

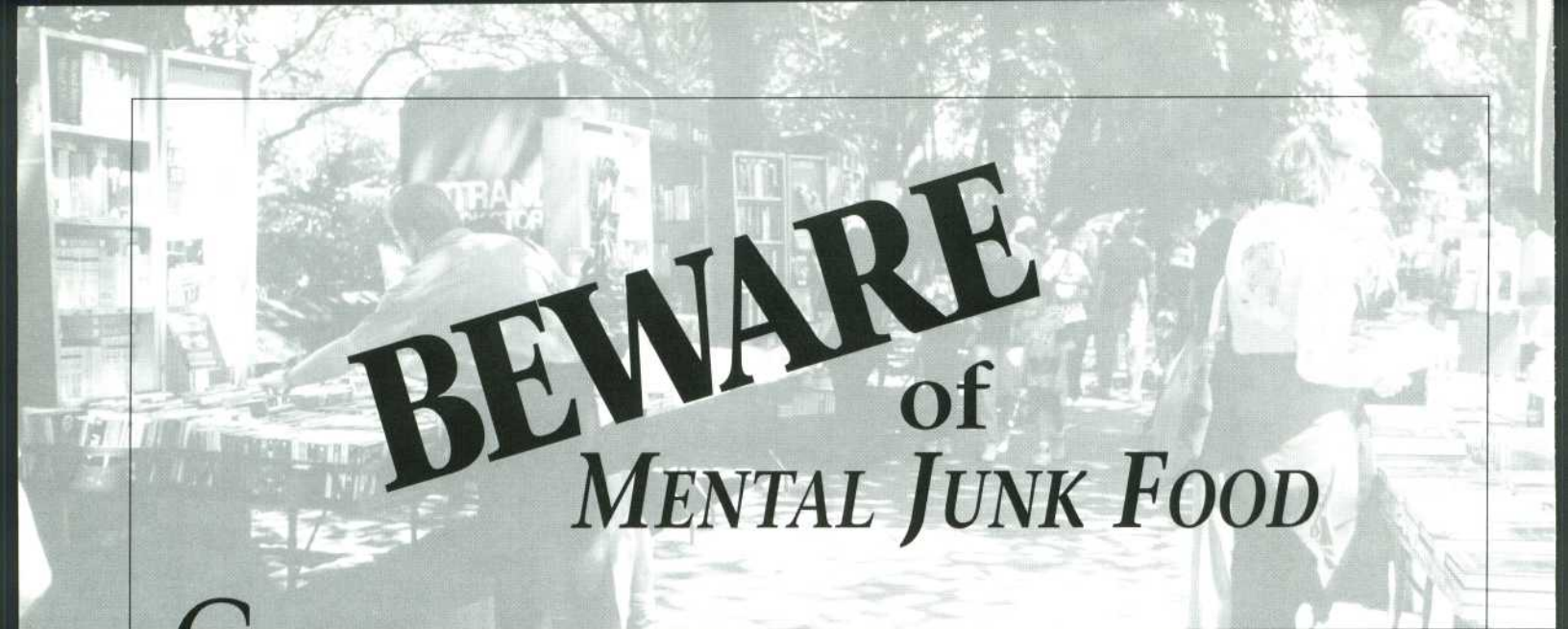


Megiddo Message

Vol. 84, No. 2
February, 1997

The fruit of
righteousness will be
peace, ...quietness and
assurance forever.

Isaiah 32:17



BEWARE of MENTAL JUNK FOOD

Concerned shoppers today read carefully the labels on the products they are purchasing, hoping to give their bodies the right balance of food elements and at the same time protect themselves from unwanted substances. But the same people often overlook what is a problem even more critical: the proper feeding of their minds.

Maximum health does not stop with the body. Just as our bodies are affected by the food we eat, so our spiritual health is affected by what we take into our minds. My spiritual makeup is the cumulative result of what I have been feeding my heart and mind. And I am convinced that God is even more concerned about what I feed my mind than what I allow to enter my stomach.

The Bible gives an overall warning that challenges our misplaced priorities: *"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the springs of life"* (Prov. 4:23). Our common version reads, *"Keep thy heart with all diligence."* Diligence here refers to one who is posted to keep watch. It implies a guardedness as to what kind of ideas and influences we allow to enter our heart or mind.

Why the need for such tight security? Because Jesus said, *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh"* (Luke 6:45). What comes out of our mouth (our words) will be the result of what we—consciously or unconsciously—put in (what we read, what we hear).

Our hearts have the capacity to hold an abundance of ideas, beliefs, convictions, priorities, thoughts. What makes up the "abundance" in our hearts? Is it a healthy treasure of good, nourishing, spiritual food, or is some of it of a type that makes us sickly and weak?

A good place to start is by examining our mental and spiritual consumption via *what we see*. Whenever we look at a magazine, book, or newspaper, we should ask ourselves, "What is this teaching me?"

How will it influence me, be it ever so subtly? What values does it portray?" These are not easy questions, because everything we read influences us either for good or ill. Every piece of literature projects values of some sort, invisibly woven and carefully determined by the choice of words. Those values may range from humanistic to Christ-like, from the most atheistic to the strongest, most confident faith.

Do we feel confident that we can sift through a book or magazine, discard the "chaff" and retain the "wheat"? Don't be too sure. It is not easy to discard thoughts which have entered our minds. Who of us has not found that the chaff we thought we had thrown out long ago made a lasting impression, and has come back to haunt us at the most unlikely time?

We cannot be too careful of the food we take into our minds. Whatever we let into our heart and mind will make an impression. Whatever we see or hear becomes a part of our thought-life, and is set aside for recall at the unsuspecting moment.

Parents have an additional responsibility: to teach their children to choose wisely. Children are in the process of forming their values from the time they are born, and young minds are easily impressed. They are also easily attracted by the unhealthy fare that is visible everywhere in the form of cartoons, magazines, TV commercials, and TV programs. Ever so subtly—and many times not so subtly—our children are fed false values, false reasoning, false images, and false goals. The media is working constantly to teach them that each new toy, new snack, new game, or new gadget will make them happy. Such is the advertising of Babylon, and the less we expose our children (or ourselves) to its influence, the safer we will be.

If we would keep our faith strong and growing, we must use our thought power to the best possible advantage. This means screening out many secular images and messages, which are often designed to make one dissatisfied with his family, his mate, his

(Continued on page 27)

MEGIDDO MEANS ...

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

WE BELIEVE ...

- in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

SOON-COMING EVENTS ...

The Herald and the KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: ...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all who live will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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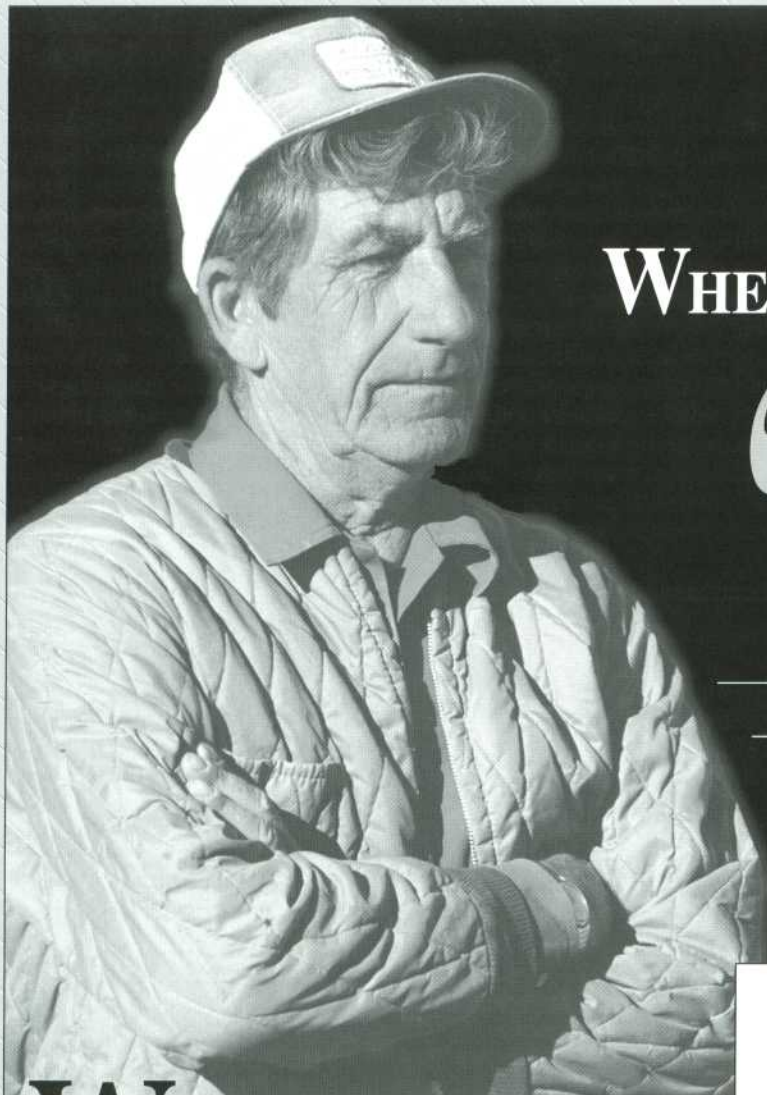
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WHEN THE TROUBLE IS “ME”

(OR THE SIN OF SELFISHNESS)

We are born, all of us, with an instinct to look after ourselves. We might say it is part of our God-given equipment for the preservation of the species. If we had no instinct for self-preservation, our kind might have died out long ago.

When we become part of God's family of believers, we find we have a battle with every aspect of our nature. We cannot remain as we are and belong to Christ. God has given us instincts, but He has given us also the mental and spiritual powers to control these instincts, even to make them work for us.

This selfish spirit, this first concern for “I,” “me,” “my,” shows itself in dozens of ways. It is the spirit that says, “If I don't look out for ‘me,’ who will?”

Selfishness is when I ask for things to be done my way. It is easy to see when I say, “I'll show you...” or “I like it this way...” or “Watch out for that—it's mine.”

It is the essence of the “Toddler's Creed.”

TODDLER'S CREED

If I want it, it's mine.

If I give it to you and change my mind later, it's mine.

If I can take it away from you, it's mine.

If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.

If it's mine, it will never belong to anyone else, no matter what.

If we are building something together, all the pieces are mine.

If it looks just like mine, it is mine.



In the same spirit this “me” can quickly pull together a few fragments of information and draw all kinds of groundless conclusions. Then, as if to add to its miseries, its imagination runs wild and it pictures the very worst, as if to out-worry even itself! What is the trouble? Not circumstances, not physical weakness, not even another's willfulness or lack of consideration. The trouble is “me”!

Selfishness is easy to spot—in others. We see it in our family, in our friends, even in those we hardly know, but we are oh! so slow to see it in ourselves—because we have a *reason* for being this way! Our spirit of selfishness, our opinion, is justified! “Of course I’m right!”

Selfishness has been called the “great unknown sin”—unknown because it doesn’t look bad to us. No selfish person ever thought of himself as selfish. We need each other to see it. We would never recognize it by ourselves. Like the worn spot in our living room carpet, we prefer to keep something sitting on top of it. At least we *think* we keep it covered.

But one problem: God still sees it.

Selfishness is the root and source of many another evil. Out of selfishness comes prejudice, conceit, and a feeling of superiority that makes us feel our judgment is above another’s. Selfishness excludes us from the bonds of love and fellowship in Christ. Until we break our naturally selfish spirit, we will be thinking first of *my* opinion, *my* idea, *my* way of doing it, *my* judgment. The Japanese have found that by tying the taproot of a very young tree they can turn what would become a forest giant into no more than a potted plant. How many times we allow our taproot to be tied. How many times we have been dwarfed in our freedom, our power, our growth, because our taproot has become entangled with selfishness, fear, and worry.

This “me” instinct is not all bad. If we were not interested in looking out for ourselves, we would have no desire for the eternal crown, nor the incentive to work for it. “*Save thyself*,” said Paul to his son-in-the-faith Timothy (I Tim. 4:16). This is the one place where a degree of “self-first” is needed.

But there is no place whatever for selfishness in the body of Christ. As true believers, we are called to work together, to pull together, to seek each other’s good. Time and again we must put others’ interests, others’ concerns ahead of ours. At the time it may seem unreasonable, so programmed are we to think first of ourselves.

Where does selfishness fit into our Christian service? It does not. Said the apostle Paul, “*None of us liveth to himself*” (Rom. 14:7). We do not live to ourselves, nor can we grow and develop inwardly by ourselves. We grow in grace as we grow in our relationships with one another. A right spirit, a right attitude, a spirit of helpfulness and love and brotherly kindness must *always*—no exceptions—must *always* prevail among believers. We must be kind, sympathetic, sharing, generous, loving—Christ-like. We cannot be selfish and godly at the same time. The more difficult the stress, the tighter should be the bonds of love pulling us together, drawing us toward God, our one and only source of help.

Selfishness is our enemy, though often it poses as such a vital friend. But selfishness makes a barrier between us and God. Selfishness stands in the way of our effectiveness as God’s representatives. It even hinders our own happiness. It separates us from our friends, and keeps us from doing our duty to one another—and especially to God. If we would be Christ-like, we must learn not to be selfish.

A simple definition of selfishness has been given as “seeking pleasure or well-being for oneself without regard for others, exclusively concerned with oneself.”

There is nothing exclusive in true Christianity, nothing to harm or hurt another. We are called to be part of a brotherhood, a family encompassing all believers from the beginning of God’s plan clear through to its culmination. Who would want to be a selfish unit, separated from this great family?

We would do well to rehearse to ourselves very frequently the words of Paul to the Ephesians: “*And be ye kind*.” Hearts knit together in Christian love, hearts bound by Christian kindness, hearts beating together in unison, in sympathy, in a common affection for God and truth—where is there any place for selfishness?

Did you ever notice how much the New Testament—Jesus and Peter and Paul and John—have to say about how we treat one another?

There are no less than fifty commands in the New Testament giving direct and specific instructions on how we should treat one another. We are commanded to “*love one another*” (John 13:34, 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11). We must “*stir up one another to love and good works*” (Heb. 10:24). We must be “*subject one to another*” (1 Pet 5:5). We must “*minister...one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God*” (1Pet. 4:10). We must use “*hospitality one to another without grudging*” (1 Pet. 4:9). We must have “*compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful,*

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be courteous” (1Pet. 3:8). We must “*speak not evil one of another*” (Jas. 4:11). We must “*exhort one another*” (Heb. 10:25) and “*consider one another*” (Heb. 10:24); we must “*comfort one another*” (1 Thess. 4:18) and “*edify one another*” (1 Thess. 5:11). We must “*increase and abound in love one to another*” (1 Thess. 3:12). We must be “*forbearing [with] one another*” and “*forgiving one another*” (Col. 3:13). We must “*be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another*” (Eph. 4:32). We must “*speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another*” (Eph. 4:25). We must “*by love serve one another*” (Gal. 5:13). We must “*be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another*” (Rom. 12:10). We must “*be like-minded one toward*

another according to Christ Jesus" (Rom. 15:5). We must "admonish one another" (Rom. 15:14; Col. 3:16), "forbearing one another in love" (Eph. 4:2). We must "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:4). Can we think for a moment that we can live to ourselves and please God? God is judging us as individuals, but He is judging us by how we interact with one another, not only by how we are when we are alone.

Let's concentrate on growing in this virtue of unselfishness, grow in our relationships with one another,

If we would be Christ- like, we must learn not to be selfish.

and whatever we do to consider and love one another, to do whatever we do as unto Christ.

Nearly every Christian virtue is expressed toward "one another." Look at the fruits of the Spirit. The first is **love**. How can one show love, except it be to another?

Peace. How can peace be kept, except in relation to one another? One may be at war within himself, but how often another is involved, or affected. How rarely do we mar our own peace, if left to ourselves!

Long-suffering. How can we show long-suffering, except it be to another? What opportunity would we have to show how long our long-suffering may be, except it be tried by the need of another?

Gentleness. Other translations call it "**goodness**." Goodness, again, must be shown toward another. Who ever had a problem being good to himself?

If our gentleness is tested, there must be "another" involved. There is no virtue in gentleness without an inclination or an occasion to be un-gentle.

Faith, or **faithfulness**—to whom? How? Another must be involved. We must be faithful to something or someone, and though the greatest test of our faithfulness, perhaps, is to ourselves, on the higher level we must be faithful to God. But even this involves our faithfulness to each other. For we can only show our faithfulness to God by serving one another.

Faithfulness is a virtue which must touch every aspect of our lives. We must be honest and true, upright and pure, through and through. Whatever the test, we must come out genuine, faithful—to one another, and to God.

Meekness. How many times we violate the virtue of meekness simply by insisting on our own way. Again, "another" is concerned. We put our own way first, or our own opinion, or our own judgment—even when that of others may be superior. So blinded are we by our own pride that we cannot see another's point of view. Meekness is a heart quality; it is "me" giving up my will, my opinion, my idea for that of another, and very frequently that "other" is our brother or sister in the faith.

Temperance. Here we come to the one virtue which is perhaps most self-contained, which keeps us under control at all times. But again, the temptation to be less than self-controlled must come from another. We do not try ourselves that often. Even our temperance is occasioned by one another.

Another virtue commanded directly by the Apostles is that of **hospitality**. Peter said it forthrightly in these words: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Pet. 4:9). Not only "use hospitality one to another" but do it "without grudging." There is no place in the Christian life for any grudging service. Christian service is a mutual obligation from which we cannot retire. As much as lies in us, as far as we are able, we must serve one another.

And how carefully we should guard against the "me first" attitude. It has been said that a person wrapped up in himself is a very small package—surely a package none of us want to be. We need to have a

growing concern for one another. Our former pastor, Maud Hembree, expressed it when she prayed, "help us to think of others more and more, and remove that selfish spirit."

Let us look closely to ourselves, and search out the selfishness that still lies hidden in our hearts. Is there any bitterness, any jealousy, any rivalry in us? Do we give—grudgingly—of ourselves, our substance, our time, our energy? Are we ever slow to encourage or upbuild another—when we sense that it may put that one ahead of us? Are we always ready to speak the helpful word, to lift the heavy burden, to do all we can to increase love and fellowship and faith in one another? Our time for service is limited.

How can we be selfish—and loving?

How can we be selfish—and peaceable?

How can we be selfish—and patient?

We should realize, too, that what we do for one another we are doing for the Lord Jesus Himself, and who of us would think of giving Jesus less than our most kindly, most gracious, most loving spirit?

Being kind to one another is, in reality, being kind to Jesus. Being loving and helpful to one another is, in reality, being loving and helpful to Jesus. Being patient, forbearing and forgiving is, in reality, giving the same to Jesus. What makes us say this? It is the parable of our Lord Himself, when He spoke of separating sheep and goats. Those who were placed on the right were rewarded for what they had done for one another, with these commending words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

When Jesus was with His disciples just before the Transfiguration, He said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19). Do we realize the responsibility Jesus was laying upon every would-be follower of His, that "what-

soever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"? In other words, the same high standard that will prevail in the Kingdom of God must prevail among the true believers now!

Have we taken seriously that command to bring into captivity every thought and make it obey Christ? Have you ever noticed how many of your thoughts turn instinctively to yourself, your feelings, your opinions, your concerns, your worries, what you plan to do, where you plan to go? To a point this is necessary, but the point of the command is control. Our thoughts must not be wandering aimlessly.

God wants us to live beyond ourselves. He wants us to become part of His larger unit, part of His family. He has called us to belong to eternity. Why do we cling to that which is so small, so limiting, so perishing?

One of the greatest victories we can win is the victory over our selfishness. When we can truly see and know that "the trouble is me," then we can go to work and change—and we will be amazed at how much our circumstances, our surroundings, and those around us have changed!

God has called us to live above the normal human level. He has even called us to live above ourselves. As Christians, we must do it. We cannot remain the same old creature and enter the Kingdom.

We can have our choice: To be selfish, and have all and only ourselves; or to let go of our selfishness and link ourselves to a higher, nobler family, where we can know life and glory everlasting, where we can join the company of angels who have witnessed the beginning of God's plan on earth clear through to its culmination.

Selfishness pops up in the most unexpected places—quick as a wink—to protect our good name, or simply to save our face. The evidence of the blunder may be as big as life. But something in us jumps out to say that we really were not at fault, at least we did not *intend* it that way.

Sometimes selfishness is "me" hiding behind my *rights*. Recall the man who came to Jesus, upset because he didn't feel his brother had been fair with him in dividing their inheritance. Jesus knew it was best not to argue with the man and so made a simple statement to end the conversation and teach a lesson

on the problem that lay at the root of it: Selfishness. He said, "*Take heed, and beware...for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*" (Luke 12:15).

Then Jesus went on to tell the

**Help
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spirit.**

—M. Hembree

parable of the Rich Farmer, the man who was so wealthy he couldn't spend it all. Did you ever notice how many "I's" there are in this little story? "*And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns,*"
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Prayer

O GOD our fortress and our strength, our bulwark never failing; our helper strong amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing: hear us as we come into Thy presence with hearts and minds eager for new impressions from Thy Word. We are creatures of a moment; Thou art from everlasting to everlasting.

Father, we appreciate the favored place Thou hast granted us in the day of salvation; for the privilege of living so near the glorious climax, when all the things Thou hast spoken will be fulfilled. Help us to live in a constant expectancy, aware that time as we know it will soon end and Thy glorious, never ending Day be ushered in. May we so live that the arrival of that Day will be for us a Day of joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We thank Thee for all Thy bountiful provisions for our lives, for life itself, for the vigor of health, the warmth of friendship, and for every gift of happiness and strength. We thank Thee for Thy Word, and the brilliant hope it sets before us. Help us to use all these gifts in ways that honor Thee.

May we have a passion for eternity and all the

things Thou hast promised; a desire so strong that it will dominate every aspect of our lives and impel us to make a complete surrender of ourselves to Thee. May we be so possessed by our sublime hope that no experience of the present can distress us or cause us to lose our buoyancy, but we will see everything as preparing us for Thy new world.

Lord, we pray not for lighter burdens but for greater strength; not for easier disciplines, but for the grace to accept them and grow under them, until we attain to Thy full mental and moral likeness.

We pray Thee to bless our homes, bless our church, bless our brotherhood and all those who belong to it who are absent from us today, who are making a definite effort to be part of Thy family. Strengthen the weak, uphold the suffering, and grant to all of us the steadfastness to keep pressing on and on to the end of our day of salvation. And hasten the Day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of Thy Son and He shall reign forever and ever. In His worthy name we pray. AMEN.

**Take GOD into
All Your PLANS**

The Apostle Paul did not want us to lose sight of the line when he said, "*Do not be yoked together with*



unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'" (2 Cor. 6:14-18, NIV).

All through life we have the opportunity of choosing which side we wish to travel, but only as we keep to the right side of the road can we enter that eternal City.

As inexperienced travelers at the start we do cross the line. The officer along the road overtakes us. Firmly but kindly he warns of the danger of becoming entangled with the traffic on the other side, and urges us to keep to our own side, to let our eyes look right on and our eyelids straight before us (Prov. 4:25-26). He shows us how that by restraining our eyes we can restrain our actions as well.

Saul forgot the dividing line when God's highway took him through Amalek. He discounted the Lord's command by one word and crossed to the side; he partially obeyed—and partially disobeyed. By so doing he crossed the line and started in a reverse course from which he never returned.

Jehoshaphat would not have encountered difficulty when the wicked King Ahab wanted him to join with him in battle if he had not already been crossing the line and helping those who hated God. The officer Jehu, who was on duty at that time, set him right, and he in turn charged the people to serve the Lord faithfully and with a perfect heart.

Anything short of serving with a perfect heart takes us into the danger zone. Traveling with a divided heart causes us to keep crossing to the side of flesh, and at the end of the journey we shall be found faulty.

If during our test we do not quali-

fy as a safe and good driver, we will never be able to qualify for that future position of riding upon the high places of the earth with those who wait upon the Lord and have their strength renewed to mount aloft with power as eagles and travel with the freedom of the wind (Isa. 58:13-14; 40:31).

How many plans do we make, and carry out, without a thought of God? Is He thoughtlessly left out, or is He excluded, as though we did not want Him to interfere? Yet, when the great and dreadful Day of the Lord comes, we expect that He will take us into His eternal plan and spare us, and welcome us when He fills the earth with Israel, His glory!

In the morning when we awake and begin to formulate our plans, do we include God, or is He left out? Do we let Him into all our deals, our sales, our purchases; into every realm and aspect of life?

Why do we refrain from taking God into all our plans? There can be but one answer: We think that we do not need Him; that we can handle the plan better alone; that some choice plan of ours might be upset by letting Him in, or we would have to give Him all the glory if the plan proved successful.

Paul says that we are "workers together" with God. How can He work with us or we with Him if we do not take Him into all our plans? If God is going to supply all our needs in Christ Jesus, how can He do it if He is left out of our plans? Solomon, when little in his own sight, was anxious to take God into every move and plan he made; but

shortly he began to make his own plans and leave God out. And how quickly he became a dismal failure and brought ruin and destruction upon himself!

Judas, on that dark night long ago, departed from the Lord's table to carry out his own plans. How bitter the ending! We might say that such a deed or plan would be far from us; but remember, lest we forget our high calling, lest we suddenly leave the table of the Lord and go forth into a world of darkness and lay plans of our own to betray Him. Every time we formulate a plan and leave God out we are the loser, for the plan from the beginning is bound to be a failure.

What an outstanding example we have in Moses, the great Lawgiver! When the people rose up against him, and challenged his authority, he sought an answer from God. When asked for his plans for Israel's guidance and welfare, he took the matter to God, to seek His way. How exceedingly careful he was to take God into all his plans!

When Jesus was confronted and His authority questioned by the Jews, he said unto them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Soon they realized that He and His Father were working together on the same plans. Then Jesus answered and said unto them, "Verily, verily"—truly, truly—"I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that he himself doeth" (John 5:19).

Many have pushed the Creator into the background, to have no part in their plans; He is thought of as the emergency squad, useful only when some great tragedy falls. Meanwhile, they eat, and drink, and plant, and reap, and conduct their daily business without a thought of God. They forget how small a role they have in their success; how dependent they are on God. At most they are only the sowers and planters of the seed, the cultivators of the soil; the increase comes from God.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." If we

***Thoughts grow
to deeds, deeds to
habits, habits
to character,
character to
destiny.***

believe there is such a present help so near at hand, why do we attempt to struggle on alone with our own plans and purposes? Says the wise man, *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him"* (Prov. 3:5-6)—in other words, don't think of making a plan or carrying out a purpose without God. Take Him into all your plans. He will willingly labor with you if you let Him, but you must open the door.

Think of being workers together with God! What strength there is in such a union, what comfort, what help, what support! What plan or purpose can fail with such a Mighty One working with us!

People like to make plans, hew out cisterns of their own, but such cisterns are only broken and empty. Such products are the result of God being left out of the design and plan. Saul, at the beginning of his kingship, had the privilege of working with God in the defense of Israel; but soon he refused and set up a campaign of his own, which brought in the end his downfall and ruin.

"O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed; and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth" (Jer. 17:13).

If we want life in all its fullness, God must be taken into our plans. Paul, the Apostle to us Gentiles, emphasized the relation of every Christian with God, when he said, *"We then as workers together with him."* Think of God being willing to work with us poor mortal creatures of the dust! Paul did not let God stay out of his plans. Although his life began with a failure by persecuting the churches, it turned into a glorious triumph.

One might ask, How it is possible to let God into every plan? *"Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established"* (Prov. 16:3). First, there must be a committal. Tell yourself: Everything I have comes from God; my very breath is from God, my life is from God. Every move of my body I make by using the tools He has designed. What have I that I can call my own?

This thinking leads to commitment, and so we say, God, I owe you all I have. How can I use any part of me in any pursuit or pleasure or interest that You cannot bless?

This is not easy, for we are so strongly inclined to go our own way and forget God. But when we realize that all we have belongs to God, when we let Him take charge, then we do what we can and leave the rest with Him.

And God makes no mistakes.

We need to renew our commitment each day. One way of doing this is by beginning each day with God. In the words of the hymn:

*Begin the day with God alone,
Kneel down to Him in prayer;
Lift up thy heart to His abode
And seek His love to share.*

When we awake in the morning, let us turn our first thought toward God, who has preserved us through the night, and ask Him to go with us through the day; ask Him to lead, and guide, and bless, as He in His wisdom sees best. Then, when night comes we can lie down without fear or regret.

The very fact that we sing and talk about the things of God shows we have an interest in God's plans, in what He is doing, and the glorious Day when God's will shall be done here as it is in heaven. That day is truly approaching, some day soon it will arrive. It was far off in Paul's time. Now it is right upon us.

As we begin the day with God, as we pause to refresh our minds at the heavenly springs, to feast our soul on heaven's bread, and petition God's help for the day, we are

stronger to meet the trials that are sure to come. Sometimes the day begins calmly and smoothly, not a ripple in sight, but soon something develops that tests us. What started as a quiet and pleasant day sometimes turns out to be otherwise.

We admit that we can be patient for an hour. Surely, then, we can do it for two hours with just a little more effort. Then why not three hours, or four—and soon the day is done. With just a little more effort, keeping that constant, prayerful attitude, we shall find that we can go through the day with patience intact. We won't do it the first day, but the Christian's life is a growth, a continued effort, which if we persist will show progress and eventually success.

When the day is over, what can be more satisfying than to know that it has been well spent! To look back and have no regrets, to see that everything was done with the principle of God directing our mind, to lie down and feel that all is peace—what a comfort! What a contrast to the turmoil that comes from sin and wrong.

David knew the mental torture that comes from yielding to sin; he knew also the joy and peace that comes from doing right. These are his words: *"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety"* (Ps. 4:8).

If we take God into our plans now, He will take us into His plans when He sends His Son to clean up this sin-ridden world and transform it into a paradise of delight.

Fellow Christian, if you would live each God-given day as God wants you to live it, and as you must live it to be worthy of His salvation, make this your rule of life: Spend a little time each morning reading some portion of God's Word. Think upon it. Pray about it. Ask God's help for the day. Resolve to do whatever you have to do as His servant, faithfully and cheerfully. Then when night falls, thank Him for going with you through all the day has brought. Your spiritual strength will increase, your faith will mount, and your hope shine brighter unto the perfect Day. □

***Every time
we formulate a
plan and leave
God out, we are
the loser.***



Millennium Superworld

Part Twelve

The 1000 Years Are Finished

"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

—Numbers 14:21

"They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

—Zechariah 13:9

"He who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten."

—Isaiah 65:16

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come."

"So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory."

"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer."

"This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord."

—Psalm 102:13, 15, 17-18

A thousand years is a long time, but it is not forever. Like every preceding era of earth's history, the thousand years will have an end.

The Bible describes a number of events which will happen at the end of the Millennium. For our information about these events we are indebted to John the Revelator.

To learn about events that shall occur when the thousand years are finished, let us go to Revelation 20. We cannot know exactly how God's program of events will be carried out; we can only project the sequence of events according to our understanding of what is revealed in the Bible, and know that God will perform what He has planned. How accurate our understanding will prove to be, we cannot know now.

Revelation 20 starts at the beginning of the thousand years when "an angel" comes down from heaven, "having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand," with which he binds "the Devil, and Satan...a thousand years...that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled" (vs. 1-3). This presents in symbolic language the unbreakable law which will keep "the Devil," representative of all sin and sinners, completely restrained; no open disobedience will be tolerated.

Revelation 20:4 and 6 speak of the victorious overcomers of the first six thousand years of God's plan on earth. Those who have part in the "first resurrection" are from this group, and are "blessed and holy"; they are also said to live and reign "with Christ a thousand years." This first resurrection (exaltation) is "first" in "dignity, in importance," not only in time (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Those who belong to this group are raised to immortality, rewarded with glory and honor, and given positions of authority with Christ.

The last part of verse 5 belongs with the thought of verse 4: "This is the first resurrection."

The first part of verse 5, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until

the thousand years were finished" seems to be an added explanation belonging to a later time. These words are set in parentheses in Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*, in the *Concordant Version*, also in the *New International Version*. The thought of the words shows their meaning; it is an explanatory clause to inform us that the populace of the Kingdom who die during the Millennium are not resurrected, judged and rewarded until the close of the Millennium. If we omit this added clause, the passage reads: "And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years....This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" (from verse 4, part of 5, and into 6).

From the bits and pieces of information given it seems that the first sign of the end of the Millennium will be the Resurrection. At the blast of the trumpet of the archangel, those who have lived and died during the Millennium and are amenable to Judgment will come forth. It is the second and last Resurrection.

They come forth to mortal life. Some of these were cut off in rebellion. Others refused to cooperate with the new government and died because of the enforcement of unbreakable law. Others are people who transformed their natures and made themselves worthy of the crown of life.

The Final Rebellion

Before the time of final separation and judgment, there is a period of "silence in heaven" (Rev. 8:1).

All during the thousand years, Satan, representing the evil in the hearts of men and women, was controlled by stern and inviolable law, the guiding voice being ever present to say, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21).

But there comes a time when this voice is no longer heard. It is the end of another epoch in the plan of God, and like the calm before the storm, an ominous silence reigns in the political heavens. No inflexible law restrains the rebellious element; and many of

the rebellious discover it and are quick to mutter their disaffection.

This is the period described in Revelation as the time when Satan is "loosed a little season" (Rev. 20:3). During this period of "silence in heaven" (Rev. 8:1), mortals are allowed to manifest their evil natures, and there is no penalty. The rulers overlook it in silence.

This lasts for a "little season."

Some of the definitions of "season" are "a certain definite time, a short time." Though definite, its length is not revealed. Whatever time is set aside for this suspension of law, it will not be long.

The purpose of the strange silence is to let the evil element vent itself so that they can prove themselves the wicked, unworthy servants they really are, and be removed. Other mortals will be able to see them in their true light and know that the punishment reserved for them is just.

Someone has commented that God allows these rebellious people to let their whole power loose that their total defeat may be more decisive.

What do the rebels do? They go out "to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle" (Rev. 20:8).

The word "nations" may refer to people, lands, or races, or simply inhabitants. It does not imply foreign empires at this time, as there is only one nation worldwide.

Who are Gog and Magog? A footnote in Berkeley's New Testament reads: "All forces that oppose God." Another Bible student describes them as "all enemies of God's truth." Another says, "Gog and Magog represent all the faithless upon the earth."

What then is the picture at the end of the Millennium? There are two classes of mortals: those who are faithful, and those who are unfaithful and rebellious in heart. At this point, everyone who lives is either on the side of Christ and the new rulers or opposing them.

Revelation 20:9 pictures the rebels in action: "And they went up

on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." What is said to happen when they do this? Did they succeed in their evil design? No, "Fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." There is no more opportunity for repentance; the day of grace has ended. These people rebel against God—for the last time—and at the hand of God meet swift and final destruction.

The Final Destruction

At this point, the devil, symbolic of all evil, comes to an end. We read: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone" (v. 10). The "lake of fire" is a symbolic term, defined in verse 14 as "the second death," a death that is penalty for sin and from which there is no release. Satan has been bound a thousand years at this time, then loosed for a "little season"; now he is flung into the lake of fire; this is the end of evil.

Already in the lake of fire is "the beast" and the "false prophet" (v. 10). This indicates that all powers of darkness and all false systems are also at an end. The final hour has come.

How long will their fate continue? They "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (v. 10).

Does this mean they will writhe in agony and pain and misery through all eternity? Is such the end God has promised those who disobey Him? Never! Jesus said long ago that the "broad way," the way of sin and self-indulgence, leads to "destruction," not torment (Matt. 7:13-14). And the apostle Paul says the "wages of sin is death," not eternal suffering and misery (Rom. 6:23).

But there will be torment—mental anguish—as Jesus revealed at the close of one of His parables. It will be torment enough to "see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God" and they themselves eternally outside (Luke 13:28). It will be mental torment as long as their life extends, but not beyond.

How is this, when "they shall be

tormented day and night for ever and ever"? However long this verse sounds, it speaks only of the finality of their doom. The torment lasts only as long as "day and night," and day and night does not last forever, for with the dawn of the Eternal Day shall come the end of night: "There shall be no night there." With the dawn of the Eternal Day, the punishment and consciousness of the wicked shall end, and night shall end, and all shall be bliss and glory, light and life forever!

The Final Judgment

In Revelation 20, after describing the end of the rebels, John gives a description of the last Judgment. "And I saw a great white throne [a symbol of purity and equity], and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them" (vs. 11). The old political systems (heavens) of Gentile times "fled away" at the close of the first six thousand years of God's plan. Now both the heavens (the political system) and the earth (the people) are new—the earth has a whole new populace. There is no place left for the old. The new King is reigning in justice and holiness, and everything is being done in a new way; all things are become new.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (v. 12). It is another scene of Judgment. The "small and great" who lived during the Millennium are judged. All ranks and degrees and conditions of mortals are judged. None can escape. They are judged by God's standard, and

they are judged "according to their works." Some names are in the book of life, and some are in the book of death.

Books are kept. It is a reminder that none can escape the results of their deeds. The consequences are adhesive. They cannot be torn away from the one who performs them. All are recorded in God's book. The books are photographs of human souls. Each comes to Judgment trailing the record which will determine his destiny. It is the age-old principle: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

Let each take the lesson to heart.

All are judged by their deeds, which express the very inner

*If we knew of our dependence
On the God who gave us life,
If we knew of His compassion
As He sees us in the strife,
If we only saw the glory
Christ is holding over there,
We would read His word with pleasure
And would study it with care.*

*If our minds were not so crowded
With the cares and things of time,
If our thoughts could reach the Kingdom
And explore that blissful clime,
If our eyes could see the vision
Of that land so very near,
We would read His word more carefully
And obey it as we hear.*

*If we'd contemplate the future
Looking thence for sure rewards,
If we'd tune our ears to listen
To those sweet and heavenly chords,
We'd go pressing towards the mark
Of that glorious aftermath,
With His word a lamp unto our feet,
A light unto our path.*

meaning of their lives. This has always been God's principle. Those who have bad records would like to hide the record from all eyes, human and Divine. But God does not keep things hidden; at Judgment the records are brought forth, the records that show how
(Continued on page 24)

Life's Lessons

Match the name with the phrase that best summarizes a key lesson that can be learned from that person's life.

NAMES

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. ___ Joshua | 7. ___ Jesus |
| 2. ___ Stephen | 8. ___ Jeremiah |
| 3. ___ Daniel | 9. ___ Micaiah |
| 4. ___ Peter | 10. ___ Solomon |
| 5. ___ Moses | 11. ___ Abraham |
| 6. ___ Paul | 12. ___ Joseph |

KEY LESSON

- Faithfulness to the truth can cost you your life.
- Faithful obedience to God makes one a friend of God.
- God means exactly what He says.
- Full of grace, truth and glory, a beloved Son.
- Strictly adhering to the truth can place you in prison.
- Faithful service in second place, later in first place.
- Total faith in the promise of God's deliverance for the Israelite nation.
- There is no true pleasure or happiness in disobedience.
- Visible evidence of "I will be with you...a brazen wall...an iron fence."
- Unflinching courage in the face of danger.
- God forgives even one who feels himself "less than the least of all saints."
- The champion of God's second chance.

*"Wisdom is
the principal
thing, therefore
get wisdom."*

— Proverbs 4:7

Know Your Bible?

Bible First's

Fill in the blanks. (More than one word may be needed.)

- The "firstfruits from the dead" is a phrase referring to _____. (Text: _____)
- Israel began the year with the first month, called _____. (Text: _____)
- The Israelites had to _____ the first ripe fruit of the land. (Text: _____)
- The first king of Judah after the kingdom divided was _____. (Text: _____)
- "I am the first and I am the last, and _____," says Isaiah the Prophet about God. (Text: _____)
- Jesus said that _____ must come first, before Jesus' second appearing. (Text: _____)
- According to Jesus, the first and great commandment is to _____. (Text: _____)
- Paul says that a _____ is the first qualification needed to have one's gift accepted by God. (Text: _____)
- The person who _____ must be the first to harvest the crop. (Text: _____)
- _____ said that He was Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. (Text: _____)

True or False?

(Give at least one Scripture to support your answer)

Part A: About the Judgment

1. ____ When we stand at the Judgment, God will erase the record of our evil works, whether we turned from them or not. (Text: _____)
2. ____ When Jesus sits as Judge, He will have a carefully selected jury to evaluate the evidence. (Text: _____)
3. ____ Everyone at Jesus' Judgment seat will be righteous. (Text: _____)
4. ____ Jesus compared the Judgment to the herdsman's task of separating sheep and goats. (Text: _____)
5. ____ Those who are judged faithful will be surprised that their efforts merited so generous a reward. (Text: _____)
6. ____ Those judged unfaithful will think they did more than they did. (Text: _____)
7. ____ The Old Testament says nothing about the Judgment at the return of Christ. (Text: _____)
8. ____ The purpose of the Judgment is to distinguish those who served God faithfully from those who did not. (Text: _____)
9. ____ God has appointed Christ to be the Judge, and to give life to whomsoever He chooses. (Text: _____)
10. ____ Those judged faithful by Jesus at His return will never die again. (Text: _____)

True or False?

Part B: About the Second Advent of Jesus

1. ____ Before Jesus went away, He promised His disciples that He would return. (Text: _____)
2. ____ When Jesus went to heaven He had not yet received the eternal crown. (Text: _____)
3. ____ Jesus went to heaven to wait until it is time to return and rule the earth. (Text: _____)
4. ____ When Jesus returns, everyone on earth will welcome Him. (Text: _____)
5. ____ Jesus will return to those who are looking for Him. (Text: _____)
6. ____ After Jesus went to heaven, He sent special gifts back to His own. (Text: _____)
7. ____ Jesus' second advent will happen suddenly, meaning that it will be unannounced. (Text: _____)
8. ____ The many earthquakes and severe storms in recent years are obvious signs of the nearness of Jesus' return. (Text: _____)
9. ____ There will be living believers on earth to welcome Jesus when He returns. (Text: _____)
10. ____ Jesus will return alone, just as He went away. (Text: _____)

True or False?

Part C: About the Kingdom of Jesus

1. ____ During His earthly ministry, Jesus taught that He was bringing in the Kingdom there and then. (Text: _____)
2. ____ Jesus' chief message was about the Kingdom. (Text: _____)
3. ____ Many of Jesus' parables reveal specific facts about the Kingdom. (Text: _____)
4. ____ Jesus taught that the Kingdom was something to live for, pray for, and work for. (Text: _____)
5. ____ Jesus said that He Himself did not know the exact time of His return. (Text: _____)
6. ____ When the Kingdom of God is fully set up, everyone on earth will know and obey the law of God. (Text: _____)
7. ____ Jesus told two of His disciples that they would be granted positions of highest honor in His Kingdom. (Text: _____)
8. ____ When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He said they should pray for the Kingdom to come. (Text: _____)
9. ____ Jesus taught that if we are to live in the Kingdom, it must be the first and most important goal in our life. (Text: _____)
10. ____ There will be no sickness and no death in the finished Kingdom of Christ. (Text: _____)

(Answers on page 26)

Excerpts from the talks and writings of Rev. L. T. Nichols, founder of the Megiddo Church.

God's Plan of Salvation...

In the first of Genesis, God is not telling us about the creation of the literal heavens and earth. He is simply enlightening us regarding His Plan of Salvation upon this earth.

People in general have such a meager idea of God's Plan of Salvation. I was talking a few days ago with a man, and during the course of the conversation the point came up that only few would work out their salvation during the six thousand years from Adam. He thought it a dreadful thing that so few should be saved; thought that God had made a failure of His Plan. I asked him, "When do you think the first man was made?" He replied, "About six thousand years ago." I said to him, "Do you not think it would be a greater failure if in all the thousands and millions of ages in the past not one man had been created, not once had God moved the wheels of salvation?"

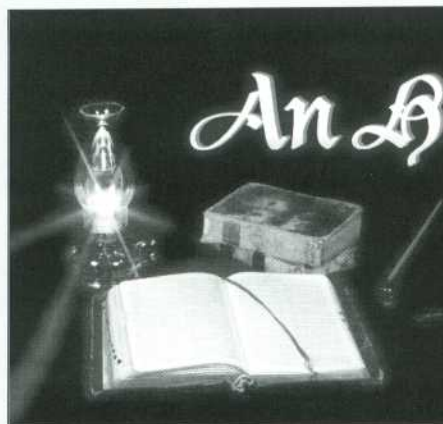
Ah, my friends, that family of God is expanding continually; the heaven of heavens cannot contain them; they extend on and on to other planets. God has plenty of time. Because time is so precious and so limited to us is no sign that it is limited to God. His purpose is to fill this earth with righteous people glorifying Him. Go back to Moses in Numbers 14:21, and there we read His purpose: "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Ah! light comes in and shines upon our pathway, and we see that He has not made a failure. He would not make a failure if it took Him millions of years to accomplish His purpose. But He would if those from Adam on were the only ones in the universe to be saved.

Adam and Eve were not the first man and woman God ever created. They were simply the first of our race, the first to be called into the spiritual vineyard or garden of the Lord. They were not the beginning of God's wonderful Plan. God has unnumbered worlds in His mighty universe filled with happy immortal beings
(Continued on page 17)

An Honest Man

Biography of L. T. Nichols

Part 5*



ON, STILL ON

Soon after settling in Minnesota, L. T. Nichols gave up active farm work, letting out his land to others that he might devote more time to study. Pamphlets on The Kingdom of God, Natural and Spiritual Israel, The Sabbath, and Man: What Is He? were written and printed on the press brought from the West; earlier tracts written in Oregon were revised and republished. So assiduous a writer was he, and so able to concentrate, that it is said that one of his books was largely written while stacking grain, between loads!

To the person of average ability, preaching, writing, printing and manufacturing would seem a Herculean work. But L. T. Nichols was not an average man. His mental caliber was remarkable and his resourceful brain was ever busy. In addition to all this, in his spare time (!) he had invented and patented several useful articles, including a four-horse evener for use on harvesting machines, an improved hay press, a hay loader, a patent farm gate, and a fire escape, all of which he manufactured in a large shop on his own farm. This brought him a good income, yet he never became attached to money or the making of it. When a call for help would come from Minneapolis, or Davenport, or Barry, or Springfield, the machinery would be shut down, perhaps for weeks, while he was in the work he loved best, spending and being spent for the salvation of others.

In 1890 a congregation was founded in Davenport, Iowa, the home city of his one-time teacher in Wisconsin days, Mary Eastman, now Mary Lee, and a zealous disciple. The following year a little church was built in Ellington, Minnesota, all the work and expense being borne by the leader and his brethren. (In fact, at no time did he or any of his followers ever make an appeal to the public for any financial assistance of any nature.) An ecclesia in Minneapolis was without a place of worship, so an unused church in that city was purchased by a well-to-do brother and dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel. Owatonna, sixteen miles away, was the home of a number of believers, who worshiped at Ellington when possible and at home when Mr. Nichols visited their city.

In Barry, too, a church had been built, and a zealous band carried on under the wise and gentle rule of the Rev. Maud Hembree. Twice a year at the least Mr. Nichols made the circuit of his scattered congregations. These visits were events. Lists of written questions had accumulated and were brought forth for answering; there were practical matters where judgment must be rendered

*An Honest Man is available in printed book form. Write: Megiddo Press, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, NY 14619. Price: \$2.00.

and discipline given; and soul-stirring exhortations left the little bands revived and refreshed, more deeply rooted in the faith.

An incident of those days reveals the deep sincerity of the leader. An ecclesia had prepared a program of welcome for his visit, and the songs, recitations and tributes were rendered with fervor. On the surface all was proper and pleasing. But things were not right in this particular congregation. There were sins unconfessed and unforsaken, and the generally prevailing attitude had been too complacent. In one of his most soul-searching sermons he refused to accept the welcome, telling them plainly that it was distasteful to him until such time as they should from the heart repent of their evil ways and turn from them. Such a leader was not working for the honor of men.

In Barry another attempt was made to ensnare him in a net of gold. On a certain Sunday morning in August, 1900, Mr. Nichols, in the pulpit of the little church, delivered a powerful sermon on the four beasts of Daniel's vision and prophecy (chapter 7). In the congregation was a stranger, a New York millionaire named Bateman, who was spending a vacation with relatives in town. This sort of preaching was new to him, something entirely different, and he was deeply impressed by the power, fearlessness and ability of the speaker. An idea began to take form in the visitor's mind; and, being a man accustomed to quick and decisive action, by the close of the service it had matured.

Introducing himself to Mr. Nichols, he informed him that the large, liberal and wealthy New York church of which he was a member—an influential member, he inferred—was in need of a minister. The field was broad, and many more people could be reached than in a sleepy Midwest town like Barry. Such a man as Mr. Nichols—a preacher mighty and eloquent in the Scriptures—would fill the place admirably. Would he accept a "call"? The salary, he said, would be well worth considering.

"Yes, I will go," the preacher said, without hesitation, "if you will give me more than I am getting now. I am a sensible man, and willing to work for the best paymaster."

Well pleased, the New Yorker mentioned a salary he felt sure would be attractive. Mr. Nichols declined. The New Yorker increased his offers to as high as \$20,000 a year—a salary all but unheard of in 1900!—and was painfully surprised when his offer was still rejected as much too small.

"Tell me," he said, "how much are you receiving now? What are your prospects?"

"I am working for a reward far beyond what eye has seen or ear heard or the heart of man has imagined; a life that will never end, riches and power and glory that will be eternal, a strength of body and mind that will never weaken or decay. These things Jesus will give me when He returns, if I serve Him faithfully. Then, too, in this present life I receive a hundredfold of joy and happiness as I go along, for I know I am on the way to the Kingdom of God. Can you offer me more than this?"

The visitor was silent. "You see," Mr. Nichols continued, "if I should accept your offer, I would be obliged to preach to please the people, so I would no longer be free to speak the Word of God without fear. Money has too much power, and I cannot afford to lose my eternal reward for a paltry \$20,000 a year. I hope you understand, Sir."

"I see.... I see. Money would have no attraction for you. I am sorry, Mr. Nichols."

It must have been something of a shock to the unquenchably enthusiastic mind of Mr. Nichols to find that the truth which lay nearest and dearest to his heart was unacceptable to the majority of the educated and cultured.

Here came a severe test of his honesty. A little shading, a little softening, a

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who have worked out their salvation; and there are numberless others which are passing through the same process we are. The salvation of this earth is only according to His eternal purpose. There are many folds in this wonderful Plan, and this fold on our earth is only one fold of His glorious Plan. Paul tells about it in Eph. 3:10-11, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God's plan on this earth is not His eternal purpose, but only according to His eternal purpose; simply a sample of the glorious Plan of Salvation which He has been working out through untold ages in the past on other planets—God's happy family in glorified worlds above. With his mind expanded to grasp the magnitude of this plan, it is no wonder that Paul exclaimed in verses 14-15, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The whole family in heaven as well as on earth are all named of God, a family saved throughout the eternity in the past.

The Book is true. God tells you His mercy is from eternity past to eternity future. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (Ps. 103:17). Could He have had mercy if there had been no one to whom He could show mercy? There have always been people to whom God could show mercy, and there always will be. There never will be a time the wheel will stop; it will always roll on and on and on. There will be millions and billions and trillions of people created yet. Would you not like to live in that time? It will be exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think.



More Than a Minute-Job

You cannot get this robe of right doing on in a minute. When I told a lady, "You cannot be a Christian in a minute," she replied, "Oh, I know you are wrong, for I attended a revival

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meeting three weeks ago and was converted, and I have not sinned since."

"Not sinned since!" I said.

"No," she answered.

I began to quote to her a few testimonies and she flew angry. I said, "Does it not say in the Bible, 'Put away all wrath and anger?'"

"Well," she said, "it is enough to make an angel mad!"

You Could Do It—for \$1000

A blacksmith at Quincy, Ill., said to me last winter, when I was talking with him upon the subject, that he did not think if an ugly horse was brought to his shop to be shod, and the horse began to lay down upon him, or should kick him, he did not think he ever could get so that it would not make him mad. I said to him, suppose I should bring in the worst horse you ever shod; and suppose I should deposit \$1,000 in the bank at Quincy subject to your order, upon the condition that you would not become mad in the least or show any signs of anger; do you think that you could possibly be made mad while shoeing that horse? Oh! he thought for \$1,000—of course he could keep from getting mad!

As I asked him, so I ask you, what is a \$1,000 compared to an endless existence in that age of eternal glory that we brought before your mind this morning? It is a mere speck, a mere nothing compared to it. And if you could keep from getting mad for \$1,000, how much easier it ought to be for that inestimable prize!

The great difficulty, as I have told you before, is a lack of true genuine faith in the Word of the Lord. For if you really believed that by overcoming all evil so that you would not sin that you would without doubt receive as great a prize as we have portrayed to us in the Word of the Lord; I say if you had unbounded faith in this, there would be no difficulty about your performing the work. And we would not hear it said by any who had this faith that we could not get rid of our sins and sin no more.

Angels Are Men

When we stopped at Aurora, Ind., while traveling on the river on
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little relaxing, a little dishonesty could have won him a following from a higher social and cultural level. But however strong the temptation may have come to him as his aspiring soul yearned for altitude and nobility, his immediate answer was, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" He had renounced once for all the hidden things of dishonesty, nor could he be induced by any fleshly consideration to handle the Word of God deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2). "*The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*," and with all godly ones insofar as it pertains to eternal things. If these humble folk were the ones who would hear the voice of God and obey it, they were his people and he would serve them gladly.

"*Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith?*" Far better a fool who knows he is a fool and seeks to become wise in the knowledge of the Eternal than a fool vainly puffed up by human wisdom and unwilling to bow to the thoughts of his Creator. These common people, honest men and women before God, would if faithful be eligible for the highest honor the human mind can conceive of. The culture and station of the world are false values. An honest consideration of these facts, an honest reverence for the law of God kept him steadfast in his duty, rejoicing and glorying in the cross of Jesus Christ which daily separated him further and further from the world.

Bread cast upon the waters in Oregon was carried to far-distant London, England, and there nourished a few hungry souls. A gentleman in that great city one day picked a small pamphlet from the wastebasket in the building where he was employed. He saw it treated on the practical Christian life and, being much interested along that line, took it home and eagerly read it. Finding that it contained Bible truths, he continued his investigation by writing to the author, Mr. Nichols, and eventually by coming to America. After spending some time in Minnesota, hearing and learning, he urged Mr. Nichols to visit London. The invitation was readily accepted, for Mr. Nichols had previously contemplated a journey to England hoping to find a fertile field in which to sow the seed of the Kingdom.

In the autumn of 1891 he embarked, accompanied by his wife, who was his faithful companion in all his travels. She it was who looked after all the details of everyday life, leaving his mind free for the greater work. She was also a gifted letterwriter, and many were the resourceful and inspiring letters written by her to the dear friends at home, giving vivid accounts of the interest aroused and of meetings held in the different places visited. Six months were spent in this part of the world, mostly in London; visits were also made to Swansea and other Welsh cities, always finding a few who seemed to receive the Word with joy.

Again on this voyage he was moved to acknowledge the protecting hand of the Eternal. Ships docking at New York shortly after they had sailed told of five days of fearful tempests which had wrecked many vessels and caused deaths and injuries to passengers and crewmen on other vessels. There was much apprehension among the sailors and travelers, but to their amazement the sea was tranquil and the sky clear throughout the voyage. To them it seemed almost a miracle; to him it was the providential care of his Heavenly Father.

On this trip came his final breach with nominal Christadelphia. Through the years he had hoped against hope that he could by some means cause the leaders of the sect, which had been promising in its youth, to accept the principles which he found so plainly revealed in the Bible. Upon his arrival in London he lost no time contacting these leaders, but it was of no use. The proposition that we can and must live sinlessly to be saved was too much, just as it had been in Oregon eleven years before; they were repelled and antagonized by the lofty standard.

Many lively discussions were held in their assemblies, where most of his work was done. On one occasion a discussion was arranged between Mr. Nichols and a Mr. Martin, each having the privilege of cross-examining the other. Mr. Martin boasted in his opening remarks that he would have no difficulty in "tying Mr. Nichols up and laying him away in a corner." But the American's first questions blasted his hopes, for in the course of a dozen answers he was made to state that while Christ died, His life did not; He was dead and alive at the same time! Such reasoning disclosed a muddy streak in the Christadelphian concept of the nature of man, one of their basic doctrines; for if Christ, who was created "*in all points like his brethren*," could possess something like an immortal soul, then all His brethren and, in fact, all other men could also. Mr. Nichols had long ago seen this weakness and progressed to the truth of the matter, and his opponent quickly found himself securely tied and laid in a very dark corner.

Mr. Roberts, the successor of Dr. Thomas, alarmed at the newcomer's success in convincing his followers of their errors, attempted to overthrow him in a debate. Like Mr. Martin, he soon found the evidence too powerful and became nervous. At last, in desperation, he attempted to flee by way of a door leading from the rostrum. The door opened outward, but Roberts, in his confusion, kept trying to pull it inward, to the amusement of his audience. A number of converts were made and baptized in the sea, Mr. Nichols not having yet arrived at a full understanding of the subject of baptism.

Perceiving that there was no hope of persuading the leaders of the sect to advance, he stepped out alone. It must have appalled him to realize suddenly that he was indeed alone, that of all earth's millions the Almighty had chosen him to bring to light the long-buried truth in all its parts and to prepare a people in the eleventh hour of the day of salvation. He felt very humble and unworthy, crying out with the poet king of Israel,

"Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"

Yet no man can say that he failed in any particular to rise to the challenge of this tremendous responsibility laid upon him. His past life had been a thorough preparation for the work, and the years which followed bore eloquent testimony that God had indeed worked in the last days by the hand of a fit man.

The name "Christadelphian" was now abandoned. Mr. Nichols had found the sect in a deplorable state, apart from its doctrinal and practical errors. Schisms had disrupted it until no less than seven divisions called themselves by that name. Having no desire to add to the confusion, he bade the whole organization a last farewell. Henceforth his church was known as Christian Brethren.

God says, My ways are best. Did He not know? Truly He did. Why are they best? Because they will bring life. Our ways bring quite a different ending; they end in death! the dark, dismal tomb; a home two by six. The Wise Man says, "There is a way that seems right unto a man"—yes, it seems right, "but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Do you want that ending? You will get it if you walk after your own thoughts, ways and pleasures. It is not a bright outlook, yet people will go and do as they please, and pay no attention to the loving Voice that is pleading with them to seek the new and living way, the way by which they can live and find life, endless life. —L.T.N.

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our large Mission Boat, a minister, Mr. Davies by name, offered us his church to hold meetings in. We accepted the offer and had services for several nights. One evening I made the statement that angels were men. Mr. Davies arose and said,

"Brother Nichols, it will never do to call angels men."

"Well," I said, "if it will not do, I will not say so; but if God tells me so, have I not a right to proclaim it? We read, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?'"

"Will it do to speak as God speaks? If the oracles of God say that angels are men, shall I not believe it, and must not you? We read in Dan. 9:21, 'The man Gabriel,...being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.' The great angel Gabriel, the man Gabriel, was sent to Daniel. So we see it will do to call angels men; Mr. Davies to the contrary notwithstanding."

In Revelation 23?

A minister once said he wanted only five minutes to riddle me, I was holding a meeting and this man was there. After the meeting every one who wanted to had perfect liberty to speak. He got up and said he would riddle my argument in five minutes. He gave a text and I asked where it was. He did not know where it was but said, "Oh, Brother Nichols, you will know where it is."

"Oh, yes," I said, "It is in the twenty-third chapter of Revelation." He went on for five minutes and when he stopped I got up and said, "You were going to riddle my argument in five minutes, but seeing your text is in the twenty-third chapter of Revelation, and there are only twenty-two chapters in Revelation, your text is just outside the Bible, in the hymn book." And I picked up the hymn book and there it was—Watt's hymn.

The poor minister looked as if he would have liked to drop through a hole in the floor. He had not remembered that Revelation has only twenty-two chapters! How he must have studied his Bible! □

"THEY FOLLOWED WHOLLY"

"Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun...have wholly followed the Lord."

—Numbers 32:12

In the great roll of the heroes of faith, in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, are many of the outstanding men of God. But some are left out. Two of those omitted are the names of Caleb and Joshua.

Caleb's shining record, that he had *"wholly followed the Lord,"* is credited also to Joshua (Num. 32:12), and these two splendid characters have a large place in the story of the conquest of Canaan. But, though their names do not appear in Hebrews, their acts are recorded, for both were present on that memorable day when *"by faith the walls of Jericho fell down,"* and a manifestation of Divine power sealed the faith which had borne the scoffs of the defenders as the men of Israel quietly compassed the city.

True obedience, wholly following the Lord, is what makes life victorious. And this victory in life never precedes the surrender of our whole being to God. Only as our will is handed over and the keys of our life placed in the hand of the Lord will there be in us that full measure of obedience that was found in the life of Caleb. It is the lesson the apostle Paul learned, that *"in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing"* (Rom. 7:18). It is a hard lesson to learn, but a necessary one; for only after this can one reckon himself as *"dead indeed unto sin"* and *"alive unto God."*

How much the saints of old understood of the whole plan of salvation we do not know. But one fact is clear as we read the record. We are impressed with their deeply spiritual relationship to God. We can see that their experience with God was genuine and mighty.

They walked with Him, and talked with Him; He guided them and strengthened them for service; they shared His hatred of idolatry and His abhorrence of sin. Nor was positive love and devotion lacking; at the root of their service was genuine desire for fuller, richer life in God. The Psalms have many an outpouring of intense yearning, and those inspired poems express as truly the inner longings of Joshua and Caleb and other godly Israelites as they do our own heart-aspirations today. *"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings....So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows"* (Ps. 61:2-4, 8). *"Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved"* (Ps. 62:1-2). *"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is....Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee"* (Ps. 63:1, 3).

From such seeking after God alone can come the power for obedience. There is a time in the experience of every aspiring child of God when sin becomes the most terrible of all things, something that must be overcome before God can truly be found and His favor assured. Only at this point can *"perfect love"*—loving the Lord with all the heart, and with all the

soul, and with all the mind, and with all the strength—become an actuality in the inner life.

Was not this the aspiration of Joshua and Caleb as they walked before God in lives that were wholly committed? Was not this the source from which flowed the ardent zeal that spurred them on to *"wholly follow the Lord"* their God?

Is there, then, so much difference between the saints of the Old Testament and the saints of the New? There are differences in the conditions in which they lived, in the testings they had to withstand, in the trials that were allowed to purify their lives and hearts; but the obedience and faith required of all was the same. And it is the same that is asked of us today. We, too, may wholly follow the Lord, just as Caleb and Joshua did, just as Abraham before them had done, just as Nehemiah and Ezra after them did. There seems to have been little lacking in Simeon, *"just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel,"* or in Anna, who served God day and night in the temple. We know Zacharias and Elisabeth were *"both righteous before God"* (Luke 1:6), walking in *"all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."* Paul the apostle had brethren whose *"names are in the book of life";* and he himself is with the Eleven who are named as foundation stones of the eternal temple. So Caleb and Joshua will have many to join them, many besides those mentioned in Hebrews 11. Some day we shall meet these old worthies and compare experiences, if we, like them, *"wholly follow the Lord."* □

...THEN



Waiting. Just thinking about the word makes us sigh. And while we wait—in the doctor's office, in the dentist's chair, in the grocery line, or at the service desk—once fleeting seconds stall on the clock.

But waiting cannot be avoided. It is part of life. We must *wait* for the job application that seems to take forever to be processed. We must *wait* for the sick friend to respond to medication. We must *wait* for the slow but inevitable maturing process of our children.

Sometimes we are personally responsible for the waiting. It does no good to blame God for our irresponsible planning. But how do we respond to those situations which are beyond our control, where only the hand of God can end the waiting? At such times do we learn to trust, or to fret?

An illustration from the first century, recorded in Luke 8, offers some insight into how to respond to waiting. Jairus and his family lived in Capernaum, where Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue (Luke 8:41). Luke records that Jesus had been to Capernaum before, and now He was returning.

Jairus is in the crowd that presses forward to see Jesus.

We would like to think that most in the crowd are eager to learn from Jesus about His message of hope and salvation. But facts are facts: Most of them are curiosity seekers, looking simply to hear or see something new. Some are also looking for a free meal. Fresh in their minds is the day Jesus had stretched one boy's lunch to feed over 5,000 persons. Who could tell when He might do it again? There was nothing to lose.

Some in the crowd were looking for healing. Jairus was among these, but Jairus was not seeking casually; his motives were desperate.

Jairus had only one child, a twelve-year old daughter. But rather than a twelve-year-old filled with life and joy, Luke notes simply but painfully that "*she was dying*" (8:42). With very little imagination we can picture the shredded emotions of this loving father, who had already tried everything he could imagine to restore his daughter to health. Only one ray of hope remained: Jesus, the prophet.

His plan was simple: Get Jesus to his daughter's bedside as quickly as possible—who could tell when she might breathe her last? Perhaps Jesus could help, if He came quickly.

Jairus forces his way through the crowd until he is standing right in front of Jesus. With understandable urgency in his voice, Jairus pleads for Jesus to come to his house (Luke 8:41). Jesus consents. Immediately Jairus turns toward home, and pushing his way through

the crowd, beckons Jesus to follow Him. Slowly they make headway. They have gone but a short distance when Jairus glances over his shoulder and sees, to his utter dismay, that Jesus has stopped. Once again the crowd, like bees in a hive, have swarmed around Him.

In that crowd is another who has been waiting to see Jesus. In fact, this woman has been waiting twelve long years to get help for her incurable condition. Anxious and expectant, she had stretched out her hand to touch the Master as He passed by. Jesus, feeling the touch, had stopped.

There was nothing for Jairus to do but wait.

Place yourself in Jairus' sandals at that moment. The facts belong to you. It's your daughter, and your wife back home, whom you can picture sitting anxiously at your daughter's bedside, waiting for the door to open, and Jesus to enter, and heal your daughter. The moments in this life-and-death struggle seem like centuries.

Back in the crowd where Jairus is waiting, the drama heightens as Jesus casually asks, "*Who is the one who touched me?*" The disciples suggest that such a question is absurd, given the press of the crowd (Luke 8:45).

And still Jairus waits. Might he have thought, "Jesus is worried about such trivia—'who touched me?'—when my daughter is dying! Doesn't He care?"

Jesus speaks to the woman: "*Your faith has made you well.*" She shouts for joy; her long wait has ended. Now, Jairus thinks, if Jesus will only hurry along, He may be able to save my daughter.

Just then Jairus glances up and sees in the crowd a face he recognizes. It is his most trusted servant. One look at the servant's face, and Jairus knows the message. Yes, he is right. "*Your daughter is dead*" (Luke 8:49).

It is all over. No need now to bother the Master.

Jairus chides himself. Why did he wait so long to seek Jesus? Why didn't he come yesterday? But it is too late for regret.

But Jesus has not forgotten Jairus. He gestures to Jairus as He comes toward him.

We may wonder why did Jesus put Jairus through such trauma. Could it be that Jesus was intentionally delaying, so that He could show His power to restore life? Perhaps the conviction that would come to Jairus from seeing his daughter resurrected would be greater than that of seeing her healed. We do not know.

Something in us wants to know the "why's" of our experiences. God does not always see fit to reveal these. This may be part of His kindness, because our limited perspective is easily overwhelmed by Divine reasoning.

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WHY DID JESUS GO TO HEAVEN?

"What evidence do you have that Jesus is in heaven for the purpose of getting ready to rule the earth?"

We have no doubt that Jesus is in heaven right now for the purpose of getting ready to rule the earth, for God has revealed that Jesus will return to take over the governments of earth and set up a worldwide kingdom of righteousness and peace.

Jesus Himself gave one of the strongest evidences of His purpose in going to heaven in His parable of the pounds. He compared Himself to a nobleman going into a far country *"to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return"* (Luke 19:12). This action was typical of local governing officials at that time, who would go to Rome to receive their official credentials and training, and return.

Jesus said the same in John 14, that He was going to His *"Father's house,"* where He would *"prepare a place for you"* and *"come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"* (verses 2-3). This text is often mistakenly quoted as saying that Jesus was taking His disciples to heaven. But He says only that He is going there *"to prepare a place"* for them, after which He will come again [to earth,] where He will receive them to Himself. The time intervening between His going to heaven and His return to earth was to be a time of preparation.

In Hebrews 10:12-13 it is written that he *"sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."* This passage is quoted from Ps. 110, where the same thought is expressed (verse 1).

In Colossians 1:18 Christ is said to be the *"firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."* Part of this preeminence is to be given the authority to govern the earth as its supreme

ruler, a task which He will return fully qualified to perform.

Jesus is now in heaven, at the Father's right hand, and when the time is right, the Father will send Him to restore all things which have been promised, and *"the Lord shall be king over all the earth"* (Acts 3:20-21; Zech. 14:9).

We look forward eagerly to that Day.

◆ Body, Soul and Spirit?

"A typical Christian believes that a human consists of three parts, body, soul and spirit. But it is very vague to me, because I do not understand what happens to the spirit when the body dies. What is your position on this topic?"

The Bible does not state that the total human being is made up of the three parts you describe, body, soul and spirit, though this concept is widely believed. The Bible speaks most often of a person as a whole, living being, which it frequently refers to as a *"soul."* *"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt,"* i.e., all the persons (Gen. 46:26); *"The sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls"* (Gen. 46:27). When the Israelite households were preparing the Passover, they prepared it *"according to the number of the souls"* in each household (Ex. 12:4). When someone would not cooperate with the laws of Israel, it was written that *"that soul shall be cut off from Israel"* (Ex. 12:15, 31:14), again indicating the person, the individual. The law stated also that *"The soul which hath touched any such shall be unclean until even, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he wash his flesh with water"* (Lev. 22:6)—it is hard to picture the commonly described *"soul"* washing *"his flesh with water."* In each passage, the original Hebrew word

used is *nephesh*, which means *"a soul, living being, life, self, person"* (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance).

In Scriptural phraseology, souls are described as doing everything a person can do. Souls long, souls wait, souls lust, souls thirst, souls live, and souls die; souls faint, souls cleave, souls keep, souls hear, souls enjoy, souls seek, souls love, souls hunger, souls hate, souls weep, souls remember, souls are troubled.

Generally speaking, the Bible uses the term *"spirit"* to refer to the breath of life which animates the body. A body may be alive or dead; the *"soul"* is the whole living being. The soul is the body breathing, animated with *"spirit,"* the *"breath of life."* Job speaks of God *"in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind"* (Job 12:9-10). Job said again, speaking of himself, *"All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils"* (Job 27:3), referring to what ever time he was a living, breathing being, possessing life. The word breath is translated from the Hebrew *ruach* or *neshamah*, both of which mean *"breath,"* *"persons alive."* Job said again, *"The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life"* (Job 33:4). God is the source of all life; all that live are animated by His *"breath"* (*neshamah*). If God withdraws breath from man, he dies. *"If [God] set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust"* (Job 34:14-15). When God removes one's *"breath,"* he dies (Ps. 104:29). The difference between a living body and the dead body is the presence or absence of the vital functions of life, one of which is the process of inhaling and exhaling which we call breathing.

An example of the life-animating power of breath occurs in the

record of Elijah's raising the widow's son to life. When the child died, the text reads that *"There was no breath left in him"* (1 Kings 17:17). When Elijah restored the child's life, it reads that *"The soul of the child came into him again, and he revived"* (1 Kings 17:22). The word translated *"soul"* is the same *"nephesh,"* which means *"soul, living being, life, self, person."* In other words, the child started to breathe again. When we die, we stop breathing. The body ceases to function. While we are alive, we take in air and expel air. But there is no separate living property to the breath that we breathe; it is simply a life process because our bodies require oxygen to live.

We are dependent on God for our very life, our breath, our being. As long as we live, we take in and expel air (breath). When we die, we stop breathing, and our *"breath"* joins the vast reservoir of air surrounding us. This is what the writer of Ecclesiastes was saying when he wrote, speaking of the state of death, *"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it"* (Eccl. 12:7). Was the writer of Ecclesiastes saying that our personality, or the real *"person"* within us goes to heaven when we die? If so, then he was saying that the spirit of everyone goes to heaven at death, that *all* spirits of all who live go to heaven, because the verse does not say that only the good go *"unto God."* This (erroneous) position results in another problem: What happens to undying spirits of those who are criminal or disobedient through life? This very problem was the source of the doctrine of eternal torment, to make an eternal place other than heaven for those who are sinful. (This is another doctrine which Scripture does not support. For more information on this topic, send for our booklet, *The Devil and Hell of the Bible.*)

Someone once described a *"soul"* as an animating principle not having size, weight, shape or substance; without body, form or parts—a description which our Founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, said was the *"best definition of nothing that he had ever heard."*

No, the Bible does not teach that we are composed of three separate parts. We have bodies, and while we are alive, breathing, living beings, we are *"souls."* When we cease to breathe, we cease to live, and cease to be a *"soul."* We do not have within us an *"immortal something"* that never dies. All hope of future life depends upon a resurrection of the body and a change to the immortal state, which Christ will have power to impart when He returns (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 15:50).

♦ When Did Jesus Keep the Passover?

"I have a problem with the idea that Jesus kept the passover one day before the regular Jewish Passover, just before He was crucified. Matthew 26:17 says it was 'the first day of the feast of unleavened bread' when the disciples asked Jesus, 'Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?'"

The problem lies in the translation of Matthew 26:17. The verse reads in our common version, *"Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?"* The same event is recorded by the apostle John in chapter 13, verses 1 and 2, where we read that it was *before* the feast of the passover when Jesus met with His disciples.

Why the difference? The problem is with the translation, not with the original text. The word translated *"first"* in Matthew 26:17 is translated from the Greek word *protos*, which has for its root word *pro*, and *pro* is the word used in John 13:1, where it is translated *"before."* Of the root word *pro* we read in the Greek lexicon: *"Pro* is a root whence by the change of a vowel spring many branches, all having the common notion of before in regard sometimes to space, sometimes to time...which forms almost always refer to being before in point of time, sometimes in point of number or degree." The definitions of *protos* are: *"Of place, before, in front, forward...of time,*

before, former, sooner...on the day before...before, sooner, earlier."

If we substitute the thought of *"before"* in Matthew 26:17, the passage would read, *"Now before the feast of unleavened bread,"* and the passage harmonizes with John 13:1.

Jesus ate the Passover Supper one day early with His disciples, on the evening of Abib 13, and later that same evening He was betrayed, and led into the house of Caiaphas, where He was tried, appeared before Pilate, who sent Him to Herod, who sent Him back to Pilate, and by three o'clock the next day He had been crucified and was dead. All of this occurred on the day of Abib 13, which was the day before the beginning of the Jewish Passover/Sabbath. When the sabbath began that evening at six o'clock (the beginning of Abib 14—the Israelite day began in the evening; Lev. 23:32), Jesus had been buried. He lay in the grave that night, all the next day, the following evening and night. The following morning, the day of Abib 15, He was resurrected. □

Self-Denial Week

This year, the week of February 2 will be the annual observance of Self-Denial Week for the Megiddo Church congregation and all who wish to observe it with us.

During this week we will limit ourselves to three articles of food at each meal. Selection will be made from simple, plain, common foods, varied each meal as desired. We shall refrain from all specialties, all cookies, pastries, desserts, and fancy foods.

Our purpose is not asceticism. There is no virtue in denial for the denial's sake. What we are seeking is strength of character, the ability to say *"No"* on the lower level so that we may be able one day to say *"Yes"* on the higher.

We can do no better than to follow Jesus, denying ourselves and taking up our cross daily (Luke 9:23), if we hope to share in His Kingdom.

Millennium Superworld

(Continued from page 13)

thoughts became purposes, purposes became deeds, and deeds became destiny.

John continues to write the vision he saw: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (v. 13). John emphasizes how completely earth's population will be represented, and again he declares the fact that every man is judged according to his works.

Then he describes again how extensive is the final destruction: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (vs. 14-15). At last is brought to pass the saying written so long ago in prophecy: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

And victory it will be! From pole

to pole will ring the song of triumph, the anthem of deliverance, the shout of liberty full and complete, proclaiming "liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

Celebrating Victory

Then follows the great celebration, the greatest this earth has ever seen. It is the celebration of the triumph of the great multitude. The whole host of newly crowned immortals are there. The thousand-year-old immortals, who sit with Christ upon the throne of His supreme glory, are there. Also attending are myriads of angels. It is the climax of all earth's ages. It is the celebration which marks the end of time and the beginning of Eternity. Another planet has gloriously concluded its long period of development and is being welcomed into the heavenly family of

perfect worlds, among whom it will shine forever and ever. How fitting that the angels should attend!

Then the angels, the saints, and the new immortals all join their voices in one grand chorus that rings through the heavens: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 7:12).

The Revelator adds one more description, a picture of perfect, never-ending peace:

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters" (Rev. 7:16)—fountains from which issue the streams of immortal life!

Oh, what will it be to be there! □



Abib Is Coming!

Once again the New Year is near, the sacred New Year as God commanded Moses to measure time.

According to Biblical records, the ancient Hebrews began their sacred year with the new moon of Abib, or Nisan (see Ex. 12:2, 13:4). Abib is the first new moon following the spring equinox. The equinox this year occurring on March 20, and the first new moon following on April 7, the Megiddo Church will observe the beginning of the month Abib on Monday evening, April 7, continuing Tuesday, April 8, Bible time being counted from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32). The day will be observed in recognition of its double significance—as the beginning of the sacred New Year and also as the anniversary of the birth of Christ.

Thirteen days later (Abib 13, this year on Saturday evening, April 19), we will commemorate the Lord's Supper, and the morning of April 22 (Abib 15) will be the anniversary of Resurrection morning, Christ's triumph over death and the grave.

Fifty days later (June 10) will be the anniversary of the day of Pentecost, when the power of the Holy Spirit descended upon the assembled disciples.

Guard Well Thy Lips

Guard well thy lips; none can know (PROV. 13:3)
What evils from the tongue may flow (JAMES 3:5-6)
What guilt, what grief may be incurred (JUDGES 11:35)
By one uncautioned, hasty word. (MARK 6:22, 25-26)

Be "slow to speak," look well within, (PROV. 4:5)
To check what there may lead to sin; (JAMES 1:25)
And pray unceasingly for aid (COL. 4:2)
Lest, unawares, thou be betrayed. (LUKE 21:34)

"Condemn not, judge not"—not to man (1 COR. 4:5)
Is giv'n his brother's faults to scan; (MATT. 7:3)
The task is thine, and thine alone— (MATT. 7:5)
To search out and subdue thine own. (1 COR. 9:27)

Indulge no murmuring; oh, restrain (PHIL. 2:14)
Those lips so steady to complain; (JOB. 27:4)
And, if they can be numbered, count (PS. 103:2-3)
Of one day's mercies the amount. (PS. 23:6)

Shun vain discussion, trifling themes; (TITUS 3:9)
Dwell not on earthly hopes and schemes; (MATT. 6:34)
Let words of wisdom, meekness, love, (JAMES 3:13)
Thy heart's true renovation prove. (LUKE 6:45)

Set God before thee; every word (PS. 57:5)
Thy lips pronounce by Him is heard; (PS. 139:4)
Oh, could'st thou realize this thought (LUKE 12:2)
What care, what caution would be taught! (LUKE 12:3)

WHEN THE TROUBLE IS "ME"

(Continued from page 7)

and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:16-19).

But God had another idea. "Thou fool!" He said, "this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" (v. 20). This is what happens, says Jesus, to the one who is consumed by selfishness.

Selfishness is when I hold to my

own opinion, even after I am proven wrong.

Selfishness is the unwilling spirit, that thinks first of "me" and second of others. It is as if Paul said, "Look not every man on the interest of others, look out for your own interests!"—how contrary to the spirit of Christ! (See Phil. 2:4).

Someone has said that the human race naturally is afflicted with a bad case of vertigo. Most of the time what we think and feel is right really isn't. In fact, we might make better decisions by determining first what we think is right, then reversing it. Isn't this what

the book of Proverbs says: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

True believers are not little islands scattered across the sea; they are called to live and grow and act together.

God grant us the vision and the power to outreach ourselves; to stamp out the selfish, self-pitying spirit that is naturally part of us, and join heart and hands with our brothers and sisters in Christ, working wholeheartedly together for a place in the eternal Kingdom of Christ. □

Letters

Not Alone

The day draws closer to His returning, when His faithful ones will be rewarded and all suffering, sickness and pain and sorrow, even death will flee away.

Let us be like Brother Paul who said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Truly our only hope in these evil times is to hold to faith with enduring patience.

We have God's promise to His people, Isaiah 41:10, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

The world is so much after their own interests and monetary gains. "The love of money" holds first place in so many hearts today, and it is often difficult to get an honest deal.

But I know I am not alone. There are others in similar circumstances, and can one forget the apostle Paul, alone in his prison? So let us be thankful for the blessings we have now and thank God for all the help and guidance He has given us. He will not forsake us if we are faithful to the end.

J. B.

Australia

Harvest Coming

The harvest season is past, I can hardly believe it. Soon God's time of reaping the harvest for His Kingdom will begin, bringing blessing and glory to those who have grown to their fullest potential and have kept their lights burning. What a grand harvest that will be! What a happy time in the history of mankind.

R. D.

Maine

Obituary

Marietta Ruth Miller

On January 18, death claimed a friend and sister of our Rochester congregation, Marietta Ruth Miller, aged 91.

Sister Miller's acquaintance with the Church dates back to the 1930's. She was living with her husband and young child in Detroit, when the Depression struck. Her husband lost his job, and the Millers lost their home. Mr. Miller's parents, living on a large farm in Missouri, invited them to move to the farm, where there was work, housing, and food. The Millers gratefully accepted.

At the Missouri farm, Sister Miller found her mother-in-law taken up with a new religion and some books by L. T. Nichols. She, along with a lady friend who operated a small hotel in town, were really serious about it—and enthusiastic in telling others. Sister Miller heard quickly, but was not an immediate convert. She would investigate for herself.

She investigated, using her own resources. Her father, deceased at that time, had been a lawyer, and Sister Miller had inherited his library. Among the books were a number of encyclopedias and reference works. Whenever she heard or read something in the Church literature—a definition, a quotation, a reference—she checked it for herself. This went on for some time, and, to her great surprise, it always checked out right. She became convinced, and made her decision to join the

organization. In 1945 she relocated to Rochester, a move she never regretted.

Sister Miller was a resourceful, practical, vivacious person, who really enjoyed life. Even if a situation wasn't "made to order," she could find a way to make the best of it. She said frequently, when asked how she was, "I haven't anything to complain about."

A student by nature, meticulous and methodical, she was invaluable as a proofreader and contributed thousands of hours to making the *Message* and our other Church publications as accurate as possible. She checked anything that could be checked—references, quotations, definitions. She even designed and constructed her own indexes—necessary in those pre-computer days—to help in the checking process. Though she had no formal training in Hebrew and Greek, she had a working knowledge of the languages, and her skills were greatly appreciated.

Her abilities were not limited to books. She was also handy with hammer, saw, screwdriver and paintbrush. She took part in all church activities as long as she was able. She was a member of the Maranatha Society, served on the Church Board, and was Assistant Church Treasurer for a number of years.

She is survived by her daughter Doris Munzing, of Hanford, California; and her daughter Joanne Byers, of Boulder, Colorado; three grandsons, one granddaughter, and five great-grandchildren.

...THEN WAIT

(Continued from page 21)

For Jairus, the waiting process was agonizing, but in the end he surely affirmed that God's delays are not without design.

Another principle we can see in this account is the dependability of God. When He promises, He fulfills. Jesus could have told Jairus at the outset, "Your daughter will be made well." But He chose to say nothing until the word was needed desperately. At crisis point, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't fear."

What did you say, Jesus? What did you mean: don't fear—illness? Don't fear—suffering? Don't fear—death? Don't fear—that I will not come?

All of these are part of Jesus' message: "Don't fear." Suddenly the promises of God became challenges. In the crucible of suffering His words take on new meaning.

God's method of dealing with Jairus is duplicated throughout Scripture. Abraham might have lost faith in the promise of God while he and his wife grew older and older—and still they had no child. Moses might have wondered when God would bring to pass His word, and fill the earth with His glory—when Moses was having to work day after day for forty years with a stiff-necked and rebellious people. But the promise stood firm.

God's word to the prophets assured them of protection, blessing, and a bright future—even when wickedness was prospering and everything looked hopeless. Assurances have real substance when they are rooted in the promise of God.

In the story of Jairus, the scene now shifts from the crowd to Jairus' home. Enter Jesus, the three disciples, and the parents of the girl (Luke 8:51); exit all others. Jesus exclaims, "She has not died but is asleep."

"Absurd!" they thought, "why, everyone can see that she is dead!"

At that point, Jesus told all to leave the room, and taking the child's hand, He said, "Maiden, arise." The child began to breathe again, and sat up. She was alive! Jairus' waiting had been rewarded.

For years we have been waiting for the fulfillment of God's Word. And as surely as God lives, so surely our waiting will be rewarded. When the time is right, the grand prophet Elijah will break the silence and the great King of the earth shall descend in glory and power, to take His kingdom and throne and transform this earth into a paradise of delight. His purposes will not be frustrated. And if we have been faithful in our service, our waiting will be abundantly rewarded. □

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGES 14-15:

Life's Lessons

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <u>f</u> Joshua | 7. <u>d</u> Jesus |
| 2. <u>a</u> Stephen | 8. <u>i</u> Jeremiah |
| 3. <u>j</u> Daniel | 9. <u>e</u> Micaiah |
| 4. <u>l</u> Peter | 10. <u>h</u> Solomon |
| 5. <u>c</u> Moses | 11. <u>b</u> Abraham |
| 6. <u>k</u> Paul | 12. <u>g</u> Joseph |

Bible First's

1. Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:23)
2. Abib (Ex. 12:2; 13:4)
3. offer (or sacrifice) to the Lord (Ex. 22:29)
4. Rehoboam (2 Chron. 11:17)
5. beside me there is no God (Isa. 44:6)
6. Elias (Elijah) (Matt. 17:11)
7. love the Lord with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength (Mark 12:30-31)
8. willing mind (2 Cor. 8:12)
9. "the hardworking farmer" or "the husbandman that laboreth" or works (2 Tim. 2:6)
10. Jesus (Rev. 1:11)

True or False?

Part A: About the Judgment

1. False. We will be judged for "the things done in the body, ... whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).
2. False. He will not rely on any human judgment; He Himself will render the verdict based on the record of the person's life (Ezek. 14:14; 2 Tim. 4:8; John 5:26-27).
3. False. (2 Cor. 5:10).
4. True. (Matt. 25:32-33).
5. True. (Matt. 25:37-40).
6. True. (Matt. 25:44-45).
7. False. (See Mal. 4:1-3, Eccl. 12:13-14, and others).
8. True. (See Mal. 3:18 and others).
9. True. (John 5:26-27).
10. True. (Those judged worthy to "obtain that world...neither can they die anymore, for they are equal unto the angels and are the children of God" Luke 20:35-36).

Part B: About the Second Advent of Jesus

1. True. "If I go away, I will come again" — John 14:3, 28.
2. True. He prayed to be glorified in His Father's presence (John 17:1-5). In Acts 2:33, Peter stated that their receiving power was evidence that Jesus had been exalted.
3. True. (Ps. 110:1-3; Heb. 10:12).
4. False. All nations shall "wait because of him" — Rev. 1:7.
5. True. "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time" — Heb. 9:28.
6. True. He sent the Holy Spirit power which He had promised them — Acts 1:8 and Luke 24:49; power received: Acts 2, see especially Peter's statement in Acts 2:33-34.
7. False. Elijah will announce it (Mal. 4:5-6), though it will come suddenly upon an unsuspecting world (like a thief in the night, 1 Thess. 5:2-4).
8. False. Jesus said these things will come, "but the end is not yet" (Matt. 24:6-7).
9. True. Many texts support this thought: see Luke 12:35-38; Isa. 25:9; 1 Thess. 4:16-18, and others.
10. False. A company of angels took Him away, and He will return with angels (Matt. 16:27; Mark 8:38, and others).

Part C: About the Kingdom of Jesus

1. False. He preached that the Kingdom was yet future, comparing Himself to one "going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke 19:12). Just before He ascended, He indicated that the Kingdom was still future (Acts 1:6-8).
2. True. See Matt. 4:23; Matt. 9:35; Mark 1:14; Luke 8:1.
3. True. See Matthew 13, Luke 8, etc.
4. True. See Matt. 6:10, 33, and others.
5. True. Mark 13:35.
6. True. See Jeremiah 31:34, and others.
7. False. He said that these positions were not His to give (Matt. 20:23).
8. True. See Matt. 6:10.
9. True. Matt. 6:33.
10. True. Rev. 21:3-4.

On Barr's Trail up the slope of Pike's Peak is a place where the trail divides. One marker reads: "To the Summit"; the other, "To the Bottomless Pit." One step decides the traveler's destination.

Too often we satisfy ourselves with shabby living and expect to reach nobleness. We take short-cuts in morality and expect to develop character.

Until we have seen ourselves as God sees us, we are not likely to make much progress in our spiritual lives.

'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours and ask them what report they bore to heaven.

Day By Day

*Lord, give me strength for this day's task—
From rising until setting sun
In everything Thy will be done.
Not for tomorrow would I ask.
At twilight hour, oh, may I say,
"The Lord has been my guide today."*

*And if for me tomorrow dawn
Upon this earth, I'll gladly say,
"Thank God for another day,"
And praise His name another morn.
Thus day by day I'll work and pray
Till dawns at last God's endless day.*



Experience is a hard teacher—it gives the test first, the lesson afterwards.

Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him labor diligently to build one for himself.

Life indeed must be measured by thought and action, not by time.

Even if you have nothing else to give, you can always give encouragement.

Beware of Mental Junk Food

(Continued from page 2)

job, his appearance, or his sense of self-worth. All that belongs to the downward spiral, all that pulls away from God and toward the blazing caldron of this world we must carefully avoid.

The more we feed on the mental junk food of this world, the less appetite we will have for the things of God. And, conversely, the more we feed on the things of God, the less appetite we will have for the things of this world.

In Philippians 4 Paul outlines a program of thinking that will give us the best possible mental diet: *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things"* (Phil. 4:8, NIV).

If we keep our mind on this level, we will ask our selves before we read any item, "Do I really need to know this? Is this something God will admire? Will this strengthen my moral character in the sight of God? Does this book (magazine, printed piece) present ideas and thoughts that God will honor? Can I, as a Christian believer, respect the principles it sets forth?"

As we separate what is true from what is false, as we learn not to believe everything we hear or read, as we learn to judge everything in the light of God's view of it, we will develop a spiritual discernment.

"As [one] thinks within himself, so he is" (Prov. 23:7). In other words, *"you are what you eat."*

What is on your menu for today?

The tighter we keep the security on our minds, the safer will be the development of the new life within and the freer we shall be from the shackles of this world. □



If I But Trust

I've never known His mercies fail;
The wrong gainst right will ne'er prevail;
As day will follow after night,
So every wrong will yield to right—
If I but trust.

Aye, when the shadows longer grow,
When midnight hides the way I go,
If I but kneel and pray for light,
An angel makes the pathway bright—
If I but trust.

It would be foolishness to fear,
Tho' grisly phantom forms appear
To bar my pathway, for I know
They'll vanish like the summer snow—
If I but trust.

So God be praised who gives me power
To feel His guidance hour by hour;
Whose Word will lead me all the way,
Through each divinely planned delay—
If I but trust.

