

Megiddo Message



O Sing for Joy

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EXERCISE for EVERY DAY

THERE IS a certain law of continuity in this world that says a level once achieved cannot be sustained without continued effort. At what point can the athlete say, "I have done all the calisthenics I shall need, I am strong enough. From now on I shall take life easy"?

At what point can the musician say, "I have done all the practicing I shall ever need to do; from now I shall only perform"?

At what point can anyone say, "I have eaten all I shall need for the rest of my life," and expect to go on vigorous and healthy?

At what point can the Christian say, "I have had enough of spiritual disciplines; my knowledge and experience are adequate. From now on I shall not have to worry"?

The apostle Paul spent nearly his entire life strengthening and encouraging others so that their faith in Christ might continue to grow. "I will continue with you," he wrote to the brethren in Philippi, "*so that you will grow and experience the joy of your faith*" (Phil. 1:25, NLT). He knew that they would continue to need his loving help and encouragement.

It was not that these brethren were just beginners. They were already well advanced. Every time Paul remembered them, he said, he thanked God for how they had helped him (Phil. 1:3-5). And yet he prayed that their "love for each other" would "*overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in your knowledge and understanding. For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until Christ returns*" (Phil. 1:9-10, NLT).

Why if they were so advanced was he not content? Why did he feel he should still work to advance their faith? And why should each of us be concerned with building ourselves up in our most holy faith? Isn't there a point at which we can relax and take things easy?

There is not. Strength is a fleeting thing. Just as the exercises that an athlete used for many months will not keep him strong unless he continues the program, so the Christian's spiritual exercises must be a daily matter, or our strength will wane.

What are some of the daily exercises we need to maintain our strength?

Our founder once summarized them in three meaningful words: "Read, meditate, grow." Reading builds faith, and provides the seed for serious meditation. As we fill our minds with thoughts of God's plan, His purposes, His creative works, His promises to us, and what He expects of us, all the wonders of the new world come alive in our minds and our enthusiasm mounts. Invigorated, we become more and more determined that we will be part of that new world. And when a temptation comes to test our faith, we find ourselves instinctively taking the right side—how can we do otherwise without jeopardizing our prospects of sharing in that world?

Daily spiritual exercise is the only way we can be sure of the strength to endure to the end. And only "*he that shall endure unto the end...shall be saved*" (Matt. 24:13). □

MEGIDDO MEANS ...

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

WE BELIEVE ...

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

The Herald and the KING

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

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

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We Look for the Savior!

*Our citizenship is in heaven.
And we eagerly await a Savior from
there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who,
... will transform our lowly bodies
so that they will be like
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— Phil. 3:20-21, NIV

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In the Scriptures, "look for" and "wait for" convey a feeling of anxiety. There is nothing placid about such "looking" or "waiting." Both looking and waiting are bound up in a sublime tension and an overpowering expectancy. The term occurs first as it records the earnest expectation of Simeon, who was *"waiting for the consolation of Israel"* (Luke 2:25). His was a time not unlike our own. Let us look briefly at its history, and at the brave man who was clinging to hope.

The land was Palestine, where patriarchs and prophets for centuries had lived and died in hope. The city was Jerusalem. The time was that intolerable period we call the time between the Testaments, when there was no longer any stable Jewish authority in the land, and injustice and crime were rampant.

So dark was the outlook that few dared to think about what lay ahead. Strife, tumult, suffering, violence, hatred—nothing but bad could be imagined. Meanwhile, a corrupt Jewish priesthood along with an intolerably legalistic sect of Phar-

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speaking with such confidence? Who is it? None other than the apostle Paul, speaking for all believers in all ages. In a world dark with turmoil and trouble, ours, he says, is the brightest of bright expectations.

"We look." Looking suggests desire, longing, diligence, disregard of all else but the object of one's interest. It is the challenge that gives destination to life and keeps us constantly thinking beyond ourselves and our small environment. It is a desire that gives breadth, depth and meaning to life. What we see is not all there is. We are looking for a deliverer, a Redeemer—our Savior.

If we are satisfied with the things at hand, the pleasure and experiences of sight and sound, of taste and touch about us, we can disregard such looking. It has no value for us. But if we want something we cannot find here, something lasting, something in which to place our confidence and invest our lives, something that offers solid hope, expansion and expectation, then we ought to consider seriously the belief of the holy men and women of God, who said: *"We look for the Saviour."*

The phrase comes directly from the apostle

isees prided themselves in adhering to their version of the Law. Where was godliness? Where was virtue? Where was holiness? Where was the faith of their fathers, the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

Most important of all, where was the Messiah, who had been the sustaining hope of Israel for centuries? Were honest, sane, thinking people to continue believing something that had been anticipated for centuries and still had not arrived? Where was the promise of His coming?

Standing on a street corner and watching the multitudes come and go, anyone would have concluded that faith was altogether extinct. But somewhere among them were a few, a zealous few who were living in hope, a few who shared the faith of Israel's ancient prophets and were willing to stake their lives on the surety of God's promises. By precept and example they announced their confidence to all: "We look for the Saviour." He is coming. Common people were they all, yet how refreshing the hope their lives radiated in an age of hopelessness.

The name of one of these was Simeon. Living on year after year, growing older and older and still not seeing the fruition of his faith, he must have received more than an occasional taunt. "Why my old friend Simeon, you have been looking for the Saviour since we were boys. And that was a long, long time ago. Don't you have any common sense? Why don't you forget those childhood fancies and live in the real world? If the Messiah doesn't come pretty soon, you're not going to be around to see Him. Then what will happen to all your dreams?"

And Simeon replies: "That is just what makes me believe His coming is near, and getting nearer. I *am* getting old, but the Lord God has promised me that I shall not die until I have seen the Lord's Christ. And I believe God. I am getting old, so it means just one thing: the Messiah will be born—soon."

"Born? You think the Savior will come as a babe?"

"That is the promise," Simeon replies. "He will be raised up from among His brethren. And my eyes shall see Him. I am living in hope."

However severely his faith was tested, we know that in due time it was rewarded. Simeon saw the newborn Messiah.

Anna the prophetess also grasped the hope of Israel and was clinging to it. Her confidence, too, was "We look for the Saviour." But year after year passed by, while

she grew older and older. Did she begin to wonder? What if she had lost faith? What if she had told herself, "Eighty years is long enough to wait for something that hasn't happened. It's time to forget the whole thing and go out and enjoy myself." But does this sound like Anna the prophetess? Not at all. With the passage of the years her hope only grew more and more sure. And as her hope grew, so did her devotion, her purity, her love. She knew what she was living for and looking for. And when she finally saw Him, we read that she "in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-38).

We are not told much about the shepherds to whom the angels came, but they, too, must have been looking for the Savior. Did not the angel say, "Unto you"—the shepherds included—"is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"? (Luke 2:11). Would it not seem that they were men of faith, to have been granted the privilege of seeing the angel of the Lord that holy night?

All this was at the time of Jesus' first advent. Now, twenty centuries later, what of us? What of the hope and promise that is *our* heritage? Is it sure? Is it real? And are we among those who say vitally and vigorously, by word and by deed, "We look for the Saviour!" Yes, indeed! It is the desire of our lives, the longing of our hearts, and our sustaining hope through all our years. If only we may be among those who will be able to say when He comes, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 25:9). Some will say it. Some will be living and believing at that time, and will rejoice to see His coming. Shall you? Shall I?

*When Christ, the Sun of Righteousness,
A glorious orb, shall rise and shine
In earth's new heaven, its brilliant light
Shall penetrate to every clime.
Then superstition dark shall flee
As mist before the rising sun,
For just and righteous government
Upon this war-torn world's begun.*

*Its radiant beams search out and scan
The dark recesses of the earth,
So hidden from the sight of man,
Where crime and cruelty have birth;
The darkness all shall disappear
Beneath the Sun's all-searching ray;
On earth, as in the heavens above,
God's will be done through endless Day.*

—Liot L. Snyder

*The things of this
world and the
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world matter only
as they help us
serve our King.*

*What we see is
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We are looking for a
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Our Need: A Savior

How desperately our world needs a Savior, one to redeem, to rescue, to heal, restore, bless and save. Think of the multitudes who suffer political bondage, whom the Savior can deliver. What will it mean to the millions who suffer in poverty and destitution in many parts of the world, to say nothing of the sick and suffering who are everywhere?

And how desperately do we need a Savior! And just as surely as we live, so surely shall He arrive in God's appointed time, just as surely as He came to those who were looking for Him at the time of His first coming. Scoffers may say, "Where is the promise of his coming?"—to which each sincere believer replies: "Everywhere."

This hope, this confidence, totally transforms our outlook here, and we see ourselves as transients, temporary occupants only.

Transients

The story is told of an American tourist who visited a renowned Polish rabbi while traveling abroad. The American was astonished to find the rabbi's home was a simple room having in it a table, a bench and a few books. "Rabbi," he asked, "where is your furniture?" "Where is yours?" replied the rabbi. "Mine? Why, I'm only a visitor here," said the puzzled American. "I'm just passing through this country." "So am I," replied the rabbi.

And so are we in this world. Our fortunes or misfortunes here do not concern us too deeply, only as they lend opportunity for us to prepare for our eternal home. The things of this world and the creatures of this world matter only as they help us serve our King; for we, like the rabbi, are transients here. Like the apostle Paul, we "are citizens of the republic in heaven, from which we are eagerly waiting for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20, Williams). We have staked our all upon this one fact: Christ is coming.

*The kingdoms of the earth go by
In purple and in gold;
They rise, they triumph, and they die,
And all their tale is told.
One Kingdom only is Divine,
One banner triumphs high;
It is the Kingdom of the Lord—
And it is drawing nigh!*

Watch! Pray! Seek! Repent! Go! Tell!

The New Testament is filled with confident words of expectancy, words of

urgency, words that call for intense action. *Watch! Pray! Seek! Repent! Go! Tell!*

What is the reason? Why this intense spirit among the early Christians? What in their lives was so stirring, so vitalizing?

It was the message they were bearing to the world, the message of the coming King of kings. "Behold he cometh...." It was the message the angels had given to the watching disciples the day Jesus ascended into heaven. They had been walking with Him when suddenly "he was parted from them" and "a cloud received him out of their sight."

"And while they were gazing after Him into heaven, two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them, and said to them, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This very Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come back in just the way you have seen Him go up into heaven'" (Acts 1:10-11, Williams).

No sooner had Christ ascended than His apostles began telling of His return. Christ had lived and died and been resurrected. Now He had been taken to heaven. The next great event in the sequence would be His return.

For this reason, everything the apostles said and wrote centered around Christ. The promise of His return was repeatedly confirmed. It was "that day," "the day," the "last day," the "great day," the Day when Christ shall return to earth.

"For I know whom I have believed," said Paul, "and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day" (2 Tim. 1:18).

Again in the book of Hebrews: "Let us consider one another,....not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,....but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25).

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). It is "the day," the day of the coming again of our Lord to earth.

Jesus Himself spoke of His second advent with expectancy. In His parable of the wise and evil servants, He indicated



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So dark was the outlook that few dared to think about what lay ahead. Strife, tumult, suffering, violence, hatred—nothing but bad could be imagined. Meanwhile, a corrupt Jewish priesthood along with an intolerably legalistic sect of Phar-

that the master (Himself) would arrive in a day when the evil servant was not "looking for" him, when there was no expectancy, no anticipation, no eagerness—and no readiness—"at an hour when he is not aware" (Luke 12:46; Matt. 24:50). What a serious warning against the possibility of relaxing one's vigil. He spoke of expectation again when He said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately" (Luke 12:35-36). No placid settling down in complacency and idleness. No ease and leisure in this waiting. "Let your loins be girded"—for action; and "your lights burning"—with expectancy. For as surely as you relax the vigil, your Lord will come and find you *unprepared*.

Paul, writing to his son-in-the-faith Timothy, set this forward-looking attitude in special prominence. He told of the power of the "grace of God" to "teach" us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," all the while "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God [Christ, Emmanuel, 'God with us, Matt. 1:23] and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:11-13). Though Paul knew this "blessed hope" would not become a reality in his day, still he was eager in anticipating it and stressed the importance of living daily in expectancy—"looking" for it. He knew that this attitude of eagerness should impel the Christian believer to preparation in every age.

The "servant of Jesus Christ" named Jude, who penned one short Epistle "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ," admonished them to keep building themselves up in their "most holy faith." Then he told them why: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20-21). They were to keep alive the goal, the expectancy, the vision of the future that had gripped their hearts. They were to keep "looking for" the mercy of Christ "unto eternal life," the reward that would be brought to them when Christ should come again.

The apostle Peter also "looked for" the Savior, and can't we hear the eagerness in His voice? "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved," he writes, "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy

conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things"—yes, seeing you are looking

Our Heavenly Father, grant us Thy blessing as we meet this day.
 Grant us this day
 Lips which speak the truth,
 but also speak the truth in love;
 Minds which seek the truth as it is in Jesus Christ;
 And grant us the courage to face the truth
 even when it hurts and condemns us,
 That we may never shut our eyes to that
 which we do not wish to see.
 Grant us hands which work with diligence,
 Yet have time to help another.
 Grant us resolution to stand for principle;
 but save us from stubbornness,
 And from magnifying trifles into principles.
 Grant us grace to conquer our temptations
 and live pure and upright before You.
 Help us daily to shed old faults,
 And gain new virtues,
 Until Your life is seen in us.
 All through this day help us to live as Your
 loving, obedient children. Amen.

for the fulfilling of these promises, "be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:11-14).

We find ourselves today living in a generation that gives little or no thought to the future, much less to the reality of imminent Divine intervention. Present goals of pleasure and material profit are all absorbing, and any suggestion of the coming One is thought of as an unwelcome intrusion, if it is considered seriously at all. The consequence is that we who are "looking for the blessed hope" of the ages must live and work daily in an atmosphere of near-total disbelief. This poses a continual threat to our faith. The attitude of indifference so easily worms its insidious way into our thinking, and

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Go! Tell!"*

is so deadly. How diligently we should concentrate our minds each day, each hour, each moment, on the vision God has placed before us, to keep alive in our hearts the lively expectation and the eager longing and looking for of the fathers of our faith who said with holy resolve, "We look for the Saviour."

How can we be absolutely certain that Christ is coming, that all things do not simply continue as they have for centuries? How can we know?

To answer this question requires but a very short process of reasoning. If the Bible is true—and we know that it is; and if the Bible teaches it—there is not the slightest question; and if the words of Jesus Himself are genuine—I will come again"; where is there the least ground for uncertainty? There is none. The words of Jesus in His final message to humankind are one last signature upon the whole: "Behold, I come quickly." There can be no question whatever. Jesus is coming.

The second advent of Christ was the sustaining, electrifying hope of God's people through the ages. It was the message of poets, prophets and apostles. Often their words were related to conditions then present; many prophecies were short-range; but always there was the greater, longer-range significance which permitted men to look beyond the limits of the world they could see, to the Day when God's plan on earth would be culminated.

The entire New Testament proclaims the message, urgent, vibrant, real—over three hundred times in all. Must we conclude that these promises are past due and out of date? Must we believe that the early Church was disappointed and that the hope on which they staked their lives is forever unfulfilled? Never! The fact that those early Christians were alive with anticipation shows only their wholehearted commitment to the cause. Paul warned them plainly that "that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first" (2 Thess. 2:3). And Jesus warned His eager disciples that it would be a "long time" before He would return to reckon with His servants (Matt. 25:19).

The whole book of Revelation is given to revealing events which shall accompany the second advent of Christ. Almost its closing words repeat the promise of Jesus Himself: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me,

to give every man according as his work shall be...Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22:12, 20).

Some nineteen hundred years have passed into history since these words were recorded, and the "long time" is nearly over. Now is our expectation nearer than when we first believed. "We look for the Savior"—the day draws steadily nearer, the day when Jesus Christ shall come as earth's Conqueror, Redeemer, and King—and our Judge. We cannot evade our responsibility. Every servant of God will be summoned to stand before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).

And what will that mean? It will be a revealing day for all. Someone has suggested that on "the Great White Throne" will be two sets of books: one book in which everything you ever did, every good deed you ever did, every sin you ever committed and did not forsake, every thought you ever thought, every intent that you ever had that was wrong and not forgiven, is recorded. And when you come to that Judgment, you will say, 'But Lord, I didn't do these things. I'm not guilty.' And He will say, 'Open the book.' And there will be the record, clear as day, of everything you ever did—not only the things you did, but the things you thought; your intents; your whole inner life will be right there on record. And there won't be any mistakes; you will have to believe it, and confess that He is right."

Then there will be another book. The Bible calls it the "book of life." If our name is written there, we need have no fear, for everyone shall be delivered whose name is in the Book of Life.

That day is surely coming. We do not know when, but its coming is as certain as the coming of winter, spring and summer in their appointed season.

Do we believe it? Do we feel the impact of this message from God? Do we sense the urgent responsibility that this promise lays upon us? Do we earnestly, eagerly, momentarily, look for our Saviour? Then let us stir ourselves with the intensity of those early Christians. Let us believe with every nerve and sinew of our body that Christ is coming. Let us awake! arise! watch! pray! seek! repent! go! tell! Let us do nothing, say nothing, think nothing, that we will not want to be found doing, saying, or thinking when Jesus comes—for "the day of the Lord cometh, it is nigh at hand." □

10 Distinctives of a HEALTHY CHRISTIAN

by Frank Minirth

In this day when thousands suffer from mental disorders, the Bible—rejected by the majority—offers a means to mental stability to those who commit themselves to heed its message. In this article Dr. Minirth draws examples from the Bible to demonstrate how the law of God builds mental health. — EDITOR.

I have asked several different people to name the five most mentally healthy men in the Bible. Of course, the list and the order of the list varied from one individual to the next, but I found that Daniel was almost always in the list and that he was usually listed second only to Christ.

In Daniel 6:1-5 the following is recorded: *"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."*

These verses, along with the rest of the life of Daniel, reveal several significant insights into the characteristics of mental health. With millions of neurotics, millions more alcoholics and millions more emotionally disturbed children, millions who suffer from antisocial personalities, millions of psychotics, and over a million hard-drug addicts in America today, one might wonder if mental health exists. It does! And Daniel illustrates it well.

Daniel was only about sixteen years old when Judah was taken into exile by Babylon. He was a choice young man. Nebuchadnezzar chose Daniel to be trained to occupy a position of administration and authority. Daniel had no physical blemish, was intelligent, quick to learn, and was socially poised. He was a gifted young man. The Scriptures note he had "exceptional qualities."

Every now and then in life all of us come across someone who is truly gifted in several areas. Like you,

I can recall a school classmate who was very gifted. He was a good athlete, straight-A student, and was exceptional in character. Daniel was such a man.

Ezekiel called Noah, Job, and Daniel righteous men. This was quite an honor considering that Daniel was a contemporary of Ezekiel. If most of us were giving a talk today on godly men, we would most likely draw our characters from the past—not from the present. Christ also made reference to Daniel. Reference is also made to him in Hebrews 11—God's list of the great men of faith.

Very little is known of Daniel's first fifteen or sixteen years, but he must have come from an unusually stable family background. I believe God used those first sixteen years to build a man of incredible mental and moral strength as illustrated by the following ten characteristics of mental health.

(1) An Ability to Withstand Change

The mentally healthy individual can react appropriately in the face of stress. He has self-control, discipline, and emotional control. He can accept what is unchangeable. He is free from excessive and prolonged anxiety or depression in the face of change.

As Daniel 5 opens, Daniel was about eighty years old. Over the years he had faced unbelievable change. He had been taken from his country at a young age, never to see many of his relatives and friends again. He was taken to a new home, a new school, and a new social situation. On a stress test he would have had enough points to have a nervous problem, but he withstood it well.

(2) The Ability to Function at Full Capacity, Physically, Intellectually, and Emotionally

Probably the most practical criteria of mental health is how an individual is functioning physically, intellectually, and emotionally. In fact, the definition of neurosis is "not functioning adequately physically, intellectually, and emotionally over an extended period of time." Many of the individuals I see cannot function adequately because of worry, anxiety, depression or mental confusion.

Daniel excelled physically, intellectually, and emotionally throughout life. He excelled as a youth. He excelled under three different kings. He excelled for over eighty years physically, intellectually, and emotionally.

(3) A Good Attitude—Optimistic, Confident, Secure

A mentally healthy individual is often apparent by his good attitude. He is basically secure and reflects this in his confidence, optimism, and sense of humor.

Daniel had confidence because of his faith in God. As a youth he was confident God could make him physically strong even though he refused the king's food. He was confident before Nebuchadnezzar that he could interpret a dream he had never seen. He was confident with a second king to the point of being able to tell the king of his impending death. This confidence was evident to yet a third king who wanted to set him over his whole kingdom.

(4) An Unwavering Purpose for Life

One of the major determinates that keeps a person on a mentally stable path is that he have an unwavering purpose for life. In the reception room at our clinic we have a little pamphlet that says, "A person is born, grows up, goes to school, gets a job, marries, eventually dies—is this all there is to life?" We want people to think about what their real purpose in life is. We want them to ask themselves the question, "What will last in life?"

Daniel had an ingrained, unwavering purpose for life. He had an eternal perspective. He lived for God and His principles. His brain was programmed through and through with an unwavering purpose for God. This purpose gave him contentment, happiness, inner peace, and mental stability.

(5) The Ability to Relate to People and Build Relationships with Others

In determining the mental health of people that come to my office I have often taken special note of how they relate to others (wife, friends, employer, etc.). It takes a mentally healthy person to relate well to a variety of people. It is especially significant if he can consistently relate well to those with whom he is close.

Daniel related well as a youth, a period when many of us are too rebellious to relate well. He related well as an old man, when many of

us are too set in our ways to relate well. He even related well to a foreign people.

(6) Balance in Several Important Areas

An individual with balance to his life has long been recognized as an individual of mental health. There needs to be a balance between being dependent and independent, between being organized and creative, between spiritual coldness and excessive emotionalism.

Daniel had a balance between being dependent and independent. As a youth he often had to depend on various foreign people in positions of authority over him. And yet, he could be independent when needed. Although he was trained in the foreign schools, he was never brainwashed as they had hoped. He could be open and flexible when needed (an important aspect of mental health), but he knew where to draw the line and be independent.

Also, Daniel would have had to have a balance between being organized and being creative. Organization is more of an obsessive compulsive personality trait; whereas creativity is more of an hysterical personality trait. A highly efficient and effective person has a healthy balance of both. Daniel had both.

Daniel had a balance spiritually. In chapter five, we noted his emphasis on the Word of God. In Daniel 10:12 the emphasis is on prayer with the following words, "Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words." In Daniel 12:3 are these words, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

(7) Dependable

Dependability is the mark of mental health most looked for in employees.

Daniel was outstanding in regard to being dependable. The

passage in Daniel, chapter five, noted that he was trustworthy, not corrupt, and not negligent. The presidents and princes could find no fault nor occasion against Daniel. This is remarkable when one considers the hundreds of people that must have worked under him. Daniel had strong internal standards that made him dependable. Because of these he could resist social and environmental pressure; he could resist sin; he could avoid being impulsive. He was dependable.

(8) Others-centered, Not Self-centered

When I am looking for criteria of mental health on a psychological test, I look for scales that would indicate that a person tends to be others-centered rather than self-centered. When a person is all wrapped up in his own selfish desires—anger, jealousy, suspicions, and problems—he has very little to give to others, and is not being emotionally mature and healthy.

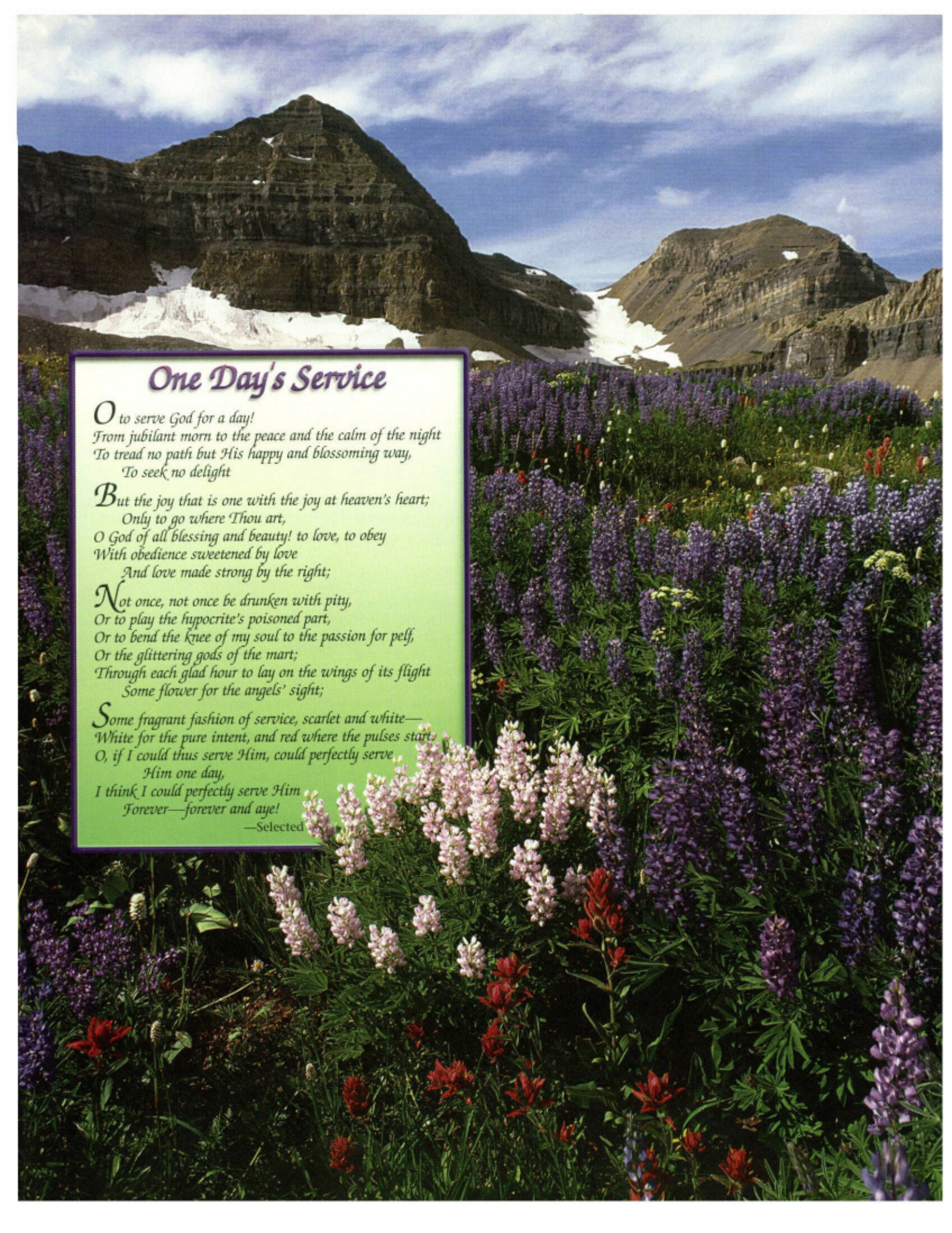
Daniel was others-centered. Although the presidents and princes were angry and jealous of Daniel, there is no indication that Daniel ever had a bad attitude toward them. Daniel showed concern for a group of wise men once and even intervened for their lives. He was others-centered. He had enough emotional strength left over in dealing with his own problems to give to others.

(9) A Person of the Word

I believe that a major indication that a Christian is mentally healthy is that he is in the Word of God daily. Daily time in the Word is not only an indication that a person is mentally healthy, but it is also the reason why he is mentally healthy. Jesus once told a group of people that they erred because they did not know the Word of God. The Word of God produces peace, joy, contentment, and all the aspects of mental health of which we routinely think. It works against anxiety, depression, defensiveness, immaturity, and all the things we routinely consider indications of a lack of mental health.

Daniel was a man of God's Word.

(Continued on page 20)



One Day's Service

*O to serve God for a day!
From jubilant morn to the peace and the calm of the night
To tread no path but His happy and blossoming way,
To seek no delight*

*But the joy that is one with the joy at heaven's heart;
Only to go where Thou art,
O God of all blessing and beauty! to love, to obey
With obedience sweetened by love
And love made strong by the right;*

*Not once, not once be drunken with pity,
Or to play the hypocrite's poisoned part,
Or to bend the knee of my soul to the passion for pelf,
Or the glittering gods of the mart;
Through each glad hour to lay on the wings of its flight
Some flower for the angels' sight;*

*Some fragrant fashion of service, scarlet and white—
White for the pure intent, and red where the pulses start—
O, if I could thus serve Him, could perfectly serve
Him one day,*

*I think I could perfectly serve Him
Forever—forever and aye!*

—Selected



THE FIRST LIE

One day in early spring, my father brought home some choice young fruit trees. His hired man set them in rich, black earth, so straight and so neatly that they were a pleasure to gaze upon. I was then a little child, about four years old, and I remember his replying to all my questions with that straightforward simplicity he always used toward children. He told me that in a year or two there might be some beautiful red apples on those pretty trees, and asked me if I could wait till then. I had a vague idea that the apples lay hidden in the trunk somewhere, and wondered how I would ever see them.

A long time passed, and at last there came a few blossoms on the little trees. They had little pink edges, and were streaked with faint veins. That summer my aunt Mary died, and I was sent to spend a few months with her lonely daughter.

At last the fall came, and I returned home. Pleasant as my stay had been with Mary's daughter, I was wild with delight with the thought that I should soon be home with my dear mother and father. How I flew through the old house, after I had kissed everybody and almost everything—even to the old sober cat, who gave me an ungracious protest.

With delight I ran around outside the house, to see what had changed. The summer flowers had faded, the pump was still covered with moss, and there, over by the barn, was the fruit orchard. On one of the young trees hung one—only one—large red apple. It looked so tempting, so luscious, that from the first sight I felt I must put my hands

upon it. Before I thought, the apple was in my hand. Oh, how beautiful! I turned to go into the house to give it to my father, trusting he would ask no questions, or that if he did, my frankness might be my mediator. But the melting lusciousness that seemed to permeate even the glossy rind, melted my resolution, and I hurried breathlessly to a large tree at the end of the orchard, out of sight.

Not a mouthful did I enjoy; it was sweet and delicious, but in my haste I choked it down, and had eaten to the core when I heard my father's voice. I threw down the remnant of the apple, wiped my hands, and with burning cheeks, went forward to my father. He looked at me keenly, and we passed into the house.

All that long afternoon my heart ached.

"I am sorry, Mother," said my father that evening, "but the apple you wanted so much is gone."

I cowed as I stood watching my mother preparing meat for supper. My mother paused with a look of anxiety as she said, "Who do you suppose has taken it? It was there this morning."

"I am afraid some of the children—"

"I didn't touch it," I cried, before he had finished.

"No one has accused you, Marsha," said my father, after interchanging glances with my mother—"why are you so ready to deny before the question is asked you?"

TRUTH

*Why should you fear the truth to tell?
Does falsehood ever do so well?
Can you be satisfied to know
There's something wrong to hide below?
No; let your fault be what it may,
To own it is the better way.*

I said nothing. In a little while my father took me into his workroom, to show me a little toy he had been making for me. My cheeks burned, and I kept choking back the tears. I was suffering the agony of my first lie.

Suddenly my father took my hand, and drawing me toward him, held up the very apple core I had thrown away.

"My daughter—you took the apple," said my father, in his calm, solemn voice—and oh! as I looked at him, I saw tears in his eyes, and those mild lips trembled. It would have been easier if he had been angry with me. I longed for him to scold me—anything but that sad, cutting look of disappointment. I felt like crying, but could not.

I thought in the silence that followed my heart would break. My eyes were bent to the floor, and it seemed as if I could scarcely breathe.

I felt his fingers under my chin, pressing it to make me look up. I heard his voice, a little sterner now. "Look up, my child"—and I lifted my eyes to his sorrowful face. Then he talked to me about my wrong, till my heart was melting. At last I cried out, "Oh, father! forgive me, forgive me—I took the apple. And I told a lie. It was all very wrong. I shall never dare to pray again!"

"I am old now," said the sweet-faced lady who told me this story, "but the prayer that my father offered to heaven that night, I seem to hear it as if it were a thing of yesterday. Days and weeks passed before I felt innocent again.

But never since then—never, never once have I been tempted to tell a falsehood. And I thank God for the sting of remorse which left a wound that bleeds afresh at the very thought of lying."

From *Sunshine Series for Little Folks*, printed about 1850, by the Pacific Press, Oakland, California.

Know Your Bible?

Sheep and Goats

1. In what story does the Bible tell of a ram's being caught in a thicket?
2. What name was given to the goat sent out into the wilderness as a part of the sin offering?
3. In what beautiful psalm are we likened to sheep cared for by a kind shepherd?
4. What were goatskins used for in Palestine?
5. Were sheep and goats considered "clean" animals?
6. Who complained that not even a "kid" had been killed for him?
7. What animal was sacrificed for the Passover feast?
8. In one of the parables concerning the separation of the good and the bad, Jesus says: "As a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats, he shall set the sheep on his _____ hand, and the goats on his _____ hand."

Walls

1. What city wall fell down after an army had marched around it thirteen times?
2. In connection with what feast is the account of the handwriting on the wall? Who did the writing?
3. Who was let down at night, in a basket, over the wall of Damascus?
4. Who once let down two Israelite spies by a rope from her house on the wall of Jericho?
5. Who superintended the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem?
6. What heathen king burned the temple and fine houses and broke down the walls of Jerusalem?
7. What city is spoken of which has a wall great and high, with 12 gates inscribed with the names of the 12 apostles?

Who Was the Boy?

1. This boy was found on a river bank, among the flags, in a basket.
2. This boy left his parents while on a visit to Jerusalem, to go to the temple and discuss questions with the leaders.
3. This boy's mother gave him "a little linen coat."
4. This boy performed a brave act with a stone and a sling.
5. This boy was laid on an altar by his father.
6. This boy became king while a little child.
7. This boy was sent out into the desert with his mother.
8. This boy was thrown into a pit by his jealous brothers and sold into slavery.
9. This boy was the youngest of twelve brothers.

Who Was Called?

1. The son of perdition?
2. The Son of man?
3. The friend of God?
4. The doubter?
5. The disciple whom Jesus loved?
6. The sons of thunder?
7. Cephas?
8. The Tishbite?
9. The Benjamite?
10. The sweet singer of Israel?

Whose Son?

1. Whose son was Rehoboam?
2. Whose son was Methuselah?
3. Whose son was Noah?
4. Whose son was Ephraim?
5. Whose son was Eleazar?
6. Whose son was Judah?
7. Whose son was Saul?
8. Whose son was Japheth?


Whose Daughter?

1. Whose daughter was Jemima?
2. Whose daughter was Michal?
3. Whose daughter was Zipporah?
4. Whose daughter was Miriam?
5. Whose daughter was Athaliah?
6. Whose daughter was Leah?
7. Whose daughter was Eunice?
8. Whose daughter was Rebekah?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 26

He Calls

All By



Above: Ground-based telescope photo of the Antennae Galaxies.

Right: Hubble's "close-up" view of the heart of the galaxies.

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has uncovered over 1,000 bright, young star clusters bursting with at the heart of a pair of the Antennae galaxies (called the Antennae because of its long luminous tails resembling an insect's antennae). "The sheer number of these young star clusters is amazing," says Brad Whitmore of the Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI), Baltimore, Maryland.

A Hubble Space Telescope Photo taken on October 21, 1997 (STScI-PR97-34).



hem Name

—Isaiah 40:26

Who's Competing with God?

The story is told of a French revolutionary who had helped storm the Bastille. He had scaled the Cathedral of Notre Dame, torn the cross from the spire and dashed it into fragments on the pavement of Paris far below. He said to a peasant: "We are going to pull down all that reminds you of God!" "Citizen," replied the peasant calmly, "then pull down the stars."

Yet there are many today who refuse to recognize the Great and Almighty Creator—as though one who has successfully orbited a few pieces of hardware in space, and has set a precarious and carefully covered foot on the moon, can compete with a God who orders a hundred billion galaxies!

As though one who has discovered some of the wonders of the atom, can compete with a God who is the Source and Designer of all light and energy!

Man, for all his science and skill, his inventions and discoveries, is still man, mere mortal man. And God is God—eternal, omnipotent, all knowing, infinite, infallible, holy and righteous. If you don't believe He is the greater, just think about pulling down the stars!

Are you tired of the rat race, the pressures and problems of the modern world? Do you long for peace, serenity and the deep, spiritual values that truly satisfy and fulfill?

Look up! Our Creator's handiwork is on display every night. Don't miss it! The stars that stud the vault of night, that capture the astronomer's eye and perplex and mystify every seeker of knowledge—are they meaningless blobs of dust and burning gas scattered through a purposeless void?

The answer is No. None of God's creation is without meaning or purpose (Isa. 45:18). The vast expanse that modern telescopes are seeing is yet more and more evidence of the splendor of God's creation, and it is not empty void. His creation is filled with real worlds and populated with real beings. The Bible calls them "family" (Eph. 3:14–15). Here is the realm where God's will is done now just as it will soon be done right here on planet Earth (Matt. 6:10).

The God of the Bible is no figment of man's minds, nor is he a mysterious and unknown force. Nor are His works under the power of any human hands. He is the Almighty Creator, the Lord God that made the heavens and the earth. And He is in control.

Seek Him—through His Word—and you shall find Him!

*"If you look for me
in earnest, ... I will be
found by you," says
the Lord.* —Jeremiah 29:13

THE GREAT APOSTASY

a-pos-ta-sy *n. pl. a-pos-ta-sies* 1. Abandonment of one's religious faith, a political party, one's principles, or a cause. [Middle English *apostasie* from Old French from Late Latin *apostasias* defection from Late Greek from Greek *apostasis* revolt from *aphistanai* to revolt *apo-* *apo-* *histanai* to stand, place.]
—The American Heritage Dictionary

apostasy: an abandonment of what one has voluntarily professed; a total desertion or departure from one's faith, principles, or party.
—Webster's New International Dictionary

apostasy: a term generally employed to describe a complete renunciation of the Christian faith, or even an exchange of one form of it for another, especially if the motive be unworthy. In the first centuries of the Christian era, apostasy was most commonly induced by persecution, and was indicated by some outward act, such as offering incense to a heathen deity or blaspheming the name of Christ.
—Encyclopaedia Britannica

Part Five

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but...they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." —2 Timothy 4:3-4, King James Version

"A time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever they want to hear. They will reject the truth and follow strange myths."
—2 Timothy 4:3-4, New Living Translation

The Apostasy Terminated

God would not create a world and let darkness and evil rule it forever. As surely as day follows night, as surely as spring follows winter, so surely should the resurrection of Divine truth follow the long night of the apostasy.

As the historian wrote: "Truth, that it might pass safely through the period when Rome would have crushed it with her iron sceptre, had acted like the insect that weaves with its threads the chrysalis in which it envelops itself during the winter...But the spring might come, when the hidden truth might lift its head, and throw off all the threads which covered it. Having acquired fresh vigor in its seeming tomb, the world might behold it in the days of its resurrection, obtain the victory over Rome and all her errors."

That spring came. It came just as the Divine writers had foreseen it would come. After the time allotted had expired, the time came for the renaissance of light and knowledge.

Among the prophecies foretelling this important time are the following:

Jesus assured Martha that there would be living believers upon earth at the time of His second advent. He said to her at the time of her brother's death, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:24-26), indicating that men and women would be embracing the same holy faith at the time of His return.

In Matthew 25, in the parable of the Ten Virgins, Jesus foretold an awakening. While the bridegroom tarried, they "all slumbered and slept." But "at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (Matt. 25:5-6). The virgins woke up.

Jesus also assured His listeners that the days of "great tribulation" should "be shortened," else "there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:22).

Daniel in his last vision saw the extinction of the true Church—and also the day when it would revive (Dan. 12:5-7).

Joel illustrated the apostasy and its end by a fig tree that would lie waste and then come back to life, bud and bear fruit (Joel 2:21-22): "...the pastures of

the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength."

To an observer in medieval times, in an age when superstition held men's minds enslaved, such prophecies would have seemed incredible, absurd, mere wishful dreaming of an ill-informed idealist. The entire fabric of civilization had disintegrated into a state of ignorance, brutality and misery. And the Roman power seemed invincible.

Yet despite the dismal outlook from a human viewpoint, the Lord had spoken; and the word of the Lord is mightier than the mightiest chains of bondage, ignorance and superstition. Looking backward and forward, yesterday, today and forever, Jehovah stands supreme in the scheme of history. Men and nations, though ignorant of His plans, all unite to perform His will when He decrees it.

When threescore and ten persons, the progenitors of the chosen people, entered Egypt as famine refugees, it was more than coincidence that they found a friendly dynasty in control. Years went by, the nation grew and became a nation of slaves. Again God intervened. He raised up Moses to deliver them. And when they came to possess Canaan, He frequently allowed heathen invaders to punish them for their apostasy and evil. When their lesson had been learned, He found someone to rescue them. Nothing was left to chance.

When they scorned His repeated warnings, the Lord permitted His people to be taken as captives to Babylon, and their land was overrun by foreigners; then, after seventy years, God used Cyrus to allow them to return to their native land and rebuild their sacred city.

So also the movements of history which brought an end to the night of darkness were ordered of God. But the apostasy did not end in one dazzling burst of heavenly light. Just as the dawn breaks gradually over the earth, so the night of the apostasy ended slowly—slowly, yet surely.

For over ten centuries the power of Rome had held absolute sway over the destinies of courts and nations. So severely had the medieval Church limited free thought that the art of thinking was all but extinct.

All but—for when the slightest break appeared in the dominant power, men's minds were already active.

Countless successive steps combined to make possible the resurrection of Divine truth. The rise of independent thought, the Magna Carta, the Renaissance, the so-called Reformation, the discovery of the Western world, the Declaration of Independence, the establishing of a nation where freedom of religion was guaranteed—all were steps in the plan of God as He prepared a place and a time for the spiritual awakening His prophets had foretold.

Probably the greatest single step was the translation of the Bible from the Latin Vulgate into the common tongues of the people, thus releasing it from the clutches of the ruling clergy. And the invention of the printing press guaranteed that never again would the Bible be restricted to a few.

The Awakening

In all ages the plan of the Almighty has operated through human instrumentality. Human instruments under the power of Rome silenced the believers of the early centuries and one by one replaced pure doctrine with error in the apostate Church. Even so God provided that another human instrument should extricate true religion from the falsity which had smothered it.

In the nineteenth century of our era, the wheel of time had turned to a point where prophecy could be fulfilled. Daniel in his last vision had beheld the extinction of the true Church, the 1260 years of darkness, and—joyful sight!—the day of its resurrection.

"Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the

other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" (Dan. 12:5-6).

Daniel saw two men whom he called "wonders": one on the further bank of the river who held to true religion in the face of savage persecution; one on this bank of the river who, unaided by visible Divine power, laboriously cleared away the debris which centuries of darkness had deposited and presented the true teachings of the Word in their original purity; truly they were "wonders."

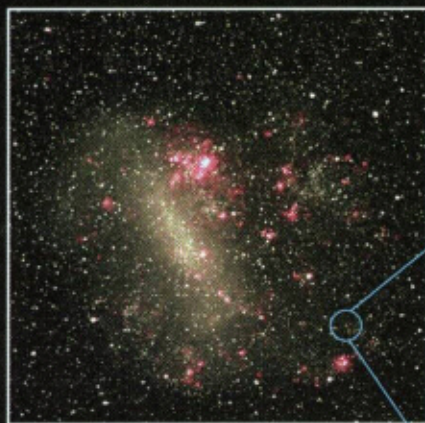
Daniel reveals that the same interval of time we observed in other prophecies—"a time, times, and an half"—would separate one wonder from the other.

At the time of the first efforts at reformation it became safer to possess and use an *intellect*. Men had been dissatisfied with the superstructure which the Roman Church had placed upon a rotten foundation of pagan thought, and had reconstructed it to their liking. It yet remained for one to arise with sufficient courage to repudiate the foundation as well as the building. The great cornerstone of the Fall of Man and its counterpart, the redemptive, sacrificial death of Christ, had yet to be challenged and overthrown. The basic principle of human sacrifice which was a vital part of every pagan cult from Memphis to Stonehenge, from Baal to Brahma, had stood for so long that mankind knew no other foundation, and to strike against it was to oppose every church in Christendom, whether Protestant or Catholic.

At the time of the Reformation in Europe, Modernism and Fundamentalism as we know them today did not exist. None but the infidels denied the six-day creation six thousand years ago, and unreasoning literalism hampered most religious thought and investigation.

Still, it was safe to think, and more people were thinking. The time was ripe for something to happen, and that something was the True Reformation.

(Continued on page 19)



Left: The Large Magellanic Cloud, as seen by a ground-based telescope.

Right: A dazzling "jewel-box" collection of over 20,000 stars in this "cloud" as photographed by the NASA Hubble Space Telescope on April 9, 1998 (STScI-PRC98-16).

Lord God Almighty

In just ten words, Genesis 1:1 introduces us to the majestic author of Creation in a most majestic way. Even more, that opening verse opens the great central topic of Scripture—the creative design and work of God.

Turn your mind to the great Creator who is the source of all existence, and think about Who He is and what He is doing.

Of course we think of God as our Creator. But actually, God as Creator is just one of many descriptions of the Almighty that the Bible reveals to us. He is also

- ◆ **God the Sustainer of all life** ("seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things"—Acts 17:25).
- ◆ **God the Owner of all things** ("the cattle on a thousand hills are mine"—Ps. 50:10)
- ◆ **God who has the ultimate say in the rulership of the earth** ("the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will"—Dan. 4:17).
- ◆ **The One who kills and makes alive, who "gives" and "takes away"** (1 Sam. 2:6; Job 1:21).
- ◆ **The One who "giveth us richly all things to enjoy"** (1 Tim. 6:17).
- ◆ **God the great Designer of the plan of salvation** ("the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"—Eph. 3:11).
- ◆ **God the Guide of our lives** ("He shall direct thy paths"—Prov. 3:6).
- ◆ **God the Revealer of His message to our race** ("Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets ... now in these final days, he has

spoken to us through his Son"—Heb. 1:1–2, NLT).

- ◆ **The Great Eternal Father** ("of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named"—Eph. 3:14).
- ◆ **God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Perfect Example and coming King** ("when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son"—Gal. 4:4).
- ◆ **The God who has promised to fill the earth with His glory** (Num. 14:21).
- ◆ **The Giver of all spiritual blessings** ("Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"—Eph. 1:3).
- ◆ **The One who has promised us life eternal** ("And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life"—1 John 2:25).

And this is only a beginning—how many more of God's important roles can you think of? The Bible is filled with them.

Why not make a special effort to get on God's side? The best way we can do this is to ask at every interval, "What does God think of (such and such)?"—because if we are ever to know Him as the Giver of eternal life we must first meet Him as our judge (Amos 4:12).

Now is the time to get ready for that meeting. □

(Continued from page 17)

The Second "Wonder"

In the early part of the nineteenth century there were many stirrings in the religious waters, particularly in England and young America. While the reformers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries corrected many obvious abuses in the Roman church, they left the entire substructure of medieval thinking untouched, and anyone who read the Bible seriously could easily see a wide disparity between the average denominational church and the church of the New Testament. As a result, various voices of protest were heard here and there, each serious about their beliefs, and each wishing to reinterpret or reapply one part or another of their religious faith. Numerous groups and sub-groups appeared, among them the Quakers, the Anabaptists, the Mormons, the Campbellites, the Russellites, the Adventists, the Christadelphians, and many more.

Many distinct points of Bible teaching were discovered and taught by one here and one there. But even so, the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith remained intact.

Then, about the middle of the nineteenth century, God began to move upon the instrument He would use to bring about a greater and fundamental religious revolution. The second "wonder" rose up in the darkness with a determination to know the whole truth as God intended it to be known from His written Word, and to live a life pleasing to God. He read in the Word of God, *"If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God"* (Prov. 2:3-5). Taking the Word of God at face value, he was convinced that the knowledge of God could be found, but that it would require seeking and searching. To this task he dedicated his life, and his efforts were rewarded.

This instrument, this second "wonder" of Daniel's vision, we

believe to have been our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols (1844-1912). This is a broad and sweeping statement which every earnest truth-seeker should investigate fully by comparing his findings with the Word of God. In the words of the Apostle Paul, *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good"* (1 Thess. 5:21). This was his lifelong motto.

Born of frontier parents and endowed with a strong and independent mind, he easily rose above the handicap of limited schooling. In his pioneer home he was acquainted with earnest toil, yet never allowed toil to blunt his finer sensibilities. He learned to know God through the works of nature, and from earliest childhood deeply revered the great Creator.

Like all children of religious parents in his day, he was educated at his mother's knee in the ideas of fundamental religion (his mother was a Campbellite). In other words, his religious structure was started for him on the same old foundation. But it did not remain there. At an early age he began turning the searchlight of youthful inquisitiveness against the religious systems of the day. Before each "I believe" he placed a pertinent "Why?" The word of a noted divine or a paragraph from a church creed was not sufficient evidence when the ideas expressed conflicted with reason and with what he could read in his Bible.

Nothing could be taken for granted; every belief had to be clearly the teaching of the Bible, or it had to be rejected.

Very early he realized that if he was to succeed in his task, he must understand the tongues in which the Bible was written. So without hesitation he plunged into the study of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. This was absolutely necessary because, while the great majority of its teachings can be understood from the King James Version of the Bible, yet in many places the translation is colored by the darkness which enveloped the minds of those who translated it.

To understand the magnitude of the undertaking one must realize the immensity of the great gulf

that separated light from darkness, truth from error. It was not the birth of a new religion; it was the resurrection of an old one. The religion of Jesus, the prophets and apostles alone saved and will save. Consequently, any religion that failed to embody every principle of their teaching was not pure truth.

Thus came the close of the long

*It was not the birth
of a new religion; it
was the resurrection
of an old one. The
religion of Jesus, the
prophets and
apostles alone saved
and will save.*

dark night and the dawn of a new day.

Why had God allowed His truth to become so buried in superstition and gross misunderstanding, so thoroughly mixed with paganism and philosophy? Perhaps it was His means of preserving it while it should rest in the hands of those who would have been its enemies had they understood its meaning.

Doctrines Buried

For centuries the masses, under the fear of death, had been forced to believe that the whole creation of earth, and sun, and universes of stars all began just six thousand years ago, and that prior to that time there had existed an enormous void, uninhabitable and uninhabited. Yet Mr. Nichols read in the Bible the words of the Psalmist (Ps. 103:17), that "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting." How could this be, if the whole creation were a mere 6000 years old? Upon whom had a supreme Creator, perfect in power, in goodness, in mercy, from aeons

in the past been dispensing justice?

All was clear when the Genesis account of creation was viewed as a symbolic picture of God's long-range plan of spiritual creation, a plan for the developing and perfecting of planet Earth, filling it with the glory of God. Understood in this way, there need be no conflict between science and the Bible. The purpose of the Bible was not to tell us how the galaxies came into being; rather, the Bible author in the first of Genesis was presenting an outline of God's plan for the earth in the form of an allegory. During six days (or six thousand years, one day for a thousand years—2 Pet. 3:8), the rulers of God's future Kingdom would be chosen and developed, and during the seventh day, the Millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6), the populace of that Kingdom would be prepared, after which the work would be completed and pronounced "very good."

This revolutionary approach to the creation removed the ambiguities caused by the literal interpretation of Genesis, along with the impossibility of literal grass growing before the literal sun, and of the human race being made physically in the image of God. Gone also was the basis for the almost universally held belief in the fall of man and original sin, by which Adam was thought to have passed the guilt of sin to all his progeny for millennia to come. How could such be possible when the Bible declared plainly, *"The soul that sinneth, it shall die";* and *"son shall*

not bear the iniquity of the father" (Ezek. 18:20)? Gone also was the injustice of needing to redeem a fallen race with the death of His innocent son; when the Bible again declares that God rewards each according to his own works, his own righteousness, and not another's (Rev. 22:12; Jer. 17:10; Ezek. 14:14; Ps. 18:24).

Two of the most glaring and most widely believed fables were belief in literal hellfire and a literal devil. Well-meaning theologians frightened the simple into religion by vividly picturing the abode of the damned where their *"worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched,"* a realm superintended by a superpower of evil who was the arch enemy of God. Many went so far with their literalism as to picture a cloven-hoofed monster with a tail of such magnitude that it encircled a third part of the stars of heaven.

Luther sanctioned this belief, and in his writings related many "encounters" with the devil—while the Bible teaches that the only devil that defiles comes from within (Mark 7:21–23; James 1:13–14). Furthermore, the words translated *"hell"* (*sheol* and *hades*) refer to the grave, annihilation, and never once mean an abode of eternal torment.

The pagan concept of a triune God, the mystery of the ages, went into the scrap heap as utterly without Scriptural authority—how could it be authentic when it was not accepted by the church until the fourth century A.D.? Yet it was

solidly believed by the reformers of the 17th and 18th centuries, and was the dogma for which Calvin sent Servetus to the stake.

One by one the doctrines that had been born during the centuries immediately following Christ and during the Medieval Age were proven to be not the true teachings of the Word of God. In this category were deathbed repentance, instant salvation, the vicarious atonement, the deity of Christ, the Holy Spirit as a person—in fact, the entire stronghold of papal tradition that had been handed down from generation to generation for more than a thousand years.

By far the greatest discovery of this "wonder" on this side of the river of time was that of the core of the ancient religion of Jesus, that highest of high ideals, perfection of character. So convinced, this man undertook the greatest work of which mortals are capable, as stated by Jesus: *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"* (Matt. 5:48).

And so, holding in his hand the true doctrine of Christianity, the religion of the heart, he led the way out of religious confusion into the full blaze of the Divine truth. The following are his own words:

"As I stand upon the shore in the full blessed light of its freedom, and see for me the ending of the weary centuries of darkness, I lift my heart in thankfulness to God that I have been made free from superstition, free to walk in the wonderful light of truth." □

(To be concluded next issue)

10 Distinctives of a HEALTHY CHRISTIAN

(Continued from page 10)

He greatly valued "the law of his God." This is why he was mentally stable. This is why his mental stability was reflected in his extreme courage in facing lions, foreign kings, and people that were jealous of him.

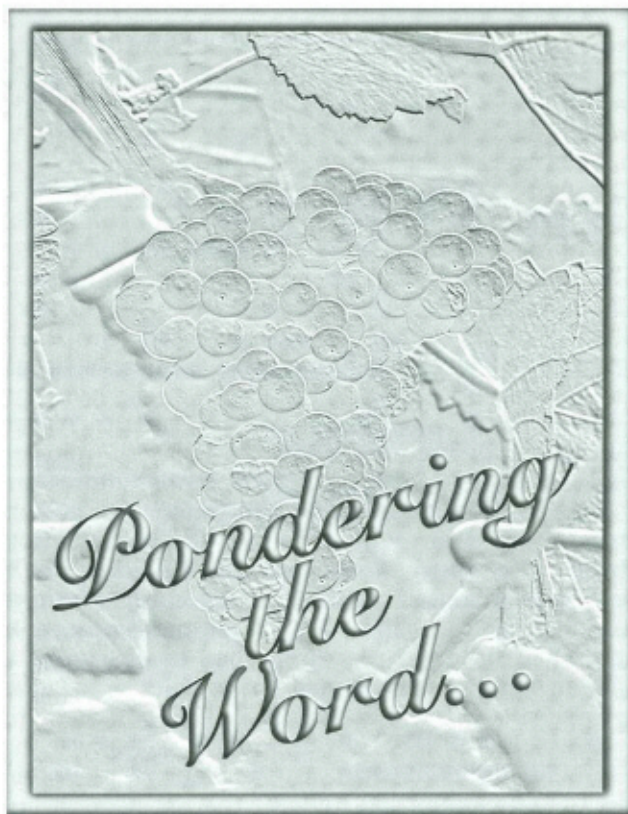
(10) An Acceptance of God as Our Primary Support System

Skeptics have accused Christians of using God as a crutch. Mental health is realizing that we all have dependency needs and then meeting those needs in healthy ways. God desires that we let Him be our primary support system.

I was recently impressed as I was reading the following words spoken by the Lord to the children of Israel, *"I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown"* (Jer. 2:2).

Daniel was a man that watched his world crumble around him as a youth. His external support system fell apart. More than any other single reason, Daniel was mentally healthy because God was his support system—a system that could never fail.

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If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." —Psalm 130:3-4

David was dreadfully conscious of his own sins. Even more, he was grateful for God's promise of forgiveness. Sin puts up a wall between us and God, forgiveness tears it down.

Under the old law sin had to be dealt with at its point of guilt. The sin offering dealt with the principle of sin. By it the sinner acknowledged his sin and asked to be made right with the law. That is what forgiveness does for us. It makes us right with God. We repent and turn, and God forgives.

The sinner is afraid God will punish him; the godly one is afraid he might sin again.

Solid food is for those who are mature, who have trained themselves to recognize the difference between right and wrong and then do what is right." —Hebrews 5:14

Knowledge is the basis of all faith. "All things that pertain unto life and godliness [come] through knowledge" (2 Pet. 1:2).

The Bible never belittles knowledge, but knowledge alone is not enough. To really know God, we must commit to Him all the concerns of our lives, including what we are, what we love, what we cherish. The only

true knowledge of God is that which has been applied.

We might talk about forgiveness, but unless we know the bitter experience of repentance, there is an echo of unreality in what we say. We may talk about love for God, but unless we have actually shown that love in our daily lives, by our own submission and obedience, we are like "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1). We may talk at length on the lessons that can be learned from suffering; but until we ourselves have suffered, there is something empty about our words.

No one ever gets to be an authority in the things of God merely by reading and investigation. Authority comes when we can say from the depths of our own personal conviction, as did Jesus, "We speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen" (John 3:11).

Apparently the author of Hebrews is complaining about his people's quality of faith. "By this time you ought to be teachers," he said, but instead, "you need someone to teach you again the first principles of God's word." In plainer words, it was as if he said, You don't yet know your ABC's (Heb. 5:12).

The real problem was not knowledge but application. They had not put their faith to the test of experience. They were "unskilled in the word of righteousness" (verse 13). Skill comes only by experience. One might have all the credentials for a very high position, but without experience, his credentials mean little.

The goal of Christian faith is not knowledge alone but the growth of mature men and women who out of a basic obedience have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.

Growth in Christian experience means growing in sensitivity to right and wrong, otherwise there is a moral barrier between us and God, however well informed we may be.

One of the best tests of spiritual maturity is the ability to live our faith in the everyday arenas of life. In real life one can never confuse knowledge with practice.

A man's ways seem all right to himself, but the Eternal has the verdict on his life." —Proverbs 16:2, Moffatt

Everyone of us can rationalize our own conduct. We can always talk ourselves into doing what we want to do, and justify it to ourselves. "A man's ways seem all right to himself." No question.

But...that is not the end of the matter. What we think, what we do, our judgment of right and wrong is not the ultimate. God has the last word. "The Eternal has the verdict on his life."

God is not fooled by our chicanery. He judges the heart, He reads the motives. If we have pure motives, then we will do what is right, since pure motives produce right action.

If all our ways are right, then we have no need to fear the verdict of the Eternal. □

Is War Right or Wrong?

"I am interested in your Church's stand on conscientious objection and details regarding your founder's opposition to war."

As a Church we are conscientious objectors to war. War under human direction is wrong because it involves taking the life of our fellowmen; and since we as human beings without Divine help cannot tell who is worthy to live or die, to kill in war is to make a judgment we are not qualified to make.

What is the basis for this position? When a group of soldiers came to John the Baptist and asked, "What shall we do?" He answered them, "Do violence to no man" (Luke 3:14)—a strange directive to soldiers, but he was teaching the Divine principle.

When the apostle Peter raised his sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest on the night Jesus was betrayed, Jesus said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:51-52).

Paul wrote also that we as Christians do not "war after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:3-4). Again he wrote, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12).

Because of these commands, our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, took the position during the Civil War, more than a century ago, that it was not right for the follower of Christ to bear arms. At that time the United States did not protect conscientious objectors, and standing firmly for his convictions in an unfriendly atmosphere nearly cost him his life. Hearing of his resistance to bearing arms, an over-zealous sergeant took it upon himself to act as judge, jury and executioner, and placed Mr. Nichols before a firing squad. Had it not been for the timely intervention of a superior officer, Mr. Nichols would have been executed.

During World War I, our pastor, Rev. Maud Hembree wrote an appeal to the president of the United States to recognize our Church as conscientiously objecting to war. A delegation from our Church also appealed to the Selective Service headquarters in Washington. The request was granted, and since then our Church position has been recognized. At present there is no draft law, but should one be enacted, our position would be the same, that we do not bear arms.

However, we do not take a position of non-cooperation when and if our country should participate in

acts of war. War under human direction is sometimes a necessary evil.

What about our individual involvement? We are willing to serve our country in areas of national importance, i.e., forestry, hospitals, civilian duties, and if at all possible, under civilian direction. Our government allows this type of service for conscientious objectors, for which we are grateful. We would not be violating our conscience to serve under military supervision in non-combatant duties, but one can never be sure when he might be summoned to bear arms in such an environment, hence our preference for alternative civilian service duties.

The taking of life is not the only aspect of war that is forbidden the Christian. As Christians we are forbidden all the feelings that underlie the war-like spirit, in great or small degree. These include feelings of anger, hate, strife, greed, jealousy, rivalry, pride, resentment, bitterness, revenge. All are caveman instincts in the sight of God and absolutely and definitely forbidden. The Christian can never under any circumstances harbor feelings of anger against anyone. The law is plain: "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath"—no exceptions (Ps. 37:8).

Furthermore, war is the desire to hurt, not help; to tear down and not build up. If all worldwide were willing to work sincerely for the good of all others, if everyone followed the Bible laws on kindness, compassion, and love, there would be no war nor any need for war. There would be no strife even between individuals, much less between governments or nations.

Another belief underlying war is that one's own nation is superior to others, and that offensive action is as justified as defensive; also the feeling that all other governments should recognize and respect the superiority of one's particular nation—all of which is contrary to God's manner of judging men and nations.

Does that mean that we are pacifists? No. Are we against all war? No. Do we support war? No. Do we protest our government's involvement in war? No.

There are three Bible principles which govern our attitude toward our government in a time of war:

1) We are commanded to be subject to the government under which we live. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation"

(Rom. 13:1-2). Even though we may not at all times agree with the actions of our government, we are not to protest or be uncooperative. If we resist our government, we resist God. If our government should require us to bear arms, we would have to accept the penalty without resistance in order to be loyal to God.

Even though we cannot take any action which might endanger, threaten, or kill our fellowmen, neither are we to take judgment into our own hands and try to hinder those who do. Jesus never taught His disciples to resist the actions of the government under which they lived, but only to behave in such a way that they themselves would be blameless, as far as possible both before men and before God.

2) We do not oppose or condemn our country for going to war, because our nation and its leaders are not under the Law of God. And because we are committed to God, it is not our place to advise, direct, or be concerned with our government's decisions. We are to leave all matters of the state to the state. God has set up the governments of earth for this purpose: to keep law and order. Our duty is to obey God, to live by His Laws, and to let the officials of our country take whatever actions they deem necessary as rulers in the kingdom of men (Dan. 4:25).

3) We cannot be entangled in *"the affairs of this life"* and expect to please our Captain Christ. We have chosen to serve a higher cause, to be Christ's soldiers, and how can we serve in two armies at the same time? This is what the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: *"No man that warreth [for Christ] entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"* (2 Tim. 2:4).

We are grateful to our government for administering its national and international affairs so as to give us political security and freedom from strife and war, so that, in the words of the apostle Paul, *"we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty"* (1 Tim. 2:2). God has arranged this, and we should thank Him, and show our appreciation by serving Him wholeheartedly.

◆ A Trine Baptism?

"I read somewhere in your literature that the Trine Baptismal formula stated by Jesus in Matthew 28:19 may not be authentic text. What is your authority for this statement?"

The text in question reads: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matt. 28:19). This so-called Trine Baptismal Formula, *"in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"* does appear in the common manuscripts from which the New Testament is translated.

However, many serious students of Scripture have questioned it. For example, the following:

"...the New Testament knows only baptism in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 19:5; Gal.

3:27; Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 1:13-15), which still occurs even in the second and third centuries, while the Trinitarian Formula occurs only in Matt. 28:19, and then only again in the Didache 7:1, and Justin, Apologies, 1:61. It is unthinkable that the Apostolic Church thus disobeyed the express command of the Lord, which it otherwise considered the highest authority. Occurrences like those of Acts 19:1-7 ought to have shown that the prescribed formula baptism could not have been shortened to 'the name of the Lord Jesus,' if the character of baptism was to be retained as commanded." —*Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, "Baptism,"* p.435

The Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, under the topic "Baptism (Early Christian)," offers this thought under the subheading of "textual criticism":

"In all extant manuscripts and versions the text is found in the traditional form, though it must be remembered that the best manuscripts both of the African Old Latin and of the Old Syriac versions are defective at this point."

The author mentions also that some of the earliest church fathers (e.g., Eusebius and Justin Martyr) who quoted this passage of Scripture were not familiar with the Trine Formula,—a fact which suggests strongly that the Trine Formula may have been added at a later date.

This is not conclusive evidence of itself, but it supports what we find in the rest of the New Testament, where no mention is made of a Trine Formula for baptism, or, in fact, of the Trinity in any form.

The above-mentioned article gives this summary statement as its conclusion:

"On the whole, then, the evidence of literary criticism is against the historical character of the traditional text of Matthew 28:19."

The Apostles were sent out to preach and to baptize in the name of the Lord, and even if they did use the so-called "trine formula," it does not say that the three are one being or one organism, nor does it lend any credence to the common belief in the Trinity. The apostles spoke often of the Father and the Son, but they distinguished them as two separate entities. They spoke of *"God the father and our Lord Jesus Christ"*—two beings; and *"God, and our Savior Jesus Christ"*—two beings. The Holy Spirit also was distinct, being a power which was "given," which they "received," and by which they worked (see Acts 1:7-9; John 7:39).

If Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19 was intended to extol the godhead in its association with baptism, Paul totally missed the point—or flagrantly disobeyed (which was entirely unlike him), for there is no evidence that he complied with the command. In fact, he seemed to depreciate the significance of the baptisms he did perform (1 Cor. 1:14-17). Being the apostle to the Gentiles, he was showing the deeper meaning of baptism—the death to sin and sinful tendencies, which each believer must complete.

◆ Jesus to Touch the Earth When He Comes?

"The Bible makes it clear that when He (Jesus) comes at His second coming He will not touch the earth. But all the saved ones will join Him in the air and be taken to heaven while the unsaved will be destroyed by His coming brightness."

We are at a loss to know where in the Bible you find that Jesus at His second coming will "never touch the earth." Paul's letter to the Thessalonians says that both the resurrected dead and the living believers will be *"caught up together...to meet the Lord in the air"* (1 Thess. 4:16-18). Paul does not say what will happen next, but the prophet Zechariah does, and he says that when *"the day of the Lord cometh,...his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley;...and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee"* (Zech. 14:1-5).

There are many texts to indicate that after Jesus returns to earth, He and His saints will be on the earth. Only the wicked will be removed. We are told this in Prov. 10:30: *"The righteous shall never be removed; but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth."* This was the purpose of God from the beginning. *"He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited"* (Isa. 45:18). The song of the saints in Rev. 5:9-10 ends with these words: *"We shall reign on the earth."* The Lord's Prayer begins with a petition for the Kingdom to come, and His will to be done *"in earth as it is in heaven."* And Zechariah promises that *"the Lord shall be king over all the earth"* (Zech. 14:9), and also that His capitol city will be Jerusalem: *"He shall choose Jerusalem again"* (Zech. 2:10, 12).

The Bible indicates that while Christ and the saints are judging the nations, they will be on the earth, for it says of the wicked, *"they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet"* (Mal. 4:1-3)—hardly a fitting symbol if Jesus and the saints were not on earth.

The judgment of God's servants, as pictured by Jesus in parable, is a setting in which both faithful and unfaithful are present, not the faithful in heaven and the wicked on the earth. Matthew 25 reads: *"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered [out of] all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd*

divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you" (Matt. 25:31-34).

Jesus is also pictured in Revelation 14 as standing on Mt. Zion with 144,000 faithful ones. This statement assumes that the Judgment has already been completed, for these are described as *"having his Father's name written in their foreheads,"* and being *"without fault before the throne of God."* In other words, they are faithful.

Psalms 37 makes several references to the righteous remaining on the earth: *"For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth"; "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace"; "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever." "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land"* (Psalm 37:9, 11, 29, 34).

Jesus Himself called Jerusalem the *"city of the great King"*—would it be His city if He never touches the ground? (Matt. 5:35).

It seems that you allude to a passage in 2 Thessalonians when you say that *"the unsaved will be destroyed by His coming brightness."* The apostle Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 1, speaking of Christ's coming, that *"the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God,...who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power"* (2 Thess. 1:7-9). This passage is translated variously as, *"They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints"* (RSV). The New English words it, *"They will suffer the punishment of eternal ruin, cut off from the presence of the Lord and the splendour of his might, when on that great Day he comes to be glorified among his own."* The thought does not seem to be that the brightness of His coming will destroy them but that the wicked will be punished by being eternally excluded from His glory and the blessing that will be given to the faithful. Jesus will at the Judgment separate the faithful from the unfaithful, the *"wheat"* from the *"tares"* (Matt. 13:29-30), and the earth will become the Kingdom of Christ and His saints, and all who live will enjoy the blessings of peace, prosperity, health and happiness (Isa. 32:17-18). □



*Opportunity is not something coming tomorrow—
it is here today.*



Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them.

A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and treat before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" —Luke 15:11-19, NRSV

Sin's Price is Too High

Hidden in one of Jesus' parables is a lesson on the high price of sin. The parable is that of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15).

Penalty #1: The Memory of a Bitter Past.

After the prodigal had been gone for some time, and had wasted his inheritance in "riotous living," he found himself hungry. "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" he said. He compared a miserable present with a past he had voluntarily left behind, and realized that the past was better.

Penalty #2: The Misery of a Bitter Present.

The prodigal dreamed of living in a land without a fence. Ironically, he found himself fenced in with swine and fenced out from all that was beautiful and good. His dream had become a nightmare.

It has been said, "Every day is a thread woven into the history of life, and we choose the color." The prodigal chose black as his color, and the bitterness of each day served as a grim reminder of his wrong choice. What he thought would be freedom became a new kind of bondage.

Penalty #3: The Mockery of a Broken Future.

The prodigal realized that he had gambled his future for the pleasures of the present, and had lost. He had traded tomorrow's security for today's sin. Here was his plight: He was out of funds, out of food, out of friends, and out of a future. The young man who once had had something now found himself with less than nothing. He had traced a mirage and found its source—the pigpen of sin.

Under these conditions the young man "came to himself." Suddenly he realized the wrong course he had taken, and longed to belong to his father's household again, if only as a servant.

So he arose and went to his father, and confessed: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Suddenly he was humble and seeking forgiveness.

To the son's amazement, the father accepted his confession and welcomed him with joy.

What a difference a right attitude makes! It changes both the present and the future. This is all God asks, that we repent and turn. □



Obituary

Edith I. Heywood

On March 10, death claimed a life-long member of our Rochester Congregation, Edith Ilene Heywood. Sister Edith had a long life as mortals count time—she lacked just two weeks of completing her 91st year, and during almost all of it enjoyed the blessings of good health. A nurse both by training and by nature, she came to Rochester at age 23 to take a job at the Iola Sanitarium, and soon became an active member of the Megiddo Church.

Sister Edith was generous and kindly, and took her religion seriously. An ardent and enthusiastic missionary, she always wanted to help others. She especially loved children and young people, and took an active part in helping them. She prepared many children's parts for the Church programs, and wrote plays for visiting children to act. She sent out children's Bible Study lessons, replied to them, and tracked their progress. In 1962 she was responsible for the setup and launching of *Children's Doings*, a quarterly publication by children and for children. Not

willingly did she give up this work which was closest to her heart, and spoke of it frequently in later years. She also spent many hours in correspondence, encouraging and cheering those at a distance.

For some thirty years she managed the Church's mailing department, sending out thousands of Elijah booklets, sets of books, and cassette tapes. Each and every request was treated with strong personal interest. She kept up the cassette mailing until her ninetieth year.

Sister Edith believed firmly in the Bible hope of a resurrection of the dead. Her favorite sermons were those on the resurrection, and when her activities became more limited she spent many happy hours playing her cassette tapes. She was also excellent at memorizing Bible passages, and even within the last year worked hard to keep large portions in memory.

She is survived by her elder sister, Vivian Nasbitt, of Upland, CA, now age 94; also a number of nieces and nephews, among them Mrs. Ruth Johnson of Buffalo, New York. □

NOTICE

Change in Mailing Dates

Did you wonder why your March issue was so late?

We have changed our Message mailing schedule. You will now receive a total of ten issues per year, instead of eleven. The January and February issues remain as before. The March and April issues have been combined into one New Year issue (a March/April issue), to be mailed in late March.

The rest of the mailing schedule for the year will be: the May issue, to be mailed in early May; the June issue in early June; the July issue in early July; the August issue in early August (not the July/August issue we have had previously). September and October will be combined into one issue, to be mailed during October; November and December will be as usual.



When the going seems easy, check to make sure you are not going downhill.



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 13.

Sheep and Goats

1. The story of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22:13)
2. The scapegoat (Leviticus 16:8)
3. Psalm 23.
4. For water bags.
5. Yes.
6. The elder son, in Jesus' parable of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)
7. A lamb (Leviticus 23:18)
8. Right—Left (Matthew 25:33)

Walls

1. The wall of Jericho (Joshua 6:20)
2. The feast of Belshazzar; the angel of God (Daniel 5)
3. Paul (Acts 9:25)
4. Rahab (Joshua 2:15)
5. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2)
6. Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:12)
7. The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:12)

Who Was the Boy?

1. Moses (Exodus 2:5)
2. Jesus (Luke 2:41-47)
3. Samuel (1 Samuel 2:19)
4. David (1 Samuel 17:49)
5. Isaac (Genesis 22:7-10)
6. Josiah (2 Kings 22)
7. Ishmael (Genesis 21:14)
8. Joseph (Genesis 37: 18-28)
9. Benjamin (Genesis 35:18, 42:13)

Who Was Called?

1. Judas (John 17:12)
2. Jesus (John 6:62)
3. Abraham (James 2:23)
4. Thomas (John 20:25)
5. John (John 19:26)
6. James and John (Mark 3:17)
7. Peter (John 1:42)
8. Elijah (1 Kings 17:1)
9. Saul (1 Samuel 9:1-2)
10. David (1 Samuel 16:23)

Whose Son?

1. Solomon's (1 Kings 11:43)
2. Enoch's (Genesis 4:18)
3. Lamech's (Genesis 5:28-29)
4. Joseph's (Genesis 41:52)
5. Aaron's (Exodus 6:23)
6. Jacob's (Genesis 35:23)
7. Kish's (1 Samuel 9:1-2)
8. Noah's (Genesis 5:32)

Whose Daughter?

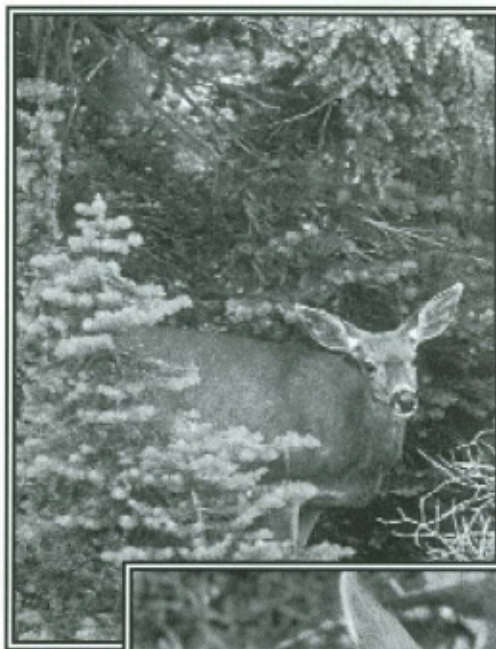
1. Job's (Job 42:14)
2. Saul's (1 Samuel 14:49)
3. Jethro's (Exodus 3:1)
4. Amram's (Numbers 26:50)
5. Omri's (2 Kings 8:26)
6. Laban's (Genesis 29:16)
7. Lois' (2 Timothy 1:5)
8. Bethuel's (Genesis 24:15)

The Helpful Past

*We cannot change the past;
It is forever gone away.
But, unforgotten, it serves
As a guide for a newer day.*

*The errors we made last week,
Mistakes of the month before,
Now that they're well understood,
Need never be made any more.*

*The past is a storage vault
From which we are able to borrow
The aid that experience lends
For a wiser, better tomorrow.*



Hold the Latch

The famous painting "The Light of the World" pictures Christ knocking at the door. It is reported that when the artist had finished the painting, a friend criticized: "You have made one big mistake. You have left the latch off the door."

"Oh!" replied the artist, "that is not a mistake. The only latch is on the inside." He meant to portray that the only latch to a man's mind and willpower is on the inside. The power to act and the conscience behind it is strictly a personal power. "Every man is lord of the house of his own heart; it is his portion; he must open the gates of it."

Here is human responsibility. Christ knocks; we may answer or refuse to answer. Christ does not break in; He must be invited. Even as on the Emmaus road, "He made as if he would have gone further." Jesus Christ will never force Himself on any one: He must be an invited guest.

No man does either right or wrong without his own consent. Temptation may surround him, but it is not sin until it gets inside. And it does not get inside unless he permits it to get inside—unless he himself lifts the latch.

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. 12:35). And every man has the power to control the door to his own heart.

Christ pleads; Christ offers. But only the man who has learned to say "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" has opened the door and invited Him in. And having accepted the gracious offer, this man has found an intimate friendship with Christ which will linger throughout eternity.



It is later—and worse—than you think.

If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are convinced.

Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall.

All the problems in the world could be settled easily, if we were only willing to work together.

How much have we laid up of character, self-reliance, integrity, and every Christian virtue—the riches far more precious than gold?

*"O God, work out Thy heavenly plan;
Within my soul unfold
The stature of the perfect man
And Thine own image mold."*

My Daily Prayer

*Dear God, as I begin this day
Let me turn my thoughts to You,
And ask Your help in guiding me
In everything I say and do.*

*Give me the patience that I need
To keep my peace of mind,
And with life's cares, I hope, dear God,
Some happiness to find.*

*Grant me to live this one day well,
Not worrying what's ahead,
For I have trust that You will see
I get my "daily bread."*

*Give me courage to face life's trials
And not from troubles run,
Let me keep this thought in mind:
"Your will," not "mine," be done.*

*And if some wish I do not get,
Though why I cannot see,
Help me believe and understand
You know what's best for me.*

*I've failed You many times, I know,
But when tonight I rest,
I hope that I can kneel and say,
"Dear God, I've done my best."*

—Selected

