

# Megiddo Message

*“Enter  
into My  
Joy”*

*— Jesus*



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# NOSTALGIA FOR THE FUTURE

As we turn each year's record over to the safe keeping of the heavenly Accountant and look upon the fresh, clean page before us, our hearts are vibrant with anticipation. What lies ahead? What will the next twelve months bring? We do not know, but we have within us what someone has called "a nostalgia for the future."

The present, with all its comforts and pleasures, does not offer the satisfactions we seek, because it is so temporary. We live in the midst of change. Nothing we know is permanent. Every moment of our time, whatever its burden of pain or its thrill of joy, is fleeting.

There is an account of an Indian monarch who suffered many hours of discouragement. He desired a motto short enough to be engraved on his ring as a suitable reminder alike in prosperity and adversity. After many suggestions had been rejected, his daughter offered an emerald bearing this inscription: "This, too, shall pass away."

Our high and happy moments are wonderful, if only they could go on forever. We do not want sound health to be interrupted. We do not want our family circles to be broken. We do not want our friends to leave us, or our strength to fail. We do not want our privileges to be withdrawn or the sun of our successes to go down. But alas! Change is the law of our lives; we are powerless to stay its onward march. The present, however ideal, leaves us with longings unfulfilled. We have a nostalgia for the future.

The last two decades have brought human achievements beyond the farthest imagination of our grandparents—the development of atomic energy and nuclear power, space exploits which have placed men on the moon and brought them safely back to earth, the unbelievable powers of the laser beam, phenomenal advancements in the various fields of communication, and the technology which has made all these possible. Still, in all this, we find no lasting satisfaction. In fact, our feeling of distrust of the present intensifies as we see our proud civilization confronting problems which defy human solution—monetary problems, pollution problems, moral problems, problems of starvation, inequity, injustice, and unprecedented social unrest.

We look out upon all the heathen splendor and pagan power of modern Babylon and see at the heart of it all the fatal void. A deep and awful night hides at the very center of the bright achievements

of modern culture. We see mighty structures erected not upon the Rock of Ages but upon the shifting sands of human standards and human philosophies. And we hear the message, as if whispered in our ear: "This, too, shall pass away."

But we are not melancholy. Our hearts are vibrant with expectancy. We have a nostalgia for the future. We are not at home; the present scenes are merely passing views of landscape en route. Our home is in the eternal Kingdom of God—our heart is there already. By faith we can already hear the angel choir, and feel the glory and bliss of immortality. Our expectation is so vivid that nothing here can distract us.

Without this vision of the future, which God has given us in His Word, life is meaningless and futile. But because as Christians we know something of the Divine happenings just ahead, life is radiant with purpose and anticipation. Better times are coming! Life which will be glorious and satisfying and enduring is ahead! The darkness of the present does not discourage us; the future will be indescribably magnificent! Does anyone wonder that we feel a nostalgia for the future!

That future will begin with the arrival of the King and His forerunner. The Second Advent was the hope which kept alive the early Church. And it is our hope today. Whether it will happen in the next twelve months, we do not know. But our hearts are bound up in its reality. It may happen yet today! It is the inner longing and expectation which keeps us living and looking forward.

As committed followers of Christ, we dare not forget it—"lest coming suddenly," He find us sleeping. We cannot forget it because we have an obligation to fulfill before He comes. His words are ringing in our ears: "Therefore be ye also ready..."

If we are ready, what lies beyond the moment of His arrival? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

Does not our nostalgia for the future become more and more acute as we think about such promises? Oh, let it give such impetus to our life of service to God now that we will spend every day He grants us in earnest preparation. For soon we shall see "the glorious appearing of...our Saviour Jesus Christ."

He is coming! That is why we have a nostalgia for the future. □

## MEGIDDO MEANS ...

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

## WE BELIEVE ...

- in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable, with the help of God, of applying to our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that Jesus Christ will soon return to rid the earth of all sin and suffering and inaugurate an eternal and worldwide kingdom of peace and righteousness, until God's will is done here as it is now done in heaven.

### The Herald and the KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: ...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

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## Megiddo Message

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*Note: If you wish to remove label on cover, warm with hair dryer and carefully peel off.*

# Enter into My Joy

*J*esus Christ is seated upon His throne of judgment. In our mind's eye we see Him, sublime in His majesty, His face glowing with immortal light. Scores of angels surround Him, and thousands of saints look on in rapt attention.

A loyal servant steps before Him. The Master smiles, and His words are gentle, loving and filled with admiration: "Well done, My good and faithful servant: come, enter into My joy."

"Enter in...." What an entrance! a step into glory, into honor, into immortality, into real life! Can we even faintly imagine the thrill of that moment? Can any words suggest a meaningful definition of such joy? Truly, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the [human] heart" to imagine the hundredth, nay, the thousandth part of the reality of that joy.

Can we feel the thrill that will rush through our being; to realize we have been accepted once and for all into the family of the great God of heaven? No wonder Peter could rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." For this is no dream. This is the grand consummation, the crowning day, the beginning of a glory and a joy which will open into broader and yet broader realms of happiness and delight through ages to come.

As we watch the celestial scene, the director of the angel choir lifts his hand and a thousand heavenly voices respond as one. Softly, then growing louder and louder as they are joined

by another heavenly choir, and another, and yet another, they crescendo until their praises ring through the vast vault of heaven.

The Revelator in his prophetic preview, at a loss for adequately descriptive terms, compared it to the sound of a thousand oceans crashing on the shore, as wave after wave of "Alleluia!" echoes from choir to choir. "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:6-7).

"Come, enter into my joy." Such a simple word, yet "joy" may describe the vicissitudes of immortality as well as any other word in our language. The Bible pictures the reward of the saints in the most glowing terms. In every aspect filled and overflowing with joy, always it is pictured as surpassing the ultimate in satisfaction, beyond the best that we can imagine; yes, "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). Said the Psalmist of old, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11). Scarcely could he find words to portray the supreme blessing God has reserved for His faithful children: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Ps. 36:7-9). Fulness of joy... abundant satisfaction...rivers of pleasures!

*We can have  
joy just in  
proportion to  
our faith.*

The prophet Isaiah described the victorious saints as walking the high road to Zion with "songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isa. 35:10). Again he wrote of the favored children of God who would have all the earth for their possession, and "everlasting joy shall be unto them" (Isa. 61:7).

With such overflowing joy at the very center of God's promises, an integral part of all He has set before His aspiring children, do we wonder that the New Testament is a book of joy? It opens with a choir of angels singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." It closes with the ringing tones of the Hallelujah chorus at the joyous Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Is it strange that those who live between these two events, whose hearts are captured by the Divine promises, share a joy that this world can neither give nor take away? Since the whole plan of God is to culminate in everlasting joy and happiness for all who have a share in it, is it any wonder that those who have served God in all ages have been men and women radiant with joy? How could they help but be, with such a glorious future in prospect?

### Joy On This Side

Now let us come to our own situation, and our present joy. The connection between the immortal crown and joy is obvious. But what can we learn about joy that lies *this side* of the eternal crown?

David found joy in the Lord. His psalms are filled with joy, yet when we read the story of his life, we wonder how joy fitted into the picture. "My soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation..." (35:9). "I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy..." (31:7). "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me...with the voice of joy and praise" (42:4). "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy" (43:4).

Jeremiah, in a life of trial and difficulty, said that the word of God was the joy and rejoicing of his heart (Jer. 15:16).

Peter wrote to his brethren, who were facing severe persecution, "that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold which though perishable is tested by fire, may redound to praise

and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Without having seen him you love him; though you do not see him now you believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy" (1 Pet. 1:7-8, RSV), or as phrased in our common version, "Yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

John was filled with joy because his children walked in truth (2 John 4).

On the night of the Last Supper, Jesus told His disciples that He wanted to share His joy with them. Imagine! Jesus knew that by that time the next day he would have been crucified, yet He had joy to share! "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). He was radiant with joy. What was the source of His joy? It was the real devotion and love He felt for His Father and which His disciples felt for Him, as He looked ahead to the glorious future they would share together. Here was a source of pure and abundant joy.

Even God is said to rejoice. He rejoices in His works (Ps. 104:31); He brings forth His people with joy, and his chosen with gladness (Ps. 105:43). And He will rejoice when the saints are made immortal. For "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isa. 62:5). "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul" (Jer. 32:41); "and it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth" (Jer. 33:9). "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee...will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17).

What distinguished the early Christians from their non-believing neighbors? It was their radiant, unconquerable joy. Like their great example Paul, those early believers learned in whatsoever state they were, to be content, if only God could be glorified and their hope in Christ made sure. This inner joy was not a

*The New  
Testament opens with  
a choir of angels  
singing "Glory to God  
in the highest" and  
closes with the  
Hallelujah chorus.*

*The Christian  
life is not an escape  
from life's harshness  
but a support  
through it.*



## Christian Joy

The original Greek word translated joy is *chara*, which comes from the Greek word *chairō*, which means, "to be cheerful, calmly happy or well off, be glad, joyful, rejoicing." *Chara* means "cheerfulness, i.e., calm delight:—gladness, exceeding joyfulfulness" (*Strong's Dictionary*).

*Chara* (joy) is inseparably linked to another word *charis* (grace), as both come from the same Greek word root. And why not? For "the grace that shall be brought...at the revelation of Jesus Christ" is the "joy," the reward, the blessings that God has planned for those who love Him. How can the prospect of such blessings fail to produce joy in the true believer? Is it any wonder that the early Christians were filled with an unconquerable gladness?

Christian joy is not dependent on circumstances. Joy that is rooted in faith and hope abides despite circumstances.

Joy is a confidence that overrides moods and emotions, that sees sufferings as temporary, and future bliss as eternal. Jesus was not seeking pleasure as He went through life; He was not looking for self-gratification, or the applause of men, or even the normal satisfactions of life. His whole intent was to please His Heavenly Father; nothing else really mattered. And so He had joy.

What would happen if we took that motivation for our own? If our whole purpose in life was to please our heavenly Father, what would be our reaction to failure or crisis? Would our joy be shattered

pious wish but a permanent, all pervasive part of their very being. Whatever the worst this world could throw upon them, it was but for a moment, only a brief interlude, after which they would begin an abundant and victorious life in God's new world. Let their enemies stomp them down, trample them under foot, rend and hurt them—they could triumph but an hour.

In the book of Acts, despite intolerable hardship, life seems infused with an unconquerable gladness. The same spirit is seen in the Old Testament. All of God's servants had this singular capacity to rejoice amid the worst of circumstances.

This was the spirit that so much impressed and puzzled the pagans who observed them. The Christians had something that seemed to be out of this world, something different from anything known in normal human life, something that they with their finest pleasures or deadliest terrors could not touch. Pleasure is one thing; this joy was another. Pleasure might mitigate the rigors of life; but this joy created an atmosphere that could not be clouded. Pleasure is ephemeral, this joy was enduring.

Joy motivates, joy stimulates, joy issues from true fellowship with God; and it is a holy joy. There is a story of a young Roman officer named Marius who called on some Christian friends one evening, and in their villa heard them singing in what was to him a new way. "It was the expression not of mirth but of some wonderful sort of happiness," he said.

Those who truly hear the word of life can but sing their joy.

### What Is Joy?

Joy is a dependent virtue. It does not come of itself. We might compare it to the movement of water in a pond. The water does not move itself. But skip a stone across its surface, and you produce little ripples which awake the whole

pond. Likewise for joy to ripple through us, something must cause it.

Joy in this world may be good or bad, depending on what it is the result of. For example, in Jesus' Parable of the Lost Sheep, there is joy when the shepherd finds his lost lamb and goes home. His joy is good. When Judas promised to betray his Master, and the chief priests rejoiced, their joy was bad.

Joy is the heart's response to something that gives it pleasure. Love God, and God will give you joy. Love God more than anything else, and His word, His promises, His presence—anything that pertains to Him or reminds you of Him—will give you more joy than anything else.

What gives us joy is a real tell-tale of what we love, what grips us, what moves our affections. (Do we see why joy follows love in the fruits of the Spirit?) If we delight in anything God forbids, how can God delight in us? If it can be said of us, "*When thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest*," such rejoicing is evil. But if Christian service, Christian sacrifice, and Christian fellowship give us joy, then our joy is in the Lord.

Oh, let us keep an eye on ourselves, and see what gives us pleasure.

Should we not have the same joy as those Christians of old? Have we not the same God and the same reward awaiting us if we are faithful? Should not our lives be always radiant, overflowing with joy?

Yes! Such is the ideal, and with God's help we shall attain that height; but in the meantime, most of us must confess that we are at times short on joy, in spite of our great hope. We have been guilty of complaining; we have been worried or irritated, burdened or frustrated. What is the problem? Simply that we are not naturally all that we should be. This is why God gives us time; and this is why God has commanded us to rejoice.

### Joy A Command

The Bible associates joy with the final recompense, an inseparable part of the reward to every faithful one. And because of this fact, the whole Christian message, and the whole Christian life becomes an expression of joy. The

Christian is also commanded to rejoice. It is a command to be obeyed, and obedience requires effort. Here we reach a strange point, for why should something so wonderful as joy require any effort?

But God knows us better than we know ourselves, and He knew our tendency to complain, to be shortsighted, to see the immediate problem so much more vividly than the manifold greater glory to come.

And so joy is among the commands of Scripture to be obeyed. Every good deed *should* be spontaneous in us, but it is not. That is why we are here, to develop the character God is seeking. The command is repeated many times in Scripture: *"Rejoice in the Lord...rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice."* *"Rejoice and be exceeding glad,"* *"rejoice in the Lord,"* *"count it all joy."* To rejoice is just as much a command as to be meek, or pure, or humble, or kind. If we are to obey these commands, we must take the steps that will produce in us the right kind of joy.

But like any other Christian task, we cannot expect it to be always easy. When James wrote to his brethren, he knew that they were facing trial and persecution, and so he said, *"Greet it as pure joy when you encounter any sort of trial, sure that the sterling temper of your faith produces endurance"* (James 1:2-3, Moffatt).

Jesus, in the sermon on the mount, after saying, *"Blessed are the meek..."* and *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness..."* and *"Blessed are the pure in heart..."* said also *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"* (Matt. 5:11-12). *"Rejoice and be exceeding glad"*—looking forward to the sure reward and eternal joy in the future.

In Jesus, every believer had the height of Christian joy. His treasure was in heaven, and in loyalty to it he could give up anything on earth. In Gethsemane, Jesus surrendered even His own will, an example to His followers who later would rejoice *"that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name"* (Acts 5:41).

The apostle Paul placed joy among the fruits of the Spirit which we must bear in our lives, but fruit does not bear itself. The analogy is instructive and thought provoking. Fruit does not come instantly. It takes time, diligence, patience, and hard work to make an apple tree productive. Nor does *good* fruit come without opposition. Often it is the victory over weather, bugs, weeds, poor soil and neglect. Likewise, the knowledge of God is not an automatic and effortless guarantee of pure joy. Joy is the result of a hard-won victory over pessimism, doubt and despair.

### **"Rejoice in the Lord Alway"**

Why did Paul command us to *"Rejoice"*? Because he knew himself, and he knew us. We do not naturally have that consistent, abundant, inner joy. Yes, we want it in the future, but if we would have it in the future, we must develop it now.

If our joy now is dependent upon the satisfactions of this life—good friends, good health, good success, fame, wealth, or the politics of this world, *and the absence of trouble and suffering*, we will have to say that Paul must have lived in an altogether different world than we—his kind of joy isn't possible here. Forget the *"always"*—rejoicing would be only an occasional outburst, because everyone knows that life is not a steady procession of pleasure. But the impossibility vanishes when we realize that we are to rejoice *"in the Lord,"* not in the problem. Whatever comes or goes in our lives, our place *"in the Lord"* remains constant, secure, unshaken. Paul's joy was not dependent on circumstances. Even when everything seemed against him, he could still *"rejoice in the Lord"* knowing that God was working all things together for his eternal good, and that in time even his sorrows would turn to joy.

Mr. and Mrs. Average Person have two levels of reality, one of satisfaction and one of dissatisfaction.

into a thousand pieces by a loss of money, or security, or position in this world? If so, then our motivations were wrong; we were living for money, or security, or position, and not to please God.

One might think that the opposite of joy is sorrow, but Christian joy is different. For this special brand of joy can co-exist with sorrow. Said the apostle Paul, we are *"never far from death, yet here we are alive, always going through, yet never going under. We know sorrow, yet our joy is inextinguishable"* (2 Cor. 6:9-10, Phillips).

Christian joy is a heart-confidence in God which is unshakable and undisturbable. It results from an inner conviction that God's great purpose and plan is all important and all controlling, and so we as individuals are freed from the normal concerns of life. Yes, we have sorrow; but it does not interfere with our joy because God will bring us to happiness in the end. Yes, we have pain. But even pain does not interfere with our joy, because it affects only the very smallest fraction of our life, after which we shall be delivered to enjoy ages upon ages of happiness and bliss. Yes, we may be mistreated, maligned, disowned, persecuted. Still, nothing that can happen to us in this world can interfere with true joy, because God is in control, and will recompense His children a thousandfold for all that they have suffered. At worst, the suffering is but for a moment; the joy will last for ever.

Christian joy is something that defies definition, because it is independent of this world and its circumstances. □



*God's promises  
create a joy so great  
that nothing here—  
good or bad—can  
compare with it.*

*The early  
Christians, mocked  
and beaten, chained  
and imprisoned, still  
rejoiced with "joy  
unspeakable" in the  
hope of coming glory.*

When all goes well—when they have helpful companions, enough money, good grades in school, or a job they find challenging—then they are happy. But when things do not go so well—when the household is in a shambles, when they are not getting along well with others, when they are running out of money, when the boss at work is unbearable, or their school grades are at the bottom—then they are unhappy.

Everyone experiences both of these situations at one time or another.

However, the Christian has a third level of existence, which rests on a different foundation. The Christian bases everything on his confidence in God. His life is in God's hands, and whatever comes into it goes first to God and then to him. With this perspective, all things become a means of serving God, and the believer is free from the contentions and struggles of this world. With both feet firmly on this solid foundation, whatever happens, the foundation remains. Nothing can take away that supporting joy.

This is why Paul could write, *"In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us"* (Rom. 8:18, Phillips). The bright picture of future glory was always there. Whatever the momentary pain or pleasure, God's promises for the future created a joy so great that nothing here—good or bad—could compare with it.

As Christians we do not have to be Epicureans and pretend that all is well when it isn't. We don't have to be Stoics and deny pain, or sorrow, or adversity. All we have to do is take what comes and make the best of it, trusting God to do what we cannot, and knowing that if we are true to Him nothing can hurt or hinder our eternal welfare. What more do we need to make us a people of *real joy*!

Serving God doesn't guarantee present happiness but it does guarantee

*future joy*. This is why God's people are able to *"Rejoice in the Lord always."*

Christian joy is a very special, other-worldly commodity. Do we have sorrow? Yes, but we do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13-17). Do we have suffering? Yes, but it is nothing to be compared with the glory which lies ahead (Rom. 8:18). The Christian life is not an escape from life's harshness but a steadying support *through* it. What happens here is really of little consequence, if only we can reach the glory that lies ahead.

Some misguided preachers try to make Christian joy sound instant, free, easy, and effortless. Believe, and you will have nothing but joy. But such is not the gospel of Christ. There is no guarantee of uninterrupted wealth, health and happiness in this life, even to the most godly. The heroes of faith were burned, sawn asunder, living in caves and holes in the ground, men and women of whom the world was not worthy. They were mocked and beaten, chained and imprisoned. Happy? hardly. But full of joy? They rejoiced with joy unspeakable, in the hope of *coming glory*.

And that bright hope put a new light on all of life. In fact, in its light, present joys or sorrows had little consequence. This attitude brings a hundredfold of contentment even now. As Paul wrote, *"our trials not only give hope of future joys—we can be full of joy here and now... these very things will give us patient endurance; this in turn will develop a mature character, and a character of this sort produces a steady hope, a hope that will never disappoint us"* (Rom. 5:3-5, Phillips).

Jesus gave His disciples what might have seemed like a strange lesson at the time, yet its meaning to us is deep. His point was that they should have the right source of joy. His disciples had just returned from a healing campaign and were rejoicing over the miracles they had done. When they were at the peak of declaring their joy, Jesus countered: *"Nevertheless, what you should rejoice over is not that the spirits submit to you, but that your names are enrolled in heaven"* (Luke 10:20, NEB). Power from God was a rich blessing; but richer still was the

glory of winning God's favor, and this is a joy every one of us can have.

As we search for joy in a troubled world, full of violence, heartache, and unrest, we come back again and again to the fact that God is in control, that He has never broken His promises yet, and He never will. God is faithful, loving, holy, just, steadfast, infinite in majesty, able to overrule to bring about His eternal purposes. With such a goal in view, what does it matter if our little temporal projects succeed or fail, if only the events of our lives train us for His eternal service? Here is the source of real joy, far deeper than anything this world can give.

**H**ow consistent is our joy? Do we find our lives lacking in this beautiful spring flower of hope? Let us review our priorities and do everything we can to tighten our grip on things eternal, making sure that we are producing each day the righteousness God requires.

We can have joy just in proportion to our faith.

Our motives control our lives. If we are living to please ourselves and feast on the goodwill or good words of our fellowmen, if we find exhilaration in looking good or feeling good or impressing others, our joy will be easily shattered, for any or all of these may be wholly beyond our control. Have we not read that "the joy of the hypocrite" is "but for a moment"?

Oh, let us find our joy in the Lord, and then all the great things that God has promised will one day be ours to enjoy together, world without end!

I would like to close with these joy-bursting words of the apostle Paul in the eighth chapter of the book of Romans, as translated by Dr. Phillips:

*"Can anything separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble, pain or persecution? Can lack of clothes and food, danger to life and limb, the threat of force of arms?"*

*"No, in all these things we win an overwhelming victory through him who has proved his love for us."*

*"All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear—you have been adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, 'Father, my Father.'"*

*The Spirit himself endorses our inward conviction that we really are the children of God. Think what that means. If we are his children we share his treasures, and all that Christ claims as his, will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his sufferings we shall certainly share in his glory.*

*"In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited—yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!"*

*"I have become absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of Heaven nor monarch of earth, neither what happens today nor what may happen tomorrow, neither a power from on high nor a power from below, nor anything else in God's whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord!"*

Then, through all of the ups and downs of life, we can rejoice in the Lord always, as we think about those most gracious, most delightful words we may one day hear from our Master:

*"Well done, My good and faithful servant; enter into My joy!"* □

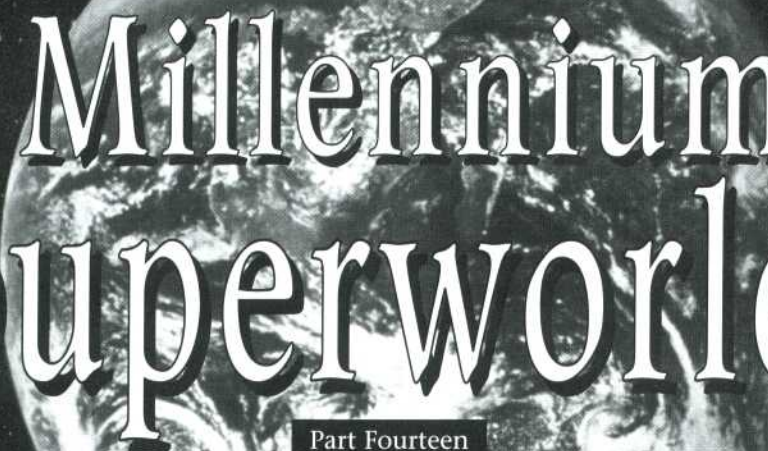
**F**ather of mercies and God of all comfort, who holdest our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved; who triest us as silver is tried, and bringest us through water and through fire: we come before Thee in humble gratitude for all Thy tender mercies toward us.

We thank Thee that we have been brought safely to the point of beginning another year with Thee, that our souls are still held in the bundle of life. We are grateful for our pleasant surroundings, and for Christian friends with whom we may share the real values of life. We are grateful for the degree of health and strength Thou dost permit us to enjoy; for reasoning minds, for will power to choose between right and wrong, and for memories that can retain the lessons we learn.

We thank Thee especially, our Father, for the blessing of hope, for the unspeakable joy and glory Thou hast set before us.

May our hearts rejoice, as we look ahead to the time when we can renew our strength, when we can mount up with power as do the angels, when we can run and not be weary, walk and not faint. Thou hast promised that for us one day mortality can be swallowed up of life, that we may be made equal to the angels never to die. With Thy promises we can look ahead to receiving an inheritance which will be incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. May these bright prospects buoy us over every trying situation of our lives. May we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory as we anticipate receiving the end result of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

We pray Thee to be near Thy people everywhere whose hearts are one with Thee, who are seeking earnestly Thy Kingdom. Protect and watch over those who are not yet Thy people but of whom it shall soon be said, These are the people of the living God. Forgive us for the sins we confess and forsake, and keep us all steadfastly pressing toward the goal Thou hast set before us, that we may someday share the delights of full salvation with Thy Son and the good and faithful of all ages world without end. In His name we pray. AMEN.



# Millennium Superworld

Part Fourteen

## **"BEHOLD, A NEW EARTH"**

*"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."*

*—Revelation 21:5*

*"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."*

*"And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying."*

*—Isaiah 65:17, 19*

*"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."*

*—Revelation 22:6*

*"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth"* (Isa. 65:17). The promise is from heaven; spoken many centuries ago by the messenger of the Lord, it has been preserved to arouse the expectation of generation upon generation. *"Behold, I create"*—the Lord is working. He is doing something. He is fashioning, developing, shaping. The process of creation takes time; but the work is destined to be completed. There shall be new heavens and a new earth.

First will come the *"new heavens."* Christ is returning to be *"king over all the earth"* (Zech. 14:9), and soon after His arrival He and the saints shall take over the jurisdiction of earth's affairs, and their righteous rule shall displace the faulty human systems. For *"the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him"* (Dan. 7:27). Christ and His saints will compose the *"new heavens,"* the new ruling authority upon earth.

*"Behold, I create new heavens"*—this process of creating requires six thousand years before they are finally selected, developed and exalted to positions of honor, seated with Christ upon His throne of glory (Rev. 3:21). But what a glorious day when all shall *"behold"* these *"new heavens"* who shall *"judge the world in righteousness, and minister judgment to the people in uprightness"* (Ps. 9:8). In their hands will be the glorious task of making *"all things new"* from *"sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth"* (Rev. 21:5; Ps. 72:8).

After the creating of the *"new heavens"* will follow the task of creating a *"new earth."* A whole new populace must be developed to fill the earth with the glory of the Lord. But they will not be accepted as the laws of nature produce them, rough and untried. They must be brought *"through the fire,"* refined *"as silver is refined"* and tried *"as gold is tried"* (Zech. 13:9).

The Lord will have no inferior material in His finished creation; all must have proved themselves under trial.

When this creating task is complete and the glorious Millennium belongs to history, the words of Revelation 21:5 will be fulfilled: *"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."*

All things new! A splendid promise. But what does it mean to an ordinary man or woman living in the old world of today? First of all, if you are there to behold it, you yourself will be new. You will be a radiant, glorious immortal being with the life and vigor of the angels of heaven. Pulsing in your veins will be the lifeblood of immortality. You will be all new!

Picture yourself in the flush of eternal youth, with eternal vitality, eternal strength, eternal energy. You will have new muscles which cannot strain, weaken or tire. You will be able to *"mount up"* with power that can defy the laws of gravity, to *"run, and not be weary,"* and *"walk and not faint"* (Isa. 40:31). You will be able to come and go with the freedom of the summer breeze.

Then, you will have a new intellect, an intellect that will grow and expand with the endless cycles of the eternity before you. Imagine what it will be like to never forget what you want to remember. You will have a mind capable of retaining and relating limitless impressions as you are exposed to more and more of the wonderments of heavenly wisdom and knowledge.

Then, you will have new eyes, eyes which can behold the transcendent beauties of that bright new world, eyes that can rejoice in the exceeding brightness that accompanies immortals everywhere they go. You will need these new eyes even to live with yourself, for as an immortal being, you will be shining, too! What will it be to have eyes that can view all the

unfoldings of God's magnificent plan through ages upon ages of fruitful, immortal activity!

Then, you will have new ears, ears that can perceive sounds surpassing the finest mortal imagination. Music? You have never yet heard anything that merits the title. Immortal beings know music beyond our fondest finite fathoming. You will need your new ears to hear it, and a new mind to comprehend it.

You will have a totally new

**Y**OU WILL BE A  
RADIANT, GLORIOUS  
IMMORTAL BEING WITH  
THE LIFE AND VIGOR OF  
AN ANGEL.

body, composed of new substance, a substance superior to flesh and blood, a substance that can never age or decay.

As well as perfect physical and mental capacities, you will also have a perfect spiritual capacity and an appreciation of the workings of God which is beyond imagining now. New dimensions of holiness will continue to thrill you through all eternity. The majestic holiness and grandeur of Jehovah is inexhaustible. Only immortals can begin to comprehend it.

*"Behold, I make all things new."* First, the new *"you,"* and then—

Everyone you meet everywhere and anywhere you go throughout the wide world will be just like you—another happy, glorious, immortal being. Everyone everywhere will be rejoicing in the marvelous salvation of our God. Go where you will, you will find peo-

ple everywhere with whom you can share a new immortal experience, or a new gem of heavenly knowledge, or a new insight into the workings of Omnipotence. Everyone everywhere will be interested in the same goals that are yours—indeed, your goals will be the universal goals of the world, for everyone will worship and praise and serve and adore the same Eternal God.

You will all be members of one family, an eternal family that will never know a sorrow or a parting or a care. There will be no sickness, no old age, no suffering in that family. Every member will be continually challenged by new horizons of knowledge as they advance from "glory to glory."

Do you think that you will grow tired of your family on earth, after you have lived with them for a few billion years? Don't fear, you will continually be making new acquaintances after earth is accepted into the family of the "Lord God of hosts." Indeed, you will need Eternity to get acquainted with all the glorified immortals from other worlds who will be your own brothers and sisters. Earth will no more be an island alone, for God's will shall be done here as in heaven; and when it is, earth shall become a part of heaven!

"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." If you are there, you will experience firsthand the fullest meaning of perfect love, perfect peace, perfect beauty, perfect harmony, perfect joy, perfect contentment. You will be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, when He has come to dwell forever among men (Rev. 21:3) in that glorious, bright new world. The former shall "not be remembered, nor come into mind." All things shall be new forever!



*The person who has no fire in himself cannot ignite others.*

## HOW CAN I GET THERE FROM HERE?

"Who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?" —Mal. 3:2, NIV

"LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?

"He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellow man,

"Who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the LORD, who keeps his oath even when it hurts,

"Who lends his money without usury and does not accept a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken." —Ps. 15:1-5, NIV

**T**he Millennium will come. It is only a matter of time.

But when all is said and done, what benefit can we as individuals derive from knowing about it in advance? Of what real value is it to you and me to know about the Millennium or the age that will follow?

A minister of the last century illustrated the point as follows: Suppose someone should come to you and tell you about an immense gold mine, yet would reveal nothing about where the mine was located or what anyone could do to procure the gold. Would you value the information? You would want to know at once about your own prospect of mining the gold, where it is located, and what it might be worth.

So with the future age. Merely to know that it is in the plan of God, that a millennium of joy will follow this age of turmoil and be enjoyed by the inhabitants of the earth worldwide, is of no personal value to us unless we can know also what we as individuals must do to live in that time.

Has God left it merely to chance, as to who will live then? Or has He a plan whereby those who desire to may take the proper steps and be sure of it?

God operates by plan, a well ordered plan. The teachings of the

prophets, Jesus, and His apostles all confirm this. All taught that obedience is the requisite to receiving God's approval. We read in the book of Samuel, "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2:3). Moses' law also demanded obedience: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine" (Ex. 19:5). "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 10:12). These are the words of Jeremiah, who spoke for God: "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17:10). The words of the prophet Micah confirm: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8).

When Jesus sent His apostles out to preach, what was the message He gave them? "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19). What were they to teach? "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (v. 20).

What was the message of the apostle Paul? That God will give "to

them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7). Again he advised that "They which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works," adding, "These things are good and profitable unto men" (Titus 3:8). Consistently it was a gospel requiring obedience as a condition of salvation. The apostle John wrote about those who might expect to be made like Christ: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure" (1 John 3:3). James advised his congregation, "humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you" (James 1:21, NIV). And the apostle Peter wrote: "Rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (1 Pet. 2:1-2, NIV). Said Jesus, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John

15:14). To whom will He say "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord"? Only to the "good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23).

Thank God, He has revealed how we may be permitted to live in that glorious Millennial age, and on into Eternity. The admission price is no more than anyone is able to pay: the price of obedience to the laws of God. For this purpose He supplies us this present life, His written Word, and minds capable of understanding that Word. Our part is to use what we have been given to practice His law, to let it direct and control our lives. Then we can look forward to the fulfilling of Jesus' promise, given in His last message: "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be....Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:12, 14).

How do we get there from here? How can we prepare to live in the Millennium? Only by living a life committed to His principles, obedient to His laws.

Jesus will come and bring about the changes foretold, when the time is right.

Who will do their utmost to live by God's laws now, so that they can be accepted to live when the Lord's prayer is fulfilled and God's will is done on earth as now it is done in heaven? □



*Christians can be at their best even when everything else is at its worst.*

*Take time to think where you're going, or you may not like where you end up.*

It is one of those familiar yellow highway signs, with its brief, pointed warning message: "Bump." And sure enough, a hundred or so yards down the road, there it is, the bump we anticipated. A real "bump" it was, but not the jolt it might have been had we been taken by surprise. The sign had served its purpose. If we traveled the road frequently, we might not have been surprised anyway, for the bump was there before the sign.

Now think about it from another angle: Why the "Bump" sign? Why not repair the road? Then there would be no need for the sign. But putting up the sign was so much easier and less costly. At least it would warn people until the need for the sign could be eliminated. Or maybe the highway department decided that the bump in the road was not that serious, and so long as there was a sign to warn travelers of it, all responsibility was fulfilled.

"Bump" signs are bad enough on the highways; but far worse is this technique when it is used to cover our unrepaired, unreformed and undesirable character traits. It may be that we have a tendency to run short of patience. When we feel the pressure rising, and our



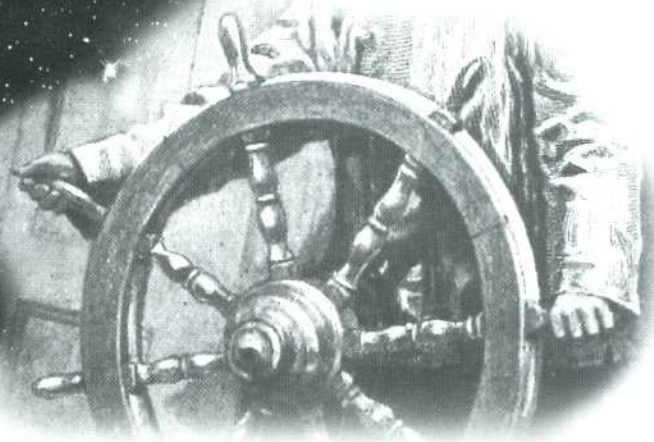
supply dwindling, instead of taking ourselves in hand and strengthening our willpower to hold on, we put up our "Bump" sign and let others know that we have had all we can take; any more is dangerous. And from there on it is up to them, either to keep quiet or take the consequences. If we become provoked or angered, others are to blame—because they didn't heed our sign.

Or we have a tendency to want something that doesn't belong to us. Instead of telling ourselves firmly to look the other way and forget it, up goes our "Bump" sign. We say by our actions, "Don't tempt me—I'm vulnerable." Or we carry a grudge against a certain person. All is well until something is said about them. Then suddenly, up goes our "Bump" sign again, as if to say, "Better be careful!" And so, unconsciously, we say that warning others of our shortcomings is an acceptable alternative to getting rid of them. Raising "bump" signs admits to others that the undesirable trait is there, but it says also that we don't intend to change.

Bad traits, bad habits, bad temperaments, bad moods don't go away simply by admitting they exist. Why not go to work, dig up the "road," and repair the cause of the "Bump."

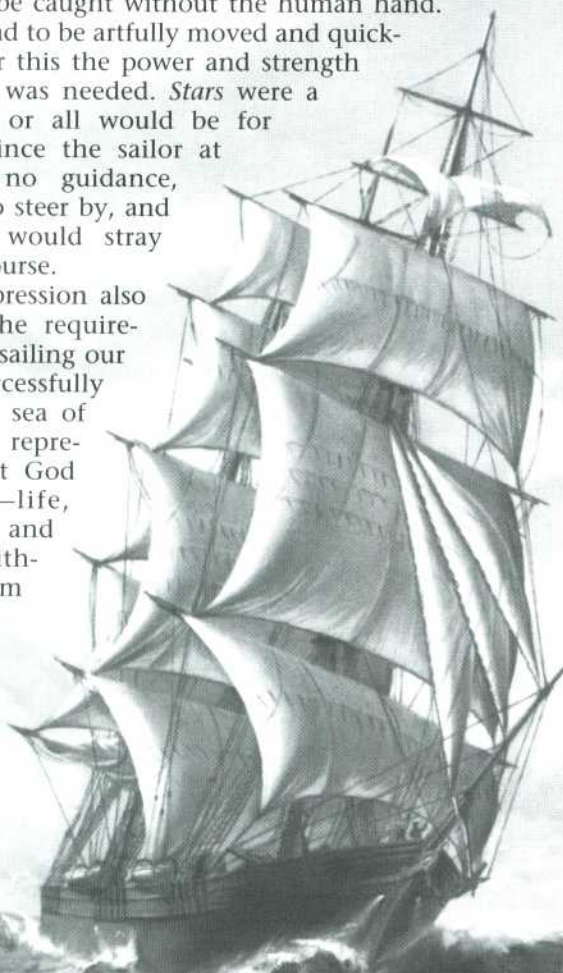
Then there won't be any need for a sign. □

# By Wind, By Hands, By Stars



**A**n old nautical expression described the means by which a ship could cross the sea: "By wind, by hands, by stars." *Wind* represented the part which God provides: an essential in sailing vessel days. Without wind the ship would lie motionless. *Hands* stood for the human part in the sailing. Man could not blow upon the canvas to produce motion, but neither could the wind be caught without the human hand. The sail had to be artfully moved and quickly, and for this the power and strength of a man was needed. *Stars* were a necessity, or all would be for naught, since the sailor at sea had no guidance, nothing to steer by, and the ship would stray from its course.

The expression also suggests the requirements for sailing our bark successfully across the sea of life. *Wind* represents what God provides—life, energy and power. Without Him



there is no motion, no energy, and no goal. *Hands* tell us that we have a part in the crossing, an essential part. Said the apostle Paul, "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*" As someone put it, "Pray as though everything depends upon God. Work as though everything depends upon you." *Stars* are those eternal principles which God has set down for our guidance in His Book. The principles remain the same from age to age, never changing, never diminishing in importance. They are for our protection and our guidance. They are points of reference by which we can chart our course through life, and continually correct that course.

The stars are absolutely dependable. No mariner was ever lost because the stars betrayed him. Whenever a wayfarer found a conflict between his directional instincts and the information which the stars provided—he did well to follow the stars.

God's Word is among those things which "*cannot be shaken.*" The learning of this world cannot push it aside, because it transcends human wisdom. Wars cannot move it, since it is not dependent upon human consent. The rise and fall of human economies, human governments, human societies can never touch it, because it is one of those things which "*cannot be shaken.*"

Not only did maritime navigators find in the stars the guidance they needed, but even in our space navigations today we still look to the stars when voyaging. Even the sophisticated Hubble telescope keeps its course by locking its sites on certain predetermined stars.

The Word of God, like the stars, is useful for guidance because it is dependable. It is the expression of Him who cannot lie and does not change. "*I am the Lord, I change not,....and my glory will I not give to another*" (Mal. 3:6; Isa. 42:8). We can be sure that not one word will fail of all that He has spoken (1 Kings 8:56).

Another comforting comparison between the stars and the Bible is that stars shine at night, and the Bible is a spiritual light in this world's moral darkness. Nothing about the darkness can dim its light.

Those who have learned to live by the light of God's Word have learned that the dark places of earth hold no terror. In fact, in its light *"the night shineth as the day"* (Ps. 139:12).

An inscription on the crypt of Allegheny Observatory at the University of Pittsburgh reads, "C. V. Bra-shear, 1834-1910. 'We have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.'"

Can't we as believers in Christ say the same, in a spiritual sense? We live in a world of darkness. We are surrounded by foes we cannot control: foes of error, immorality, violence, oppression, destructiveness, and disregard for the sanctity of life; foes of selfishness, greed, and the inhumanity of man to man; foes of our own human limitations and the facts of mortality. However vibrant and full of excitement the sunlight of life can be, we know that it will end. We have no power to save ourselves. But we have "the stars"—bright stars of hope and faith that He has given us in His word. We love these stars far too fondly to be fearful of the night.

The stars never go out of style. Those which Abraham looked up to are the very same that look down on us. They have been there for every generation, and are part of eternity itself. The stars represent the eternal verities God has given us in His Word. God's principles are relevant in every age. We can never outgrow them, or leave them behind. They are not Divine because they are in the Bible, but they are in the Bible because they are Divine.

If we are to sail safely through life, we need to sail by God's stars, His Word, His principles. Whatever we do, we need them. There are some learned voices today saying that the Bible is out of date, and that modern man no longer needs it. But who are we to question Him who made us? Who are we to say that we do not need what He has provided for us to use?

Clovis Chapel, a religious author, once told a story about two men in a boat on the open sea. Darkness had overtaken them as they sailed homeward. Being weary, the owner of the craft turned over the duties of steering to his hired hand, carefully pointing out the star by which he had been guiding the boat. "Now keep your eye on that star," was his clear instruction, and "we'll reach the right port."

It had been a hard day, and soon the owner was fast asleep. The new navigator was dozing, too. After several naps, with the boat now way off course, he awoke and thought of the star he was supposed to be watching. Unable to find it among the vast number overhead, he went to where the older man was sleeping and shook him awake. "Sir," he said, "show me another star; we've sailed past the first one."

God has given us stars to sail by, and it is our responsibility to keep awake. If the star seems to be out of sight, it is not the star that has moved; we have. God's Word is a steady guide, but we must keep our eye on it, or we will surely be lost.

Times and customs change, but Divine truth remains the same. Today, even as in days gone by, we still sail "by wind, by hands, by stars." □



## *Slightly Soiled and marked down*

Several men, laughing heartily, stood about the showroom of the farm implement store in Woodbridge. Stephen and his father had joined the group when they recognized two of their own neighbors. One of them was Mr. Ronaldson, a member of their own church.

"Quite a story, quite a story," chuckled one of the strangers. "I can tell you one just as good," said another stranger. Then he told a dirty story that made the men roar with laughter again.

Stephen, embarrassed, looked at his father. Dad was the only man who was not laughing.

Silently he took Stephen by the arm and they walked out of the store.

As they got into their car to go home, Stephen said, "Dad, I never thought Mr. Ronaldson would laugh at a dirty story like that. Why, he goes to our church!"

"Yes," said Dad, sadly, "he goes to our church." For a few moments, he was silent. Then he added, "Remember that sign in the store where we bought those shirts the other day? We got them at bargain prices because they had become soiled?"

"You mean the sign that said 'Slightly Soiled. Marked down?'"

"That's it. I can imagine that is the way you feel about Mr. Ronaldson now—that he's slightly soiled and marked down in your estimation."

Stephen's eyes were serious. "You're right, Dad." There was hurt in his eyes, too. He had always admired Mr. Ronaldson. A pleasant man, one of the most successful farmers in the Pleasant Valley neighborhood, Mr. Ronaldson always had a cheery greeting for everyone.

"We'll hope and pray," said Dad, "that our friend Ronaldson will learn to '*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good*'" (Rom. 12:9).

Dad laid a hand on Stephen's arm. "Next year, you'll be going to high school, Son. You'll be mixing with a lot of different kinds of boys. Some of them are going to have a lot of smutty stories to tell."

"I'll remember, Dad," Stephen promised. "I don't want to get slightly soiled and marked down." □

It is difficult to imagine how anyone could be fonder of envisioning the reward offered by the Great Creator for faithful service than was Mr. Nichols. Never did he address his people without thrilling anew at some aspect of it. He thought of it, he spoke of it, he dreamed of it; and doing all this, he was constantly impelled to live for it.

Occasionally he prepared rhyming verse to help capture the vision.

As you read this rhyme, join him in his flight of fantasy—and realize that someday it shall be glorious reality!

*O what great joy and peace Divine  
Can all be yours, can all be mine  
If we'll but walk in narrow way  
With Christ our Lord each day by day!*

*O what a happy, blissful lay  
Can grace our lips in that glad day  
If we will now forsake the world  
And hold aloft God's truth unfurled!*

*O what a power our God will give  
To all who now will godly live  
And do His bidding, great or small,  
As did our dear, beloved Paul!*

*O what a mansion bright and fair  
We each one then will have and share,  
If we'll but to all sin now die  
And keep our mind on things on high.*

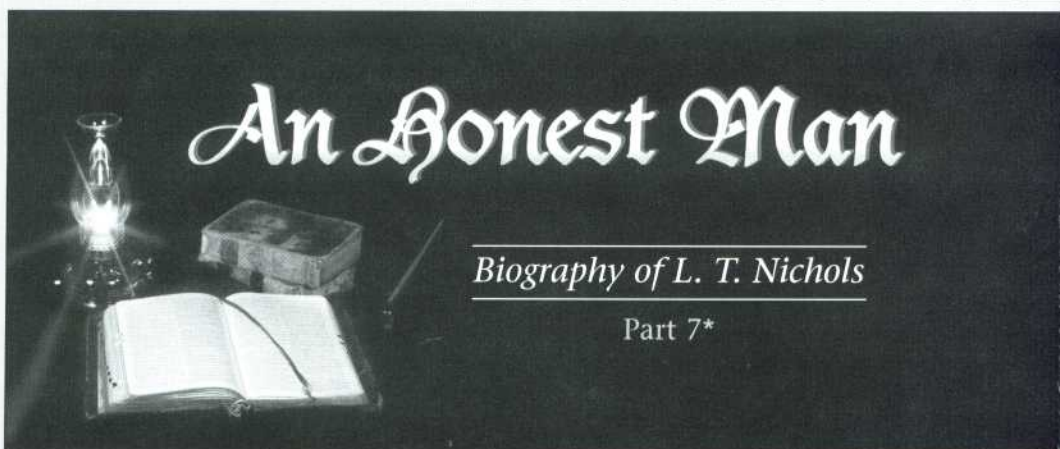
*O my! what grand beatitudes!  
How we'll enjoy the interludes  
If we will crucify the flesh  
And ne'er be caught in sin's dark mesh.*

*O what a joyful, happy band  
We'll join within God's summerland;  
We'll bask with them for evermore  
In joys each day increasing more!*

*O what great joy we then will take  
In passing through the pearly gate  
With all the joyous happy band  
Who enter that glad summerland.*

*O what a joy to then behold  
This happy band all pure as gold  
All sparkling with God's love Divine  
Because they stayed in Christ the vine.*

(Continued on page 17)



# An Honest Man

*Biography of L. T. Nichols*

Part 7\*

## NEW HORIZONS

Although retarded somewhat by heavy snow, the travelers reached Rochester on January 27, 1904, and were met by a few of the brethren who had preceded them and arranged for temporary quarters at 55 East Avenue. They were soon comfortably settled and remained there until the last of February, when the present property on Thurston Road was purchased. At this time there was no street car line nearer than Genesee St., about a mile away. This part of the city was as yet undeveloped, and much of it was swamp.

The property purchased by Captain Nichols consisted of six acres of land, one large two-story house and two small cottages. These sufficed for short-term housing for "the group." Within a few months a three-story house was constructed, which was ready for occupancy July 4, 1904. Several smaller residences were soon added. The original building contained a large double parlor. This at once became the assembly room, where all gathered each evening and on Sundays for worship.

Captain Nichols now purchased a large number of vacant lots lying on Cottage, Sawyer, Enterprise and Ellicott Streets. These he sold to his followers at cost, as he did also the lumber which he bought in large quantities at wholesale prices, and they were soon engaged in erecting houses, which were to be rented, thus providing employment for the members, as well as adding to their incomes. Through his efforts the New York State Railways extended their line through Arnett Boulevard and Thurston Road to Brooks Avenue. Water and sewer accommodations were secured within a few years, and the building went steadily forward.

While the group were busy building houses, the city did its part in the way of pavements and sidewalks. Meanwhile the city expanded, and a sufficient number of high-grade business firms located in the area.

The spiritual work was not neglected during this time. In August, 1904, a tent was erected at the corner of Genesee Street and Bronson Avenue. Services were conducted for a week, all meetings being well attended. Campaigns were also conducted at Sea Breeze and Charlotte during the summer. In November, the Colonial Hall was secured, where meetings were held for some time. Then Plymouth Church, at Plymouth Avenue and Troup Street, was hired, and here the group worshiped regularly for 18 months, until the church was sold to the Spiritualist Society. The last sermon preached there was on August 5, 1906. In this address Captain Nichols said, "I stand ready today to buy the Plymouth Church outright and make the Spiritualists a clean present of it if they will produce one phenomenon which I fail to

\*An Honest Man is available in printed book form. Write: Megiddo Press, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, NY 14619. Price: \$2.00.

explain upon reasonable investigation." He was never called upon to make good his offer.

Plymouth Church was the scene of the first true Christmas celebration given by the Megiddo group for the public. Captain Nichols had been engaged for some time in collecting and tabulating the evidence showing that Christ was not born on December 25 but in the spring of the year. According to his calculations, the anniversary of Jesus' birth fell that year (1906) on March 25, and the church was elaborately decorated for the occasion with artificial flowers of many varieties—to the number of 10,000, all handmade by the ladies of the group. A program of recitations, songs and selections by the band was rendered, closing with an address by Captain Nichols.

During these years, home mission work was being extensively carried on in many parts of the United States by house-to-house canvassers offering books explaining the Bible by subjects. Captain Nichols offered to pay the railroad fare and furnish the books at cost to all who would go out and help to carry the light in this way to a world in darkness. Many responded, some giving their entire time to the good work. Several more publications were added to the list during the next few years in Rochester, viz.: *What Must We Do to be Saved?*, *Treatise on the Holy Spirit*, *Treatise on the Trinity*, *Treatise on Elijah and the Coming of Christ*, and *Treatise on Christmas and New Year*. The *Spiritual Creation* was a posthumous work of Captain Nichols', published in 1914. All together it became a set of thirteen books furnishing a comprehensive study of the Bible.

The point that the prophet Elijah will return to herald the second advent of Christ, was one of the last to be discovered. "*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*" This prophecy had stood in plain view for centuries, as had the statement of Jesus, "*Elias [Elijah] truly shall first come, and restore all things*" (Mal. 4:5-6; Matt. 17:11). Yet the subject was beclouded by those who had tried through the years to apply these texts to another individual or to a class or movement. A study of the subject convinced Mr. Nichols that there could be but one meaning; that the passages were literally true, and the old prophet Elijah, who was translated to heaven so many centuries ago, was being trained for a special work and would return to herald the coming of the Messiah. With this agreed the records of the primitive Church, according to the earliest secular historians. Thenceforth the message of the Megiddo missionaries was the imminent coming of Elijah to sound the final warning.

The Captain had for some time felt the need of a larger place of worship for his growing band, so in the autumn of 1907 he decided to build a church. No sooner was the plan mentioned to the brethren than the work was begun. The location chosen was at the corner of Thurston Road and Sawyer Street, just opposite the Mission Home. The building erected is 76 feet long by 36 feet wide, and has a seating capacity of 400 persons. Several trees which stood on the premises were cut down and sawed into building material, which was used in the church. (A saw mill and flour mill were part of the equipment of Captain Nichols.) The pews, which were of chestnut and beautifully finished, were the work of the Captain and his men, while the cushions for the same were made by the women.

This little church, when completed, presented a very neat appearance. Though it has been remodeled several times, the original structure still stands and is used today. Its distinguishing feature is its interior decoration—large wall plaques lettered artistically with Bible verses, proclaiming to all who visit that the Bible is the rule of this church.

(Continued from page 16)

O wondrous summerland of joy  
Without a thing that can annoy!  
Among the ones that reach this land  
O may we be, this little band!

O how we long to meet you there,  
And in these glories gladly share,  
Where all the tugs and toils of life  
Will all be gone, with every strife.

O what a joy we all will take  
In hearing Daniel, Paul relate  
The trials they in life passed through  
While they were being made o'er new.

Great Gabriel will be there in white  
Who long ago passed weary night;  
He has been learning, living more,  
He'll have great things for us in store!

O what a pleasure, lasting, grand,  
To have him 'mongst our little band!  
We'll listen to his stories great  
Which he to us will then relate.

'Twill make our hearts with joy expand  
As Gabriel tells of his dear band,  
Of all the wondrous things they've done  
Throughout ten thousand ages long.

O what a privilege greater still—  
'Twill give our hearts the grandest thrill  
When he invites our little band  
To go and see his blessed land.

May you be there to shout "Amen!"  
So let it be, Amen! Amen!  
We'll gladly visit your own band  
Within your distant summerland!"

O what a visit that will be  
To go and Gabriel's brethren see;  
We'll pass ten thousand worlds so bright  
See all their inmates filled with light.

And we'll hear music, oh! so grand,  
That sounds afar from Gabriel's band;  
They've spied dear Gabriel! oh, the joy,  
That nothing ever can destroy.

And then the welcomes! oh, how sweet  
As they come forth to Gabriel greet!  
Yes, what grand joy as loves entwine,  
Surpassing loves of humankind.

So upright, good and grand and bright  
Are all his brethren dressed in white;  
All clean and spotless, pure within,  
All cleansed from every form of sin.

This trip alone will pay us great  
To bear our cross and evil hate;  
To do with all our mind and might  
The things our God has said are right.

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17)

*Long time we'll stay at Gabriel's home  
And with his happy, loved ones roam.  
Our minds will grow, each day expand  
As stay we do with Gabriel's band.*

*The days and hours will speed, so fast,  
Ten thousand years will soon be past,  
And then one day a trump will sound  
In accents sweet, "Be homeward bound."*

*We'll bid Adieu to Gabriel's band,  
And swiftly fly to our own land,  
Where our own brethren, loving, dear,  
Are anxious to our story hear.*


*Ten billion visits we'll repeat;  
Each time 'twill be a greater treat;  
Time ne'er will wane nor shorter grow  
As to ten billion worlds we go.*

*Our minds they will expand and grow  
As with the noble ones we go.  
How happy will the dwellers be,  
Enjoying all they hear and see!*

*O praise the Lord! can it be true,  
These wonders are for me and you?  
Yes, yes! they are for each one here  
Who will perform what they do hear.*

*O Brethren, will you each one go  
Where there will come no kind of woe?  
All will be joy supremely great  
Within the Golden City gate.*

*Yes, we can join that faithful band  
Who'll enter God's fair summerland,  
Those who will clothe in garments white  
By doing what they know is right.*

  
The all-important question is: Are we doing this great work which alone can assure our hearts now, and in the end secure to us a home far beyond all isolation, trials, sickness, death, or woe? A home where death can never pluck from our fond embrace the ones we so dearly love; a home surrounded with ecstatic joy; a home with pleasures of every kind; a home where minds will expand and knowledge never cease to abundantly increase; a home that shall never know a sorrow of any kind, never a pain be felt by a member of this family so wonderfully blest! How different from the joys and pleasures of this fleeting, short-lived world. What a contrast! One is brilliant, grand, glorious, lovely, eternal; the other dark, uncertain, mixed with much sorrow, and finally cut short by death.

The total cost of the church was about \$5,000, and it was all paid for when completed; yet no one outside the immediate group was asked to contribute a cent and no collections were taken to defray the cost. Two hundred and fifty people attended the dedication service which was held March 22, 1908.

Now that the public could be accommodated, the celebration of the true Christmas with a free entertainment became a regular yearly feature of the work. Programs consisting of recitations, dialogues, songs and music by the band, attracted capacity audiences, and many times large numbers were turned away for lack of room. These programs, which required a great deal of hard work and practice, were not simply to entertain the public but to call attention to these wondrous Bible truths in a way that would make deep and lasting impressions. Captain Nichols always spoke, giving Bible evidence for commemorating the Saviour's birth at this time of the year. Hundreds of people partook of the delicious Christmas dinners which were served to the public at a modest fee, and the handmade flowers with which the church was profusely and elaborately decorated at this season were an attractive feature and won admiring comments from visitors.

Each year, immediately after the New Year/Abib season, the missionaries began preparations for active work in the field. Books and trunks were packed and each group departed for its individual field of labor. A party consisting of from four to twenty persons would locate temporarily in a city, and, by house-to-house canvassing and personal talks with the people, a great many books were sold and given away. The missionaries' efforts were directed toward arousing more interest among the people in Bible study, enabling them to gain a better understanding of the Word of God.

Their missionary labors did not cease with the summer: when cold weather came on they turned their faces southward, where the work could be carried on in comfort, several groups customarily spending their winters carrying the good news of the Kingdom to the inhabitants of various Southern cities.

Through the foresight and good business management of Captain Nichols, the work was established upon a sound financial basis, so that there has never been a cessation of the work on account of lack of funds. Believing that the tithing system, which was instituted long prior to the existence of the Mosaic law, was the method of giving approved by the Almighty, the organization adopted that method upon locating in Rochester. The method has proved effective and satisfactory, affording all an opportunity to assist in the work and causing no hardship to any. The tithe money is not used to pay the minister, organist, choir or band, however. All the workers give their services absolutely free, following the example of their leader, who during his fifty years of service never accepted one dollar of remuneration. The money paid in tithes pays the railroad fare of missionaries, settles advertising bills, and spreads the gospel in whatever way is deemed expedient.

By these methods, during the lifetime of Mr. Nichols more than a million publications were placed in the hands of readers the world over. A small-scale work, in these days of large figures? Perhaps so, but the number present at the first Pentecost, as we recall, was not large either.

#### INTERRUPTION

In the midst of these crowded, happy years (he loved activity and accomplishment), a chilling cloud appeared in the smiling sky. Man is mortal, and the human organism will endure just so much and no more. Now this great, good man, who had lived several lifetimes in his sixty-seven years, who had

never spared himself the hardest labors and for whom little sleep or rest had sufficed, he whose buoyant enthusiasm and zest for living increased with the years, began to find that he was paying toll to Nature. His health failed perceptibly; his heart was no longer equal to its task at his former pace. Urged by those near him to take rest and treatment at the Battle Creek (Michigan) Sanitarium, he consented with reluctance, as this was a new and unwelcome thing for him. On the evening of February 13, 1912, he bade farewell to friends and loved ones, and, accompanied by his wife and his sister, he began the journey from which he was not to return alive.

"You have worn yourself out," the examining physician told him, "trying to save sinners."

At first things went well: he felt stronger day by day. The following Sunday he planned to preach to friends in Battle Creek, and in a few more days he would return to dear Megiddo. On the night of February 28, he retired to the dressing room to prepare for a treatment and there he was found shortly afterward in the quiet embrace of the King of Terrors. God had been kind to His servant; death had come as he would have desired it, suddenly and painlessly. An interested friend, Mr. F. O. Downer, took charge and accompanied the grief-stricken sisters, together with the body of Captain Nichols, to Rochester.

The funeral was conducted by his assistant pastor, the Rev. Maud Hembree, now leader of the band, in the little church he had built four years before. He was then borne by his sorrowing band to Mount Hope Cemetery and laid to rest to await the Resurrection Day.

Words cannot convey the sadness his death brought to the Megiddo Band, and to none was it more poignant than to his devoted wife, with whom he had lived happily for 48 years. Not one of his followers but felt that he or she had lost an important cog in the machinery of existence. Nor were these alone in their sorrow, for hundreds of friends and acquaintances, Catholic and Protestant, came to join in their tribute.

His life's work was complete. Like Paul, he could say, *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"* (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

He lived to see the truth which was his lifelong quest freed from the last muddy streak, the last taint of error, as a result of his own untiring efforts and the help of the Eternal. He rests from his labors, but the work he inaugurated goes steadily forward. The gems of truth he exhumed have lost none of their brilliance, the household still receive their portion of *"meat in due season."*

*What a rich boon the All-wise, Omnipotent God has held forth as an inducement for us to faithfully serve and obey Him! And then to think, all we do, every good deed, will be set down to our account, we the ones to reap the benefit of our service. Also to think the benefit will be unending in its duration, far above all we can ask or think in its wonderful volume of glory, joy and light! This thought should cause every nerve to spring into action, with a determination to completely render our bodies and minds a living sacrifice. This work can be done, but not by halfway workers; it will be absolutely necessary for us to throw our entire being into the work, without any reserve, in order for us to be successful in accomplishing this grand and noble work which alone can yield to us life, glory and happiness in the good time to come. -L. T. Nichols*

The following is from a letter written by L. T. Nichols from St. Augustine, Florida, in 1894.

*Human nature is weak and needs stimulating;  
it requires reading, daily reading of the Word;  
careful meditation;  
prayerful self-criticism;*

*Humble confession of faults;  
chaste conversation, coupled with fear;  
godly example in every day life;*

*Heartfelt, sincere exhortations;  
rebuking in love;  
watchfulness for each other's welfare;  
fervent desire to do right;*

*Deep sense of self-respect;  
an abhorrence of evil; purity of motives;  
kindness of words and purpose;  
unbiased judgment;  
love unfeigned;  
courtesy to all;*

*Stability of character;  
uprightness in dealings;  
fervency of spirit;  
diligency in business;  
reverence for superiors;*

*Truthfulness in telling;  
holiness in conversation;  
cleanliness of person;*

*Loving the right, hating the wrong;  
true godly sorrow when we have done wrong;  
aiding the needy;*

*Chastening the guilty;  
upholding the righteous;  
crucifying all flesh that tempts to do wrong.*

*We should rejoice with the lowly;  
weep with the truly penitent;  
give the water of life to the thirsty,  
and bread to the hungry;*

*Ever be merciful;  
dare always to do right;  
be thankful for favors;  
never find unnecessary fault;  
live unto God, and not unto men;*

*Never be weary, but walk in the light;  
do unto others as we would have them do to us;  
be easily entreated; throw all stubbornness away;  
have no relish for error.*

# Faithful Abraham

**T**he Patriarch sat at door of tent,  
Pitched 'neath a spreading tree,  
And worshiped God for blessings great,  
Unmeasured, full and free.  
Out on the fertile plains there roam  
His flocks and herds untold,  
For God made Abra'am very rich  
In cattle, silver, gold.

**T**he Lord spake unto Abraham,  
"Come thou and walk with me  
In perfect and obedient trust,  
And I thy God will be.  
I'll with thee make a covenant  
That ever shall endure;  
And multitudes shall come of thee,  
My covenant is sure."

**T**his was the promise of his God:  
"For faithful service given  
Tho' childless now, yet shall thy seed  
Be as the stars of heaven.  
And now, e'en now in thine old age,  
A son to thee I'll give:  
My covenant I'll make with him  
And Ishmael, too, shall live."

**B**ut Isaac shalt thou call thy son,  
He is the promised seed,  
And thy wife Sarah, she shall be  
Mother of kings indeed."  
The son was born, and as he grew  
In stature, year by year,  
A dutiful, obedient child,  
He filled their hearts with cheer.

**T**hink you the father did not love  
His good obedient son,  
The promised child of his old age,  
His dear and only one?  
He loved him with a perfect love,  
Taught by the Lord, I trow;  
That no transgression would pass by,  
Nor would he evil know.

**T**here came a time when he was tried,  
For God would try His own,  
And Abraham must bear the test,  
And trust the Lord alone.  
"Take now thy son, thine only son,  
Most precious in thine eyes,  
And make of him an offering,  
A burning sacrifice."

**T**hink you it was no cross to bear  
For that fond father's heart,  
No trial of his faith in God,  
From his dear son to part?  
'Twas God's command: the father's hand  
His only son must slay.  
Think you he faltered in the task?  
My friends, I tell you nay.

**I**mmediately obedient,  
He heeded God's command,  
O who of us would have the faith  
In God, as Abraham?  
At early morn they started forth,  
The son by father's side;  
The servants followed with the beasts,  
Things needful to provide.

**A**nd when they see the place afar,  
The men and beast must wait,  
While Abraham and Isaac go,  
The sacrifice to make.  
We hear that loving son exclaim,  
To faithful Abraham,  
"My father, here's the fire and wood,  
But, father, where's the lamb?"

**T**hink you the struggle in his breast  
Was easy to control?  
Think you the words of that dear son  
Rent not the father's soul?  
O who of us would bravely say,  
"My son, 'tis God's command,  
We'll follow where He bids us go,  
God will provide the lamb."

**T**hey reached the God-appointed place,  
His hands the altar made,  
With faith unwavering in his God,  
The wood upon it laid.  
What think you were the thoughts that filled  
That loving father's mind  
As his own hands take up the cord,  
His only son to bind?

**A**ll things are done, the son is bound,  
And on the altar laid;  
And now, oh, now there comes the test,  
The offering must be made.  
Think you he feared God's promises  
Would crumble into dust?  
Or did he fearlessly obey,  
In perfect faith and trust?

**H**e doubted not, he faltered not,  
But raised the shining blade,  
When lo, he hears a voice above:  
The fatal blow is stayed.  
"Lay not thine hand upon the lad,  
My word thou hast obeyed,  
And now I know thou fearest God,  
For this thy hand is stayed."

O who can know the great heart-throbs  
That heaved that father's breast,  
When words like these, from angel lips,  
Were unto him addressed!  
Methinks that praise, as incense sweet,  
Rose to the throne of God  
From hearts with thankfulness o'erwhelmed  
As homeward path they trod.

We are not called upon to slay  
A darling only child,  
But we must kill each fleshly love,  
From sin be undefiled;  
Must make the friends of Jesus ours,  
E'en tho' we suffer loss  
Of earthly treasures, home, or friends,  
Must patient bear the cross.



Will we like faithful Abraham,  
Have strength to bear the test?  
Or, filled with doubts and fears, turn back,  
And lose the promised rest?  
Our God is faithful to His word;  
The promised rest is sure;  
If we will keep our faith with Him,  
That rest we will secure.

'Twill be a rest of joy and peace,  
And happiness worldwide,  
For nothing that can hurt or harm—  
Will in that realm abide.  
Then let us daily take our cross,  
Like Abra'am bear it well,  
Then when his seed is like the stars,  
With them we'll ever dwell.

—Mary A. Lee

## UTTERLY FOOLISH

A bridge has washed out. The highway patrol sets up warning lights and a barricade. A motorist disregards the warnings, plows through the barricade—and crashes to his death.

A student enters a classroom to prepare for an exam. He puts cotton in his ears so that he cannot hear the instructor, and closes his eyes so that he cannot read the papers on his desk.

A soldier goes to battle. He takes no gun, no ammunition, nor any kind of weapon with which to defend himself or attack the enemy.

A man is stricken with all the symptoms of a heart attack. He refuses to lie down or to let his family call for help.

A man sets out to drive across the United States. He does not take any road maps, nor does he consent to ask what route to take. He is sure that he can find his way without any directions.

A lawyer goes into court to defend his client, but he has not studied his client's case, nor researched the points of the law that will be involved.

A carpenter starts to build a house. He has no plans to follow, nor will he use a square, saw,

hammer or plane.

A company builds and stocks a large store in a prime location. A man is chosen to manage the store, but he has no knowledge of that line of business, nor of the cost of the items on the shelves.

A physician goes into surgery to operate on a patient. But he refuses to use the necessary instruments, nor will he allow anyone to help him.

A man is walking down a dark road at night. He does not know the road. He has in his hand a flashlight, but he will not use it.

A plane is preparing to fly across the North Pole. There will be no navigator on board, nor anyone acquainted with the operations of the plane.

A motorist is driving at night. His car is well equipped, but he refuses to turn on his headlights.

A house is wired for electricity. All the fixtures are in place and the wiring complete. But the owner refuses to throw the master switch, to connect to the outside source of power.

What is our reaction? In each instance, the picture is one of imminent danger or loss—because available resources are being

refused. How foolish can one be! we exclaim.

Yet, what of ourselves? How well are we using the resources God has given us?

God has placed in our hands a Book of Knowledge. Within that Book (the Bible) is a map of the past, a guide for the present, and insight into the future. By it alone can yesterday be understood, today rightly lived, and tomorrow prepared for.

We hold in our hands the only Book that contains the chart and compass for our race. It is our only light in the darkness; our only guide across the sea of life; the only roadmap giving sure directions to the City Eternal. Are we using it? Are we using it to its fullest?

There is no dispute in matters of a physical nature. No responsible physician would refuse to use his instruments. No responsible lawyer would go into court unprepared. Only the most foolish motorist would drive at night and not turn on his headlights. Only the most foolish man, stricken with a heart attack would refuse medical help. In each case it is a matter of grave consequence.

But we who stand before God holding in our hands His law of  
(Continued on page 26)

## OLD Testament ABC's

**A** 1. A \_\_\_\_\_  
Persian King who chose  
Esther for his queen.

**B** 2. B \_\_\_\_\_  
City where it was  
prophesied that Jesus  
would be born.

**C** 3. C \_\_\_\_\_  
Persian king who gave  
the Jewish captives per-  
mission to return home.

**D** 4. D \_\_\_\_\_  
Christian worker who  
loved to have the preemi-  
nence and rejected advice  
from the apostle John.

**E** 5. E \_\_\_\_\_  
Priest who brought up  
Samuel at the  
tabernacle.

**F** 6. "All who f\_\_\_\_\_   
thee will be ashamed."

**G** 7. G \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Elisba's ser-  
vant, who was stricken  
with leprosy.

**H** 8. H \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of prophet who  
wrote, "The just shall  
live by his faith."

**I** 9. I \_\_\_\_\_  
Youngest son of Aaron.

**J** 10. J \_\_\_\_\_  
Fiftieth year in Israel,  
when all slaves were freed  
and all debts erased.

**K** 11. K \_\_\_\_\_  
Israelite who led a rebel-  
lion against Moses and  
died by Divine judgment.

**L** 12. L \_\_\_\_\_  
Book of the Bible written  
by Jeremiab; reflects on  
the reality of God's judg-  
ments upon sin.

**M** 13. M \_\_\_\_\_  
Book of the Old Testa-  
ment that prophesies  
the coming of Christ's  
messenger.

**N** 14. N \_\_\_\_\_  
King of Babylon noted  
both for his conquests  
and his dreams.

**O** 15. O \_\_\_\_\_  
Son of Ruth and Boaz,  
grandfather of David.

**P** 16. P \_\_\_\_\_  
Location of Jacob's  
wrestling with the angel.

**Q** 17. "In q\_\_\_\_\_   
and in confidence shall  
be your strength."

**R** 18. R \_\_\_\_\_  
A Moabiteess who  
accepted and worshipped  
Israel's God.

**S** 19. S \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Judge of Israel and  
earnest spiritual leader.

**T** 20. T \_\_\_\_\_  
Seaport city denounced  
by the prophets Ezekiel  
and Joel.

**U** 21. U \_\_\_\_\_  
A Town which God com-  
manded Abraham to leave;  
in return, God promised  
great blessings.

**V** 22. V \_\_\_\_\_  
Means by which God  
revealed prophetic  
messages to Daniel.

**W** 23. "Happy is the man  
who findeth w\_\_\_\_\_,  
and the man who getteth  
understanding."

**Y** 24. Y \_\_\_\_\_  
Hebrew name for God.

**Z** 25. Z \_\_\_\_\_  
Holy bill where God  
will establish His King.

(Answers on page 26)

## WHAT ARE "Glorified Worlds"?

"In the April issue of your magazine, there are two references to 'glorified worlds,' a heretofore unread and unseen area of extension. Do you have any reference material on this subject? What are the biblical references?"

"I am somewhat familiar with Paul's reference to the fifth heaven and references to angels being placed in varying degrees of responsibility and stature."

We are convinced that the Bible amply supports the existence of "glorified worlds," i.e., planets which began like our earth is at present and were later perfected (glorified) and filled with glorified beings.

One statement of this belief, though unrecognized, is found in the Lord's prayer: *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."* If it is the plan of God that His will shall in the future be done "in earth" as it is now being done "in heaven," is this not suggesting that the heavenly bodies began like the earth, and progressed to their present state?

As for the inhabitants of these worlds, we are told by Jesus in that worthy mortals will be made *"equal unto the angels, ... neither can they die any more"* (Luke 20:35-36). According to Paul, we look forward to having our physical nature changed to the likeness of Christ, to a glorified state that is no longer mortal and corruptible (Phil. 3:20-21). The apostle also described it as putting off the corruptible nature and putting on the incorruptible (1 Cor. 15:51-53). This tells us that glorified beings are no longer subject to sickness and death.

We learn from several other passages that glorified beings radiate light. Said Jesus Himself, *"Then*

*shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father"* (Matt. 13:43). We read of the Eternal City that it had no need of the sun nor of the moon *"to shine in it: for the Lord God giveth them light, and the Lamb is the light thereof"* (Rev. 21:23). The prophet Isaiah foretold the same wonder, that the future Kingdom would need no sunlight for illumination (Isa. 60:19). Daniel said that the *"wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever"* (Dan. 12:3). These passages indicate that glorified beings radiate physical light, so much so that they *"shine as the stars."*

How does all of the above come about? It is all according to God's *"eternal purpose"* (Eph. 3:11). The earth is only one part of an unfolding Divine plan of creation, which includes thousands and millions of other worlds, as well as the earth. The Bible is concerned exclusively with the portion of the plan that relates to the earth and its inhabitants, hence we are not told details of the rest of the plan. But Paul prayed to the God who was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *"of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named"* (Eph. 3:14-15)—this earth is only one small part of an enormous whole.

We have the further confirmation in the fact that angels are able to come and go to earth, as has been recorded in the past. Angels came to visit many people during Bible times, and we are told that theirs is a continuing ministry, although at the present time they are not seen. *"The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him, and delivereth them"* (Ps. 34:7). Is it not reasonable to think that the glorified worlds above are the homes of these bright, shining

beings, whose nature has been changed from the mortal to the eternal, immortal state?

Another point may be made from simple logic: We acknowledge God as the Creator of all matter and all life, and what purpose could He have in bringing into existence the myriads of stars that are visible in billions of galaxies throughout space that scientists are now able to see with their high-powered telescopes? Shall we be so conceited as to think that God placed living beings on only one tiny planet in one remote corner of one galaxy in His vast creation?

There is another point of evidence found in Psalm 103:17-18: *"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him."* This tells us that God has had living beings upon whom to bestow His mercy *"from everlasting"*—certainly a statement reaching far beyond the boundaries of our small earth.

We look eagerly forward to the day when God shall transform our earth into a part of heaven, removing all that is harmful or wicked and filling it with His glory, His people, until it is the perfect, finished product which He planned it should be. Such is the intent and purpose of His creation, for we read, *"He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited"* (Isa. 45:18).

### ◆ Does God predict or direct?

"I don't purposely try to find errors in your magazine. In general your articles are very good. But some things jump at me for comment.

"I have in front of me where you wrote, 'This is the very condition that God predicted.' I would qualify that by adding to

that sentence the words 'and directed' to complete the thought and show that it is God's doing, not just God's prediction. Revelation 17:17 is explanation enough, even though there is much more in the Word about God directing."

You raise a good question: Does God predict, in that He foreknows what will happen, or is He directly involved, i.e., "directing," causing things to happen?

There is a basic difference between God foreknowing and God directing. God *foreknowing* does not imply that He has any direct influence on or control of what happens; He simply knows in advance what will be. If God *directs*, He causes things to happen, both good and ill. This suggests that He overrules human action, and that God, not humans, should receive the full credit or blame. This is contrary to the teaching of Scripture, where the various writers picture God as restraining evil, containing evil, hating evil, sending His judgments upon the evil-doers (Gen. 6:6-7; 18:1-15). If God determines human conduct, good or evil, then human beings are not free moral agents but merely puppets in His hand, creatures which He makes to act according to His supreme will. Such an arrangement would void human responsibility and leave no place for human achievement, human progress, or for training us to use the minds and wills God has given us.

The Bible presents God as supreme in control and man as a free moral agent, free to serve God or not to serve Him as he individually chooses. "*Choose ye this day whom ye will serve*" was the command of Joshua. And Moses stated the mind of the Lord when he said, "*See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil*" (Deut. 30:15). Each individual was free to choose for himself, whether or not he would obey God, whether or not he would serve God.

But the points you question are regarding events, not individuals' choices. The question, then, is: Do

events happen as a result of chance, or are all events directed by God?

While God leaves humans to choose their own course of action, there are events which are directly acts of God; i.e., they are completely beyond human power either to make happen or to prevent. There have been times when God acted directly and visibly in history. When He was working with the nation of Israel, He frequently intervened, to fight their battles, or to bring about that which He had decreed. At other times, He watched silently as events took their course, while men and nations interacted without recognizing His authority.

In either case, whether God was intervening or not, He knew what the outcome would be, and was able to state it in advance if He had any reason or purpose to do so. He was not interfering; He was simply able to see the drama in advance, and know the ending before it happened.

There are statements in the Bible which would suggest that God did everything that was done, as though every event was His direct responsibility. This arises from the fact that the Hebrews thought of all history as God-ordained, as the hand of God at work. In their language, to say that "it happened" was the equivalent of saying that "God did thus and thus." It was not predestination but only Divine foreknowledge.

Were God to be directly responsible for all of history, where would there be any free choice? Where would we be left to choose our own course, or to use the resources God has given us? If our minds and wills were constantly overruled by God and we did only what we were foreordained or predestined to do, there would be no human victory, and no struggle and achievement; everything would be God's doing. In this sense, all good (or evil) would be His doing. This is not the way God designed His plan. He distinctly commands us what to do, and reveals what is acceptable or unac-

ceptable conduct in His sight, and leaves us to act responsibly or irresponsibly. There would be no point in giving us freedom of choice if He forced us to act in a predetermined manner. Nor would He be fair in punishing wrong doing if He was ultimately responsible.

What about distinct events that are part of His plan? God has decreed that certain events shall be, and nothing men may do can thwart that plan. In such cases we might say either that God directed it and/or that God foreknew it. One example would be the birth of Jesus Christ. This event was predicted by God's prophets centuries in advance, and certainly God directed it, even caused it to happen. At the same time, the human actors in the drama (Mary, Joseph, Zacharias, Elisabeth) made their respective contributions by their own free choice. God acted upon Mary, to make her the mother of the Christ-child, and Mary cooperated with God. She said, "*Be it unto me according to your word.*"

Another example is the destruction of Jerusalem. God knew in advance that this would happen; Jesus foretold it. But we would not say that God directed Jerusalem to be destroyed; He simply foreknew what would happen—and prearranged a means whereby His people could be spared, if they heeded the warnings.

In certain events, God was the principle actor in the drama; i.e., the birth of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus; the ascension of Jesus to heaven. None of these events could have come about without the intervention of God into human affairs. Each event was predicted, and God also directed the happening. Other events (the death of Jesus, the fall of the Jewish nation, or the coming of the dark night of the apostasy) were foretold, but the human actors who brought about these events did not need God to overrule in order to make them possible. In most cases, they were the result of the wicked actions of wicked-minded men. Peter said of the cru-

cifixion, "Whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead" (Acts 4:10; see also Acts 2:23).

When God sends Jesus Christ to earth, He will be directly intervening in human affairs, and taking charge of the course of events. Jesus, equipped with Divine authority, will break into human history. The event has been predicted; in this case again God will be making it happen.

The passage you cite from Revelation 17:17 refers to the time after Christ has returned and is judging the nations. It reads: "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Here God is moving people to do what He wants done so that His words may be fulfilled. The same was said in the days of Daniel, that "The most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:17). The apostle Paul made a similar statement, that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13)—not that they exist directly by God's action, but God oversees, to the extent that nothing is allowed to interfere with His long-range plans.

God is supreme in history, directing all toward His pre-ordained end: the realizing of His

plan for His earth, and in due time He will bring it to pass. In the meantime, He lets men and nations make their own choices, go their own way, build up and tear down as they purpose, and He does not interfere, except to fulfill a promise or to protect His own.

#### ◆ About the Use of Alcohol

"What are your views on using alcohol as a beverage?"

The Bible does not give us specific information on all subjects, but it gives us guidelines which we may apply. One of these is found in 1 Cor. 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God."

"Whatever you do" is all inclusive. No activity of our life can be omitted.

Can one drink alcoholic beverages to the glory of God? There have been times when pure drinking water was not available and alcoholic beverages were used instead, but in our present situation we see no need to ingest any alcohol. At times a doctor may prescribe a small amount of wine or brandy to improve one's health, and the law of God would not prohibit this. But to drink alcoholic beverages for pleasure is not "to the

glory of God" when such beverages are known to be damaging to our bodies and make us less able to function well. The greatest danger is that even small amounts of alcohol may lead to addiction and eventual drunkenness, which Paul said, places us in a category with such as "shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21).

There is another factor here, and that is one's example. If the young see their elders drinking alcoholic beverages, they might get the impression that indulgence is harmless, and may start upon a course that could lead to ruin. All things considered, we feel it is best to abstain totally.

Today the use of alcohol is reaching frightening proportions, especially among the young. Recent statistics show that of those 18 to 25 years of age, 80 percent have used alcohol, and 60 percent use alcohol regularly. Do we wonder why our nation must spend millions to reclaim alcoholics? It will not change greatly until Christ returns, with a new set of laws, laws which separate public good from monetary gain. Until that time arrives, the Christian must add courage to his or her faith, and abstain from that which is harmful. □

## Hold the Fort!

The story is told about a Fort in Georgia back in the days of the Civil War. This fort, besieged for many days, was getting to the point where the commanding officer thought they could hold out no longer. He was ready to surrender to the enemy.

About this time, another general was marching through Georgia. When he was about fifty miles away from the fort, he sent out a messenger with this word, "Hold the fort, for I am coming." With this encouragement and hope, the fort was able to hold on until help reached them.

It seems that Jesus is saying that to us today. "Hold the fort, for I am coming." His messenger has

not yet arrived, but we can have faith as we see the fulfilling of prophecies spoken for the last days of man's rule, "evil men and seducers" waxing worse and worse, men doing evil "with both hands earnestly." And surely the weak have said "I am strong."

The enemy may seem strong, our ranks thinning out, and holding on may become more and more difficult, but the message rings clear: "Hold the fort, for I am coming"—"Though it seem to tarry wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not be late" (Hab. 2:3, KJV and Moffatt).

Our Lord has given His word: Some will be watching, holding on, ready when He returns (Luke 12:35-37). Let us resolve that we will be found holding the fort. Help is on the way! □

*The road to life is steep and rough, and no one should attempt it without prayer and a reliable road map.*

Asked to define sin, a small boy replied, "Sin is fun that's bad."

*Bad men excuse their faults; good men abandon them.*

It is not always evil that shuts out the best. The second best is the worst enemy of the best.

*Happiness is an INside job.*

It is better to be despised for the right than praised for the wrong.

## Utterly Foolish

(Continued from page 21)

life also face a life-and-death situation. There is only one way to survive. There is only one way to obtain the life He offers, and that is by following strictly the guidelines in His Book. To do any less is to show we are not interested in living, that we would rather pursue our own foolish course—and die.

In our day, traditional moral and spiritual values have largely lost their meaning. Our society has cut loose from its moorings and does not know where it is going. Religious traditions have been rejected, and concepts of right and wrong are based on relative values. What can we expect, but that such a society will sink lower and lower?

In the Bible we find a clear statement of the values that are based on God's holiness. Here we learn how God would have His children act in everyday life.

The Psalmist, extolling the blessings of God's Word upon all who will believe and obey, says, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Ps. 119:105). Has there ever been a time when we needed that light more than today? To ignore this Divinely given light is to commit spiritual suicide. It is like driving down a dark road at night and refusing to turn on our headlights.

The Psalmist voiced a prayer which should be in the heart of every Christian: *"Keep my steps steady according to your promise, and never let iniquity have dominion over me"* (Ps. 119:133, RSV).

Each time we feel like going our own way and

neglecting the Word of God, let us think about the foolish ones who refuse help and plunge headlong into disaster.

When we neglect to heed the Word of God, we are just as foolish, for such a course, if continued, is sure to result in our own eternal loss. Without God how can we know how to live, or what to do? We are but blind fools if we willfully reject the Light of Life. On the other hand, accepting the help at hand is the way to life. What person in a sane state of mind would not choose it?

We may be advanced in every form of the knowledge of this world; we may master science and math, and be well informed on national and international affairs. But if we do not go to the Bible and turn its searchlight upon our own hearts, to discover the evil within, we are only stumbling blindly in the night.

Only the Bible points out the way to life. Only the Word of God describes the character God will perpetuate. Only the Bible shows what we must do to live beyond this world. Paul told his son-in-the-faith Timothy that only the Scriptures could make him *"wise unto salvation"* (2 Tim. 3:15).

Let us bow our heads in humility and acknowledge that God knows better than we.

Let us be trained soldiers, wielding the sword of the Spirit at every opportunity, following where our Master has led. Let us use the wisdom of God to discern between the true and the false, right and wrong, good and evil, so that our lives may be free from every taint of sin, and at last we may be accepted into God's eternal family. □

## Letters

### The Mighty Word of God

Even though we don't have visits from angels or the Holy Spirit power today, we have God's Word, the Bible. We were quite impressed by the series in the Message about the infallibility of the Bible. Recently my husband and I have been reading, *The Bible Through the Ages*. It is about the evolution of the Bible and its influence on people from its beginning until now. Only because it's the Word of God could it have come through the ages as it did.

The fact that it was written especially for us in the latter days is awesome. Every bit of instruction and proof we need to perfect our characters is there. We can be sure that all prophesy will be fulfilled and is being fulfilled around us every day. We shouldn't need angels to impress us or miracles

to convince us that God is in charge.

The trouble is the world is too much with us. We are surrounded by worldliness. It is so easy to become complacent and tolerant of sin and evil. It is a grave mistake to think we are pretty good when we compare ourselves to the world. Only Jesus Christ can be our pattern. We cannot compare ourselves to any other pattern.

There isn't much time left. What are we doing with ours? If we are praising God every day, all day, there will be less time for sin. Complacency is one of our biggest enemies. We don't have time for it. The older I get the more I realize how fast time goes. We are not guaranteed even 70 or 80 years. We have to do our best every day or the work will never be finished.

Texas

P. Fleming

### Old Testament ABC's

(Answers to questions on page 22)

- A. Ahasuerus (Esther 1:2-9)
- B. Bethlehem (Mic. 5:1-2)
- C. Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-3)
- D. Diotrephes (3 John 9)
- E. Eli (1 Samuel 2)
- F. Forsake (Jer. 17:13)
- G. Gehazi (2 Kings 5:25-27)
- H. Habakkuk (Hab. 2:4)
- I. Ithamar (Ex. 28:1)
- J. Jubilee (Lev. 25:11-14)
- K. Korah (Numbers 16)
- L. Lamentations
- M. Malachi (Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6)
- N. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2)
- O. Obed (Ruth 4:17)
- P. Peniel (Gen. 32:24-31)
- Q. Quietness (Isa. 30:15)
- R. Ruth (Ruth 1:16-17)
- S. Samuel (1 Sam. 12:24)
- T. Tyre (Ezekiel 26-28; Joel 3)
- U. Ur (Gen. 12:1-3)
- V. Visions (Daniel 2:19)
- W. Wisdom (Prov. 3:13)
- Y. Yahweh
- Z. Zion (Ps. 2:6)

*It is the difference in viewpoint which makes our opportunities a success or a defeat.*

A right spirit at the center of your being will easily control the circumference.

*I've got a heap of troubles  
And I've got to work them out.  
But I look around and see  
There's trouble all about.  
And when I see my trouble,  
I just look up and grin,  
And count up all the troubles  
That, thank God, I'm not in.*

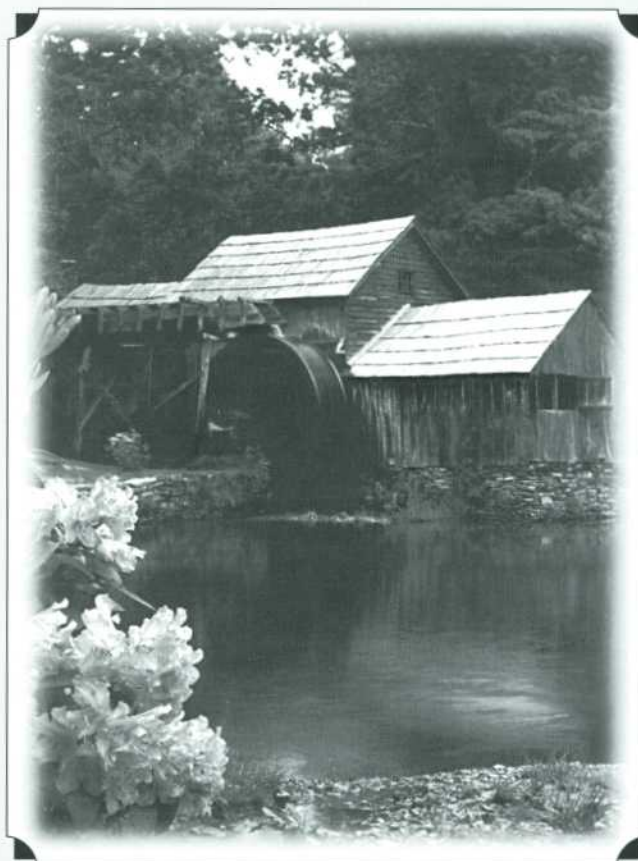
It requires a strong man to say, "I'm sorry."

*Live your life as an exclamation, not an explanation.*

Yesterday's experience plus today's action can make tomorrow a great day.

*Well done is better than well said.*

Life exacts one minute at a time, so all you have to do at any given time is one minute's worth of work. That's not so hard is it?



*If a problem is too small to seek God's help for, it's too small to worry about.*

A story is told about a man who was known as a human fly some years ago in Los Angeles.

On a given date, this man was to climb unaided up the face of a large department store. Long before the appointed hour thousands of eager spectators were gathering to see him perform this seemingly impossible feat.

Slowly and carefully he began to climb, clinging now to a window ledge, now to a jutting brick, again to a cornice. Up and up he went, higher and higher, performing the seemingly impossible.

The crowd watched breathlessly as he felt left and right and pulled himself slowly and carefully up the side of the building. Cautiously he tested every new foothold to be certain it was firm enough to support his weight.

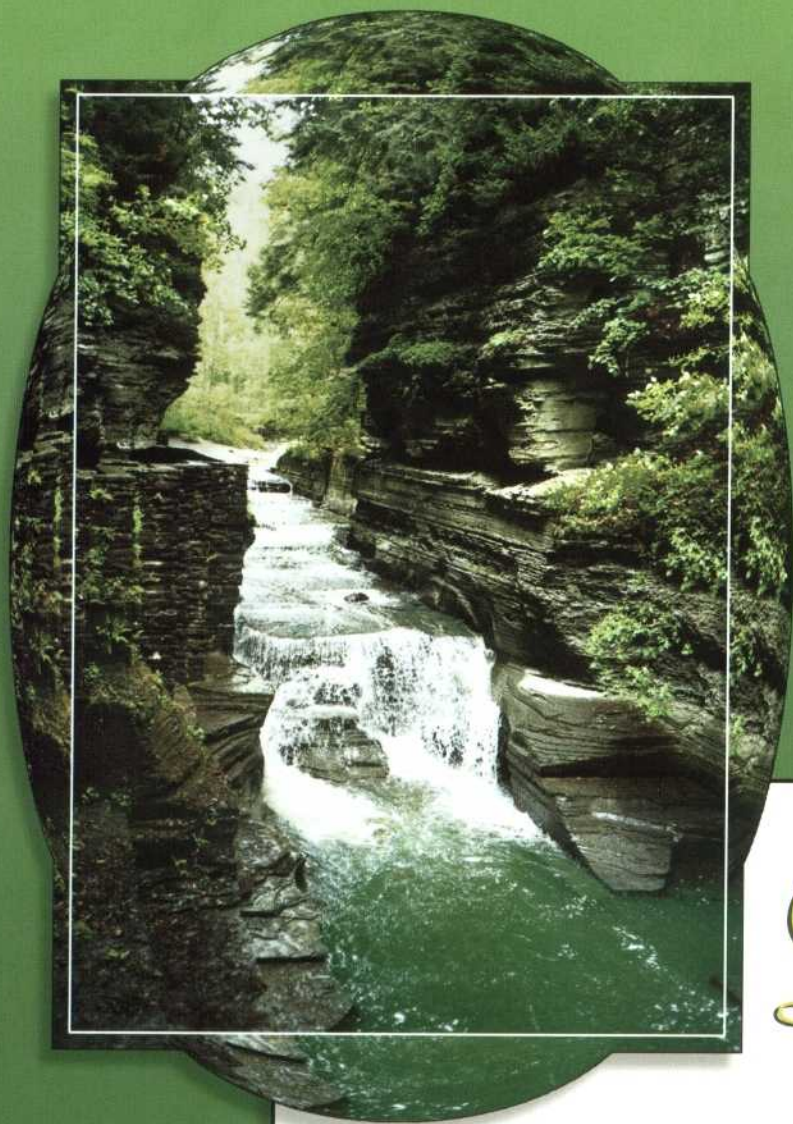
As he neared the top, he spied what looked like a gray bit of stone or discolored brick protruding from the smooth wall. He reached for it, but it was just beyond him. Then, venturing all on a springlike movement, he jumped, grasped the protuberance and, before the horrified eyes of the spectators, fell to the ground. In his lifeless hand was found a spider's web!

This man met his death because he placed his trust in a spider's web. "How tragic!" we say. Yet how often have we been like this man, putting our trust in ourselves and the things of this world.

Where is our trust? Are we placing it entirely in God and the rewards He has offered us, a place where we can be certain of safety? or are we trusting in ourselves. Every time we cling to our own ways, we are trusting in a spider's web.

The prophet Isaiah shows the worthlessness of such webs: "They hatch adder's eggs, and weave a spider's web;...Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity. Plunder and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no justice in their ways; they have made their paths crooked; whosoever walks in them shall not know peace" (Isa. 59:5-8, Lamsa).

Who would be so foolish as to put his trust in a spider's web and be lost forever? Will you? Will I? □



## Dwell Deep

*D*well deep! The little things that chafe and fret,  
O waste not golden hours to give them heed!  
The slight, the thoughtless wrong, do now forget,  
Forget yourself in serving others' need.  
Your faith in God through ev'ry hour still keep:  
Dwell deep, my soul, dwell deep.

*D*well deep! Forego the pleasure if it lead  
Away from God; oh, consecrate each thought;  
Believe in Him who gives you everything,  
And trust that all to wisest end is wrought.  
Be pure, be true, God does your record keep:  
Dwell deep, my soul, dwell deep.

