

The Two Great Lights of Genesis

TIMELY TOPICS

THE SEVENTH FLUTE

THE NEGLECTED SCRATCH

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

SLOWPOKES

WOMEN'S DRESS

CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN THESE TIMES

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THY WAY NOT MINE

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# Megiddo Message

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# Editorially Speaking...

#### Don't Deceive Yourself

ATTEND church regularly. I do certain acts of charity. I study my Bible. My moral life is irreproachable. I have a kind disposition. I am very generous to the poor. I am reasonably patient, not prone to temper or excessive passion. I am a Christian.

But am I? Are you?

Perhaps we understand the principles of Christianity and profess a certain faith in Christ. But did we ever stop to seriously ask ourselves this question: Am I a *Christlike* Christian?

We may have a good opinion of ourselves, and a conscience that will justify our every action. But let us be careful: All of this may only serve to cover the proud heart of the Pharisee. We can deceive ourselves.

No one lives in a more dangerous condition than this, and the saddest fact is that such a man or woman is not in the least alarmed. He glides smoothly along until he slips into eternal ruin. He thinks himself on the way to glory and never realizes that to become a Christian he must walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, as did Zacharias and Elisabeth of old.

To be "almost a Christian" and to die in that condition is to cast our lot among the lost, for in God's sight are only two classes of covenant-makers: faithful and unfaithful.

When God sent the Flood in the days of Noah, each one was either in the Ark or he was out of it. There was no half-way position. When the judgments of God fell upon Egypt, every house was in one of two categories: either it had the blood sprinkled on the doorposts, or it did not. And it was either passed over, or smitten with the curse.

Likewise, in the final analysis, we shall either be Christians or aliens. If we think of ourselves as Christians but procrastinate in actually doing the work God has given us, we shall never be found true and full-grown Christians.

Who is a true Christian? He who is like Christ in thought, in interest, in aspiration. He knows that God is infinitely holy. And realizing that He will not tolerate any evil in His eternal Kingdom, he works diligently to cleanse himself from all sin, be it malice, or guile, or hypocrisy, or evil speaking, or any of the host of evils enumerated by Jesus (Mark 7:21—23).

The Christian is the man who is striving in dead earnest to be like Christ. By relentless self-discipline he is forming himself into that "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17). No longer does he possess the liberty to think his own thoughts or pursue his own desires. His every energy is bent upon new interests, new affections, new desires.

The genuine Christian loves God above all else, and the highest expression of that love is the perfect keeping of His every commandment—this is his goal and his ultimate attainment. Such a man is not deceived—he is a Christian. ••

## The Two Great

# Lights of Genesis

#### PRAYER

Eternal God, Thou whose steadfast love has brought us to this place of worship and to this hour, thanks be to Thee for life and being, for all the blessings that come to us from time to time; for the love that we have received and given; for all the kindnesses we have received from others, and for Thy grace going before us, and following after us to guide, sustain, forgive, and hearten. Guide Thy Church that she may move, and move others along the way of compassionate service, the champion of every just cause, leading others to be like Thee.

Loving Father, Thou who didst command the light to shine out of darkness, and hast foreshown the arrival of a time when the darkness will have passed away, and the light of Thy divine knowledge will have enlightened all mankind, we thank Thee most heartily for this light. We are fully aware that apart from it no flesh could be saved; we ourselves and all the human family would be wandering on in darkness, with no hope of anything beyond this brief life and our limited mortal capacities.

It is Thy initial purpose that light shall ultimately prevail over the darkness. A time shall arrive when the darkness will be passed, and the true light will shine. Thy purpose is to divide the light from the darkness, that those who serve Thee shall be distinguished from those who serve Thee not. Thou hast set apart the righteous for Thyself; Thou hast decreed that in Thy finished purpose only the light shall remain, the darkness shall ultimately pass away forever.

Father, give us the spiritual gumption to develop fully the qualities of light in our own daily living. May our lives be an open book, and may every dark shadow be eradicated therefrom. May we have nothing to hide; may we allow no thoughts to prevail which we would be ashamed to have openly projected for all to see and evaluate.

And with flashing eye and radiant face may we look hopefully forward to a time when Thy light, The divine knowledge, will cover the earth from pole to pole, and abundant life and the insights of immortal beings be the happy possession of every creature upon Thy earth made over new.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

#### DISCOURSE

THE VAST and energizing power behind the divine plan is introduced into the Genesis allegory with the creation of light. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3).

Light! Nature's resplendent robe; Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt In gloom.

We read further: "And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night" (vs. 4, 5).

Then followed the creation of grass: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass" (v. 11). And, "God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night" (v. 16).

A literal interpretation of these passages has involved theologians in no end of difficulties. If natural light were created only about six thousand years ago, then prior to that time the entire universe was a dark and purposeless void, uninhabited and uninhabitable. Furthermore, if the creation of the physical sun did not occur until literal grass was growing luxuriantly, then the green turf was produced on earth in the frigid condition that would prevail in the absence of the sun's warming rays.

But approaching the Genesis narrative as an allegory, we can arrive at a Scriptural elucidation which both appeals to reason and harmonizes with scientific fact, and can abandon all impossibilities and absurdities as relics of man's apostate darkness.

In much literature, both secular and Biblical, light is used as a symbol, a figure, a symbolic representation of truth, goodness, mental enlightenment, and those in whom these qualities dwell. Contrariwise, darkness often signifies evil, mischief, disaster, harm, and the agents of these. For example, the words of Jesus: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. 6:23). Both the light and the darkness in this passage are symbolic. Paul spoke of the "rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12), using

darkness as a figure of the unenlightenment of the world.

Grass also is used in a figurative sense, representing that which is shortlived and perishable. In the Bible it sometimes expresses the brevity of human life, here today and gone today (see Ps. 92:7; Jas. 1:10, 11).

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. God provided a lesser light, the Word of God, to rule this night of spiritual darkness; and a greater light, Christ, the Sun of righteousness, to shine with effulgence in God's eternal Day.

#### The Source of Light

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

God gave command, and light came into existence; but why should this be only physical light? Could it not rather be the light of divine knowledge, the light of a God in whom there is no darkness?

Were we to trace the flickering light of human erudition to its origin, we should arrive at the mind of mortal man. But when we seek to discover the source of the vastly superior divine light as unfolded on the pages of Holy Writ, we are transported to the mind of the Infinite—the mind of God.

The Book reveals that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). The source of all light, "the Father of lights" (Jas. 1:17), God is often called "the light." "The Lord is my light and my salvation," extolled the Psalmist (27:1) as he gloried in the wonderful light of the knowledge of God. He spoke again of the glory of God: "Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty: who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain" (Ps. 104:1, 2).

The Psalmist rejoiced in the excellence of the God of light: "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. 36:7—9).

God, the sole Creator and Sustainer of the universe, is the source of all light, physical and spiritual. At some unknown time in the remote past He brought physical light to this planet. But this could not be the light of which the Genesis author speaks, for physical light sustained life on earth long prior to 6000 years ago. Just one evidence of this fact is the existence of coal, an organic compound formed from the remains of living trees, shrubs, and plants that scientists tell us flourished in a moist climate between 250 and 400 million years ago. These

living plants did not grow in darkness while God delayed the creation of literal light.

When God said, "Let there be light," as we read in the Genesis allegory, He was saying in reality, "Let my saving knowledge enlighten men."

#### Light—Divine Knowledge

The term "light" as used in the Bible often refers to divine enlightenment. For example, we read in Isa. 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," that is, no knowledge of divine truth. In the days of Babylon, King Belshazzar was informed by his queen: "There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him" (Dan. 5:11).

In the book of Job we are counseled to become acquainted with the Almighty through His Word, that we may have peace and good and lasting treasures. To do this, it is necessary to first receive His Word and lay it up in our hearts; then we shall be built up and put iniquity far away. Further the prophet informs us of the results and employs the term light in a figurative sense that coincides with other Scriptural usages of the same term. "For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways" (11:26— 28). This figurative or symbolic light, divine knowledge, will shine upon our pathway, lighting us to that glorious coming Day.

The apostle Peter also described divine enlightenment as light, in fact, "marvellous light": "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

We would think naturally that man's interest and aspiration would focus on this superior light whose Creator and Source is the Eternal God. Sadly, however, such is not the case. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). The light of divine wisdom has always fostered true civilization and the highest morality; yet it has received little credit or support from the masses of mankind. Why? "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Man shuns that wisdom which would enlighten his mind, transform his life and guide his steps in safety.

#### Light—the Word of God

Because the light of divine wisdom is made available to humanity through the medium of the written Word, the Word itself is often termed light. Is it not reasonable, then, to term God's Word the

"lesser light"? We read, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). Again, "The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Prov. 6:23).

Paul in II Corinthians 4 speaks of the true gospel as the light: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." And then, alluding to the creation narrative of Genesis 1, he says further: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The light which God commanded to shine out of darkness was the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God," "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ."

Finally, Peter establishes the light as the Word: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise" (II Pet. 1:19). The figure of a light shining in a dark place signifies the light of the gospel of Christ shining in a world dark with iniquity and evil. Though the darkness persists, the Word is available to all who will receive it.

Thus, the lesser light of Gen. 1:16 which God provided "to rule the night," this night of spiritual darkness (Isa. 60:2), is the Word of God, the Bible.

#### The Functions of Light

Without this divine light of God, life would be a purposeless existence, our farthest horizons bound within the limits of a brief, mortal span. With light, all things are possible. Those horizons broaden and expand into an eternity which knows no bounds, filled with supreme delights.

The light of God's Word imparts knowledge. "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. 119:130). "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead" (Eph. 1:18—20). Here is light and understanding which has power to release its possessor from the clutches of Death!

The light of God's Word reveals to man his own nature. "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:20, 21). Light exposes evil. Therefore, all who seek for purity will desire its revealing rays.

The light of God's Word affords prophetic insight; it reveals the times and seasons of the Lord's return. "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.... But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (I Thess. 5:1—4). Light creates expectancy of the Second Advent, and expectancy stimulates preparation. This is a light that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4:18).

The light of God's Word leads to holiness now, and to exceeding joy in eternity: "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy; yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God" (Ps. 43:3, 4).

The light of God transforms men and women from children of darkness to children of light. Said Paul to his informed brethren: "But ye, brethren: are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thess. 5:4, 5). All are by nature the children of darkness, unenlightened by the knowledge of God, governed by their own thoughts and ideas, walking in the light of their own fire (Isa. 50:11). Only the light of God can change them into children of light.

#### Light Bearers and Light Stands

Vital to the diffusion of light is the light stand. Throughout the teachings of Jesus runs one essential principle: the light and the light stands are one. By walking in the light of revealed truth, the believer identifies himself with the light and actually becomes a part of it.

Jesus was the world's greatest light, not because of the greatness of His natural endowments or of His divine origin, but because of the amount of light which He absorbed and radiated in His daily life. So radiant was His life that He was called the light. Simeon spoke prophetically at the time of His birth: "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32). Jesus said of Himself, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. . . . Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light. . . . While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light" (John 12:46, 35, 36).

We read in II Samuel 21 of a time when David went with his men to battle against the Philistines and came very near getting killed. In verse 17 we read, "Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." He was

the light, the leader, the secular and religious head of the nation, the existing light of Israel.

In the prophecy concerning the rending and division of the kingdom of Israel after the death of Solomon is a typical use of figurative speech. After foreshowing that ten tribes should fall to Jeroboam, leaving only two, it is stated of Solomon: "And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen to put my name there" (I Kings 11:36).

John the Baptist so completely illuminated His life with the light of divine knowledge that he, too, was called a light. Of him Jesus said, "He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light" (John 5:35). Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to be a light: "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth" (Acts 13:47).

The responsibility of light bearing rests upon everyone who is himself walking in the light. Addressing His followers, Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14—16).

From this one short passage of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, we learn that the light bearer's obligations are tremendous. We find elsewhere that he must walk in the light (I John 1:6, 7); he must speak according to the light (Isa. 8:20); he must love his brother, for "he that hateth his brother is in darkness" (I John 2:9—11). Identification as lights in the world involves not only our personal walk but our relationship with others. Brotherly love is part of light bearing, and this is a virtue which matures only in deep, fertile Christian soil. There are words of encouragement to be spoken, burdens to be lifted, doubts to be dissolved, reproofs to be administered, all of which express love for the brotherhood and afford light for the way.

Another obligation of the light bearer is alertness. "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (I Thess. 5:5, 6). As light bearers we must watch, watch lest evil and darkness creep into our lives and defile our characters. We must be continually watching that we are not doing evil, or speaking evil, or abetting evil, or showing an example of evil, but letting the light of God shine out in our lives.

Paul also warns of the responsibility of light bearers: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:14—16). Light bearers have a sacred duty never to murmur, but to be cheerful, rejoicing reflections of their Source of light.

#### Dividing Light and Darkness

"And God divided the light from the darkness," the day from the night. What is the significance of such a division?

In this brief statement is embraced an eternal principle of divine Law. Light and darkness must be divided, their cleavage sharp and definite. There can be no affiliation, no amalgamation of the two.

Paul elaborated this same truth when he said, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). Again he admonished: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6: 14—18). Absolute severance from darkness is difficult, but the recompense is abundant—"I will be a Father unto you." The "Father of lights" hereby condescends to become our Father if, if we become "children of light."

The prophet Isaiah pronounced a woe upon all who fail to make a clear separation between light and darkness: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter" (Isa. 5:21). In the sight of God there is no division short of complete separation. Light is all light; darkness is all darkness. Right is right, and wrong is never right.

#### The Greater Light

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night."

We have found the "lesser light" which rules this night of darkness to be the Word and all who exemplify the Word.

For nearly six thousand years the tired eyes of a stricken world have looked with longing for the end of the night. Generation after generation has groped and stumbled in the darkness. And now "the night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). A new light, the "greater light" of Genesis is about to arise to dispel the immemorial darkness. Even now it colors the eastern sky with the foreglory of the approaching dawn.

Patriarchs, prophets and apostles have described this "greater light" in golden words of promise, suggesting the glory which shall bathe the whole

world in God's eternal Day.

Let us read from Isaiah, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: ... of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (9:2, 6, 7). This "child"—composed of Christ and the saints—is to form the great light of the new Day.

Speaking prophetically, King David described the glories of the coming Day. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (II Sam. 23:3, 4). Yes, there is to dawn a day without a cloud! When the greater light of Genesis appears in the political heavens it shall roll back every cloud of disease, of poverty, of man's inhumanity to man.

Malachi identifies the greater light as the Sun of righteousness. "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings ['rays'—Moffatt]" (4:1, 2). When this mighty Sovereign of the morning arises in the new heavens. His healing beams shall penetrate to earth's remotest bounds. There shall be spiritual healing until all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest; and physical healing until the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick."

This Sun of righteousness heals, but it also destroys. "The sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth" (Jas. 1:11). Here is the grass of God's spiritual creation—not literal grass, but "surely the people is grass" (Isa. 40:7), shortlived, perishing like the grass. Such grass existed long before the Sun of righteousness was created. However, "when the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish," they are destined to be destroyed forever by the Sun of righteousness

(Ps. 92:7).

The Lord will smite, but he will also heal: "And the Lord shall smite Egypt [the land of darkness]: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them" (Isa. 19:22). After God's cleansing judgments have finished their work, those that survive and submit to God shall be sparedand they shall receive the blessings of the healing rays of the Sun of righteousness.

The blessings to be dispensed in the coming Day are further described by Isaiah. "Behold my servant [Christ and His associates, the greater light], whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house. . . .

"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight" (42:1, 6, 7, 16). The oncoming Day offers universal emancipation from the prison house of darkness that has bound the majority of mankind through the centuries. Now only a few can be constrained to cast off the shackles of religious error and superstition which bind them in prison; but when Christ the Sun of righteousness shines in the new heavens, "Many people and strong nations" shall say, "Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isa. 2:5).

Perhaps nowhere in Scripture are the splendors of the new Day—illuminated by the "greater light" —portrayed so vividly as in Isaiah 60. There we see Jehovah's great Luminary burst upon the earth and flood the world with glory, dispelling forever the darkness of the ages. Beautiful and inspiring is the poet's paraphrase of the passage.

"Awake, arise, thy light is come; . . . The nations, that before outshone thee, . . . Now at thy feet lie dark and dumb .... The glory of the Lord is on thee! . . . Arise—the Gentiles to thy ray, . . . From every nook of earth shall cluster; . . . And kings and princes haste to pay . . . Their homage to thy rising luster.

"No more shall Discord haunt thy ways, . . . Nor ruin waste thy cheerless nation; ... But thou shalt call thy portals, Praise, . . . And thou shalt name thy walls, Salvation. . . . The sun no more shall make thee bright, . . . Nor moon shall lend her luster to thee; . . . But God, Himself, shall be thy Light, . . . And flash eternal glory through thee.

"Thy sun shall never more go down; . . . A ray, from Heav'n itself descended, . . . Shall light thy everlasting crown-... Thy days of mourning all are ended.... My own elect, and righteous Land! . . . The Branch, forever green and vernal, . . . Which I have planted with this hand... Live thou shalt in Life Eternal."

# Timely Topics

HE WORLD'S situation is what it is today largely because of fear," writes a special Associated Press correspondent in our local news-

paper.

Seeking an elusive goal of security from the threat of global disaster, the leaders of today's nations feel themselves treading slowly down a dead-end street. Their attacks on sources of potentially explosive tensions are cautious, hesitantthey are fearful.

Every thinking man and woman today realizes

#### Global Fear

that huge arsenals of destructive weapons threaten civilization. Power vastly beyond man's comprehension rests in the hands of a trusted few.

But what if—?

The two superpowers talk about how to limit these weapons, but each is fearful of the other. If the Soviet Union builds more defensive missiles, this cuts the deterrent capabilities of the U.S. weapons. This urges Americans to build more weapons to defend existing weapons. And the Russians, in turn, impulsively build up their armaments to match American strength.

And so the fear-filled race continues. Moscow proposes security conferences with European nations, but Washington fears the weakening of NATO and the isolating of the United States from Western Europe.

In the Middle East, Americans fear every move of Soviet policy will undermine vital American interests in the area. And the Russians, equally jealous of their rights, in turn fear U. S. proposals.

In Vietnam, every earnest struggle for peace is hindered by the fear that the other side will getor take—the advantage.

When the United States shows even a slight gesture of favorable policy toward Red China, Moscow immediately sees in it a secret attempt to exploit Soviet-Chinese differences. China, in turn, fears every possible sign of friendship between the two great powers.

Internally, Soviet leaders seem obsessed by fear. They proclaim loudly to their people the disastrous exploits of the American "imperialists" to run down the common man and build up the rich. Every "anti-Soviet" idea or expression—in music, literature, art, or political philosophy—is feared as a hidden means of overthrowing the Soviet system.

The United States itself is stricken with fearfear of war, fear of poverty, fear of anarchy, fear of government; fear of drugs, fear of disease, fear of suppression—fear of global disaster.

The sponsors of a "War Control Plan" to attack the problem of fear sum up the situation this way:

"For the first time in history, human beings hold the power to destroy mankind. Mythology always claimed that God alone could command such power. There are no precedents in political science or in history to guide men who command modern power. Scholars who look backwards into history for their reassurance have become irrelevant for the generations in college and high school, who must create new history if there is to be history at all."

What should be the believing Christian's attitude toward this specter of fear? Not fear—but faith! Fear among the nations is but a vivid fulfillment

of divine prophecy:

"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on earth despair of nations in bewilderment at the roaring of the sea and its waves [the sea of nations], men fainting with fear and apprehension of the things that are to come upon the world, for the power of the sky [the political heavens] will be shaken" (Luke 21:25, 26, Williams).

And then—and then what?

"Then they will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud in overwhelming power and splendor. When these things begin to take place, look up and lift your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near."

Yes, deliverance is drawing near. Fear of global disaster shall climax in global deliverance! ••

#### Plow Deep

A wealthy father before he died buried a large treasure on his farm, according to the story, and left this instruction to his three sons:

"When I die, the ranch will go to my eldest son for one year. If he finds the chest in the one-year period, it is his. If not, the second son will have a year, and finally, the third son will have a year. If none of you find it in three years, the money will be given to charity."

Each of the boys slipped in to him secretly after the writing of the will to ask for some special clue. and to each of them he said in careful tone: "Plow deep, son, plow deep."

The first son spent his year looking in a ravine where he had seen his father often; the second son spent his year near an area of the ranch where his father had a special watchman. When the third son had his chance, he said, "This farm has grown up in weeds. I must first get the crops going, then I will look for the treasure." One day while he was plowing deep in the soil his plow point caught in an iron chest. And the treasure became his without any shortcuts. —Selected.

# The Seventh Flute

SOMETIMES we may be inclined to belittle the minor roles in life. Often those playing minor roles sense our attitude and feel it the most. They may feel inferior, ordinary and insignificant compared to others.

Naturally we think of a special role as something great. But in reality, there is no unimportant job

anywhere.

This point is illustrated in the story of Walter Damrosch, the famous conductor. It is said that one time during a rehearsal when everything seemed to be going smoothly, he stopped the orchestra and shouted, "Where is the seventh flute?" Even the seventh flute, probably the last player in the line, had an important part to play in creating the effect the maestro desired. There was no unimportant part in the performance.

So it is in life. Each has a part to play, and each has the responsibility to play it well. God the great Maestro does not credit us according to our role, whether we are playing the first trumpet or the seventh flute. Prominence in this life does not set us apart for God. An excellent musician and singer once pointed out God's standard for selection: "Know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself" (Ps. 4:3). That is the distinction that we should seek after.

For the great things which God has done, for His care over us, and the many blessings we enjoy continually from His hand, we are exhorted many times in the Scriptures to "Seek him," to "love him" with all our heart, to praise and to extol Him, and to put our trust in Him. If our devotion to God was stirred with such emotions as exists between devoted friends, we would find it easy to follow Paul's admonition, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23); and "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). That is how we add joy and beauty to our task, and that is the only way we can give real purpose and value to any role, whether it be major or minor.

How often our task becomes unpleasant because we have forgotten God and are all concerned about our status for the present, our status in this little world, in our community or circle of friends. We forget that we shall be honored richly in God's own time, when we are ready for it.

In Jesus' day when there were those who were seeking honor from one another, Jesus said to them, "I do not accept honour from man, but I know that in your hearts you do not really love God. I am come in my Father's name, and you do not re-

ceive me.... How is it possible for you to believe, while you receive honour from one another and have no desire for the honour that comes from the only God?" (John 5:41—44, Weymouth). Indeed, if our devotion to God were the mainspring of our life, we would not accept the praise of man either. If the love of God is the complete devotion of our being, it will be the chief concentration governing our activities. It will be a power in our lives moving us to play our parts joyfully and to the glory of God.

A major role can be an opportunity for special service, but it can also prove a shame and a snare to one. Let us note a few Bible characters who were distinguished by their endowments, but who did not do well.

There was Absalom, who murdered his own brother and conspired against his father. He was of royal birth, remarkable beauty, natural dignity, and extraordinary grace of person. All these made him a conspicuous figure. He had everything in his favor, fortune bowing at his feet to load him with favors. He was his father's idol, and his charm of eloquence won him the hearts of all Israel. But Absalom was a godless character. This handsome selfish Absalom was utterly destitute of principle and faith. His filial affection was sacrificed on the altar of inordinate ambition. He had no reverence for God. He was his own master and his own god. His own will was his own law. Brilliant in the beginning, he was buried like a dog in a lonely wood, his name execrated.

Then there were the princes of Israel, "men of renown," and famous in the congregation. But these men became so inflated in their positions that they resisted the civil authority of Moses their great leader. God put away their evil by causing them suddenly to perish from among the congregation—swallowed alive by the yawning earth.

Centuries later, in the early Church was Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve. He was the treasurer of the apostolic band, but his very endowment became a snare to him. One never knows where a wrong thought may end. Sin gained momentum. And sin only needs opportunity to carry us to its utmost depths. Alas! Judas betrayed his Master for thirty pieces of silver. He could have repented, but his love and faith in God were too far gone. He went to his own place and ended his life.

These characters prove vividly that prominent roles in life do not predetermine our success. Our credit is marked by doing our part well—whatever it is.

(Continued next page)

Nevertheless, a special role *can* be an opportunity for high and holy service. Moses, that wonderful leader of the children of Israel, *grew* through his heavy responsibilities and became the meekest man on earth. He kept close to God, and God spoke to him as to a friend. That was the secret of his successful labors.

Josiah the king was not too proud to weep for sin. When he discovered how far his people had wandered away from God, he humbled himself and prayed. He was not too proud to begin anew and do right.

Then, at the beginning of the New Testament era we find Zacharias officiating as high priest in the holy place. In his spotless robes, his head covered, and with his shoes off he ministered in the holy Temple. In love and holiness he performed his service, glorifying God. It is recorded of him that he was "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6).

Holy, and just, and righteous is the Eternal! He looks upon the heart, rewarding only the humble, contrite servant who trembles at His Word.

Let us not forget the assurance of Jesus: The smallest service shall be amply compensated. "For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, . . . verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward" (Mark 9:41). Then, whether we are playing seventh flute or first trumpet, let us muster our all; let us master our endowments; let us wash them every day in the fountain of God's purifying truth, and guard and sanctify them by prayer, that they may be fit for the Eternal's service. ••

### Words to WALK By

A wound inflicted by the tongue is worse than one inflicted by the sword.

The path of virtue may be strait and steep, but it is the shortest route to happiness.

The path of virtue is never made easier by detours.

Compassion and knowledge and virtue are the only possessions that do not fade away.

Grieving over misfortunes is adding gall to wormwood.

The future has a rich harvest in store for those who rightly cultivate the present.

Christianity is not believing the impossible but doing the incredible.

Happiness is not the greatest end of life; it is character.

Hold your temper for a moment and avoid a hundred days of sorrow.

### The Neglected Scratch

A MAN at his work one frosty morning happened to get a slight scratch on the back of his hand. A single minute's attention to it would have assured its healing in a day or two. But it was neglected. A slight inflammation developed, which a simple poultice might easily have reduced. But it was neglected. The whole hand became inflamed and should have had the best medical attention. But it was neglected. The arm and shoulder and back were seized with violent pain, and now all was alarm and confusion. Three physicians were consulted upon the case. The question was whether cutting off the limb would save the man's life—but alas! it was too late. The disease had gained a mortal hold and no human skill could arrest it.

A vicious habit—a little sin—a neglected duty—how easily they may be taken care of, if we work with them in season. But how stubborn and ruinous they become if they are left alone.

Yes, how often a scratch—only a little scratch of sin—is allowed to grow and develop, neglected, which if taken care of at once would have healed. How often we fail to recognize the scratch as anything serious, and instead of healing it we add sin to sin and cover it with a covering which is not of the Lord until our wound becomes incurable. If we would only take heed to the warnings of the great Physician and apply the Balm of Gilead—"He sent his word and healed them," Ps. 107:20—we could be made whole again.

Frequently the first scratch of sin is the evil thought. Put away immediately the first idea of the possibility of doing what you know to be wrong, and the sin will not grow. But how frequently we indulge the evil suggestion, revolving it in our thoughts until it loses its hideous deformity, and the anticipated gain or pleasure comes to outweigh the egregiousness of the transgression.

Never allow yourself to pause and consider the pleasure or profit of anything that is not good and right. Close your mind against the first evil suggestion as you would lock and bolt your door against a robber.

Never dwell upon forbidden subjects or impure pleasures. Meet your enemy at the threshold and drive him from the door of your heart—it is much easier than dislodging him after he is comfortably situated inside. Keep your thoughts undefiled, your imagination unpolluted: So shall your life be virtuous and yourself happy.

Take care of the first scratch—the thought—and the actions will take care of themselves. ●●

# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

#### Jesus Christ

JESUS came as a child. He grew up, not in true poverty, but in humble circumstances nevertheless, in the house of a simple craftsman, a carpenter. Jesus' general behavior and manner of illustration throughout His ministry shows that He was accustomed to simplicity.

Early in His ministry Jesus gathered around Himself a band of the more receptive listeners, whom He instructed in the deeper meaning of His message. From among these, He made another selection—the Twelve.

Jesus was born, He grew, He lived, He taught—but what was the purpose of it all?

We shall continue our study with this thought— Why? Why did Jesus minister and teach?

Our outline of study will be:

IV. Purpose of Jesus' life

A. His Messiahship

B. His Titles

V. The Achievement of Jesus Christ

VI. Proof of Jesus' Existence

As we study the purpose of Jesus' life and His achievement, let us not forget to compare our life with His, for if we would be His disciples we must grow until we reach full stature, even "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

#### IV. PURPOSE OF JESUS' LIFE

#### A. His Messiahship

- 1. Meaning. The word Messiah comes from the Hebrew verb mashach, which means "to anoint." Thus "the Messiah" is literally "the Anointed One," recalling the ancient Hebrew custom of anointing a person who was being set apart for high office, priesthood or special service. "The Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Messiah, and is used as its equivalent in the New Testament. To call Jesus the Christ is to give Him the title of Messiah.
- 2. Acceptance. The idea of the Messiah was deeply ingrained in Jewish thought. It was for the Messiah that the Jews were hoping and praying and waiting—and yet, when the Messiah came, they rejected Him and crucified Him.

But a few believed and accepted Him. The first recorded open confession of Jesus as the Christ is that of Peter. To Jesus' specific question: "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered affirmatively: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Previous to this the apostles had received Christ as their Master and Messiah as a promise that might or might not prove true. But now they deliberately ratified the fact as their own firm conviction, based on their witness of what Jesus had shown Himself to be. Here at last, they felt, was the solid rock on which they could build their faith. By owning Jesus as the Christ, they were stating that they knew what they believed and why they believed it, and were willing to live by the truth and, if need be, die for it.\*

The Messiahship of Christ was the substance of Paul's preaching. Immediately after his conversion on the road to Damascus, he amazed the Jews by proving in their synagogues that "Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 9:22). His message in Thessalonica was that the Jesus whom he proclaimed was the Christ (Acts 17:3). In Corinth he testified to the Jews that the Christ was this same Jesus (Acts 18:5). Apollos in Ephesus convinced the Jews of the truth of Christianity by proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 18:28).

- 3. Significance. The title of Messiah was connected with the offices of prophet, priest and king. The filling of these offices is the exact purpose of the life of Jesus.
- a. Prophet. Just as Elijah was instructed to anoint Elisha as prophet in his stead, so Jesus was the anointed prophet of God. He could say, quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke 4:18, 19).

Moses had foretold that "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me" (Deut. 18: 15), and Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy par excellence.

As a prophet, a teacher sent from God, Jesus came with supreme credentials. So filled was He with the law of God that He could say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). And again, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

<sup>•</sup> J. R. Dummelow, A Commentary on the Holy Bible. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1936, p. 680.

- b. Priest. Christ is our high priest, making intercession for us at the throne of God. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:16).
- c. Mediator. Christ serves in the capacity of mediator: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5).
- d. Judge. This office of Christ is prophetic, belonging to the time of His second advent.

Christ will judge His servants, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

Christ will judge the nations. "For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire" (Isa. 66:15). He shall "judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off" (Mic. 4:3). And this task belongs specifically to Christ. "Because he [God] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Again, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16).

e. King. Christ's fourth and most significant office is that of king. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9). He shall be "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 17:14).

The Hebrew prophets pictured Christ the King as a mighty warrior who will rescue His people from their distresses and subdue their enemies; "a wise ruler and a judge because he will have a wisdom which is more than the wisdom of men, a king who will purify Jerusalem until it is truly holy, a king whose reign will have an everlasting peace such as the world has never known."\* (See Jer. 23:5; Isa. 11:1—6; 32:1—5; 3:2—6; 9:6, 7; Ps. 72; 145.)

The Kingship, according to Jesus' own testimony, is the express purpose for which He was born: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37).

#### B. His Titles

Throughout the Bible, many different names are assigned to Christ, revealing the purposes for which He came.

- 1. Deliverer. In His role of moral, spiritual and physical deliverer, He is called the "Holy One of God," the "Consolation of Israel," the "Redeemer," the "Horn of Salvation," the "Desire of All Nations," the "Deliverer," and the "Plant of Renown."
- tions," the "Deliverer," and the "Plant of Renown."

  2. King. Jesus is "Michael," the "Messiah," the "Son of David," the "Ruler in Israel," the "Branch of Righteousness," the "Sun of Righteousness," the "Sceptre," "Emmanuel," the "Prince of Peace," the "Messenger of the Covenant," the "Just One," the "Prince of the Kings," the "King of kings, and Lord of lords," all descriptive of His kingly office.
- 3. Intercessor. As the "Priest of the order of Melchizedec," "Advocate," "High Priest" and "Mediator," He is now serving in behalf of those who shall be heirs of salvation.
- 4. Judge and Rewarder. As the bestower of future life and salvation, He is called the "Resurrection and the Life," the "Author and Finisher of our Faith," the "Faithful and True Witness," the "First Begotten," the "Captain of our Salvation," the "Prince of Life," the "Good Shepherd," the "Door of the Sheep," and our "Saviour."
- 5. The Chosen of God. His unique relationship with His heavenly Father is also revealed in His title: He is the "Son of the Highest" and the "Son of God Most High." He is "Heir of all Things," the "Lamb of God," the "Son of God," the "King of Israel," the "Elect of God," and the "Only Begotten of the Father."

These are only a few of the names which Biblical writers have used to describe this central personage in the plan of God.

#### V. THE ACHIEVEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

- A. Jesus fulfilled the will of His Father. "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10: 9). He could say, "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5: 30). So complete was His submission to His Father's will that even in the face of death He could say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."
- B. Jesus learned perfect obedience. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8, 9).
- C. Jesus achieved perfect holiness. He was "the Holy One and the Just" (Acts 3:14), as a "lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 2:19). He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26).
- **D.** Because of His holiness, His perfect obedience, His complete submission to the will of His Father, He became our perfect example. "For we

<sup>\*</sup> William Barclay, Jesus as They Saw Him. (Harper and Row, New York, 1962) pp. 103, 104 ff.

Shiloh	Gen. 49:10			Prophet	Acts 3:22
Star	Num. 24:17			Holy Child	Acts 4:30
Scepter	Num. 24:17	TITLES GIVEN T	O CHRIST	The Just One	Acts 7:52
Emmanuel	Isa. 7:14	IIIEES CIVER I	O CIMISI	Man	Acts 17:31
Wonderful	Isa. 9:6			Lord	Rom. 1:3
Counsellor				Deliverer	Rom. 11:26
The Mighty God		King of the Jews	Matt. 2:2	Lord of Glory	I Cor. 2:8
The Prince of Peace		Governor	Matt. 2:6	Passover	I Cor. 5:7
The Everlasting Father		Nazarene	Matt. 2:23	Firstfruits	I Cor. 15:23
(Father of the world to come)		Son of God	Matt. 4:3	Adam	I Cor. 15:45
The Branch	Isa. 11:1	King	Matt. 5:34	Mediator	I Tim, 2:5
The Rod	Isa. 11:1	Master	Matt. 8:19	Potentate	I Tim. 6:15
The Root	Isa. 11:10	Son of man	Matt. 8:20	Heir of All Things	Heb. 1:2
Ensign	Isa. 11:10	Friend of Sinners	Matt. 11:19	Apostle	Heb. 3:1
Eliakim	Isa. 22:20	Stone	Matt. 21:42	High Priest	Heb. 5:10
Precious Corner Stone	Isa. 28:16	Holy One of God	Mark 1:24	Forerunner	Heb. 6:20
Judge	Isa. 33:22	Temple	Mark 14:58	Author & Finisher of	
Law Giver	Isa. 33:22	Son of the Highest	Luke 1:32	our Faith	Heb. 12:2
King	Isa. 33:22	Horn of Salvation	Luke 1:69	Bishop	I Pet. 2:25
Jacob	Isa. 41:8	Saviour	Luke 2:11	Daystar	II Pet. 1:19
Servant	Isa. 42:1	Consolation of Israel	Luke 2:25	Advocate	I John 2:1
Redeemer	Isa. 59:20	Salvation	Luke 2:30	Eternal Life	I John 5:20
Righteous Branch	Jer. 23:5	Son of God Most High	Luke 8:28	First Begotten	Rev. 1:5
The Lord our		Only Begotten of the		First and Last	Rev. 2:8
Righteousness	Jer. 23:6	Father	John 1:14	Morning Star	Rev. 2:28
David	Jer. 30:9	Lamb of God	John 1:29	Faithful and True	
Plant of Renown	Ezek. 34:29	King of Israel	John 1:49	Witness	Rev. 3:14
Messiah	Dan. 9:25	Teacher	John 3:2	Lion of Tribe of Judah	Rev. 5:5
Michael	Dan. 12:1	Bread	John 6:48, 51	Word of God	Rev. 19:13
Ruler in Israel	Mic. 5:2	Door of the Sheep	John 10:7	King of kings, Lord of	
Desire of All Nations	Hag. 2.7	Good Shepherd	John 10:11	lords Rev	. 19:16; 17:14
Branch of Righteousness	Zech. 3:8	Resurrection and Life	John 11:25	Alpha and Omega	Rev. 22:13
Messenger of the Covenant		Way, Truth, Life	John 14:6	Root and Offspring of	
Sun of Righteousness	Mal. 4:2	Vine	John 15:1	David	Rev. 22:16
Jesus	Matt. 1:22	Prince of Life	Acts 3:15	Bright & Morning Star	Rev. 22:16

have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). And hereunto we are called: "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:21—23). Here is our commission: to attain the same level of perfection that He achieved, through growth.

#### VI. PROOF OF JESUS' EXISTENCE

What shall we say to those who try to discredit the whole story of the life of Christ as fable, myth, or falsehood? Shall we have an answer?

The Bible offers abundant evidence; if we accept the Bible, we simply have to accept the Christ that it proclaims.

#### A. The Evidence of the Gospels

The accounts of Jesus' life, as given in the Gospels, are amazingly parallel. Consider that the four Gospels were written not only by four different persons, but in different communities—Rome, Antioch in Syria, some city in Greece, and Ephesus in Asia Minor. They were composed to meet the needs of widely separated churches, "and the marvel is

not their differences but their agreement. Seen against the background of the historic situation out of which they came they are authentic endeavors to deal with bona fide recollections of a real personality."‡

At the beginning the Christian community relied on oral transmissions of stories about Jesus' life and teachings. But it soon became apparent that written records would be needed. Scholars now push back the date of the writing of the first Gospel far earlier than used to be supposed.

Is there any possibility that the Gospels are a fabricated story? Let us suppose for the moment that they are. If that be so, then every detail of the "fable" has been confirmed as historically correct—can this be?

Jean Guitton, author of The Problem of Jesus, illustrates:

"I use my imagination to invent a scene which I never witnessed; I may well hit by accident on a detail that happens to be correct. . . . I may well imagine the death of a friend in Australia. But if also I imagine that he was injured in the neck, that this occurred at midday, that contrary to his usual custom he was wearing a striped waistcoat and had six shillings and five pence in his right-hand pocket;

<sup>†</sup> Harry Emerson Fosdick, The Man from Nazareth. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1949, pp. 33 ff.

then, if this combination of independent details turns out to be verified by the facts, it will have to be recognized that my mental operation was not that of invention but-whatever its mechanisma kind of vision at a distance.

"Now it is certain that the places mentioned in the Gospels are real. Those who live in Palestine can recognize the sites, the distances between them, the differences of landscape, the descriptions of the Holy City, its monuments, its surroundings, its peculiarities." All these facts confirm the Gospel accounts.

When a writer of fiction imagines the past, he cannot help but project his present surroundings into it. The likelihood of his reconstructing it accurately, especially when accuracy would serve no immediate purpose to his readers, would be very small. Had the Gospel writers been fiction writers, they might have chanced upon some truth by accident. But the whole story would have been confused, vague, and inaccurate in detail.

By studying the accounts of Jesus' life in the Gospels, we are forced to conclude that the account is correct.

#### Secular Historical Confirmation

The historian of the Jews, Josephus, records the fact that Jesus lived: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. . . . He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."†

H. G. Wells, in his Outline of History, affirms the life of Christ: "In the reign of Tiberius Caesar a great teacher arose out of Judea who was to liberate the intense realization of the righteousness and unchallengeable oneness of God, and of man's moral obligation to God."

Jesus was a real man; His life was fact, not myth, as no serious scholarship denies. His place in history cannot be removed.

#### C. Facts Confirming the Existence of Christ

The growth of the Christian Church in the centuries immediately following the life of Christ is definite testimony to the fact that Jesus actually lived. What else would have given to the world the foundation for such a structure as the whole of Christianity, though in its growth it apostatized from the teachings of its founder?

The recognition given to Christ by hostile Jews is evidence that Jesus lived. He came, undoing their work, breaking down their time-honored barriers, pointing out their senseless legalism and unveiling their hypocrisy. If they could have done away with this reformer and persuaded people that He never lived, they most certainly would have done so. But no, they did all in their power to halt His work—and still were unsuccessful.

We quote from a contemporary writer: "Had Jesus not really lived, none would have known it better than the Jews and, had it been possible, they surely would have raised that issue. Upon the contrary, all Jewish attacks on Jesus take for granted his life and death in Palestine." In early Jewish writings, Jesus' life, ministry and death in Palestine are assumed as matters of unquestioned fact.\*

- 3. Action taken by the Roman government against the Christian Church in its early years testifies to the existence of a Founder who gave impetus and inspiration to His followers. Christians were a zealous but persecuted sect for centuries.
- 4. All the teachings of the Apostles centered around Christ. Even when He was no longer with them, Christ was their rallying point and central thought, His life, His death, His resurrection, His Second Coming, His Kingdom—these were the subjects which they proclaimed. And what basis would they have had for such teaching if no Christ had actually lived? ••

To be a messenger you must know the message.

#### TEST YOURSELF

- What is the meaning of "Messiah"?
- Discuss briefly the significance of the title "Messiah," as applied to Christ.
- Give Bible evidence to show that Christ will judge His servants and all the nations of earth.
  - How is Christ our "high priest"?
- What was the most important achievement of Jesus during His mortal career?
- How do the Gospels show the reality of Jesus' life?
- 7. List four facts which confirm the existence of Jesus.

† The Works of Flavius Josephus, "Antiquities of the

Jews," Book XVIII, chapter III, paragraph 3.

\* Harry Emerson Fosdick, The Man from Nazareth. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1949, pp. 19, 20ff.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

# Slowpokes

HAVE YOU ever been really driving to get somewhere when suddenly you discovered your effort was all in vain—you were caught behind a slowpoke?

The State of Arkansas recently published a pamphlet dealing with this unpopular class of drivers on our streets and highways, pointing out the unnecessary dangers they cause themselves and others.

To the driver who has somewhere to go, there are few things more frustrating than to have the road blocked by a slowpoke. Sometimes traffic will be slowed to a cold-molasses drip for miles by a driver who barely creeps along and seems to have no consciousness of the rights of others to the use of the road.

Even worse than the slowpoke—who, after all, is moving, though slowly—is the driver who stops his car dead still in the line of traffic without warning.

Then there is the stop-and-go driver, the fellow who doesn't know where he is going, stops briefly at every intersection and then spurts ahead just as you are ready to go around him.

There are also the snails, the stoppers and the hesitaters in the drivers' seats in business, the church, the school, and in every level of society. Among these are the abundance of people who aspire to nothing more, it seems, than the honor that goes with an office. Once they have been elected, they have arrived.

"Verily verily!" you are saying. For you think this column is talking about your preacher, your children's teacher, your boss, or someone else.

But you are wrong, brother, I'm talking about you—and me. For each one of us Christians is in a very strategic driver's seat. And if we are not careful, we may be getting in someone else's way to the abundant life.

A busy highway requires a certain rate of speed. Anyone traveling slower is a hazard to himself and others. Especially is this true in our spiritual traveling. On the King's Highway we do not see many travelers; nevertheless, we come upon the snails, the stoppers and the hesitaters who are taking their time. Now on this superhighway it is not only a matter of consideration, but it is vitally important that we do not lag behind. To arrive at our destination on time is of the utmost importance, and the time is brief.

We know where we are going. Our destination—the Kingdom of God—has been clearly marked and the way mapped out with accuracy. The Master Himself has traveled this road all the way. And

over each step of the way we are commanded to follow, looking straight ahead, not turning aside to the right or to the left. And we must travel—not creep. Creepers never arrive.

If we hesitate and stop along the highway, we put a stumblingblock of offense in our brother's path. As good examples we cannot stop for some unworthy satisfaction or craving of the flesh.

Along the route are many dangerous intersections to be avoided. Some pleasures are lawful; but here, too, we must take caution. If not careful, we can easily spend more time than is wise. At such a time as this, when there is a crying need for good examples among Christian travelers, we should be running at top speed.

Our Guide Book gives us accounts of the stoppers and hesitaters along this road to the Kingdom. There have been many from whom we can learn how not to travel. Solomon should have been a model of speed. But he turned aside, considering his high office and great wisdom as his own rather than a sacred trust from God. He was placed in the lead and should have been a true leader, but he failed miserably. He thought at the beginning that he knew where he was going, but instead of following to a successful finish he turned off the strait and narrow road into the grossest idolatry. He gave excellent advice and correction, but could not be admonished himself.

Demas started with considerable speed and, according to Paul, was doing well. Paul commended him as an able assistant in the great work of the Lord. He could have continued to progress; but his eyes began to wander, and the uncontrolled lusts of his heart pulled him off the road into the sinful attractions of the corrupt world.

There have been many human obstructions along this difficult road who came to a dead standstill. Laziness, inattention, highmindedness crept in somewhere and proved too much of a strain to a driver only half concentrating on the prize ahead. The magnificence of future bliss, so irresistible and full of glory to their earlier vision, faded into nothing more than a fanciful dream.

Just because we have been called to travel the highway does not mean that we have already arrived at our destination. A good appearance, a high seat in the church, a kindly and generous disposition—these alone are no sureties that we are the candidates for salvation. It is the responsibility of each of us to make his own calling and election sure (II Pet. 1:10).

Each of us is in a very strategic driver's seat. No man liveth to himself. Not only must we look to ourselves that we lose not our destination and come short of the full reward—though this must be our first concern—but our running also involves our brother. He is running the race with us and perhaps is anxiously looking up to us to give him the

(Continued on page 18)

### Women's Dress

BEFORE I became interested in serving the Lord, I kept up with the styles. Sometimes it occurred to me that this was foolish, but fashion prevailed over reason, and before I stepped out in public, I had to don the latest.

But when I turned to God, I realized the utter folly of it all. Women, says God, should "adorn themselves in modest apparel" (I Tim. 2:9). Yes, modest apparel—not minis and maxis, not fishnet hose or bared legs, not elaborate coiffures and gaudy array—but apparel pleasing to the Lord.

As I read in the Word that my clothing should be that which is becoming to "women professing godliness," I changed my mode of dress. It was a brave step, and at first I felt ashamed to be so different; but I have never regretted the decision. Why should I? Why should any women professing godliness and truth feel abashed at appearing different from those who bear no respect for God and His righteous cause? Honorable pride and self-respect should strengthen them, make firm their step, brighten their countenance, and cause them to move with quiet dignity and poise.

Civilization, it has been observed, depends on individual character. You look in vain for a single instance where the people have preserved their liberties after the individual character was devalued. Where there is a want of moral principle, the loftiest efforts of the human intellect degenerate to the level of the beast.

One can hardly overestimate the value of true womanhood in supporting the morals of a nation. Honesty, chastity, temperance, fidelity and every virtue as taught round the table and fireside have made the great men of every age. Diffuse the poison of immorality and vice among the women of a nation; let the corruption and degradation triumph over honesty and piety, and we have the perilous times that are upon us, a state of fear, confusion, signs that foreshadow the collapse of civilization.

As individuals we cannot be a stay in this world fast going to destruction, but we can be a light. If we cannot elevate those with whom we come in contact, we can at least keep ourselves from descending to their level in thought and action—and not be ashamed of it. We can be "blameless and harmless, . . . in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). Jesus commanded us plainly, "Let your light so shine before men" (Matt. 5:16). However feeble our light, we must let it shine as the light of women professing godliness. Because of the marked difference between the ap-

pearance of godly women and that of the majority of the world, nothing shines more than a modest woman. Even though many hate to see the light, some will see; someday they will acknowledge it.

Let us join heart and hand with the ranks of all the noble women of old. Sacred history records examples of their modesty, purity, strength and courage. Their call comes ringing out to us, "Let your light shine." And we can know that same victory will be ours as was Gideon's when his army routed the enemy if we, like them, let our light shine out.

The lives of Deborah, Hannah, Ruth, the widow of Zarephath, should inspire us. Mary the mother of Jesus left a worthy example, standing by her Son even to the cross. Her noble co-workers left footprints in which we may follow. When the apostles shrank and fled from their Saviour, it was the women who stood by, last at the cross and first at the tomb—monuments of holy faith and stead-fastness.

There were Euodias and Syntyche, of whom Paul wrote, "They have fought by my side in active service of the gospel."

There were Priscilla and her husband, of whom Paul recalled, "they risked their lives for me."

Closing his Roman epistle, Paul wrote of another beloved sister, and again of others: "I commend unto you Phoebe our sister. . . . Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. . . . Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. . . . Salute Rufus, his mother and mine. . . . Salute the beloved Persis, who laboured much in the Lord. . . . Salute . . . Julia and the sister of Nereus." Can we picture these saintly persons half clad, or donning the sheer, brief robes of a modern and corrupt Rome? Never! They were women of the highest order.

Should we be less?

Of course we do not face active persecution, as they did; nevertheless, we have work to do—to let our light shine! At home and abroad, we can be modest, pure, discreet, prudent in word and conduct. Through all we can stand for faith in God; remembering our worthy examples of old, we can let our character be marked by honesty, strength, courage, humility, sincerity, and good temper.

As I read in Proverbs where wisdom is personified as a woman, I thought to myself: We may become as glorious and eternal as wisdom personified. Does that seem impossible? If we adorn our lives with every virtue and let our light shine, we shall be graced with immortality, no longer merë women but angels of God, to bask eternally in the radiance of divine bliss, dispensing knowledge and light to worlds yet uncreated and nations yet unborn.

Speaking of the Bride or Church of Christ, the Wise Man declares, "Strength and honour are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come" (Prov. 31:25).

We should strive earnestly to be this woman clothed with good works, beautified with the ornaments "of a meek and quiet spirit" (I Pet. 3:3, 4)—priceless jewels.

But like all other virtues, our modesty must be steady. A double-minded woman, like a double-minded man, is unstable in all her ways. Virtue consists in action which springs not from the tongue but from the heart. Virtue is always amiable; it conquers envy and every evil feeling. It alone is invincible. Though severely tried, it grows under adversity. "He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job 17:9). And finally, perfection in every virtue unites us with God, to become His eternal daughters (II Cor. 6:17, 18).

What is the value of modest dress? First, only modesty is becoming to women professing godliness. Second, it separates the striving Christian from a scoffing world. Third, it is a mark of courage, dignity, and virtue that all followers of Christ must have. And fourth, it obeys the command of Paul: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

As women striving for an eternal place in God's heavenly Kingdom, let us conduct ourselves wisely. Hear the words of Jesus: "Let your light so shine before men"—that means your light and my light.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Then in that glad Day of Christ, what joy to stand approved, to meet and greet all those noble women who added every virtue to their lives, who took no part in a world destined to fall but bore their responsibility as women and as Christians. That Day will come. Maranatha!

### "just b-barely"

THE STORY is told of a churchman who invited his pastor home with him for Sunday dinner, at which they had delicious fresh fish. The pastor asked if the fish were caught on Sunday morning. The host replied that he set the lines out on Saturday and went down on Sunday morning and the fish were on the lines.

"That's all right," the pastor said, "you had to relieve the fish. But tell me this: Did you rebait the hooks?"

The host quietly answered, "I just barely did." How often do we employ this face-saving attitude to justify our own negligences? All it amounts to is simply self-justification. We just barely do our duty, or we just barely don't. In other words, we do or we do not. Whether or not we choose to admit it, there is no middle ground.

How willing are we to acknowledge our failures? Do we try to make the narrow way just a little broader by just barely stepping over the borderline? And looking closer, do we feel unduly criticized when someone brings to our attention the sins we feel we "just barely" committed?

Remember, the Judge will not "just barely" pass any sin, however small. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." ••

It is better to be despised for the right than praised for the wrong.

It's not how old you are but how you are old.

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MARCH, 1970 17

#### Slowpokes

(Continued from page 15)

strength and courage he desperately needs to carry him through the difficult places in the ever winding and twisting roads of life. If we hesitate or poke along, so to speak, he may be persuaded to do the same.

Paul was not a slowpoke, and he took special precaution not to create a roadblock for his fellow Christian. His conscience was strictly educated before God to keep his faith always in topmost working condition. He could think, speak, act and write with confidence, giving no offense. We may learn more of his life's journeyings by reading his impressive epistles to the churches, and take them for our spiritual guidance.

We have no excuses to be slowpokes! ••

Let's Think About-

#### The Church of Ephesus

(Rev. 2:1-7)

The Church at Ephesus had labored much for the cause of the Gospel, but had lost its first love. It had fallen from the great spiritual height it had attained, and was admonished to repent and love reproof, or it would be removed out of its place.

How do we stand?

### Attention!!

#### READY NOW

#### The Devil and Hell of the Bible

-A NEW EDITION-

Who or what is the devil—a spirit, an influence, a real being, a force, or a personality—or what?

What is the punishment of the wicked—is it eternal torment? Will evildoers burn in literal fire?

Understand what the Bible says on this important subject.

SEND FOR YOUR COPY TODAY!

The editor of a small New England newspaper sent for our booklet The Kingdom of God, as we advertise, and returned the following book review.

#### Megiddo Booklet Assays Israel

Among the pamphlets popular with some area Bible students are the booklets issued periodically by the Megiddo Mission Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, N. Y. The tracts are so well done typographically that it would appear that they are being sold below cost.

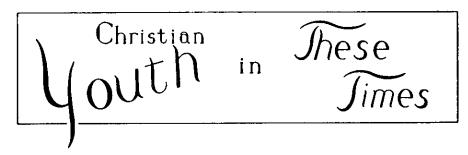
One of their Bible study pamphlets is "The Kingdom of God," a 70-page booklet based on the phrase in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come." A supplementary text given is Rev. 11:15 RSV, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ."

An introductory chapter evaluates present thinking on the subject and the second chapter deals with the question, "When will the kingdom be established?" It is the sixth chapter, however, which gives full and well-deserved attention to a vital subject. It deals with the question, "Is the State of Israel a fulfillment of prophecy?"

After a brief summary of the history of the modern State of Israel which gives credit to the early Zionists for their courage and breadth of vision, the author then utilizes an exegesis quite common among Fundamentalist groups and suggests that it is a spiritual Israel which is meant in the Bible prophecies, a theory akin to that of the Rev. Dr. Frederick Aston, who offers for consideration a Suffering Servant who may be either the people Israel or else Jesus. Problem here is that of finding in either concept the divine narcotic of hope and relief of conscience. ••

#### Concentrate!

When you have chosen a great purpose and are certain you have chosen well and wisely, concentrate upon it. Bend your best energies to it. Guard yourself against subtle and innumerable influences that tend to divert you from it. Make that single great purpose the definite aim of your daily life. Be enthusiastic about it. Your thought and time will be solicited by many influences, and you will do well to take special means to protect yourself against them. Make your resolutions so clear and firm that nothing can lure you from your chosen path and duty. Substitute doing for dreaming, and achievement for wishing. The great things of the world are done by men who specialize and con--Selected. centrate.



#### The First Thing

T OM AWOKE especially early. This Saturday was to be a big day. Ever since last Monday, when he had received that letter from Mr. Gerald Lieberman, he had been looking forward to it. The letter had requested Tom's presence at Mr. Lieberman's office Saturday morning at ten o'clock. Tom polished his shoes extra carefully and rubbed and rubbed them, then gave them an extra whisk to see that they reflected the fullest brightness of the May sunshine.

Carefully he pressed his Sunday trousers until the creases were straight and firm. He even pressed his best tie, the one he had received for his birthday and was saving for a special occasion. Everything must be just right when he appeared before Mr. Lieberman that morning. After all, not every high school freshman in Wellington had received such a letter from the owner of the city's largest grocery chain. Surely the letter could mean only one thing: Mr. Lieberman was going to offer him a job. At least, this was what Tom had his heart set on. His father was crippled, and Tom wanted desperately to help his mother and his four younger brothers.

It was only eight-thirty, much too early to get dressed and start on his way downtown. Tom stood looking out the dining room window, his hands in his pockets, whistling a happy tune. This was to be the day!

Suddenly the song on his lips died, and he turned from the window feeling very uncomfortable. He had caught a glimpse of his poor little Great-Aunt Sue, who lived next door, hobbling about her yard with the help of her cane. She carried a small paper bag, and was picking up all the loose paper and rubbish that the wind had blown into her backyard. For the past five years Tom had always done that work for her every Saturday morning. And he had always done it before eight-thirty.

"She must think I'm sick, or neglectful, or extra busy today," Tom thought to himself. He felt very guilty as he stepped to the corner of the window and tucked his head inside the curtain to take one more quick look at the little old lady hobbling about her yard.

"Well," he said, shrugging his shoulders as if to convince himself that it really didn't matter. "After all, I won't be able to do such work anymore. That kind of job is for children. I'm going to have too many more important things to do on Saturday mornings from now on."

But such thoughts did not make Tom feel any better inside. He knew that all the paper of the entire neighborhood always seemed to blow down the street and get caught in his Great-Aunt Sue's hedge. She never complained. The first thing every Saturday morning she had always gone out, paper bag in hand, to rid her yard of all the trash. Then one wintry day five years ago she had slipped and fallen on the slippery sidewalk. Since then Tom had always done this job for her. He had never missed a single Saturday, until this one.

Tom was still feeling uneasy as he got off the bus and walked down the street toward Mr. Lieberman's large office building. When he turned the corner he stopped short, as if unable to believe his eyes. There was Mr. Gerald Lieberman, president and owner of the largest grocery chain for miles around, all dressed in his smart business suit, polished shoes and striped tie, carrying a small paper bag and picking up candy and gum wrappers and other bits of litter along the sidewalk.

Tom decided quickly to turn and walk around the block very slowly so that Mr. Lieberman would not know Tom had seen him. But before he had time to turn around, Mr. Lieberman caught his eye and waved at him.

"Good morning, Sonny," he said cheerfully. "The custodian who usually sweeps the sidewalks is sick this morning. So, until someone else has time to do this work for him, I thought I might as well pick up all these scraps of paper. There's no use having such litter cluttering the sidewalks. Go right up to my office. I'll be with you in a minute."

Tom was surprised that Mr. Lieberman spoke with him, so surprised that for a moment he could not speak. He just stood there, silently watching Mr. Lieberman pick up the bits of paper that careless people had dropped the night before. Suddenly the picture of his Great-Aunt Sue with her cane and her paper bag came before Tom's eyes. He felt so ashamed that he wanted to run home to help her. Instead, he quickly stepped up to Mr. Lieberman and said, "I'll be very glad to finish this job for you, Sir. You must have more important things

to do. As soon as I'm done, I'll come right up to your office—if that's all right with you," he added quickly, slightly fearful of Mr. Lieberman's reaction.

Mr. Lieberman handed Tom the bag as a bright smile lighted his face. "I'll be in my office waiting for you, Tom," he said as he disappeared through the revolving doors.

Tom was surprised to find five other boys sitting in the outer office, all waiting to see Mr. Gerald Lieberman. He knew them all, for they were boys from his high school. "They must be here wanting a job, too," he thought. "What if there's just one job—one job for all of us?" Tom's knees began to tremble. "I surely hope I'm the one Mr. Lieberman chooses. But, what about these other five—" He quieted his fears with a solemn mental command to "Just wait and see."

Just then the door marked "Private" opened, and Mr. Lieberman stepped into the outer office. He smiled as he greeted them. "Young men," he addressed them, "I spent some time with your principal at school last week, for I want to find the very finest young man I can for a special position I have in mind. I suppose you wondered how I knew your names. You were all pointed out to me as you passed in the halls between classes the other day. I could not have chosen any of you at the time, for all of you are fine-appearing students and have made such good records at school.

"But somehow I had to select just one. And not knowing any better method, I decided to let you do the choosing. When you arrived this morning you all saw me with the paper bag in my hand, picking up scraps of paper from the sidewalk. You were all willing to come up and wait for me here, while I continued to work alone—that is, all of you except one." Tom could feel his face getting redder and redder. His chin dropped, but inside his heart leaped in expectancy.

Mr. Lieberman continued, uninterrupted. "I have only one job to offer right now, but I hope that all of you will learn a very important lesson this morning. No job is too small for a big person to do. Only people who stay small in their thinking find such work as picking up paper beneath them."

Then speaking directly to Tom, he said, "We have much to talk about, Tom. Step into my office, and we'll get busy right away." And to the other five he said, "There may be other opportunities for you in the weeks to come. In the meantime, keep your eyes open. Look around you. Get yourselves ready for a big job by doing all the little jobs you can find and doing them willingly and well."

Tom could hardly wait to get home, for he had wonderful news to tell his mother and father. But there was another and more important reason why he was so anxious for the bus to arrive at his street corner. As soon as the bus stopped, Tom bounded off, ran down the street as fast as he could, passed his own house, and knocked at his Great-Aunt Sue's door. He wanted to tell her how sorry he was that he had felt too big early that morning to pick up the paper for her, but to assure her that she could count on him from now on.

"The first thing, the first thing every Saturday morning," Tom thought to himself as he waited for the little old lady to answer the door. "The first thing."



#### Spiritual Food

There is much spiritual food and blessings contained in the twelve booklets you sent me. A lot of these booklets contain truth, information, and interesting facts that I have never known or heard before.

I enjoyed reading about the history of the Megiddo Mission. I think it is a shame that such an ambitious work as the Mission's goes unheard in many areas, but our God knows, and that is what is important.

Ilion, N. Y.

Mr. H. J.

#### Influence

Practically everything we come in contact with, see, or hear has an influence on us. Many times we don't realize it. As others influence us, so we influence others.

So we should be very careful of what we say or do, for we do not know who will be influenced. How much better to say something kind or encouraging instead of something to hurt someone else.

I try to be careful what I say, but I do sometimes say something that I regret later. God wants us to be kind.

Adamsville, Tenn. Mrs. J. P.

#### Again and Again

Words of encouragement from fellow workers are always helpful. I am reminded of the song, "I Love to Tell the Story." Two ideas in the verses are that the more you tell the story, the more wonderful it is. The other is that those who know it well want to hear the story again and again.

Small children learn their favorite stories by heart and never tire of hearing them told over and over again. I think this is true of God's Word. Those who know it by heart never tire of hearing it again and again. Our letters carry no new ideas, but rest assured that the old ones are just as satisfactory to those who know the story of God's Word.

Westfield, N. Y.

W. G. R.

#### Who Made the Devil?

I was talking with someone yesterday who asked me, "Did God make the devil?" I didn't know just what to say, but I think we make our own devil with our high temper, being angry at the least little thing, no self-control, no will power over self.

Nacogdoches, Tx.

Mrs. E. C. E.

# Meditations On the Word

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24).

This sounds reasonable enough, and has a familiar ring to the students of the Scriptures; but how shall we square this warning with the promise of the same Teacher in Matt. 7:7, 8, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"?

There is no difficulty whatever, if we accept the qualifications provided by the Speaker. Certainly such a promise, if unconditional, would conflict not only with our text but with the familiar passage immediately following: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

It is evident, then, that there is more than one kind of seeking. Of the many courses which we may expect to find, not all can be right; in fact, it is revealed that only one is the true and successful way. All roads may lead to Rome, as the old proverb says, but all roads do *not* lead to the Kingdom of God, modern easy-going theology to the contrary notwithstanding. Personal salvation can be gained by only one approach and one formula.

The principal reason for the unpopularity of the true and living way is the nature of the gate through which all its travelers must pass. It is not an easy way, and never has been. Good things do not come easy; that is an axiom in this life and a principle of God's evolution—the survival of the fittest. It is, as our text says, a "strait" or difficult way, restricted and narrow. Five other translations of this verse render it "the narrow door." It is so narrow that not one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19—21) or the thirteen evils which lurk in the heart of man (recorded in Mark 7:21, 22), can be carried through.

It is to be expected that the masses, who are averse to effort of a mental or moral nature, would seek for an easier way, and this is just what we find. There is plenty of seeking done in the world; the utterly irreligious person is comparatively rare. The quest for salvation or spiritual satisfaction is universal and timeless, appearing in a

multitude of forms, from the most primitive fetishism or animism right on up the line: but

Of all the creeds that mortals wrote, Not one caught true perfection's note.

Of faith and zeal there is no lack, and never has been; but there is a woeful lack of knowledge to direct and control. Error has had more martyrs than truth, but it is still error. "Though I have all faith," said the apostle, ". . . and though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Charity, or love, the keeping of the commandments of God (I John 5:3), includes and presupposes knowledge, the channel through which all other virtues come (II Pet. 1:2, 3). Much seeking, but most of it is doomed to failure because it is done in the wrong way. Shrewd leaders took advantage of the universal desire for a wider gate and a smoother road, and provided it by postulating a system of righteousness by proxy, or substitution. The people liked it, and they still like it, as witnesseth Jer. 5:31, and our own observation.

The natural Jew, who beyond question had the best opportunity ever placed before any people, rejected it because the sterile formalites of an obsolete law seemed easier. Sacrifices and offerings, fasts and holy days, could be managed without interfering with the inner man. The stark proposition of an utter cleansing, without and within, was too much for him, and his "seeking," though sincere and zealous, went for naught (Rom. 9:31, 32).

Then there is the individual, familiar to all of us, who is never satisfied with any result unless it is attained by his own methods and ideas. The scholars of King James, in the sonorous dedication of their translation of the Bible, shrewdly appraised this class as "self-conceited brethren, who run their own way, and give liking unto nothing but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil." We still have them. This is plain inflation, and the entire plan of salvation is definitely anti-inflationist. The old head must come down, and in the end be cut off entirely (Rev. 20:4). Not one of our own ways or ideas will pass the "narrow door."

All these classes, without preferment or discrimination, are classified by the Master as thieves and robbers. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). We know that their climb will be fruitless, for there are but two gates and two ways—the narrow way of perfection on one side, and everything else on the other.

So much for the unenlightened world. But within the way of understanding there is a numerous class whose fate is even more tragic, because they could have finished the course and gained their objective. "Too little and too late" is their trouble, or most of it. The narrow door lies not at this end of the narrow way, but at the other. All the way through our probationary pilgrimage we are free to carry along some of self, some work of the flesh, some opinion or doubt or grudge or unlawful desire, right up to the gate of the City. Perhaps we are aware of some of this "excess baggage," but have a vague idea that somehow we can lay it off in time to get through. But that is another impossibility. We will find ourselves in the position of the man in the fable, who deliberately carried and nurtured a grudge to the end of his life; but finding that it blocked his passage into the heavenly city, he attempted to drop it, only to find that it had grown fast and become a part of him.

Then we will strive, then we will seek with the many, the great host of the unfaithful, to enter in, but shall not be able. It is too late. Our time is up; our works are not perfect before God. "When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; . . . he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are; . . . depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." ••

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Does the 2300 days of Daniel 8:13, 14 represent years?

"Daniel 8:11 says that the he goat (Greece, Dan. 8: 21) takes away the daily sacrifice. Alexander the Great conquered the Jews back in 330 B. c. Did he take away the daily sacrifice? 2300 years from 330 B. c. would bring us to 1969 or 1970. Could this represent a sign as to the end of the world?"

Regarding your first question, "Does the 2300 days of Daniel 8:13, 14 represent years?" we would answer yes. We are confident that it does; often in prophetic time the Bible uses a day to represent a year (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6). But you are obviously confused in your deduction from Dan. 8:11 and 21. You postulate that it was the he goat, Greece, that took away the daily sacrifice. But if you will reread the narrative carefully, you will see that it was the "little horn" power, or Rome.

Verses 3 and 4 of Daniel 8 speak of the twohorned ram, or Medo-Persia, having the second horn higher than the first, or the Persian Kingdom stronger than its predecessor, the Median.

Verses 5 through 8 picture the he goat, Greece, with one notable horn between his eyes, representing Alexander the Great. "And when he was strong, the great horn was broken"—that is, Alexander the Great died—and in its place "came up four notable" horns; after Alexander's death,

the kingdom was divided among his four generals. "And out of one of them"—out of one of these divisions of the Empire of Greece, emerged the "little horn" which waxed exceeding great (verse 9)—the Roman Empire. "He magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down" (v. 11). Who took away the daily sacrifice? The "little horn, which waxed exceeding great," the Roman power.

This Roman Kingdom, represented in Daniel 8:9 as the "little horn," is pictured in Daniel 7:7 as a fourth beast, "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: . . . and it had ten horns." Verse 8 tells of another "little horn," Papacy, which developed out of this fourth beast dreadful and terrible, "and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." Verses 19 and 20 speak further of this horn's power: "exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; . . . even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows."

Verse 21 then reveals the work he was to do: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."

Out of this fourth beast, Rome, referred to as the "little horn" in Dan. 8:9 came that horn (Papacy) which "had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things," and he it was who "magnified himself even to the prince of the host," and by him was the "daily sacrifice" taken away. How was this done? By teaching that good works are not necessary to salvation, that salvation can be obtained without rendering our bodies a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12: 1), that it is not necessary for us to become "dead to sin" (Rom. 6:11), that it is not necessary for our "old man," our carnal nature, to be crucified with Christ to merit salvation (Rom. 6:6), the daily sacrifice was taken away. Scripture and history picture this apostasy as complete about the beginning of the seventh century.\*

This is the same "daily sacrifice" that Daniel forecast would be taken away in ch. 12:11, the sacrifice of a "broken and a contrite heart" (Ps. 51:17), the daily dying to sin and taking up of our cross of self-denial (Luke 9:23; I Cor. 15:31; Gal. 2:20).

It was, specifically, the ecclesiastical empire that emerged from the Roman power, predicating salvation on submitting to the ritual of the church and

<sup>\*</sup> We read in Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, "The profound ignorance and barbarism of this century will hardly appear credible to those who have not personally examined its literary productions. During this century [the seventh] true religion lay buried under a senseless mass of superstition, and was unable to raise her head."

depending on the death of Jesus on the cross, that took away the daily sacrifice.

Now let us give some thought to the 2300-year vision. Turning to Daniel 9:21 we learn that Daniel was praying for more knowledge. His prayer was answered by a visit from the angel Gabriel. In verse 23 Daniel was commanded to "understand the matter, and consider the vision." By following the narrative from Daniel 8 through verse 23 of chapter 9, we can observe that the vision of which an explanation is being given is the vision of chapter 8, the 2300-year vision.

Now listen to what Gabriel tells Daniel in verse 24: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." Seventy weeks of what? Of the 2300 years. Seventy weeks would amount to 490 days, or 490 years, which proves that the 490 years of the 2300 ended at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

By way of identification in verse 25 the angel tells Daniel that "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city." Remember that Jesus, when foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, said: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," etc. (Matt. 24:15, 16). Speaking in Luke 21:20 and 24 of the same event Jesus said, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." The end of the 490 years, when Jerusalem was destroyed, was the desolation spoken of by Daniel, to which Jesus referred.

It may be difficult to pinpoint just when the 2300-year vision commences and ends. However, we must remember that the 2300-year vision was not to reach until Christ's second coming, but specifically to the latter-day cleansing of the sanctuary (Dan. 8:14). God's "church" or "sanctuary" upon earth represents His people (I Cor. 3:16; Heb. 3:6; Col. 1:18). During the long night of the apostasy they "all slumbered and slept" (Matt. 25:5). During this time much uncleanness accumulated in God's sanctuary, until a living witness arose to proclaim the vital truth, God's demand of perfection of character (Gen. 17:1; Isa. 1:16, 17; Mic. 6:8; Matt. 5:48; II Cor. 7:1; I John 3:3; Rev. 2:26; 3:21; 22:12, 14).

"You claim that the 14th of the month Abib every year is a Sabbath. It is not. There are extra days every year, and the Sabbath will be at different times, not on the 14th every year."

I believe you are wrong, however there is some disagreement among scholars. I believe the reckoning of time as given to Israel by Moses in the wilderness was on this wise: the year began with the month Abib. The position of this month was dictated by the moon, being the incidence of the first new moon after the Spring equinox. The seventh day of this month Abib was a sabbath, and the 14th, the Lord's Passover, was also a sabbath.

The following year this program was repeated, the 7th day of the first month being the sabbath for that year. The Hebrew year being 354 days in length, and that number not being divisible by 7, the sabbath would of necessity come on different days of the Roman week in different years. A thirteenth or intercalary month was inserted every third year to make up the difference between 354 days and the actual length of the solar year. There is some question as to whether this plan was still used at the time of Christ.

For further evidence, refer to our booklet, *The* Sabbath.

### "Is it right or wrong for Christian people to take Social Security?"

There could be nothing wrong with taking Social Security. Each person under 65 years of age, if employed, is dutybound by law to make his payments to the Federal Social Security System, hence when he reaches retirement age the benefit payments are rightfully his.

At present many persons are receiving more than they paid into the program, but that is due to the plan not being in effect long enough for matters to equalize themselves. It is basically a good plan, and I see nothing about it that would conflict with the Bible.

## Megiddo means

"a place of troops,"

-Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon.

"a place of God."

-Young's Analytical Concordance.

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Supremacy there has always been the envy of the world, and the prevailing nation has guarded it with a jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, God is in this place with a band of troops. Soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

# The Two Great Lights of Genesis

#### PRAYER

Eternal God, Thou whose steadfast love has brought us to this place of worship and to this hour, thanks be to Thee for life and being, for all the blessings that come to us from time to time: for the love that we have received and given; for all the kindnesses we have received from others, and for Thy grace going before us, and following after us to guide, sustain, forgive, and hearten. Guide Thy Church that she may move, and move others along the way of compassionate service, the champion of every just cause, leading others to be like Thee.

Loving Father, Thou who didst command the light to shine out of darkness, and hast foreshown the arrival of a time when the darkness will have passed away, and the light of Thy divine knowledge will have enlightened all mankind, we thank Thee most heartily for this light. We are fully aware that apart from it no flesh could be saved; we ourselves and all the human family would be wandering on in darkness, with no hope of anything beyond this brief life and our limited mortal capacities.

It is Thy initial purpose that light shall ultimately prevail over the darkness. A time shall arrive when the darkness will be passed, and the true light will shine. Thy purpose is to divide the light from the darkness, that those who serve Thee shall be distinguished from those who serve Thee not. Thou hast set apart the righteous for Thyself; Thou hast decreed that in Thy finished purpose only the light shall remain, the darkness shall ultimately pass away forever.

Father, give us the spiritual gumption to develop fully the qualities of light in our own daily living. May our lives be an open book, and may every dark shadow be eradicated therefrom. May we have nothing to hide; may we allow no thoughts to prevail which we would be ashamed to have openly projected for all to see and evaluate.

And with flashing eye and radiant face may we look hopefully forward to a time when Thy light, The divine knowledge, will cover the earth from pole to pole, and abundant life and the insights of immortal beings be the happy possession of every creature upon Thy earth made over new.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

#### DISCOURSE

THE VAST and energizing power behind the divine plan is introduced into the Genesis allegory with the creation of light. "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3).

> Light! Nature's resplendent robe; Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt In gloom.

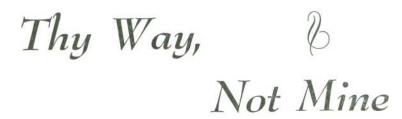
We read further: "And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night" (vs. 4, 5).

Then followed the creation of grass: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass" (v. 11). And, "God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night" (v. 16).

A literal interpretation of these passages has involved theologians in no end of difficulties. If natural light were created only about six thousand years ago, then prior to that time the entire universe was a dark and purposeless void, uninhabited and uninhabitable. Furthermore, if the creation of the physical sun did not occur until literal grass was growing luxuriantly, then the green turf was produced on earth in the frigid condition that would prevail in the absence of the sun's warming rays.

But approaching the Genesis narrative as an allegory, we can arrive at a Scriptural elucidation which both appeals to reason and harmonizes with scientific fact, and can abandon all impossibilities and absurdities as relics of man's apostate dark-

In much literature, both secular and Biblical, light is used as a symbol, a figure, a symbolic representation of truth, goodness, mental enlightenment. and those in whom these qualities dwell. Contrariwise, darkness often signifies evil, mischief, disaster, harm, and the agents of these. For example, the words of Jesus: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt. 6:23). Both the light and the darkness in this passage are symbolic. Paul spoke of the "rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12), using



Thy way, not mine, O Lord, However dark it be! Lead me by Thine own hand, Choose out the path for me. The kingdom that I seek Is Thine; so let the way That leads to it be Thine, Else I must surely stray.

Smooth let be or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it leads
Right onward to Thy rest.

Take Thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill,
As best to Thee may seem;
Choose Thou my good or ill

9 dare not choose my lot; 9 would not, if 9 might: Choose Thou for me, my God, So shall 9 walk aright. Choose Thou for me my friends My sickness or my health; Choose Thou my cares for me, My poverty or wealth.

Not mine, not mine the choice, In things or great or small; Be Thou my guide, my strength, My wisdom and my all.