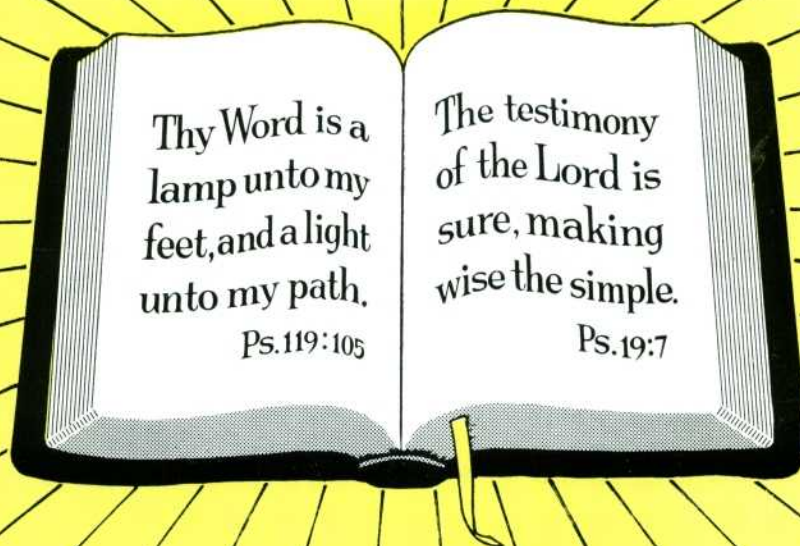


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Rejoicing In Hope

"Let Your Women Keep Silence"--?

What Is Truth? The Great Infidel Discussion

The Way of Righteousness

EDITORIAL



Idol Talk

THERE ARE several varieties of "idol" talk on the market today, none of them worth buying. But all are worth our learning to recognize, lest we be tempted on an off-guard day.

First, there is the idol talk manufactured by those who seek to make something material a substitute for the God they worship. It may be money, sports, pleasure, achievement, friends, anything that comes ahead of their thoughts of God or takes the place of His true worship in their lives. Men have always wanted some kind of idol—something tangible, something they could see and feel and handle—in preference to the God of heaven. There is far greater pleasure in worshipping that which is part of the present cosmos. Danger lies, however, in the fact that the things of this world will perish with it. Idol talk may *seem* to transform the apparently worthless into the best value available, but what of its *eternal* value? They know—and we know—there is none.

Also, how can the worship of a God who is "from everlasting to everlasting" be replaced by some tangible piece of His creation? How can the worship of Him who stretches out the heavens and who laid the "foundations of the earth"—how can His worship possibly give place to that which is transient and trivial? Yet, small gods of this world consume many idle hours of idol talk.

Then there is another type of idol talk that even those who scorn shrines, medallions and the like may be guilty of. It is a peculiar version of a benign grandfather god, who loves everybody and is thought to bend to everybody's individual wishes. The true God hates sin and He also hates sinners; His delight is reserved for His chosen ones. Those who do not delight in Him are not a delight to Him. If we talk about God as being our friend when we do not meet the qualifications for being His friend; when we wish we could lavish goods upon Him to win His favor; when we seek His approval on *our* terms;

when we want Him to bless us but hope that He closes His eyes to our shortcomings, are we not in a sense worshipping an idol of our own making, setting up our own little god and saying, "You are mine, lord; what will you do for me?"

Another kind of idol talk today is that which reduces God to the T-shirt slogan or a car bumper sticker. As dedicated servants of the Most High, we can have nothing to do with such; however, let us beware lest the cheap imagery around us, and the common vernacular that so freely takes His name in vain, contaminate us. Whatever men do, however they may desecrate His cause, He is still the Most Holy, the Most High exalted over all, the blessed and only Potentate, and what He purposes *will* come to pass, human wishes and human wills notwithstanding. Men may flout His name and break His laws, but when their day is done, they shall be no more, while the "word of the Lord endureth forever." Let us be doubly sure that we have no part or lot with any such.

There is yet another type of idol talk, quite unrelated, but no less idolatry. It is the self-worshipping talk that puts self at the center of all. "I-I-I"—we exalt ourselves above our measure. This is a direct violation of our sacred covenant to order our ways by His law and make all our will subservient to His. A great man of God said long ago, "Reverence for the eternal is the first thing in knowledge" (Prov. 1:7, Moffatt). It is still true. And genuine reverence for the Eternal allows *no* idol talk, no talk that makes an idol of self or allows any measure of self-worship.

Idol talk belongs among that which the apostle Paul classifies as should "not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph. 5:3-5). Let us watch out for it. Let us make our worship pure and our hearts open before Him, before He opens His mouth and speaks—and we are no more. ••

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 (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—*New English Bible*

NIV—*New International Version*

NAS—*New American Standard*

RSV—*Revised Standard Version*

TLB—*The Living Bible*

TEV—*Today's English Version*

Phillips—*The New Testament in Modern English*

Berkeley—*The Modern Language New Testament*

Weymouth—*The New Testament in Modern Speech*

Moffatt—*The Bible, A New Translation*

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

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Rejoicing In Hope

SOMEONE has said that joy these days is just about as rare as the bald eagle. That is why Samuel Johnson once remarked that the human race is a vast assemblage of individuals who are continually counterfeiting happiness; he felt there was no true happiness available.

In a world short on so many things, this is perhaps the saddest lack of all—joy. Nothing, therefore, makes the Gospel of Christ so magnetic as its promise of joy. All through the New Testament, jubilant music echoes and re-echoes in a symphony of joy. When Jesus was born, the angels came bringing “good tidings of great joy,” and ere they departed a multitude joined in singing, “Glory to God in the highest” (Luke 2:10-14).

As Jesus talks to His disciples even on the last night before He suffered crucifixion, He tells them of the fulness of peace and joy which no one can take away. The Book of the Acts describes the triumphant joy of the early Church as its hymns of praise arise even out of severe persecution. Apprehend these men, beat them, and let them go, and they depart “from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they [are] counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41). Put them in prison, with bodies bruised and their feet in stocks, and they sing praises to God at midnight. What is it? What a phenomenon—a group of ordinary people with extraordinary happiness in the midst of extraordinary hardship!

Such joy was no accident; nor was it comparable to the “crackling of thorns under a pot.” Neither was it the giddy laugh that often hides a load of care. There was solid reason for this spirit of joy, and that reason may be stated in one word: HOPE. The men and women of

God in all ages have been men and women who rejoiced in hope.

The Meaning of Hope

We need to know exactly what this hope is. Hope is expectation, but all expectation is not hope. Hope is the expectation of good. “To hope” in a Scriptural sense is “to wait for salvation with joy and full of confidence”—joy is part of hope; there can be no true hope without joy! Hope is also defined as “joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation.” It is “security with a guarantee.”

No force in the world is more powerful than hope. It is the motivating power behind every achievement. The farmer would never sow a single grain of corn if he did not have hope that it would grow. The research doctor would soon walk out of the confines of his laboratory if he did not have hope of making some new discovery. The merchant or tradesman would not invest a single hour of work in his trade or business if he did not have hope that he—or someone else—would benefit.

Hope is the impelling power behind all human action; yet today hope seems to have made its exit, along with joy. Years ago, when visionaries drew pictures of the future, they painted the ideals, with families “happy ever after,” enjoying peace and prosperity, with war a thing of the past. Most twentieth century prophets are prophets of doom and gloom.

Unfortunately, there is little in the world’s annals of progress to counter this feeling. It was said in 1974 that the stockpiles of the nuclear powers of the world contained explosives equivalent to a hundred tons of TNT for each inhabitant of the earth. And recent developments in chemical and germ warfare are too horrifying to describe. There was a time, says a current writer, “when only God had the power to end

Note: “Rejoicing In Hope” is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

the world. Now it seems almost anyone could do it."

Hope, blessed hope, where hast thou flown?

Yet men cannot live without hope. And having no long-range hopes to which they may anchor, many are turning to the hope of enjoying the moment—"Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die."

In the midst of the gloom, let us thank God for hope. Thank Him that we can turn to things divine and spiritual with a love so strong and deep that earthly plights are blotted out of sight. Thank God that we have a hope that will triumph, a hope in which we may even now rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. We can rejoice because we know who holds our future; we have within our reach a "security with a guarantee."

Someone has said that life without Christ is a hopeless end; life with Christ is an endless hope. And so it is. Without hope, without God in the world, we have nothing. With Him and the hope He offers us, we have promise of more—much more—than we can even begin to imagine or comprehend.

In this age of despair and hopelessness, we need to be continually grounding ourselves in our living hope. Our hope must be a vital, growing thing, producing in us a strength that is not our own. Indeed, the Christian hope has been known to produce the world's strongest men and women. "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Cor. 4:16)—renewed in the strength of a living, growing hope.

Saved by Hope

Hope has been the central theme in the lives of all of God's people in all ages. They rejoiced *in* hope. They lived *by* hope. They lived *on* hope. Why? Because they had caught a glimpse of a better world that could be *theirs*, and they were willing to concentrate their whole life-energy on obtaining it. Every circumstance or experience of life only served to bind them the more firmly to that hope. Was the future of their nation uncertain? Their citizenship was in heaven. Was the ruling power threatening to take their lives? They could only take this present one—and how little that was; real life for them was in the future, and neither Rome nor another power of men could take that from them. Had they lost their goods in this world? Perhaps they were better off without them; now their

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desire for Christ's Kingdom was the stronger. Were they suffering hardship, privation, pain, or ill-treatment? It was only for a moment, the "slight trouble of the passing hour" that would result in "solid glory past all comparison" (II Cor. 4:17, Moffatt Bible). "These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope" (Rom. 5:3-4, JB). "We are saved by hope," they could say with confidence (Rom. 8:24). This being true, what else mattered but the surety of that hope?

This attitude is particularly outstanding in the Book of Acts. The historic account of that period is a depressing chronicle of anarchy and chaos, of rapacious government, social unrest and unemployment, of bloody insurrection and savage repression, of brigandage and terrorism. Events for several decades had been building up to the fatal rebellion that finally happened in A. D. 70, bringing the Jewish Age to a violent end. The secular history of the time would give the impression that life during that time was so miserable and uncertain as to be well-nigh unbearable. Yet of all this, scarcely a word appears in the Acts of the Apostles. Why? It was not that the writers did not know of these things; it was that they simply did not matter.

The apostles and their fellow-workers proved themselves strong enough to hold a true and steady course even in a stormy world; while the Jewish world was fast catapulting to destruction, they were marching steadily on to perfection. A turbulent world was their great opportunity to make good, and they made the most of it. Complete consecration lifted them to a stratosphere where the storms no longer mattered; minor inconveniences, "light afflictions," no more.

Peter's Epistles of Hope

This same attitude is noteworthy in the Epistles of Peter. In fact, the First Epistle of Peter has been called an Epistle of Hope. So dominant is the theme that it colors the entire narrative, giving beauty to life and meaning

to suffering. Here again men and women are called to rejoice—to rejoice *in hope*. No nebulous, wistful optimism is this hope, or a bland trust that all will turn out right in the end; but a fervent, sincere, solid abiding in the living God who made all things, and who is the rewarder of all who diligently seek Him. High and wide and deep is this sublime hope.

What makes The Epistle of First Peter even more meaningful in its projection of hope is its association with the man who wrote it. The Apostle had come a long way since that night when he denied Christ, and the Epistle rings with the assurance that had kept him moving forward through all the intervening years. Peter, now the aged brother and elder, is in a position to help and encourage others who aspire to

the heights of holiness. All through his Epistle, his admonitions vibrate with the lessons he himself had had to learn, lessons of patience and trust, lessons of carefulness and faith, lessons of obedience and hope.

Whatever is recorded in Scripture has been recorded for our learning, and this is true of the New Testament record fully as much as of the Old. The story of Peter's life-growth is among those recordings, and it contains many a lesson for us. Peter had his strong points from the beginning. Always willing to sacrifice for his Lord, this youthful dynamo was one of His closest friends. He did not hesitate to give up his livelihood to join the Master. He walked with Him from the beginning all the way to the last fateful night before the crucifixion. Even then

Let Us Pray . . .

Almighty and eternal God, the same yesterday, today and forever, our lives wax old as doth a garment, but Thou art ever the same, and Thy mercy changeth not. In the midst of these confused and shifting scenes, help us to find in Thee the constant and unfailing Friend in whom we may place our confidence, and from whom we may receive wisdom and strength, not only for these days, but for all days that are to come.

Dear Father, we pray for open minds and honest hearts, that our love may be without dissimulation, that we may be open and above board, that our lips and lives may agree, our professions and our actions tell the same story. May our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify Thee in the Day of Visitation. May we always abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good; believing only the things which Thou dost call truth, doing always the things which Thou canst call good, with Christian steadfastness.

May we always be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another, banishing our naturally selfish spirit. May we never be slothful in Thy business, or take any of Thy holy precepts as unimportant, or as a duty that we can take or leave at our caprice, but aware that Thou art a God of knowledge by whom actions only are weighed, may we be fervent in spirit, serving Thee.

May our hope be a real thing to us, a prospect that we will pursue with greater fervor than any other interest in life. May we hope for everything beyond; for a physical body that will never grow old or be enfeebled with the passing of the years. May we hope for a mind that is keen and that will always retain every impression that is made upon it; for bodily vigor that will never wane, with every imaginable pleasure and delight to accompany us as we live through endless years.

In the hope of these fathomless blessings may we be patient in any tribulation that it may be our portion to bear. May we count the inconveniences and reversals of our mortal existence as mere light afflictions, not worthy of our notice or of special concern.

May we value the privilege of communing with Thee in prayer, our heavenly Father, as the sweetest experience of our lives, and may each such contact sharpen our sense of need for Thee, and broaden our determination to live a perfect life so as to be worthy to share those greater blessings Thou hast in store for all who serve Thee worthily.

We thank Thee for the increase Thou art giving to the spreading of the truth of Thy Word, that some hearts have been and are being touched by Thy great and precious promises, and are being led in the strait and narrow way to life. Help us above all things to make ourselves ready for acceptance in the Day of Judgment, that the Great Judge may be pleased to speak to us His "well done," and endless life be our happy portion. In Jesus' name. Amen.

he ventured further than any of the others. He tried to walk on the water. He shared in the Transfiguration vision. Bold and adventure-some by nature, he was both determined and self-confident. "Even if it means dying with you," he said, "I will never disown you" (Matt. 26:35, Phillips). He felt a loyalty so strong that it seemed unshakable.

But Peter also had his weaknesses. How very like us he seems at those times he speaks before he thinks, or runs before he is sent. More than once this highly impetuous nature brought him to grief. And when, contrary to all his strong confidence, he actually denied Christ—it was enough.

Yet, looking back on it all, the aged Apostle writing his Epistle to younger brethren could see the steady building of a solid, Christian hope which would carry him through to the end of his mortal career—and on into Eternity! To him, life and hope were inseparable.

Here we might do well to put the question to ourselves: How attached are *we* to our sublime hope? Is our hope our life, and our life our hope? Are the two bound up in us so inseparably that nothing shall ever be able to pull us apart?

Hope In Spite Of ...

Life in the first century church that Peter knew was not a settled, easy, comfortable existence. Everywhere were enemies, and one never knew which interested inquirer might be a minister of Satan. The threat of persecution loomed large on the horizon. Professing Christianity in those days was serious business—as serious as life and death. Christian living could easily mean a full measure of Christian giving—even to one's life. No one knew what would happen next. Already the scattered brethren were running into difficulty.

So Peter wrote them a letter. And how did he open it? Did he say, "Grace to you, my brethren, and how I wish you did not have to suffer; it makes my heart ache when I hear how much trial you are having to endure—would that God might grant you an easier way"—was this what Peter wrote? Or did he start out by telling them about *his* troubles, explaining that he was getting old now, and was not so strong as he used to be; so they could be understanding if his faith and power seemed weak? Is there any of that tone in Peter's words? There is not a trace of it. Rather, Peter opens his letter by ascribing praise and thanks to God:

Thank God for hope that will triumph, a hope in which we may even now rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Pet. 1:3). Unto what are we begotten? "Unto a lively hope." And how is this hope made sure? "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." The newer translations show even more of Peter's vivacious hope, as: "Thank God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in his great mercy we have been born again into a life full of hope, through Christ's rising again from the dead!" (Phillips).

To Peter, this hope, confirmed by Jesus' rising again from the dead—to which he himself was a witness—was the most treasured possession of the early Christian church. The world of ancient Greece and Rome was a world of fascination. It could boast of courage, intellect, power, poetry and art. But it was a world without hope. Life was a sumptuous banquet indeed; but when it was over—? The thought of the future struck chill to many a heart.

In the midst of this pallid fear stood the shining hope of the true Church. Here was a group of men and women who could look steadfastly into the future without fear. The prospect of a future, eternal life free from suffering, hardship, persecution, and strife, gave an enormous new dimension to the present. It made them able to go about their daily duties, all the time "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. 12:12). They were living in hope.

And what of us? Does not the buoyant, fearless spirit of those loyal first-century believers reprove our weak, faltering faith? We who so easily forget the great promises that are ours and are indifferent to our high calling—how well would we have stood *their* testings? Are we able to bless and praise our God and Father, uplifted by our confident, living hope, when we find ourselves in difficulties so much less than they experienced?

We today must be representatives of our faith no less than they were. We, who have in our possession that same ancient faith,—do we treasure it as we should? Are we willing to stake

our lives upon it? Does our life stand out in contrast to the dreary background of this modern world, with the same striking contrast of the lives of those early believers? Or is it our first desire to be as liberal, as broad-minded, and easy-going as possible? Have we that same zest for eternal life which captivated Peter's interest and directed every aspect of his daily conduct? Or is our interest in God's promises somewhat detached, separated, and dispirited?

Our Hope Today

How we need more and more of Peter's lively, living hope in our lives today, we who are so close to the time when it shall become reality, we who are in such constant danger of letting slip those things which are so nearly within our

We today have in our possession the same ancient faith, the same living hope. Do we treasure it as we should? Are we willing to stake our lives on it?

grasp. Without hope, even the finest and best of earth is worthless, futile and fleeting. If we have no hope, all our ambitions and plans for the future are but tantalizing projections of fancy. Of what value is the finest education, or the richest potential, or even the most cultivated character, if all ends hopelessly in the grave and nonentity? Had the gospel called men to a higher life without giving them a vision of hope, we would have been awakened only to be plunged the deeper into despair as we faced an unknowable—and uncontrollable—future.

Worldly hopes may sustain for awhile; but before long, they vanish. They mock us with a deluding expectation, and in the end disappoint us, leaving us sad and hopeless. Their fleeting nature is graphically described in the Oriental proverb,

**The worldly hope men set their hearts upon
Turns ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,
Lighting a little hour or two, is gone.**

But to the Christian belongs the reality of a sure hope, and it is full of life, and joy, and every hopeful prospect. It is bright, active, cheer-

ful; and as each divine promise is read anew, it springs up fresh and clear. And the further we tread the narrow way, the brighter and brighter it grows.

Our Lively Hope

But let us return to Peter's Epistle to learn more about this lively hope. First, what is its object? What are we hoping for?

It is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 1:4). It is an inheritance beyond our understanding; it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive its marvelous wonders. We can only describe it by negatives; we know more about what it is *not* than what it *is*. It is *not corruptible*. And the gladness that accompanies it is like the inheritance and the people who receive it—all are incorruptible.

Then, *it is undefiled*. Men's hearts, lives, conversation all naturally bear the taint of evil, until they are disciplined and changed. Upon this heavenly inheritance is no earthly taint.

Then, too, "*it fadeth not away*." The lapse of time does not affect it, for it is timeless, eternal. There is no old age there, but perpetual youth. The best of this world fades into weariness; there is no weariness there. Immortal beings never grow tired or weary. "They shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). They have been made like unto their Creator, who "fainteth not, neither is weary."

The promised reward is a heavenly inheritance—not that it will have to be obtained in heaven, but it is now "reserved in heaven" for each faithful one, "ready to be revealed in the last time." It is the "praise and honour and glory" that will be dispensed "at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:7). This is the "grace" that is promised, and it shall "be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:13). There was no question in Peter's mind as to when this hope would be realized. It would be at the time of Christ's appearing, when "the Chief Shepherd shall appear" (I Pet. 5:4).

In the meantime it is "reserved." The fact that it is "reserved in heaven" shows its highest of high quality—its source is far above anything earth could bestow. Secondly, the fact that it is reserved *in heaven* shows its preciousness, and the care with which it must be kept. Special merchandise requires special storage and

(Continued on page 24)

Signs of the Times

IN THE BOOK of Joel is recorded a highly significant passage of prophecy:

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel 3:9-10).

With farsighted prophetic vision, Joel seems to pinpoint two prophecies: 1) a time of general armaments preparation and 2) a time when "the weak" will say "I am strong." Both prophecies are being strikingly fulfilled at the present time.

There doubtless was a time when men wondered how such a prophecy could be fulfilled. "Weak" nations were "weak," and strong nations were "strong," and if the weak attempted to call themselves strong, they were not long learning of the contrary opinion of the strong.

But in recent years the picture has changed greatly. With the emergence of many small independent states upon the African continent, and in the Near and Far East, and with the majority of smaller nations acquiring strong military potential, the weak are indeed boasting of their strength.

A recent report from our capital city tells of a record \$120 billion of armaments sold abroad in 1978. "Developed and developing nations are acquiring arms, ammunition and military apparatus" at a rate "unprecedented in history for a time when there is no head-on conflict among the major powers," says economist Ruth Sivard. In 1978, global arms sales equaled the entire gross national product of Spain.

The economist says also that developing countries have increased their military spending

approximately 400 percent since 1960.

Is not this one means of the "weak" saying "I am strong"—by purchasing armaments in such quantities?

Also, the worldwide build-up of armaments—while peace talks and negotiations for peace treaties continue—seems significant, in the light of the first prophecy in Joel's passage, a prophecy of general armaments preparation. Total military spending amounted to \$425 billion last year in our nation, nearly 30% of which went into weapons procurement for conventional and nuclear warfare, it is reported.

But our nation does not stand alone in this. Consider the following:

On the average, governments spend \$16,000 a year on each soldier, sailor or airman in their armed forces, while they spend only \$260 a year on the education of each school-age child.

In pounds per person, the world has more explosive power than food.

Governments spend four times more for research on weapons than for research on energy.

The explosive power of the nuclear weapons of the "nuclear club" (the U. S., U. S. S. R., Britain, France, China, India, and possibly Israel) has been calculated to equal at least one million Hiroshima-type bombs.

Do we wonder at the fulfillment of still another prophecy—the words of Jesus that men's hearts would be "failing them for fear"? (Luke 21:25-26)—while they beat their "plowshares into swords, and their pruninghooks into spears" at such a rate?

It speaks one message to us: "Be ye also ready." Should we not be preparing ourselves with all possible speed, as we realize how very near the end of the age might be?

In the words of Zephaniah, recorded for our time, "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly" (Zeph. 1:14). Never were these words more accurate than at the present. ●●

"Go give of your best to the Master today,

For giving is living," the angel did say.

"And must I be giving again and again?"

My peevish and pitiless answer ran.

"Oh, no," said the angel, piercing me through,

"Just give till the Master stops giving to you!"

—Anonymous

"Let Your Women Keep Silence"--?

IS IT WRONG for women to teach or preach? Did Paul believe that "women should keep silence" and be totally in subjection to their husbands?

In the wake of women's lib, the argument has loud overtones. Some churches have even divided over the issue of whether or not women should be ordained as ministers of the gospel.

What does the Bible say?

First we should remember the words of Peter: that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10: 34-35). Tall or short, black or white, male or female makes no difference to Him. All are part of His creation and live according to the laws He set in motion. How then can *He* discriminate?

Paul himself said there was no distinction: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

In New Testament times several examples of women speaking in the church are recorded. In Acts 21:8-9, we are told that "Philip had four daughters, which did prophesy." To prophesy can mean to teach.* In Romans 16: 1-3 Paul sends commendation to "Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea," also to "Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus." The New English Bible renders this text: "I commend to you Phebe, a fellow-Christian who holds office in the congregation at Cenchrea." Several other versions call her a "deaconness." In his letter to the Philippians he speaks warmly of certain "women . . . [who] labored side by side with me in the gospel" (Phil. 4:3).

* *Prophecy*: This word is most commonly associated with the foretelling of future events; but it also applies, as used in Scripture, to "discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproofing and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden. Used in the N. T. of the utterances of the O. T. prophets: Mt. 13:14; II Pet. 1:20-21;—of the prediction of events relating to Christ's kingdom and its speedy triumph, together with the consolations and admonitions pertaining thereto: Rev. 11:6; 22:19." To prophesy (*propheteuo*) is defined as: "foretelling future events; pertaining esp. to the kingdom of God; . . . to utter forth, declare, a thing which can only be known by divine revelation; . . . to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort"—*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*.

How then could Paul say on another occasion that women should "keep silence"?

We should study his statement in the context in which it occurs. The passage is found in I Corinthians 14, where Paul is giving specific directions about the use of the particular gift of the Holy Spirit which was known as speaking in tongues.

We learn by reading Acts 2:4 that those who received the gift of the Holy Spirit could speak in tongues; they could be understood in more than one language. In I Corinthians 14:31 we find that all could prophesy (or teach),* whether they had the gift of tongues or not; but not all had the gift of tongues.

With this in mind let us scan the chapter. In verse 2 it is stated: "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue [in the church] speaketh not unto men, but unto God." Why does he not speak to men? Because "no man understandeth him." For this reason Paul says in verse 5, "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied"—this same word means teach. Why would he rather that they teach? "That the church may receive edifying."

All members could not understand foreign tongues, but all could understand the prophets if the speakers taught from the Scriptures. Therefore Paul wrote in verse 19: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." He places great importance upon teaching (prophesying) in the church, at the same time depreciating the value of speaking in tongues. Why?

Read verse 22: "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." Then verse 27: "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter,"—what then? "Let him keep silence in the church." Here are men receiving the same command often associated only with women: to "keep silence in the church."

But let us remember the qualifying term with

which Paul started: that he is writing about speaking in "an unknown tongue." And what does he say about women with respect to this command? "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak"—in an unknown tongue; this is the subject Paul has been discussing. "For ye may all [both men and women] prophesy [or teach] one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."

Now let us read I Corinthians 14:35: "And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home." Did Paul condemn women learning anything except from their husbands

at home? (If so, how could unmarried women ever learn anything?) No, Paul was still discussing the use of unknown tongues. "For it is a shame for women to speak in the church"—in an unknown tongue. If it were a shame for women to speak from the Scriptures, the law and the prophets, why did Paul say in verse 31, "that ye may all prophesy"? Would not "all" include the women?

No, Paul did not contradict himself. He was as willing to listen to and do justice to a Phebe or a Priscilla as he was to an Apollos or an Aquila. God is no respecter of persons, only of character. ●●

Fruitful Fragments



Worry kills more people than work.

The Golden Age lies before us, not behind us.

He who can take advice is sometimes superior to him who can give it.

Dost thou love life? Then waste not time, for time is the stuff that life is made of.

Much which we think essential is merely a matter of habit.

God helps them that help themselves.

True eloquence consists in saying all that is necessary and nothing but what is necessary.

Don't waste yourself in rejections, nor bark against the bad, but chant the beauty of the good.

He who would govern others should first be the master of himself.

How poor are they who have no patience!

Beware of little things; a small leak will sink a great ship.

Try this for one day: Think as though your thoughts were visible to all about you.

March, 1980

Practice, Practice, Practice

MANY THINGS have been written about the value of practice. Since early childhood we have heard that practice makes perfect. It is easy to see that practice will generally produce improvement, but a little consideration helps us realize that only perfect practice will ever make perfect performance.

People who make a study of such things believe that no amount of effort and practice will ever establish a habit unless that habit gives a satisfaction. Likewise, it is almost impossible to break an undesirable habit unless we practice to establish another habit which will give a satisfaction equal to or greater than the old.

It takes practice, practice, practice, and more perfect practice to overcome the faults, failures and ignorance which would keep us commonplace.

The person who takes up his cross daily, endeavoring to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, striving to become His friend by obeying His commands, is bound to experience repeated and bitter opposition. Otherwise the way would be easy and there would be no cross. But Jesus said there will be a cross to carry daily, not just for ten years but as long as probation lasts. This effort is a practice, for we cannot learn in a moment but must learn as we go, practicing the lessons of character building which we must at last perform perfectly. If we slacken, we shall be forced to confront failures, loss and punishment. This is something we have agreed with God to do, and He will not excuse us.

—J. D., Liberia, Africa

The Night Cometh

CARL NELSON glanced at his watch as he turned the corner one block from the store. "Good!" he exclaimed, "I'll be back to work ten minutes before Mr. Norton expects me." It was the first day Carl had worked in a store. The position had come after many unsuccessful attempts. Here, it seemed to him, was his opportunity at last, and he determined to make the most of it.

The first day passed swiftly. He had spent much time, when not otherwise employed, learning the quality of the goods, and their classification. Walter Stone, another clerk, had found some amusement in Carl's confusion and embarrassment at times. Walter made it a point to accompany Carl on his way home that afternoon.

"How'd you like it?" asked Walter, with a light smile.

"Great!" came the quick reply. "Not a dull moment."

"You did work hard, Carl. Too hard, if you ask me. Norton don't expect a man to kill himself. And the more you do, the more you will be expected to do. Besides, I know that you're not being paid enough."

"I should worry about the pay," answered Carl with a smile; "I want to learn the business."

Days lengthened into weeks. By rigid economy, Carl had started a bank account. Norton had learned of this through the banker. Norton had learned of something else—that Carl was known among the customers as the "friendly" clerk.

"I don't see how you stand up to it," Walter told him one evening as the two were wending their way homeward. "You don't have to do a lotta things you're not paid for, Carl. Let Norton hire another clerk. It ain't murder to kill a little time now and then. Besides, a feller needs to rest a little once in a while."

"You're right, Walter," came the reply; "killing time isn't exactly murder—it's suicide!"

That evening Carl read some portions of literature in a book he had recently acquired. One passage held him. It told how Dr. Johnson, the great English writer, had a phrase placed on the dial of his watch in Greek. A strange thing to do, it seemed. Yet the act took on new meaning

as Carl pondered over the phrase. "The Night Cometh!" Those three words, no more. He recalled that a Nazarene Carpenter one time said much the same thing: "The night cometh, when no man can work." It was true. Not only the night following the day, but the nighttime of life, after its sunrise, noon and evening.

The thought was uppermost in his mind as he walked to work the next morning. He had just begun a piece of sorting, interrupted the night before by Walter's eagerness to get away, when Norton called him to his desk.

"I find it necessary to leave the city at once on important business, Carl," Norton said. "I need a man who can look after things while I am gone. Will you do it?"

Would he do it! The offer came so suddenly that all Carl could think to say was, "I'll try, Mr. Norton." And a few instructions followed.

Customers at the store the next day noticed a perceptible difference in the trimness of things, and, quite unexplainable, the day's receipts, and those of the days to follow, were above average.

The evening of the third day, as Walter was about to leave the store, he spoke impatiently to Carl. "I don't see why you want to work day and night for Norton. He's away, take things easy. You're a fool!"

Carl moved to reply, but he restrained himself.

Norton returned a day earlier than expected. As Carl entered the store before the opening hour, he was surprised to find Norton at his desk. "Good morning, Carl," said Norton. "I've just been looking over the records, and I want to congratulate you. I have just bought another store, over at Charleston, and I shall take personal charge of it. You are the manager here."

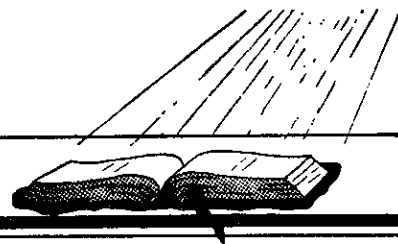
After closing hours that afternoon, Walter loitered in front of the store until Carl came out. They walked a pace together without speaking a word. Walter broke the silence.

"I've been with Norton longer than you have, and that job belonged to me. What did you do to get it? I never have any luck!" And if his voice did not show his temper, his face betrayed him.

"I'm sorry," replied Carl. "All I did was my best. The only kind of luck I believe in is the kind that comes from doing your best. When I finished school, my dad slipped me a piece of paper, on which he had written a quotation from Longfellow, and I never could forget it. Here it is." And he drew a carefully folded slip of white paper from an inner pocket.

Walter read: "Success means doing more for the world than the world does for you." ●●

BIBLE STUDY HOUR



The Way of Righteousness

Our study today centers around the first Psalm. It contains only six verses, but there is much wisdom of God in it. I trust that all have at some time memorized it, but let us review it before we begin our study.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish."

Question. A good title for this Psalm might be, "How to Avoid Spiritual Decline," for we have that right in the beginning of the Psalm. The righteous man is pictured negatively—what is the first thing he will avoid?

Answer. He will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. The righteous man listens only to the counsel of the Lord.

Q. The New English Bible words it, "Happy is the man who does not take the wicked for his guide." We are all inclined to be followers—this world has more followers than leaders. What is the greater danger with the Christian?

A. He is inclined to follow the dictates of his own mind—a totally unreliable guide.

Q. We might not think of it as such, but the counsel of the ungodly can come from within our own minds. This indicates spiritual decline—but it is not the first step. What is the first step in following the evil way?

A. We allow ourselves to entertain evil thoughts, wondering if the counsel of the ungodly doesn't have something to recommend it. Then we try to justify our actions in our own mind.

Q. We see the evil thing first and have the desire for it in ourselves, then we take the wicked for our guide.

But what does the Bible have to say about whom we should or should not follow?

A. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment" (Exod. 23:2).

Q. The Bible is very specific that we should not follow the crowd; we cannot go with the majority. The New International Version translates that verse, "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong," and the New English reads, "You shall not be led into wrong doing by the majority."

Those are very plain testimonies. Are the majority apt to be on the right side?

A. Only if God is on that side. One with God is a majority.

Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14). The many are in the broad way that leads to destruction.

Q. What is the next step in our text? What do we do after we listen not to the counsel of the ungodly?

A. The righteous man "standeth not in the way of sinners." The New English Bible reads, "nor walk the road that sinners tread." But the backslider does just the reverse.

Q. I like the Jerusalem Bible translation of this verse: "Happy the man who never follows the advice of the wicked or loiters on the way that

sinner's take." What would the thought of loitering indicate?

A. It would show that we feel comfortable with them, that we enjoy their company. We stand and talk with them, spend our time with them—we are comfortable in their presence.

Q. *Does the Bible have anything further to say about not walking with sinners?*

A. The Bible is very specific. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Prov. 4:14-15). Solomon left us much good advice, but he failed to heed God's command. Evil company proved his ruination.

Proverbs 14:7 is just as specific: "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge."

Romans 12:21: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Q. *Solomon received some excellent advice directly from God that would be good to read. Could we have I Kings 9:4?*

A. "And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father."

Q. *King Solomon failed miserably. He took "the wicked for his guide and walked the road that sinners tread," for it is recorded that "his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." And when he built altars to the gods of these foreign women, he was sitting "in the seat of the scornful"—which is the next downward step of the backslider.*

By way of contrast, what position did Jeremiah take?

A. He kept aloof from sinners. He said, "I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation" (Jer. 15:17). If a person sits, or companies with those whose influence is downward, it is because he wants to be there, else he would not sit down with them.

Q. *Yes, when you sit down, you are content; you have allowed them to take over. Such a one has reached a very low ebb of spirituality, when he joins with those who scorn God and His Word.*

What does it mean to be scornful or to scorn?
A. Isn't it just the same as to mock, to make light of, or to ridicule? It is also to show contempt for the things of God.

Q. *But is the man that does these things happy?*

A. Not likely. The Psalmist states it in the negative: Happy (or blessed) is the man that does not do these things. So we could say, Unhappy is the man who does them.

Q. *It is certain we will never find happiness by following the ways of the wicked or having our own way. But could we have a few texts to show what does make a man happy?*

A. Our text says the righteous man finds "his delight in the law of the Lord." If he delights in God's law, he is happy.

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding" (Prov. 3:13). That agrees with the verse we just had.

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Ps. 146:5). Unless one first learns God's law, it will be neither help nor hope to him.

Q. *There is one thing that should make us happy that is quite unnatural. What would that be?*

A. "Happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" (Job 5:17). We would not naturally be happy about being corrected, but if we ever hope to be saved, we must adopt this attitude.

Q. *That is right, because we read that "the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Prov. 6:23). Correction or reproof is the key to greater happiness.*

Our text reads, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

What do we mean when we say that we should "meditate day and night"? Obviously we cannot do that literally.

A. It would be like praying "without ceasing"—it is not something to be done literally, but an attitude of life we can maintain. We can go through every day "with God." We can live a prayerful life, and a meditative one also, by letting Him be the moving power behind everything we do and seizing every opportunity to direct our thoughts to God's Word.

When we have a few minutes waiting for traffic on the way home from work, during our lunch

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

break, or before we fall asleep in bed, we can meditate on some familiar Scripture verses, and try to apply their message to our lives.

Q. Yes, where there is a will to meditate, there will be both time and a way.

Could we have a few texts showing what we should meditate on?

A. Paul gave some very good advice to Timothy concerning meditating. "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Tim. 4:13, 15). If we give ourselves wholly to these things, that would be equal to meditating "day and night" as the Psalmist said.

Q. Can we go to Paul for some more good counsel on good thinking?

A. In his letter to the Philippians he said that we should be thinking about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8).

Q. What did the Psalmist say about himself and his own personal meditation?

A. The Psalmist said, "O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97). Many, many times in this long Psalm he expressed his love for the law of God. His meditation was no bore, it was his delight. In verse 24 of this same chapter he said, "Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors."

Q. That is a good text—we must likewise have God's Word as our counselor. If in every situation we ask ourselves, "What does the Word say?" we will not be listening to the counsels of our own heart or the counsels of the ungodly.

Can we have proof from the Scriptures that our own heart is an unreliable counselor?

A. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:5, 7).

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). We cannot judge by what seems right to us.

Q. When we reach the point where we no longer walk according to our own ideas, we are making growth. And meditating on the things of God will

March, 1980

help us reach this point. We must get where we discipline our mind and make a habit of meditating.

When the righteous man does all these things, then what does our lesson say he will be?

A. He will be "like a tree planted by the rivers of water."

Q. What kind of a tree will he be?

A. A fruit-bearing tree. Only good trees bear good fruits. In the Bible the Christian is never compared to any but a fruit-bearing tree.

Q. This tree has its roots watered by the "water of life." Just as water is vital to the natural tree, the water of life is necessary for growth and fruit-bearing in the spiritual trees.

Jesus referred to His disciples as something else that grows. Can we have John 15:1-2? Also verse 8?

A. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."

Verse 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

Q. What are the fruits that the vine or the good tree bear?

A. They are the fruits of the Spirit—not the Holy Spirit, for we do not have that now. These fruits come as a result of allowing the Word to control our lives. Paul listed some in Galatians 5: 22-23: "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

—Newly Edited—

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meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Q. In the natural, fruit-bearing is the result of being a fruit tree. It is the nature of a fruit tree to bear fruit. And it will be so with the Christian. If he makes proper growth in the Christian life, he will automatically produce good fruit.

But what happens to the branch that fails to produce fruit?

A. Jesus said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." And He further says, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (v. 6). The branches that are cast into the fire and burned represent the unfaithful servants—they are not literally burned, but their end is destruction.

Q. Continuing with our lesson chapter, verse 3 reads, "His leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Are we to understand from this that the righteous man will have nothing but prosperity?

A. No. The righteous can have reverses as easily as anyone—but not in a spiritual sense. Spiritual prosperity is the most important and the righteous man will do what is necessary to insure prosperity in that sense.

The apostle John wrote in his Third Epistle, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." He knew his friend to be spiritually prosperous and wished him physical health in the same proportion.

Q. Can we have something from the Scriptures to show what the righteous man's wealth consists of?

A. There are some good verses in Paul's first letter to Timothy. I would like to read them from the New English Bible: "Instruct those who are rich in this world's goods not to be proud, and not to fix their hopes on so uncertain a thing as money, but upon God, who endows us richly with all things to enjoy. Tell them to do good and to grow rich in noble actions, to be ready to give away and to share, and so acquire a treasure which will form a

good foundation for the future. Thus they will grasp the life which is life indeed" (I Tim. 6:17-19).

Q. God does not deny us our share of this world's goods, but we cannot set our affections on them. But if we suffer reverses, it may be because that is what we need to test us. What we see as adversity might really be for our profit—spiritually if not financially.

We should have something from the Old Testament that is very good on this subject of prosperity.

A. The Lord told Joshua how to become prosperous. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Josh. 1:8). Prosperity was linked to observing the law of God faithfully.

The righteous are promised both riches and honor in the book of Proverbs, but again it is connected with the knowledge of God. The man that gets this knowledge and puts it into practice will be the one to share the eternal riches.

Job saw the wicked prospering in this life, but then he told their end: "Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver" (Job 27:16-17).

Q. Yes, if found faithful we shall share in the riches of the whole earth in that Day. But not everyone will, as we learn from the concluding verses of our chapter: "The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. 1:4-6).

How many classes of people are represented here?

A. Three. The ungodly—those who never covenanted to serve God. They have their reward in this life, and perish forever.

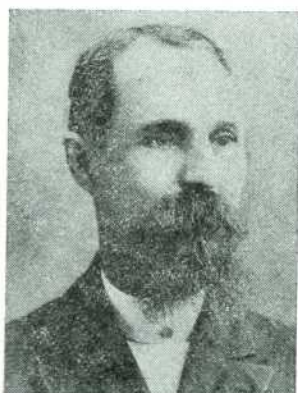
The sinners, or unfaithful. They knew the way, but failed to keep their covenant. They will appear at the Judgment, but will not be able to "stand firm" (NEB); they will be turned to the left. Eternal death will be their reward.

The righteous, [the faithful covenant-makers] or in other words those found faithful at the Judgment. They will receive the reward of eternal life from the righteous Judge and will hear the welcome words: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Let us be sure to be among those worthy to hear this invitation. ●●

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What Is Truth?

The Great Infidel Discussion



Reverend L. T. Nichols vs. Professor W. F. Jamieson

Part Five

IN THE YEAR 1890, our founder Rev. L. T. Nichols engaged in a series of debates with the great infidel debater Professor W. F. Jamieson.

The following articles are extracts from addresses by both speakers in the debates, which reflect the opposition our founder encountered and his sincere desire to discover fully the true teachings of the Word of God.

Mr. Jamieson's Fifth Address

We have met again to resume our wordy war, and I trust with the same good-natured feeling which has characterized the meetings thus far. There had been a question in reference to the form of our resolution, and a question was raised as to who proposed that point. Mr. Nichols, I think, was in error when he charged upon Mr. Johnson, our moderator protem, that he proposed the word "full" in our thesis. I refer to a letter written by Mr. Nichols to Walter A. Johnson, Byron, Minn., June 27th, 1890. The letter read as follows:

Dear Sir:

If Mr. Jamieson will permit the following, then I will meet him and enter into discussion with all my heart. Resolved: That the Bible is wholly of human origin, and full of contradictions.

"Full of contradictions." That was the question, and this excuses Mr. Johnson.

It appears that my way of arguing does not at all suit my friend. Just my luck! In my reference to my friend as an auctioneer, I see that he takes it seriously, while it was only meant to be a little pleasantry to offset his lecture allusion—"only this, and nothing more."

He twits me with once being a trance-medium, March, 1980

and then says I have repudiated it. Like thousands of others of my fellow citizens, I did once think that all such experiences were the result of spirit power. Once I believed the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. Is it a crime to change your opinions? I am willing to change every day of the week if thereby I can gain the truth, or dispel an error. My friend, also, I believe, has changed his opinions, according to the evidence presented to his own mind. This is right, I haven't very much respect for any man or woman who says, "I think now as I thought forty years ago. I have not changed my opinions in all that time." And so I say about all such people, that they were either very wise then, or they are rather behind the age now.

"I honor the man who is willing to sink
Half his repute for the freedom to think;
And when he has thought, be his cause strong
or weak,
Who will risk t'other half for the freedom
to speak."

So says Russell Lowell, and so say I, and so says Brother Nichols, and so say his people, and I am glad to meet them and have this good-natured, fraternal, yet, at the same time, earnest discussion.

We ought to be in earnest about these great questions of life and death and human destiny, and human welfare. There is nothing that can better engage our faculties, it seems to me, than this same

pursuit for truth, and when the opportunity occurs anywhere in this land I say, Blessed are the people of that town that can receive the benediction of a debate from two such good-natured men as these that are before you.

Mr. Nichols told you last night that if I was as earnest for truth as I represented to this intelligent audience, I would have done certain other things. That implied something uncomplimentary; in fact, for some reason, he was rapidly losing his good opinion of me. While I would like to retain it, I must perform my duty, if I lose it entirely.

He next styles my last address a "harangue." Oh, well; that will not hurt it, if my words were true. If they were false, I cannot see how that was an answer. I think my friend got a little beside himself when he said that I had misrepresented him. That is an attack upon my motive, and is rather personal. But I pass it by, for I do not think he really meant it. I was sorry, too, to have my friend say to me, as he did, "You have not kept the word of your honor in this discussion." I always try to. You can see for yourselves how meek and lamb-like I am. I endeavored, in my humble way, to show what the opinion of the Bible is, as believed by those who profess that it is Divine. I had hardly finished when my time was up. I wanted to say that orthodox Christians who get their ideas of God and His treatment of children from the Bible—as it is—would naturally and logically conclude that that same God would torture them in hell. That the Bible, as it is, does not stand the fire of debate, has been demonstrated in this discussion. Is this the

reason why the clergy shun our debate? What the Bible as it should be might be like I have no means of knowing. Probably it would be so good a book that I would have nothing to say against it. It certainly could not be any worse than the Bible as it now is. And in this I think my friend agrees with me, for he said in his last speech: "I am frank to confess to you that if there were no dead language, I would have been a Free Thinker." Again, he says, "Friend Jamieson knows that a dead language is the best possible language to go to, because a dead language never changes." If that is so, it is unlike all other dead things. But has it come to this, that his God had to lock up his revelation in a mummy language to preserve it? Is that Divine? I think my good friend, towards whom I personally have nothing but the kindest of feelings, believing as I do that he is a gentleman of integrity and unusual candor, entered into this debate with a certain theory to which he expected everything must square. It is plainly observable that in every case where King James' translation is not satisfactory to him, he considers the Hebrew inspired, and not King James' translation; only where the King James and Hebrew agree will he accept King James' translation as Divine. Hence, he holds that those who read Hebrew read the word of God, wholly divine.

He distinctly told us that if it had not been for the dead Hebrew language, if he had been confined to King James' translation, he, too, would be like me, a Free Thinker. And this brushes away those poor forty-seven translators of King James, and substitutes Gesenius and the Hebrew Bible. What a misfortune it was that, instead of Englishmen translating the Bible, the process had not been exactly reversed, and a council or convention of Jews called to translate Hebrew into English, the dead into the living!

Why did not God inspire the English translators, inasmuch as they designed giving the word such a wide circulation? And what evidence is there that the Hebrew is Divine? Have you the original revelation? No, sir. From my study of Hebrew scholars—Horne, Stowe, Smith, and others—among the ablest authorities on Bible history, I find them saying that "Since the Messianic period the Hebrew Bible contained no audible vowels; the words as written consisting of consonants only, or with a few silent vowels, and the vowels were changed; and the vowels with which to pronounce them, I should say, have been given wholly according to oral tradition."

There is the foundation of your Hebrew Bible; your Jehovah was obliged to communicate His will to mankind in an old, rickety, skeleton language so

Remember ABIB

The Abib season is approaching again. The new moon following the March equinox occurs this year on April 15, placing the observance of Abib First on April 15, 16.

The day will be observed with appropriate services of prayer and praise marking the double holiday—in remembrance of the birth, life, work, ministry and future destiny of Christ, and in welcoming the beginning of another sacred year. All interested friends and subscribers are invited to join us at this season.

Thirteen days later (Abib 13, this year on the evening of April 27) we will meet to observe the New Passover, the anniversary of the Lord's Supper. The morning of April 30 (Abib 15) will be the anniversary of Christ's triumphant resurrection. ●●

utterly unreliable that no Hebrew reader knows the proper pronunciation of his Jehovah's name! The ancient Jews thought it was a crime, worthy of death, to pronounce the name of God, now written "Jehovah." These scholars tell us that the early Hebrew manuscripts, having no vowels, only give the four consonants: "H-H-V-H," or "Y-H-V-H"; and what is the proper sound of the spoken name is totally unknown. It is agreed that it was not Jehovah. They think it might be "Yihveh," "Yehveh," "Yahveh," or "Yahevah," and then these Christian gentlemen add: "But no opinion on the subject is more than a guess." That is characteristic of Bible history; guess, conjecture, supposition, all the way through. This debate is too short to give all the details of the voluminous history of Bible building, and in consequence I must be content to give but a few of the salient points.

This uncertainty applies to the rest of the words of the Hebrew, for they say the Messianic doctors reduced the traditional pronunciation to record by a system of dots which they placed in various positions about the consonants, adding also a system of marks for accent and for guiding the public readers in a half singing or cantillation, which was—and still is—the mode of reading the law in the synagogues.

These systems of vowel points and accents were only completed by the tenth or eleventh century, and this was made out substantially as we now have it in the written Hebrew text of the Old Testament.

Now you tell me to produce evidence that Hebrew scholars differ in the definition of words; that is, in the words you used. You furnished the evidence yourself. I pick up this Bible and it says, "Old and New Testaments, translated out of the original tongues published by the American Bible Society." Gesenius and other Hebrew scholars differ; and the translations of the New Version differ still further. The translators of the New Version say that the King James version, for more than two centuries and a half, held the position of an English classic. Say all you can of good about the book. There is much in the book that is good. I never have known of a book that was all bad. No free thinker takes the position that there is nothing good in the Bible.

The remainder of my time tonight I will call your attention to the contradictory parts of the Bible.

The Bible represents that God cannot repent. "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the Son of Man that he should repent" (Num. 23:19).

But now, the Bible represents that God does repent! "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6). We read that the blood

shedder must die. "At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. 9:5-6). Again we read, "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13). There is even a passage where a man who had shed man's blood was not to be killed. "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him" (Gen. 4:15).

I am giving these statements right along, showing the thoughts of the authors of the Bible as rapidly as time will permit. But at this moment, I haven't further time.

Mr. Nichols' Fifth Reply

It is indeed with great pleasure that I stand again before you in the defense of the Bible, the Book of books. It will not be necessary for me to go over all the ground that my opponent went over in his last speech, for I have answered it in my former address. I shall endeavor, a little at least, to brush away the dust that has been cast out to blind your eyes. I do not attribute to my opponent any dishonesty in this, or any intent to wilfully blind your eyes. I believe, so far as my acquaintance is concerned, he intends to be honest in his discussion; but let me say, an individual may be honest and yet throw a great deal of dust which will blind the eyes of those who are not thoroughly instructed in the Bible teachings.

In reference to the Bible, let me say, as I have said before, that the great object which I had in view when I went to Gesenius was simply to remove those contradictions, or absurdities, or difficulties that my opponent has seen fit to bring before you. He picks up here King James' translation, and then the Revised Version, and tells you they are translated one way from the same original by King James, another way in the Revised Version, and still another in Gesenius. Let me say to you that that is not so. Go to Gesenius and you can prove that both of those definitions are here; Gesenius agrees with them both. But words, as I said last evening, have more than one definition; and while King James selected one—and Gesenius gives that—and the Revised Version another, I select still another, because it brings the Bible into unity and harmony, and brushes the contradictions off the board.

I can tell you that I do not deviate from King James' translation only for this purpose; neither do I rely upon the Hebrew Bible for my salvation or yours. Whenever he makes a point, I will own that point, fair and square.

Mr. Jamieson has endeavored to show you that

the word "Yahveh," which we call Jehovah, cannot be decided upon as the proper pronunciation; but because individuals cannot arrive at the proper pronunciation of a word is that any evidence that they cannot arrive at the proper definitions of that word? Of course not. If there were a Hebrew scholar here tonight versed in his language, he would tell you that he could pick up the Bible before the dots and vowels were used and read it off as readily in that condition as with the vowels. They have told me so. And if there is a doubt, why will Mr. Jamieson not give the Bible the advantage of the doubt and go to Gesenius and if Gesenius gives a definition of the word used that will make sense in reading these texts, ought he not to be willing to accept them? Let him grapple with this in a business-like way, and take up Gesenius. Let him show that we are wrong in the definition we have given the words.

We now come to the testimony he has called your attention to, in which he has maintained that God is a God that repents, and he is also a God that cannot and does not repent. In the first place I will call your attention to the sixth chapter of Genesis because I believe that is the most formidable text on this repenting question. We find here that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6).

Now let me ask: If God did not alter His plans as men change their attitude toward Him, would He be just? Should He treat righteous men in the same way as He promised to treat them when they were doing wickedly? So when God saw the wickedness of men, was He not justified in turning from the good He had promised and sending punishment instead?

I now come to blood shedding. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." He then called our attention to Genesis, where God placed a mark upon Cain, lest man should kill him, also to the sixth commandment of the law. Remember now that those events were at different epochs of time. The first was a long time, over two thousand years, before the latter law came into force, the latter law being given to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt. Would you think the Almighty unable to commute a sentence, even if it had been the law in an earlier age? We have laws in our land which say that such and such shall be the punishment to individuals that transgress it; but because the governor commutes that sentence, is

that anything against the law? By no means. Likewise, as the Almighty is the maker of His law, He had a perfect right, if He saw fit, to commute the sentence. There is no argument in that whatever.

With these few remarks, I will pass on. I wish to call your attention to the seventh chapter of Daniel. You remember that Daniel had a vision, and I wish to refer to that vision; not so much to the vision itself as to the interpretation of it.

You will remember that he saw four beasts; the first was a lion, with eagle's wings; the second was a bear having three ribs in his mouth. The third was a leopard with four heads and four wings, and the fourth beast was a great and terrible monster, fearful and exceedingly terrible. Now what is all this for? Here comes a great vision, and what is the meaning of it?

We read, "Behold a fourth beast dreadful and terrible, . . . and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. . . . And the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool."

Remember now that this little horn had great power. I call your attention now to the four great world kingdoms of the earth, as represented in this vision.

"I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and

shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces" (Daniel 7:7-9, 15-23).

Pray, tell me, my friends, where in the mighty world will you find a man that could have predicted the rise and fall of four world empires long, long before it came to pass? Tell me, if it is not Divine. Where is the man that could have predicted these wonderful events? Josephus tells us that this was a matter of history long previous to his date.

The fourth world empire was to be the Roman Empire. The ten horns represented the ten kings of the Roman kingdom. Remember, my friends, this was a subject matter which was told long before the division of the Roman Empire. Even in the days of Christ, the Roman Empire had not yet been divided. It was not divided into Eastern and Western Rome until 353. It had not been divided into ten kingdoms at all; consequently, you cannot look for the beginning of the little horn power until the ten horns were on the beast.

In the days of Christ, the Roman kingdom was one grand world power, and had not been divided into the Eastern and Western Empire, and you could not see the power of the little horn until after the days of Christ. And no man could have told in the days of Persia that there was to be a fourth kingdom, united at first, and then divided into two kingdoms, then into ten kingdoms, as Daniel declared. I say, my friends, tell not to any intelligent mind that the Bible is not Divine; tell not to anybody that it is of human origin.

My friend had referred to my statement concerning his having been a trans-medium. I did not do that in a twitting manner at all. I simply told you that I had hopes of converting him. He told me today that he was a trans-medium, and he hung to spiritualism and was bound to make it true.

We find the Roman Empire not only divided up into Eastern and Western Rome, but we find it divided up into ten kingdoms, and if you will turn to the eleventh chapter of Revelation, you will find that the "time and times, and the dividing of times" are 1260 years. No man could have told you that the little horn was to rise and prevail against the saints, as Mr. Gibbon tells you commenced in the seventh century—which brings us down to the very time in which we are living, for the coming of the Son of man. Say to me that man could have been the author of that—say to me that the Bible is wholly human? It cannot be! Impossible! It is *utterly impossible!*

Look at Napoleon Bonaparte, and our little German Garibaldi. Take our late Napoleon. He understood the tactics of war better than anyone else in the world of his time, and had the best drilled March, 1980

soldiers. He started out at the head of France and attempted to conquer Prussia. Having conquered Prussia, he intended then to conquer Russia. Having conquered those two powers, he could have conquered the world and established a universal world-wide empire, and his son Louis would have been its Emperor.

Why did these great men all fail to establish a universal empire? It was because the Bible is Divine and predicts that the next or fifth universal kingdom is to be the Kingdom of God.

The Bible tells us, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." This was represented in the dream by the little stone, which is to smite this image on the feet, and become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. We believe these things, because there is no power upon earth that can show that men could have predicted them and foretold such mighty and wonderful events as the four world kingdoms of men, as is demonstrated by the Divine testimony. Never say to me that there is nothing in the Bible to show that it is of Divine origin. Mr. Jamieson said it was wholly of human origin. Let him take up my argument and show where it is wrong. Take up this Bible history, and show that it was not an historical account well known before it was divided into Eastern and Western Rome; before it was divided into ten kingdoms. Let him grapple with this like a man, and not spend his time on those things where the Hebrew helps us to make the Bible a unanimous book from Genesis to Revelation.

Take this Bible and study these testimonies for yourselves, and make up your mind from them and you will never be an Infidel Free Thinker. NEVER. ●●

A Christian's life is laid in the loom of time to a pattern which he does not see, but God does; and his heart is a shuttle. On one side of the loom is sorrow and on the other is joy; and the shuttle, struck alternately by each, flies back and forth, carrying the thread, which is white or black, as the pattern needs; and, in the end, when God shall lift up the finished garment, and all its changing hues shall glance out, it will then appear that the deep and dark colors were as needful to beauty as the bright and high colors.

—Selected.

It is the extra mile that makes the Christian; the measured mile makes the Pharisee.



SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

"Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" —Psalm 19:12-13

IN THIS nineteenth Psalm, the royal singer has been meditating on the wonders of the glory of God revealed in the creation around him. "The heavens declare the glory of God," he writes, "and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Whether men take notice or not, the beauty is there and it is of God. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge."

His mind then rises to contemplate the next higher revealing of the glory of God—His law. Here is a region that directly concerns him as the servant of God. It is the region of thought, duty and spiritual life. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether" (Ps. 19:7-9).

Then he opens the windows of his own soul and lets the light of this glorious perfect law and its statutes and commandments shine in, for "in keeping of them there is great reward" (9:11). Yes, *great*—even everlasting—reward.

But—. David wonders. Is that great reward for him? Can he be sure of it? Can *we*? He looks into the depths of his own heart as he writes, "Who can understand his errors?" He is suspicioning himself—there are "errors" perhaps hidden deep, but they are no less errors that will stand between him and the great reward. There is still sin lurking within; he has not yet perfected his obedience to that perfect law of God. Hence, his saintly prayer: "Cleanse thou me."

Should not each of us follow David's example

and look to ourselves? And should not our petition be the same as David's, "Cleanse thou me"?

Then David mentions two basic types of sin, either of which may easily defile our record. Let us listen, because if anyone is qualified to talk about sin, David should be.

"Cleanse thou me from secret faults." It is a saintly prayer against a most deadly type of sin: secret sin.

There are perhaps two types of sin which may be called "secret." The first are those sins into which we fall unawares, and which are in that sense secret even from ourselves. We did not realize it was sin, or we would not have done it. And as soon as we learn, we are ready to turn from it. The second type of "secret sin" are those sins which we practice secretly, and carefully keep secret, sins which are known only to God and ourselves. Both kinds are no less sinful, but the second kind is by far the more vicious because of its intentionally secretive quality. We seldom find it "easy" to overcome even those sins which are evident to all and for which we can have help. But when our sin is secret, first of all it is "secret" because we choose to have it that way; and secondly, we keep it "secret" because we *want* it that way. We coddle it; we cherish it; we *love* it. What could be a more "ideal" environment in which sin may grow! What power have we in ourselves to combat such sin—when we in our weakness are propagating it? How wise was the Psalmist to seek God's help in dealing with such: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." He realized his need for the help of the Lord; and do we not realize *our* need?

What may be the form of the cleansing *He* will send in answer to our prayer? The first may be

a revealing to us of the hideousness of the sin we cherish—let us pray that our eyes may be open to see it as God sees it. Then may follow the desire to be free of it, and open, honest confession, repentance, and turning, perhaps with the help of a trusted brother or sister in the faith. It has been truly said that secret sins are seldom forsaken so long as they remain secret. And of all sad plights imaginable is that of one who has lived in honor and esteem among his fellow Christians, who is suddenly discovered to have been secretly leading a dishonest or impure life. It is like a tree, hollow at the heart, suddenly uprooted. Such cases give dreadful emphasis to the question of the Psalmist: "Who can understand his errors?" Who can unravel the deceitfulness of sin or comprehend its folly, or picture the inward anguish of a life of "secret sin" when it is finally disclosed? Oh, let us pray with the Psalmist: "Cleanse thou me," that I may be spared that shameful revealing. "Cleanse thou me," an actual inward cleansing of the thoughts, desires, and affections from which such sins spring. Perhaps it is a secret opinion, or a harsh or hasty judgment we hold in our mental storehouse. Or perhaps it is an attitude of hostility, felt but unexpressed. It may be only a bit of pride—but oh, how deadly. In anticipation of the searching light of the great Day of Revealing, we ought to blame ourselves bitterly *now* for every secret sin we can discern, for He whom we worship sets "our secret sins in the light of [his] countenance" (Ps. 90:8). What may be made naked and open in the great revealing Day if we do not give all diligence to searching out every secret sin now! What need to pray, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

Then there is another class of sins for which the Psalmist seeks help. But this time his prayer is different. This time he prays not to be pardoned or to be helped in cleansing from sin but to be "kept back," withheld, restrained. He has a healthy fear of sin, and wishes to avoid it. Prevention seems more desirable than cure. But with a profound humility and a knowledge of his own heart that he has acquired, he feels the need of God's help. Of himself he cannot be sure of avoiding the sin he fears. And he wishes at all costs to avoid the consequences. Is not this always the best plan? Thus he prays, "Keep back thy servant . . . from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me."

What is "presumptuous sin"? It is willful sin, literally, "sin with a high hand." It is sin that is plotted, planned, perverse disobedience to God;

it is sin that despises His law, defies His justice, denies His supremacy and does despite to the spirit of grace. It is sin which is an open contradiction to professing to serve God. David dreads the overmastering power of such—perhaps from the depths of his own bitter experience. Hence his prayer, "Let them not have dominion over me."

The more willingly and wilfully we sin, the more do we forge fetters that will tie and bind us to death. Should not we with the Psalmist pray to be kept from all such? Should we not seek to avoid the consequences by avoiding the sin? And should we not realize with him that *our* heart also is deceitful and desperately wicked and in need of divine help if we would walk straight? It was not without meaning that Jeremiah penned those words: "I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." We need God to help us *cleanse* from sin; we need God to help us *keep* from sin.

Then the Psalmist sees a ray of hope. If God will help him, there is hope: "Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (v. 13). Is not *any* sin, whatever its definition or dimension, a "great transgression" when we realize that it will keep us from receiving the approval of God and sharing a place in His Kingdom?

David's whole desire is to be "upright . . . innocent." Upright means literally "perfect"; it is the perfection of which Scripture speaks so often. It is completeness, wholehearted sincerity, complete integrity. It is all good, all pure, with nothing over and nothing lacking.

What, then, is the whole of this saintly prayer? "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," from those sins which are so difficult to bring to view. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins," from those sins which I shall forever regret if I commit them. Let not them or any other conceivable form of sin "have dominion over me. Then shall I be upright"—perfect, pure, acceptable in Thy sight; then shall I be "innocent," and will someday receive that "great reward." ●●

*Smile awhile,
And while you smile
Another smiles, and soon
There's miles and miles
Of smiles and smiles,
And life's worthwhile
—Because you smiled.*

Rejoicing In Hope

(Continued from page 8)

special handling. So does this special inheritance.

God has great and wonderful blessings in store for every loving, loyal child; they are "exceeding, great and precious promises," and does not the thought that they may be reserved—set aside—especially for us, give us greater impetus to complete our work? They are promises of real and lasting value, of things which have no tendency to decay, nor can they lose their bloom and freshness of joy. And if our lives are becoming new, if we are truly born into this living hope, then we too may look forward to a share in that "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." This is what God has promised—do we believe it?

Real, Living, Vital Expectancy

The Apostle's words sparkle with the joyful expectancy he felt—is this expectancy as real to us? Do our hearts thrill at the thought of the inheritance *we* may have? Are we doing the things each day which will certify to us this sublime hope? Are our lives becoming so transformed to the pattern of Christ that we may realistically hope to receive that inheritance? Are we so absorbed with this prospect that to secure it is our first and foremost concern each hour of each day? Do we think about it so persistently and live in such constant awareness

of the divine that we cannot possibly become too interested or too absorbed in anything lesser? Are we so bent on getting our reservations made that we are checking every thought we dwell upon, every motive we act upon, every feeling or word that might prevent that heavenly hope becoming our own? Oh, the careful attention, the steady devotion, the watchfulness that come with true joyful expectancy, as we aspire to being "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" that is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:5). How much that assurance means—it means our very life!

What is the effect of possessing this sublime hope? Peter says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice." Anyone reading this Epistle up to this point would have no faint idea of the magnitude of his trials, or of those of his brethren. Now he mentions them in one brief comment: "Though now, for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (v. 6). "Though now for a season, if need be"—they are temporary at their worst. But if we count the Apostle's words of hope up to this point, we find that he has used more than ten times as many in telling about his sublime hope as he now uses in telling about the present trials. The proportion is worth noting. Is this anything like the proportion in our conversation? Do we have ten times as much to say about the future and our sublime hope as about the present?

Do we sense the weight of Peter's reasoning? Can we overlook the present troubles so easily as he did? Are we fully prepared for anything that might come to us in this world, because of our solid hope in the future and the God who is over it? We can be. We can be so fortified that nothing will sour us, upset us, or cause our hope to dim. Reverses will come; temptations will come. Disappointments will come. We may be frustrated in a long-cherished ambition. Impaired health, or a change of circumstances, or unexpected responsibilities, may prevent us from doing what we had once hoped to do in the Church or the community, but these things cannot affect our constancy toward God. If we are rejoicing in hope when tragedy strikes we will be so fortified by our hope that we can actually make use of it. The stock market may plummet, inflation may eat into the real value of our life's savings, our earthly goods may be damaged or stolen or burned; but come what may, nothing whatever can blight our hope of future success. Whatever comes, we will be able to look up and say, Yes, I have suffered a loss;

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but I can still carry on. The sting cannot always last; and though life may never be quite the same again, someday it will be infinitely better. And even now, I can adjust myself to the changed situation, and with a keener interest in the world to come!

If this be the result of our adversity, let us thank God for it!

More Praise

This was what Peter did. "Blessed be God," he could say, even in the midst of " manifold temptations." All through his words there is a ring of joy. He rejoices in hope; he exults when that blessed hope lives clear and bright in the hearts of his brethren. He strives to "hold fast the . . . rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6). He looks at the trials, but he knows that the heavenly Father "doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men," and that deliverance will come in due time. He knows the Father allows trials "for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10)—and who would wish to have no trials—and miss being a "partaker of his holiness"? Trials must be felt, or they would not try us; the Christian's cross must sometimes be heavy and sharp, but remember its purpose: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:7).

Temptations try the Christian's faith; but temptation resisted and overcome proves faith real and true. Temptation refines faith. Temptation borne meekly and patiently purifies faith and helps us to overcome our pride, self-confidence and worldliness. It gives us a truer picture of ourselves and our need for God, and greatens the soul within. Abraham was greater for his trials; so was Jacob; so was Joseph; so is every patient endurer, for when the testing is over, hope shines the brighter.

The Full Assurance of Hope

Oh, ours is a great, grand, glowing hope. And it is as sure as the existence of the God who created us. "As truly as I live" is His signature upon it. Can we possibly think too much upon it—when multitudes through the ages have been born only to die, and we have been offered a means of escape? Is it not reason enough to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"? Salvation—immortality—life,

God has great and wonderful blessings in store for every loving, loyal child, "exceeding great and precious promises." This is God's promise--do we believe it?

with every conceivable and inconceivable joy and comfort and pleasure—should we not thank God for *any* experience of life that can make that hope more real, more sure, more glorious to us? Those early Christians rejoiced because they had hope; and this same hope can bring joy into our lives today. It is a joy fed by the unfailing spring of divine faithfulness. It is a deep, positive happiness which nothing that happens today or tomorrow can adversely affect. It is joy in the realization that the great things God has promised can actually be ours—because we see ourselves being re-made into the new creatures that God has promised to save. This is what makes hope real to us.

This is what made hope real to Peter. At the time he was writing that First Epistle, he could see it. Hear him addressing himself to his brethren: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ"—Peter's was a special privilege, though doubtless he still recalled that night with a feeling of shame—"and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." Here is the surety that has grown out of a life of faithful service. "Who am . . . also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." Here was genuine hope—"security with a guarantee." Peter *knew* that the future glory would be his. He knew Christ would return one day in the future, and would raise him from the sleep of death and present him "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." He knew that great Day would be his to see and experience, and he rejoiced. Oh, can we imagine the deep joy that must have surged through his being at the thought of it!

And if we but grasp it, believe it and act upon it while our gracious God still gives *us* opportunity, this same joy can be ours. We have been called; we have been instructed. We know the great things which are promised in the Word of God. How can we let either our fortunes or misfortunes in this world affect us unduly? Should we lose everything here, are we not still fabulously rich in the possession of the knowl-

edge that one day we can, if faithful, be a co-inheritor of the unsearchable riches of Christ and in the ages to come be shown the exceeding riches of His grace?

This was Habakkuk's confidence long ago. He had lost everything; yet, hear his words of triumphant joy: "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. 3: 17-18).

How can we afford to do anything that might lessen our chances of having our hope a final and glorious reality to us? Oh, "happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

Let us look ahead each new morning with a deep and overflowing joy in our hope, a joy that will keep our attitude ever holy, helpful, and humble in the service of our King; for someday, someday—someday very soon—these things shall *be!* ●●

**Someday a bright new wave will break upon
the shore,
And there will be no sickness, no more
crying, no more war,
The saints will be immortal, none will suffer
any more,
And there'll be a bright new morning over
there,
There'll be a bright new world for them
to share.**

**Someday there'll be an end to unkind words
and cruel,
The man who said, "There is no God" will
know he was a fool;
And peace will be a way of life when Christ
the earth shall rule,
And there'll be a bright new morning over
there,
There'll be a bright new world for some
to share.**

**Someday, we know not when, when toiling
days are done,
And saints of all the ages shall be gathered
in as one,
Their voices shall be ringing out the victory
they have won,
And there'll be a bright new morning over
there—
Shall we be there that bright new world
to share?**

—Selected.

Our Readers Write...

Thankful

How we thank God for His written Word, which is available to almost everyone today. It is so sad, though, that more men will not read it to see whether or not they believe God's Son. And what is to become of those millions of people who call themselves Jews, but follow neither Jesus nor Moses? And what of the millions of Gentiles who say they follow Christ but in reality follow men?

We have seen the difference between John 3:16 (which everyone seems to freely quote) and John 3:16-21, which explains something. We must all keep on reading the evidence.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

P. B.

Striving

We have really enjoyed the Debate in the Messages of late, between Mr. Jamieson and Mr. Nichols. Yes truly, what is life? We should all be living it to God's glory rather than to see what we can get out of it.

It is so easy to put our old self first in things, and if we aren't very determined to put self down he will creep in anywhere he can. Our old nature is very wily and crafty. But we can overcome if we will and form a godly character, God helping us. When we keep God's commandments, we feel so much better, even now. God truly helps those who help themselves if they do all He wills for them.

Kinards, South Carolina

H. C.

Patiently Waiting

We think of this like a preparation day, as it is the day preceding the great event. It is very important that we have the patience to await the expected event.

Patience is not the possession of children. This is made strikingly evident by the ear-splitting howls the young send up when they must wait for something they want.

There can be no idleness. Children cannot wait because they live in the present, not the future. This is the difference between an immature outlook on life and a mature one. A mature adult will plan for the future and is willing to wait patiently until his plans materialize.

Waiting is a divine requirement. For ages God has required men to wait. In the days of Noah He promised the destruction of that wicked world 120 years in advance. Even though that promised day seemed a long way off, Noah waited for it. Time was not standing still. It continued to move at its unchanging pace, and finally the fateful day arrived.

There are divine promises that we today are expected to wait for. The destruction of the present system, the righteous rule of Christ, eternal peace, the gift of eternal life, all are dependable promises that will be fulfilled at God's appointed time.

Monrovia, Liberia

P. C.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Grateful

We are grateful for your letters and literature, also the services on cassette. The articles in the Messages and also on the cassette have been very good on the subject of the Love of God and "God Is Love." One hears so much of "I love you and God loves you" in so many church and religious groups today that they would really be surprised whom God *does* love if they took the trouble to investigate the true teaching of the Scriptures. It is easy to be deluded or influenced, but one must always make sure it is according to the Word of the Lord, which the multitudes of the world today do not bother to verify. It is easy to follow the crowd.

But we do know that it is written that "I love them that love me: and those that seek me early shall find me" (Prov. 8:17). The study on the Epistles of John covered the subject very good and clearly, showing that true religion and love must be combined in Christian character. We must walk worthy of the love God will bestow upon us if we show our love for Him now in keeping His commandments and rejoicing in them.

Warwick, Queensland, Australia

J. B.

Learning Patience

It seems that all kinds of things keep us on the move. If the things we are doing are only helping us to "wing" our way toward God and His eternal city, it is good. However, many things seem to crop up which take up much of my time which really are trivial and relatively unimportant, but perhaps this is one way to develop patience. I do my best, but sometimes that seems very inadequate. Never having been a very patient soul, I feel that perhaps this is God's way of pointing out to me one of my shortcomings, and that through tribulation I may learn to "let patience have her perfect work." I know that without His help I would be unable to bear some of the things in my life, and it is evidence that He will not let us "be tried beyond that we are able to bear," and that He does make a way of escape. Whatever He deems fit to send me that will help to shape and form a character acceptable in His sight and worthy of perpetuation in the world to come, is what I pray for.

Knoxville, Maryland

J. B.

SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

BIBLE NUMBERS

Choose the correct number in each of the following.

1. When Jesus healed the ten lepers, (one, two, five) returned to give Him thanks. (Luke 17:11-19)
2. In the parable of the Virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom, (five, ten, four) went in with Him to the marriage. (Matt. 25:10)
3. With the loaves and fishes provided by the lad, Jesus fed (five thousand, five million, four thousand) people. (John 6:10)
4. Jesus chose (eleven, twelve, thirteen) apostles. (Luke 6:13)
5. Joseph was (twelve, twenty-one, seventeen) when his brothers were plotting against him. (Gen. 37:2)
6. The Lord sent (ten, twelve, seven) plagues upon the Egyptians before Pharaoh finally let the people go. (Exodus 7-11)
7. (Six, eight, ten) people were saved in the ark in the time of Noah. (Genesis 7)
8. Moses chose (fifty, sixty, seventy) of the elders of Israel, according to the command of the Lord, to assist him in bearing the "burden of the people." (Numbers 11:16-17)
9. Isaac had (two, six, twelve) sons; Jacob had (two, six, twelve) sons; Joseph had (two, six, twelve) sons; Moses had (two, six, twelve) sons. (Gen. 35:22; 46:20; Ex. 18:6)
10. The number of people who accompanied Zerubbabel in the first group of captives to leave Babylon after the captivity was about (ten thousand, fifty thousand, one hundred twenty thousand). (Ezra 2:64-65)
11. Noah remained inside the ark about (one month, six months, a full year). (Genesis 7:11; 8:13-16)
12. Gideon's fighting army that defeated the Midianites consisted of (thirty-three thousand, three thousand, three hundred) men. (Judges 7:15-20)
13. The prophet defeated (four hundred, eight hundred fifty, a thousand) false prophets in a vivid demonstration on Mount Carmel. (I Kings 18)
14. When Jesus confounded the doctors in the temple, He was just (twelve, eighteen, twenty) years of age. (Luke 2:41-45)
15. Enoch lived (three hundred, three hundred sixty-five, nine hundred fifty) years on earth. (Genesis 5:23-24)
16. God gave Solomon great wisdom; he wrote (one thousand, two thousand, three thousand) proverbs, in addition to a thousand and five songs. (I Kings 4:32).

Today Is Mine

*Today is my day,
the day I have been looking for, praying for;
now it is finally my own.
I do not want to waste it,
for it is my sacred opportunity to do good;
it is my time to let the heavenly light
shine in me, through me.
It is my time to be a shining example
of love and cheer.*

*Today is mine,
and no man can rob me of it.
But I must use it while it is mine,
for it will not come again.
Seconds, minutes, hours speed by—
and there is yet so much to do.*

*Yesterday is only a memory, bitter or sweet;
tomorrow is only a promise.
But today is mine.
And if I use today as God marks out,
Tomorrow's promise will be grandly fulfilled.*

*Today is an opportunity I have never had before.
I'll work tomorrow, if I may,
But first I will concentrate on today.*

*Today I will use as a stepping-stone
To glorious heights that are yet unknown.
I will not wait, but lay my plans
And set to work with heart and hands.
For should God speak, I know He'd say,
"My child, what did you do today?"*