

WINTER 2015 • VOLUME 102, No. 4

Megiddo Message



**God gives me hope. He is my rock...
My honor and salvation come from God.**

—Psalm 62:6-7 NCV



BY GERALD R. PAYNE

EDITORIAL

"My tongue is the pen of a ready writer" —Psalm 45:1

Maximum ^{Recommended} Pressure

The thin, lightweight, tubular tire of a bicycle can be inflated to at least 100 pounds per square inch (170 pounds for some three-ply tires) without tire failure. This might seem surprising when the larger automobile tires require much less pressure to inflate.

But there is a reason. Bicycle tires hold up best when kept at the maximum recommended pressure. The harder tire will roll more easily over the bumps and be less prone to "flats" caused by bruising.

Isn't there an analogy here for those seeking to live the Christ-life? Yes, pressure can have positive value. If we are always looking for the easiest way out, the safest course, the simplest answer, the least complicating circumstance, we may be cutting ourselves off from the blessings we want most.

Take the apostle Paul as an example. He did not try to avoid the pressures of life. Rather, he welcomed them. Did he have to suffer? He was sharing in the sufferings of Christ—that they "*may also be glorified together*" (Rom. 8:17). Was he called to the utmost in self-sacrifice for his brothers and sisters in Christ? He only longed to share his joy with all of them (Phil. 2:17).

Reading his letters, we learn that pressure was something Paul was acquainted with on a daily basis. At one time, he wrote in his letter to the Corinthians, they (Paul and his comrades) were "*pressed beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.*" Talk about maximum pressure—Paul knew what it was. But how did he take it? As a lesson that they "*should not trust in themselves, but in God, who raises the dead*" (2 Cor. 1:8-9).

I once heard someone say that they would NEVER pray for patience again! It seems they thought their prayer had really been answered *that* time—because what is the route to patience but tribulation! (Rom. 5:3). The Greek word *thlipsis* (translated "tribulation") has *pressure* for its first definition. So the Christian who seeks patience should not scorn or complain when pressure comes.

Sometimes the pressure is from a circumstance. Sometimes it may be from a person who comes into our lives. And how do we know that God did not send that certain one for the purpose of making us stronger? That most difficult individual may be providing an opportunity for us to grow in patience, perhaps humility, even joy. If that person shows up the evil in us and we overcome it, is not that *thlipsis*, that pressure, truly a God-send?

The apostle Paul knew *thlipsis* from many directions—the pressure of persecution, the pressure of opposition, of unpopularity, probably of illness and overexertion. Yet he could say with confidence, "We rejoice even in the midst of these pressures" (Rom. 5:3; 2 Cor. 7:4).

How are we to triumph as Christians when we face outward pressures that seem almost too great? And what about those inward pressures—the fear of failure, or the fear of aging, or disappointment or financial concerns?

Whatever the pressures from outside, if we maintain maximum recommended pressure inside we will feel no harm. This meeting

The Christian who seeks patience should not scorn or complain when pressure comes.

Front cover:
Awesome colors and rock formations (hoodoos) at Sunset Point, in Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah.
By Patricia Fleming

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.

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).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

MEGIDDO MESSAGE • WINTER 2015

In this Issue...



- 2** EDITORIAL
Maximum Recommended Pressure *by Gerald R. Payne*

- 4** SPECIAL FEATURE
Footprints to Follow *by Ruth E. Sisson*
What It Means to Follow—
How to Take Mistreatment
How to Love
How to Forgive
How to Die—and Live
How to Keep a Right Attitude
How to Put on Christ's Character

- ARTICLES
10 Only Two Options *by Ruth E. Sisson*

- 12 Blood: Miracle of Life**
Physical Blood
Spiritual Blood

- QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
16 Keeping What Law?

- KNOW YOUR BIBLE?
19 God's Heroes • Who Was? • How Many?
• Complete the Proverbs

- AWESOME DESIGNS
20 Anableps "Four Eyes"

- ARTICLE
21 Integrity Matters!

- ARTICLE
22 Hanameel's Field
Jeremiah's Historic Act of Faith

- YOUTH IN CHRIST
24 True or False? • Heather's Difficult Choice

- ARTICLES
26 Living by Faith

- 27 The Benefits of a Good Slap** *by Edward Shayler*

- 29 I'm Sorry, I Was Wrong** *by Elva E. Byers*

- LINES TO LIVE BY
30 Some Day?
When-ners Are Not Winners

- BACK COVER
32 Lest It Be I

Megiddo Message

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The following lexicons are abbreviated as:
BDAG—Arndt, W., Gingrich, F. W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (1996).

A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature; **DBL**—Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains; **EDNT**—Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G. (1990-). Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament; **GES**—Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures; **HAL**—Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M., & Stamm, J. J. (1999). The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament; **LSJ**—Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996). A Greek-English lexicon; **LN**—Louv, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains; **SHG**—Strong, J. (1997). The new Strong's dictionary of Hebrew and Greek words. **THAYER**—A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (1889).

Footprints to Follow

BY RUTH SISSON

Following is an acknowledgment that another knows more about the route to take.

Imagine trying to find your way across a sandy wasteland, not knowing which way to go—when suddenly you discover footprints in the sand. Someone has already passed this way! Having no other guide, you venture to follow, even though you cannot see whom you are following.

That is how we follow Jesus. We cannot see Him ahead of us, but we know that He has gone our way because we can see His footprints. We see them in the Word of God. We see them in the lives He has influenced, both in history and in our own time.

Do our footprints follow His?

We know where His footprints lead, because He has shown us. He has given us His own testimony: *"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore"* (Rev. 1:18). There is great comfort in knowing that we put our feet in the steps of One who has gone ahead. Whatever it is, He has experienced it first. And—most important of all—He has reached the destination! He has a glorious, immortal body, and He has promised to make us like Himself when He returns (Phil. 3:20–21). We shall be *"like Him,"* free from sickness, pain and death (1 John 3:2–6; Rev. 21:4).

All we have to do is follow. ♦

What It Means to Follow

We are all followers. The critical issue is making the right choice as to whom we will follow. Do we want to go where that following will take us?

When we travel, the first decision we must make is that of our destination. Then we must choose which routes will take us to that destination. Life is much the same.

Consciously or unconsciously, we are all the time looking at the possibilities and choosing whom we will follow. We watch others and note their strengths and weaknesses.

For many, choosing a guide or a route in life is haphazard. Few, very few give serious thought to their destination.

continued on page 5

Most are content to follow their peers and enjoy the scenery. If it is pleasant, if it satisfies their desire for challenge and achievement, if it in some way increases the happiness of themselves and perhaps others, they are content.

But occasionally comes one whose greatest concern is the destination. Such a one is careful—very careful—whom he follows, for well he knows that not every route can take him to his destination.

Such a one was Jesus Christ, the greatest man ever to live on our planet. What made Him great? The answer lies in His willingness to follow, to obey, to submit to the will of His Father.

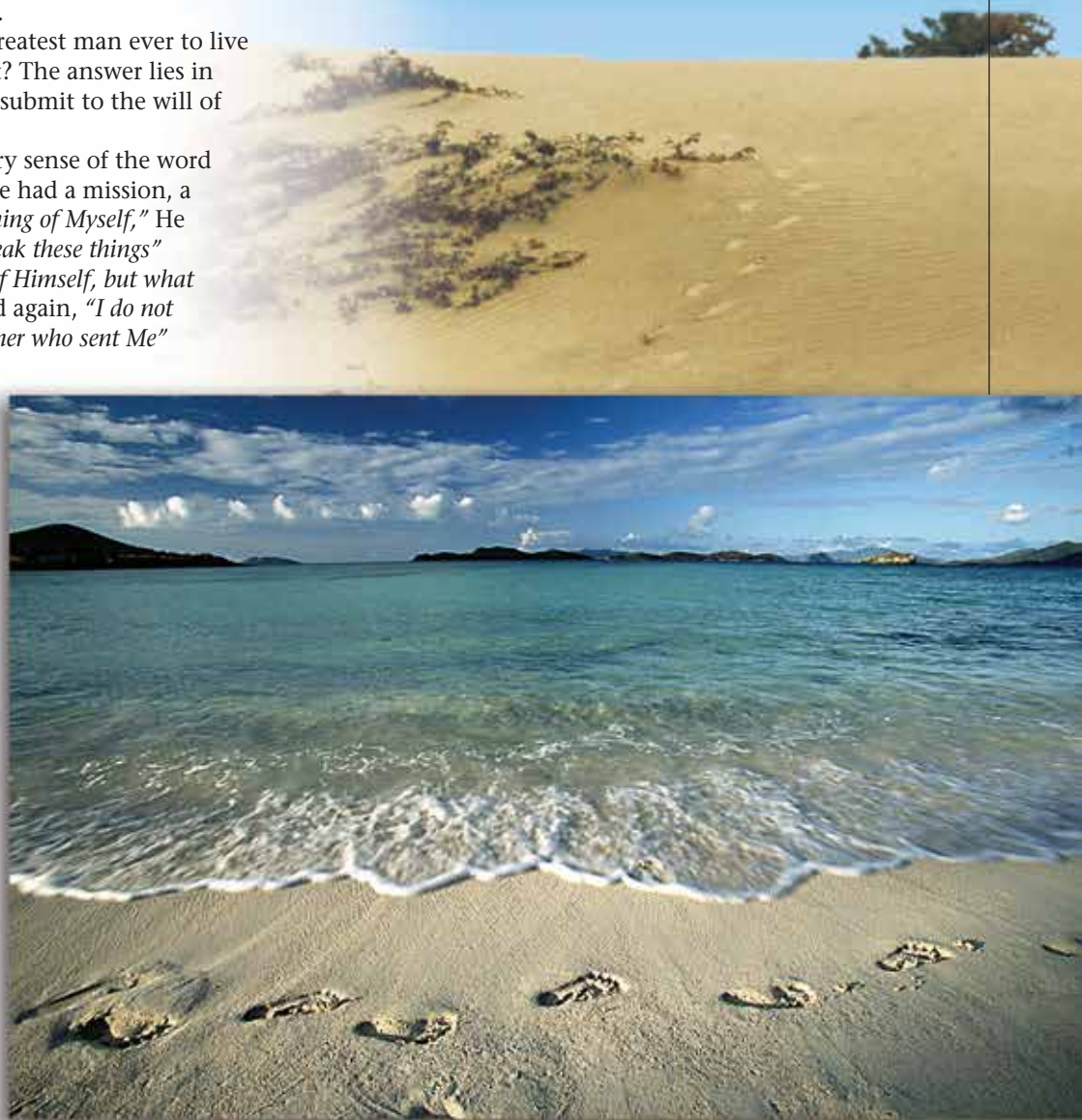
Throughout His life He was in every sense of the word a follower. He was not on His own. He had a mission, a purpose, a duty to perform. *"I do nothing of Myself,"* He said, *"but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things"* (John 8:28). *"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do"* (John 5:19). And again, *"I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me"* (John 5:30).

Following is not easy. **FIRST**, it means we must make some fundamental changes in our way of thinking and doing. Following is an acknowledgment that another knows more about the route than we do, and so we are willing to let go our own opinions. From that point on we are not free to follow any road we might like to explore. Where our leader goes we must follow.

SECOND, we must keep our eye on the One we are following. We cannot have our eyes in the ends of the earth and be good followers of Christ. *"Let your eyes look straight ahead,"* is the command, *"and your eyelids look right before you"* (Prov. 4:25). This was the pattern left us by the One we follow, who *"for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God"* (Heb. 12:2). Christ was enduring *"for the joy"* ahead.

THIRD, by following another we relinquish our freedom to explore any road that might appeal to us. When we make up our minds to follow, we agree on one route and forego all others. This means that *"you do not do the things that you wish"* (Gal. 5:16–17). We are not free to try this byroad and that. Our decision to follow Christ is a decision *not* to follow any other course, not even that of our own mind.

FOURTH, following means matching the stride of the One who went before us. Imagine a small child trying to follow the footprints of a giant. Just so must we grow up in Christ, become mature men and women in Him, to match His pace. And even as we grow, we must stretch our legs to the limit, and thrust them forward with all our might. It is not easy to follow One so far ahead of us, but it is the surest, fastest—only—way to our destination. ♦



**By following Jesus,
we relinquish our
freedom to explore
any road that might
appeal to us.**

How Can I Follow Jesus?

If any one message comes clearly through the Gospels, it is the call of our Lord, "Follow me." The voice is commanding. It rings with authority. But there is good reason to follow, because there is something better ahead. Life, glory, honor, and eternal happiness are ahead! (Rom. 2:7). Jesus knows, because He has gone before us.

"Follow me" was the call to each of His Apostles, and we read that they "left everything, and followed him" (Luke 5:11 NASB). Whether casting nets or tax collecting, whatever their former way of life, they left it to follow. They had caught the vision of what Jesus saw up ahead, and they wanted it!

Very near the end of his life, the Apostle Peter was still thinking about the call of his Master. He realized that Jesus' call was not to the Apostles alone but to every believer in every age. And so he wrote to his brethren: "To this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Every believer in every age has been called to follow Jesus.

We can understand how the Apostles followed Jesus. Listening day after day

to His dynamic preaching, as He went from city to village "preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:1), they followed Him literally. And as they followed we can be sure that they observed also His manner of life, His patience, His humility, and His careful attention to the details of His own obedience. They marveled at His kindness, His selfless consideration for others, His firm devotion to duty, and His personal life of holiness in all the events of every day.

When suddenly Jesus was taken from them, they continued to follow—by carrying out the commission He left them, by preaching His message of hope and the coming Kingdom. They were captured by Him. Christ was their rallying point, the center of their thinking, their Hero. Everywhere they went they preached Jesus Christ—crucified, risen, ascended to heaven, and coming again. They were driven

by His faith, motivated by His confidence in them, challenged by His goals. They were His servants, literally His slaves, and everything they did was done as for Him, even though He was not present.

Most of all, they followed by imitating His manner of life, His integrity, His fearless denunciation of evil, His courage, His faith, His single-minded desire to please His heavenly Father. If only they could suffer with Him, die with Him, live with Him, reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:11–12)!

But the command to follow Jesus was not for the Apostles alone. It stands on record for us, clear and unmistakable: "If any man will come after me, let him...take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

What do these words mean? Did Jesus truly mean what these words seem to say to us nearly two millennia later, we who have not seen Jesus? How can we follow Him?

Footsteps of Jesus



Then at last, when He comes and sees us,
Our journey done,
May we rest where the steps of Jesus
End at His throne.

**You must arm
yourselves with the
same attitude [Christ]
had. –1 Peter 4:1**

Footprints To Follow

What footprints can we discover from what has been written of the life of our Lord?

Jesus' life was not haphazard. Nor were the footprints He left behind. He consciously marked out a path to follow. He told His disciples, *"I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you"* (John 13:15).



How To Take Mistreatment

If any thought that Christ was only for admiration, not imitation, Peter dispels any such idea. Christ's life was an example for *following*. His footprints are clear, says Peter, and *"you should follow his steps."*

But the first "step" he mentions is not an easy one. Peter says of Jesus, *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth"* (1 Pet. 2:22 NIV). Here was the supreme example. Though we today are not slaves, nor are we facing active persecution as believers then, still everyone at some time encounters some type of mistreatment or undeserved blame. Are we prepared to take it without complaint?

Worse than this, Christ was cruelly and inexcusably wronged; yet He felt no resentment against His injurers. *"When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats"* (1 Pet. 2:23 NIV). No wonder the centurion, witnessing such character, exclaimed, *"Truly this was the Son of God!"* (Matt. 27:54). Christ was the perfect example of patience in suffering.

What was Jesus saying to us? When you are distressed by the treatment you received from those who are unjust or unreasonable, this is the time to prove the reality of your convictions. Do not retaliate. Do not even allow yourself to cherish a thought of ill against another (1 Thess. 5:15). Remember the example of Christ, cultivate His spirit, and instead, trust the wrong *"to Him who judges justly"* (1 Pet. 2:23 NIV).

Even the most unwelcome, unwanted circumstances can be used to the highest results. Taken in the spirit of Christ, life's storms can only cast up rare treasure that gives spiritual advantage.



How To Love

Another outstanding example from Jesus was His view of love. *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another"* (John 13:34).

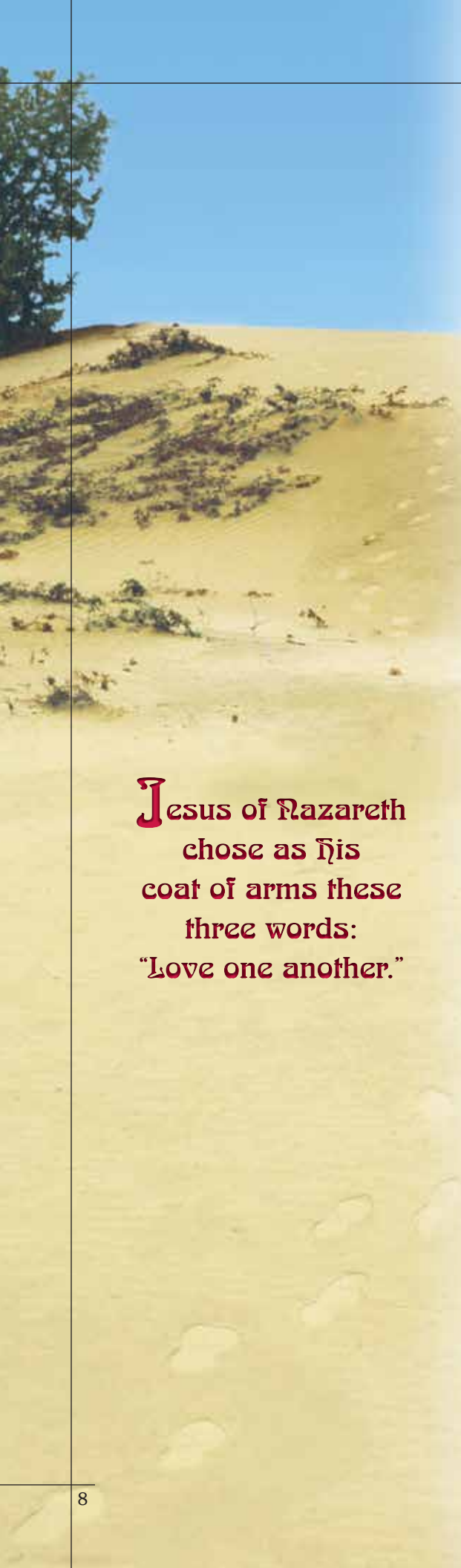
It is a love so far removed from the level of instincts that it must be commanded: *"A new commandment I give unto you."* But like every other commandment from our Lord, He was the first to comply with it Himself. He did not ask His followers to do anything that He was not willing to do Himself. This is why He is our perfect example.

"Love one another," He said, *"as I have loved you."*

What can we learn about this mutual love that Christ commands? First, it is a special love shared by those who belong to Christ's family.



Following means
matching the stride of
the One who went
before us.



Jesus of Nazareth
chose as His
coat of arms these
three words:
“Love one another.”

We can learn something about the nature of Christ's love by observing His love for His disciples. First, from Christ's standpoint, *it was unselfish*. And because there was no jealousy or rivalry on the part of Christ, *it was pure*. Then, too, *it was practical*. It was love that bears its ripe fruit in deeds. It walked in Jesus' feet, spoke with His tongue, worked in His hands. Everywhere He went, it was evident.

What made this a “new” commandment? Christ's love was age-old in its principles, but it might be called “new” because of its complete expression in the life of Christ. Here was the perfect Example, the perfect life fully lived. No longer was the commandment encased in cold, lifeless words; now it was living flesh and blood, warm and animate. Then, too, Christ's love was new in the motives it inspired. Jesus' first love was to please His heavenly Father (John 8:29). Could His disciples share that love? They could, if they had the honesty of heart that this love required; if they had their Master's perseverance and His deep desire to do right.

The result? “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). The effects would be inward and outward. Others will see it. Levels of achievement in various fields have always been distinguished by different outward marks. Soldiers of different countries have long been identified by their uniforms. The Pharisees and Sadducees had their distinguishing phylacteries and ceremonies, and various kingdoms have their coats of arms. Jesus of Nazareth chose as His coat of arms these three words: “Love one another.” Then He added, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” Not, if you have wealth and learning, or if you have a long face or a pious smile, but if you “have love for one another.”

It is said that in the early centuries after Christ, the bond between believers was so intense that the persecuting pagans exclaimed, “See how these Christians love one another!” Even if believers could not meet to worship as they would have liked, or sing His praise, they still could wave this flag before a hostile world. What shame on us if the love of our Master is not seen in us!



How To **Forgive**

Do we notice how many of Jesus' footprints have to do with our relationships to one another? And here is one more: the ability to forgive.

Jesus was realistic. He did not picture a Pollyanna world without problems. He knew that in the daily intercourse of life, people would offend one another—innocently or intentionally. There would be differences in feeling and opinion, even among believers. How could these differences be resolved? What should be done?

Follow Christ's footprints, and there is no question. There must be a spirit of forgiveness. We never have a right to hold a grudge against anyone. “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Col. 3:13–14 NIV).

If Christ can forgive us, how can we possibly hold feelings against our brother?

If we would follow Christ, we must cultivate this Christ-like forgiveness. As His servants, we are bound by His example.

Christ's example points up yet another fact: that any quarrel or disagreement requires two. If either is forgiving, the quarrel is over. Do we wonder why Paul advised, “forgiving one another, if any have a complaint against any”?

What if our brother is not willing to change? We are still not justified in holding any resentment against him. A Christ-like spirit will make us so humble that we cannot wish ill on the offender, even if he is hard and impenitent. Shall we make the impenitent offender set the standard for our forgiveness?

As long as we are unforgiving, we cut ourselves off from His forgiveness, for Christ has promised to forgive us only as we forgive our brother. If we refuse to forgive, let us not dare to pray.



How To **Die—and Live**

4 Another powerful example from Christ is seen in the spiritual significance of His death and His life. *“For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all [time]; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom. 6:10–11).

Paul tells us first how Christ died, then says that we must die *“likewise.”* Paul tells us how Christ lived, then says we must live *“likewise.”* But notice that death precedes life. It is *“death to sin,”* a death of our old nature. No change is so drastic as this death of our old self. Our *“new”* life does not depend on outward circumstances—the color of our skin, or the climate of our birthplace, or the nature of our occupation, our education, wealth, age or station in life. None of these make us either *“dead”* or *“alive”* to God. But as we die to sin, put to death the old nature within us, struggle by struggle, bit by bit, we become alive to God.

Christ walked this way ahead of us, and has left footprints for us to follow. And *“if we be dead with Him,”* we shall one day *“live with Him”* (2 Tim. 2:11–12).



How To **Keep a Right Attitude**

5 Here is a giant footprint of Christ which we must try hard to follow. This footprint is visible to us in this simple statement: *“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 2:5 NIV). *“You must arm yourselves with the same attitude he had”* (1 Pet. 4:1 NIV).

Here we have one of the greatest challenges of all. It is easy to imitate another's actions, even to follow their instructions or directions. How different to adopt their attitudes.

How shall we begin? How can we take on Christ's attitude?

Christ did not live for pleasure. He did not seek status or honor in this world. He did not live for ease or comfort. He lived to please His Father, to do His Father's bidding (John 5:30), to fulfill His Father's will (John 4:34). He lived to preach the Gospel of the coming Kingdom (Luke 8:1), and to prepare Himself to be its glorious King (John 18:37).

If we would walk in Christ's footprints, we must share His concerns, His thoughts, His mind. It should be the object of our hearts to know Christ, to love Christ, to be like Christ—in the outward life of obedience and in the inner life of our mind. It affects how we act toward our spouse, our children, our friends, our employer, and even strangers.



How To **Put on Christ's Character**

6 Another footprint to follow is what Paul called Christ's character. *“Put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and never think how to gratify the cravings of the flesh”* (Rom. 13:14 Moffatt). By instinct we want what we want. Jesus did not go after the things He wanted. He said, *“I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me”* (John 5:30). He *“did not please Himself”* (Rom. 15:3).

Putting on Christ's character is a picture drawn from the familiar routine of putting on clothing. We put off the old, filthy garments of our natural characters so that we can put on the fresh, clean garments of right doing. The two actions are simultaneous. When we put on Christ's character, we put off our natural habits and ways.

To wear Christ's character is our life goal, to attain *“unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,”* to *“grow up into him in all things, which is the head,*

**Christ has
promised to forgive
us only as we forgive
our brother.**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



ONLY Two OPTIONS

by RUTH SISSON

Is it possible to have too many options? Advertisers today would like us to believe that more is always better. But there was a time in Israel many years ago when even two choices were more than the people could manage.

Go back to the time of Ahab, king of Israel, to a crucial moment of decision. It is time for a showdown between the God of Israel and the false god Baal.

Choosing to live by the law of God may seem restrictive now because it closes out this world, but that is the only choice that leads to eternal life with “glory, honor and immortality”

(Rom. 2:7).

Elijah signals for the people’s attention, and challenges them to make a choice between the living God of heaven and the false god who has captured their affections. Elijah’s voice rings out: *“How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the Lord is God follow Him! But if Baal is god, then follow him!”* Only two options. The choice should have been obvious and simple. How did the people respond? *“The people were completely silent”* (1 Kings 18:21 NLT).

Only two choices and no response? The problem was, the people feared to choose what they really wanted because the prophet of the true God was delivering the challenge. They knew, and Elijah knew, that Baal was in their hearts’ affections. If Elijah’s God should prove to be the winner of the day, what would happen to them if they had been rooting for Baal? Better to keep one’s options open, than to make a wrong choice.

Why did they want Baal? Because serving Baal left them free—free to do as they pleased, free to join in the revelry and the excitement and all the “fun” things they were used to. For them, serving the true God would be a dismal existence, colorless and dull, with nothing to

brighten the day but worship, work, and worry. What possible benefits could come from worshipping a God you could not see? In their view, Elijah’s God had nothing they wanted. Baal offered options unlimited!

Today we find ourselves in a culture that has demanded unlimited options in almost every area of life. As a result, what should be a quick decision has become unnecessarily time consuming.

Take the simple matter of shopping for groceries. While a large part of the world suffers from shortages, many of our stores provide an overload of options. Need to purchase a can of tomatoes? Go to the section where the cans are lined up, and you are dazed with the number of options. Shall it be organic, or 100% natural? Diced Italian style or petite diced? With or without salt? Fire roasted with garlic or with added rosemary or oregano? Whole peeled, crushed, pureed, or paste? Stewed seasoned or plain? The options go on and on. If I look at all the options, I feel like I’ve wasted my time. And if I just quickly pull a can, I go away feeling that I probably missed the “best” choice. Either way, I lose—which doesn’t matter, because the issue is insignificant.

Do we wonder why God gives us only two choices, when those choices are hugely significant? No need to be distracted or confused, because He made it very plain. *“Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I*

command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known" (Deut. 11:26–28). He said it again in chapter 30: "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live" (Deut. 30:19).

The song writer captured the point exactly:

"This world has many options, eternity has two."

In everything we do, in everything we say, by every small decision each day, we are either choosing life by our obedience to the law of God, or death by our disobedience. Only two options, and the results are eternal. If we choose to reject God's offer and go our own way (choosing death), we are free to pursue any other option at hand. These options include all the opportunities, pleasures, and false gods this world can offer. Very attractive, but they all have one end: death. Choosing to live by the law of God and secure life, eternal life, in the end, may seem restrictive now, because it closes out this world. But when we choose "life" and obedience to God, we are in reality choosing the only unlimited option there is. True, we are cutting ourselves off from the limitless options of this world—which have no future, but we are laying hold on a life that will be unlimited in duration, expanse, and every possible, imaginable good.

Talk about options unlimited? How many have you thought of? The promise is that God will do for us "*exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*" (Eph. 3:20). And how many options are included in this most precious promise: "*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him*" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Best of all, these options will keep opening and expanding through all eternity.

Only two options? It is enough.

Why not echo the voice of God's prophet and say, "*I choose life!*" (Deut. 30:19). ♦

Prints To Follow

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

even Christ" (Eph. 4:13, 15).

How do we prepare to meet our Lord? By becoming like Him. Jesus loves most the ones who are most like Himself (John 14:15; 15:14).

Christ is coming to be glorified in His saints—those who have grown into His likeness; and they shall in turn be glorified in Him. Our work now is to occupy each precious moment putting on the character of Christ. This is the apparel we will want to be wearing when our King arrives. For our garments of character must be all made in advance. It is written of the bride the Lamb's wife, that she "*made herself ready*," that she is clothed in "*fine linen clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints*" (Rev. 19:8).

If we would share Christ's blessings, if we would obtain the life He has offered, we must follow. Again and again Jesus said it: "*Follow me.... My sheep hear My voice ... and they follow Me*" (John 10:27). And again, "*If any man serve me, let him follow me*" (John 12:26). And again, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me*" (Luke 9:23).

Have you heard the Master's "*Follow Me*"? Then follow, all the way into the Kingdom! ♦

Maximum Recommended Pressure

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

of pressure with pressure will give us the strength to endure to the end.

The Christian hope is a certain and expectant hope. Paul's triumphant, confident attitude in the midst of pressure from outside and inside was the result of a real hope. "*Not only that*," he wrote, "*but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope*" (Rom. 5:3–4).

And so he goes, rejoicing in *thlipsis*, knowing that it is all for good, that it is all part of God's providence. Sometimes it is preventive (God uses one circumstance to *prevent* another which might be more difficult). Sometimes it is permissive (He *permits* the pressures of life because they are part of the human situation, and why should Christians be exempt?). And sometimes it is purposive (He purposes to develop character and quality in us). But always it is for good, because Paul says "*We know*,"—not we guess, or we surmise, or we think but "*We know*." "*We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*" (Rom. 8:28).

We know that because God is in control and working all together for our good, the pressures will also be for good.

If we are under pressure and are still rejoicing, believing and enduring, looking forward to the reality of our hope, then the pressure is working for us.

When will the pressure be too much? Only God knows, and He holds the controls. He knows that just-right amount that will make us able to roll over the bumps more easily, with less bruising and less flats. Only He knows the value of maximum recommended pressure, and when that just-right amount might be exceeded, He will make a "*way of escape*" so that we will not be harmed.

Either way, the pressure is for our good. ♦

Blood:

MIRACLE OF LIFE

Physical Blood

Do we ever stop to think about the wonderment of God's creation and the complexity of the life God has given us—and offer heartfelt thanks to our Creator?

We work and eat and sleep with scarcely a thought of the intricate processes that are happening every second in our bodies just to keep us alive! Our bodies are wonder-working “machines,” displaying a marvel of design far beyond our ability to comprehend, a continual testimony to the workmanship of our Creator. Medical doctors and scientists have labored for decades even to discover the secrets of life. They are learning constantly, and there is still more to learn.

One of the complex designs within us is the miracle of blood. This veritable river of life flows constantly in our blood vessels as long as we live, whether we are awake or asleep, without a conscious thought or direction from us. We didn't design it, we cannot duplicate it, we can scarcely discover what makes it work. Yet every one of the more than 7 billion persons on the earth is blessed with a supply of this miraculous, life-sustaining substance.

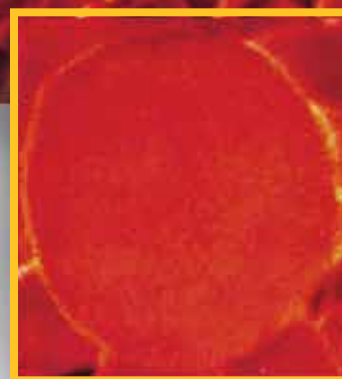
The “*life of the body is in the blood*,” said the ancient inspired writer (Lev. 17:11 NCV). Modern Science confirms that this is true. God knew, long before we humans figured it out, that blood is the sustainer of the body's life. Every second, every hour, this crimson stream courses through the vessels of our bodies, completing a route of some 60,000 miles every day, nourishing, cleansing, carrying food and oxygen to every cell in our body—can we not honor the Creator that designed all this?

Let's look just a little closer at this miracle substance. Our bodies contain about 100 trillion cells, all doing their various God-designed jobs. (How much is a trillion? A trillion **seconds** would take us forward in time from the year 2016 to the year 3416!)

Of the 100 trillion cells in our bodies, about 25 trillion are the red blood cells that float in our blood. So

Magnification: 3,300 times

Each of us has some 25,000,000,000,000 (25 trillion) red blood cells in our body. In a tiny droplet of blood are some 5 million red blood cells.

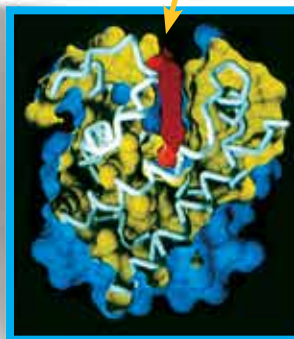


Magnification: 6,000 times

RED BLOOD CELL

HEME

Computer-simulated image



HEMOGLOBIN MOLECULE

Each red blood cell contains some 265,000,000 hemoglobin molecules

Each hemoglobin molecule consists of 4 elaborately entwined strands of a protein substance (composed of about 570 amino acids). In the middle of each strand is a heme, a tiny disk in the middle of which is a single iron atom which carries oxygen by “piggyback” to the needy tissues.

Scientific data is from <http://www4.atpgi.com.au/users/amcgann/body/circulatory-facts.htm>, <http://www.rose.edu/faculty/gjackson/cir-sys.htm>, also *The Incredible Machine*. copyright 1986 by the National Geographic Society, Washington, DC 20036.

many red blood cells crowd our blood stream that if these red cells could be laid tightly one against another, they would make a string that would reach all the way around the earth and six thousand miles besides!

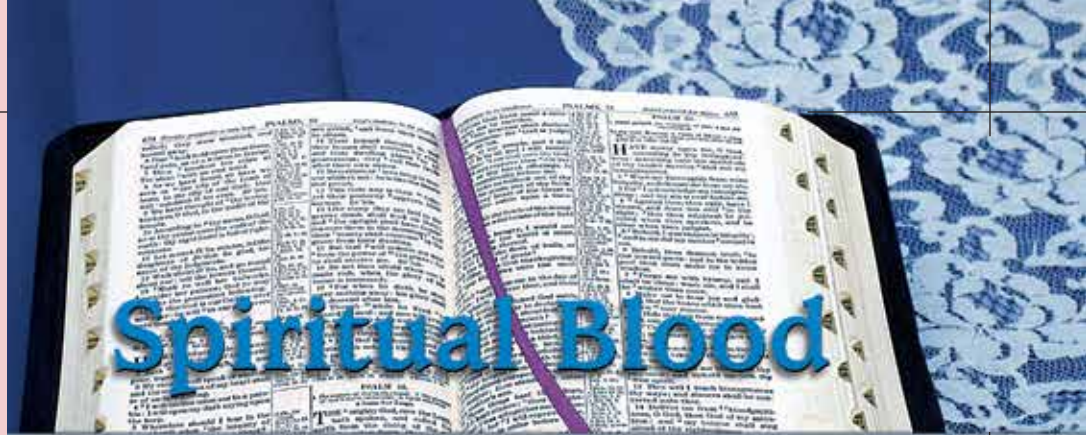
Now let's look closer at one of these red blood cells. Shaped like a cushion, the cell consists primarily of water and a red protein called hemoglobin. Hemoglobin gives the cell its red color and its remarkable oxygen-carrying ability. Each red blood cell does not contain one or two or even a dozen hemoglobin molecules but 265 million!

What makes a hemoglobin molecule able to carry oxygen? Each hemoglobin molecule, with its more than 10,000 atoms, consists of 4 elaborately entwined strands of protein (a substance that contains more than 570 amino acids). In the middle of each strand is a heme, a tiny disk of carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen atoms, and in the middle of each heme is a single iron atom. This atom of iron makes the heme act as a magnet, grabbing up oxygen and carrying it to the tissues where it is needed, then releasing the oxygen—and just in proportion to the need!

Where do these remarkable red blood cells originate? Day and night, year after year, as long as we live, our bone marrow is constantly producing them. Each red blood cell lives only about four months (during which time it makes about 250,000 trips through the body), then it dies, and is replaced by a new red blood cell. This process goes on very rapidly. Every second about 8 million red blood cells die, and the same number are born.

Even more rapid is the production of hemoglobin to fill these cells. It has been calculated that in a single second the human body produces about 500 trillion hemoglobin molecules, the tiny vehicles that carry the breath of life to our cells!

We can only exclaim with the Psalmist, "Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom" (Ps. 145:3 NIV). ♦



Wasn't Jesus choosing the very most appropriate symbol when He chose the term "blood" to communicate to us the vitality, the living power, the wonderful life-sustaining quality of His message? For in it is life, yes, the very life of life—*eternal life*!

And can we wonder that He made this very special blood the fundamental condition of spiritual life? He even went so far as to say, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53 NIV). Only as we eat His spiritual flesh and drink His spiritual, life-imparting "blood" can we have life. Again He said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (v. 56 NIV).

WHEN THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF BLOOD....

Let us consider the meaning of the word "blood" as the Scriptures use it in this symbolic sense.

The vital relationship of blood to life makes it especially meaningful in Scriptural phraseology as a figure or symbol of that which is vital to spiritual life. Just as literal blood supports physical life, so *spiritual blood* supports *spiritual life*. What can we learn about the nature of this spiritual "blood"?

Blood used in metonymy for the Word

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which a common term is used in place of a less common term (concept or idea) to convey a meaning which might be otherwise obscure. (Note: Metonymy is used today in such terms as the "bull" in a bull market or the "bear" in a bear market, or the "stars" in Hollywood and the sports arena, or the "light" in a title such as "New Light on the Issues.")

What, according to the Bible, is the lifeblood of the spiritual life? What is it that performs for the spiritual life what physical blood does for physical life?

In the Bible, the term "blood" is used in metonymy for the "Word," or wisdom, or life-giving knowledge of God. In this way, the potency and power of the Word of God and its vital relationship to spiritual life is emphasized. Just as physical blood cleanses, quickens, and supports physical life, so the Word of God supports spiritual life.

Jesus described His Word, His teaching, His wisdom, as this all-important, life-supporting substance (John 6:63). This Word, acting as *spiritual blood*, does the following:

- ♦ *It cleanses.* Said Jesus: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).
- ♦ *It quickens, or makes alive.* The Psalmist commented on this power of the Divine Word: "For Your word has given me life" (Ps. 119:50).
- ♦ *It gives light and understanding,* two requisites of spiritual well-being. "As

*Just as literal blood
supports physical life,
so spiritual blood
supports spiritual life.*

your words are taught, they give light; even the simple can understand them" (Ps. 119:130 NLT).

♦ *It sustains life.* The Apostle Paul understood this special power of the Word to support spiritual life. We read, *"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain"* (1 Cor. 15:1–2 NIV).

This symbolic use of the term "blood" is common in Scripture. Jesus Himself used it when He said to His hearers, *"I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you"* (John 6:53 NIV). His "flesh" and "blood" were vital to "life." But no one thinks Jesus was teaching cannibalism. And no one thinks He was speaking to people who were literally dead because they had not yet eaten that which would bring them into a state of "life." The "flesh" the "blood," and the "life" of which He spoke were all spiritual. He was using "flesh and blood" in metonymy for His message, His words, His teachings, and in this way showing how vital they are to spiritual life. Because these people were not "eating" His symbolic "flesh" and "drinking" His symbolic "blood," they were, spiritually speaking, dead: *"you have no life in you."*

What are His flesh and blood? Jesus Himself answered the question clearly: *"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life"* (John 6:63 NIV). Let us repeat: *"The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."* His words were the flesh and blood capable of supporting spiritual life.

Why did Jesus compare His words, His heavenly message, to flesh and blood? Because His words, His teaching, the Word of God, are to the spiritual life what flesh and blood are to natural life. They are *absolutely necessary!* Without them, *"you have no life in you."* In other words, without them you are spiritually dead.

Blood=Life, and Loss of Blood=Death

The Scriptures also use the term blood in another sense. Because blood is vital to life, it is sometimes used as the equivalent of life. The loss of blood is equivalent to the loss of life, or death.

Who, of all people on the face of the earth, should have known better what blood meant to life than the Jews, after the many years of offering animal sacrifices. By using this terminology Jesus was able to convey a lesson to them in terms they could understand. They knew what happened to an animal when its blood was drained from its veins—its life ended. Its life indeed was in the blood.

When the term "blood" is used in Scripture as the equivalent of life, then the loss of blood (shedding of blood) means death, both in a literal or symbolic sense. Let us look first at the literal.

The Scriptures may speak of a loss of literal life as "blood," with an implied sense of guilt upon the one responsible. (The forceful taking of another's life was condemned from the very earliest times—see Gen. 4:6–14). This use of blood occurs in Rom. 3:15, *"Their feet are swift to shed blood."* Again in Luke 11:51, *"From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias,"* meaning the death of these righteous men of God. Or as Pilate declared, *"I am innocent of the blood of this just person"* (Matt. 27:24), meaning that he did not wish to be guilty of taking the life of Christ. Each of these texts uses "blood" in the sense of a life taken, with guilt upon the one responsible.

Blood may also be shed, i.e., life taken or given up, in a spiritual sense. It is blood which every true child of God must shed. It is the blood of the old nature, the "old man" of the flesh, one's natural ways, and the result is death in a spiritual sense, the death of the old nature, the "old man," the old "self." It is the sacrificing of one's inner desires, ambitions, will, etc.—that which is as dear as life itself.

This shedding of spiritual blood, and the resulting death of "self," was a fre-

quent subject in the Epistles of Paul. Indeed, it is the most serious aspect of the Christian life, which results in the complete transformation from the old creature to the new (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17). Even Christ was not exempt from this spiritual shedding of blood. He, too, had to "die to sin." In fact, Christ set the pattern for all who would come after Him. *"For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God"* (Rom. 6:10).

In every life that pleases God, this blood of the old self must be shed, a life must be given up, a death must be suffered. Paul spoke of the process as being *"crucified with Christ"* (Gal. 2:20). Again he spoke of *"crucifying the sinful nature"*: *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires"* (Gal. 5:24 NIV). He also spoke of it as being "dead": *"For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God"* (Col. 3:3 NIV); and *"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry"* (Col. 3:5 RSV). Again he spoke of it as being "dead to the world": *"Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!?' These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings"* (Col. 2:20–22 NIV).

Each of these verses pictures the complete giving up of the sinful life.

The writer of the book of Hebrews spoke of this death when he said, *"without shedding of blood there is no remission"* (Heb. 9:22). Again he said to his brethren, speaking of the spiritual death which they were even then in the process of executing, *"You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin"* (Heb. 12:4). This text indicates clearly the nature of the "blood" to be shed. It is blood shed by *"striving against sin."* (This text shows also that each individual must "resist unto blood," not that Christ's sacrifice covers all.)

The book of Revelation describes

this same self-sacrifice using another term for death: beheading. The removing of the head signifies in a spiritual sense the giving up of one's will, opinions, ideas, thoughts. The Revelator saw under the altar *"the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of*

ding of blood (the lifeblood of the old nature) *is no remission"* (Heb. 9:22).

The Apostle Paul frequently pictured the Christian life as a life-and-death struggle, a battle of flesh against spirit, of the old against the new. He spoke of his own struggle against sin as a fight and a death. He said, and

could be more meaningful. No contrast could be more vivid than that between a state of death and a state of life; or between blood that supports life and blood that is shed.

When blood is used in this same sense, the words a "full surrender" or "living sacrifice" may be substituted, as in Hebrews 12:4, *"You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin,"* meaning, You have not yet fully surrendered yourselves.

Jesus Himself spoke of His own "blood" in this highly symbolic and spiritual sense at His last supper with the disciples. These are His words: *"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this...in remembrance of me"* (1 Cor. 11:25 NIV). In other words, this cup is a symbol of the new testament or covenant, which I am ratifying by My death. It is a covenant of death, a covenant of total self-sacrifice. I have met the requirements of this covenant; I have fulfilled it by My death, and you must do the same. You too must die. You too must surrender your lifeblood, even as I have. It is the terms of the covenant.

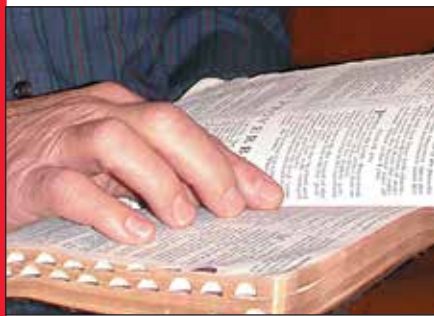
The Apostle Paul captured the full meaning of Jesus' self-sacrifice as he repeated His words to the Corinthian brethren: *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?...In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me'"* (1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25). Notice the command: *"This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes"* (1 Cor. 11:25–26).

Let us feel a new sense of gratitude to God for the life that is in our blood, and now consecrate every drop of our spiritual lifeblood to Him, as did Christ. Then one day we shall experience the change to immortality, that state of life that is better than flesh and blood, and receive the crown incorruptible. ♦



BLOOD (physical)

- nourishes
- cleanses
- feeds and sustains physical life



BLOOD (symbol of the Word or knowledge of God)

- nourishes
- cleanses
- feeds and sustains spiritual life

God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4). They had shed the blood of the old nature, had given up themselves totally, in a spiritual sense. (This total self-sacrifice could—and did sometimes—include a surrender of physical life, rather than deny one's faith. This was true of Christ and many others during the early centuries.)

The putting to death of the old life, the giving up of our own ways, the pouring out of our spiritual lifeblood, is the sacrifice which is required of each servant of God. It is precisely this crucifixion of the old life which allows the new life to thrive. Obedience to the Word of God means death to every part of the old nature. *"Without shed-*

meaningfully, *"I die daily"* (1 Cor. 15:31). Again he wrote to the Galatians (Gal. 6:14 NIV): *"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."* It is a contest of "flesh" against "spirit," the old life against the new (Gal 5:16), with the result that *"you cannot do just what you please"* (v. 17 NCV). Each must present his own body a "living sacrifice," spiritually speaking, *"holy, acceptable unto God, which is [our] reasonable service"* (Rom. 12:1–2).

The ultimate of that "offering" of our bodies as a living sacrifice is that the offering be perfect, without spot or blemish. In this way, our individual offering of ourselves becomes a "type" of the sacrifices made under the old law.

No description of the Christian life



KEEPING WHAT LAW?

BY GERALD R. PAYNE

Would you please comment on some Scriptures regarding the keeping of the law?

◆ **Isaiah 28:9-10, "Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little."**

To whom will He teach knowledge? Certainly not to these people, because they will not listen.

This passage is about the Israelites who had rejected God's teachings. Several versions convey the people's very negative attitude toward God. To them the prophet's words sounded like so much baby talk. But the real problem was their own closed ears and hearts, not God's method of instruction. *"To whom would He teach knowledge, and to whom would He interpret the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just taken from the breast?"* (v. 9 NASB). The NLT reads, *"They say, 'Who does the Lord think we are? Why does he speak to us like this? Are we little children, barely old enough to talk? He tells us everything over and over again, a line at a time, in very simple words!'"* (Isa. 28:9-10 NLT).

"In very simple words"—that is often just the type of lesson we need. The prophet was putting his message in the simplest terms so that it could be easily understood and acted upon. It is the same method by which we learn, *"precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there*

a little." Just because the people did not like the way the message was worded did not take away its impact or its truthfulness.

In the broader application, no one writer of Scripture gives all the details. Each delivers a part and leaves us to relate and study to get the full understanding. If we refuse to hear the message, the problem is not the method of teaching but our own closed hearts.

Like little children, we need simple, "bite size" instruction in plain words before we are ready to understand the deeper meanings of parables and allegories. It is the same method often used in general education. In the study of Scripture, we start with the plain statements in Scripture, and then study to rightly divide the word of Truth, as the apostle Paul says (2 Tim. 2:15).

God repeatedly warned the Israelites through His messengers, saying the same thing over and over, using different means and different words, yet they would not obey. They seemed to have the same attitude many do today. They thought they could do as they pleased and all would be well.

Since the same injunctions are repeated many times, it is very possible, especially in some of the passages which are not as easy to understand, to overlook their real meaning. It is human nature to take the easy way. This is especially true of the more exacting commands. But God's Word still stands, and it will be fulfilled, whether we listen or not.

◆ **Isaiah 2:1-3, "In the last days... out of Zion shall go forth the law."**

The passage reads: *"The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted*

above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

To what period of time does the phrase "in the latter days" refer? The context shows it to be after Christ returns, when "He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (Isa. 2:4).

His means of bringing peace will be the enforcing of unbreakable but righteous law. "The law will go forth from Zion, and the word of our God from Jerusalem" (v. 3). No one will be allowed to violate this law which goes out from Zion. This is why Christ is said to rule with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:7-9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

At no time in history have people from all over the world gone to Jerusalem to worship, learn and obey. But after Christ returns, Jerusalem will be the seat of worldwide authority, and all will turn there for law and instruction. This is the time we look forward to with great anticipation, a time when there will be no more war, when all people everywhere will learn to live peaceably with each other, to love God and obey His laws.

♦ **Isaiah 5:24, "They have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel."**

This describes the condition of Israel and Judah during the time of Isaiah. They had forsaken the Word of God. We know this from the context of the passage. The chapter begins, "Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard" (v. 1). The 7th verse leaves no doubt as to the identity of the vineyard: "For the vineyard of

the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant." It also describes the condition of His vineyard at the time: "and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." The song continues through the end of the chapter. Israel and Judah had forsaken God.

♦ **Isaiah 8:16, "Seal the law among my disciples."**

In ancient times, a scroll was written on, rolled up, tied with a cord, and sealed to preserve it for a later time if it had no immediate use. Isaiah's contemporaries had refused the law (instructions) from God. So Isaiah wrote it down on a parchment and sealed it for later because it was of no further use at the time.

There is some doubt as to the meaning of the phrase "among My disciples." The word translated disciples is from the Hebrew *limmud* which means taught, learned, discipled (*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*). The LXX, Syriac, and Targum have no reference to disciples (*The Interpreter's Bible*). Therefore the meaning of this verse could be that instructions from God would cease, at least for a time, sealed up from those whom Isaiah taught (the king and people whom he addressed), again because they would not listen.

The lesson for us is that God will not continue to work with people (us) if they (we) are obstinate.

♦ **Isn't Isaiah 42:1-7 a prophecy of the coming Messiah?**

You are right. This prophecy briefly mentions His first coming: "I have put My Spirit upon Him" (v. 1), which occurred at His first coming.

Then the narrative rapidly moves forward in time about two thousand years, and we read, "He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law" (Isa. 42:4). These conditions do not exist today, nor have they ever existed during the history of humankind. It is long-range prophecy soon to be fulfilled. Verses 6 and 7 also include both comings. "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles" (v. 6). But nations would refuse His guidance at His first coming, though He was given as a personal confirmation of the covenant with all who agree to that covenant.

Verse 7 continues, "To open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house." Those who are blind to the teachings of God will be given sight (understanding). The captives from the prison of sin will be set free. Those who sit in the prison house (prisoners of superstition and lies) will be released by the teaching of right knowledge.



◆ **Matt. 12:17–21 is an explanation of the prophecy in Isaiah 42, isn't it?**

The passage reads: *"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: Behold! My Servant, whom I have chosen; My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench, till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust."*

This is a prophecy of both comings of Christ, the first and the second. Note that verse 20 speaks of sending *"forth judgment unto victory."* This part of the prophecy will be fulfilled at Christ's second coming. He first came as a Lamb. He will return as the *"Lion of the tribe of Judah"* (Rev. 5:5).

There is a similar passage in Luke which is of interest in this context. Christ *"came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing'"* (Luke 4:16–21).

If you read the passage from Isaiah, you will notice He did not quote all the prophecy. He stopped short of the phrase, *"and the day of vengeance of our God"* (Isa. 61:2). He could not have quoted this and then have said, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."* The day of vengeance was for a later time, at His second advent some 2,000 years later.

Jesus knew that His mission then did not include *"the day of vengeance."*

◆ **Speaking of Christ, in the same chapter that explains Christ's mission, we see that He will "Magnify the law and make it honorable (Isaiah 42:21)." Did Christ magnify the law and make it honorable? Absolutely yes.**

I am not sure what you mean when you say that Christ magnified the law and made it honorable. The wording of Isa. 42:21 may be clearer in the NASB, *"The Lord was pleased for His righteousness' sake to make the law great and glorious"* (Isa. 42:21). This verse is not about Christ, but about God and the Israelite people, as the context shows, *"Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law"* (Isa. 42:24). The Lord taught the law to these people with great signs and wonders, and they rejected Him. Notice the wording of the verse just preceding verse 21 in the NCV, *"Israel, you have*

seen much, but you have not obeyed. You hear, but you refuse to listen" (v. 20).

He said, *You have seen much. You hear. These words give us some insight as to the meaning of the words "Magnify the law and make it honorable."* Or, as the NASB has it, *"great and glorious."* As you recall, the law of Moses was given with great signs, wonders, and demonstration of power. The mountain quaked and smoke arose from it as a furnace; they heard the trumpet blast atop the mountain. Moses even had to cover his face with a veil, in the presence of the congregation, because he was reflecting the glory of the angel that he met on the mountain. And if one considers the other laws given to Moses, there were many other sights and sounds and voices these people saw and heard.

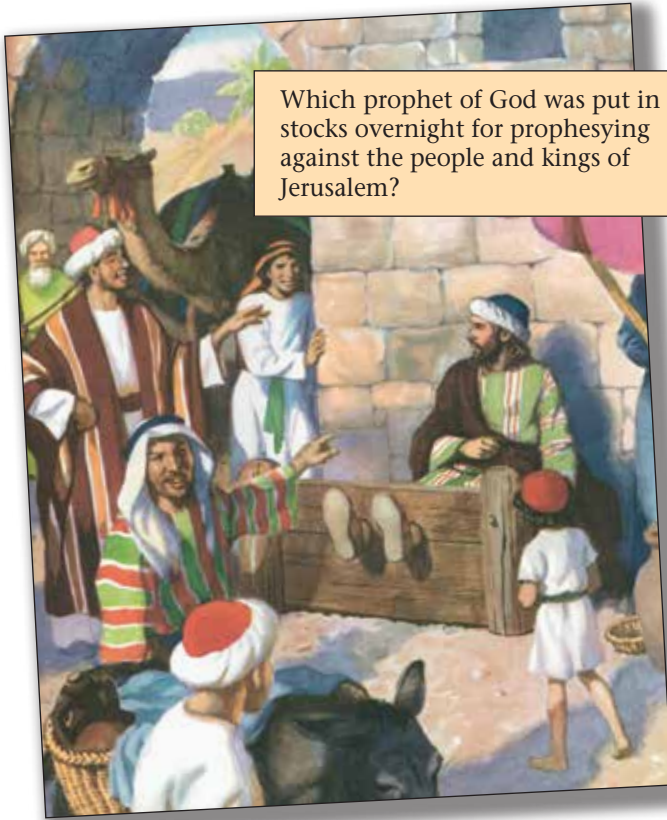
Whenever we consider the laws spoken of in Scripture, we must bear in mind that the *"law of Moses"* did not bring salvation because it could not *"make perfect"* and therefore could not release from sin and give salvation (see Heb. 7:19; 9:9; 10:1). It was a law only meant to govern and teach a people who had been in slavery for years and to be a *"shadow of things to come"* (Heb. 10:1). As Paul said, comparing the two, *"For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory"* (2 Cor. 3:9). Notice that Paul declared that the one condemns; the other makes righteous.

Christ did not magnify the law of Moses. He did magnify and obey the law of faith (royal law), a law which will sanctify and cleanse from sin (John 17:17; John 15:3; Eph. 5:26–27). Nor did He make the law, given to Moses, glorious. God made it glorious by performing mighty acts through His angels.

How did Christ magnify the law? By obeying it. Perhaps you may be thinking that Christ is the only one who ever obeyed the *"royal law"*? There were others. It is written of Zacharias and Elisabeth that they *"were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"* (Luke 1:5–6). It was said that *"Simeon was just and devout"* (Luke 2:25). The firstfruits (those who will receive salvation at the first resurrection) will be *"without fault before the throne of God"* (Rev. 14:5). This includes every individual who will receive eternal life at Christ's second coming.

Peter tells us, *"be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless"* (2 Pet. 3:14).

The law of Moses, as previously mentioned, could not bring salvation because it did not require inner purity and holiness. It was a ministration of death—death was the penalty for several acts of disobedience (2 Cor. 3:7). It governed only the outward actions of a person. The *"royal law"* (James 2:8), as can be seen from the context of Christ's discourse (Matt. 5:21–48), was a law controlling every part of one's life, including the *"thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Heb. 4:12). It changed the way one thinks and acts. The law of Moses restrained men and women from evil conduct, but the law of Christ produced a character that would not sin. ◆



Which prophet of God was put in stocks overnight for prophesying against the people and kings of Jerusalem?

WHO WAS?

1. Who was the father and mother of Obed?
2. Who was the first king of the Northern Kingdom, Israel?
3. Who was Abigail?
4. Who was Manoah?
5. Who was Elymas, where did he live, and what was his other name?
6. Who was Saul's great general?
7. Who was Adoram?
8. Who was Shishak?
9. Who were Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon?
10. Who was Rhoda?

HOW MANY?

1. "So all the days of Methuselah were ____ years; and he died."
2. "Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ____ times."
3. "You shall take with you ____ each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female."
4. "And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him. Noah was ____ hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth."
5. "Leave ____ of your brothers here with me, take food for the famine of your households, and be gone."
6. "Then God made ____ great lights."
7. "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, and in the vine were ____ branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes."
8. "Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became ____ riverheads."
9. "For these ____ years the famine has been in the land, and there are still ____ years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting."
10. "Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was ____ days old, as God had commanded him."

GOD'S HEROES

1. Accompanied by only an armor bearer, he climbed into an enemy garrison and killed 20 men.
2. He dared to attack vast armies of Midianites and Amalekites with only 300 men.
3. He killed two lionlike men and a lion in a pit of snow.
4. During a terrible plague, in which thousands of people died, he bravely mingled with the stricken people to make a reconciliation with God.
5. Aware that going before a king without his summons meant death, this person disobeyed the decree in an effort to save Jews.
6. He disregarded a king's edict against petitioning God and continued praying even though it meant being thrown to lions.
7. Even though his life was threatened by Sanballat and Tobiah, he refused to hide in a temple behind bolted doors.
8. After Jesus' crucifixion he dared to ask Pilate for Jesus' body.
9. When deserted by his soldiers, he stood alone and struck down enemy Philistines.
10. He dared to face an enemy giant, armed with only a sling and stones for a weapon.

COMPLETE THE PROVERB

1. "A friend loveth at all times, and ____."
2. "The fear of the Lord is ____."
3. "Where no counsel is, the people fall: ____."
4. "He that hath pity upon the poor ____."
5. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord: but ____."
6. "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, ____."
7. "He that spareth his rod ____."
8. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for ____."
9. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but ____."
10. "A soft answer turneth away wrath: ____."

ANSWERS ON PAGE 23



AWESOME DESIGNS

"Stand still and consider the wondrous works?" -Job 37:14

Anableps "Four Eyes"

They look like bubbles on the surface of the water. Looking closer, you see they are actually eyes which float just above the surface of the water. They belong to the anableps, a minnow-sized fish often referred to as "four eyes." Isn't that awesome!

I'm a minnow—you don't get much more ordinary than that! But wait until I tell you about myself, and especially about my marvelous Creator. I think you will be surprised.

We are native to the tropical waters of the Americas, either brackish or fresh. We aren't fussy about what we eat either. We like worms, insects, crustaceans—just about anything that comes along. And we aren't very large. Most of us average three to four inches in length, though a few of our kind reach as long as a foot. Being so small, we have one very big problem: surviving. You see, we're lunch for lots of the bigger fish. So we have to be—you guessed it—all eyes! It's the only way we can survive.

But if I may brag a little, I think our eyes are wonderful. I had nothing to do about their design—I have to give all credit to our marvelous Creator for knowing what we needed. Maybe we don't look spectacular, but we can really see. You think you can catch me off guard? I'll always be a hop ahead of you! Yes, I had an eye on you (one of my "four") long before you saw me! Actually, "four eyes" is a slight exaggeration. We have two divided eyes that work like four distinct eyes.

How our eyes work

Your eyes are designed to see objects in the air (out of water). Each of your eyes has a pupil, and in front of it a large front window (the cornea). Light entering your eye is focused by a combination of the front window (cornea) and a flat-type lens. If you try to look at objects under water, everything is out of focus. Animals that live under water, like fish, have spherical lenses, which produce a perfect image of the underwater world but would not work in the air.

Now we anableps have a special problem, because most eyes are designed to see objects *either* in the air (out of water) *or* under water. Because we live at the surface of the water, we need to see both through the air and through the water. If we had eyes like yours, we could see very well in the air, but underwater images would be out

of focus. If we had eyes like other fish, we would be able to see very well in the water, but objects in the air would be out of focus. And in either case, I can assure you, I would be so hungry, I wouldn't be able to swim anymore. Or else I'd be eaten so quickly by some predator, I would never need to eat anything!

Well, what do you suppose my Designer did? He designed my eyes with four parts—I can actually see above the water and under the water with each eye at the same time! Really! How?

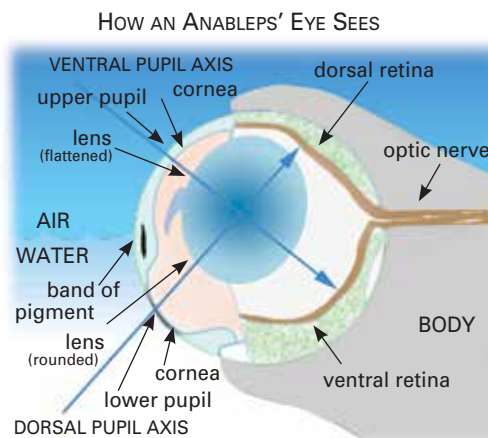
Each of my eyes has two corneas (front windows), one that looks out into the air, and one that looks down through the water. The same eye looks two directions. Light entering through both of these corneas passes through a lens in my eye. But the lens is neither round nor flat; it is elliptical. (Who thought up that one?!) And it is perfectly aligned so that light coming from above the water passes through the *shorter* axis of the lens and strikes a special retina in the *bottom* of my eye, producing a sharp clear image. And light coming through the other window from underneath the

water passes through the *long* axis of the lens and strikes the upper retina of my eye, also creating a sharp clear image. So I am able to see two images with each eye at the same time. Isn't that pretty wonderful?

That is why it looks like I have four eyes. Really I have only two, but each eye has two pupils and two corneas, one above water and one below the water, separated by a line of pigment at the water level.

Do you see why our eyes are so important? Little minnows are delicious food for many larger animals, so we have to be constantly looking out

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



Integrity Matters!

If you have integrity nothing else matters, if you don't have integrity nothing else matters." —Alan Simpson, former US senator.

What does the Bible say about it? When God spoke to King Solomon at the dedication of the temple, He laid out the conditions of blessing:

"If you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man as ruler in Israel.'

"But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples" (2 Chron. 7:17–20).

God said it plainly: Keeping His commandments is the basis of integrity. The high principles, honesty and good character in a person of integrity come from adhering to divine principles. In Solomon's case he had

committed himself to serving God and the keeping of God's law was an integral part of the commitment.

We don't have to read much further to find out that Solomon did not walk in integrity of heart like his father David, and, as a result, the kingdom was divided. Eventually Israel did become a byword and an object of ridicule. Why? Because as a nation they lacked integrity.

*Integrity implies
being willing to do what is
right no matter what the cost
or what we prefer.*

David knew the value of integrity. Just before he died he went all out to help prepare for the building of the temple. It was his heart's desire to build it himself, but God had refused him permission, saying, "No, your son will build it instead."

What was David's response to this denial? Did he mope and complain and blame God for not coming through for him? On the contrary, David said to God,

"I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I

have willingly offered all these things; and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision" (1 Chron. 29:17–19).

David was correct. God does test our heart, and He looks for integrity. Integrity implies being willing to do what is right no matter what the cost or what we prefer.

David put aside what he might have liked to do and wholeheartedly supported a plan not of his choice, even when he knew the credit and prestige for building the temple would go to someone else.

Integrity is a quality you cannot fake. There is no such thing as insincere integrity. If it is insincere, it is not integrity.

God will judge us for our integrity. He isn't looking for talent, or wealth, or education, or popularity, or anything this world can give. He is looking for something we are responsible for: a pure heart.

Let us keep our integrity. The benefits will multiply, both now and future. ♦

Anableps "Four Eyes"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

for predators. Using my "four eyes" and floating right at the water's surface, I'm able to see both up and down simultaneously. Yes, I can focus on an airborne predator and a tasty underwater snack at the same time. How about that!

Some of your scientists think I have achieved this remarkable feat on my own. They talk about all the

years I was developing these eyes. Isn't that fantastic? Fancy little "me" figuring out how to stay out of the sharks' mouths while my eyes were under construction! And how would I find anything to eat in the blur under the water? I can't imagine what I would do.

But then, I'm only a little minnow. ♦



An Anableps looking above the water surface and below at the same time with its special eyes..

Hanameel's Field

JEREMIAH'S HISTORIC ACT OF FAITH

(Read Jeremiah 32)

The time was 532 BC. The last pitiful remnants of the once good little kingdom of Judah were going to pieces as Zedekiah, the puppet king, was about to pay the penalty for rebellion against his lord, the king of Babylon. A ten year siege had reduced the unhappy city to the last extremity; the hoped-for assistance from Egypt had failed to come, and famine made its slow kill day after day. Vain and unreasoning national pride was giving way to despair. It looked like the end of all things; the nation was doomed and would never rise again. How could it?

Still the futile resistance went on.

In this very bad spot was the Eternal's watchman, the heroic prophet Jeremiah, sticking to his unenviable post for the sake of the very small remnant of honest men and women who lived in Jerusalem. He had consistently advised submission to the inevitable as the only sane course and the one approved by the Eternal, but his counsel was not popular. The machinations of a hostile nobility and military clique and the influence of a very few friends in high places kept him in an uncertain position, the inveterate king imprisoning or releasing him according to the pressure of the hour. Just now he was "in," with little prospect of getting out until the city should change hands. But his counsel was unchanged. Jeremiah was too big a man for that.

Into the prison one day comes a visitor named Hanameel, Jeremiah's cousin, with a little proposition. He has a field in a suburb of Anathoth which he wishes to sell, and according to the ancient Jewish land-laws, Jeremiah has the first right to its purchase. Would he buy it? Without hesitation, and probably to Hanameel's surprise, Jeremiah buys. The transaction is conducted with the utmost formality, with signatures before witnesses and the deeds carefully recorded and filed (in a jar), just as in the happier days of peace and prosperity. Jeremiah returns to his cell, and Hanameel goes his way

with a broad smile, no doubt, at his cousin's gullibility. Money you can

spend, but land—why, with Chaldeans overrun-

ning the country for the last ten years and the city about to fall, the best of fields were not worth a farthing a dozen. It was almost a shame to take the money. It was something like finding seventeen shekels of silver. It certainly looked like history's craziest real estate deal. Jeremiah must be losing his wits in his old age.

But Jeremiah was not mad; he was the sanest man in Jerusalem in those mad times. He knew what he was doing. He knew perfectly well that he was buying a regiment of heavily-armed Chaldeans along with the field, men whom it would be rather hard to evict. More, he knew he would never claim or cultivate or reap any profit from the purchase. Never would he build a house on it. His last days were to be spent far, far away, in the land of the Nile. Why, then, in the name of reason, did he make such a worthless investment?

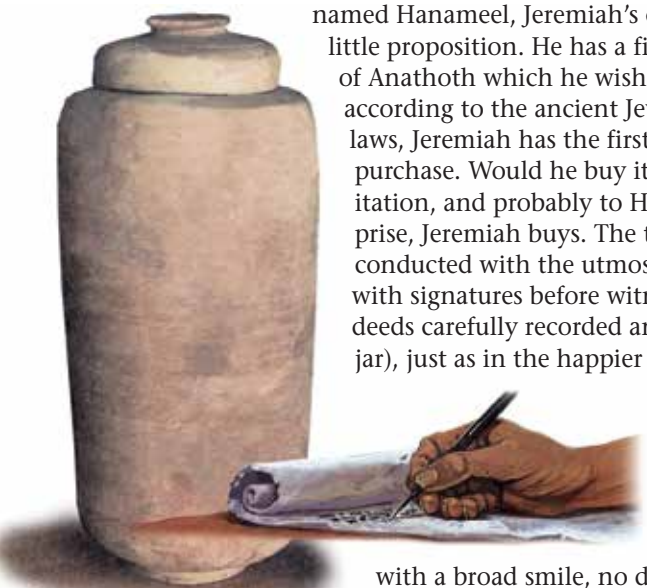
The fact is, he was by example, preaching a sermon of hope and cheer, one of the most cheerful messages ever delivered by this much-maligned Prophet. Jeremiah is commonly considered a prophet of gloom and desolation, "*doleful Jeremiah*." To be perfectly frank, there wasn't much in his day—externally—to be cheerful about. He told them the bold and unpalatable facts when he prophesied of the inevitable desolation to come as the result of their disobedience, and the people wouldn't believe him. He also offered them consolation and hope, and still they wouldn't believe him. Yet he stuck to his post and refused to be silenced, even at the risk of his life.

What made Jeremiah cheerful amid such cheerless surroundings? His foresight. Through Divine inspiration he could see at least seventy years further ahead than any other man of his day. He knew that the Captivity was a fact and had been for twenty-one years, although his stubborn countrymen were reluctant to admit it. He knew that the complete destruction of the city was inevitable. But he also knew that the dark night would have an end; that when Babylon was a memory, Israel would inhabit the old familiar places.

"For the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Someday people will again own property here in this land and will buy and sell houses and vineyards and fields." (Jer. 32:15 NLT).

Things would come out right after all. The Captivity with its miseries was but an interlude. To show publicly his faith in the future, he bought a field, a share in the country.

"Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and



seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah,...for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord" (Jer. 32:44).

Multiply conditions in Jerusalem in the tenth year of Zedekiah by the breadth of the earth, and you have the world of today. Desperation and hopelessness are everywhere.

Yet even in the darkness and chaos we hear the cheery voice of the watchman and see a gleam of light, the same light kindled by Jeremiah when against all common sense he purchased Hanameel's field. For there is a field to be bought today, and right now is the time to make the investment. The price will never be lower. *"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field—and to get the treasure, too!"* (Matt. 13:44 NLT).

"The kingdom of heaven"—that's our earth, our earth made over new. *"He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited"* (Isa. 45:18). That is His purpose, and it will be carried out. The treasure is eternal life. *"Someday people will again own property here in this land and will buy and sell houses and vineyards and fields"* (Jer. 32:15 NLT). The blessings of immortal life shall be enjoyed right here in America, in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and the isles afar off. Peace, plenty, stability and justice shall cover the earth, eternally.

This is no mere pleasant dream; the Eternal has given His word. He has taken His oath, and it will happen. And soon! Through the dark and bloody history of our planet

the Divine Plan has been silently working out; all else is incidental or accidental, man's own doing, misdoing and undoing—not reckoned. The present state of confusion is but an interlude, the darkness before the dawn. The sort of thing we have been having since creation is not going on and on and on. A change is coming and things are going to get better and better and better. All will be well. Will our faith in these trying times match that of Jeremiah?

Buy this field, brother! Buy a share in the Kingdom of God, sister! Buy a share in a glorified earth. It will be the greatest investment you ever made; you'll never regret it. It will take all you have and are, from this time on; but it is worth it. The price is a consecrated life, *"a new creature,"* every thought, act, word and feeling subjected to the will of God. Put off the *"old nature"* and put on the new.

The new order of the ages is only for those who prepare for it. The field at this moment is still occupied by the enemy, but his power is brief and the Eternal will reckon with him. We need have no fears. When He takes a hand, He will make a short work of it. Buy it; the title is sound and sure. When every other investment, every other value has crumbled, its development will have just begun.

Every truth will some day be accepted, every right will some day be established, every wrong some day will be righted, and every evil some day will be abolished. In praying, in working, and in hoping, we must not faint. The delays may be many, the obstacles often seem insurmountable, but nothing is impossible for God who holds the destiny of the nations in His hand.

Buy this field! Buy it for joy! There's a treasure in it. ♦

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 19

Picture: Jeremiah in stocks (Jer. 20:2)

GOD'S HEROES

1. Jonathan – (1 Sam. 14:13–14)
2. Gideon – (Judges 7:7–22)
3. Benaiah – (2 Sam. 23:20)
4. Aaron – (Num. 16:46–49)
5. Esther – (Esther 4:11–16)
6. Daniel – (Dan. 6:6–13)
7. Nehemiah – (Neh. 6:10–11)
8. Joseph of Arimathea – (Mark 15:43)
9. Shammah – (2 Sam. 23:11–12)
10. David – (1 Sam. 17:4, 49)

WHO WAS?

1. Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 4:13–17)
2. Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:20)
3. The widow of Nabal who became David's wife (1 Sam. 25:39–42)
4. The father of Samson (Judges 13:2, 24)
5. He was the sorcerer, of Paphos in Cyprus, who was blinded because he opposed Paul. His other name was Bar-Jesus (Acts 13:6–11)
6. Abner (1 Sam. 17:55)
7. The officer in charge of the king's taxes, sent by Rehoboam to the rebellious tribes and stoned to death (1 Kings 12:18)
8. The king of Egypt who defeated Rehoboam and despoiled the temple and the royal palace (2 Chron. 12:1–9)
9. Judges of Israel (Judges 12:8–13)

10. The damsel who went to the door of Mary's house to admit Peter, just released from prison (Acts 12:12–13)

HOW MANY?

1. 969 (Gen. 5:27)
2. 10 (Gen. 31:41)
3. 7 (Gen. 7:2)
4. 600 (Gen. 7:5–6)
5. 1 (Gen. 42:33)
6. 2 (Gen. 1:16)
7. 3 (Gen. 40:9–10)
8. 4 (Gen. 2:10)
9. 2, 5 (Gen. 45:6)
10. 8 (Gen. 21:4)

COMPLETE THE PROVERBS

1. *"a brother is born for adversity"* (Prov. 17:17).
2. *"the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction"* (Prov. 1:7).
3. *"but in the multitude of counselors there is safety"* (Prov. 11:14).
4. *"lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again"* (Prov. 19:17).
5. *"they that deal truly are his delight"* (Prov. 12:22).
6. *"and the man who gains understanding"* (Prov. 3:13).
7. *"hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes"* (Prov. 13:24).
8. *"out of it are the issues of life"* (Prov. 4:23).
9. *"sin is a reproach to any people"* (Prov. 14:34).
10. *"but grievous words stir up anger"* (Prov. 15:1).



TRUE OR FALSE?

Mr. Dixon was collecting the quiz papers from his seventh grade class. He was noted for his unexpected quizzes, and this Thursday afternoon's was, from all appearances, the standard kind: twenty questions, true or false, covering the material the class had been discussing during the week. Just as he placed the papers in his notebook, the bell rang.

"Class dismissed," he called out in his usual, matter-of-fact manner. Then he added, "Tomorrow we'll see how well you did."

But this was not the typical test. Mr. Dixon had a special plan for this quiz. He had designed this quiz to point out the importance of honesty, not to test one's knowledge of the subject matter.

That evening at home, he carefully graded each paper, and recorded the score in his grade book. But he left no marks on the individual papers. When the class assembled the next morning, he passed the papers back to the class and asked that each grade his or her own paper. "I will read the answers, and you can mark yourselves. Count five off for each one you miss, subtract the total from 100, and write your score at the top of the paper. Then I will ask you to read me your scores."

As soon as he had finished reading the answers, he began asking for each student's score, and entered each in his book.

"John?"

"Eighty-five," John responded.

"Laura?"

"Ninety-five."

"Andrew?"

"Eighty."

"Lindsay?"

"Ninety."

"Bret?"

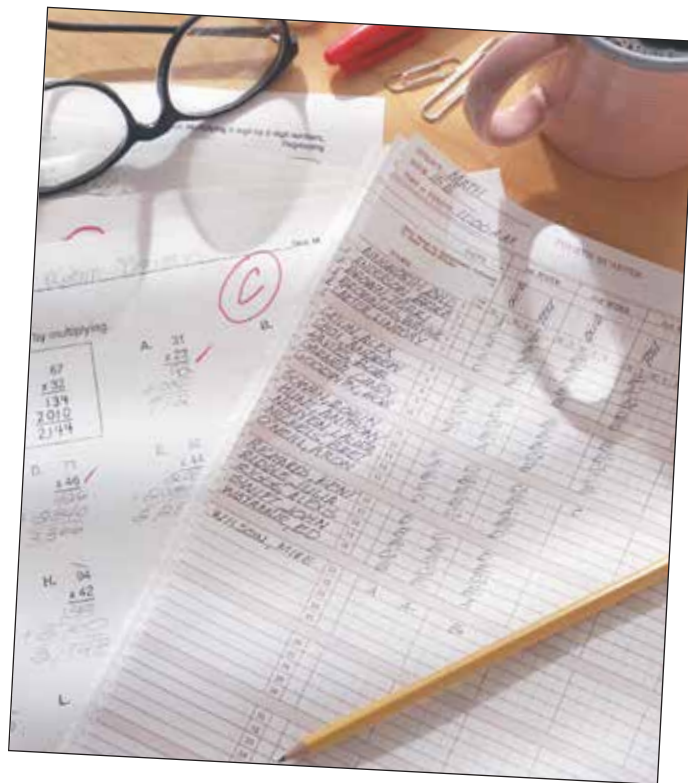
"Ninety-five."

"Julia?"

Her voice could barely be heard: "Seventy."

Mr. Dixon made no response but continued on around the room until he had all the grades carefully entered in his book. What the students didn't know was that each now had two grades in the book.

Then Mr. Dixon explained his plan. "This quiz has been a little different from the norm," he began. "Each of you now has two grades in my book, one which I recorded last night from your paper, and one which you gave me orally just now."



A hushed silence fell on the room.

"This true or false test was not the standard quiz. This was a test of you. Were you true, or were you false?"

No one moved.

"Julia," said Mr. Dixon. "Would you please stand up? I want all in the class to know that in my book, Julia achieved the perfect score on this test. Julia, you make me feel very proud."

All eyes turned toward Julia, who looked up rather timidly. Her eyes glistened as she broke into a shy smile and rose to her feet. "Thank you, Mr. Dixon," she said. "I always want to be true."

"I want to say just one thing more," continued Mr. Dixon, addressing the class. "Whatever you do in life, always remember that anything you *gain* by cheating is always outweighed by what you *lose*. Just remember that, and this little test will be worth it." ♦

When you cheat, you lose more than you gain.

PRAYER:

My Father, thank You for everything you send into my life, for the activities of the day and the rest of the night; for my home, my family, my friends, my teachers and my school.

Help me today to let Your light shine in my life, so that I may bring credit to You and others will be led to know You. I want above all to be Your loving, obedient child. AMEN.

HEATHER'S DIFFICULT CHOICE

Heather was the best artist in her school. She wanted to be an artist when she was through school, or maybe draw pictures for children's books.

One day Heather's older brother brought a friend home. When Bruce saw Heather's pictures on the wall, he was impressed.

"These are good!" Bruce said. "Would you draw a big picture for me to put on the door of my dorm room at college? I'd pay you."

"Pay me?" Heather was excited. She had never gotten paid for drawing before! "Sure! I'll draw a dog, or—"

Bruce laughed. "No. I know what I want." He pulled a sheet of paper from his pocket. It was a picture cut from a magazine. "Can you draw this, Heather?"

Heather looked at the picture. She felt her face getting hot. It was a picture of a woman with hardly any clothes on.

Heather had seen pictures like this before, but she had never thought of drawing one!

"You're good enough to do it for me," Bruce encouraged her.

Heather hesitated. She knew she could draw the picture. She could draw almost

anything, especially if she had something to copy from. But this did not seem like the kind of picture she should draw. "It's—it's not what I want to draw," Heather said slowly. "I could do something else for you—"

Bruce put the picture back in his pocket. "This is what I want, but I should have known you couldn't handle it. I'll find someone else."

Heather watched as Bruce left. She wondered if she should feel sad at losing her first chance to earn money by drawing, but she didn't. She felt good inside. She had done the right thing. ♦

PRAYER:

Thank You for giving me special talents, Lord. Help me to develop them to Your glory and service now, not just some day when I'm grown up. I may not always see the chances myself, so I need Your help and others' to point them out to me and to help me do what I should. AMEN.

ACTION IDEA:

What is your best talent? Think of ways you could use it to serve God. Write down all the ways in your notebook. Choose one way and try to find a chance to use your talent for God that way this week.

Living by Faith

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

of the Apostle in 1 Thess. 4:1 are clear and forthright: "Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God" (1 Thess. 4:1). Stagnant water would not be suitable to quench one's thirst. Likewise, a stagnant believer, one who has not taken his faith to heart and acted upon it, is of no use to the Eternal God. Growth and action are indispensable accompaniments to faith. The only faith that will avail is the faith that works by love, a faith buttressed by right doing. (Gal. 5:6; Rom. 2:7).

The statement in Hebrews 11:6, that "without faith it is impossible to please

Him," is but another way of saying that if anyone draws back from the Almighty, refusing to believe in Him, the Almighty will have no pleasure in that one. This warning against drawing back into perdition is especially fitting for our time. More than twenty centuries have passed since God communed audibly with men through the medium of angels, hence the attitude is widespread that no one on earth will ever again see His face or hear His voice. Meanwhile scoffers have arisen saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Pet. 3:4)

Nevertheless, continues the Apostle, "The day of the will come as a thief in the night"—a thief to those

not looking for Him, a thief to those who are not prepared.

Now is the time to be building our confidence "which has great recompense of reward," knowing absolutely that "He that shall come will come and will not tarry." and spend every moment preparing for that auspicious event.

Now is the time to keep our faith in lively exercise, because faith in action means obedience. If our lamps are filled with the oil of a firm belief in the divine promises; if our lights are brightly burning; if our confidence in the divine promises is unshaken and our watchword for victory is the firm determination that we will not be among those "who draw back," then we can go on to the end with those who believe "to the saving of the soul." ♦

Living by Faith

Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. – Heb. 10:38–39

Faith is an indispensable element in the life of a Christian. How else can we dedicate ourselves to the service of the Eternal God in hope of the rewards He has offered? We have never looked upon His face, or heard His voice. How can we believe such a Being exists? How can we not believe? Would we be so naïve as to accept the phenomenon of a creation without a Creator, a design without a designer, direction with no one to direct, effect without a cause? Would we take the untenable position that the visible universe, with its symmetry and complexity, and the laws by which it operates, along with the myriad forms of life upon it, all came about by chance?

We may refuse to accept the Bible as the Word of God on the grounds that its claim to Divine authorship cannot be backed up by contemporaneous writings but depends solely on the statements of its own authors, who, though presumably honest, may have been misled zealots ascribing natural phenomena to the Divine.

But to establish the authority of the Book it is not even necessary to search back to its beginnings. This Book proves itself true when allowed to define its own terms, demonstrating to an open mind that it does not reflect the thought pattern of the age in which it was produced, or any other age. Compare the Bible with Homer's Iliad, or even the thinking today, and you will see that it is far ahead of its times.

When the Old Testament was written, polytheism was the popular belief among the most cultured people of the time. Yet Moses and the prophets without exception declared unequivocally that there is but one God that

made heaven and earth and created all things.

Even before astronomers were speculating whether or not the sun, moon and stars were merely lights hung in the sky, lighted and extinguished daily, God's prophets, divinely inspired, had knowledge of the heavenly bodies and of the greatness of the Hand that created them.

Scientists today are still speculating as to the possibility of other heavenly bodies inhabited by intelligent beings, while nearly two millennia ago the apostle Paul made it plain that he worshipped a God by whom *"the whole family in heaven and earth is named"* (Eph. 3:14–15).

At the time the Bible was written, it was universally believed that the earth was flat, yet the words of the prophet Isaiah recorded over 2500 years ago declared that earth is a sphere *"it is He that sits upon the circle of the earth"* (Isa. 40:22). What about the standard of conduct demanded by the Word of God? The lofty theme of hear and obey is echoed and reechoed all through Scripture, along with blessings to the obedient and curses upon the disobedient. Again let us ask, isn't this evidence that a Divine Mind guided the writing of Scripture, and not a human brain creating a book in his own image?

*Of all the books that mortals wrote,
not one struck true perfection's note.*

Did not God say to Abraham, *"I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless"*? (Genesis 17:1). And Jesus in the first century declared, *"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able"* (Luke 13:24).

Conclusions of self-confident men,

educated above the average for their time have always been accepted as authority in their respective lines, while the Book declares that man in his best estate is only vanity and that his best wisdom is but *"foolishness with God"* (1 Cor. 3:19). We must remember also that God's thoughts are as much higher than ours as the heavens are above the earth (Isa. 55:8–9). This illustration proves conclusively that the Bible is not of human origin. For what man would be induced to compare nations of people to *"a drop in a bucket"*? (Isa. 40:15).

Having established a premise in favor of faith in the Bible as the Word of God, let us think further on the importance of that faith. In the first verse of Hebrews 11 we read, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Why do we need such faith? Because we have not received the reward of immortality, nor have we seen anyone else who has received it. Our bodies are still mortal, corruptible. We are still subject to disappointment, old age, disease and death. Our only ground for confidence that we can escape these limitations of mortality and live forever comes through our faith in the promises of our Creator. This faith must be the moving factor in our lives, so strong that it will admit of no doubt, for *"the just shall live by his faith"* (Heb. 10:38). A living, active faith is that by which a just (upright, righteous, right-living) man lives, hence one cannot hope for future life or be spiritually alive without this faith.

A living faith promotes action and continuity of action. To surge ahead for a time and then halt, then draw back will not get us anywhere. The words

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



The Benefits of a Good Slap

by EDWARD SHAYLER

Some years ago, during the Second World War, there was a prisoner of war in a prison camp in Hong Kong who had become ill. In a miserable state with lice, fleas, and bed bugs, he had lost much of his body weight, in addition to being ill from dysentery, pellagra, beriberi, dingo fever, bedsores. Not surprisingly, he was totally depressed.

I was asked to speak to this man. When I went in to see him, I was overcome by the pitiable sight. He was lying in his own filth and refused to let anyone wash him or help him in any way. His only request was to let him die. I tried to talk to him, but he refused to listen. The only remaining option was to summon a doctor, who had become my friend, but commissioned officers had been separated from the men. With much difficulty, arrangements were made for him to come.

The doctor at once asked the nature of the problem. I explained as best I could, and took him to this deplorable man. Doctor Banfill knelt beside him and began talking to him, then without any hesitation he gave him a HARD SLAP ON THE FACE. I winced! Even doctors needed to be taught a lesson!

But immediately I began to learn how wrong I was. The man suddenly began to be belligerent, and he spent the next while berating the doctor with words far from good English. Then the doctor

explained that he had no food or medication to help the man in his suffering, in fact he could offer nothing, but because of his pitiable state he used the only solution that he thought might be of benefit. Before leaving he gave me these instructions, that no matter how hard the man protested, have some men give him a good washing, clean him up and comb his hair.

It was not hard to find comrades willing to carry out the task, and so the process began. I still remember these wonderful men, and how they proceeded. They took all his filthy clothing away from him, after they had found some nice warm water (I still have not solved the mystery of where they found it). Somehow they came in possession of a sliver of soap. Now the man had changed from abusing the doctor to abusing them. They kept right on anyway with their purpose until he sat there as a beautiful, shining example, for I do not think that those men left a toenail unnoticed. To clean his teeth they ground up some charcoal and mixed it with soap, and used a wet piece of cloth, until he promised to do it himself. While they were doing this, some others were at work, washing and cleaning his belongings. How did they do it? Some of the men made a steamer out of material that defies logic. They stuffed all of his belongings into it, as many as it would

*The best remedy
is not always the one
that feels good.*



hold at a time, and put a small amount of water in the bottom. Then they boiled the water until the steam penetrated and sterilized everything in it. This took time, but eventually even his blanket was processed.

In the meantime the man had quieted down and began to cry. The

heard that his wife had committed suicide when she learned that he had been made a prisoner of war. Then he shared with me some personal feelings and aspirations he had. If he survived the war, he would come back to China to help some of the very unfortunate people.

I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.

Correct me, O Lord, but in just measure; not in thy anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

—Jer. 10:23–24 RSV



men waited until he began to want to move about, then they made his resting place as comfortable as possible, and they began to talk to him, telling him that they had done all they could for him and that the rest was up to him. He began to eat some food, however unpalatable it was, and started to get up and move around, and take an interest in himself. As the days passed, he grew stronger and began to gain a little weight. Eventually he recovered from his ordeal of dysentery, and lived to return home after the war. The last time I heard of him he was doing well.

There is another part to this story, and it involves the doctor. One night just after we had been relocated to another prison camp (not the one of the previous incident), it was dark and I could not sleep. I went outside the building and heard someone sobbing. Listening closely, I tried to locate the source of the sound. It was Doctor Banfill. I encouraged him to tell me the reason for his sadness, and he told me that he had just

I never did see him again after the incident. I often wondered if he had learned the results of HIS SLAP ON THE FACE.


As I think about these experiences, I see a similarity between them and dedicating ourselves to a good spiritual life. Nothing much will happen until we make that first decision. Naturally we feel that we should be left alone, to live our lives in a situation of our choice, with moral and physical decay. In such a state we know that we are not fit to be presented to our CREATOR, nor have we any reason to expect HIS acceptance of us. Living to be honored by the social system that we are part of, we have found ourselves instead rejected and are living out our lives without HOPE. We wallow in the residue of our own making. We try this, and then we try that, but nothing seems to work, and we begin to feel “Oh, what’s the use?” We determine that there is not much in this world to live for. We have paid a nodding glance at religion, and it is full of

loopholes. We talk to people who are dedicated to it and hear things like “you’re going to fly off to heaven.” Then we watch everyone who dies being buried instead, and conclude that there must be something wrong. What a dismal way to exist!

Now is the time for us to accept a good hard slap on the face, and realize that if we want to improve our condition, we must be doing something about it. And so we begin. As we progress, we begin to change our attitude. We find proof that there is a real genuine CREATOR, we accept the fact that GOD requires discipline, and for the first time in our lives we learn to be HUMBLE. Now life is becoming meaningful. I know that others have tried this, only to become disillusioned; but we are fortunate, because we have come to know the God of truth, and the Word of truth that He caused to be written for our learning. I believe that this is a gift from God.

As we begin to see the results of following His will for us, as we read and practice His purpose in our lives, it becomes a wonderful experience to discover that we really can have **EVERLASTING LIFE** if...IF we do the work He requires. Our blessings begin to run over, and now the feeling of honest labor is paramount, which gives us more ambition to work harder. One thing that we learn for a certainty, we cannot work too hard, and we will be rewarded for everything we do.

Also like the man in the story, we find that we have willing helpers. Our spiritual larder is filled and running over with a supply of help that keeps us pushing ahead in the spiritual direction continually. We will have no excuse for failing at the time when all must stand at the Judgment Seat. What a *wonderful, wonderful, WONDERFUL* future is in store for us, one that we would never have known about had we not responded to that first good, hard slap on the face! ♦



One of the sweetest chords
in the ears of the
Master Director is,
“I am sorry, I was wrong.”

I'm Sorry, I WAS WRONG.

by ELVA B. BYERS

What three little words are the hardest to say? They are these: “I am sorry.”

Just three little words, but how often we have failed to say them. How much better our day would have ended if we had held back that phrase tinged with bitterness.

How much bickering and strife could be avoided if, when a disagreement arises, we would take a long, hard look at ourselves, accept our share of the blame, and honestly admit, “I’m sorry, I was wrong.”

When our temper flies, or that green-eyed monster jealousy turns our life into a sea of misery and we become cold and aloof why not quickly admit, “I’m sorry, I was wrong, very wrong”? What do we gain by holding back? Nothing at all.

Just three little words, “I am sorry,” but what Divine power they hold to bless the wounded spirit, to heal the rift caused by an unkindness, or to take the sting out of cold indifference.

When a disagreement arises in a family, who is right and who is wrong? Very often the answer is nebulous. But one answer is always clear: He is greater who is willing to say, “I am sorry,” and mean it. Apologizing is a virtue. It is not a weakness but a sign of strength. Small people never apologize; they imagine themselves always right. The person who thinks he knows everything has a lot to learn.

Big, Christ-like people want to apologize so that they can leave their sins behind and become more and more like their Master.

We tighten our family relationships by learning to apologize. In the same manner, we tighten our bond to God’s family.

Be Master!

How can we master these three words? Here are a few suggestions:

- * Always take the initiative in apologizing.
- * At the end of the day, stop to count how many times you should have apologized and did not. Think of everything you can: the raised voice, the hasty judgment, the lack of consideration, the overcritical spirit, the act of selfishness.
- * When you apologize, don’t try to rationalize or throw responsibility on someone else, or on circumstances. And don’t wait for your brother who has something against you to come to you; go to him to make amends (Matt. 5:23–25).

A mature Christian is willing to admit his wrongdoing, then to ask God and others to forgive him. This is the theme of a thoughtful poem entitled “I’m Sorry, I Was Wrong.”

*There may be virtue in the man
Who’s always sure he’s right,
Who’ll never hear another’s plan
And seek no further light.
But I like more the chap who sings
A very different song,
Who says when he has messed up things,
“I’m sorry, I was wrong.”*

*It’s hard for anyone to say
That failure’s due to him,
That he has lost the fight or way
Because his light burned dim.
It takes a man to cast aside
The vanity that’s strong,
Confessing, “’Twas my fault, I lied,
I’m sorry, I was wrong.”*

*Confess your faults, the Bible says;
That humble act makes strong;
You’ll honor God and rest your soul
By saying, “I was wrong.”*

Humble frankness is not only good therapy for the soul but it also opens the door to renewed relationships. Others are more likely to show compassion and be forgiving if you acknowledge your faults and are willing to say, “I’m sorry, I was wrong.” ♦

SOME DAY

*Today we look upon the land
 And see that Greed is in command,
 Inciting and directing wars,
 Misusing earth's abundant stores.
 Hate is instilled within the heart—
 Distrust and fear have done their part,
 This can not last eternally—
 How different the scene shall be,
 Some day!*

*Some day there'll be a glorious change,
 For Christ shall come to rearrange
 And set in order things of earth,
 And give His own the Spirit birth.
 He'll banish from earth's wide domain
 The scourge of evil, sickness, pain;
 Dispensing knowledge far and wide,
 Till all in blessed health abide,
 Some day.*

*Some day, and oh! it will be soon—
 Earth's shadows will give place to noon;
 For Christ, the Sun of righteousness,
 Shall rise, with light all peoples bless.
 The nations shall from warfare cease,
 And all the earth shall be at peace,
 Allowing man to use his time
 In furthering God's plan sublime,
 Some day.*

*Now we must face Today, and work.
 There's much to do—we dare not shirk
 If we would be among the wheat
 That's some day laid at Jesus' feet.
 Let us arise, with vigor press;
 Be satisfied with nothing less
 Than victory—the right to see
 And share those glories that will be,
 Some DAY!*

—Liot L. Snyder

"WHEN-NERS" ARE NOT WINNERS

Have you met the when-ners? They are always about to live, about to do something, whatever it is. They are waiting until things are just right...

WHEN they will have more time,
 WHEN they will be less tired,
 WHEN they get a promotion,
 WHEN things settle down,
 WHEN, WHEN, WHEN, ...until...until...until.

Something major has to happen before they begin living.

WHEN I grow up,
 WHEN I graduate,
 WHEN I get the job I want,
 WHEN I get a car,
 WHEN the children are grown up,
 WHEN I am older,
 WHEN I retire,
 THEN I will be happy.

But the only day we can truly live is today. The only time we truly have is now. It is now, now, now. Now is the time to turn our hours into power and make the day pay. To live wisely we need to invest in today.

The apostle Paul said it in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "...Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Jesus counseled: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matt. 6:34).

Since now is the only time we have, let us be careful what we think, what we say, what we do—right now. This is the day to think right thoughts, to say right things, and do what is right. Never mind about your good intentions for tomorrow. Make today good and when tomorrow comes, you can make that good also.

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going" (Eccl. 9:10).

Stop being a "when-ner" and begin being a **doer**. Then you can be a **winner**! ♦



Man finds it hard to get what he wants, because he wants the best. God finds it hard to give, because He would give the best but man is not willing to give himself to receive it.

Happiness doesn't depend on what we have, but it does depend on how we feel toward what we have. We can be happy with little and miserable with much. A contented person is a happy person.

Every man is like a carpet tack—he can't go any farther than his head will let him.

Most people seldom pause to give thanks for the simple blessings of life. One reason is they are used to having so much. They simply assume that they deserve all the good things of life. They do not want to admit that God is the Provider of all good things. But we must remember that we are God's stewards. Being thankful requires humility and faith in God. Only when we have these can we be truly grateful.

We need to feed the fires of consecration to God with the fuel of meditation on His Word.

The man who sits down to wait for a golden opportunity to come along may have a long wait.

HOLD ON

*When troubles seem to linger
And refuse to go away,
When one thing and another
Keeps coming day by day,
Till faith is sorely tested
And seems about to break,
We must hold on! The Father knows
Just how much we can take,
Then, later when we understand
The meaning of each test,
Our thankful hearts will praise Him.
For giving what was best.*

THE HOUSE WITH THE TWO BEARS

It was observed by friends that old Mr. and Mrs. Brown were getting on more agreeably than they formerly had done. Asked for an explanation, Mr. Brown replied: "Well, about a year ago we decided to keep two bears in the house all the time. One of these bears is '*Bear ye one another's burdens,*' and the other is '*Forbear one another in love.*' And since we took these two bears in, we have found the going easier."

*Impure thoughts are combustibles
too dangerous to keep in the mind.*

Are we making a sacrifice **of** the best or **for** the best?

No degree of temptation justifies any degree of sin.

Add cheerfulness and kindness to your life.

Subtract worry and fretting from your thoughts.

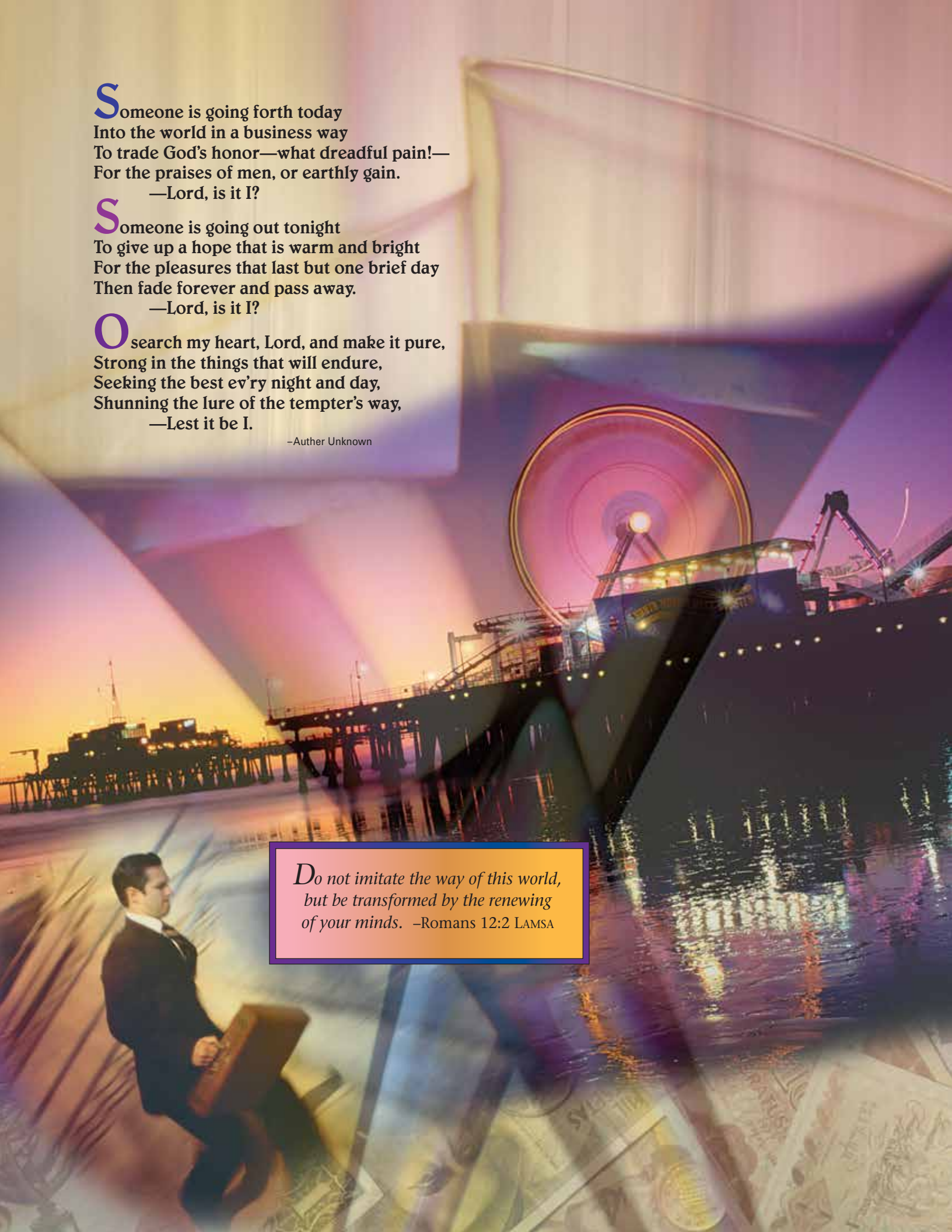
Multiply your good deeds and actions.

Divide with others the good things that come our way.

*Godly sorrow works repentance
Unto life and blessedness;
But the world's regret or sorrow
Worketh death and deep distress.
For behold, this godly sorrow,
Of a pure and holy kind,
How it works unfeigned repentance,
And from sin refrains the mind.*

We can purchase the future by making proper use of the present.

It's how we treat the small things of life that makes us big.



Someone is going forth today
Into the world in a business way
To trade God's honor—what dreadful pain!—
For the praises of men, or earthly gain.
—Lord, is it I?

Someone is going out tonight
To give up a hope that is warm and bright
For the pleasures that last but one brief day
Then fade forever and pass away.
—Lord, is it I?

Search my heart, Lord, and make it pure,
Strong in the things that will endure,
Seeking the best ev'ry night and day,
Shunning the lure of the tempter's way,
—Lest it be I.

—Author Unknown

*Do not imitate the way of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing
of your minds. —Romans 12:2 LAMSA*