

Megiddo Message

JULY, 2002



WHAT IS THE WORTH OF YOUR SOUL?

OUR REASON TO TRUST

by RUTH E. SISSON

Living in a world of the natural, the explainable, the obvious, sometimes we may forget that God is a God who works *beyond* the natural, *beyond* the explainable, *beyond* the obvious.

I challenge you to discover one moment in your life when you do not, consciously or unconsciously, exercise faith. Sit down on a chair—you have faith that it will hold you up. Step into an elevator—you have faith that it has been adequately maintained and will carry you safely to the desired level. Drive your auto 60 mph on the X-way—you have great faith that those autos around you and across from you are under the control of at least partly sane drivers. Open a tightly sealed tin of food from the local grocery and begin to eat its contents—you have faith that it is clean and uncontaminated.

Small objects of our confidence that all of us take for granted, but are they not a continuous source of satisfaction? Remove this confidence, and life becomes a nightmare.

But trusting though we be, none of the above are as sure as the Christian's source of confidence in God. The chair might break. The elevator might quit at the fortieth floor and fail to open its door. The approaching driver on the X-way might unexpectedly leave his lane and enter yours. The tin of food might be contaminated. The possibility may be remote, but it is millions of times more likely to happen than that God will forsake His children. He simply—absolutely—*will not fail!*

Read the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 40:4: *"Happy are they who make the Lord their trust."*

David, who made his share of mistakes and more, had a firm confidence in God. Through all the ups and downs of his life, he could still say (Psalm 71:5), *"You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth."* He knew that God could be trusted, and was willing to believe.

Trust is a wonderful word. It suggests a refuge, a place of safety, peace in the midst of stress and danger. Has there ever been a time when our need was greater for a sure refuge, a strong confidence, something solid we can trust? We live in a world of chaos, directed for the most part by people who leave God

out of their lives. We see scientific achievements that stagger the imagination—alongside moral and spiritual poverty even more staggering. We look at the uncertainties and forget that God is still in control.

People disbelieve God because they cannot prove Him in a test tube, though the same people trust unseen evidence every day in the material world.

Hear the Apostle Paul express his confidence:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Spiritual blessings may not be visible to natural minds, but they are no less real. They are blessings of hope, faith, love, and all the benefits that come from obedience to God's law. When we fail to walk by faith in the light of God's certainty, we are sure to encounter sorrow, uncertainty, frustration, and confusion.

One of the greatest fears today is fear of the unknown. We are afraid of terror, afraid of other cultures we do not understand, afraid of illness, or financial loss, or many another man-made source of uncertainty. But the Bible overrules all these when it says, *"Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe"* (Proverbs 29:25).

Do we fear what is around us? We have greater reason to trust the God who is above us, who is in control of this world and who will in His time bring all to the climax He has planned.

Keep looking beyond the natural, beyond the visible, to that Power that is able to save, guide, and keep! God *never* fails! ♦



*You are my hope,
O Lord God;
You are my trust
from my youth.*

—Psalm 71:5

What Is the Worth of Your Soul?

by RUTH E. SISSON

This subject is about values, about currency, about exchange, about buying and selling—all very common in our lives. But we aren't talking about physical goods. We are talking about our inner values, the part of our lives that makes up our real worth. Jesus set all the temporal values of this world against the inner values of life and said, What is worth more to you? Where is your *real* value?

In Mark 8:36–37 Jesus summarized it in two short phrases, *“What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”*—our soul being our life, our very being, and all our prospects for the future.

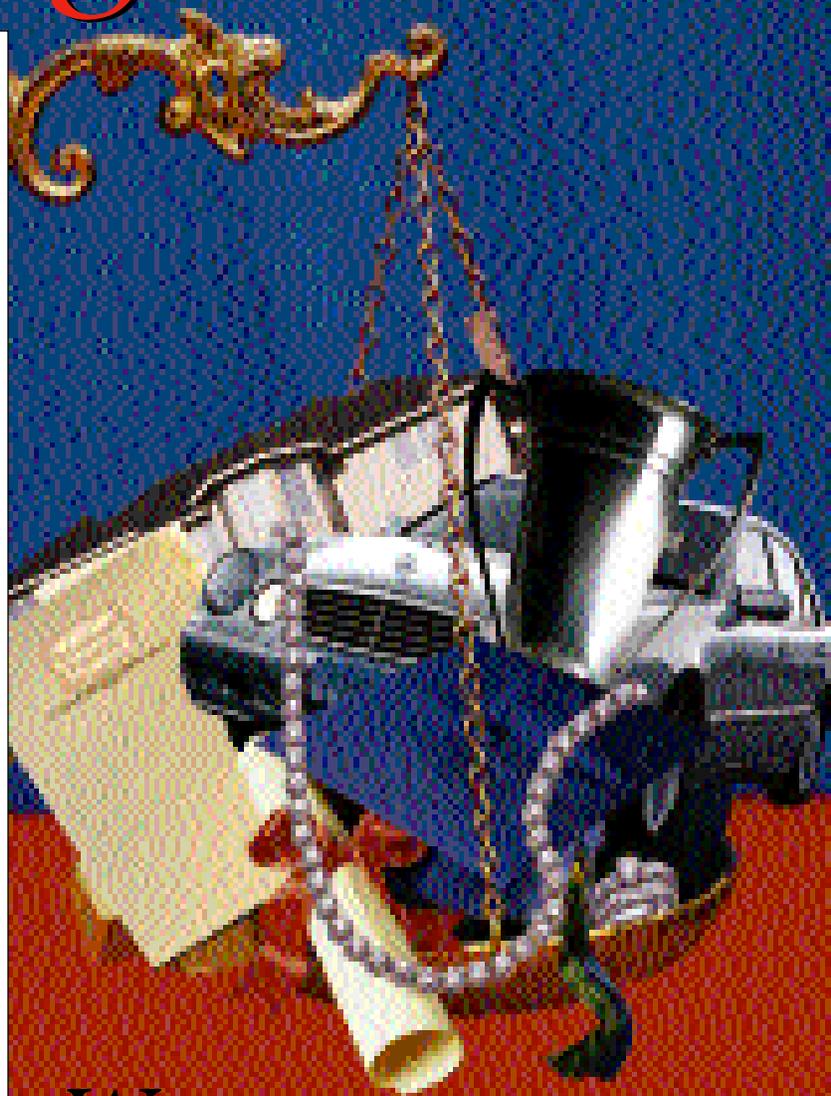
Life has millions of choices, but underlying them all are only two: eternal death, or eternal life. Every other choice comes down to one of these. We are either choosing the broad road that leads to destruction, or the narrow road to life. We are choosing to die or to live. There are no other options. Hence Jesus' question for us: Are you purchasing wisely? What are you giving in exchange for your soul (your love, your heart)? What are you going to have when all these transactions of life are complete? What is the net value to you going to be? *“How do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul in the process?”* (NLT).

Every successful business does a careful analysis from time to time, to make sure that its operations are profitable. If they do not review and analyze, they will not be around long. They need to know whether they are making more than they are losing, or losing more than they are making. That is what Jesus advises for our individual life business: Look ahead and plan carefully. Look at the end of this project you call “life,” He says, and ask, How is it going to come out? What is it going to be worth—long-term?

Naturally we have a very short-range view of things. We like things that feel good, taste good, look good—short-term. We're very short-term minded. The shiny BMW, the vacation abroad, the six-figure income, the million dollar home—these things may feel like true worth. But Jesus is teaching us that these are not the real values.

“What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world...?” The whole world, you ask? I don't expect that!

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What are you going to have when all these transactions of life are complete? What is the net benefit going to be? “How do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul in the process?”

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It's Up to You

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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.

What Is the Worth of Your Soul?

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But some have. Alexander the Great did. When he was conquering in the 4th century BC, it is said that he actually cried when there were no more worlds to conquer. He thought he had done everything possible. Crossing Europe, Asia, and the Orient, he amassed an enormous empire. But he missed one great victory: a victory over himself. Because of this massive defeat, though he had everything, he could not live to enjoy it. In his thirty-third year he died, a drunkard. He had literally gained the "whole world," but lost everything.

Napoleon was another who set out to make a name for himself by building a great empire. But his glory also was brief. It is another reminder of Jesus' words: "*How do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul in the process?*" Very easily we can lose more than we gain.

How do we lose our soul?

When we attach ourselves to the wrong friends, those who will lead us away from God, we murder our soul.

When we view images on screen or in print that are violent, impure, or sensual, not spiritually uplifting, we poison our soul.

When we believe man-made superstitions in place of the true word of the Lord, we injure our soul.

When we spend our time absorbing information from the news media and neglect the good Gospel of God, the words of eternal life, we starve our soul.

All the treasures of this world are going to come down to zero value. We may enjoy them for a moment, but soon they are gone. If we have exchanged our soul—our prospects of eternal life—for them, Jesus calls it a bad bargain, a loss and not a gain.

Isn't that what Esau did when he sold his birthright, something of real value, for a bowl of soup? Can we think of a poorer exchange? Only a short time later, he regretted it, but it was too late. The lesson: Don't exchange your soul for anything of this world. Even if it looks like good value at the time, Jesus says it isn't worth it.

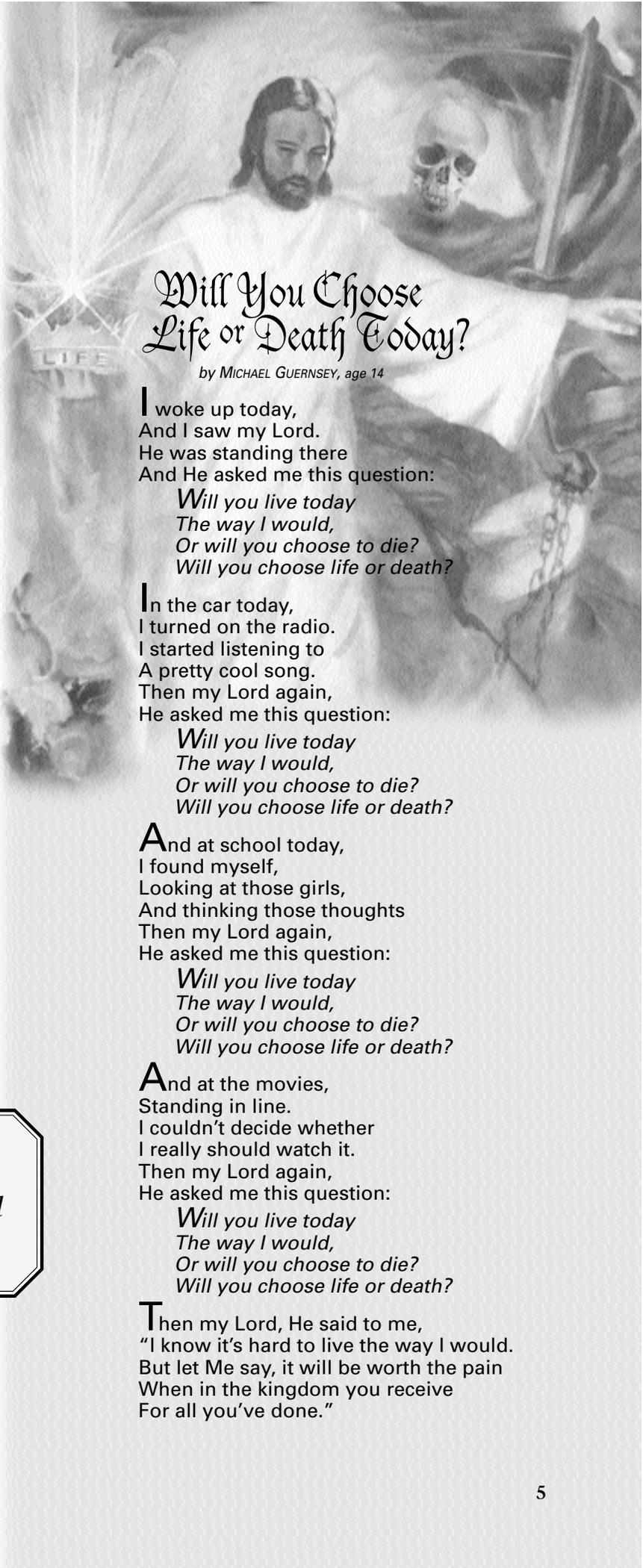
"*What will a man give in exchange for his soul?*" Gain the rewards, honors, degrees, wealth, satisfactions of this

Jesus wants us to keep the right perspective. The things of this world don't have any long-term value.

world and *lose*—forfeit, surrender—your soul, your prospects of future life. It is all loss.

When we spend money, we are making an exchange. Jesus says, You are spending your life every day. What are you getting in return?

Jesus viewed everything from an eternal perspective.



Will You Choose Life or Death Today?

by MICHAEL GUERNSEY, age 14

I woke up today,
And I saw my Lord.
He was standing there
And He asked me this question:

*Will you live today
The way I would,
Or will you choose to die?
Will you choose life or death?*

In the car today,
I turned on the radio.
I started listening to
A pretty cool song.
Then my Lord again,
He asked me this question:

*Will you live today
The way I would,
Or will you choose to die?
Will you choose life or death?*

And at school today,
I found myself,
Looking at those girls,
And thinking those thoughts
Then my Lord again,
He asked me this question:

*Will you live today
The way I would,
Or will you choose to die?
Will you choose life or death?*

And at the movies,
Standing in line.
I couldn't decide whether
I really should watch it.
Then my Lord again,
He asked me this question:

*Will you live today
The way I would,
Or will you choose to die?
Will you choose life or death?*

Then my Lord, He said to me,
"I know it's hard to live the way I would.
But let Me say, it will be worth the pain
When in the kingdom you receive
For all you've done."



We must use the things of earth, but always be aware that they are not our real treasures.



What Would You Give in Exchange for Your Soul?

*W*anderer afar from the Savior today,
*R*isking your soul for the things that decay,
*O*h, if today God should call you away,
*W*hat would you give in exchange for your soul?

*M*ercy is calling you, won't you give heed?
*M*ust the dear Savior still tenderly plead?
*R*isk not your soul on a world full of greed,
*W*hat would you give in exchange for your soul?

*M*ore than the silver and gold of the earth,
*M*ore than all jewels your life will be worth
*I*f your Creator will grant a new birth!
*W*hat would you give in exchange for your soul?

*W*hat would you give? What would you give?
*W*hat would you give in exchange for your soul?
*O*h, if today God should call you away,
*W*hat would you give in exchange for your soul?

Why spend time, energy and worry acquiring things we cannot keep? This makes the price tag on those acquisitions very, very high; because we have only a limited amount of life to spend.

There is a story of a man who was reading a newspaper. As he was reading, he noticed that it seemed a little strange. He was reading about events that had not happened. How could this be? The article was assuming he knew of things he had not heard about. Then he looked at the date on the paper—the date was six months in advance! No wonder it didn't look familiar!

He kept on reading. He turned to the weather page, and even the season was wrong! He turned to another page and saw what was going on sale. Again the season was wrong. He turned to the financial page and noticed the prices of certain stocks and bonds with their prices. Then he started to think, "I could really make good here! This is valuable information. Now I know what stocks to buy. I can be really, really rich. I'll have a great fortune in a short time!" And he started dreaming of all the things his money could buy—a Rolls Royce, a home overlooking the ocean, and all the wonderful things everybody dreams about. In just a short time he could have it all!

Excitedly he turned the page. There was the obituary column. And right at the top of it he saw his own picture, his own name, and his own story! Suddenly, everything looked different. None of the things he had been dreaming about had any value—because he had only six months to live.

That is the perspective Jesus wants us to keep: everything here is short-term. Use it right, He says, because you cannot keep it. Anything here has value only as we invest it in real worth. Only the world to come is eternal.

Jesus made the same point in His parable of the Rich Fool. This man's land had produced tremendous crops. What could he do with it all! "Oh," he says, "my barns won't hold it. I've got to have more barns." So he decided to build bigger barns to hold all his produce. "Then," he says, "I'll take my rest and eat, drink and be merry." But God had another idea. God said to him, "You fool, this night your soul will be required of you. Then who will all these goods belong to?" God said to him, Your life is going to be taken. Then who is going to have all these good things?

Jesus wants us to keep the right perspective. The things of this world don't have any long-term value.

If we are squandering eternity for the sake of some little gratification here, how small is our gain! What a very high price we are paying for the questionable pleasure of having our own way! What a very high price to pay for the privilege of doing as we please, for taking the easy course, for that little bit of indulgence, that little bit of pleasure, that bit of lust or gratification, or the satisfaction of saying what feels good at the moment. To think that this is our exchange for something of eternal value!

We are talking about life and death matters, giving up our soul, our prospect of something eternal, for some little satisfaction of the moment. What is Jesus' advice? You can't afford it. ♦

Where Is Your Treasure?

by ELVA BYERS

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” —Matt. 6:19–21

Life is like the gathering of wealth, this embryo parable is saying. A choice confronts us: we can have treasure on earth, or treasure in heaven.

In these verses our Lord deals with the true attitude of His subjects toward the material world. Here is a negative and a positive: *“Do not lay up...treasures on earth.”* *“Lay up....”* treasures in heaven.

Notice the comparison of values. Treasures laid up on earth are perishable. Moth and rust can consume. Thieves can break through and steal. Treasures laid up in heaven are lasting and sure, for to them neither moth, rust, nor thieves have access.

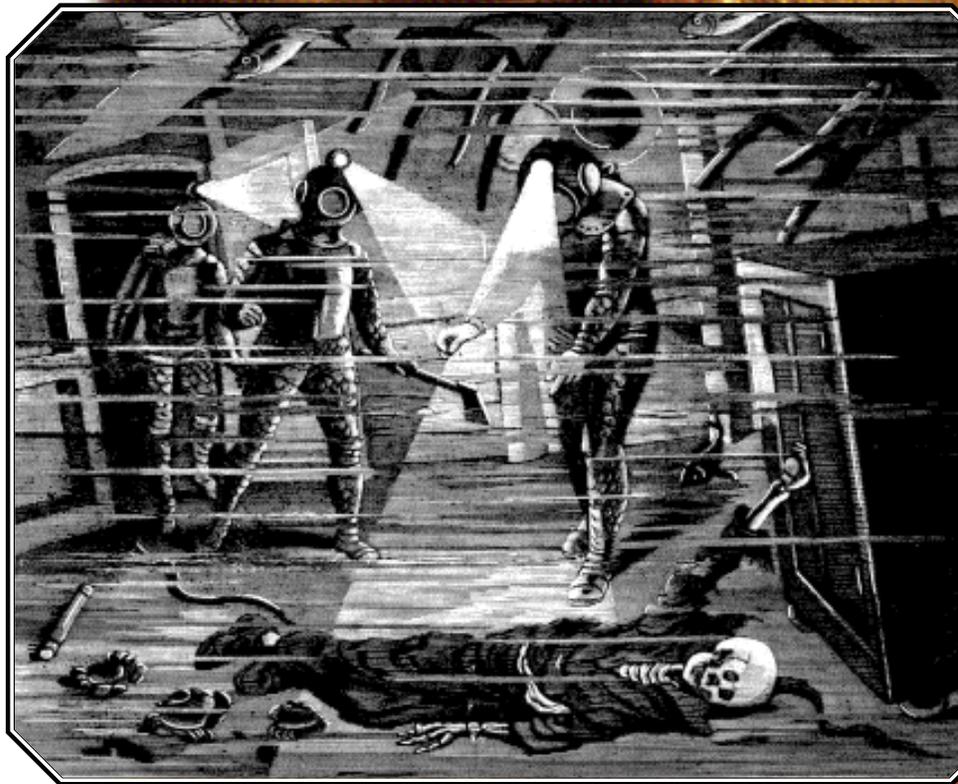
Next, notice Christ’s reason for this injunction: *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Treasures on earth are beset by risks and end inevitably in total loss. Wealth in Christ’s day was not only in coin and monetary exchange; it was partly in fabrics—in rugs, in fine and elaborate clothes and expensive hangings. Vermin threatened the stored treasures, and thieves could easily break through the mud walls. Many a man’s wealth consisted in the corn and the grain that he had stored away in his great barns. But into that corn and grain could come the worms which would eat it away. Rats and mice could invade, until the store was polluted and destroyed. In any event, death would soon overtake the owners.

Were Jesus speaking today, He might mention inflations, depressions, and the uncertainty of fluctuating stocks. He would remind us that *“you can’t take it with you.”* The only bank that will never break is the bank of worthwhile human character laid up in the presence of God.

In this parable Jesus is also showing that the physical and the spiritual cannot be completely separated. Dead-earnest life-seekers still have to touch, use and handle material things, but their minds are fixed on the greater, spiritual riches of Christ.

However much the inner life may be sustained by that which is essentially spiritual, we continue to live with the



When the Values Are Reversed

J. C. Riley, nineteenth century British theologian, commented on values and the reversing of values. Speaking of the future, he wrote, "I often like to think what a change there will be one day in the values that are around us. I look around this world. I mark the current price of everything this world contains. Then, I look forward to the coming of Christ and the great Day of God. I think of the new order and the day it will bring.

"I read the words of our Lord and realize there will be a great change soon. What are the dear things now: money, precious stones, bank notes, ships, land, houses, horses, carriages furniture, meat, drink, clothes, and the like. These are the things thought to be of value now. These are the things that command a ready market and a high price. The one who has these things is counted wealthy. Such is the world.

"What are the cheap things now? The knowledge of God, the knowledge of the Bible, the concerns for salvation, the privilege of being God's Son, the right to the tree of life, the promise of an incorruptible inheritance, the offer of a crown of glory that fadeth not. These are things no one cares about today. They are offered without money and without price, freely, yet no one wants to even buy them. They go a begging. They are scarcely looked at. Such is the world.

"But the day is coming when the values will be reversed. A day is coming when the bank note shall be as useless as rags. The gold and silver and money will be as worthless as dust. A day is coming when thousands shall care nothing for the things they once lived for and shall desire the things they once despised. They shall want the favor of the great King. They shall scorn their silks and satins and velvets and laces. All this will be lost in the anxious desire for the robe of righteousness."

Let's reverse our values now, to be prepared for the great reversing to come. ♦

*By our daily life we show
what place we have reserved
in our hearts for God.*

things which are seen and temporal. And this is the lesson our Lord was teaching: Every Christian must live in the material world; but our heart must be elsewhere; we must be dominated by a superearthly consciousness. We must use the things of earth, always aware that they are not our real treasures.

There is danger that we will attempt to place treasure in two places, that we will be straining toward two goals. Should Jesus speak to us today, He might say: "You are not single-minded in your spiritual life; nor are you single-minded in your material life. And these crosscurrents bring collapse. You are trying to lay up treasure in two directions—in heaven and on earth."

The human heart cannot have two first loyalties. If we tolerate conflicting interests in our lives, sooner or later one of these interests will rise up and assume control. The treasure draws the heart after it.

To live a spiritual life in the midst of a material environment has ever been the problem of God's people.

What are we to do *about earthly treasure*? Notice that Jesus did not say, "Do not lay up treasures on earth." What He did say was, "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth.*"

Actually, we do not own anything, even ourselves. But we can, by proper use, turn the things of this world into the coinage of heaven. We can use the temporal to gain the eternal. We might think of our material possessions as the rough granite out of which, as careful sculptors, we are to chisel and perfect the ideal character image God is seeking.

What are we to do *about giving*? The selfish Christian is a contradiction of terms, for no one can be Christian and be selfish. We all are beneficiaries of the Lord's goodness to us; we all owe it to Him to help others.

So easily our giving can become selfish, our prayers a show-piece for spirituality; our sacrifices may be performed for effect. Such works lay up only treasures on earth.

But when the same sacrifices are offered from the heart and for God, they turn into "*treasures in heaven.*"

It is a choice each of us must make, for we cannot lay up value in two places; we will not be paid twice. We cannot have our rewards both in this world and in the world to come.

The moment we find ourselves laying up treasures for ourselves, the moment we discover a selfish motive animating us, that moment we must let it go or lose our treasure in heaven, our genuine Christian character. If we find ourselves seeking power, prominence, the love of display, selfish ease, then our earthly treasures will be only for ourselves, and they will drag us down to the dust.

To know just where the material interests in our lives cease to serve God and begin to spring from purposes of selfishness requires keen spiritual discernment.

The material world may be a cog or a clog. As long as it fits into God's purpose, it is a cog and we may use it. But the moment it becomes a clog to our spiritual life, we must break with it lest we ourselves be broken.

In the heart of the Christian, the currency must not be the coinage of this world. No outside voice can rule there. Every one who desires to be truly Godlike must draw a line somewhere in his life and say to material things, "Thus far shall you go and no further."

When we break the power of the material by dedicating it to spiritual ends, it becomes a spiritual agent.

With wealth often comes temptation to pride and many

other evils. That is why Paul warns: *“Tell those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which will soon be gone. But their trust should be in the living God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give generously to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of real life”* (1 Timothy 6:17–19 NLT).

Why this warning? *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Every one has something he treasures, whether it be his wealth, his education, a home, a career, a skill, an art, or even his own opinion. In everyone there is a passion to possess. And Jesus does not condemn us for satisfying that passion. His warning, however, is that we satisfy it in the right way. For what we possess will have its effect upon us.

If we take our treasures and place them here, our heart will be here and we will be here, of the earth—earthly, sensual, material-minded. Why? Because our treasure is here. But if we store up our treasure in heaven, lay up our treasures beyond, our heart will be beyond and our life will be lifted. All the love of the infinite will dominate us, and the life of the infinite God will be surging, beating, thrilling, throbbing through us.

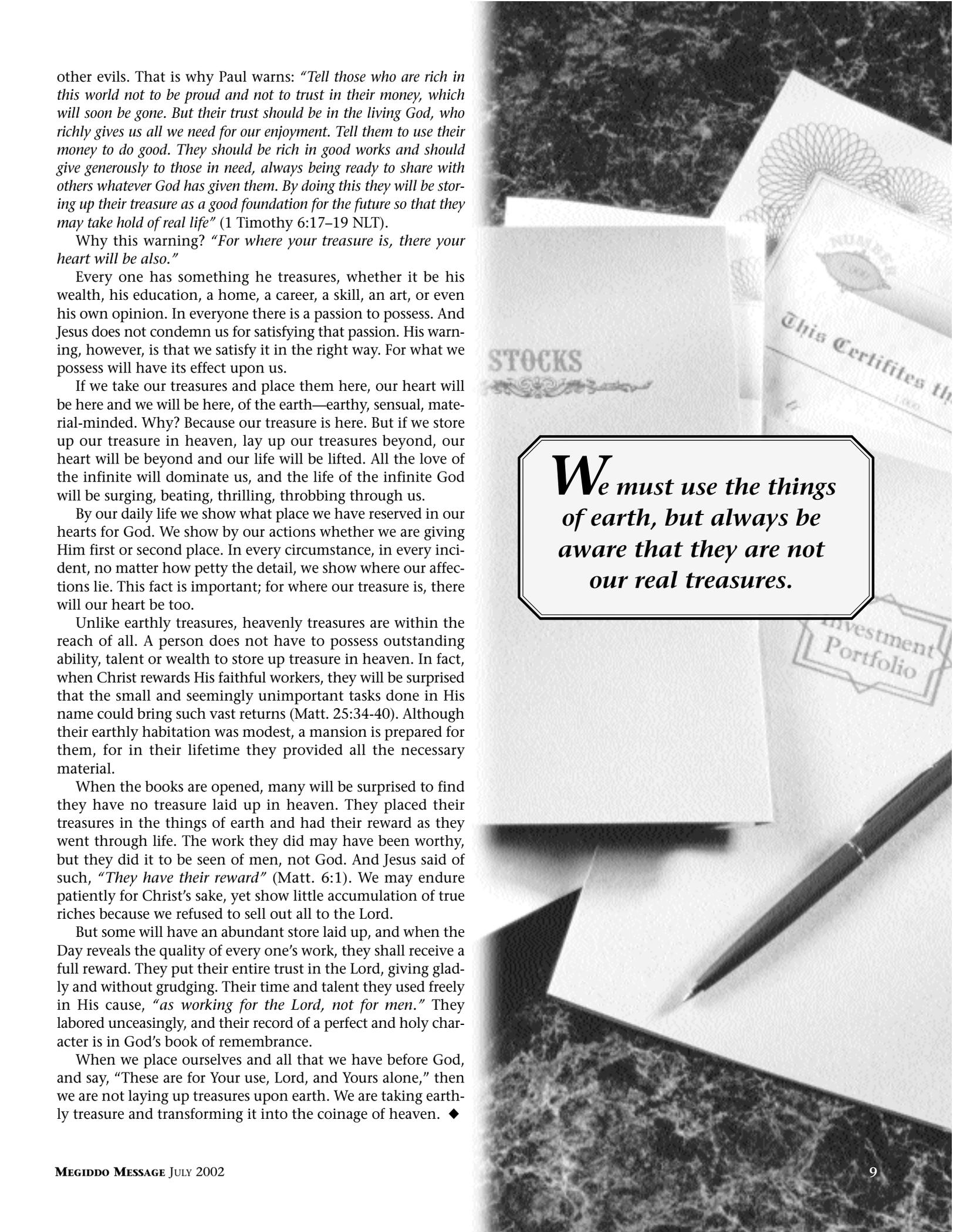
By our daily life we show what place we have reserved in our hearts for God. We show by our actions whether we are giving Him first or second place. In every circumstance, in every incident, no matter how petty the detail, we show where our affections lie. This fact is important; for where our treasure is, there will our heart be too.

Unlike earthly treasures, heavenly treasures are within the reach of all. A person does not have to possess outstanding ability, talent or wealth to store up treasure in heaven. In fact, when Christ rewards His faithful workers, they will be surprised that the small and seemingly unimportant tasks done in His name could bring such vast returns (Matt. 25:34-40). Although their earthly habitation was modest, a mansion is prepared for them, for in their lifetime they provided all the necessary material.

When the books are opened, many will be surprised to find they have no treasure laid up in heaven. They placed their treasures in the things of earth and had their reward as they went through life. The work they did may have been worthy, but they did it to be seen of men, not God. And Jesus said of such, *“They have their reward”* (Matt. 6:1). We may endure patiently for Christ’s sake, yet show little accumulation of true riches because we refused to sell out all to the Lord.

But some will have an abundant store laid up, and when the Day reveals the quality of every one’s work, they shall receive a full reward. They put their entire trust in the Lord, giving gladly and without grudging. Their time and talent they used freely in His cause, *“as working for the Lord, not for men.”* They labored unceasingly, and their record of a perfect and holy character is in God’s book of remembrance.

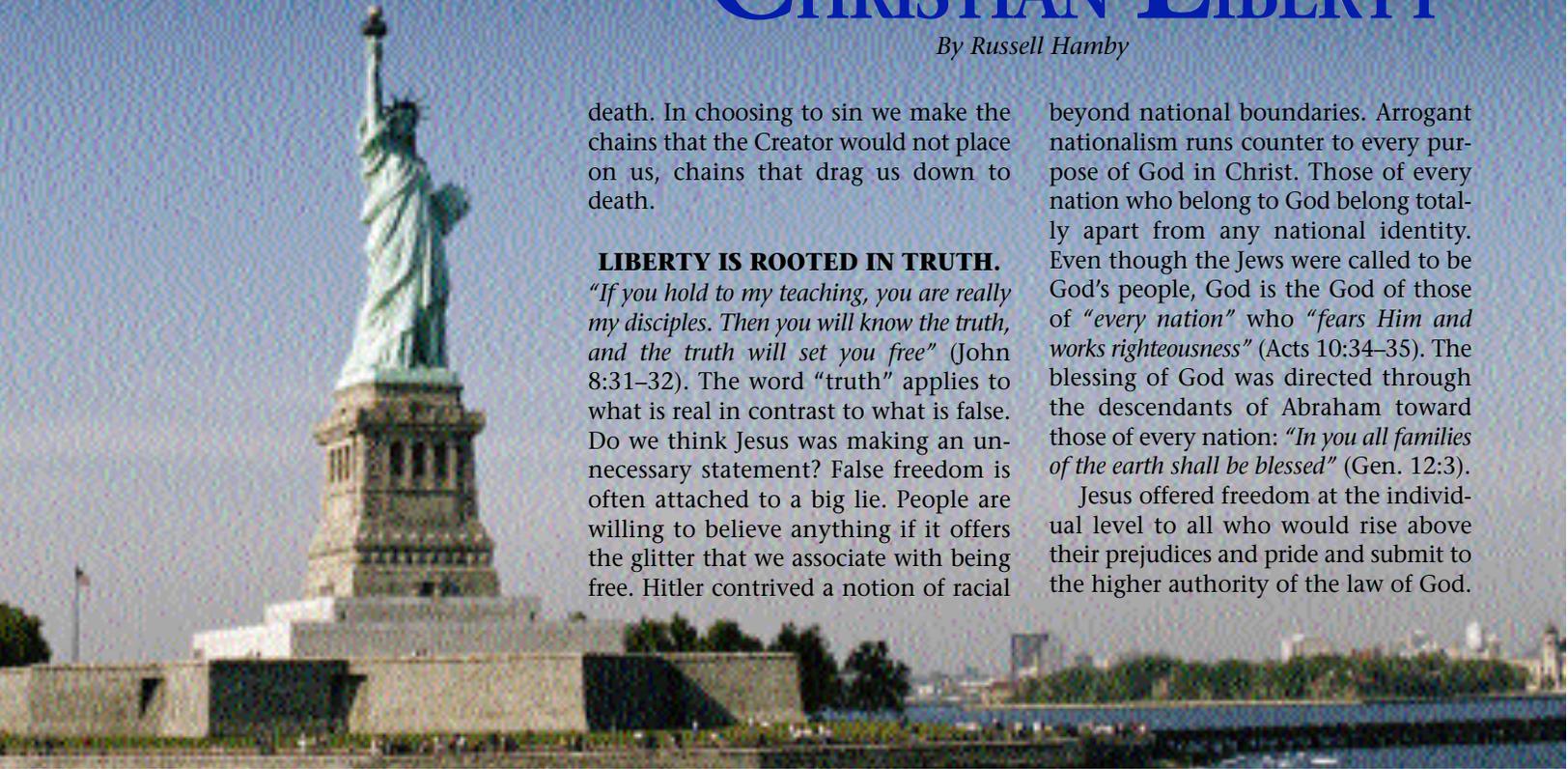
When we place ourselves and all that we have before God, and say, *“These are for Your use, Lord, and Yours alone,”* then we are not laying up treasures upon earth. We are taking earthly treasure and transforming it into the coinage of heaven. ♦



***We must use the things
of earth, but always be
aware that they are not
our real treasures.***

FOUNDATION for CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

By Russell Hamby



death. In choosing to sin we make the chains that the Creator would not place on us, chains that drag us down to death.

LIBERTY IS ROOTED IN TRUTH.

“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:31–32). The word “truth” applies to what is real in contrast to what is false. Do we think Jesus was making an unnecessary statement? False freedom is often attached to a big lie. People are willing to believe anything if it offers the glitter that we associate with being free. Hitler contrived a notion of racial

beyond national boundaries. Arrogant nationalism runs counter to every purpose of God in Christ. Those of every nation who belong to God belong totally apart from any national identity. Even though the Jews were called to be God’s people, God is the God of those of “every nation” who “fears Him and works righteousness” (Acts 10:34–35). The blessing of God was directed through the descendants of Abraham toward those of every nation: *“In you all families of the earth shall be blessed”* (Gen. 12:3).

Jesus offered freedom at the individual level to all who would rise above their prejudices and pride and submit to the higher authority of the law of God.

To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, *“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”* —John 8:31–32 NIV

What are the foundations of our freedom in Christ?

Long before our nation was established on this continent, liberty was a gift of God. More than any of God’s creatures, the human race was set loose in the world with a wide range of freedom. We might have been bound to our Creator as a tree is tied to the earth, but God did not design us this way. Like the tie between the mother and the child, God saw that it was best for the umbilical cord to be cut. Our tie to the Creator was to be not by nature but voluntary; not like a chain or a cage but a bond of love, trust and gratitude. God gave His law, with a wide-open choice: “Obey and live, disobey and die.” The risk of such freedom was the possibility that humans would disobey and by so doing choose bondage to sin and ultimately

supremacy in an attempt to justify his slaughter of the Jews and the advent of World War Two. Because people believed the big lie, we had the big war. But liberty was not the result.

Jesus associated liberty with the truth of God. We are free, not when we are able to assert our superiority over others but when we subject ourselves to God’s law of truth. I cannot begin to tell you all that is contained in the “truth” of which Jesus spoke. It begins with the message He taught and bears fruit in an attitude of mind.

We should not be afraid to look with curiosity at God’s world or to learn about what He has made that has not been known before. We have no fear that science will destroy our faith in the Bible or in God because “good” science is always in harmony with truth. God and truth stand together.

LIBERTY TRANSCENDS NATIONALISM

Liberty is not the prior right of any nation. In fact, liberty is a law and

We sometimes hear the criticism that the one whom we call Christ has not yet presented the world with world peace, but consider the fact that He is looking for us to respond as individuals, not as a nation.

LIBERTY IS A CHRISTIAN WORD

I would not discount the importance of the political dimensions of our liberty. We are grateful for the liberty guaranteed us by the laws and mandates of our government. But Christ was concerned most of all with spiritual freedom. One could live in physical chains yet enjoy freedom complete. Christ came as our perfect example to show us how we can be set free from our spiritual prisons of hate, anger, rebellion, selfishness and pride. Then, one day, He will come the second time to all who have become spiritually free, and will give them the blessings of physical freedom—from mortality, sickness, sorrow, pain and every fear that paralyzes or perplexes now.

What a liberty that will be! ♦



The **BATTLEFIELD** of **GOD**

*Men have fought for fame and glory
Some for gold and silver, too;
But the call of God comes ringing
For the men who dare and do;
There's a cry for willing soldiers
Who with righteousness are shod,
To contend in life's engagements
On the battlefield of God.*

*Let us never shirk our duty,
In His service never tire;
To be up and always fighting
Till the last armed foe expire.
May each fresh assault of evil
Find our feet upon the sod,
Pressing toward the front of action
On the battlefield of God.*

*If we fight in faith undaunted,
Soon will cease the bitter strife;
With the smoke of battle over
We shall gain the crown of life.
May we not disgrace the record
Of this field where saints have trod,
But united raise His standard
On the battlefield of God.*

A **PRAYER** for **INDEPENDENCE DAY**

*I pause to thank you Lord, for what my country means to me.
We abound in Your great blessings. We're a people living free.
Thank You for our founding fathers who would bow on bended knee—
to just one King, a carpenter, who walked the hills of Galilee.
We've been a favored nation, dwelling in a favored land,
gifted with prosperity, protected by Your hand.
You have raised up patriots who paid our freedom's price
men and women in war and peace, who would make the sacrifice.
Forgive us our trespasses when we seek pleasures on this earth.
Revive in us the spirit that gave our nation birth.
Convict our collective conscience when we let selfishness erase
respect for all our people, regardless of creed or race.
As we celebrate together on this Independence Day,
give us strength for action, not just for words we say.
And until Your Son comes back again, we ask Your help to be
guardians of our legacy, a people living free.*

Dialogue

"Recently while we were waiting at a local laundromat, a family of two young men and their mother stopped in to use the pay phone. While the son was on the phone, I entered into a conversation with the mother about salvation and religion. The family were from the north and had for one reason or another escaped to Arkansas. She expressed her desire to live right and that for this purpose she had become affiliated with a local Pentecostal church. She said that the son who was on the telephone was being pushed by their congregation to talk in unknown tongues during their church services.

"After much church member coercion, he let out a string of German, (he knew the language) at which the congregation shouted and rejoiced because he had finally received the Holy Spirit and was talking in unknown tongues! She said the preacher then slapped him on the forehead to enhance his trance. Would you mind commenting?"—J&J

Is speaking in tongues today heavenly or human? a manifestation of Divine power through the Holy Spirit, or merely the expression of human emotion and religious ecstasy?

The earliest instance of tongues speaking in the Bible is recorded in the Book of Acts. Perhaps better described as a miracle of understanding, this gift made it possible for persons of seventeen different languages to understand one Galilean speaker—each "heard" the speaker in his own native tongue! Speaking in tongues was also one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit known among the early believers, which Paul discusses in some detail in First Corinthians (chapters 12 and 14). But the gift Paul discusses appears to have been some-

what different from that seen on the day of Pentecost, being more of a power of ecstatic speech used to glorify God rather than to instruct.

It seems that many times those who received other gifts did not receive the gift of tongues-speaking. We have only two recorded instances where the gift of tongues was actually used in the Book of Acts. One was the time when Peter was preaching to Cornelius and those who were with him about God's message of salvation to all who work righteousness (Acts 10:34-35, 44-46). The second occasion was at Ephesus, when some followers of John the Baptist belatedly heard the message of Christ and received the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6).

These Biblical records were indisputably manifestations of Divine power. Other histo-

ry records of tongues-speakers lie entirely outside the scope of the First Century Church—and even outside the Christian faith. People have long been fascinated by the very human art of nonsensical babbling. Primitive peoples often possessed a strong belief in spirits, and religions antedating Christianity by thousands of years had some sort of tongues-speaking associated with their worship. "Messages" were received from the spirit world in an unknown tongue, which pagan priests "translated" into the native tongue of the people—a lucrative business. Traces of the art appear also in Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek and other ancient sources, telling of ecstatic sounds from the lips of worshipers.

Is it possible for any man or woman to speak in tongues today as the disciples did at Pentecost?

Pentecostalism began in our country very early in the twentieth century. A small Bible college in the Midwest decided that the converted believer ought to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as did the apostles, and that speaking in tongues should be the proof that the baptism had been received. They began to "seek the baptism" through revival-type meetings.

The format of these meetings, also known as "full-gospel meetings," has changed little in the century since Pentecostalism was introduced in America. The music is generally of the "foot-stomping" variety. Speakers are sensational, and sensationalize their message. Emotion runs high. Such is the setting in which they "seek the baptism of the Spirit."

And "something" happens. Mob psychology rules, and some who are overcome with a sort of mass hypnotism suddenly start chattering or babbling in unknown tongues.

Is there any parallel between such meetings and the one held in the Upper Room on that original Pentecost? Those who attended that first meeting did not gather to seek the baptism, as is so common today. They were meeting in response to the command given them by Jesus before His ascension: "Wait for the promise of the Father ... tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49). They were not seeking the Holy Spirit but were waiting for the power which Jesus had promised to send: "ye shall be baptized...not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). At no time were the disciples commanded to seek for it. They had been assured that they would "be endued with power from on high" if they only waited.

TONGUES-SPEAKING TODAY: TRUE OR FALSE?

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

Glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, is a Greek compound of two words: *glosa*, meaning “tongue,” and *lalia*, meaning “talk” or “speech.” We read that on the day of Pentecost, the disciples “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). But we should note that this speaking in tongues was very different from any manifestation that is claimed today. For these “other tongues” were not unknown tongues but foreign, known languages. They did not have to be translated to be understood by the multitude. Three times it is recorded that the people heard the preaching of the disciples “in their own languages.” The “tongues” at Pentecost were intelligible speech in a variety of languages, and served a definite purpose—people of seventeen languages were able to understand the words of the apostles without the aid of translators or interpreters.

Paul’s discussion in First Corinthians concerns tongues that are of a different nature, it would appear from the reading of the text. The King James Version consistently inserts before “tongues” the word “unknown,” though this is not found in the original Greek text (1 Cor. 14:4, 13–14, 19, 27). The rendering in the New English Bible is perhaps more fitting—“language of ecstasy” (v. 2) or ecstatic “utterance.” Apparently this gift of “tongues” was an utterance not intelligible and not intended to be understood by the congregation (as the

tongues-speaking on the day of Pentecost had been). This is evident from the fact that legitimate use of the gift required the presence of an “interpreter.” And “interpretation of tongues” was a separate gift (1 Cor. 12:10).

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

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

It is clear from Paul’s letter that he valued the gift of tongues far less than did the Corinthians. He places the gift last in two separate lists of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:8–10, 28).

In chapter 14, Paul discusses the gift of *tongues* by comparing it with another gift, that of *prophecy* or *teaching*, which he believes to be far superior. Throughout the discussion, Paul sets lit-

tle value on the gift of tongues. He includes the following points in his comparison:

Two Gifts Compared: Prophecy and Tongues-Speaking

1. *The use of the two gifts:*

The one who speaks with tongues speaks a language of ecstasy (1 Cor. 14:2, 4 NEB); and he does not address himself to men; nobody understands him; he speaks “in the Spirit,” and consoles himself.

He who “prophesies” preaches the word of God. And he speaks understandably, to build up others, to encourage and console them (1 Cor. 14:3-5 NEB).

Paul’s conclusion: Speaking in tongues benefits only the speaker, therefore is of no use to the congregation.

2. *Spiritual benefits of the two gifts:*

Prophesying, or teaching, results in imparting knowledge of spiritual things, some specific teaching about the Christian life (1 Cor. 14:6). Tongues do not supply any spiritual need of the congregation.

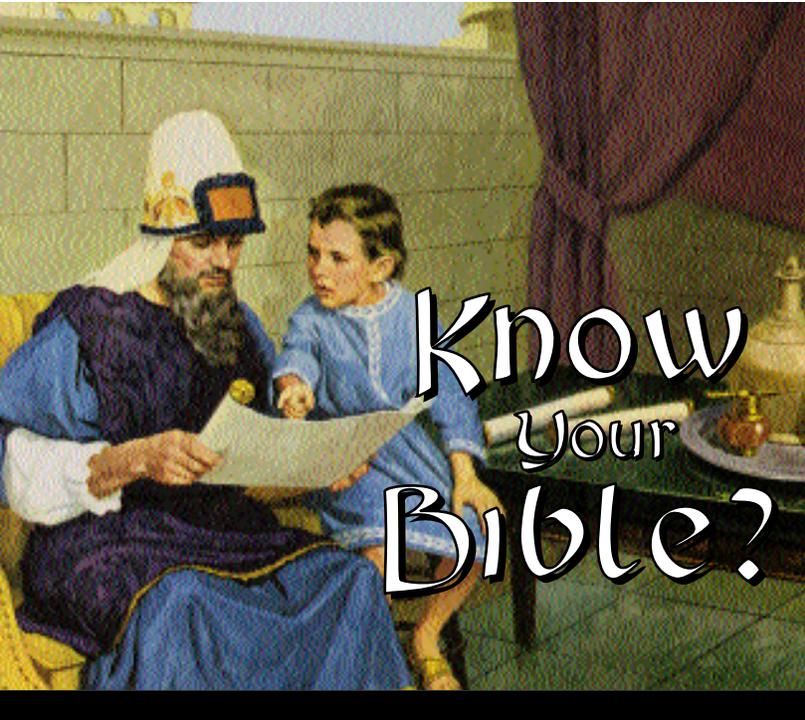
3. *Their intelligibility:*

Sound spoken with no precise meaning is spoken “into the air”; in other words, it is wasting one’s breath. It is to be compared to playing a musical instrument without producing any tune (1 Cor. 14:6-9). Because tongues cannot be understood without an interpreter, Paul indicates that the gift is inferior to that of prophecy.

4. *Their power to communicate between brethren:*

Paul says: “But if the sounds of the speaker’s voice mean nothing to me, I am a foreigner to him, and he is a foreigner to me”

continued on page 17



Know Your Bible?

WHO

1. Who succeeded Elijah?
2. Who succeeded Herod as ruler of Judaea?
3. Who (with his assistants) "read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading"?
4. Who was the first king of Israel, and whose son was he?
5. Who was greatly blessed by keeping the ark in his house three months?
6. Who used the metaphor of an axe laid at the roots of trees?
7. Who was the Jewish ruler that visited Jesus by night?
8. Who was Mephibosheth?
9. Who was the Roman governor of Palestine before whom Paul was first tried? And the second governor?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

WHO

1. Elisha (2 Kings 2:11-15)
2. Archelaus (Matt. 2:22)
3. Ezra (Neh. 8:5-9)
4. Saul, son of Kish (1 Sam. 9:1-2; 10:1)
5. Obed-edom (1 Chron. 13:14)
6. John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1, 10)
7. Nicodemus (John 3:1-2)
8. The son of Jonathan, lame in both feet, whom David cherished for his father's sake (2 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 9:6-7)
9. The first was Felix (Acts 24:1-3, 10, 27); and the second was Festus (Acts 25:1-12)

WHERE WAS (WERE)

1. Wilderness of Ziph (1 Samuel 23:13-18; 31:2)

2. In captivity residing on the banks of the river Chebar (Ezekiel 1:1)
3. In Babylon (Ps. 137:1-2)
4. In the home of Simon the leper (Matt. 26:6-7; Mark 14:3-4)
5. Opposite the table of shewbread in the Holy Place (Ex. 40:22-24)
6. Dothan (2 Kings 6:12-13)
7. At the east of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24)
8. In Troas (Acts 16:8-10)
9. On Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:19-24)
10. Hidden in the temple (2 Kings 11:1-3)

ABOUT MOSES

1. The infant's mother (Ex. 2:7-9)
2. Drawn out of the water (Ex. 2:10)

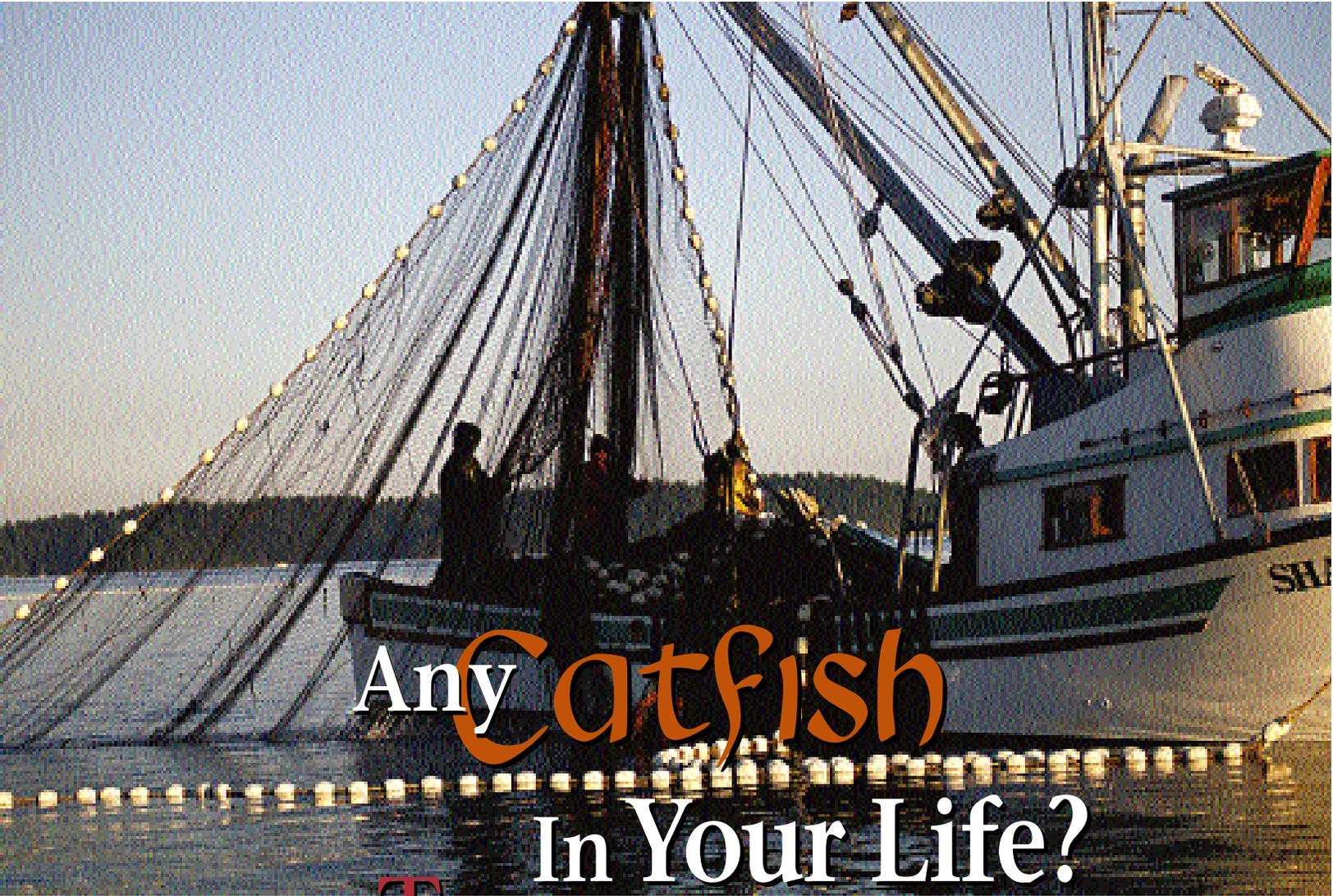
WHERE WAS (WERE)

1. David and Jonathan's last meeting-place?
2. Ezekiel when he saw visions of God?
3. The Israelites when they hung their harps on willow trees?
4. Jesus when a woman anointed Him with the precious spikenard?
5. The golden candlestick to be found in the Tabernacle?
6. Elisha's place of residence?
7. "The flaming sword which turned every way"?
8. Paul when he saw "the Macedonian vision"?
9. Elijah when he conducted his great contest with the Baal priests?
10. Joash during the first six years of his life?

ABOUT MOSES

1. The child found by Pharaoh's daughter in the ark of bulrushes was thereafter nursed by _____.
2. The name Moses means _____.
3. Moses fled from Egypt because _____.
4. Zipporah was the _____.
5. When Moses first saw the burning bush, he _____.
6. God told Moses that when the Israelites finally succeeded in leaving Egypt they would _____.
7. Moses' father and mother were related as _____.
8. Moses smote the rock at _____.
9. Moses' hands were held up by _____ during the battle with Amalek.
10. Moses' father-in-law helped him by _____.
11. The Ten Commandments were written on _____.
12. Moses broke the Ten Commandments because _____.
13. Moses made the people _____ the molten calf, and _____.
14. The cloudy pillar that descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle was _____.

3. He had killed an Egyptian (Ex. 2:11-15)
4. Wife of Moses (Ex. 2:21-22)
5. Took a closer look (Ex. 3:2-3)
6. Spoil the Egyptians (Ex. 3:21-22)
7. Nephew and aunt (Ex. 6:20)
8. Horeb (Ex. 17:6)
9. Aaron and Hur (Ex. 17:11-13)
10. Decentralizing his authority (Ex. 18:13-26)
11. Two stones, each written on both sides (Ex. 32:15-16)
12. He saw the Israelites worshipping a molten calf (Ex. 32:1-19)
13. Grind to powder and put in water and drink (Ex. 32:20)
14. An angel who spoke to Moses (Ex. 33:9-11; 14:9)



Any Catfish In Your Life?

THE COD fishermen of Maine have found a unique solution to a serious problem. The difficulty is that after the cod are caught and placed in the holding tanks aboard ship, they just lay in the bottom and don't move. Consequently, their flesh becomes soft and flabby and they are of little value to the buyer.

The fishermen, however, have an ingenious way to keep them swimming and strong. They keep a large catfish in the holding tank. Catfish and cod are natural enemies.

Therefore, its presence keeps the cod swimming to stay away from its stings and jabs.

As a result, the cod remain active and strong, and are suitable for the marketplace.

All too often we are like the cod. We're content to take it easy and do as little as we can. We accept what is, we are content with ourselves as we are.

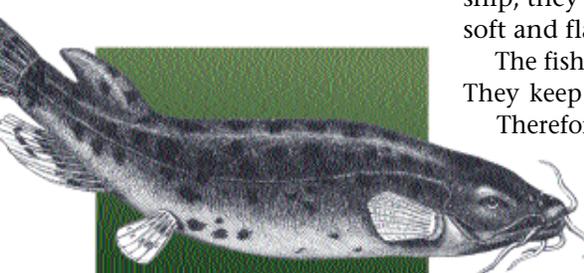
We do not feel the urgent need to change to what God wants us to be. As time goes by, we become spiritually flabby and ineffective in the cause of Christ.

To keep us active and strong, God may allow a "catfish" into our lives. It may be one of the children, someone we work with, or a fellow member of our church. They don't agree with our opinions. Their words and actions are a constant irritation. They try our patience and test our self-control. But it's all for our good, if we take it in the right way. It makes us strong, mature.

If you have a "catfish" in your life, thank God for him or her. Without them you wouldn't be as spiritually strong as you are. And you would have missed many a valuable lesson.

Perhaps—perhaps you even need another catfish. If so, count on one appearing!

Every experience in life isn't pleasant, but when the growing days are done, we shall be more than grateful for every "help" that brought us to the measure of the stature of Christ, when He says to us, "Well done!"



WHO WILL GOD JUDGE?

When Moses was leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, they cried and murmured until thousands of them were destroyed. When Christ returns, will these people be raised for the Judgment, or was it God's judgment to let them lead themselves to destruction in the wilderness?

The Bible does not give us a clear-cut answer to your question, but it does give us some examples and some guidelines which may shed light on the subject.

God Judges and Punishes Evil Actions

In the Biblical record are a number of instances where ungodly, evil people died in a final judgment of God.

- **The destruction of the ungodly in the days of Noah**

When *"the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Gen. 6:5), He instructed Noah to build an ark as a means of escape for any who would listen and obey Him. According to the account of the apostle Peter, God *"did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly"* (2 Pet. 2:5).

- **Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain**

Some years later it suited God's purpose to bring judgment upon the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain, *"making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly"* (2 Pet. 2:6). It was another case of judgment upon evil people. They were sinful, impenitent, and God saw fit to destroy them. The book of Jude says that they were *"set*

forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7), that is, destruction from which there is no release.

- **The captivity of Israel and Judah**

When God was working with the nation of Israel, He gave them definite laws by which to live. These laws were both for the governing of the political state, also for its religious life. When the people went after other gods and refused to follow the laws God had given them, He sent prophets to warn them. Right from the beginning they were warned that if they obeyed God's laws and were loyal to Him, they would prosper. If they disobeyed and went after the worship of foreign gods, they would suffer the consequences (see Deut. 28).

The worship of false gods was far more attractive than the worship of the true God, and time and again they fell into it. Time and again God sent His prophets, pleading with them to return to Him, warning that if they persisted in their evil ways, He would send punishment upon them. He would destroy their temple, and the people would suffer untold hardships, even being taken to a foreign land, where they would be captives.

As a nation, the people did not repent or reform, and the predicted judgments fell. In the words of Jeremiah, *"Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people; the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded my words, nor my law, but rejected it"* (Jer. 6:19). Again the prophet spoke plainly, *"I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, says the Lord, I will kindle a fire in its forest, and it shall devour all things around it"* (Jer. 21:14).

A few words at the close of the book of 2 Chronicles summarize it well: *"All the leaders of the priests and the people trans-*

gressed more and more according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the Lord which He had consecrated in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending them, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place.

"But they mocked the messengers of God, despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand. And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions...to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah" (2 Chron. 36:14-21). It was judgment on iniquity.

The situation of the Israelites coming out of Egypt seems parallel. These people were under God's direction, and He gave them laws to live by, but they refused to obey. When they came to the land of Canaan, and sent spies to search the land, ten of the spies brought back an evil report, saying that the people were strong, the cities fortified and very large. *"We saw the giants...; and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight and so we were in their sight"* (Num. 13:33). Joshua and Caleb tried to counter the evil reporting with the facts and a reminder that God would be with them, that with God on their side they were *"well able"* to overpower them, but to no avail. *"All the congregation lifted up their voices and cried,..."* and complained against Moses and Aaron,

claiming that the Lord had brought them into the wilderness only to kill them, and wanting to make a captain and return to Egypt (Num. 14:1-4).

As a result of their rebellion, they had to spend nearly 40 years taking a journey which could have been less than two months, while the rebels and disobedient died. For the Lord decreed that these "evil people" who refused to hear His voice would not enter Canaan but would die in the wilderness. And over the next nearly 40 years, this happened. In one rebellion or another, the generation that left Egypt perished. Only their descendants entered Canaan except for Joshua and Caleb.

The Purpose of Judgment

According to the Bible, the purpose

of the Judgment when Christ returns will be to separate the good from the bad, the righteous from the wicked, the faithful from the unfaithful. This purpose is pictured in Jesus' Parable of the Sheep and Goats, where the shepherd gathers all His flock in front of Him, to "separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. 25:32-33).

In each of the above mentioned incidents, God punished those who were evil; the good were spared (at the time of the flood, Noah and his family; at the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot and his two daughters; in the nation of Israel, those who survived to be taken into captivity). In each case, God was

looking out for His own. Those who died suffered a judgment from God. Why would they need to be brought back to life to suffer another judgment, when they were already punished for their sins?

The apostle Paul also points out the purpose of judgment: to separate good from bad and to reward each for what they have done. Says Paul, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). The people who died in the flood, in Sodom, or in the wilderness, received for what they had done at the time. There would seem to be no purpose in bringing them back for further judgment. ♦

Dialogue

continued from page 13

(1 Cor. 14:11 Phillips). The simple fact that tongues do not produce any communication between members of the Church is a serious limitation.

5. One's personal religious life:

Here is one of Paul's most damaging arguments against the manner in which the Corinthians used their gift of tongues. Even praying in tongues becomes a subconscious act, to the exclusion of the real moral use of a man's mind. "If I use such language in my prayer, the spirit in me prays, but my intellect lies fallow" (14:14 NEB). It means that a man makes his emotions the basis of his belief, without giving to God the powers of his conscious mind.

6. The benefit of tongues to the world:

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

well-balanced, fruitful, intelligible worship (1 Cor. 14:19).

7. Tongues and spiritual maturity:

Do tongues signify a Christian's maturity? Paul's answer is no. "Do not be childish, my friends! Be as innocent of evil as babes, but at least be grown-up in your thinking" (1 Cor. 14:20 NEB)—a stern rebuke for a church that considered itself privileged on account of this gift. "You are childish and immature!"

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

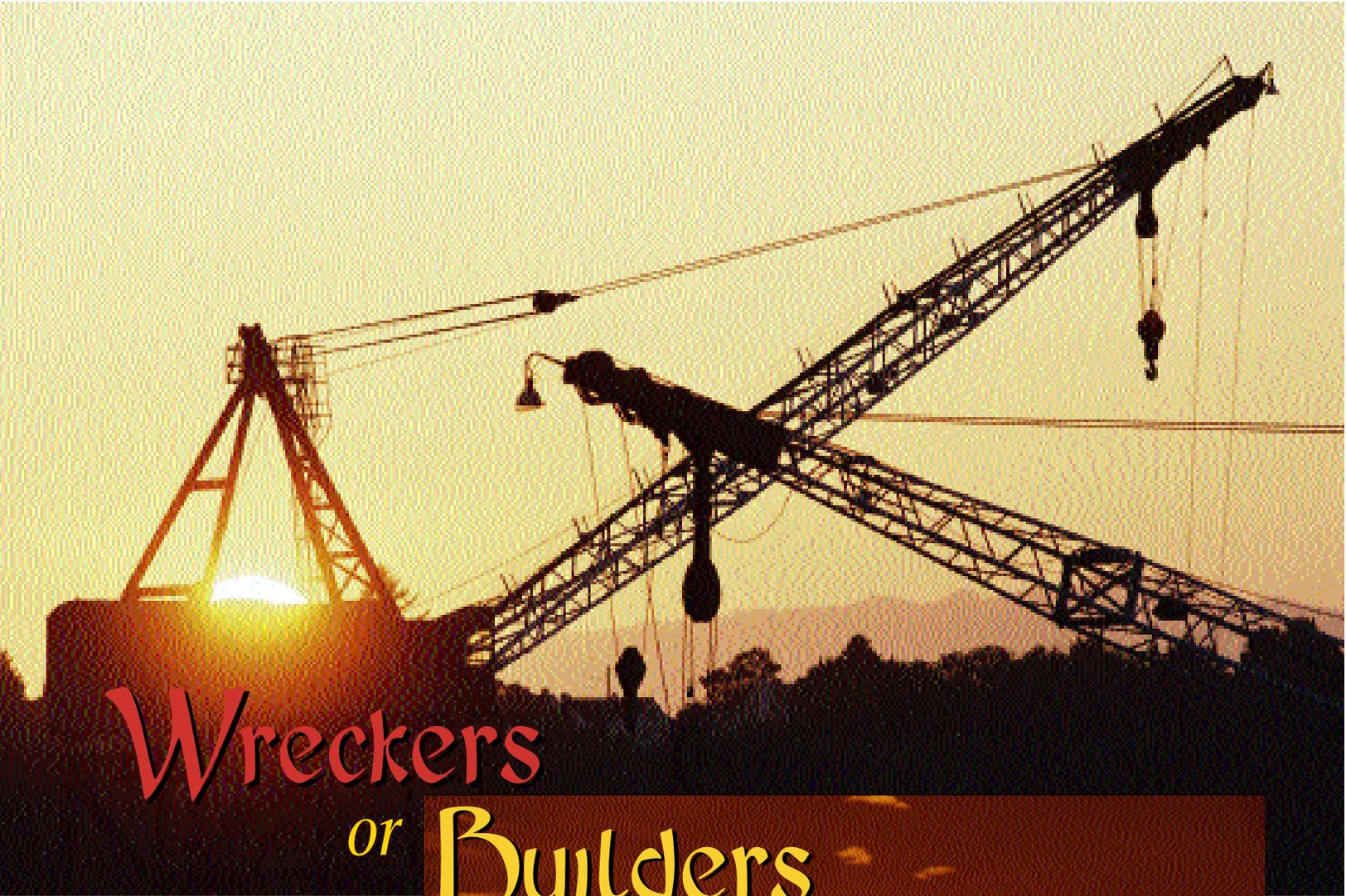
He continues his thought in chapter 13. "I may speak in tongues of men or of angels, but if I am without love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal" (13:1 NEB). In effect Paul is saying, Suppose I could speak with the voice of an angel, it would amount to no more than a big noise if I had no love;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

Tongues of ecstasy, gifts of prophecy and super-human knowledge would end when they had fulfilled their pur-

pose; but love would never come to an end, said Paul (1 Cor. 13: 8, 13).

The apostles were given these special gifts for a specific purpose and for a limited time. For example, Paul and Barnabas "spoke fearlessly for the Lord, who made it plain that they were proclaiming the Word of his grace, by allowing them to perform signs and miracles" (Acts 14:3 Phillips). Only by such demonstrations of the power of God could they gain a hearing for the Gospel. "God added his testimony by signs, by miracles, by manifold works of power, and by distributing the gifts of the Holy Spirit at his own will" (Heb. 2:4 NEB). The miracle of tongues-speaking was one of these signs and gifts, but there is nothing to indicate that all future believers were to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in the same way. They were for that special age and that age only.

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

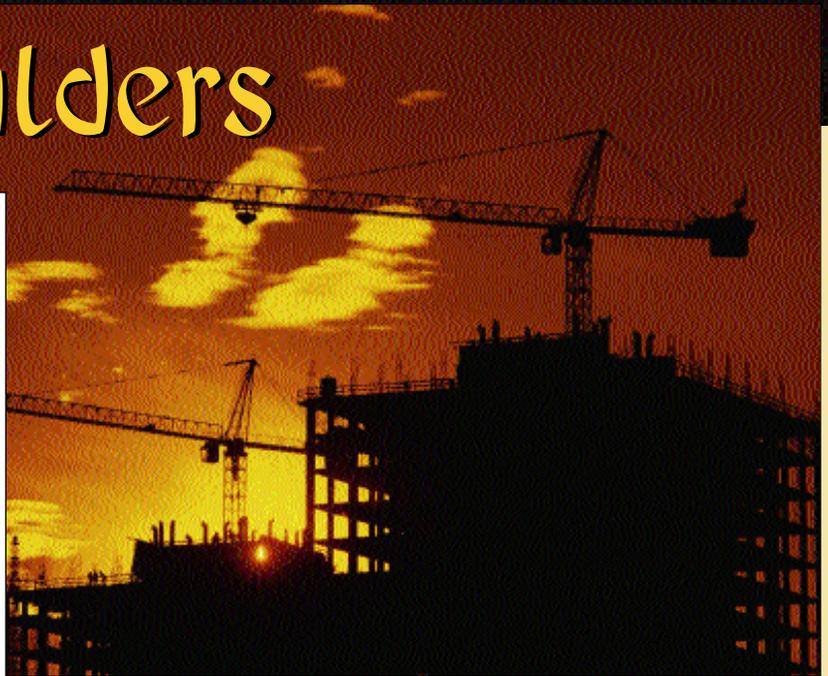


Wreckers or Builders

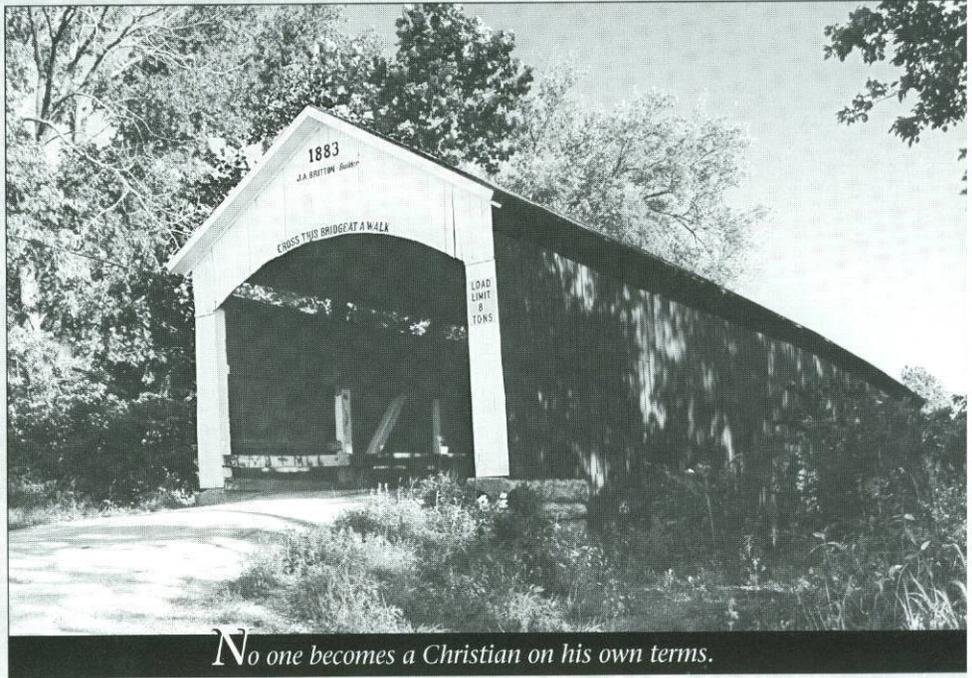
*I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho-heave-ho and husky yell,
They swung a beam and a sidewall fell.
I asked the foreman, "Are these men skilled,
As the men you'd hire if you had to build?"
He gave me a laugh and said, "No indeed!
Just common labor is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do."*

*And I thought to myself as I went my way,
Which of these two roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with care,
Measuring life by the rule and square?
Am I shaping my deeds by a well-made plan,
Patiently doing the best I can?
Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,
Content with the labor of tearing down?*

—Author Unknown



Think smiles, and smiles shall be;
 Think doubt, and hope will flee.
 Think love, and love will grow;
 Think hate, and hate you'll know.
 Think good, and good is here;
 Think vice—its jaws appear!
 Think joy, and joy ne'er ends;
 Think gloom, and dusk descends.
 Think faith, and faith's at hand;
 Think ill—it stalks the land.
 Think peace, sublime and sweet,
 And you that peace will meet.
 Think fear, with brooding mind,
 And failure is close behind.
 Think this: 'I'm going to win.'
 Think not on what has been.
 Think victory; think, 'I can!'
 Then you're a 'winning man'!



No one becomes a Christian on his own terms.

The secret to success in any human endeavor is total concentration.

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor is man polished without trials.

Storms make trees take deeper root.

Not everything that counts can be counted. Not everything that can be counted counts.

THE LIVING SERMON

*I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day,
 I'd rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way;
 The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear,
 Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear;
 The best of all the preachers are the ones who live their creeds,
 For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.*

*I soon can learn to do it, if you'll let me see it done,
 I can watch your hands in action, your tongue too fast may run;
 The lectures you deliver may be very wise and true,
 But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do,
 I may not understand the high advice you give,
 But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.*

We are put here to grow, and we ought to grow, to use all the means of growth God has given us. God wants His children to be growing up inwardly all the time, becoming more just, true, generous, kind, active. And this we can all do, by doing each day the day's work as well as we can.

The one who can take advice is sometimes superior to the one who can give it.

Try this for one day: Think as though your thoughts were visible to all about you.

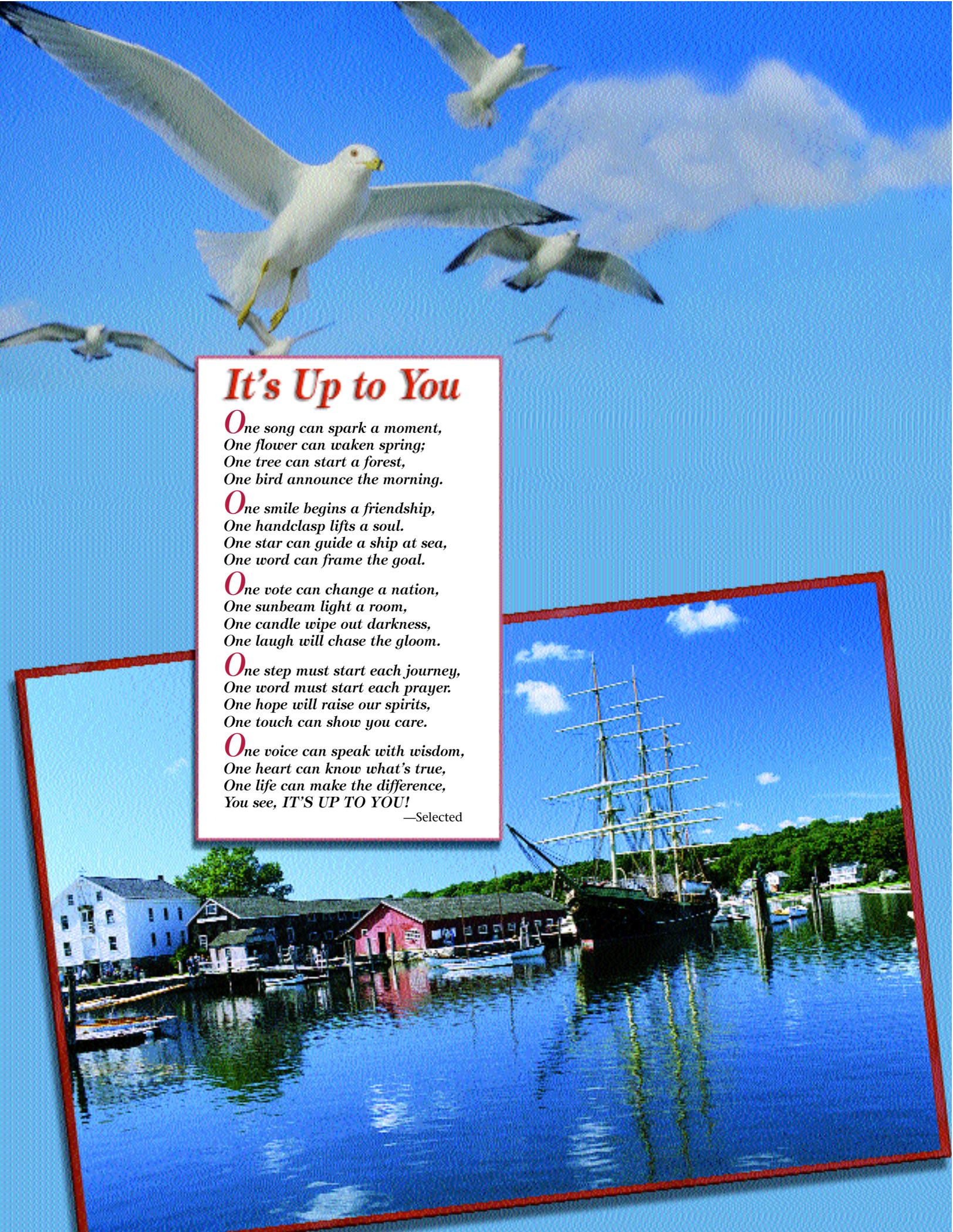
Preparing for a trip, a Christian said to his friend, "I am just about packed. I only have to put in a guidebook, a lamp, a mirror, a microscope, a telescope, a volume of fine poetry, a few biographics, a packet of letters, a book of songs, a sword, a hammer, and a set of books I have been studying."

"But" the friend objected, "you can't get all that into your bag."

"It doesn't take much room," replied the man as he placed his Bible in his suitcase and closed the lid.

He who does what he should will not have the time to do what he should not.

Good days or bad don't happen; they're made.



It's Up to You

*One song can spark a moment,
One flower can waken spring;
One tree can start a forest,
One bird announce the morning.*

*One smile begins a friendship,
One handclasp lifts a soul.
One star can guide a ship at sea,
One word can frame the goal.*

*One vote can change a nation,
One sunbeam light a room,
One candle wipe out darkness,
One laugh will chase the gloom.*

*One step must start each journey,
One word must start each prayer.
One hope will raise our spirits,
One touch can show you care.*

*One voice can speak with wisdom,
One heart can know what's true,
One life can make the difference,
You see, IT'S UP TO YOU!*

—Selected

