



Megiddo Message

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...Yet I will
rejoice in the Lord, I will joy
in the God of my salvation.

—Habakkuk (3:18)

Heart Obedience Is Different

*"God be thanked, that ... ye have
obeyed from the heart that
form of doctrine which
was delivered you."*

—Rom. 6:17

Through the centuries most religion has been a matter of external conformity. Say the right prayers, go to the right place of worship, pay the required amount of money, observe the appointed fast and feast days, be outwardly honest and kind to your neighbor, and that was the most of it. What you might think or feel mattered little, so long as you complied with the outward requirements.

In this respect the worship of the true God was different, *very* different. For Christianity is a religion controlling *first* the heart, *then* the outer life.

But unfortunately, the influence of the common attitude was widely felt, even among worshipers of the true God also. In ancient Israel the problem was perennial. To such a people (apostate) the prophet Isaiah was sent. They were not irreligious. One watching them might have been well impressed. They offered the right sacrifices, kept the right feast days, said the right prayers, went through all the motions, but it was all a form, a meaningless exercise.

So bad was the situation that the Prophet called them "rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah." "Listen, you leaders of Israel, you men of Sodom and Gomorrah, as I call you now. Listen to the Lord. Hear what he is telling you! I am sick of your sacrifices. Don't bring me any more of them....Who wants your sacrifices when you have no sorrow for your sins? The incense you bring me is a stench in my nostrils. Your holy celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath, and your special days for fasting—even your most pious meetings—are all frauds! I want nothing more to do with them. I hate them all; I can't stand the sight of them. From now on, when you pray with your hands stretched out to heaven, I won't look or listen. Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear" (Isa. 1:10-15, TLB).

Years later, the Pharisees were indicted on the same account. Said Jesus, "Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin"—they were loyal to the formalities—"and neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and good faith" (Matt. 23:23 NRSV).

Still later, the church at Sardis, a group of loyal believers, was threatened by the same danger. "I know thy works," said Jesus in candid analysis, "that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3:1).

Someone has said that the greatest threat to Christianity is not external but internal. The faith of the early Church thrived even under severe persecution. No power on earth was strong enough to make them change their minds. To them, religion was a life-and-death commitment. To be believers at all, they had to be heart-and-soul believers. Contrast this with the dull unconcern, the chilly indifference, the utter disregard for spiritual obligation which we see today, and we are reminded of the words of our Lord: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

We today are tempted by the same danger. It is not that we would disregard the Divine service, but we come to God's altar with that which has cost us nothing. We lift our hands without our hearts. We come to be seen, rather than to renew ourselves in our most holy faith. We substitute sign and symbol for substance, place and form for sincerity. We live on the level of the superficial, not the genuine. For genuine service has a price—a high price. It is the price of heart service, of heart obedience. And heart obedience is different.

Can we imagine asking God to give us eternal life, when we are willing to give Him only an outward show, only an empty conformity, a soulless commitment? He who has done so much for us, is this all we can find it in our hearts to give Him? Contrast this with the words of the well-known hymn:

(Continued on page 26)

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

Soon-coming events ...

THE HERALD AND THE KING

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

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

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

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A Time For **ACTION**

*We are not here to be spectators
of the game of life. We are here to get into the action.*

Through the mercies of God we are approaching another sacred landmark, the beginning of another sacred New Year (this year April 3). Once again God is calling us from the humdrum routine of everyday to refresh ourselves at His fountains. It is a time to thank God and take courage, a time to look back and look ahead. It is a time to get a fresh hold on our faith and the evidence that supports it; and a clearer view of God working in our world today. It is a time to get fresh impressions from His Word, clearer glimpses of the goal ahead, and new incentives that will impel us to do the things that yet remain undone.

It is a time to look over our lives and assess our spiritual progress, to see where we have come from and where we are headed. It is a time to take a closer look at the sins that yet lurk in our hearts. It is a time to renew our resolves to think right, do right, be right.

It is a time to realize anew the extreme urgency of the hour. God in His mercy is still lengthening out the evening shadows in this the cool of the day, but for how much longer we do not know.

It is a time to devise new means for our development, new strategies

for our success. We can even pick up suggestions from one another that will give fresh impetus to the days ahead. Perhaps we had not realized that our brother's struggles are so much like our own, and what has helped him may very well help us. This is one reason God always called His people to gather together, so that they could learn from one another, so that they could use to the full every resource He was providing for their growth.

Let us not underestimate how much we can learn from one another.

God has not designed that we go alone through this world. The command is plain: "Gather the people, sanctify the congregation" (Joel 2:16). We are meant to serve and worship together. Much of our service to God is, in reality, service to one another, strengthening, helping, sharing, caring, encouraging. He brings us together so that iron can sharpen iron and spirit encourage spirit; so that we can work together, pull together, grow together, and together look forward to the great good time that is coming when all of God's people in all ages shall be gathered together. What a gathering of the faithful *that* will be!

We delight in our gatherings

even now, and say as did the apostle Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." We even feel like taking his suggestion: "Let us make here three tabernacles" (Matt. 17:4) so that this happy situation may continue.

But such is not the plan of God for us. We need the inspiration of the mountaintop; we need also the buffetings of the weekday valleys. For the battles of life are not won while we are in church; our old nature is not crucified while we are sitting quietly in the Lord's presence. We need the tests that come from being with others on the job, in the home, at the office or shop, in the everyday routine of life. This is the very purpose of our lives, to dedicate every day to God. Who are we to separate life into sections and say, Here I serve God, and, Here I depart from God to meet my daily needs and those of others? Who are we to say this is "sacred" and this is "secular"?

Benefits of the "Huddle"

We can draw a helpful lesson from the game of football. The game begins, we are told, with the two opposing teams on the field each forming what is called a huddle.

Because it is necessary for the players to work closely together, the rules have been designed to include this period of time during which the team members "huddle" to plan their moves, devise their strategies and intensify their enthusiasm to win.

Is not this what we do as we gather for a New Year celebration? Even as we congregate from day to day, are we not, in a sense, "huddling" to refresh ourselves in what can and must be done, and how best we can do it?

Now the huddle is a very important part of the game, but it is not the game. And no game was ever won in a huddle. So the rules specify that the huddle must be brief. If the team is to win, they must huddle, and then get on with the action. Only twenty-five seconds are allowed for huddling, after which the referee blows his whistle and imposes a penalty on the delaying team.

Now suppose the team goes out onto the field, and gets in a huddle, and they huddle, and they huddle, and they huddle. And the referee blows the whistle and calls, "Penalty, delay of game, back five yards." And they huddle, and they huddle, and he blows the whistle again, and again they get another penalty. The onlookers question: "What are you doing out there?" And they say, "Oh, these are the best huddles you ever saw. Some of these players really know the rule book. I tell you, we are having the best studies of the book you ever saw." And they ask, "Why don't you get out there and play the game?" And the players reply, "We don't want to do that. Our objective is bigger and better huddles."

How parallel is our life before God. We need the huddle, the gathering together, but then those well devised strategies and ambitions

must be put to work; we must play the game—and win it. For the game represents the whole of life, and *all* belongs to God, not just the huddle.

Valuable as are our times of refreshing, they are not the goal of our Christian life, they are only a *means* to the goal. The goal we have set before us is the totally remade individual, fashioned in the likeness of Christ. As we gather together we assess what we have accomplished for God and righteousness and what we have yet to accomplish; but vital as they are, good resolutions do not in themselves remake us. The lessons we learn must be *applied* in *real life*, in our relationships with one another, in the ordinary tasks of our lives. Here is where the real service is rendered and the real work done. Our times of refreshing are only a preparation, a fortifying of ourselves so that we can go out and serve God in the everyday situations of life—at the workbench, in the kitchen, in the shop, in the classroom, in the office, on the street, in our homes; so that at *all* times we will be able to keep our minds close to God, close to our hope, and intent on the prize set before us. God calls us to come and sit down at His table, so that we may eat and drink—*so that we may rise up and work*.

Jesus called His disciples not to remain forever sitting at His feet and listening to His words but to go forth and serve, to be the saving salt for the earth, shining lights in the world, living representatives of Himself and all that He taught among the people. He compared Himself to a sower planting seed, seed which must germinate *and bear fruit, fruit unto holiness*.

Sacred or Secular?

Now surely there are two parts to our lives, natural and spiritual. In

the "spiritual" category we place prayer and meditation, Bible reading, hymn singing, church attendance, and any other activities that spring directly from the practicing of our faith. These activities are dedicated to God, always pulling us away from this world and toward the world to come, our "house not made with hands," which is "eternal" (II Cor. 5:1).

Against these "sacred" acts we set the "secular" ones, the ordinary activities which we share with all

**We must do
more than plan our
work, we must
work our plan.**

the human race: eating, sleeping, working, looking after the needs of the body, performing our duties in this world, even temporal or physical service to the church. Do we ever feel that this so-called secular part of our lives is inferior to the spiritual, as though these things should not require our time and attention, as though they were a lesser way to spend our time and strength? And do we ever look down upon those who do these seemingly secular duties?

God forbid. For this dividing of life is not of God. God never condemned anyone for doing his or her share of the physical duties of life. So long as we are not making these activities "an occasion to the flesh" or an end in themselves, they are not wrong. They are, in fact, a God-appointed means of rendering Him service. God made us with physical needs, and we can thank Him that He has provided us the means of looking after those needs. We need

the spiritual enrichment, but we need also the everyday settings of life, where hard heads will bump, and rough stones will rub, and harsh and irritable dispositions be mellowed. We need the workaday world where we can apply the high principles we profess, where we confront ourselves head-on, and face continual opportunities to fight—and conquer—our old flesh

Have we said that we must be kind? Let us look for opportunities to show kindness at home.

nature. For only as we *apply* the law of God can we know its fullest meaning.

Daily Service to God

Just as the huddle is not the game, so our times of prayer and meditation, vital as they are, are not our full service to God. Their good effects must carry over into *all* we say, *all* we do, *everywhere* we go. And *all* must be consecrated to God. By all we shall be judged. For the game is life, and we are committed to win it.

This everyday part of life and its obligations is something we share with all of God's people of every age. **Abraham and Sarah** did not spend all their time talking with the angel, or worshiping God. The far greater number of hours were consumed in the everyday mundane duties of life, caring for the children, and the servants, and the cattle, and the tent, and, and, and... But they were not *living for* any of these. They were using these every-

day situations to show God that they could live in obedience to the command they had received from the angel, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." Translated into everyday terms for them, this meant love and gentleness to the children, patience with the servants, kindness for the cattle, and uprightness and honesty before God. The setting was earthly; the service was heavenly.

David made no apology for keeping sheep. **Daniel and his three companions** did not despise the mental effort they had to exert to master a foreign language and custom, or—still worse—to serve in a heathen court. It wasn't what they would have chosen, but they made it their way of serving God. **Nehemiah** did not look meanly upon his office of cupbearer to a heathen king. **Boaz** was an ordinary farmer, growing and harvesting grain. Yet his farming was consecrated to God. The very first word of him in the Divine record is this greeting to his reapers, "The Lord be with you" (Ruth 2:4).

Amos was a keeper of sheep. **Elisha** plowed with oxen. Even **the apostle Paul** took up his trade of tentmaking so that he could be financially independent and not have to lean upon his churches for his support.

Our Lord Himself, our perfect Example, counted all of life as doing the will of His Father, not just the hours spent on the mountaintop in prayer. And He taught the same. In His parable of the Judgment, those who hear "Well done" say to Him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer

them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matt. 25:37-40, NRSV).

Let us never forget that serving one another is serving Christ.

The apostle Paul understood this when he wrote: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). Here is a guideline for any task: Do all *sacred* things to the glory of God. Do all *secular* things to the glory of God. And if you can't do it to the glory of God, don't do it.

Does this ideal seem too high, too exalted for everyday use? Perhaps that is why Paul was careful to include such everyday activities as eating and drinking. If even these lowly acts can be used to honor God, then it becomes difficult to imagine what cannot.

Do secular duties interfere with the time we would like to offer to God? There need be no interference, if we make the doing of the temporal sacred, by consecrating it to God. For remember that *all* of our life belongs to God. One verse remembered and applied is worth forty chapters read and set aside. We will not be rewarded for what we *know* but for what we *know* and *do*. The blessing is promised to those who "*remember* his commandments to *do* them" (Ps. 103:17-18).

The same applies to our meditation and prayer. We may offer noble prayers and fix our minds on lofty thoughts, but if our life is not changed, if we still show the same old animal nature toward our brother or sister, our prayer has not reached the throne of grace.

Our All Is...?

If we take Jesus' words to heart and love the Lord our God with "all our heart" and "all our soul" and "all

our mind" and "all our strength," what is excluded? Nothing! Every part of life can be as truly sacred as prayer. To say this is not to bring our acts down to one dead level; rather it is to lift every act up to God and turn all of life into an offering to God.

If the fear of God and the love of future life are the deepest yearnings of our heart, what God thinks of our life will be our foremost concern; and this concern will be in our blood, so to speak, and will determine the complexion of every thought, whether it be of things temporal or things eternal. Every precious moment will become a sacred opportunity to practice the high principles we profess. If a task needs to be done, it is as much a part of our offering to God as any act of worship we could perform. When we wonder, let us talk it over with God in prayer, and we will find that all of life takes on new meaning.

Does this "total" concept of our life seem overdrawn? If one is a doctor, is he not a doctor 24 hours a day, even when he is not on duty? Or if one is a parent, does he cease to be a parent when the children are in school, or are grown up? If one was a priest in the temple, was he a priest only when he was serving in the temple? Was he not just as much a priest when he was at home or on the street?

Jesus was the Son of God—when He was preaching in the temple and when He was talking with the scribes and Pharisees, and when He was relaxing in the home of His friends in Bethany. Paul was a "servant and apostle of Jesus Christ" whether he was walking between one village and another, or sitting in prison, or making tents, or writing letters.

And so are we God's servants, wherever we are, whatever we are doing. How we treat our family, or

Bless the Lord, O My Soul!

*I will bless the good Lord every day that I live,
I will bless the good Lord who is swift to forgive,
Who provides daily bread from the life-giving land,
Who heals my disease with His calm, skillful hand;
Who has broken the shackle that chained me to death,
I will bless the good Lord while the Lord gives me breath!*

*Bless the Lord all His children though you may be downcast;
He liberates now as He did in the past;
From their bondage in Egypt His children broke free;
With a harsh desert wind He divided the Sea;
He guided by flame and by pillar of cloud;
Lift your eyes, square the shoulders that hardship hath bowed!*

*Like a father who cradles a whimpering child,
The Lord holds us gently—the night storm is wild—
For He knows that our life is a vanishing flower,
We grow and we blossom and die in an hour;
The child wakes and smiles, then his slumber is long;
But the Father is watching, His mercy is strong.*

*Bless the Lord you redeemed in the heavenly choir!
Bless the Lord, angel chorus with anthems of fire!
Cherubim, Seraphim, and the archangel throng,
Glorify Him and shout ye the jubilant song!
All that can sing join the triumphant chord,
While the Lord gives me breath I will bless the good Lord!*

—Selected

how we do our work is as much a part of our service to God as how we worship. We are not free to do as we please in any area of life, because we have been bought with a price. We do not belong to ourselves but to God. Everything we have is God's. All is sacred.

This is why Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart"—that means with all our emotions, deep feelings, and affections.

"...And with all thy soul"—that means our thoughts and spiritual expressions.

"...And with all thy mind." That means what we allow in our minds, what we learn, how we use our ability to reason and remember.

"...And with all thy strength." That means our work, anything that requires our physical energy and effort.

What else do we have? Nothing!

The Peril of Spectatoritis

There is another lesson we can draw from our parallel with the game: that each of us is in it to work, not watch.

Every team has a coach, just as every assembly of Christian believers has a leader, a minister, a pastor. Now suppose the members of the team line up along the side of the

Some duties cannot be delegated. No one can watch for me, or taste for me, or work for me. I must do it for myself.

field and give a big cheer, and the coach goes running out onto the field. The onlookers question: "What kind of a game is this?" And the team members reply, "Oh, he knows a lot more about it than we do, so we are just going to stand here and oh! are we really going to cheer for him! This is going to be a great game. He can do it so much better than we can." Is that the way the game is played? Yet in our spiritual lives, in our service to others, are we always ready to help where we can, or are we quite willing to step to the sidelines and let someone else do our share—and take our crown?

There is yet another parallel we can draw, and that is from the standpoint of the spectators of the game. Most modern games are staged not for the benefit of the players but to entertain an audience. This practice fosters the old disease of the human spirit sometimes called *spectatoritis*.

Someone interviewing a retired football coach asked him his opinion about the contribution of modern football to physical fitness. The man replied, "Absolutely nothing!" The reporter was nonplused.

"Would you care to elaborate, coach?" he asked. "Certainly," replied the coach. "I define football as twenty-two men on the field desperately needing rest, and forty thousand people in the stands desperately needing exercise."

Because the spectators provide the dollars for which the players work, the sports world today focuses great attention on those who pay to sit and watch, and approve or disapprove of what goes on in front of them. Millions of dollars are spent providing the spectator with comfort and convenience.

How parallel is the concept of many religious persons today. The sufferers from the disease of *spectatoritis* may be totally unaware of their condition, but the symptoms may be described as an absence of conviction, moral indecisiveness, and the belief that a well poised vacuum is the ideal mental state. Unchecked, this malady develops into acute moral paralysis, which cuts off any hope for future life.

Spectatoritis is characterized by a low temperature on burning questions and neutrality as the sanctified ideal.

This is what happened with a little nation described in the shortest book in the Old Testament, the book of Obadiah. For *spectatoritis* is not a new malady. At least 500 years before Christ, an entire nation (Edom) stood condemned because it surrendered to this malady and gloried in what should have been its shame. Obadiah predicted its downfall, and today the capital of the nation is of interest only to archaeologists and travelers, for it has long since perished.

What was the cause? "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, even thou wast one of them." It may have been that when Israel was invaded and Edom could have come to the rescue, she was a look-

er-on, a spectator, playing no part in the drama right at its gates. Edom surrendered to the preventable disease of the spirit: *spectatoritis*.

The perils of *spectatoritis* are both present and future. Its present detriment is that it does not help where help is needed, and so deflects from Christian duty. In this way, it does not prepare for the future, and so shall be the object of Divine retribution.

The Cure: Action

What is the cure for this indecisiveness, this weak and timid neutrality? What is the cure for this onlooking, this staying out of the action? It lies in taking action, *living* what we know, *doing* what we profess to its fullest and best *right here and now* in our everyday situations. When the Word of God was given through Moses to the children of Israel in the wilderness, the people were to answer: "All these things will we do, and be obedient." From that time on, the measure of their worth before God was the measure of their obedience.

Even now, the real satisfactions of life are reserved for those who enter into it wholeheartedly. And so in the spiritual realm, true achievement never comes by proxy. Each of us must experience it for ourselves. Wrote the Psalmist, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is" (Ps. 34:8, NIV). The request seems small but it is urgent. It must be done, and it cannot be delegated to another. No one can watch for me, or taste for me, or work for me. I must do it for myself.

We are not here to be spectators of the game of life. We are here to get into the action. *Where we are* is the place, and *now* is the time. And we must work together, we must love and help each other. When our brother needs encouragement and we stand listlessly by, criticizing,

belittling, hair-splitting, henpecking, we sin. We forget that our brother has the same crosses to bear that we have, the same carnal nature to fight. We are quick to make allowance for *our* weaknesses, but *he* should be perfect.

Let us look to ourselves, to the many times *we* have wavered, to the many times *we* have needed help. Let us think of the times when *our* faith would have faltered if another had not come to reinforce it. Why not extend the same to another? Why not show brotherly concern for another and strengthen his faith—and in the process become stronger ourselves! What shame if we stand by as indifferent spectators.

We may feel that our brother's problems are only imaginary, that he is largely to blame for his own plight; if only he would snap out of it, things would be different. But that may not be the truth of the matter. Oh, let us be careful in our judgments of others, that we do not condemn ourselves. Let us show the Christlike spirit of brotherly concern and Christian sympathy, remembering how many times we ourselves have needed them.

Today we need a re-commitment to that which is primary, to Christ and His Kingdom. We cannot remain as we are. If we are not going forward, we are drifting back. If we are not all out for Christ, we are against Him, for "He that is not for me is against me," said the Master. "What think ye of Christ?" is not a mere question for discussion but one which we must be answering every day. It is a question of who and what shall command our allegiance. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," said Joshua to the children of Israel, and Elijah's cry on mount Carmel echoes the same challenge: "How long halt ye between two opinions?

if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (Josh. 24:15; I Kings 18:21).

We must do more than talk, we must act; for the forces against us are strong. Each of us has within us the potential for good, but also a strong inclination to evil. We must do more than plan our work, we must work our plan. We must act, and act decisively. We must arise and actually *do* the things which we know must be done. God wants a full surrender; He will never save spectators.

The prudent of this world utilize every available resource to reach their goals. They have their eye on the future, and they are constantly planning to make every experience contribute toward their success. Can we who have set our heart upon the Kingdom of God do less?

God has work for each of His servants to do. It was true in New Testament times. Peter had his obligations, Paul had his. And we today have ours. It may be only the humdrum duties of everyday, but this is *our* opportunity to participate in the plan of God, our chance to be part of the action.

In the early Church there was no place for anyone to sit complacently by while others worked. Each had to stand on his own feet, accept his own duties, and build his own relationship with God. Each had to be ready to stand, even to die, for his faith. This was not easy. But it did away with the spectator class. In the face of persecution there were none sitting on the sidelines.

Today being a spectator may seem safe and easy, but God has no reward laid up for spectators. Each will be judged by what he has *done*, not what he watched being done. Each of us must be a light shining in a dark place, each must be an example of the believers, each must have a righteousness that far

exceeds the righteousness of those who only profess religion, each must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

Are we waiting for a more convenient season? Are we putting off

We do not belong to ourselves but to God. Everything we have is God's. All is sacred.

any part of the work we know we should be doing? Are we waiting until we are more convinced, until our grasp upon the sacred truths is surer and our step of faith firmer? Are we on-lookers, watching others fight—and win—while we give in to our fleshly desires and passions? Are we waiting until we are more fully convinced that our faith is solid and sure? Are we waiting to understand all before we do all?

It is said that when Columbus started out on his first voyage to the west, he believed that the earth was round, and small enough to be circumnavigated. He did not think that this was right in theory alone, but he was willing to stake his whole existence upon it, even though he had not seen it. He said, "I believe so that I may act; I act so that I may understand." This statement is relevant not only to the world of science but to the world of faith. For as we act, we shall understand; and understanding, we shall see more fully the solid foundation on which we stand.

This is a time for action. We have resolved, and re-resolved, and

(Continued on page 24)

Spiritual Bankruptcy:

How to Get There Fast

After long and careful consideration, the experts believe they have at last compiled a list of suggestions that should go a long way in assisting the would-be reprobate toward his goal. It is to be noted these suggestions are not for the earnest doers, the wide-awakes, the full of faith, the active. They are for the sluggards, the dreamers, the doubters, the mockers, the murmurers, the backsliders, and their kin, such as have no desire for eternal riches but only to live their own life in their own way.

As everyone who professes the name of Christ knows, this is a period in which he is faced with the prospect of reaping for all his labors. Sensing the world's condition, he sees the nearness of the eternal Day. There are a few who seek to stay on the right side always and avoid all possible delays.

But to you who desire spiritual bankruptcy, this definitely is not the time to improve your record. You who have this desire really have no reason to be downhearted. Practice the following tried-and-true methods and you will find your faith diminishing to a vanishing point most rapidly.

Why waste time trying to be difficult when with only a little more effort you can be downright rude? The experts have whipped up ten easy steps, all in connection with one's daily life, to help you go into spiritual bankruptcy. Of course, if you are spiritually minded and want to stay in the narrow way, you will not want to follow this advice. (You are also being warned by the experts that if you turn this advice around and ignore it long enough, you will find yourself growing spiritually rich and you will spend a life of useful service for the Eternal and end up right in His Kingdom! This warning is urgent. Now don't say you weren't warned!)

#1 *Never express thanks for anything that you receive or for anything that is done for you.*

SUGGESTION

You have many blessings, that's true: temporal and spiritual. In fact, they are innumerable. You know that. But why be thankful? These things are yours to enjoy. They should be yours anyway. And why shouldn't others help you out frequently? Just maintain your pride and feel that you get less than you deserve, and you will seldom be grateful. Why! gratitude is the mother of virtues, and that's the very thing you want to stay away from.

#2 *Impress upon your associates that you are always right.*

SUGGESTION

Never make allowances in the least that you could have been mistaken. Always insist that you know better, that you have the evidence on every point in question. Make it a point to argue on controversial subjects. Always force your opinion forward. If you have some little pet theory of your own, get as many to listen to you as you can. If they agree too readily, substitute something harder and more fantastic. Keep yourself mysterious and in an attitude of superiority. It will surprise

you how many old friends you can lose in this way, and how quickly you can be left stranded alone as you desire to be.

#3 *Disregard authority.*

SUGGESTION

Granted, the world needs some kind of government. But you are different. You are an exception. Have you not read, "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes"? Then why not believe it!

#4 *Never accept advice that may improve you.*

SUGGESTION

Don't you recognize that you are good enough as you are? Don't ever ask for advice, and avoid those persons who are apt to give you their good opinion on something needful. If, however, you are unavoidably faced with having to consult a superior, just present your case in such a way that you will have to be agreed with, and you will end up having your own way every time. See? There are some folks who seek counsel about everything—well, one thing certain, they will never reach *your* goal!

#5 *Never do anything for anyone else.*

SUGGESTION

Think of yourself first, last and always. If you try to help others, more than likely they won't really appreciate it.

There are some people who turn this squarely around and are always thinking of others first. They are

continually looking for a way to be helpful or kind. They write encouraging letters to distant friends, they answer inquiries. And when visitors come, they encourage them in the best possible manner, and even stir up each other. They say that in this way, they are strengthened and much encouraged to face their own problems. Don't be influenced in anything like this. Nip all such inclinations in the bud. Just say when asked to do something for someone else that you have no such ability, or that you are too busy.

#6 *Disregard the old idea that the time to overcome a fault is at its first appearance.*

SUGGESTION

Some folks insist that you should resist the first impulse to evil. But wouldn't that help ruin your chances of becoming the failure that you want to be?

#7 *When you go to church, do not make preparations beforehand.*

SUGGESTION

Stay up late the night before, get in at the last minute, or a little late. Then, if you are tired and sleepy, why you can doze right off quick.

Or, if you have some business problem that needs much serious thought, the church is a good place to think it out. Don't forget you have a living to earn, after all. And it's more important to get something into your stomach than something spiritual into your head. And, if you have any ill feelings against anyone, just brood about them during the service. In this way, you will hear very little of the sermon. In fact, within a few hours, you will remember nothing about it.

#8 *Keep yourself sensitive and easily hurt.*

SUGGESTION

When someone says some little thing to you, which may hurt only slightly, make the most of it. Don't forget it. No. Brood over it. Let it grow, fertilize it with evil imaginations until it grows to immense proportions. If ill is done to you, whether real or fancied, permit it to embitter you, and fill you with the spirit of vengeance. Develop a slight peeve into a grudge and a grudge into a resolute hate. Let discouragement and disappointment keep you in a blue mood until gloom and defeatism become the regular tone of your months and years.

#9 *Be sure to neglect reading the Bible and other literature which may influence you to godly living.*

SUGGESTION

By neglecting reading, your faith will grow weaker daily, in fact, you won't have any faith—just the way you want it!

Take care not to memorize any new testimonies. If you are asked to recite any, just use the old easy standbys which you have repeated like a parrot many times previously. Be careful you don't overlook this advice—it's important. Why, if you should practice daily reading of the Word as some folks do, your faith would increase immensely. It would drive away your doubts while reading those prophecies and promises. It would revive your interest and get you living right up to the mark. And, if you should happen to make the mistake of memorizing a chapter occasionally, so that you could meditate on it while you were busy working with

your hands, there is just no telling what it would do for you. Your chances of reaching spiritual bankruptcy would be ruined.

#10 *Never pray.*

SUGGESTION

You may be told repeatedly that prayer is an important feature in the lives of those men and women whose first desire is genuine spirituality. Through prayer men have overcome the hardest inner battles; through prayer they have even turned defeat into victory. They have changed from the downward trend to rapid progress in the way of holiness. Of Jesus it is said that He prayed frequently. The solemn scene in Gethsemane, because of fervent prayer, was really His victory while the cross still awaited Him. The advice to you from the experts is: Neglect it. Let it alone. Cease it entirely, and there won't be any danger of your making any headway for the Kingdom.

There are just numberless ways of going into spiritual bankruptcy. No group of experts could possibly list them all. But the ones I have given you ought to be helpful, and if you consider the ways of your fellows of other ages, such as Cain, Solomon, Judas and Demas, you can use some of their methods in your own case to good advantage.

As a final word: Do not fail to consult the experts if you are in need of further advice. An invitation is extended to you from the offices of Pettifogger and Sheister. They are located on Darkway Street in the Flimflam Building. Their offices are in the lower left wing. Doors are never closed.

Signed:

Carnal Blackguard

By the Grace of God

When the apostle Paul wrote these words, it was in connection with an enumeration of some of his past deeds, particularly his persecution of the Church. That short episode in his career troubled him through all the years of his ministry. Even knowing that the merciful God would forgive and forget, he nevertheless could not forget it.

Because of the offense he labored, by his own testimony, "more abundantly" than anyone else, undoubtedly with the thought of compensating in some small way for the evil he had done. And more than likely, the more he labored and devoted himself to the cause of Christ, the easier it became for him to keep back the thoughts that haunted him.

When he visited Jerusalem and saw Peter and James and the others, one can imagine something of the agony that must have filled his now humbled heart, when he saw within the circle of believers the widows and orphans who were left after his terrorizing zeal for the tradition of his forefathers. With bitter remorse he remembered the men, women and children he had led to prison and compelled to blaspheme, and the ones he had caused to be slain. It was a dark chapter.

And so it was that out of the realization of what he had been and what he now was he wrote these words: "By the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. 15:10). From that eventful moment on the road to Damascus when the Lord appeared to him and gave him his commission, and ever after, he was moved by the power of God. As it was revealed to him what he must do, he obeyed, and the grace or Gospel of Christ which was given him became the power that transformed him into the man he now had become.

What God through His grace did for Paul and others, He can do for you and me. In the same Word of His grace others have found the power to rise from their former manner of life in sin and opposition to God to a plane of purity and holy service. His Word, being a "thorough furnisher," supplies the answers and the formula for successful living. It is the searchlight by which we search out our hearts and learn the depths of the privacies within. This Word of God teaches us a code of morals, of principles of honor which demand that we live like men who are strong, steadfast and firm. In proportion to the

I Am What I Am

indwelling of the Word as a force in us we shall become what it teaches we should be.

The record of the ages and our own observation and experience tell us that God does not find perfect stones in the quarry. The men and women God calls are not perfect specimens. They are but ordinary men, yet possessing the material which can be worked upon and developed. Hard granite rock when removed from the quarry is rough and unsightly. But apply the tools of a skilled workman and soon it is shaped to perfection.

So the individuals who come under the influence of the grace of God are at first unsightly and rough. Through the long process of development the imperfections gradually grow less and less, according to the degree they allow the Word to change them. The initial break with our former way of life is difficult, requiring a firm conviction. However, continuing in the way is by no means a light matter, and should not be regarded as such. The difficulties and opposition one encounters in the early stages of his Christian career may be difficult and may demand much of his strength. But usually the first flush of zeal will carry him through. But as time lengthens, as days stretch into months, and months into years, and years into more years, then the real test of endurance is encountered.

The great Apostle was no exception in this respect. After years in the service for Christ, he still encountered difficulties. Listen to him as he speaks of himself to the Roman brethren, "I often find that I have the will to do good, but not the power. That is I don't accomplish the good I set out to do, and the evil I don't want to do, I am always doing. In my mind I am God's willing servant, but in my own nature, I am bound fast as I say to the law of sin and death. It is an agonizing situation, and who on earth can set me free from the clutches of my own sinful nature?" (Rom. 7:21-24, NIV). Paul did not evade facing himself as he was, nor did he fail to acknowledge openly that within his heart there still were sins to be banished. And the nearer he tried to live as God would have him, the more he was aware of the sins which lingered in his heart, though they may have appeared to be small or unknown to others. Whatever the besetment, he looked upon it as something that would separate him from God, and therefore classed it as exceeding sinful.

Each of us discovers for ourselves that dealing with sin in the inner recesses of the heart is an agonizing situation. All will discover, too, that nothing on earth can deliver us from it except the grace or Gospel of Christ. As Paul states: "I thank God there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord," through the gospel He taught. There is no other way. By the grace of God we are what we are, and by the grace of God we shall reach the height to which God has called us. Paul fought, he labored, he pressed, he prayed and fasted. And with all this effort, he kept up his faith and strength until the day he was able to say he had finished his course (II Tim. 4:7-8). So must we.

This Word or grace of God will reveal to us our sinfulness. And as we learn of our sins, we will be humbled, and will cease from them. This awareness of his sins made Paul cry out as he did. The noblest and best men in all

***By the grace of God
we are what we are,
and by the grace of
God we shall reach
the height to which
God has called us.***

dispensations have been men who learned to know themselves and who worked to remake themselves until they had attained both a blameless heart and a blameless conscience. Then our holiness alone shall exalt us and cause us to exclaim, "By the grace of God we shall triumph. Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." MM



Yet I Will Rejoice

“Yet.” Something is wrong. Something is contrary to what would be desired. That is not strange, for life is filled with problems. But this “yet I will rejoice” approach to problems, this rejoicing *in spite of* them, is different.

“Yet I will rejoice.”

Rejoice... when you see your nation falling apart—economically, socially, politically?

Rejoice... when you see people all around you going deeper and deeper and deeper into sin, in spite of repeated warnings from God?

Rejoice... when you know that more trouble and suffering lie ahead?

Yes! Habakkuk determined to be bigger than the problems because he was on God’s side. If he stayed with God, nothing could overwhelm him.

Habakkuk’s message is especially meaningful, because life for Habakkuk was not smooth and easy. In fact, he lived in one of the most turbulent periods of Israel’s history, right at the end of the kingdom of Judah. He was a contemporary of Jeremiah.

When Habakkuk was born, God had been warning His people for many years that judgment was coming upon them for their sins. They had not heeded the warnings. There had been good kings, and bad kings, another good king, and more bad kings. There had been some revival, then things would promptly turn and go the other way.

And this was not all. Not long before, the dreaded Assyrians had invaded and slaughtered mercilessly in Israel. He had seen the nation overthrown by the Egyptians. Then he had seen Judah, under Josiah, try to cut off the Egyptians. The two nations met at Megiddo, on the plains of Armageddon, and Judah was soundly defeated. Then the Egyptians had been defeated by the Babylonians. Soon Nebuchadnezzar's troops would be camping at the gates of Jerusalem. Disaster and defeat loomed large on the horizon.

"Yet I will rejoice..."?

Habakkuk's victory is not without struggle. He is troubled. He cannot see why things must be so bad. And so he takes his problem to God. He says, in effect, "God, why don't you do something?"

Habakkuk is wise in trusting God. He does not allow trouble to remove him from God, but rather to draw him nearer. Instead of withdrawing from God and abandoning his faith, as so many were doing, he brings his distress directly to God.

God listens, and replies. He says, in effect, "I *am* doing something, Habakkuk. Do you think that all this trouble that has come upon Judah is *by chance*? Do you think that Josiah and Judah just happened to be overthrown? Do you think that the Egyptians were defeated by chance? No, Habakkuk, I am God. You do not need to worry. I am in control, and I am working out my purposes. The Babylonians are going to be the instrument of My judgment on Judah."

Habakkuk's approach to trouble is of special interest to us. He does not doubt God's existence, he does not question God's right to act according to His superior wisdom. In fact, he even praises God's righteousness. "Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then...are you silent...?"

It is a question we might ask today. In a world where there is so much trouble, so much suffering, so much injustice and abuse, we too may feel like asking God, "Why are You silent?"

We are typically impatient. We want things to happen immediately or sooner. Is it not time that we listened to Habakkuk's advice, and learned to bide God's time? For, as God assures Habakkuk, there is no delay, there is no uncertainty. The outcome is fixed. When the time is right, He will act, but not one minute before. "For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay" (Hab. 2:3, NIV).

God is going to deal with the problems of the world. He is going to dispense justice to everyone. Our concern is to be faithful, for says God, "The righteous will live by his faith" (v. 4).

Habakkuk does what we must do also—he turns his attention from the problems of his nation to that smaller realm which is his own responsibility. If he can just be faithful to God, God will take care of the rest.

And so he voices his prayer to God: "Lord,...I stand in awe of your deeds, O Lord. Renew them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy" (Hab. 3:2), and in prayer he reviews the righteousness of God.

Then follows his personal declaration of triumphant faith. The present troubles do not matter, they are of no lasting consequence, if only he has God. "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord,

I will be joyful in God my Savior" (Hab. 3:17-18, NIV).

Translated into language for our times, this text might read: Though the bank fails and all my savings are gone; though I lose my job and my home and my health and all that I depend on in this world, *yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

Somehow in our distorted way of thinking we want to claim an inalienable right to constant good

The true Christian can rejoice in difficulty because He is trusting in God and looking forward to future, eternal joy.

health. And of course, we should be able to live in peace, undisturbed, and have everything we desire to eat, and wear, and live in!

But this is not God's promise. He does not promise a life without problems, only the strength and fortitude to go through them triumphantly. Then, too, we have His promise that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to endure.

So let those words ring out to us: "Yet I will rejoice."

How could Habakkuk do it? Because he was putting his trust in One who was greater than the difficulties. He was saying, Lord, my life and all that I have is in Your keeping. I know I can trust You, I know You will work out Your purposes. I will trust You through

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I Have Confidence in...

"We...worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" —Philippians 3:3.

All of us have confidence in something.

We learn quite young that we cannot put confidence in everyone. Schoolmates and playmates disappoint us even before we reach maturity. But—strangely—we have plenty of confidence in ourselves. An overgrown self-image is a life-long affliction of almost the whole human race, for "every way of a man is right in his own eyes" (Prov. 21:2). Whatever we try to do, a giant named "Me" gets in the way. We think ourselves quite sturdy, quite right, quite dependable.

This most dangerous point of confidence was probably in the focus of Paul's mind when he wrote: "Have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3). Not someone else's flesh but—our own!

Here is a command which took courage to teach, because Paul knew it would not be popular. Among his brethren were some who still put confidence in the outward, physical rites required by the law of Moses. Paul could understand the problem, because he himself had been among them in times past. And so he wrote: "Look out for those dogs (Judaizers); look out for those mischief-workers....For we who worship God through the Spirit and pride ourselves in Christ

Jesus, and do not confide in the flesh, we are the truly circumcised" (Phil. 3:2-3, Berkeley). True Christian believers were to be different in every respect.

It was a new level of thinking. The very idea that one could be "truly circumcised" and not be a natural born Jew was outrageous to the proud sons of Abraham. But Paul was not worried about offending them. Did they feel superior for being natural born Jews? They must lose that confidence in the flesh.

Neither would the command be welcomed by the Roman, for none were stronger in natural self-confidence than the Roman citizen.

Then, too, there were the Greeks, who worshiped physical and mental prowess. These men would rather die than give up their right to self-glory. Relinquish their human pride? Never!

But Paul did not modify his gospel to accommodate any of them. He speaks out boldly, and with the warmth of a fatherly appeal: "We are really the circumcised people, we who worship by God's Spirit, and are proud of Christ Jesus, and don't trust anything human" (Phil. 3:3, Beck Translation).

"We...are proud of Christ Jesus,

and don't trust anything human." Could anyone miss the impact of that message?

Can we miss it?

Where is our proper source of confidence? It is not in *anything human*, and that rules out the most common source of confidence: ourselves. It is easy to mistrust others. It is easy—too easy—to *trust* ourselves. But, says Paul, We have no right or reason to have confidence in ourselves.

Here is an enormous step which every aspiring Christian must take. For all of us have by nature an overgrown self-image. There is something in us that instinctively trusts ourselves, *our* judgments, *our* feelings, *our* ideas. The book of Proverbs stated it long ago in these words: "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes" (Prov. 21:2).

"Have no confidence in the flesh." Does this mean that I cannot trust my own judgments, my own feelings, my own opinions? Exactly. Does this mean that I must *mis*-trust my own judgments, feelings, opinions? Exactly. There is only one lawful standard of comparison, and that is the standard set by Jesus Christ.

The sooner I learn this, the more rapid will be my growth into holiness.

So easily we justify ourselves. If someone else is critical, or fault-finding, we say they are unkind, or unfair. If only they knew all the facts, we tell ourselves, they would feel differently. But when *we* are critical and faultfinding, we are only observing what *is*.

To all these human instincts come the solemn words of the apostle Paul: "Have no confidence in the flesh." "Don't trust anything human"—not even yourself!

The original words Paul used allow a few other translations, which expand his meaning even further. The Moffatt Bible reads, "We are the true Circumcision, we who worship God in spirit, we who pride ourselves on Christ Jesus, we who rely upon no outward privilege." The Lamsa Bible reads, "Yet do not rely on things of the flesh." The New English Bible is truly comprehensive: "We whose worship is spiritual, whose pride is in Christ Jesus, who put no confidence in anything external." It is natural to put confidence in many things external. Naturally we have confidence and pride in our government, our economic system, our family background, and the educational institutions of our land. We feel confidence in our superiors, our relatives, our friends, and—*especially*—ourselves. When we sell out all to God, all this instinctive pride must go also. All our natural respect for human institutions and human ways and human systems, all is part of the "external"; all is rooted in human pride and not in God.

Paul tells his own personal experience in changing *his* source of confidence: "For [Christ's] sake I did in fact suffer the loss of everything, I considered it mere garbage compared with being able to win Christ" (Phil. 3:8, Phillips Trans.).

It is all a matter of values. We can trust ourselves, or we can trust

Christ. We can take pride in ourselves, or we can take pride in Jesus Christ. But if we trust ourselves, what have we? This is where Paul showed his good judgment. He saw the limitations of the Mosaic system. Its purpose was already accomplished in his day. He knew also the weakness of human flesh. In a few years his own life would be over and gone. And if he put his confidence in the flesh, in human institutions—in himself—what would he have then? What would he be able to *keep*? The answer came back: *Nothing!*

Shall we show ourselves less wise? Shall we trust our own judgments? Shall we put confidence in that which is doomed and perishing, that which can last but for a day, and let go the eternal riches in Christ Jesus? Or shall we pride ourselves in Him, let go everything of the flesh, and secure for ourselves an inheritance "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,...ready to be revealed in the last time"? (1 Pet. 1:4-5).

God grant us the wisdom to act wisely, to see beyond our instinc-

Paul was realistic. If he put his confidence in himself, what would he have in the end? Nothing!

tive love of self. Paul's words may be harsh, but they face the facts as they are. "Have no confidence in the flesh." It is one of the hardest lessons of life, but also one of the greatest. For we cannot truly trust God, or confide in God, or worship God, or love and serve God as long as we have confidence in ourselves. "No servant can serve two masters" (Luke 16:13).

When we have God for our confidence, the flesh will be gone, and Christ and all that He represents will have become our all in all.

This is the way to salvation.

This is the way to life.

MM

Obituary

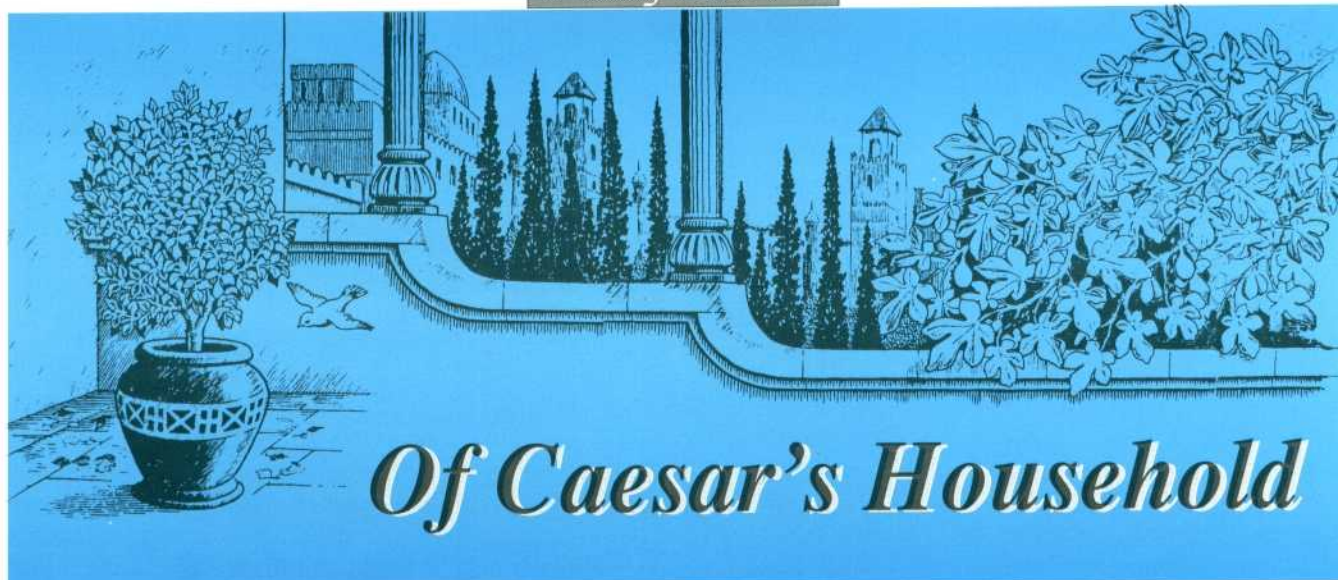
Bertha Scarborough

On February 1, death came peacefully to an elderly member of our church congregation, Bertha Scarborough.

Born in Basom, New York, January 24, 1902, she became acquainted with the Church through her father, who in 1928 first learned of the Megiddo Church from gospel car missionaries. He began to study, became convinced of the teachings of the Church, and attended services in Rochester when time and health permitted. Only a few years later he died and his daughter Bertha moved to Rochester to join the Church congregation, feeling this was what her father would have wanted her to do.

Sister Bertha was gifted musically, and served as church organist and pianist for many years. She was also gifted as a typist, a very fast typist, and spent many hours typing sermons, which she continued to do as long as she was able.

She is survived by two sisters, Mrs. Lila Andrews, of Houghton, New York; and Mrs. Lulu Cook of Rochester, New York; also one niece, Alice Wilkins, of Laurinburg, North Carolina; and one nephew, John Andrews, of Houghton, New York.



An Unwanted Honor

In the corridor the frightened Irene found the Greek ballet-master, who surveyed her with a keen, professional air. Immediately he began to question her brusquely—age, nationality, history, and weight, ending with the question she was expecting, yet dreading:

"Have you ever danced?"

"Never! I haven't the slightest idea how it's done."

The Greek was not disconcerted by her eager disavowal.

"You'll learn, soon enough. I've been watching you, and so graceful a girl as you should never be wasting her time scrubbing and cleaning. You are to be promoted."

Irene's heart almost stopped.

"What do you mean?" she faltered.

"What do I mean? Just this: I need new dancing girls for the royal entertainments and the like, and you are the most promising candidate I have found so far."

"But I haven't promised! I'm afraid you'll have to look further; I'm very well satisfied with my work and, really, I'm not a candidate." Irene forced a smile as she spoke.

"Oh, yes, you are. I never take 'no' for an answer."

"Oarses won't let you have me."

Hippo smiled triumphantly.

"I've talked the matter over with Oarses, and he tells me to go ahead. At the rate Jewish slaves are coming into the city, he will have no trouble in getting house-slaves; but natural-born dancers, such as you seem to be, are scarce. Why, with two month's training you can set the palace agog, and in six months all Rome will be talking about you. You can't get away from it, so you might as well be reasonable. Most girls would feel highly honored by such an offer. How soon do you want to come over to my training-school?"

"I'm not coming at all! I *won't* be a dancer!" Irene cried, bursting into tears. "I—I just *can't*, that's all. Please, *please* don't make me!"

Hippo's face darkened with annoyance.

"See here, girl, you can't talk to *me* like that. Don't you know you are a slave? You'll be at the school a week from next Tuesday morning when the new class starts training, or I'll know the reason why!"

"I'll—I'll appeal to the Emperor!" she sobbed, desperately.

"Try it!" he sneered. "A lot he'll care. He'll probably have you scourged for your insolence, and I'll get you anyway. He's a soldier and he allows no insubordination." Turning on his heel he stalked confidently away, while Irene, suddenly and mysteriously recovering her composure, returned to her work. Inside, she met the envious and incredulous gaze of Myrrhina, who had managed to work near enough to the door to overhear most of the conversation.

"Say!" the latter exploded, "I've known some fools in my lifetime, but you're the worst I ever saw! A fellow comes along and offers you the chance of a lifetime and you try to turn it down, and cry when you can't get out of it. Why, I'd give one of my eyes for such a chance as that. There's no future in this job, but if you make good there you are sure to get rich and probably get your freedom. You make me sick!"

"Too bad," was Irene's calm reply, "but that's my way of looking at it, so why should you care? If you want the place, why don't you ask for it? I'd be only too glad to let you have it—that is, if I really have to go."

"If? There's no 'if' about it.

You're certain to have to go. Why shouldn't you? Who do you think you are, anyway?"

The Gallic girl smiled vaguely but made no answer. At her first moment of liberty, however, she hastened to the apartment of Myra, the thought of whom had brought a revival of hope. Myra had always found a way out; surely she could do so again. In answer to her eager knock a Corinthian serving-maid opened the door.

"Is the lady Myra in?" Irene asked. The girl shook her head.

"No; the master and mistress are both away."

"Away? For long?"

"Perhaps. Valerian was ordered to go to Egypt on a secret mission for the emperor, and the mistress accompanied him. They took ship this morning for Alexandria. They may be away for six months or more."

Six months! Irene's brain reeled, and she suddenly felt very weak. Who would intercede for her now? Six months! In that time—. It could not be! Surely her God would not abandon her to such a fate, to be dragged against her will into the exposed, infamous life of a palace entertainer. She could not! She *would* not! But how—how could she, a lone slave girl among the vast heathen multitude, uncomprehending and unfeeling, hope to save herself? Controlling herself by a supreme effort, she sought out the kindly Miriam, and in her motherly arms sobbed out her story.

The Jewess was very grave as she listened, and sought to allay the girl's fears. What a pity, she thought, that so sweet a young life must be warped and seared by the sophistication and vice of the notoriously corrupt training-school. Far better that she die in Christ than be left helpless in the power of the snake-like Hippo and his crew. But

there might be a way of escape opened up. The day of miracles...

"There, there, Irene!" she said, comfortingly, "tomorrow night we'll tell them about it at the Church, and we'll all pray for you. It may be that the Lord will save you by a miracle, as He delivered Peter from the hand of Herod."

But as she spoke, she doubted. She had witnessed enough of persecution in Nero's day to know that God did not always deliver, if the martyr's salvation was worked out or his time had been wasted. Besides, something was wrong. There had been no revelations, no healings, no tongues for a week. She herself had felt a lack of something in the assembly, and a change in herself, and had wondered. Was it only a brief temporary silence, or was it indeed the end of the Age, when the gifts of the Spirit should cease? She understood that the age of miracles was to last only until the fall of Jerusalem, and the latest reports from Judea indicated that the famine-stricken city could not much longer prolong its fanatical but hopeless resistance to the all-conquering eagles.

Miriam herself had not seen Jerusalem for many a year. She had been a village dweller up to the time of an insignificant rebellion some twelve years previous, at which time the surviving population of the disaffected district was transported to Rome. Most of the men were crucified beside the highway. She knew full well that the city, steeped to the lips in iniquity, a stronghold of robbers, murderers, and fanatics, richly deserved its impending fate; but she could not restrain a feeling of sadness as she thought of the Holy City, the city of the Great King, the city which had squandered or rejected so many priceless opportunities through the ages, once more to feel the wrath of

Miriam had witnessed enough of persecution in Nero's day to know that God did not always deliver.

the Gentile, to be scourged with steel and flame, and to lie desolate "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." She would never see its restoration in this life, she knew.

But the business at hand was more important. Irene must be saved from the unspeakable thing which threatened her. They could but try; they would pray as they had never prayed before. She herself would lay the case before Aquila. She thought in desperation of appealing to Caesar, but dismissed the idea; he would not understand, and it might precipitate a general persecution of the Christian slaves in the palace, with no benefit to Irene. If Myra were here, she could do it with safety; but even then, emperors were not likely to interfere with their overseers, and the life of a slave had no particular value, what with the market glutted with human wares and a wholesale capture impending or already accomplished. It must be taken to the Church.

(To Be Continued)

The fourth "R" in education is Responsibility.

God's Spiritual Creation

Adam and Eve (Conclusion)

The Clothing of Adam and Eve

We read in Genesis 2:25, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." This describes mankind in his natural state—his unfaithful state—destitute of the robe of righteousness, unaware and unashamed of his wretched, disgraceful condition.

Further we read, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (3:7). The eyes of their understanding (Eph. 1:18) are opened by the light of Divine knowledge, and this enlightenment brings hope. Sin cannot be remedied until it is recognized. When Adam and Eve perceive their naked condition, there is possibility of their becoming clothed.

Throughout all ages the Almighty has counseled His servants to buy "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Rev. 3:18). Some do as they are bidden. Others make little if any change from their natural condition: they remain naked, refusing to clothe themselves with the garments of righteousness.

We read how the Bride procures the robe of righteousness (Rev. 19:8); the Church becomes clad in a garment which is without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27); "strength and honour are her clothing" (Prov. 31:25); she is "all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold" (Ps. 45:13); she is attired in "beautiful garments," "clothed with humility," with charity which covers a multitude of sins (Isa. 52:1; I Pet. 5:5; 4:8); she has removed the "filthy garments" and become clothed with a "change of raiment" (Zech. 3:3-5). She has adorned herself with the "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," which is priceless in the sight of God (I Pet. 3:4).

Others whose eyes are opened to recognize their nakedness react in an entirely different way. They

clothe themselves with their own ways, as the allegory indicates: Adam and Eve "sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7). Herein is revealed one of the inherent weaknesses of human nature, that of resisting reproof and attempting to cloak spiritual nakedness with assumed righteousness. In this manner unfaithful Adam and Eve "cover with a covering, but not of my [God's] spirit," thus adding "sin to sin" (Isa. 30:1).

Adam and Eve "sewed fig leaves together" for clothing. Some of the definitions of "leaves" in the original are: "Metaphorically, a shadow—used of anything fleeting and transient." When God's Word is brought to bear upon Adam and Eve, exposing their weaknesses, causing them to realize their spiritual nakedness, reproving them for transgression; instead of humbly confessing their guilt they hasten to justify their position, to make excuses for their faults. But will such excuses cover their nakedness? No more than a shadow! Self-justification may conceal one's true condition momentarily—during this "fleeting and transient" existence—but unless the fault is corrected, it remains to be exposed to his double shame and frustration when at Judgment he hears the sentence, "Depart, I know you not."

The Rewards of Adam and Eve

God's Word applied to the lives of those who consent to serve Him has contrasting effects, creating two classes: those whom it transforms, His loyal servants; and those upon whom it has no saving effect, unfaithful servants. And so we shall expect these two classes to receive two diverse rewards at the Day of Reckoning; the promise is that God will give to "every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

We read, "They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:...and the

Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Gen. 3:8-9). The "cool of the day" brings us beyond the noonday heat of persecution to the evening, the end of salvation's day, when the Lord calls His servants to account. Who is called to account? Only those who labored within God's garden, who covenanted to serve Him. Those outside the garden are not amenable to Judgment. In support of this principle we have Paul's words in Romans 2:12, "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Two of Jesus' parables teach the same. In one He likened the Kingdom of heaven to a man traveling into a far country "who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods"—upon His return He reckons only with His "own servants." In the parable of the Dragnet, we observe that the gospel net which brings forth both good and bad could not possibly catch all the fish in the sea (Matt. 25:14, 19; 13:47-48). And so in the future Day of Reckoning the Lord will call to account only that portion of mankind who were caught in the gospel net, who labored in the garden, His "own servants."

At that Grand Assize the faithful servants who are clad in the garment of right-doing are rewarded with "coats of skins" (Gen. 3:21). The definition of the word translated "skin" is "to cause to escape, to deliver from danger, to preserve life, to preserve one's own life, to preserve anyone's life." Here is suggested a covering far more significant than any natural coat of skin. All who are found worthy shall be given coats of redemption, deliverance, salvation, life.

Several times in the Scriptures the future reward is symbolized as

a coat or clothing. In the Psalms we read the precious promise, "I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy" (Ps. 132:16). Isaiah exulted in the same prospect: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation" (61:10). Jesus reassures, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment" (Rev. 3:5). Paul's Epistles express this same hope of being clothed with immortality (II Cor. 5:1-2, 4).

What about those servants not worthy to receive the "coats of skins," the coats of life?

Jesus' last message contains a solemn warning: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). The Moffatt Bible renders it, "Lo, I am coming like a thief; blessed be he who keeps awake and holds his raiment fast, not to go naked and have the shame of exposure!"

When the Lord's voice is heard in the cool of the day, the unfaithful Adam and Eve hide themselves from the presence of the Lord because they realize that they are naked (Gen. 3:8-11). But their moments of hiding are measured.

Before the bar of God's Judgment there can be no dissembling, no concealing. When the unfaithful stand there, stripped of all their disguises—the last fig leaf rent asunder—they would gladly surrender ten thousand worlds and lives and honors if only they might obtain the robe of righteousness; but the hour for that opportunity has passed forever.

"So He Drove Out the Man"

The last of the allegory describes the fate of the unfaithful: "And the

Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming

***Before the bar of
God's Judgment there
can be no dissembling,
no concealing.***

sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:22-24). Significant here is the phrase, "He drove out the man." The unfaithful servants are driven out and kept out by the flaming sword, a symbolic representation of the decision of the Judge. Thus the way is barred, lest any put forth a hand and partake of the tree of life which "is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7), thereby gaining knowledge of the laws by which they too might perpetuate their existence.

The parable of the Marriage Feast reiterates this same removing of the unfaithful. "When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." For the first time during their long and inglorious career, the unfaithful have no excuse to offer. During

their lifetime they and their faithful brethren had equal opportunity to prepare for this occasion. One class prepared; the other procrastinated. And now, face to face with the results of their sloth, they have not a word to utter; they are speechless. "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be

Only the "overcomers" will be granted the right to eat of the tree of life.

weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 22:11-13). It is only another way of saying: "So he drove out the man."

Numerous other passages of Scripture describe this forced removing of the unfaithful. They are the "transgressors" who shall be "rooted out" (Prov. 2:21-22). They are the "wicked" who shall be driven from "light into darkness" and "chased out of the world" (Job 18:18). They are the goats in Jesus' parable of the Separation, to whom shall be spoken the fateful word "Depart" (Matt. 25:41). They are the "enemies" in His parable of the Pounds, who resist His rightful authority, concerning whom He issues the command, "Bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27). They are the tares in Jesus' parable of the Wheat and the Tares, which are gathered and burned. For "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniqui-

ty" (Matt. 13:40-42). They are the "bad fish" gathered into the net, whom the angels shall "cast away" (Matt. 13:47-50). They are the unfaithful branches which the master Husbandman "taketh away" because they do not bear fruit, branches that are cut off and are "withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire [symbolic of God's judgments], and they are burned" (John 15:2, 6).

But the removal of the unfaithful man from the garden of God does not mean that the garden will be left empty. God's whole purpose in creation is that the earth shall ultimately be "filled with the glory of the Lord," a righteous people deserving to live. "He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18). Remember the words of the Lord's prayer: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." To fulfill that promise the wicked must be removed and the righteous must remain.

A careful reading of Genesis 3 reveals this very point. Though the unfaithful Adam is removed, nothing is said of the removal of the "woman" who represents God's faithful servants. And we learn elsewhere in Scripture that she shall abide. This faithful woman is the Bride of Christ, composed of all believers, men and women, who serve God faithfully. Of "her" it is written "his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7-8). They are the "righteous" who shall "never be removed"; the "upright" who "shall dwell in the land, and the perfect [who] shall remain in it" (Prov. 10:30; 2:21). For doing "the will of God" they shall be granted the privilege of "abiding forever" (1 John 2:17). They are the "overcomers" who have kept the commandments of God, to whom will be given the right to eat "of the tree of life,

which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7; 22:14).

What will become of the "Adam" who is driven out? Violation of one's sacred pledge is not without its ultimate consequences. In the words of Genesis, this unfaithful man is compelled to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow; he must till the ground from whence he was taken (Gen. 3:19, 23). From other inspired writers we learn that the unfaithful man must till the ground—humanity—in preparation for the new world. There is much tilling to be done before the ground is fit for the one third who submit to Christ's authority, who will form the nucleus of the burgeoning populace of the new age (see Zech. 13:9; Isa. 66:19-22).

In Summary

From the dim and rudimentary outlines in Genesis we have seen God's plan of salvation unfold to incorporate the entire scope of Divine revelation. We have watched the spiritual creation in progress, as a loving Heavenly Father with infinite patience and tenderness selects from the raw material of humanity the best for His eternal purpose.

The more we study God's plan of salvation, the more we fathom of the deep and beautiful truths which are compressed into three brief introductory chapters of Genesis. There is certainty and immutability, vastness and majesty, loftiness and grandeur to that plan, far transcending any human wisdom. It is Divine. Grandest of all its principles is this: that the humblest earth-born can participate in that plan and share its eternal realities if he will but become created in righteousness and true holiness, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, God's spiritual creation. THE END



Glorified in God's Presence

"I would be pleased if you would answer a question which my son-in-law keeps asking. The passage is in John 17:5, 'And now, O Father glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' Also verse 24. These are Jesus' own words, and I must say I'm at a loss to know what to answer."

First of all, what did Jesus mean by praying to His Father, "Glorify thou me with thine own self"? An alternate translation of this phrase might be, "Glorify thou me in thy presence" or "at thy side." Several of the new translations incorporate this thought, as: "Honor me in your own presence" (Phillips); "Glorify me at your side" (Beck); "Invest me at your side" (Rieu). Jesus had glorified God "on the earth," now He prays that God would glorify Him in heaven, in His own presence.

It was a special request which God did indeed honor.

The last phrase of this text, "with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," is taken almost universally as a guarantee of Jesus' pre-existence, but we cannot feel that such was Jesus' intent because of the enormous weight of

evidence on the other side. The phrase reads as translated in the King James Version: "...with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." This phrase in the original Greek might be literally translated, "Before the world to be" (see Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott).

Were this the only passage of Scripture we had on this subject, we might feel uncertain; but in view of Jesus' plain statements that He was the Son of God, that He was not the Father, and Moses' statement that He was to be raised up from among his brethren (Deut. 18:15)—not sent down from heaven—it seems conclusive that Jesus was talking about the "world to come" (Heb. 2:5) which is, literally rendered, the "world to be," the eternal Kingdom, rather than anything Jesus had previously experienced in heaven. Supporting this view is the fact that the word translated "world" in this passage is not the earth on which we stand, i.e., He is not referring to the creation of the earth, but to the *cosmos*, which means the "arrangement" of governments or people upon the earth, one's surroundings.

Jesus was looking forward to receiving the boon of immortality, to being glorified in His Father's presence with the glory that God

had planned for Him—a plan which had indeed existed from the very beginning; His place in the Divine scheme had been foreknown from the earliest time. Even in the first book of the Bible it was revealed; He was to be the honored recipient of tremendous favor, the future King of the whole earth. Now the time was near for Him to receive the reality of that which had been His by promise, the glory for which He was destined by virtue of His holy and upright life, the glory with which He would be vested before He should return to be King of a new creation, the world to come, "the world to be."

Verse 24 reads: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

Again we must observe that the word "world" which Jesus used here is not the earth but the *cosmos*, the arrangement of things upon the earth.

If we take this verse as it is often understood, we have a contradiction with Jesus Himself. In this verse He seems to be saying that He wishes His disciples to behold the glory which He has had from

His Father "before the foundation of the world," yet John 7:39 says plainly that at that time "Jesus was not yet glorified." Again, if He was praying for His disciples to "be with me where I am," so that they could see the glory which He had always had, this again would be contradictory because they had been with Him for three years, and why had they not seen His glory if He already had it, as verse 5 is often misinterpreted to say.

No, Jesus is not contradicting Himself. He was praying in verse 5 to be glorified in His Father's presence, and in verse 24 He was longing to share that glory with His disciples. And He was saying also that God genuinely loved Him—because of His righteous character—before the inception of the "world to come," that world over which He would have dominion and in which His disciples *could* and *would* see His glory. MM.

True Love Lasts

God has a crown of life eternal laid up for all who truly "love" Him and all that is His. What is this love? Read I Corinthians 13 and you will learn that this love is:

- never rude
- never selfish
- never irritated
- does not demand its own way
- does not think evil of others
- does not rejoice in the misfortune of others
- bears all
- believes all
- hopes all
- endures all
- does not belittle
- does not plot against
- does not gossip about
- does not compete with
- is not double tongued
- and lasts forever.

A Time For ACTION

(Continued from page 9)

re-resolved. Let us *do* the things we have resolved. Let us stop talking and start acting. At this late hour, to delay is to invite disaster.

Do we say that we must be strictly honest? Then let us look for opportunities to practice it, in the small, everyday things of life. In anything we do or say or represent, let there be no compromising with the facts to make ourselves appear better than we are. If we are telling a story, let us tell it *exactly as it is*. And let us watch above all that we do not deceive ourselves and think we are doing something which God knows—and in our inner hearts we know—that we are not doing.

Have we learned the command "Pray without ceasing"? Then let us *do* it. This is the time for action. Let us keep an attitude of humble prayer before God from morning until night; let us picture ourselves as His servants, doing His bidding.

Have we said that we must keep our minds on God and the future? Then let us do it. Let us fix this thought in our mind when we wake up in the morning, that we belong to God, that we need Him to help us that day, and begin by filling our minds with His Word. Let it act as the sentinel all day, guarding the gates carefully against anything not spiritually upbuilding.

Have we said that we must be kind? Let us look for opportunities to show kindness at home. Let us speak kindly, and never let any harshness pass our lips. And even when we are tried, let there be no ruffling of our spirit, no resentment in our tone, no rudeness in our manner.

Have we resolved to break our will? Then let us not give in to ourselves in the little things of life, and we will find the greater issues easier to master.

Do we see a need for a new attitude, a deeper devotion, a humbler spirit? Then let us be about it. Let us *apply* the things we know, *do* what we resolve. This is the only way that we shall ever stand among the winners and receive the laurels of victory.

Living as we are at this very critical time in the world's history, when the night is nearly over and the glorious new Day is about to break in upon us, we should be ever asking, what can I do to get myself ready? Where do I stand in relation to where I should be? How important is the Kingdom of God and righteousness in my life?

What does the Lord require of me? If we allow even a hint of "time enough yet" in our subconscious mind, we will find ourselves making excuses for the evils of our nature and be at least part-time spectators of the game we should be winning.

At the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, we shall want to be more than spectators. We shall want to be full participants, with a full share in all the glory and joy and honor that will come with that auspicious occasion.

But if we are spectators now, we shall be merely lookers-on then, when we shall "see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and [we ourselves] thrust out" (Luke 13:28). For the Kingdom of God is not for spectators; it is only for dead-earnest workers who want above everything else to *win*.

Because winning means life—*life—LIFE!* MM

Yet I Will Rejoice

(Continued from page 15)

thick and thin. Let come what will; You can turn it to good. Take away anything and everything I have—"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Here is true faith, faith *in spite of* anything that may seem against us. Here is hope, trusting where we cannot see. Here is true confidence that holds fast even in the most difficult trial.

"Yet I will rejoice." Here Christianity is different. No other faith can do it. No other faith can find joy in the midst of calamity.

No one enjoys losing, whether it be the loss of a job, or a lifelong companion, or even the loss of one's reputation. No one enjoys being sick, or hurt, or mistreated. Loss is not a cause for joy.

But let us read carefully Habakkuk's words: "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord." Habakkuk was not rejoicing *in the difficulty* but *"in the Lord."* He could rejoice because he had placed his confidence in the source and fountain of true joy. He could rejoice because he knew God is greater than any difficulty, and would work all things together according to His great and glorious and eternal purposes.

Habakkuk was not alone in this approach to trouble. Jesus taught it in His first sermon: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:12). Are we reading Jesus correctly? Is this indeed what He said? Yes, and He said more: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed

are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake" (Matt. 5:10-11). What could be worse than persecution, slander, and suffering *because one is doing right?* Here again is rejoicing that is *in the Lord*, because God is working all things together for the believer's eternal good.

The Apostles practiced what Jesus taught. Captured, imprisoned, and beaten, still they "departed from the presence of the council, *rejoicing* that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41).

Peter's approach to trouble was the same as that of Habakkuk and Jesus. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye...Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings" (I Pet. 4:12-14). But is that all? Did Peter stop there? No, he went on to tell about the glory that would be the consummation of the suffering: "That when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Peter's joy was in the prospect of the glory ahead.

And what glory that will be! Who can compare even a full 70 or 80 years of intense suffering with ages upon ages of celestial happiness and joy? Do we wonder that Habakkuk could say, "Yet I will rejoice"?

Habakkuk was looking ahead and trusting God. And in the meantime, he was determined to be faithful himself. One fact he had settled forever: that God's ways are not our ways. But if we will only take the trouble to align our thinking with God's and follow His way, we can look forward to joy, *everlasting* joy in the future.

What matter the losses, or crosses, or trials of the road—if only they are working out for us a place in God's eternal, glorious Kingdom on earth! MM

The Bible

*Study it carefully,
Think of it prayerfully,
Deep in thy heart let its pure precepts dwell!
Slight not its history,
Ponder its mystery,
None can e'er prize it too fondly or well.*

*Accept the glad tidings,
The warnings and chidings
Found in this volume of heavenly lore;
With faith that's unfailing,
And love all prevailing,
Trust in its promise of life evermore.*

*With fervent devotion,
And thankful emotion,
Hear the blest welcome, respond to its call;
Life's purest oblation,
The heart's adoration,
Give to the Master, the Saviour of all,
This message of love,
From the tribune above
To all the nations and kindreds is given,
The faithful shall raise
Their glad anthems of praise—
Grand hallelujahs that reach unto heaven!*

Heart Obedience Is Different

(Continued from page 2)

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

The more we are satisfied with form and ritual, the further we depart from that real worship which is offered in spirit and in truth. God wants not form but force; not perfect display but perfect intent. The form may be rough, its delivery unrefined; but how much sweeter the sacrifice in the eyes of Him who judges the heart than a perfect—heartless—performance with scarcely a thought of God!

Our offerings to God *can* be beautiful *and* heartfelt. But the danger is far greater that the form will be perfect and the faith lacking, that the delivery will be beautiful and the discernment missing; that while God is acknowledged openly, the worshipers are really pleasing themselves, not God. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8).

The apostle Paul commended his brethren warmly for their heart obedience: "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18, NAS).

Announcing...Abib

This year the members and friends of the Megiddo Church will welcome the beginning of another sacred New Year on the evening of Friday, April 3, and extending through Saturday, April 4, Bible time being measured from "evening to evening" (Lev. 23:32). The ancient Hebrew pattern, according to the law God gave to Moses, was to begin the New Year with the month "Abib," which is the month beginning with the first new moon following the spring equinox (March 20, this year). The first new moon occurs this year on April 3.

This day has double significance as we commemorate the beginning of the sacred year and also the birth of our great coming King.

Distant members and friends, plan now to join us for this sacred season. New Year services and programs will be held on April 3 and 4. The anniversary of the Lord's Supper will be on Wednesday, April 15, and the Resurrection on April 18.

Jesus challenged His followers with the highest of high callings: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). He wanted heart obedience, nothing less.

The prophet Jeremiah appealed to his brethren for the same level of service: "Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens" (Lam. 3:41).

Is our service *heart* service? Is our obedience *heart* obedience? Is our love for God *heart* love?

If not, let us set to work at once to change it.

What makes the difference between hand worship and heart worship? What makes the difference between hand service and heart service? The difference lies in the commitment behind it, the motive, the love, the devotion. It is the difference between a child who is visiting with a family or one that is part of the family.

Can we imagine Jesus doing the will of His Father as a mere perfunctory service?

Heart service will serve without knowing when it is tired. Heart obedience will sacrifice without counting the cost. Heart love will give without a thought of self.

True worship is heart worship, for it includes devotion, and prayer, and commitment. We can add nothing to the perfection of God, but it is our high obligation to let His Word transform us. Paul had much of which he could boast of things natural, but he counted "all things but loss"—so much garbage—in exchange for the "excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus [his] Lord." To him, Christ was life, Christ was hope, Christ was all in all. And so he could renounce all that belonged to pride of birth and position and station, in exchange for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. To his way of thinking, there was just no comparison. To his zealous viewpoint, there was no loss—it was all gain—great gain. He knew that if he was to share in Christ's resurrection, if he was to have life beyond this short term of his existence, he must first share in Christ's suffering, His life of self-denial and sacrifice, and he exhorted his fellow believers to do the same. Such heart obedience stands in sharp contrast to any ritual or formality.

Heart service is the service of a broken and a contrite heart, one that is penitent before God, one that is open and anxious to see evil and correct it before it is everlastingly too late.

"God's sacrifice is a soul with its evil crushed: a heart broken with penitence, never wilt thou despise" (Ps. 51:17, Moffatt Bible).

God forbid that we should ever attempt to worship without sacrifice, that we should ever lift our hands without our heart. Thousands will give their loyalty to rules and empty rituals. Heart obedience is different—because the reward of heart obedience is *life!* MM

Line to Live By

Self-criticism is a powerful force. Others may guess at your potential, but only you know if you have the will to keep going when others stop.

When we consider a duty, often we are only explaining it away. Deliberation is often only dishonesty. God's guidance is plain when we are true.

If you want to form a tolerably true opinion of yourself, consider the thoughts of your own heart when you are alone.

When we ask of God, what we often want is not so much to know His will and way, as His approval of our way.

Choice, not chance, determines destiny.

Not he that reads most, but he that meditates most on divine truth, proves the wisest, choicest Christian.



*The wind that blows can never kill
The tree God plants;
It bloweth east, it bloweth west,
The tender leaves have little rest,
But any wind that blows is best.*

*The tree God plants
Strikes deeper root, grows higher still,
Spreads wider boughs, for God's good will
Meets all its wants.*

It is a fatal mistake to suppose that we cannot be holy except in a situation or circumstance that suits our fancy. One of the first principles of holiness is to leave our times, our places, our goings out and comings in

entirely with God, and say, Lord, here am I. Here you have placed me, here I will glorify you!

Not by changing our circumstances but by changing ourselves are we reconciled to God, and life, and duty.



Absolutely Certain

*"Being absolutely certain "
Of the promise of the Lord
Makes me feel at ease when others
Doubt the truth of God's own Word.*

*He is bound to keep His promise;
He is able to make good.
What He says He will accomplish—
You could trust Him if you would.*

*Stagger not at any promise
That the Lord has given thee.
He is able, beyond measure,
To perform "abundantly"!*