

# Megiddo Message

*Love is  
very patient,  
very kind...*



June, 1995  
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# What More Can I Do?

(Love can never do enough)

**W**e are all born selfish. Selfishness is an instinct for survival, and is part of both human and animal nature.

But like all other parts of our nature, it is a trait which can be controlled and directed for our good.

When God asks us to give, He asks that we give of ourselves, that which is nearest and dearest to us. The plan seems realistic. He is offering us more than eye hath seen, or ear has heard, or has entered into our heart to imagine. And what does He ask in return? Nothing more or less than our best. But how much is that?

Spanish coins prior to 1492 were said to be inscribed with the Latin words, "Ne Plus Ultra," meaning "nothing beyond" (the Spanish horizon). The Spanish patriots who designed the coins thought no further than the borders of their realm. Then Columbus discovered America, proving that there was something beyond, and the coins had to be changed. Now they read, "Plus Ultra," meaning "more beyond."

It might be said of ancient religions that they were superscribed with the Latin, "Ne Plus Ultra," meaning "nothing beyond" (duty). True enough, there was nothing beyond. When the duty was done, that was all that was asked, and all that would be received.

When Jesus came teaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, with *something definite* beyond, what a contrast! There was a duty to be performed, but it was a duty with a purpose—a goal, a reward—a boundless reward. Said Jesus, "I am come that [ye] might have life, and that [ye] might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). This sharp revision of ethics, this addition of a purpose to duty, this displacing of nothing beyond with something grand surpassing all imagining was a great departure from the old order.

What was the result of the change? William Barclay underscored it in these words: "The person who thinks in terms of duty (by compulsion) thinks how little he can do; the person who thinks in terms of love can never do enough."

This was the way Jesus approached life. He did not try to get by with doing as little as possible, living life in terms of the irreducible minimum of service. He came facing life in terms of heartfelt love and gratitude to His heavenly Father. The most that He could do would not begin to be enough in return for all that His Father was doing and had promised to do for Him. Even though He might give God everything

there was of Him, what did it amount to? What could He possibly do—suffer—give—that would be a worthy exchange for the Kingship of the whole earth and a life that would go on through all the ages to come? What could He possibly do to pay in advance for some twenty centuries spent in His Father's throne room? Rather than asking how much was enough, can we not rather picture Him saying, "Father, what more can I do?"

This is the spirit Jesus taught His disciples. As the beloved John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). What could anyone give in return for such love that would claim us poor frail mortals as sons and daughters of God!

Our life is fraught with trial and challenge, calling forth our total dedication to what is high and holy. But no matter how faithfully we may have labored up to a point, our assignment is to be faithful all the way *to the end*. At no point can we stop and say—or even feel—"I have done enough, now I deserve a break."

What if all duty was measured by the minimum? Would truly loving parents do only what they *had to do* for their child? How would we feel toward a teacher who taught only the *very least amount possible*? Would the employee who did only the *bare minimum* be counted the key member of the team?

If the measure of service matters so much to one another in this world, how much more when service is to God, and for an eternal crown! It is our Father's supreme love in offering the *supreme* in blessing which moves the believer to go on. The Christian's motive is beyond and above the compulsions of work, position, obligation or duty—so much so that we need to be asking ourselves daily, What more can we do? What more can we give?—in return for the incomparable reward God has offered us.

If doing our duty is never enough, what was the meaning of Jesus' parable about the unprofitable servant? Why should he have been asked to work all day in the field, then return home to prepare supper and serve it, and eat his own meal afterwards—and not expect so much as a vote of thanks for having done so? Why would the conclusion of the parable be, "So with you: when you have carried out all your orders, you should say, 'We are servants and deserve no credit; we have only done our duty'"? The point of Jesus' parable is that we are servants, with specific

(Continued on page 27)



## 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 who live 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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*Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is*

# Love that God Loves

**W**hat is God looking for in His human creation? What type of character does God love, admire, select?

Thanks be to Him, we are not left to wonder. His Book of instructions is complete. And perhaps the most wonderful requirement in the whole law, the one which is the key to the fulfilling of all the others, is found in what Jesus called the first and greatest commandment in the law:

*"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30).*

Deep in every human heart is a certain impulse called love. It is a natural passion God has provided to soften the impact of life's harshness and warm the cold chill of reality. But it is more than this.

This term love, so abused today by those who know nothing of its real meaning, is something deep, something grand, something wonderful. It is a quality that finds its source and highest expression in the heavenlies. *"Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7).* Not until we are made immortal will we be able to enjoy its fullest meaning. Imagine, if you can, the love that must draw one angel to another, and all the angels to the great God who has blessed them with so wonderful an existence, a glorious immortal life!

But even at the mortal level, love is vital. Love mellows. Love soothes. Love strengthens. Love warms. Love cheers. Love draws. God does not want us to be creatures with no love. The word is used more than five hundred times in Scripture—certainly God meant us to consider it.

## **Thou Shalt Love...God**

What would God have us do with this passion within us? Here is where the first and greatest commandment touches each of us personally: *"Thou shalt love."* *"Thou."* It is a command aimed at each of us directly. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30).*

What does this mean? It means that the great God who has given us this





life, and who is offering us more life—even life that will never, never, never, never end—is asking something of us. He is asking of us all that we have, even to our love. There must be a total commitment. Give me your whole life, He says, all your time, all your talent, all your mind, all your strength, all your interest, even all your affection. *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all."* You cannot reserve anything with which to satisfy your natural, earthly cravings.

Is this too much to ask, when we consider what God has already done for us? When we consider that we, the least even among earthborns, who exist on one of the smallest planets in one small solar system among the hundred million stars in our own small galaxy, which is only one among many billions of galaxies in this universe—which, in turn, is only one universe among many in God's vast creation!—can we even fathom the love He has shown us, to arrange that we may become eternal members of His heavenly family? Should not the mere thought of it draw from the depths of our hearts an unbounded love, a desire to give Him all He asks of us—and more?

But this love is not a mere feeling. It must have practical expression. Perhaps the simplest description of how we may show Him the love He requires is found in the Epistle of First John. *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."* Here is a plain statement of fact. Then John adds an inspired opinion from his own experience: *"and his commandments are not grievous"* (I John 5:3). Nothing impossible, not even anything grievous; for it is all a matter of love. *"And this is love,"* he says, *"that we walk after his commandments"* (II John 6).

The love John recommends is not love by instinct. It is a love which must be learned, summoned, directed. It is a love that means the outgoing of the whole nature in reverent devotion to God. But it must be felt as deeply and earnestly as any passion that ever gripped the heart of man. *"For this is the love of God"*—that we obey, that we submit our

wills to His almighty will. It is what moves us to do the things that please Him, to love what He loves, to be interested in His interests. Indeed, if we love God our whole lives will become an expression of this love to Him. Our love for Him will be primary, all our other loves and interests being motivated and directed by it.

### How, How, How?

How shall we love God with all our heart? Along with our conviction must be a fine rapture of devotion, a keen spiritual vision, a zealous courage that is ready to do and dare; this is love.

If we are to succeed in our Christian enterprise, we must love it. And that love—for God and holiness and life—must be a steadily growing thing. No level of present love is sufficient. Love that is alive must grow!

Disaster threatens as soon as we allow ourselves to be satisfied with what we are. When we first heard the promises of God, we were captured by them. So much for so little! we responded. But as time goes by, love demands that that response deepen, else it will wane. These heavenly things must mean more and more to us, and all other things mean less and less. This is the love of God.

To love God is to change our desires to His, our tastes to His, our whole life interest to His. Even our individual loves must change. Here is the real proof of genuine love. We can direct our hands to obey; but if there is no love behind that obedience, that obedience is not completely the fulfilling of our duty to love God. We must obey *"from the heart"* (Rom. 6:17).

We may train ourselves to do anything within our capability. We can teach ourselves a ritual of serving God. But this alone is not enough. To have our service acceptable to God, we must *love* to serve. We can learn what is right, and do it. But to please God, we must learn to *love* to do it, because we know it is pleasing God. Only in this way can we love the Lord our God with *all our heart*.

When we love God so completely that we are keeping all His commandments, then all our other loves are directed by it. We love God; then it follows that we love the things of this world and the creatures of this world within the circle of our love to God.

### Loving One Another

How can we love our fellowmen as we should if we have not learned to love God?

Just as the mariner takes his



bearings by the sky and finds the harbor only as he journeys, so our relationships with others are possible only after we first establish our love to God. Other men are mortal like ourselves; they have no final wisdom to give us; we cannot travel safely by the lights of other ships. Our one steady-ing bond is with our Creator. Only in Him can we learn the real purpose of life, or find the power to fulfill it. Only when we have learned to love God can we hope to properly direct our loves on earth. *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"* (John 13:34).

Our love for God finds further expression in the love we show our brother in the faith. *"If a man say, I*



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love God, and hateth his brother, he is  
a liar: for he that  
loveth not his  
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he hath seen,  
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or find the power  
to fulfill it.**

love God  
whom he hath not seen? And this com-  
mandment have we from him, That he  
who loveth God love his brother also" (1  
John 4:20-21).

The whole New Testament is an

appeal for the need of love and fel-  
lowship in the bonds of Christ. "By  
this shall all men know that ye are my  
disciples, if ye have love one to another";  
"be kindly affectioned one to another  
with brotherly love; in honour  
preferring one another"; "that ye might  
know the love which I have more abund-  
antly unto you"; "this I pray, that your  
love may abound"; "having the same  
love, being of one accord, of one mind";  
"Let brotherly love continue"; "Beloved,  
let us love one another: for love is of  
God; and every one that loveth is born  
of God, and knoweth God." The Chris-  
tian faith is a "faith which worketh by  
love." (John 13:35; Rom. 12:10; II  
Cor. 2:4; Phil. 1:9; Phil. 2:2; Heb.  
13:1; I John 4:7; Gal. 5:6).

Listen to this warm, brotherly  
appeal to the Philippian  
brethren: "If then our common  
life in Christ yields anything to  
stir the heart, any loving con-  
solation, any sharing of the  
Spirit, any warmth of affection  
or compassion, fill up my cup of  
happiness by thinking and feeling  
alike, with the same love for one another,  
the same turn of mind, and a com-  
mon care for unity" (Phil. 2:1-2, NEB).  
No rivalry, no bitterness, no preju-  
dice, no sarcasm, no desire to put  
another down and exalt ourselves,

no hasty judgments of others, no  
grudges new or old; but love, pure  
and unadulterated. This is brotherly  
kindness.

We cannot read the Epistles of  
Paul without feeling the love which  
he felt toward his brethren in the  
faith. It is warm, glowing, affection-  
ate. See the devoted Onesiphorus  
making his way to visit Paul, when  
he was in prison, and "oft refreshing"  
him. Hear Paul's greetings of love to  
faithful brothers and sisters. Read of  
their eagerness to meet him, and his  
keen yearning for fellowship with  
them. Here were bonds of love  
stronger than the strongest ties of  
earth. Feel the longing in the heart of  
the earnest Apostle that he might  
come once again and visit them (I  
Cor. 16:4-5). Again, hear him send-  
ing his "beloved brother and faithful  
minister and fellow-servant in the Lord,  
Tychicus," to comfort them. See those  
faithful elders on the shore near Eph-  
esus, their hearts knit together in  
love, bidding farewell to their  
beloved brother, "sorrowing most of  
all...that they should see his face no  
more" (Acts 20:36-38). Hear the Apos-  
tle beseeching his son-in-the-faith  
Timothy to make one last attempt to  
visit him and "Come before winter" (II  
Tim. 4:21)—that winter which he  
very possibly knew would be his last.  
How rich was the life of the great  
Apostle, how full and overflowing  
with the love of Christ. Here was  
love that was pure and noble, warm  
and glowing, and full of fond brother-  
ly affection.

This love of Christian brethren is a  
vital part of the Divine plan for our  
development. The perfecting of holi-  
ness in the fear of God is a difficult  
undertaking at best, and willful isola-  
tion only adds to the difficulty. If the  
possibility of success is increased—  
and we know that it is—when one  
life is linked with others in kindred  
fellowship, why not do all we can to  
promote that fellowship so that we  
can all be workers together with God  
and seek our spiritual goals in Christ  
together! This is the plan Christ  
taught, and followed. And it was the  
plan of His disciples, also. "If a man  
love me, he will keep my words: and my  
Father will love him, and we will come

## Three Words for "Love"

**T**he Greeks had three words for  
"love." Most commonly used  
among the Greek-speaking world  
of the day was *eros*, describing  
love that is natural human emo-  
tion or passion, natural affection,  
human love. (This word, used  
almost exclusively of love in the  
Greek-speaking world, is not used  
even *once* in the New Testament.

The second word for love was  
*phileo*, which is a special word to  
convey warmth, closeness, and  
pleasure in brotherly affection. It  
is properly used of that which is  
near and dear. It is used of the  
Father's love for His Son (John  
5:20), and of the devotion all of

us ought to bear to Jesus (I Cor.  
16:22). But even this word is  
used relatively few times.

The most common—and  
supreme—word for love in the  
New Testament is *agape*. *Agape*  
love seeks always the best inter-  
ests of the one loved. *Agape* love  
is not an instinct or a natural  
emotion; it is deliberate, direct-  
ed, controlled. It is a firm convic-  
tion of mind that issues in a  
definite policy of life. It is not  
simply a wave of emotion; it is  
an action of the will. It takes all  
one has to show *agape* love; it  
takes his heart, his mind, his  
will, his whole being.



unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

Just what is this love that Jesus and His apostles talked so much about? We can understand better if we look briefly at the Greek words for love, for that was the language in which these men of God wrote.

### **More Brotherly Love**

Again and again—more than 250 times—the New Testament speaks of the deep and holy love of Christian brethren for one another. It is the love which Paul had toward his brethren, Peter toward his, Jesus toward His. It is the love that Christ showed "the church" when He *"gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"* (Eph. 5:25-27).

Oh, who can know the length and breadth and depth of this genuine devoted love which Christ showed His brethren, and which we can show one another in Christ! It is a love that renews faith, corrects sin, exhorts to good works and provokes more and more unto love. It is a love that purifies the heart, stifles selfishness, discourages evil desire, and silences acrimony (sharpness, or bitterness of expression). It is love that stimulates and encourages every high and holy desire. It is a love which we can enjoy even now, and which will extend into the ages of eternity.

This love shows itself in many ways. It shows itself in loving concern for one another's temporal good. It shows itself in sympathetic understanding, in patience, in consideration in everyday life. It shows itself even more in watchfulness for each other's spiritual welfare. Can we say we love our brother, if we see him do something that we know will bring God's disapproval upon him and fail to tell him? Suppose a young man was preparing to compete in a national music contest. Suppose he had spent many hours under the guidance of a professional instructor, but that his instructor—

thinking to be "kind"—had not pointed out a basic deficiency in the young man's playing, a deficiency which would surely result in his failure. Would the young man feel that his instructor was doing him a kindness?

### **Jesus, Pattern of Love**

Let us look to Jesus for the perfect pattern. The apostle John says He *"loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end"* (John 13:1). With deep desire did He desire to eat the passover with them before He suffered—it was their parting commitment to one another and to God (Luke

22:15). And hear how lovingly He addressed His disciples at that Last Supper. *"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends....Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love"* (John 15:15-16,10).

Again He said further, *"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him"* (John 14:21).

And even more: there is promise of eternal fellowship.

Just so do we need each other to see our weaknesses and failings, so that we may overcome these sins which so easily beset us. We cannot see ourselves as we are; we must have help. And is not that help the finest expression of true brotherly love? This is what the author of Hebrews says: *"Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are*

## *"Lovest Thou Me?"*

**I**n a brief conversation of Jesus with Peter alongside the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection (John 21:15-17), the word "love" occurs seven times, but two different words are used. If we read the passage substituting the word "fondness" for one type of love, and "deep devotion" for *agape* love, we have this account:

"Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you have a *deep devotion* for me, a devotion more than you have for these things?

Peter said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I have a *fondness* for you.

Jesus said to him again the second time, Simon, son of John, do you have a *deep devotion* for me?

Peter said to him, Yes, Lord, you know that I have a *fondness* for you.

Jesus said to him a third time, Simon, son of John, do you have a *fondness* for me? Peter was grieved because Jesus said to him the third time, Do you have a *fondness* for me, and he said to him, Lord, you know all things. You know that I have a *fondness* for you."

Why was Peter grieved at the third question? Because Jesus changed the question from the *deep devotion* emphasis to that of mere *fondness*. Jesus, by using the very word Peter had used in answering the first two questions, probed deep into the heart of Peter. It was as if He asked, "Peter, how much do you really love me? You have not yet given me all. You have fondness for me, true enough; but you have not yet committed your whole self, your all.

How deep is our love? How much have we given—or withheld?



*Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is*

partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12:6-8).

Another secret of brotherly love

**How shall  
we love God  
with all our  
heart?**

**Along with  
our conviction  
must be a fine rapture  
of devotion, a keen  
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courage that is ready to  
do and dare; this is love.**

is found in the book of Malachi, (3:16). "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another." They spoke often of the things nearest and dearest their hearts—some

word of faith, some thought of hope, some fear of wrong, some rebuke of evil. Are not these the things that draw us together? Are not these the interests that make us brothers and sisters in Christ, that bind our hearts together in love, that nurture our fellowship and love within the body of Christ? Words not artificial but sincere and loving, as we stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel—these are the words of Christian love (Phil. 1:27).

How deep, boundless and inexhaustible is this love of God! So is the love that flows between kindred hearts within the bonds of Christian fellowship. Why not!—are not these the people we hope to live with and love and enjoy forever, as we go from glory to glory? Are not they our kindred now and through all eternity, if we can prove faithful together? Are not these the people we

expect to accompany us as we set out to explore the far reaches of God's universe? Do we wonder that Jesus commanded His brethren to "love one another"?

And now I would like to close with this loving appeal from the great Apostle to us: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;...and may the Lord make your love mount and overflow towards one another and towards all, as our love does toward you. May he make your hearts firm, so that you may stand before our God and Father holy and faultless when our Lord Jesus comes with all those who are his own" (Phil. 1:9-10; I Thess. 3:12-13).

Is not the Kingdom promised to "them that love him"? (James 2:5). Is not the crown laid up for those who "love his appearing"? (II Tim. 4:8). Is not he who stands the test assured of the "crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him"? (James 1:12). Is not the promise of more than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man hath imagined prepared for "them that love him"? (I Cor. 2:9).

Then let us heed the words of Joshua (23:11) spoken more than three millenniums ago: "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God." □



**A**lmighty God, Source of all mercies, we thank Thee for all Thou hast given, and for all Thou hast forgiven us. We thank Thee for all the mercies which in our blindness we have passed over, for the blessings hidden from our minds when we are dull; for the marvel of beauty in which Thou hast set our lives. We thank Thee for Thy love which is new every morning, shedding upon us the life-giving power of Thy grace.

We thank Thee for all who have helped us with our problems when temptations were strong, when we needed encouragement. We thank Thee for those to whom we may go at any time, with whom we can talk and keep nothing back, knowing they will understand—and help us. We thank Thee for the desire to be helped ourselves, and to help others.

We appreciate Thy care in blocking us when we are traveling the wrong road, and pray that we may always be sensitive to the restraints of Thy Divine precepts. And once we know a thing is a Divine command may we fly to obey it.

Father, help us to love Thee with all our might, mind and strength, and may we demonstrate that love in the only way acceptable to Thee—by keeping Thy holy commandments.

Thou art a God of knowledge and by Thee actions, and actions alone are weighed. As said Jesus, Thou art glorified only when we bear much fruit. Help us to do just this.

Empty professions are only an abomination to Thee with Thy righteous way of evaluating character. Thou desirest that we show our faith by our works. The only love that Thou lovest is that love which is demonstrated by holy living.

Give us within our own hearts the peace that passeth understanding. Take from us anxieties which detract and weaken us; take from us doubts which have no foundation, and weaken our faith and endurance. Take from us wrong desires, false ambitions; above all take from us any estrangement from Thee, and grant us the peace and joy of sins forgiven, of accomplishment in the Divine life, of visible growth into holiness.

And may Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven, until every knee shall bend to Thee, every tongue sing Thy praise, and Thy glory fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. All this we ask through our Mediator, whom we would honor and obey. Amen.



# God Is Creative Love

**T**o whom then will ye liken me?" asked the ancient Prophet, speaking for God. And, lest we answer according to our own imaginations, He proceeds to inform us through His inspired writers of some of His most striking attributes. Perhaps the most familiar, the most beautiful, best fitted to our mortal state, and most vital in our quest for the higher good, is the concept of God as a God of love. Pagan cults have their gods of wrath, revenge, jealousy, bloodlust, and every base and destructive quality. It remained for the Hebrew prophets first to reveal the Deity who loves His creatures with a perfect love and calls upon them to imitate that love.

## **When We Say "God Is Love," What Do We Mean?**

The idea of God as supreme Intelligence or supreme Will is inadequate, since neither a brilliant mind nor an iron will is evidence of character. In fact, human experience proves that, uncontrolled by love, they may be tools of evil. Generations of miseducation, however, have so beclouded and distorted this sublime word "love" that it requires definition. The term has all but suf-

fered the fate of being slain in the house of those who have called themselves its friends.

## **Love that Protects: Domestic Love**

The love most familiar to all of us, and which we first experience is that of the family circle. When we think of love, we think of the love between parent and child, between members of a family. Its purpose is clear: to protect the object of its interest. And while in many aspects this love is a beautiful and powerful thing, it has in its very nature grave limitations, and fails to explain how "God is love." Mother love, the strongest family tie known to our race, can be—and often is—utterly unreasoning, blind to faults, oblivious to evidence, even degenerating into a feeling of mere sympathy. It is clan-nish, tribal, and sometimes socially retarding. The fact that this protective impulse is present in the brute creation, often to an amazing degree, indicates that it is largely an instinct necessary to the survival of

the species. At best its moral quality may be regarded as incidental.

There is something lacking in the picture of God as a parent who is eternally busy taking care of His children. He is far more than a superior protector of His offspring.

## **Love that Possesses: Romantic Love**

The second concept of love in the human experience is sentimental or romantic love. Sentimental love seeks to possess the object of its interest. We can readily see that God is most emphatically not that kind of love. Read Paul's hymn to love (in I Corinthians 13), substituting the word "romance" for love wherever it appears, and what do you have? "Romance is patient and kind; romance is not jealous or boastful; romance is not arrogant or rude. Romance does not insist on its own way..." (RSV)—no one would even suggest that this is true. Romance is selfish, jealous, intolerant, irrational, often cruel and lawless.

Romance has no redemptive quality. To conceive of God's love as a romantic spasm or even a sustained ecstasy of sentiment is utterly inadequate. Neither God nor man can save the world by romanc-

**The Eternal is doing all according to plan, and toward a definite end.**



ing, dear to the heart of the race though it be. Dispassionate analysis shows romantic love to be a physical instinct based on the survival of the species; and its infinite capacity for perversion and degradation, when undisciplined by law, places it morally even below the domestic experience.

#### **Love that Perfects: Creative Love**

Love has yet another guise. It is less

#### **God as Creator**

The great eternal God has many attributes. He is a creator. In Psalm 19, King David draws our attention to His creative ability in beautiful language: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge"* (vs. 1-2). Again the great God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, calls our attention to

God through His creative love purposes to produce one new composite man, "created in righteousness and true holiness."

easy to name, but its evidence is unimpeachable. Unlike domestic love, it does not seek merely to protect; and unlike romantic love, it does not seek to possess. Rather, it seeks to *perfect* the object of its interest. Perhaps it should be called *creative* love, since its effort is to create greater and higher values in the person or thing loved, just as one enriches his life by his response to (and love of) music or art.

So, too, is the Divine love. It is expressed in many ways which, to the uninstructed, bear no resemblance to the popular notion of love. Just as the highest form of parental love is expressed in guidance and discipline, as well as in protection and support, so these expressions are the very essence of the creative, perfecting love of God; for only through discipline can perfection be attained. *"Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth"* (Prov. 3:12). Even Christ, the great Captain of our salvation, of whom it was said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"* was made perfect through suffering, discipline, trial. God so loves the world of believers that He cannot be satisfied with them until they have attained His mental and moral image.

His ability to create, with these words: *"Lift up your eyes on high, 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). In the book of Isaiah, seven or more times God restates His claim as Creator.

Even a casual appraisal of the wonders of creation, at close range or distant, cannot fail to impress us with the greatness of the Creator. The wisest man living today—or the accumulated wisdom of all who ever lived—could not create any part of the physical universe; we must attribute it to the All-wise Designer and Creator.

But is this the extent or limit of His creative ability? Is His interest confined to the physical and visible? No, being a God of love, He possesses creative love. And from the great mass of humanity He is creating by His love a new nation of believers, a group of super-alert men and women. He has arranged circumstances by which members of the race may enjoy physical life, at the same time making something of themselves. He permits grief, reverses, pain, distractions, and testing to toughen their fiber, to build in

them a character worthy of perpetuation.

God through His creative love purposes to produce one new composite man, *"created in righteousness and true holiness"* (Eph. 4:24). For this reason, the Christian life is a life of change, of improvement, of character building, of learning to put first things first. The apostle Paul said that we are *"created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Eph. 4:24; 2:10). The saving gospel is a gospel of transformation. Prayed the Psalmist, *"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me,"* (51:10); and the sentiment was exactly the same when he prayed, *"Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me"* (40:11). Could we but realize that the chastening rod is directed by the hand of God Himself, a token of His love and care to purge us from sin and create a clean heart within us, we would receive it with such gladness that it would yield in us the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

God in His love is creating a people to be part of His new and heavenly order which will one day prevail upon earth. Through Isaiah He revealed His plan, to fill the earth with His glory, true Israel, His *"little flock,"* a *"righteous little people."* Speaking for God the Prophet said, *"I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory"* (Isa. 46:13). Speaking again of His plan to create righteous people fit for perpetuation, the Eternal declares, *"I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters 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). What an exhibition of creative love!

#### **Free Moral Agents**

God shows His creative love by leaving His human children free moral



agents, so that we can make something of ourselves—or refuse improvement—as we choose. God could have created us flawless and perfect, so that it would have been impossible for us to sin. But under those conditions, our perfection would be of no glory to our Creator, and no virtue to us. God shows His creative love by setting before us good and evil, and leaving the choice to us.

### **God's Munificence An Evidence of His Creative Love**

The love of God has visible features which are both protective and paternal. We see His love in the bountiful provisions for the subsistence of the human family, though many are unthankful and evil. To the faint-hearted it may seem that the Creator, by allowing the adverse and unharnessed forces of Nature, has made life and survival difficult. But the fact remains that the species has thrived amazingly in spite of the hardships, and the human population of our planet grows apace year after year.

*He sendeth the sunshine and the  
rain,  
He scatters the dew on the  
flowers;  
He maketh the desert to bloom,  
His blessings descend as the  
showers.  
Wonderful, merciful, bountiful  
love!*

Yet this provision is not from sentimental or purposeless generosity. The Eternal is doing all according to Plan and toward a definite end, and His whole interest, if we may believe His words, is in the new world He is creating, those who will be selected out of the great reservoir of humanity for His eternal purpose. The present populace shares these temporal bounties only incidentally, until the fullness of time shall come when only the fit shall survive. Creative love dominates this aspect of His work, as well as all others.

By far the most precious gift of His Divine and creative love is the offer to the human race of a life that will be painless, deathless, and filled

with every conceivable pleasure, combined with the means by which it may be obtained.

### **Creative Love in Action**

God's perfecting love in action is described comprehensively in the latter part of the fourth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. He gave "some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ. So shall we all at last attain to the unity inherent in our faith and our knowledge of the Son of God—to mature manhood, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ....So shall we fully grow up into Christ." (4:11-16, NEB). Here is the new man taking shape: "So shall we all at last attain to the unity inherent in our faith and our knowledge of the Son of God"—a knowledge of the Son, and the great place He is destined to fill in the age to come. Apart from this knowledge we would not know God's definition of right and wrong. Apart from this knowledge we would not have the impetus, the driving force to impel us to make the drastic change from the old life to the new.

An elderly Disciple who had learned the secret of creative love, and who was still living creatively in a decadent age—John the presbyter of Ephesus—once wrote a simple letter to his friends in which he spoke of the close relationship between God and His worthy children, and of the impact this should have upon our lives. Here are his words:

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him

*"Dear friends, let us love one another creatively, for creative love comes from God, and every one who loves creatively is a child of God and knows God, for God is creative love. God's creative love has for us been revealed... Dear friends, if God has loved us so, we ought to love one another creatively."*

*-John the Apostle  
(a paraphrase)*

as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:1-3).

A little further on in this Epistle, John gave a summary of a philosophy that had brought him serenity and poise in a turbulent day. As we take slight liberties in translating it, he seems to be saying:

"Dear friends, let us love one another creatively, for creative love comes from God, and every one who loves creatively is a child of God and knows God, for God is creative love. God's creative love has for us been revealed...Dear friends, if God has loved us so, we ought to love one another creatively." □



# Who

## Is God's Child?

"In the Megiddo literature the teaching is that not all of us are the children of God. We believe we are. We will always love our child no matter what, and we believe God does the same. God will punish out of love.

"I would appreciate your comments." —from J. & D. J., Indiana

When we say that all are or are not children of God, we must be careful to define our terms correctly. The entire human race lives by God's design, by His creative genius, by laws which He has set in motion. He "giveth to all life, and breath," and "in his hands is the breath of every living thing" (Acts 17:25; Job 12:10). He makes the sun to shine on the evil and the good, and gives rain and fruitful seasons to all (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17).

But does the fact that all the human race are the result of laws which God set in motion mean that He has fatherly concern and love for each and all? The apostle Paul says of a certain group that "these are not the children of God" (Rom 9:8). How can this be?

The question comes down to determining, first: does God love all simply because they are living beings—does His love extend to all who breathe, or does He love only some among them? And second: if God loves only some among them, what determines whom He loves? Is His love based upon happenstance, or is it selective? Is it whimsical, or is it based upon their character and qualification?

We find no evidence in the Bible that God's special, providential love and concern extends to all who breathe. On the contrary, entire

nations are in His opinion "like a drop in a bucket," "as dust on the scales"; they are "counted to him less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:15, 17, NIV). "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity"—not a very flattering evaluation (Ps. 62:9). Though they may think themselves great, they shall die and be forgotten as the animal creation. Says the Psalmist, "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them;...their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling" (Ps. 49:14).

Second, we find much evidence in the Bible that God's love is selective, that He judges His human creation on the basis of individual character, obedience and virtue. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2:3). Accordingly, we read why He loves certain individuals, why He does not love—even hates—others; why He is near to some, far from others; why He blesses and "knows" some, and totally ignores others.

If God loves all equally, why is it written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"? (Rom. 9:13).

Or why do we read, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (Prov. 8:17)?

Why do we read of God's attitude in Psalm 5:5, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity," if God loves everyone? Or that "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. 7:11)—if He loves everyone? Or why do we read, "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth" (Ps. 11:5)?

If the Lord regards all alike, why is He "far from the wicked," but "he

heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Prov. 15:29)?

You say, "We will always love our child no matter what..." Is this a valid basis for believing that God does the same? Human parental love and Divine love may have some points in common, but when the Bible tells us that God's thoughts are as much above ours as "the heavens are above the earth" (Isa. 55:8-9), we cannot be too surprised if there are also vast differences.

Pick up just about any religious periodical or listen to a popular evangelist, and it is not long before you are hearing how much "God loves you," and that love is seldom qualified. "God loves us unconditionally," says one current writer, "He even allows us to make mistakes, to fail" — but the conclusion is—"His love never fails." Sometimes the implication is that no matter how "bad" we are, how evil, how sinful, God's love for us is just that much more.

Aside from the point that God loves all the human race in giving them this mortal existence, the Bible says not one word about loving everybody regardless of character, uprightness, or obedience. We read how God looked down upon the sons of men to see if there were any who were seeking Him (Ps. 14:2)—He was looking not to see if any were living but if any were living who were seeking Him.

The prophet Amos, speaking for God, wrote concerning the nation of Israel, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2)—how could He make such a statement if He loved everyone alike? In the next chapter He says, "I have



overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah" (Amos 4:11)—how could He make such a statement if He loved them?

### Does God Punish Out of Love?

You state that "God will punish out of love." This is surely true in many situations. But is it always true?

It seems that God's punishment (judgment upon individuals) always has one of two aspects: 1) when He punishes to discipline and train those in whom He sees useful material; and 2) when He punishes to remove those who are offending/sinning/contaminating, for the relief and benefit of those remaining.

There certainly were times when God punished out of love. This was the situation with David, when he numbered Israel and God sent punishment in the form of a "pestilence upon Israel" (II Sam. 24:15). God was not punishing the innocent for the guilty. David had sinned in numbering Israel, but the nation also had gone astray from God, for we read in II Sam. 24:1 that "again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." God was punishing, but He was preserving those who would be loyal to Him, who were of worth in His sight. And David himself was penitent, as he clearly acknowledged unto the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done" (II Sam. 24:10).

Another example of God punishing out of love was His statement to David that he would have trouble for the rest of his life as a punishment for His sin with Bathsheba (II Sam. 12:10). It came to pass. David did have trouble in his kingdom, and his family, as long as he lived, and he recognized that it was from God as a punishment. But David was humble, penitent, and revered and thanked God for His mercy and love.

We read in the book of Proverbs that the Lord "disciplines the man he loves" (Prov. 3:11-12; see also Ps. 94:12-13; Heb. 12:7).

Another example of God's punishing out of love was His treatment of Israel as a nation at the time of the captivity. Those who were sincere believers were spared, and allowed to live out their lives in a foreign land. The Lord fulfilled His promise: "I will correct thee in measure" (Jer. 30:11)—a limitation upon His justice.

There were many other times when God punished but showed no love for those punished. For example, take the multitudes who perished at the time of the flood in Noah's time, when "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). God was not punishing these people out of love—they had no love for Him, and He had no love for them. He gave them no blessing, only removed them quickly. We read, "God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6:12-13)—did He have any reason to love them?

The same was true of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. God removed them because of their iniquity. There was no love in His punishment, only a desire to remove them from the scene of life and action. The record in Genesis shows the dire state of iniquity when not even ten righteous persons could be found in Sodom (Gen. 18:22-33). Abraham was pleading for God's mercy, and God was open to be merciful and show His love, but there were none deserving except those for whom He made a way of escape. Sodom and Gomorrah were punished as a lesson to others, as we read elsewhere in Scripture: as Peter writes, how God, "turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should

(Continued on page 23)

## RIGHT FOOT, RIGHT STEP

While my husband and I were out walking recently around the village, he said to me, "Do you know, in all the years we have been together, I've never trained you to start with the right foot"—which, I understand, is the *left* one (apparently I start with the right foot—my husband used to be a captain in the Royal Army, so he should know!).

When we are walking together, I sometimes hear the click of his heel as he changes his step to get in step with me, and then we walk well together, taking about the same size strides.

This has made me think about our walk with the Lord. Did we not all start off on the wrong foot? We were brought up in homes where fables and pagan customs were taught and practiced. We have a nature strongly inclined to do evil. And the longer we practice the wrong the more difficult it is to change. But God knows who will do His will, even before they are born.

It's one thing to start off on the wrong foot when out walking, but quite another when we are dealing with the Lord and our eternal life is at stake. In the words of the shepherd prophet Amos, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (3:3). It would be most unusual for them to be walking along together if they were not in agreement.

How can we walk (keep in step) with the Lord and with the devil (our old nature) at the same time? This is what most of us try to do, but I'm afraid it can't be done. King David tells us in Psalm 37:23-24, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand."

What more could anyone want than that? From now on I must watch my step, and try to keep right, and do and think only what is right.

—by J. T., Oxfordshire, England





Reprinted from the *Megiddo Message*, 1932; new translations added.

God has given us the Scriptures, which are *"God-breathed and [are] useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (II Tim. 3:16-17, NIV).

Yet we are so slow to comprehend and respond to God's thoughts. Why? Deep within us are problems. Just because we enter the sphere of God's interest and become acquainted with His laws, we are not changed instantly from the old nature to the new. There is still within us a self-centeredness always ready to say "How will this affect me?", and a self-pity that says "Oh, dear," in the face of sacrifice; a self-will that obeys—or disobeys—at its own caprice, and a self-justifying spirit that is ready to fight for our old nature, whether right or wrong.

Why are we not automatically full grown men and women in Christ? Why do we not resist every temptation and always live victoriously in Christ? What is the huge boulder lying right across the way, hindering our onward progress? It is S-E-L-F.

Let us stop and analyze this obstacle. Paul tells us, *"For in me (that is, in my flesh) no good dwells, I know; the wish is there, but not the power of doing what is right. I cannot be good as I want to be, and I do wrong against my wishes"* (Rom. 7:18-19, Moffatt). Jeremiah says, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,"* and it is *"not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jer. 17:9; 10:23). Jesus proclaimed the same truth when He said, *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness"* (Mark 7:21-22).

No wonder we are so dull, so slow to comprehend God's thoughts—and so often caught sleeping when we should be watching, giving our maximum effort to pressing forward.

We read of earnest-minded men and women, standing high in the affairs of the nations, who daily discipline themselves and follow a certain code of conduct very religiously. Is it then too much for us to take an honest look at the weak spots in our characters, and strive earnestly to better ourselves—in the prospect of receiving endless rewards, even eternal life?

It might help us to view our present struggles as opportunities: the struggle between self-indulgence and self-control, for example, or between pride and humility; or between an honest self-analysis and a vain self-esteem.

Paul knew the prize he was seeking, and he knew how to get it. And he knew it could not be had by idle wishing, or even a halfhearted effort.

Now, then, in the fear of God, let us each one look into our own heart, and give an honest answer to the following questions. Let us be sure to be impartial in our judgment. It is always difficult to appraise our own conduct; we seem to be unreasonably prejudiced in favor of ourselves. But in our own best interest, let us be our severest critic, and we should derive great benefit from the test. Self-analysis is not intended to reduce us to discouragement, however, or a melancholy state. Its only objective is to help us build a stronger character.

**1** Did I look up to God in prayer this morning when I awoke, then dress up my mind with a fresh thought from the Word of God—or was I mentally lazy? Paul the apostle wrote, *"Hence I never lose heart; though my outward man decays, my inner man is renewed day after day"* (II Cor. 4:16, Moffatt). But that renewing is not automatic. Wholesome, stimulating, lifting thoughts of God and holiness do not automatically form themselves in our minds. If we would think thoughts of God, we must direct our minds into channels that feed godly thoughts. If we would encourage ourselves in the way of holiness and faith, we must concentrate on faith-building topics, and read and discuss those points which will build faith in us.

**2** What really altruistic service did I render a fellow traveler today? Not what did I think about rendering but what did I actually do? *"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself"* (Rom. 15:1-3).



3 Was I patient under all circumstances?—and I refer to a total feeling of composure and patience, not a subdued and smoldering anger. The command is, *"Only, let your endurance be a finished product, so that you may be finished and complete, with never a defect"* (James 1:4, Moffatt).

4 Am I envious or jealous of anyone? Is there anyone I cannot wholeheartedly wish the best because of some subtle feeling or fear? The command is, *"So strip away everything vicious, everything deceitful; pretenses, jealousies, and disparaging remarks of any kind. Be as eager for milk as newborn babies—pure milk of the Spirit to make you grow unto salvation"* (1 Pet. 2:1-2, NAB).

5 What kind of talk did I indulge in—small talk (gossip), light talk (foolishness), or edifying (upbuilding) talk? The command is, *"No bad language must pass your lips, but only what is good and helpful to the occasion, so that it brings a blessing to those who hear it"* (Eph. 4:29, NEB).

6 How many times today did I use the capital "I"? Did I speak more often of myself, and what I like, or what I think, or what I can do, than about the interest of my heavenly King? The Psalmist David wrote, *"I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works"* (Ps. 145:5). He was speaking of his King, not of himself.

7 Was I afflicted today with self-pity? Was I at any time moody or blue when things did not go my way? The apostle Paul has the admonition for this problem: *"Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice"* (Phil. 4:4). Notice that he says *"Rejoice...always"*—not just when everything is favorable.

8 Am I grateful for the correction and reproof I receive? Do I long above all else to be and do right? or do I close my eyes to small transgressions, either in myself or in those closest to me? The command is, *"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins"* (Isa. 58:1).

9 Did I today respect or accept the opinion or judgment of others? or was I stubborn in holding to my own viewpoint? Everyday offers us some opportunity to practice giving up our own opinions, our own ways—an exercise that is valuable in preparing for the Kingdom. The prophet Samuel, reproving the errant King Saul, said, *"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he*

*hath also rejected thee from being king"* (1 Sam. 15:22-23).

10 Did I redeem my time today in the very best way possible, or was too much of it spent foolishly or selfishly? The apostle Paul has one command for all: *"Be strictly careful then about the life you lead; act like sensible men, not like thoughtless; make the very most of your time, for these are evil days"* (Eph. 5:15-16, Moffatt).

11 Did pride or any self-exalting spirit of any kind influence me today, thus marring my record before God? Again the command is clear: *"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"* (Prov. 16:18).

12 Am I attaching undue importance to some remark or action of another that is not really significant, in this way marring my own peace of mind? Again we have the command: *"Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble"* (Ps. 119:165, NIV).

13 Was all my conduct today to the glory of God? The command is broad, but very specific: *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor. 10:31).

14 Am I meek, humble and lowly, anxious to be told where I am wrong, anxious to improve and grow, or do I instinctively feel I am just a little superior to others? *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves"* (Phil. 2:3, NIV).

15 Have I a secret sin that only God knows? Secret sins are deadly, and usually do not get conquered until they are no longer a secret. We know we cannot hide from God, so why should we try to hide from one another, from those who are sent of God to help us? Let us pray, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"* (Ps. 139:23-24, NIV).

16 What gave me my greatest satisfaction today—something I did for myself, or something I did for God? Jesus said that the greatest commandment in the law was to love the Lord our God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength (Mark 12:30). Fulfilling this command leaves no place for self-seeking and self-satisfaction.

Let us approach these questions thoughtfully, as a corrective to our easy going self-satisfaction, and pray with the Psalmist, *"May my spoken words and unspoken thoughts be pleasing even to you, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer"* (Ps. 19:14, TLB). □



# Elijah



## God's Man of the Hour



**E**lijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead," is one of the most stirring characters of the Old Testament.

The kingdom of Northern Israel, cut off from the central shrine of the true faith at Jerusalem, was slipping rapidly into idolatry under a series of wicked kings, of whom Ahab was one of the worst. His new queen, Jezebel of Sidon, was still worse. To accommodate her religion, one of Ahab's first building projects was the erecting of a great temple to the Phoenician god Baal, the worship of which he established as the official religion of the nation.

The drama opens in Ahab's palace, where the coming dedication of the new temple is being discussed by Ahab and his heathen priests, Baal-Zekar and Arzaad.

### Preparing for the Dedication

ACT I, SCENE I

#### Characters:

AHAB—King of Israel  
 BAAL-ZEKAR—Priest of Baal  
 ARZAAD—Priest of Ashtoreth  
 OBADIAH—God-Fearing Servant of Ahab  
 SERVANT

**Setting.** The palace of the King in Samaria. Ahab, Baal-Zekar, high priest of Baal, and Arzaad, high priest of Ashtoreth, are conversing informally, drinking wine as a servant fills their cups.

BAAL-ZEKAR: This is a time long to be remembered, my lord. Long to be remembered.

ARZAAD: The fulfillment of our fondest dreams.

AHAB: I hope all the people will feel the same about it.



BAAL-ZEKAR: They do, my lord, they do already. Whatever the king does pleases all the people. Whatever the king approves, they approve. Glory to the gods, our great temple of Baal is nearly finished! Heretofore we have been homeless, worshipping on the high places at the mercy of the sun and rain. Now, what a temple! Praise to king Ahab, and to the noble queen Jezebel. A national shrine, a center to which all Israel will look for spiritual leadership. I foresee the day when all other religions will be absorbed in the rising glory of great Baal.

ARZAAD: (*rather stiffly*) May I remind you, friend Baal-Zekar, that the beautiful and noble queen also worships Ashtoreth, of whom I am high priest? If I am not mistaken, she is perhaps more favorable to the goddess than to Baal. After all, being a woman—

BAAL-ZEKAR: Oh, certainly, certainly, friend Arzaad. We wouldn't slight you or your goddess for all the world. Whatever we have is yours; and yours is ours. You know that. There is glory enough for all.

ARZAAD: I understand, but it sometimes seems that we of Ashtoreth share what is left. You get the first temple, we get space in it. You have 450 priests, we are allowed only 400. Why? Why can't we be first—at least once in awhile?

BAAL-ZEKAR: Come, come, now, Arzaad. Isn't it in the order of nature that the sun shall outshine the moon?

ARZAAD: It isn't humorous. I appeal to the king—

AHAB: Are you sure the temple will be ready by the date you have set?

ARZAAD: Definitely. The building proper is completed now. The famous artists which the queen's father sent from Sidon are busy decorating the walls, and the images are being overlaid with gold. And the great altar, it is a magnificent thing....Has the king seen it?

AHAB: Ah, yes! You will let us know what you will require in the line of beasts for sacrifice?

BAAL-ZEKAR: Certainly, certainly. It will be a large requirement.

AHAB: But remember this: no *human* sacrifices.

BAAL-ZEKAR: As the king wishes. Anyway, the school in which I was trained doesn't practice human sacrifice as much now as years ago. Of course, in a great national emergency it can be very effective.

AHAB: We have no national emergency.

ARZAAD: (*smoothly*) To be sure, times are different now. The king is to be commended for his broad-mindedness and his thoroughly modern spirit. Free from the shackles of the past, Israel should mount to heights of glory beyond the imagination of a Solomon or a Jeroboam.

BAAL-ZEKAR: Narrow-mindedness can be the ruin of a nation. Look at Judah down there, struggling along with one God.

AHAB: That's true. Rehoboam wouldn't progress, and it cost him most of his kingdom. I wouldn't want that in my record.

BAAL-ZEKAR: My lord, such wisdom is nothing less than divine. Would my lord inform us as to the future status of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, under which guise Jehovah has been remembered since Jeroboam's day?

AHAB: I don't think we need to worry about them. The people have just about lost interest in them. They want something new. The old worship will die of simple neglect.

ARZAAD: No doubt. This new arrangement will be to the king's advantage in every way, in that it will make Samaria the center of religion as well as of the state. With both branches controlled by a wise king—aided, of course, by a clever priesthood—it should be possible to handle even so rebellious a people as Israel.

AHAB: Do you think I hadn't thought of that?

BAAL-ZEKAR: We had no doubt of the king's foresight. In fact, the king could well be counted among the prophets. But, my lord, there is just one fly in the ointment.

AHAB: What is that?

BAAL-ZEKAR: You have no doubt heard of what they call



*Date palms in Israel*

the schools of the prophets, the training centers of these fanatical, old-time Jehovah worshipers. They are scattered all over the kingdom, but their principal centers are in Jericho, Bethel, Jezreel and Mount Tabor, with a small group here in Samaria. In view of the political situation, it seems to us unwise to tolerate them, broad-minded though we be.

AHAB: There are only a few of them, and I do not really think them dangerous.

ARZAAD: Well, I'm not so sure—(*Baal-Zekar nudges him and silences him with a fierce look*)

BAAL-ZEKAR: (*suavely*) My lord, I understand the queen is concerned over these centers of infection. She considers these people to be politically unreliable. They could easily be spies for Judah, since their religious



sympathies are there, and one traitor is too many...Shall I fill a cup for the king?

AHAB: No, thank you. I never drink before noon. Besides, only the king's cupbearer fills the king's cup.

ARZAAD: Surely the king would not intimate that he does not trust his own high priests?

AHAB: (*dryly*) Not at all, not at all; it's just an old Israelite custom, and old habits die hard. Kings live longer when they are careful.

BAAL-ZEKAR: Now these schools of the prophets—

AHAB: (*impatiently*) I'll think the matter over. After all, it's a matter of state, and I am the one to make the decision. You attend to your temple, I'll take care of the rest.

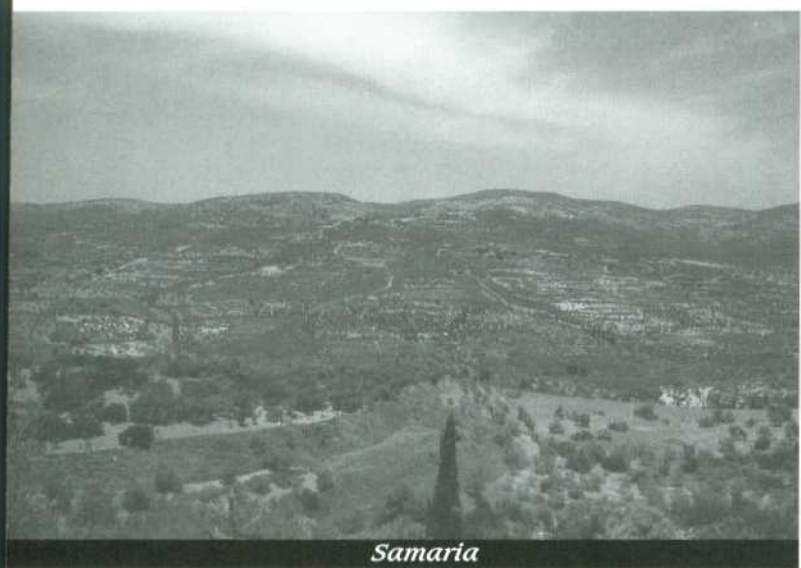
(*Priests bow and exit*)

AHAB: Trust those fellows? I trust no one, least of all a priest. Why, I wouldn't even let the queen fill a cup for me. Ho, hum! It's a great and dangerous life, being a king—but we like it just the same.

(*Enter Obadiah*)

OBADIAH: Yes, my lord?

AHAB: What's the daily report, Obadiah?



Samaria

OBADIAH: Nothing out of the ordinary, my lord. Things are running very smoothly in the palace, for a change.

AHAB: The dedication of the new temple is set for the second new moon. That gives you plenty of time to get ready, which you will need. There will be guests of state, among them the king of Sidon, my father-in-law. You must see that the entertainment is on the proper scale. Leave nothing undone that can be done. We must do this thing in style; our national reputation is at stake. If we are going to be one of the family of nations, we must look the part. Understand what I mean?

OBADIAH: This all costs money, do you understand, your majesty? The treasurer tells me he can see the bottom of the golden coffer.

AHAB: I know. This building has been a drain, but the income from the temple should soon help us. But we have to take the first step. Borrow on the king's credit, and squeeze it out in taxes afterward. I think the people can stand one more squeeze.

OBADIAH: Very well, my lord, I shall try to please the king.

AHAB: Do you suggest that you do not like the job—is that it?

OBADIAH: If I may speak freely to my lord. I do not.

AHAB: And why not?

OBADIAH: As the king knows, I fear and worship Jehovah, and Him only, even from my youth. I am thankful for the king's protection which permits me to worship, even to go to Jerusalem to the feasts. But I cannot help lamenting the reprobate condition of Israel when Baal can take the place of the true and living God as our people's object of worship.

AHAB: Come now, Obadiah, don't be so provincial in your thinking. You're an educated man. You ought to be broader-minded than that. Surely there is good to be found in all religions. Look at Judah. They have adhered closely to the leading of your God, keeping their narrow attitude, but are they any more prosperous than we? We've tried Jehovah for a long time. Now give Baal a chance. The times change, and we have to change with them. Yesterday Jehovah. Today, Baal. Tomorrow—who knows?

OBADIAH: Tomorrow the ruin and collapse of our nation. For when the descendants of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob come to this, that they can bow to gods of wood and stone, what else can we expect? Is this according to the law of our fathers, or is it after the example of—

AHAB: (*sharply*) Listen, Obadiah. Don't talk about the past. We live in the present. Now, confidentially, I understand your viewpoint, and I hope you will believe me when I say that this is not really my doing. I would have been satisfied with things as they were, but the queen naturally wants her own gods. You are a married man, aren't you?

OBADIAH: Yes.

AHAB: Then you understand what I mean. Sometimes we have to do things we don't want to do. There are political considerations, too, as dependent as we are on Egypt and Sidon. But I think it will turn out all right in the end. Look on the bright side, Obadiah. Things could be a lot worse.

OBADIAH: I wish my lord might hear the preaching of the great prophet who is in Gilead. He might be able to turn the heart of the king back to God.

AHAB: Who are you talking about?

OBADIAH: Elijah, none other. Elijah the Tishbite.

AHAB: (*suddenly angry*) I've heard of that fellow, and I want nothing to do with him! A bigot, a fanatic, a rebel! Oh, how I would like to...!!! (*suddenly calm*) It is no use. Go ahead, worship your God. But don't try to tell the rest of us what to do.

(*To Be Continued*)



# THOUGHTS DETERMINE ALTITUDE

The old proverb, "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he," is so comprehensive that we cannot escape its impact. We are, quite literally, what we think about. Our destiny will be the direct result of the thoughts we permit, because thoughts determine attitude, attitude determines altitude, and our altitude determines our destiny.

A proper evaluation of ourselves is no small achievement. While an over-active self-ego can create many problems, to sell one's self short is equally foolish and self-destructive. Thoughts of doubt and low self-esteem can quickly forge themselves into attitudes of defeatism. And how can any worthwhile spiritual altitude be achieved if doubt and fear are ever dragging us lower into discouragement? Success is the result of a strong, unbending purpose, a determination so fixed that doubt's seductive wedge can find no point of entrance.

If an invigorating, soul stirring, spiritual altitude is our quest, it is imperative that we turn our thoughts to the highest of heights, to our Great God. It is absolutely essential that we learn to think His thoughts and pattern our life after that of His beloved Son, who attained the glorious altitude of a perfect life. And, across the centuries echoes His loving "Follow Me," His invitation to explore the exhilaration of life lived on the heights.

Yet, how often we find ourselves living in the lowlands, stuck in the mud of our perverse natures. Sin dies hard, and it almost seems at times that some besetments have many more than just nine lives. How often have we fought to gain control of a hasty temper, or its close cousin impatience. But what

have we really *done* about it? If our thoughts are thoughts of Christ and our attitude is under control, won't we remember that *"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city"*? (Prov. 16:32).

There are so many situations in life which can create havoc if our thoughts are not under firm control. Fortunately, all of us have not the same tendencies, but anyone with a sensitive nature knows how quickly a small injury or slight can blossom into acute hurt feelings, then bitterness, and finally in cynicism and despair.

Is there any hope or help for this situation? Thank God, there is! But the path leading out of the mud of the lowland is not an easy one. Naturally, our first instinct is to place the blame on the "other" party—he or she could have spoken or acted so much more appropriately. But— isn't it possible that a little bending of our stiff necks might have saved the situation? And isn't it possible the other party may be wholly oblivious to saying or doing anything to cause a rift? Life is too short and friends are too precious to allow misunderstandings to become barriers! Oh, take that first all-important step to a cleaner, higher altitude! Forget your pride, humble yourself, and resolve the problem. It may hurt a little, but think of the many, many benefits of renewed love and trust. Imagine, too, what it will be like to soar on the thermal currents of the upper altitudes!

There is yet another thought pattern to beware of, one that leads to devastating attitudes. It is the complacent "time-enough-yet" style of thinking. Along with the "time-

enough-yet" complex comes an easy satisfaction with surface religion, being content with little victories, little goals, little joys, and little advances, always promising ourselves that tomorrow our progress will be stupendous. Tomorrow comes, but no great progress, and so on and on—and the years go by. Time's clock keeps ticking, the gray hairs increase and all of a sudden the words of the ancient Prophet strike us like a dagger: *"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil"* (Jer. 13:23). Soon follows the sad lament of the procrastinator: *"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved"* (Jer. 8:20).

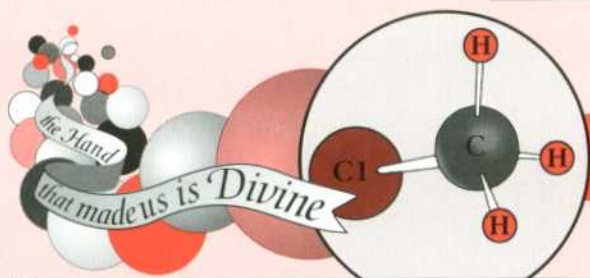
The Christian's use of time is exceedingly important. If we would reach the breath-taking altitude we must be making daily progress toward it. The opportunities are here, the invitation, and the promised reward all set before us. God grant that we may put forth the effort and make the advances, before too late.

Our attitudes determine our altitude. And our thoughts determine our attitudes. We ourselves will become the sum total of the thoughts we entertain and the attitudes they harden into.

Let us dream loftier dreams, and as we dream we will find the power to soar to new heights of spiritual attainment. In this way our thoughts determine our destiny. And it is a glorious destiny we can lay hold on. Our vision is the full glory and joy that God has set before us and which we *can*, with His help, attain.

—Contributed by J. M.





# O f A t o m s & E l e m e n t s

## Definitions

**Chemistry:** The branch of science concerned with matter, its structures, properties and composition, the changes that matter undergoes.

Almost everything in our world relates in some way to the science of chemistry. Everything that we see or touch is composed of elements, which are the basis of the science of chemistry.

**Chemical change:** Any change that results in the production of one or more substances that differ chemically from the original substances.

Examples of chemical changes are the rusting of iron, the souring of milk, or the changing of the food we eat into energy to walk and work.

**Matter:** Any substance that has mass (weight) and occupies space.

**Atom:** The smallest part of an element.

**Element:** A substance that cannot be broken down by ordinary chemical means.

**Molecule:** The smallest part of a substance that can exist free and retain the properties of the substance.

**Electron:** a negative particle found in an atom.

**Nucleus:** the dense center part of an atom.

**Neutron:** A particle found in the nucleus of an atom, having a positive charge.

**Compound:** A substance made up of two or more elements chemically combined. Water is a compound; Sugar is a compound.

We are accustomed to attributing the marvels of space—where distance must be measured in light years and time is beyond fathoming—to the handiwork of God. But the other side of the universe, the microcosm, the world of molecules, atoms, protons and electrons, shows just as plainly the wonders of our Creator.

Part of this other side is the world of chemistry. In order to study this world, we must use powerful microscopes, just as we must use powerful telescopes to bring the macrocosm (the universe of stars and galaxies) into view. Although the contrast in the size of the two worlds is indeed extreme, many similarities exist.

When we think of chemistry, we think of a laboratory with test tubes, beakers, and very precise electronic instruments. The atmosphere seems cold, unfeeling, and far removed from anything sacred or Divine.

Actually, the very opposite is true. Nowhere in all the world can the wonders of God's creation be observed any more distinctly—or impressively—than in the world of chemistry.

Every part of our lives is affected by chemistry. Our bodies are an exceedingly complex combination of chemicals. The medicines that we take when we are sick help us because they affect the chemistry of our bodies. The clothing we wear, the dishes in which we do our cooking, the furnaces that heat our homes, the vitamins and minerals that guard our health, along with such everyday simple products as toothpaste, soap, even water—all are products of the operation of chemistry.

Chemistry is a highly predictable science governed by law. And those laws were sharply defined and in place long before any human mind began to study them. In fact, scientists have studied and experimented many years just to *discover* what has been operating all the time. These laws are among the wonders of our Creator's handiwork, and but for them, we would not be able to live. Said Thomas Edison, "No one can study chemistry and see the wonderful way in which certain elements combine with the nicety of the most delicate machine ever invented, and not come to the inevitable conclusion that there is a Big Engineer who is running this universe."

## Atoms Everywhere

Chemistry is the study of matter, and matter is anything that has mass (weight) and occupies space. Matter is anything we can feel or touch—the water we drink, the air we breathe, the car we drive, our chair, the floor, the wall—all is matter.

All matter is made up of billions and billions of tiny particles called atoms. The concept of the atom is an old one. The word was coined by the Greeks about 400 BC. But the idea of atomic structure did not begin to be understood until the early nineteenth century. Now, after years of research and study, substances are defined according to their atomic makeup.

For the scientific data in this article we are indebted to *Chemistry, The Study of Matter*, Fourth Edition, by Henry Dorin, Peter E Demnin and Dorothy L. Gabel, published by Prentice Hall, Inc., ©1992; also *Chemistry: General, Organic, Biological*, Second Edition, by Jacqueline I. Kroschwitz and Melvin Windkun, published by McGraw Hill, ©1990.



An atom is a very, very small particle—it is hard to imagine *how* small. It would take more than 100 million average sized atoms, set edge to edge, to equal the thickness of a sheet of paper. Someone has calculated that on the curved surface of an ordinary pin are some 200 quadrillion nickel atoms.

But atoms are not hard, solid little balls. Atoms are made up of three smaller particles: protons, neutrons and electrons, plus a whole lot of empty space. In fact, the inside of an atom is mostly empty space!

In the center of each atom is a tiny nucleus, in which are a fixed number of *neutrons* and an equal number of *protons*. Outside the nucleus of the atom are an equal number of *electrons*, tiny particles whirling in orbits around the nucleus, just as the planets orbit the earth—and just as far apart, relatively speaking. A single atom may have as many as 100 electrons orbiting its nucleus. The rest of the inside of the atom—the most of it—is empty space. This means that the chair you sit on, or the floor you stand on, is mostly nothingness, held together by the force of electrons whirling so rapidly that they cannot be crushed, giving us an illusion of solidity and firmness. (Might this be one reason why the Bible says that the things which are seen are made out of

nucleus at the center of the atom is very, *very* small, even in relation to the atom. It would take a 100 thousand nuclei to reach across the diameter of an average-sized atom.

What does this mean in tangible terms? If an atom were the size of an auditorium, the nucleus of that atom would be the size of a housefly.

Protons, neutrons, electrons form the basic structure of everything around us—and who can think that they came about by chance, by accident? It is all a marvel of design far beyond our ability to fathom.

(And we cannot help but wonder: Does God see His human creation as it really is, stripped of all the empty space within the atoms? For truly, He knoweth our frame, "He remembereth that we are dust." Might this be among His reasons for looking at us as infinitesimal specks?—because we really are!)

With speeds so great and sizes so microscopic in every tiny atom, can we not marvel again with the Psalmist, "*What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?*" (Ps. 8:3-4).

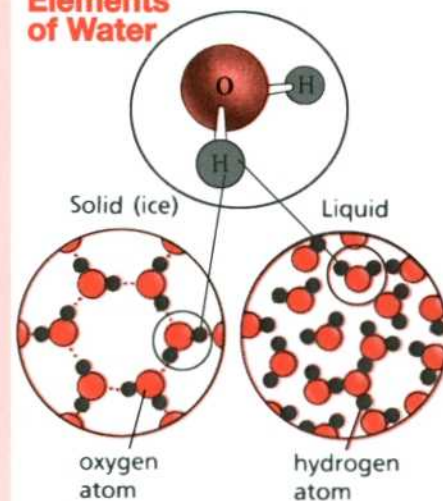
### Atoms Make Up the Elements

All matter is made up of a relatively few basic elements, and each element has its own atomic structure, i.e., a fixed number of protons and neutrons, which give the element its properties, and therefore, its identity. At present, 109 elements are known to exist (oxygen, iron, copper, mercury are common examples).

How can so few elements make up our entire world, with its billions of different substances? Again we must look to our Creator's masterful design. He has so arranged that two or more elements can combine chemically, in an exact proportion, and produce a wholly new substance (called a compound), having its own distinct (and different) properties (sugar, water, and salt are examples of chemical compounds). For example, two atoms of the gas hydrogen (H) combine chemically with one atom of the gas oxygen (O) and produces the water we drink (H<sub>2</sub>O). Calcium combines with carbon to produce the substance we call baking powder. Common table sugar is the

result of the chemical joining of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen atoms in a specific pattern (all carbohydrates are various combinations of the

### Elements of Water



**The structure of water, as a solid and liquid.** Water molecules in ice are more open in structure than in liquid water. This is why water expands when it freezes.

same three elements). The chemical joining of iron and oxygen results in iron oxide—we call it rust.

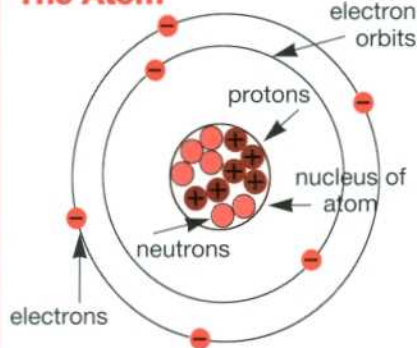
### The Wonder of the Elements

Now let's look a little more closely at the elements that compose all matter. Are they hit-and-miss substances that came about by chance?

A little more than one hundred years ago, the Russian chemist Mendeleyev shocked the world of science with his statements about matter. The fourteenth child of a Siberian school teacher, he studied chemistry and related subjects at the Main Institute in St. Petersburg, graduated with honors, and continued in research and teaching. Dismayed that he could not find a suitable chemistry textbook for his students, he proceeded to write his own *Principles of Chemistry* (1868-71). In the process, he organized the known elements on a chart, and discovered a natural order among them that is no less than astounding.

(Continued on page 24)

### The Atom



Electrons in random orbits circle the nucleus of the atom billions of times in millionths of a second!

things which do not appear?—Hebrews 11:3).

Now let's think just a little more about what is inside the atom. The



# Always Encourage

(A Mother's Experience)

My young son Bryan had been trying to reach his raincoat in the front closet. He wasn't quite tall enough. So, typically boy, he decided a nice big jump would pull it right down. Well, the jump pulled it down all right, only the raincoat wasn't the only thing that came down. The entire bar, with its array of coats, jackets, and sweaters, collapsed in a heap on the closet floor.

"Mom, help!" came the cry of distress.

I hurried to the rescue. "You should have known better than that," was my first response. It was the end of a long, busy day, but my tongue wasn't too tired for a scolding.

But suddenly I stopped myself. A picture came to my mind. I saw a little boy, arms full of tools, going outdoors that afternoon, hoeing the garden, mowing the lawn with all the strength a seven-year-old can muster, and raking up all the sticks that collect so quickly under the big old maple tree in our back yard. And all without even being told!

Had I been as anxious to praise and thank him for all the work he had done that day as I was now to scold him for his childish mistake? After all, that bar had been bending under the weight of the coats and jackets for some time now; we needed a stronger one anyway.

I turned to him kindly. "From now on, when you can't reach something, I think you will use the stepstool. But Bryan, I haven't thanked you yet for all the very nice

things you did to help us this afternoon—making the backyard so clean and tidy. It's a real help, I should have thanked you before."

When Daddy came home from work I made sure he heard about all the jobs his Bryan had done, instead of confronting him immediately with the one mistake.

Why is it so much easier to criticize than to appreciate and thank and encourage? The children are sure to hear about it when they do something naughty, or aggravating, or even when they make a simple mistake. Shouldn't we be just as anxious to let them know when they are helpful and good and their effort is appreciated? The good won't take care of itself; it must be cultivated.

Of course we want to develop as much good Christian character in our children as we possibly can. To do this, we need to correct them by word and by discipline. But there is a

difference between training in good habits and just plain criticizing.

The Bible gives some very good advice to parents:

*"Fathers, don't scold your children so much that they become discouraged and quit trying"* (Col. 3:21, Living Bible).

*"And now a word to you parents. Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful"* (Eph. 6:4, Living Bible).

*"Don't overcorrect your children or make it difficult for them to obey the commandment"* (Eph. 6:4, Phillips). And the New English Bible says, *"You fathers, again, must not goad your children to resentment, but give them the instruction, and the correction, which belong to a Christian upbringing."*

Encouragement and tolerance have definite places in the Christian home. Cultivating these traits will rid our homes of unnecessary strife.

I try to ask myself these questions: Am I expecting too much of my children? Am I allowing myself more leniency than I allow them? Would I want others, or God, to deal with me in the same manner that I deal with my children?

Yes, God demands obedience, and He promises to punish for wrongdoing; but He is a very merciful Father, not giving up on us though we may make the same mistake again and again.

Discipline and encouragement must go hand in hand. I, for one, am going to try harder to give them out in equal parts. □





## Who Is God's Child?

(Continued from page 13)

live ungodly" (II Pet. 2:6). God showed no love for those whom He destroyed; however we might say that He was showing love for others by pointing to Sodom and Gomorrah as a lesson of a punishment which they could avoid.

Did God show any love in directing Elijah to slay the 850 prophets of Baal, after Elijah's dramatic victory on Mt. Carmel? Again, God was removing the wicked element, so that they could not contaminate more people. And doubtless others were impressed by the lesson.

In a number of Jesus' parables, the wicked are punished—overthrown or destroyed—and there is no indication of any love of God for the wicked. Take, for example, Jesus' conclusion at the end of the parable of the pounds. We read, "*But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me*" (Luke 19:27). Is there any indication that God is punishing these people out of love? He is only removing them because of their wickedness, to silence them in their opposition, and to make room for those who are worthy to live.

Jesus makes this same lesson in Luke 13:24, where His disciples asked Him, "*Lord, are there few that be saved?*" And He replied, "*Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*" And Jesus goes on to mention the fate of the disobe-

ent, to whom He shall say,..."*I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out*" (Luke 13:22-28)—is there any evidence of love for those who are "thrust out"?

In the Book of Revelation is the picture of Christ conquering the incorrigible element of earth when He comes the second time. They will resist His rightful jurisdiction, and He will forcibly subdue them, as we read, "*These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings*" (Rev. 17:14). Is there any evidence of His loving those He subdues and eliminates?

The removal of the wicked element is the only sure means of opening the way for universal, unrestricted, unhindered progress. As long as those who refuse to change and refuse to allow others to change are allowed to live, the state which we see today will continue.

When one's life is gone, there is no more opportunity to repent, and no way of receiving God's love—how, then, could God punish any with death and at the same time be punishing them "out of love?" It is a contradiction of terms.

The only "loving" side of God's punishment when those punished must die is the impression upon those who remain. It is not unusual that we read that when there was a punishment, "great fear" fell upon

all who heard of the incident. This was true at the time Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead because they lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:11). It was a mandate in Israel that in the event of a public punishment, "*those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you*" (Deut. 19:20).

When God removed the wicked nations from Canaan, through His instrument Joshua and the armies of Israel, when they conquered the land before settling it, God was not punishing out of love in removing these people. He was simply removing the poison, so that His people could live safely. Though God's will did not totally prevail, the nation was certainly better for what they removed, and they suffered for what they did not remove. God's love was for those to whom the land was given, not for the idolatrous nations whom He removed.

It is impossible to read the Bible with an open mind and to believe that God loves everyone indiscriminately or unconditionally. If God has love for all, then He does not truly love righteousness and hate iniquity. If He loves the wicked as much as the just, then we will never have a Kingdom of righteousness and peace, where righteousness will be free to flourish and the earth be filled with the glory of the Lord (Isa. 32:17-18; Num. 14:21). But such is His promise, and to fulfill it He must show His disapproval of the wicked element—by removing them—so that the good may live and flourish. □

### My Prayer

Health...enough to make work a pleasure;  
Wealth...enough to supply my needs;  
Strength...enough to battle with difficulties and overcome them;  
Patience...enough to work until some good is accomplished;  
Grace...enough to confess and forsake my sins;  
Charity...enough to be never rude, selfish or irritable;  
Integrity... that will not compromise with sin;  
Love...enough to encourage rather than criticize;  
Faith...enough to make real the things of eternity;  
Hope...enough to remove any anxiety for the future;  
Gratitude...enough to realize that everything I have belongs to God;  
nothing is my very own.



(Continued from page 21)

In Mendeleyev's opinion, there were more elements than had been discovered—he was sure of it because of the pattern and order he observed among the known elements. He was even prepared to give the exact description of the yet unknown elements. Many scientists scoffed, but Mendeleyev held to his premise, leaving blanks in his chart where an undiscovered element belonged. He even gave each of the undiscovered elements a pseudo name and filled in its exact properties.

Within a few years, all the missing elements had been discovered, and each one fit exactly where Mendeleyev had said it would. There was no longer any room for doubt.

Suddenly Mendeleyev was a hero showered with honors.

### About the Elements

What is the order among the elements? Look at the chart below. Start with the element *hydrogen* (represented by the "H" in the upper left-hand corner of the table). Hydrogen is the simplest element known to exist, because its atoms contain only one proton (and, of course, one neutron and one electron).

Now add one proton to it, and you have the next element on the chart: *helium*.

Add another proton, and you have another element: *lithium*. Add another proton, and you have *beryllium*.

And so on. When you have five protons, you have boron. *Carbon* has six protons, *nitrogen* has seven. Keep adding one proton at a time, and you will eventually form all of the 109 known elements, which are the basic building blocks of all matter.

Can anyone miss the pattern, the design, the orderliness of the structure of matter?

Every time you add a proton, you change the mass of the element—it becomes a bit heavier and a bit larger. So helium weighs more than hydrogen, and lithium weighs more than helium, and so on. This is how Mendeleyev could know that certain elements were missing when he was putting his chart together—it was as obvious as counting "1-2-3-4-6-9"

## Periodic Table of the Elements

The elements in the table are arranged in order by the number of electrons, protons and neutrons each contains (called their "atomic number").

Each horizontal row is called a **period**. Most of the elements in the first three periods (rows 1, 2, and 3) are relatively common in the surface of the earth (in the soil and subsoil, plant and animal life, oceans, and atmosphere).

Each vertical column in the table is called a **group** or **family** of elements. All the elements in a group have similar physical and chemical properties.

Periods	Group 1																	Group 18
1	<b>H</b> 1																	<b>He</b> 2
2	<b>Li</b> 3	<b>Be</b> 4											<b>B</b> 5	<b>C</b> 6	<b>N</b> 7	<b>O</b> 8	<b>F</b> 9	<b>Ne</b> 10
3	<b>Na</b> 11	<b>Mg</b> 12											<b>Al</b> 13	<b>Si</b> 14	<b>P</b> 15	<b>S</b> 16	<b>Cl</b> 17	<b>Ar</b> 18
4	<b>K</b> 19	<b>Ca</b> 20	<b>Sc</b> 21	<b>Ti</b> 22	<b>V</b> 23	<b>Cr</b> 24	<b>Mn</b> 25	<b>Fe</b> 26	<b>Co</b> 27	<b>Ni</b> 28	<b>Cu</b> 29	<b>Zn</b> 30	<b>Ga</b> 31	<b>Ge</b> 32	<b>As</b> 33	<b>Se</b> 34	<b>Br</b> 35	<b>Kr</b> 36
5	<b>Rb</b> 37	<b>Sr</b> 38	<b>Y</b> 39	<b>Zr</b> 40	<b>Nb</b> 41	<b>Mo</b> 42	<b>Tc</b> 43	<b>Ru</b> 44	<b>Rh</b> 45	<b>Pd</b> 46	<b>Ag</b> 47	<b>Cd</b> 48	<b>In</b> 49	<b>Sn</b> 50	<b>Sb</b> 51	<b>Te</b> 52	<b>I</b> 53	<b>Xe</b> 54
6	<b>Cs</b> 55	<b>Ba</b> 56	* 57-71	<b>Hf</b> 72	<b>Ta</b> 73	<b>W</b> 74	<b>Re</b> 75	<b>Os</b> 76	<b>Ir</b> 77	<b>Pt</b> 78	<b>Au</b> 79	<b>Hg</b> 80	<b>Tl</b> 81	<b>Pb</b> 82	<b>Bi</b> 83	<b>Po</b> 84	<b>At</b> 85	<b>Rn</b> 86
7	<b>Fr</b> 87	<b>Ra</b> 88	† 89-103	<b>Unq</b> 104	<b>Unp</b> 105	<b>Unh</b> 106	<b>Uns</b> 107	<b>Uno</b> 108	<b>Une</b> 109									

<b>La</b> *57	<b>Ce</b> 58	<b>Pr</b> 59	<b>Nd</b> 60	<b>Pm</b> 61	<b>Sm</b> 62	<b>Eu</b> 63	<b>Gd</b> 64	<b>Tb</b> 65	<b>Dy</b> 66	<b>Ho</b> 67	<b>Er</b> 68	<b>Tm</b> 69	<b>Yb</b> 70	<b>Lu</b> 71
<b>Ac</b> †89	<b>Th</b> 90	<b>Pa</b> 91	<b>U</b> 92	<b>Np</b> 93	<b>Pu</b> 94	<b>Am</b> 95	<b>Cm</b> 96	<b>Bk</b> 97	<b>Cf</b> 98	<b>Es</b> 99	<b>Em</b> 100	<b>Md</b> 101	<b>No</b> 102	<b>Lr</b> 103



and knowing that the numbers "5" and "7" and "8" were missing! And because of the orderliness of the elements, he could know exactly the characteristics of each missing element.

### **The Phenomena of Order**

The orderliness of matter is one of the most powerful evidences of our Creator's handiwork. For how can order come from disorder—automatically, without intelligent direction?

The answer is simple: It cannot. An All-wise, Omnipotent Creator designed and organized our world and all its elements.

Disorder is easy to understand. But order must have a mind behind it, an intelligent arranger. Toss a box full of papers into the air, and will they land in a perfect arrangement, in order by subject, all neatly stacked? You might toss them for a lifetime but they will never arrange themselves. Or dump a truckload of bricks. Do you expect it to look like a wall, a house—or anything other than a pile of bricks?

It takes intelligent thought to straighten out a desk of papers. It takes intelligent direction to arrange bricks to build a house. It also takes intelligent thought (the mind of God) to design the laws which govern the atoms to combine with each other in an orderly manner, to produce the billions of substances in our world.

We could study our whole lifetime and still only begin to understand the wonders of the world of chemistry. The most brilliant scientists today understand only a tiny fraction of what there is to know, so great are the wonders of our God!

But can we not see, even with a tiny glimpse, enough to marvel at the beauty, the order, and the design in our Creator's workmanship? Who can say that such order "evolved" without intelligent direction?

If it takes human intelligence to put a stack of papers in order, or to build a house, or a piece of furniture, or a computer, is it not an insult to our Creator to even suggest that the building blocks of all matter—and the intricate laws that govern them—came about by happenstance?

Can we not bow our heads in reverence to the marvelous Creator who designed so orderly a world? Can anyone look upon such a wonder and not believe that all is the work of an All-powerful, All-wise Creator with awesome and incomprehensible knowledge?

What can we conclude, but that "the Hand that made them is Divine"! □

## **Are You Ready?**

*"And there shall be signs...upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring...and then shall they see the Son of man coming..." (Luke 21:25-27).*

### **Joy and Sorrow**

The Master goes on to say, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (v.28). "Your redemption"—the message is one of joy as our daily prayer, "thy kingdom come," will finally be answered. We long for God's new order upon the earth; we anticipate being united with loved ones who have passed away; we sigh in relief that the struggle against sin will finally be over.

But not all of Christ's servants will rejoice; some will have said, "My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." Others will have exhausted their supply of enthusiasm and Bible interest while still others will never have applied their talents to the work of the Truth (Matt. 24:48-49; 25:8, 25).

These will be rejected. The Lord will "cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites...and the door was shut...cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness:" (Matt. 24:51; 25:10,30). Predictably, the rejected will react with panic and anguish, "Lord, Lord, open to us...There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

They did not expect Christ to come.

"The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of" (Matt. 24:50). This situation is not unusual, for the Lord repeats the point several times, "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (v. 44, and note vs. 36, 42 and 25:13).

How could it be that believers who have been given so many signs could be caught unawares?

All we have to do is look inside ourselves for an answer. We know this is the generation of the Lord's return. Forty-seven years Israel has been a nation;\* twenty-seven years the Jews have controlled Jerusalem, bringing the times of the Gentiles to a close; never before have people gone to and fro as they are now and never before has knowledge increased with such dramatic, unceasing rapidity (Luke 21:24; Dan. 12:4).

We know it is the time, but when we look inside ourselves some of us will see talent and opportunity lying dormant not being used in the work of the Truth; some will recognize that former interest and enthusiasm has died out and others will have to admit they are sometimes unkind to Christ's brethren. If we knew Christ was coming next week, we'd change fast. Yet soon, it will be next week. Why don't we always behave as if he is coming very soon?

—From *The Christadelphian Tidings*, March, 1995

\* We cannot be sure of the full meaning of the Scripture prophecies pertaining to Israel, but all evidence reinforces our belief that the Second Advent is near.



# Offerings Today?

"Burnt offerings were once commonplace. Would God receive an offering made today on an altar from the vegetables, fruit and meat that a person produced in their garden or on their farm? If so, how should this offering be made so that it would be acceptable to God?"

You are right, that burnt offerings were once commonplace. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob offered sacrifices on altars as a means of worshiping God. Burnt offerings were a part of the law governing the nation of Israel, along with many other types of offerings. There were thank offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, offerings of the first fruits, burnt offerings, and whole burnt offerings. Each had a place, and had to be offered according to strict standards. These sacrifices were a vital part of the covenant God made with the Israelite nation.

However, the offering of these sacrifices did not assure the offerer of eternal salvation, only of temporal favor in the sight of the law. The author of Hebrews makes this limitation clear: *"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship...because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God'. First he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them' (although the law required them to be made)...Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin"* (Heb. 10:1, 4–8, 11, NIV).

The sacrifices were in reality a lesson in obedience. God wanted the spirit willing, and the heart right, and the will set to obey. The offering itself meant nothing to the Almighty. Said the Psalmist, *"I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills"* (Ps. 50:9–10, NIV). Again the Psalmist explained, *"O Lord,...you do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise"* (Ps. 51:16–17, NIV).

In the time of Isaiah, the people were offering sacrifices but God was not pleased. *"The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?" says the Lord. 'I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fat-*

*tened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats....Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood!"* (Isa. 1:11, 13–15, NIV). What did God want? *"wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right!"* (Isa. 1:16–17, NIV). Clearly God did not want the sacrifice, but the obedience, the willingness to sacrifice something of value in obedience to His command.

Could we please God today by offering a sacrifice? Not unless sacrificing was commanded, and there is no command to sacrifice physical offerings today. Rather, we are commanded to offer our bodies a *"living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"* (Rom. 12:1). To set up our own law to obey, and then obey it, might be classified along with Jews, who set their own standards, of whom Paul wrote, *"They are a law unto themselves,"* and again, *"Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness...I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge"* (Rom. 10:3–2, NIV).

It is far easier to offer produce or the firstfruits of our crops than to live a life dedicated and pleasing to God in all that we say and do. While the making of a physical offering might seem or feel meaningful from our side, if it is not commanded it would be meaningless to God, and might even be considered presumptuous, *"vain oblation"* as in Isaiah's time. □

*The musician who reads the music reads more than the notes—he also reads the "rests," the brief periods of waiting. There is no music in a rest, but the music could not be the same without them.*

*When God writes the music of our lives, He wisely includes "rests," as when illness or trial force a change in our plans. These are the times when we can make our music truly beautiful.*

*By waiting. Patiently.*



A skeptic is a person who, when he sees the handwriting on the wall, claims it is a forgery.

*It is easy to take liberty for granted when you have never had it taken from you.*

The will to win is not nearly as important as the will to *prepare* to win.

*The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more.*

A stumble may prevent a fall.

*To be upset over what you don't have is to waste what you do have.*

Fear is the darkroom where negatives are developed.

*The man who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.*

Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm.

### *What More Can I Do?*

*(Continued from page 2)*

duties assigned us. Everything we may do is part of that assignment. But when we have done all we can possibly do, we have still done only what was our duty—in return for what God is doing for us. We have only built up a future blessing for ourselves; we have done nothing to enhance God's glory.

But what we will receive for our service will be magnificent beyond anything we can imagine, because our God is able to do for us "*exceeding abundantly above all that we can or think*" (Eph. 3:20).

What is the motive in our serving? Is it Christ's "greater love" that is willing to give *all*? Are we really serving out of love, with *all* our heart, *all* our soul, *all* our mind, *all* our strength?

When we realize what God has done—is doing—and has promised to do for us, let us show by our lives that our love for God is a love can never do enough, for even by a total dedication, a complete obedience, a full surrender, we are still receiving *infinitely* more than we can give. □



### Take A Walk Around Yourself

*When you're criticizing others  
and finding here and there  
A fault or two to speak of  
or a weakness you can tear;*

*When you're blaming someone's weakness  
or accusing some of pelf,  
It's time that you went out  
to take a walk around yourself.*

*There are lots of human failings  
in the average of us all.  
And lots of grave shortcomings  
in the short and in the tall;*

*But when we think of evil  
Man should lay upon the shelves  
It's time we all went out to take  
a walk around ourselves.*

*We need so often in this life  
the balancing of scales,  
This seeing how much in us wins  
and how much in us fails;*

*But before you judge another  
just to lay him on the shelf,  
It would be a splendid plan  
to take a walk around yourself.*

—Selected





# The Dawn of Peace

*A*wake! awake! the stars are pale, the east is russet gray;  
They fade, behold, the phantoms fade that kept the gates of day;  
Throw wide the burning valves, and let the golden streets be free,  
The morning watch is past—the watch of evening shall not be.  
Put off, put off your mail, ye kings, and beat your brands to dust!  
A surer grasp your hands must know, your hearts a better trust.  
Nay, bend aback the lance's point and break the helmet bar;  
A noise is on the morning winds, but not the noise of war.

*A*lmighty God now bids you fear, and glory give to Him;  
Oh, hear the Prophet's warning voice before your eyes grow dim.  
God mustereth His mighty host, He whets His glittering sword;  
Come, kiss the Son of Zion's hill and heed the Conqueror's word.  
Among the grassy mountain paths the glittering troops increase—  
They come! they come—how fair their feet—they come that  
publish peace!

Yea, victory! fair victory! the enemies are ours!  
And all the clouds are clasped in light, and all the earth with flowers.

*T*hough still depressed, yet showers will fall, and, in a little while,  
All radiant with the deathless rose the wilderness shall smile,  
And every tender living thing shall feed by streams of rest;  
Nor lamb shall from the fold be lost, nor nursling from the nest.  
For aye the time of wrath is past, and dawns the age of rest;  
When honor binds the brow of man, and faithfulness his breast—  
Behold, the time of wrath is past, and righteousness shall be,  
And the wolf is dead in Kingdom fair, and the dragon in the sea.