

Megiddo Message

WHO IS LIKE YOU—
MAJESTIC IN HOLINESS,
AWESOME IN GLORY?

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WHAT YOU DON'T SAY COUNTS, TOO

Much is said about words, and the care we should give to thinking before we speak. But there is another side to this issue: *What you don't say counts, too!*

Strange? Think about it.

Of course, temperaments differ. Some of us are all too ready to speak our mind, and must learn that our opinion is not infallible. This article is addressed to those who prefer to avoid controversy. Our instincts tell us to keep the boat steady and move along as smoothly as possible. So when we disagree, we say nothing. But is this the right way to go through life? Is it possible to take a solid stand for God and righteousness and avoid all controversy?

The spirit of our age is to be tolerant of everything. Keep your thoughts to yourself if they do not match those of the crowd; or better still, don't bother to think. Agree with everybody and anybody, or else keep quiet.

At times this may be the wise course, but at other times we hurt our cause by our silence. How will anyone know of our great hope if we are always silent? How will anyone learn of the joy that thrills us, or the deep love that burns in our hearts, if we say nothing about it?

Did the ancient prophets of God keep silent? Ezekiel was told to speak God's words to the people *"whether they will listen or not, for they are rebels"* (Ezek. 2:5, 7, NLT). Jeremiah was told, *"you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you"* (Jer. 1:7, NLT). God was not allowing any silent, easy way out.

The prophets were men of strong conviction, men who were willing to stand for something even when it was unpopular.

They stood, even though they had to undergo a period of name-calling, or persecution, or imprisonment, or torture. They might even have to face death for speaking out. But they had a job to do, and they did it. And when the storm died down, they were better for it—because they had God on their side.

Broad-mindedness is not always the best policy. It has been said that the difference between a politician and a statesman is that the politician sees which way the people are going and tries to stay with them, whereas the statesman looks at what is best for the people and does that, even if no one will follow him. A man of God is still different: He speaks the message of God faithfully, even though it is not naturally his opinion, or that of his hearers.

There have probably been few figures more controversial than Jesus of Nazareth. He was born in obscurity, raised in a quiet village, unlearned by the standards of His time. Yet, when He came into view, He spoke as no other man had spoken. Why? Was it because He agreed with everyone and knew they would agree with Him? Not at all. He did not even quote others, except the law and the prophets. He paid no attention to philosophers, poets, politicians, or public figures in His speeches. He said, *"I say unto you,"* and the people could take it or leave it as they liked. He spoke of goodness; He spoke also of sin. He spoke of kindness; He spoke also of judgment. Sin and judgment, then as now, were not the most popular subjects upon which to speak. Yet if He had *not* spoken on those topics, what a different

picture we would have of Him today.

Jesus never tested to see which way the wind of public opinion was blowing—He set His own direction. He spoke the words which His heavenly Father had given Him to speak, and He spoke them with authority. If He had remained silent, we would not know where He stood, or what He demanded.

It is time for us to take a new look at what Jesus said. If ever we needed authority, it is now. The world is full of opinions, "maybe's," "perhaps's," and "we-hope-so's." Those who speak for God can and must speak with conviction, the conviction born of real, living faith in God. We do not know everything; we are limited both in what can be known and in our ability to know. Paul said that now *"We see through a glass darkly."* But the word which God has given us, we must speak. To be silent is to betray Him.

God has given us a strong foundation upon which to stand, a bright array of prophecies and fulfillments. We know the Word of the Lord is true. We may doubt ourselves, but we have no reason to doubt God's Word. And one thing about the Word of God, it has power: power to change lives, power to correct, power to lead—all the way into the Kingdom of Christ.

This is no time to doubt. It is only time to obey the voice which says plainly, *"This is the way, walk ye in it"* (Isa. 30:21).

There may be times when silence is golden; there are also times when it is deadly. What we say is vital. But what we don't say can reveal our lack of courage, faith, or confidence in God.

(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 (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

WE BELIEVE ...

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

The Herald and the KING

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

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

IN THIS ISSUE ...

Editorial	
WHAT YOU DON'T SAY COUNTS, TOO	2
Article	
THE COST IN PENTECOST	4
Poems	
BLEST DAY OF PENTECOST	6
GONE, GONE	10
Bible Quiz	
NEW TESTAMENT ABC'S	11
Article	
BEHOLD, HE COMES!	12
Dialogue	
FINDING MEANING TO LIFE	14
Poem	
THE TOWN OF NO-GOOD	17
Children's Story	
JOHNNY AND THE WOODSMAN	18
Biography	
AN HONEST MAN (Part Eight)	20
Public Debates of L. T. Nichols	
Questions and Answers	
PRAY FOR WHOM?	24
"Touch me not"	
"Study"	
"Search"	
Back Cover Poem	
O HAPPY ZION	28

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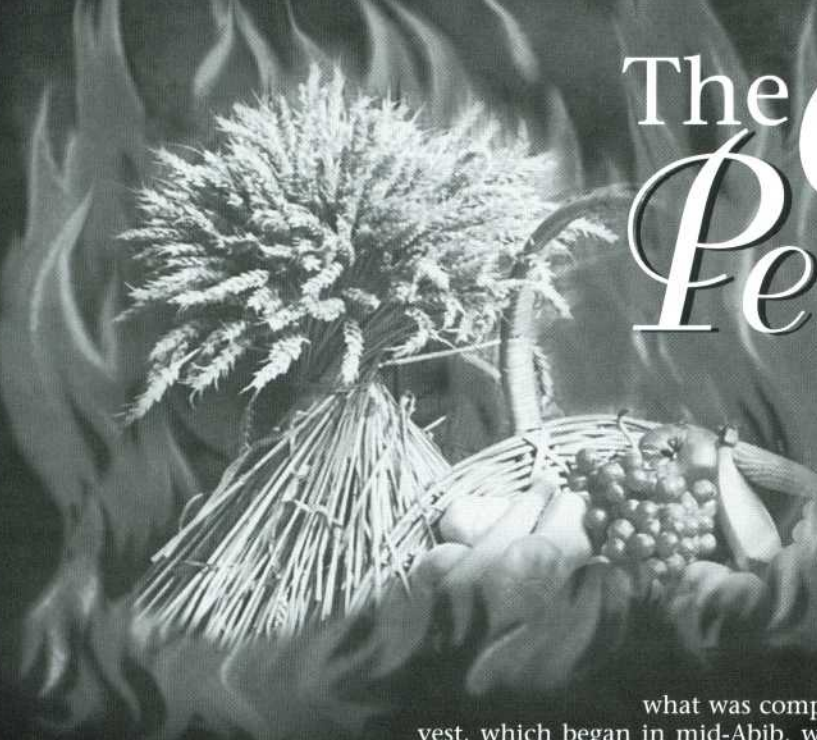
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Pentecost this year is June 10.

The Cost in Pentecost

*What is there
in life that really
counts that does
not really cost?*

*The coming day
of Pentecost will
bring the fruition
of all our hopes
and highest
expectations.*



Pentecost was a happy festival in ancient Israel. The fiftieth day after they waved the first sheaf of harvest before the Lord, it was a day of praise both for what was completed and what was just begun. The barley harvest, which began in mid-Abib, was now over, also the wheat harvest; this gave Pentecost the name of "Feast of Ingathering," "Feast of Reaping and Harvest," also "Feast of Weeks" because of the week of weeks included in the harvest season. But Pentecost was also called the "Feast of Firstfruits" because it marked the beginning of the harvesting of the firstfruits of the land, which the people were committed to bring to offer to the Lord. In later years, Pentecost was also kept as a remembrance of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai.

We want to think today about the *cost* in Pentecost. Was there *cost* in this ancient occasion? There was. Who could enjoy the harvest festival who had not contributed to the harvest? Who could bring any firstfruits to the Lord with joy who had not planted and cultivated them? Yes. There was *cost* in Pentecost. God never planned that His people should be laggards, drones, loafers.

Pentecost marked the end of one harvest and the beginning of another. What a fitting time for the bestowing of the power of the Holy Spirit in the days of the apostles, for the inaugurating of a new dispensation of God's grace, a new age of harvesting souls for the Kingdom of God. For it was "*when the day of Pentecost was fully come,*" when the disciples were "*all with one accord in one place,*" that "*there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*" (Acts 2:1-4). What an indescribable experience it must have been! What a day! What a Pentecost! Greater than any of the preceding fifteen hundred! On this day the ancient feast took on new meaning. Henceforward the Christians would remember Pentecost not as a day marking the end of barley harvest, not as a day for the harvesting of their first summer fruits, but as the day when Jesus sent special power to His people, to assist them in the new missionary campaign that His apostles had been commissioned to launch.

What was this Pentecost power? Jesus had promised His disciples before He ascended that they would receive "*power from on high*" (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). On the day of Pentecost, Peter testified that the power they had was from the now glorified Christ (Acts 2:32-33). It was special power by which, as Jesus had promised them, they would be able to do great works, greater than He had done during His earthly ministry.

But this power was not all-purpose, for every human need. Nor was it power that was theirs to use as they pleased. It was not theirs merely to make them impressive in the eyes of their peers; it was not even to help them in their own infirmities or to relieve their personal discomforts. The power of the Holy Spirit was power with a purpose. It was power that made them living witnesses of all that they had seen and heard and been taught during the three years they had spent with Christ. It was power that was theirs to confirm the words which they would speak and the witness which they would give. It was the "promise of the Father" given so that those who heard and saw could not possibly doubt the God who was behind them. It was power that was meant to bring in a great harvest for God.

The Cost

Was there *cost* in this Pentecost? And if so, what was the *cost*?

In 1977 a certain Catholic priest named Father Joseph Orsini wrote a book which he entitled "*The Cost in Pentecost*." The book bears the Nihil Obstat and the Imprimatur, giving it the full endorsement of the Roman Church. The first sentence in the book states the theme and conclusion of the author: "The 'cost' in Pentecost was and is the death of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. He paid the cost once and for all."

Was this the conviction of those who shared in the first memorable Pentecost experience? Did those disciples feel their account with God was "Paid in Full," that there was no cost for them to meet?

Not at all. They had yet to complete the purifying of their own hearts and lives. And, being the recipients of special privilege they had other special responsibilities. This is part of God's way of working. Where much is given, much is required; and on that day of Pentecost, much was given. To have in one's own being the living power of God—what a tremendous privilege! Was it not reasonable that they owed, in return, some special obligation, duty or responsibility?

Being a recipient of the Holy Spirit power brought with it, first of all,

a commitment to a lifelong loyalty. If they fell away, they could not repent and be re-instated. We may wonder how anyone who had felt in his or her being the living power of God could possibly lose faith; but it must have been possible, or God would not have given the warning. The warning was plain: "*It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame*" (Heb. 6:4-6). "*It is impossible...if they shall fall away, to renew them again.*" A harsh and stark fact, but God meant what He said. High privilege brought with it high responsibility; there was *cost* in Pentecost.

There was also another cost: the persecutions they might have to endure as they faced a hostile world. "*All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,*" wrote the apostle Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:12). All will experience some type of suffering; but during the heat of the day of salvation, there was possibility—great possibility—that they would have to suffer physically for His sake. Even to identify oneself with the cause of Christ in that age could mean placing oneself in mortal danger. It was part of the price of belonging. It was a cost that went with the Pentecost blessings, the great privilege of seeing and knowing the power of God firsthand.

The apostles warned their brethren of this fact. Wrote the apostle Peter, "*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.*" What was to be their attitude? "*But rejoice*"—why? "*Inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings.*" Their persecutions were an opportunity to share in the sufferings of Christ: "*that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy*" (1 Pet. 4:12-13). The apostle Paul also warned of the possibility of persecution, as in his letter to the Thessalonians, where he said "*we must expect to have persecu-*

Was not a
faith worth living
for also a faith
worth dying for?

tions" (1 Thess. 3:4, JB); or his letter to Timothy: "*If we suffer [with Christ], we shall also reign with him*" (2 Tim. 2:12).

There are two words used in the New Testament for suffering and persecution. One is *pascho*, which is literally "suffering" such as Christ suffered physical crucifixion. The other is *thlipsis* which refers to "trials, troubles, tribulation, pressures." We today experience only the latter—the pressures of circumstances, the tribulation that accompanies sacrifice, or the trials that result from pursuing our own stubborn way; but both types of suffering were part of the cost the early Christians had to pay. The way to life was indeed strait, narrow and difficult.

Was there no other way? They might have tried to do what the man who set out for Sunnyville on foot did. Arriving at a fork in the road, he was annoyed to discover a signpost with one arrow marked "Manor Town" that pointed down a wide, smoothly-paved road and another arrow marked "Sunnyville" that pointed to a narrow, rocky trail. What did he do? He stood there perplexed for a moment, then climbed up the post, reversed the signs, shimmed down, and proceeded merrily down the smooth road. The only trouble was, he never made it to Sunnyville. So with these early Christians. They could have found a way around the cost, but where

*Only when we
learn to take Jesus
as our standard of
excellence do we
discover our own
deficiencies.*

would they have arrived? Nowhere. They would have lived lives like everyone else, "full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing."

Such was not the wish of the apostle Paul. He was ready and willing to meet the cost. Hear him reciting a page from his own book of experience: "Overworked,...scourged more severely, more often imprisoned, many a time face to face with death. Five times the Jews have given me the thirty-nine

strokes; three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I have been shipwrecked, and for twenty-four hours I was adrift on the open sea. I have been constantly on the road; I have met dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my fellow-countrymen, dangers from foreigners, dangers in towns, dangers in the country, dangers at sea, dangers from false friends. I have toiled and drudged, I have often gone without sleep; hungry and thirsty, I have often gone fasting; and I have suffered from cold and exposure" (2 Cor. 11:23-27, NEB). This great apostle enjoyed the highest of privileges—a miraculous meeting with Christ to set him on his way, only a few days later a blessing with Holy Spirit power; plus other visions or appearances of Christ; contact with angels. Stupendous privileges!—but was there not a cost? Did Jesus not tell him at the very first: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16)?

What was Paul's spirit through it all? "For our light affliction," he wrote,

"which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). "Light affliction"...and "but for a moment," "troubles soon over" (JB), which "though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory." What a weight! Was it not worth the cost?

Cost: Persecution

The book of Hebrews speaks of those who suffered "by being [themselves] publicly exposed to insults and violence" (Heb. 10:33, JB). Others were "stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. 11:37-38). Yes, there was cost. But was not a faith worth living for also a faith worth dying for? This was the attitude of those early stalwarts, and they were more than willing to pay the price—not only to compen-

Blest Day of Pentecost

*Again the Day of Pentecost,
Has come our path of life to bless;
With golden memories has it come,
Our way to brighten like the sun.*

*To all those holy men of old,
Who waited its appointed hour;
We are drawn closer to behold
The wonders of a hidden Power.*

*Through forty crowded days and nine
They tarry at Jerusalem,
To be endued with power Divine
According to our Lord's command.*

*And as they wait they talk of Him
Who rose triumphant from the tomb.
Then, even as they meet to pray,
A sound from heaven fills the room*

*Where they are gathered, e'en the sound
As of a great wind rushing through;
And as it passes, lo, 'tis found
They speak in tongues they never knew!*

*The multitude, Greeks, Parthians, Medes,
And those that in Judea dwell—
Each in his own tongue hears them speak,
And understands the things they tell.*

*Those holy men, with Spirit filled,
Once timid, now in Christ are bold;
Their voices are no longer stilled—
The power within they cannot hold.*

*And when the gathered throngs perceive
They are but plain, unlearned men,
The facts compel them to believe
Those speakers have with Jesus been.*

*Among the many men who flock
To hear them there are some who mock
And say, "These men are full of wine";
But others heard the Word Divine,*

*Renouncing all their former ways,
They turn to God with songs of praise.
Thus, in one day three thousand souls
Were added to the Christian roles.*

sate for the privileges they were enjoying but in prospect of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"!

Shall we be any less willing, we who have been invited to share in the greater Pentecost that is just ahead? The Pentecost day when Jesus sent power from on high was shared by only a few, and the cost likewise was assumed by only a few. But the greater Day of Pentecost to come shall be known worldwide, and its blessings shall benefit all who live. Should we not expect that there would be cost attending such an outpouring of blessing, for those who will have a direct share in its wonders?

Those who shared in the first outpouring of Pentecost may share also in the second, for it is written that all shall be judged and rewarded together, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:40). What a gathering of the faithful that will be! What a day,

when the Lord will pour out His power "upon all flesh" and "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God"! (Joel 2:28; Isa. 52:10). With this great event will come power—the power by which God will begin again His great, open work among men. Once again His people will be given power to confirm their words with marvelous "signs following." "Greater works will be done than did Jesus the Son, by the gifts of the Spirit, too." So says the songbook. And so says the Word of God. It is no fanciful dream; it is all true.

Elijah the prophet will arrive and begin the greatest reformation this earth has ever seen. Then "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isa. 35:5-6). Then will the dead in Christ arise and all be gathered together ready to meet the Lord in the air when He returns. All this—and

much more—will come with the great new day of Pentecost. The day will bring the fruition of all our hopes and highest expectations, the beginning of all the wonders we can imagine—and more; the fulfilling of all that has been written in the law and in the prophets of the "great day of God Almighty." This will be the day of Pentecost.

Is it not entirely reasonable that there should be cost associated with participating in such great events? True, the greater Pentecost will arrive whether we give anything towards our part in it or not. But can we risk not being a lively, active participant in such a day?

The Costs

Everything of value has cost. Rarely do red or golden yellow apples merely fall into our laps without our having to do anything to obtain them. There is a price to pay. And there is a price to pay for all who would have part in the great coming Pentecost, if we would have a share of that power

*By word and miracle and sign
Bold Peter proved the Word Divine;
He healed the lame, and bade him rise;
And when he saw some men's surprise*

*He seized the opportunity
To tell of Jesus' ministry.
And then he warned to cease from sin,
And life anew in Christ begin.*

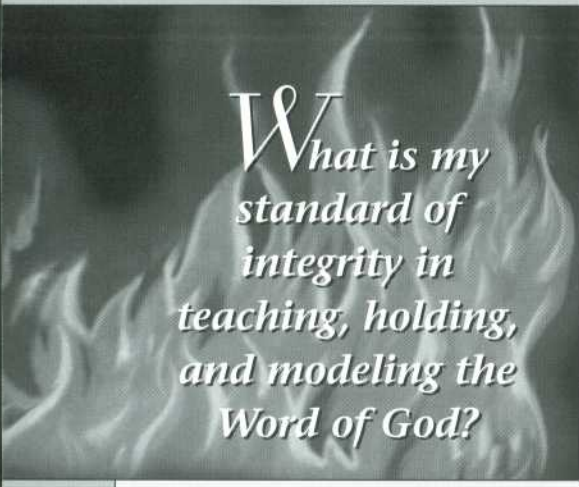
*O blessed day of Pentecost,
When men were to the Spirit host;
The symbol of a greater Day
When Jesus o'er the earth holds sway.*

*Now, in this long, dry time between,
The Holy Spirit is not seen;
Faith, hope and charity are all
On which true Christians now may call.*

*But soon the Prophet shall return
For whom the waiting faithful yearn,
He, herald of the King of kings,
Will sound the word: "Restore all things."*

*Then Christ will give the Spirit birth
To all the worthy ones of earth:
And all who sleep in Him shall rise
And reign with Christ in Paradise.*





What is my standard of integrity in teaching, holding, and modeling the Word of God?

to raise the dead, heal the sick, open blind eyes and instruct nations in the right ways of the Lord. Oh! What wouldn't we give for a share in that great power now!

What is that cost? God's spokesmen have described it in many ways through the ages. Let us see what Jesus had to say about it. He spoke to His disciples, to those who listened to Him in that day, and to those who would read His recorded words. All who would have part in the Day to come would have to meet the same requirements.

Are You Able?

The first statement we want to examine was addressed to two of His apostles and their mother. The account is found in Matthew 20:20-28.

Everyone naturally wants honor, position, prestige. Man is man because he aspires. He loses his worth when he is content to remain as he is. It is goals like these that goad us to our highest action. We will *do* something if only we can *be* somebody.

James and John were no exception. They (or their mother) were just a little more outspoken than some of us. And when they came to Jesus inquiring whether they could have the two highest positions in the Kingdom, what did Jesus answer? He did not say that honor and prestige were not available. He answered simply: "*Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able...?*" It was more than a matter of simple ask and receive. The request was stupendous. Did they realize what they were asking?

The question: "*Are ye able?*" suggests that the qualifications to be met were high. There was *cost* involved, *great* cost. Had they weighed this fact? Had they *counted* it?

Still unaware of the import of Jesus' words or of the magnitude of what they had asked, the disciples answered quickly, "*Yes, we are able.*" Isn't this just the natural response? There is a something in us that prevents us from properly appraising ourselves. We judge ourselves by a standard but—alas!—it is the standard we have set. Only when we learn to take Jesus as our standard of excellence do we discover how far from *able* we are.

Jesus then went on to compare the attaining of positions in this world with the positions He had to offer.

What was Jesus' attitude toward their striving for ambition, their eagerness for the authority, ostentation and pride of this world? Instead of lopping off the branches one by one, He struck at the root: "*It shall not be so among you.*" My kingdom is not like the kingdoms of this world, He explained. My kingdom is not made of titles, insignia, robes, retinues and ceremonies. "*Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them*" (Matt. 20:25). The world is full of ostentation and pride. They wield power, and often it is used tyrannically. The patronage of the rulers is courted; their favors are applauded; they are worshiped by courtiers, sycophants, and slaves. "*But it shall not be so among you.*" "*It shall not...*"—no if's or but's or other allowances for pride of face and place and station. Jesus did not condemn their aspiring, but anything parallel to this world and its strivings is wrong. Have the desire, says Jesus, to be somebody, but be somebody *really* important. How? "*Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant*" (Matt. 20:27).

Do we wonder that Jesus pressed the question, "*Are ye able?*" There is *cost* involved, high cost in self-esteem, self-importance, and worldly satisfaction. Not everyone is able

to pay—because not everyone is willing. Are you able? Am I?

"*Are ye able?*" In other words, can you meet the cost? Have you counted it and made the irreversible decision? Are you ready to make any sacrifice required and call it naught but gain—in view of the immeasurable reward you are promised?

"*Are ye able?*" Are you willing to forgo worldly ambitions and strivings to be Christ's humble, obedient servants, ready to learn, listen and follow, and wait for the honor which shall come when Christ arrives to dispense the rewards?

The question "*Are ye able?*" is far reaching. The words reach even to us and touch upon every aspect of our lives. Are *we* able? Are we prepared to follow Jesus over all the ups and downs of life? Can we take whatever God sees fit to allow in the right spirit and profit by all? Can we take a disappointment without bitterness? Can we take a reproof—whatever the spirit in which it is given—without any feeling of revenge? Are we able?

Our daily lives offer almost countless opportunities to show our Christ-like skills. Are we able to take a loss without feeling unjustly treated, or see our best efforts come to nothing and yet entertain no thoughts of self-pity? Can we make a sacrifice—and forget it? Can we see our plans set aside while those of another are preferred and feel no personal offense? Are we able?

Are we able to take criticism without feeling hurt, sour or upset? Can we dismiss an apparent slight without assuming that that person intended to give us the worst? Can we look at another's method or plan objectively and see the good in it even when we feel our way would be superior (and the only logical one to follow)? Can we do well and suffer for it—silently? Are we able?

Can we share another's joy in having something we were denied, and feel no touch of envy? Can we overlook trifles instead of getting upset? Can we keep a level, Christ-like balance, not feeling too puffed up in success or downcast in failure? It is all part of the cost. Are we—you and I—able? Are we doing our best to meet the cost?

Who Comes First?

On another occasion Jesus stated the cost in different terms. "If any man come to me," He said, "and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26-27). It is altogether possible that this statement drew from His hearers a comment similar to what His disciples said another time: "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60). If they didn't say it, they at least thought it and felt it. They preferred to dwell on the lighter, easier aspects of being a disciple. Are we not the same? We like to think of following Jesus as something all pleasant and smooth and velvety soft. But Jesus never deceived anyone as to the real terms of discipleship. He would have no one start without considering the costs.

But did Jesus mean we should hate the members of our family, and our own life also, to be His disciple? The thought of "hate" seems contradictory to several other statements Jesus made, for did He not say, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"? (Matt. 5:44). Again, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34).

When we turn to the original word translated "hate" in Luke 14:26, we find that its first definition is "to hate, to pursue with hatred, detest"; but this is not its only meaning. It has for a second definition, equally valid, "to love less, esteem less" (Taylor's Greek-English Lexicon). Jesus may be saying, then, "If any man come to me and [does not love less] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also [than he loves Me] he cannot be my disciple." It is not a matter of love versus hatred; it is a matter of first loyalties when the interests of one's own family interfere with the interests of God. Jesus is saying that in any such clash of claims He must be first and everything else and everyone else must be secondary. Several of the new trans-

lations read: "Whoever comes to Me without prizing far less dearly his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yea, even his own life, cannot be My disciple"; and in a footnote, "As love means, prize dearly, so hate here means, prize less." The New American Standard has in a footnote on the word hate, "that is, by comparison of his love for Me."

It may seem a severe statement, but it is the mind of the Master. How could it be otherwise? How could one who is completely devoted to the prospect of everlasting life let the wishes of his unbelieving family interfere? If it is a matter of choosing between our family and our obligations to do what pleases Christ, these words of Jesus have a real application; we must choose the right and let the consequences follow, meekly bearing the heavy cross of severance, if need be. It is our duty always to weigh one authority against the other, and to decide in favor of that which will honor God. Is this not part of the cost if we would share in the great Pentecost to come?

We should notice also in Jesus' statement that we are to be willing to "love less" or "suffer the loss of" something more, if necessary: our own life. Now life is a precious gift we naturally—and rightly—prize. Is Jesus asking us to give even our life? Here is a statement of complete consecration, the cost at its highest value. Is such a price ever asked? It was asked of Jesus, our perfect example, for is it not written of Him that He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8)? Job maintained the same attitude of resignation and complete trust in God: "Though he

slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). What does this mean to us? If it comes to a question of either...or, either life and surrendering our hope in Christ, or death and not surrendering our hope, there must be no compromise in favor of

Almighty 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 help others, and for the power to help them, and for the desire to be helped ourselves.

Give us within our own hearts the peace that passes 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; and above all take away 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 and Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom we would honor and obey. AMEN.

preserving our mortal life. We must be ready to take our lives and all that we have in our hands and offer them to God. This is the total devotedness we owe to our loving God.

More Cost

When Garibaldi was setting out to liberate Italy, he saw a group of young fellows standing on a street corner. With a word he summoned them to rally to him. "What do you

What is there in life that really counts that does not cost?

offer?" they asked. "Offer?" replied Garibaldi, "I offer you hardship, hunger, rags, thirst, sleepless nights, footsores in long marches, privations innumerable; and victory in the noblest cause that ever asked you." Young Italy followed him. So it is in the challenge to which Christ calls us. He does not say there is no cross to be borne. He does not say the way is easy. But what is there in life that really counts that does not really cost? There is always a price to pay—

*For the joy set before thee,
The cross;
For the gain that comes after,
The loss;
For the morning that smileth,
The night;
For the peace of the victor,
The fight.
For the white rose of goodness,
The thorn;
For the Spirit's deep wisdom,
Men's scorn;
For the sunshine of gladness,
The rain;
For the fruit of God's pruning,
The pain.*

*For the clear bell of triumph,
The knell;
For the sweetness of meeting,
Farewell;
For the height of the mountain,
The climb;
For the crowning in Zion,
Your all.*

When that greater Day of Pentecost arrives, what will it matter if only we can participate? What will matter the suffering those early Christians endured, if only they

can know the joy of the Spirit birth! What will matter their few days or years of tribulation if only they can partake of the joys that will never end!

Oh! The delights of that coming day of Pentecost, and all that will follow; will not the cost be forgotten as a dream of the night? Will it not be totally lost in the grandeur and eternal worth of all the blessings that will suddenly surround the saints in light?

It was said of a certain man that he "paid too much for too little." This unhappy outcome need never be ours if we invest in meeting the cost in Pentecost. It might be more correct to say that we are paying too little for too much!—but neither the *little* nor the *much* will be excessive for it. The little we pay will be our all, and the *much* that we gain will be beyond all we can ask or think—and will we not praise God for all, world without end?

Let us be diligent in paying whatever balance of the cost is still due, so that we are not missing at that great coming PENTECOST! □



Gone, Gone

*The day is done, and at its closing I am backward looking,
Wondering what its hours will bring me in the time of reaping.*

*Gone, gone, forever gone are they, the rosy hues of morning;
The sparkling dews and scent of flowers that heralded its dawning
Have sped away, and heated noon in all its glowing splendor
Has followed in its footsteps fast, drooping the young and tender
Herbs of the field, and causing the stout corn its leaves to fold
And close, within its bosom the sweet sap of life to hold.*

*Gone, gone the lovely sunset, and the lingering light of evening;
Now everything in nature a quiet rest is seeking.
Yes, gone, forever gone the daylight's bright and golden hours;
What are the seeds that I have sown? wild seeds, or fragrant flowers?
Have I broadcast the noxious weeds, the seeds of worthless tares,
And stinging nettles that sap the strength of precious ripening ears?*

*Or did I strive with care to sow the seeds of choicest, golden grain,
Grain which my Lord will love to gather when He comes to reign?*

*Oh, what will the Master think of me, when my last hour is past:
Will He say, "Go away!" or "Come and share my glorious repast?"*

—by Mary A. Lee

New Testament ABC's

A 1. **A**
Roman official whom Paul almost persuaded to be a Christian.

B 2. **B**
Early Christian missionary who came from the island of Cyprus, comrade of Paul.

C 3. **C**
Roman Emperor to whom Paul appealed for justice.

D 4. **D**
Early Christian woman who was sick, died, and was restored to life.

E 5. **E**
Philippian believer who had a conflict with another woman in the church.

F 6. **F**
Relationship of God to His human family of believers.

G 7. **G**
Esteemed Jewish doctor of the law who taught young Paul in Jerusalem.

H 8. **H**
Wicked ruler of Judea who ordered the slaying of all children two years old and under.

I 9. **I**
Means by which God conveys His knowledge to human writers.

J 10. **J**
New Testament author who exhorted us to contend earnestly for the faith.

K 11. **K**
Valley near Jerusalem used for burial and dumping ground.

L 12. **L**
Woman of Thyatira who was converted to Christian faith and actively taught others.

M 13. **M**
Jesus compared the Kingdom to a grain of m_____.

N 14. **N**
City which rejected Jesus.

O 15. **O**
Christian brother in Ephesus whom Paul commended for his faithful visiting.

P 16. **P**
Jewish festival commemorating the exodus from Egypt, observed by Jesus.

Q 17. **Q**
A type of dissension forbidden in the church of Christ.

R 18. Paul said we are servants of "sin unto death" or of "obedience unto r_____."

S 19. **S**
"S_____ them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

T 20. **T**
Disciple of Jesus who refused to believe in Jesus' resurrection until he had seen.

U 21. **U**
Type of bread used for Passover meals, symbolic of spiritual bread of sincerity and truth.

V 22. **V**
A term for the retributive justice belonging only to God.

W 23. **W**
An act of reverence due to God and Jesus only.

Y 24. Paul called the old law of Moses a y_____ of bondage.

Z 25. **Z**
Group of militants in the time of Christ, to which one of Jesus' disciples had belonged.



Behold, He Comes!

Of all the subjects of Bible prophecy, one event stands out in supersharp clarity: *Jesus Christ is coming.* His own words spoken before His ascension state the promise emphatically: *"I will come again." "If I go,...I will come again, and receive you unto myself"* (John 14:3).

The New Testament is filled with words of expectancy, words of urgency, words that call for intense action. *"Watch! Pray! Seek! Repent! Go! Tell!"*

What is the reason? Why this intense spirit among the early Christians? What in their lives was so stirring, so vitalizing?

It was the message they were bearing to the world, the message of the coming King of kings. *"Behold he cometh...."* It was the message the angels had given to the watching disciples the day Jesus ascended into heaven. They had been walking with Him when suddenly He was parted from them and *"a cloud received him out of their sight."*

"And while they were gazing after Him into heaven, two men dressed in white suddenly stood beside them, and said to them, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This very Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come back in just the way you have seen Him go up into heaven'" (Acts 1:10-11, Williams).

All through the Bible the promise is repeated and confirmed.

In the New Testament it is

"that day," "the day," the "last day," the "great day," the day when Christ shall return to earth.

"For I know whom I have believed," said Paul, *"and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day"* (2 Tim. 1:12).

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day" (2 Tim. 1:18).

Again in the book of Hebrews: *"Let us consider one another,...not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,...but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (Heb. 10:24-25).

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). It is *"the day,"* the day of the coming again of our Lord to earth.

The second advent of Christ has been the sustaining hope of God's people through the ages. It is the central theme of poets, prophets and apostles. Often their message was related to conditions then present; many prophecies were short-ranged; but always there was the greater, longer-range significance which permitted men to think beyond the limits of the world they could see to the Day when God's plan would be culminated on earth.

In the Old Testament

We find prophecies of Christ's second advent and the work He will perform in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

ISAIAH tells us that the Lord *"will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him."* He will *"come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger [judgment] with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire"* (Isa. 40:10; 66:15).

JEREMIAH tells how God will raise up a *"righteous Branch, and a King"* will *"reign and prosper, and... execute judgment and justice in the earth"* (Jer. 23:5).

EZEKIEL says Jerusalem will be in an overturned, unsettled condition *"until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him"* (Ezek. 21:27).

DANIEL foresaw in vision the time when the *"kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him"* (Dan. 7:27). He knew also of the time when the days of the kingdoms of men should be accomplished and *"the God of heaven"* should set up *"a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed"* (Dan. 2:44).

HOSEA saw in prophetic vision the number of the children of spiritual Israel *"as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered,"* people of whom it shall be said, *"Ye are the sons of the living God."* He tells of the day when men shall *"seek the Lord their God, and David their king [Christ, the greater Son of David]; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days"* (Hos. 1:10-11; 3:5).

JOEL describes how the Lord *"shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people"* (Joel 3:16). It is the day when there will be *"multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision"* (Joel 3:14).

OBADIAH prophesied of the calamity which would befall the nation of Edom but climaxed his message with a far-sighted vision

of the great triumphant day when "the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (Obadiah 21).

MICAH tells of the time when "the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." He announces the end of all war, for Christ will have returned and will be reigning supreme. "For he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit ever man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:2-4).

NAHUM saw in vision the Lord having His way "in the whirlwind and in the storm," a description of His judgments upon the earth at the time of His second advent. He speaks also of the mountains quaking and the hills melting at the sight of His presence (Nah. 1:3-6).

HABAKKUK assures us that though "the vision is yet for an appointed time," it is surely coming; for "at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:3).

ZEPHANIAH warns of "the great day of the Lord," the day which "is near, and hasteth greatly," the day when God will make His people "a name and a praise among all people of the earth," and "thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 1:14; 3:20, 15).

HAGGAI foresaw a mighty shaking among all nations when "the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:7).

ZECHARIAH gives us a picture of the Lord coming "and all the saints with [Him]," when His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, and the mountain shall divide.

"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one"

(Zech.

14:4-5,

9).

MALACHI closes the Old Testament with the promise of the coming of Him who "shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver," who will take swift action against all workers of iniquity. He speaks also of "the Sun of righteousness" which shall arise with healing for all men, and then concludes his message by announcing the work of Christ's herald, Elijah the prophet (Mal. 3:2-3; 4:2, 5-6).

In the New Testament

The New Testament continues the theme of Christ's return. Only two of the New Testament books mention the birth of Jesus, but the second coming is found in every book. In **MATTHEW**, Christ is the bridegroom who comes to receive His bride, in **MARK** He is the "certain man" who "planted a vineyard, and...let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country," and who came again at the appointed time. In **LUKE** He is the "nobleman" going into a "far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Matt. 25; Mark 12:1-10; Luke 19:11-21).

The Gospel of **JOHN** records the words of Jesus Himself: "I will come again" (John 14:1-3).

The book of the **ACTS of the APOSTLES** tells how the apostles went everywhere proclaiming the message of Christ—who lived, died, and was resurrected, ascended to heaven and is coming again in like manner as He went away (Acts 1:3-11).

In the book of **ROMANS** Paul tells of the "day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16). He confirms this fact by quoting the Prophet who said, "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer" (Rom. 11:26).

To the **CORINTHIAN** brethren Paul wrote of Christ who was the "firstfruits," that is, the first to be resurrected, judged and rewarded with immortality; then follows the promise to every true believer: "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:23).

To the **EPHESIANS** Paul wrote of the day when God will send Christ who shall "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:10).

In **PHILIPPIANS** Paul says that "our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile [mortal] body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:20-21).

COLOSSIANS says that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

FIRST THESSALONIANS tells us "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise" (1 Thess. 4:16).

SECOND THESSALONIANS gives us the picture of "the Lord Jesus...revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God...when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thess. 1:7-10).

FIRST TIMOTHY gives us a command to keep "without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." By doing this we may lay up "in store for [ourselves] a good foundation against the time to come, that [we] may lay hold

(Continued on page 26)

Dialogue

Gentlemen:

Although I am incapable of any belief in religious matters, if I did have the "gift of faith," your group would be the one I would believe in. Sometimes I wonder why I cannot believe in any religious system; it sure would be nice if I could. At least according to your belief all that will happen to me is that I will sleep forever. I think I like this idea.

In any case, thanks for your website. Also, please pray for me. If there is a god, I'm sure you have found it. Sadly, life has no meaning for me, outside of the need to maintain a job and take care of my material needs. By the way, I am a subscriber to your magazine. Thanks once again. (H. P.)

Dear Friend:

Some seem to be born with the "gift of faith"; others have to develop it. Some just can't seem to acquire it—but then, maybe with a different approach to one's thinking, a basis for faith might be found...?

Personally, I can't imagine life without faith in God. I can't make the food I eat, the water I drink, the air I breathe—and nobody else can either! The sun comes up every day, the seasons come and go, and all this was going on, long before I came along—and will continue on and on. Neither I nor my forebears had anything to do with making it happen.

Now one can say that it all "evolved" by itself, but even a cursory look at the intricacy of detail in the microcosm, as well as the macrocosm, leads me to believe there is a power, a mind, an intelligence, a being superior to anything that is—it is mind-boggling! Everything around us proclaims a Power superior to the most complex organism existing. You may recall that one of the astronauts, after returning from a mission, declared his belief in a creator.

But just any belief or superstition is not a suitable foundation for faith in God and future life. That is where the Bible—and the Bible only—gives us a solid basis for believing, because it presents facts which can be verified.

The Bible contains hundreds of prophecies which have been fulfilled, some of them spanning centuries, some fulfilled within a very short time, and some that are not yet fulfilled. Would you consider looking at a

few of its prophecies that have been fulfilled?

Take the prophecy recorded in the Book of Daniel (chapter 2), of the rise and fall of four world kingdoms: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. I said that I was citing a prophecy that has been fulfilled. Actually, it is about 80% fulfilled. The prophecy describes four world kingdoms, to be superseded by a fifth power that will break to shivers any remnants of the previous kingdoms and literally fill the earth. The four great kingdoms have come and gone. We await the fifth, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, which He will set up when He returns.

The king of Babylon had a dream, in which he saw a great image. The image had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and legs part of iron and part of clay. At the time he awoke, the king could not recall either the dream or its meaning. After his regular magicians failed to offer any satisfactory answers, Daniel was called in.

Giving all credit to God, Daniel proceeded to reveal to the king both the dream and its meaning. In describing the image, Daniel first told the king that he, Nebuchadnezzar, was represented by the head of gold. And *"after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee [Medo-Persian], and another third kingdom of brass [Greece], which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom [Rome] shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things:...And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay"* (Dan. 2:35-41).

At the climax of the dream, a stone cut out of the mountain without hands (representing Christ and His saints) strikes the image upon the feet, the image is blown away, and the little stone grows until it fills the whole earth.

The Bible is not short on detail in its prophecies. In prophetic vision, the Grecian Kingdom was represented by a leopard with four wings and four heads. This is especially fitting because the leopard is known for its swiftness. History tells us that the swiftness of Alexander the Great was his greatest means of victory. In Daniel, chapter eight, Alexander the Great is represented as a he-goat that *"touched not the ground,"* again symbolizing swiftness. Notice also that he broke the two horns of the ram. Horns represent power. By breaking the power of the Medes and Persians, Alexander the Great strengthened his own might, and waxed very great. *"And when he was strong, the great horn was broken;*

SEEKING MEANING TO LIFE

and from it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven" (Dan. 8:8). Alexander, represented by the one horn, died at the early age of 32, and his kingdom was divided among his four generals, (in the prophecy, four horns came up in place of the one horn that was broken). "And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great" (Dan. 8:9). Here is a picture of the Roman power which came into being as Greece declined. History confirms all these details that Daniel described several hundred years in advance. Can we not believe that the final power, the fifth kingdom, will also come into existence just as prophesied?

We sincerely believe that Jesus Christ will soon return to this earth and establish a worldwide Kingdom that will never fail. We don't believe this just because someone says it. We believe because we have read other prophecies in the Bible and we have solid evidence to support its truthfulness. We thoroughly believe that it is God's Message through those He inspired to record it. We read in 2 Pet 1:20-21 (NIV): "...no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

At least part of the problem of acquiring faith, it seems to me, comes down to our individual willingness to believe when sufficient evidence is given. One must be willing to accept evidence and draw logical conclusions based upon it.

We exercise plenty of faith in everyday matters. The science of electronics, for example, is largely based on theory. We believe the theory because it works.

We trust a map to guide us to a particular location because we have used a map for this purpose many times before.

We believe that we can turn a switch in our automobile and a few moments later be effortlessly cruising down the highway, because we do it every day.

I believe that if you can bring yourself to a really serious study of the Bible, you will soon be amazed at the faith you will develop. This has happened to others. Our founder started out as a youth with only a wavering faith in the Bible. He had to decide: either to commit to it totally, or dump it. He said, "Either the Bible is all true, or it is of no value whatever." He decided to give the Bible a chance, and was repeatedly impressed by what he found.

One subject that might be of special benefit to you

right now is the study of Bible prophecy. Fulfilled prophecy strengthens our faith in the supreme God who knows the end from the beginning. Prophecy is the unique attribute that proves there is a God in Heaven. Prophecy demands a supreme intelligence that no mortal can claim. We cannot know what will happen five minutes from now.

There are thousands of prophecies recorded in the Scriptures. Some of these were fulfilled immediately, some shortly afterwards, others centuries and even millenniums later. Some we see being fulfilled in our own day. Some are yet to be fulfilled. With the Bible in one hand and history in the other we can gain a wealth of knowledge we could never acquire in any other way. Christ's own words to His disciples were: "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).

I am praying that you will seriously consider these things. Please let us hear from you again. —
(G. P.)

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your response to my questions about the meaning of life. Your report, while quite interesting, does not bring any hope since these sort of matters can be interpreted in many ways. As an extreme case, consider the Waco situation with a David Koresh.

I believe you are sincere, and this is why I continue to correspond with you. (Your magazine is outstanding and the cover is always uplifting.)

If only there were some way I could find meaning in life! Sadly, once we die, it's fairly clear that that is it and a 100 years hence no one will care that we lived.


Thanks for your time, as I have never found any meaning in my life. Please help me if you can. (H. P.)

Dear Friend,

Thank you for replying.

We all know that it is impossible to convince anyone against his will. However, I trust that you are open to accept evidence. I recall a discussion with a professor of biology who believed and taught evolution. After going over the evidence, he said he was fully satisfied that evolution was not the answer to the origin of things, that there is a supreme Creator—but he was

going to continue to believe and teach evolution anyway to the end of his career, because he would not go against what he



*The only way we can
learn about anything that
lies beyond our experience
is to consult our Creator.*

had been teaching as fact for so many years. His reputation meant more to him than his belief in God or his own salvation.

We are born, we live a short time during which we experience a mixture of pleasure and pain, then pass out of existence. This is all we can know from our own human experience. For any knowledge beyond this we must depend on our Creator.

Personally, I do not see how any reasoning person can deny that we have a Creator. We human creatures are not the highest level of existence, because we did not make ourselves; we did not give ourselves intelligence, or the power to reason or remember, to be aware of our existence or even to feel, to see, to hear or have emotions. Someone with greater intelligence has designed us. Just as an inventor is superior in intelligence and skill to the machines he invents, so the Creator that designed us (or any other part of His creation) is superior to us.

The only way we learn about anything that lies beyond our human experience is to consult our Creator.

And the only way we can consult our Creator is to go to the written Word, the Bible, which He has provided to instruct us.

This is why the Bible is supremely important to us. It is our only link with our Creator's mind, therefore our only source of knowledge about anything that lies beyond our observation or experience.

This is why we are serious about learning what the Bible tells us.

How should we study the Bible? I think we both realize how important it is to look at the overall picture, not just an item or two. Just reading the Bible will help by acquainting us with some of its plain teachings. The problem here is that we humans have a tendency to read things into the Scriptures that aren't there. (Much of this can be attributed to what we have been taught beforehand.) That is why a serious *subject-by-subject* study is necessary, so that we can build our faith on a firm foundation.

One must also study *for the right reason*. Studying for the wrong reason is often a dead-end street. If, for example, I study the Bible to find support for what I want to believe or what I have been taught, I cannot expect to arrive at a correct understanding of it. But if I am ready to lay aside my own thoughts and study to find out what it really teaches, then I can count on God to help me.

To believe something because *we think* it is right is far different than believing because we are convinced that it is the true teaching of the Bible. "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*" is advice we find right in the Bible (1 Thess. 5:21). Isn't this the only basis for genuine belief? Surely the Scriptures must have something to offer in the way of absolutes to put forth such a profound challenge to us concerning itself—"*prove all things.*"

Building faith may be compared to building a house, *it is done one piece or block at a time*. And as with any house, a good foundation is essential lest it fall in the first storm (the first encounter with one of different faith).

After many years of study I am convinced, without a shadow of doubt, that the Scriptures are true and that they present us with the one and only way to make life worth living now, along with the promise of a far better life in the age to come.

You mention in your response that the Scriptures can be interpreted many ways—perhaps you were inferring that a correct meaning cannot be determined. I readily agree that all interpretations are not equal, and all are not correct. But I firmly believe that with study we *can* learn what the Author of the Scriptures intended.

What about the differing interpretations of many Bible passages? When one seriously applies himself to study the Bible, comparing Scripture with Scripture, many of these different interpretations soon show up for what they are—mere human conjectures, *misinterpretations*, and not the meaning the Bible author intended. Sometimes it is necessary to consider the context of the passage; other times it is necessary to look at the general teaching of the Bible, and then find a way to harmonize a seemingly "variant" passage with the general teaching. Sometimes it is a simple matter of choosing the correct definition of a word. Just as a single word in our language can have many different meanings but only one that is appropriate to a given situation, so another definition can make a difficult passage clear.

This is why, and I think you agree, that all religions are not equal. Religion in general does not offer a consistent interpretation of the Bible. (Some do not even believe that it is important to understand the Bible.) Most express only their own ideas, or those they have been taught; and their "I think" carries no more authority than yours or mine.

We might compare religion to a currency. Now there are many religions, just as there are many currencies, but a currency is only as good as the nation standing behind it. So a religion is only as good as what is behind it. If it is supported by the Word of God, it has great value; if its tenets are not supported

by the Bible, it is as worthless as the currency of a non-existing nation.

I'm sure you agree, there is no value in believing just anything. Nor does it make sense to tenaciously cling to a belief when there is sound evidence to the contrary. You strike me as one who is not willing to believe just anything. This is good. I think this has been an attribute of every aspiring Christian. Else they too would have just followed the way of error as so many have (and still do).

Only a knowledge of God our Creator and of His purpose for this earth and the human family can give real meaning to our lives. And here I find *great* meaning for life. I am not here just to exist, to pass the time, to provide the necessities of life for myself and my family for a little while, and then die. The Bible reveals that God has a plan, a great plan, and that I can become part of that plan, if I meet His terms of acceptance. I am "in training" right now, all the experiences of my life are teaching me the lessons I need to learn, and giving me the opportunity to develop the type of character God wants. If I "pass," if I meet His requirements, I will be promoted and receive a higher—eternal—life and be permitted to live when Jesus returns and sets up His Kingdom upon earth.

This isn't just a wish or a dream. It's solid fact; it is the plan of God as it is revealed in the Bible. And it is going to happen—Christ is going to return and set up His kingdom here whether I believe it or not.

The plan of God isn't all obvious with just a cursory reading, but it is all there. But it is necessary to study, and with just a little study you will discover that the majority of churches are not teaching according to the Bible. They have, as the Bible prophesied, been turned from "truth to fables." (This happened during the early centuries after Jesus. You can read it in any history of the time. It is a fascinating study.)

I am convinced that serious Bible study is the only route to faith in God and real meaning in life. God's plan for our earth is tremendous, but there is only one way to obtain a knowledge of it, and that is through a serious study of His written Word.

God is going to have a glorified planet filled with happy, immortal beings, with no sin, suffering, crime, or evil. He is inviting us to be part of that new world. This means that right here, at my job, at home, whatever I'm doing, I am preparing to live forever. This makes every day a fresh opportunity, a new challenge, and a great blessing from God.

And the benefits we get now for having our confidence in God and the future are no small thing. We can have peace and contentment that nothing here can disturb—genuine happiness in working for a goal. We're not affected by all the ills and troubles of life or our world because they do not change our prospect for the future. We learn to be thankful, even for those things that try our patience.

All this—plus what is in the future, which the Bible describes as "*exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*" (Eph. 3:20)—is the promise of God to those who live by His word of life and follow Christ's example.

For myself, I'm convinced—there's nothing to equal it in all the world. — (G. P.) □

The Town of No-good

*My friend, have you heard of the town
of No-good,*

*On the banks of the River Slow,
Where blooms the Wait-a-while flower fair,
And the Sometime-or-other scents the air,
And the Soft-go-easies grow?*

*It lies in the Valley of What's-the-use,
In the Province of Let'er-slide.
The tired feeling is native there,
It's the home of the listless I-don't-care,
Where the Give-it-ups abide.*

*It stands at the bottom of Lazy-hill,
And is easy to reach, I declare;
You've only to fold your hands and glide
Down the slope of Weak-will's toboggan slide
To be landed quickly there.*

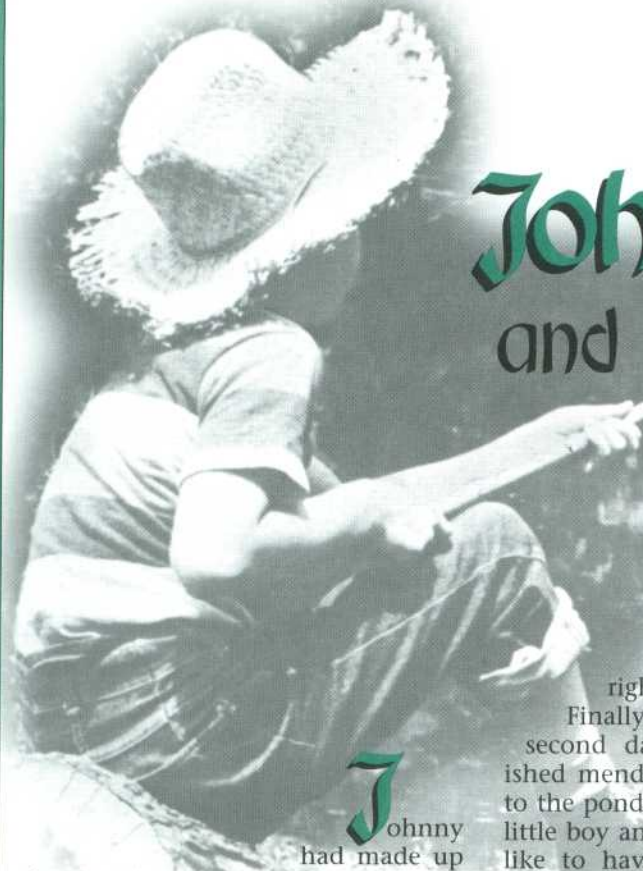
*The town is as old as the human race
And it grows with the flight of years.
It is wrapped in the fog of Idlers' dreams,
Its streets are paved with discarded schemes,
And sprinkled with useless tears.*

*The town No-good is all hedged about
By the mountains of Despair.
No sentinel stands on its gloomy walls,
No trumpet to battle or triumph calls,
For cowards alone are there.*

*My friend, if you from the town of No-good
Would keep yourself far, far away,
Just do your duty through good and ill,
Take this for your motto, "I can, and I will,"
And live up to it each day.*

Author Unknown

Johnny and the Woodsman



Johnny had made up his mind to catch a fish. And he'd made up his mind to catch it down by the end of the meadow pond where the water was deep.

The woodsman had warned the little boy that the water was too muddy there and no fish would stay in such muddy water. He had told him to go up to the other end where the creek comes in and the water is so clear you can see the crawfish trying to hide under the stones. But Johnny just knew there must be bigger fish where the water was deepest, so for two days now, ever since he had received that nice new bamboo rod for a birthday present, he had been coming down there to fish. But never once did his cork bob—except when some old frog came paddling by, making waves like a tiny steamboat.

The woodsman, who was mending a fence back by the cow pasture, would call out every once in awhile: "Changed your mind yet, Johnny?" And Johnny would reply that maybe the sun was too bright—or perhaps he didn't have the right bait, or that the frogs were scaring the fish away.

Away deep down in his mind, he was beginning to feel that perhaps

the woodsman was right after all. But Johnny was rather set in his ways, as people say, and so he kept right on watching that cork.

Finally, toward the end of the second day, the woodsman finished mending the fence and came to the pond. He sat down beside the little boy and said, "How would you like to have me tell you a story, Johnny, while you go on fishing?" Johnny said he would like it very much and settled down to listen while he still kept his eyes on the cork.

"Once upon a time not so very long ago," began the woodsman, "there lived in a tree not so very far away from here a family of raccoons. There was Father Coon, Mother Coon, and five little Coons, all as happy as could be. All day long they slept peacefully, and at night Father and Mother Coon went out to hunt, leaving the five little Coons safe in their big hollow branch. There were frogs and fish and crawfish to scoop up out of the creek and the pond. There were sleepy grasshoppers to catch in the meadows. And sometimes, over in the fields, there was sweet corn to nibble.

"Old Father Coon was very fat and looked very wise. And indeed, he had a right to look wise, for many were the dogs he had outwitted and outfought in his long coon-life. But there was one peculiar thing about him—he was mighty set in his ways. Often people who are set in their ways call it determination—especially if they win in the end. Old Mr.

Coon really thought he was famous for his determination. When he started anything he always stuck to it in his own way until he finished it.

"Well, he got along all right until one night not so very long ago. It was just such a night as last night, with the moon shining down through the trees and playing along the creek until it was almost as bright as day. Mother Coon and old Father Coon were down by the banks scooping up crawfish with their paws. You know a coon's paw is just about the size and shape of your hand! He can pick up things like a monkey, and he's as quick as a cat. So Father Coon and Mother Coon had no more trouble dining on crawfish than you'd have eating peanuts out of a bag.

"After they'd eaten all they could and had about decided to go home to the children, something on the other side of the creek caught old Father Coon's eye. As usual, he was just as full of curiosity as he could be. 'What's that?' he whispered in coon-language, nudging old Mother Coon and pointing with his nose to where something glittered on a big flat stone.

"'That's nothing but an old bottle,' said Mother Coon. 'Don't be going over there now. It's time to go home.' Old Mother Coon was rather inquisitive herself, but she thought she could hear the five little coons calling to her back there in the big tree.

"But old Father Coon had made up his mind to investigate, for he was one of those who believed in finding out things for themselves. So he pushed Mother Coon away,

jumped in, and swam across to the rock. Sure enough, there it stood, an old milk bottle.

"But there was something down inside of it, he couldn't make it out.

"Mother," he called, 'come over and see what this is. My eyes aren't as good as they used to be.'

"Mother Coon grumbled a little, but she came over and looked down into the bottle and sniffed. 'Why, that's nothing but a crab apple,' she said. 'Come on, it's time to go home.'

"But what do you suppose that crab apple's doing in that bottle?" said old Father Coon, sitting back and cocking his head on one side, as he always did when he was thinking.

"How should I know!" said Mother Coon. 'Chances are somebody put it in there and went away and forgot it. Who cares about a crab apple anyway?' Mother Coon knew that when Father Coon made up his mind, it was no use to argue with him, so she sat down to wait.

"Old Father Coon walked around the bottle three times, looking through the sides. Then he stopped and peeked down through the neck and scratched his head. Then he tapped the bottle with his claws. With both paws he took hold of it and rocked it back and forth so that the crab apple rolled around. Finally, he care-

"Yes, sir," he said, 'that's just what I thought. It's a real crab apple all right, there's no trick about that.' He started to pull it out but his paw stuck fast. 'That's funny,' he said, 'I can get my paw in all right, but I don't seem to be able to get it out.'

"Let go of that crab apple and it will come out easy enough," said Mother Coon.

"But that's what I reached in for—to pull the crab apple out! And now you want me to let go of it! Don't be unreasonable." And old Father Coon looked at Mother Coon with great disapproval. He squeezed, and he tugged, and he turned, and he twisted, but still his fist stuck fast. He rolled the crab apple around and grabbed it from every side and every angle, but he simply couldn't get it out. Every few minutes he'd stop and think and stroke his whiskers with his free paw. Then he let go with his right paw and tried the left paw; but that didn't do any good. Then he went over and sat down with his back against an old log and held the bottle braced tight with his back paws while he squeezed, and tugged, and twisted all over again.

"At last Mother Coon lost patience and went home to the five little coons. But Father Coon stayed behind wrestling with his bottle. 'It won't take me long now,' he told her. 'You run on home, I'll be along pretty soon.' But when the sun rose, old Father Coon was still sitting against the log, trying first one paw and then the other.

"You see, Johnny, he was set in his ways."

The woodsman slowly got up from the bank of the pond and turned to go. Johnny looked up very much disappointed. He had forgotten about the cork that wouldn't bob and wanted to hear the end of the story.

"Please, Mr. Woodsman," he asked eagerly, "what happened to old Father Coon? Is he there yet?"

"Pull in your line and come along with me and I'll show you." The two walked through the woods to the woodsman's cabin, and there, in a wire-covered pen, sat a big raccoon. He was leaning against the side, with



one paw inside a milk bottle, holding onto a crab apple while he squinted up at the sky.

"There's old Father Coon for you," said the woodsman. "You see, I set that bottle out there last night and old Father Coon was easy to catch with that hanging to his fist. For, of course, he wouldn't let go."

"But why," asked Johnny, "doesn't he tip the bottle up and pour the crab apple out?"

The woodsman looked at Johnny for a moment with a twinkle in his eyes. Then he answered—in a most knowing way: "Oh, Mr. Coon, he never changes his mind."

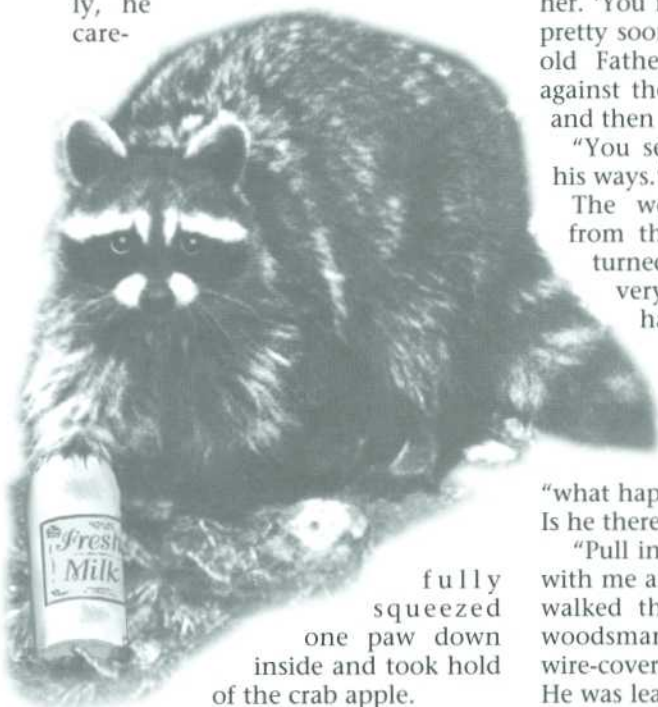
The next day when the little boy was going out with his rod, he met the woodsman.

"Before you start fishing today," said the woodsman with a big smile, "go over and take a look at old Mr. Coon."

Johnny thought for a moment, then said, "Oh, Mr. Woodsman, I'm not going to fish in that muddy pond any more."

And he whistled as he threw his line in the stream up where the water was clear and you can see the crawfish trying to hide under the stones.

And what happened to old Father Coon? Why, they say his paws got so thin from his sitting around with nothing to eat, that he finally managed to pull the crab apple out. Or maybe the crabapple got all withered up so it came out easily. Anyway, he's back in the hollow branch, telling the five little coons how in his whole long coon life he never changed his mind—not even once. □



fully squeezed one paw down inside and took hold of the crab apple.

The following is extracted from a discussion published in Evansville's newspaper, The Courier in July, 1903, while the steamship Megiddo was anchored there. First is a challenge from Rev. Davis, pastor of the First Christian Church of Evansville, followed by Mr. Nichols' reply.

CHALLENGE SENT TO REV. NICHOLS TO DEBATE

To the Editor of The Courier:

I would like for you to make an item of what I have to say to the Megiddo preacher, the Rev. Nichols:

We need gospel preachers, those who will come and preach Christ. But when one comes parading the ignorance of other preachers, only to egregiously display his own, he should be shown up in his true colors.

If the papers have quoted him right, his doctrines are very erroneous. He is reported as not being out to debate, that people do not have to believe his doctrine. This is a sign of a weak cause. In other words, if you reply he has no defense to make, for that is debating to defend your position against opposition that you have aroused. Remember, there is a difference between preachers seeking discussion in a combative spirit, which we do not believe in, and humbly defending when called in question.

Now persons do not have to engage in formal debate to show up one's position. The character of preaching that Rev. Nichols is doing will never bring the churches together, but if all will preach Christ only, the churches will evolve together. It is his insisting on erroneous doctrines, as he is doing now, that makes divisions and perpetuates them.

Since his sermons have become public property, now let us make a dive into them and see the secret of his new wisdom. Now Rev. Nichols is quite right in some things, and who is not? We are told that a clock that does not run at all is right twice in twenty-four hours. This is about his proportion. Some may have believed in the past, but few, if any learned men today believe that when Adam sinned death came unconditionally upon the human family, and if it has come it is because "all have sinned," and Rev. Nichols is right.

(Continued on page 21)

An Honest Man

Biography of L. T. Nichols

Part 8

= PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS OF L.T. NICHOLS =

Mr. Nichols was an eager and capable debater, not for the sake of argument but for the advancement and defense of the Scriptures. What better or fairer way to convince his listeners, he reasoned, than to have both sides state and defend their positions? He was enthusiastic because he was convinced that he had the right position and the evidence to prove it. It was noticeable that his opponents were never willing to debate a second time.

Apart from his impromptu discussions with various ministers during his teen-age years, his first public debate was in 1869 with a Mr. Wilcox, at Wrightstown, Wisconsin. A large hall was provided for the purpose, and an immense audience attended each meeting. The subject discussed was "The Resurrection," Mr. Wilcox affirming that all come forth from the grave immortal. Mr. Nichols answered with Bible evidence, showing that the individual is raised with a mortal body, is then judged, and finally rewarded with immortality, eternal life, or eternal death and destruction, according to his works. In those immature days only the beginnings of the whole truth were visible, yet even then the evidence was ample to win over error.

The next debate came in 1877, as mentioned earlier. Professor Campbell, who was then President of the Christian College of Monmouth, Oregon, also editor of the *Christian Messenger*, later president of the State Normal School of Oregon, was urged by his friends to defend his beliefs against this newcomer, L. T. Nichols. Mr. Campbell, a learned man and a master of languages including Hebrew, and knowing his opponent to be a farmer, consented, no doubt anticipating an easy victory. Carlton, Oregon, where the discussion was held, was only a village, so in the absence of a larger building, an immense warehouse was secured for the purpose. The discussion lasted four days, having two sessions each day, each speaker being allotted one hour at each session.

After the first meeting, Mr. Campbell realized that he had met his Waterloo. Speaking upon the mortality of man, Mr. Nichols quoted Gen. 7:22, "All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died," explaining that the word "breath" was translated from the Hebrew word *ruach*, which is the same

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

word used in Ps. 146:4: "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish"; also in Eccl. 3:19: "Yea, they have all one breath," showing that both man and beast share the same breath. He read for the definitions of *ruach*, the following: "Spirit; breath, breath of the mouth; breath of the nostrils; the vital principle which shows itself in the breathing of the mouth and nostrils, whether of man or beast."

Professor Campbell denied that the word *ruach* was used in the 7th chapter of Genesis, whereupon Mr. Nichols in his next speech reiterated his statements in regard to the word, and told Prof. Campbell that he must retract his statements before the discussion could proceed further, and that unless he did so, he would call upon a Hebrew by birth to come to the platform and read the disputed verse to the audience. Mr. Campbell then asked for a little time in which to look up the word, saying that he was somewhat rusty in his Hebrew while Mr. Nichols was kept bright by constant study. His remark caused amusement among many in the congregation, as those who knew Mr. Nichols saw him going about his daily occupation as usual, being engaged at the time of this discussion in building a barn. Mr. Campbell was given until the next day to look up the word, and upon his return to the platform the next morning he was greeted by Mr. Nichols with the words, "Well, Mr. Campbell, how did you find the Hebrew?" The reply came in a whisper, "I found that you were right." Mr. Nichols said, "I knew I was right, and you must now retract your statement before this audience." Mr. Campbell, although much embarrassed, complied with this demand, and the discussion continued. However, Mr. Campbell could never fill his hour, and asked permission to have a friend use a concordance to locate his Bible references for him, which request was granted. He then read the references handed him without regard to their fitness for the argument. Mr. Nichols, by contrast, had a vast amount of Bible testimony at his command, which he quoted from memory, readily giving chapter and verse, so that his hour was soon gone. He asked if he might have the unused portion of his opponent's time, but was refused, Mr. Campbell remarking, "You talk too much now."

This discussion was attended by many hundreds of people, some coming 100 miles, some 60, and many driving 40 miles each day. A deep and enthusiastic interest was manifested throughout.

As mentioned earlier, this was the occasion of the conversion of his successor, Maud Hembree.

In the year 1878, a discussion was held in Salem, Oregon, with a Seventh Day Adventist minister, Mr. VanHorn, the subject being "The Sabbath." Mr. Nichols had searched out the truth on this subject several years previous to this time, but when Mr. VanHorn entered into the discussion he thought that his opponent, in common with the other religious teachers of the day, believed that the Ten Commandment law given to Moses was still in force and should be obeyed, consequently could not deny that the seventh day Sabbath must be kept holy. However, before the debate ended, Mr. VanHorn learned, to his dismay, that Mr. Nichols took a very different stand. Mr. Nichols first showed that the children of Israel were not commanded to keep the Sabbath until after their departure from Egypt, and that the

But he says erroneously that the whole reward and punishment of Adam is future, after the judgment. Wrong, because physical death also resulted from the sin of Adam and was part of the punishment. Proof: Genesis 3:17-19. Because Adam had eaten of the tree a curse was pronounced against him and part of it was that he should return to the dust. This is physical death.

Then, Rev. Nichols, [if all death is due to sin], why do the good die? Why do babies die physically? There is only one answer. Adam after his sin was subject to physical death, and hence became the father of mortal children....

Another point: It is true that Christ never died for the human family unconditionally, for this would be universalism, but Rev. Nichols is very wrong when he says Christ never died for anyone, good, bad or indifferent. The truth is, Christ died for men, to show them a way for salvation. It is strange that a man who reads as much as Rev. Nichols would overlook such passages as these: "While we were yet weak, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly" — Rom. 5:6. He says, "Christ would not die for those for whom he would not pray." This is right, for Christ prayed for his murderers. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Neither does Rev. Nichols know what he is doing.

Then to cap it all, he says the garden of Eden was figurative: that the tree of knowledge was not literal, and infers that Adam was not literal. Now if the garden of Eden, the tree of life and Adam were figurative, sin is figurative, the whole story is figurative, and we are figured out of heaven and eternal life, all to save a theory of Rev. Nichols. This is very poetical, but it proves too much, hence proves nothing.

The same proof destroys the creation, and origin of sin. If Adam and the garden is figurative, so is sin, so is heaven, so is hell, so when we become overwise, we become fools. This is destructive criticism, and no wonder Rev. Nichols is trying to get away from the literal sin, and has figurative blood and a figurative Christ, so must have a figurative heaven. At least this is the consequence of the doctrine of the higher critics, and if Rev. Nichols is not one, he is at least squinting that way. We are also ready with the tongue as well as pen and if Rev. Nichols is too modest to debate, he had better spunk up.

(Continued from page 21)

MEGIDDO MINISTER ACCEPTS CHALLENGE

To the Editor of The Courier, Evansville,
Indiana:

Please allow me a little space to reply to J. T. Davis, pastor of First Christian Church.

First—You say, "We need gospel preachers." Yes, indeed, and if we preach anything that cannot be plainly read in the old ancient gospel of Christ, the apostles and prophets, we say, as we have said every night at our meetings, do not accept it. For we are told that "many false prophets are gone out into the world." We read, *"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."* Isa. 8:20. Such testimony I rely upon, and when we read what we believe in so many words, we simply let the audience judge as to whether they are believing it or no, allowing every one their own right to choose, to believe it or to disbelieve it, as their own good or poor judgment may dictate.

Second—We have never said that if any one reply to us we have no defense to make. No, but quite to the contrary, we have a reply to make at the proper time, place and circumstance.

Third—Friend Davis, we have stated time and again that we came to Evansville to do good, to help you all draw nearer to God, to aid you to live pure and holier lives. As to our doctrines, whether you believe them or not, it matters not so much, only so we could get you to live better lives, get you to come down on all evil, close your miserable saloons, not only on Sunday but on every day of the week; put away all anger, wrath, malice and hatred.

It is evident, my friend, that you have not been out to our meetings or else you failed to take in what we said. It is true, "we are not here to debate." But we are here to try to get you aroused to doing more for Christ and less for the world, as we said in our sermons.

Fourth—Friend Davis, you are wrong again. What we said was that neither Adam or any of his posterity ever was put on probation for natural life or natural death, but for eternal life and eternal death or everlasting destruction to be executed after the judgment. We used such texts as "if ye live after the flesh ye shall die," and asked if the most righteous one does not die a natural death, and then showed that natural death was not the penalty for sin. We illustrated by saying:

law which was written and engraven in stones was done away. He proved that Jesus never once commanded anyone to keep the Sabbath, also that Saturday was not the seventh day of Bible time. Thus ended the discussion.

In 1887, he again met the Adventists in a discussion, this time at Owatonna, Minnesota, with two Adventist ministers, Messrs. Gregory and Scramm. As usual, the "Sword of the Spirit" proved the better weapon, one of the Sabbatarians afterward remarking that from the first meeting he felt as if he were in chains! The proposition that the Mosaic law was not binding in this age so effectually spiked their guns that they were totally helpless. This ended his public discussion with members of the Adventist faith; for, although he repeatedly challenged them to meet him in open and friendly debate, not one of them had the courage to accept.

On the heels of this debate came another in February, 1888, this time with a Baptist pastor, Mr. First by name. The location was in Barry, Illinois. The subject under discussion was what God requires of those who obtain salvation, Mr. First affirming that Christ did all that was necessary for us, and that we had but to trust in His blood and vicarious sacrifice, while Mr. Nichols maintained that the Bible taught that we must know and keep every commandment of God to be saved.

In the course of the discussion Mr. First, having been driven out of the Bible, attempted to introduce the historian Josephus, as evidence. Mr. Nichols, of course, objected, referring the matter to the chairman for settlement. The chairman, an infidel, read from the rules originally agreed upon, that the theme of the debate was "Resolved, the Bible teaches—." This excluded Josephus, as well as all other mortal and fallible commentators. The pagan doctrine of eternal torment was also thoroughly aired and showed to be both inhumane and unscriptural, God having provided eternal death as the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23).

Two years later he challenged the world-famous infidel, Col. Robert Ingersoll, whose writings had received his careful study. The redoubtable Colonel however, was "too busy" at that time to engage in a debate, but sent in his stead the capable and like-minded Mr. W. F. Jamieson. Kasson, Minnesota, was chosen as the meeting place, and the discussion opened in September, 1890, the people of the town and the surrounding country showing a lively interest. Mr. Jamieson advanced the timeworn arguments used by the infidels against God and the Bible, and very plausible they may have sounded to one uninstructed in the Word. But a man properly educated in the Scriptures would soon have detected the fatal defect in the unbeliever's arguments—a defect of which he himself was unaware; viz., his powerful diatribes were against the false theories taught by the churches as emanating from the Bible, and not against the Blessed Book itself.

Mr. Nichols replied to each accusation by proving that the Bible is one Divine harmony in accord with nature, science and reason; not, as Mr. Jamieson stated, "abounding in absurdities, impossibilities and contradictions." Contradictions, etc., arise through attempting to harmonize the absurd and unreasonable teachings of the churches with the true teachings of the Bible. For example, the idea that God created from nothing the earth, sun,

(Continued on page 23)

moon and stars and all that are in them, in six 24-hour days, about six thousand years ago, was brought up by the infidel as absolutely untrue and impossible, and yet taught by the Bible. This argument, which had upset many a well-meaning fundamentalist, was viewed utterly irrelevant and useless by Mr. Nichols, who proceeded to show his belief that the Genesis story had no reference to the literal creation but to the creation of God's future Kingdom, which would be six thousand years in preparing, the seventh day, or Sabbath, representing the grand Millennium, when the world shall have rest from sin (see 2 Peter 3:8).

Many other points were discussed and many eye-opening polemics advanced from both sides, but the Bible came through unscarred and vindicated. If the text of a controverted passage was obscure, a short research into the original Hebrew or Greek immediately cleared up the situation.

Finding himself checkmated at every turn by Mr. Nichols' masterful logic and handling of the Scriptures, the infidel devoted the greater part of his time to long panegyrics in praise of the mind and of the accomplishments of the human race unaided by God, in this way evading the subjects under discussion.

The next discussion in which he engaged was with one of the ablest exponents of the most insidious and dangerous of modern cults—Professor Moses Hull, Spiritualist. It was during a convention of Mediums in Minneapolis in October, 1891, that the discussion was arranged. Many of these visiting wizards and conjurers were in attendance at each session. Prof. Hull confined himself to relating wild tales of the disembodied spirits, etc., which he or other men (usually other men) had seen or heard. Mr. Nichols asked for a demonstration, stating that signs were for the unbelievers, and repeatedly challenged Mr. Hull or any other medium to perform one trick which he could not expose. The response which one might have expected from men so confident was conspicuous because of its absence, so the conclusion was naturally reached that the pretensions of Spiritualism were fraudulent.

Mr. Hull, however, made a final proposition to Mr. Nichols, as follows: "Mr. Nichols, if I die before you do, I will certainly return and appear to you, to convince you that the dead are alive and conscious." A short time afterward, Prof. Hull was killed in an accident. To date, nothing has been seen or heard of his "spirit".

This was the last of his public discussions, not through his own choice but because of the extreme unwillingness of any minister or priest to meet him. After locating in Rochester, he recognized in the well-known Pastor C. T. Russell an ultradangerous disseminator of a mixture of half-truths and Romish superstition; so, at the close of one of Mr. Russell's lectures, in the presence of a number of witnesses, Mr. Nichols challenged him to a friendly public debate for the purpose of proving which of the two could read his faith in the Bible. The challenge, which was repeated in the press, was promptly refused by Pastor Russell.

From that time until the day of his death, standing offers were made by him of large sums of money to any minister of Rochester who would meet him on the platform in an old-fashioned religious discussion. These offers were unaccepted by any of the clergy of the city. □

Supposing Mr. Brown, who recently caused such a tumult in your midst should die before he had a trial, would his death be penal death? No, but if he is brought to trial and put to death by the law, this death will be a penal death.

You say physical death resulted from the sin of Adam. No, here is where you are wrong, my friend Davis, in our judgment. No one can find [in the Bible] a statement that natural death or physical death came by Adam's sin. Not one. We showed that the son did not die for the father's sin. Until the law sin was in the world, "but sin is not imputed where there is no law." Then no one could die a death by sin during the time that sin was not imputed, hence no one during that time could die a penal death. But they could die a natural death. All is plain, because God said, "sin is not imputed where there is no law." But death reigned—what death? Natural death and not penal death—over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression. To illustrate: No doubt Brown will be put to death by the law, and will not death reign over us all that have not sinned after the similitude of Brown's transgression? Yes, but will it be the same death? We hardly think any instructed one can fail to see the point....

Fifth—Oh, my friend, we entreat of you to have better hearing the next time you hear us. We never said "Christ never died for anyone, good, bad or indifferent." What we said was, "Christ never died for everybody, good, bad or indifferent," and added that he died for everyone that would accept of and obey him....

Eighth—As to the garden of Eden being figurative, can it be possible that any one can believe the garden with the tree of life in the midst was literal, when we are plainly told that "wisdom is a tree of life, to them that lay hold upon her" (Prov. 3:18)? And "Christ is made unto us wisdom." Read Ezekiel 31 and you will see that the trees of Eden are men and not literal trees.

Ninth—As to our spunking up and debating, we are willing and ready to discuss with him and thus defend anything that we believe. We remain as ever his well wisher, seeking to do him good. Let him come down to our boat and make arrangements for a friendly discussion in the church of which he is pastor and we will assure him that we will be on hand to accommodate him to his full satisfaction. —L. T. Nichols. □

Note: The debate was scheduled but never happened, because the Rev. Davis did not appear.

PRAY FOR WHOM?

"Is it right to pray for transgressors and non-believers, or only for those who are truly Christ's?"

The Bible gives us many examples of persons for whom prayers were made. Most of these were prayers of believers and for believers.

But there are others.

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that in his general meetings prayers should be made for "all men," whom he specified: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

On numerous occasions Moses prayed to God in behalf of the children of Israel, who were disobedient and rebellious, and God heard and answered him (see Num. 14:15-22; Num. 21:1-3).

In the time of Samuel, the people had apostatized from God, but when they were in danger, and needed deliverance, they "cried unto the Lord, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the Lord, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee" (1 Sam. 12:10). They continued by demanding of the Lord that He give them a king to reign over them. When the Lord sent thunder and rain, the people's heart was changed and they pleaded with Samuel to pray to God for them. "And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king" (1 Sam. 12:17-19). Apparently they felt that Samuel's communication lines with God were better intact than their own. Samuel replied, "Moreover as for me,

God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way" (v. 23). Samuel was willing to pray for them, as long as they were willing to work with God. And when they turned against God, Samuel could pray that they return to God, see the error of their ways, and seek forgiveness.

God expressly told Jeremiah *not* to pray for his people, who had proved utterly rebellious and hard-hearted and impenitent. "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee" (Jer. 7:16).

In John 17 we find a long prayer of Jesus'. First He is praying on His own behalf; then He intercedes for His disciples. Then, at verse 9, He says, speaking of His disciples, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." They had received His words and believed on Him. Hence Jesus had special concern for them. And because He was going away and they would have to continue on in the world without Him, He prayed the Father that they might be kept from the evil that is in the world.

Then, in verses 20-21, Jesus prayed for others: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;...that they also may be one in us." Jesus had loving feelings toward His own, yet He was not exclusive—He looked forward by Divine insight and prayed even for those who would believe in the future—His prayer reached even to us!

In Proverbs 28:9 we read, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." God does not hear all prayers. He reads the heart, and knows who He will hear and who He will not.

If we could not pray for trans-

gressors, how could we get help ourselves when we fall? Jesus prayed for His disciples even when He knew that there was strife and wrong feelings among them. He prayed not that they be taken out of the world but that they might be kept from the evil that is in the world (John 17:15). He prayed for Peter when He transgressed. He said, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:32).

Let us thank God for the privilege of prayer, and keep our communication lines open by asking according to His will; then we can have the confidence that He will hear and help in every time of need (1 John 5:14; Heb. 4:16).

♦ "Touch me not"

"A friend of mine believes that Jesus was a spirit after His resurrection, and he quoted Jesus' words in John 20:17, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.' What is your position?"

The Gospels give no suggestion that Jesus was a spirit after He was resurrected. On the contrary, He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27). Luke reports of the same occasion, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39). After His resurrection, Jesus ate with them, talked with them, walked with them, lifted up His hands and blessed them—none of these things would have been possible if He had been a spirit.

Why did Jesus say "touch me not"? These are among the words Jesus spoke to Mary on the morn-

ing after the resurrection. The King James Version of the passage is not as clear as some other versions. For example: "Do not hold me" (TCNT); "Cease clinging to me" (Moffatt); "Do not hold on to me" (NIV); "Be not detaining me" (RHM). The New English Bible reads, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers, and tell them that I am now ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God."

A footnote in the New Catholic Edition of the Bible suggests that Mary, in her joy, had cast herself at Jesus feet. "But he tells her not to delay thus, 'But go tell my brethren.'" A footnote in the Scofield Reference Bible gives a similar thought: "that He merely meant: 'Do not detain me now; I am not yet ascended; you will see me again; run rather to my brethren,'" etc.

The fact that Jesus told them not to tarry or delay seems to explain the meaning of Matt. 28:9 where the disciples "held him by the feet, and worshipped him." It was their way of expressing their extreme joy at seeing Him and their wish for Him to remain with them.

When Jesus said, "Touch me not," it seems that He was really saying to Mary that she should not delay Him, they should not spend time worshipping Him because soon He would be going to the Father. Rather she should go and tell the good news to the rest of the disciples, so that no time be wasted.

◆ "Study"

"I've just finished reading the article 'About Higher Criticism' in the March issue of your magazine, and was frankly astounded to find, in the second paragraph, serious misreading of the Scriptures. The conclusions you reach are correct, but the verses used are not.

"Let's begin with the verse from Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV): 'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.'

"Now, the New American Standard Version: 'Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.'

"As you can see, the word 'study' really has nothing to do with studying, in the sense that you intended. It means 'make every effort,' or 'be diligent.' This definition can be verified by checking Strong's Dictionary, or any other good biblical reference.

"Once again, this is not to say that 'study' is wrong; clearly, we must be diligent in our study. It is only that the verse is poorly understood in the KJV, and does not teach what you might think."

You make a valid point, that the word "study" as we would use it today is an inadequate expression of the apostle's thought in this passage. The word "study" as Paul used it in 2 Timothy 2:15, means much more than the term as we would use it today. The original word translated study, according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, is *spoudazo* (Greek 4704), and means "to use speed, i.e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest:—do (give), diligence, be diligent (forward), endeavor, labor, study." It comes from the Greek word *spoude* (4692), which is usually rendered "speed", and means "(by implication) despatch, eagerness, earnestness:—business, (earnest) carefulness, diligence, forwardness, haste."

Various translations of the passage render it as, "Do your best"; "try hard"; "earnestly endeavor"; "let it be your concern to get the approval of God"; "aim first..." Paul concludes the text with the thought that one should give his best to "handling accurately the word of truth." The purpose of being "spoudazo" is to handle the Scriptures accurately, a task which requires serious study and application.

Your criticism seems justified, however it seems that the word "study" is an inadequate descrip-

tion of the apostle's intent, but not a distortion. Paul was saying much more than the word "study" as used in our language can convey.

◆ "Search"

"Now, on to the verse in John (5:39): 'Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.'

"Once again, the New American Standard Version: 'You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me.' Note the addition of the word 'You' at the beginning of the verse. This is supported by virtually every modern translation, and is correct. You see, Jesus was not commanding them to search the Scriptures; they were doing this very well. The problem was that they were searching because they thought that by doing so they would find eternal life, and yet they were missing that the scriptures were pointing to Him! Thus, this is not a command to study the scriptures, but rather an expression of frustration that their study led them no closer to the truth.

"May our God richly bless all of you. And thank you for your good work."

Again, your point is well taken. Jesus was making the point that they were searching the Scriptures—the very Scriptures that foretold about His life and career—yet they were rejecting Him.

Jesus was not commanding them to search the scriptures; they were doing that very well. The problem was that in so doing, they were missing Him! In other words, their ardent studying of the Scriptures brought them no closer to the real truth.

The Scriptures generally have much more to say than appears on the surface, as you have pointed out. □

Behold He Comes!

(Continued from page 13)

on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:14, 19).

In **SECOND TIMOTHY** we read about the crown of life which is laid up in store for all those who "love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

In the Epistle to **TITUS**, Paul tells of the grace of God by which "we are disciplined to renounce godless ways and worldly desires, and to live a life of temperance, honesty, and godliness in the present age, looking forward to the happy fulfillment of our hope when the splendour of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus will appear" (Tit. 2:12-13, NEB).

HEBREWS speaks of Christ coming "unto them that look for him...the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

JAMES tells his readers to "be patient...unto the coming of the Lord" (Jas. 5:7-8).

In his First Epistle, **PETER** encourages his brethren to endure the fiery trial of their faith that they might "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:7). He said also, "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4).

In **SECOND PETER** we find the warning of scoffers who shall come in the last days, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Nevertheless, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. 3:3-4, 10).

JOHN gives the great promise to all the faithful: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He [Christ] shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).

JUDE records the words of Enoch of old: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints" (Jude 14).

The whole book of **REVELATION** is given to revealing events which shall accompany the second advent of Christ. Almost its closing

words repeat the promise of Jesus Himself: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be....Surely I come quickly" (Rev. 22:12, 20).

Some nineteen hundred years have passed into history since these words were recorded, and the "long time" is nearly over. "Behold he cometh!"—the day draws steadily nearer. Jesus Christ is coming as earth's Conqueror, Redeemer, and King. We do not know when, but His coming is as certain as the coming of winter, spring and summer in their appointed season. His coming is certain, it is sure, and it is imminent.

"Be Like Men Who Are Expecting Their Lord"

With such evidence in the Word of God, can we doubt for even a moment? Should we not busy ourselves in preparation, lest that day take us unawares?

The importance of being fully prepared and ready for the return of the King is the most important matter that can concern us now. Whenever the subject is mentioned in Scripture, the urgency of readiness is stressed. Jesus' words as recorded in Luke 12 cover the subject very pointedly: "Keep your loins girt and your lamps lit, and be like men who are expecting their lord and master on his return from a marriage-banquet, so as to open the door for him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the lord and master finds awake when he comes!...Whether he come in the second or the third watch of the night and finds them thus alert, blessed are they!" (vs. 35-38, Moffatt Bible).

For preparation, Peter gives this advice:

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ....

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." And concludes, "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

God is faithful, and even through stormy interludes the prayer of the saints is steadily nearing fruition: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus." □

*To worry is to put
today's sunshine behind
tomorrow's clouds.*

Answers to Questions on page 11

New Testament ABC's

- A. Agrippa (Acts 26:28)
- B. Barnabas (Acts 4:36)
- C. Caesar (Acts 25:11)
- D. Dorcas (Acts 9:36-40)
- E. Euodias (Phil. 4:1-3)
- F. Father (Matt. 6:10)
- G. Gamaliel (Acts 22:3; 5:34-39)
- H. Herod (Matt. 2:1)
- I. Inspiration (2 Pet. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- J. Jude (Jude 3)
- K. Kidron (Jer. 26:23; John 18:1)
- L. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15, 40)
- M. Mustard (Matt. 13:31)
- N. Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30).
- O. Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1:14-16)
- P. Passover (Ex. 12; Luke 22)
- Q. Quarrels (James 4:1-2; Mark 6:18-19)
- R. Righteousness (Rom. 6:16)
- S. Sanctify (John 17:17)
- T. Thomas (John 20:25-27)
- U. Unleavened (1 Cor. 5:8)
- V. Vengeance (Rom. 12:19)
- W. Worship (Rev. 4:10-11)
- Y. Yoke (Gal. 5:1)
- Z. Zealots (Luke 6:15)

Many people in ordinary circumstances are millionaires of cheerfulness. They make their neighborhood brighter, happier, and a better place to live by their presence; they raise the value of every lot for miles around them.

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

TOMORROW'S PATH

*I do not need to know just where
Tomorrow's path may lead;
Guidance for this present day
Is all I really need.*

*If I stay with my Saviour
Wherever life may wend
He'll show me how to follow
And guide me to the end.*

Your strength lies in what you stand for; your weakness in what you fall for.

The person who fears God has nothing else to fear.

The big question is not whether God is on my side but whether I am on God's side.

WHAT YOU DON'T SAY COUNTS, TOO

(Continued from page 2)

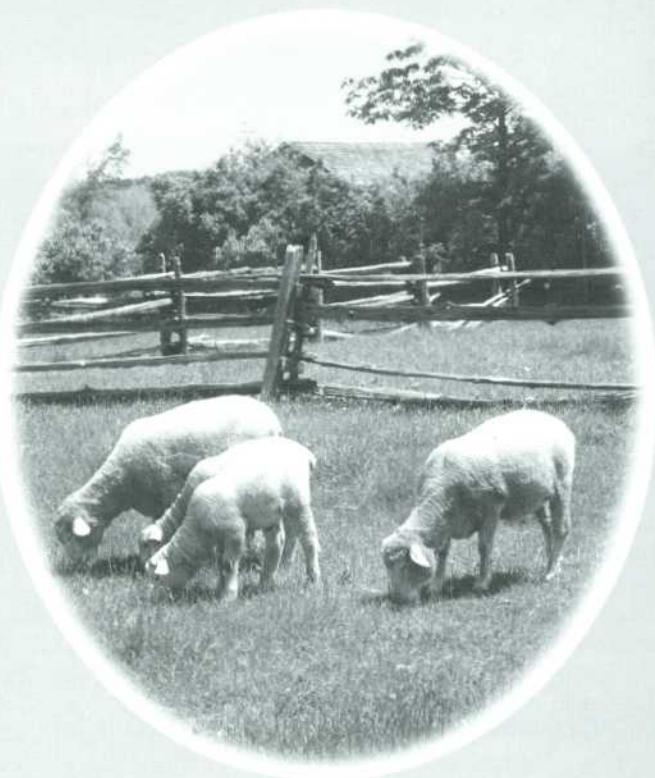
There are times when silence means consent, and there are issues to which we cannot consent. A wrong principle, a wrong judgment, a wrong position, a contrary way of thinking must be opposed. If the law of God says no, we must say no. This does not mean that it is always wise to speak our mind. But if we are to be on God's side, we must speak the truth and speak it boldly, for He is the God of truth.

We have no need to be ashamed of our cause. In fact, what shame is on us if we are ashamed of it! (Mark 8:38).

Let us speak kindly, truthfully and courageously, and let us do it now, before the night comes when no man can speak.

Speak out confidently about the things you really believe in, and you may be surprised how much good you can do.

For remember, what you *don't* say counts, too. □



SEEK TRUTH, NOT GREATNESS

A well-known educator once said, "If any man seeks for greatness, let him forget greatness and ask for truth, and he will find both."

Within the heart of every human being lies a desire to become great in one cause or another.

But what does this world's fame and honor amount to? Like all other living creatures, whether famous or unknown, we too shall reach an end. That cruel enemy death will step in and all our greatness will end. Like the flower of the field it will wither and die, its beauty gone forever.

We see evidence of this fact daily. The great men of this world—kings, emperors, presidents, statesmen, scientists, generals—at one time honored by thousands, pass silently on, their glory fading with them as other generations arise to take their place.

None of the greatness of this world endures; but the rewards God offers for faithful service last forever. Not only that, but they continually increase. How else can we comprehend a promise that is "exceeding abundantly above all" that we can "ask or think" (Eph. 3:20)?

Everything of this world is short-lived, circumscribed by death. The rewards God gives are eternal.

What, then, shall we seek? Seek the eternal truth of God, not the greatness of this world, and you shall be fully- and eternally - satisfied.

The page is framed by a decorative border of pink roses and green foliage. A large pink rose is in the top right corner, and a cluster of pink roses is in the bottom left corner. The background is a dark green, textured surface.

O Happy Zion

A Paraphrase of Psalm 84

How lovely are thy dwellings fair! O Lord of hosts, how dear
The pleasant tabernacles are where thou dost dwell so near!
My soul doth long and almost die
Thy courts, O Lord, to see;
My heart and flesh aloud do cry,
O living God, for Thee.

There even the sparrow freed from harm hast found a house of rest,
The swallow there, to lay her young, hath built her brooding nest,
Even by Thy altars, Lord of hosts,
They find their safe abode,
And home they fly from round the coasts
Toward Thee, my king, my God.

Happy, who in Thy house reside where Thee they ever praise,
Happy, whose strength in Thee doth bide, and in their hearts Thy ways.
They pass through Baca's thirsty vale,
That dry and barren ground
As through a fruitful watery dale
Where spring and showers abound.

They journey on from strength to strength with joy and gladsome cheer
Till all before our God at length in Zion do appear.
Lord God of hosts, hear now my prayer
O Jacob's God, give ear,
Thou God our shield, look on the face
Of Thy anointed dear.

For one day in Thy courts to be is better and more blest
Than in the house of vanity a thousand days at best.
I in the temple of my God
Had rather keep a door,
Than dwell in tents of rich abode
With sin and pelf galore.

For God the Lord, both sun and shield, gives grace and glory bright,
No good from them shall be withheld whose ways are just and right.
Lord God of hosts Who reign'st on high,
That man is truly blest,
Who only on Thee doth rely,
And finds in Thee his rest.