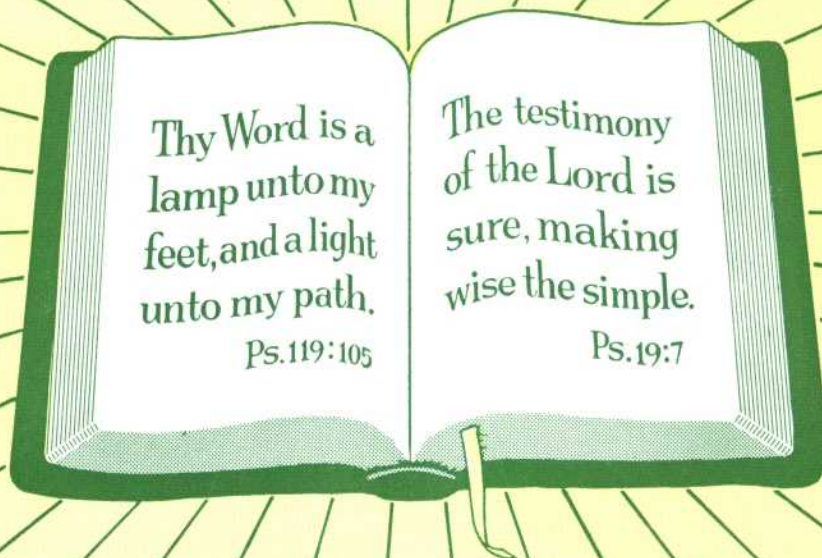


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Enter Ye In

"Blessed Are the Pure in Heart"

"Whether There Be Tongues"

Israel

Megiddo Message

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Editorially Speaking...

Beware: Complaints are Contagious

AMONG the most serious and least feared diseases of the soul is the infection known as complaining. So widespread is the disease that it is oftentimes hardly noticed, and the sufferer easily—and unconsciously—spreads it to all he meets.

The would-be complainer never lacks occasion. With only a minimum of thinking one can always find reason enough to make himself unhappy. The object of his censure may be almost anything: the weather, the workshop or the world; what he has to do or what he cannot do; his family, his friends, or even God Himself.

The complainer who professes Christianity puts himself in a position morally untenable. The simple logic of his profession is against him. First, as a follower of Christ, he believes that every situation and circumstance in his life has been allowed by God for his moral and spiritual development. He is, therefore, stating His disbelief in the wisdom of God when he complains about anything that comes into his life. Secondly, as a follower of Christ, he is a volunteer; God forces no one. What right has he to complain about any phase of the life which he has chosen?

The complainer is further embarrassed by the moral company in which he finds himself. His is a spiritual affinity with some rather undesirable characters: Cain, the murderer; Korah, the sulky elder among the Israelites; the petulant Jews of the Book of Malachi who answered every fatherly admonition of God with an ill-humored "Wherefore have we? Wherein have we?" These are but a few faces that stand out in the picture of the disgruntled followers of God's way. And the complainer, if he but looks closely, will see his own face peering out at him from among that background.

Furthermore, the man who complains against the difficulties of the Christian way proves that he is unwilling to follow in the steps of Christ who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered; he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2: 23). As a follower of Christ, we must expect some suffering; we must settle in our minds the fact that there will be something to endure (I Pet. 1:7).

Of course, we do not think of all these things when we are tempted to complain—complaining is too natural. It is a habit, and worse—it is a disease, and contagious—notoriously so. The first step toward cure is to recognize it; then we must discipline ourselves to keep silent when we have nothing to offer but a complaint. And many times we will find that the most effective remedy is an overflowing spirit of thanksgiving. ●●

"Enter Ye In"

PRAYER

Eternal Father, Thou Mighty Ruler of the universe; Thou Preserver of all men; Thou Rewarder of the meek, and Saviour of the upright in heart: We approach Thee again, thanking Thee for the blessing of life and health, for the privilege of calling Thee our Father, and the assurance that if worthy Thou wilt call us Thy sons and daughters.

We thank Thee for an insight into Thy superior knowledge, for the restraining influence of divine law that can make something of us now in this life, and fit us for a place in Thy eternal Kingdom upon the earth made over new, to be the inheritors of paradise.

Grant that our longing for those joys eternal may be so strong as to impel us to cut loose from everything of the present, and seek first Thy Kingdom.

Father, grant us the insight to enter through the strait difficult gate, carefully treading the narrow and ascending way leading to life; the caution to avoid the wide gate and its corresponding broad way that leads to destruction and eternal oblivion.

Remind us that we cannot fool Thee. If we follow the broad way, eternal death will most certainly result; only by walking the narrow way can the end be eternal life.

May we not be among those who say Lord, Lord, and do not the things He commanded; but may our lips and lives agree, our professions and our actions tell the same story, our light so shining before men that they may see our good works and glorify Thee in the Day of visitation.

Bless the reading of Thy Word, and may we open our hearts to receive a blessing, making a personal application of the lessons impressed.

Bless Thy work in all its forms. Be with the sick and afflicted and those unable to be with us this morning. Be with all who are seeking a knowledge of Thy saving gospel.

Forgive us for the sins we have turned from and forsaken, and may we hasten our escape from the windy storm and tempest, that that Day of peace and glory may be ours. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

DISCOURSE

IN Matthew 7, the Master brings the Sermon on the Mount to a climactic close. He has explained the nature of that character to which God calls men, and of that blessedness to which He invites them. The law from Sinai has been in part amplified and in part superseded by the new and eternal law given from the mountain in Galilee, under circumstances and amid scenes how different! At last it has reached that comprehensive summary of all relative duty: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

And there, we might say, the sermon ends, so far as its instructions are concerned. What follows might be called an application of the message of the sermon, as vital as the sermon itself. For truth that is not applied is not living truth. To be comprehended, it has to be taken into life; it has to be lived.

What emerges as of supreme importance? There are two remaining subjects—a narrow, difficult gate; and a wide gate of easy access. And there is an appeal to men to enter in through the gate which Christ points out. The path leading to that gate is narrow, the gate itself is difficult to open; and passing through is problematic. If we find anything discouraging in some of the thoughts here suggested, let us not forget those first three words: "Enter ye in." It is a command from the Master, who never asked men to do what He Himself was not willing to do. Thus it is not to daunt us but to incite us, to challenge us that the merciful Saviour speaks as He does to us.

What is the parable He proposes? He puts it into dramatic form. Here we are, walking along, when suddenly two gates confront us. Beyond each there is, hidden from view, a dwelling place, a collection of human habitations, a city of great or small proportions. We cannot see within. The wall hides; the gate intercepts the view. Yet we cannot fail to get the Master's meaning: one gate leads to destruction, the other to life.

One of these two gates is wide and ample. It seems to invite access, to promise admission. Many could enter in at one time. Judged by this token, the city within it might seem to be the larger and more magnificent.

The other gate is strait and confined. It appears to be a postern, or back-entrance gate. It looks, in the distance, as though it would scarcely admit one man at a time; as though the city must be poor, incommodious and unattractive. And to each of these gates there leads a corresponding way.

Toward the wide gate there stretches a broad, smooth road. There is ample room upon it for all travelers; and many are in sight at one time, passing along comfortably and at their ease.

Toward the strait gate there extends a narrow pathway, difficult to find, as well as hard to keep. It winds over mountain sides, along abrupt precipices, here and there across precarious marshes. And if you ask for companions on the journey, they are few and rare in comparison with the passengers upon the broad way toward the wide gate.

Nevertheless, inside that wide gate is *destruction*: perdition, hopelessness, the casting away of the man himself, eternal oblivion. Therein is no brightness, but dim darkness; not happiness, not contentment, not honor, nor rest, nor peace; but rather misery and suffering; and shame too, as the Prophet of old writes, "shame and everlasting contempt." It is a one-way road to the land of no return.

The wise author of the book of Proverbs pictures this darksome passageway and its untimely ending as the path to the house of the strange woman, and says of her: "For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life" (Prov. 2:18-19). Indeed, it is a one-way road.

Inside that strait gate which seemed, at a distance, to promise nothing—at the end of that narrow way which seemed, in prospect, to lead to nowhere—there is that which Jesus calls *life*. This word is a two-aspect term. It covers the present and the future; it denotes first, Christian living, and then its consequence, life in the world to come. The active Christian really *lives*. He experiences that true, that real being—that expansion of every higher power and faculty—which for the first time makes a man feel and know that he lives; which makes existence—often having been a drag and a yoke—an ecstasy and a delight; which calls into vigorous exercise every capacity of happiness and contentment. It brings the hundredfold

in this life, and much more; in the end we shall inherit "everlasting life."

The narrow way and strait gate leads to life—eternal life. It stretches forth in prospect into an unlimited duration. Inasmuch as it has this characteristic, that it is to be a life with God and in God, it is therefore as incapable of limit as of change, because they who dwell there, in the "high and holy place," dwell there with the "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" (Isa. 57:15).

"Enter Ye. . ."

Notice particularly Jesus' words "Enter ye. . . ." They are at once an invitation and an exhortation. We must *do* something. Luke in his Gospel adds the verb "strive." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." We are to struggle, wrestle, "strain every nerve," contend earnestly to enter in. It is a work of difficulty; it demands toil and pain. The eager soul who would enter that gate must "storm" his way (Matt. 11:12, Moffatt). There is no purpose in describing the glories beyond the narrow gate if we are always going to look at it from a distance. We have always the tendency to contemplate the Christian life without doing anything about it. But this is not to obey Jesus' admonition, "Enter ye." There is a road to be trodden; there is something we are to enter into.

The gospel of Christ demands first of all a decision and a committal. It is not a gospel which says only, "Consider me," or "Admire me," but "Believe me," and "Follow me."

And so we ask ourselves: Am I entering in? Have I committed myself totally to this higher, though restricted way of life? Is it the controlling power of my life? Have we said, "I am going to give myself to it, come what may; I believe it, and I will act upon it; henceforth this shall be my life"?

Once we have decided to enter in, what does that decision involve?

Willingness to Stand Alone

The gospel of "Enter ye" involves a willingness to stand alone. We are all, by nature, creatures of imitation. For one person who leads, thousands follow. And even the person who leads has followed someone. No man enters this world as a unit, as a being whose life is altogether detached and severed from all around him. It cannot be so. A man must be an unloving, unamiable, unnatural man, to make it so. We ought to be influenced, and we must influence. In *unimportant* things, in all matters of mere outward custom, to be singular is to be foolish. It shows a care about trifles, which is unmanly; or else a desire to be noticed, which is ungodly.

In all things connected with the life of this world—its trades and professions, its arts and sciences—a man must imitate if he would learn. Learning is imitation. To be original, for all except the one man in a million, is to be conceited, and to be wrong. But when we come to the things of the spiritual life, to questions of our duty to God, and to questions of correct belief, then a man ought to be not only independent, but—if need be—alone. “To his own master he standeth or falleth” (Rom. 14:4). It is not enough to be able to say—if indeed it could ever be said with truth—Everyone says this, everyone does this. That is not the question. The question is only, What is true? What is right? What does God command? To enter and travel the narrow way one must be prepared to say: “Let God be true, but every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4). The faith in which he should live and die, if it is to be the true faith, must be the “faith once for all delivered to the saints,” and written down for us on the pages of God’s holy Scriptures.

And our Lord here warns us that the common opinion and common practice of men, in the things of the soul, is not only an insufficient, but is even a fatal guide for such as would be saved. It is the way to destruction, which is crowded. It is the wide gate of which He says, “many there be which go in thereat.” People today take their religion at secondhand. From their parents, from their teachers, from their friends—from the current ideas, the popular notions of their contemporaries and countrymen. Not from reflection, honest comparison, and not from the Bible. Not from God Himself—through His Word—do they derive that little system, poor and unstable and precarious as it is, which serves as their creed while they live, their hope when they die.

Let us ask ourselves the question, Are we independent of the opinions of the world in things which pertain to our eternal salvation? Do we possess the independence to enter the narrow way and the strait gate? Do we in some measure bow to conformity in dress, in deportment, in speech? When the easy way leads the crowd astray, can the Captain count on you and me? To force our way through the narrow difficult gate we must dare to be different. We must dare to think independently, God’s Word must be the final arbiter of what is right and wrong. It will be well for each of us to search our own hearts on these vital questions.

Now it is plain that this is one reason why it is difficult to enter in at the strait gate. To do this a man must be willing, if necessary, to stand alone. Each individual must be ready to speak as the oracles of God. He must know for himself whom he

has believed, and why; and he must carry out his faith consistently in his own life.

The multitude throng the broad way. He who would enter into life must be willing, if need be, to walk alone.

Needed: Resolute Purpose and Submissive Will

Again, to enter the strait gate requires a *resolute purpose and a submissive will*. We shall never enter in unless we keep the gate in view. It is implied in the parable that the gate of life is less conspicuous than the other.

Many an eye is caught by the wide ample portal which forms the terminus of the broad commodious way. But the narrow gate is in danger of being overlooked in the distance, even as the path which leads to it lies, in part, out of sight. We must keep the gate in view, or we shall never reach it. We must see whither we are going, or we shall certainly not keep the way. Are we really bent upon being safe at last, upon entering into life, upon passing through the pearly gates? Nearer objects we all have, and they sometimes seem so alluring. We can work for an earthly prize. We can rise early, and take rest late for the wages of this world; for a maintenance, or for a fortune, for something which is to gratify vanity or reward ambition; but the narrow gate in the far distance—who can see it? Who earnestly makes for it?

It was a great sin in the Israelites of old, that they “thought scorn of that pleasant land” which God promised them (Ps. 106:24). How is it with us? What resolute purpose is there in us to reach the prize at all hazards? Can we say with the great Apostle, “I count all things but loss... that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:8, 12)?

Then there is another factor: a *submissive will*. It is not enough to see the gate: we must also keep the way, and the way is sometimes hard to find, especially when we prefer not to find it. “Few there be that find it.” The direction of the road is not always obvious. It does not always seem to be the straightest way toward the designated end. It turns and winds, here and there, so that the wayfarer doubts his course. Sometimes it is steep as well as narrow; rough, and full of obstacles as well as intricate; and not to our liking. But in all this, the Christian must be submissive. A man who would reach the gate cannot choose his way; he must take what comes. Is it not so in obtaining that which we desire in this life? The journey through this world to the world to come is no different. It is for this reason that the earnest life-

seeker must get his senses exercised to "discern between good and evil."

How hard to find sometimes, is the path of duty! Such ambiguous turns, such seemingly contradictory windings, such questions arising between safe courses and accomplishment, between rigidity and conciliation, between that which will please God, and that which we think might attract, and possibly win souls. Besides these, the more exceptional cases, such constant temptations to compromise with the flesh, such incessant buffetings of inclination, such daily crossing of the will and mortifying of the affections. It is not always easy to find—and certainly it is rarely pleasant to keep—this way that leads to life.

How discouraging sometimes is the morning prayer, in the prospect of a day's trials! How dispiriting too, at times is the evening prayer, in the retrospect of a day's faults and falls! Having stumbled so many times in the same pitfall, it takes much courage to go once more to the throne of grace and ask for help to keep the narrow way. What wonder is it, then, if some even turn aside in the midst, and walk no more with Jesus? And what wonder, if many more, knowing by distant rumor the trials and troubles of the spiritual pilgrimage, put off, day by day and year by year, the work of beginning it; hoping against hope that something, some miracle perhaps, may make them Christians some day without their seeking; and that, though they neither see the gate nor keep the way, they may yet find themselves inhabitants of the city within it? Idle dreams, these, for such is physically impossible!

Seeing the Invisible—By Faith

Once more, and yet more distinctly, this entering in is *difficult*, because the things within the two gates are beyond the view of sense. Destruction, and immortal life, we have experienced neither. They can be known only by the exercise of faith.

The world is too much with us. We are here imprisoned, each of us, within a body of flesh and blood; imprisoned all of us together within a world of matter, of sense, of time. There is enough within these prison walls to occupy all our thoughts if we let them; sometimes with images of pain, and sometimes with images of pleasure. The cares of this life are enough; the pleasures of life are enough; the affections of life, lawful and unlawful, are enough for this; what is left, either of understanding or of interest, when all these are provided for? Thus it comes to pass that some are practically unbelievers in that which they see not.

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*And he opened his mouth
and taught them,
saying . . .*

"Blessed

THE gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of the heart. And so is the sixth beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

The heart being the central organ which controls all of man's activities, it has become a symbol of all that determines a man's character—the inner forces of mind, emotion, intellect and will. It includes all that combines within a man to make him what he is.

The Hebrew mind made invaluable use of the word as a symbol of all human force, the source of desire and the center of personality. "Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life" (Prov. 4:23, RSV). A "good" heart is vital to a "good" life, for the outwardly righteous life flows from the inwardness of right desires, wholesome purposes and heavenly loyalties.

Our Lord undoubtedly emphasized the importance of the heart because of the Pharisees. It was His great charge against them that they were interested in the outside of the pots and platters and ignored the inside. They were willing to be disciples in "hand," but not in "heart." External injunctions they obeyed scrupulously; but they found it quite easy to overlook the weightier matters of the law—those which affect the heart.

Jesus continued this ancient use of the term "heart" as being the whole motivating power within a man. He said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And again, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 6:21; 12:34). The "heart" is the source of all that is evil: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders" and whatever defiles the character of man. Conversely, the heart may become, through patient training and care, a treasury of good: "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things" (Matt. 12:35).

The heart is the total man. So when Jesus says "Blessed are the pure in heart," He means,

Are the Pure in Heart"

"Blessed are those who are pure not merely on the surface but through and through, clear to the center of their being." It is as deep as that. The gospel of Jesus, to be effective, must purify *the heart*.

Pure in Heart

What does it mean to be *pure* in heart?

The word "pure" occurs 28 times in the New Testament, and has a variety of uses. Originally it meant "clean," and could be used, for instance, of soiled clothes which have been washed. It was regularly used for corn from which the chaff has been removed. In the same way it was used of an army which has been purged of all discontented, cowardly, unwilling and inefficient soldiers. It described a force composed solely of first-class fighting men. "Pure" commonly was used with another adjective describing that which is unmixed, unalloyed, unadulterated, as of milk which is undiluted with water, or of metal which has in it no alloy.

So basically, "pure" means unmixed, unadulterated, unalloyed. This beatitude might be translated, Blessed is the man whose motives are always entirely unmixed, for that man shall see God.

Jesus is saying that one must be "pure in heart" if he is to act absolutely from unmixed motives. For example, we might give generously to some good cause and yet have lingering in the depths of our heart some desire for the praise and credit we feel our liberality should receive. Or we might make some sacrifice and not be altogether free from the feeling that men will see something heroic in us or regard us as a martyr. No one is entirely free from the danger of self-satisfaction and the desire for self-approbation. John Bunyan was once told by someone that he had preached well that day. He replied sadly, "Yes, the devil already told me that as I was coming down the pulpit steps."

"Blessed are the pure in heart." This beatitude demands from us the most exacting self-examina-

tion. Is our work done from motives of service or from motives of pay? Is our service given from selfless motives or from motives of self-display?

Is the work we do in church contaminated with a seeking for our own prestige? Is even our prayer and our Bible reading engaged with the sincere desire to company with God, or because it gives us a pleasant feeling of superiority to feel that we do these things?

Is our religion a thing in which we are conscious of nothing so much as our need for God, or do we pride ourselves in devotions which are simply an empty form?

To examine our own motives may be a daunting and a shaming thing, but we must if we would be among those whom Jesus calls "pure in heart."

To be "pure in heart" also means to be "single," without hypocrisy. It means, "without folds." The pure heart is open, nothing is hidden. One of its best definitions is given in Psalm 86:11: "Unite my heart to fear thy name." The trouble with us is that too often our heart is divided. That is why the Psalmist prayed, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Make it one, he seemed to say. "Make it single, take out all the pleats and folds, and let it be whole; let it be one, sincere and free from any hypocrisy."

That which is pure is so clean that it is fit to be brought into the presence of God and used in His service. Is this true of our hearts, our intents, our minds, our lives? The world is full of things which are soiled and sordid and shabby. The Christian's mind must be set on things that are pure; his thoughts so clean that they can stand even the scrutiny of God.

To be pure in heart is to be like the Lord Himself who "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," perfect, spotless, entire. To be pure in heart is to keep the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy

(Continued on page 12)

"Whether There Be Tongues--"

THE question Jesus asked the Jews about the authority of John the Baptist might well be asked about another matter, speaking in tongues: Is it from heaven or from men? Is it a manifestation of divine power through the Holy Spirit, or is it merely the expression of human emotion and religious ecstasy?

In recent years the subject has won wide publicity. "Believers in various denominations scattered throughout the world are receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and are speaking with other tongues just as the one hundred and twenty did on the day of Pentecost," reports a current Pentecostal publication.

A repetition of the day of Pentecost—fantastic! Shall we believe it?

At the onset we must divide the use of tongues into two categories: those who manifest a divine power—which we believe no one has today—and those who speak merely from human emotion and linguistic artfulness.

The ability to speak in other tongues by divine power is a phenomenon which appeared suddenly on the day of Pentecost in the first century, as recorded plainly in the Book of Acts. This was a gift which enabled persons of seventeen different languages to understand one speaker each in his own native tongue. Speaking in tongues was also one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit known among the early Christians, which Paul discusses in detail in First Corinthians (chapters 12 and 14). But this gift appears to have been of a different nature from that manifested on the day of Pentecost; this latter gift seems to have been a power of ecstatic speech used to glorify God, rather than to instruct men.

We have only two recorded instances where the gift was actually used in the Book of Acts. One was the time when Peter was preaching to Cornelius and those who were with him about God's message of salvation to all who work righteousness (Acts 10:34-35, 44-46). The second occasion was at Ephesus, when some followers of John the Baptist belatedly heard the message of Christ and received the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6). It seems unlikely that the gift always accompanied baptism, for when Paul discusses the matter in

First Corinthians 12, he speaks as though one person received one gift, another received another gift.

These Biblical records were indisputably manifestations of divine power. But history records other tongues-speakers whose supposed "gift" lay entirely outside the scope of the First Century Church—and even outside the Christian faith. Men have long been fascinated by the very human art of nonsensical babbling. Heathen peoples always possessed a strong belief in spirits, and paganism antedating Christianity by thousands of years contains numerous references to some sort of tongues-speaking associated with their worship. "Messages" were received from the spirit world in an unknown tongue, which pagan priests "translated" into the native tongue of the people—a lucrative business. Traces of the art appear also in Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek and other ancient sources which tell of ecstatic sounds from the lips of worshipers of heathen gods.

Certainly no one would attempt to associate such "tongues-speaking" with the Holy Spirit. The art is practiced also by the followers of most of the religions of the East. Moslems, Hindus, and other non-Christian people are as adept at the art as are present-day Pentecostals in the United States. Clearly, all so-called "tongues-speaking" is *not* divine.

What shall we say of the present-day believers in the gift? Is it possible for a man or woman today to speak in tongues as the disciples did at Pentecost?

Pentecostalism (so named to identify with those receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost) began in our country very early in this century. A small Bible college in the Midwest decided that the converted believer ought to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as did the apostles, and that speaking in tongues should be the proof that the baptism had been received. They began to "seek the baptism" through revival-type meetings.

These meetings, also known as "full-gospel meetings," brought about the desired results. Their format has changed but little in the seven-plus decades since Pentecostalism was introduced in America. The music is generally of the "foot-stomping" variety. Gospel songs have a rollicking rhythm. Speak-

ers are sensational, and they sensationalize their message. Emotion runs high. Such is the setting in which they "seek the baptism of the Spirit."

And "something" happens—it *has* to happen. Mob psychology rules, and those in attendance are overcome with a sort of mass hypnotism. Is it any wonder that some suddenly start chattering or babbling in unknown tongues?

Such meetings are far-removed from the meeting in the Upper Room on that original Pentecost! Those who attended that first meeting did not gather to "seek the baptism," as is so common today. They were meeting in response to the command given them by Jesus before His ascension: "Wait for the promise of the Father. . . . tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49). They were not *seeking* the Holy Spirit but were *waiting* for the power with which Jesus had promised them, "ye shall be baptized . . . not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). At no time were the dis-

ciples commanded to seek for it. They had been assured that they would "be endued with power from on high" if they but *waited*.

According to those who defend speaking in tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit today, their power is a renewal of the Pentecostal experience described in Acts 2, and is also in agreement with the practice of the church of Corinth, as recorded by Paul in First Corinthians 14. To arrive at an answer to this increasingly controversial question, we need first to compare the two texts on which they base their claim.

Glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, is a Greek compound of two words: *glossa*, meaning "tongue," and *lalia*, meaning "talk" or "speech." We read that on the day of Pentecost, the disciples "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). But we should note that this speaking in tongues was very different from any manifestation that is claimed today. For

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Pentecost Is Coming . . .

(this year, May 26)

WHEN "tongues, like as of fire" descended upon the assembled group on Pentecost and they "began to speak with other tongues," an unenlightened onlooker might have simply shaken his head and raised his eyebrows in disbelief—but unbelief does not turn history into legend. That Pentecost actually happened cannot be disputed. The record of Acts is conclusive proof that the apostles had been favored with a priceless possession—the Spirit of the living God. A miracle had happened; Pentecost cannot be explained in any other way.

Pentecost was the birthday of a mission; it gave a powerful beginning to the Christian Church. It launched the first great missionary effort, that of spreading the Gospel to the then-known world, and the power behind that mission was the power of God, the Holy Spirit. God had completed one stage of His plan in sending the prophets to teach and instruct and another in sending His Son to set a perfect example. His Son had tasted death, had been raised from the dead and proved Himself alive, had ascended to heaven to His Father, been rewarded and glorified. Now He had sent back

the promised power to enable His followers to spread the Good News of this Gospel.

Pentecost was the greatest manifestation of the Spirit of which we have record. It did not mark anything new in the divine method of operation, but the power was increased because there was a greater need; a larger company of men needed to be prepared to fulfill so great a mission in so short a time. Jesus had possessed the power from His baptism and He had imparted some of it to His disciples as they had need. But throughout the Gospels Jesus is the dominant character and the emphasis is on His use of the great power He possessed both in healing and performing miracles.

The blessings of that first Pentecost immediately following Christ's ascension into heaven were received by only a few. But the greater Pentecost is coming when, "saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18). Such will be the abundant latter-day rain that will accompany the time of final harvest. Shall we be allowed to participate in the blessings of that greater Pentecost?

This question is being answered by each of us each hour of each day of our lives. ••

"Whether There Be Tongues . . ."

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these "other tongues" were not *unknown* tongues but *foreign* and *known* languages. This is evident, because they did not have to be translated to be understood by the multitude. Three times it is recorded that the people heard the preaching of the disciples "in their own languages." The "tongues" at Pentecost were intelligible speech in a variety of languages, and served a definite purpose—people of seventeen languages were able to understand the words of the apostles without the aid of translators or interpreters.

Paul's discussion in First Corinthians concerns tongues that are of a different nature, it would appear from the reading of the text. The King James Version consistently inserts before "tongues" the word "unknown," though this is not found in the original Greek text (I Cor. 14:4, 13-14, 19, 27). The rendering in the New English Bible is perhaps more fitting—"language of ecstasy" (v. 2) or ecstatic "utterance." Apparently this gift of "tongues" was an utterance not intelligible and not intended to be understood by the congregation (as the tongues-speaking on the day of Pentecost had been). This is evident from the fact that legitimate use of the gift required the presence of an "interpreter." And "interpretation of tongues" was a separate gift (I Cor. 12:10).

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, chapters 12 through 14, Paul writes a long dissertation on the subject of tongues. From the reading of the entire Letter, it would seem that the Corinthian Church was a problem to Paul: there was strife among them; some were living immorally, they were worshiping idols; there were divisions among them; some denied the resurrection of Christ, others were over-emphasizing the gift of tongues. From the stress laid on the tongues subject by Paul, it would appear that this was not the least of their problems.

Knowing the background of Corinth gives us some insight into why this particular Church had so many problems. Corinth was noted for its cosmopolitan population. It was also noted for its paganism. The Greek oracle of Apollo (the Greek god of prophecy) was located nearby, and both Greeks and Romans sought answers to their questions from the priests who officiated there. The answers were given in other tongues, which the priests translated for the people. No doubt the Christians often came in close contact with the pagan tongues-speaking, and not to be outdone by

them they valued their gift of tongues and practiced it to the utmost.

It is clear from Paul's letter that he valued the gift of tongues far less than did the Corinthians. He places the gift last in two separate lists of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:8-10, 28).

In chapter 14, Paul discusses the gift of tongues by comparing it with another gift, that of prophecy, which he believes to be far superior. Throughout the discussion, Paul sets little value on the gift of tongues. He includes the following points in his comparison:

1. Concerning the use of the two gifts:

The man who speaks with tongues speaks a language of ecstasy (I Cor. 14:2, 4, NEB); and he does not address himself to men; nobody understands him; he speaks "in the Spirit," and consoles himself.

He who "prophesies" preaches the word of God. And he speaks understandably, to build up others, to encourage and console them (I Cor. 14:35, NEB).

Paul's conclusion is this: Speaking in tongues benefits only the individual, and is of no use to the congregation.

2. Concerning spiritual benefits of the two gifts:

Prophesying, or teaching, results in imparting knowledge of spiritual things, some specific teaching about the Christian life (I Cor. 14:6, Phillips). Tongues do not supply any spiritual need of the congregation.

3. Concerning their intelligibility:

Sound spoken with no precise meaning is spoken "into the air"; in other words, it is wasting one's breath. It is to be compared to playing a musical instrument without producing any tune (I Cor. 14:6-9). Because tongues cannot be understood without an interpreter, Paul indicates that the gift is inferior to that of prophecy.

4. Concerning their power to communicate between brethren:

Paul says: "But if the sounds of the speaker's voice mean nothing to me, I am a foreigner to him, and he is a foreigner to me" (I Cor. 14:11, Phillips). The simple fact that tongues do not produce any communication between members of the church is a serious limitation.

5. Concerning one's personal religious life:

Here is one of Paul's most damaging arguments against the manner in which the Corinthians used their gift of tongues. Even praying in tongues becomes a subconscious act, to the exclusion of the real moral use of a man's mind. "If I use such language in my prayer, the spirit in me prays, but

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TIMELY TOPICS

WHEN reporting a recent Presidential press conference, one correspondent wrote that the President seemed to be relaxed and in a jovial mood, while another correspondent covering the same press conference wrote that the President was tense, short-tempered and ill at ease. Obviously, these two men saw the President at the same time, but in an entirely different light. Perhaps one man's personal prejudice colored his judgment, or the other's admiration caused him to overlook obvious facts.

Whatever the rationale in this illustration, it does point up an important trait of human nature.

Two Views We all tend to judge a person, an event, a performance, by our own pre-drawn conclusions and impressions. Our personal prejudices affect our judgment. With the exception of a few dyspeptic critics to whom everything is condemnable, most people demonstrate a charitable attitude. We tend to place the best possible emphasis on a given situation. It is a well-attested fact that people remember pleasant experiences much longer than unpleasant ones. Life would be a rather dismal existence if this were not so. Just imagine how oppressive life could seem were the situation reversed—if we remembered all the sad and unfortunate experiences and forgot all the pleasant!

We might say that everything—or most everything—has two sides. People have two natures, the flesh and the spirit, the bad and the good. Events may be pleasant or unpleasant. A business deal may be profitable or unprofitable. A story may be true or untrue. An orchestra may play in tune or out of tune. An animal may be tame or ferocious. A stream may be clean or polluted. Religion may be true or false.

Even God's nature has two sides. While we with our limited human wisdom cannot say that God possesses two natures, His one divine nature certainly has two facets. On one hand He is all-merciful, kind, loving and forgiving—to those who remember His commandments to do them. And for those who flagrantly disregard His laws He reserves severity and punishment. Old time hell-

fire preachers made the most of this latter quality which they believed the Creator to possess. This type of evangelism has largely been soft-pedaled in recent years—and should be, as it is unscriptural and far beneath the dignity of an All-wise God. But the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, and pulpit, magazine, radio and television proclaim the one-sided love of God for all humanity in sending Jesus to die on the cross to bring salvation clear and free to all who will accept Him.

While we would be the last to deny the mercy and forgiveness of God, we must not forget the other side of God's nature. What appears to us to be two facets, however, is in reality only a far superior nature of divine mercy combined with justice. For mercy is as inseparable from justice as laws are from lawyers.

Generally speaking, too much emphasis is placed on the forgiveness of God and not enough on the requirements of God upon those who would desire that forgiveness. For instance, we often hear, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). But we seldom or never hear, "For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:20-21). According to the record of the apostle John, both statements were made by Jesus at the same time and in the same connection. It is less than honest to quote one repeatedly and ignore the other.

Or how many times have Paul's words been quoted, "Not of works, lest any man should boast," when in the very next sentence he says that God has ordained that we should walk in good works? Is it fair to quote part of Paul's thought and omit what completes it?

Unfortunately we tend to interpret what we hear or read in the light of our own philosophy or in the light of what is pleasant or unpleasant to ourselves. The Bible, the written Word of God to His earthly children, has been in existence nearly two thousand years. And it has been subjected to a fantastic number of interpretations. This could never be if mankind did not try to read into the Word his own idea, for one inspired Word of God can contain only *one* plan of salvation. But how often the pleasant, the agreeable portions of the Bible are proclaimed, and the unpleasant is forgotten. Thus God becomes a merciful God who gives freely to all and judges no one.

These examples show the folly and even the dis-

honesty of giving only one side of a proposition.

This one-sidedness is common in temporal affairs. Advertisers call attention to all the good qualities of their product, completely ignoring the disadvantages. Drug manufacturers often stress the benefits to be derived from a new-formula drug, saying nothing about harmful side effects.

One prominent radio preacher uses as his theme, "Something good is going to happen to you." There is nothing wrong with thinking positive thoughts, but this is a classic example of giving only one side of the picture. Nothing good is going to happen to you unless you *make* it happen. How can anyone read the Bible and conclude that mankind has nothing to do to receive God's mercy? The hard facts are that no miracle is going to get you or me a place in God's kingdom, and to proclaim otherwise is to give only one side of the story. We must meet the requirements God has laid down and then something good *will* happen to us.

The apostle Paul said, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22). The Biblical writers were all cognizant of the true character of God. They continually stressed both facets of His nature—judgment on the wicked, mercy on the penitent.

There are also two sides to every man's nature, the good and the bad. If we are to be the recipients of God's longsuffering, mercy and goodness, then it is up to us to eliminate the bad side of our nature and build up the good. We must "overcome evil with good." Only then will something eternally good happen to us. ●●

"Blessed Are the Pure in Heart"

(Continued from page 7)

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." There is a parallel in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which speaks of "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

They Shall See God

What is the recompense for such spotless purity? "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Here is the most amazing promise: Those who become pure in heart shall someday *see God*! If we but grasped this, it would revolutionize our whole lives. You and I may someday appear in the audience chamber of God. Someday we shall enter into the presence of the Omnipotent! Do we really believe it? Is our affection set upon it? If we do,

then the greatest concern of our life will be to have a pure heart.

Listen to what Paul says: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." Strangle them, get rid of them, get rid of everything that stands between you and the goal for which you aim. "Mortify," put it to death. "If ye through the Spirit," he says to the Romans, "do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Do we comprehend the promise? "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Is this our supreme object, desire and ambition? If it is, we will agree with John: that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure" (I John 3:3).

We may not have long to prepare. The Great Day of the Lord is near. Are we wasting time looking at the things which are earthly and temporal? Or are we looking forward to our audience with the Eternal! How can we afford to waste any time on things that will be of no value when that Day arrives? things of which we will then be ashamed?

Meditate upon the promise: You and I, creatures of time, may someday have the honor and privilege of *seeing* God!

By our daily lives we are fitting—or unfitting—ourselves for that great occasion. ●●

Words to WALK By

*Are you but common clay, unsightly and ill-shaped?
Let God mold you on his wheel; yield to His shaping
hands—you yet may become a vessel for your King.*

Cherish a resentment or a bitter spirit, and you retard your own spiritual development and disappoint your heavenly Father.

*Chastisement is one of God's most effective fertilizers.
It multiplies the yield of the precious fruit of faith.*

The most difficult lesson in the Christian life is the attaining of a true knowledge of self.

*Are you tempted to settle in the wilderness, just
outside the Land of Promise? Push on, or you will
lose your full inheritance.*

If you would succeed in God's university, major in the eternal and minor in the temporal.

*There are no conscripts in the army of Christ;
every soldier is a volunteer.*

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

Three Classes of Humanity

WHEN God first introduced His plan to men on this earth He offered a reward of sufficient magnitude to cause some to seek after it. Moses, speaking for God, said to the children of Israel, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; . . . I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: . . . for he is thy life, and the length of thy days" (Deut. 30:15, 19-20). To obtain the eternal life He offered, they had to render a perfect obedience (Deut. 11:26-27).

God was not asking the impossible; He was simply asking for obedience to His law, a law already made known unto them. "This commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, . . . neither is it beyond the sea, . . . but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Deut. 30:11-14). This has been God's principle from the beginning; anyone who makes a covenant with God must first know the terms of the covenant.

To be classed as a faithful covenant-maker, worthy of eternal life, one must render a complete obedience, serving God and Him alone, "for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. 34:14). "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deut. 10:12-13).

This command was to the nation of Israel. But God's people today, the spiritual Israel, are bound by the same command repeated by Jesus. Likewise, the principle of first **knowing** was taught by Jesus. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45).

The lesson is the same in the parable of the tower: "Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (Luke 14:28). That all do not first count the cost—or do not care to pay the price—is obvious from the fact that there are both faithful and unfaithful servants at the Judgment.

We will continue our study of the Three Classes of Humanity in this issue following our outline:

- I. The Faithful Covenant-Makers
 - D. Rewards for the Faithful
 - E. Promises Made to the Faithful
 - F. God's Honor Roll

As we learned in our last lesson, God's plan is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. Those who have heard His Word and have agreed to work in His vineyard have thereby placed themselves under covenant. Knowledge brings responsibility. Hence, those who know become either faithful or unfaithful covenant-makers. The great masses of humanity who have lived and died and never knew God or His plan form the class known as the ungodly. Ignorance is a cloak for them; they will never be brought to Judgment.

In this lesson we will continue our study of the faithful covenant-makers, including the rewards righteous living brings in this life and what it promises for the future.

To be "holy and without blemish," to be "without fault," or to be "righteous before God" is a big order. Some say it is an impossibility, that mortals cannot be expected to be perfect. Has such a standard ever been reached by a mortal? We shall learn the answer in this lesson.

I. THE FAITHFUL COVENANT-MAKERS

To be classed among the faithful covenant-makers should be our earnest desire. Would you not like to spend eternity in the company of such worthies of old as Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, Peter and Paul in a Kingdom ruled over by Jesus Christ? Such is our hope, and it was the hope of our founder who

delighted to talk about that future Day and its glories. The following is a quotation from one of his messages:

"God has promised to prolong our life through the billions of ages yet to come and give us pleasures that are 'exceeding abundantly' above all we can even ask or think. He will do for us 'exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.' We can think of a great many things we should like to have, and we could ask for a great many things; but He will do for us above all that. He says, I will not only do for you above what you ask or think, but I will do **exceedingly** above what you ask or think; and that is not enough, I will do for you **exceeding abundantly above** all you even ask or think! What more could He do for us?"

The offer of such a reward should cause every one of us to do our utmost to obtain it.

D. Rewards for the Faithful

That God is a just Paymaster cannot be doubted. But when does He pay? What does He pay? Is He a pay-as-you-go Paymaster? We will attempt to answer these questions using the Bible as our Textbook.

1. When does God pay? If you were to witness a funeral in any one of the well-known churches of our day, you would be led to believe that the departed one had received his or her reward immediately after death. If the deceased had lived a good life you would be told that his or her soul had joined the souls of other faithful dead in heaven and was rejoicing around the throne of God. Such is the accepted belief of most faiths.

While such a belief may be popular and perhaps comforting, it is not according to Scripture. The Bible teaches plainly that both righteous and wicked go to the grave at death to await a resurrection at Christ's coming. It is then that they will receive their reward, their pay.

In the minds of many theologians, a man is saved at the beginning of the race and rewarded at the end. But this is not according to Scripture. The words of Jesus are unmistakably clear: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). He "shall be" saved, future tense; he is not saved now, otherwise he would not need saving in the future. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God [Emmanuel, God with us—Matt. 1:23] will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you" (Isa. 35:4). **The reward is to be saved, salvation; and it is to be given at the second coming of Christ.**

That all are rewarded at Christ's coming and

not at death is supported by the testimony of many Scripture writers. We will review a few:

a. The testimony of Jesus. "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14). The word "recompensed" carries the same meaning as "reward." It is not bestowed upon anyone at death.

b. The testimony of Daniel. The "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth" include both faithful and unfaithful covenant-makers, as the text clearly shows: they shall "awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." But both classes "sleep" until the time of resurrection.

c. The testimony of Peter. "And when the chief Shepherd [Christ] shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4). The "crown of glory" represents the reward, the "crown of life" and will be given the faithful at His appearing, not at death.

d. The testimony of Paul. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). When Christ comes, not at death, are the faithful chosen.

e. The testimony of Jesus through John the Revelator. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). When Christ comes He brings the reward with Him to give to **every man**, all those worthy. (This subject is discussed more fully in the series of lessons entitled "The Nature of Man"—see **Megiddo Message**, January through April, 1971.)

2. What does God pay? God is not only a just Paymaster, but a generous Paymaster. He offers far more than any human could actually earn in the comparatively short few years he works in the Lord's service. The pay is variously described as being saved or salvation, eternal life, immortality, the prize or the reward. But all add up to one and the same thing: **SALVATION.**

All these rewards are yet future, but living the Christian life in hope of future rewards also brings its present recompense. Realizing the difficulty involved in obtaining the reward, Peter said to the Master, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, . . . and every one that hath forsaken [all] . . . for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (Matt. 19: 27—29). **The greater blessing is reserved**

for the future, when He shall return, but the hundredfold is for the present time. Included in the "hundredfold" is the promise of Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Also the promise of the guardian angels, "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14).

E. Promises Made to the Faithful

Except for the reward for better living received day by day, the pay of the faithful is "held in escrow" at the Father's right hand. Payment is guaranteed to all who have fulfilled the terms set forth in the Scriptures, that is, all faithful covenant-makers. Christ is His Father's Paymaster, and when He returns He will bring the reward with Him.

The sum total of the reward is eternal life, everlasting salvation, or immortality. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation . . . and it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isa. 45:17; 25:9). Salvation itself is the reward.

The Scriptures hold out a host of promises for the faithful. Some might be termed as physical, others concern the mental and moral state; some relate to the honor and power reserved for them, while some are all-inclusive. Included in the latter category are such promises as Paul quoted from the prophet Isaiah: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9); and "[He] is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20); and "This slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (II Cor. 4:17, RSV). Such glory is beyond the comprehension of our finite minds, but it is within our power to gain if we but remain faithful.

1. Physical promises. The promises which we will include in this category relate to physical life and health. They include, in part, the promise of:

a. A resurrection from the dead. Those living at the return of Christ will have no need of this promise, but it is vital to all those who have gone before the generation that witnesses His coming. We do not have to rely on one verse alone for this promise; proof-texts are numerous. Paul stated clearly to the Corinthians: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us

also by Jesus" (II Cor. 4:14). It was for this hope that Paul was called to defend himself before King Agrippa (Acts 26:6-8) and for which he so diligently worked: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:10-14).

b. Eternal life. The promise of eternal life for faithful service is proffered throughout the Bible. It is variously termed "life," as in Deut. 30:15, 19; "length of days," as in Prov. 3:16; "a tree of life," as in Prov. 3:18, Rev. 2:7 and 22:14. The promise is always conditional; to receive it requires obedience to God's commandments.

Paul voiced his hope of eternal life more than once. To Titus, he wrote, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised . . ." and again he admonished the young Timothy to "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" (Tit. 1:2; I Tim. 6:12).

c. Perfect physical health. John the Revelator heard a voice out of heaven saying that "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (Rev. 21:4). It is also recorded that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; . . . they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). There shall be no fatigue, no weariness. Again from Isaiah we learn that deaf ears shall hear, blind eyes shall see, and the lame man shall leap (35:5-6).

d. Immortality. Immortality, unending life, is a prerequisite of life in the Kingdom of God. Said Jesus, "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, . . . are equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:35-36), and Paul spoke of a time when "this corruptible [mortal] shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53); and again of "God, who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:6, 7). **When mortals have attained a state "equal unto the angels" they will be immortal, unable to die.**

Immortality, eternal life, is not a present possession, but one we hold only by promise: "And this is the promise he hath promised us, even eternal life" (I John 2:25).

2. Promises concerning the mental and moral state. The promises of God for the faithful concern all aspects of life. There are a great many in this category, but included is the promise of:

a. Unending pleasure. "In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11); "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and

everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

b. Abundant prosperity. "If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures"; "The meek shall inherit the earth;...and their inheritance shall be for ever"; "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession"; "the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High" (Job 36:11; Ps. 37:11, 18; 2:8; Dan. 7:27). The Lord has "pleasure in the prosperity of his servant" (Ps. 35:27).

c. Honor, fame and praise. Men delight in praise; they thrive on the approbation of other men. God condemns worldly honor, but those judged faithful will be worthy of honor and will receive it. "I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. . . . I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, . . . saith the Lord" (Zeph. 3:19-20). "He that overcometh, . . . I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3:5). Would not that be an honor?

d. Freedom from fear. At the present time, fear of one kind or another grips the hearts of a majority of the population. Some fear hunger, others fear war, some fear crime and criminal attacks. Governments fear attacks from others more powerful than they. But in that future day there will be no such thing as fear. War will have been banished forever, for "He maketh wars to cease" (Ps. 46:9); the wicked will have been removed from the earth (Prov. 2:22), and "thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 3:15). There will be nothing to fear, and "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. 4:4). "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17). It will be a wonderful time to live!

e. Knowledge. "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure" (Isa. 33:6). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7), but in that Day our minds will be expanded to understand more and more the wondrous things of God. Now we have difficulty retaining the knowledge we are able to acquire, but then we shall be blessed with perfect memory capabilities.

f. Power and authority. Men naturally crave power over others, and often those mortals who

succeed in gaining it are ruthless and greedy. In the Kingdom of God those who prove faithful are promised to reign with Christ over the whole world, (Rev. 5:10; 20:6). In the parable of the Pounds, Christ, represented by the nobleman, says to the faithful servant, "Have thou authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:17). The faithful will be given positions of authority; the "ten cities" represents a degree of authority in the Kingdom, not ten literal cities.

F. God's Honor Roll

Those who obtain all the blessings we have enumerated—and more that have not been covered—will have earned their reward in their lifetime. Under the laws of our land today, a ne'er-do-well son might inherit a fortune from his father and as a result live in luxury in this life. But such riches offer a man nothing beyond whatever span of years of mortal life he may be allotted.

God's plan is different. Whatever a man is awarded has been earned. And it will not be for threescore years and ten, but for an endless cycle of years that will roll on and on.

God offers much, but He demands much. God demands that the life-seeker use all that he has in His service. He demands moral perfection, spiritual maturity. Nothing short of moral perfection is the standard set by God. Men do not attain it all at once, in one grand leap, but it is a process of growth into holiness. It is a case of "perfecting holiness" (II Cor. 7:1); of letting "patience have her perfect work" (Jas. 1:4); of being made perfect through "every good work" (Heb. 13:21); of "putting away lying" (Eph. 4:25); of putting off the "old man" and putting on the "new man" (Eph. 4:22-24); and of doing all things according to the Word of God.

The first reaction of many to such a request is a cry of: It can't be done! But it **can** be done; it **has been done**, and we also can do it. We will offer as proof that it can be done what we like to call "God's honor roll," those who have run the race to a successful finish and whose names are written in the book of life, persons whom we hope to be able to meet in the Kingdom. We will discuss a few of these in our next lesson.

*Reprints of these studies are available
upon request.*

ISRAEL

Yesterday

Today

Tomorrow

Spiritual Israel

THE ultimate goal of the plan of God is a perfect world, filled with happy immortals enjoying peace and divine blessing eternally. In the words of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

The majority of the promises and prophecies of the Bible center around the Messiah, who is destined to return to earth to establish this Kingdom which will extend "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8). Christ Himself is to be the King (Zech. 14:9; John 18:37).

But Christ is not to inherit this Kingdom alone; nor is He to govern alone. His very title—"King of kings and Lord of lords" (Rev. 17:14)—suggests the presence of associate rulers, fellow-heirs with Him of the promises. Who shall share the high honor of being His eternal associates? The book of Revelation calls them the "overcomers" (Rev. 3:21), also they that are "called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). The apostle Paul called them "Israel" (Rom. 9:6-8).

Just as the physical descendants of Abraham were the inheritors of the kingdom under the Mosaic covenant, so the spiritual descendants of Abraham, the faithful, will be the inheritors of the eternal Kingdom of

Is the modern State of Israel a fulfillment of Bible prophecy? Is God blessing Israel today because of the promises to their fathers?

Who are the Israel chosen of God, who shall receive His everlasting inheritance?

During recent months we have received numerous inquiries as to the significance of modern Israel in the light of Bible prophecy. In reply to these queries, we are publishing a series of articles which will discuss the subject in detail.

Christ. The selecting of these choice individuals has been the central purpose of God through the ages—to find in the vast reservoir of humanity the best material for His eternal purposes. These comprise His "special treasure," His "eternal inheritance," His "sons and daughters," *spiritual* Israelites.

The nation of Israel provided much worthy material for this select group of spiritual Israelites. In fact, the greater number chosen during two millennia were natural Israelites. The nation of Israel was itself a type of the eternal Kingdom of God over which Christ, as the greater Son of David, shall rule when He returns to earth. The laws and covenant of that ancient kingdom were typical of the laws and covenant to which every aspiring spiritual Israelite must be loyal if he would inherit eternal blessings. Always

in any divine arrangement, obedience is prerequisite.

Spiritual Israel Identified

The Bible abounds with references to this select group known as "spiritual" Israel.

The Psalmist spoke of these true Israelites when he wrote, "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart" (Ps. 73:1). Jesus called Nathaniel an "Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile" (John 1:47). Such Israelites are they who "shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation" (Isa. 45:17). These texts clearly identify an Israel other than the natural descendants of Abraham, some of whom proved stubborn and unbelieving, having "a revolting and rebellious heart" (Jer. 5:23-25). These *true* Israelites are people "of a clean heart," "in whom there is no guile," and are such as "shall be saved."

Paul referred to these true Israelites as Jews "inwardly": "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

The nationality of these select persons does not matter—many are Jews by birth; many are not. But all belong to the nation of

true Israel by their faithfulness to their covenant with God. They are chosen "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. 5:9), but they are part of that "chosen generation," that "royal priesthood," that "holy nation, a peculiar people" who "show forth the praises of him who hath called [them] out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (I Pet. 2:9-10).

The Epistle of James is addressed to these Israelites, whom he calls "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (Jas. 1:1-2) and "my brethren." They are "begotten of God" but not because of their nationality; they are begotten "by the word of truth" (Jas. 1:18).

The Relationship Between Natural and Spiritual ISRAEL

What is the relationship between natural and spiritual Israel?

God's entire program of work upon earth has been the selecting of the members of spiritual Israel. And for a considerable length of time He focused His attention primarily on a single family and nation—natural Israel. To them He extended the first opportunity of becoming His chosen people indeed—if they would meet His exacting moral requirements and serve Him wholeheartedly. An eternal inheritance could be theirs—even the whole earth, for an everlasting possession. They could be the channels of blessing to all mankind. Theirs could be everlasting honors, with riches and blessings and pleasures beyond measure. To assist them, God showed them special favors: theirs were "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Rom. 9:4-5). The natural Jews possessed a rich heritage of spiritual advantage; they were indeed called of God—to privilege.

But privilege does not guarantee acceptance or salvation. And the majority of natural Israel disregarded the whole, and even forgot the God who had established them and made them a nation.

Nevertheless, some responded and made themselves over into *true* Israelites. Among these are such familiar names as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Caleb, Joshua, Samuel, David, and Isaiah, and many, many more. All were Israelites by birth; but they are remembered by God because they became Israelites indeed—such as "are of a clean heart."

There Came A Change

For centuries God continued to extend special opportunity and advantage to the literal descendants of Israel. But as we have seen, Israel grew apostate and sinful, and God forsook them as a nation and turned to another people. From that time forward, God gave priority to His work among the Gentiles. This did not mean that any Jew anywhere could not become a Jew indeed; it meant only that God was no longer dealing with the Jewish people as a nation.

In Acts 28 Paul states plainly this change in priority, together with the reason for the change. He begins by applying to them a prophecy from the writings of Isaiah. "Go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it" (Acts 28:26-28).

Such was the understanding of Paul, who was himself a "Hebrew of the Hebrews"; being a Jew or a Gentile by birth had no bearing on one's acceptability in the sight of God. Paul himself, though a Jew by birth, was ordained an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 26:17).

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

DWELL DEEP

Little boats are playthings on restless waves. They quiver and roll in every direction, easily overturn, and frequently break up. The big ocean liner cuts through the waves and goes its way without heeding them. What makes the difference? It is a matter of depth. There is steadiness the deeper one goes.

So it is in our Christian stability. Dwelling deep in God and His Word of truth produces steadfastness. Each of us has need of this. The perilous times in which we live, the indifference and godlessness that surround us may tend to make us feel restless and spiritually unsteady. We need to dwell deep in God; settle His truth and the certainty of His promises deep within our innermost soul, and we will not be tossed to and fro and carried about by those who lie in wait to deceive. There is steadiness in depth. ●●

"Whether There Be Tongues--"

(Continued from page 10)

my intellect lies fallow" (14:4, NEB). It means that a man makes his emotions the basis of his belief, without giving to God the powers of his conscious mind.

6. Concerning the benefit of tongues to the world:

Paul shows that the gift of tongues, besides being of no direct spiritual benefit to the believers, does no good to those outside the Church. The non-believer can't even add his amen to it. At this point Paul underscores his point with a plainly figurative overstatement: Better five intelligible words than 10,000 in the language of ecstasy. This proves the Apostle's strong conviction that the gift of tongues had little benefit when compared with the conscious, well-balanced, fruitful, intelligible worship (1 Cor. 14:19).

7. Concerning tongues and spiritual maturity:

Do tongues signify a Christian's maturity? Paul's answer is no. "Do not be childish, my friends! Be as innocent of evil as babes, but at least be grown-up in your thinking" (14:20, NEB)—a stern rebuke for a church that considered itself privileged on account of this gift. "You are childish and immature!"

Tongues-speaking was the lowest of the gifts, not even mentioned among the "higher gifts" that should be aimed at (1 Cor. 12:31, NEB). And even of these Paul said, "Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way," or "the best way of all" (NEB).

He continues his thought in chapter 13. "I may speak in tongues of men or of angels, but if I am without love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal" (13:1, NEB). In effect Paul is saying, Suppose I could speak with the voice of an angel, it would amount to no more than a big noise if I had no love; I would be but a hypocrite if I professed to speak in tongues and did not keep the commandments of God. Without this genuine, practical love of God, Paul was telling them, their tongues, their faith or their charitable gifts added up to naught.

"Tongues of ecstasy," gifts of prophecy and super-human knowledge would end when they had fulfilled their purpose; but love would never come to an end, said Paul (1 Cor. 13: 8, 13).

These special gifts were possessed by the apostles for a specific purpose and for a limited time. For example, Paul and Barnabas "spoke fearlessly for the Lord, who made it plain that they were proclaiming the Word of his grace, by allowing them to perform signs and miracles" (Acts 14:3, Phillips). Only by such demonstrations of the power of God

could they gain a hearing for the gospel. "God added his testimony by signs, by miracles, by manifold works of power, and by distributing the gifts of the Holy Spirit at his own will" (Heb. 2:4, NEB). The miracle of tongues-speaking was one of these signs and gifts, but there is nothing to indicate that all future believers were to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in the same way.

Our position on these gifts is well stated by a contemporary writer:

We have no testimony that any of those gifts which were truly miraculous and in every way above the faculties of men, were communicated to any after the expiration of the generation who conversed with Christ.

Another writer sums it up thus:

These special gifts of the spirit, including tongues-speaking, were given to authenticate the apostles as messengers from God. Not only did the apostles possess these gifts, they were also able to bestow them on others. There is no record of the bestowing of these gifts on someone by the laying on of hands of any one other than an apostle. They [these miraculous gifts] were part of the credentials of the apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the church. Their function thus confined them to distinctively the Apostolic Church, and they necessarily passed away with it.

"Whether there be tongues, they shall cease." And they *did* cease. Today we have no need of these miraculous gifts. We have the complete Bible, the Word of God, to confirm the gospel message. And we have the promise that these gifts will be restored "when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord: and he shall send Jesus Christ, . . . whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things" (Acts 3: 19-21). Until that time we must rely on the written "sure word of prophecy." ●●

BE THE BEST OF WHATEVER YOU ARE

If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,
Be a scrub in the valley,—but, be
The best little scrub by the side of the hill,
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

If you can't be a bush, be a bit of grass,
And some highway some happier make,
If you can't be a muskie, then just be a bass—
But be the liveliest bass in the lake.

If you can't be a highway, then just be a trail,
If you can't be the sun, be a star;
It isn't by size that you win or you fail,
Be the best of whatever you are.

Christian Youth in These Times

Only Once

GENTLY Dr. Bennet removed the last of the stitches. "Now, Richard, you are just fine. And do you realize how very lucky you were? That gash is very close to your eye."

With these words from our family doctor, I was released to go about my daily life with but a surface scar; but every day I would be reminded of the real, knowing scar deep within me—a scar that no doctor could ever touch. Every day that I looked into the mirror to shave, I would see the superficial scar and be reminded of the hideous one within me.

It was a balmy spring day, and I was sure the flowers would be blooming on our favorite place over on the hill. And because I wanted to be the first visitor there this spring, I headed my trusty old Plymouth in that direction.

First there was the vegetable garden, then Eileen's flowers. They were in full bloom, brilliant yellows and bright pinks—her favorite colors, I remembered, as I bent down to pick a few. I wanted a bouquet that would be tall and slender like she was. And in spite of what I knew, I somehow half-expected to see Eileen come dashing down the rocky path in her simple yellow frock—

But Eileen would not be coming ever again. An automobile accident on an icy pavement last winter, and in less than ten minutes a young life was gone. My dear young sister Eileen.

I returned to my auto carrying the flowers and headed the thirty-some odd miles to the cemetery, my thoughts taking me back to a bright sunny day last February.

"Certainly, Richard can handle the deliveries tonight. It sure is good to have such a trusty driver." Dad was standing in the hallway by the kitchen, admiration clearly shining in his eyes as he looked over his family. The Holdens were in the bakery business, and all had a part in it as they were able to help.

"Why not try this?" was Eileen's contribution

to decorating the cake. She was always bubbling with excitement, and that night was no different.

"Why not indeed!" piped Mother, smiling. "I sure like that idea!"

Now the cake was finished and lavishly decorated, thanks to Eileen's great imagination. The cake was ever so beautiful with its twenty-one candles.

"Could it be possible? Peter—twenty-one years old? My, but the years pass so swiftly!" Mom shrugged hopelessly. She kept thinking of what would be going on at the party. A modern one, perhaps even with drinking. How thankful she was that none of her family were going after any such so-called "pleasures." It was their business only to make the cake, and see that it got delivered on time—nothing more.

"Mom, may I please, please go for the ride with Rich tonight?" and up the stairs she almost flew, calling, "I'll hold the cake on my lap all the way!"

Richard was getting the car ready and checking the tires; they shouldn't be too hard on a night like this one.

Eileen came out to meet him, carefully holding the well-wrapped package.

"Do be careful," called out Dad as he and Mom waved happy good-byes.

"Just take a look at the beautiful stars, Rich." Eileen was almost breathless with excitement.

That was my sister Eileen, always happy, always eager to be of help and full of life. The memory of that fateful night brought a terrible ache into my chest. The young man in whose honor the party was given—Peter—he would be out of the hospital soon to face life again—without his left arm.

Of course the whole town read of the accident—the paper headlined it. But there were many accidents, they just happened in succession, though the mind does not take in the details when one is not personally interested.

Neither of us drank. Eileen was only fourteen, and I had never been to a drinking party. We were much too busy trying to be of help to Mom and Dad in the bakery business.

At the crossroads, I felt the light was in my

favor. My mind was a bit hazy. I had delivered the cake. And I had been teased and taunted by those at the party until I, too, had taken my first drink—or was it two? I remember coming back to the auto, after delivering the cake, and seeing the clear blue eyes of my sister as she waited for me. Guilt tugged at my heart. Would she guess? Would she know? Then I remember she cozily curled up in the backseat of the station-wagon, trusting me to get her home safely. I dearly loved my sister, and the way she always trusted her big brother “Rich,” as she called me.

The road, I remember, was slippery. And my vision fuzzy. But Eileen was not to know.

Suddenly, from the left, dashed a heavy sports car. And because my reaction was slow—due to the drink—I could not get out of the way fast enough. It was Peter in the other car. I never knew why. Something was said at the party about getting more gin—

The simple facts are—so common—these days. But for yielding only once—only once—to a temptation—my sister’s life. And Peter’s left arm, and the deep gash on my forehead. And my broken, heavy heart.

As I turned up the road that led to the cemetery, I looked over toward the new grave. Eileen’s grave. The new headstone had been delivered. Mom must have been here earlier this week. There were a few wilted tulips on both Eileen’s grave and Uncle Floyd’s.

As I knelt in prayer by the grave, I wondered if I could ever forgive myself. Yes, I had been tempted. And I had yielded to the temptation. And because of it, I was now weeping bitterly over my moment of weakness.

I have learned my lesson, and I know that I shall never again take another strong drink. But I must for the rest of my life live with my guilt. ●●

Our Hope Is In Thee!

*My heart crieth out for a jubilee song!
There is joy in my heart, let me praise with my tongue,
For I know though the darkness of Egypt still lowers,
That the time ere release is not ages—but hours!*

*The world, as of yore, naught of all doth divine,
Saith again that believers are filled with new wine;
Suffers warning to pass all unseen and unheard,
Fulfilling His Word, though opposing the Lord.*

*Then welcome, thrice welcome, ye tokens of God!
What else but His coming can comfort afford?
What presence but His sets this prisoned earth free?
O Star of the Morning, our hope is in Thee!*

May, 1974

“Enter Ye In”

(Continued from page 6)

Faith in the sight of the unseen, the spiritual apprehension of that which is to the senses invisible, may well be made, in Scripture, the one characteristic, the distinguishing attribute, of such as shall be saved.

“O, for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by many a foe;
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe.

“Lord, may I have a faith like this,
And then whate’er may come,
I’ll taste e’en here the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.”

The Wide Gate—and Destruction

Why enter in at the strait and narrow gate? “For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: *because* strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Look at the broad way. Could any route be more dismal, more hopeless? What real satisfaction can there be in a life that ends in eternal oblivion? What lasting value is there? Paul summarized it perfectly when he wrote, “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death” (Rom. 6:21).

Death. Destruction. What is it? Can it mean a man losing himself, and being cast away forever? The religious world might say, “No, it cannot mean that. God is too good to destroy anyone! That cannot be the end of persons whose only fault has been that they lived by sight and not by faith; that they enjoyed the pleasure of common sin for a season, still less of those who did many things which were good, and heard the doctrine gladly!”

But let us take God at His Word. Let us have the faith to believe that the broad road and the wide gate lead to destruction, and destruction does not signify continued life. We made the statement earlier in this discourse that both the narrow and wide gates lead to places of habitation; and we speculated that the wide gate, being so much more commodious, should lead to a place of ever burgeoning population. Indeed, our speculation was correct, for Jesus said: “Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.”

The great masses of earth’s inhabitants, having never recognized God or His authority, are gath-

ered in this super-metropolis. The divine pronouncement is: "And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts" (Jer. 51:57). And ultimately all of God's unfaithful covenant-makers shall join them.

But what man in his right senses would want to spend eternal years in such a community? The dwellings are too small, they are too dark, and the congestion there is unbearable. Just listen to the Psalmist's prediction of these places of habitation: "Nevertheless man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish . . . Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed upon them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling" (Psa. 49:12, 14). The grave, what a terrible dwelling place!

The Narrow Gate—and Life!

Today God is silent. He has been silent now for these many centuries. Men defy Him, and He does nothing about it. Rebellion brings no swift retribution. The wages of sin have not been paid, and we may have the idea that they never will be paid, but they shall, and with interest. The broad road *will* lead to destruction! It is inevitable.

And life, "*strait is the gate that leadeth unto life.*" Another may ask, Life, what is that? I cannot understand the pleasure—nay, I cannot catch the meaning—of a life altogether heavenly, a life lived wholly for God, surrendered completely to Him, uttering His praise or performing His service. Surely there must be an excuse for me if I cannot yet desire this; cannot set before myself as an object that which I understand not, cannot earnestly pursue that end which is to me unreal, visionary, transcendental!

Brethren beloved, if we have not experienced the blessedness of a fully consecrated life, we have no one to blame but ourselves. If sin still lies at our door, if we are double-minded, if our interests are divided, if we are trying to serve both God and mammon, we are still in the broad way and cannot experience the joys of the Christ-life.

And thus, to the difficulty which arises from our unwillingness to stand alone, and from our want of a resolute purpose and a submissive will, must be added this other and yet more fatal impediment—that we live in things which are seen, and cannot apprehend the very idea of a life fully consecrated to God.

Positive Faith

Unless we can picture ourselves as winners in the race for eternal life, how are we going to have the strength to run that race? How important is belief! Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. Moses believed God. Samuel believed God. King David certainly believed God, for he said: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. 27:13). Isaiah believed; Jeremiah believed; Daniel believed; Simeon believed; Jesus Himself believed. And Paul believed. He expressed his honest belief when he quoted the Psalmist to the effect: "I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" (II Cor. 4:13). And again: "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

The future life—the real goal—is beautifully pictured many times throughout the Word of God. There are given to us "exceeding great and precious promises" of life in the age to come, on the other side of the difficult gate. After the toiling and the weeping, after the sowing and reaping, can come the end, life in unspeakable bliss. For the overcomers the gate to life then will no longer be narrow. An "abundant entrance shall be ministered" to them "into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." God will then set their feet in a "broad place," a place "wherein there is no straitness" (Job 36:16).

That life will be a life free from sorrow, free from pain, free from disappointment. There will be no more accidents, no more old age, no more bending forms, and there will be no more death. There is no reason for difficulty in estimating the value of the life beyond the narrow gate. That blissful life is vividly pictured in Revelation 21: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

Quite recently the theory has been advanced that in God's future Kingdom, when His plan upon earth is consummated, Christ and His saints, an aristocracy of immortal kings and priests, will eternally reign over a group of mortal subjects.

It is evident that the sponsor of this viewpoint has completely overlooked the aforementioned promise of Revelation 21: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and *there shall be no more death.*" There cannot be mortality without death, or death without mortality. Hence the promise of no more death sounds the death knell to mortality. It simply cannot exist on earth when God's faithful promise of Revelation 21 is fulfilled.

Mortality is to be swallowed up with life. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15:54-55). But if through ages unending, mortal nations are still to exist on earth, the sting of death *will* remain, and the grave and death, and not life, will be victor.

The foregoing considerations will suffice to explain to us why the way of salvation is difficult. We ourselves *make* it difficult by trying to bring our own ways and attitudes into the narrow way. And now let us, in conclusion, lay to heart the solemn charge which bids us, nevertheless—notwithstanding the difficulty—at all risks, and at any cost, thus to *enter in*.

"Enter Ye In at the Strait Gate"

Strait, difficult. If it be *difficult*, it certainly is *not* impossible. With men it may be impossible, but not with God. Hence with His help, and with the good counsel provided in His Word, we *can* enter the difficult gate; we *can* banish all sin from our lives.

We can overcome the tendency to anger, to malice, to jealousy, to pride. We can stanch the springs of guilty thought, we can learn to control the evil emotions of mind and body. We can cast down vain imaginations, and captivate every fleshly tendency that exalts itself above the knowledge of Christ. The difficult gate is *not beyond* our ability. The work *can* be done, it *has been* done, and let us reassure ourselves often that *we ourselves can do it*, and say, God helping me, I will enter the gate of life. ●●

The less we are certain of the purpose of living, the more we hurry to "kill" time. He who loses his way will always drive faster. Youths who live only for the present love speed because it makes velocity take the place of destiny. They may not know where they are going, but they are certainly on the way.

He who lives for eternity enjoys time much more than he who does not know why he is living.

May, 1974



God Has Promised

We know we are living in the last days of this age. It is a time to keep the "glory brightness" in our eyes.

God has promised life—length of days—to His faithful ones; along with riches and the honor of being a son or daughter of God Almighty. That means that the angels who inhabit those worlds on high will be our own brothers and sisters!

God has promised authority to those who will help rule throughout the Millennial Age. And there will be no pain or sorrow—how wise is the eternal God to offer this as an incentive for faithful service.

God has promised strength—Isaiah 40:31 tells us of having eternal youth. What would it be like not to be weak and fatigued! Then power is another blessing—power to heal the sick, to raise the dead, to foresee future events.

The promises are exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think.

And all these blessings can be ours if we faithfully serve and obey Him.

Davenport, Iowa

Mrs. M. O. P.

Redeem the Time

The apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, said: "Redeem the time, because the days are evil." To this we all agree, but our minds are so leaky. As one writer states, it is possible to work in a factory with a group of people and have our minds absorbed on eternal things, or we can be isolated away from the world and work alone, yet our minds are out in the world. What we do with our minds is up to us, not our circumstances.

The fact that we have begun in this race for life is assurance that we can win—if we do not choose to lose. God has promised to be with His children every step of the way and will uphold them with the right hand of His righteousness. Surely we can depend on divine protection, if we are worthy of it.

Charleston, Mississippi

R. S.

Appreciative

The words from your *Megiddo Message* and pamphlets are very enlightening. When I read the words they seem to give me strength. I've never been a religious man, but the words you speak cannot be ignored. They are the words of wisdom, truth and logic.

I read your pamphlet about Satan, saying that any person who opposes God is a Satan. Also, the devil is evil thoughts that originate in each person's mind. This sounds logical, and I can believe it. I want to say again how much I enjoy reading your *Megiddo Message*.

Bangkok, Thailand

M. S.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I have read in one of your booklets where you say Proverbs 8 is the voice of wisdom speaking. You are right, but you miss the real connection because Christ is the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:24 and Col. 2:3), whom God sent to dwell among men."

Proverbs 8 is clearly the voice of wisdom speaking, but there is nothing in the chapter to suggest that Christ is speaking. The chapter uses a literary device known as personification, common in both secular and sacred literature. The first of the chapter states the subject clearly: "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?"

The chapter continues throughout to speak of wisdom as though it were a person, but there is no reference to Christ. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. . . . Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. . . . All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. . . . I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. . . . Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength."

The chapter even connects the work of creation with the wisdom of God—a connection made elsewhere in Scripture. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no foundations abounding with water. . . . While as yet he had not made the earth, . . . I was there. . . . I was by him as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight." God's wisdom, His purpose and plan preceded the creation of the earth and mankind. And His wisdom was definitely an agent in creation: "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up" (Prov. 3:19-20)—the Lord does everything according to His wisdom.

You are correct in stating that Christ is "the wisdom of God," but Paul says nothing to indicate that Christ was the mental processes of God. Christ was a man, and He possessed and lived by the wisdom of God so completely that He was properly called "the wisdom of God." But this wisdom was not something He possessed prior to His birth. He had to acquire it, as it was prophesied concerning

Him: "Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Isa. 7:15). Jesus had to learn to discern between evil and good. He had to learn "obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). In Christ were "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3)—surely Christ possessed wisdom and knowledge far surpassing that of any other man; He gave His entire life to learning and doing the will of His Father.

But to say that because Paul called Christ the "wisdom of God," the voice of wisdom in Proverbs 8 is the voice of Christ, is to draw a conclusion without evidence. If we would be justified in such a conclusion, we could also associate Matt. 5:14 and Psalm 119:105, and say that because Christ called His disciples "the light of the world" and the Psalmist said "thy word is . . . a light," that the disciples were literally the word of God—certainly an unreasonable deduction.

No, the Bible does not teach that Christ had any existence prior to the time of His birth of the Virgin Mary. God did all His "works of old" by His eternal wisdom, not by His Son.

"I have read where you quoted Titus 2:13 and leave out of your quotation the words 'God and.' This requires an explanation."

The text reads: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

In the cases to which you refer, we probably quoted it as "the glorious appearing of our . . . Saviour Jesus Christ." In printing articles, it is common practice when making quotations to leave out non-essential words in order to keep the copy as brief as possible. Especially is this done when the extra words would tend to give the reader a wrong understanding. Such is the case with the words "the great God and," should they be included in the quotation of the text and left without explanation. And too many explanatory insertions make an article too wordy and the more difficult to understand. It is for this reason that the aforementioned words are left out.

But the appearance of these words "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" can be harmonized with general Bible teaching; they need not be taken in support of the popularly accepted doctrine of the deity of Christ. It is a matter of translation, for which there are many possibilities. And is it not reasonable to choose that which har-

monizes with the plain teachings of the Bible?

We answered this text in our issue of September, 1973, on page 7, as follows:

"Let us read verse 13 from the *New English Bible*: '...looking forward to the happy fulfillment of our hope when the splendour of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus appears.' Notice that it is not the great God and Saviour Christ, as one being, which shall appear. It is the splendour of the great God which shall accompany the appearance of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Note also the suggested translation given in the footnote: 'Or, "of the great God and our Saviour...."' Again, two distinct persons. Jesus Christ will come 'in the glory of his Father with his angels' (Matt. 16:27). This will be in the splendor of the great God Almighty, but this does not say Jesus is God. The RSV wording supports this thought: 'Awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ'—again it is the glory of God that shall accompany our 'Saviour Jesus Christ.' "

In not quoting a text *verbatim*, we are not doing violence to the Word of God. Others of the newer versions give the correct idea also: as, "...the appearing of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ"—God and Christ are two separate persons. Also, "...awaiting the blessed hope of the appearance of the Glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Moffatt). The Knox Bible words it much the same: "We were to look forward, blessed in our hope, to the day when there will be a new dawn of glory, the glory of the great God, the glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ...." And in a footnote we find this: "We may, with the Greek Fathers, understand St. Paul to have written here 'the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ'; or we may, by a slightly less natural interpretation of the Greek, render 'the glory of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.' "

There is no evidence in this text to buttress the belief of those who claim Christ was a deity.

"Does Paul's mention of 'braided' hair in I Timothy 2:9 mean that it is sinful for women to braid their hair?"

In I Timothy 2:9-10, Paul is giving admonitions as to the proper attire and adornment of Christian women. The vanity of women, as well as of men, is an age-old characteristic. The text reads: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly

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HAVE YOU READ?..

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

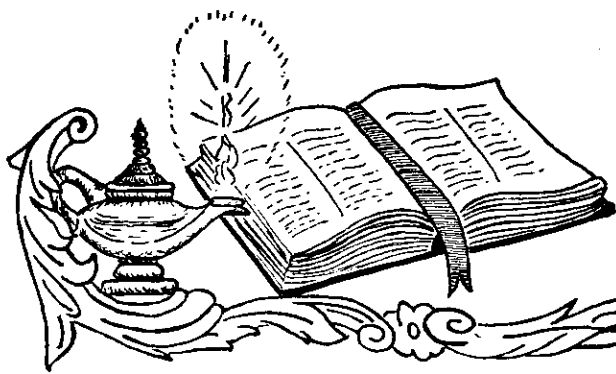
GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION
THE KINGDOM OF GOD
THE GREAT APOSTASY
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?
HELL AND THE DEVIL
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE ATONEMENT
THE SABBATH
THE TRINITY

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array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Paul's admonition is against stylish, immodest and extravagant attire and coiffure. In mentioning "braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array," he is not condemning that which is plain and modest, but that which is used for adornment and vanity. Some of the newer versions translate this phrase as follows: "not with wreaths or gold ornaments for the hair" (Twentieth Century New Testament); "not with plaitings and ornamentation of gold" (Rotherham); "not with elaborate hair arrangement or gold" (Amplified Bible); "not with elaborate hair-styles, not decked out with gold" (NEB). *The New Testament in Modern English* renders it, "The adornment of a Christian woman is not a matter of an elaborate coiffure, expensive clothes, or valuable jewelry."

As a contemporary religious writer comments: "Let Christian women—and all women—remember that if they would be attractive and admired and influential, an extravagant adornment of the body is hardly the way to accomplish that end" (see I Pet. 3:3-4). The Apostle is "not urging carelessness of dress. He is warning against ostentation in coiffure, jewelry and clothes.... Neither Paul nor Peter would have approved the modern woman's virtuosity [skillfulness] in cosmetics." ●●



Meditations

On the Word

EXCELLENT advice, this, any way we look at it. Many of us remember the simple rhyme we learned as children:

"All that you do, do with your might.

Things done by halves are never done right."

A grade or two later, perhaps, we were struggling over the copy book maxim, "*Anything that is worth doing at all is worth doing well.*" Continuing the analogy, anything not worth doing well—and there are so very many such things—is a waste of time and should be dropped, that we may be able to concentrate on things that matter. It is wise, therefore, not to spread ourselves too thin by acquiring too many interests, for while a few rare souls may be eminently successful in a great many lines of work, the rule is, "jack of all trades and master of none." The scatter-brained, halfhearted, halfway, "good enough" worker will not go far in this life, nor does he derive much satisfaction from his labor. We reap as we sow, getting from life just what we are willing to put into it. "He which soweth sparingly," said the greatest Apostle, "shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (II Cor. 9:6).

This life being too short to explore every road, it is necessary for us to choose the pursuit which promises the greatest rewards. To those who have faith in the Word of God, the highest rewards of earth sink into utter nothingness in comparison with the glories offered by Wisdom to her faithful disciples. "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor" (Prov. 3:16). Eternal life, eternal health and vigor, eternal glory and power and dominion with Christ! All this—and a hundredfold in this life besides (Matt. 19:

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest"

—Ecclesiastes 9:10.

29). Where now are the tinsel joys and honors of earth? "Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" (Ps. 49:20). Who would choose such a fate?

Such a reward as the Almighty offers us, if worth anything at all, is certainly worth an all-out effort, all we have and are, bent to one end. Only such an effort can or will succeed. If we win, nothing else will matter; if we lose, we have lived in vain. We can never hope to earn it—the prize is out of all proportion to our best efforts—but it is enough for us to make ourselves worthy of receiving it by changing our lives completely.

He who approaches this gigantic proposition waveringly, with insufficient faith and courage, will find it a losing battle unless he persistently adds and cultivates these essentials. Constantly looking back at the things he has left behind, torn by doubt and indecision, maybe yes and maybe no, he dwells between two worlds and loses both. In the days of Israel, God commanded the fearful and fainthearted to return home, lest they lower the morale of the rest of the army.

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways," said James (1:8). Isn't it true? We cannot serve God with a divided heart; we must be one thing or the other. The sin of the Laodicean church was not rebellion or vice or heresy, but lukewarmness, and as such it drew the most scathing of rebukes. Religion with them was a "spare time" matter; the cares of this life crowded out the really important things. "Meditate upon these things," that great one-purpose man, Paul, wrote to his spiritual son Timothy, "give thyself *wholly* to them" (I Tim. 4:15). Not halfway, or even mostly, but *wholly*. This thread of singleness of heart, of

one increasing purpose, runs through the entire sacred Volume. "This *one thing* I do . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

This by no means precludes working for our living, for this is a part—but only a part—of "these things." The life—eternal life—is more than meat, and the body than raiment. The Scriptures emphatically denounce improvidence or slothfulness in temporal things (Prov. 18:9; Rom. 12:11; II Thess. 3:10; I Tim. 5:8). Slackness in everyday affairs is a pretty sure indication of a weakness somewhere in the character. The spiritual man will look upon his business as a stewardship, God's business, and handle it accordingly. It is a matter of motives, of balance, putting first things first.

The latter half of our meditation text contains a solemn warning for old and young. *Now* is the time to do the good things we have been dreaming of; tomorrow may be too late. This verse in itself is a death blow to the pagan theory of the immortality of the soul. Dr. Moffatt renders it, "no pursuit, no plan, no knowledge or intelligence, within the grave where you are going," or, as the Douay Version has it, "in hell, whither thou art hastening"—*Sheol*, the grave, the common receptacle of all human beings. This all adds up to the sleep of the dead, even to annihilation if we end our days without accepting God and agreeing to serve Him. In any event, death is the end of probation, definitely and finally. When the spark flickers and dies, our book of remembrance is sealed, to be opened, for better or worse, at the Last Judgment. And since death, with its thousand doors, is so nigh each of us every hour of the day, since at best our time is very short, so much to do and so little done, how very important that we be found daily living in expectancy, planning as if we were eternal but conducting ourselves as if today were our last. Only so can we claim the assurance that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7). Protected by these "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14), we are assured of sufficient time to complete our work—enough, but no more.

*Forget the past and live the present hour;
Now is the time to work, the time to fill
The soul with noblest thoughts, the time to will
Heroic deeds, to use whatever dower
Heaven has bestowed, to test our utmost power.
Now is the time to work, and, better still,
To serve our God alone; o'er sin and ill
To rise triumphant; thus the perfect flower
Of life shall come to fruitage.*

May, 1974

Selected Quotes . . .

On the Home

When home is ruled according to God's Word, angels might be asked to stay with us, and they would not find themselves out of their element.

—Spurgeon

Six things are requisite to create a "happy home." Integrity must be the architect, and tidiness the upholsterer. It must be warmed by affection, lighted up with cheerfulness; and industry must be the ventilator, renewing the atmosphere and bringing in fresh salubrity day by day; while over all, as a protecting canopy and glory, nothing will suffice except the blessing of God. —Hamilton

Home is the seminary of all other institutions.

—E. H. Chapin

The most essential element in any home is God.

—Dr. Frank Crane

The family circle is the supreme conductor of Christianity.

—Henry Drummond

Christianity begins at home. We build our characters there, and what we become in after years is largely determined by our training and home environment.

—Tillman Hobson

To be God's child, we must begin by proving ourselves faithful children of our earthly homes. That is the way our Lord took, and it remains the way of life for all who would follow him.

—A. Ian Burnett

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

—Joshua 24:15

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

—Isaac Watts

Contradiction

On the walls of an old cathedral was found this thought-provoking inscription, entitled: "Thus Speaketh Christ, Our Lord, to Us":

Ye call me Master, and obey me not:

Ye call me Light, and see me not:

Ye call me Way, and walk me not:

Ye call me Life, and desire me not:

Ye call me Wise, and follow me not:

Ye call me Fair, and love me not:

Ye call me Rich, and ask me not:

Ye call me Eternal, and seek me not:

Ye call me Gracious, and trust me not:

Ye call me Noble, and serve me not:

Ye call me Just, and fear me not:

If I condemn you, blame me not!

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? " (Lu. 6:46).