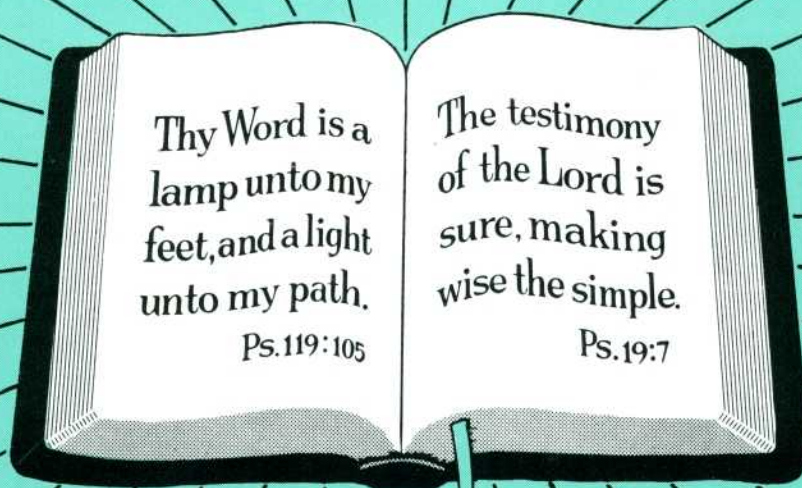


Megiddo Message

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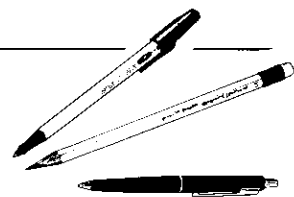


Something Beautiful, Something Good

When Faith Grows Weary

Was David A Man After God's Own Heart?

Where Did Life Come From?



Stand Firm, and Take Action

AT THE CLOSE of several deep chapters of prophecy in the book of Daniel, we find this very practical advice: “the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits” (11:32). The Revised Standard Version renders it: “The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action.”

What better advice could be given any people in any age—especially those living right at the close of Gentile times! In the best of times, in the worst of times, at all times, this is the action taken by those who know their God; it is their reaction to all the evil and sin and corruption around them. While God is being defied or disregarded, they cannot rest. They must *do* something. The evil around them does not contaminate them; it only goads them into action. And what is that action? It is nothing less than a closer binding of themselves to God, a more diligent following of His every precept, a more anxious desire to fill their place in His plan. They cannot change the world, but they know they can and *must* change themselves into the people He can recognize. And so they take action.

This is exactly what Daniel did. His lot was not cast among God-fearing people, with those who would do nothing but love and encourage him. From a very young age he was among strangers in a foreign land. But he actively stood out against the conventions and dictates of his contemporaries, against irreligion and false religion. He stood firm, and took action. Daniel in particular appears as one who would not allow himself the least compromise with the evil around him; rather than risk possible defilement with the evil, he stood firm against it. That was his plan when only a youth, when he was offered to eat of the king’s palace food. And some seventy years later, he was still adhering to the same uncompromisingly high prin-

ciples. When the Persian King Darius suspended the practice of prayer, under threat of death, Daniel not merely went on praying three times a day but did so in front of an open window, “as was his custom” (Dan. 6:10). He stood firm and took action. It was not that Daniel was an awkward, cross-grained fellow who luxuriated in rebellion and could be happy only when he was squarely against something. It was simply that he was one of those who know their God and so are sensitive to situations in which God’s truth and honor may be jeopardized, and rather than let the matter go by default they force the issue and stand firm, even if it involves personal risk. This was Daniel’s course—and conviction; no compromising, no retaliation; just “stand firm and take action.”

Nor is such action aimed at public appearance. Men who know their God are above all else men who are humble, and whose first concern is their own spiritual enrichment. They are men who pray, and the first point where their zeal and energy for God’s glory come to expression is in their prayers. In Daniel 9 we read how, when the prophet “understood by the books” that the foretold time of Israel’s captivity was drawing to an end, and when at the same time he realized that the nation’s sin was still such as to provoke God’s judgment rather than mercy, he set himself to seek God “by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes” (v.3), and prayed for the restoring of Jerusalem with a vehemence and a passion that showed his wholehearted commitment to God’s holiness.

We are not in Daniel’s position; we are not obligated to make public gestures against ungodliness and apostasy. But we can all stand firm and take action against these tendencies in ourselves. This will be evidence conclusive that we “know God,” and are known by Him. MM

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—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

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

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

Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People

Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

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

Megiddo Message

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Something Beautiful, Something Good

IT IS the title of a sacred song composed during the last decade. And much more. It speaks of two qualities that belong especially to God and to all His works: beauty and goodness. It speaks also of the qualities He wishes to see in us. In the words of the song,

Something beautiful, something good;
All my confusion He understood;
All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife,
And He made something beautiful of my life.

—By Gloria Gaither, copyright 1976 by Paragon Associates, Inc.,
Nashville, TN

While it is true that God does not do expressly for us, in us, without our consent and without our doing on our part, still it is true that goodness and beauty are divine qualities and we need His help in adding them. When we incorporate them in our lives, we do it by following divine specifications. For beauty and goodness belong to God.

Beauty . . .

How destitute, how barren would be even our world without these two qualities. Beauty, that strange, indefinable loveliness that touches the lowliness of earth with the grace of heaven. Beauty, that perfection of harmony, grace and symmetry that enhances life and vibrates some responsive chord within. Something in us is stirred, awakened, aroused. The beauty may be simple—a rural landscape in the evening; a stoney, babbling brook; a broad expanse of earth and sky, or the majestic grandeur of mighty mountains. It may be the touch of delicate color in the tiny petals of a flower, or the celestial melody that thrills the heart and lifts the soul. Whatever it is, it is of God. We call it beauty and are reminded that He has “made everything beautiful in his time” (Eccl. 3:11).

Note: “*Something Beautiful, Something Good*” is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

God means that His handiwork in this natural world should remind us continually of His infinite creative power. Never did He mean that life should be dull and full of drudgery; He designed our world so that life can be meaningful; life can be beautiful.

But grand as these beauties are, they are only parables of grander beauties above and beyond the created world, beauties that not only adorn but also enrich, endure and in the fullest sense satisfy. These are the beauties of a clean character, a holy life, a pure heart. What can be more beautiful than the raiment of the “king’s daughter” who is “all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold”? (Ps. 45:13). The beauty of lily or rose cannot compete for loveliness with the graces of love and peace; nor can the majesty of a stately tree rival the solid grandeur of a life rooted and grounded in Christ; and the gorgeous sunset is far less grandly beautiful than the calm evening of a holy, perfect life.

God calls most beautiful that which is most like Himself. Whoever thought of a stubborn, headstrong child as “beautiful”? Instinctively we associate beauty and character; should not God do the same? It is the principle contained in the childhood rhyme:

*Beautiful hands are those that do
Deeds that are noble, good and true;
Moment by moment the long day through.*

*Beautiful feet are those that go
On kindly errands to and fro—
Down humblest ways, if God wills so.*

*Beautiful faces are those that wear—
It matters little if dark or fair—
Whole-souled honesty printed there.*

What does it all mean? Beauty is as beauty does. When God judges beauty, He judges by His own standard.

Goodness . . .

The same is true with goodness. All through His Word God extols the virtue of goodness and encourages it in His children. He gives “good things to them that ask” Him (Matt. 7:11). He delights in

“good trees” that bear an abundance of “good fruit” (Matt. 7:18-20). Along with the fruits of peace, longsuffering and gentleness is that of “goodness” (Gal. 5:22-23). He has ordained from the beginning that His children should walk in “good works” (Eph. 2:10). He loves the sacrifice that is “good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2). He commends the righteous man who out of the “good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good” (Matt. 12:35). The good seed of the kingdom planted in good ground are they “which, in an honest and good heart, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Luke 8:15). Truly God loves goodness.

One time a young man came to Jesus with a question. “Good Master,” he addressed Him, “what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?” (Matt. 19:16-17). His aim was high—he was seeking *eternal life*—and he wanted to know the exact level of goodness of which eternal life is the reward. He was asking, in effect, “Good Master, how may I become good like you?”

Jesus’ answer was simple, yet how inclusive: “If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.” It was not the definition of goodness that the young man had expected; nor did he comprehend half of its meaning, as his self-assured answer revealed: “What lack I yet?” Clearly, the young man’s definition of “good” and Jesus’ definition of goodness were as far apart as east and west. He came to Jesus because he realized he needed *something*, but when he learned the fuller meaning of goodness and what it involved, it was too much. He went away sorrowful.

True Beauty—Treasure from Heaven

Something beautiful, something good—what can it be? Have we ever seen anything that measures up to God’s definition of “that which is good”? We *have*—it is the “pearl of great price,” the Word of God, treasure from heaven. Here is beauty that cannot fade. Yea rather, it grows the more beautiful with every passing season. Time serves only to hallow and consecrate its glory. Here is goodness that cannot be surpassed, the unfadable glory of divine knowledge. With all thanks to our great God who designed and provided it, and to our founder who uncovered its beauty in these last days, this matchless treasure is *ours*! It is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is the way of *salvation*, the way to life, *eternal* life. Can we comprehend it? It is beautiful beyond description. And it is good, *supremely good*! Here is knowledge that can obtain for us everything that

**When God judges beauty,
He judges by His own
standard. Beauty is as
beauty does.**

we can ever ask for or even imagine—and it is ours! Here is knowledge that can perpetuate our lives beyond this short span.

Do we appreciate it as we should? Do we prize it above all else? Do we realize the intrinsic worth of this jewel that is ours to guard and keep, to have and handle every day?

If we were trusted to keep in our home some great earthly treasure—perhaps a rare painting worth millions of dollars, or the crown of an ancient monarch—would we not take the charge seriously? Would we not thrill at the thought that we had been trusted with so great a treasure? Nor would we be able to enter or leave our home without thinking of it, without giving one more lingering look to be sure all was well. Would it not be a pre-occupation with us day and night?

Just so should we treasure the jewel of divine knowledge that is ours—for far, far surpassing is its value. This jewel was not made or mined on earth; it is treasure from *heaven*! Words fail to describe its beauty, nor can the standards of earth measure it. As expressed in the words of a song composed years ago by our founder, near the end of his quest for this jewel:

*Oh the unfadable beauties of truth!
Better than all we behold;
Beauties abounding in mercies there found,
Better, far better, than gold.*

Why is the Word of God so beautiful, so good? Because it was designed by God and written under His direction. When we study the Bible, we are not studying the product of some man’s imagination. We are studying the work of God.

Indeed, the whole plan of salvation which it presents is divine, beautiful, good. A plan as broad and boundless as the universe, it reaches “from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps. 103:17-18), including all who fear Him and “remember his commandments to do them” (v. 18). Within the compass of that plan is goodness beyond the mind of mortals to conceive. There is “peace that passeth

understanding" (Phil. 4:7). There is love "which passeth knowledge," love that has breadth, and length, and depth and height, that fills its possessor with "all the fulness of God" (Eph. 3:17-19). Within the compass of this plan is blessing "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20), and rewards which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9). Is not this heavenly beauty?

The Law of the Lord

Along with this beautiful plan is a beautiful, good law. "The law of the Lord is perfect"—it cannot be excelled. It is a law the whole limit round about which is "most holy" (Ezek. 43:12). It is a law that is "sure making wise the simple," with statutes that are "right, rejoicing the heart," commandments that are "pure, enlightening the eyes," fear of the Lord which is "clean, enduring for ever," and judgments that are "true and righteous altogether" (Ps. 19:7-11). The longest Psalm (119) is filled to overflowing with phrases extolling the greatness of God's laws, their beauty, their goodness.

Not only are we privileged inheritors of this great

law, but God has revealed to us "great things" out of that law (Hos. 8:12). Among these we might include our knowledge of His plan for this earth, the perfecting and glorifying of a people to inhabit it forever; His plan to rid the world of all sin and evil and fill it with His glory; His plan to include every humble, faithful servant in that plan. Also among the "great" things of this plan are His provisions for His children, His promise to guard and guide them safely through the experiences of their lives to one great end—life in His re-made world. Indeed, it is something beautiful, something good.

This Law is especially good in that it is a law *unto life*. It is not leading us down a blind alley or around a circular path. It is heading us straight toward Zion, "the heavenly Jerusalem," the "city of the great King" (Heb. 12:22; Ps. 48:1-2). It is the wisdom of God which holds in her left hand "riches and honor" and in her right hand "length of days" (Prov. 3:13-18). It is a law which commands a blessing upon the mountain of Zion, upon every faithful one, "even life for evermore" (Ps. 133:3).

Behind all these promises stands the Immutable Word of the Lord, a mighty bulwark of evidence, evidence so profound that even the hardest-set skeptics cannot overthrow it. Through the centuries men have tried, but time and again they have

Let Us Pray...

Father of mercies and God of all comfort, in tender love and mercy we beseech Thee to look upon Thy servants and bless us in every effort we make toward purity and righteousness. We praise Thee for the light of Thy Word. We rejoice that the eyes of our understanding have been enlightened to behold wondrous things out of Thy law.

Apart from this light we should be without Thee, without Christ, and without hope in the world. Grant us the insight to apply the light to our daily living. May we employ the searchlight of Thy Word to search out and eliminate every dark corner in our hearts and eradicate all the dark shadows of evil. May we let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify Thee in the Day of Visitation. Help us to put off every way of the flesh and put on purity, put on the new man created in righteousness and true holiness. Help us to bear the lovely fruits of the Spirit in our everyday living, and cease bearing the fruits of the flesh.

Give us the insight to want to be beautiful from Thy point of view, and to do the things that will

develop that beauty. Warn us against thinking anything will look beautiful to Thee unless it be of the finest quality, the new creature fully transformed by the power of the gospel. Father, give us the insight to see ourselves just as we look to Thee, and not try to think ourselves into holiness if we lack that quality, aware that Thou art a God of knowledge, and by Thee actions and only actions are weighed.

Help us to put first things first, to seek first Thy Kingdom and its righteousness, to seek it above every earthly treasure, to give our best, our very best in Thy glorious Cause. Help us not to delay the doing of these important things, conscious that to delay means eternal death. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation; it is now or never.

Give us a faith that is strong and enduring, the will power to overcome every obstacle of the flesh. May we not allow anything of the fleeting present to deter us from keeping Thy holy commandments and running our course steadfast to the end; fully assured that every good work done for Thee shall be amply rewarded in the world to come. In Jesus' name. Amen.

had to bow before its weight of authority—the reports of many witnesses, an empty tomb, the transforming power of the gospel, and the powerful unfaltering testimony of its advocates. It has not failed yet; nor shall it, for the “truth of the Lord endureth forever. . . Praise ye the Lord” (Ps. 117:2).

The Beauty of a Perfect Character

There is something else which God considers beautiful—and which He will someday beautify eternally. It is the re-made, re-molded, re-fashioned man or woman, those whom He delights to call “Israel, my glory,” “Israel, my joy, mine inheritance.” Those who purify their lives according to His laws, become morally like their great God and are, in His sight, beautiful. They are beautiful because adorned with the “beauty of holiness.”

The “beauty of holiness” had singular meaning and appeal to the Israelites of old, partly because of their background and experience, and partly because of their relation to the symbols of their faith. To every devout Jew, Jerusalem was “the perfection of beauty,” “the joy of the whole earth” (Ps. 48:2), because the temple of the Lord was in Jerusalem. Its ritual, its white-robed priests and Levites, the choral psalms, clangor of trumpets, harps, cymbals, all seemed the highest ideal of worship, the very visible aspect of the “beauty of holiness.”

But the words, “O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,” as they are recorded for us, convey the higher, more spiritual meaning to which the physical pointed, of which all the glory of the temple-worship was but a faint shadow. The first consideration is to be *holiness*; beauty is the result.

Holiness is literally that which is like God, consecrated to God, dedicated, devoted. In this sense, things, ceremonies, as well as persons, can be “holy to the Lord,” and in ancient Israel, many “things” were counted holy for this reason. Even the ground round the burning bush was holy (Ex. 3:5) as long as God’s presence was there. So was the place where, for the time, the tabernacle was pitched. Anything employed in God’s service was holy.

Are we *ourselves* not in this category, if we are trying to be beautiful before God?

In Israel, no pains were spared to impress the idea that nothing is too pure or too good to give to God. Victims offered on His altar were to be without blemish; vessels of precious metal and perfect workmanship; bread, unleavened; altar,

The true Christian is altogether new—he is the largest built of any man; has the biggest, strongest heart; the broadest, most farsighted vision; and the deepest understanding.

built of whole stones; priests, free of all bodily defect; the very clothes of the worshipers washed and clean.

The lesson was that of holiness—all must be purified to meet God’s searching eye. All was directed to the higher, deeper view of holiness to which all the outward forms of holiness were designed to lead. It was God’s appeal even to Israel: “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” Could any Israelite be so dull as to fail to see that the outward ceremonies were meant to inspire deeper reverence, profound worship in thinking and speaking of God and in drawing man to Him, that God’s holiness must be personal purity, righteousness, goodness, that to be truly holy we must be “like God”? (Ex. 6:1-8). Was not this high ideal what attracted the best of the people to worship God in sincerity and in truth, to aspire to the great rewards He was offering?

This is the highest ideal of which humankind are capable of thinking. Men and women may have great minds, but if they limit them to the goals and possibilities of the present world, they are losing the best, that which is truly beautiful and good. There is nothing to equal the excellence of God-like character, God’s own character. Thought cannot soar higher than this. The Biblical ideal of divine holiness—perfect moral and spiritual excellence—so far excels all goals of this world as the noonday excels the night.

Through the power of the gospel *we* ourselves can have opportunity to become this beautiful, new creation. The power of God can so transform us that God will call us “beautiful.” We know, of course, that the process is by no means automatic, nor is it without the help and consent—and *effort*—of the person transformed. Still, it is a transformation to the beauty that belongs to God. Marvelous indeed is the fact that the “worthless creature” can become “wise,” that the “wild colt” nature can be trained and used by God!

**The whole plan of salvation is
divine, beautiful, good.
It is a plan as broad and
boundless as the universe.**

New and Beautiful

It has been said that God is not in the business of making "duds"; every child of His is supremely beautiful—and this is true, if we think of every recreated being, each one who is created in righteousness and true holiness, as His child. Is not each one who wholly remakes himself or herself into that new creature, that perfect mental and moral image of God, worthy of such a term as "good"? Are they not promised His highest of all high commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

Each of us can, by patient continuance in well doing, become part of God's beautiful new creation, as beautiful and as good as the truth we exemplify. Someone has called these persons "the Exemplified Version," the Bible seen in everyday persons, exemplified in real life. In the words of the song, "Let thy word be seen in me." That is what each of us is called to do, to be a living epistle, the gospel of God in real day-to-day life. This is the true beauty of the Lord.

The developing of this inner beauty is what Paul described as God's *new* creation. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). What is more beautiful than something *new*!

Let us look closely at this passage. Here is a *new* creation; something is "new" *because something that was "old" has changed*. There has been a change as a result of being "in Christ." *Who* has changed? Surely not God, for He *cannot* change; and more, He does not *need* to change. He could never become more just, or more merciful, or more righteous, or more pure, or more holy, for He is already the perfect embodiment of all these. The new creature is the result of a change on *man's* part and on *man's* exclusively. That is why Paul speaks of our need to be reconciled to God, never of God's need to be reconciled to us (II Cor. 5:15). If ever we find ourselves further from God, we can know who has moved—not God away from us, but we away from God.

Let us look closely to see how we may become this beautiful, good, "new creature," this entirely new creation. Paul says, "If any man be in Christ"—here is our first task, to be "in Christ." To Paul, being "in Christ" meant to be in His character, to live in His ideas, to subscribe to His principles, to seek His goals. It was part of becoming acquainted with that ultra-powerful force, the "love of Christ" which "constraineth" everyone who seeks earnestly to be conformed to His character image.

No ordinary love is this love of Christ. Paul described it in another place as "without dissimulation," love that abhors that which is evil and cleaves to that which is good, love that is kindly affectioned toward another—and more: "with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." No area of life is left untouched by this remaking love.

Christ's love, the power of His example, is the flame that kindles ours, and a mighty force it is in daily life. This love of Christ, the love that characterized Christ's life, is love that kept Christ doing always those things that pleased His heavenly Father. This was the dominant passion of Paul's life. It "constrained" him. It carried him on like a resistless torrent. It was something that propelled him forward, to do those things he would not naturally have done.

This constraining, propelling power of love, this all-out commitment to Christ, was something quite incomprehensible to those who had known him before. In fact, his contemporaries thought him mad. What he had above other men, so far as they could see, was not praises and gain, but losses, labors and reproaches. Yet he endured all because he had in him the mainspring of faith in the high calling of God, the holy energy of Christ, and the overpowering desire to be *like* Christ. They saw him brave the greatest perils, oppose the greatest powers, make the greatest sacrifices. What they could not see was the principle that moved him in all this, or the goal that attracted him. Had it been for ambition or avarice, they would have understood. But for "Christ," and being "in Christ" and attaining the prize to which Christ had called him—all this was something they knew nothing about.

The man "in Christ" has a new social standard. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh." The world has numerous standards by which it judges men—birth, wealth, office, etc. But to a man filled and fired with the hope of Christ, these are nothing. God evaluates a man by his rectitude, not by his rank; by his spirit, not by his station; by his principles, not by his property.

The "Remade" Man

The man "in Christ" has a new spiritual history—"therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." In what sense can this change be called a creation? Because it is the production of something *new*. It implies an inner change that is equivalent to the making of a new product. The new creature is not merely an improved, reformed, or revised version of the old, which might imply mere external changes; he is so totally remade that he is *new*. He is God's *remade* man. He is totally different from what he formerly was at his best. The change is radical. It goes to the roots of his being. The old has passed away, the old self, old in taste, old habits, the old unbelief rooted in the fleshly mind, the old worldliness, the old desires—all the old things are passed away; all things have become new.

Have we made this change—from old to new?

And this word "all" is another big word. "All things" are become new means that all pertaining to this change in its cause, agency, and completion, are "of God." Strong language is this, but no stronger than the reality it represents. The change to the "new creature in Christ" is a great change, the greatest of which human beings are capable. Nay, words cannot adequately describe it.

Controlling the "Inside"

The creation of something so beautiful, so good as this "new creature," is a process that begins on the inside, just as a change of action must begin with the redirecting of the thoughts; for thoughts are the springboard for action. Thus when Paul writes, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," he is saying, "You must begin on the inside, that is the only way you can become new." To put it in terms of a simile, let your behavior be represented by steam (the result), your thoughts by fire (the cause) and your emotions by water (the means). Apply the fire of thought to the water of emotion. This produces the steam of behavior. The steam is the only visible evidence that there is fire, for thoughts cannot be seen. But when you see steam, you know that there is fire and there is water. A heavy lid may curb the steam of behavior, but unless you curb the fire of thought, the heaviest lid will blow off. Thus, if we lose the control of ourselves, when the old nature manifests itself, it is not because we failed to restrain our actions with heavier lids, but because we did not turn down the flame of our thoughts that boils the waters of our emotions.

This is something the person "in Christ," the

"new creature," has learned to do—to control the behavior of his life by controlling the fire of his thoughts. It is the supreme motto of Christlike living: *Control, control, control*. With our thoughts under control, we will be able to judge life by a new standard. "All things are [now] of God." That is, all things of the new creation. Here is a new relationship building with God, a change from enmity to friendship. Alienation from God means death. A river cut from the fountain dries up; a branch severed from the tree soon withers; a planet cut from the sun is lost. A man separated from the source of life soon dies. In the same way, the man "in Christ" must be attached, firmly, securely, forever united to the source of life—God.

The "new creature" lives in a new world because his outlook is changed; for the looks of the world we live in depends on our outlook upon it. As we become "new," there is a transformation in our values. Some of the things we once valued most lose their appeal. Trials, disappointments, hardship instead of being mere doom or black misfortunes, take on new meaning and become the means of God's challenge or discipline. Like the tools of the master potter, they are sent to give the cup both grace and beauty,

Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
To try thee, and turn thee forth,
sufficiently impressed.

"If any man be in Christ"—here is the means to making something beautiful, something good of *our* lives. But it is nothing automatic. What does Christ do for us? He takes what we are naturally—insipid, narrow-minded, childish, full of whims and notions, selfishness, and fear of exposing our inner lives—and remakes us into something altogether new and beautiful, a new creation that is a reflection of His own image. For the true Christian is altogether new—he is the largest built of any man; has the biggest, strongest heart; the broadest, most farsighted vision; and the deepest understanding.

No Easy Way

But the responsibility for the changing process is ours and ours alone. There is no easy way but to submit ourselves to the changing process, to examine ourselves closely to discover those elements in our lives that need changing, and then, with God's help, actually make the change.

(Continued on page 24)

Where Did Life Come From?

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AT ONE TIME or another most everyone asks the question, "Where did life come from?" Bound up with the answer is the question, "What is man's purpose on the earth?" There are essentially two main viewpoints on this question: the atheist position which, in essence, says life came about through change, time and fortuitous events; and the Creationist position, which teaches that everything living was created by a Creator, whom Christians call God. Christianity, since its inception, has taught that life was created by God for a specific purpose. For example, Revelation 4:7 says, in part, "... You [God] created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created." Likewise, Judaism has always taught the same doctrine (see Gen. 1:1-8).

One of the earliest evidences for creation is the observation that order does not come about by chance; and if left to itself, in time, *disorder* results. Archeologists, doing field research, are usually able to discern whether or not an object was produced by natural events (such as wind) or whether it was produced by man, by the *degree of order the object shows*. Order indicates that some outside intelligent agent (which in the case of an archeologist was another man) has applied order to the "randomness" (or lower level of order) which naturally exists in the non-living world.

It is true that the plant and animal kingdoms both manifest a great deal of order, but this order *preexists* in the animal or plant; i.e., it was inherited and is passed on through reproduction. In other words, except for the plant and animal worlds (and the "world" made by man), the natural world operates according to *preexisting physical laws and randomness*. The plant and animal worlds operate within natural forces according to a set of laws that man does not yet fully understand. Plants and animals represent a level of design which is not even remotely found in the non-living world, hence the belief that the living world *could not come from the non-living world*. Someone had to make or create the living world.

As research chemist E. C. Kornfield (*The*

Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe) stated:

While laboring among the intricacies and definitely minute particles in a laboratory, I frequently have been overwhelmed by a sense of the infinite wisdom of God. . . one is rather amazed that a mechanism of such intricacy could ever function properly at all. . . the simplest man-made mechanism requires a planner and a maker. How a mechanism ten times more involved and intricate can be conceived as self-constructed and self developed is completely beyond me.

In other words, the high level of complexity found everywhere in the living world is far beyond that of the non-living world, and the products produced by the non-living world (such as smooth stones polished by the moving water of a stream or ocean) could never produce either plant or animal life.

A number of researchers have, through a wide variety of ways, concluded that the probability of life arising by chance is so small that we can only conclude that this is an impossibility. For example, the mathematician Grey noted that by putting ten black and ten white balls into a box and drawing them out in random lots of ten the probability of drawing either ten white or ten black balls is 5 times in 1 million! If we increase the number and draw 100 balls, the probability of drawing 100 black or 100 white balls is so low as to be, for all practical purposes, nonexistent!

How then could the chance distribution of molecules ever lead to development of life? The reasoning that leads us to this conclusion is that living molecules contain a number of elements which must be "lined up" or arranged in a certain order, and the probability of the required order in a single protein molecule arising from chance would be 10 to the 43rd power (the number 10 followed by 43 zeros!), a figure which removes chance arrangements of these molecules outside of the realm of possibility. And we are only speaking of the

"chance arrangement" and not a functional arrangement, i.e., an arrangement that works. I can arrange the gears of a clock in the correct order, but the clock will not work unless the gears are properly meshed, spaced, secured and so on.

A problem with understanding the concept "life" is that we do not know exactly which "elements" are necessary for life to exist, although we are able to delineate the chemicals which seem to be necessary. But yet, putting these chemicals together does not give us "life." This is one of the main arguments of Lecomte du Nouy in his book, *Human Destiny*. In addition, the proper arrangement of elements to form protein molecules is only one small aspect of life. Most animals are made up of cells and, according to one author, "the cell is as complicated as New York City" (*Look* magazine, January 16, 1962).

Princeton University biologist Edwin Conklin concluded that "the probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a print shop." This famous illustration helps us understand that complex systems *do not come about by chance* but are the product of a designer. Likewise, books do not come about by chance, but are the product of reasoning intelligent human beings (although some books published today . . . cause us to wonder). Even Darwin himself recognized the

extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving of this immense and wonderful universe, including man with his capacity of looking far backward and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity.

Life From Non-Life

An important part of the question, "Where did life come from?" is the question of spontaneous generation, i.e., where life would, if a set of circumstances were correct, produce itself. This possibility is no longer accepted—except by some, and then only for the beginning of life. Here, some feel, somehow the first living thing spontaneously generated itself—and every living thing thereafter evolved from this "first" living thing. Whether we tend to feel that spontaneous generation operated only once to produce the first living thing, or whether it regularly operates today to produce flies from decaying meat or bees from dead carcasses, some statements from noted scientists will help us understand how difficult it is to accept the belief

that "life" is able to come from "non-life," or something living from something that is nonliving.

Astronomer G. Stromberg (*Science of Mind*, Sept. 1958): stated that: "We are convinced that *nihil ex nihilo* (out of nothing, nothing comes)." Physicist Lord Kelvin stated emphatically, "I am ready to adopt, as an article of scientific faith, true through all space and time, that *life proceeds from life and from nothing but life.*" As Lord Kelvin declared (*Nineteenth Century*): "If you think strongly enough you will be *forced by Science to a belief in God.*" Adds scientist Max Planck ("Science of Mind," Dec. 1955): "There is no explanation of the universe apart from the assumption of a Supreme Creative Intelligence." Albert Einstein (*The World as I See It*, New York Philosophical Library, 1949:27) affirmed that the scientist's religious feelings "take the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection." Or as Robert Jastrow, the well-known scientist said: "For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story (of his quest for the answers of the universe) ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries" (*The Detroit Free Press*, July 2, 1978).

Of this principle of science (called "biogenesis") *The Encyclopedia Americana* says: "From the Greek words *bios*, (life) and *genesis* (birth, source, creation) is the biological term for the doctrine that *living organisms are produced only by other living organisms*. . . biologists are now not only in unanimous agreement that *all life derives from preceding life*, but that the parent organism and its offspring are of the same kind."

This principle tells us that there is nothing living on earth, animal or vegetable, that did not receive its life from previous life, from a superior, mature parent. Since this law of biogenesis states that life proceeds only from preexisting life, there must have been a preexisting life that started all life. And since life cannot create itself the source of life must be God. As we read in Psalm 36:5, 9, "O Lord . . . with you is the source of life." MM

A man's worth in God's sight is according to his conduct.



When Faith Grows Weary

Lessons from the Book of Malachi Part Two

LIKE other prophets of God, Malachi was fearless in his indictment of evil, while at the same time holding out hope glorious for the future.

Israel had lost faith; God seemed a long way off. And a loss of faith had led to lax worship. A corrupt priesthood ministered to the people, and as the priests, so the people. Without godly leaders, morality had reached a new low.

Q. In our last lesson we studied Israel's failure to respect God in worship. What was Malachi's next task?

A. He rebuked them for a serious violation of the moral law. They were taking wives of the nations surrounding them. Worse than that, they were forsaking their legal wives to do this.

Q. We should read these verses. Can we have verses 10-12 of chapter 2, from the New English Bible?

A. "Why do we violate the covenant of our forefathers by being faithless to one another? Judah is faithless, and abominable things are done in Israel and in Jerusalem; Judah has violated the holiness of the Lord by loving and marrying daughters of a foreign

god. May the Lord banish any who do this from the dwellings of Jacob, nomads or settlers, even though they bring offerings to the Lord of Hosts."

Q. Mixed marriages were an abomination to God and a violation of their covenant. Such marriages were strictly forbidden. Can we have Bible evidence for this?

A. Moses gave such a command: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them [the nations]; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly" (Deut. 7:3-4).

Q. Nehemiah found these very conditions in Jerusalem when he returned for his second visit, hence we may conclude that Malachi prophesied at that time. Nehemiah was quick to take action. Perhaps we should read a few verses from the last chapter of Nehemiah: "In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: and their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the

language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves" (Neh. 13:23-25).

Q. It was a very serious sin. Whose sin did Nehemiah compare it with?

A. He cited the sin of Solomon, and showed how marrying foreign wives brought about his downfall. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?" (vs. 26-27).

Q. Solomon had a great beginning, but what a shameful end. These Israelites might have profited from his experience; but they had not, else they would not have committed the same sin. Their lax habits of worship had

led to a lessening of faith which, in turn, led to a decline in morals.

What is the lesson for us?

A. Losing faith leads to sin, and the way of sin is all downhill—one sin leads to another. They were adding sin to sin.

Q. We know from Nehemiah's account that the priests were also involved, for in verse 28 he tells of one of the sons of a priest that was son-in-law to the non-Israelite Sanballat—one of their worst enemies. Of him Nehemiah says, "I chased him from me." Then Nehemiah called on the Lord to "remember them, . . . because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites."

Malachi showed God's displeasure at this same sin in verse 12 of the second chapter. Would someone please read it to us?

A. "The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts." The "master and the scholar" suggested the relationship between the priests and the people. It was a case of the blind leading the blind, and both were destined for the ditch.

Q. The sinner that failed to reform would be permanently banned and would have his offering refused. A serious sentence; but verses 13 and 14 seem to indicate they made a mockery of repentance. Could we have these from the New English Bible?

A. "Here is another thing that you do: you weep and moan, and you drown the altar of the Lord with tears, but he still refuses to look at the offering or receive an acceptable gift from you. You ask why. It is because the Lord has borne witness against you on behalf of the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your

partner and your wife by solemn covenant."

Q. God was not moved by their tears because they were not tears of contrition. He knew they were not sincere. They had shown no change of heart. Their wickedness had raised a barrier between them and God so that He would not hear and accept their offering.

What verse in Isaiah describes this condition?

A. Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Q. God knows the heart. He knows our hearts, and He knew theirs. He knew their tears were not genuine. His all-seeing eyes were witness to their sin; yet in their blindness they asked why God would not receive their offering. The sin was serious, but they were not willing to admit their guilt. Under Jewish law, marriage was considered a sacred vow and covenant, and they had broken that covenant. They had divorced their wives and married foreign wives.

What was the Prophet's word to them?

A. That they take heed to what they were doing and not "deal treacherously" against their legal wives. "For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away" (vs. 15-16).

Q. Newer translations make those verses clearer. The Berkeley Version renders "putting away" as divorce. "For I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel, and the one who covers his clothing with cruelty, says the Lord of hosts. So take heed. . . , and be not unfaithful."

To "deal treacherously" was to be unfaithful, to divorce a legal wife. God not only condemned it, but said He hated it. Does He look at it any differently today, since divorce laws have been liberalized and divorce has become so common and so widely accepted by modern society?

A. No. A recent report says that one out of every two marriages ends in divorce. But God does not hate it any less now than He did then. His laws have not changed. To Him, evil practices never become good by becoming common.

Q. Israel had allowed God's law to become commonplace to them and were not heeding it. Whatever they did looked all right to them. We must beware, lest we do likewise, and allow His law to become commonplace to us, for human nature is just the same today as it was in Malachi's day.

It was their loss of faith that was the root of their trouble. Verse 17 further shows this characteristic. Would someone please read it.

A. "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?"

Q. What does it mean that they had "wearied the Lord" with their words? Does God get weary?

A. God does not suffer physical weariness, but He does get weary of insincere words to the point that He no longer listens.

We might say that they wearied Him with their murmuring and discontent. They even went so far as to call evil good, and good evil. God will have none of that, for He has pronounced a woe upon all who say such things.

Q. When they said, "Everyone that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord," they were voicing the age-old complaint, "Why do the wicked prosper?" All they could see was the punishment, not the cause of it. They thought the wicked nations around them were prospering more than they. What was the real problem?

A. It was God's way of punishing them. They were suffering for their own wickedness, not because God was showing any favor to the wicked. But they could not see it this way.

Q. Their statement, "Where is the God of judgment?" shows their lack of faith. God was no longer real to them; they were out of touch with Him. But though they did not realize it, He had not deserted them; they had deserted God.

There was yet another way in which they had neglected Him. It is in the third chapter.

A. The prophet said they were robbing God by not paying their tithes. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation" (Mal. 3:8-9).

Q. As with their other sins, they had lost their sensitivity to sin, and were unaware of the offense. Their question, "Wherein have we robbed thee?" has a self-justifying tone about it. It was like saying, "We don't owe you anything; what have you done for us?"

Was it only money they were withholding from God?

A. No. Robbing God in tithes and offerings was not referring simply to ignoring the weekly collection. In verse 7 the Prophet said, "Ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them." To not show due respect to God's

law and its observance is to rob God.

The neglect of the portion for the Levites was another part of their spiritual robbery. This was one of the evils mentioned by Nehemiah when he returned to Jerusalem. Nehemiah told how he found the Levites working in the field because they had not received their portion.

Q. Is a tithe of 10% of our money all God wants today?

A. He wants much more than our money—He wants us. He wants our *all*, our time, our talents, our wholehearted service. And we have to give it to Him both willingly and cheerfully. Paul said that "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7).

Q. In Malachi 3:10 the Prophet speaks for God, challenging the people to bring Him their tithes and offerings and prove whether or not He will again bless them. But like many another statement in the Bible, it had a present meaning for them and a future meaning for us. Are we giving Him all we owe?

It would be well for us to look to ourselves and see whether we are giving Him His due, or whether we are giving Him what we happen to have left over after we have done everything we want to do for ourselves. If we are looking out for ourselves to the exclusion of God's interests, or if His interests are secondary, we cannot expect an eternal recompense from Him:

In verse 12 the Prophet says, "And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts."

Were all the nations suddenly to become Israel's friends if they paid their tithes to the Lord?

A. No, that verse is prophetic. The time has not yet come when Israel is a delightful land. The prophecy applies to spiritual Israel,

God's true people who will be called "blessed," and the time when it will be fulfilled is yet future.

The earth made over new with the New Jerusalem as its capital will be the delightful land, the nation that will be blessed. And this will not be until after Christ comes.

Q. The Prophet has yet one more rebuke for back-slidden Israel. What is it?

A. Concerning their words. "Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?"

Q. As with all the previous rebukes, they acted as though there were nothing wrong. They were not sincere in their service of God, or they would not have been looking for immediate benefit from serving Him. Instead of seeking what they could do for Him, they were looking for what He could do for them.

Are we supposed to walk "mournfully" before God?

A. No. God wants none of that. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their outward show because that is all it was—outward show. They had neither faith nor works to go with it. Those Israelites must have been like the Pharisees.

Q. No one that is truly religious will "walk mournfully" before God. Nor can we say it is vain to serve God, because it is the only service on earth that will not prove vain in the end if we fulfill our part.

If our religion does not satisfy us, whose fault is it?

A. It is not God's, it is ours. Jesus said we could experience the hundredfold in this life—with persecutions—and in the end eter-

nal life. But if all we are looking for is what we can get out of this life, we won't have time for God.

Q. In spite of all the unfaithfulness in the time of Malachi, there must have been a faithful remnant, as indicated in the next two verses. These feared the Lord and spoke often to one another about it—and what assurance were they given?

A. That the Lord heard and recorded their name in the book of life. "They shall be mine, . . . in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal. 3:16-17).

Q. We have to be speaking often to one another about what?

A. We have to be speaking often to one another of our hope for the future and what we must do to have a part in it. If we have nothing to say concerning our hope, then God's angel has nothing to record.

Q. Jesus made it very clear just how important our words are. What did He say?

A. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. . . . every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:34-37). MM

(We will continue next month.)

Have You Thought?

*Have you thought, when feeling weary
With the trials of the day,
Of the thousand wasted chances
Which the hours have borne away?*

*Have you thought about the blessings
That surround you all the time,
And that grumbling in their presence
Is a weakness—nay, a crime?*

*Have you thought of all you're missing
While you waste time and complain,
And what fortune may await you
If you only try again?*

Wash and Be Clean

HUMILITY is something we like to see in others, so we want to nourish the growth of this wonderful flower in our own lives. How quick we see and dislike pride in others, so we want to spray this weed with chemicals that will cause total devastation wherever it raises its ugly head.

How plain we see the great man, Naaman, the commander-in-chief of the Syrian armies, coming in all his pomp and splendor to the humble door of the prophet Elisha and expecting to be treated like a great man that happened to be a leper. But see Elisha treat him like a leper who happened to be a great man. He was angry because Elisha sent directions to him by a messenger instead of coming out to see himself, and because the directions from the Prophet were so simple.

Physicians today tell a patient that all he needs is regular exercise and diet and sleep, and the patient, like Naaman, is wroth. "Behold I thought," he says, "that he would give me powerful medicine, order me to see some noted specialist, or prescribe a trip to some foreign baths, and he tells me to walk and eat and sleep!" And he, too, goes away in a rage.

"My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it?" With this question Naaman's attendants bring him to his senses. He has already done the great thing, he had taken the long journey to see the Prophet and has brought many thousands of dollars with which to pay for his cure. Now let him try the simple thing that Elisha prescribed and go and wash in the Jordan seven times.

God wants nothing from us but to take His cure. Men will do many things to try to be thought of as Christians rather than listen to the humbling message "Wash, and be clean."

Two stanzas of Whittier's poem, *The Cypress Tree of Ceylon*, give us some good thoughts:

*Easier to smite with Peter's sword
Than watch one hour in humble prayer,
Life's great things, like the Syrian Lord.
Our heart can do and dare.*

*But oh! we shrink from Jordan's side,
From water which alone can save,
And murmur for Abana's banks,
And Pharpar's bright blue waves.*

—From a member in Minnedosa, Manitoba

What Is Time?

WHAT IS TIME? It is the duration and measurement of passing events. Primitive man made use of the sun and moon for his timepiece and by them was able to plan ahead. By taking a sapling and observing the shadow from the sun on the ground and using a rock for a marker he made his first sundial.

Time is the mysterious ever-flowing river that keeps on rolling, and once lost it can never be recovered. It is free to all to use or abuse. It is the measure of our lives and our future destiny depends upon the use we make of it. It is gold or dross as we use or waste it.

Time may be said to be lost when it is not devoted to some good useful purpose or when opportunities of improvement are neglected. Time is wasted by excess sleep, unnecessary recreations, indolent habits, idle reading, vain conversation, wandering thoughts and all those actions which have no good end in them. How much time do we waste?

We ought to be improving the time, when we consider that it is short—swift—irrecoverable—uncertain, and a talent committed to our trust for which we will have to give account.

Given time, man can accomplish almost

anything within reason, even to the reforming of his old thoughts and habits, and thus become a new creature upon which time will leave no deteriorating imprint of age.

Time glides remorselessly onward at the rate of twenty-four hours a day, and we are steadily building ourselves up or tearing ourselves down all the while.

If we plan our lives so each step we take will bring us that much nearer our intended goal, our chances of success are increased many fold. The majority of persons do not do this, you say? That is true, and the majority of persons do not attain their desired goals.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Yesterday is gone; tomorrow looms. Has your moral fiber stiffened and your wisdom increased? Must you repeat the same mistakes and have the same regrets? Is it not better to prevent them than to repent of them? Resolution and virtue are always rewarded, and to procrastinate is to become a lost soul.

A minute isn't much? Don't be too sure about it.

A minute isn't much? You cannot get on without it.

No, you'll never gain the prize, the goal you'll never win it.

Unless you utilize each little short-lived minute.

The day of probation is closing in upon us, and it seems it would cause us to more seriously consider our ways. If you are going to do anything, do it on time or all of your effort may be wasted. One very important element of wisdom is to use time, to be wise in time. And whereas we have lost and misimproved much time already, we ought to give double diligence and start today, to make the very most of our time, for "there is no time like the present."

Time moves on relentless, changeless.

The seconds, minutes, hours, pass by beyond recall.

The tide moves in, and then goes out once more.

Sunset ends the daily track of vaulted orb across the sky.

Winter's frigid blast is melted by a summer's sun.

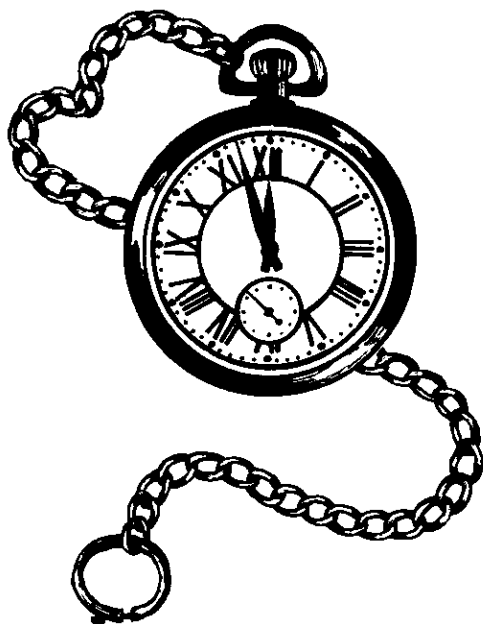
Infancy, youth, old age—and man returns to his long home.

In the never-ending stream of passing time,

Life at its most is a tiny flicker of candle light.

So live that when the light of life again is lit,

It will be yours that's lighted for eternity.



DAVID: A Man After God's Own Heart?

. . . God Forgave

ONE OF our correspondents has asked:
"The Bible says of David that he was a man after God's own heart. Yet he has not yet ascended to heaven, as recorded in Acts 2:34. How do you explain this?"

It is definitely true that Peter, speaking of David, said that he had not ascended into heaven. The same could be said of any man or woman who ever lived—with but one exception, Christ. The patriarch Job anticipated a long "wait" in the "grave" (Job 14:13-14). Death is a "sleep," a time of total unconsciousness (Eccl. 9:5); the very day a man dies, "his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:3-4). The apostle Paul wrote that without a "resurrection of the dead," "we are of all men most miserable," "our preaching is vain, and our faith is also vain" (I Cor. 15:13-19). All hope of future life depends upon God restoring the dead to life. The saints mentioned in Hebrews 11 "died in faith, not having received the promises" (Heb. 11:13). This was the point Peter was making on the day of Pentecost—David had not ascended to heaven. Jesus went to heaven (Acts 1:10-11), and He said plainly, "Whither I go ye cannot come" (John 13:33).

But our correspondent raises another and more perplexing question: **Was David truly a "man after God's own heart"?**

The statement is found first in I Samuel 13:13-14, where Samuel is announcing to the disobedient Saul that the Lord has rejected him from being king and has found another: "And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee" (I Sam. 13:13-14). Someone was to be chosen to replace the disobedient Saul, and this man was one whom God had sought; and the quality God was seeking was "a man after his own heart." We

know that Saul did not meet this qualification.

The apostle Paul in Act 13:22, made a similar statement concerning this same period of history. We read here that after God removed Saul from being king, "he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus."

This statement, that David was a "man after God's own heart," has raised questions through the centuries. While theologians have used it to illustrate God's supposed love for flagrant sinners, critics have derided the God who would be so morally weak and erring as to accept a man with David's character weaknesses as one "after [His] own heart." And many a sincere believer has wondered how David could indeed merit so honorary a classification.

It has been pointed out, and rightly, that **many times in Scripture the term "David" is used speaking of David's greater son, Christ, the Messiah.** The Hebrew Lexicon has as its first definition of the name David, "Beloved," and gives Hosea 3:5 as an example of how it is used: "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." The David, the beloved of the Lord whom they should be seeking in the latter days is Christ, the coming King of all the earth. The "David" in this passage could not possibly refer to the literal man David, who had already lived and died; future generations from the time of Hosea could not possibly seek the literal "David" as "their king." The same use of the name David, denoting the Messiah the son of David, is found in Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24, and elsewhere. The Lexicon gives these texts to illustrate its use: "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David. . . . And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them. . . . And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they

shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them." This was all spoken several hundred years after the literal David died, yet the prophet was foretelling future events—sure evidence that reference was being made to the righteous reign of a beloved David who should later rule in righteousness: Christ.

We know that Christ was truly a "man after God's own heart," humble, submissive, "obedient even to the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:9).

But this fact does not seem to satisfy the question raised by the prophet Samuel's statement or by Paul's, that says explicitly, speaking for God, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" (Acts 13:22-23). Jesus was raised up "according to the promise" "from this man's seed." If Jesus were in reality the man being referred to as "after God's own heart," He could not be raised up from his own seed!

If we can learn what God honors, requires, approves, desires in mankind and then look at David's character in relation to these, we can perhaps see the above statement about David in a new light.

Repentance Means "Turning From"

We know that God demands absolute righteousness, absolute holiness, absolute purity, absolute integrity, absolute goodness from those He approves. But we know also that God knows He cannot find that absolute quality of character ready-made. "He knoweth our frame," and our inclination to evil. He knows our weaknesses and the things that tempt us to sin. He knows also that we must grow into a holy character, and He allows us time to grow (Eph. 4:15; 2:21).

What God expects is not an entire life of perfect service without one slip but a sincere and earnest effort coupled with a wholehearted determination to do right; and when we fail, a humble readiness to acknowledge our failure, ask forgiveness, and try again. This latter quality is one which David, despite his checkered career of transgressions, possessed in abundant measure. When he had sinned, he took the correction in the right spirit, humbly sought God's mercy, and changed his ways. **And this is all God asks—He does not rule out His mercy even to those whose sins are "as scarlet" if only they will "wash" and "be clean," "cease to do evil" and "learn to do well" (Isa. 1:16-20).** But this requires a high quality of character which very few through the ages have possessed. Could not such an

outstanding quality make David a "man after God's own heart"?

David's deep, heartfelt humility is expressed vividly in many of the Psalms. For example:

"Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O Lord...for thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great...forgive all my sins."

(Ps. 25:4-7, 11, 18)

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile...For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:...I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

(Ps. 32:1-2, 4-5)

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice... If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared...Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

(Ps. 130:1-3, 7-8)

"O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh,...because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day...For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin."

(Ps. 38:1-6, 17-18)

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgression; and my sin is ever before me...Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Create in me a clean heart, O God;

and renew a right spirit within me. . . . The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise"

(Ps. 51:1-3, 5-7, 10, 17)

Could anyone ever speak more meaningfully? And if such thoughts issue from the inner sanctum of one truly humble and penitent, could not such a one rightly be called "a man after God's own heart"?

It was not that David did not sin. David sinned, and grievously. And God did not allow him to forget this. But David's attitude, upon learning of his sin, was exemplary. Even when the reprover was an unscrupulous Joab, David, though king, took the correction in the same, humble spirit, receiving it as a message from God. Was not this a superior quality singling out one who might be called "a man after God's own heart"?

After David had transgressed in numbering Israel, we read that "David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly" (II Sam. 24:10).

David was not a ready-made specimen of the character God loves. But God does not judge us by our natural condition—or who would ever qualify? We have all sinned, and any sin is abominable to God. We may be inclined to feel ourselves much better than a man like David, who could commit adultery and murder and then try to cover it up. And God did not love David for these—He strongly condemned David for them, He punished him. But David had the high quality of character to respect and reverence God through it all, and to repent and turn; and this is the quality God desires. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

This has been God's principle in dealing with mankind all through history. **He judges not by what we are, but by what He knows we can become; not by the egregiousness of the sins we commit, but by our readiness to repent, and turn from our sin.** "He shall save the humble person" (Job 22:29). "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, . . . and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him" (Ezek. 18:21-23). Does not such a quality show the longsuffering and forbearance of God? Does it not give us hope?

God's standard is high, supremely high. He can-

not tolerate any sin. But at the same time, He gives us the opportunity to change. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57:15). **Humility and contrition were qualities that David, in spite of his weaknesses, possessed in great measure.** And this is the word of the Lord: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2). Does not this describe David? From such a standpoint, might he not truly have been a "man after God's own heart"?

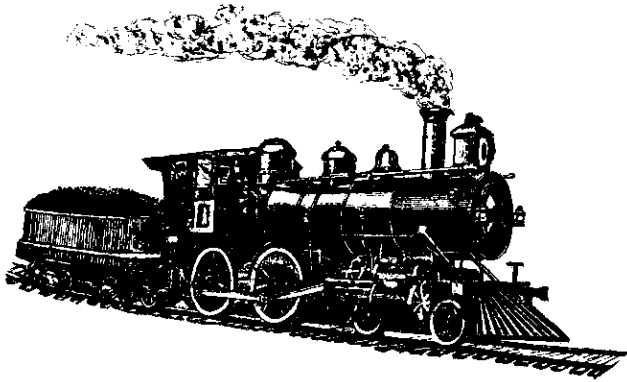
David may also be said to have been a "man after God's own heart" so far as the political service he gave to Israel. In this, Saul had failed; but according to the record, David did God's bidding. When he transgressed, he was always ready to change—and this is all God asks.

God abhors sin, and He abhors those who sin, for sin and sinners truly cannot be separated. But He knows that in our natural state we will sin, and He has provided a means whereby we can obtain His forgiveness and mercy; and it takes an honest, humble, God-fearing heart to find and make use of that means. This is what David had, and what God must have recognized when He called him a "man after [His] own heart."

MM

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Engine Trouble

THE COURTROOM was very quiet. The boy standing before the judge's bench was certain to be handled in typical Maloney fashion.

Mike Faverty, bailiff in Western City's Juvenile Court, watched Judge Maloney as he studied the legal papers before him. Public opinion in the city had been demanding action to deal with the city's juvenile delinquency.

"I wonder how tough he'll get with this boy," said Mike to an assistant.

The Judge looked down at the white-faced, poorly clad boy of fourteen before him. The youth shifted his position uneasily. "I will postpone giving a decision on this case until Friday," said the Judge quietly. "I wish to talk to the defendant in my chambers."

In his chambers, Judge Maloney faced Jimmy Buergin and Mr. Olson. His well-known stern face wore a warm smile. "We've got to do something about this, Jimmy. Organizing a gang to throw rocks at trains filled with passengers just won't do."

Jimmy looked up at the Judge, and then out of the window into the cold gray of Western City's atmosphere. "I'll do something about it, Judge." The boy's tone was defiant.

"What, Jimmy?" asked the Judge, looking serious.

"I'll throw some more rocks at some more trains, Judge!" threatened Jimmy with an angry snarl in his voice.

A momentary flash in the Judge's gray eyes disappeared, as a warm smile came to his lips. He put his hands on the boy's shoulders. "I know something better than that, Jimmy."

The snarl deepened. So did the Judge's smile. He went to his desk and wrote a note. Handing it to Mr. Olson, he said, "You may go. I'll handle this. Will you please hand that slip of paper to Mr. Faverty?"

The Judge turned to the boy again. "We're go-

ing to take a ride, Jimmy. I want to show you something."

"Jimmy," said the Judge, as they were driving along, "it's a good thing that you and your outfit weren't good shots. You broke only two windows. Most of the rocks bounced off the sides of the trains, I understand."

"Yeh, too bad!" The defiance was still there, but mixed with perplexity. "What are ya' gonna' do?" "You'll see."

They rode on in silence, but soon the car turned up the driveway leading to the Judge's home. A few moments later they entered the Judge's living room, and there, to Jimmy's great surprise, were Mr. Faverty, Mr. Olson and four solemn-faced ragged youths.

"We got them, sir," said Mr. Faverty to the Judge. "It took some fast work, but the precinct captain in that district knew just where to go."

"Fine," said Judge Maloney. "You see, Jimmy, I didn't have the other boys come to court today because I wanted to study your case first, since you're the oldest. After I had talked to you, I asked Mr. Olson and Mr. Faverty to get the other boys. Now I think all of us are about ready to go down to the basement quarters."

The boys looked frightened, wondering what was ahead.

The Judge led the way down the long winding stairs.

"Rather a big house for an old bachelor," said the Judge. "I'm all alone in the world, but there are a lot of things which I like to have around."

They entered a door at the end of a corridor. The room was a large one. The floor was covered with a gigantic model railway system. The Judge pressed some buttons on a control table, and two gray streamliners began moving along the miniature tracks.

"Want to throw rocks at them, boys?"

The Judge studied the boys. All five faces were intent on the moving trains. There was no evidence of a snarl.

"What a layout!" exclaimed Jimmy. He dropped to his knees as the streamliners roared by. The other boys did likewise. After a few moments, Jimmy jumped to his feet. "Could we—could we—run them, Judge?"

"I'm going to give everything in this room to you and your friends, Jimmy," said the Judge quietly.

"Your Honor!" protested Mr. Faverty.

The other boys jumped to their feet, excitedly.

"Oh, you've got to earn it," said the Judge. He met the bewilderment in the boys' faces with a smile.

"You see, I had to earn it before I got it," the Judge declared. "I've had to earn a lot of things. I don't have any family, but I'm able to have these things by doing for others. I want to share them with you now."

"Do you mean you're going to give us these tracks and trains?" asked one boy. "Where could we put them?"

"I said you had to earn it. You boys did enough to be sent to reform school." The Judge hesitated.

"I don't want to handle your case that way," continued the Judge. "I guess I really don't need these trains any more—not as much as you do. You're going to have charge of them in the new boys' club being built."

"You mean, Judge—" That was all Jimmy could say.

"We'll put you boys on probation. When the club gets going, you will organize a model railroad room on one floor. You will have to set up the room, and most of the responsibility for taking care of it will be yours. Carry it out, and there will be no reform school."

"Oh, thanks, Judge." The chorus of voices was excited with genuine enthusiasm.

"You see," said the Judge, "there are other ways to get excitement than by throwing rocks. Running these trains can be exciting, and it's all within the law, too. Let's see what good railroad men you can be. If you run into engine trouble, I'll try to help you, as one railroad man to another. Now clear out, boys. I'll see you next Tuesday afternoon down at the new Club. See how many more boys you can get interested."

The boys made a noisy departure, thanking the Judge, promising their support in the new venture.

The Judge turned to the two amazed men, who stood watching the departing boys.

"Well, I'll be, Judge!" Mike Faverty spoke first.

"How did you happen to think of something like that?"

The Judge fingered the switches on the control table, a reminiscent smile on his face. "It has been many months since I've been down in this room. I used to spend a lot of time working on these trains. I got interested in them when I was a boy on the East side, just like Jimmy. Then one day I met old Judge Ronen, and he told me about trains. You see, men," the Judge spoke slowly, "I once had engine trouble, too."

MM

—Reprinted from *Sunshine Magazine*.

Do and Be Blest

**Dare to think, though others frown;
Dare in words your thoughts express;
Dare to rise, though oft cast down;
Dare the wronged and scorned to bless.**

**Dare from custom to depart;
Dare the priceless pearl possess;
Dare to wear it next your heart;
Dare, when others curse, to bless.**

**Dare forsake what you deem wrong;
Dare to walk in wisdom's way;
Dare to give where gifts belong,
Dare God's precepts to obey.**

**Do what God decrees is right,
Do what He proclaims is best,
Do with all your mind and might;
Do your duty—and be blest.**

Announcement

The new moon of Abib occurs this year on April 4. This means the Megiddo Church will observe the event beginning with the evening of April 4, Bible time being measured from "evening to evening" (Lev. 23:32).

The arrival of Abib means a double celebration at the Megiddo Church—the recognition of another sacred New Year, and the observance of the anniversary of the birth of Christ, our coming King.

Distant members and friends, plan now to join us at that sacred season.

The anniversary of our Lord's Supper will be held Thursday evening, April 16 (Abib 13), and Resurrection Morning will be Sunday, April 19. MM



Learning to Trust

***“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”
—Proverbs 3:5-6***

WE INSTINCTIVELY think of ourselves as quite sufficient. We are quite able to order our own lives, and make our own plans—and execute them, of course—until some tragedy strikes or some force beyond our control overpowers us, or some unexpected emergency interrupts the carefully plotted course of our lives.

Our reaction to the unexpected is an important part of our developing that special virtue of “trust.” In fact, “trust” is a virtue which can flourish most in an atmosphere of tension and concern.

Consider seriously just how we may learn to trust in the light of this emphatic directive from the Word of God: “Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:13-17).

God knows the future; we do not. Hence, in the face of situations beyond our control, what are we to do? “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart.” God unfolds the future to us as we travel, one step at a time; but we in our finiteness and weakness need to remember that we are in danger of jumping to conclusions and mapping out the future days and weeks when He has given us instructions for only one *step*. Just where that steppingstone in the midst of the swirling waters of life is leading may be quite different than we think. But we must trust. The whole disposing of the Christian’s life is in the

hand of the Lord, His one purpose to bring each to full maturity in Christ. He does the directing; we do not have to.

This does not mean that it is wrong to have a schedule, to plan ahead, to put down engagements in a notebook, to make reservations ahead of time, to project what should or should not be done. No, not at all. We are not told that we should not plan ahead. However, we are warned that we are not to be solid in stating what we will and will not be doing, but that we should preface our statements of plans always with, “The Lord willing, I shall. . . .”

We must realize that we have no power to demand a certain sequence of events in the future. It is His divine prerogative to alter any course, to shape all for His overarching divine purpose. And if He is Lord of our lives and we have learned that wonderful lesson of submission, we will be more than willing to let Him lead, to acknowledge Him in all our ways and let him direct our paths. We will be more than willing to trust the steering of our lives to Him.

Trust is the banisher of worry, which is what the Psalmist is recommending. Worry is needless, useless, and even injurious. Worry cannot affect the past, for the past is past; and it cannot change the future. It refuses to learn the lessons of history, that God has worked, and that accordingly He will work again; it refuses to learn the lessons of life, that we are still alive and our heads are still above water, that somehow we have already been enabled to do what we thought was undoable, and bear what we thought was unbearable, and to pass the breaking-point and not break; and that what we have done we will be able to do again. Hence

the lesson of trust is that worry is unnecessary.

"I delight to do thy will, O my God," wrote the Psalmist in a moment of prophetic inspiration (Ps. 40:8). "I delight"—when? When everything goes my way, as when His will fits in with my flight schedule and the arrival is on time and everything goes smoothly? But what about the times when a disappointment gives an opportunity for me to say, "What time I was afraid, I will trust in thee" (Ps. 56:3)?

Trust is a virtue that shines only against a background of some kind of dismay, or fear, or confusion, or testing. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart" speaks of the contrast between a "blueprint" type of expectation for the future and a human understanding of where each step is leading.

And the following verse makes this even more explicit: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." How do we acknowledge Him on a continual basis, in "all" our ways? Is it not by saying in every situation we encounter, "The Lord willing I will" do such and such, feeling that if He is not willing, neither are we? Is it not an attitude of humble submission to His leading, hinging our plans on His by the day, the month and the year? We are but small creatures within His vast creation; we are finite; He is infinite. And when the unexpected—and perhaps unwanted—comes, then we have a practical opportunity to live the "Lord willing" clause we so easily say at times.

It may come as a shock to us sometimes as we realize how contrary God's will is to our own, and how instinctively unwilling we are to "follow." We must realize, however, that sometimes God is chastening, He is teaching, instructing, training us to be citizens of that new and better world where only the "fittest" will live. And how can we become "fit" if not by some particular combination of difficulties? Our life is committed to Him, our time is His, as well as our bodies and minds. And His plan is to be ours—even when it interrupts our conception of His plan.

What is the end result of letting God direct, acknowledging Him in all our ways, and trusting with all our heart? It gives us the right to include ourselves in the brethren Paul addressed in I Cor. 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." MM

"Here Am I"

*Hark! the voice of Jesus calling
"Who will go and work today?
Fields are white, the harvest waiting,
Who will bear the sheaves away?"
Loud and long the Master calleth,
Rich reward He offers thee;
Who will answer, gladly saying,
"Here am I, O Lord, send me?"*

*If you cannot cross the ocean
And the distant lands explore,
You can find a duty nearer—
It is even at your door;
If you cannot speak like angels,
If you cannot preach like Paul,
You can show them how the Lord lived,
An example unto all.*

*If you cannot be the watchman
Standing high upon the wall,
Pointing out the path to Zion,
Offering life and peace to all;
With your prayers and with your labors
You can do what God demands,
You can be like faithful Aaron,
Holding up the prophet's hands.*

*While salvation's day is lengthened,
And the Master calls for you,
Let none hear you idly saying,
"There is nothing I can do!"
Gladly take the task He gives you,
Let His work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when He calleth,
"Here am I, O Lord, send me."*

Living to Please God

The question in deciding upon a course of action is not, "What harm will it do?" but "What good will it do?" The question involves not only what is objectively right or wrong but also the underlying intent. **Why** am I doing it? With what purpose? Objectively, it may appear right to go to church; but subjectively it is wrong unless I mean to please God by so doing. If someone asks what harm there is in what he is doing, I answer that it is all harm unless he means to please God by doing it.

Many people will do what pleases themselves, and take for granted that God does not object to it. They never think of rising to the higher level where they avoid that which they think will displease God or of doing only what will please Him. This is the Christian's challenge. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

'Tis looking down that makes one dizzy.

Something Beautiful, Something Good

(Continued from page 9)

It all comes down to something I must be doing—and right now. If I expect God to look favorably upon me in that soon-coming Day. I have the responsibility in all the little things of daily life to make the right decisions, to behave myself wisely, in a perfect way, to purify the motives of my conduct and the meditations of my heart. There is no way I can exempt myself—by claiming that I am a victim of my circumstances, or my personality. We have all heard “I can’t help it—that’s the way I am.” But that is *not* the real problem. If I am not becoming new in some way every day, it is only because I lack the desire; because I *won’t*. If my traits, my drives, my attitudes and habits are contributing to my making wrong decisions, thinking wrong thoughts, pursuing wrong courses, then I must *change* them! Since I—as I am—do not meet God’s standard, then I must *change*.

But there is something in us that fears and resists change. We like to make other people think we are “pretty good” just the way we are. I don’t really need to change. Or we make excuses for the way we are. As one writer has put it, “‘Sorry, but this is the way I am. . . . I was like this in the beginning,

am now, and ever more shall be.’ . . . This is a handy motto and a delusion to have around if you don’t want to grow up.”

Let us take this thought as a warning, we who are here to grow.

Sometimes we wish for an easier way. This is not strange. Moses did. David did. Jeremiah did. If only God could change our lot in life, or take away some of the hurts, some of the struggles, some of the strife; if only He could give us something like a massive spiritual antibiotic which would correct the sicknesses of our dispositions without affecting us otherwise.

But God does not work that way. And as long as we waste time longing for such, we are working against ourselves.

What are we doing about this changing of ourselves, you and I? Is it our first desire each and every day? Can we see the new creation taking shape in our hearts and lives? Do we long to transform all our ugliness into the beauty of Christ? Oh! Let us face ourselves honestly, squarely, fairly, as we really are and determine anew to make the change, that we may someday be found “in Christ,” not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but wholly new creations which He can perpetuate in His eternal kingdom when old things will have forever passed away and all will be new forever.

MM

So What Do You Know?

Test Yourself on the Twelve

1. Which of these were apostles of Jesus? Luke, Simon Peter, Barnabas, Andrew, Joseph, Matthew, Judas Thaddeus, James, Philip, Stephen, John, Simon the Canaanite, James the son of Alphaeus, Bartholomew, Silas, Paul, Mark, Thomas Didymus, Judas Iscariot, Timothy. (See Matthew 10:2-4)
2. Who restored Dorcas to life? (Acts 9:36-42)
3. Who was the first martyr? (Acts 12:2)
4. To which apostle did Jesus say, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat”? (John 6:5)
5. Which were fishing when Jesus called them to follow Him? (Matt. 4:18-21)
6. Which apostle was indignant because Mary anointed Jesus’ feet with ointment? (John 12:4)
7. Which apostle walked on the water? (Matt. 14:28-29)
8. Which apostle was working at a public job when Jesus called him? (Matt. 9:9)
9. After the resurrection, which apostle was absent when Jesus first appeared to them? (John 20:19,24)
10. Which apostle might have been the second martyr had not an angel interceded? (Acts 12:3, 11)
11. Who brought the lad to Jesus who had five barley loaves and two fishes? (John 6:8-9)
12. Who were mending their nets when Jesus called them to follow Him? (Matt. 4:21-22)
13. Who said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”? (Matt. 16:16)
14. Who was “the disciple that Jesus loved”? (John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20,24)
15. Which two apostles said, “Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them”? (Luke 9:54)
16. Which apostle cut off Malchus’ ear? (John 18:10)
17. Which apostle was let down over a wall in a basket? (Acts 9:25)
18. Who preached the sermon at Pentecost? (Acts 2:14)
19. Which apostle was a Pharisee? (Phil. 3:5)
20. Which two apostles came to Jesus requesting a place on His right and on His left in the Kingdom? (Matt. 20:20-23)

EIGHT BUGS TO AVOID:



Glitterbug

*Self-absorbed.
So dazzled is she by her glitter bright
That she fails to see what is good and
right.*

*Looks bitter, fells bitter...is bitter.
Life is against him,
And what is the gain?
There's nothing but worry
And trouble and pain.*



Bitterbug



Sitterbug

*Just sits and sits
While others work and toil all day
He's pleased to sit the time away.*

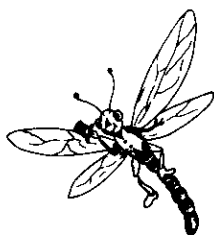
*Fritters the time away.
Time is precious? No, not for him;
He has so much to do in the interim;
He stares at the window, he stares at the clock,
What he went there to do he really forgot!*

Fritterbug



Critterbug

*The sun's too bright, or the wind's too cold,
And so he continues to scold and scold.
You talk too loud, or you work too long,
Whatever you do, it's bound to be wrong.*

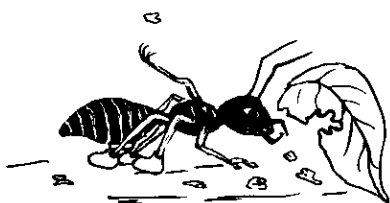
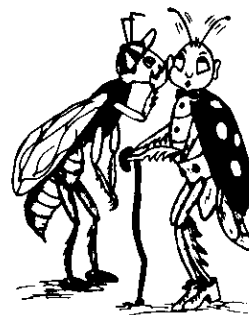


Flitterbug

*To eat and wake and sleep,
To smile, to sigh, to grieve;
To move in idleness through earth--
This, this is just the flitterbug's life.*

*Frivolous, giddy.
He chatters and chatters the time away,
So little accomplished day after day.
What is the matter? The Twitterbugs say
They are happy to "twitter" the time away.*

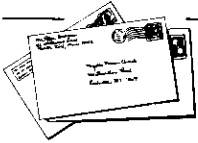
Twitterbug



Litterbug

*Thoughtless.
You can always tell his favorite spot
By the things he left where he cared not.*





Letters

Good Advice

Advice is surely one thing we really need more than anything else in the world. There is good advice in the first chapter of Proverbs. It also tells us what will happen if we refuse to take heed: "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (v. 26). In the Book of Proverbs we can get a good supply of advice, wisdom and understanding.

It is said that too often we have good intentions, but our actions are below standard. The apostle Paul tells us, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we [first] believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13:11-12). Let us strive to be among the few.

Port au Port, Newfoundland

G.W.

In Faith

We know God is in His heaven, but all is certainly not right with the world, and will not be until the Master comes and sets up His kingdom, and takes personal control of government, along with all the Saints. How we should long for that glorious day! "And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah" (Isa. 22:12). Also "and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee" (Zech. 14:5).

"Some men live near to God, as my right arm
Is near to me; and then they walk about
Mailed in full proof of faith, and bear a charm
That mocks at fear, and bars the door on doubt,
And dares the impossible."

Minnedosa, Manitoba

E.H.

Daily Devotions

Many thanks for the kindness in sending the tapes. We listen to them and we are being taught a great deal that we did not know. Each day I read a portion of the "Understanding The Bible" papers; a chapter on the MILLENNIUM SUPER-WORLD, a fine well-written book on the life to come; and the Bible. My wife and I have faith in God's Word.

Leicester, England

C.D.

Watching

How wonderful it must be never to have a pain. It surely can't be long until we will realize these things. These trials can be the making of us, so we should rejoice that we are having them. We don't know what all we will have to go through with yet—God only knows all these things; but He is very watchful over all His loved ones.

It's so easy to think about the things that we shouldn't, things that we know cannot please our Heavenly Father. Then it comes suddenly to us; we must change our thoughts and think of things that He can find no fault with, for we really do want to make it to the top. We never know what is coming next for us to do in this world, but let us work to be ready. We wouldn't want to miss out. "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and hasteth greatly" (Zeph. 1:14).

Milton, Iowa

E.T.

Counting Blessings

Today I have been counting my many blessings. I am very thankful, and I have thanked God many times that I have made the acquaintance of the Megiddo Mission because it has been so helpful to me; a most wonderful source of knowledge in helping me to understand the Word of God.

If ever a people was blessed it is we who are privileged to live in this favored land. It is well that we go over and enumerate some of our many blessings so that we may render thanks unto the Giver. When we receive so bountifully of God's goodness, it is often a great struggle not to let it become commonplace in our lives. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding" (Prov. 3:13).

Rome, Georgia

S.J.

Deciding for Eternity

How true it is that we all need advice. But so often we resent good advice when it is given us. I am sure if we had always heeded the sound words of counsel which were spoken to us, we would all be much nearer to the goal of perfection than we are. But sometimes we are stubborn and rebellious and have to learn things the hard way. Rebelliousness is something we all have to overcome. But it can be and must be overcome.

I am happy to say that I have overcome some things. They are no longer a problem to me. But, on the other hand, I am still having to fight against other things. It is encouraging to know that I have won some victories in the warfare against the old man.

Let us press on with joyfulness and singleness of heart for the time is drawing near when Christ will come. There is nothing of lasting value in the world. This life is short, so we must make full use of it in preparing ourselves for eternity. Will we spend eternity in the tomb, or will we reap everlasting life? We are now making our choice. The life we are living now will decide for us where we will spend eternity. Let us put all our energy and effort into making the right choice.

I am sincerely striving to continue to move forward spiritually.
Cleveland, Tennessee

S.K.

Rich Dividends

I am enjoying some rich dividends keeping my mind on spiritual things. I woke up this morning with the thought that it is another day that God has allotted me. I want to make use of the time by thinking of things that will get me ready for the big Day when Jesus comes.

First of all, I want to mention my thankfulness for the prayer on the back of the November MESSAGE. There are many things we can thank the Lord for—including the encouraging words from the sermons, letters and tapes. We must pray for the Lord to save us from making the same mistakes over and over again; and then to ask the Lord to forgive us for being so ungracious and ungrateful for so many blessings; to help us daily to grow purer, kinder and stronger and to always live every moment as in His presence. If the Lord will help us to do this, we will be rich “spiritual millionaires.”

God sees the real “me”; we can’t fool God or even people. We must live always as under the eye of God.

Many people think they are saved without work, but Paul told Timothy to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them. “Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (II Tim. 2:22).

Meditation is like having the Word of God do us good as the digestion of our food does for our natural body.

Davenport, Iowa

W.P.

Keep At It

Time is passing by so swiftly. We may not have much more time left before Christ returns.

It is not easy for us to be joyful in trials as well as in prosperity. But the only way is to keep at it each and every day to bring our thoughts, words and actions under control. Let us keep striving every day.

Canton, Texas

B.N.

The Age to Come

I have been thinking what a great time it will really be when everyone shall know the true God; we shall know as we are known. Every one we meet will be in the right way. It will surely be quite an age. We can work and win—we can be there then in that bright new world over there.

This age is running out; we know Christ will bring in that new age, as we quote in the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

There will be so many wonderful changes that will take place. *Nothing* shall stop God’s plan. Usefulness will be everywhere. Everyone will be in their place of usefulness and prosper in God’s way.

The book MILLENNIUM SUPERWORLD is so plainly written. We can receive much wisdom from it along with our Bibles.

It is wonderful to know we have leaders and teachers that are leading in God’s true way. Our duty is to obey and overcome the old man.

Crawford, Nebraska

M.M.

Finally, Brethren

Have You Misplaced the Blessed Hope?

THE “Blessed hope,” even the “glorious appearing of . . . our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13) shouts for attention from nearly every page of the New Testament. The one thing we cannot do with it is dismiss it. An average of one verse in every twenty-five proclaims it. And it is the promise which closes the book of Revelation: “Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

How dear is this hope to our hearts? Does our whole life pattern revolve around its glorious expectation? Have we the certainty of faith that gripped the hearts of those disciples of the first century who saw Him go away and heard the reassuring words of the angels: “This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven”? Are we looking, longing, living for that Day?

Many people look ahead to the coming new age as if it were someone’s imaginings of something nebulous that might possibly take place sometime. But there is no uncertainty. In fact, the “blessed hope” is one thing about which we can be absolutely sure. All things around us are subject to the forces of change and decay; but God’s promise of the arrival of the King and the new world of righteousness is absolutely sure. It is more than a promise; it is, in a limited sense, partly a reality. Christ’s first coming *began* what His second coming will *complete*—the fulfilling of all that was written “in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning [Him].”

What about the mighty convulsings in the world today? It seems that God is serving notice on us that time is running out. If ever there was a generation which could momentarily expect the appearance of the King, it is our own. Events in the world today are building toward the great climax of human history when “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,” and the Lord’s prayer will be fulfilled and God’s will be done on earth as it is now done in heaven (I Thess. 4:16; Matt. 6:10).

These facts are not simply interesting speculations; they are facts which should challenge the way we live. The massive evidence that the Lord’s coming may be soon ought to be a dynamic in our lives. For this is the blessed hope. And how else can we *look* for it?

Have you misplaced it? or is it for you a glorious hope that grows brighter and brighter unto the perfect day?

The Lord Is King

*Lift up your hearts to things above,
Ye followers of the Lamb,
And join with us to praise His love,
And glorify His Name:*

*To Jesus' Name give thanks and sing,
Whose mercies never end;
Rejoice! rejoice! the Lord is King;
The King is now our Friend!*

*We, for His sake, count all things loss;
On earthly good look down;
And joyfully sustain the cross,
Till we receive the crown.*

*O let us stir each other up
Our faith by works to prove,
By holy, purifying hope
And each sweet task of love!*

*Mercy and peace our portion be,
To carnal minds unknown,
The hidden manna, and the tree
Of life, and the white stone.*

*Let all who for the Promise wait,
Thy admonition crave;
Till, raised to an unsinning state,
In Eden we shall live!*

