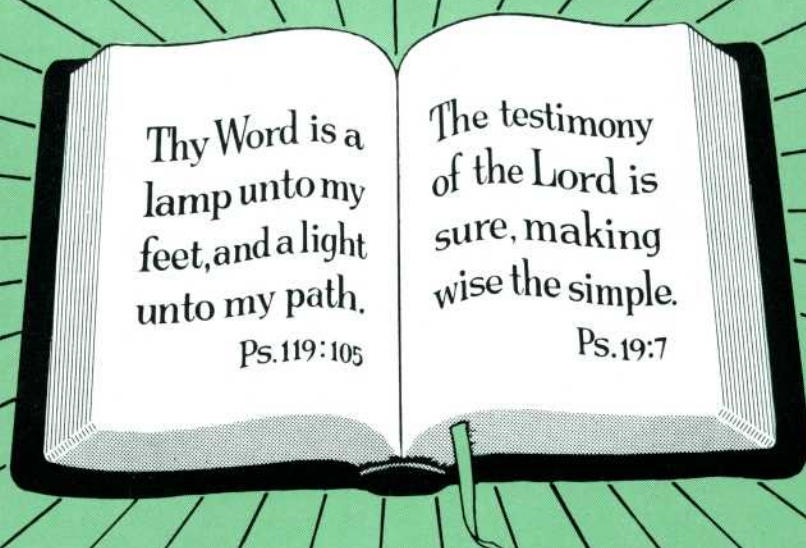


Megiddo Message

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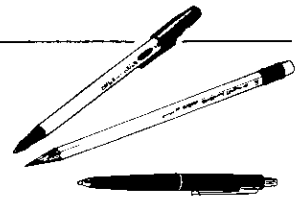


At The End of the Days

Holiness Does Not Rub Off!

Clean Hands or a Clean Heart?

The Lift of the Far View



“Is There Any Word from the Lord?”

IT IS the pathetic query of a king who has gone his own way so long that his doom is inevitable. “Is there any word from the Lord?” he asks, hopeful that there may have been some change in the divine mind, some altering of the divine will, some lifting of the curse that has been pronounced. But the word of the Lord, spoken by this dedicated, unfaltering prophet is just what it has been from the beginning: “Thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.”

The king is Zedekiah; the prophet, Jeremiah. Well this prophet knows his very life is in danger; yet the word of the Lord is precisely what it has been, and the prophet does his duty to speak that word with respect, forthrightness and quiet courage. There is no flaying of the pathetic king with whips and stings of prophetic indignation; just the same solemn, solid, and unwanted truth: “Thou shalt go into Babylon.”

Has this ever been *our* secret thought? Have we ever inwardly sought for some *new* word from the Lord, one that would make the way to life easier, less self-denying, less strictured with “Thou shalt’s” and “Thou shalt not’s”? Do we ever ask, “Is there any word from the Lord today?” hoping for some change, some release, some lifting of the sentence pronounced so long ago?

There is always a word from the Lord; and though it may not be what we *want* to hear, it is always what God knows we *ought* to hear. Should we not welcome it then, as we hear it again and again, as it keeps us reminded of our sacred duty to Him before whom we shall one day have to render an accounting of our service? What right have we to seek some altering of this word? None at all.

In an English cathedral is a tomb. On the tomb

are these words: “He was a painful preacher of the truth.” More than likely the truth was the cause of the pain; indeed, has not many a spokesman of the Lord been the preacher of painful truth? What is more painful at times than the plain, unalterable facts?

This was the experience of the woman at the well. “He told me all things that ever I did,” she said. It was all facts, but facts she did not feel comfortable being reminded of. She would have *liked* to hear something more pleasant than the truth. But true religion is not intended to make us comfortable; it is intended to make us strong and right.

We ought always to be prepared—even eager—to hear the preacher of the painful truth. And when we are in the wrong, how forthrightly we ourselves ought to be that preacher—and to keep right on with this preaching until the evil is removed.

Years ago a man was telling a group of seminary students who were about to graduate: “Gentlemen,” he said, “preaching will prove a difficult task in the days to come. Again and again you will be tempted to give people what they *want* to hear, rather than what they *ought* to hear.” This is the criteria that separates the supporters of true religion from all others, those who dispense the word of the Lord from all others. The word of the Lord is always what we *ought* to hear. It may—or may not—be what we *want* to hear. And whether that spokesperson be ourselves, a trusted spiritual friend, or one whom we count far beneath us in spiritual stature, let us take the message as from the Lord and act upon it.

“Is there any word from the Lord?” There *is*! It is the same message of obedience that we have heard before; but let us hear it again and *obey it!* MM

Megiddo means

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

We believe
—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe
—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe
—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

We believe
—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe
—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe
—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe
—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.
Other versions are identified as follows:
NEB—New English Bible
NIV—New International Version
NAS—New American Standard
RSV—Revised Standard Version
TLB—The Living Bible
TEV—Today's English Version
JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition
Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English
Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament
Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech
Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation
Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People
Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

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At the End of the Days

Part II

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days"
—Daniel 12:13.

ONE DOES NOT have to be an astute student of prophecy these days to realize that we are nearing the end of an age. A simple example in arithmetic—adding approximately four thousand years before Christ to our present date 1981 shows a total of years not far short of the allotted 6,000. And an honest comparison of the condition of the world today with the description given by Paul for the last days (II Tim. 3:1-4) confirms our calculations.

Because some wrong interpretations of prophecy have been made, some people shy away from any attempt to understand God's times and seasons, as though God had intended us to stay completely in the dark. But such is not the case. While we must be careful not to read into Scripture more than the authors intended, neither can we be so disinterested in God's plans that we do not pay attention to what He says or even try to understand it. Things written aforetime *are* for our learning. And, doubtless, looking back upon our age, we shall marvel at the wealth of knowledge we held in our hands but failed to comprehend.

When we think of the "end of the days," we are drawn instinctively to the words of the apostle Peter: "The end of all things is at hand." What was he thinking as he penned this? Was he pondering the brevity of his own life, or was he thinking of the approaching long night of darkness—or was he thinking of the end of the age of man's misrule which is now upon us? Or is it possible that these words, spoken under the direction of divine inspiration, included all three, and that for us they bear a message of special warning, we upon whom the "ends of the world are come"?

Jesus also spoke of the end time. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;

and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear. . . ." (Luke 21:25-26). This is a note struck repeatedly through the New Testament. Not only Peter wrote it, or Jesus. Paul also caught this divine urgency: "The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5). And James warned, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8). "Children, it is the last hour," penned John (I John 2:18, RSV). And we hear the risen Christ saying, "Behold, I am coming very soon" (Rev. 22:7, RSV).

There are times when we might be tempted to close our eyes to the distress around us and forget the future. But to do so is to invite disaster. We now have opportunity to escape the coming time of trouble, an opportunity to prepare ourselves to enjoy the heavenly bliss and happiness of God's bright new world. Shall we refuse it?

The 2300-Year Vision

There is another direct Bible prophecy concerning the "end of the days" which we want to consider. It is a vision seen by Daniel during "the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar" (8:1). Daniel describes the vision in these words: "And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam. . . . Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns: and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great. And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing

Note: *At the End of the Days* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

"And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

"Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great. . . yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered" (Dan. 8:1-12).

Apparently two angels were part of the vision, one who was informed of the particulars and one who was not, for Daniel says, "I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (vs. 13-14). The vision was to extend over a period of 2300 days or, prophetically speaking, 2300 years.

Daniel was perplexed. Apparently one of the attending angels realized this and put in a plea for him to Gabriel, for he recounts further, "And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man [Daniel] to understand the vision." So Gabriel "came near where I stood. . . and said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision" (vs. 15-17).

"At the time of the end shall be the vision." This does not give us any clear definition of the time frame of the vision, but it does give reference to the "time of the end." And Gabriel said yet more: "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end shall be" (v. 19). The prophecy spans the centuries down to the "end time," just as do the other visions of the book of Daniel, right down to the end of the days.

**We now have opportunity
to escape the coming
time of trouble.
Shall we refuse it?**

Gabriel's Explanation

The angel had even more to say about the meaning of this vision. "And he said, . . . The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king" (v. 21). No misunderstanding this interpretation! In the midst of the mighty Medo-Persian conquests Babylon the great was to be overpowered by the Medo-Persian power (the "ram which had two horns, one higher than the other"). And this Medo-Persian power was, in turn, to be overpowered by the swiftly advancing power of Greece under the leadership of Alexander the Great (the "he goat" with "the notable horn between his eyes," which came charging at such terrific speed that it "touched not the ground"—v. 5). This he goat, in the fury of his power, smites the ram (Medo-Persia) and breaks his two horns, casts him down to the ground, and stamps upon him; Greece, under Alexander the Great, is triumphant over Persia.

But not for long, for "when he was strong, the great horn was broken." This is evidently a prophecy of the sudden death of Alexander the Great, who had so quickly extended his empire from India to Ethiopia and so quickly vanished from the scene of action. At the age of thirty-two years he died suddenly (in 323 B. C.), at the height of his power, having never once been defeated in battle. This was the great turning point in Greek history.

Then what happened? The great horn broken, "four notable ones" came up. When Alexander died, his kingdom was divided into four parts and each part was placed under the jurisdiction of one of his four generals, hence the "four notable ones" (v. 8).

But even this was not to last, for "out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great." Here we recognize immediately the power of Rome, first political and then ecclesiastical, which took away the "daily sacrifice," cast down "the place of his sanctuary," cast "down the

truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered" (Dan. 8:9-12).

At the Time of the End

We are not able to say with dogmatic certainty just exactly what period the 2300 days, or prophetically speaking, years, include, and several suggestions have been made; but since the prophecy highlights the dramatic conquest of Alexander the Great and his downfall and reaches to "the time of the end" (vs. 17, 19), is it not possible that the approximate time to begin counting this period of time is the time of Alexander's death? If the death of Alexander the Great (about 323 B. C.) is to be the starting point of the 2300 years, the end of this period brings us right down to our own day and time. This does not mean that any set year on our calendar is the year when God should bring to an end the present arrangement of things and fulfill the prophecy. We have no way of making an exact

calculation, and God does not intend that we should have. Most scholars agree that the birth of Christ occurred somewhere between 5 and 9 years B. C. according to our present calendar. But the changes in the calendar have been several, so there is no way for us to know anything absolutely. Furthermore, we cannot be absolutely certain of our understanding of the time frame of the vision.

However, one fact is sure: that we are *right now* in the era of the end time, very, very near the closing of this age and the beginning of the next. Indeed, how extremely short our time might be! How timely may be the words of the apostle Peter: "The end of all things is at hand."

We want to look now at the words of another of God's far-sighted prophets. This Prophet was no less a personage than His own Son, Jesus Christ. Could anyone have better information to give us than He?

Let Us Pray...

Loving Father, Thou Giver of every good and perfect gift: Thou to whom all flesh must come; the Giver of life, breath, and every blessing which we now enjoy. We draw nigh Thee again this morning thanking Thee for Thy great goodness to us, that the shades of the evening are still stretched out, and that we still have time to complete that which is lacking in our faith.

As we see the things foretold in Thy Word being fulfilled before our very eyes, proving that Word true, may our faith grow exceedingly, and may works of righteousness accompany that faith. May we daily grow more anxious to see self, more willing to surrender every way of our own, craving the death to sin more fervently than we once craved to gratify the emotions of the flesh.

May we never call evil good nor good evil, but judge ourselves and others by fruits and fruits only. Help us to abhor evil, especially in ourselves, and to flee from it, that we may offer to Thee an offering in a clean vessel.

May we always remember that only the pure in heart shall see Thy face or bask in the sunshine of Thy presence. May we then work untiringly in Thy service, completing the work given us to do. May we lift up not only our hands but also our hearts to Thee. And may we always remember that one day we must stand before the great white throne and be judged for all that we have done and said, for every thought and feeling, for the hidden motives that have impelled us to act. Help us then to open up our hearts to Thee now, and allow the searchlight of divine truth to reveal every hidden impurity, and strive conscientiously to form characters worthy of perpetuation.

We who are striving to be members of Thy true Church in these the closing days of the ages are those upon whom the ends of the world are come, hence the warning in Scripture is beamed directly at us. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"; let us take heed lest we fall.

Be with the sick and afflicted, and with those enduring trial and unhappy circumstances. Be with those isolated from us, those who would desire to be with us but are prevented from doing so by circumstances which they cannot alter. Be with all who are striving to learn and live Thy blessed precepts, and may they grow in the knowledge of the truth, and be sustained by the hope of being saved eternally in the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray. Amen.

Matthew 24

and the

"End of the Days"

In the 24th chapter of Matthew, Jesus gave some pertinent information about the "end of the days," the era of His second coming, and events that were to take place in the interim. The whole discourse came about very naturally as Jesus and His disciples were strolling about the temple precincts one day. As they were admiring its magnificent structures and architecture, the time was right for Jesus to speak an unforgettable word: "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Such a statement! The beautiful temple was to be thrown down?

This statement of Jesus's set their minds whirling with questions; and as they trudged on up the mount of Olives and Jesus sat down upon the mount, these disciples said unto him privately, . . . "Tell us, when shall these things be?" They were still thinking about His statement of the fate of that glorious temple. They wanted to know more: "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. 24:2-3).

Jesus might have answered them as He had answered their query of a couple of years before when two of them, James and John, were seeking to sit one on His right and the other on His left in His Kingdom. He might have said, "Ye know not what ye ask," for even now, their three short questions encompassed a great amount of time. But no, He answered each question in detail: First, "When shall these things be?" referring to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple; and second, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world?" referring to the latter days. We might easily get the wrong idea from "the end of the world," thinking that they anticipated the destruction of our planet; but the word translated "world" here is the same Jesus used in His promise to be with them until the "end of the world," meaning "end of the age." He was speaking of an age, a specific period of time, in this case the "consum-

mation of the age," as it is translated in *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* and the *Revised Standard Version*.

"When . . . ?"

Let us look closely at Jesus' answer to the first question, "Tell us, when shall these things be?"

The first portion of Jesus' reply pictures in broad outline the events that should befall His church and the world at large during the years and centuries following. Along with His predictions He issued some timely warnings. We might paraphrase His words like this:

First of all, He is saying, you must be careful not to let men lead you astray. Many will come in my name and say, "I am the Messiah," and "the time is at hand." Many will be led astray, but you must not be. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars; don't be troubled by them, for all these things must come. Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. There will be terrors around, terrors abroad, terrors on every hand. But do not be disturbed, for the end is not yet. "These things must necessarily come and they will be the beginning of your suffering, but the end will not immediately follow."

He then forewarned them how they would be afflicted, killed, hated of all nations for His name's sake. And "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." But then, looking away down to the time of the end of the age, He gave the comforting assurance: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (24:11-13).

Preaching the Gospel in All the World?

His next words are a direct answer to the disciples' first question: "Tell us, when shall these things be?" referring to the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. His words form a short-range prophecy which was to meet its fulfillment in a very few years, marking the end of the Jewish Age. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (v. 14). Modern evangelists have taken and are taking this command as apropos to our own day and time, saying that so long as it is unfulfilled Jesus will not come, that before Christ comes the gospel must literally be preached to all the world.

There are several facts which disallow this appli-

What we need is a larger measure of Daniel's courage and practical devotion to God. . .

cation of the commission to "preach the gospel in all the world." One is the description given by Jesus of the conditions that would be prevailing just prior to His return. Contrary to the gospel being preached in all the world, it would be a time comparable to the world in the days of Noah, or in the days of Lot, when wickedness was so extant that God sent a wholesale destruction.

Jesus also indicates the time when the gospel was to be preached to "all nations" by its sequence in His prophecy. The verses immediately following go right on to tell the particulars of the destruction of Jerusalem. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)"—then follows a whole list of commands for the safe escape of those who should be living in Jerusalem at that time, commands to "flee"; to not turn back, and to escape in any season except winter (vs. 16-20).

We have also some positive statements that tell us this commission to preach the gospel "in all the world" was literally fulfilled at that time; the gospel was preached to all the then-known world during the Apostolic Age (see Mark 16:20; Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:23).

"Great Tribulation"—Apostasy

Then in Matthew 24:21, Jesus comes further down the stream of time to the period we identify as the "apostasy," the time of great falling away from the true teachings of Christ. The prophet Daniel foretold this period of time, this great "tribulation" in chapters 7 and 8 of his book, as we have seen. An ecclesiastical power should emerge from the fourth major kingdom of earth which should "wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they [should] be given into his hand. . . . Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of

transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered" (Dan. 7:25; 8:11-12). The apostle Paul spoke also of this great departing from the faith (see II Tim. 4:1-4, II Thess. 2:3-8).

In Matthew 24:22, Jesus reveals that this trend will not be uninterrupted; the long dark night should *end*; those days would be shortened, and for a very special purpose: "for the elect's sake." We read, "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." If the dark night of the apostasy had not been brought to a close, there could have been no elect on this side, hence we would have no opportunity. But thank God, those days *were* shortened!

Warnings for the Time of the End

Then follow other warnings by Jesus that apply most especially to those living on this side of the apostasy, in the era of His return. The message is plain: Don't let *anyone*, with *whatever* strange teaching, lead you away. He says: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." And as if knowing the great amount of deceptive teaching that would be promulgated in the last days in the name of Christianity, He issued this warning against all false teachers and imposters: "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (vs. 23-27).

At verse 29, Jesus again uses the time of the "tribulation," the long period of apostasy from true religion, as a point of reference and says that "immediately" following it (just before the time of His second appearing) there will be great national and international distress among the political powers of earth and a waning of general confidence. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." The word "immediately" may seem strange in such a context, but our concept of time is not God's; to Him a thousand years are "but as yesterday, . . . and as a watch in the night," hence the second advent, on such a scale, is "immediately" following the end of the apostasy.

The "Sign of the Son of Man"

"And then," following the period of unstable political and social world conditions, "shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." This statement, although we have no way of knowing definitely, seems to indicate the appearance of the forerunner of the coming King, Elijah the prophet, spoken of by Malachi the prophet, immediately preceding the appearing of the "Son of man . . . in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The "sign" precedes the actual coming of the King. "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (vs. 30-31).

Then Jesus concentrates His prophetic eye on the time frame for these events: "When shall these things be?" and gives a parable by which they may have some idea of "when." Employing the simile of the fig tree, when it breaks forth into leaf and "ye know that summer is nigh," He explains: "so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (vs. 32-33). These verses have been widely applied to the recent establishment of the independent nation of Israel, as a sign of the end of the age. A more likely application would seem to be the rebudding of true religion after the long "tribulation" period, the long night of apostasy. Not until true religion was again living and growing and bearing fruit would the time of the end come and the fulfilling of the promise of verse 34: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

The words "this generation" have been approached in several ways: that the physical "generation" who saw the fig tree bud in the last days would not "pass, till all these things be fulfilled." The phrase has also been applied to the "faithful generation," and taken as a positive statement by Jesus that there would be living believers ready to welcome Christ when He returns.

How certain is the fulfillment of His promises? If heaven and earth were to pass away, His words would remain! He says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away"—not that they would; but *if they did*, His words are still forever: "My words shall not pass away" (v. 35).

More Warnings

The remainder of the chapter is given to warnings on readiness, the need for preparation, the need to "watch"—"lest coming suddenly" He find us unprepared. For just as in the days of Noah and

. . . and the unswerving commitment of Jesus Himself.

the days of Lot, the Day of the Lord will break into an unsuspecting world, a world where all is "business as usual," and change the course of history. For "as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage"—all absorbed with the normal course of this world, unmindful of any pending divine intervention—"until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Those last words were written to alert us: "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be," just that sudden, just that unexpected by the world at large (vs. 37-39).

Nor was this all that Jesus had to say in His sermon that day to His disciples as He sat upon the mountain. He did not conclude until He had told them about the sudden separation that His coming would bring, a separation between "him that serveth" and "him that serveth not." Whether in field, vineyard, or mill, "the one shall be taken, and the other left"; one shall be removed from the field of service, the other permitted to remain forever (vs. 40-41).

He told also of the "faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season," and admonished again and again to "watch," be ready; for if not watching, if not preparing, "the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of," and his end shall be one of desperate sorrow: "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (vs. 45-51).

Is it not a chapter of tremendous promise, warning and destiny? Wouldn't we like to have listened in that day upon the mountain? But how much could we have remembered? How much could we have taken in and comprehended?

The Day of Reckoning Forecast

But Jesus actually did not stop His sermon even here that day. He went on to tell them (chapter 25)
(Continued on page 23)

Holiness Does NOT Rub Off!

CHRISTIAN companionship is an invaluable asset in the way to life and a real assist toward Christian stability. Just as a picture is worth a thousand words, so a good example, righteousness-in-action, has tremendous power. Even in the absence of such an example, we may radiate its influence. This was true with the apostles—those who saw them knew that they had been with Jesus; their lives testified to it. His holiness was reflected in them.

But even the best associations have no power to *make us good* if we have not set our hearts to do good ourselves. The holy, godly character is in every sense nontransferable. Holiness points toward *more* holiness, but holiness of itself does not rub off.

This fact is stated several times in Scripture in several different ways. The prophet Ezekiel put it in plain words: "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 14:14). Again, "As I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered" (v. 16). Four times in this one chapter the point is repeated.

The ancient prophet Haggai made the same point when trying to stir up his people to greater loyalty. Building around an illustration familiar to his people, he asked them a very simple question: "If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? . . ." (Haggai 2:12). And the definite answer from the priests was *no*. A thing could not be made holy simply by being touched against something that was already holy. Things were holy only when properly *made* holy.

Is it not the same with us? We may rub daily with one whose holiness and godly example is outstanding. But simply being very near to one who is holy will do nothing to make us holy—unless we put forth the effort to follow their example. Mere contact or companionship with the holy does not

make us holy. Being close to Jesus did not make Judas spotless; nor did being with the great apostle Paul make Demas a saint. It takes more than that.

Jesus made this same point in His words recorded in Luke 13: "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets" (vs. 25-26). In other words, You were good, and we were close to You. But simply being near to Jesus, or being in His presence, or even being classed among His followers, was not enough, because holiness does not rub off!

Jesus taught it again in His illustration of the two men in one bed; the two women grinding together; the two men working in the field together. In each case, "the one shall be taken, and the other left" (Luke 17:34-36). One shall be removed from the field of service, the other shall be allowed to remain forever. The holiness of the second did nothing to cover the unholiness of the first.

The illustration is seen frequently between father and son. The prophet Samuel, for example, was a notable example of a holy father; but his holiness did not rub off onto his sons. Both were rebellious and disobedient, and were cut off. The same was true among the sons of Aaron. We know very little about them except that Nadab and Abihu "offered strange fire before the Lord"—an outright act of disobedience—and lost their lives. The holiness of their father Aaron or their uncle Moses or their brother Eleazer seemed to have had no effect upon them.

But this is only one half the lesson. The prophet Haggai also gave us the other half. While holiness will not rub off, UN-holiness *will* rub off. "If one that is unclean by a dead body," he asked, "touch any of these, shall it be unclean? . . ." (Hag. 2:13) and the answer was yes, "It shall be unclean." This is why God calls us to a life of separation from all

that will defile. We are to "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"; and, I "have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine"; and "evil communications corrupt good manners"; and "come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing"; and, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"; and "keep [yourself] unspotted from the world" (II Cor. 6:14; Lev. 20:26; I Cor. 15:33; II Cor. 6:17; Eph. 5:11; James 1:27). These are all spiritual directives from God, intended to reduce the amount of unholiness that all too easily rubs off from lesser associations and makes the inner man unclean.

Nothing clean ever rubs off the unclean, but oh, beware of the unclean, for you cannot touch it without becoming contaminated. Just take an oily, greasy rag and touch it to a clean, white linen towel; the clean towel will never cleanse the dirty rag, but if they touch, the clean towel will show it.

Our Christian friends can help us, but they cannot make us holy. Holiness comes from the heart. But oh beware of the unclean, for uncleanness does rub off!

MM

The Witnesses

Lo! what a cloud of witnesses
Encompass us around!
Men once like us with suff'ring tried
Shall be with glory crowned.

Let us, with zeal like theirs inspired,
Strive in the Christian race;
Lay off our ev'ry weight of sin,
Their holy footsteps trace.

Behold one Witness nobler still
Who trod the narrow path;
Jesus, the Author, Finisher,
Rewarder of our faith.

He, for the joy before Him set,
His eye fixed on God's love,
Endured the cross, despised the shame,
And now He dwells above.

But soon He comes to earth again,
Straight from the Father's right;
And all His witnesses shall rise
To meet Him—what a sight!

—Selected

We Need To Pray

PETER and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer. Prayer had an "hour," a definite time and place in their program of living. Their Master always had His hour of prayer. A great while before day he "rose up and went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35); "He went out into a mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). He went, as his custom was, unto "the Mount of Olives, and kneeled down, and prayed" (Luke 22:39-41).

If Jesus felt the need of prayer, how presumptuous are we if we think we can live without it! Prayer is as necessary for us as winding is for a watch. As the watch must have strength imparted to its spring by daily winding, so we must have our strength reinforced by putting ourselves in daily connection with the Power above through prayer.

We think we have a little space of time fenced off night and morning which we will spend in prayer, but how often the encircling fence is broken down by the duties and pleasures of the day! There is so much to be done some days that we think the morning prayer must be omitted, "just for this once." We are so weary at night that the evening prayer is forgotten. Perhaps the broken fence is repaired the next day, but it is not so strong as it was before, and it is more easily broken down the second time than it was the first.

An earnest man arose in a prayer-meeting and said that he had gained great strength from prayer, and that it has been his custom for many years to rise an hour earlier each day so as to have time for communion with God. A few of those present knew that this man's business required him to start to work at five every morning, and yet he counted it gain to rise an hour earlier in order to have time to pray.

"Give God thy first thoughts, then, so shalt thou keep Him company all day, and in Him sleep."

One smile can glorify day.

One word new hope impart;

The least disciple need not say

There are no alms to give away

If faith be in his heart.



"Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?"



"Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. . . . In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." (Mark 7:5-7)

Clean Hands or a Clean Heart?

Word had reached Jerusalem that a young Jew named Jesus was preaching a strange new doctrine in the towns and villages of the country. Rumor had it that He was attracting great multitudes, among them not a few Jews. And if it could be believed, He was ignoring the traditions of the elders, those many rules and regulations so sacred to the Pharisees. Deciding to see for themselves, the Pharisees came up from Jerusalem and encountered Jesus and His disciples in Galilee. The report proved true, and the battle lines were drawn in their first meeting.

Mark explains: "The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with 'unclean'—that is, ceremonially unwashed—hands. . . . So [they] asked Jesus, 'Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with unclean hands?' "

Jesus replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites as it is written: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men" (Mark 7:1-2; 5-8, NIV).

The clash between Jesus and the Pharisees was not a personal one; rather it was a collision of two views of religion, two views of the demands of

God. For the Pharisees, religion was the Law plus countless rules and regulations added by the rabbis. For Jesus, religion was the Word of God with nothing added and nothing taken away, the words which He had received from the Father.

The Law had been given by Moses, but since the time of Ezra countless rules and regulations had been added until Moses would never have recognized his law had he appeared on the scene. For the Pharisees, pleasing God consisted not only in keeping Moses' law, but in observing these many trifling statutes of men that governed every act of life. So numerous were they that if a man kept them all he would have had time for little else.

So it was not at all strange that when Jesus came teaching a religion of repentance and righteousness, of precept and promise, of hearing and doing, that He should encounter opposition from the scribes and Pharisees. For Jesus, religion was not in mere externals, not in keeping a multitude of insignificant rules; rather it was a religion of the inner man, of the heart and mind. Even the evil thought that prompted the evil deed must be eradicated. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," was typical of the precept and promise that Jesus taught, and this was an idea totally foreign to the Pharisaic mind.

With the Pharisees, the issue was not physical cleanliness, but ritual cleanliness. In their eyes, Jesus' disciples were ceremonially unclean. They

ate without washing their hands according to the tradition of the elders. Their tradition, those fifty or more volumes of rules and regulations assembled since the time of Ezra, told just exactly how and on what occasions hand washing should be done. It was specified just how much water should be used [an amount equal to not less than an eggshell and a half full], just how it should be applied [to one hand at a time with the fingers pointing up and without one hand touching the other], just what part of the hand should be washed [to the wrist only], and even how the hands should be dried one at a time that they might not contaminate each other!

For the devout Pharisee, religion was these explicit rules and righteousness was in keeping them. Tradition was respected just as much as the written Law, and even held to be more sacred by some of the more zealous. If a man performed the ritual washings, strictly observed the Sabbath, kept the outward form of the Law, including the traditions, paid his tithes exactly, and kept himself separate from Gentiles, he could be saved. It was entirely a matter of outward observance.

Jesus' attitude, hence that of His disciples, was to ignore such petty rules and regulations. He identified religion and righteousness with the purity of a man's heart, with the cleanness of his life, not with how he kept the outward aspects of the law. Ceremonial cleanliness was ignored. In Jesus' eyes, a man could carry out all these little external rules and still be far from the Kingdom of God. Obedience to the commandments of men could add nothing to one's treasure in heaven. Whether the hands were washed in a cupful or a bucketful of water mattered not to the Almighty. The washing He wanted was that which cleansed the heart, which purified the inner man and removed all stain of sin. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Obedience was what God required, and it was not obedience to the traditions of man but to His higher law, the "words of eternal life."

Jesus' condemnation came straight to the point: "You have made God's law null and void out of respect for your tradition. What hypocrisy! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 'This people pays me lip-service, but their heart is far from me; their worship of me is in vain, for they teach as doctrines the commandments of men'" (Matt. 15:6-9, NEB).

To take the words of God lightly upon the lips with nothing of their meaning in the heart is to play the hypocrite and to offend God. The Pharisees read the Law daily in the synagogue, but allowed it to have no effect on their lives. It is one thing to

listen to the Word, but quite another to be governed by it on every occasion, to allow it to penetrate the heart and rule the life. God wants more than a hearer of the Word, He wants a doer. He demands obedience.

There was a time when Israel rendered heart service to God. They had made offerings acceptable to God, and when the Law was read in their hearing, they had answered, "All these things will we do and be obedient." But the Pharisees were generations removed from that time. During these generations they had allowed their religion to degenerate into ritualism, rules and regulations—the doctrines and commandments of men. Their traditions came into competition with the commandments of God—and the traditions prevailed. Tradition was revered because it had been handed down from their forefathers. They claimed it had been spoken by Moses, hence was equal to the Law; but it was nothing more than a useless fabrication.

They thought themselves special for being Abraham's descendants. "Abraham is our father," they said, calling attention to their heritage. Jesus' answer showed the fallacy of their reasoning: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." They were concerned with externals, with the outside of the cup, to the neglect of the inner man. They were paying God only lip service, not heart service.

Such worship is vain, said Jesus. True worship loses sight of self in the worship of God, but the worship of the Pharisees was the worship of self, not God. It was for their own profit, not for God's glory. They loved the best seats and the salutations in the marketplace more than God. In elevating the commandments of the scribes, they dishonored the commandments of God. They magnified the precepts of men rather than the Word of God.

The Pharisees were the religious leaders and the strictest sect of the Jews in Jesus' time. Yet Jesus denounced them both for their sins of omission and commission. But His words are helpful only if we take them to ourselves. Their sin was the gulf that existed between their words and their deeds. They had substituted external washings for internal cleanness. They preferred clean hands to a clean heart. They chose to trust in righteousness by the outward form and refused to acknowledge Christ and accept His definition of righteousness.

Jesus used the Pharisees as a warning to all who would come after, as a type of those whose religion will not save. They were good in their own eyes, but not good enough for the Kingdom of God. They kept the trifles of the law, but forgot the things

which really matter. And to His disciples, and all who would follow later, Jesus warned, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). Their righteousness was self-righteousness, not God's righteousness. The Scribes were the trained teachers of the law in that day; the Pharisees were the professed examples of the strict adherents to that law. But their righteousness was lacking—it was not making them eligible to enter the "kingdom of heaven."

Their righteousness was lacking in depth. It was all outward show. They judged others by the outward keeping of their many rules and regulations. They desired only to appear righteous before men. Like Jesus said, they cleansed the outside of the cup and the platter for appearance, but were loathe to cleanse themselves on the inside. Their many rules and regulations did nothing toward purifying the heart—nor would they admit that it needed any cleansing.

But let us look to ourselves. What about the depth of *our* righteousness? Is it more than skin deep? Are we guilty of offering God lip service without the corresponding life service? True, we are obligated to lip service in prayer and thanksgiving, for "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Ps. 50:23). Lip service cannot stop with prayer and thanksgiving. Empty words will avail us nothing. Lip service without the consent of the heart is no less to be condemned in us than in the Pharisees.

The Pharisee's righteousness lacked breadth. In remembering their many petty prohibitions they lost sight of that city "whose builder and maker is God," that city for which their forefathers yearned. So intent were they on the past and present that they were blind to the future. They saw Jesus only as a usurper and not as the Messiah, the future King of the earth. They listened to Jesus only to find fault with His words, not to share in His vision of everything beyond.

The Pharisees made it a point to appear righteous before men, but it was only play acting. Jesus addressed them as hypocrites, a name befitting such actors. They were acting the part of religious men, but they had yet to grasp the meaning of righteousness. The Greek word for "hypocrite" means an actor, one who impersonates. It was originally applied to an actor, one who wore a mask to disguise. Thus "hypocrites" was an appropriate name for the Pharisees, for they were wearing a mask of profession to obscure their lack

of performance. They only made a pretense of honoring God, but it was not from the heart; it was for the benefit of those who might witness the performance.

Their religion and righteousness was all on the outside; what others thought of them was of prime importance. They prided themselves that they were not as other men; they looked good in their own eyes. But respectability is not always evidence of a pure heart. A man might appear respectable, yet be a villain at heart.

The Pharisees were quick to observe that Jesus' disciples failed to perform the ritual washings but were slow to comprehend the necessity of cleansing the inner man, the thoughts and intents of their own hearts. What of us? Are we quick to observe someone else's sin and slow to notice our own evils? Let us beware of our own Pharisaic tendencies: "Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also," lest we too be termed hypocrites.

We are warned not to compare ourselves among ourselves. We might think ourselves to be more righteous than our next door neighbor, but that is no guarantee of salvation. There can be no substitute for "truth in the inward parts." Christ looks for inward righteousness—the pure heart. Truth, not tradition will gain for us salvation. "Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you," wrote Paul to Timothy (II Tim. 1:14, RSV). We have this same truth entrusted to us; let us guard it well lest we be accused of "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," or "holding the traditions of men," and our worship be in vain. MM

What Is My Work Today?

To seek for truth and wisdom,
To live for Christ alone;
To run my race unburdened,
The goal a blessed home.
To view by faith the promise
When earthly hopes decay
To serve my Lord with gladness,
This is my work today.

To shun the world's allurements,
To bear my cross therein;
To turn from all temptations,
To conquer every sin;
To linger calm and patient
Where duty bids me stay;
To go where God may call me—
This is my work today.

—Contributed.



"Lord, are there few that be saved?"



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

Striving to Enter

Journeying toward Jerusalem, Jesus would of necessity have passed through the towns and villages of the people. With a heart all aflame for His heavenly Father's business and a deep yearning for those lost in sin and trespasses, He would pause, taking time to seek out the lambs for His kingdom. Passionately concerned about His own salvation, He tried at the same time to arouse others into a responsive frame of mind and perchance induce some sin-weary soul to take up his daily cross and follow Him.

Possessing none of the stiff formality of the Scribes and Pharisees, He first exemplified the love of God by His own compassionate understanding of their human needs. He healed the sick of their infirmities and stressed the keeping of God's commandments above the love of self, at the same time pointing them away from the all-too-consuming temporal pursuits to the far more glorious and everlasting hereafter, to everything beyond, to all that is absolute and forever.

In all this He did not rely upon idle words and vain repetitions of men with their thousand and one meanings requiring volumes to interpret. In simple, everyday language He directed their minds to the highest principles of morality, to the obedience God loves, to the discipline that prepares men and women to enter the Kingdom of heaven.

As they pondered Jesus' words, they realized that the Kingdom would be a most desirable place

to find oneself. Surely it would exceed all imagination. But when they stopped to think about the *all* required of a man to get an entrance there, it became at once a very serious and laborious task. Is it any wonder the question arose: "Lord, are there few that be saved?"

To the average among the inquirers, Jesus' answer, "Strive to enter in," was not exactly what they wanted or expected to hear. No doubt considering themselves the seed of Abraham with Father Abraham for easy reference they felt sure enough of an effortless admittance into the realm of the qualified. So far as they were concerned, with such patrimony preceding them their passports would not be questioned.

But Jesus said the gate to life was difficult. And so it was—and it is. When Jesus said, "strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able," He had in mind those who would be hiding behind the popular easy way: "Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?" But the Lord would have us understand that we cannot slide in by the easy going, nothing-to-do gate. To enter in, this requirement must be met, even "all that a man hath." Here is the qualifying term. Atoning sacrifices and loud supplications avail nothing without godly character. The verdict would be, "I never knew you. Get away from me, you who are so busy doing wrong."

As striving Christians, we must put ourselves voluntarily through the difficult gate. There is no one to force us through; we must compel ourselves, submitting to the grind of many years of rigorous training, even daily and hourly self-discipline and moment by moment self-denial. We must submit to some yokes and throw off others and eagerly seize every opportunity to prove our knowledge, understanding and faith in God in the everyday circumstances of life, whether sad or glad. The character-building experiences sent to prove our caliber before God do not automatically produce holiness in us. We must allow them to work within, to the purifying of our inner unholiness and unrefined actions.

"Strive to enter in" is suggestive of struggle, agony, toil. One's birth or race, education or social standing is of no significance with God. We each must storm our own way in, violently, aggressively press against the forces of evil in us and around us by our own initiative, by our own active powers of self-control and self-restraint. Our most valued passport lies in taking every discipline and correction as a challenge that we *will* enter in, that we *will* work out our own salvation. For we alone are responsible for our actions.

"Gird up the loins of your mind," is the Biblical injunction. Gather up your thoughts, organize all your powers of self-control and draw into service every wandering thought into the obedience of Christ and let every action be as unto the Lord. The time for disorganized minds and practices to be flying about loosely in the breezes of every strange impulse is past. Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation.

"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." This is from the great apostle Paul, an intensely ambitious man who never strove by fits and spurts. Citing himself as an example, he urged, "Copy me as I copy Christ." Aim high. Go after this "one thing" as I do, press toward the mark for the prize. Fight, war, keep your body under. All his ambitions found their center in Christ; so must ours.

In the light of sound reasoning and understanding, let us ponder, think and weigh every situation we encounter. If a deed is right, do it boldly; if wrong, refuse to do it. To say no to what is wrong is always good and right. To be able to say no to what may prove a hindrance to us in performing our spiritual duties or be a stumblingblock to another, even though it be pleasant and permissible, is common sense; indeed, it is the highest form of wisdom.

Carefully pondering all aspects of our con-

templated course of action in striving against sin, we will not fail to see the moral guidelines God has set for our benefit. We can not resist certain principles and accept others. "Every word of God is pure," good, right, and to add or detract from His word is to lose our sense of dignity and worth and sink to the level of the easy-going, non-thinking, non-striving nations about us.

We must keep in mind that striving toward a goal in any field is never quick and easy. In the Lord's business it is the same. A willingness to undertake the task of becoming self-controlled is the first step in achieving. It must be met by strong purpose, daily practice and training with unwavering regularity. God is very exacting and demands solid consistency and an all-out exertion and self-sacrifice on our part. Low at his feet we must stand and straight before all else, facing everything and using everything that comes, be it health or sickness, pain or sorrow, loss or opposition. Trials purify and provide the setting in which we may become holy. We learn obedience and commitment in the things we suffer, knowing that He who has called us is trying to firm our spiritual backbones and refashion our characters for time and eternity.

Let us convince ourselves we must strive to enter in at the strait gate, or we may find ourselves with those who "seek to enter in" and "shall not be able." Considering the urgency of the days we are living in, it is obviously plain we cannot postpone the alternatives. We cannot delay the decision. A soft answer turns away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. Let patience have her perfect work, and you will bless those who persecute you. Our Lord knew how to handle those who opposed Him. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. Straightforward, conscious, obedient striving is the disciplined training in righteousness that will make a way for us to enter in through the gate. Let us do all we can. The day of the Lord is near.

MM

***Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute;
What you can do, or think you can, begin it!
Only engage, and then the mind grows heated;
Begin it, and the work will be completed.***

***Lose the day loitering, 'twill be the same story
Tomorrow; and the next more dilatory;
For indecision brings its own delays;
And days are lost lamenting o'er lost days.***

TEMPTATION

EVERY ONE IS tempted. If a man is alive he is tempted. If he is living on this particular planet called earth, he is a tempted man. If one has a body, there will be temptation through it. If there be a mind to think with, there is temptation through that. If there be a social nature through which to enjoy others, if there be a right ambition to take one's place in life, and do one's full share of the fighting—and, in a good way, win one's full share of the victory—there will be temptation because of these.

Some people *yield* to their temptations. They calmly lie down, and are trodden underfoot.

Some people *play* with their temptations. Their consciences are not dead yet, though they are a bit withered and atrophied from lack of exercise. They make a pretense of fighting, and then having thrown that bone to their consciences to be chewed on a bit, they likewise lie down and are trodden underfoot.

Some people *fight* their temptations. They recognize and resist them. They have learned the meaning of "watch and pray." The "watch" brings into focus the human side; the "pray," the divine side. Their watchtower is never deserted. They have discovered the sleeplessness of the tempted and of all his sub-tempters, and so they lock up the joints of their will and limber up the joints of their knees and they fight. They say, "If we must go down, we will go down fighting; and only in the last ditch, with face outward toward the foe. But we will never yield, not by so much as a half hair's breadth." That's the spirit in which they meet and fight their temptations.

And it makes no difference what the temptation is; by steady, stiff fighting it can be fought and resisted successfully by this spirit.

Now I wish you to mark very keenly this: temptation has no power of itself. It must have help from the one being tempted. There is nothing so weak, so ridiculously weak in itself as a temptation. It can do nothing, absolutely nothing, without the consent of the man being tempted. It can allure, it can sing bewitching songs, it can make an atmosphere around you mighty hard to breathe in, but it can't get inside your life without *your* consent. And it is as powerless as an infant unless it gets inside.

There is only one knob to the door of our life,

and that is on the inside. That door never opens except as *we* open it. Let every one of us who is tempted underscore this fact, that it may stand out sharp and clear. And then let us underscore it sharper yet in the book of our experience, that it takes *two* to make a successful temptation, and I am one of the two. Without my partnership, the temptation must slink dejectedly away defeated.

Temptation of itself is utterly powerless. When we yield, of course we are whipped in the start; we give the chance of victory away without even a decent show of fight. If we *play* with the temptation, as so many do, if we dally and linger, if we hang around the fire poking dry straws in, as so many do, then we are whipped, too. Our defeat is sure. We pass the chance of victory out to the assailant without a decent show of fight.

But if we fight, if we are determined to fight, *we will win*. For we will reach out for every bit of help within reach. And there is One standing very nearby who knows all about temptation, temptations of every sort, who eagerly lends us help. He is always waiting to help.

We may at times feel weak, and the temptation may seem very subtle and very strong. It may come with the rush of a wild storm down the valley. Or it may come with the sly, sneaking subtlety of a snake crawling along in the tall grass waiting to strike its fangs in when you least think it is there. But the man says, "I want to be right. I want to be good, strongly good. I want to be pure, above all else to be pure." And so he locks up every joint of his will and reaches eagerly for the help of the Helper at hand and he fights; and more—he wins. Every temptation so approached and attacked is already defeated.

Every temptation is a chance for a triumph. It is a signal to fly the flag of Victory. It is a chance to make the tempter know anew that he is defeated. It is an opportunity to strike the note for a ringing song of triumph.

Steady, steady—there's a will within, and a Friend alongside, and a victory just ahead, with the flag high, and the music joyous.

To him that o'ercometh God giveth a crown;/Through faith we shall conquer though often cast down,/He who is our Saviour our strength will renew,/Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

The Lift of the Far View

"Who is made . . . after the power of an endless life" —Hebrews 7:16.

IN THE MIDST of a lengthy discussion in the Epistle to the Hebrews appears this intriguing but tremendously dynamic description of Jesus: "Who is made . . . after the power of an endless life." The author has been comparing the old with the new; the outworn, outmoded, earthbound rules of the Jewish system of laws and customs with the new and infinitely superior system of faith and obedience inaugurated by Christ. The former was a priesthood "after the law of a carnal commandment," i.e., it was based on physical qualifications of inheritance and ancestry. Christ came, a priest of a higher order, with higher qualifications—"on a basis of a power flowing from a life that cannot end. For the Scripture bears witness: 'You are a priest forever . . .'" (Hebrews 7:16-17, Williams Translation).

Here is Jesus introduced to us with His authority independent of the temporary ordinances and customs of the Jewish system out of which He came. Jesus has been perfected, judged, exalted, glorified, freed forever from the bounds of time and circumstance. The author of the Epistle has taken the whole matter out of the familiar and ordinary, out of the limitations of the human realm and has placed it in line with the living, creative, ongoing, cosmic force behind the universe. We see Jesus in the perspective of the far view, an integral part of eternity itself, His whole existence vivified by the power of an endless future life.

Life! It is a miracle which holds our keenest attention; no wonder that Jesus should have been seized by its prospects and possibilities. Life is the key to all that is profitable, pleasant and delightful. Yet life on this planet exists by so narrow a margin. It walks a straitened path between threats of disease on the one side and accident on the other, forever on the precipice of extinction. Instinctively we cling to it. And in a desperate desire to extend it, we seek to understand it, to wrest from it its secrets, to live it to the full, to extricate it from the bounds of time and temporality. But here we reach the limit of mortal capability; we must look up. We must look to Jesus, for only He of all our earthborn race is "made . . . after the power of an endless life."

How splendidly those words describe the whole purpose and personality of Jesus—"made . . . after the power of an endless life." Even during His mortal career Jesus was no ordinary human being pursuing a fruitless round of work and worry and rest. His whole life was propelled by a higher power, by the far view which had captured His whole life interests. "My meat," He said, "is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work . . . I am come in my Father's name . . . I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:17, 43, 30). So perfect and so absolute was His dedication that He could say, "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things . . . for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:28-29). Here lay the secret of His power—obedience; unfaltering, unailing, unquestioning obedience.

Thus when we try to learn the art of mastering life; when we desire to know how to live it so as to extract from it the greatest good both in this world and in the world to come; when we seek a scale of values by which we may determine what is really most worthwhile, how fitting that we look to Jesus. Into the short months and years that He moved among the children of men He crowded so much of insight into the depths of life, so much mental illumination and aspiration combined with a flawlessness that equalled moral perfection, that His brief life has become the measuring stick by which all of us can evaluate our achievements. How did He do it? He lived "after the power of an endless life." The great forces of eternal and ongoing life flowed through Him on to the future. He lived by the lift of the far view.

Many scholars have been determined to understand Jesus by locating Him in His exact setting historically, socially and politically. They have striven with painstaking accuracy to know what the people of His time thought, how they lived and with what ideas they approached life. But such knowledge, interesting though it be, does not begin to touch the real Source of the power that made

**Jesus was a specialist on life.
He was its embodiment,
its champion.**

Jesus what He was and is. Suppose we could describe accurately the philosophy of life generally accepted in His time—even that did little to lift Caiaphas or Judas to goodness and greatness. Suppose we could finally settle the last detail of the history of His betrayal, His death, His burial—these were not the facts which electrified and empowered the persons nearest to Him.

It was not the physical, the historical, the legal, the political or the social features which distinguished Jesus from His contemporaries. It was the endlessness of that prospect His Father had set before Him—life. Jesus was a specialist on life. He was its embodiment, its champion. He was called “the son of man” because He seemed to have within Him the most perfect exemplification of the highest and finest that humanity can produce. He was called “the son of God” because He belonged to the Eternal Being who is the inventor and giver of life and the author of immortality, and because He was expressing the Eternal’s purposes in His own daily life on earth.

The will of that God was His will. When people listened to Him, they felt the power and authority of that God in every word. When they followed Him they felt the thrill of the cause of that God. Even in the dire moments of His suffering on the cross there was a haunting consciousness, even within those who were His executioners, that surely this Man had something beyond their power to kill.

Through the centuries numerous doctrines have been formulated about Jesus, the majority of them inconsistent with His life and teaching. Man uses his intellect at its best only to find it impossible to crowd into words the force, the dynamic element in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus eludes the dogmas; He is bigger than our intellectual pigeonholes; He marches on, growing, changing in the same sense that life is growing and changing. While in one sense He is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever,” in another sense He is new and vital and contemporary. There is nothing static about Him; He is no perfect marble statue. Jesus was made “after the power of an endless life,” and the power of His life reaches even to us in this century.

Whence came Jesus’ power?

Among the greatest of Jesus’ interpreters undoubtedly were the writer of John’s Gospel and the Apostle to the Gentiles. In their writings are profound explanations of the overmastering power of Jesus. They describe Him as a man from among His brethren with His entire life focused forward. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men,” writes the beloved John of the logos or divine wisdom personified in the life of Christ (John 1:4). “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself” (John 5:26). “[Him] God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it,” says Peter (Acts 2:24). The apostle Paul wrote of “Christ, who is our life” (Col. 3:4). Indeed, He is our life; for only when He returns will we, if worthy, receive the promised “glory and honour and immortality, eternal life” (Rom. 2:7).

To these men, the words they penned were attempts to express to others the reality of Jesus by which they had been gripped. These writers, mastered by the magnetic and powerful personality of Jesus, felt and knew that Jesus “was made . . . after the power of an endless life.” They could not explain His tremendous accumulation of living and vital power, but they were thrilled by the fact that right among them had lived the future King of the whole earth. They were gripped by the thought, stirred by His message, activated by His challenge.

Take again their words about His rising from the dead. They could not explain what they had experienced after this resurrection without trying to describe how they had been caught up on a rushing spiritual current. At first it seemed impossible. They had seen Him crucified, to be sure, but only a few hours and He was once again among them! It was impossible for Him to be holden of death; and the touch and the thrill of that personality this side of the grave was even more powerful than it was on the other side. While the debate went on as to exactly what had happened, the disciples went forth everywhere to preach the gospel of Jesus—crucified, resurrected, glorified, and returning—a gospel that changed lives, revived hope, and electrified all whom it touched.

In what way does Jesus’ life affect us? It challenges us with the same power that challenged those who knew Him before, “the power of an endless life.” His humility shames our self-exalting pride. His largeness of soul defies our cheap smallness. He calls us to that which is noble and heroic; He inspires within us all that is holy and pure.

These are the realities to which He brings us. He still lives “after the power of an endless life,” and it

is this far view of Him that teaches us to lift our eyes from our short-range problems and by longer vision to see all things working together in one divine plan for our eternal good. It is our privilege to feel here and now the lift of the far view that inspired Him. It is our privilege to take each piece of work in which we are engaged and give it larger meaning in the perspective of the far view.

As men and women whose goal is the Kingdom of God, we must learn to see every circumstance and event of our lives as becoming a part of that great enterprise. Just as a man bending over a pattern in a mosaic, fitting tiny pieces of stone of different colors into some small figure, gets his real inspiration by lifting his eyes at times and seeing the large sketch of the whole picture, so we must learn to look up to feel the lift of the far view.

Many things cannot be understood unless they are set against the far view. The goals which we are unable to realize; the plans that crash about our heads; the sacrifices that seem so hard and so needless to our short-range vision; the friends that turn against us because of our involvement in the cause of righteousness; all these are an enigma in temporal perspective—they seem self-defeating. Without the far view we would die, brokenhearted, unfulfilled. But with the far view we may be like the heroes in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, of whom it is said: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13). Had these men measured their work by the period of persecution in which they lived, they would have seemed as great failures to themselves and others as Jesus seemed when on the cross. But in the light of the far view they gained hope, and in that distant prospect we judge them infinitely more important than those who beat them down and persecuted them.

Hammurabi was a great king and a man of tremendous power in the ancient civilization out of which Abraham went; but it is Abraham, not Hammurabi—the man who left, not the man who stayed; the man who, to those in that country, seemingly failed, instead of the king, who seemingly remained in power—who lives on in the plan of God and whose faith has been a stimulus through the ages. The power of Egypt erected giant physical monuments on its soils, to "immortalize" its heroes; but the intangible and seemingly unimportant words and teachings of Moses, whom Pharaoh rejected, have lived on while the Nile-valley civilization has gone into eclipse. Rome, in all its vast power and grandeur, came and went;

**In a world of cynicism,
doubt and dread, we still can
live pure in the prospects
of the far view.**

but the humble Galilean, whom it crucified, lives on eternally—victorious, triumphant, and immortal.

We cannot judge whether a cause is right or wrong by the crowd that follows it. We must think and act and plan in the light of God's long-range purpose, not according to the plaudits of our contemporaries.

In the midst of a bemired and soggy world, with its cynicism and doubt and dread, we still can live pure in the prospects of the far view. We still can live after the power of an endless life and feel the thrill of a faith that reaches across time and strikes hands with the God of eternity. We can—if we will.

We are in a great procession; we work in a cause that moves steadily across the ages; we are within the compass of a power that is as resistless as the force that inspired Jesus—"endless life." Why shouldn't we feel the lift of the far view? MM

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When Faith Grows Weary

Lessons from the Book of Malachi Part Three

Q. In the remaining verses of the book, Malachi takes up another subject, unrelated to Israel's sin. It is a subject of prophecy and a major tenet of our faith, an event largely unrecognized by the nominal churches. What is it?

A. The prophecy of the coming of the prophet Elijah, who will precede Christ's return.

Q. The first mention of this messenger to precede Christ is in Malachi 3:1. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

Does this text apply to the messenger that was to come before Jesus' first advent, or to Elijah coming before the second advent of Christ?

A. Jesus quoted it in Matthew 11:14 with reference to John the Baptist, saying, "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, [Greek for Elijah], which was for to come." But from the accompanying verses we know that its full fulfillment will be in Elijah.

Q. The part of the verse Jesus quoted speaks of a messenger in only a general way. This messenger could be either John or Elijah.

John the Baptist was to fill a role before Christ's first advent similar to that which the prophet Elijah will fill before His second coming. That is the reason the father of John the Baptist prophesied as he did, saying of his son not yet born, "He shall go before him [Christ] in the spirit and power of Elias, . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

But in Malachi 3 there are several prophesies that could not apply to Christ's first coming. Can we have these verses, please?

A. Verses 2 and 3 picture a work which Christ did not accomplish at His first advent: "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Q. Those verses picture a

time very different from His first coming. The text says, "Who may abide the day of his coming?" There was no difficulty in abiding the day of Christ that followed John's preaching.

What else in the text leads us to the conclusion that it refers to the second advent, not the first?

A. The "refiner's fire," and "fullers' soap" speak of judgment to come. He did not sit as a Judge at His first coming. He warned against the day, but it was yet future.

The work of separating the dross from the gold and silver (the righteous from the wicked) awaits His second coming and the Judgment.

At His first coming the people were in power and He was the defeated, not the conqueror. They crucified Him; He was as a lamb, not as a lion.

Q. If we keep in mind that prophecy often has two different applications, one of near-range and one of far, we can better understand this text. The prophet making the prediction was seeing both the first and second advent of Christ. He saw both comings announced by a messenger, and then detailed events following the second advent. It is worth noting

that Jesus quoted only the first phrase of the text when He applied it to John.

Verse 5 pictures the judgments following the second advent of Christ. We should read the verse.

A. "And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts."

Q. Certainly there is nothing in that text that could be said to have taken place at Christ's first advent. The nearest Jesus came to passing judgment on anyone was His denunciation of the Pharisees and the act of driving the moneychangers out of the temple. God's judgments that follow the Second Advent will make such acts look like child's play. The Prophet gives some indication of this in the first verse of the fourth chapter.

A. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

Q. In those days it was necessary to build a fire hot enough to heat stones for baking bread. Thus fire that burned "as an oven" would be an intense fire, one that consumed whatever was added to it. In Chapter 3 we had the "refiner's fire," which was also a very hot fire, emblematic of the judgments of God. Throughout the Bible, fire is often used of the Judgments of God but those judgments will consume only that which is a hindrance to the establishment of His kingdom.

The second verse of chapter 4 pictures the return of Christ, here described as the "Sun of righteousness" who goes forth "with healing in his wings." But before the arrival of the "Sun of righteousness," there is one very important prophecy to be fulfilled, one that we find at the end of the prophecy of Malachi.

A. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Q. Our church is one of a very few who teach that Elijah the prophet will return in person before Christ. What position is taken by most denominations concerning Elijah?

A. They say that John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy of Elijah.

Q. There is strong proof in the Bible that John the Baptist was not Elijah. What is that?

A. John's own testimony. We read in the first chapter of John that the Jews sent "priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not: but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? and he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No" (vs. 19-21). Then John referred them to the prophecy of Isaiah concerning himself.

Q. Isaiah prophesied the coming of John the Baptist before Christ's first coming. But can we explain the words of Jesus, "This is Elias, which was for to come"? And in Matt. 17, were the disciples mistaken in their understanding "that he spake unto them of John the Baptist"?

A. No. In Matthew 11 there is

no question but that Jesus was speaking of John the Baptist just as He said. The angel Gabriel had prophesied that John would come "in the spirit and power" of Elijah before Jesus' first advent, so it is not at all strange that He should describe him as "Elias, which was for to come."

Q. Any doubt about what Jesus said in Matthew 11 should be cleared away by His statements in Matthew 17. This episode followed the transfiguration where Peter, James and John were shown a vision which included Elijah, so it was not strange that they should ask, "Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?" How did Jesus answer them?

A. He said, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (v.11).

Q. Then what did Jesus say which has confused the issue for so many people?

A. He said, "But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed."

Q. Was Jesus confused? What did He mean to convey in this statement?

A. Jesus was speaking of two different messengers who were to precede two different comings. He spoke first of Elijah the prophet who would come to announce His second advent. He said, "Elias truly shall [future] first come, and restore all things." He could not have said this with reference to John the Baptist, because John the Baptist at this time was already dead as Jesus indicated when He said "they have done unto him whatsoever they listed" (v. 12). They had killed him; his mission was over. The mission of Elijah the prophet is yet future.

Q. There is another part of Malachi 4:5 that should help us to differentiate between John the Baptist and Elijah, and the two comings. What is that?

A. Elijah was to come "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." The birth of Christ could not be considered a "great and dreadful" day. To the majority of the people, it was unknown. The event was announced by the angels to a group of shepherds.

Q. What is meant by the "great and dreadful day of the Lord"?

A. It will be a great day for those who are ready to meet the King, but a dreadful day for those who are not ready. Second Thessalonians 1 pictures this "great and dreadful day" vividly as the day when "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them . . . that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction" (vs. 7-9). The vengeance will be on those who refuse to obey the law of God.

That "great and dreadful day" is yet future. There is no way in which the work of John the Baptist can be construed to have fulfilled the prophecy of the return of Elijah the prophet. MM

At the End of the Days

(Continued from page 9)

a parable of wise and foolish virgins to illustrate the seriousness of unpreparedness. Then followed another parable, "for the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods, and unto one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one." And, "after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them" (Matt. 25:14-19). It is the lesson of making proper use of the talents, the opportunities and advantages entrusted to us, for Christ will have no mercy for unfaithful stewards.

Then follows yet another depicting of the inevitable Day of Reckoning, which He compares to the manner in which a "shepherd . . . divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matt. 25:31-41). Strong lessons these, of the need to take seriously our duty to God, for the day of opportunity is not forever.

What a sermon! And do we realize all this was just two days before He was crucified?

Oh, that we could spend a few hours with Jesus

on the mountaintop! How much He could tell us of what we *want* to know. But let us not take casually what has been recorded for our learning. The greater privilege is ours—to be able to company with His words, to be able to read, and read, and re-read them, to meditate upon and ponder them until they become part of our very being, inspiring us with the highest and noblest of life's desires: to be like Christ.

If only we had the opportunity of Daniel! or Jesus' apostles! If only we had but a small part of Daniel's great vision of the future! If only Gabriel would pay us a short visit, how much we could learn!

But let us not feel forsaken, just because a divine revelation has not yet been ours. Before our career is over, it may be ours to see direct divine power around us. Some one shall meet the prophet Elijah. Some shall even "see the king in his beauty" (Isa. 33:17), and all the thousand wonders that shall accompany Him. *The power of God* will be seen and known!—soon enough.

What we need now is not a divine vision, for that would mean the end of this age. What we need is a larger measure of Daniel's courage and practical devotion to God, and the unswerving commitment of Jesus Himself. We need to know and feel every moment of every day that we are not our own, that we belong to God, that our time is not our own, that we are living—very literally—on borrowed time; hence we "cannot do the things that [we] would." Right now, before the end of this age, we need to be sure that we are one hundred percent willing and anxious to do whatever He has commanded and to refrain from whatever He has forbidden. That is our *whole* duty to God.

We long for the privileges of Daniel, or Jesus' apostles, but do we realize the special privilege that is ours, a privilege not enjoyed by *anyone* in *any* age before us, to be living *right at* the end of the days? Should we not sing triumphantly, "the end of all things is at hand," knowing that this means our "redemption draws nigh"?

Let us ponder once again those last words spoken to Daniel. There is an emotional eloquence about them that speaks to the heart. There is warmth and beauty in their living message of hope: "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." It was as if to say, You have seen enough, Daniel; and now, while you rest awhile, all these things shall pass by. But do not fear, for your future is secure; and at the time of the end you shall awake and claim your share in the Kingdom of the Messiah!

Let us pray each one that *we* may be there—with Brother Daniel!—at the end of the days. MM



The Sin of Lying

A LIE IS anything said or done to deceive. The person to whom it is said or done may not, indeed, be deceived by it; but this does not make the guilt of the attempt any less. A man who tries to pick another's pocket and fails, is certainly no less a thief for the failure.

A direct falsehood is one way of lying; but it is not the *only* way. He who says one thing and means another, is a liar; he who shuffles or prevaricates is a liar; and he who keeps back part of the truth when he ought to tell the whole is a liar.

You may *think* a lie, as well as *speak* a lie; whenever you *wish* to deceive another, you *think* a lie; whenever you say what you know will deceive, you *tell* a lie; whenever you *do* anything calculated to deceive or mislead, you *act* a lie.

Suppose a traveler should ask you to show him his road. If you said in your heart, "Now I will put him wrong," this would be to *think* a lie; if you told him to turn to the right, when he ought to turn to the left, this would be to *speak* a lie; if instead of saying a word you merely pointed your finger in a wrong direction, this would be to *act* a lie.

Lying is so mean and contemptible a vice that no youth of spirit or manliness should condescend to be guilty of it. He is a coward who is afraid to tell the truth; he is a cheat who goes the length of telling an untruth. But it is more and worse than a contemptible vice,—it is a most heinous sin. It is displeasing to God and ruinous to the soul.

In thinking, speaking, and acting, let *truth* be ever kept in view. And beware not only of direct falsehood but of the smallest departure from truth, even in jest. Remember that falsehood, however disguised, is sin, and that sin can never be a trifle; also, that "white lies" always introduce others of a darker color. If you can trifle with truth, if you can color and heighten what you repeat, you are on the way to become a habitual liar; for he who tells a lie without a motive, will he scruple to do so when the lie may serve his turn?

Oh, shun falsehood, then, in all its shapes, as you would shun a deadly disease! Offend not the

God of truth by tampering with truth. Say, whenever you are tempted to prevaricate, "Better for the truth to die,/Than purchase living by a lie!"

A deaf and mute boy was asked, "What is truth?" He replied by thrusting his finger forward in a straight line. He was then asked, "What is a lie?"—when he made a zigzag with his finger. Try to remember this, and act upon it. Never take a zigzag path, but always go straight for the mark.

God has commanded us always to speak the truth. "Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile." "Deceive not with thy lips." "Speak every man truth to his neighbor." "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord."

*Be the matter what it may,
Always speak the truth;
Whether work or whether play,
Always speak the truth.
Never from this rule depart,
Grave it deeply on your heart:
Written 'tis in Virtue's chart—
"Always speak the truth."*

*There's a charm in verity,
Always speak the truth;
But there's meanness in a lie,
Always speak the truth.
He is but a coward slave,
Who, a present pain to waive
Stoops to falsehood: then be brave,—
Always speak the truth.*

*Falsehood seldom stands alone,
Always speak the truth:
One begets another one,
Always speak the truth.
Falsehood all the soul degrades;
'Tis a sin which often breeds
Greater sins and darker deeds,—
Always speak the truth.*

*When you're wrong the folly own,
Always speak the truth;
Here's a victory to be won,
Always speak the truth.
He who speaks with lying tongue
Adds to wrong a greater wrong;
Then with courage true and strong
Always speak the truth.*

CAN and COULD

DO YOU KNOW them? I think you must; for *Can* and *Could* live in your neighborhood. Last night I found *Can* at his arithmetic lesson. It was a hard lesson. Not a boy in the class had mastered it that day, and the teacher had given it out a second time. *Can* had said "No!" to a moonlight party, in order to give his time and mind to the lesson.

"I *can* master it, and I *will*," said *Can*. "This lesson must not beat me the second time." "Shall I not help you?" asked his elder sister. "I'll try it first," answered *Can*. "I feel like going at it with a *will*; for I've heard it said, 'Where there's a *will* there's a *way*.'" That is the spirit which accomplishes a task; and he did not go to bed until every example was carefully worked out.

Let us look at *Could*, who is in the same class. "If I *only could* learn this horrid lesson!" he said, looking awhile on his book, and then gazing about him. He took up his pencil, made a few random figures on the slate, and then went to drawing dogs' heads.

"Is that the way you study your lessons?" asked his mother.

"If I *only could* get it!" he said, fretfully. "It is too hard and dry for *anybody*!"

His eyes are on his book again. The next moment he jumps up and runs to the window. "O, this splendid moonlight! It is too bad to have to stay in." And away he goes.

"But your lessons are not prepared," said his mother. "When I come back it will be time enough for them," answered *Could*. The next day, in the class, he drawled out, "I *would* have learned the lesson if I *could*," a very poor excuse for his unfinished work.

Can and *Could* both live on the farm, and both have cows to drive to the pasture, and both have work to do in the garden. *Can* is up bright and early, ready for business. In the summer time, his cows are cropping the grass on the hillside long before *Could* is out of bed. "If I *only could* wake up!" he says. Shame on such an idle excuse! Be up and at your work like a man!

It will be just the same when these two boys grow

up to be men. *Could* will look around upon the want and ignorance in the world and will say, "If I *only could* be a George Peabody, I would build houses for the poor, and supply them with the means to get an education."

Can is no idler. He is diligent in business, and ever seeking an opportunity to aid those who may need his assistance. He has no grand projects in his head, but he does whatever lies at hand that he can do. And he always has kind and encouraging words to cheer the people he meets.

Mark the sayings and doings of *Can* and *Could*, and you will find they are as different as industry and idleness can possibly make them. *Can*, by diligence and economy, is prosperous and happy; *Could*, by indolence and neglect, is discontented, fretful, and unhappy.

Which of these two characters do you desire to represent, *Can* or *Could*?
—Selected

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Letters

It Will Come

We have one aim, one thought in life, that is being one with Christ and hoping that someday we shall achieve alike oneness as the victors. Christ could claim a oneness with the Father, for truly Christ could say "I do always those things that please him."

We are more than fortunate, for we have Christ as our mediator pleading our cause. It is well we have, for without Christ we could never stand before the Father.

There is coming a day when all eyes will see our Lord; there will come a day when those who vowed to serve the Lord will be raised from the grave. There comes a day when each one will face judgment as to how they have carried out their service. It could be a terrible time for some; a joyous time for others; a time of rewards whether good or bad, but the time will surely come. How many times in the word of God does it say, "And it came to pass"? We cannot stop this day from dawning, just as we cannot stop the nighttime from falling. Can we hold back the tides of the sea? Nay, neither can we halt God's reckoning day. It will come to pass because God has promised it.

Workshop, England

H. L.

Avoiding "Dead Center"

We must not allow dormancy to gain control of our being which might become disastrous. We are created a more distinctive species; therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober, as says the apostle Paul. The crank and arm has a point of dead center which affects its starting motion. We also should watch and beware of the human "dead center," which could seriously cripple our progress.

The new book **MILLENNIUM SUPERWORLD** is very interesting and inspiring and should be in the hands of all honest lifeseekers. We have read it twice and find it difficult to lay down before completion.

We are grateful to be identified with your order in like mind, and are striving to be clean before our Divine Magistrate.

Basin, Wyoming

J. A.

Pray

The Bible tells us to pray for one another, so let us pray that we will do more for the Lord in order that we can hear Him say, "Enter into the joy of the Lord."

Mt. Hope, West Virginia

W.W.

Appreciative

The MEGIDDO MESSAGE would contribute to good library reading. We would appreciate receiving it for our library.

Alakanuk, Alaska

M.O.

Ready Reminders

To get rid of these everyday thoughts that won't help in making the Kingdom, is a determination on my part.

I always wear an apron with a pocket and I am determined to have a Bible lesson or some choice verse of Scripture in my pocket so when I sit down to rest, I can just reach in my pocket and have something spiritual to read and think about. It's so easy to let your mind drift on just everyday occurrences.

The way of Christ is not popular for it demands full sacrifice to God with no reservation for our own aims or purposes. We must keep our tempers controlled; banishing lusts for forbidden things; barring unholy thoughts; redeeming every moment instead of taking our ease. If we live our life in the service of the Lord, we shall find it in the Kingdom of God (John 12:25).

Davenport, Iowa

W.P.

Thankful to God

We are enjoying the narrow way more and more with each passing day and it gives us a great joy to think of you at Megiddo. We are far apart in distance, but not in heart and mind. We are striving to be with you in that soon coming day when Elijah and Jesus will be back on this earth again.

We can thank God for the many, many blessings that He has bestowed upon us. What does the Lord really require of us in order that we may share that great salvation soon to be bestowed? In Micah 6:8 it says, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

We have everything to thank God for, when we see the people striving for satisfaction, trying to satisfy their own human nature while everything is falling apart under their feet. Jer. 10:23 says, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

We all have our battles, striving to kill this old carnal nature, but we are thankful to God to know that this life is only a preparing place for the life that is soon to come.

Port Au Port, Newfoundland

D. T.

Sheltered Safely

While the shadows of evening are still stretched out, let us strive as never before to be sheltered safely in the strong tower of Truth when the storm breaks suddenly and furiously upon an unsuspecting world.

Charleston, Mississippi

R. S.

Working, Working

Prosperity could lead us away from God, but adversity helps us to know ourselves. It tests our faith and teaches us patience and endurance. The Psalmist realized this, for he said, it was good for him to be afflicted that he might learn God's statutes so, by this alone, we might know that all aspiring Christians will get their trials, and that there will be much to do to get them removed. Were we incapable, or had not been given a certain amount of ability to do the work, we would never have been called to try. Some are much quicker than others. However, the nobleman distributing the money to his servants tells them to "occupy until I come," so may we steadfastly "keep at it," heedless of scoffers and idlers, "for God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Though He cause grief, according to the multitude of His mercies He will have compassion.

May we strive to count our little trials all joy, and, like Job, bless the Lord for all that He gives us, and for what He takes away, and say with Habakkuk, "Yet, I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Obviously we are living in the last hour; we are nearer than we think. So may we hasten and steadfastly work as never before with what we have been given, not keep it put away in a handkerchief like the rascal of a servant in the parable, but using it to our fullest ability, so that we may be ready when the nobleman returns.

Swansea, South Wales

R.B.

Toiling and Toiling

Thanks to the Almighty God for His continuous blessings toward us day by day.

Methinks we shall appreciate that grand time when the beautiful rainbow is spread over this valley of tears, when the time has come which our Master told us about. And how thankful we should be to know and realize that a knowledge of these wonderful things assures us, if we walk in obedience to it, that we are indeed the servants of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and being servants to Him will bring us a grand and wonderful reward. How glad we should be to be His servants! It will bring us not only joy and happiness, but will give to us a life, oh, so different from the present.

This life is filled with laborious toil; we have to get up in the morning and tug all day; and when the year has rolled around, all we have accomplished, seemingly, is to have simply clothed and fed ourselves. We have not made much advancement so far as gaining something lasting is concerned. There is only one way to gain something endless, and that is by becoming a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it will give us a life so different from this! There will be no sorrow, no woe, no discomfort; there will be no sickness, and there will be no death.

To enjoy such a grand state of things it would seem as though we would want to be His servant. It seems as though each one would throw all his energy into the work to become indeed a true and living servant of the Lord. He is going to give us riches untold, give us a life so different from the present for our service. How anxious we should be to serve Him.

Monrovia, Liberia

S.Z.

Finally, Brethren

Ready to Go,

Ready to Stay

ONE QUALITY very characteristic of a man of faith is his ability to leave home. This may be one of the main reasons Abraham came to be known as the father of the faithful. According to the writer of Hebrews, "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go" (Heb. 11:8, RSV). He did not know *where*, but he did know *Who*—and so he went. This implicit sense of trust in God allowed him to be at home anywhere God led him, even on unfamiliar ground. With this kind of readiness for the unknown, doesn't fear dissolve and the terrors that we thought were lurking beneath the surface of the new vanish away?

As Christians, we are not permanent residents here. Our lives are to be lived with the mobility of tents. Faced by afflictions, uncertainties and frustrations, we know still that we have a share in the stability of that one kingdom that will endure, the coming Kingdom of Christ. Ever on the move until we arrive there, we can ride out any storm of life without losing the larger perspective. Wherever we are in the interim, we are at home. We know this world for what it is, a temporary stopping place, a depot as it were. We are able to love and enjoy it appropriately, never being possessed or captivated by it in the process. We can relate to it most wisely, knowing that we have in the world to come a home that will be enduring.

God wants us to appreciate what He has given us to enjoy in this world; but our real treasures are stored in a more permanent place. Always in our thinking we are "on the way" and have no time to pause to rest uncritically on the status quo. What lures us on? It is the persistent vision of the Kingdom of God. The call is always to be ready—ready to go, ready to stay, but at all times READY.

MM

Consecration

*Just as I am, Thine own to be,
Thou God of all who seek for Thee,
To consecrate myself to Thee,
Thou God of all, I come.*

*In the glad morning of my day,
My life to give, my vows to pay,
With no reserve and no delay,
I yield my all to Thee.*

*I would live ever in the light,
I would work ever for the right;
I would serve Thee with all my might;
Therefore, to Thee, I come.*

*Just as I am, young, strong and free,
To be the best that I can be
For truth, and righteousness, and Thee,
Lord of my life, I come.*

—Selected

