

Megiddo Message



*Ye that have faith
to look with fearless eye
beyond the tragedy of a world at strife,
and know that out of death shall rise an ampler life--
REJOICE! REJOICE! REJOICE!*

Duty-Honor-Country-God

Those four hallowed words reverently dictate

*What you can be,
what you ought to be.*

They are your rallying points

*To build courage when courage seems to fail;
To regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith;
To create hope when hope becomes forlorn.*

They build your basic character; they make you

*Strong enough to know when you are weak;
Brave enough to face yourself when you are wrong;
Humble and gentle enough to find God's help ever near.*

They teach you not to substitute words for actions,

*or to seek the path of comfort and ease,
but to face the stress and spur of difficulty and challenge.*

They teach you to stand up in the storm,

*To master yourself before you seek to master others;
To have a heart that is clean, a goal that is high;
To reach into the future, yet never neglect the present;
To be serious, yet never to take yourself too seriously;
To be modest so that you will remember
The simplicity of true greatness;
The open mind of true wisdom;
The meekness of true strength.*

They will give you a temper of will,

*A quality of imagination,
A vigor of emotions,
A freshness of the deep springs of life.*

They will give you a predominance of courage over timidity,

An appetite for adventure over a love of ease.

They will create in your heart the sense of vigorous determination,

*The unfailing hope of what next,
And a joy and inspiration in life now and future.*

Megiddo means

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

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—*New English Bible*

NIV—*New International Version*

NAS—*New American Standard*

RSV—*Revised Standard Version*

TLB—*The Living Bible*

TEV—*Today's English Version*

Phillips—*The New Testament in Modern English*

Berkeley—*The Modern Language New Testament*

Weymouth—*The New Testament in Modern Speech*

Moffatt—*The Bible, A New Translation*

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

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You HAVE What It Takes!

IT WAS JULY, 1776; an ordinary summer day in the city of Philadelphia, yet far from ordinary. History was in the making in a small room in that city, history such as the world had never known before. It all centered in a new document called the Declaration of Independence. A young, talented, clear-thinking Virginian named Thomas Jefferson was its author. Many—in fact, most—of the representatives from the various colonies assembled were in favor of the document by which the American colonies were declaring themselves independent of the mother country. They had come of age—or had they?

Throughout the colonies, confidence was not so strong. What if—What if—? Had the document been put to popular vote it would have suffered immediate death. The American colonies talking up to the greatest, strongest country in the world? Unthinkable! Many were the well-meaning settlers who would have torn up the document in disgust and written in its place a declaration of loyalty to the Crown. At least one third of all Americans remained steadfastly loyal to England (some historians estimate the percentage was as high as 60 or 70%); to their way of thinking, it was simply not right to rebel. At least another third were lukewarm—they could go either way. At the very most, then, there was only one out of three persons willing to stand behind the Declaration of Independence and fight for the colonies.

But in Philadelphia the independent spirit prevailed; the document *had to be*; there was no other recourse. Still there was the question: Could it be done—successfully? Could the colonies even hope to win the war that was inevitable? Could a handful of poorly organized, untrained, ill-equipped and ill-tempered frontiersmen think of winning against the armies of a

nation that had fought and won against its enemies for hundreds of years? Could troops riddled with plunderers, fair-weather soldiers and drifters, constantly short of ammunition, food, clothing and medical supplies, dependent on volunteers for emergency service, often on short enlistments—could such a force confront an army that had been winning battles on land and sea for centuries—and *win*?

In addition, the British had the Indians on their side, and the Indians were skilled at surprise attacks and adept at harassing western frontiers, setting dwellings on fire, destroying crops, and massacring settlers.

Those fifty-six statesmen assembled in Philadelphia that hot July day knew all this; still they signed the document. By their actions they were saying, "We know it will be rough, but we believe we can see it through. We have what it takes."

• Had we been there that July day in 1776, would we have been among the brave signers? Would we have felt that we had what it would take—enough to commit ourselves to the struggle and war that was inevitable? But ours today is the greater challenge, for each of us individually is engaged in a life-and-death grapple with our own human nature. Are we facing our inside enemies each day with the feeling that we do indeed have what it takes and we are going to win? Is ours the confident philosophy of the apostle Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"? When we hesitate and falter with an attitude of "maybe-yes, maybe-no," we cannot expect to succeed—we lack the first essential, faith in ourselves.

We Can

There is a short motto expressing the determination we need to renew in ourselves everyday. It reads, "We CAN, We MUST, We WILL." We *can* overcome, we *can* be obedient, we *can* achieve,

Note: "You Have What It Takes!" is available as a church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00.

we *can* become God's own sons and daughters—because we have what it takes. Others before us have done it—shall we show ourselves of lesser quality than they? We can, we *must* and therefore we *WILL*—it is a matter of thinking victory, and then acting upon the thought.

The science of psychology plays a major role in modern life. Not only in medical science but in the student and business world today men and women are taught positive thinking. Salesmen are trained to create or stimulate purchasing desire in their prospective customers; executives are trained to deal positively with employees to encourage the best and most efficient service. Musical instructors are trained never to show the student what he is doing wrong but to demonstrate how his performance may be improved, for greater effectiveness. Why shouldn't we as Christians train ourselves in this same approach, and learn to think victory!

That is why we need to form the habit of picturing ourselves as overcomers, victors passing the test and receiving the laurels of full success. This will help us in times of trial and temptation to back up our ambition with the necessary effort.

The lives and sayings of all God's people through the ages have been positive. They have had conviction that God would be true to His Word, consequently their actions were decided, consistent, steady, not halfhearted or spasmodic. They were "eager souls" storming their way into the Kingdom. They knew their goal and they knew they had what it takes to reach it, so they pursued it in a straight course. Can we picture the apostle Paul sitting down with Barnabas, or Timothy, or Luke to discuss whether they would be able to stand the hardships that lay ahead, whether the missionary venture was really worth the cost? Did they stop to wonder whether they could stand the chill nights, or the long days of walking, or the hard beds, or the hostile people they would meet? Can we picture them wondering if the high calling of Jesus Christ was really worth it all? No. Their conviction was strong. There were no "ifs" or "buts" in their lives, no variation in their purpose. They were convinced that they had what it took.

The same prize is still being offered; should we be less determined? It is a matter of telling ourselves we *CAN* and then going straight ahead. And with a firm resolve that we will win at all costs and are on the way, how can we think of anything but winning? This thinking will help us to persevere in the rough places of life and increase our strength, and this in turn will

We need to form the habit of picturing ourselves as overcomers, victors passing the test and receiving the laurels.

encourage us to keep on. We shall have many lessons to learn, but we never need to be defeated unless we lose courage. In other words, we are *bound to succeed*, unless we think defeat.

This was the fighting—and winning—policy of Admiral Horatio Nelson, England's most famous sea fighter. He lost the sight of his right eye in battle during a revolutionary war with France in 1794, but that did not daunt him. In 1801, Nelson won a notable and strategic victory over the Danish fleet at Copenhagen. In the midst of the battle things were going badly for the English fleet and the leading English ship hoisted its recall signal for all the English ships to withdraw from action. Nelson's superior pointed it out to him, and handed him the telescope. Nelson put the telescope to his blind eye and said, "I really do not see the signal." Thus they fought on, and probable disaster was turned into triumph. Isn't this the way we can succeed—by not permitting ourselves to see defeat?

Think Success

We have good reason to think success. Do we not have the promise that "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man, and God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (I Cor. 10:13, NIV). There are three points in this text: first, that temptations will come. Temptation is part of life; yet, we should not think of it as something God has designed to trip us; it is a test, often a result of our own weakness, that gives us opportunity to grow a little stronger.

With each temptation is always a way of escape. The word here is vivid. It means a way out, as a mountain pass. The idea is of an army apparently surrounded and then suddenly seeing an escape route to safety. No man need fall in temptation, for with the temptation always comes a way out. And that way out is not the way of surrender, not the way of retreat, but the way of conquest.

Then follows the assurance that we *can* stand,

*We are made for mountains,
not for plateaus, and God forbid
that we should content ourselves
on the level.*

if we use the strength God provides. There is really no need to fret or fume about temptations. When God allows them to come, He provides the strength to endure, and His Word is filled with promises to fortify us. We have "guarantee of something very great and wonderful to come," promises through which we will "be able to share the divine nature and to escape corruption in a world that is sunk in vice" (II Pet. 1:4, JB).

We should be constantly filling our minds and lives with positive good. Whatever our conscious mind dwells on will be projected in our attitudes, our habits, our lives. There is no way to avoid this. We cannot live a Christian life while our thinking is not godly.

There is another help to victory, and that is to discipline our thinking. This is what Paul recommended: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I will say, Rejoice. . . . Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil. 4:4-8, RSV).

What will be the results of such positive God-directed thinking? Our fears will decrease and our faith will mount. Our attachments to unworthy goals in this world will grow less and less and our devotion to what is worthy will grow. Our discouragement will diminish and our courage will mount, until our whole mind and heart will be filled with God's great and precious promises.

But how can we actually *know* we *can* succeed? Because we have what it takes through the grace and goodness of God; we have the potential within us. God does not draw men and women

Let Us Pray . . .

Once again, our kind heavenly Father, we lift our hearts and voices to Thee in thankfulness for Thy great mercy. We thank Thee for this temporal life accompanied by so many blessings, and above all that Thy mercy which is from everlasting to everlasting has overflowed even to us, giving us the chance of forming holy and righteous characters, and ultimately becoming Thy sons and daughters to live through a glad-some eternity.

Help us never to take lightly Thy proffered goodness, or esteem of little worth Thy great and precious promises, or forget that Thy word shall not return to Thee void but that Thou wilt accomplish all that Thou hast planned. Whatever we sow we shall reap. If we sow to the flesh we shall of the flesh reap corruption; only if we sow to the spirit shall we of the spirit reap life everlasting.

Help us to think courage, think righteousness, think moral fortitude, think purity, think advancement in the divine life, and then trans-

late our thoughts into action. May we never allow the subversive thoughts of defeat and despair to discourage and disarm us, or be among those who say, The work cannot be done, the evils of my nature cannot be conquered; but may our motto ever be, it *can*, it *must*, it *will* be done.

Help us to take the whole armor which Thou hast provided, to employ all the weapons which are a part of Thine arsenal in the titanic struggle against self. May we have our loins girt about with truth, and wear the breastplate of righteousness; having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, using the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit; and may we never forget to pray. May our path to the Kingdom be as a shining light that shines brighter and brighter to that perfect day.

May we always remember that one with Thee is a majority, and never underestimate our strength when working in union with Thee. Thou canst save by many or by few. Thou art God alone. Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshipeth Thee. May we do likewise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

into His sphere of influence and then inform them that they do not belong there, that they cannot survive there or do not have what they need to stay there. This would be contrary to His whole plan of mercy and justice. Those whom He calls will have to answer for what they do under that call, hence must be able and responsible (Rom. 2:12). In short, we CAN if we WILL.

We *have* the potential to succeed. This is contrary to all other forms of life on this planet. A weed, for example, is limited. Cultivate it, stake it, fertilize it, and all you can ever get is more weed. A hog is limited. Whatever you do to train and nourish it, all you will ever get is more hog. But we are people, created with heavenly potential. Cultivate us, train us, feed us with holy, inspiring thoughts of God, and we can become the people of God, His own sons and daughters! We have what it takes!

Our Sufficiency Is of God

Our greatest source of supply is just one: the God who stands behind us. Didn't the apostle Paul say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He said also, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (II Cor. 10:4-5). Great power is this, but what is the source? Our weapons are "*mighty through God.*" We are not alone, if we are on God's side; "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," is the promise. This is why the Apostle could say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

Perhaps we have not always used this aspect of our strength to its fullest. We forget our need of God, that we are dependent on Him for everything we have or are or ever hope to be. If we only tap it, there is a strength here not only for life's extremities, during times of crisis, but also for our ordinary dealings in daily life.

We forget this. We go along "in between," placid and complacent, not rebellious, but not fully captured by our great goal. We do not give up, but neither do we triumph in Christ as we *could*, as the apostle Paul *did*. Consequently, content with what life brings, we settle down on one of life's many plateaus where the going is relatively safe and smooth. We settle for making do and getting by, instead of giving our utmost and best. Think of some of these

None are so strong or so independent as they who depend wholly on God.

plateaus; they are better than the lowlands, true; but they are not the heights. They are not the way to holiness and perfection.

We are made for mountains, not for plateaus, and God forbid that we should content ourselves on the level. Let us summon our God-given strength and begin climbing in earnest for the highest heights above us. We are made for mountains, with the great power that works in us.

We might think of it in another simile. God, His purpose, His gospel, may be compared to an immense power supply—is not the Gospel the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16)?

Picture a tractor set to move. Picture a large heavy load in a deep ditch. That is where the masses of mankind are content to lie. But there is a chain provided. That chain is our mental and spiritual possibilities. Wrap the chain around the load that is your life, and attach the other end of that chain to the tractor. Now let the tractor begin to move, and what happens? The links of that chain snap together, the full chain jerks straight, and the load begins to move, right up and out of the ditch.

That is the way with each of us. God gives us the load, but He also gives us a chain. And He offers the power; but it is up to us to use the chain, attach it firmly to the load, and firmly to the tractor; we must do our part; then God will do His part. Without the tractor we would remain forever in the ditch; without the chain we would be ditched. But link our life to that limitless source of power, and watch what happens! We have what it takes!

This is what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was saying in the last of chapter 5. First comes a strong rebuke. They have not been using their potential. He says, "You have been Christians long enough, some of you for twenty or thirty years. You ought to be teachers by now, but instead of being teachers, you still have not learned your ABC's." You are still in the ditch.

That would be like a pupil in an advanced math class not having learned the multiplication tables. He could not get anything done if he had to be constantly reviewing the product of two

(Continued on page 19)

Of Children Great and Small

WE HAVE all seen the artist's portrayal of Jesus sitting on a rock in a pleasant field, or by the seashore, surrounded with little children. The picture is on the cover of many children's Bibles, and is to be seen in a variety of children's Bible story books. Often the caption with it is: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." These are Jesus' own words, recorded in Luke 18:16.

The illustration is suitable if it is presented to children as an inspiration for them to be the type of children Jesus could befriend; but does it mean all that it is usually thought to? How literally are we to take Jesus' statement? Do those small in stature and young in years have a natural right to a place in the future, glorious realm?

We cannot believe that this is what Jesus meant. Consider the following reasons:

1) If children have a natural right to a place in Christ's kingdom, what happens when they grow up? At what point of life is the privilege withdrawn? If we say the right is perpetual (as it would have to be to have any real merit) then we find ourselves believing in universal salvation, for we were all children once!

2) The Bible states definite entrance requirements for the Kingdom. They are a "patient continuance in well doing" (Rom. 2:7); loving "the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). The Kingdom is promised "to him that overcometh" (Rev. 2:26; 3:21); to him who "shall endure unto the end" (Matt. 24:13). All these are achievements requiring time and mature effort; they are beyond the possibilities of a child.

3) The "little children" who will enter God's kingdom must "be converted," as Jesus Himself said (Matt. 18:3). "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." It is possible that Jesus was using a well-trained child as an example of the obedience and humility required of every child of God; but He must have been speaking

to mature men and women, who were capable of being converted, who were capable of independent thought and reasoning. (Notice this verse does not *address* little children; it simply uses them for an illustration.)

4) Jesus further identified the "little ones" He favored as "little ones which believe in me" (Matt. 18:6). The people He was concerned with were equipped with a well-founded faith and belief in Him. Only a mature person could truly be said to have weighed the evidence and be convinced sufficiently to "believe."

5) Jesus said on another occasion: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). Can we picture the kingdom of Christ filled with children small in stature and young in years?

6) All of us are by nature like the untamed colt—the Bible calls it the "wild colt of a man"—that must be tamed by the power of God's law of obedience (Job 11:11-12, Moffatt). From within our naturally evil hearts proceeds every evil to which flesh is heir. The child has had less opportunity and has less power to control these naturally evil traits than does the adult—so why would Jesus choose the child for special recognition in His kingdom, when He says, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. 21:27)? What consistency or justice would there be in setting such a high standard and then admitting those who were too young even to comprehend the meaning of the standard?

7) Jesus said to His Father at another time, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent ["their eyes they have closed"—Matt. 13:15], and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Luke 10:21). In this verse the inference is that "babes" are the opposite of the "wise and prudent," which refers to those who feel themselves superior in this world. The "these things" to which Jesus referred would have been

much too heavy for literal "babes" to comprehend. Jesus is saying that God chooses the simple, humble-minded of earth, rather than the sophisticates, as channels of His wisdom and His grace.

The Bible uses two different terms when speaking of children. The first, and most common, is *teknon*, which denotes the child of a parent. Believers are also called by this term, as being children of God or children of the faith. Jesus used a form of this word when speaking to His disciples in familiar, loving address (see John 13:33). The word is used also by the Christian apostle, or a teacher in speaking of his spiritual children.

The other New Testament term for "children" comes from the Greek word meaning "upbringing, training, instruction, as it is attained by discipline, correction, all discipline" (Heb. 12:11). It refers to one who is young and who is in training. In a figurative sense it is used of one who is a child "as far as the mind is concerned, with reference to their attitude toward the truth." The apostle John used this disciplining word for children when he addressed his brethren: "Little children" (I John 2:18). Jesus used it when He spoke of His disciples' needing to be converted and become as "little children" (Matt. 18:3), suggesting especially the discipline and training they would need.

The Bible uses the term child in several ways other than of a person young in years. Parent-child illustrations are used to describe the relationship between God and His human family. God being the supreme Creator of all, it is He who has made life possible for us; in this general sense, all humankind are His children; they all live because of the laws and the provisions He has made for their existence and survival.

In a deeper sense, we become children of God as we are adopted into His family and change ourselves so that we can "belong" eternally. Because of this special relationship God offers every true believer, we have the privilege of addressing Him as "Our Father."

In another sense, the Bible uses the child as an illustration of a new beginning in the life of a person, however old or young that person may be. Hence a person may be forty years old and be a "child" in the faith, newly begotten by the word of truth (Jas. 1:18). In this sense it is written, "Wisdom is justified of all her children"—every believer is her spiritual offspring, for whom she cares (Luke 7:35).

Paul used "children" in this way when he

wrote to the Galatian brethren, addressing them as "my little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19).

James included himself with his brethren as children when he wrote, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be . . . firstfruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1:18).

The apostle Peter addressed his brethren as "newborn babes" who should "desire the sincere milk of the word" that "by it you may grow up to salvation" (I Pet. 2:1-2, Phillips).

Many a man in Christ has had spiritual children, those whom he has taught and instructed in the word of truth. Paul felt this way toward many of his brethren. As he wrote to the Corinthian church, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (I Cor. 4:15).

The apostle Paul felt a special kinship toward Timothy, whom he called "mine own son in the faith" (I Tim. 1:2), and Titus, whom he called "mine own son after the common faith" (Tit. 1:4); and the loving, dedicated, Christian relationship which they shared radiates all through Paul's letters to them.

Sometimes the Bible uses childlike traits, such as love and trust and humility, to illustrate what the child of God must be. Again, "child" conveys a feeling of inadequacy, as Jeremiah expressed when he answered the Lord: "Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child" (Jer. 1:6). He felt too small and too insignificant to fill the Lord's commission to him.

King Solomon started with this same attitude, as he prayed to God for the wisdom and discernment he would need. "O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in" (I Kings 3:7). But it did not take him long to outgrow this childlike humility.

King Saul also commenced with this humble, childlike quality. But he also changed, to his own ruin. The prophet Samuel conveyed the message to him in later years: "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" (I Sam. 15:17).

Those who will submit to Christ's new government and live during the Millennial Age are classified as children in the Bible, children who will have to be taught the ways of God: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa.

54:13)—and we can imagine what eager scholars they will be! Jesus quoted this prophecy of Isaiah's and applied it to those who were learning of the Father through His ministry (John 6:45).

The relationship of parent to child is used again and again through the Bible in many different illustrations. Perhaps the climax occurs in the words of Paul, as he pens the promise of God: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17-18). This will mean becoming permanent members of the "whole family in heaven and earth" (Eph. 3:15). All these are the children of whom Jesus said: "of such is the kingdom of heaven." ●●

Eat to Grow

Yes, we must eat, breathe, rest, and work in order to grow and certainly there must be a desire to grow spiritually before there can be any progress. Just as a child grows inch by inch by feasting on wholesome food, so do we need to grow spiritually by devouring spiritual food (the Word of God). Jesus said in Matthew 4:4, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If we do not get fed spiritually it is our own fault, for the *Message* and tapes are very nourishing for our spiritual growth. We must be like newborn babes desiring the sincere milk of the word (I Pct. 2:2) and grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Pct. 3:18).

We must keep striving to grow a little each day. If we do not eat, we cannot grow. No one else can do the work for us and even when we have all we can eat and digest in the natural we can be literally starving if we do not digest the Word of God.

Sometimes we are pressed for time to do the necessary things of daily life, and it is so easy to let our tasks become more important than our spiritual welfare.

Carrollton, Ohio

M. W.

Keeping Right Values

It would be presumptuous for us to sit idly thinking that our food and clothing will be brought to us, or that our health will be taken care of no matter how we eat and drink. This is not God's plan; but on the other hand when we get all worried and flustered about how we're going to make ends meet, it absorbs all our time and energy so that we lose sight of eternal realities. There is a happy medium. When we are doing the best we can, God will bless our efforts and we can trust Him to take care of our needs.

As Christ entered the temple one day, the noise and confusion within was like the hustle and bustle of the market place. His Father's house had become as a den of thieves. Even so, sometimes the chambers of our minds become so involved with the hustle and bustle of obtaining earthly goods that we fail to take stock of our spiritual needs.

When we make God the center of our lives we will be able to put the right value on things.

Covington, Georgia

L. G.

An Example

I read that during the war with Japan, the war prisoners in one of their camps were issued work tools in the morning, and in the evening they were all counted. One day one of the tools was missing. The guards were going to punish the entire camp, but one soldier stepped up and took the blame. The guard beat him to death with his rifle. The soldier was willing to suffer a violent death to protect his fellow soldiers. Later a guard counted the tools and found them all there, but it was too late for that soldier.

God is never unjust like men are, but how many of us are willing to lay down our lives as an example to our fellow soldiers? We are commanded to present our bodies a "living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God."

Selma, Iowa

G. M.

Our Readers Write...

Excel In Humility

I have been reading recently about Jeremiah. How he was treated because he tried to help his people!—and was accused of trying to hurt them. We cannot serve the Lord as we see fit to serve Him and expect to receive the full reward. If we would do all to the glory of God we will not be fearful that we will do too much for His honor and glory, or even be anxious about what the world may say or even think. We must *press* into the Kingdom and nothing short of an all-out effort will suffice.

When we speak of these things, as Jeremiah did, we are hated and that hatred can be as close to us as members of our own household. Of course we are forbidden to exalt ourself in any way, we must strive to excel in humility. If we would serve the Lord we must serve Him together and in harmony, be constant in our effort.

So much is coming to pass so soon. It is very urgent that we look well to our ways. One little bit of pride or jealousy may not seem enough to loathe ourself for, but a little bit of any of these evils will keep us out of the Kingdom.

When God gathers in His children, those who have become pure in heart, may we have so lived that we will be among the number—if we are not it will be because we are not found worthy.

Charleston, Mississippi

R. S.

Character

GOD LOVES character. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness: his countenance doth behold the upright," wrote the Psalmist (Ps. 11:7). The man or woman who "fears him" and "works righteousness" is the only one who can hope to be accepted (Acts 10:34-35). He is a God of "knowledge, and by him actions are weighed"—not good resolutions or good intentions, but actions. And actions are the making of character; good actions are the making of *good* character.

From the moment a baby begins to notice surrounding objects, his character is in a process of formation. Day by day, through infancy and childhood, here a little and there a little, character grows with the growth and strengthens with the strength until, good or bad, it becomes almost a coat of mail.

Have you ever watched the icicle as it formed? Have you noticed how it froze, one drop at a time, until it was a foot long, or more? If the water was clean the icicle remained clear, and sparkled brightly in the sun. If the water was slightly muddy the icicle looked foul, and its beauty was spoiled. Just so are our characters formed. One little thought or feeling at a time adds its influence. If each be pure and right, the soul will be lovely and the character will sparkle; but if impure and wrong, there will be deformity and wretchedness that cannot be hid from the eyes of God. He sees, He knows, and He will judge accordingly.

Yes, actions, looks, words, steps form the alphabet by which you may spell character. And it is the quality of our character that will decide our destiny.

A very famous man once attributed his success as a public man not to his talents or to his power of speaking, for these were "but moderate," but to his known integrity of character. "Hence it was," he says, "that I had so much weight with my fellow-citizens. I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in my language; and yet I generally carried my point."

Character is power in a much higher sense than knowledge is power. Mind without heart, intelligence without good conduct, cleverness without purity of intention—these are powers only for mischief. Truthfulness, integrity, and goodness are qualities that stand out preeminent in life and form the essence of godliness. Was not Jesus an example of this? Did not His character, even in the moment of supreme testing, shine far above that of His persecutors? He who could be reviled without reviling again, who could suffer without threatening others, committing all things to the remembrance of Him who judges justly, He is our perfect example of the character that pleases God, and the standard by which He will select His eternal associates.

Perhaps one of the strongest and most effective influences making for noble character is the lurking thought that someone, somewhere is expecting something worthwhile of us. If we could trace the circumstances and instances surrounding many of this world's finest achievements we might be surprised to find that the impulse which made them possible was someone else's great expectation. It is therefore one of the best things we can do for our friends, to let them know that we are looking for them to be noble and heroic. This is one channel through which we may effectively add to the nobility of others. And by raising our expectations of them, we will in a sense be raising our own, for who can expect of others what he does not demonstrate in himself? Who can point others to ideals higher than he himself holds?

As the world is made up of atoms, so the Christian life is made up of countless little things done right; and if we contribute our utmost effort to each with sincerity of purpose, how far-reaching the results will be! They will carry us beyond this world into the world to come where we will inherit a place and a name "better than" that of sons and daughters, even an "everlasting name that shall not be cut off." This is what God the great Idealist expects us to attain. Shall we do it? ●●

God Must Be First

GOD CHOSE the nation of Israel as a nation to be His people, a nation with whom He would work, a nation He promised to bless if they obeyed Him, a nation which He promised to chastise if they forsook Him.

History tells the sad story. The people forsook Him, and—true to prophecy—God chastised them by allowing their enemies to overpower them. The result: Captivity, either in Babylon or Egypt.

Seventy years passed, and the decree went forth from Cyrus, king of Persia: "Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel." Many a loyal Jew responded.

But life for the returned captives was not easy. Times were hard. Drought, famine, and pestilence plagued the new inhabitants of Jerusalem. Why?

There was a reason.

Although the returned captives were not strangers to the true religion, neither were they zealous for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were inheritors of a long and colorful legacy, but at least seventy years separated them from the nation that had been. Many had no connection at all; they lacked the reverence, the respect, the fear, the compelling sense of duty to their God that had constrained those who had lived and worked and worshiped in the environs of the temple. Even among the most loyal, however diligent they had been to their devotions in exile, Babylon had had its influence—and taken its toll—especially among the younger generation.

It is these people and their problems which the following story attempts to portray.

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That half-panelled wall is the strangest sight. And it still bothers me. I never like to leave work half-done—especially in so conspicuous a place. But there it is, right in our front room.

What visitors must think of such negligence! And I don't know *when* I'll get around to finishing it.

But perhaps that doesn't matter—not so much as some things, anyway. I am satisfied that the Prophet was right; yes, the Prophet was right, absolutely right. What a lesson!

It happened this way. We had recently emigrated to Jerusalem—that is, my mother and father, an elder brother, and my youngest sister. Two other sisters and my younger brother had chosen to remain in Babylon. They had families of their own, and were comfortably situated in Babylon. It was "home" to them—it had become "home" to all of us, for that matter—and the idea of a return to Israel, a deserted, forsaken land, just didn't appeal to them. They had been born in Babylon, they were content to live and die there.

Babylon was a beautiful city—and prosperous. We were satisfied. We had a fine and comfortable home in the Jewish sector of the city, a favorable standing among our brethren, and a prominent place in the synagogue. An esteemed elder among us, Ezekiel by name, had done all in his power to keep us "alive," spiritually speaking. He had taught us about the true God of Israel, His promises, and His demands, and we were contented. We would make the most of life in Babylon.

But not so long ago a man by the name of Zerubbabel—he was a close friend of Ezekiel's but entirely different in nature, much younger and more aggressive—started agitating. He said we had no right or reason to be content in Babylon. Jerusalem was our home, the city of our God, the center of our faith. And to Jerusalem we ought to return.

Well, some agreed heartily. Others nodded in cautious assent. But Zerubbabel was a man for action; and when the government in Babylon changed leadership he decided the time had come to act. So he proceeded to devise a plan whereby he could be ushered into the presence of Cyrus

the Great. He wanted to inform the king of all he could gain if he would issue a decree permitting the Jews who desired to return to their homeland to leave. They would thereby expand the prosperity of his domain; they would build up another area for the great nation of Persia. They would provide a buffer for his western border; they would be loyal to him; they would even be willing to pay tribute, if necessary.

The plan worked, and Zerubbabel came away from the king with all the permissions he had gone after—and more. The king was very interested in the expedition; he even offered to contribute money to help defray expenses! Zerubbabel was enthusiastic.

Well, my father was all captivated by the idea, too. A return to our homeland! An opportunity to work on the temple of Jehovah! to clean up the city of Jerusalem, and assist in the thousand other tasks which would combine to re-establish us as a God-fearing nation!

Mother and I did not see quite all that in the idea. As for my younger brother, his position was neutral. His one ambition was to be a priest; whether in Jerusalem or in Babylon made no difference. Probably Babylon's growing synagogue offered the greater visible possibilities. What need was there in a deserted city, in a broken and burned temple, in far-away Israel?

My two sisters pretended not even to hear the call to return. They were content, quite content with all they had in Babylon. What was Zerubbabel thinking of? Did he expect them to go off and leave homes they had just finished building, and all the comforts that made life pleasant—to live like nomads in Israel? Ridiculous!

Well, I was interested in the trip, very interested. Traveling was strenuous, true. But I was young and ready for some adventure. And what could be more thrilling than a journey to Jerusalem! Many were the nights we children had sat on our mats on the floor and listened while Grandfather described the wonders of the city and all the great things that had happened there. Great men of God, like David, Josiah, and good king Hezekiah virtually came alive as Grandfather talked. Many were the nights I dreamed of seeing the city of David, the broad, fruitful plains of Jordan, and all those towns and villages where the prophets taught. I wanted to see those verdant hills that were so rich with history, and the charred remains of the sacred temple. I longed to feel the golden sun of Palestine and taste those crystal streams I had heard so much about. I longed to stand where Father Abraham

had labored and pick the rich clusters that Joshua had found.

I longed to see—but to see, and to locate permanently were two different propositions. I just wasn't sure—.

Well, despite the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the majority, Zerubbabel managed to gather quite a large company for the expedition back. Exactly how many I do not know, but there must have been nearly 50,000 counting Levites, porters, singers, Nethinims, priests, servants and all the rest.

My father was on the list from the very first. The rest of us took a while to decide. My two sisters were definite; they had *no* interest in making the trip. My two brothers vacillated. Then the younger one turned sour altogether when, after some persuading, he inquired whether he might be able to serve as a priest in Jerusalem if the temple should be built. The answer was no; the reason: our family lacked evidence as to ancestry. We were Israelites unquestionably; and he and I thought we were Levites. But since we could not prove it, there was no possible way for him to serve as priest.

Mother and I found ourselves pulled between two—my father's unchangeable determination to go and the cold and bitter indisposition of my two sisters and younger brother. But after much deliberation, we decided to go.

Among the travelers were two men of high repute, distinguished both for character and leadership, and very intimate friends. Their names were Haggai and Zechariah. My personal views probably do not belong here, but my respect for these two men is so great that I cannot avoid mentioning it. Anyone seeing them was impressed by their superior quality; they were men who lived very near to God, if I may judge.

Somehow, though, I greatly preferred Zechariah to Haggai. I don't know exactly why, but it seemed as though Haggai was always "stepping on your toes" for some reason or other. He made you uncomfortable simply by his presence, as though he were eyes and ears for the heavenly King. Zechariah seemed to be a quieter sort, thoughtful and brotherly, though he, too, was capable of being very direct in his manner.

But I must return to my story. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, we immediately set to work to clear away enough rubble to make place for erecting shelters; Jerusalem had become "an heaps"—there was little else. Temporary shelters were a necessity, and these, we thought, would suffice,

for everyone was anxious to get to work on the temple.

But as we weathered the rains and sun, we seemed to get more and more involved in our work. We had come to *stay*, and since we were putting so much work into our houses, it seemed sensible to make them as complete, as pleasant and as livable as possible. Camping was most interesting for awhile, but our love for the out-of-doors soon grew cold, especially as the season changed. We were accustomed to fine homes in Babylon, and since this was to be our permanent home, we wanted no less in Jerusalem. So our "temporary" shelters grew more and more elaborate as we learned to make use of the resources available.

Zerubbabel occasionally mentioned that we ought to be starting work on the temple, but no one seemed especially interested. He and Joshua, our high priest, had instigated the erecting of an altar, around which we all gathered daily for a spiritual refreshment and a sacrifice to God. And having this, the need seemed to be satisfied and no one seemed too concerned about the temple. It would come in time. So long as we had the altar, wasn't that sufficient?

But everything went wrong. Weeks and weeks went by, and we had no rain—not a drop. Nothing we planted grew, and we began to wonder what we were going to do for food. Of course, the lack of rain had been very advantageous to our home-building projects, but we were now to the point of inside work, stuccoing, panelling, floor-laying, etc., and rain in any quantity would have been more than welcome. We needed food; our supply was extremely limited and daily becoming shorter.

We grew concerned. What were we going to do? Concern grew into dissatisfaction, and dissatisfaction turned to bitterness. Why did we ever consent to come back to Jerusalem? I thought of my brother and my two sisters back in Babylon. An occasional letter from them assured us that all was as usual in Babylon. And always there was the thought no one dared to express. Were they—were they right?

Why such a drought in Israel? The natives all said they had never seen the like of it before. What was the cause?

Then one day the prophet Haggai—we called him "prophet" because the Lord seemed to give special revelations to him—Haggai came around where I was working on our house one day and offered a fantastic suggestion. The drought, he said, was the direct result of our neglect of our

temple and our God. Had we come to Jerusalem to build fine homes for ourselves, or had we come to repair and rebuild the temple and revive the worship of our God?

His words stung. I looked at him, pained, speechless. "Traitor" was the word that seemed to shoot forth from his accusing eye. Traitor.

But then, I was not guilty. I was only doing the same as everyone else.

The Prophet wanted to know what I was doing. Well, it was quite evident. I was at that moment busy fastening panelling on the inside walls of our front room. I explained to him how we had made bricks with straw and laid them up hastily at first to make for ourselves a shelter, and now, since that was finished, we had had all we could do to finish the inside. Father had cut down some trees in the forest outside the city and made some very beautiful wood panels, and we thought these would add considerably to the value of our home. They would provide insulation against the winter wind, and—

Haggai seemed untouched, unmoved, unsatisfied with all my reasons. In fact, I wonder if he even heard them. "Why all this?" he responded. "Is it necessary, all this fancy work while the house of God lies in ruins?"

I explained that I wasn't trying to be fancy. And did we really need the temple? I took time every day to worship at the altar. I had no intention of neglecting the service or worship of God. And as soon as I finished panelling our house, I would be more than glad to commence work on the temple. I would willingly give all my time and all my effort to that work. It wouldn't be long, now, and my house would be finished. Father had the panels all made, and it was just a matter of putting them on.

But the Prophet was not satisfied. "You seem to think the temple unimportant, as though the finishing touches on your own home far surpass in importance the temple of the Lord our God."

I began to understand. "As soon as I finish this room," I replied, "I will be ready to work on the temple."

The Prophet looked at me with a steady, searching gaze. I was speechless.

"I am delivering the Lord's message," he said sternly. "You wonder why God does not make your crops grow, why He does not make your money prosper, when you are so unbelieving and so unwilling and so slow to give yourself to His work and to concern yourself with the spiritual welfare of your nation. You have neglected the Lord, in the same measure He is neglecting you."

The Prophet was right, absolutely right. But I could not begin the work alone. There were stones to be gathered, debris to be removed, wood to be cut, and—and—

The Prophet had a ready answer: I should show my interest in the temple of Jehovah by *action*. "If you value the Lord's favor above the favor of men, if you believe the work for the Lord is more important than your own, *show* your faith. Take what is left of this panelling to the temple site. Gather as many people as you can, and stir up the work on the temple. This is the word of the Lord."

I was too overcome by the suggestion to answer. At that moment it seemed unreasonable. How much would a half dozen panels contribute to the rebuilding of the house of the Lord?

But the lesson was there: God had to be first. And I was not to wait for everyone else and then follow. If I took a step, perhaps another would take two, and another, and another, and soon the work of God would be all in all!

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Work on the temple has advanced rapidly, and now preparations are apace for the dedication service. So I should not have to look at this half-panelled wall much longer.

Yes, Haggai was right, stern prophet that he is. God must be first. And when His work is done and there are resources to spare, we may use them—if we do it in His name and to His glory. Everything is ours, if only we learn to put God first. ●●

?uestions

"Where in the Bible can I find the chapter and verse which states that 'Jesus appointed Paul to take the place of Judas'? I read in the Acts, chapter 1, verse 26, that Matthias was numbered with the Eleven. The 25th verse states that he would take part of the apostleship, from which Judas fell."

There is no one verse which states that Jesus appointed Paul an apostle in place of Judas, but note the following:

In Acts 9 we read where Paul was struck down by the Lord as he journeyed to Damascus. Jesus said he was a "chosen vessel . . . to bear my name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). In Romans 1:1 we read, "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle." Then in the fifth verse, speaking of Jesus, Paul states, "By whom we have received grace and apostleship." In I Corinthians 4:9, Paul says, "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last." Again he says, "For I am the least of the apostles" (I Cor. 15:9). Again he said, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, . . . whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle" (I Tim. 2:5, 7). See also II Tim. 1:11, II Cor. 12:11,

II Cor. 1:1. Galatians 1:1 is definite: "Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father." This is conclusive evidence that Paul was appointed an apostle by Jesus Christ.

Paul's own telling of what happened on the road to Damascus shows that Jesus was appointing him to a specific mission. Jesus had said to him, "Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light" (Acts 26).

We know that Judas disqualified himself for the position of apostle, a fulfillment of the prophecy which Peter cited from the book of Psalms in regard to Judas, "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take." Later in the same chapter we read where the Eleven remaining apostles assembled and cast lots to choose an apostle to replace Judas, and the lot fell upon Matthias. Apparently this was done without the authority of Jesus, for we never hear of this man again, and, as we have seen, Paul was definitely appointed to the position.

"In reading your pamphlet, I noted that you teach that the first day of the week is the Sabbath. Why do you err?"

I believe you have misunderstood our statement. The first day of the week is not and never

could be the Sabbath, for the "seventh" day was the Sabbath.

You probably refer, though, to our belief that we today are not dutybound to observe the Sabbath, which you feel to be Saturday, as a sacred day of worship. First let me say that there is absolutely no evidence that the Saturday of the Roman week was the seventh day of the week as the Israelites counted time, or that our Saturday today is the same seventh day as given by God to Moses.

There are a few facts basic to an understanding of the Biblical teaching about the Sabbath. We agree that the children of Israel were commanded to keep the Sabbath. "Remember the sabbath, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God."

The question is, When was this Sabbath that Israel was commanded to keep? There are several passages of Scripture which indicate that the first day of every new year was also the first day of the month and also the first day of the week; and there being 360 days in a year, the sabbath could not have occurred every seven days year after year, for 360 is not evenly divisible by 7.

Exodus 12:2 tells us that the month during which the Israelites left Egypt was the first month of the year, and Exodus 13:4 states that its name was "Abib." This was a month they were commanded to observe: "Observe the month Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 16:1). We learn from Lev. 23:3, "Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation." The Lord's passover occurred on the second sabbath of the year, which was also the fourteenth day of the first month: "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover" (Lev. 23:5). Hence, the first day of the year had to be the first day of the week as well.

Now the month Abib began at the time of the first new moon after the days and nights were equal in the spring; and the date being determined by the moon, it could not possibly fall on the same day of the week each year. Thus, the Sabbath as observed by the children of Israel could not possibly coincide year after year with our Saturday.

But concerning the observance of the sabbath, it was a command given only to the Israelite people. And it was linked to a lunar calendar, which was also given to Israel to keep. And there is no instance where any but Israel were commanded to observe it. Finally, it is not possible to link the

seventh day of the week as given to Moses with the day we call Saturday, so named by the Romans and never mentioned in the Bible. If we were to begin each year with the first day of the week as the children of Israel did, then the seventh day would be the Sabbath, but it would fall on different days of our week; some years it would fall on one day, other years on another. It could come on Sunday, it could come on Saturday, or any other day. The two calendars do not and cannot coincide.

However, the principle of setting aside one day each week for worship and extra devotion and Bible study is God-ordained, and we do it by setting aside the day selected by our government. We set it aside, not as the Holy Sabbath, but simply as a day dedicated to God. As far as one day being holy above others, we are commanded to make every day a holy day to the Lord (I Pet. 1:15-16; Isa. 56:1-2); we are not to do evil *any* day.

"Is the baptism of Matthew 3:11, baptism as administered by John, the same as the baptism spoken of in Mark 10:38 where Jesus said 'Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?'"

No, we do not believe that the baptism Jesus referred to in Mark 10:38 is the same as the literal water baptism practiced by John. Anyone sincerely listening to the law of God and working for eternal life, or lacking that sincerity, could receive the literal rite of baptism. The baptism Jesus mentioned in Mark 10:38 is a baptism not everyone is willing to undergo. Anyone may be immersed in literal water, but very few are willing to take up their cross and deny themselves as Jesus did (Luke 9:23)—which is necessary to be His follower. Jesus could say that He did only those things that pleased His heavenly Father; this includes His complete submission to the will of His Father, even to the giving up of His natural life. If we are to follow in Jesus' footsteps, if we are to be baptized with the baptism He was baptized with, we must be willing to do as He did; we must be willing to live a life wholly devoted to the service of God.

The rite of baptism was practiced by the apostles; they were commanded to perform it, but it was only symbolic in nature. The rite itself never purified one's heart or cleansed one's life from sin and evil, thus could never bring salvation. It

was a visible symbol of the inner cleansing which will ensure salvation.

"How do you harmonize the text that tells how Abraham was to become 'a father of many nations' (Gen. 17:4) with your idea of one world government? How are there to be many nations if all are one?"

The Bible teaches definitely that there is to be one world government when God's work on earth is complete. See Zechariah 14:9, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." Also Psalm 72:8, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." This indicates a Kingdom that will cover the entire earth; there will be no place for any other nation. God does not purpose to have nation fighting nation under the righteous rulership of Christ.

However, the prophecy to Abraham does have a significant meaning. It indicates God's age-old plan of working not with any one people exclusively but with all who will be His obedient children. For many years God worked primarily with the Jewish people, but never to the exclusion of any other people who would obey Him. It was always His plan that all who will "fear him, and work righteousness" will be accepted (Acts 10:34-35), regardless of the nation from which they come. Righteousness is the standard; blood or descent does not matter. And Abraham is, spiritually speaking, the father of all who believe (Rom. 4:11).

We are told also that the saints are to be taken out of "every nation, and kindred, and people and tongue" (Rev. 17:15; 5-10). All are adopted into God's family and thereby become spiritual children of Abraham by obedience to God, by doing "the works of Abraham" (John 8:39).

The promise recorded in Genesis 17:4, though spoken primarily for its long-term meaning, also was literally fulfilled in an immediate sense, in the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael. Together the descendants of these two sons did comprise "many nations." The descendants multiplied very rapidly, and the prophecy was fulfilled. However, the main thrust of the prophecy is much longer-ranged. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul uses the two sons of Abraham as an "allegory" and the account in Genesis may also be understood as an allegory. Isaac is the father of the believers selected and perfected during the first six thousand years of the plan on earth, and Ishmael is called the

father of all who become part of God's family during the Millennial Age. Both groups will include "many nations" in their complete fulfillment, Abraham being the father of them all in a spiritual sense. But when the plan is complete all will be united, nationality distinctions will be completely removed, and all will comprise one kingdom under one King. Isaac and Ishmael classes will live as one nation and serve in their respective positions. (For further discussion of Isaac and Ishmael as an allegory, see our booklet *The Kingdom of God*, chapter V.)

"Where in the Bible might I find that it is sinful to do genealogy on our family?"

There are two texts in the Scriptures which pertain to genealogies. One is found in I Timothy, where Paul is telling Timothy to "command certain persons to give up teaching erroneous doctrines and studying those interminable myths and genealogies, which issue in mere speculation and cannot make known God's plan for us" (NEB). Again in Titus 3:9 Paul advises, "But avoid foolish questions and genealogies and contentions and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain." The Apostle seems to place genealogies in a class of needless wranglings that gender strife and do not edify. Searching out one's genealogy is time-consuming, and is of questionable profit—what practical benefit can there be? If our first interest is to prepare to live in God's future Kingdom, we will find far more profitable occupation for our time than tracing our ancestors.

During the time when God had a people on earth with whom He was working, and one's qualifications for service were determined by one's family and ancestry, tracing genealogy was profitable and necessary (Neh. 7:64). Again, when they were commanded not to intermarry with foreign people to avoid being contaminated by their pagan practices, a record of genealogy was important (Ezra 10).

The command to us today is, "Make the very most of your time" (Eph. 5:16, Moffatt). Tracing one's family genealogy could hardly be said to meet this qualification. ●●

Lord, let me not in appearing to worship Thee be seeking the worship of men. Give me singleness of mind. Give me purity of heart. And may I discover true greatness in seeking greatness for others.

Look Up and Go Through

Does the battle seem long, and the enemy strong,
Easing down for more strength to renew it?
Go on, meet the foe—on, is victory, you know;
Put your trust in the Lord and go through it.

Have you met a fierce test when you've done your best,
While foes muster help to undo it?
Even this cannot last, all things come to pass,
Turn your face toward the sky and go through it.

Have friends proved untrue, as sometimes they do,
And you wonder just what made them do it?
Disappointed, forlorn, beaten back by the storm,
Turn your face toward the sky and go through it.

If sickness o'erthrows you, as sometimes 'twill do,
And you feel like you may not get through it,
Don't pretend nothing's wrong—sing a much sweeter song,
Put your trust in the Lord, you'll come through it.

If cyclone or tragedy tears up your world,
And your blood chills in fright as you view it,
All helplessly torn, do not try it alone,
You've a Master who'll help you go through it.

Go through it, oh, yes, whatsoever the test,
Not over, around, or eschew it;
Look life in the face—meet it by God's grace—
Keep your face toward the sky and go through it.

All "passing things pass," and all "lasting things last,"
A fleeting life's moment—you're through it;
All trials pass away, God's Kingdom's for aye—
Keep going that way—you'll get to it!

SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

Judge Yourself on the Judges

The nation of Israel was ruled by judges for a long period of time.
Name the judge that goes with each statement below.

1. _____ To whom was it said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour"?
2. _____ Which judge had the privilege of anointing two kings of Israel?
3. _____ This deliverer was left-handed. He said, "I have a secret errand unto thee, O king," and thereby was left alone with the king of Moab.
4. _____ To whom was this said, "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go. . . ."
5. _____ Which judge found a jawbone of an ass and used it to fight the Philistines?
6. _____ Whose only daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances after a great victory?

7. _____ This deliverer was the son of Caleb's youngest brother Kenaz and the first judge of Israel.
8. _____ He judged Israel seven years and had 30 sons and 30 daughters.
9. _____ This man delivered Israel from the Philistines by fighting with an ox goad.
10. _____ Which judge was brought up in the tabernacle at Shiloh?
11. _____ This judge had 40 sons and 30 nephews that each rode ass colts. He judged Israel 8 years.
12. _____ This Gileadite judged Israel 22 years. He had 30 sons that rode 30 ass colts and they had 30 cities.
13. _____ Who was known as Jerubbaal after he threw down Baal's altar one night?
14. _____ Who judged Israel under a palm tree?

Answers:

1. Gideon (Judges 6:12) 2. Samuel (I Sam. 10:1; 16:13) 3. Ehud (Judg. 3:15, 19) 4. Deborah (Judges 4:8) 5. Samson (Judges 15:15) 6. Jephthah (Judges 11:34) 7. Othniel (Judges 3:9) 8. Ibzan (Judges 12:9) 9. Shamgar (Judges 3:31) 10. Samuel (I Samuel 1:28; 2:18, 21, 26) 11. Abdon (Judges 12:14) 12. Jair (Judges 10:3-4) 13. Gideon (Judges 6:32) 14. Deborah (Judges 4:5)

You HAVE What It Takes!

(Continued from page 7)

times two. There are moves to be made, there are things to be left behind. We must use the power God provides, attach the chain firmly, and MOVE. Go on to perfection. This is what the author of Hebrews is urging. Muster all your might, and with the help of God, MOVE. Apply the pressure, make the change, meet the challenge, MOVE.

In Ages Past—Jeremiah . . .

It has always been God's plan to give men and women what they needed to succeed. Look at Jeremiah. It was not an easy matter for Jeremiah, young, modest, and sensitive, to come boldly forward and threaten the judgments of God against his countrymen. But when God calls a man to any task, He helps him and gives him strength proportionate to the task.

This is what God did for Jeremiah. We read the promise in Jeremiah 1:18-19: "Behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee: but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." Notice the strong images: "I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls"—didn't Jeremiah feel strong as he heard this! In spite of his weakness and youth, he could perform God's will because God would be with him; he had what it would take.

None are so strong or so independent as they who are wholly dependent on God. In this way God taught Jeremiah to expect opposition; it is foolish to ignore the approach of trouble; but danger foreseen and met in the strength of God is already half overcome. No ground of confidence could be more assuring than this, that in the power of God we CAN; we CAN because we have what it takes.

. . . Moses

Moses was another man whom God empowered, and who was strong in His strength. When the call came to him in that Midian desert, Moses was sure that he did not have what it would take to lead the Israelite host out of Egypt—and he

surely could not estimate at that point even minutely the difficulties he would encounter. "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" he pleaded; but God's messenger said, "Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (Ex. 3:11-12). Was it not enough? The great I AM was sending him. What more could he ask than this?

. . . David

When the young David was confronting the great giant of the Philistines, we read that he went forward "in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (I Sam. 17:45). The 300 chosen men of Gideon's army were called "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon" (Judg. 7:18). God was their strength. When Paul asked that a certain trial be withdrawn, God did not offer to remove the trial but to give the strength to endure. Was it not enough? "My grace is sufficient for thee," He said. Who could contradict the fact? God's grace was sufficient. And can we today think that this sustaining power of God is any less active in our lives—if we are working with God? Is not their God *our* God, capable of seeing *us* through also, giving us the strength we need from day to day?

What does it mean to have what it takes—with God on our part? It means that we are always in the majority, for one with God is always a majority. It brings us into partnership with God; as our founder so aptly described it, "He in one end of the yoke, and we in the other." And we need have no fear, God will do on His part.

. . . Israel

The nation of Israel experienced this. Without God to pull with them, they could not move. They were nothing without Him. They had neither greatness of resources nor military prowess nor broad borders. But with God on their side, what power on earth could stand against them? So long as He was their strength, their high tower, their buckler and shield, they had no earthly foes. But when the nation turned to idols and God withdrew His support, see how weak and powerless they were.

... Elijah

What happens when we have what it takes—with God on our part? See how He wins victories. See the lone prophet Elijah thundering into the presence of Israel's wicked king Ahab, a man whom Elijah knew full well had the power to behead him; but hear his brave confrontation presented in these words: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (I Kings 17:1). Perhaps for Ahab this was enough; if he laid hands on the Prophet, things could be *worse*! Then see the same Prophet standing alone on Mount Carmel three years later with all the prophets of Baal against him. But *who* could bring fire down from heaven?

What happens when we are on God's side? See Sisera's wheels getting literally stuck in the mud when God wanted them defeated. See the enemies of Israel retiring because they thought they saw a valley full of blood. See the great hosts of Midian fleeing before a mere shout and noise of a handful of men, when God wanted them to run. Again, see his enemies hearing noises that frightened them, when God wanted it that way.

What does it all mean? It means that God's side is undefeatable. If we stand with Him, we cannot lose. All failure lies in separation. Look again and see the hosts of Pharaoh enveloped in the descending walls of the Red Sea—which had held up for every Israelite to pass through dry shod. Look again and see the walls of Jericho crashing to the ground. Is it not the power of Him who is great and doeth wondrous things, even He who is God alone? (Ps. 72:18). In fact, without Him we are nothing. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1).

Do We Have What It Takes?

With God on our side, we have taken the first great step toward success. All that remains is to prove to Him and to ourselves the spiritual strength we have within us, to train and discipline ourselves to develop all that it takes to make us into the fresh new creature He is looking for. Are we showing more and more day by day that we have what it takes in the everydayness of our lives? For example:

Do we have what it takes to apologize when we are in the wrong whether the evidence condemning

us is conclusive or not? Do we have what it takes to forgive another who has wronged us and not hold any ill feelings against him, even though we know that he was wrong and we were right?

Do we have what it takes to see ourselves honestly as we are, even when that picture is not as good as we had imagined it to be?

Do we have what it takes to speak up and change the topic of conversation when we sense that it is tending too much to things secular, things temporal, things of no eternal significance or even temporary import?

Do we have what it takes to stand up for our convictions even when others around us are compromising theirs?

Do we have what it takes to be a burning and a shining light, no matter how dark the world around us? Do we have what it takes to keep our faith burning brighter and brighter even when others would challenge and upbraid?

Do we have what it takes to stay on the unpopular side because we are convinced that it is right and will triumph in the end?

Do we have what it takes to retain no feelings of ill toward one who gets what we know he deserves—do we have what it takes to rule out all feelings of revenge or any desire to "get even"?

Do we have what it takes to go the "second mile" for one we do not especially like, whose personality does not match well with ours?

Do we have what it takes to judge another entirely by fruits and evidence and not by our own personal prejudices or preferences?

Do we have what it takes to forget trifles which we know were not intended to carry any wrong—to put the best construction on another's conduct and not the worst?

Do we have what it takes to always speak the truth and nothing but the truth, whether it be to justify or condemn us?

All this takes strength, great spiritual strength; but with God on our side, we *have* it; we have it if only we will summon it, develop it, apply it in His great cause and forget ourselves.

What does it take to see us through?

First of all it takes a forward vision, a glimpse of the future which we cannot forget. A man once told of walking with his grandfather through the woods. As a boy, he was prone to look back, but when he did he always managed to stub his toe and fall. "After helping me up for the third time," the man relates, "Grandfather tilted my chin and looked straight into my eyes. 'Quit looking back, Son,' he admonished;

'that's not the direction we're going.'"

So with us, back is not the direction *we* are going; why, then, should we be looking that way? If we would avoid stumbles, we must look ahead.

Second, we need a reverent love of life and of the God who imparts it. God is our strength, God is our stay; in God is our power and hope of salvation. A strong devotion and love for Him is a large part of what it takes to see us through.

Then, we need that inspired imagination that can picture us as overcomers, winners in the race, enjoying the laurels of full salvation. What can be more encouraging than this!

Then, too, we need a firm and unchangeable decision. Often in temporal matters we want to postpone a decision, but decide we must and then make that decision stick. So in things spiritual. "Once to every man and nation,/ Comes the moment to decide/ In the strife of truth with falsehood,/ For the good or evil side; One great cause comes with Messiah,/ Off'ring each the bloom or blight,/ And the choice goes by for ever/'Twixt that darkness and that light."

Oh, let us choose wisely.

The word "Hebrew" reflects this choice. It meant literally "a crosser." The Hebrews were, in fact, "crossers;" they were people who had come across the great river, who had broken completely with their past and had made up their minds for a new life. Unfortunately, this was not true for all of them. But the way is open for each of us to be true Hebrews, Jews indeed who have made the great crossing. It is the firm decision that will see us through—through the little rivers that we confront every day, rivers of complacency and prejudice sometimes seem so wide and staggering that we wonder if we can make it across. And what rivers of self-satisfaction we must cross, or rivers of indifference or fumbling irresolution, or stubborn selfishness, or pride. But once the crossing is made, how much further ahead we are. It is such decisions as these that let us know we have what it takes.

Another factor necessary in seeing us through is time, and we all have it, 24 hours each day, 24 hours to redeem or squander, hours we can put to the very best use of which humans are capable or hours we can let go quietly by while our minds flit here and there and our hands are busy with this and that, until the day is done. Is it not our challenge today, we who live so near the end—is it not our challenge to show how much a few moments can produce in real spiritual achievement?

We have more in our favor than any other
July/August, 1980

people who ever lived. We have God on our side, and all His hosts of angels to encourage and sustain us. We have His written Word to teach us, brethren who have gone before us and to whom we want to prove that we did indeed have what it took. We today have the bonus benefit of living this side of the dark night of the apostasy when we can know that the great Day of the Lord is right upon us. We may even live to see it! In addition to all this, we are living in an age of religious tolerance when we do not have to fear open persecution. And witness the fulfilled and fulfilling prophecy all around us. How much more do we need to certify our success?

What We Need

What, then, do we need? A reverent love for life and the God who gives it, a constant forward vision, a divine destiny, an inspired imagination that can picture us as overcomers, and the courageous practical dedication that comes from faith applied. All this—plus God on our side—and we have what it takes. Oh! Let us resolve with all of the latent power within us; let us resolve that we *will* use the powers we have and achieve the high calling to which we have been called, for surely, we have what it takes! ●●

I must go shopping today;

I am completely out of generosity and must get some more.

I also want to exchange the self-satisfaction I picked up the other day for some real humility. They say that it wears better.

I must look at some tolerance, which is worn as a wrap this season.

I saw some samples of kindness . . . well, I'm a little low on that and one can never have too much of it.

And I must try to match some patience. I saw it on a friend, . . . it was so becoming, and might look equally well on me.

I must remember to get my sense of discernment mended, and keep my eyes open for some inexpensive goodness.

It's surprising how one's stock of goods gets depleted.

And—I almost forgot—I need to buy more faith. I like to keep a really big supply on hand.

Yes! I must go shopping today.



SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

"As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things"

—II Cor. 6:9-10

WRITING to his Corinthian brethren about his sufferings, his work, and his accomplishments in the cause of Christ, the apostle Paul says, "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings"; or, quoting from the Jerusalem Bible, "We prove we are God's servants by our purity, knowledge, patience and kindness; by a spirit of holiness, by a love free from affectation; by being armed with the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left, prepared for honor or disgrace, for blame or praise; taken for impostors while we are genuine; obscure yet famous; said to be dying and here are we alive; rumored to be executed before we are sentenced; thought most miserable and yet we are always rejoicing; taken for paupers though we make others rich, for people having nothing though we have everything" (vs. 7-10).

Let us focus on the last part of our text: "as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." What did Paul mean? As far as the things of this world were concerned, he was a poor man; he found it necessary to labor with his own hands at his humble trade of tent-making that he might maintain himself and help others. Yet, with all his poverty he spent his life making other people rich, for he had spiritual riches in Christ that far surpassed the wealth of any millionaire on earth. What did he give men? He gave them that which made his own life rich, the hope he had received from the Lord Jesus, the prospect of a place in God's everlasting Kingdom.

Let's look more closely at Paul's riches.

When the great light shone upon his pathway and struck him to the ground and a voice spoke

to him on the Damascus road, he asked the question: "What wilt thou have me to do?" Upon being told what he must do, he was immediately obedient to the heavenly vision. Right then and there he began selling out his all, his own ways and thoughts, his aims and aspirations in this world, to exchange for the greater values. He sold all to the Lord and bought the pearl of great price, the wisdom of God, that of which it is said, "her merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her."

Why is this wisdom so valuable? Because it gives what no amount of worldly riches can possibly give: "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor" (Prov. 3:13-18). Just think of such a legacy! Who could ask for more?

Here are the very things for which men have toiled and struggled through the ages, but how few, how very few ever attained their goal. Not only riches, honor and long life, but "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." With the present condition of the world, is there a soul who would not like to walk in safe and peaceful paths? But listen further: "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her." Riches, honor, long life and happiness! Are not these true riches? Was not Paul far richer when in possession of all these than he ever could have been by following his own chosen course in life?

According to the natural mind ungoverned by the law of God, following one's chosen course is a great privilege. To do just as one pleases is called liberty, freedom; and men will fight and even die for what they call their liberty.

When Paul comprehended the vast storehouse

of wealth which this wisdom of God opened up to him, he was caused to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Then by preaching and teaching he began to distribute his wonderful wealth to others, carrying the glorious Light he had received to a world in darkness; and it has reached even to us through his thirteen epistles written to the different churches he founded. Thus we may share this wealth any time we wish to sit down and read the Blessed Volume.

Paul had other riches, also. He was among those grand characters who were rich in faith. What else could have made him say, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39)? Did not his whole life testify to the fact that this persuasion was truly his?

Being rich in faith, he became rich in good works, for "faith if it hath not works is dead, being alone" (Jas. 2:17). If Paul demonstrated any one principle more than another in his life it was this showing of faith by his works. This is what he admonished his brethren: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Tit. 3:8). Again he wrote of the grace of God which teaches us that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:11-12). Was not Paul very rich to have such sound doctrine to impart to others?

Paul had yet another source of spiritual riches—godly contentment. "I have learned," he could say, "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." This state of mind is true riches. The contented mind enables us, like Paul, to know that the whole disposing of the life of the true Christian is of the great and everlasting God. Believing this with all our heart, we shall find so many things to rejoice in and be thankful for that we shall forget to be discontented; for are we not assured that "all things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28)? But to show that we love God we

must enter into His service with our whole heart and in love faithfully keep His commandments.

This gospel of contentment was part of Paul's preaching. "Godliness with contentment is great gain, . . . and having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:6-8). How much happier we are when contented with our lot. And what spiritual riches—great gain!

The writer to the Hebrew brethren likewise admonished to contentment: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." If we are content, our conversation (conduct) will show it.

This godly contentment gives us great adjusting power in our lives; it gives us the ability to adapt ourselves to circumstances as to the will of God. Only by this adaptability can we find happiness even in this life. Unhappy indeed is the man who allows his life to run in such a rut that if forced out of it by circumstances his whole mental equilibrium is upset.

The apostle Paul set us a good example in this, too. He said at one time, "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that befall me there; save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy" (Acts 20:22-24). His whole life testified to the great spiritual riches of contentment that he possessed.

Again he exclaimed, in the face of bonds and afflictions, "Wherever I go, thank God, he makes my life a constant pageant of triumph in Christ, diffusing the perfume of his knowledge everywhere by me. I live for God as the fragrance of Christ breathed alike on those who are being saved and on those who are perishing, to the one a deadly fragrance that makes for death, to the other a vital fragrance that makes for life" (II Cor. 2:14-16, Moffatt). Such an outlook as this on life is true riches indeed.

Do we realize the value of the unsearchable riches of Christ that are offered to us? Do we feel in our very heart that if all else were taken from us we would still be fabulously rich in the possession of the wisdom and knowledge of God? And if we are faithful in the use of that which is now committed to our care, whether much or little, in the future we shall be the inheritors of more than eye hath seen or ear hath heard, or the heart of man hath conceived! Yes, we are promised that it will be "exceeding abundantly

above" all we ask or think. No wonder Paul marvelled at the "unsearchable riches of Christ" he possessed!

Since we are of the great number made rich through the work of the noble apostle Paul, shall we not give willingly of our store to others? and not grudgingly, nor of necessity, for God "loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:7). Then we, too, can say that though we are poor, yet we are "making many rich." ••

**Kathy
Kandor's
Korner**

Me Apologize?

My eldest son Karl has an experience to tell you. I trust it will help you as it has helped me. Can't we learn from each other's mistakes? This one was Karl's. Listen as he tells it.

I HAD dismantled our rebellious lawnmower, and it lay in something like a thousand pieces on the garage floor. I was just at the point of figuring how to put it back together when Janet dashed in with the latest. She had just come from the store, and whom had she chanced to meet but Jack. I like Jack. He's a clean young man, and there's something thoughtful about him—maybe you call it scientific. I first met him on the job a couple of years ago, and we've had many good conversations together.

Janet watched in silence a few moments—wondering, no doubt, if I could put together what I had taken apart. (Very honestly, I wondered, too!) Then she spoke, and the subject was not lawnmowers but friends. "Karl," she said, "how do you think you should treat a friend you want to keep?"

What a question! Was Janet suddenly becom-

ing philosopher? This wasn't like her. "What's on your mind?" I queried. This was too unusual a question to answer.

"I was just wondering," she continued. "I met Jack this afternoon in the store, and he inquired about you. Wondered if you liked him anymore."

"What?" I couldn't imagine what might have happened. "I wouldn't know why *not*. I was over there just the other night."

"That's the whole problem."

"You mean Jack objected to my stopping by? He didn't seem to at the time."

"Well," Janet continued, "you must have said something that offended him. Because he doesn't care about having you stop by anymore."

I stood up, dumbfounded, hurt, and angry. What was the matter? "Oh, Jack is just so sensitive! Why doesn't he grow up!"

I had said too much—I knew it immediately—and worst of all, Mom had heard. "What's this?" she said, appearing in the doorway. "What did you say, Karl, to offend Jack?"

"Nothing that I know of," I objected.

Janet now came to my defense. "Maybe Jack was having a bad day today, he may forget it and be all right. He *is* sensitive."

"What *did* you say to Jack the other evening, Karl?" Mother was insistent.

I was aggravated. "Do you expect me to be able to recite an hour's conversation that we had—on the spur of the moment?"

"If you're watching what you're talking about, you should have *some* idea of what you said, whether you talked about the weather, or the birds, or the job, or—of better things like the Word of God and our hope for the future, or—"

"You know Jack doesn't go to church. But I'm always hoping that maybe—maybe someday—"

Mother was quick to pick up that cue. "Then *you* need to be watching your *example*, Karl, and not saying things that offend him—or that put a bad light on *your* religion."

Well, Mom isn't the kind of person to give up, and I knew I'd be telling the story sooner or later, so I began. "You know how Jack is always trying out something different, or fixing something up. And every time you stop by, he has to show you his latest creation. Well, this time it's some new kind of greenhouse he's experimenting with—I don't know what all it is supposed to do, but he has plans for installing new plant feeding techniques, controlled light, controlled temperature, controlled moisture and so on. It's really going to be something, I guess. At least you'd think so to hear Jack telling about

it. But to look at it now—well, I told him what I thought—I said it looked to me like an old fashioned chicken coop! And really, Mom, it does!”

“Now Karl, whatever made you say that?”

“It’s the facts, Mom, you’d think so too. I didn’t mean to hurt him. I was just describing what it looks like at this point. I know it’s *not* a chicken coop, and when it is done it will probably be a masterpiece—like everything else that Jack makes—but right now, really, it looks so queer, with all the odd kinds of lumber Jack has picked up around town and used—”

“Saves him a lot of money!” Janet interposed.

“Yes, but the looks of it. Of course this is just the rough structure. He’ll be covering it over, and glassing it in, and so on, I suppose. But why should he be offended? *He* knew I didn’t *mean* any offense.”

Janet was quick to defend me again. “Jack is sensitive, *very* sensitive.”

“You ought to go and apologize to Jack,” Mother proposed.

What? *Me* apologize—to Jack? When Jack had been offended over *nothing*? “Mom, Jack knew I wasn’t trying to hurt his feelings. Why, we talked on—for maybe half an hour—after that, and he seemed pleasant enough. He had to tell me about all the things he plans to grow and prove in his new greenhouse, and—”

“Still,” Mom insisted, “you *ought* to apologize.”

“But Mom, I was just making a comment, I wasn’t trying to be unkind. If Jack is offended by such *little* things as that, maybe—”

But Mom cut me short. “Pray about it, Karl,” she suggested kindly as she went back into the house.

I left the lawnmower in all its pieces and stomped into the house, determined not to feel condemned. What were people doing, making a mountain out of a molehill! *What* had I to apologize for? Just because Jack didn’t happen to fall for my description! And what would he think of *me* coming with an apology. Suppose Janet has misunderstood Jack—what would he think when I came apologizing for something *he* hadn’t even remembered!

But my conscience troubled me. The hurt was there, and I knew it. I raked my mind for anything to justify myself.

Didn’t the Psalmist say, “Great peace have they that love thy law, and *nothing* shall offend them?” So what right had *Jack* to get offended?

And even if I *was* wrong, didn’t Jesus say if your brother offends you, then you, the offended

one, should go and make things right? This means *Jack* should come to *me*!

And then there was that verse in Matthew 6. Jesus told us that if we don’t forgive others their trespasses, then God doesn’t forgive us. Surely that was clear—if Jack didn’t forgive *me* for this thing, he would never be able to get forgiveness that *he* needed!

I could see *no* reason to apologize when I was not the *cause* of the trouble. If Jack is so touchy, it’s time he began to do something about it. Why doesn’t he stand up like a man and admit that it was just his own sensitiveness that was the trouble, and not put the blame on *me*?

The more I thought about it, the more disgusted I grew. Why, Lord, do Jack’s feelings have to be coddled so? Shouldn’t someone consider that *I* have feelings *too*?

The battle between what I naturally wanted to think and what I knew I *should* feel raged fiercely. There was so much to condemn Jack, and so much to justify *me*. But hard as I tried, I could not forget a certain verse in Galatians 6:1. “If a man be overtaken in a fault”—who was overtaken this time, Jack or me? But the rest of the verse: “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Grudgingly I had to admit it. I had been overtaken in the fault. I was making myself guilty, even if I had not been at the first. I guess that means, I told myself, that if I want to call myself

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THE ATONEMENT

THE SABBATH

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spiritual, *I* must be the one to apologize, whatever Jack intends to do. Besides, I've got an agreement with God which makes me responsible; Jack does not."

That was the deciding thought. I said the words out loud, even though there was no one to hear. Somehow it helps to hear yourself talking.

But my thoughts started running away with my sense once again. I picked up my favorite book on mechanics, thinking the diversion would help until I could get my mind settled. But all evening I found myself sending up a steady stream of arguments to the Lord.

Then, right in the midst of it all, a very disquieting thought struck me. Where would *I* be if God were not long-suffering with me? What did *He* think of *my* baby-act? And how could *I* ask God to forgive *me* when I wasn't willing to go to my brother and ask *his* forgiveness? Didn't those words of Jesus apply to *me* as well as to Jack? "If ye forgive *not* men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive *your* trespasses." Try as I might, I could not keep those words from bothering me.

There was just no way to get around it. If I refused to forgive Jack, I was burning the bridge that I myself needed to get across.

Fifteen minutes later I was standing at Jack's door. His face showed how surprised he was to see me.

I came right to the point. "Jack, I've heard that you were offended at my remark the other night about your new greenhouse project."

Jack shifted uneasily from one foot to the other as he searched for words he couldn't find.

"It wasn't really anything, Karl—"

"Jack, I offended you, and I have come to apologize," I insisted.

Jack opened his mouth, but no sound came. After several attempts, he finally admitted that he had been hurt. "You may be right, Karl," he said. "After you said that, I took another look at it, and it *does* have some resemblance to a chicken coop at this point."

"But it was not a kind thing to say, Jack, and I'm sorry."

"Really, Karl," Jack continued, "it wasn't so much your comment as—I get a feeling somehow you don't like me, Karl."

Indignation welled up in me again. What was he accusing me of now? But even as I tried to justify myself, the truth of his words cut.

"What is it, Jack? Let's talk about it. There's nothing that can't be settled." I tried to show him the warmth of a real Christian friend.

Wasn't that really the best missionary work I could do, to *show* Jack what my religion was doing for me?

For nearly an hour and a half we talked. No, it was a fact—I had not *known* Jack or the struggles he had had. There was a reason for all his strange projects—his family had been broken when he was very young, and, and—

I went home that night counting my own blessings, and determined to watch my words, those cutting little comments that slip so thoughtlessly, so needlessly, and which can be so hurting to others. But when it *does* slip and cut another, there's only *one* right thing to do—apologize. It makes your own soul greater, and it may rescue your friend. ●●

The time is short!

O ye, who bear Christ's name,

With unction from on high,

His truth proclaim.

Redemption draweth nigh!

Awaken all who idly slumber!

Send heralds out in countless number.

The time is short!

The time is short!

Unsheathe the Spirit's sword.

Salvation's helmet wear.

Await with joy your Lord,

Yield not to dark despair.

Let kingdoms rise and fall,

God's Word abides through all.

The time is short!

The time is short!

While moments still remain

Bring to God's storehouse now

The tithes of gold ere rust has left its stain.

O bring in sweat of brow

The gifts of serving, toiling,

God's holy law fulfilling.

The time is short!

The time is short!

Sweet advent music swells

O'er hill and dale and plain.

The pealing chime of Maranatha bells

Soon herald His coming reign.

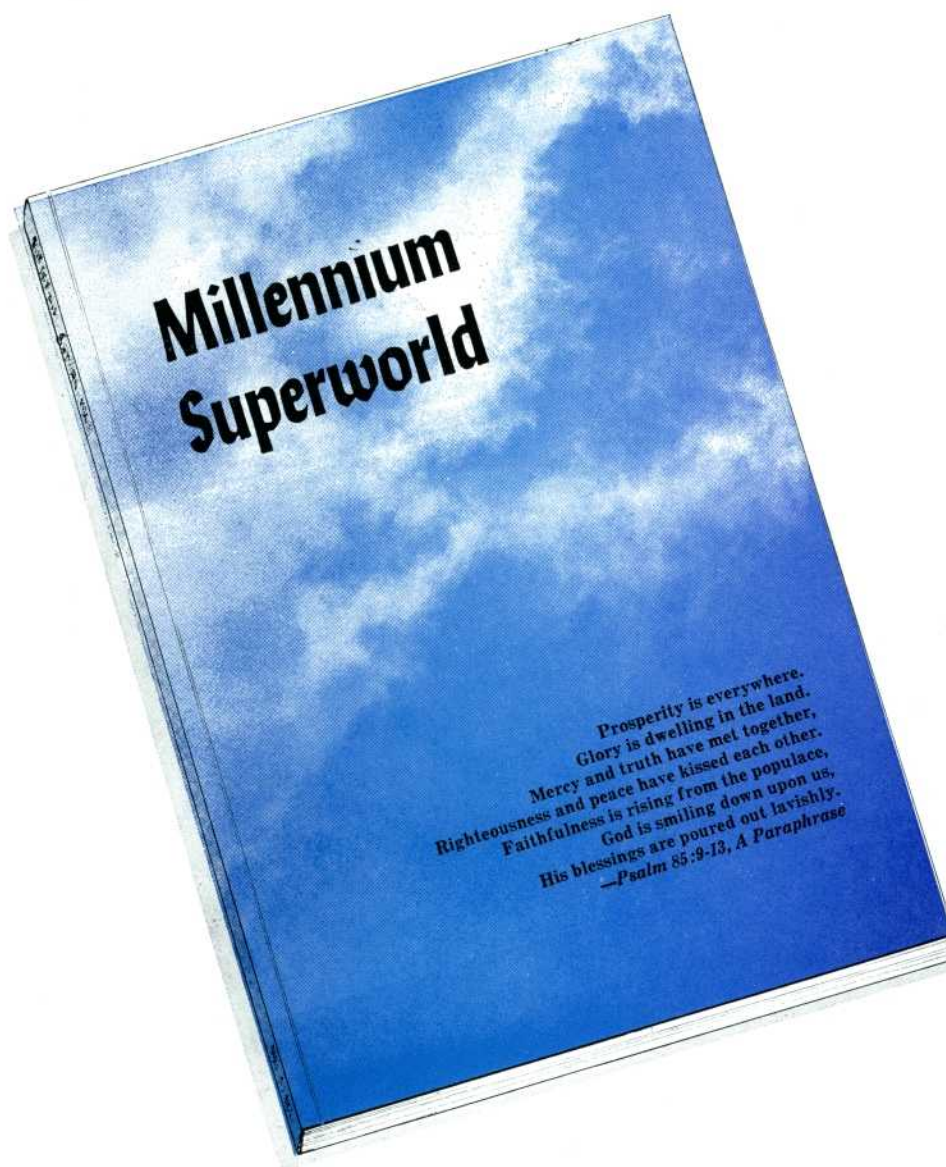
Each day His coming nears,

No time for idle fears—

The time is short!

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*The Lord will come and not be slow,
His footsteps cannot err;
Before Him righteousness shall go,
His royal harbinger.*

*Truth from the earth, like to a flower,
Shall bud and blossom then;
And justice, from her heav'nly bower
Look down on mortal men.*

*Rise, God, judge Thou the earth in might,
This wicked earth redress;
For Thou art He who shalt by right
The nations all possess.*

*The nations all whom Thou hast made
Shall come, and all shall frame
To bow them low before Thee, Lord,
And glorify Thy Name.*

*For great Thou art, and wonders great
By Thy strong hand are done:
O send Thy King to Zion's hill
And rule, Thou God alone.*

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