

Megiddo Message

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Follow Me



Are You Doing the Devil's Work?

1223. διαβολος **diabolos**:—*false accuser, devil, slanderer.*

—Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

According to the Lexicon, the word "devil" as used in the Bible means "false accuser, slanderer." In simplest terms, a devil is one who accuses falsely, one who slanders.

False accusations are nothing strange or uncommon. Who of us has not been falsely accused? Coming closer home, who of us has never falsely accused someone else? Of course we felt justified in our accusation. But if we are honest with ourselves we may have to admit that we have spent much—too much—valuable time judging and criticizing—falsely accusing—our brother. So engrossed have we been in his shortcomings that we were entirely oblivious to the fact that we might have a fault or two of our own.

Isn't all such activity rightly called the devil's work?

And—what is the next conclusion we should draw in this analysis? Precisely this: that when you and I do the devil's work, *we are the devil*.

Not a very flattering conclusion, but facts are facts. And this one was stated definitely by Jesus: that when we do wrong, we are devils. Did He not say to Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan?" The devil is anyone who answers to the definition: "slanderer, false accuser."

What is the value in our false accusations, slander, or plain (largely unfounded) criticism? What benefit do we derive from doing the devil's work? We build up feelings of ill against others, we stimulate unkind thoughts, and waste many precious moments—which could be better spent. We feed our jealousies, we stir up hatred and mistrust, we encourage dissent, and discourage worthy effort. And are

not all of our barbed remarks, skeptical allusions and captious complaints much more akin to the devil's work than to our Master's?

If we review the terms of our contract with our Master, we will find that we are committed not to indulge in *any* of the devil's work. Jesus described the devil's work in detail when He enumerated the evils that proceed "from within, out of the heart of men" (Mark 7:21-23). We are not to backbite, or slander, or accuse falsely under any circumstances. We are not even to criticize unnecessarily, or find unnecessary fault.

How much progress we could make—and how much help we could lend to others—if only we could learn to be rigorous in our judgment of ourselves and gentle in our judgment of others. If we would remedy a fault, kindness works best with others, sternness with ourselves. It is so easy to make allowances for our weaknesses, our deficiencies, our slips of speech. But what about those of others?

It is strange how high our opinion runs of ourselves: The dust for others, the sky for self.

Let the words of the apostle Paul strike as an arrow to the mark: "If we must be critical, let us be critical of our own conduct" (Rom. 14:13, Phillips). Also Jesus's words in His Sermon on the Mount, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye, with never a thought for the great plank in your own? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye', when all the time there is that plank in your own? You hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to

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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 (II 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 of applying in 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 a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Soon-coming events

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.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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Megiddo Message

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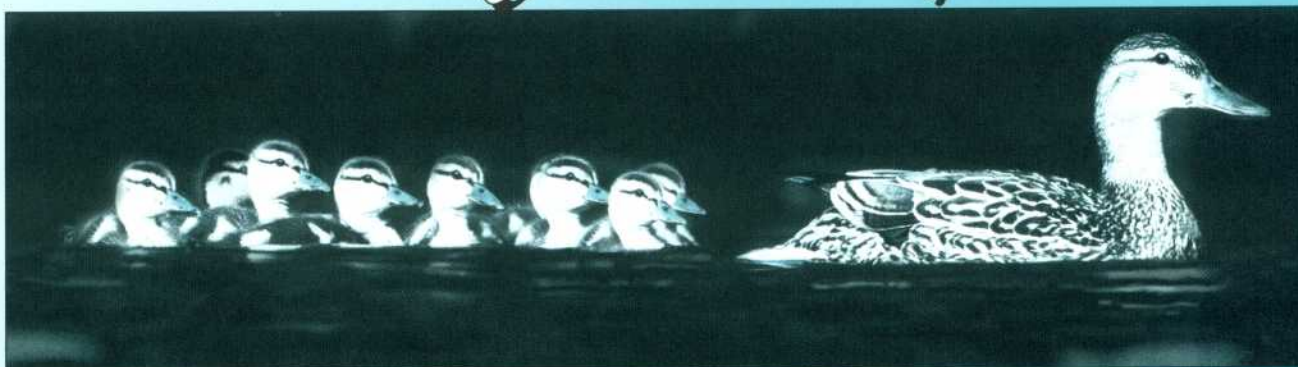
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Follow Me



What Have They Seen

The power of example touches all of us. There is no one who is not influenced, or does not influence others. The apostle Paul said it in these words: "No man liveth to himself alone."

But in no sphere is the power of example more potent than in the family. The infants of today are the young men and women of tomorrow, leaving home to enter adult life with equipment largely provided by their childhood environment.

You, fathers and mothers—what have they seen in you? Have you prepared them to face life, or have you deprived them of the most important things which they could have seen and experienced?

Has your example been one from which they can profit? Have your concerns been centered on time, or on eternity? on material or on spiritual values?

Have your children been conditioned to consider making a living as being of primary importance, or "success" in life, or do they know that for you the Kingdom of God and His righteousness come first?

Have they learned the social graces at the expense of deep, spiritual truth? Have they developed built-in safeguards to purity, or are their standards those of the world around them?

A carefully structured godly character is the only safeguard against temptation. As parents we may not think of it, but when we compromise our principles

we are teaching our children how to compromise theirs.

When your children leave home, what will they remember about your relationship with God? Is yours a home where prayer is always given a primary place? Do your children see you turning often to God for guidance and help? Do they know from your experience that Divine help is available to those who trust God and are committed to obeying Him above all else?

Is prayer in your home incidental, or reserved for emergencies, or is it a daily way of life?

And what place has the Bible in your life? Is it a pious ornament on your table, or a book of reference and inspiration to which you turn daily?

Every believer needs to know and feel that the Bible is God's Word and that it has the answers to all our human problems. What attitude toward the Scriptures are your children learning from you? What if they esteem the Bible in the same way that you do—will you be pleased? If they follow your example, will they turn to the Bible with love and joy, and look forward to learning more of God's truth each time they read it? Again let us ask: What have they seen in your house? And what have they experienced at your hand? Have they learned that God loves everybody, or have they learned what the Bible teaches—that God

Following is part of life. Children follow their parents or grandparents, heroes or peers. Everyone is an example—worthy or unworthy—to someone.

At the very core of Israel's ancient law was every person's duty to learn the law and keep it, and for parents to instruct their children in the law of God. *"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates"* (Deut. 11:18-20).

Again Moses warned: *"But be careful! Watch out and don't forget the things you have seen. Don't forget them as long as you live, but teach them to your children and grandchildren. Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Mount Sinai. He said to*

In Your House?

loves us as we obey, and that the law of God is firm and unyielding? Have they learned that you can say "Yes" or "No" with equal emphasis?

What place has God in your family life? Is He incidental or vital?

What is your attitude toward others' problems? Do you try to be sympathetic, understanding, and evaluate others' situations from a standpoint of being helpful, or realistic, to show the effects of basic types of conduct or misconduct, so that your children may benefit? Do the disasters, sorrows, and privations of others bring tangible reactions in your home? And do you give your children the opportunity to help others?

Yes, what have they seen in your house?

Another question: What have they *heard* in your house? bickering and strife? conversations taken up with trivialities? the standards of Hollywood and its latest productions, or the standards of Christ? Where is your enthusiasm? Do they hear everyday about what is happening in Washington? or who is running for the election, or do they feel your greatest enthusiasm is in the support of the coming election, and the new government which Christ will set up?

What about your spirit?—it may be their spirit also. Is there a spirit critical of neighbors, or friends, or teachers? What is the overall impression they get of

what is really important—a spirit of truth, or of carping criticism?

What about your values? Do your children see you compromising with wrong, even in little things? Do they hear you distorting the truth even in tiny situations that perhaps make no difference? Do they sense that absolute honesty is not important to you, that face and appearance predominate above fact?

What do you expect them to think when your words and actions do not jibe, when it is clear that there is some basic compromise with sin?

Moses expressed the responsibility of passing on a godly heritage to the next generation: *"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up?"* (Deut. 6:7).

Such responsibilities carry over from generation to generation. And like Joshua of old they must continually make and reinforce the decision, *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Josh. 24:15).

Only too soon the opportunity is gone, and your children have moved beyond your influence. And with them will go the impressions of their youth. They will be either prepared or unprepared to meet the temptations and buffetings which are inevitable.

What are they seeing in your house? □

me, Bring the people together so I can tell them what I have to say. Then they will respect me as long as they live in the land, and they will teach these things to their children" (Deut. 4:9-10, NIV).

So it was nothing new when Jesus said to His disciples, "Follow Me."

"Jesus replied, 'I tell you this: in the world that is to be, when the Son of Man is seated on his throne in heavenly splendour, you my followers will have thrones of your own, where you will sit as judges of the twelve tribes of Israel. And anyone who has left brothers or sisters, father, mother, or children, land or houses for the sake of my name will be repaid many times over, and gain eternal life'"

—Matthew 19:28-29, NEB.

It was springtime in sunny Galilee. The blue sea shimmered beneath the warm rays of the morning sun. Beyond the pebbly beach the green hills laden with the flowers of spring stretched far away to the fair blue skies.

In a quiet cove a little distance from the busy city of Capernaum, Andrew and Simon sat in a ship industriously mending their nets. Above the gray hills of the Gadarenes the morning sun was mounting higher, and they were anxious to push out. Andrew paused from his work, looking up. Far up the hillside, wending his way along the dusty road, was a solitary figure. As he drew nearer, Andrew's heart rejoiced; it was their beloved friend Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, "The Lamb of God," as John, that fearless young prophet down by the fords of Jordan, described Him.

Vividly did Andrew recall that day but a few weeks back. At the busy market at Jerusalem he had heard excited tales of a preacher out in the wilderness of Judea, gaunt and stern as another Elijah, one whose burning words were worthwhile to hear. With his business over, he and his partner, John the son of Zebedee, joined the crowds that thronged down the narrow path that leads from Jerusalem to Jericho, through the barren region of crags and ravines, out onto those lonely wastes by the Dead Sea waters.

A multitude had gathered there from

every direction, Pharisee and Sadducee, scribe and soldier, priest and publican, to catch the sound of that "voice of one crying in the wilderness," one whose doctrine was the baptism of repentance; and his message, the coming of a deliverer. "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance!" were the words that came from his lips. The proud and sanctimonious Pharisees and the haughty Sadducees he addressed as, "O generation of vipers!" and added, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

"What shall we do?" the people asked him.

His reply was, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." To the publicans who came to him to be baptized, he said, "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." The soldiers he enjoined, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

The crowds pressed nearer. Who was he? Was he the Christ? He plainly told them he was not the Christ. "Who art thou?" "Art thou Elias?" "Art thou a prophet?" No; he said he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the Lord.... He it is who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." Andrew had been impressed. The words of that strange preacher sank deep. Long after the sun sank behind the flinty precipices, and the burning stars came out, Andrew and John discussed the things they had heard that day.

Morning found them close at the side of John the Baptist. As they were standing there alone, where upon the previous day the crowds had been gathered, Jesus passed by. Gazing upon Him, John the Baptist suddenly exclaimed in tones of reverential awe, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Those words were too remarkable to be unheeded. Jesus they knew, and His manner of life; His upright and holy character they were acquainted with. Could He be the One of whom the Baptist had spoken, who coming after him should be preferred before him? At this bidding from John the Baptist, the fishermen left his

side and hastened to follow Jesus. He turned at the sound of their footsteps, gently enquiring, "What seek ye?"

They said unto Him, "Master, where dwellest thou?"

He said unto them, "Come and see."

They went with Him and abode with Him that day, and the following morning they journeyed with Him to Galilee, where they left Him to return to their fishing.

Now He was coming toward them, descending the sunny hillside. As He neared the shore He called to them across the water, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Straightway they left their nets and followed Him. That was the beginning of their career. Unlearned, simple fishermen, they started out with high hopes and beating hearts, leaving homes, occupations and earthly ambitions to follow the Galilean preacher.

The busy days that followed sped rapidly by. A year or more passed, a year of journeying, teaching, healing, laboring and preaching. Yet the wondering multitudes that thronged about the great Healer, the itinerant preacher of Galilee, did not dream who He was.

On a warm summer day Jesus with His disciples journeyed northward. As they drew near Caesarea Philippi, that famous city nestled in a valley at the foot of Mount Hermon, Jesus turned to His disciples. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?"

They answered, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

He said unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?"

Then Peter, the ever warm-hearted, answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The end of His earthly mission was approaching, and knowing His disciples were unprepared, that they were yet dwelling on idle hopes of earthly splendor, He began calmly and deliberately to reveal to them His intended journey to Jerusalem, His rejection by the leaders of the nation, the anguish and the insult that awaited Him, and, as a consolation to them, His resurrection on the third day.

Such words were more than the sympathetic Peter could bear. Acting upon impulse he indiscreetly began to rebuke His Master: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee."

Sharply Jesus reproved him: "Get thee behind me, Satan...for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Then more solemnly He added, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

Yes, through daily crosses, through trials, through death, His footsteps would lead. Yet what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? "Follow Me!"

Miserable and sick at heart, with the last glimmer of hope almost extinguished, Peter fearfully followed, through the darkness far at the rear of the hostile crowd that was triumphantly carrying away captive his Master.

In the lower courtyard of Caiaphas' house he joined the palace servants, hoping that he would be regarded as merely a curious onlooker, while despondently he waited to see the end. The night was chilly. As he stretched his hands out over the fire, a maid servant looked upon him intently. Turning to the others, she exclaimed, "Why, this fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth!" Peter, startled into fear, denied it. Trembling inwardly and

filled with uneasiness he withdrew from the suspicious group at the fireside and slipped over to the shadows of the porch. The minutes dragged slowly by. Then another maid saw him, and began to say to them that stood by, "This is one of them." Once more he emphatically denied it, using an oath to seal him from any further suspicion, declaring, "I know not the man."

A whole hour passed, a fearful hour. Once more one of the high priest's servants strongly and confidently charged him with having been with Jesus in the Garden, for his speech was that of the Galileans. Others joined in the accusation. Pressed the closer, he began to curse and swear, saying, "I know not the man of whom you speak." At that fatal moment, from the distance came the sound of the cock crowing, and at the same instant the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. What a look that was! What a feeling of remorse swept through the heart of Peter! The sound of that cock-crowing and that look from his Master shocked him into remembrance of words that had seemed unbelievable but a few hours previous: "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

Filled with misery and anguish Peter turned and fled out into the misty gray morning, out to the cold, dark hills to weep bitterly. An hour later, as the sun appeared over Olivet, he returned to the city penitent and humbled.

Valuable lessons did Peter learn in that hour between daybreak and dawn, lessons that are reflected in his Epistles of later years.

It was springtime in Galilee. Dawn was breaking above the bleak hills of the Gadarenes. Far out on the misty waters of the lake was a little fishing boat occupied by five men. Wearily they pulled in their nets, for they had fished all night and caught

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Think Magnificently About God!

No one likes to be told that he is a small person—small in outlook, small in vision, small in soul, small in character. Of course not! Doesn't everyone know how really important he is? Ask the average man on the street a few questions, and you discover quite soon that he sees himself as really *big* and in the center of the universe—*his* universe, at least.

But when we are wrapped up in ourselves we are—in spite of our grand imaginings—a very small package. Smallness is the bane of our existence. Small thoughts consume us, small interests absorb us, small horizons limit us, small pleasures satisfy us, small problems vex us. This is our natural, unreformed state. It is to *redeem us* from this smallness that the knowledge of God comes, to show us broader horizons and higher goals. It comes to expand our minds, that we may expand our actions, that we may ultimately have our whole existence expanded! No small thing is this.

Why do we tend to be so small? There is but one reason: we *think* small. The Almighty has surrounded us with countless evidences of His greatness and His creative ability. But many are the small-minded admirers of beauty for beauty's sake, who fail to look beyond the beauty to its Creator. God has given His Word to tell of Himself and His magnificent plan. But many are those who read the Sacred Writings and see neither God nor His magnificence—and all because of their small thinking.

One area in which our small-mindedness is especially grievous is in our thinking about God. We recognize that He is our Creator, but too rarely does our outreach toward Him and our thinking about Him even touch His greatness. We say that we

trust Him, but in actual fact we do not fully trust either our world or ourselves to God. We believe primarily in ourselves. The proof of this comes in our conversation, as we plan and propose without considering the will or the wishes of God. Our belief in ourselves shows also in our attitude, when we act as though the whole world would stop if we stopped pushing. And then we worry and fret, as though the God who sustains the universes was not capable of ordering our little lives aright. What small-minded creatures we are!

The Bible tells us that in former times men of God were moved in heart by the remembrance of His power; they were stirred to holiness by His goodness, filled with wonder by His purposes, and awed by the thought of His judgments. They entrusted the entire directing of their lives to God. When they approached Him in prayer, they prayed as though their life depended on gaining an audience in His presence. But for us—well, how is it with us? How close to God do *we* live? How desirous are we as we approach the throne of grace? Another writer has put the feeling of many into these words: "We are almost casual in our approach to God. It does not amaze us as our fathers

were amazed, that we can speak to God in His glory," that we can address Him as "our Father," or turn to Him for strength in time of need. "We turn into His presence almost nonchalantly, shoving the door open with a lazy shoulder. We speak to Him as if He did not matter too much to us, as if He were about on our level, He and we."

Yet the central fact of life is that *God is*. In serious moments we realize we do indeed need God. "I need thee every hour" is more than

*The Great Creator
wants great souls who
share His great thoughts
and interests.*

pleasing hymnbook meter; it is a fact we should never forget. In God *"we live, and move, and have our being."* Should He choose to withdraw our breath at any moment, all of us would perish together, as the patriarch Job observed long ago (Job 34:14-15).

We know this, but how do we get a deeper impression of our need for God, an impression so deep that we will never forget our dependence upon Him? How can we reach beyond our small world with its small interests and small goals into His infinite realm? How can we expand our minds, that we may expand our actions?

We need to follow the advice of a serious thinker of yesterday: "Think magnificently about God."

Let's try some magnificent thinking, and see what it can do for our spiritual vitality.

Think About God

Let us begin with God as our Great Creator. To Him we owe our very existence. *"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein,"* sang the Psalmist of Israel. *"The Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand"* (Ps. 24:1; 95:3-7). Come, think magnificently about God!

Think of the processes of creation that brought into being the vastness of His world. Think of the orderliness and intelligibility of the creation. Think of the almost unbelievable perfection of the conditions which combine to make life on earth possible for us—the surrounding atmosphere in which the proportion of oxygen and nitrogen is *just right* (and that *margin* of "rightness" is very narrow). Think of the yearly round of heat and cold within the narrow temperature limits we are able to tolerate; the inclination of the earth's axis at 23-1/2 degrees, no more, no less; the revolution of the earth about the sun on its proper and unmarked path; the perfectly timed movements of the planets in our solar system; all these resulting in the succession of day and night and the recurring seasons. Think of the provision of adequate moisture; the relation of sea and land to each other, and of plant and animal life to each other, and of

the natural resources for sustaining plant and animal life.

Here is wonderment beyond description. Here is the work of an infinitely Wise Mind, whose creation speaks to us in a million ways of ability beyond our power to fathom, much less duplicate. Here is creative power and extravagance that stirs sensitive minds and hearts to reverence and awe. Think magnificently about God!

Go outside on a clear night and look into the star-studded heavens. There light coming from a star strikes our eye. The light coming from this star left on its journey toward us long ago, perhaps while David was tending his sheep in the Palestinian hills, and it has been coming toward us ever since, traveling at the speed of light, 186,000 miles every second of every hour of every day for 3,550 years. Our minds bog down because in our personal experience we can scarcely begin to comprehend the distance in a single light year, to say nothing of 3,550 light years! To travel the distance of a single light year one would have to make 40 million trips around the earth, the equivalent of six trillion miles. And to think that light reaching our eyes now from the stars has been traveling for as much as hundreds, millions, and trillions of years!

What happens within mind and heart as we stand perceptively and sensitively before the vastness of such creation? Think magnificently about God!

See the wonder of His creative power in the infinitely great and the infinitely small; He is the God of space and time and eternity. He is the God who designed the atom, with its complexity of moving particles. He, the Creator of the countless worlds shining above is also the Creator of the lowly human family. That marvelous mechanism, the human body, with intricacies that defy explanation, was designed by Him. Think magnificently about God!

The fact that you and I are able to talk and think together as we do results from the fact that God *is*. For

the capacity to use words we understand, we depend upon what He has put within the framework of our bodies. All consciousness and intelligence is the gift of God. It is God's wisdom which the scientist seeks constantly; His wisdom is behind the growth of every blade of grass, as well as the plan of the universes which fill interstellar space. In God is the source of life itself. Long before our little minds started functioning, God created universes which we are just now "discovering"

*Behind everything
we see and touch and
experience is the power of
God. Oh, think magnifi-
cently about God!*

by our most powerful telescopes. Behind everything we see and touch and experience is the power of God. Oh, let us think magnificently about God!

Then think of ourselves set within this vast creation. One out of the five billion human creatures on one small planet in one small solar system in one of the smaller galaxies of one of the universes of His creation—how does God even know we are here? In the words of King David, *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"* (Ps. 8:4). Say this, as you think magnificently about God!

Go outside on a clear night, look into the heavens, and realize that the light reaching your eye this moment has been traveling toward you at 186,000 miles every second of the last several thousand...or million... years—and think magnificently about God!



He is so great, and so mighty, and so all-powerful, and yet He has offered to draw us poor frail creatures of dust into the circle of His special concern and purpose! He has offered to let us drink of the river of His pleasures, to taste the joy of His salvation, to give us a share in His Divine nature, and to crown us as eternal members of His eternal family—if we will meet His standards. Can we disregard such a high calling and honor? Nay! Rather, think magnificently about God—yes, indeed, think magnificently about our God!

Others Have Thought Magnificently About God

People of God in all ages have thought magnificently about God. Their dedicated minds transcended the bondage of the earthly and touched upon the infinite and absolute. In such thinking, language became inarticulate. That is why the apostle Paul, who called himself "crude in speech," exclaimed: *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"* (Rom. 11:33).

Prophets and poets of old found themselves frequently on the brink of the infinite gazing into the depth of a Divinity that overwhelmed them and drew from their hearts such bursts of feeling as mere words cannot express. Again and again they exhausted their vocabularies and their powers of description, and still they fell short of the full magnificence they felt to ascribe. No small-minded men were those holy men of old; they thought magnificently about God, His power, His grandeur, His greatness, His justice, His righteousness, His truth.

Perhaps among the most magnificent descriptions of God are a few words in the book of Ephesians. Attempting to describe God's ability to recompense the faithful, Paul wrote that God is able to do *"exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think"*—or this is how the words come to us in our King James Version (Eph. 3:20). Translators agree that the words of the passage defy translation—Paul went beyond the limits of his language in an attempt to describe that which exceeds the supreme! Indeed, Paul thought magnificently about God!

Abraham nearly four millennia ago felt God's magnificence so strongly—in contrast to his own littleness—that he did not venture to speak to the Lord's angel without expressing his insignificance and utter nothingness. *"Behold now,"* he said in deepest humility, *"I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes"* (Gen. 18:27). He who was called the *"friend of God"* and communed with Him so frequently thought magnificently about God.

When Moses thought of God he seems to have been profoundly impressed with God's faithfulness and mercy, a Being who could be trusted to be true to His Word as far into the future as Moses could imagine. "Know therefore," he told Israel, "that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations" (Deut. 7:9). We today are still well within the margin of time. This magnificent God is faithful to those who are faithful to Him for ever, even for ever and ever!

Again Moses' magnificent thinking found beautiful—though still inadequate—expression as he wrote this song during his last days of life: "I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." A little later, in the same exultant song, he wrote, speaking for God, "See now that I,

*Think about your body...
an assemblage of some 100 trillion
cells, each cell performing its
specific functions day and night
as long as you live
—and think magnificently
about God!*

*even I, am he, and there is no god
with me: I kill, and I make alive:
I wound, and I heal: neither
is there any that can deliver
out of my hand. For I
lift up my hand to heaven,
and say, I live for ever*" (Deut. 32:3-4; 39-40).

The book of Psalms is filled with David's magnificent thoughts about God. "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5). "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable" (Ps. 145:3). "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (Ps. 104:24). "O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep" (Ps. 92:5). "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory" (Ps. 72:18-19)—these are just a few out of many hundreds.

At the time the people gave freely and willingly for the house of the Lord which Solomon was to build,

Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God....Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshipeth Thee."

And when we look into Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, may our naturally proud attitude be humbled, so that we will be moved upon to ask: What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? What am I that Thou hast opened to me such a delightful door of hope? Knowing as we do that all nations before Thee are as a drop in a bucket, help us to realize how unimportant we as individuals must be.

God of history, God of our day, and God of our future, lift us up that we may have fellowship with Thee, with one another, being a part of that broader fellowship of sainted souls who have gone before us. By holding in remembrance the lives of holy men and women, may we ourselves become stronger and more righteous persons, better able to bear the burdens and meet the responsibilities of our own day.

May we always be keenly aware of Thy greatness, and often count and recount the evidence of Thy power and creative ability. The heavens declare Thy glory, and the earth shows Thy handiwork. In view of these evidences of Thy greatness may we be humbled, may we be overawed, and may we willingly exchange our shallow worthless thoughts for Thy thoughts, which are as high above the thoughts of erring man as the heaven is higher than the earth.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

David offered a magnificent prayer to his magnificent God, to whom he felt deeply indebted—but for God's mercy he would have been cut off years before. These are his words: *"Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever: Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine*

on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart" (1 Kings 8:22-23). Had he maintained this magnificent thinking toward God all of his days he would be among God's honor roll. But his name is not there.

The prophet Isaiah pictured God's magnificence as unrivaled and supreme: *"Lift up your eyes on high,"* he wrote, *"and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth"* (Isa. 40:26). He was extolling God's magnificence by calling attention to His vast creative work. He is the God who *"fainteth not, neither is weary";* He is *"the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth"* (Isa. 40:28). *"To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One"* (Isa. 40:25).

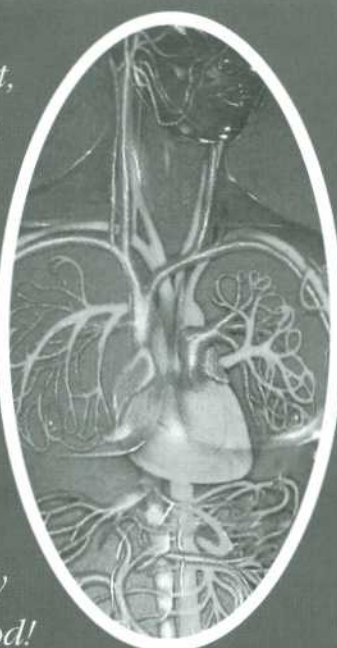
The young Jeremiah, when called of God, thought of God so magnificently that he felt himself totally unworthy. *"Ab, Lord God!"* were the words that escaped his lips, *"behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child"* (Jer. 1:6).

Jeremiah addressed God as *"the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation....Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give everyone according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings"* (Jer. 10:10; 32:19).

Nehemiah was thinking magnificently about God when he extolled Him in prayer: *"Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee"* (Neh. 9:6).

No small-minded men were those prophets and apostles of old; they thought deeply, reverently, magnificently about God. And as we recall their words, are we not also stimulated to think mag-

Think about your heart, beating, beating, every hour, day and night, as long as you live. Think about the blood in your veins, constantly flowing, constantly multiplying its cells, completing some 500 trillion faultless copies of hemoglobin every second—and think magnificently about God!



band it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." Feel the magnificence in these words. David was recognizing God as the source of all his blessings. He was thinking magnificently about God (1 Chron. 29:10-12).

David's son Solomon started out with the same reverential feeling toward the God of his fathers. As he stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel when dedicating the completed house of the Lord, he spread forth his hands toward heaven and prayed, *"Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or*

nificantly? How can we possibly content ourselves with small thoughts, small goals, small utterances, when we worship the Creator of the universes? We who are so highly favored, called to be members of the heavenly family; we who hope to share someday the inheritance of the saints of God, can we not think magnificently about God?

Our Plague: Shallowness

Magnificent thinking is not natural to us. Shallowness is the plight of the majority of humankind. The mass media, radio and television, save thousands the trouble of thinking for themselves. The moment's excitement or pleasure is about the extent of their interest in life.

While this seems extreme, we cannot exempt ourselves from the danger of shallowness. We would do well to check often the depth-level of our thinking, for we are all too shallow by nature, too small in thought and vision. If we could see a written record of all our thoughts in a single day, we might be appalled at the multitude of small, repetitious thoughts we entertained. It is so easy to let our minds go over and over something of no value whatever, or to wander from this to that without aim or direction. No small task is it to bring every thought into captivity and make it obey Christ, but this is what we must do if ever we are accepted by Him.

The Great Creator takes no delight in mental pygmies; He wants great souls who share His great thoughts and great interests. There is no place in God's family for miniature men and women with miniature minds and miniature characters. God deals only in greatness. Everything about Him is superlative.

Do we qualify? Are our thoughts

appropriate to the magnificent God we serve? How much time do we waste reviewing minor issues that require practically no thought at all? How much time might we have for soul-stirring prayer and heavenly meditating if we watched our thoughts with all vigilance and strictly prohibited our minds from dwelling on issues we have no power to change, or issues which are of no lasting consequence and provide no spiritual stimulus?

Using Our Minds

God has given us minds, and He wants us to use them. Thinking requires conscious, directed effort, but He has given us also the willpower to make that effort. We have all the faculties we need to think magnificently.

But how? Do we wonder how we of ourselves can ever originate a magnificent thought? We need not worry, for God knows our frame, and He has supplied our need abundantly. He has provided us an inexhaustible storehouse of lofty thoughts. Ten centuries could not exhaust its thinking possibilities, to say nothing of our little lifetime. All we have to do is to "read, and meditate," and then—grow! Could God possibly have made right thinking easier for us?

With so much done in our behalf, with minds to think, intel-

lects to reason, memories to remember, and a wealth of magnificent thoughts all written out to be absorbed and put to use, do we realize what a dishonor we do our loving God when we fill our minds with petty interests, small desires, and useless whims?

In the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians is a breath-taking list of magnificent possibilities for worthwhile thinking: "Brothers," he writes, "*whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things....And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 4:8-7, NIV).

The Effects of Magnificent Thinking

Magnificent thinking should have a profound effect upon our lives, for how can we truly worship the "*high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy*," without ourselves aspiring more and more to holiness? How can we meditate upon His supreme greatness and not be humbled? How can we recognize His almighty power and not feel our own impotence? How can we cherish thoughts of His great goodness and not be thoroughly ashamed of our pettiness, our little strifes, grumbles, grudges and gripes! How can we delight in any of these and at the same time entertain magnificent thoughts of God and His holiness? Doesn't the very thought of God's magnificence move us to say with finality to one and all of our petty ways, "Be gone! I'll have no more to do with all such nothingness!"?

(Continued on page 20)

*Our righteous
Lord loves righteousness,
and His countenance
beholds only the upright
with approval.*



Just Watching

He is only six. Perhaps that's excuse enough. Still, I could hardly believe what I saw. We were visiting my sister's family, and young Brian had not been seen for a long time. Presently I decided to find him. And there he sat, leaning hard on the upstairs windowsill, watching with all eyes what was happening outside the window. In the adjacent schoolyard, a gymnastics class was being conducted. And there sat Brian, not moving a muscle, but 100% entertained. Just watching.

"Kick. (pause) Kick. TWO, THREE, FOUR...." Brian watched silently. I could hear the exercise instructor saying, "You know what your problem is—." Probably by now the panting exercisers did have some idea of their physical problems. But not Brian. Unswearing, unpanting, unmoved he sat, just holding down the windowsill.

I would have shaken my head and called him away if a parallel had not struck me just then. Watching a group of exercisers is not much different than sitting in a pew at church, if one's only purpose is entertainment. Plenty of people do that all the time!

("Kick, two, three, four...")

"Let us pray," says the preacher. Or, "Let us read from Deuteronomy 32,..." or "*We ought to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength....*"

In the pews sit the silent observers, not moving a muscle.

("There—doesn't that make the blood circulate?")

"There's no thrill equal to doing God's work," says the preacher.

The motionless observers do not feel any thrill.

("You know what your problem is—.") Some may know the nature of their spiritual problems, but others may be thinking about what they are going to do when they get home, or next week, or what they need to buy at the store. Simple pew-warmers don't care much about their problems.

Have some of them attempted, once or twice, to participate in the Christian life, to see their problems and master them—and failed? Or have they even failed to try?

We are here to act on the Word, not merely to listen to it, deluding ourselves (James 1:22, Moffatt). We are here to be alert and strong for the battle against sin, to give our all, not reserving any strength with which to gratify our flesh nature (Romans 13:13-14). If we fail to do this, how can we benefit? How can we encourage ourselves? How can we be strong and growing stronger?

We are not here to watch, but to participate. We are here to get into the action and really act. We are here to develop strong spiritual muscles by which we can "run" the way of His commandments (Psalm 119:32).

How can we be content with mere watching?

Mere watching may be entertaining, but it will not make us any stronger. To get strength we must participate. We must submit ourselves to the disciplines that develop strength.

God has liberal rewards, but only for the participants, those who have given themselves heart and soul and mind and strength.

He has nothing for those who are content with just watching. □

The Fool's Prayer

The royal feast was done; the King
Sought out some sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

"No pity, Lord, can change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool;
The rod must heal each sin: But Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

"Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

"These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart-strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung?"

"Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But for our blunders—oh, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

"Earth has no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave, and scourge the tool
That did his will; but Thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The King, and sought his gardens cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me, a fool!"

-Selected

Belief in Inerrancy

A Summary

Inerrancy In The Early Church

The attitude of the early Church toward the Old Testament Scriptures is summarized by the German scholar and historian, Adolf Harnack. Mr. Harnack delivered a series of lectures during the late nineteenth century, in which he covered in detail the history of the Christian Church, from its earliest days to the present.

According to Mr. Harnack, the early Church believed that the "sayings of the Old Testament, the Word of God," furnished "inexhaustible material for deeper knowledge. The Christian prophets [teachers] were nurtured in the Old Testament, the teachers gathered from it the revelation of the past, present and future, and were therefore able as prophets to edify the churches." Also from the Old Testament they were able to draw a "confirmation of the answers to emergent questions, as one could always find in the Old Testament what he was in search of." The various writers in the early Church began with the fundamental understanding that the Old Testament was a holy Book, containing correct information and needful explanations. Although certain parts of the histories seemed "in part unintelligible, or in their literal sense offensive [contrary to common reasoning], they were at the same time regarded as fundamental words of God." Can we wonder that they used the Scriptures freely, and relied upon them for their principle points of

belief? From the Old Testament they obtained 1) their belief in one eternal and all powerful God, supreme in the cosmos, omniscient and omnipotent; 2) a wealth of prophecies that had been written "centuries, nay, thousands of years beforehand," pertaining to the appearance and entire history and destiny of Jesus Christ, also to the mission that would grow out of His work; 3) the Old Testament "was used as a means of verifying all principles and institutions of the Christian Church, i.e., the spiritual worship of God without images, the abolition of ceremonial legal precepts, etc."; 4) the Old Testament "was used for purposes of exhortation: if God then punished and rewarded this or that in such a way, how much more may we expect, who now stand in the last days?..." 5) there were in the "Old Testament books, above all, in the prophets and in the Psalms, a great number of sayings—confessions of trust in God, of help received from God, of humility and holy courage." There were also "testimonies of a world-overcoming faith," also "words of comfort, love and communion"—all of which were "too exalted for any caviling, and intelligible to every spiritually awakened mind." Then Mr. Harnack concludes with this statement: "Out of this treasure which was handed down to the Greeks and Romans, the Church edified herself, and in the perception of its riches was largely rooted the conviction that the

holy Book must in every line contain the highest truth." (from Adolf Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Vol.1, pp.175ff).

Inerrancy After Christ

Belief in the inerrancy of Scripture was the consistent teaching of the Christian Church, and the solid conviction held by virtually all Christians and Christian teachers through the first seventeen hundred years of the Church's history. Except for a few scholastics, the doctrine was generally assumed. Believers simply adhered to the doctrine of Biblical authority on the basis of an understanding of Scripture, and when any question arose they sought the answer directly in Scripture. Not until the veracity of Scripture was undermined and threatened by hostile critics did the need arise to prove the inerrancy of the Bible.

The early Church fathers differed widely, both in their principles and in their interpretations of Scripture; but all assumed that the Scriptures were consistent, that they were the final authority, and that there were no contradictions in Scripture. Scripture was considered to be the revealed Word of God.

Bible Scholar Robert D. Preus, in a lecture on "The View of the Bible Held By the Early Church," comments, "The early Christian fathers, the Apostolic fathers, and the Apologists always accepted the Old Testament as divinely inspired and authoritative, long before the entire New Testament Canon was accepted. Like the apostles in the Book of Acts, they consistently cited the Old Testament as divinely authoritative for their proclamation of the Christian gospel....The Apologists were in fact brought to faith in Christ through their reading of the Old Testament Scriptures." After the time of the Apologists, "The New Testament writings were accepted along with the Old Testament....The New Testament was therefore considered completely authoritative along with the Old, and

the two were now seen as one unit. The New Testament was regarded as the divinely authoritative commentary on the Old....

"Correlative to Scripture's divine origin and authority is its truthfulness and reliability. This was the universal conviction of the early Church. Never was there any doubt concerning the inerrancy of Scripture. The notion of an errant Word of God was unthinkable in those days. True, fanciful exegesis often was employed, the allegorical method," and the search for a plainer sense of the written word. Augustine struggled with many seeming discrepancies, as did other teachers. But "never in those days was a difficulty of Scripture solved by charging Scripture with error or untruth. Never was the unity of Scripture and Scripture's agreement with itself questioned. In fact the inerrancy of Scripture was not merely assumed but was affirmed deliberately and dogmatically. We find Augustine saying that the Scriptures are unique in their inerrancy: 'Only to those books which are called canonical have I learned to give honor so that I believe most firmly that no author in these books made any error in writing....I read other authors not with the thought that what they have taught and written is true just because they have manifested holiness in learning.'" (from *Inerrancy*, ed. by Norman I. Geisler, Zondervan Publishing House, copyright 1980, pp. 357ff.).

"I have learned to defer this respect and honor to the canonical books of Scripture alone, that I most firmly believe that no one of their authors has committed any error in writing. And if in their writings I am perplexed by anything which seems to me contrary to truth, I do not doubt that it is nothing else than either that the manuscript is corrupt, or that the translator has not followed what was said, or that I have myself failed to understand it."

— Augustine

Jerome made many similar assertions. When Augustine and Jerome speak of the truthfulness of Scripture, they include the formal inerrancy of Scripture (Scripture does not contradict itself) and the material truthfulness of Scripture (all the assertions of Scripture correspond to what is, in fact, so). According to the Fathers, "Scripture is *a priori* true, irrefragably so. Scripture needs no verification of any kind from outside authority."

When we come to the period of the Reformation, we find a slightly more willing spirit to challenge the authority of Scripture. Although Martin Luther, like his predecessors and immediate followers, rarely spoke of inspiration as such, he said in literally hundreds of instances that Scripture is the Word of God, that God speaks through Scripture, and that God is the author of

Scripture. Luther simply says, "You are so to deal with the Scriptures that you bear in mind that God Himself is saying this." He said also that we fear and tremble before the very words of Scripture because they are God's words, all of them, and "whoever despises a single word of God does not regard any as important." He said also that Matthew, Paul and Peter were indeed men, but should anyone believe that their words and doctrine were only the words of men and not of God, such a one is a hardened and blinded blasphemer who should be avoided. "It is cursed unbelief and the odious flesh which will not permit us to see and know that God speaks to us in Scripture and that it is God's Word, but tells us that it is the word merely of Isaiah, Paul, or some other mere man, who has not created heaven and earth."

Luther was one of the first to take

Biblical Inerrancy

By Rev. L. T. Nichols

I looked over the field of human thought to see by what means I could accomplish the greatest good, and I decided that of all the literature of earth the Bible contained the most knowledge that would benefit humanity for both this life and the one to come.

"On the very threshold of my investigations I was met with much to appall and bewilder even an older head. Over 1,000 faiths in the land, all teaching different things, and all claiming to speak the words of an infallible God, the words of Holy Writ, yet that very Bible teaching that all its sayings are yea and amen, not yea and nay (II Cor. 1:19-20).

"With such a state of affairs, I could not wonder that the world was turning infidel. I did not wonder that the inquirer after truth, bewildered by the confusion arising from jarring sects, began to doubt the infallibility of this blessed Word and infidelity was adding thousands to its ranks.

"Either the Bible was Divine, the work of an infallible God, or it was the work of fallible man; there was

no halfway ground upon which to stand. I met prominent infidels, and found I could not answer the charges brought against it. I saw that the wise of the world, the great teachers of the day, those trained in the theological schools of the land, could not meet them. I saw that the time honored creeds of the day would not stand the test before the bar of reason and evidence. If all others had failed, what could I do? I trembled at the magnitude of the undertaking. Thus passed days and weeks of anxious study, when often upon bended knees and with falling tears I prayed to God for light.

"Then one day while reading carefully, my eye caught a striking testimony in Proverbs 2: 'Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God' (vs.3-5). How the reading of those testimonies impressed my mind! I must search as for hid treasures to ever find the knowledge of God. If that were so, what had covered it up? I sought for the answer, and found it in the sayings of Paul, the great apostle: 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

the position that Scripture (not the established Church) is the only authority for any doctrine. "No doctrine in the Church can come from anywhere but the Holy Scripture; it is our only source of doctrine," said Luther. "There is no other evidence of Christian proof on earth but the Holy Scripture." For Luther it was obvious that neither reason, nor philosophy, nor experience, nor Pope, nor church council could be regarded as an authority beside Scripture; all must conform to Scripture. Nor might any of these be allowed to interpret Scripture in a way that is contrary to its plain and clear meaning. If Scripture is not the authority alone, it is not the authority at all. This was Luther's famous *Sola Scriptura* principle. In his usual blunt and ingenious way, Luther affirmed the absolute infallibility and truthfulness of Scripture. For Luther, this meant that Scripture 1) does not

deceive in any way, and 2) does not contradict itself.

This is precisely the position we take today, that no doctrine can be of God except it be the teaching of Scripture.

What if an apparent error is discovered? Said Luther, "Faith teaches and adheres to the pure truth. He who adheres to the Scriptures will find that they do not lie or deceive....Scripture cannot err....The Scriptures have never erred." If Scripture seems to err, it is our fault for not understanding it properly. "The Holy Spirit has been blamed for not speaking correctly;...But it is our fault, who have not understood the language nor known the manner of the prophets. For it cannot be otherwise. The Holy Spirit is wise and makes the prophets also wise. A wise man must be able to speak correctly; that holds true without fail." □

exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables' (II Tim. 4:1-4). It was the fables to which mankind had been turned that had covered up the true religion, the sound doctrine; and Paul had foretold over 1800 years ago that this would happen, so that we might be able to dig beneath the rubbish and find the hidden truth.

"I need not be discouraged because I stood alone. If I could but learn to read or write I could grasp the key of knowledge that would open the door to the storehouse of truth, and enable me to grasp her treasures. Paul testified to this truth in Ephesians 3:4, 'Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.' This was plain, that understanding would come through reading. But what must I read? Would this knowledge come from catechisms, prayer books, commentaries, the church fathers, or could I obtain it by reading the decrees of councils or the formulated creeds? The fifth verse of Ephesians 3 provided my answer. 'Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.' This called to mind a saying of Jesus

recorded in Luke 11:52, 'Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.'

"The false teachers of the day had taken away the key of knowledge, that which would unlock the most sacred recesses. I must find that key. This I did, as I studied the blessed Bible in Hebrew, Greek and English, that I might obtain a knowledge of its more than wonderful pages. I grasped the key with a firm, unyielding hand, and the fables were discarded as truth was disclosed to view. Seeming impossibilities and contradictions vanished. Instead of quailing before the infidel, it was now the infidel's turn to quail before the mighty power of true religion.

Now, after years of earnest, careful study, I rejoice with joy unspeakable to know that I have found the gem for which I sought and hold in my hands the blessed Bible, knowing that upon its pages are no impossibilities, contradictions or absurdities in the language in which God caused it to be written. As I stand upon the shore in the full blessed light of freedom, and see for me the ending of the weary centuries of darkness, I lift up my heart in thankfulness to God that I have His blessed Word, and by it have been made free from superstition, free to walk in the wonderful light of truth (John 8:32)." □

Thinking magnificently about God humbles us; it fills us with reverence and awe; it puts us in our place as "sheep of His pasture," creatures existing by His mercy, dependent upon our Creator for our very life and all that sustains it. And does it not at the same time stir within us a deeper appreciation of His love and goodness to us and a surging desire to please Him who has not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities? Do we not feel to thank and praise Him whose lovingkindness is better than life? Do we not long to draw nearer and nearer to Him that we may have our souls bound in the bundle of life with Him? He who never calls evil good or good evil, do we not long to learn His definitions and order our lives in His fear?

How can we think magnificently about so loving and merciful a God and not be more and more willing—even eager—to serve Him?

And does not the thought of God's magnificence stimulate our desire to merit an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and partake of the Divine nature (II Pet. 1:2-4)? What could we mortal creatures possibly do—or do without—to be worthy of such high honor?

Overwhelmed...

Oh, as we approach the Almighty and ponder the eternity He has set before us frail creatures of earth, there should rush up from the depths of our souls feelings which all our wealth of words is incapable of expressing. Words become weak and all but useless in describing the magnificent goodness He has shown us in setting before us such indescribable blessings.

We need to be overwhelmed with the realization that we are dealing with Omnipotence. We need to be put to silence in the presence of the Divine. We need to be confounded by the magnitude of what He offers so that it is on our minds continually. We need to think more and more magnificently about God.

For...

Someday we shall have to come to terms with this magnificence. God, who is supreme in knowledge, supreme in wisdom, supreme in creative ability and intelligence, is also supreme in righteousness, in equity and in justice. He has one perfect standard by which He judges all—even us. Someday we shall find ourselves face to face with His righteousness and justice. And what can we expect then? Dare we think that the omnipotent Creator will crown with His magnificence anything that is not itself magnificent?

It is this uncompromising quality of God's nature that will guarantee the blessedness and beauty of His new creation. There will be nothing to hurt nor destroy in that new world because combined with God's long long-suffering and patience is an unflinching intolerance of evil. He will not always chide, nor will He withhold His indignation forever (Ps. 103:9). When the time is right He will act, and no workers of iniquity will survive. His new creation must be as perfect and pure as His own Divine nature; God loves righteousness, and justice and judgment are the eternal habitation of His throne; (Ps. 89:14), where He reigns, these prevail.

God's magnificence should create in us a deeper consciousness of the reality and seriousness of our commitment to God. Never must we forget that He is of too pure eyes to behold iniquity—the world's iniquity, your iniquity, my iniquity—with any degree of tolerance (Hab. 1:13). Sin, any sin, small or great, is nothing less than sin in His sight. And sin, any sin, is exceeding sinful. Before we can hope to know the magnificent blessings He has in store for His own, we will have to learn to see sin as God sees it and eradicate every trace of it from our lives.

Our righteous Lord loves righteousness, and His countenance beholds the upright with most loving approval (Ps. 11:7). He would have us *"all glorious within,"* polished *"after the similitude of a palace,"* *"perfect and complete with never a defect,"* *"not having spot nor*

wrinkle or any such thing," but "holy and without blemish." With examples of this perfection continually around Him in His heavenly realm, can we wonder that He *bates* sin in all of its forms?

Obvious sins—dishonesty, drunkenness, revelry, fornication—may appall us. But our magnificent God sees more than these. He sees all the way into the depths of our being and knows the thoughts that come into our minds, every one of them. There is not a word in our tongue but that He knows—even before it is spoken. He sees even to the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12), and as long as any dark or shady motives are hiding there, He will never bestow upon us His eternal blessings.

God does not classify sins as small, medium and large. He hates all forms of all sins. Oh, let us learn to feel that same abhorrence of our own sins in the depths of our being as we think magnificently about God!

Magnificent Love

Do we realize how endearingly He has spoken of those who turn from sin and learn to live uprightly before Him? We know that whole nations who are unmindful of Him and His great purposes are "*as nothing*"; they are counted as mere dust upon a balance scale; "*all nations are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity*" (Isa. 40:15--17). But those who become holy and righteous, who live by His laws and attain to His standard, are called His "*beloved*" (Deut. 33:12); His "*jewels*" (Mal. 3:17); His "*peculiar treasure*" (Ex. 19:5); those upon whom He has set His love (Deut. 7:6-7); those whom He will make "*high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour...an holy people unto the Lord thy God*" (Deut. 26:18-19); those who are "*called by the name of the Lord*" (Deut. 28:10); those whom He has set apart for Himself (Ps. 4:3); "*a people near unto him*" (Ps. 148:14). Such as are "*upright in heart are his delight*" (Prov. 11:20)—think of being one in whom the God of heaven *delights*! They are His "*sons and daughters*" whom He will gather "*from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him*" (Isa. 43:6-7).

The remembrance of these

chosen ones is with Him continually, even more continually than a mother remembers her newborn infant (Isa. 49:15). "*Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me*" (Isa. 49:16). "*I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people*" (Isa. 51:16). "*My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee*" (Isa. 54:10). "*Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate...for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married [shall be called "a Home"—Knox],...and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee*" (Isa. 62:4-5).

God sent His prophets to warn, but the promises of blessing abound in their words—blessings for the faithful and obedient. "*The Lord thy God...will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing*" (Zeph. 3:17). So precious will they be that they will be "*as a signet*" (Hag. 2:23), and "*he that toucheth [them] toucheth the apple of his eye*" (Zech. 2:8).

Has not God dealt magnificently with us? He has given us this life and all we need to sustain it, while we prepare for life in His better, future world. He has sent His Word to steady us, instruct us, and inspire us; He has sent His Son to show us the way, and brethren to help and accompany us. And He has placed us in the midst of a magnificent creation, giving us countless reminders of His existence, His ability, His omnipotence. How can we possibly be casual and indifferent about such magnificence?

And how can we rest content with ourselves until we have exerted the last ounce of strength within us to attain to the exalted standard of His magnificence?

What a holy privilege is ours to be called into the sphere of such magnificence. Oh, let us think magnificently about our God!

*God's magnificence
should create in us a deeper
consciousness of the reality and
seriousness of our commitment
to God.*

And now, "*unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*" □

Holiness Is *Not* An Option

"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" — 1 Peter 1:15-16.

Is holiness meant for us — when it is the highest attribute that can be ascribed to God and the members of His family? Yes!

We cannot study the Bible diligently and earnestly without being struck by one obvious fact—that our obedience is highly important to God. He does not want us as we naturally are. He wants us to be holy.

This idea does not appeal to the vast majority of people, who live for pleasure and selfish satisfactions. But the Scriptures are forceful. The command to obey is not a polite request but a forceful demand. Peter bases his words on two great facts—first, the character of God (*"as he which hath called you is holy; so be ye holy..."*), and second, the command of God (*"Because it is written, be ye holy..."*).

What is Peter's logic? That God's children must be holy because God Himself is holy, and because God commands them to be holy like Himself.

We who claim to be followers of Christ do not have the privilege of ignoring this command. Simply because it is stated by an Apostle of Jesus Christ, we must face up to the fact that we have to deal with it. We cannot ignore it, or set it aside because it does not go along with our line of thinking. God has never asked us to weigh His commands to us in the balances of our own judgment and then decide what we should do about them. He has given us our choice: We can obey, or disobey. But we take the consequences of our choice.

Once Jesus said to His disciples, *"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."* Many looked at one another,

then walked away. Jesus turned to the remaining ones and said, *"Will ye also go away?"* Then Peter gave the answer which is still our answer today: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life"* (John 6:53, 67-68). Those were wise words, words born of devotion and love, words spoken from the depths of inner conviction.

And so we today repeat: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."* And those words are words which we must obey.

No Compulsion

We are not forced to obey, but we must make the choice at many points. We can reject God's instructions if we wish, but where else shall we go? Who else has anything to offer like Christ? Where else can we find hope? Where else can we find life?

If we choose to ignore the Word of God and treat its commandments as optional, we are showing disrespect and dishonor to the great Author of that Word, and are jeopardizing our own salvation.

The word *holiness* occurs 650 times in the Bible. This is not including the words related in meaning, such as *sanctify* or *sanctified*. Were we to include these, the number would be nearer 1000.

The word *holy* is used to describe the character of angels and the character of God. It is said of God's habitation that it is a holy place where no unclean thing can enter. God is described as the holy Lord

or the "Lord God Almighty." These words are used often throughout the Bible, showing that holiness is the highest attribute that can be ascribed to God and the members of His family.

What is to be the result of the absence of holiness? We will be prevented from seeing God. Says Hebrews 12:14, *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."* This text has great meaning, and ought to disturb us until we have discovered what it means, and how we may meet its conditions.

The Meaning of Holiness

What does the word holiness mean? In the Bible holiness means moral wholeness, a positive quality which actually includes kindness, mercy, purity, moral blamelessness and godliness. And in its Biblical context, it needs to be always thought of in a positive, white-heat intensity of degree.

When we consider the holiness of God, we are talking about something heavenly, awe inspiring, supreme. Some who profess holiness have hardened the meaning of it into a formula which has become a hindrance to repentance, which has been invoked to cover up frivolity and pride and worldliness. The results are that honest, serious persons are turned away from the whole idea, and the fruit of faith is lost.

We are under the holy authority of God. He has asked us to become holy men and women, because we want to be the children of God, who is holy. He requires that His children be righteous, which means being and doing what He calls right.

So what do we do to acquire holiness? First, we must bring our lives into line morally so that God can approve our conduct. Along with this, we must bring our

thoughts under the control of His law, so that they too can be approved of God.

And the groundwork of it all is repentance and obedience, separation and holy living. And along with all this comes a sense of other worldliness which is wonderfully real, which separates us from the present and transports us into another realm where the problems of this world cannot trouble us and the turmoil of this world cannot affect us. It is all a matter of thinking and being and feeling right.

It is all a matter of holiness.

The idea that God will pardon one who remains a rebel at heart is contrary both to the Scriptures and to common sense. How terrible to contemplate a Kingdom full of persons who still love sin and hate righteousness! How horrible to think of God accepting sinners—along with those who made an all-out effort to consecrate their lives and change their ways to His!

In Scripture the promises of pardon are always associated with a command to repent and obey. *"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool...If ye be willing and obedient,"* if we obey the command, *"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well"* (Isa. 1:16-19).

What does this teach but a radical reforming of our life before there can be any expectation of pardon. To divorce the words from each other is to do violence to the Scriptures and to convict ourselves of deceitfully handling the word of life.

Practical Holiness

If we bring the whole matter of holiness down from the uplands of theory and observe it and apply it

to everyday life and conduct, what do we have? We have a plan of life directly against our natural inclinations. For example:

The Christian is at his best in heavenly places, and does not fit well into the society of earth. He belongs to another world.

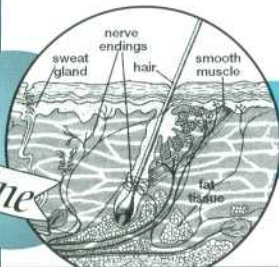
The Christian bent on holiness does not follow the pattern of this world, but quite to the contrary. To be safe, he puts himself in jeopardy. As Jesus said, he loses his life to save it and is in danger of losing it if he attempts to preserve it (Matt. 10:39). He goes down to get up. If he refuses to go down, he is already defeated.

The Christian bent on holiness has set his mind to turn his weakest points into his strengths. When it comes to spiritual essence, he has most after he has given most away.

He can even rejoice in trial, and be glad in sorrow because he is looking at the goal beyond it all.

The Christian bent on holiness is a citizen of the world to come, and to that sacred citizenship he has pledged his first allegiance. He respects his earthly country as a temporary provision of God, and thanks God for every blessing he enjoys. But his heart is in the world to come, the bright new world where Christ will reign as King and all the earth be filled with glory.

The holiness that brings about this change of life is a heart holiness, and it is a command, not an option. Just as holiness in the sight of the law was required under the Mosaic arrangement, so holiness is required of every priest who would serve under the New Covenant, and who would participate in the blessings of the New World. But think of the vistas of knowledge and opportunity to which this holiness opens: even "glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life." □



Our Elastic Cloak

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ... that our skin is the largest and most versatile organ of our body.
- ✓ ... that the skin is an acute sensory organ, constantly reporting current external conditions to the brain, to which the body responds by making internal adjustments.
- ✓ ... that our skin is a large elastic-like garment that stretches as we stretch and moves as we move.
- ✓ ... that our skin is totally 'new' about every 27 days—the outer layer of our skin literally rubs off at the rate of about a million cells every 40 minutes, which our body replaces with new cells at an equivalent rate.
- ✓ ... that our skin shields our body against injury, against invasion by foreign matter and disease organisms, and even against potentially harmful rays from the sun.
- ✓ ... that our skin controls our body temperature by regulating the release of body fluids.
- ✓ ... that our skin is equipped with thousands of nerve sensors distributed unevenly over its surface, through which we sense pain, feel temperature, and identify our environment by a very light touch.
- ✓ ... that the outer layer of our skin contains distinct ridges and dips which are determined before we are born and remain the same throughout our life. No two persons' fingerprints are identical.

Note: Scientific information is taken from the *Encyclopedia Britanica*, 15th edition, Vol. 16, pp 839ff.; Vol. 21, pp. 700ff.; Vol. 25, pp. 227ff.; *Popular Science*, Vol. 2, pp. 173ff., and *The Incredible Machine*, published by The National Geographic Society, pp. 157ff.

Never underestimate the importance of your body's cloak, your skin. You might think of it as something superficial, just a lifeless wrapping, impervious to its environment. But that is not true. Our skin is another marvel of our Creator's handiwork in its design and functionality.

Approximately 2 square yards in total, and weighing 6 or 7 pounds, our skin is unlike any other organ of our bodies. It flexes, it folds, it stretches around joints, it wrinkles as we change our facial expression. It is sometimes smooth and soft, sometimes rough and sandpapery.

Structure...

Structurally, our skin, like every other part of our body, is a masterpiece of design. It consists of numerous layers, each having its own specific properties and functions. The layers are stacked with different orientations, much like plywood, in which the layers are criss-crossed, so that the finished product has much greater strength than a single board of the same thickness. (What element of chance determined this!—what *chance* designer produces plywood?) The layers of the skin are also designed in such a way that they provide a cushion to the delicate nerve endings, protecting them from external shocks.

The two major layers of the skin are the dermis (underneath) and the epidermis (above), on the surface of which is the dead or horny layer we commonly refer to as skin. Cell division in the skin occurs at a constant rate, because cells at the surface are constantly being rubbed or scuffed away (at a rate of about one million every 40 minutes) and must be replaced. To meet this need, cells at the base of the skin constantly divide and ascend through the different layers until they reach the surface, where they become hard and scale-like, and are eventually scuffed away. It has been estimated that the normal human skin cells take about 27 days, or one month, to travel from the base of the skin to the surface. This means that all our skin is "new" every month—another marvelous design of our masterful Creator, to keep us looking fresh and clean.

Examined under a microscope, a small cross-section of skin looks like a forest of fine hair growing on a terrain with thousands of interruptions. Every square inch of our skin holds up to 650 sweat glands, in addition to the many thousands of nerves, blood vessels and capil-

laries. In addition to all this, the skin is also riddled by an intricate mesh of lymph vessels which belong to the body's immune system. Who can say that we are not fearfully and wonderfully made?

The cells of the skin are attached to one another in a very special way. Instead of being tightly fused, each cell is attached to its neighbor cell by a zipper-like connection. This unique design allows nutrients and other essential substances to seep between the cells. It also allows for the easy movement of the skin cells, as they rise from the base of the skin to the surface. Can we say that such an arrangement is without design or intelligent direction?

Temperature Control

The functions of our skin are many. Primary is its task in regulating the internal temperature of the body by controlling the flow of blood through the body. Were it not for the regulating ability of the skin, we would perish from overheating.

The skin has two mechanisms for temperature control. First, it is pervaded by a tangled but orderly maze of blood vessels: arteries, veins and capillaries. Why does the skin need so much blood? It doesn't. But God has designed our skin to function as the body's temperature-control device. When the air around us is warm, the skin opens extra long routes for the blood to circulate through, allowing more blood to be exposed near the surface of the body, in this way increasing the loss of body heat. This is why our faces get red when we are too warm. When the air is cold, the skin shuts off these extra routes, the blood bypasses them, and in this way body energy is conserved (and we look pale). Also, when it is cold, our blood vessels contract in quick, successive rhythms (we call it shivering). This allows only a small amount of

blood to flow through them. Did such an intricate system of control come about by mere chance?

Our skin's second means of controlling body temperature is through the millions of tiny sweat glands in it. Our body has between 2,000,000 and 5,000,000 of these glands. Sweat glands serve two distinct purposes. Distributed over our body, they keep our body from becoming overheated by secreting water upon the surface of the skin, so that the skin is cooled as the water evaporates. The largest concentration of these sweat glands — in the palms of our hands and the soles of our feet — provides friction and keeps the skin from becoming hard and insensitive.

Defense

Our skin is a silent sentinel always on duty, constantly gathering information about our environment and relaying it to the brain, which in turn signals the body's immune system. Upon receiving a message of potential danger, the immune system immediately responds by mobilizing its fighting forces—and all without a conscious thought from us. Our skin will even produce highly specific chemical substances and spread them over its surface to prevent harmful substances from penetrating. Who can think that all this marvelous system came about by chance?

Built into our skin is also a highly specialized defense against the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. This shield is the skin's pigment, called melanin. Our skin color is determined by a pigment manufactured in specialized cells that reside between the regular cells of the skin. All of us, regardless of our race, have about the same number of these special pigment cells; only the amount of pigment in the cells varies. When an area of our skin is exposed to the sun, these special pigment cells go to work and pro-

duce more melanin. The newly made melanin granules flow between the skin cells and into those cells exposed to the sun, where they park between the nucleus and the surface of the cell. In that position, the melanin acts as an umbrella over the cell's nucleus, protecting its important information (stored in the nucleus) from being damaged by the sun. The result is what we call a "suntan."

Sensitivity

Our skin is our body's means of learning about our environment. With only a light touch we can tell whether a surface is hot or cold, wet or dry, smooth or rough, prickly or fuzzy. This is possible because our skin is equipped with countless nerves, some of which lie as close to the surface as possible. We have some 640,000 of these nerves distributed over our body's surface, with several thousand to the square inch in some areas like the fingertips, the lips and the tongue, and the palm of the hand. Touch a very hot surface with the tip of your finger. The nerve endings in the fingertip instantly send a message to the brain by way of the spinal column, and in milliseconds the message is back to the finger muscle telling it to pull away from the hot object. It all happens so quickly that we do not give it a conscious thought. We simply pull our finger away, saying, "It's hot!" Because of the quick response, a minimum of damage is done to the skin at the point of contact.

The Marvel of Self-repair

Our Creator has designed our skin with a remarkable ability of self-replacement. It repairs expertly the minor injuries it suffers, and, given opportunity, will repair even major injuries almost equally well. And observe this amazing fact: that the repaired or replaced skin bears the same pattern of ridges and valleys

which the former skin had! (What part of evolution makes this possible?)

Our hair and fingernails are an outgrowth of our skin, though scientists still do not fully understand how nails grow as they do. The color of our hair is determined by the color pigment which is loaded into the hair shaft as it grows, the amount determining the color. As we age, the center of the hair shaft becomes filled with tiny air bubbles, making the hair appear gray.

As long as the skin remains uninjured, it keeps the body's insides in and the rest of the world safely out. Despite daily scratching, ripping, tanning, burning, and exposure to irritating soaps and drying heat, the skin remains largely unchanged. It constantly relubri-

cates itself and replenishes its outer surface.

What happens when we get a splinter of wood in our finger? Immediately a battle is set off within our body. Cells at the sight of the injury release chemicals which alert neighboring capillaries to the crisis. Immediately the tiny blood vessels in the area expand their walls and become porous. This allows additional blood to flow into the area. As a result, the skin reddens and heats up. The wounded tissue swells and becomes tender.

Within an hour, the body's small white blood cells have been summoned to fight the thousands of invading microbes that rode into the body on the splinter. These white blood cells speed to the battle sight, slithering through capillary walls, surround the invading

bacteria one by one, and eat them. (Digestive enzymes produced by the white blood cell totally destroy the bacteria). Once one bacteria is destroyed, the white blood cell is ready to attack another invader, and another. All this happens without a conscious thought from us. We simply know that we got a splinter in our finger, we pulled it out, and in a short while it will begin to heal. If these white blood cells were not on duty, the invading bacteria would multiply and multiply, and soon our very life would be threatened—even by so small an injury as a splinter in our finger.

Who cannot bow in reverence to such a God, in whom we live, and breathe, and move? Who can say that we are not fearfully and wonderfully made? Indeed, "The hand that made us is Divine"! □

Follow Me

(Continued from page 7)

nothing. The sky was growing paler. The mist that enveloped the lake was beginning to lift. Through the dim light they could see a figure standing on the shore. A voice called to them over the waters: "Children, have ye any meat?" They answered, "No."

The call came back, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship."

They cast, and they were not able to draw the net for the multitude of fish. It was Jesus who stood on the shore. As dawn came up over Galilee, they sat down to breakfast with their Master on the pebbly beach.

For the third time the question came, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

Peter grieved; "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

Jesus said unto him, "Feed my sheep. Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." And when He had spoken this, he said unto him, "Follow me."

Long years passed since that last morning with their Master on the shores of Galilee. One by one those of that little band were taken away by the hand of death. The beloved John, now grown old, an exile on the barren and desolate island of Patmos, was privileged to glimpse in vision the great day of coronation.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

"And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:"

"And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth..."

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:1-5). □

Only as we adopt a "perfect heart and a willing mind" can we fully understand God's working with us. As long as we think more of ourselves than we ought to think, as long as we seek our own welfare and not that of others, as long as we refuse to acknowledge the hand of God dealing with us, we will miss the greater blessings that He has for us.

In a certain type of devotion, one gesture is to put the hands to the ears, as if to listen for messages from another world. So should our ears be tuned to God and the posture of our minds intent upon Him. This will give us a standing place above and beyond the stir and confusion and dissipation of this world, a place where we can wholly live for God.

Do not be afraid of criticism—criticize yourself often.

The most illuminating light that ever spread its silvery rays upon the human heart is the light of understanding that comes to the one who has banished hatred, envy and selfishness.

Cheerfulness contributes to your general good and to your satisfaction with life. It stimulates both mind and body, while gloomy thoughts depress and distract.



The only highway having no traffic congestion is the strait and narrow path to life.

Are You Doing the Devil's Work?

(Continued from page 2)

take the speck out of your brother's" (Matt. 7:3-5, NEB). It is just possible that our own sin in making the accusation is worse before God than the fault we are seeing in another.

We do not want to rule out all criticism—criticism can be constructive. Criticism can be helpful. Criticism can be fair and useful. The devil's work is criticism that is false, accusative, slanderous, designed to pull down rather than build up. It is criticism that is unkind, without thought to another's good, with the intention rather to hurt than to help.

When we criticize ourselves, we engage a noble task because we have the whole mind before us, all our thoughts, our motives, our true feelings, our deepest purposes and highest ideals—all the real

facts which cannot be seen by our associates but which are an open book to the Almighty by whom we shall be judged. If our judgment is fair and honest, its value is priceless. Far from being the devil's work, such a work God will honor and bless.

But when we come to criticizing others—beware. It is so easy to find unnecessary fault; it is so easy to tear down.

Next time we are tempted to criticize another, let us ask ourselves: Am I doing God's work—or the devil's?

And before we speak a single accusing word, let us put ourselves to the test. Our thoughts might run something like this:

I know it's time to re-examine my own heart and mouth. Will what I am about to say strengthen God's ministry? or am I accusing others falsely... and doing the devil's work?

It is a question that only we ourselves can answer. □

PROMISE

Over the gloom of the years it is ringing,
Cheering the hearts that are longing for light,
Hope's inspiration to weary ones bringing,
Filling the soul with a holy delight,
Bursting the fetters where sadness is binding,
Turning life's dirge to a joyous refrain,
Over and over in gladness reminding—
"Jesus the Saviour is coming again."

Nothing can hinder, each moment fleeting
Hastens that Day when the ransomed shall sing:
"Glory and honor" in exultant greeting,
"Unto our Mighty Redeemer and King."
Bending, the heavens will yield Him their splendor,
Starworlds no longer their silence maintain,
Jubilee voices in loud anthems render—
"Hark, for the Conqueror cometh again!"

Whisper the thought until love, all inspiring,
Breathes o'er the spirit triumphant and free;
Sing it till hearts in devotion untiring
Echo its message far over the sea.
Never a moment let sadness or doubting
Over thy spirit their bondage retain,
Heaven and earth join the chorus with shouting—
"Jesus the mighty is coming again."