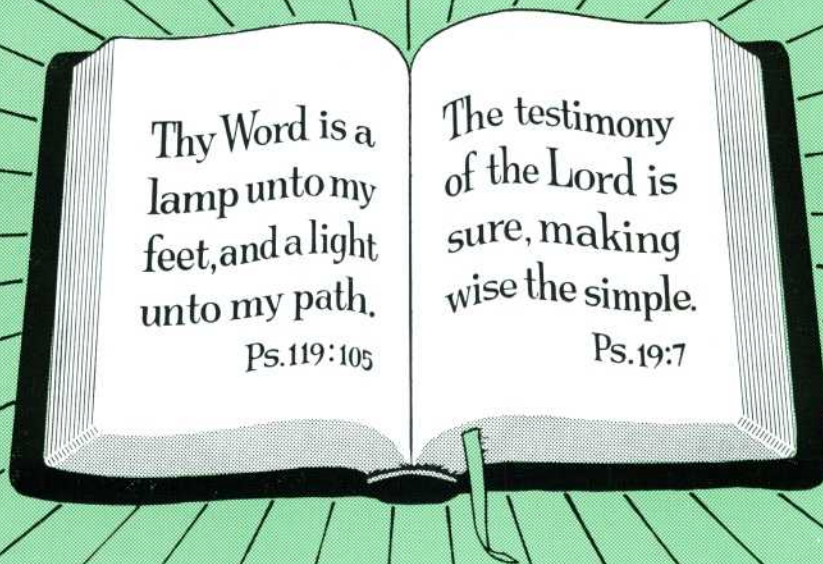


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Thou Shalt Love the Lord Thy God

Pentecost Is Power

The Millennium : A Plan That Will Work

Pro & Con

Sanctifying the Ordinary

AS prospective sons and daughters of the Kingdom of God, we have in our possession a precious treasure we can ill afford to neglect. But at the same time, we find ourselves in the midst of innumerable ordinary duties which seemingly bear little relation to the sublime. We feel to say with the poet, "Oh, in what way can such a life as mine is, glorify our heavenly Father, or be a reasonable sacrifice? What can I do to fit me for His kingdom, whiles that I must work, and toil and struggle day by day?..."

The solution to the problem lies in learning to sanctify the ordinary. Whatever our tasks, we can do them "for Christ's sake." Whatever our desires or ambitions in this world, we can discipline and direct and develop them "for Christ's sake."

This is just the opposite of what we see all around us. We live in a sophisticated world. People have been overstimulated, their sensibilities numbed by constant excitement. Nerves are jaded and tastes corrupted. The sacred has been secularized and the holy vulgarized. Everything is common; almost everything is boring.

Yet, in the middle of it we are charged with the responsibility of living soberly, righteously and godly. There is danger that we allow ourselves to be too much affected by the degenerate tastes and low views of the "Hittites" and "Jebusites" among whom we must dwell and so learn the ways of the nations—to our own undoing—as Israel did.

When the whole moral and psychological atmosphere is secular and common, how can we escape the deadly effects? How can we sanctify the ordinary and find true spiritual meaning and stimulus in the common things of life? The answer is to consecrate the whole of life to Christ, "for His sake."

To make our lives acceptable to God does not necessarily mean that everything we do must be changed. We must care for our families, earn our living, and provide the necessities of life for ourselves and those who

depend on us. But we must change our attitude toward all these responsibilities. We must learn to do "for Christ's sake" what we had formerly been doing for our own name or our own sake. This may seem like a small change; we would like to do some great thing for God, to hazard our lives in a dramatic act of devotion. Plain workaday Christians like us? How can we rise to such heroic heights as those who have gone before us? How can we, in the dull routine of the commonplace, live lives acceptable to God? What can we do to satisfy the heart of our Father in heaven and make us eligible to live forever in His kingdom?

The answer is simple: Vacate the throne room of your heart and enthrone *Him* there. Set His interests in the focus of your heart's attention and stop wanting to be a hero. Make Him your all in all and try yourselves to become less and less. Say with John, "He must increase, and I must decrease." Dedicate your entire life to His honor alone and shift the motives of your life from self to God. Thus you may sanctify the ordinary.

"For thy sake" can rescue the little empty things from vanity and give them eternal meaning. The lowly paths of routine living will by this thought be elevated to the level of a bright highway to eternal life. The humdrum of our daily lives will take on the quality of a worship service and the thousand irksome duties we must perform will become sacrifices acceptable to God.

In the sight of God, there are no small offerings, if they are made with the right motive and with the right spirit. Conversely, nothing appears great to Him that is given for any other reason than for His honor.

When we learn to sanctify the ordinary, every commonplace duty will turn to joy and every lesser task will become an offering of gold and we ourselves will become like vessels "sanctified and holy, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." ●●

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Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

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

In the spiritual parallel, it is a place of troops, where soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "The weapons we wield are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, NEB).

Megiddo Message

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Thou Shalt Love the Lord Thy God

...WITH ALL THY HEART

In familiar discourse, such as the following, our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, vividly portrayed the future and appealed to all to make the wise decision, giving up the lesser for the abundantly greater.

Though some seventy years have passed since he spoke these words, their message is still vital and timely and should encourage those who are seeking life in the world to come.

THE thought of the great and wonderful future, that the promise is indeed in the blessed Word that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"; and that we shall continue to enjoy ourselves as long as these wonderful planets shine on in their glory, should be enough to cause us to stop and earnestly consider and ask ourselves the question: Are we ready; are we every moment living for eternity? Or are we spending our time for the ephemeral things of this life which will so quickly pass away that we shall wonder where they have gone? We can scarcely realize that all we now have will vanish away to be no more. But the grandeur and glory and beauty, the grand beatitudes of the Kingdom of God will never pass away. They will not only continue to roll on in eternity, but we shall be made like unto the angels, consubstantial with and equal to the glory that shall ever continue.

We shall be given a life that will know no sorrow, nor experience one pain. Such a life is worth our consideration. To procure such a home of magnificence and beauty is worth every effort within our power. But still we look around on this benighted world and how few are all interested and inquiring every moment: Am I living as I should? Am I bringing every thought into obedience to our Lord and Master; or am I going along and simply procuring for myself transient pleasures which are to perish like a bubble with the using? We can answer these questions either in our favor or disfavor. It will be according to our actions in life whether it will be for or against. If you and I are keeping all the commandments, it will be for us; but if not, it will be against us. We may go along and deceive ourselves and think we are going to

live forever, but we shall find ourselves sadly disappointed some day.

A Fundamental Commandment

The first, great commandment to be kept is: to serve the Lord with all our mind, might and strength. We are to have no mind, might or strength with which to serve the world, but must spend all in the service of our Lord; for He 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 ask or even think. This was not written simply to make a book, but to make an impression upon our affections, to show us the goodness of an All-powerful God. 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 express my promise in the highest degree; 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. Oh, it will so far exceed all we can ask or think! What more could He do for us? What greater inducement could an Omniscient God offer us as individuals to get us to keep the first commandment found in Mark 12:30, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength"?

The difficulty is that people in general do not know what God has said. We are greatly favored in having the privilege of learning the Word of God; and our hearts should go out to Him in thankfulness for the blessings by which we are surrounded. As I said, so many do not drink in the

wonderful meaning of this verse. They read it over but do not go down to the depths of it. They only nibble around the outside, instead of digging underneath until they reach the rock. To serve the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength means something. This Rock declares that we must serve Him with *all*—not part, not two-thirds, not three-fourths, not nine-tenths, but *all* our mind, might, and strength.

We have often said this over, but have not drunk in the real import of the words. It does not mean simply to say it over as a parrot says, "Good morning, John," to every one who comes along. When evening comes he still says, "Good morning, John," showing us it is only imitation. He does not comprehend its meaning. And so it is with the wide world, they do not comprehend the ideas these words contain, that we must love the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength.

A Reasonable Commandment

How reasonable it is that we should keep this commandment, seeing God will do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can even ask or think! How reasonable we should spend all our time in His service, that we should be *wholly* consecrated to Him! And there is also a second consideration: we are not only obtaining for ourselves exceedingly above all we can ask or think, but we are laboring in God's vineyard, and those who listen to Him will obtain that same exceeding great reward. We should be willing and let God use us as a second instrument that they may be brought into union with God and serve Him with all their mind, might, and strength; that the Lord may do for them "exceeding abundantly above" all they could even think or ask.

How great is the sum total of the Christian's life! It is above everything else. The true Christian will make his religion foremost. It will not be a secondary matter with him, but he will "*seek first* the Kingdom of God and his righteousness," and then the rest that he needs shall be added unto him. Yes, he will be seeking to clothe himself with the righteousness of Christ. Here we are met with the idea that has blinded the whole world: they know not what the righteousness of Christ is, thinking it means nothing but to simply say, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," and we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ. But, beloved brethren, we are to do as He did; there is a work we must perform. Christ did not do it for us, and He never will. We have been wrongly educated.

Neither the Almighty Himself, nor the angels, nor Jesus could cleanse us from sin unless we stop

sinning. With God's help, we *stop sinning ourselves*. And how reasonable it is! The God of heaven who said, "Come now and let us reason together," declared through Paul, "Awake to righteousness and sin not." We have the work to do, and we have it to do ourselves; the Almighty cannot do it for us. A man once said to us,

"Why, you limit the power of God!"

"Oh, no, God can forgive us our sins, but He cannot cleanse us; this work we must do."

That is why He told us we must serve the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength. Sin is the transgression of God's law (I John 3:4), and we must cease from it.

So earnest was the great Apostle in this matter of keeping this first commandment and urging others, that he pleaded, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Is it not our reasonable service to love with all our heart the God who promises us "exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think"?

The Cleansing Necessary

I would not have thought of such ideas as these myself, but they have been forced upon me. God has seen fit to have them recorded for our instruction and upbuilding, and they are true to the very letter. If we are proud, we may know where we shall stand, for "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Never shall a proud man or woman see inside the Kingdom of God. If you let pride, or arrogancy, or the words of men influence you, you can have no hope of entering that wondrous home. You see there is a work to do, and by working we become cleansed.

A drunkard might make a thousand resolutions that he would stop drinking, but I would like to know if there is anything that could purify that man and make him fit for our company but to stop drinking? Then how much more necessary it is for us to cleanse ourselves in order that we may be fit to be received into the presence of the Almighty and the lovely angels. Do we realize that we are spiritual drunkards? The world have been made drunk on the wine of Babylon; Babylon means confusion. They are made drunk by all this confusion in the world. Spiritual advisers in many churches let their members go out in the world and act and dress just as the world do; and if they want to prevaricate they can. Many are kept in the church just the same. That is why our Master said—and I do not wonder at it—"Strait... and narrow is

the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14).

The only thing that will cause you or me to be accepted before God is to do the work, to reform; for Peter says in I Pet. 4:3, "The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." We are no longer to "live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lust of men, but to the will of God." If you are going to live to the will of God, you must put away the fruits of the flesh—wrath, anger, malice, hatred, and the rest, and put on the fruits of the Spirit. Produce some fruit that you are going to serve God, and then we will receive you. We cannot receive people by their words only, the fruits must confirm them.

You remember the multitude came to John to be baptized; but he told them, No; you must bring

forth "fruits meet for repentance" (Matt. 3:8). That is what he demanded at their hands, fruits "answerable to amendment of life," as it reads in the margin. First bring forth fruits "answerable to amendment of life," and then we shall have some evidence that you are in earnest, some evidence that you are being washed from your sins. I said that God could not cleanse us from sin; but He does cleanse every member of the body of Christ from sin. How? We have these great and precious promises set before us; we begin to desire to obtain them, and are led by them to put away wrath and anger and all other fruits of the flesh; then, after we have done all this, God will forgive us. We are cleansed by His Word effectually working in us that believe (I Thess. 2:13). Thus we see how the Divine Record helps us to work out our salvation so that we shall be found worthy of ac-

(Continued on page 22)

Let Us Pray . . .

Our mighty God, Thou wondrous Being to whom belongs greatness, praise, adoration, strength, and eternity of days, Thou to whom all flesh must come, Thou who knowest the thoughts that come into our minds, every one of them:

As once again we appear in Thy presence help us to realize how much we need Thee. "As the eyes of the servant look unto the hand of his master," and as the child looks to the parent for protection and guidance, so we look to Thee, our heavenly Father. We need Thee every hour and every moment. We know that from Thee cometh every good and perfect gift, not in this life only but also in the world to come.

Our Father, we thank Thee for a knowledge of Thy demands, that a code of ethics is provided in Thy Word which can completely transform our unholy natures, making us holy as Thou art holy. May we always surrender gladly to Thy leading. Help us to remind ourselves often of the folly of seeking our own ways, knowing they lead down to death and eternal oblivion; and the wisdom of following Thy ways, knowing they can fit us for an eternal existence.

We thank Thee for Thy great plan, for the knowledge that this beautiful earth was not created in vain, but that some day it shall be filled with

Thy glory, and all sin, sorrow, disappointments, fatigue, frustration, sickness, and pain, and even death itself, shall be banished from this planet.

Help us to have a strong abiding faith, to believe with all our hearts that Thy long silence shall at last be broken by the return of Thy dear Son to earth; that as surely as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and the garden causeth the things sown in it to spring forth, so Thou wilt cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations.

May our hearts be so stayed on our sublime hope that every outpouring of our soul will be rejoicing; then we know that stumblingblocks can become stepping-stones, and every trial a token of Thy love for us, reassuring us that we have the potential for a finished stone in Thy eternal temple; encouraging us to patiently endure the chipping and polishing until, created in Thy likeness mentally and morally, we shall one day be made into Thy physical image, and be privileged to look upon Thy glorious face.

Create in us that warmth of spirituality that shall enable others to find Thy strength for their weakness, Thy peace for their strife, Thy joy for their sorrow, Thy love for their hatred, Thy compassion for their indifference to the welfare of others.

O God, Author of eternal light, do Thou shed forth continual day upon those who watch for Thee, that our lips may praise Thee, our life may bless Thee, our meditations may glorify Thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We Need to Pray

PRAYER is power.

In the discipline of daily devotions there is the secret of peace, never failing strength, and ever present comfort for the struggling soul.

Our Lord prayed long and often. It was His custom to rise up a great while before daybreak and depart into a solitary place to pray. In times of great decisions and sore temptations, He resorted to the mountaintop, and there spent hours in soul-to-soul communion with the Father. He came down with deeper peace, more joy, and a greater desire to do His Father's will.

People who enjoy each other's company love to spend satisfying moments by being close together. Their delight is in mutual fellowship. God would have us take pleasure in His presence. Communion with the divine mind always brings the benefits of spiritual triumphs and soul-encouraging victories.

All servants of God have been and are men and women of prayer. Prayer strengthens the moral fiber, takes away the blues, releases tension and replaces it with confidence, a song of praise, and thanksgiving. The time spent in holy conversation with God removes anxious fears and brings to us the truest of balm.

Prayer is essential in the life of a Christian. While it is self-sacrificing, difficult training, nonetheless it brings a fullness of joy known only to those who practice it. Time spent in the presence of the Father is time well spent. It never fails to brighten our path, and it makes us more qualified to face our numerous shortcomings and be determined to serve the highest and the best.

Should we pray? Yes, indeed.

How long should we pray? Without ceasing. We need God all the time. We need to talk freely with Him. When things are just right and when they are not, we need Him. The conditions make no difference; He understands. Our need for His help never alters.

We cannot call on God too often. With our human frailties and our own inability to cope with the present cares of life, calling upon God is certainly our constant need. We should feel continually our dependence on Him. Whatever our need, we should call on the Father. He is always available. In the hour of trouble, "underneath are the everlasting arms." In the calm of life, He is there, too. "Child of Mine," He says, "I will be thy firm sup-

port. In the peaceful hour, or in the storm of life, fear not."

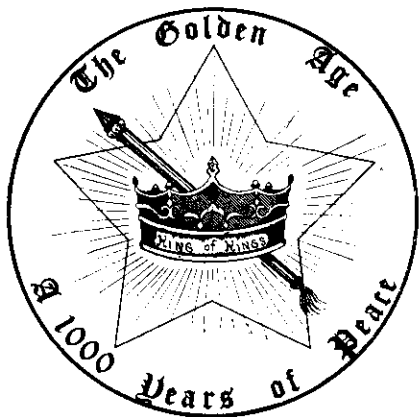
"Watch and Pray" is a motto to have and frame. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Today's world is a hubbub of evil and uncertainty. To stand upon our guard, buttressed against any eventuality, we need to hear what God the Lord will speak. His voice is the only one we should pay attention to. God is our central authority. To Him we owe our perfect allegiance. When the destructive forces around and within us would do their damage, it must be our business to stay fixed in a close relationship to God. Him we serve, and Him we must obey. Whatever else, the end result of watching and praying is to keep us from succumbing to temptation.

Times without number we must seek His face. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1). It is only by faith that we climb to the heights, where heaven seems near and our spirits delight in the glory and peace and communion with God. Every time we pray we must feel it is doing us good. Inspired and refreshed, we have the assurance He will take charge of our lives. There shall no evil befall us, only that which is for our good. So press we must to fulfill our duties here, however long or short the duration; but we should never neglect the mountaintop—lest we fail.

Prayer to be effective must be sincere. Those who pray must do it with importunity, faith and a feeling of total reliance upon God. We must believe God is powerful, and willing to grant our petitions. Yes, He will answer them even though sometimes the answer may be "No." If we pray according to His will and fear Him, He will answer. But it is God's prerogative to give or to withhold our requests according to His will for us.

The intercessory medium is one of God's provisions for His earthly children. There is a place for every sincere seeker, whether fearful, or fainting, or disheartened, or discouraged—where they can call upon the Father and receive a listening ear.

*From every stormy wind that blows,
From every swelling tide of woes,
There is a calm, a sure retreat—
'Tis found beneath the Mercy Seat.*



*This is the third in a series
of articles on the coming
MILLENNIUM.*

A Plan that Will Work

WE have established the people who will live during the Millennium; let us now turn our minds to what God has revealed about the plan of the wonderful new order which Christ and the saints will inaugurate. There are many marvelous and thrilling features of this plan, and they are difficult to separate. But let us try to take them one at a time.

The first we will consider is

Millennial Super-Government

The new government of Christ and His saints will surpass any ever known on this earth. Its executive powers will extend "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8)—a fact which will have far-reaching effects. No longer will people in different parts of the world have different allegiances and different heritages and different loyalties. All will be united as one nation "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." For "the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9).

The new government will be superior to any ever known on earth before. All power will be vested in competent and responsible hands—at the head of the government will be the King and Lord of all. And He will share His responsibilities with fully qualified, competent co-rulers, who will be themselves "kings" and "lords," for Christ will be "King of kings and Lord of lords." The principle proclaimed in ancient Israel (but not always practiced) will now be exercised: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (II Sam. 23:3). There will be officers of peace, and exactors of righteousness (Isa. 60:17-18).

The King of this new government will know how to govern equitably for the good of all. "He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.... In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" (Ps. 72:2, 7). Can we today imagine how wonderful that will be?

The prophet Daniel reveals both the scope of this new government's jurisdiction, and also the terms of office of its rulers: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and

*"And the kingdom and dominion,
and the greatness of the
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en, shall be given to the people
of the saints of the most High,
whose kingdom is an ever-
lasting kingdom, and all do-
minions shall serve and
obey him"
—Daniel 7:27*

all dominions shall serve and obey him" (7:27). It will be an "everlasting kingdom" and it will be "under the whole heavens"—it will be worldwide and eternal.

How does the term "everlasting kingdom" fit with a thousand-year plan? The new government, once established, will go on forever. Nothing will ever happen to change or challenge its power and authority. Only the people under its jurisdiction will change, as the environment in which they live grows better and better. We will consider these progressive changes of environment later. The thousand years is the time of developing, perfecting and setting in motion, bringing to a finished state the earth and its inhabitants so that the perfect world may roll on through the endless cycles of the eternity that lies beyond the Millennium.

We may realize better how superior that future government will be by contrasting it with present governments. To do this, let us go to the Bible, where we find some passages which come perilously close to describing even the best governments which exist today.

"None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity and speak lies.... The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings.... And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter" (Isa. 59:4, 8, 14). That describes the situation under man's jurisdiction.

The Millennial jurisdiction will belong to God and those whom He appoints, and we read of His government: "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted" (Ps. 89:14-17).

Here is another description that closely describes what we see today: "The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: ... that they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire. ... The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge" (Mic. 7:2-4). But all this will someday be relegated to the forgettable past. The prophet Isaiah pictures a Millennarian musing on the terror that has passed. He says: "Where are the tyrant's officers, who taxed us, charged us, took our tribute? Those insolent creatures you shall see no more" (Isa. 33:18-19, Moffatt).

The new administration will not be cruel; it will be firm, just and benevolent. Whatever sin exists must be controlled, for it will not be allowed open manifestation. The promise is, "Thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 3:15). Can we, who live yet in the old world under man's jurisdiction, imagine what that will be like? No evil to be seen—anywhere! No more crime, no man-against-man, no family strife, no inequity, no gambling or bribery or working for unjust gain; no more drug trafficking, no more alcoholism, no more smoking; no more immorality or vice; no more manufacturing to satisfy man's vanity or pride or sensual pleasure; no more living for pride and selfishness and greed. How can

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth" —Psalm 72:8, 7

"Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations" —Psalm 145:13



"As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" —Numbers 14:21.

Glory, as used in the Bible, has many meanings and shades of meaning. There are few words which have so great a variety. The Hebrew word for glory comes from a root meaning "weight," but the idea of weight is used to denote importance or worth; scholars tell us it is always used with this meaning in Scripture. Glory is the worth or greatness which commands the respect or admiration of others.

Among the meanings of "glory" as given in *Young's Analytical Concordance* are these: adornment, honor, praise, beauty, majesty, fame, purity, preciousness, grandeur, splendor, magnificence, that which exalts.

And more.

In the time of Moses the glory of the Lord appeared as a cloud or pillar of fire. This we know to have been the bright shining of the glory of immortal beings, the angels of God (Ex. 23:20; 13:21; 14:19).

On one occasion, the glory of the Lord abode on Mount Sinai for forty days and Moses went up into it. The sight of this glory was like a great fire to the

(Continued from page 9)

this be? The "devil," sin and all sinners, will be "bound," restricted, kept inside the hearts that are still evil (Jer. 17:9); he will not be able to go about spreading evil and mischief any more.

The severity and justice of the new government is described in Revelation as rule "with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:27). Millennial law will be law unbreakable for the good of all. No more "you decide what is right for you," but YOU OBEY: "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:21).

But along with the rod of iron will come a full measure of benevolence and care. The promise is: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isa. 65:24). Or as the passage has been paraphrased: "I will answer them before they even call to me, while they are still talking to me about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers" (TLB). What ever-present divine assistance for the blessed inhabitants of that new government!

The Contrast

WHAT might we say in comparing the thousand-year plan with all plans of men?

Let us use for an example what Dr. Kissinger said recently about the age we are in and the plans

of our nation for the future. There is a striking contrast between his vision as a statesman of this world and the vision of the all-wise and eternal God. We will quote a few of his remarks.

The initial question asked Mr. Kissinger in an interview was: "What do you see as you look into the future? What lies ahead for America?" There are six points in his reply which we would like to quote and contrast with what an inside observer might be able to note of Millennial government activity and progress.

POINT ONE, MR. KISSINGER: "*We are moving into a new world. We are adjusting to a new environment.*"

INSIDE THE MILLENNIUM: As we move into God's new world, everything grows continually and rapidly better.

POINT TWO, MR. KISSINGER: "*We are trying to design a policy that responds to the realities of the present and the hopes of the future, a policy that looks at the evolution of history and the American contribution to it.*"

INSIDE THE MILLENNIUM: The governing body of the thousand-year plan is not merely trying to design a new policy—they are implementing a whole new system. The rulers are fully qualified to manage, and their splendid and perfect policy is transforming the earth wondrously. We do not look back at the days when man's history evolved painfully of itself; we are continually thrilled with

children of Israel (Ex. 24:16-18). This was when Moses received the law; and in the Acts of the Apostles, we are told (7:53) that the law was received by the disposition of angels. Again, the glory was the shining of immortals.

One time Moses earnestly begged of God to show him His glory (Ex. 33:17-18). The Lord passed by, it is written, and covered him so he could not see His face. Said the angel, "Thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen." The afterglow was all that Moses' human faculties could comprehend, only a partial manifestation of His full glory.

Immortal beings shine. Their full glory is so great that mortal eyes cannot look upon it.

When the building of the temple was complete in the days of Solomon, we read that "the glory of the Lord filled the house," and the people saw the glory (II Chron. 5:13-14; I Kings 8:10-11). There was a shining radiance that resulted from the presence of the Lord's representatives.

The same shining radiance will be part of every faithful one who receives the crown of life. Do we wonder why the city of that grand Day will not need

"the sun or the moon to shine in it"? It will have "the glory of God" to "lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23; Isa. 60:19).

When the earth is filled with the glory of God, it will be filled with immortal beings who shine with His glory and share His divine qualities—"adornment, honor, praise, beauty, majesty, fame, purity, preciousness, grandeur, splendor, magnificence." They will know the power and wisdom and wonderful acts and accomplishments of the immortals.

But the glory of the Lord is not all future. Those who will know His glory then must reflect in their lives now the glorious qualities of moral beauty that were in Christ. Right now there is glory in every patient waiting, in every heroic sacrifice, in every sincere prayer, in every triumph over sin. These are the glories which God will glorify and increase throughout the Millennium, until the whole earth is filled with the everlasting glory of the Lord.

It will be glory that will cause our hearts to leap up to join the angel chorus, shouting, "Glory to God in the highest."

Oh, that will be glory! ●●

the New World as it grows more and more into the gloryland of God. There is great rejoicing everywhere as the work is beautifully and harmoniously carried forward.

POINT THREE, MR. KISSINGER: *"While any policy has imperfections, I think we are moving in the right direction."*

INSIDE THE MILLENNIUM: There are no imperfections in the government of the New World. We are positively moving in the right direction.

POINT FOUR, MR. KISSINGER: *"On the other hand, our framework is not complete."*

INSIDE THE MILLENNIUM: God's plan for the earth is complete, awaiting its fullest realization as the time becomes right. He is able to declare the end from the beginning, and He knows what is the right plan.

POINT FIVE, MR. KISSINGER: *"Many issues remain uncertain."*

INSIDE THE MILLENNIUM: All issues are clear and certain, and they have been from the beginning.

POINT SIX, MR. KISSINGER: *"There is still an unfinished agenda."*

INSIDE THE MILLENNIUM: There is no unfinished agenda. The divine program was designed ages ago, and it is perfect. Now that it has been inaugurated, it will go forth from glory to glory evermore. It is God's one thousand-year plan, and nothing can stop it. It is a plan that will work. ●●

May, 1977

Events Leading Into the Millennium...

WHEN we think of the Millennium, we must not picture an ideal and perfect state of affairs descending miraculously from heaven and displacing instantly all sin and evil. The Bible reveals a whole sequence of events that will lead into that new age.

There will be:

*The appearance of Elijah the prophet
The resurrection of the dead in Christ
The arrival of Christ
The meeting in the air (the so-called "rapture")
The judgment of the covenant-makers
Christ stands on Mt. Zion with His saints
The Coronation of the King
Establishing the new government
The call to universal allegiance to the new government
Worldwide resistance to the new Kingdom
The Battle of Armageddon
Reconstruction, rehabilitation
The Millennial reign of Christ and the saints
(Continued on page 12)*

The first open act of divine intervention will be the appearance of the prophet Elijah to herald the approach of the King and to break God's long silence. The promise is, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5). He comes to prepare the way for the coming King and Conqueror—"lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (v. 6). Elijah comes to "restore all things," to bring to life those who sleep in Christ that they with the living believers may be ready to meet Christ when He arrives. Elijah comes to restore the power of the Holy Spirit, which was withdrawn at the close of the Apostolic Age, and to begin a worldwide moral reformation.

Soon after the arrival of the herald will come the King in all His splendor, "in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38). The greatest event in the history of the ages, it will not go unknown and unacclaimed. The saints of all the ages, together with the living believers, will be gathered, ready to be "caught up . . . in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:16-17). This ecstatic meeting, often called the "rapture," will give the King the welcome He is due; but it will not result in the saints being taken to heaven with Christ, as many believe. The next events will be the Judgment, the separating of the righteous from the wicked (which possibly will take place in the air—we are not told), after which all will return to earth, the saints appearing with Christ: "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech. 14:4-5). The Judgment will have identified the true Church, the winners in the struggle for life eternal, the Bride of Christ, which will then be united to Christ in a glorious ceremony of marriage (Revelation 19). From henceforth they shall be the New Royalty, immortal members of the family of God.

The new administration will immediately take the reins of world government, with Christ and His saints as acting authorities, and all men and nations will be called upon to pledge allegiance to them. Unfortunately, all will not be so inclined. The Great King who has been the expectation of the ages will not be honored when He declares Himself King. In fact, the reaction of the majority will be violent: "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). The result: "These shall make war with the Lamb . . ." (Rev. 17:14), and there will be a great holocaust. It will be the Battle of Armageddon. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:16).

But the New King and His co-rulers will be prepared and pre-armed. The Judgment which separated the faithful to be Kings and priests with Christ and to sit with Him on His throne also identifies those unfaith-

ful servants who will serve as the "sword of the Lord" with which He will smite and conquer the nations of earth. The King who comes to bring peace must first meet violence with violence. Those who resist will suffer for it. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isa. 60:12).

The Psalmist speaks of the wicked as being the Lord's sword (Ps. 17:13); they are the "weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land" (Isa. 13:5). The book of Revelation gives us the same thought of the unfaithful serving as Christ's warriors: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. . . . And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations" (Rev. 3:16; 19:15). This army will be composed of men and women who agreed to serve God faithfully but who turned their backs on Him in open rebellion. They will be the "ungodly" who will have to be convinced "of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15), and their term of service as warriors in the Lord's army will be His way of convincing them. This will be the time of great tribulation, the time of trouble "such as never was since there was a nation" (Dan. 12:1). During this great conflict, two thirds of earth's population will perish because they will stubbornly refuse to accept the new authority (Zech. 13:8).

The Battle will be costly, but only to the evil; no innocent will suffer, and none who will serve God will be allowed to perish. It is not God's policy to punish the innocent with the guilty. He will "destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isa. 13:9); the day will burn as "an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1). But only they "that do wickedly" shall suffer. For, "it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel 2:32).

The results of this great conflict will never be in question. Right shall triumph; the Kingdom shall stand; the Millennial Age shall dawn. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Rev. 17:14).

After the mighty holocaust will follow the grandest peace earth has ever known—a thousand years of reconstruction, growth, development and progress. ●●

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Resurrection and Judgment

CHRISTIANITY finds its beginning in a series of happenings, not the least of which was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That Jesus was dead, placed in a tomb, and later was resurrected is difficult for the skeptic to deny.

Frank Morison, writing in the preface to his book, **Who Moved the Stone?** points to the "stubbornness of the facts" concerning the resurrection. It was these facts which caused Mr. Morison to write his book in support of the resurrection rather than to ridicule it as he had at first thought to do. Mr. Morison researched his subject carefully, intent upon disproving the bodily resurrection of Christ, thinking the evidences too flimsy to provide a secure foundation, but his search brought him to the conclusion that the resurrection could not be denied, that the belief rested upon a very firm foundation that could not easily be shaken.

Just as sure as the resurrection of Christ is the resurrection promised to occur at Christ's second advent, and the Judgment to follow. The first judgment will be of the covenant-makers (studied in our last lesson); afterwards will come the judgment of all the nations of earth, also known as Armageddon.

III. THE JUDGMENT

The subject of the judgment is not a popular one in our modern world where little thought is given to the end of a matter. Christ's birth and resurrection are hailed by multitudes of self-styled Christians as they turn out for midnight masses at the supposed date of His birth and early-morning services to commemorate His resurrection. But how many would come to welcome Him as Judge of all the earth?

The very word "judgment" strikes fear to the heart of many today. The average church member would just rather not think about it, or talk about

it, to say nothing of listening to a sermon on the subject. Time was when some preachers dared to point their hearers to the inevitable Day of Judgment in the hope of turning them from their evil.

But such preaching would not be welcome in the nominal churches of today. Men rebel at one who dares question their morality or their motives. Sermons such as those preached by Jonathan Edwards might be preached today, but to mostly empty pews. Nevertheless, the judgment of the nations is as certain as the Second Advent and the judgment of the covenant-makers. For all those living when Christ returns, it will be submit or perish.

B. The Judgment of the Nations—Armageddon

Armageddon. The word has been the subject of much speculation over the years. Some would claim it is past, relating it to the conflict between the early Church and its persecutors, while others see it as the age-old clash between good and evil. But the Bible is specific: Armageddon is an event in itself, and it is yet future.

The word "Armageddon" appears but once in the Bible. It is used to locate the great and final conflict upon earth: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:16). It is the place of "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (v. 14), the battle that will truly be "the war to end wars."

Armageddon was seen in prophecy (though not named) centuries before Christ. The second Psalm provides a graphic description:

"Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed, . . . Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 'I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.' . . . 'Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, . . . lest he be angry, and you perish in the way: for his wrath is

quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (vs. 1-2, 5, 8-12, RSV).

The prophet Daniel saw the Battle of Armageddon as a "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation" (12:1). Yet Armageddon is necessary; only a small minority of mankind, left to their own desires, would follow the ways of the Lord. Only "when thy judgments are in the earth, [will] the inhabitants of the world . . . learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).

1. Armageddon—When? The timing of the Battle of Armageddon will be determined by the return of Christ and the saints to Mt. Zion following the judgment of the covenant-makers. Following his vision of Christ and the 144,000 standing on Mt. Zion, the Revelator "saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:6-7).

This ultimatum will be delivered worldwide. All will be given an opportunity to submit to the new Ruler and His government. Those who willingly turn and conform to the laws of God will be protected from the "time of trouble" as described by the prophet Joel: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said" (2:32).

2. Armageddon—Why? The Scriptures describe Christ as earth's "Redeemer," or "Saviour." Why must He fight to assume the role He was promised before His birth, the kingship of the whole earth? Should not the earth, presently in such turmoil, welcome a righteous Ruler?

Our first thought would be that He would be welcomed with open arms. But human nature has changed little from the beginning of the Biblical record. Adam and Eve in the garden did not want to be told what they could do and what they could not do. Those living in the days of Noah were unbelieving until the flood came; the Sodomites refused to hear that their city would be destroyed. The new and better order must be literally forced upon mankind, for "As it was in the days of Noah, . . . and Lot . . . even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26-30). In both cases, the wicked were forcefully removed by mass destruction.

3. Armageddon—Where? Armageddon, the location of the start of the great battle, is about sixty miles north of Jerusalem, better known as the Mount of Megiddo, a crossroads between the Orient

and Middle East. Its strategic location makes it a logical place for the battle of God Almighty to begin. Because Christ appears with the saints on Mt. Zion, which is near Jerusalem, when the summons goes forth to the nations, it would seem that Jerusalem and the Holy Land would be the first to be subdued. Zechariah prophesied that the Lord would "gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle" (14:2), but that is not to say that all battles must be fought at Jerusalem. It will begin there and spread throughout the earth until all the forces of evil are brought under the control of Christ and the saints.

4. Armageddon—The Lord's Army. When Christ goes forth "conquering and to conquer" He must have an army in order to succeed. Who are they?

They will be drawn from the large number of unfaithful servants, those who broke their covenant with Him and were turned to the left at the judgment of the covenant-makers. We identify them as the "sword of the Lord." "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations" (Rev. 19:15). That it goes "out of his mouth" indicates His complete control over His army.

We learn who makes up this "sword," or army from Psalm 17:13: "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword."

Isaiah also tells us of the Lord's army and His judgments: "I will not destroy the whole nation, . . . my chosen shall inherit them and my servants shall live there. . . . But you that forsake the Lord and forget my holy mountain, . . . I will deliver you to your fate, to execution, and you shall all bend the neck to the sword, because I called and you did not answer, I spoke and you did not listen; and you did what was wrong in my eyes and you chose what was against my will. . . . and the Lord God shall give you over to death" (Isa. 65:8-15, NEB).

Because the unfaithful refused to serve Him during their lifetime, turning from Him after they knew the way, they must serve in His army in the great task of cleaning up the earth and making it a fit place for God's Kingdom. Because they rejected His discipline in their lifetime, they will be compelled to wear a "yoke of iron" (Deut. 28:48) and as the sword of the Lord be used to conquer the rebellious nations of earth.

Any suffering they experience will not be physical, but mental. These unfaithful servants must be reminded of "all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which [they] have spoken against him" (Jude 15). They must work for the Lord under compulsion, knowing that when their work is done

they must reap their own punishment, eternal destruction. They will not be permitted to share in the glories of the Kingdom they have helped to shape, but "will have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

The "lake which burneth with fire" is not a literal lake burning with literal fire, but death, penal death or the second death, the punishment stated for them "that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ... [They] shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1:8-9). A righteous God would not cruelly torture or torment even the most abominable. They will simply perish (Isa. 60:12).

5. Armageddon—The Opposition. In any conflict, the first question usually asked is: Who started it? Surely Christ, the righteous King, would not start a war if there were no opposition to His rule. But when He calls on them to join the one nation that will include the whole earth, they will fight to retain their sovereignty.

From the Revelator we learn that the opposition includes both the political and ecclesiastical powers. "The kings of the earth," the representatives of the governments of the nations, join with the "beast," the titular head of the ecclesiastical or religious powers of earth, to resist the new Ruler. The Revelator (chapter 19) paints a vivid picture:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.... And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.... And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army" (vs. 11, 15-16, 19).

These verses picture a joining of the civil and religious powers of earth to resist the King of kings. Established religion, which regards its sovereignty as highly as any nation, sees its only hope in joining with the nations in the struggle to resist the new order. The new King with His high ideals will be looked upon as a would-be dictator, an intruder, for we cannot believe that if the people of the world truly recognized Him they would fight against Him.

6. Armageddon—A Righteous War. Armageddon, the last war to be fought on this earth, will be dif-

ferent from any other war that has been fought during the history of the world. It will be a righteous war, under the command of a righteous King. "In righteousness he [Christ] doth judge and make war" (Rev. 19:11).

A "righteous war" would preclude all the horrors of war such as we have known in this century, ruling out the possibility of death marches, torture, maiming, concentration camps and the like. Death will be the instrument for the elimination of the evil element, but it will be without lingering suffering. There will be no army hospitals filled with wounded and dying soldiers. A righteous King will not inflict human suffering.

A "righteous war" likewise removes all possibility of error. Every living person will be given an opportunity to submit to the new King and His government. We need not fear that any will be cut off who would do God's will, nor will any evil escape. Right will triumph.

Many Bible prophecies, descriptive of the judgments of God, indicate that His army moves with great speed in conquering the forces of evil. The use of force will be employed as an instrument of justice; none shall perish except the sinners who refuse to hearken to His summons and reform. "He shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. The Lord also will be a refuge... in times of trouble" (Ps. 9:8-9).

7. Armageddon—The Outcome. Armageddon will differ from other wars in this respect. Because it is God's doing, the end result is known in advance. Christ and His army will be victorious, but the benefits resulting will justify the destruction involved. Evil will be wiped from the earth.

The outcome is made known by the prophecy of Revelation 19:19 and 17:14:

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.... and the Lamb [Christ] shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful [the 144,000]."

The opposing armies do not stand a chance from the start. The Lord's army possesses super-power; they are men whom the sword cannot wound (Joel 2:7-8). Modern weapons of warfare will be ineffective when used against them. Nevertheless, they will fight to the end to save their system, their pleasures and their power until in the end "the Lord shall be king over all the earth," fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 14:9. It will not be without mass destruction, for we learn from this same

prophet that "it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein" (Zech. 13:8). Only one-third of earth's billions will survive to form the nucleus of the new world. Two thirds will stubbornly resist the orders of the new King, even unto death. The thought is sobering, but not unreasonable, because to spare any of the rebellious would invite a return to present conditions in the Kingdom. All evil must be eliminated; He will have only those who will obey Him.

C. Results of Armageddon

The immediate result of Armageddon will be freedom from the menace of war, freedom from the devastating results of alcohol, tobacco and drugs; freedom from sin and debasing pleasures. In such an atmosphere, the servants of the Kingdom will work out their salvation, learning the ways of the Lord.

1. Babylon's fall. Babylon's fall signifies the beginning of the Millennium. "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen" cried the angel, seeing in his mind's eye the cry of the "merchants of the earth [who] waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies" (Rev. 18:2-3).

Babylon is used in the Bible in a symbolic sense. It denotes the world and all its wickedness, confusion and error. God's people are warned by the prophet: "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense" (Jer. 51:6). The Revelator issued a similar warning: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:4-5).

God long ago promised vengeance upon all sin and evil. Babylon will be destroyed and those who do not separate themselves from it will be destroyed with it.

Babylon's fall is not without grief to some; those who profited by illicit means, by trafficking in pornography, by the manufacture and sale of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, by indecent moving pictures—all who profited in any way from evil are included in those who bewail her demise. "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth her merchandise any more. . . . And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after are departed from thee, . . . and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things which were made rich by her [Babylon],

shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come" (Rev. 18:11, 14-15, 10).

Part of the confusion signified by Babylon is seen in the tangled affairs in the world today: racial strife, labor strife, strained relations between nations, as well as strife within nations. All these will be a thing of the past when Armageddon ends and the whole world is one nation under God, with Christ as the King.

2. Protection for the Righteous. A logical question concerning Armageddon is: Where are the faithful, the 144,000 during this great time of trouble? Surely, they will not be in the line of fire; God has provided better things for them. The prophets Joel and Isaiah both had much to say about God's judgments and both mentioned God's care for His chosen ones.

From Isaiah we read: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation [judgments] be overpast; for . . . the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (26:20-21). Joel, after picturing the "great and the terrible day of the Lord," says that "it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel 2:32). God will provide refuge for all His chosen ones, both the 144,000 who will have just been awarded immortality, and also for any from among the populace who will submit and serve Him. None who will be worthy of salvation will suffer.

The prophet Daniel also speaks of this time of Armageddon, and of the protection which will be given the righteous; it is the "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" and the time when "thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. 12:1). The prophet Malachi also speaks of the special protection which will be given those worthy of it. After describing the day "that shall burn as an oven" in which "all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble," he voices this assurance: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:1-2).

Each of us may be there; let us be sure we are on the right side, where there will be protection.

*Reprints of these studies available,
10 cents per copy.*

The anniversary of Pentecost this year is May 22.
It comes to remind us that

Pentecost Is Power

NINETEEN centuries have passed since the apostles gathered on the day of Pentecost and received "power from on high." Nineteen centuries have passed since they went out into the world fulfilling their divine commission in the knowledge, courage and strength they had received: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations."

They went; and they taught all the nations of their world by the power of Pentecost. It was an age of progress in the early Church, such as had never been known before, for the apostles were able to confirm the words they spoke with visible demonstrations of divine power. In a single day, three thousand were added to the ranks of the church (Acts 2:41). How marvelous was the conviction wrought by the visible power of God among them!

Pentecost meant great progress for the early Church in that highly favored age, progress such as we today can hardly imagine. We are familiar with secular progress. It would be impossible to make many valid comparisons between the world of that time and the world in which we live. The modern automobile, the internal-combustion engine, jet propulsion, and nuclear power have displaced the plodding donkey, the mule and the wind-driven ship; and the fantastic achievements of our day are continually being surpassed.

But the hearts of men have not changed. The sins and temptations of Jerusalem and Corinth, of Ephesus and Rome, are the sins and temptations which threaten people today, ourselves not excluded. Our weaknesses are the same as theirs. Human needs in all ages are the same. Men still pursue happiness, crave power and yearn for recognition. Men still need hope—and help—from God.

Have we in our sophistication forgotten our total dependence on God? Have we been tempted to exalt scientific achievement and forget the spiritual? Are we in danger of substituting "another gospel" for the genuine because we feel so adequate?

Let us not be deceived; our needs are many. We lack the power of the Spirit to convince and convict. We lack the ability to move multitudes for Christ as the apostles did. *But Pentecost is coming*, a greater Pentecost than the early Church experienced. When God's time is right, Pentecost will be here and God will give His work on earth a grand renewing!

When Pentecost comes, God's messengers shall go forth "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:6-7).

Come Pentecost, and "the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also, yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord" (Zech. 8:21-22).

Come Pentecost, and "many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: . . . nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Mic. 4:2-3).

Come Pentecost, and "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." Then "shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. . . . And 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. 33:24; 35: 5-6, 10).

Come Pentecost, and the true Israel of God shall "blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isa. 27:6).

Come Pentecost, and "the hand of the Lord shall

be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies" (Isa. 66:14).

Come Pentecost, and "I will send those that escape of them unto the nations . . . to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles" (Isa. 66:19).

Come Pentecost, and the purveyors of evil shall be silenced: "all iniquity shall stop her mouth" (Ps. 107:42).

Come Pentecost, and it shall not end until "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

Silence forever any suggestion that the work of God is weak! It is strong and growing stronger under the all-seeing eye of the God of Israel, who shall shortly send His Son with a new gift of power which shall rend the foundations of the present system and bring in a new era of progress. It will come with Pentecost and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, for Pentecost means progress. ●●

Obituary

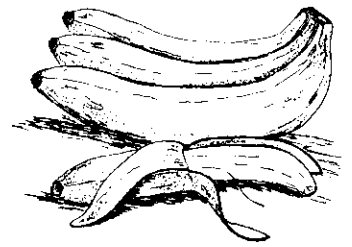
Liot L. Snyder

As this Message goes to press, we have just received word (April 5) of the death of a long-time member of our Local Congregation, Liot L. Snyder. Brother Snyder had been in failing health for several years, and death came as a welcome release. He bore his afflictions, including the loss of his sight, with outstanding patience and a true Christian spirit. Those who were with him say that through it all he never uttered a complaint but maintained a very cheerful spirit. He always encouraged his visitors to look with him to the great and glorious Day that is just ahead.

Brother Snyder spent fifty-one of his fourscore years in active service at the Megiddo Church, generously contributing to all branches of the work. Among his outstanding contributions were a helpful and voluminous correspondence; also several hundred poems, a great many of which he composed while traveling to and from work. To him, a working faith was vital, and he labored earnestly for the eternal crown.

Brother Snyder is survived by his wife, Sister Helen Snyder, who cared for him most tenderly during his long illness. Also surviving him are one son, Carl Snyder; eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. ●●

Fruitful Fragments



It is impossible to do anything that is worthwhile that does not influence others.

What should not be heard by little ears should not be said by big mouths.

You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him.

There is no man so poor as he who has only money.

When it comes to showing gratitude, it's pathetic that man is often outdone by a dog.

*The sculptor so carefully chisels each line,
With dexterous hand does he patience combine;
He to the task will his efforts confine
As he chisels and chisels away.*

*We too as we carve for the temple so grand
Must center our thoughts on the duty at hand;
And, till we enter that heavenly land,
Must chisel and chisel away.*

*Each feature must be in the likeness of one
Who leadeth to glory—Christ Jesus, the Son;
Our only desire that His will may be done
As we patiently chisel away.*

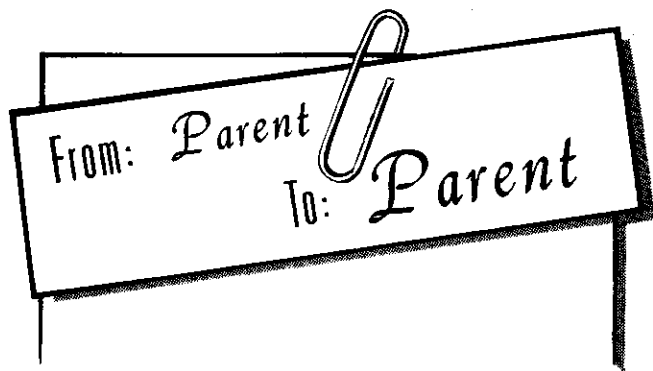
*We must smooth ev'ry hump with such painstaking care,
Whether pride or impatience, or evil desire;
All must be removed, or we'll not enter there.
So chisel and chisel away.*

*With God-given rules we must learn to comply,
And chisel the hardest where biggest faults lie;
For our image must pass a most critical eye,
And it will—if we chisel away.*

*Each tool must be sharp and the eye ever sure,
The pattern the finest that man can procure,
If down through the ages our work shall endure;
So chisel and chisel away.*

by Liot L. Snyder

MEGIDDO MESSAGE



What Are The Children Reading?

I was browsing through the religion section of a book store the other day trying to hunt down some suitable books for our children. To us parents who are endeavoring to raise our children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," deciding what is edifying for them to read can be a real problem.

But there was such a large selection. Wonderful! I thought. I took one book from the shelf. It was a Bible story, very colorful; it was the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. On the first page was a full-color picture of the serpent enticing Eve to eat an apple.

I picked another book: Noah's Ark. There were plenty of pictures in it, showing all the different kinds of animals parading into the ark two by two—of every kind from lions to lizards.

Then I made another choice. On the cover was a picture of Jesus surrounded with little children. The very first page of the story told how Jesus came down from heaven to dwell on the earth among us.

These books were all well written, and their pictures colorful and appealing. Just the kind of books we would want our children to read. Right?

Wrong! We would not want our children to read any of them as they were. Why not? Because they all teach things which are not in accord with the true teaching of the Word of God. I did buy one of the books though, the one about Jesus. It was generally good, and I knew a few word changes would make it conform to the true story as taught in the Bible.

As Christian parents, we have to be extra-discriminating in our choice of reading material. That is why my husband and I always make a practice

of looking through books before we buy them for our children, whether in the religious book store, the variety store, or the supermarket.

Besides the doctrines incorrectly taught in many religious books, we must continually guard our children against that which is even worse: the onslaught of mediocre and nonsense literature which is everywhere today. The best way to keep our children from comic books and silly and unreal stories, we've found, is to provide them with material which is edifying and/or educational. Fortunately, there is still good, wholesome material available. But even apparently harmless books—stories about firemen, policemen, or animal books, stories about the earth and its natural wonders, true-to-life stories about boys and girls and their problems—all need careful previewing. Remember, our children are continually learning from what they see and read.

The very best Book available is, of course, the Bible. And today its stories have been rewritten many times for children of all ages, from toddlers to teens. In the Bible there are stories of adventure, of excitement; stories that touch the heart, stories that inspire, stories that teach lessons. And all these stories are true! The children can learn what actually happened, and can learn to have confidence in God and His people. This gives them background knowledge which every child needs if he is to live a dedicated Christian life in his mature years.

Bible story books must be scanned—there are apt to be some points included from fundamental religious thought which we would not wish to teach our children. But such points can often be corrected easily—and at the same time, we are teaching our children not to trust everything they read, but only to trust the Word of God and believe what it teaches.

What was wrong with the three books I picked up that day in the book store? It is our duty as parents to be informed ourselves so we can make the right choices both for ourselves and our children. We need to know that Adam and Eve were not the first man and woman, and that no literal snake enticed them to eat a literal apple that grew in a literal garden. We need to know that the Flood in Noah's day did not cover the whole earth but only the "world of the ungodly," and therefore Noah did not need to take into the ark two of every fierce and poisonous creature that has survived until today. We need to know that Jesus was not God come down from heaven to dwell among men. Then we can teach our children.

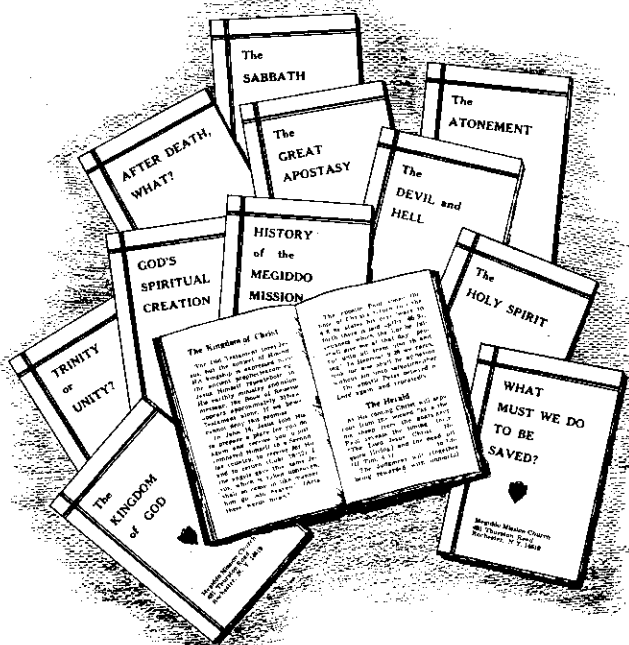
At our house, we like to set aside a time for

Bible story reading. Even a few minutes a day can mean a lot. Our children never have to be coaxed into sitting down and listening. Even the youngest loves the stories and pictures and can identify many of the Bible characters.

Our reading time provides us with many a topic of conversation throughout the day—while at work or at the table, traveling in the car or even while walking down the street. The more we talk and think about these people who served God in former times, the more real they become to us and the more we want to copy their examples (or learn from their mistakes).

Someday, our children will be choosing and buying their own reading material. Our choices now may help to determine their choices then. Let's do our best to give them Christian guidelines. ●●

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Our Readers Write...

Looking Forward

We are eagerly looking forward to the Day when there will be no more sickness, sorrow or pain. What a Day that will be! God will surely have such a Day for all who are worthy of it. And really, how little we actually have to do to gain it. When we are doing His will we are happier for it even here and now. But the eternal incentive is really worth it all.

I know earthly things often seem to crowd out the more important spiritual things. But no excuse we can give ever justifies putting off spiritual improvement. When we stand before the Grand Tribunal it won't matter how nice our house is, how nice the clothes we wear, how nice our yard and garden look, but how clean our heart is *will* matter.

It takes much more than wishing or even just thinking about it to make our hearts clean. It takes much prayer for guidance, much searching of the Scriptures and much hard work to eradicate the vices which come to us so naturally. But every minute we spend in spiritual self-improvement will pay great dividends in the future if we persist in it and become as our Lord and Master. What an example He left us!

Tyro, Kansas

P. F.

Build High Heaps

I imagine life could really be quite beautiful if we never said anything unkind or hurtful, and if we ourselves never felt offended or hurt. I could not tell the number of times I have been hasty and spoken sharp words, feeling quite justified at the time for doing so. Then afterwards I have prayed that I might be forgiven and have another opportunity to try again. However, I am resolved to make a more determined effort and "build high heaps" around all these destroying qualities and strive to think *first*. We are so blind in our rash moments and "cannot see afar off," so we will only have ourselves to blame if we fail to make the grade.

May the Psalmist's prayer be ours also, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

Swansea, South Wales, England

R. B.

Willing to Work

It has been truly said by many critics of our faith, that ours is a "do" religion and theirs is a "done" religion. But I'm sure we feel the same as a brother who said to me lately, "Who would have it otherwise?"

Anything worth having is worth working for. We work earnestly in this life for material things, which we value; and how much more we should work in the service of the Lord to do His commandments for the greatest of all rewards.

Minnedosa, Manitoba, Canada

E. H.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Scriptural Spotlight

(Continued from page 27)

preparation for greater purpose—even for Jordan.

Jeremiah seems to have acquired the reputation of “the weeping prophet.” This is unfair. Certainly he wept; he had plenty to weep about. It is a poor sort of man who cannot weep. Jesus wept. Paul wept. John wept much; and Peter wept bitterly. We have no record that Jeremiah did more than his share of weeping. He was too active for that. We find Jeremiah a truly noble soul, a fine sensitive character, unswerving from principle, courageous, zealous, sympathetic, tactful, very human in the midst of his godlikeness.

His message was very unpopular. His friends became fewer and fewer, and from all that we read in the record, except for his faithful secretary Baruch he stood alone for a long, long time. Could we have done as well?

Jeremiah’s lifespan covers one of the most dramatic and catastrophic periods of Hebrew history. He prophesied during the reign of Josiah and through the reign of Zedekiah, a period of about forty years. Great world events occurred during this period. King Josiah was slain in battle by Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt. Babylon conquered Assyria, subjugated Egypt, destroyed Jerusalem and carried the people away captive. Taking the times into consideration, we exclaim, What a Jordan Jeremiah crossed!

Great times produce great men, and Jeremiah was one of the greatest. We behold him standing like an iron pillar amid the smoke and flames and darkness of Jerusalem’s overthrow and destruction. The whole land—kings, princes, priests and people—fought against him, but they did not prevail because the Lord was with him. Strong was Jeremiah’s love for his nation, Jerusalem and the temple; we cannot imagine that it was the easiest thing to prophesy against them. However, after God called Jeremiah, he had but one ambition—to speak the Word of the Lord faithfully.

We can learn many lessons from Jeremiah’s time. We also are living in momentous times; for this is the “end time,” the closing hours of the Gentile age, when many things prophesied centuries and even millenniums in the past are meeting their fulfillment. The coming of the Lord is drawing nearer, the destinies of men and nations are in His hand. The covenant-makers of the ages shall be judged, and all the wicked, incorrigible

element, shall be cut off. And “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43). No more shall they suffer scoffs and rejection; they shall be clothed with immortality.

Are we girding ourselves with courage and faith to meet whatever tests may confront us? Are we strengthening our loins in preparation for crossing Jordan?

Each day we are given opportunity to prove our sincerity to God. If we stumble and fall over the smaller trials, then how will we do when we encounter more trying ordeals—*our* Jordan?

Apostate Israel did not prevail against Jeremiah, but what of us? We, in our day, do not fear violent persecution, but are we strong like an iron pillar, a brazen wall, and a defended city against all worldliness and indifference to the true God? Do we feel like compromising somewhat in our dress, our speech or manner of life, and apologizing for being different?

Apostate Israel went so far as to worship Baal in the house of the Lord. Now, it could be even today that we go into the house of the Lord worshiping some ways and desires that keep us from a wholehearted and holy service to God. Like Jeremiah, let us have but *one* ambition—to do the will of God faithfully.

As a defended city, so let us fortify our minds against these our enemies: impatience, selfishness, jealousy, discouragement, all the ways of our lower nature. They will take away our life! We must be alert, spot them in advance, subdue them, never belittle or excuse them. Be firm and say, “These low traits shall not prevail against me,” lest we fail at the great flood—Jordan.

God will make us strong if we are determined to be strong. Let us answer the challenge to us, and prepare for the raging Jordan: Arise and gird thyself with courage and faith; be not afraid.

If we prove our faithfulness to God through the ordinary trials of the day, then our hearts will be true to God through the greater trials.

Many faithful characters like Jeremiah have trod the way before us. We cannot reach that happy land except by crossing the raging Jordan. Those rolling billows represent the trying ordeals of life that purify and beautify our character in the sight of God. What an example of courage each faithful one is, and the more familiar we become with each of these great characters, the greater our incentive to courageously follow them and become worthy of meeting and greeting them in that fair and happy land—over Jordan. ●●

With All Thy Heart

(Continued from page 6)

ceptance in the Day of the coming of the Master.

A Serious Consideration

It is a serious thing to serve the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength. The world has not dreamed of its seriousness; that not a person who gets angry will pass the pearly gates. He must cease from anger. We must stop getting angry and impatient; hence John says: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood [word] of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1: 6-7). That is the basis of all Christian fellowship.

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." "If there come any unto you," said John, "and bring not this doctrine,"—what doctrine? Why, the doctrine of Christ; and the first commandment of this doctrine is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Now, "if there come any unto you"—it matters not who he may be—"and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house [*ecclesia*], neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 8, 10-11).

What is anger? It is a fruit of the flesh; and so if you are bearing that fruit, you may know what kind of tree you are. If we go out here and pick an apple from a tree, we know what kind of tree it is; and so if you are bearing anger, we know what kind of a tree you are. Is it not easy to ascertain what kind of tree it is that is bearing the fruits of God—"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"? It is too plain to make any mistake. God has not made it ambiguous or hard to understand, but He has made it so plain that even a fool need not err therein. The trouble is, the blind have been leading the blind, and they will both fall into the vortex of destruction by and by (Matt. 15:14).

Jesus said He was the *true light*, and He says that every one that bears anger is a tree of the flesh; so we may know just what we are by looking at the fruit. If we bear one of the fruits of the flesh, whether it be anger, wrath, jangling, theft, or any other evil fruit, we may know what we are. We might as well look for oranges to grow on a

floor lamp as to think of finding anger on the tree of righteousness. We are to be "trees of righteousness," of God's own planting. The fruits of the Spirit are these: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," kindness, charity. We must bear these alone. Would you expect, if you went out to gather fruit from an apple tree, to find apples, plums, peaches, pomegranates, cherries, and pineapples on it? No, you would find just apples, and nothing else; and so to be a tree of righteousness you must bear just one kind of fruit, the fruit of the spirit. Oh, it is a narrow way, a difficult road; but it is well worth our while to travel it!

It is just a question whether we believe or not; just a question whether we will keep the first commandment, and the second, which is like unto it—to "love thy neighbor as thyself." If you love one another as you love yourself, will you be getting angry, will you be having any wicked feelings, will you be saying any harsh things? No!

The Blessing Promised

When God gave the last revelation to Jesus, and it was sent by the hand of an angel to John that His servants might know His will, He told us: "Blessed are they that *do his commandments*, that they may have right to the tree of life." Do you think He would ever have sent such a message had He not meant what He said? Did He mean that you would get the blessing whether you did the work or not? Never. Do you think we can do the commandments without keeping the first one, to love the Lord with all our mind, might, and strength? Can we expect the bright, shining angels will welcome us into that sweet home in glory unless we have spent all in the service of the Lord? As surely as you live, the gates will be closed against every man who has not done this work; he will find out this to his own disappointment by and by. If all our time, energy, interest, and talent is not spent to procure this wondrous boon, we can never expect to get it.

Oh, to really get our minds down where we can realize that God cannot lie! Oh, to really believe it! It is written, "It is impossible for God to lie." Here is an impossibility; and there are other impossibilities with God. This is one of them, that it is impossible for Him to lie, and He declares unto us: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I

have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Anger, wrath, and malice are named in the same category of evil as murders, drunkenness, and such like; and God says "they that do such things *shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" Did He say it? He did. All you have to do is to turn to Gal. 5:19-21 and you will find it. Did He mean it? He did. We must bring all we have and are and serve Him with *all* our mind, every bit of it; all our strength, every particle of it; and all our might, every minutia of it. We cannot use one particle to serve our fleshly nature. We might just as well give up hope, as to think we can enter if we make only a halfway work of it.

All we are interested in is for you to gain that exceeding great reward, for you to pass the pearly gate; for us to join our hearts and hands together

and show to this benighted world these blessed truths, that they, too, may come in with us and gain that prize which is exceeding abundantly above all we can even ask or think. Let us renew our energy and work harder than ever before to gain the wonderful prize, for we know—no question about it—we know the prize is absolutely certain to all who remember His commandments to do them; and, on the other hand, if we do not keep them we know we shall reap destruction, for destruction is certain to the workers of iniquity.

May God be with us, and may these few words make a lasting impression on our minds, so that we may be found every moment serving our Maker, bearing the right fruits, that it may be our happy lot to gain a glorious future home and enjoy one another's company through the ages that shall roll on through the gladsome cycles of eternity. ●●



Out of the Archives

A First Century Reply

This letter was written to answer a first century inquirer into the Christian faith. The inquirer, named Diognetus, had asked about the Christians, "what God they trust in, and what form of religion they observe." Here are some excerpts from Mathetes' reply:

SINCE I see thee . . . exceedingly desirous to learn the mode of worshipping God prevalent among the Christians, and inquiring very carefully and earnestly concerning them, what God they trust in, and what form of religion they observe, so as all to look down upon the world itself, and despise death, while they neither esteem those to be gods that are reckoned such by the Greeks, nor hold to

the superstition of the Jews; I cordially welcome this thy desire, and I implore God, who enables us both to speak and to hear, to grant to me so to speak, that, above all, I may hear you have been edified. . . .

Come, then, after you have freed yourself from all prejudices possessing your mind, and laid aside what you have been accustomed to, as something apt to deceive you, inasmuch as, according to your own confession, you are to be the hearer of the new system of doctrine; come and contemplate, not with your eyes only, but with your understanding, the substance and the form of those whom ye declare and deem to be gods.

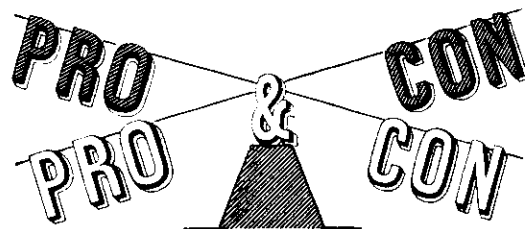
Is not one of them a stone similar to that on which we tread? Is not a second brass, in no way superior to those vessels which are constructed for our ordinary use? Is not a third wood, and that already rotten? Is not a fourth silver, which needs a man to watch it, lest it be stolen? Is not a fifth iron, consumed by rust? Is not a sixth earthenware, in no degree more valuable than that which is formed for the humblest purposes? Are not all these of corruptible matter? Are they not fabricated by means of iron and fire? Did not the sculptor fashion one of them, the brazier a second, the silversmith a third, and the potter a fourth? Was not every one of them, before they were formed by the arts of these workmen into the shape of these gods, each in its own way subject to change? Would not those things which are now vessels, formed of the same materials, become like to such, if they met with the same artificers? Might not

these, which are now worshipped by you, again be made by men vessels similar to others? Are they not all deaf? Are they not blind? Are they not all without life? Are they not destitute of feeling? Are they not incapable of motion? Are they not all liable to rot? Are they not all corruptible?

These things ye call gods; these ye serve; these ye worship; and ye become altogether like to them. For this reason ye hate the Christians, because they do not deem these to be gods. But do not ye yourselves, who now think and suppose [such to be gods], much more cast contempt upon them than they [the Christians] do? Do ye not much more mock and insult them, when ye worship those that are made of stone and earthenware, without appointing any persons to guard them; but those made of silver and gold ye shut up by night, and appoint watchers to look after them by day, lest they be stolen? And by those gifts which ye mean to present to them, do ye not, if they are possessed of sense, rather punish [than honour] them? But if, on the other hand, they are destitute of sense, ye convict them of this fact, while ye worship them with blood and the smoke of sacrifices. Let any one of you suffer such indignities! Let any one of you endure to have such things done to himself! But not a single human being will, unless compelled to it, endure such treatment, since he is endowed with sense and reason. A stone, however, readily bears it, seeing it is insensible. Certainly you do not show [by your conduct] that he [your god] is possessed of sense. And as to the fact that Christians are not accustomed to serve such gods, I might easily find many other things to say; but if even what has been said does not seem to any one sufficient, I deem it idle to say anything further.

The Blessings that Will Flow from Faith

If you love Him, you will be an imitator of His kindness. And do not wonder that a man may become an imitator of God. He can, if he is willing. For it is not by ruling over his neighbours, or by seeking to hold the supremacy over those that are weaker, or by being rich, and showing violence towards those that are inferior, that happiness is found; nor can any one by these things become an imitator of God. But these things do not at all constitute His majesty. On the contrary he who takes upon himself the burden of his neighbour; he who, in whatsoever respect he may be superior, is ready to benefit another who is deficient; he who, by whatsoever things he has received from God distributes to the needy: ...he is an imitator of God. ●●



A Column for Open Discussion

All our readers do not agree with us. If you are among those who differ on some point, write us your views and we will publish them, together with Scriptural comment. Our policy is the Apostle's injunction: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

"I am writing about your regular feature, 'Understanding the Bible,' in the January 1977 issue, which explains the Resurrection and Judgment.

"I read it, and studied it, and—well, I disagree with a lot of it. If you will just bear with me and hear me out, I'll try to explain.

"First, you say that there will be only one resurrection, and you say that both the righteous and wicked (who have known the law) will be raised at the Messiah's second coming."

May I clarify. There will be *two* resurrections: one at the close of the six thousand years (at Christ's coming), and one at the close of the Millennium, the seventh thousand-year period. But at the first resurrection (and the second, also) both faithful and unfaithful will be raised for the purpose of being brought to Judgment. There is ample evidence in the Bible to support this. See Matthew 25:32: "And before him shall be gathered [out of] all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Also II Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Also Revelation 20:12, "And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God; and the books were opened, ... and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

"You say that all who will be resurrected will be raised as mortals, and then after the Judgment will the righteous be given immortality, that is, new bodies. I'm not saying all you wrote is in error, but a lot of it, unfortunately, is. Some of the most important Scriptures that would disprove just what you said in this article you neglected to mention. Why?"

We know of no Scriptures which prove that the dead will be resurrected immortal. Such a plan would not even be possible because those who are resurrected will not yet have been judged at the time of their resurrection. If all were to come from the grave immortal, that would mean that those unworthy of eternal salvation would have to live in eternal torment—a theory which the Bible does not teach—for if raised immortal, they could not die the second or penal death, however unworthy their lives had been.

You charge that some of the most important Scriptures that would disprove our statement that the dead will be resurrected mortal we have failed to mention. And you ask why?

Perhaps you refer to I Corinthians 15:52, the only verse which comes near to saying this: "... for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." But as we discussed in our February issue ("Understanding the Bible" section), this statement does not refer to the initial casting out of the grave which brings them to the level of the living, but to the exaltation from the mortal nature to one that is immortal. The two verses that follow point this out: "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, ... then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (vs. 53-54). If the dead had been raised immortal, death would already have been swallowed up in victory at the time of the resurrection.

"I agree with you that Lazarus was raised from the dead mortal; so was the widow's son, the daughter of Jairus, and all others who were ever resurrected—with one exception! The Son of Man's resurrection was totally different from all others. He was not raised as a mortal being. The very thought of a mortal having immortality is ridiculous because it contradicts itself."

We must disagree. The thought of a mortal be-

ing receiving immortality is *not* ridiculous, and it is not contradictory. It would be contradictory for one who was raised immortal to *put on immortality*, which is what would happen if your belief (that the dead are raised immortal) were correct. But it is not contradictory for "this mortal" to "put on immortality," at which time mortality shall be "put off." "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (II Cor. 5:4).

"Now you are thinking, 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have,' as the Son of man mentioned in Luke 24, plus the fact that He ate flesh and other foods. Well, I don't deny that either. Yet, notice that the Son of God did not say that He was not spirit, because he most surely was!"

The evidence from Luke's gospel seems strong that Jesus was raised with a mortal body. Luke 24: 39 reads, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Either Jesus' statement is not true (that "a spirit hath not flesh and bones") or Jesus was *not a spirit*, for He invited His disciples to feel Him and see that He had flesh and bones. Jesus was assuring them that He was flesh and blood, and *not* a spirit.

In Romans 2:7, Paul lists the rewards to be given the faithful as "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." And we learn from John 7:39 that Jesus was to send the Holy Spirit upon the apostles when He should be glorified. They did not receive that power until ten days after Jesus ascended to heaven, or fifty days after His resurrection. During those fifty days He was still mortal. Of course, one could say that He never died after His resurrection, and in that sense He was immortal. But from what the Bible says, we cannot believe Jesus was given an immortal body until after He reached heaven and was glorified by His Father.

"I believe Lazarus and the others were brought back to mortal life, but not the Son of God! The Bible over and over explains that the Son of God was 'firstborn [via resurrection and spirit] among many brethren' (Rom. 8:29). And, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God' (I John 3:9). So the Son of God set the example of how the resurrection will be for the

just. The wicked, plus those who never had a chance, will be raised mortal. There I agree."

The fact that Christ was the firstborn among many brethren does not change the order of His resurrection and the exaltation to immortality that followed some days later. Christ died a physical death, as other men; He was raised to physical life, the same as other resurrected men; and before He could possess immortality He had to be changed from mortality to immortality, as will other men who are worthy of that change. Hebrews 2 points up this fact: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one"; "forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same"; "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (vs. 11, 14, 17). No, Christ's resurrection to physical life was no different from that which other men will experience.

Then you quote I John 3:9 as an example of how the resurrection will be for the just: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Then you remark: "So the Son of God set the example of how the resurrection will be for the just." This statement is wholly unfounded. The divine plan is: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). Good and bad are judged on the same basis.

There is no evidence to prove there is any difference in the state of the faithful or unfaithful servants at the time of their restoration to mortal life. If there were already a difference when they come forth from the grave, what need of a judgment? And "...we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, ... whether good or bad." The Resurrection only brings the dead in Christ back to the level of the living. If at the time of the resurrection it had already been determined who was faithful and who was unfaithful, the Judgment would be a meaningless gesture.

Then you add, "The wicked, plus those who never had a chance, will be raised mortal. There I agree."

No, no one whom God foreknew would do His will ever died without being given a chance. Jesus' promise is definite: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). All who will do God's will shall know of the doc-

trine; they shall be given the light if they will receive it.

"If the Son of God was resurrected only fleshly, as you say, then how do you explain the fact that He was able to walk through doors (John 20:19), vanish from sight (Luke 24:31), and travel great distances with great speed (John 20:17-19)? No mortal body could do these things, but a spiritual body most certainly could!"

The passage you refer to, in John 20:19, does not say that Jesus went through the door without opening it. It says simply that the doors were shut for fear of the Jews. Jesus could easily have opened the door without the disciples seeing Him do it. Must the Bible tell *every* detail of an incident for us to comprehend? Can't we believe Jesus was able to open a door and walk through it?

Jesus did "vanish out of their sight," as recorded in Luke 24:31, by the supernatural power He possessed. But must we believe He was a spirit to do this? If so, He was a spirit during the earlier years of His ministry also, when the city rose up against Him and would have pushed Him over the brow of the hill headlong, had He not suddenly vanished out of their sight (Luke 4:29-30).

You refer to John 20:17-19 for evidence that Jesus traveled "great distances with great speed," suggesting supernatural travel. We find no suggestion of any travel in this passage.

"The Son of man was simply allaying His disciples' fear by telling them that He was not some apparition or wispy cloud. The Son of God was very much able to manifest himself in the flesh, and whether you choose to believe it or not, He most definitely was composed of spirit. And God definitely is a spirit."

We find nothing in the Gospels, or elsewhere in Scripture, to indicate that Jesus was "definitely composed of spirit." He was called "the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5), and was said to be "made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:17)—who certainly were not *spirits*! ●●

(To be continued next issue)

At the entrance to a manufacturing plant was this signboard: "No wheelbarrows needed here. If you go no further than you are pushed, apply for work somewhere else."



SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

"If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

—(Jeremiah 12:5).

IN Bible times, the Jordan River was a dreaded barrier to travelers. Especially after heavy rains, its steady flow became a raging torrent. A belt of thorny jungle along the riverbed was apt to be half swamp during flood time, and was inhabited by wild animals; it was the haunt of lions.

In His famous challenge to Jeremiah, God uses the Jordan waters in a metaphor. "If you have run with footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you run with horses? And if on the level land, where you have confidence, they have wearied you, then how will you cross the raging Jordan?" (Jer. 12:5, Lamsa).

Jeremiah had a problem which he had taken to the Lord. It was during the earlier years of his career as a prophet, and he had experienced what were perhaps his first great throes of suffering. Sent by God, he had faithfully preached the Word of the Lord to all that had gathered in the court of the Lord's house. The priests, the false prophets and the people were stirred against him. They scoffed at his warnings and prophecies concerning the temple and Jerusalem. It was incredible to them that the temple which had stood for four hundred years should be destroyed and the capital city become desolate. They were enraged. They took him, and, but for one man—the son of Shaphan—would have killed him.

Jeremiah had faithfully carried out the divine purpose, and proved his sincerity to God while the men of Anathoth, they of his own home town, had plotted against him. He had been innocent as a lamb for the slaughter. Now in the narrative he talks to God: "O Eternal One, Thou knowest me, hast proved how true is my heart to thee" (Jer. 12:1, Moffatt). Jeremiah's question is: "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore

are all they happy that deal very treacherously?"

In reply to Jeremiah, God does not coddle him; rather, He challenges him to greater courage and faith for the more trying ordeals ahead. "If you have run with footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you run with horses? And if on the level land where you have confidence, they have wearied you, then how will you cross the raging Jordan?"

God wanted Jeremiah to be strong. The persecution that he had just experienced was small indeed compared to the more formidable trials ahead. As for the wicked, God would maintain His cause, and in His own time He would punish them.

When God first called Jeremiah as a prophet, He told him that He would make him strong like a defended city, an iron pillar, and a brazen wall against the whole land. "They shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee" (1:19).

But God did not make Jeremiah strong against his own will. He also said to him, "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces...." (1:17). Nor did the Prophet fail to stand up to the challenge. A prophet as zealous as Jeremiah, and one who loved God as he did, was not satisfied with small or mediocre achievements.

Though Jeremiah was a prophet of the Lord, we must not imagine that he was always privileged to be in contact with the Holy Spirit of God. He says, "The word of the Lord came to me" and "again the word of the Lord came." In between these times he had recourse to reflection and meditation, even as we have; and such times were

(Continued on page 21)

"Too Wonderful for Me"

Holy and Infinite, Viewless, Eternal!

*Veiled in the glory that none can sustain,
None comprehendeth Thy being supernal,
None can the heaven of heavens contain.*

*Holy and Infinite! limitless, boundless,
All Thy perfections, and power, and praise!
Earth but a speck 'mongst Thy wondrous worlds, countless;
Justice and mercy encompass Thy ways.*

*King of eternity! What revelation
Could the created and finite sustain,
More than the promise, the sweet consolation,
Jesus soon cometh in glory to reign.*

*Therefore archangels and angels adore Thee,
Cherubim wonder, and seraphs admire;
Therefore we praise Thee, rejoicing before Thee,
Joining in rapture the heavenly choir.*

*"Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises,"
Who shall not fear Thee, and who shall not laud?
Anthems of glory Thy universe raises,
Holy and Infinite! Father and God!*

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