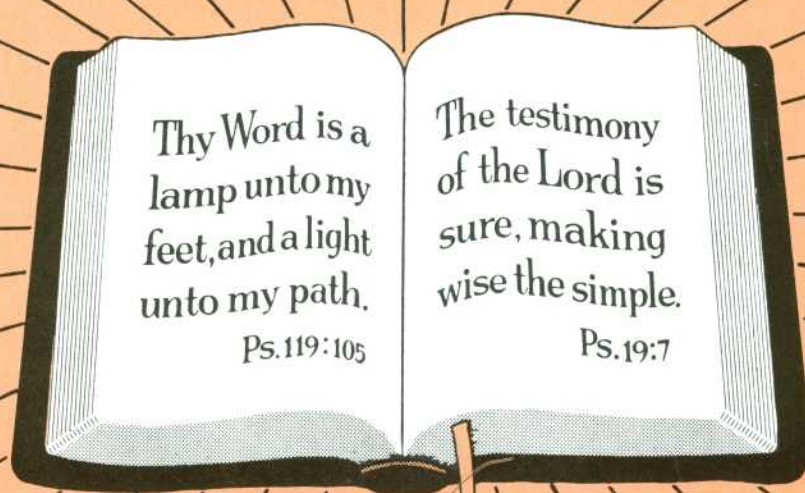


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Order, Certainty and Hope

Jesus Changes Lives

Working Wheels Keep Clean

Miracles Today?

When Hatred Isn't Enough

ARE WE perplexed by our seeming instability, so many highs and so many lows in our spiritual life? Do we feel a surge of fresh power, and then fall right back into our old ways?

Perhaps part of the problem is that we are too lenient with ourselves. We know what we ought to do, but fail to lay the axe to the root of the tree. We lop off branches of evil, but do not go to the real source of the problem, what the apostle Paul addresses as "the flesh."

This is what he was writing about in Galatians 5:19-21: "When self-indulgence is at work the results are obvious: fornication, gross indecency and sexual irresponsibility; idolatry and sorcery; feuds and wrangling, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels; disagreements, factions, envy; drunkenness, orgies and similar things. I warn you now, as I warned you before: those who behave like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Jerusalem Bible).

Immediately when we look at this list, we begin to classify. Some works of the flesh are not so bad as others. Surely we would never go into sorcery or witchcraft. But notice that the same list also includes jealousy and bad temper.

Or we might say, "I never have a problem with drunkenness—I wouldn't touch alcoholic beverages." But envy is named before drunkenness. A person consumed with envy sees someone else get attention and credit and wonders why *he* hasn't been recognized for what *he* has done. And which of us has never felt this?

Or we might say, "I don't have a problem with immorality." But the list also mentions disputes and dissensions. These things are all works of the flesh. None is any less a work of the flesh than the other. They come from the same root, and the whole tree is cursed.

We might define that root—the flesh—as self-will. And what does this root look like? We might examine ourselves, and seem not to be able to identify any particular sin except that our hearts are cold. But that, too, is a work of the flesh, the result of self-will or self-rule. God wants us all warmed up, enthusiastic in His service, in prospect of the great joy He has set

before us. Isn't it serious sin and shame if we are not?

But self-will is part of each of us by nature. A drop of the poison of rebellion has fallen at some time or other on every human heart.

A self-willed person is critical of others and says things about them to people who are neither part of the problem or part of the solution. His critical, envious spirit develops because the flesh says, "I have to shine. The only way I can shine is by cutting other people down." Such an attitude is deadly to spiritual growth.

How about our Christian example? Do we ever feel that we do not want to be identified with Christ or His cause? that we prefer not to be so "different"? Do we feel more comfortable if the people with whom we work shoulder-to-shoulder don't even know we are believers? Let us recall what Jesus said about being "ashamed," ashamed of Him and His words "in this adulterous and sinful generation . . . of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

Then, let us think of the thoughts of our own hearts, the times we have been too sure of ourselves, when we have held to our own opinion even after being proven wrong. And think of the times we have privately commended ourselves in our wrong. Someone has said that if we were made of glass and people could see what we think, we would all want to live on a desert island.

By nature we are slaves to that which is "earthly, sensual, devilish." If only we could take the drawers of our mind out one by one, turn them over, and dump all the garbage out. But it is not so easy. Evil thoughts leave only as good thoughts *force* them out.

The self-willed person wants to direct his life in his own way, set his own standards, and pride himself in adhering to them. He says, at least by action, "I will not have any one rule over me. I want to do what I want to do, because I know best." He is like the servants in Jesus' parable who said, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). But those servants did not succeed in their

(Continued on page 23)

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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Order, Certainty and Hope

Scripture Reading: Psalm 145

OUR WORLD is filled with questions, questions which we must face every day we live. Here we are, living beings on a planet called Earth. Why are we here? Where did we come from? Where are we going? We are part of a tremendous world of mountains and plains, rivers and oceans. Why?

Our world is teeming with life. There are many, many people—more than four billions of them. And there are animals, some that fly, others that swim, or walk, or crawl. Altogether we are a huge family. Where did we come from? Did we all just “happen”?

A World of Order

A marvelous world it is, and we are able to enjoy it. We have eyes to see, and our world is filled with color and light and beauty. We have ears to hear, and there are sounds and music, words and language. We are able to think, remember, reason and relate one experience to another. How is this possible?

Our world is full of questions, and men in every part of our world have been trying to answer them for centuries. Some have said that everything just happened to be—but what made the first thing “happen”? Was it mere “chance”?

Some people say there is no plan, no purpose, no future, that this life is all and when you’re dead, you’re dead. This means there is no design behind nature, no intelligent governing power—but have you ever looked up at the heavens on a clear night? If there is no designer, what caused all those bodies of light, the eternal sun, the moon and stars?

Thousands live from day to day without giving any

thought to life or its meaning. They eat and sleep and work and think of nothing else. To them, this life is all. But does that mean there is nothing more?

Some people believe a superpower has predetermined the course of all events, and that nothing a person can do can change anything. There is no hope, no ambition, no improvement. The future offers nothing, they say, but can you believe it? Is there no supreme blessing to which we may look forward and toward which we may strive?

Other people believe they can make images with their hands, out of clay or wood or stone, and bow to them and receive some kind of help or guidance. But can you believe that? Can something which has no power to see, or hear, or talk, or move give any spiritual blessing to the man who fashioned it?

Some people believe we are here solely for the good that we can do to others. We are here to love and serve one another, to relieve suffering and promote goodwill; that is all there is to life. But is it? Is there nothing more?

Still others believe life is an endless round of existence, changing constantly from one form to another. This is called reincarnation, and the whole round is either perpetual or it ends somewhere in the perfection of absolute nothingness. But is there any evidence for such an answer?

And there are many other answers to life and its meaning which men have proposed.

But to us there is only one answer: God.

God the Creator

We believe in one Supreme, All-powerful, All-knowing God. He is and always was and always will be, and every problem and question of the human mind can find its complete solution in Him and His plan. Why? Because He is the Creator and Supreme Ruler of all.

Consider the house in which you live. Did it just

Note: *Order, Certainty and Hope* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

happen, or did someone put it together? You have clothing. Did the threads just happen to fall together in order, or did some hand weave them? You walk down a road. Did all the stones just happen to lie in order to make a smooth path, or did someone place them?

Nothing can make itself. Everything that is made is living evidence of a maker. And so, everything in our world—including ourselves—had a Maker, a Creator, a Designer—God.

Life is filled with questions, but God has the answers. He who has filled the heavens with stars, the sea with fish, and the earth with animals and people, He is the source of all.

But God is in heaven. We are on earth. How can we know anything about what He has to offer us?

The Bible, God's Message to Us

Through the ages God has used many different means of communicating with men, and He could use many more if He wished. He could sound His voice like thunder and shake the earth so that all would stop and listen, if He wished. Or He could send personal messengers to tell us what He wanted us to know, if He chose to do so.

Right now God is using silent means of communication. Long ago He planned it. He caused a Book to be written, in which He recorded all we would need to know about Him and His purpose. He preserved that Book, and now it is ours. It is available in almost all parts of the world. We call it the Bible.

The Bible is not a book of unfounded feelings and philosophies of men. It is not fantasy or fiction. The Bible is the real record of men and women who actually lived. It tells of events that actually happened. It was written in and about places that actually existed. And it tells of a plan that is slowly and steadily working toward completion.

The Bible is a book of *facts*. This is important, because our future life is a matter of life and death—*eternal* life, or *eternal* death. In something so important we must have facts, evidence, certainty.

How can we be sure that the Bible is a book of facts, that it is not just another book by another group of men? How can we know that its writing was directed by the God of heaven? The Buddhists have their sacred scriptures and give glowing testimonies of what their religion does for them. The Hindus have their sacred Vedas, the sacred writings of their holy men. And the Moslems have the writings of Mohammed, and so on and on. How can we know that the Bible is not the same as all these other writings, just the words of some more men who had more ideas? How shall we be sure the Bible is the Word of God? We need evidence.

*Why are we here?
Where did we come from?
Where are we going?*

Now either the Bible is all true, and can be depended on, or it is all false and should be wholly rejected. It is either the Word of God or it is not; there is no neutral position.

Here are a few basic facts:

1) The Bible is the only communication of God to men available today.

2) The God of the Bible is the one and only true and living God.

3) The Bible is our only source of knowledge about God and His plan.

What is the evidence behind these facts?

1) The unity and harmony of the Bible.

The Bible is composed of sixty-six different books, written over a period of 1600 years. The authors of these books were men, human as we are, and they came from all walks of life. Some were kings, some fishermen, some herdsmen, statesmen, doctors. These different men wrote in three different languages, and on three continents. Yet they all proclaim one message of salvation—how could this be unless all were moved and guided by the same supreme God?

2) The Bible has been preserved.

The Bible has had the fiercest of enemies. It has been burned and its advocates have been persecuted and tortured, to say nothing of the ridicule it has suffered in the hands of intellectuals. Yet it has survived these thousands of years and is available worldwide today in nearly every written language on earth.

3) The Bible is verified by fulfilled prophecy.

Within the Bible are hundreds of prophecies which were fulfilled exactly as predicted, and often hundreds of years later. This feature is unique, not being attempted in the Vedas or the Koran or any other "scriptures" of any other religion. No man has power to foreknow the future. This ability is reserved to God, and the quantity of prophecy in the Bible attests to the fact that it is the written Word of God.

The birth of the Messiah was foretold more than twelve hundred years in advance. Also foretold were His ministry, His betrayal, His death and resurrection. All the forecasts were accurate to their finest detail. There is

only one answer. *The Bible is the Word of God.*

4) The Bible is accurate in its teaching.

The Bible supports all true science and its accounts have proven again and again to be historically correct. Archaeology has confirmed and continues to confirm the details of custom, circumstance and setting incorporated in many of the Old Testament accounts. This proves that the Bible is accurate, and that it was written by people who lived at that time.

The accuracy of the Bible is also marvelous when we consider the countless times its messages were copied by ordinary men who could easily have distorted its record. But newly found manuscripts differ hardly at all from those discovered years ago—more evidence that God was at work, preserving His message for men.

5) The Bible writers themselves testify to the God behind them.

This feature is unique, for the writers of any other “sacred scriptures” have neither the frequency nor the variety of communications from the God of heaven. And all the words of all its authors combine into one overall

teaching and one plan of salvation. This would be impossible, were it the work of ordinary men and uninspired.

Proving the Bible Reliable

The Bible is reliable. We can depend on it. This fact is amply proven by fulfilled and fulfilling prophecies. One of the most striking examples of this fact is the prophecy contained in the book of Daniel. You can read about it in Daniel 2. The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar had a God-inspired dream, in which he saw a great image, having a head “of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay” (Dan. 2:32-33).

Now all kinds of so-called “prophets” and “wise men” have been telling visions and dreams through the ages. What makes those in the Bible *different*? The difference lies in the *real meaning* and certain fulfillment which always accompanied Bible prophecies—because they are revelations from God and not imaginations of men.

The King called upon Daniel to reveal and interpret the unusual dream. Let us read the explanation which

Let Us Pray. . .

Almighty Creator, God of our fathers and Sustainer of all mankind, we thank Thee for life and all that it means to us. We thank Thee for work, and for the health and strength to do it. We thank Thee for skill of hand, for accuracy of eye and mind and brain, that we may be useful to one another and to Thee.

We thank Thee above all for Thyself and the surety that Thou art; for all the evidence Thou dost give to confirm to us Thy existence, Thy power to create, Thy ability to foretell future events. Such knowledge is high, it is wonderful, surpassing man’s most sophisticated abilities as far as light surpasses darkness. We thank Thee, too, for Thy Word, and for all the evidence that we have of its truthfulness and divine authority.

Impress us anew this hour with our finitude, our smallness, our total dependence upon Thee as we stand every moment in Thy presence. Thou hast made the earth and created man upon it. Thou art the Source of all wisdom, all knowledge, all good; without Thee we would not even

be. And apart from the information provided in Thy Word we should be out upon the sea of life with neither chart nor compass to show us where to go. We would know nothing of how we could live even one second beyond our short while here.

Grant us, O Father, the courtesy and grace that we may live every moment as if we were living at the court of the King; grant us tolerance, that we may not be so quick to condemn as to understand; grant us considerateness, that we may think of the feelings of others more than of our own. Grant us kindness, that we may miss no opportunity to help, to cheer, to comfort, and to encourage another. Grant us honesty, that our work may be our best, whether there is anyone to see it or not.

Our Father, we implore that Thou wilt send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead us into all truth and keep us from believing, accepting, or supporting any belief or conduct except that which Thou dost approve. May Thy favor be above every earthly interest or desire, Thy approval the supreme quest of our lives, that we may be lights shining brilliantly for Thee in a world of darkness.

We pray Thy blessing on all those everywhere who are seeking Thee with all their heart. And we pray Thee to bless also those who are now preparing their hearts to seek Thee. And may Thy Kingdom come and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, for Thine is the Kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

follows in Daniel 2 (verses 36-45). "Thou art this head of gold," he told the Babylonian king. But Babylon was not to be the dominant nation forever. "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee," the prophecy continues, and it describes what was the kingdom of Medo-Persia. But this kingdom was also to fall in due time, and a third kingdom "of brass," the kingdom of Greece, was to replace it. In due time the kingdom of Greece would also fall before a "fourth" kingdom "strong as iron," the Roman Empire.

History confirms that these kingdoms *did* rise and fall, just as the Prophet said they would, and the Prophet spoke these words when only the *first* of these world kingdoms was in existence. What better evidence could we find of the certainty of Bible prophecies! The God who can foretell the future of nations accurately can also be depended upon to reveal other events, which we may know will most certainly come to pass as predicted. This is the whole purpose of the Bible's predictions—to give us faith. The Bible itself presents this challenge to us: "How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?" it asks. And the answer: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken" (Deut. 18:21-22).

But there is more in the prophecy in Daniel than we have mentioned. The Prophet went on to tell of a fifth world kingdom, represented in the vision as a "stone . . . cut out of the mountain without hands," which struck the feet of the image and "brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold," all

The Bible is a book of facts.

the kingdoms of men, and "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." What is this fifth kingdom? The Prophet tells us plainly: "In the days of these kings (when their days are completed) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: . . . and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:35, 44).

Here is a prophecy which affects every one of us. And in view of the fact that the four previous kingdoms rose and fell just as predicted, we may have full confidence that this fifth kingdom, the Kingdom of Christ, will some day be established upon earth, just as the Bible predicts it will be.

Christ is coming to set up a new and universal government upon earth. This prophecy is repeated in different words more than 300 times in the New Testament alone. The Bible is filled with prophecies of the blessings and prosperity that will come with that new government. There will be universal prosperity, universal peace, no more sickness, poverty, war, bloodshed, suffering, crime or injury. There will be one worldwide, stable government for the good of all.

This is the hope of the Bible. And it is *our* hope. And it is true. These things shall be! How diligently we want to work now so that we may live when God doeth all these things.

MM

God the Architect

*Who Thou art I know not
But this much I know;
Thou hast set the Pleiades
In a silver row;
Thou hast sent the trackless winds
Loose upon their way;
Thou hast reared a colored wall
Twixt the night and day;
Thou hast made the flowers to bloom
And the stars to shine;
Hid rare gems of richest ore
In the tunneled mine;
But chief of all thy wondrous works,
Supreme of all Thy plan,
Thou hast put an upward reach
Into the heart of man.*

Selected.

You . . . an Advertisement

There are many people who have professed Christianity for years, and who would be highly insulted if one should imply that they acted un-Christlike.

"Christian" is a sign demanding honor and respect, when used in the right way; but too many people want the credit *minus* the obligation.

An automobile bears upon its hub the name of the firm that made it. Wherever the automobile goes it carries the reputation of its maker. It does not need to talk. Every mile it goes it writes a new advertisement a mile long.

So does the man who takes upon himself the name of "Christian." Every deed he does is an advertisement of Jesus Christ.

What kind of advertisement do we write, you and I?

We owe it to our God, our nation, our community and ourselves to be effective representatives of Truth and Righteousness.

Jesus Changes Lives

Nineteen centuries have come and gone since Jesus lived among men, and died and was buried. And yet He lives! He is living today, this very day! Death could not hold Him. Three days in the power of sinful men, suffering the cruelest penalty of their law, He was raised from the sleep of death to live forevermore. Men rejected Him, but God exalted Him. And He was taken to heaven, where God has glorified Him.

Wherein lies His power to change men? In the hope He offers men, in the life He demonstrated before them, in the appeal He voiced among them, in the flawless example of purity He lay before them.

Here are a few more of those men and women whose lives Jesus changed. What was their reaction to the change Jesus wrought in their lives? What would we have done had we been in their place?

Matthew

Picture: *Matthew seated at his tax-booth, with account books, money box and ledgers evident. Customer comes along, disputes his tax liability, tries to persuade Matthew that he does not have the money and does not want to pay it. Matthew is demanding. Tempers fly, customer leaves. Another customer (Jesus) comes along. Looks long and hard at Matthew, beckons for him to come with Him. Matthew emerges and speaks.*

I was sitting in my booth by the side of the road, on one of the main roads from Damascus to Israel, just outside Capernaum. It was a good station, for besides the regular tax-payers who lived in the area, many travelers came by who had to stop and pay on the goods they were importing.

It was almost closing time on this particular day, and I had gathered all my papers, checked my receipts and added up my money. Not a bad business. Seemed to be getting better all the time. A few years, and . . . I could see myself retiring early, with plenty of money to enjoy a good life. I was clever, and I knew it—clever enough to make money. That's why I had chosen to be a tax collector. Why not!

Just then I looked up, to see another customer coming down the road. It was the Carpenter from Nazareth. He came regularly. There was something different about this man that always impressed me. Whenever I told this Carpenter that taxes had gone up, He never complained. He only looked at me, and those eyes seemed so knowing, as if to ask "What has gone up—the tax, or your percentage?" Yet He always paid what I asked and went His way.

During the past few months I had heard more about this Carpenter from Nazareth, of lepers He had cleansed, and people He had healed, and powerful sermons He had preached. I had heard a little myself one day, from a distance. And I could not dismiss what I had heard.

Now this Teacher, as they called Him, was standing directly before me. Once again I had to lift my head and meet those eyes. And this time they seemed to look straight through me, through my books, through my accounts, through my empty life. I felt as though He were reading my thoughts!

All of a sudden I felt guilty, plain guilty. I didn't know what He was about to do. Was He going to complain and call me a thief like so many others did? No, he said simply, "Follow me."

Follow Him? Did He want *me* for a follower? *Me* a publican? No, He didn't want the man I was then. He wanted the man He knew I *could* be, the man I *could* become.

And so I made the decision that would alter the entire course of my life—from Matthew the publican to Matthew the apostle of Jesus Christ!

That was the beginning of a whole new life for me. Jesus disturbed my smug contentment and gave me new longings and higher goals. My life was empty, and He knew it. I was already sick of the life that seeks only money, and He knew it. And He knew what to do about it. His holy life, His teachings and most of all His quiet, humble example of obedience—it impressed me so deeply that I found myself wanting to be like Him. It changed me from a self-satisfied, selfish tax collector to a follower of Christ who could someday inherit life everlasting, if I followed to the end. What a change!

What a magnificent change!

Mary Magdalene

Picture: *Mary Magdalene, visibly vain, affected, primping in front of mirror as if beautifying herself for a special occasion. Smiles at her own appearance, as her gracious servant assists her. Then she exits, removes the vain adornments, re-enters and speaks.*

Are you ever tempted to feel satisfied with yourself as you are? Do you ever think you have arrived? Then you haven't really been with Jesus; He could always show you where you could improve. Remember, He could read your heart!

He read mine, and oh! the shameful evils I found hidden there. Secret pride I did not want to show, and a desperate craving for human pleasures, and a selfish spirit that always said "Me first." He gave me higher goals, and holier thoughts—and pleasures I could find beyond my little selfish circle. Such a change! I don't believe my old friends back in Magdala would know me if I went back there now. Everything about my life is different. The change was so drastic that the Scripture says Jesus cast seven devils out of me.

How I longed to live as He would have me live. I wanted my every thought and deed to be pleasing to our heavenly Father. I had no family of my own; how I longed to belong entirely to Him.

Jesus' example was such an inspiration to me. And such powerful lessons He gave us when He spoke! You could not really listen to Him and go away the same person; you had to *change*. And when certain of us gathered to talk with Him and His disciples after the crowds had gone, we learned—we learned so many things we needed to know to reach that high standard of character to which He had called us.

Let me tell you of just one experience, I shall never forget. It was the morning of the Resurrection. I had been overcome with grief, to think we had lost the one in whom we had placed all our hope! But when He spoke my name that morning, I knew it was Jesus! How my heart thrilled! To think that in just three years I had changed enough so that He could call me as one of His own! And those words He spoke: "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." To think that Jesus' Father could be my Father, and His God my God!

When He comes again and sits down on His throne, and chooses those who shall share it with Him, I want to hear my name called: "Mary." I want to be there to receive that final glorious change to immortality!

Peter

Picture: *Peter, with Andrew, James and John, fishermen with nets, boat. They are working hard, struggling with the nets. Peter leaves the nets and the boat, steps forward and speaks.*

My brother and I, with two other brothers, were fishermen. We didn't know a lot about politics, or religion. We just knew a lot about fishing.

The first time I ever heard of the Galilean Jesus, my brother came to me and said, "You just have to go and meet this man. There's something about Him that's different. You just have to meet Him."

Well, I went. And I met Him. And what do you think He said to me? "Come, come with me, and I will make you a fisher of men." An assignment from Him on our very first meeting! A call, to be *His* fisherman!

It was sudden, and I didn't know all that it meant, but I went. I gave it all up—the fishing, the boats, the nets. What a change! I gave it all up to be a follower of His. I had always been my own boss; it wasn't easy to *follow*.

You know me. I was the man who spoke, then thought. I was the man who jumped in, then wondered how I was going to get out. As far as I was concerned, thought and desire spelled *action*—and, unfortunately, many times *trouble*.

My lessons in forming a character for eternal life came hard; and they do not come any easier for you today. Some are shorter; some are long. One of the longest lessons, I found, was that of self-control. Why? Because I was so hasty, so anxious, so impatient, and self-control was hard to learn. I learned it the hardest way, by every knock and failure. But I took them manfully. And I kept taking them, all the way to the end.

I was a strange bundle of contradictions—unthinking and thoughtful, passionate and determined, talkative and fearful, cowardly and bold—but thank God for the second side!

It took a good many years and a lot of real effort to change this nature of mine, to remove the bad and cultivate the good. What amazes me is that Jesus saw enough in me to choose me—rough creature that I was. He chose me because He could look past the imperfections and see the good, the possibilities for rock-hard courage and steadfast character, once I was truly converted. To think that I—Simon Bar-Jona—was called to become one of earth's great men! I—the disciple who on the night of His betrayal denied that ever I knew Him! When He needed me most, I failed Him. And yet, He gave me another chance. He saw beyond the weak, faltering, fearful creature that I was to what I could become! That shows Jesus' mercy and kindness.

But what a lot of change I needed. I changed—because I wanted to be a permanent part of His Kingdom. I changed so completely that by the end of my life I was no longer serving Peter; I was serving Christ and His loyalties. I was serving the cause of His future Kingdom.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, won't you change your nature too, change the center and direction of your life, so you may someday be a partaker of the heavenly glory with me?

John Mark

Picture: *Three men are talking together. One of them, John Mark, turns away discouraged. Paul and Barnabas, very sober, determine to press ahead. Mark steps out of the picture and speaks.*

I was young when I started out, and rather immature, as I soon found out. I felt strong and full of energy when I decided to try the Christian life. My decision was largely the result of my uncle's influence. Uncle Barnabas warned me the way would have its difficulties, but he was sure I had it in me to succeed if—I would. And me, I had no question. Of course I could succeed!

Well you know my story. When the first real test came, I failed it.

It was a rare privilege, to go traveling with my uncle and Brother Paul. The very idea of it, of being chosen to go with them, sent my enthusiasm soaring. And what a royal send-off we had from the whole church-congregation. It was a great day! You see, this was the first major missionary effort, and everyone was supporting it.

We set sail for Crete. The sailing wasn't bad; in fact, I rather liked it. And the traveling across Crete wasn't hard. We had good success there! Right at the first! We were encouraged!

But when we headed up into the mountains, everything changed. Mile after mile uphill and down, and night after night without a decent place to sleep. And we were so hungry, and so tired, and so cold. Oh! Was *this* missionary life? The more I thought about what lay ahead—we were just getting started! and the more I thought about my family in their comfortable home back in Antioch—I decided I wasn't ready for this type of life. My enthusiasm—well, it disappeared. I hated to disappoint my brothers, but it—it was just too much. I wanted to quit and go home. My uncle was keenly disappointed in me, I know, but he told me I could go back. And Brother Paul—well, he told me if I couldn't make it they could get along without me. They didn't need anybody to carry!

Well, Brother Paul had his face set so firmly, I don't think he could feel the cold and the weariness and the hard beds at night like I could.

It was hard leaving them, but home I went. I put my hand to the plow, *looked back*, and *went back*.

But do you know, when I reached home, I didn't find what I wanted? There was no warm welcome, or praise, or commendation for a triumphant return. Only questions. Why? they wanted to know. Too soft? Homesick? Too young? Couldn't take a little hardship for the cause of Christ?

You know how I felt. And all I could think of was my uncle and Brother Paul trudging on mile after weary mile, and meeting all those new brethren. . . . And here was I—a traitor!

Right then and there I made my decision. I would *change*! What was I living for—a soft, easy life or the glorious coming Kingdom of Christ? Why was I thinking so much of the present, with such a glorious future ahead of me?

Well, I changed! I set to work immediately. I was determined to prove myself. I wanted to grow in Christ, as I saw Paul and other brethren growing. I wanted to make my life worth something—for God. And—I wanted to regain Paul's confidence.

It took a lot of time, effort, and really hard work. But what are we worth to ourselves or to God without these?

Present-day Believer

You know me. I am one of you. I am here today because I am committed. I have been captured by the hope of our high calling in Christ Jesus. I am a rough, unhewn stone, but I am changing. I want every day to show some bit of improvement, something new, something that will finally bring God's approval upon my life.

Jesus changed those He called, and He still changes men and women. He will change you and me, if we will let Him. His promises are just as sure, His words are just as true, His commandments are just as binding today as they were when He walked among men. Jesus still changes lives, and—

The greatest change is just ahead, when He will return to change our mortal bodies to the likeness of His glorious body and make us eternal heirs of His eternal Kingdom.

Won't you prepare now, so you can be ready for the great change in that Day? Won't you take Jesus for your example now and change?

MM

"By Thy Words"

The tongue is a world of iniquity and fiery poison.

The power to make and use language has been given us by our Heavenly Father to communicate with each other. Through the use of words we are able to express our ideas, our dreams, our hopes and our faith. But alas! how much strife, hatred, bitterness and sorrow comes through the improper use of words.

Jesus warned that our words will at last judge us "for by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." He, our perfect Example, used His words to glorify God, to heal, to lift, to redeem, to warn, to exhort toward holy living.

In this busy life and all too hurried world we must speak often one to another if we would survive. It is not only our duty but it should also be our delight. Of all people we are the most blessed. Truth is in our midst. God is at the helm, leading, directing and helping His people. As a group we are a very small body, but we can be strong. Let us keep on praying and conversing on the things that matter most and we shall triumph in the end.

—Contributed

Not Yet the Promised Calm

*Have the thunders ceased to hurtle through the dim and lurid sky?
Are the hands of nations clasped in perennial amity?
Has the dawn of glory, sighed for by the poet and the sage,
Ushered in the tearless morning of an endless happy age?*

*Has the sea of earth's commotion lulled in never-moving calm?
Shall the nations rest in peace in the shadow of the palm?
Has to dwell in darksome cavern, War, the deadly, fled confounded?
And the jubilee of mankind over hill and valley sounded?*

*No! the voice of murder shrieks through the solitude and city;
No! beside the couch of death wails the tender voice of pity;
No! in echoes terrible, voice to voice responsive rings
From the smoldering fires of peoples, from the councils of the kings;
No! responds the throbbing West from its rocky heights and llanos;
No! reply the leaping firegleams from a hundred hushed volcanoes.*

*Soon the hypocrite shall see falsehood's refuge overflowed,
For the heavy cloud of judgment quivers with its thunder load:
Soon with messages of woe shall earth's broadcast stations tremble;
Soon in battle's dark array Armageddon's hosts assemble;
Marshall'd soon beneath his banner shall the Beast's vast armies be
Like the hissing, heaving billows of a darkened surging sea.*

*Climb the watch tower, O Believer! take the telescope in hand,
And the glimmering horizon of the eastern sky command:
There beyond the brooding darkness, there, beyond the ocean strife,
When the blooms of Paradise once again shall scent our clime,
And the storm and mist forever vanish from the hills of time.*

—Selected

Working Wheels Keep Clean

I HAD A lawn mower once that became a preacher. Well . . . it preached to me, on this wise:

I was cutting the grass each week with a self-propelled, but you-walk-along-behind-it type mower. We had worked together for some time before I became aware that—especially on “dampish” days—though the rear wheels would get matted with grass and mud, the front ones *never* did. When I finished mowing, I usually had to clean off those rear wheels before stowing it in the garage; but *never the front ones*.

One day it occurred to me that this was a bit odd since both sets of wheels traversed the same ground affixed to the same machine. Reflection brought comprehension. The front ones were the drive wheels and the power was transmitted through them; the rear wheels were passive and simply followed along as they were pulled by the others.

I began to watch those drive wheels at work and became fascinated with them. (That’s when the machine started its preaching.)

Those front drive wheels were always turning. It made no difference at all if the ground was level or steep. If I depressed the handle so as to pivot the machine to turn it and they were momentarily up in the air, they turned as if they thought they were still in contact with the earth. If for some reason I man-handled the mower and forcibly pulled it back, even that didn’t phase those working wheels. Not in the least. They still turned forward even though the mower was going backward!

Nothing discouraged them, nothing stopped them. They didn’t even slow down. They had an assignment and they kept at it.

As a result, two things were taking place: (1) The mower moved along doing its work, and (2) the debris had no chance to stick to those front wheels, so they were always clean.

As I listened to the the mower preach, I concluded

there are also two kinds of human “wheels”—especially in the church.

There are those passive wheels which just sit there, being pulled about by the others. They are only along for the ride. The thought of getting deeply involved would frighten them. They are affixed to the church—they are quite content to be identified as members and attend. They even make some contribution to the church work. But the dynamic of operation is foreign to them. They are content to be pulled along on others’ power.

Not only do they lack spiritual power, but the practical problems of daily life are not solved by them. Who does the work? Who seriously seeks God and promotes His work? Not *these* wheels.

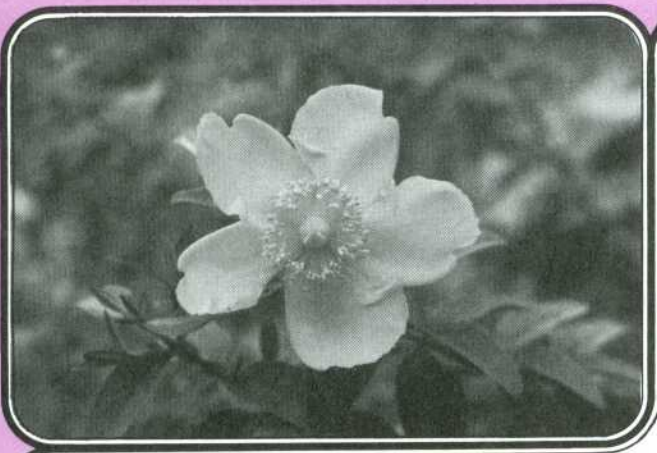
But on the other hand, who picks up all the “dirt” and peddles it? That’s right, it’s usually the one who isn’t even pulling his own weight.

On the other hand, there are church wheels who are connected to the Source of Power. Because they are so deeply involved in the life of the church, they are too busy or too concerned to peddle gossip. Here are the working wheels!

The pattern holds true, and I’ve learned to thank God for the drive wheels. Is the going uphill? They do not grow discouraged and drop out. Do things seem “up in the air,” or is the whole thing apparently going backward? On they turn. Are others just riding along, willing to be pulled? Undistracted from their own assignment, they just keep at their work in single-minded devotion.

They have a mandate for progress from the Power Source, and there is no stopping them! And it is obedience to that command which keeps them—and which will keep us also—clean!

Room for improvement is the largest room in the world.



One Life

*ONE LIFE and one alone we have
To live upon this little earth.
One life in which to learn so much—
To seek and find and prove our worth.
So many dreams there are to dream,
So many things to know and do.
So many rosy peaks to climb,
So many pathways to pursue.*

*So waste no time on fruitless quests
That get you nowhere in the end.
The gold of time is in your hand,
With greatest care to use and spend.
It's folly to postpone good deeds;
Tomorrow never comes, they say.
The future times belong to God;
Your only chance is now—today.*

"THE BEST kind of face-lifting is that which comes from within. Our faces, over the years, do reveal the quality of our thoughts and the conduct of our days. There is no fairer picture on earth than the animation and glory of a plain face grown uncommonly beautiful with inner discipline and patience, courage and courtesy."

HELP US not to be so slow to see the good in our brother and to see the evil in our own selves.

Help us to use rightly the trust committed to us for the good of Thy people and Thy glory.

Give us the conviction that with Thy help all things are possible, even the most difficult things that baffle us now.

SOME PEOPLE think they need a change of air when what they need is a change of attitude. They imagine they would be benefited by different surroundings; but if they take themselves with them, they will find that even in different surroundings they still need a change.

The smallest good deed is better than the grandest good intention.

*MY DEAR REDEEMER and my Lord,
I read my duty in Thy word;
But in Thy life the law appears
Drawn out in living characters.*

*Such was Thy truth, and such Thy zeal,
Such deference to Thy Father's will,
Such love, and meekness so divine
I would transcribe and make them mine.*

*Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervour of Thy prayer:
The desert Thy temptation knew,
Thy conflict and Thy victory too.*

*Be Thou my pattern; make me bear
More of Thy gracious image here;
Then God the Judge shall own my name
Amongst the followers of the Lamb.*

ETERNAL Source of every joy!
Well may Thy praise our lips employ,
While in Thy temple we appear
Whose goodness crowns the circling year.

While as the wheels of nature roll,
Thy hand supports the steady pole;
By Thee the sun is taught to rise,
And darkness when to veil the skies.

The flowery spring, at Thy command,
Embalms the air, and paints the land;
The summer rays with vigour shine,
To raise the corn, and cheer the vine.

Thy hand in autumn richly pours
O'er all our coasts abundant stores;
And winters, softened by Thy care,
No more a face of horror wear.

Seasons and months, and weeks, and days,
Demand successive songs of praise:
Still be the cheerful homage paid,
With opening light and evening shade.

O may our more harmonious tongues
In Thy New World pursue the songs,
And in those brighter courts adore,
Where days and years revolve no more!

*Knowing how forgetful we are, help us to bear
patiently the forgetfulness of others.*

What the future holds for us depends on
us. Hard working "todays" make high-
winning "tomorrows."



My cup turned up today for everything
God has to give me—everything.

LORD, the newness of this day
Calls me to an untried way.
Let me gently take the road,
Give me strength to bear my load,
Thou my Guide and Helper be—
I will travel through with Thee.

*JESUS, lead me up the mountain,
Where the whitest robes are seen,
Where the saints can see life's fountain
Where the pure are keeping clean.*

*Higher! where the light increases,
Rich above all earthly goods,
Where the life of sinning ceases,
Where the Spirit comes in floods.*

*Lead me higher, nothing dreading,
In the race to never stop;
In Christ's footsteps keep me treading,
Give me grace to reach the top.*

Miracles Today?

MIRACLES abound in nature, but we do not see them because they are commonplace.

Take salt, for instance. When we put it on our food, we are using two poisonous substances, sodium and chlorine. Each substance, taken by itself, would poison us. Together, however, they make something not only pleasant to the taste but essential for life itself.

Sugar offers another example. It's composed of hydrogen and oxygen, both of which are odorless. Those substances are combined with carbon, which is black, tasteless, and insoluble. Together they make sugar.

Tree branches grow straight out from the trunk of a tree, sometimes for distances of forty to sixty feet. All that anchors them to the parent trunk is fifteen or sixteen inches of fiber, which eventually loses itself in the main stem of the tree.

We don't perceive wonders of nature as miracles. And in the accepted sense of the word, they are not. Miracles are extraordinary events manifesting divine intervention in human or natural affairs.

Bible miracles are not as common as

we sometimes suppose. Actually, they occur within only five time periods. Four have already passed, and one is yet future.

Each of them represents a transitional period. The miracles occurring then were meant to be signs. All of these miracles have a direct relationship to the Jewish people.

One of the most astonishing things about the Bible is its revelation of God's restraint in using miracles. Considering all the long ages He has been dealing with men, it's surprising He has used miracles so sparingly.

The first great period relates to the days of Moses and Joshua. No evidence indicates that God performed vast miracles in the antediluvian age or the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Fortunate circumstances then led the Hebrews into Egypt, and God gifted Joseph to understand dreams. But still we find none of the sign miracles until the days of Moses when God moved in an unusual way.

The initial miracles were intended to persuade Moses to go to Egypt as Israel's kinsman-redeemer. These miracles included the burning bush that was not consumed by the flame, the rod that was transformed into a serpent and then back into a rod, and the hand of Moses that became leprous and was restored to health.

Then followed the ten mighty sign

miracles that devastated Egypt and broke Pharaoh's resistance against emancipating the Hebrew slaves. Those miracles were only the beginning.

The Red Sea parted for the Hebrews and then consumed the Egyptians. Marah's waters were made sweet. Manna came down from heaven. Water flowed from the smitten rock. And Amalek fell before the sword of Joshua.

Many of the miracles initiated by Moses were judgment miracles—Miriam's leprosy; the judgment on Korah; the plague on Dathan, Abiram, and the other rebels; and the plague of fiery serpents. Even Moses' burial, on the lonely heights of Nebo, was miraculous.

Moses' heir, Joshua, also saw miracles performed, although to a much lesser degree. The crossing of the Jordan, the fall of Jericho, the hailstones at Gibeah were all miracles.

But these miracles faded out rapidly. In fact, God had used miracles to get Israel out of Egypt and into Canaan during a period of transition and change. Canaan's conquest followed more conventional lines.

The second great outpouring occurred in the days of Elijah and Elisha, days of Israel's blackest apostasy and worst rebellion. Ahab was then on the throne, and his pagan wife Jezebel imported wholesale idolatry and religious pornography into Israel.

Ahab made idolatry the official reli-

From "Miracles: Not for Today," by John Phillips. Published in *Moody Monthly*, July 1982. Used by permission.

gion of the land, and what idolatry! This time of crisis and transition called for an extraordinary witness. Thus, Elijah appeared upon the scene, seemingly from nowhere, a veritable Melchisedek among the prophets.

He performed eight tremendous miracles, including shutting up heaven, calling down fire, supplying the widow's needs and raising her son, calling down rain, and crossing Jordan dry-shod.

Elisha, endowed with Elijah's spirit, performed sixteen miracles. He parted the waters of Jordan, healed the waters of Jericho, summoned bears from the woods to destroy his mockers, provided oil for a widow, raised the dead, treated poisoned food, and cured Naaman of leprosy while fastening it instead on Gehazi. Then once more, an age of miracles came to a sudden end.

A further outpouring of miracles occurred in the days of Daniel, another transition period for the Hebrew people. They were in exile, their land was in ruins, their temple destroyed, and ten of the tribes had long since been marched off into virtual oblivion.

Israel and Judah had both failed in their divine mission as a witness to the Gentiles. So God saw fit to perform a series of miracles in Babylon to bear testimony to Himself in this dark hour of national failure.

Daniel's friends withstood the fierceness of the fire. Daniel walked untouched by lions in their den. An almost miraculously enlightened Daniel witnessed to kings of things to come. Then, again, the miracles stopped.

A fourth period of miracles, the greatest of all, centers around the ministry of Christ and His apostles. The four Gospels abound with stories of the Lord's triumph over demons, disease, disaster, and death itself.

His whole life and ministry brought a total invasion of the natural by the supernatural. The kingdom was being offered to Israel, only to be rejected. And Judaism was being written off, to be replaced by Christianity.

In a lesser way, the Apostles also performed miracles. They healed the sick and raised the dead. The early church spoke with tongues and received the gifts of miracles and prophecy, for it was an age of transition greater than any previous one. Then it came to an end, as on previous occasions, and the sign-gifts and miracles passed off the scene.

The next great period of miracles is yet to come. It too will be a transitional period, for God will be both closing down the long age of Gentile world domination and inaugurating the new age.

Indeed, the whole period of the Apocalypse from the time God again begins to act in judgment is one when the supernatural will continually intrude into the natural. It will be a time when God will once more actively intervene in the arena of human affairs.

Of utmost importance is the answer to this question: Why did each of these various periods, when God obviously performed sign miracles, come to such an abrupt end? In each case, the brief transitional period terminated because it was replaced by the *written Word*.

The miracles of Moses and Joshua were replaced by the writing of the Pentateuch, by the early historical books, by the Wisdom literature, and by many of the Psalms.

The miracles of Elijah and Elisha were replaced by the writings of the early prophets, by the books of Kings, and by additions to the Psalms. How much more lasting benefit has been provided by the ministry of Isaiah and Jeremiah through God's written revelation than by the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, despite the tremendous miracles they performed.

The brief period of miracles in Daniel's time was replaced by the writings of the exilic and post-exilic prophets, by the later historical books, and by still further additions to the Psalms. After this portion of revelation

was completed, a long silence spanned the next four hundred years.

The miracles of Christ and His Apostles were replaced by the writings of the New Testament; and with that in hand, we no longer need the signs and the sign-gifts characteristic of that period.

In his second epistle, Peter refers to the astonishing experience he had on the Mount of Transfiguration.

He adds: "We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise . . . For . . . holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:19-21).

In other words, the written Word is more important than miraculous signs.

Generally speaking, then, God has communicated to men primarily through His written Word.

Suppose God had allowed Moses to continue performing miracles in Egypt for twenty-five years. Would the Egyptians have been any more ready or responsive than they were? No. Instead, they would simply have become so used to them that they would have taken them for granted as we do with the sun and stars.

Even more astonishing miracles performed by the Lord Jesus tended to lose their effect. The disciples themselves are proof of that. In the dead of night when they saw the Lord walking towards them on the tossing sea, they thought He was a ghost!

Mark, who probably got the story directly from Peter, gives us the explanation: "For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened" (Mark 6:52).

The feeding of the five thousand had taken place only hours before. Miracles were already so much a matter of course that they thought nothing about it.

It's apparent, then, that miracles have been used sparingly by God in

His dealings with mankind. The miracles ushering in the Christian Era were spectacular, beneficial, instantaneous, and complete. They didn't require advance publicity, mass meetings, performing healers, high-pressure tactics, stage management, love offerings, fraud, or failures. They served their purpose, and then they ceased.

God's use of the miraculous is somewhat similar to the eagle who builds her nest on high where she carefully cherishes her young. But the time comes when those fledglings are ready for flight. So what does she do? She destroys the nest, built to protect them during infancy, and forces them out so they will learn to fly.

Likewise, God would have us soar on the wings of faith, but "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Today, therefore, God directs us to His Word. He will not allow us to rest on that which was for the infancy of the age; rather, He destroys the nest and forces us to exercise our faith.

We today can look forward to the final age of miracles. It will be heralded by the sounding of the trumpet, by the voice of the archangel, and by the shout of the returning Lord as He comes to be King over all the earth. MM

*To talk with God,
No breath is lost—
Talk on!*

*To walk with God,
No strength is lost—
Walk on!*

*To wait for God,
No time is lost—
Wait on!*

Can I Take It?

I have finished reading aloud once again part of the editorial entitled "Can You Take It." And to be quite honest about the matter, I sincerely believe that I have failed the test; however, this does not mean that I have "thrown in the towel," so to speak, and quit altogether. To the contrary!

Can I take abuse when I am sincerely trying to improve something?

Can I withstand the overt indifference from others when I make a suggestion for improvement?

Can I allow others to assume the "credit" for my idea(s)?

Am I able to do the hard thankless tasks and not complain and murmur or engage in even the mildest of self-pity?

Can I *always* keep my eyes on the Kingdom of God and would the Lord be proud to call me His son?

Am I truly proud to be called a Christian and do I really serve Christ all day every day or am I nothing more than a Christian of convenience?

I feel like Job, covered from head to toe with miserable sores, completely aware of the falling-short-of-the-mark shows the gap between myself and those who have overcome and have achieved the high calling in Christ. I know that Christ would tell me that I know better, yet I prefer not to do it and the answer He would give me is that I didn't have the proper motivation. I did not want the Kingdom above all else.

Literally, Christ taught that the Kingdom of God and His righteousness had to preempt everything in our lives. We would want to be a part of it so

much that nothing, absolutely nothing, would interfere with it. It would be such an integral part of our lives, much the same as hunger and thirst are so very real to us. He would ask, Why do you complain, bicker, argue, engage in self-pity? Why are you puffed up at times with pride?

What can I say to these? When have I stepped aside and permitted others to move ahead of me and not have those normal human feelings? When have I been gracious and kind and helpful, when mistreated and slighted? Am I really sincere in my lifelong effort to secure only those treasures in Heaven? When am I going to achieve that measure of maturity and Christian living and actions which will give me a definite "YES" to these questions? Am I salt which has flavor to God, the Father, or am I bland and of this world to be cast out as worthless?

Can I overlook the worldliness in others and keep myself absolutely free of the smell of fire? It takes a heroic effort, the same as the effort put forth by Christ during His life here on earth, yet He did overcome and is King.

Why can't we do likewise, if we have a desire for life that never ends and will be filled with joy and happiness that will surpass even our wildest imaginations. Never ending life, just think of that! So, armed with this knowledge given to us by the Father and demonstrated in the life of Christ, I must overcome and be able to say I can take it.

We all have our fiery trials to assist us in the development of our character, and we should not view them as a
(Continued on page 21)

And Still She Speaks

Extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments
by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



In all my fifty years of mission work, I have never seen one person make progress who wanted the deep things first before learning the elementary principles of the law of God. If we try to start at the top of the ladder, we may have a great fall.

We must get an understanding of the Bible; we must get the framework first, and then keep building.

We must get on this firm foundation of the Prophets, Apostles, and Jesus the chief corner-stone; then we can grow unto a holy temple in the Lord.

We have to study to learn this Bible, as we would study arithmetic or algebra. If studying algebra we would not start with difficult equations but would first learn the simple problems and the rules to be used; then we could progress to the more difficult ones and be able to solve them.

The gospel of Christ that Paul preached is wiser than all the wisdom of this world. It provides a means of escape from the grave, which all the wisdom of this world can never accomplish.

When the church apostatized from the truth, the church fathers thought they must put a literal cross on their church spires and bear a literal cross on their bosom or at their side. What folly and superstition! Many want to look at the crucifix the last moment of their life; but that will avail nothing, that is not the cross we must take up and bear daily.

I have something here in which the editor quotes from an English play. "Don't you think that Lady So-and-So is behaving scandalously tonight?" queries a young man at an evening party, to which the old major replies: "My dear boy, I can't see without my glasses, and when I go to visit my friends, I always leave my glasses at home." Then the editor comments: "That is a good principle. When you visit your friends, it is best to leave your glasses behind. And the pastor had better do likewise when he surveys his flock." With such an attitude as this, do you wonder the world is sinking lower and lower into immorality? They leave their glasses at home, they do not want any restrictions, they do not want to see the iniquity and evil.

The Lord does not say to leave your glasses at home, but he says, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins" (Isa. 58:1).

Why do you want to use by-words? The world is filled with slang of the day. Do not use any slang, and do not allow your children to use slang; get your glasses on and see what they are doing. Watch what you are doing.

Perhaps some of you may think it would be nice if you had a pastor who would leave his glasses at home; but do you know that would bring you to destruction? If your natural life were in great danger, if you were surrounded by enemies, you would want watchmen on all sides who would be wide awake and sound the alarm. And that would only be for this life; but here eternal life is at stake, hence how much greater the need to be on guard. The true Christian watchman will not be looking for the evil just to find fault and tear down, but to help you confess and forsake your sins.

We should glory in this knowledge of God, take more delight in learning God's thoughts and what we must do to obtain His approval than we would in gaining all the knowledge of this world combined.

Confession will not save anybody; God requires us to confess and forsake. This is taught all through the Bible.

To Be Accepted

AT ONE time or another, we have all had a longing desire to be accepted by our fellowman, to be liked, esteemed, respected by all. Perhaps we even dreamed about obtaining some high position, or becoming a high-ranking officer—though as we grew wiser, we learned that it is not in our best interest to be popular.

We know that to be accepted by society we must be like them. This cannot be if we obey the command to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” Isaiah shows the absolute necessity of coming out from the world and touching no unclean thing, as he repeatedly exclaims: “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord” (Isa. 52:11).

Why do we want to come out from the world? We want to be accepted by Christ at His coming. Our primary concern is to be acceptable to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* gives us some interesting thoughts on the word “accepted”. One such thought is “to cause him to go up out of prison, to bring out of it.” God, speaking through Isaiah, gives us the key to this prison of sin, He has even given Jesus Christ “for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and

them that sit in darkness out of the prison house” (Isa. 42:6-7).

We who have been made recipients of the grace of God have had our blind eyes opened to the truth, being freed from the prison of darkness. How we should rejoice and lift up our hearts to God.

This brings us to another thought on the word “accepted”: “To lift up one’s own countenance, i. e., cheerful and full of confidence. To place confidence in any person.” Pouring over the Word of God, drinking down every drop of His knowledge will soothe our parched throats and revive our dying souls. It will give us confidence: first in God, that He is a rewarder of all them that seek Him; and secondly, in ourselves to take up our spiritual weapons to conquer our enemy of self, purging ourselves from sin and rejoicing more and more as we approach our goal, being acceptable as Christ’s own. Looking to all that can be ours, should we not confidently and cheerfully press on?

Another definition is: “To lift up the soul to anything, i. e., to wish for, to desire something” (*Gesenius*). As an example he says, “It incites me to do something. I am ready and prepared to do something.” The word “acceptable” has as one of its root meanings, “a sense of preparedness and a sense of action.” We find this expressed by Jesus Himself, “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at

even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:35-37).

This is a watch that stirs us to alertness. We must set a watch over our mouth, over our hearts that they be not defiled. We must be in a continually expectant attitude, expecting our Lord to summon us at any moment.

Gesenius' Lexicon continues: “From the sense of taking away comes: to take, to receive, to take hold of. To receive anyone’s prayer, to be favorable to it, to have respect to him as a petitioner. To be carried or carried away.” Will Christ receive us in the kingdom? Is He receiving our prayers, and more, are we praying for only those things that are right for us? If we are still dead in sin, He will not be favorable to our prayers; He will never even hear them. To have respect of Christ as a petitioner, we must give up our own ways and do “the will of the Father” only.

Being acceptable also carries the thought of “being delighted in any person or thing. A delight, especially what is pleasing to God.” Christ said, “I delight to do thy will.” Can we say the same of ourselves? If we expect to receive the blessing of being acceptable at Christ’s coming, we must delight in the law of the Lord; and in His law meditate day and night. We cannot expect Christ to delight in us if we do not delight in Him, in the keeping of His commandments.

Let us examine our own hearts daily; hour by hour, minute by minute. Were Christ to return at any given moment, would He delight in me? Would I be acceptable?

—Contributed

’Tis looking down that makes one dizzy.

Three Beatitudes

HOW magnificently beautiful are the Beatitudes! We think we have always known them by heart, at least by rote; but do we know them in their practical value, as offering a principle of conduct which, followed out, makes for happiness here and life that is worth living?

The first three seem to be interconnected, and what meaning they contain: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:3-5).

The poor in spirit are those who realize their spiritual poverty and are seeking relief. The poor in spirit are by no means the poor-spirited. They are not lacking in proper self-respect; they are not "Uriah Heeps"; they do not go around apologizing for their existence. Though the poor-spirited may seem to be among the smallest and meanest of the earth, none but the great can be poor in spirit. A little soul is satisfied with its own littleness; a great soul is great enough to recognize a greater soul. The great man compares his goodness with the ideal and is conscious of his poverty of spirit.

The Queen of Sheba was no abject craven spirit. She came to visit Solomon in all her regal pomp and splendor; but when she "had seen all Solomon's wisdom and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her" (I Kings 10:4-5). She was poor in

spirit; she recognized in Solomon a greater than herself.

John the Baptist was no abject craven spirit. Jesus came to him to be baptized, and John recognized in Him a far greater One than himself. "I have need to be baptized of thee" (Matt. 3:14), he said, for he was poor in spirit. Poor in spirit must every true Christian be, for he sees in Jesus the ideal Life and considers how far short he himself comes of living up to the standard which Jesus would have him attain. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." They are the true inhabitants of that future Kingdom.

"Blessed are they that mourn." This does not mean that everyone who sorrows for loss of health or money or friends or whatsoever is sure of comfort. This beatitude is evidently closely connected with the first one. They shall be comforted who mourn for their sins, who long to be richer toward God, who know their own measure and are penitent because they long to measure up to God's standard.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Meekness is the direct outcome of poverty of spirit and sorrow for sin. It is a test of the reality of one's conviction. Many a man will indulge in confessions of sin, and yet crackle up in sputtering heat of indignation at some slight offense. If he does, his lowly words have had little meaning, and the benediction of these promises will come scantily to that heart.

Poverty of spirit is humility looking Godward, a grace before God; meekness is humility looking manward, a grace before men. Both graces must grow together; for one may be meek before man and yet not be poor in spirit before God; but he who is poor in spirit before God will be meek before men. He will have the mind of Christ; for our King was meek and lowly in heart.

—From Minnedosa, Manitoba

Can I Take It?

(Continued from page 18)

nuisance but as opportunities to grow and develop. Although I am in the dust and stooped from my own personal failures in living the Christlike life, I am rising again fully aware of the ever-present dangers and likewise fully determined to have that character which is such a sweet and lovely thing to the Lord, that I am *truly* His son.

It is always so uplifting to have that reassurance that the Father will never try us beyond our ability to endure. I am grateful that our Father's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting to those who fear His name. I am thankful He is extending my days of probation.

—Contributed

The Tapestry of Life

*The tapestry of life
Is woven, day by day,
Upon the loom of time
In color dark or gay.*

*If hatred fills our hearts,
Or selfish greed holds sway,
We weave in somber hues
Of dull and shadowed gray.*

*But if we weave for God
And all His love unfold,
The pattern of our life
Shines out in threads of gold.*

Preview of Triumph

"Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect"

—Hebrews 12:22-23.

IN THESE dazzling terms, the author of Hebrews attempts to portray the glory of the magnificent finale in which every one of His true children shall participate.

What will it be like? First he describes what seemed glorious to the Israelites at Sinai. Hear his comparison: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more" (Heb. 12:18-19).

That manifestation of God's power was spectacular, awesome, terrifying; but it was not the ultimate. Great though that was, we are coming to something greater—"unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:22-24).

What does it all mean? First of all, we are coming to Mount Sion, that mountain which became associated with sacred remembrance many, many years before the book of Hebrews was written. Great significance does Mount Zion carry for the New Age about to dawn. Upon Mount Sion Jesus will set His feet when He returns. Upon Mount Sion the house of the Lord shall be established when God completes His work on earth.

Still more than all this, Mount Sion includes a reference to all the people of God. "Let mount Sion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad" (Ps. 48:11). "Mount Sion" is His holy habitation, the people with whom Christ will dwell.

So the book of Hebrews says we are coming "to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God." Here is another reference to God's people, who shall compose the heavenly Jerusalem, that new city which shall become the metropolis

of the whole earth. It is the city which shall have walls of "Salvation" and gates of "Praise" (Isa. 60:17-18). Think of the honor in this title! Think of being called a part of the "city of the living God." Here is a promise of the eternal companionship of all God's people on earth. God dwells with them, sustains them, blesses them, and gives them eternal light and power.

But this is not all we are coming to. "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." We are reminded of the vision John received on Patmos, when He saw "many angels round about the throne; . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Rev. 5:11-12). It sounds as though John tried counting them, then estimated that there must be ten thousand times ten thousand—he could not count them. Then fearing that even this generous estimate was much too low, he added, "and thousands of thousands"!

The Jerusalem Bible translates Hebrews 12:22, "What you have come to is . . . the heavenly Jerusalem where millions of angels have gathered for the festival." It is an occasion of great rejoicing, and millions of angels have come to attend *the festival*.

What is this festival? It is the great Marriage of the Lamb, when Christ is joined eternally to His faithful bride. Myriads of angels have come to sing the praises of the high attainers composing this bride, 144,000 of them who have arrayed themselves in "the fine linen clean and white." They have come to join in her acclaim, and their shouts of "alleluia" shall resound from one part of heaven to the other and "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Rev. 19:5-8; Isa. 52:10).

What a day, glorious day that will be! Day of beauty

unsurpassed/ Day of joy that e'er shall last/ Day of peace,
secure, serene/ Day of happiness supreme/ Day of love, day
of life/ Day of freedom from all strife.

What a Day, glorious day that will be!—enough to draw
the attention of the angels of heaven! The angels who come
may be those who have been our spiritual helpers; the
ministering spirits who were sent “forth to minister for them
who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb. 1:14). They, who
have watched through centuries the development of this
planet, shall not want to miss the final step in the salvation of
earth’s nobles!

How many of the saints will be present for the festival?

When Hatred Isn't Enough

(Continued from page 2)

rebellious spirit, and neither will we. The only sensible
course, the only right course is to confess and forsake
our sin.

The self-life has been identified as when you have a
secret sense of pride or an exalted feeling in view of your
success, possessions, good training, appearance, natural
gifts, or abilities. It is an independent spirit that needs
neither God nor man; that loves stiffness, preciseness
and human praise. It has been defined as a secret
fondness to be noticed; love of supremacy; drawing
attention to self in conversation; a swelling out of self
when you've been successful in some small thing. Again,
it may be the stirrings of anger or impatience which you
call nervousness or holy indignation.

How about a touchy, sensitive spirit; a disposition to
resent and retaliate when disapproved of or contradicted;
a desire to throw sharp, heated flings at another; a
stubborn, unteachable spirit; an arguing, talkative spirit;
harsh, sarcastic expressions; a headstrong disposition; a
driving, commanding spirit; a tendency to criticize and
pick flaws when you're unnoticed?

The flesh resents nothing more than going unnoticed.
It rises up and says, “Watch me. Here I am.” It loves
human praise. We delight in taking credit for the things
we do—the good things. All this makes for an ugly story.

What should we do about it?

First, we must recognize the rottenness of the flesh,
our natural condition in the sight of God. It is a weakness,
in one form or another, in one measure or another, with
all of us. It is so easy, so natural to want to be seen,
noticed, approved, agreed with. But it is not godly, and
must be eradicated. It has no place in the life of the
aspiring angel.

Second, we may hate it. But hatred is not enough. We

Every member of the “general assembly and church of the
firstborn, which are written in heaven.” They are the
consecrated ones. Many are sleeping now, but their names
are scribed in the album of heaven, written in the Lamb's
book of life. It is not that they are themselves in heaven, but
their names are enrolled there; these people have made
their reservations for a place in the new world, and when the
proper time arrives, they will be summoned.

How magnificent the scenes just ahead! How far surpass-
ing our fondest imagination! And it is all true. It is all sure.

We can be there—if our names are written in the
book of life. MM

may say, “I'll never do that again,” but we may, if flesh is
stronger than spirit. Our decision must be followed by
action. The axe must be laid at the root of the tree, and our
whole attention refocussed—upon God. Whether in great
or small measure, all of the old self-life, all that is part of the
old nature, must go.

And when God has offered a recompense that is super-
abundant in scope, beyond our grandest, fondest imagin-
ings—isn't it worth the price? MM

Obituary

Anna C. Manktelow

On March 24, 1983, we met to pay our last respects to a
friend and sister, Anna C. Manktelow, of North Chili, New
York. The Manktelow family have been associated with the
Megiddo Church for nearly 50 years, starting when Brother
Manktelow purchased the set of books from one of the
group's missionaries.

Sister Manktelow was an extremely kind person, always
placing the welfare of others above her own. Even in her last
sickness she was more concerned with the welfare of her
family than with her own. She was one of those sturdy souls
who would rather lift than lean.

Our Sister enjoyed the comfort and companionship of a
caring family and friends. She is survived by her husband,
Percy Manktelow, with whom she lived 62 years; one son,
Robert Manktelow, of Rochester, New York; and one
daughter, Joyce, who went beyond the call of duty to make
her mother's last days as comfortable as possible.

Interment was in Mount Hope Cemetery, where rest
other of our beloved dead until the great day when the
trumpet shall sound and the dead in Christ shall arise to
obtain their share in that better world where there will be no
sorrow, no suffering, sickness or pain.

• Was Jesus Three Days and Three Nights in the Heart of the Earth?

"I have just received the excellent February issue of the Megiddo Message and am writing concerning the 'Abib Is Coming' notice on page 25. I am delighted to let you know I agree with the spring date for the birth of Jesus.

"I have somewhat of a dispute, though, to make concerning the date of the resurrection of our Lord. I agree that the burial took place before sunset the day of the crucifixion (April 25, according to your 1983 anniversary date). Following this you say the anniversary for the resurrection is April 28. Can you figure three days and three nights between sunset of the 25th and sunrise of the 28th? Of course you can't. And please don't think this isn't important, for we read in Matthew 12:40 (KJV), '... so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.' On all other points I most wholeheartedly agree concerning this issue. I will be anxiously awaiting your comments."

Upon surface reading of Matthew 12:40, your point on the "three days and three nights" would seem to be well founded. However, we are not safe in drawing any conclusions until we have examined all that the Biblical writers have to say on any given point.

First, if we take Matthew 12:40 to mean that Jesus was literally in the tomb three whole days and nights, we have a statement which in one sense is not appropriate at all; for Jesus was never in the "heart of the earth." He was placed in a rock hewn tomb, what was probably more like what we would call a vault today.

As for the record of the length of time involved, the gospels give us two other statements of interest:

1) After Jesus had risen from the dead, the angels who spoke to the women at the tomb quoted the words of the Master that "The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again" (Luke 24:7). Notice that there are three different events specified, which were to occur during the three days.

2) On the afternoon of the day Jesus was resurrected, two of His disciples walked to Emmaus, and "Jesus himself drew near and went with them." Recounting

recent events, one of the disciples told of "Jesus of Nazareth," how the "chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him, (and) . . . today is the third day since these things were done." This was, according to our understanding, near the close of Abib 15, and it was "the third day since these things were done."

The terms "heaven" and "earth" are used in Scripture with meanings other than the literal. For example, see Isaiah 1:2, "Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken." The Prophet was addressing people, as verse 10 clearly states: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom, and give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah."

If we understand Jesus' being "in the heart of the earth" as His being "in the hands of sinful men" (Luke 24:7), we have harmony, because it was a part of three days and nights that Jesus was in the hands of sinful men. He was betrayed on the evening of Abib 13 and delivered by Judas into the hands of sinful men; was tried and crucified and buried before the close of Abib 13, which gives us one night and a day. The night and day of Abib 14 He lay in the tomb, which totals two nights and two days; and it was after the night of the 15th and a very small portion of the day before He rose from the dead. So the disciples could say in the closing hours of the 15th of Abib, "Today is the third day since these things were done" and the prophecy was fulfilled that Jesus was "three days and three nights" in the "earth" or "in the hands of sinful men."

• Concerning the "Evil One"

"Of whom was the apostle Paul speaking when he said, 'The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed. . . . '?"

A more modern English translation of this text (found in II Thess. 2:7-8) may be helpful. The Revised Standard Version reads, "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed." Other translations are similar.

In this chapter, the Apostle is foreseeing the approach

of the great Apostasy, the time when all forsook the true faith of Jesus and His apostles, when true religion was silenced and the power of darkness, the civil authority of Rome here identified as "the Wicked one," assumed control, when "he as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God" (II Thess. 2:4). Paul says he sees this mystery of iniquity already at work with its deadly influence in the church, contaminating pure doctrine with vain philosophies, belittling sound principles and substituting that which pleases the ear for that which purifies the heart.

But whom did Paul speak of as "he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed"?

We recall that Jesus said of His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Among the important uses of salt is its use as a preservative. A second function is its ability to season. A very few grains of salt will savor a whole meal and change it from a bland and unpalatable meal to a delight. That is why Jesus said, "If the salt (His followers) has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing."

The followers of Christ were the "salt of the earth" and the preservative of the church; it is they who by their strict adherence to the teaching and principles of Jesus preserved it from decay and rottenness. Their doctrine, their teaching, their lives kept the church from complete apostasy and preserved true religion for a time, even after the majority had departed from the faith. In the same way the prophets of prior ages rebuked the waywardness of Israel and Judah and time and again turned the nation back to God and right. By defending the faith, by upholding righteousness, they kept the professing church from utter apostasy and desolation. These men and women of God have done this by exalting the word of God and translating it into living testimony. It is they who have hindered or restrained the mystery of iniquity and workings of the Wicked one. It is they who time and again have withstood the jeerings of atheists and overcome the carnal reasonings of evolutionists, together with the oppositions of science falsely so called. No mystery of iniquity, however determined to succeed, could rise to its full stature while any of these elect of God remained in the church system. But they could not remain long, for slowly, steadily, the power of darkness wore out "the saints of the most High," and "cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered" (Dan. 7:25; 8:12).

Such "hinderings" has occurred before in history. Did not the presence of Lot in the corrupt city of Sodom preserve that city from destruction until the one righteous man dwelling among them was taken out of the way? Can

you not hear the angels as they urge Lot to depart from Sodom, saying, "Haste thee, escape thither: for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither?" (Gen. 19:22). Is it not remarkable that, as long as God permitted Lot to remain in the city, even the angels were powerless to overthrow it?

In the days of Noah, the flood did not come until Noah and his family—all who would hear and believe—were safe inside the ark and the doors were shut. As long as Noah was among the people, the fearful waters of tribulation were stayed, but once he was removed, the desolating floods descended. Paul in this Epistle speaks of a day to come when he who hindered the working of the "Wicked one" will be taken out of the way, and after their removal, "that Wicked" would be revealed, and the whole religious system would become utterly corrupt and deceptive.

• If There Is No Literal Devil . . .

"You connect 'Satan' and 'sin' in your literature. What do you do with Luke 22:31, where the Lord said to Peter, 'Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat'? If there is no devil, as written in one of your booklets—that we are ourselves the devils within us. Who was the Lord referring to as Satan?"

We do make the connection between "Satan" and "sin" or "evil," because of what the Bible teaches about sin and Satan. And you are right. "Satan" being our own evil hearts and imaginings, how could we separate them? There is no sin except as some living being performs or designs or conspires to do evil. But is there any instance where a person does not do the designing or conspiring to evil? Doesn't it seem like there are many "satans" in our world today, bent on doing the evil that their own hearts manufacture? And can't they be rightly termed "satan"?

We are not told who was the Satan Jesus referred to when he said to Peter, "Satan hath desired to . . . sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31) but was it not Peter's own weakness and overconfidence that led to his denial of Christ? The 33rd verse reveals this plainly: "And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." But Jesus knew Peter's weakness: "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me" (vs. 33-34).

The Bible refers to wicked-intentioned or evil-minded persons as "Satan," or it uses the term collectively of that class of persons, as Jesus did occasionally. Real persons are real devils when they oppose God, His work, and His people.

MM

“Would-Be” Christians?

We, who walk solely by faith, must constantly read so as to keep our minds filled; to seek good, that we may grow; and be not entangled with the things of this world. Some would-be Christians like to be talkers so that others may see how much they know. As for me, I should rather be a good listener, especially in divine things, being meek and humble so that the Lord will bless.

Some would-be Christians enjoy reading the Word and tell how beautiful it is to hear; but by their actions they say that they do not want it as a force in their lives. By their actions they say: “God is not so strict and does not really mean exactly what He says.” I know that we must have trials and temptations and endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Truly, the things we read about that caused the fall of ancient Rome we see fulfilled before our own eyes, in our own time. But we must keep an eye on self. Living right in the midst of it as we are, it can hardly go unnoticed. But though we must remain in the world where we are faced with temptations on every hand, we need not be contaminated if we heed the advice of the Wise Man: “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away” (Prov. 4:14-15).

We know what the commandments are. Why not join hands and press on up this narrow way together, doing all the good we can? Trials will come. But when we have worked out our salvation here, with fear and trembling, we can rejoice in that glorious Day. As the song, which has been with me all day, says: “What a Day, Glorious Day That Will Be!”

Mississippi

R. S.

To Higher Levels

Though our natural tendencies are low and grovelling, we can, with the help of God, lift ourselves to a much higher level. Why forfeit everything for the fleeting pleasures of this world, just to gratify the old flesh man, when God “hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” with “exceeding great and precious promises that by these we may be partakers of the divine nature”? This should give us every incentive to do what God requires. Surely, nothing could be plainer!

Truly our faith should be mountain high! God must have seen some potential for spiritual growth in us, otherwise we would not have been called. Now the question which should be uppermost in our minds is, On which side will we stand when the revealing time comes? Will we be permitted to enter God’s Kingdom, or receive the reward of the unrighteous, for whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever?

South Wales

R. B.

Following Close?

Every day is our opportunity to follow Jesus, our great example. The great question is: How closely are we following and obeying the command to overcome *all* evil? It does not come all at once, but little by little, by constantly redeeming the time remaining to us. We have to work. No one can do it for us, but God will help us and give us strength and courage to carry us through our low and seemingly trying days. As we endure our trials or tests, we are making progress toward a finished and complete product.

Even though wickedness surrounds us we can live a true and righteous life that will be rewarded with everlasting life. Let us work to that end.

Iowa

F. B.

The Kingdom First!

This is the greatest command to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” How many times we have failed to live up to this great command. Too many times we put the temporal things ahead of the spiritual. I find the best way to keep this command in mind is to devote time to prayer and Bible study the first thing in the morning. Then the temporal things take care of themselves. If we build our house upon the rock (divine truth), we will have a sure foundation. When the winds and rains come, it will stand sure. But if we build on sand (temporal things) our spiritual house will crumble.

There are 24 hours in each day. It is not how much time we have but what we do with the time. There is always time for devotions if we make time, and how much better we feel when we are kept in the circle of God’s love.

How long-suffering He has been with us through all our shortcomings; but He will not always give us an opportunity to correct ourselves. Everything in this world has an end, and time is no exception. We are promised a hundredfold in this life and eternal life if we seek first the Kingdom.

I am going to be more determined to apply this commandment to my daily life. How wonderful to be given this opportunity to make ourselves ready.

Ohio

M. W.

Phenomenal Progress

We do need to make phenomenal spiritual progress, for our days for growth are numbered. Soon, very soon, the call to account will come. Shall we be ready to meet the call without fear? All depends on ourselves.

God grant us the wisdom and understanding to use our days wisely.

New Jersey

L. K.

Abundant Life!

May I render thanksgiving and praise for the joy of having been allowed to know of the true teaching of the Word of God.

My cries were far off and faint, but they were heard, and soon to my rescue came words of: "It's not too late. Don't give up. If you really want to be saved, you can. God is merciful and He'll give you time; you'll not be cut off." To a sinking, dying soul, these words were life, and what abundant life! To one who was sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of sin, guilt and fear, these words brought joy to my heart and such peace . . . peace that passeth understanding.

There was a much-publicized airplane crash. The crash occurred in the Potomac River, near Washington, D.C. A very few were pulled from the icy waters. One girl held tenaciously to a large piece of ice. In shock, and nearly frozen to the point of unconsciousness, her weakened hands began to slip. A concerned citizen on the bank of the river saw that the rescue helicopter attempts were futile. He jumped into the water and swam to her and pulled her from her watery tomb. This incident brought to my mind how we have been rescued from eternal death, if we only will do what God commands.

And we must never give up. We must hold on to that which can keep us alive—the Word of God. If we earnestly adhere to its every precept, our life will be spared. Yes, the "promise of the life that now is" is ours to use for obtaining that crown.

Are we struggling with all our might to keep afloat? Sin is raging all around. It would engulf us if we only were lax for a moment. We *must* keep our eye on the prize and never give up in the fight.

How wonderful to know we do have ministering angels to protect through all the perils we encounter. They are there working circumstances for our good. No, this is not to say we won't have problems; however, we can know they are working in us a more exceeding glory.

The days ahead will, no doubt, hold many a challenge, but we are more than conquerors if we have God on our side. Just how do we keep Him there? By acknowledging Him in all we think, say or do.

Georgia

B. P.

Our Merciful God

As zealous members of the household of faith, we, above all people on this beautiful planet, have a much brighter aspect on life than do others, and a greater goal for which to labor. For we read in Rev. 2:26-28, "... he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." So may we cease procrastinating and go to work with a stronger determination to eliminate all of our obnoxious fleshly traits, for our working time is fast drawing to a close.

I have been thinking how kind and

merciful God is in extending our lives. We, having work yet to be done, should be so very thankful to Him for giving us further opportunity to banish all sin within and thus gain the full reward. May we make good use of the precious time God has allotted us.

We are living amidst seemingly incredible conditions, living in a world of surpassing wickedness, conditions similar to that of Noah's day. But, nevertheless, that does not mean that the work of self-denial cannot be accomplished, or that God does not require it of us. We know God definitely requires us to live differently than the masses, and that we are fully capable of doing so, otherwise He would have never commanded us to do so. Knowing that God will save nothing less than a righteous creature, let us come out from this sin-sick world of darkness and be a living light, for the Lord's coming is very near, and the reward is great.

Idaho

R. B.

■ SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW? ■

Detect the Errors

Peter Raises Dorcas from the Dead

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Rhoda. This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. She became sick and died, and they washed her and laid her in a lower chamber. They heard that Peter was at Lydda, near Joppa, and sent unto him five men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he came, they brought him into the chamber; and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which she made while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed. Turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise."

She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she stood up. He gave her, his hand, and when he had called the townspeople and widowers, he presented her alive.

The deed was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the miracles of Peter. He tarried twenty days in Joppa with Simon the tanner.

Errors Corrected: "Rhoda" should be "Dorcas"; "lower" should be "upper"; "five" should be "two"; "she stood up" should be "she sat up"; "townspeople" should be "saints"; "widowers" should be "widows"; "miracles of Peter" should be "the Lord"; "twenty" should be "many" (see Acts 9:36-43).

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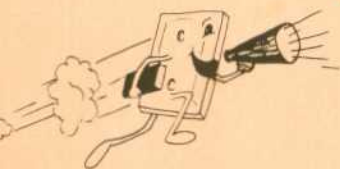
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