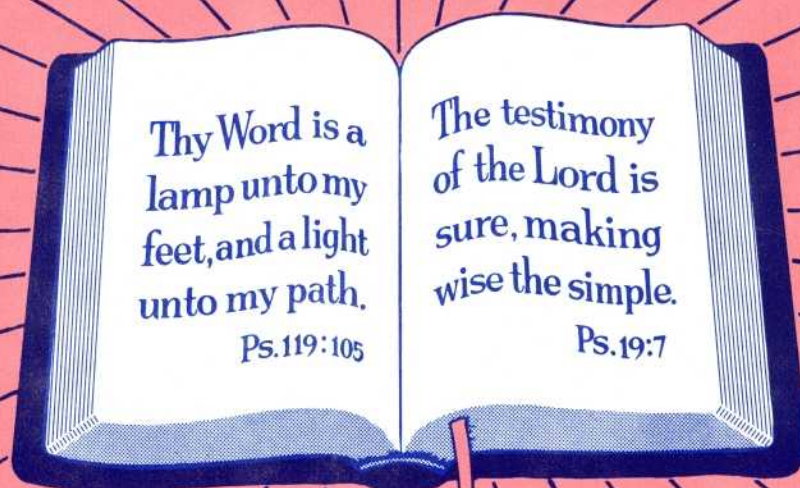


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

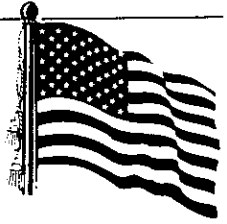


Blessed Are the Finishers

Did Jesus Commend Dishonesty?

What Is Truth? The Great Infidel Discussion

Watch Therefore!



## Thank God for the Fourth of July!

ON THE Fourth of July each year we mark the memory of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, that great document that proclaimed the American colonies a free and independent nation under God, free from the yoke of foreign domination, free from the yoke imposed upon them by their mother country. A child had come of age: America.

We want to note especially the religious tradition in which that declaration was rooted. The Declaration of Independence was the result of a lofty and invincible religious faith. Men were to be free under God—*truly* free because *captive* to God. The founding fathers were claiming their “Ancient rights”—rights as old as the Bible itself. They were men steeped in Biblical history, and their knowledge of it influenced their statesmanship. They were heirs of the recent Reformation movement, and the period of Enlightenment which preceded it, a time when men started once again to think for themselves about their religious faith. It was time for a new nation to be; God’s hour had struck.

“The God who gave us life, gave us liberty,” declared Thomas Jefferson. Freedom was not an attainment of men but an obtainment from God. Freedom was the gift of God as part of man’s createdness. The truths implicit in the Declaration of Independence are consonant with the Christian heritage—the terms of spiritual emancipation accented in the New Testament.

As we watch our nation drifting toward atheism and humanism today, we can look back and know that these were not the views of the founding fathers. The men who built our nation had faith in God.

The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights rest upon Biblical religion, and specifically embody aspects of the sovereignty of God over all men and all human institutions. They recognize that in the sight of God, man is a creature in need of spiritual guidance. Further-

more, they recognize that the law of God is the natural foundation of *all* law. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, “The principles of the Ten Commandments will not budge.” He meant that the laws of God are as inexorable as the laws of gravity and the universe itself. Break them, and you destroy yourself.

Let us note what happened when that Declaration was signed. The war against the mother country had just begun when the Second Continental Congress was called in May, 1775. On June 17, 1776, a committee was called upon to prepare a Declaration of Independence and, after full discussion at several meetings, they designated the 33-year-old Virginia lawyer to prepare a draft of the Declaration because, as John Adams put it, “he has a reputation of literature, conscience, and a happy talent of composition.” Jefferson sat in the parlor of his second-floor lodging in the city of Philadelphia, and without consulting a book or pamphlet wrote in a half day’s time the document that has become our national “confession of faith.” He showed the draft to John Adams, who made two corrections, and to Benjamin Franklin, who made five minor revisions. It was then submitted to the Committee of Five and approved without change. The Declaration was reported to Congress on June 28, and was laid on the table. On the second day of July the resolution declaring independence from Great Britain was voted, and on July 4, it was officially adopted and proclaimed.

The Declaration had an instant effect throughout the colonies. It kindled joy and quickened zeal for freedom. It united the colonies as nothing before had done. It changed a defensive war for redress of wrongs into a war for the establishment of a separate government. It separated Colonial Patriots from British Loyalists. It prompted the soldiers to plunge with new courage and dauntless determination into the fight. It encouraged people everywhere to

*(Continued on page 22)*

## 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—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  
JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition  
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  
Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People  
Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

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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# Blessed Are the Finishers

**H**OW DIFFERENT would be the story of God's people if there had been no finishers among them!

Let us suppose, for a moment. Suppose Noah had never finished the ark. After working a hundred years, suppose he had laid down his tools and declared that he was through. "The people won't listen, and there is no flood anyway. So why should I keep slaving away year after year?"

Suppose Abraham had started up the mountain with his son Isaac, in obedience to God's command; then, as he started to bind his son upon the altar, suppose he had burst out crying "I can't! I can't do it," and had taken his son, and the firepot, and the wood, and started home.

Suppose Moses had grown weary of the constant complaints of the rebellious Israelites; and then, when he learned that he himself would not be permitted to enter Canaan because of his own transgression, suppose bitterness had overpowered him and he had said, "I'm quitting. I've had enough battle with this obdurate, hard-hearted people. I'm through!"

Suppose David had volunteered to fight Goliath and then, just as he was advancing toward the giant, slingshot in hand, he had begun to wonder if the Lord really would be with him. Suppose he had started to worry—"What if my hand should waver? Can I do it? I don't stand a chance against the might of this giant if I miss"—and so had turned and run.

Suppose Jesus had come to Gethsemane and had told His Father that this last cup was too much and too bitter. He could not drink it. Suppose He had said, "Anything else, Father, but not this. I can't face it; I'm too young. Think of the years of life I will be missing—let me live and die in peace." How different would be His place in the eternal plan!

And suppose that someday it be written of us that we stood many a test and weathered many a storm of trial. We fought valiantly against the evils of our

nature for many years. Then, as the days stretched into years and the years into more years and the great things we set our hearts on had not yet come, we grew weary and our zeal began to wane. "How can I be sure?" we asked ourselves. "All things continue as they have, how can I know there is a plan?" And so we relaxed our vigil and allowed our faith to weaken. And then, only a short while later, the King arrived! And we—we were rejected forever!

Suppose—but no! It was not true of the saints of old, and it shall not be true of us! Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus were all as human as we, and they stood their tests in the strength of the Lord. Whatever their task, they saw it through to a successful finish. Can we do less?

Blessed! oh, blessed are the finishers! Who does not long to stand among them!

Finishing makes the difference. Who wants a half-baked loaf of bread, a garment that is half sewn, a lamp that is half wired?

An engineer constructs a magnificent bridge, all but the last span. A marathon runner speeds down the course, and stops—ten yards short of the finish line. A student prepares all of his lessons through the year, and fails the final exam. An electrician wires a motor, all but the final connection. An oil prospector drills and drills, deep into the earth, and gives up—only inches short of tapping the rich reserve. In each instance there is effort. There is intelligent, directed, purposeful effort. But it is fruitless, because it does not go far enough. There is no successful finish.

Emerson defined a hero as the man who is no braver than the next man, but brave just five minutes longer. Battles have been won by the army that could hold out a little longer. Successes in daily life are for those who keep at the problem until it is solved. It is all the simple story of the plodding but persistent tortoise who kept steadily on course until he arrived.

In any area of life, the ultimate test of human character is the ability to finish. Achievement is not the result of a single spectacular moment, a sudden flash of energy or an occasional outburst of en-

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Note: "Blessed Are the Finishers" is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

thusiasm; it is the end-product of moment-by-moment persistence. Many a life has failed to achieve only because it failed to finish.

Blessed are the finishers!

But to no class of persons is the test of finishing so serious as to those of us who have set our stakes at the gate of Zion. To no others is the stamina and strength to see it through so vital. No one else has so much to gain, or so much to lose. If we win, we win everything. If we lose, the loss is irreparable. Our ability to endure, or our lack of it, means to us the difference between eternal gain and eternal loss. There will be no eternal blessing for any but the *finishers*.

### Enduring to the End

We have started; we have set our faces toward the finish; we may have gone a great distance. Still, the words of Jesus stand as a reminder that we must go *all* the way: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). He that shall endure—how far? "Unto the end"; nothing less. The shadow of death extends clear up to the finish line; not until we have crossed it can we be sure of the reward. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (Jas. 2:10). Not that he has broken every law, but a broken law separates him from complete obedience; he is not a finisher until he stops breaking that one law. Salvation is reserved for those who *finish*.

All this emphasis on finishing does not mean that a good start is to be scorned or set aside as worthless. Far from it! A good start is invaluable. The bridge that is erected on a sandy riverbank without solid foundation or support cannot be expected to hold up under heavy use, however elaborate and secure its superstructure of steel. The runner who never masters the fundamentals of muscle coordination in the early days of his career can never expect to win the race. The student who does not learn early to concentrate his mind in serious study soon finds he has a handicap that he must overcome before he can progress very far.

The same is true in our Christian career. We must begin by acquainting ourselves thoroughly with God's plan and purpose; we need a working knowledge of God's law and its requirements. Acquiring this early will serve a double purpose: It will show us what God is offering and how we may obtain it, and will at the same time give us solid groundwork for faith—which is vital. Before we can make any significant progress, we must be thoroughly convinced of God's faithfulness and

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**Finishing makes the difference.  
Who wants a half-baked loaf  
of bread, a garment half sewn,  
a lamp half wired?**

---

know beyond any shadow of question that He will be true to His Word.

All this will give us a good start. But a good start is only part of the success story. Unfortunately, all good starters are not good stayers. And the crown of life is not laid up for the winner of the fifty-yard dash; nor is it for him who is ahead after the first ten miles of the marathon. It is for him who has the strength and stamina to keep on running steadily and patiently all the way to the end of the lifelong race. "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." The prize is for the finishers.

Finishing is the test of time. A new broom sweeps clean—why shouldn't it? But the test of the broom is not the first day of its use. After a normal period of wear, does the broom *continue* to perform its work? And after an unusually long period of use, does it *still* sweep clean?

### Demas: The Long Curve of Defeat

A ship is launched amid hurrahs. But the test of the ship is not the launching. The test comes on the high seas, amid tempestuous waves and angry winds. If the good ship can outride the storm and sail proudly into port after the struggle for survival, then we may judge it seaworthy.

Finishing has been a problem to many. It was the problem with Demas. We are not told much about this backsliding brother, but in what we are told there is a lesson for us. The apostle Paul refers to him three times, and in these three references we can see a long curve of defeat. The first time Paul speaks of him as "Demas, . . . my fellow labourer" (Philemon 24). The next time he is simply mentioned as "Demas," who sends greetings along with "Luke, the beloved physician" (Col. 4:14). The last mention of him is in Paul's last letter; and this time, the apostle writes, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Tim. 4:10).

What a drama is unfolded as we read between the lines of these three sentences. The scenes change, from Demas, Paul's fellow laborer, to Demas the quitter. It is the condensed biography of a man who



had a splendid opportunity and made a splendid beginning. He entered the work of the Lord with energy and courage. Had the race for eternal life required only a vigorous beginning, Demas might have done well. But he could not last. "Demas, my fellow laborer" dwindled to just "Demas," and ended as "Demas the quitter."

We would treasure the opportunities this man threw to the wind. His was the privilege of associating personally with the great apostle Paul. Demas could walk and talk with the man who had been struck down by the dazzling light from heaven; he could hear firsthand that strong brother's invinci-

ble conviction; he could share personally the profound spiritual insights that were given this great Apostle by the Lord Jesus Himself. And think of the kindly words of warning and instruction Demas could have received from his spiritual father. Think, too, of the bits of encouragement and help Demas could have given Paul. And when Demas' weakness became evident, how greatly the far-sighted Apostle could have helped him to turn his eyes and mind away from the perishing world and fix his attention on the eternal verities of God. Demas had opportunity; he had a desire for the better life; he ran well for a time, but at some point his higher longings

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## *Let Us Pray...*

Now thank we all our God, with hearts and minds and voices. What have we, O Lord, that we have not received from Thee through countless channels? We would respond to Thine unlimited goodness with gratitude expressed in our words and worship and in our daily lives. We thank Thee that nothing has come to us and nothing can come to us that Thou canst not weave into Thy great design for our lives. We thank Thee, too, that Thou dost give us strength to equal every demand, and resources adequate for every task to which Thou callest us. With Thy true Church on earth and the hosts of immortals in the heavens we give Thee the glory and the praise and the love of our hearts for all Thy gifts, and for the supreme gift, even Thyself.

Father, we rejoice to know that the weary centuries have worn away, and that the time of the apocalypse of Thy dear Son is now imminent. Divinely inspired, He could foretell that it would be a long time before He would return to reckon with His servants and establish His Kingdom of peace and good will to man, but now that time is near. Father, help us to live in constant expectancy, ever aware of the need for haste, that when the Master of the house cometh and knocketh He may find us prepared, and we may open to Him immediately.

Grant us the wisdom to count it pure joy when we encounter any sort of trial, sure that the sterling

temper of our faith will produce endurance, but warn us that our endurance must be a finished product. May we not be so foolish that having once started in this way to life we allow our ardor to cool, and lose our first love. Help us to keep steadily plodding on and never grow weary in well doing that we may obtain a full reward. May our endurance be a finished product that we may be finished and complete, lacking nothing.

Warn us that a good beginning does not assure us of a good finish. We may run well for a season, but if we grow weary in well doing and faint by the way we will be lost. Our determination must be renewed daily. We must say to ourselves, I am bound to finish the good work that I have begun. I will let nothing turn me back or discourage me in my great work of preparing for eternal life. I will be a finisher. Then may we count it pure joy when we encounter any sort of trial, sure that the sterling temper of our faith will produce endurance.

May we not permit ourselves to be among those foolish virgins who let their faith-lamps burn low or be extinguished because of an absence of the important oil of faith, but may we be among the wise who keep their faith supply adequate at all times.

For our country and our leaders we pray. Grant them such wisdom that all who lead us and all who follow may be wise to discover the ways of peace, justice and brotherhood. Be with those in sickness, weakness, or pain. Come with tenderness to those who are helpless, from whom much has been taken. If they feel useless and a burden to others, help them to remember they can still pray, and still uphold the hands of those who sponsor Thy Cause upon earth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

were overpowered by his love for "this present world" (II Tim. 4:10). The man who might have been a great finisher became a great quitter.

We tend to think of Demas as foolish; and indeed, he was, to give up so much for so little. But let us take the lesson to ourselves. Have we never felt the lure of things present? Might not some of the things that tempted Demas prove someday to be a temptation to us? We are not immune. Are we constantly renewing and fortifying our faith and our love for God, each day growing stronger and stronger in holiness, so that the loves and lusts of the present world will have no power over us?

The loves and lusts of the world are as near to us as our very own selves. They are bound up in the old nature within us, and the opposition of that nature is strong. Who naturally likes to be told what to do and what not to do—much less to command himself against his nature! The new is continually assailed by the all-too-powerful old. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary, the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). Our every firm resolve to win in this battle against ourselves is assailed by an inner instinct which protests: "Why bother? Why be so particular? Why worry so much about details of character that don't really matter that much?" But the details of character *do matter*—if our goal is finishing.

How can we know we will be able to finish?

"If you can wait and not be tired by waiting"—or watch, and not grow tired of watching; or work, and not grow weary working; or pray, and not grow tired of praying—you can finish! The words of Jesus are both a command and an assurance: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." They tell us that we *must* endure to be saved, and if we endure to the end we *shall* be saved! It is a matter of learning carefully the lessons of each day all the way to the end. It *can* be done.

### **Enoch: The Man Who Endured**

Consider the endurance Enoch of old must have had. We are briefly informed that "Enoch walked with God. . . three hundred years, . . . and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:22, 24). Three hundred years is a long time. It represented more than eighty percent of his entire life on earth—no little-end giving was this!

Now suppose Enoch had kept the law of God faithfully for three hundred years, and grown weary. Or suppose that after two hundred fifty, or two hundred seventy-five years, or even after two hundred

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## **Who knows what Demas might have been— had he only finished!**

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ninety-nine years he had grown weary of concentrating on obedience and had begun to wonder how much longer he would have to hold on before he could finally say, "It is finished." He might have anticipated many more years—his great grandfather Adam, according to the years enumerated in Genesis 5, was still living when Enoch was translated! So Enoch could easily have looked ahead to several hundred more years of patient enduring before his job would be finished.

We also might wonder if there wasn't very little to tempt a man in that early day; there were no theaters, or televisions, or printed magazines to spread filth. Modern dens of iniquity were unimagined. But there was evil nonetheless. We read that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). The evil was present, and Enoch had to resist it and keep his heart and mind pure.

Had Enoch not stood steadfast until the three hundredth year when God saw fit to transfer him to another world, all he had done in 299 years of walking with God could not have given him eternal salvation, for he would not have endured "unto the end." But Enoch did endure—he had the strength to see it through; he was a finisher.

### **Other Finishers**

Centuries later there rose the brightest star among God's high achievers, Jesus Christ. His exemplary life still inspires us today. Why? Why do we remember His spotless righteousness, His noble character, or His Sermon on the Mount or His power-packed parables? We remember them because His life came to a proper conclusion, because He was faithful to the end. Had He done any less, He might have been forgotten with His contemporaries. Had He denied that He was born to be a King, He might have escaped the agony of crucifixion; but He could not have been our example of perfect submission. It is only because He could say triumphantly, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," that He became the

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## According to Jesus, salvation is reserved for those who finish.

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“author and finisher of our faith” (John 17:4; Heb. 12:2).

Carved in the rock of ages is the name of another noteworthy finisher, the apostle Paul. So boundless was his determination 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” could separate him “from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39). All through his brilliant career, from that auspicious beginning on the Damascan road to his final moments of life, his whole concentration was this: “That I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). His determination won, for from the Roman prison he was able to pen these triumphant words: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (II Tim. 4:7-8).

Oh, the glory of finishing! What transcendent joy to know that the toils and trials of the way have all combined to secure for us the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! to know that this physical body shall one day be made immortal! Who does not long and pray to be a finisher!

### Defining “Perfection”

The Bible describes the remarkable attainment of the finishers in one challenging word: “perfection.” “Be ye therefore perfect,” are the words of Jesus, “even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

The single word “perfect” carries with it a volume of meaning. To be “perfect” means “to be complete, brought to an end, finished, accomplished.” It means to be a finisher, “perfect, full-grown, mature.” It describes moral work that is finished according to a set standard, complete.

“Perfect” means that supreme standard of acceptable character that God requires of all whom He

accepts into His eternal family. It is to “stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col. 4:12). The “perfect man” is he who offends “not in word,” who is able also to bridle the “whole body” (James 3:2).

“Perfect” describes those who are “of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:14).

“Perfect” are those who have come “in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

“Perfect” are those who “go on to complete a balanced character that will fall short in nothing” (James 1:4, NEB). It stands for thoroughness, for steadiness, for endurance; it is the accomplishment of those who are willing to take up their cross and carry it all the way to the end. “Let steadfastness (that is, the superquality of stickability) have its full effect.” Never give up, says James, until your virtue is perfect and complete; until, so far as your life and character are concerned, you lack nothing.

Is it not a glorious, high calling?

We have no occasion to grow weary and drop out. There is something to do all the way to the very end. Never do we reach the point where we must say, “I have done all I can do; Henceforth my life is worthless.” We can always do more. Finishing means work all the way to the end, and it is finishing we are called to do. We are to become “men of mature character, men of integrity with no weak spots” (Jas. 1:4, Phillips).

And so we say with Paul, “Straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14, RSV).

Foot races were common in Paul’s day, and the Apostle saw in them a meaningful illustration of the Christian life. The races were long and cost heavily in physical endurance. Many started; few finished. That is what Paul had in mind when he wrote, “So run, that ye may obtain.” Run, run, and keep on running. Run all the way. This was Paul’s personal determination; he started well, and he was determined to keep on until he had finished well. And he did.

Is this our determination? We have heard the call to serve; we have responded, confident that we can win. But there is danger that our initial energy may wane. After a mile or two—after many a mile or two—our strength may begin to flag, our shout of triumphant joy be subdued. What then? Do we still have the stamina and zeal to see us through to a successful finish?

Finishing is not one spectacular showing. It is the



persistent willingness to give ourselves and all that we have and are with unflinching purpose to the heavenly goal on which we have set our hearts.

Whether we climb, whether we plod,  
Space for one task the scant years lend—  
To choose the path that leads to God,  
And keep it to the end.

Blessed are the finishers!

Before a certain battle, Ahab king of Israel sent a message to Benhadad king of Syria in which Ahab said, "Don't let the man who puts his armour on boast like the man who takes it off" (I Kings 20:11). Benhadad had been boasting about what he was going to do to Ahab and the Israelites after he had won; but Ahab warned, "Don't be too sure." The principle is for us: We should never be overconfident of our strength; it is only by persistent effort that we will win. No man may rightly boast until the job is done—and then he will be too humble to boast.

### Shall We Finish?

Never has the need to finish the work we have begun been so urgent. Never has the end of this age been so near as it is this very moment. Never have any people of God faced the climax of the ages so imminently. All things in the world around us and among us proclaim the nearness of the end.

With the consummation of all things foretold by the prophets of old so near at hand, how absorbed we should be with finishing the work we have contracted to do. Upon our own carefulness in finishing depends everything to which we have given our lives. Nothing short of finishing will gain for us a right to enter the City Eternal. Nothing short of finishing will assure us the crown of life.

When God sent the flood upon the world of the ungodly in the days of Noah, every person was either *inside* the ark, or *outside*. When God's judgments fell upon the Egyptians, every house either had the blood sprinkled on the doorpost, or it did not; and it was either passed over, or smitten with the curse. When fire fell upon the wicked city of Sodom, each person was either obeying the words of the angels and escaping for his life, or he was caught in the doomed city. In Jesus' parable, the house of every hearer was built either on the rock or on the sand; the one stood, the other fell. When He compared the Judgment to the separating of sheep and goats, each was placed either on the right or on the left.

So will it be with us when we appear before the

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**"Let steadfastness (that is,  
the superquality of stickability)  
have its full effect."**

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Judgment seat of Christ. Our work will either be finished, or unfinished; it will be either "I did it!" or "I wish I had." We will be beckoned either to the right or to the left. We will stand with the faithful, or we will fall with the unfaithful.

How this realization should stir us to scrutinize more closely our own hearts and lives for details which yet need perfecting. How it should stimulate us to greater spiritual exertion, to a more complete devotion, that we may perfect what is lacking in our faith. Some will be blessed and victorious finishers! Will we be among them? Will we be ready when that Day of Christ arrives, ready to be presented "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy"?

Who of us will be there to get the glory? Who will be a finisher? Who will finish the job and receive the finisher's pay? Shall you? Shall I?

Blessed, yes, *eternally* blessed are the *finishers!* MM

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## They Called Him **NERO**

*Can we count our blessings enough, we who are privileged to live in the "cool" of the day and under a government that guards and guarantees our religious freedom?*

**S**HADOWS were lengthening across the warm hills of Rome as busy slaves erected final crosses in Nero's magnificent gardens. While they worked, soldiers brought in Christians and tied or nailed them to crosses. Next, they saturated them with inflammable pitch.

Darkness had frequently put a stop to the Emperor's chariot racing. This evening it would be different. Flaming Christians would provide the light! Soon the chariots were lined up, the crosses lit, and the horses leaped forward. As the clatter of the chariot wheels and the groans of the Christians mingled, the crowds cheered. But there was no real enthusiasm. Such flagrant cruelty was too much—even for them.

Seeing that he had displeased the crowd, Nero never repeated this performance. Instead, he contented himself by throwing Christians to the lions, by dressing them in animal skins and turning dogs on them, and by killing those who were Roman citizens with the sword.

Today, Nero is remembered for his cruelties, and especially for having beheaded Paul. But strangely enough, in the beginning of his reign, he was immensely popular because of his generosity, kindness, and understanding. Shortly after becoming Emperor at the age of seventeen, he was asked to sign a criminal's death warrant. As he faced the

document, he cried out in genuine anguish: "Oh, why was I ever taught to write?"

Blue-eyed, freckle-faced Nero had reddish bronze hair and slightly heavy cheeks. He also had a mania for popularity. One of his first official acts was to give every citizen four hundred sesterces (a Roman coin worth about three cents). When he learned of the illness of a friend, he sent clear to Egypt for a doctor to treat him. He even tried to eliminate indirect taxes throughout the empire!

Soon he became so popular with the Senate they wanted to start the year with December, the month of his birth, rather than the customary January. When Nero refused this honor, he became even more widely acclaimed and statues of him were erected in the most prominent places.

But beneath his boyish smile was an iron will. When his mother persisted in trying to dominate him, he had her put to death. When it seemed that his step-brother Britannicus was getting ideas, he had him poisoned. The early executions seemed to change his whole personality. One evil called for another, and another, and another. He divorced his wife, then murdered her.

While such things were going on, Nero became interested in the arts. He had a slender talent and began to write poetry, to paint, to sing. Soon he fancied that he was one of the world's truly great singers. He entered singing contests all over the empire, and because he was the Emperor, he won them all. While singing in Greece, the audience gave him such an ovation he was moved to give that part of the empire dominion status. And at this, they cheered even more!

Nero had been reigning about ten years when suddenly on July 19 A.D. 64, a fire broke out in Rome. The blaze started in some wooden sheds just east of the Circus Maximus. Soon it spread to the foot of the Palatine and Caelian Hills where vast quantities of oil and other inflammables had been stored. In those days the streets of Rome were very narrow, and the flames leaped from one house to the next and no one could stop them.

The inferno raged on for six days and as the buildings fell, thieves were busy looting, murdering, and venting their desires. And then, when it seemed the fire had burned itself out, it started again and burned for another three days. By the time it was quenched, more than two-thirds of Rome was in ashes. Nero was terribly shaken, especially because the libraries and museums filled with art were destroyed. He worked hard to take care of the refugees, erecting a city of tents for them in the field of Mars. He also brought in supplies of food and paid for them out of his own pocket.

Then one sultry night he was seen on the tower of a garden-theater across the Tiber where he had established his headquarters. There was a golden lyre in his hands, and while they watched, he sang his own poem about the sack of Troy. Soon word spread that Nero had set the fire. Accusations were even scrawled on the public buildings. Nero was now desperate for a scapegoat. He soon found one.

With infinite cunning, Nero incited the Romans against the Christians. Tacitus wrote: "They were put to death with exquisite cruelty, and to their sufferings Nero added mockery and derision. . . . At length the brutality of these measures filled every breast with pity. Humanity relented in favor of the Christians."

After the debris had been cleared, Nero began to rebuild. Funds were brought in from throughout the empire and they were used to rebuild the homes of the citizens, with no cost to them. Streets were widened and straightened. Water reservoirs were arranged so that another general fire could not take place. Indeed, such a fine job was done that enthusiasts wanted to change the name of Rome to Nero!

Nero's popularity, however, didn't last. Within a very short time the army in Spain revolted and the Senate declared Galba the new Emperor. Nero fled in disguise. Then in utter desperation he stuck a dagger into his throat. Thus he died—a suicide!

During the days of Nero's greatest popularity, Paul shivered in the cold Mamertine dungeon. In those cramped quarters he wrote some of his finest Epistles. Then the day came when Nero ordered

Paul beheaded. Few people in Rome in those days thought much of Paul. Nero with his voice and poetry was the great one. But things have a remarkable way of changing. Today there is a common saying about those two men whose names are so well known: "We name our sons Paul; we call our dogs Nero."

Today the words of Nero are either forgotten or despised, while the Epistles of Paul are loved and quoted everywhere. And while Nero is gone forever, Paul awaits the great Day of resurrection when he shall arise to receive the reward for which he labored, even the "crown of life" which the Lord has promised to them that love him (II Tim. 4:8).

—Reprinted from *Vital Christianity*, August 9, 1970.

## God Is Great

***God only wise, and great, and strong,  
Hath made the orbs to run their race;  
Knowledge and might to God belong,  
Honour and majesty, and praise.***

***Jehovah is unchangeable.  
His ways and thoughts are not as ours;  
He cheers the languid souls that fall  
And quickens all their drooping powers.***

***Gently He lifts the fallen up;  
He gives them faith, and faith's increase  
Revives their feeble dying hope,  
And fills with love, and joy and peace.***

***Blasted, the vigour of the young  
Shall fade, and suddenly decay;  
The bold, and confident, and strong,  
Shall fear, despair, and die away.***

***But they who wait upon the Lord  
Shall surely find His promise true,  
Receive the quickening pow'rful word  
And born of God, their strength renew.***

***These willing souls, from sin set free,  
Shall swiftly in His statutes move,  
Shall walk in glorious liberty  
And someday see their God above.***

—Selected.



## Did Jesus Commend Dishonesty?

*About the Parable of the "Unjust" Steward*

**H**ONESTY, integrity, strict adherence to upright principle in all business and personal dealings is an unshakable fundamental of Christian conduct. How could a God who is perfect in holiness, purity and righteousness be pleased with anything less?

But the question is asked: What, then, could Jesus have meant by the parable of the Unjust Steward? Doesn't it seem that He was recommending greed and dishonesty?

In Luke 16, Jesus is discussing the proper use of money, and to illustrate His point He employs a parable. Now a parable is a story which teaches a lesson, out very often it is one overall lesson. A parable is not an allegory; every detail of a parable is not meant to be specifically applied. Thus in the parable of the Unjust Steward, Jesus is not holding the steward's conduct up to admiration; He is illustrating one particular: that the steward acted quickly to secure his own best temporal interests—which, as Jesus points out, is more than the prospective children of the Kingdom often do in regard to something eternal (v. 8).

The parable tells of a steward who lost his position as administrator of his lord's property. Realizing that he would need friends to help him face the world, he set about to win the friendship of his lord's creditors, settling with each of them for whatever they were able to pay. It has been

suggested that very possibly stewards often worked on a basis of shares, and this steward gave his lord all that he had collected, not retaining the share which would have normally been his, had he collected the full amount of the account; by so doing he was seeking to win both the friendship of the creditors and that of his lord.

"And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely [acted shrewdly, in his own best interest]: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (verse 8). Jesus is not using the story to commend unjust dealing; nor is He recommending the steward's conduct. Jesus is pointing out the steward's shrewdness—when he saw his temporal interests in danger, he took immediate action; he made an all-out effort to do all he could to secure himself in this world; he acted with prudence and foresight. Such is the action taken by the children of this world to preserve temporal security. Should not the children of light, earnest life-seekers, be just as prudent, and just as foresighted, and just as shrewd in doing all they can to win the friendship of their Lord in heaven?

In verses 10-13 Jesus further clarifies the lesson of the parable and eliminates any question that might be raised as to the proper use of money. To make sure His hearers would not

misapply the parable and think that He was advocating a careless use of worldly wealth, He says in effect: "The steward was dishonest in money matters; I do not infer that it does not matter whether you be honest or not. It is very necessary to be faithful even there, for he who is faithful in little is faithful in much, and he who is unfaithful in little is unfaithful in much. He who is untrustworthy in connection with worldly goods is unworthy of being entrusted with true riches; the unjust administrator of another's property will not secure confidence as an administrator even of his own."

Thus Jesus says in verse 9, "And I say unto you"—He attaches positive personal authority to the words which follow—"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." What is mammon? It is a term applied to treasure, worldly wealth, riches; in a figurative sense, that which is trusted in. In other words Jesus is saying, Make yourselves the friends you will need, God and Christ, just as the steward made himself the friend of his lord's creditors; you can do this by using the mammon of unrighteousness, your earthly wealth and possessions, to their credit. Make yourselves friends of God and Christ by using the mammon of unrighteousness rightly.

The next phrase of verse 9 is stated in two different ways in the

original Greek manuscripts, but either makes a suitable point. It may be rendered: "that when it fails"—referring to the mammon of unrighteousness. Worldly wealth has no value beyond the termination of mortal life; when life ends, the mammon has failed. Or it may be rendered, "that when ye die"—the point is the same; when we die and the mammon of unrighteousness no longer has any value to us, we will need the "friends" we have made—the God of heaven and His Son Christ. If we have made these friendships secure, then when the mammon does fail, or our mortal life ends, they (God and Christ) may "receive" us into "everlasting habitations"—even the Kingdom of God when it shall be established on earth.

In the following verses Jesus establishes even more firmly the responsibility of every man to use his share of the mammon of unrighteousness—worldly wealth and possessions—however much or little, rightly; for if we cannot administer this small trust properly, how will God ever trust us with His greater gifts. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (vs. 11-12). "Faithful" suggests the character of one who can be relied on. By mentioning "that which is least" Jesus implies the fleeting, that which belongs to another; "much" suggests that which is enduring, "the true riches," even life and immortality (Rev. 3:18; Eph. 3:20). The true riches are the ideal, as opposed to the small, shadowy reality of anything we might now call our own. For "if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (v. 12). Whatever we may have now is not our own, we are only stewards of what belongs to

God (1 Chron. 29:16).

But nevertheless, Jesus goes on to say, only proper administration of the mammon of unrighteousness must concern us; such mammon must not be our master, for "no servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Mammon must be our servant, not our master.

### *About the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard*

There is yet another parable which many people feel teaches dishonesty or unfair dealing. It is the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20). Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into the vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard." He did this again at the third hour of the day, at the sixth hour, also at the ninth and eleventh hours.

And "when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

"But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong:

didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee."

Was Jesus unfair? Was He teaching unfairness?

The parable has been termed by some theologians as the parable of "equal pay for unequal work," but nowhere in the Scriptures is such a doctrine taught. God's plan has ever been to give to "every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). What could be more fair?

This is the agreement under which these laborers worked. "Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive." They agreed to work for "Whatsoever is right," to be paid just according to the work they did, which is God's agreement with all His servants in all ages. This is His just and fair manner of dealing. All work is not equal, but neither will all pay be equal; but all pay will be just according to the work performed.

Why, then, the murmuring by some of the workers at the time of reckoning? They are the unfaithful workers. Jesus spoke of these when He said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, . . . and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:22-23). The murmurers and complainers are not those who have done the good work. Faithful laborers like Paul and Peter and Daniel will not be complaining because they had to pass through trials that laborers during another part of the day escaped.

Each faithful worker in God's vineyard will receive the promised pay, the "penny," eternal life. Dilatory workers may argue that God is not fair, but the great Paymaster will always be fair and the pay will always be just. Every worker will receive "whatsoever is right." MM



# What Is Truth?

## The Great Infidel Discussion



### Reverend L. T. Nichols vs. Professor W. F. Jamieson

#### Section II, Part Two

AT THIS POINT in the debate held in the year 1890 between our founder Rev. L. T. Nichols and the great infidel debater Professor W. F. Jamieson, the manner of approach was reversed, and Mr. Nichols took the lead, making the first address, which Mr. Jamieson then answered. The discussion at this point centered around the second thesis:

*Resolved, That the teachings of the New Testament are all moral and elevating.*

L. T. Nichols, Affirmed.  
W. F. Jamieson, Denied.

The last two nights of the debate (October 1 and October 2) were given to this topic. The following is the second of four parts of an edited distillation of this final portion of the discussion.

#### Mr. Nichols' Address

I need not tell you that what I said in my former speech has come to pass to the very letter. You are all my witnesses that Mr. Jamieson did not attempt to handle a single one of my arguments. He never referred to one. He never took up a single text. Now I took every one of those texts from their own infidel paper, acknowledged by him and by Mr. Ingersoll as the things against the New Testament. I took them from their own work which they acknowledge. And one on my left here said that every one of those things was good enough for him, he believed all those. That is all right. And every one of them was taken from their own work. A queer saying to come from an infidel.

Have you come here to listen to a discussion upon nature and science? If Mr. Jamieson had challenged me to a discussion on science, then I

should have wanted to ascertain what difference there was that existed between me and Mr. Jamieson. I believe science has been the means of a great elevation and civilization of mankind. But that is not the question in this discussion. The question in this discussion is, Are the teachings of the New Testament all moral and elevating? And you have come here as Bible students; you have come here in reference to learning that Book, and not in reference to science. You have not come here to attend a circus, or to listen to anecdotes to make you laugh, or to tickle the ear. I supposed we had congregated to hear a discussion of the teachings of the Bible. This warfare is all on one side. He has not, and he dare not come hand to hand in this conflict, but carefully avoids the issues, and passes around and occupies his time giving a lecture on something that I agree with him in. We might show that many of these scientific principles came from those who profess Christianity. Does my friend remember that first



message that was ever sent over a telegraph wire? "What wonderful things God hath wrought!" Yes, God hath wrought wonderful things. I believe he is the God of nature, but because I believe in scientific advancement, because I believe there have been many things in science elevating to humanity, or aids to their elevation, has that anything to do with the question under consideration? Does that remove an argument that I have produced here? Does that have any weight in your mind in that direction? Not at all. Consequently, we leave him with his speeches and resume our argument where we left off.

We have friend Johnson *partly* converted, for he said my last speech was good enough for him. And in our last speech we took up at least a dozen of the infidel-alleged contradictions and harmonized them, so if my last speech was good enough for Mr. Johnson he must be partly converted. Well, it is all Bible, and the contradictions they bring against the Bible will always turn out to be no contradictions at all. It is immaterial to me about converting people. If the truth converts them, I say all well and good.

Now they tell you a contradiction of the Bible is found in Matthew 27:34 and Mark 15:23. Matthew 27 says that they gave Jesus vinegar to drink, and Mark 15:23 says they gave him wine to drink. So they ask which was it? Your Bible tells two stories, one says they gave Him vinegar, the other that they gave Him wine to drink. Now how can you believe the Bible if it tells two stories? I cannot. A man comes to me and tells me one story, and the next day tells me one in opposition to that. I could not have confidence in that man. That is why I have gone back to the original, to see if the Bible did tell two stories, and have found out invariably that it tells just one.

We will call your attention to the word used in Matthew 27:34, from which vinegar is translated. The word is *oxos* and the lexicon defines it as a beverage given in those days to soldiers, which was a mixture of poor wine and vinegar. Now doesn't this bring the two texts together? One calls it wine, the other vinegar; actually it was a mixture of both. I have the Lexicon, and Mr. Jamieson can read it for himself. I wish he would.

Was Christ to be three days in the grave? I take this from their own testimony. I tell you, nay, and there is no place in the Bible which says Christ was to be in the grave three days and three nights. Still that is word for word, just as they have it in their book of contradictions. There is no place in the Bible that even sounds like it, except in Matthew 12:40, which reads: "For as Jonas was three days and nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man

be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Now Christ was never in the heart of the *literal* earth, was He? The Greek word *en* may signify, "within the reach or power of," according to Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon, page 468. If Jonas was three days and nights in the fish's belly, so should Christ be three days and three nights in the power or hands of the earth. But what earth? Earth, as you know, represents and is used for the people, not only in the Bible but in common parlance. Now the three days and nights Christ was in the power, or hands of the people, would take Him from the time he was betrayed until He arose on the first day of the week. Thus the contradiction disappears as mist before the noonday sun, leaving a cloudless sky.

Did Christ ascend from Mount Olivet or Bethany? In Luke 24:50 it says He ascended from Bethany. Now let us see what it says. It reads in our common King James Version, "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." The word translated "as far as to" Bethany has for its definition "towards" or "near," "in the vicinity of." That takes away the contradiction. I had nothing to do with the Greek language, nothing to do with its definitions, but there they are.

Now we come to another one of their great and wonderful statements in the Bible that they claim to be immoral. We are commanded to hate our relatives. We are commanded, if any man hate not his father and mother, and brother and sister, yea his own life, he cannot be Christ's disciple. Now, who can uphold a Bible that will call upon you to hate your own dear mother? I could not. That calls upon you to hate your own dear sister, your own dear father, yes, your own beloved wife and dear beloved children? I could not. Now substantiate that, Friend Jamieson, and you can make a convert of me, for I cannot believe in such a doctrine as that.

But how do you get out of the difficulty, says one? Again we must go to the original and see if we can determine what the writer had in mind. The word from which "hate" is translated is *miseo*, and one of its definitions is "suffer," "love less." Now any man that would not suffer the loss of his mother, or father, or brother or sister to come to Christ, could not be His disciple. There is no wrong in that, is there? I leave that with you. It is moral, it is elevating. There you have it, and it proves the Bible divine. Anyone who cannot love his father, mother, brother or sister less than he loves Christ is not worthy of Him. Will Mr. Jamieson grapple with this? He will not.

The infidels say that the Bible enjoins improvidence. No, we do not believe that. In Luke 12:33 it says, "Sell that ye have, and give alms." Jesus says "Sell." But the question is, to whom are we to sell it? I have sold out to Christ. This does not mean that you have to go and sell what you have, and have nothing left. In I Corinthians 6:19-20 it is said about the brethren of Christ, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." And in Galatians 3:29 we are said to belong to Christ; Christ is truly the individual to whom we have sold all we have.

Now we come for a few moments to the only testimony that Friend Jamieson took up; and the only testimony that he took up was not one that we had been to the original for a definition. It is Luke 16:15-16. Let us read: "And he said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." We find in this testimony he declares unto us that that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. Turn back a little, and read the tenth, eleventh and twelfth verses: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in that which is least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

Now the thread of the argument here shows that we have sold out to Christ, and all we have belongs to Him, and if we are not faithful now and use it all in His service, we cannot be His disciple and He will never commit to us the true riches, even eternal life

and glory in the ages to come. Nothing in that out of the way. That is why He wants us to be faithful in the unrighteous mammon, not to be its friends, but to prove ourselves. But is it not highly esteemed among men to get riches, and pile it up even though the mammon of unrighteousness is going to fail?

Mr. Jamieson asks if stealing is an abomination to men. Yes, and it is an abomination to God also. And mark you, stealing goes further than simply stealing a horse. Christ said you steal my words away from your neighbor, and that is theft. That is not an abomination among men, is it? God and Christ are the ones to make friends of, that when the mammon of unrighteousness fails, they (God and Christ) may receive you into everlasting habitations. The idea here is not a financial failure. No, no, but when this life fails, in the other life, after the resurrection, may we be received into everlasting habitations. The eternal life is the consideration, not some petty thing in this life. And away goes his theory with which he sought to demoralize and demolish the Bible.

In Galatians 4:22, we read that Abraham had two sons, one named Isaac, one named Ishmael. The infidels have it in their book—that is the place I take it from; if we go to their own works for passages of Scripture containing contradictions, they cannot find any fault, I am sure. The Infidels try to make a contradiction by arraying Hebrews 11:17 against Gal. 4:22. Hebrews 11:17 says, "Abraham . . . offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called." I have read it just as they quote it: "Abraham offered up his only begotten son." In Galatians 4:22 it says Abraham had two sons, one by a free woman and the other by a bond woman. They leave it right there as a contradiction. But what are the qualifying terms? Abraham offered up his "only begotten son, of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called"? Did Abraham have two sons "of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called"? We know he did not. There is no trouble here at all. Not a particle of difficulty. Isaac was the only son in whom this seed was to be called.

Is anger approved of? No. Then what about Mark 3:5, "Christ . . . looked round about on them with anger"? I will go to the original again, and see if it will help me out. The Greek word is *orgee*, here translated "anger." It means, "the natural disposition, temper, character; movement or agitation of soul, impulse, desire," as well as "anger." Jesus looked upon them with natural feelings, and the result was that He wept. He was not "angry," with emotions out of control.

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## Mr. Jamieson's Reply

You would almost imagine that my friend never would get away from that first question we have been debating for six nights. Now the bulk of this speech has been taken up with contradictions. That is not the question. He has entirely missed it. When our moderator Mr. Johnson said that his last speech was good enough for him, he doubtless spoke of it just as I did, in terms of commendation. There were good features in the speech, and there were many excellent quotations from the book, and there were many we heartily endorse. Now that is all there is to that. Now what is the matter with our friend? I am perfectly satisfied with him up to to-night—and including to-night, and I think I will be to-morrow night. If I find my friend really has some proof—I have not been able to get a glimpse of it on his side of the question—I will own it up manfully. We have nothing to gain by suppressing the truth.

My friend has taken upon himself to prove that all the teachings of the Bible are moral; not only that, but elevating, and of course one would follow from the other. I grant that. Has he confined himself to that? Where is the proposition? Has he discussed that proposition? If not, then I am not bound negatively to follow him, if he has shot wide of the mark.

"What wonderful things God hath wrought!" That was the first message sent over a telegraph wire. What has that to do with the question? Therefore the teachings of the New Testament are all moral and elevating! I just bring this statement up to show a specimen of my friend's arguments, and his wide-scattering remarks.

Now he explains about the word "hate" in the passage. "Whoso hateth not father and mother," etc. I wish to say to him that he has given us no explanation. He has simply given us assertions. He abounds in assertions. If Mr. Nichols is correct in his view of these matters, then why in the name of common sense and dear humanity and Christian civilization and enlightenment does not he get out a new Bible? Why does not he publish a new Bible? Why does not he publish at least one Bible that is infallible? The revised Bible he rejects. I brought it in here for several evenings and showed you there was no very great, material difference in any of the words, between the words that I have referred to. That did not suit him, and yet it is the result of the labor of a number of the best scholars over the space of fourteen years, occupying in their sessions nearly 800 days. Then King James' book is not the Word of God. It is full of contradictions, and he has confessed—and I thank him for his confession—that if

that were all he had, he too would be an infidel. But I tell you that Book, the New Testament as well as the Old, King James' translation is the Bible, the book, the lamp which you say is to guide your feet to eternal glory. But if my friend is telling you the truth, it is a false, flickering light; a mere will-o'-the-wisp, and will lead you into the quagmire of dissolution. Now you can take your choice. Better re-edit that Book; and when he produces it, and it is as good as his first speech, taking it on the whole, I will tell you, Brother Nichols, I will not oppose you. I will join you, if you get a book that has in it teachings that are all good.

He says again, "I do not tell you to sell all you have and have nothing left." I know you do not. You are a sensible man; and I do not either; and there are two sensible men. Of course we do not. You and I are a good deal in advance of what King James' Bible is, for that would leave us in a state of poverty.

He then took up the quotation from Luke 16th chapter. Has he changed it? Not in a single particular, only in this way; that God and Christ are the ones to make friends of. I thought it was the mammon of unrighteousness. That is what it says. If he is not careful, he will get God and Christ in with Satan.

In debating this resolution, I wished to show what it was that is elevating humanity, so as to show the fallacy of the claim that it is the New Testament that is doing this grand work for our human race. This is what my friend does not like—going into science. He says he agrees with me in the matter of science. He never can as long as he accepts that Bible as the revelation of God to man—never. There is no reconciliation. That is the way I look at it.

The fields of science are not limited merely to this earthmound, although the earth of itself is a revolving globular garden composed of forests, hills, valleys, mountains, oceans, which, at one time, when the moon had inhabitants,\* must have appeared to them the most magnificent object in the heavens, because only 240,000 miles away. The earth would appear to the inhabitants of the moon to be a white world, shining with silvery splendor, and fourteen times larger than the moon appears to us. It is a knowledge of these facts which has given this world of ours the glory of its progress, that has helped to kill out superstitions, and elevate the race. We ought to be glad, too, that science has its practical side, that it not only is full of poetry but brimming over with the utilitarian element. Science means

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\*Some scientists at that time believed that the moon had previously been inhabited.

the "multiplying of human enjoyments, and the mitigating of human sufferings." With lavish hand, it scatters blessings broadcast, and never made a human heart sad. As Herbert Spencer says, in answer to the question "What knowledge is of most worth?" the firm reply is—science. "For direct self-preservation or the maintenance of life and health, the all-improving knowledge is science. For that self-preservation which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is—science. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper

guidance is to be found only in science." So says Herbert Spencer. Is that wide of the mark? "For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which a city cannot rightly regulate its conduct, the indispensable key is—science." So asserts Herbert Spencer, and he goes on and says: "Alike for the most perfect production, and highest enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still," the New Testament? No—"science." And "for the purpose of discipline, intellectual, moral, religious—the most fortunate study" is once more—the new Testament? No—"science" again.

Science means knowledge—knowledge not only of physical things but of mental, of invisible things; an accurate knowledge of anything and everything so far as the mind can grasp everything. Science deals with throbbing, vital organisms, as well as with fossils, skeletons, bird-tracks. It seeks to analyze an emotion as thoroughly as it dissects a dead body; while it stoops to analyze foot of fly, or wing of bird. It measures the speed of a beam of light. The domain of science is the universe, high as Heaven, deep as infinity. Radiant with the glory of truth, it heralds the splendors of the new era, affording common ground upon which the people of all races, tongues, faiths and nations may labor together in harmony—a world-wide brotherhood. There is your elevation! There is your moral voice! Not from any God-book of all the thirty-God-books that have been written; but from this grand volume of nature, where all truth is obtained. To this book we go, and bow at its beautiful shrine. Professor Vircho of Berlin, Germany, truly says "the destiny of science is the service of humanity." Here we come again to the moral, the elevating. It is because we are apt to keep out of sight the wonderful fruits and benefits and blessings of science that I am determined to bring it into this debate.

Let us direct our attention to what science has done for the race, and we will perceive that it has brought us all the blessings of civilization which we enjoy today. Were it possible to obliterate every vestige of science from off the earth, what would be our condition? We would be plunged immediately into barbarism. Sweep away botany, sweep away biology, astronomy, geology, chemistry, physics, and mechanics, then what? Would your Bible elevate you? Would your New Testament elevate you? Could you get morality from it? No. For the reason, if you take all these civilizers away, the moral influences of science away, you would find that the workshops of the world would be at a standstill. Commerce would be stagnant, and men would turn into savages. All these things the Christian

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world has been claiming for their book. That is why I bring this argument to bear right here. Let my friend sneer, if he wants to, about tracing our ancestors back to the chimpanzee, the gorilla, or even the protozoa—if it is a fact, I guess we will have to grin and bear it. We are here, and we do pretty well under the circumstances, and we will do better when people believe less in these sacred stories. Why, without science, even religion itself was savagism. Without science, not even a house could be built, nor a fence made; and like cattle, we would be turned out to the common and the jungle. Generations from age to age have added to the stock of human knowledge. Let science be known no more and the slavish fears, the various forms of savage superstition, which science has overthrown, would come trooping back to take possession of the mind. In the beautiful phenomenon of the eclipse, crouching men and screaming women would again see the face of an enraged demon God. Take away science, and this would be the result again.

The scientific study of nature tends to correct and elevate the intellectual conceptions of man, and in every possible way to improve his physical condition. Science pumps, spins, weaves for the millions. It is the hewer of wood and drawer of water for the race. It evolves the huge Corliss engine, and at the same time describes the drapery of the lilies of the field. A few hundred years ago our forefathers and mothers had no nice, clean wooden floors; tiles and stones on the bare ground, covered with straw, were the best they had. They had no windows, no chimneys. Their houses, with holes in the roofs, were as smokey and sooty as the huts of savages. It was science which furnished the cheerful fireside. They had the Bible, but that did not help them. Science showed to mankind how to pave streets, diminish fevers, and build drains and sewers conducive to good health. It explained how coal could be used for fuel. It revealed how ice could be preserved all summer. Ploughing, mowing, reaping, threshing, are the later blessings of science and this is but a glimpse of its glories. Science is the kind angel which has lifted humanity from the midnight gloom of the dark ages. They had the Bible during the dark ages, but they had very little science. Science has taken the savage by the hand and made a man of him.

Physiologically, science has lengthened man's life to nearly double in 300 years. As many persons now live to be seventy as formerly reached forty years. Great is our debt to such men as Hippocrates, the father of medicine. He showed that illness comes to us because we do not know how to take care of our bodies. Before his time people believed

that sickness was a supernatural effect, a punishment sent because one of their gods was angry; but little by little real observations and experiments took the place of fanciful conjecture. Science has come to save humanity, for it is science that is the true savior, and not a person.

Lawyers and physicians in the middle ages learned that science is the best friend that ever came to man; and those two learned professions universally fostered human knowledge, and they have been elevated in return.

So enchanting are the fields of science that men have almost forgotten to die; so absorbed were they in their scientific work that they scarcely heeded the voice of the "white-winged messenger." Dr. Wells finished his beautiful essay on "Dew" when he was on the brink of the grave. Stephen Gray was so near dying when his last experiments were made, that he was unable to write out an account of them. Science paralyzes even death itself. It can furnish every human being a key with which noiselessly to unlock the flowery-encircled gateway that leads out of this world. Few have learned how to die naturally, without fear, sorrow or suffering. Death will yet come as a sleep—a gentle, painless sleep. Science will yet practically banish death. When the lessons of science are treasured and nature's laws obeyed, a happy death will be the sequel of a healthy life.

Buckle says: "The discoveries of great men never leave us; they are immortal, they contain those eternal principles which survive the shock of empires, outlive the struggles of rival creeds, and witness the decay of successive religions. All these have their different measures, and their different standards; one set of opinions for one age, another set for another. They pass away like a dream. They are as the fabric of a vision, which leaves not a wreck behind. The discoveries of genius alone remain. It is to them that we owe all that we now have, they are for all ages and all times." That is it; better than all religions and all books.

My friend has been trying to reconcile. I will let him go on with that. I will pay attention to his word "hate." "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

You heard his reconciliation. If that is the case we ought to have a guide. Supposing we try his definition again. Here you read it in King James' version: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." My friend would have it this way: "If the world loved you less, you know it loved

(Continued on page 23)



"Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us."



"I know you not. Watch therefore." (Matt. 25:11-13)

## *Watch Therefore!*

WATCH! was the oft repeated word on the lips of Jesus. This need of constant watchfulness is forcibly impressed upon our minds in Jesus' parable of the "wise and foolish virgins."

Jesus drew His lesson from a Jewish custom which was very different from anything we know today. When a couple married in Palestine, they did not go away for a honeymoon; they stayed at home; and for a week they kept open house. To the festivities of that week their chosen friends were admitted; thus in Jesus' parable it was not only the marriage ceremony, it was also the joyous week of festivities that the foolish virgins missed because they were *unprepared*. We may wonder why a person could not be on time for a wedding. But herein lies the lesson for watchfulness.

It was part of the Jewish custom that maidens and friends of the bride should go to keep her company and rejoice with her until her bridegroom arrived. But the bridegroom does not tell the bride when he will arrive. It may be tonight, or tomorrow, or two or three weeks from now; nobody ever knew for certain. One of the great things to do, if you could, at a middle-class wedding in Palestine, was to catch the bridal party napping. It is true that he is required to send a man along the street to shout, "Behold! the bridegroom is coming!" but as that may happen at any moment, the bridal party have to be ready to go into the street at any time to meet him. No one is

allowed on the street after dark without a lighted lamp, and once the bridegroom has arrived, the door is shut. Latecomers to the ceremony are not admitted.

Using this ceremony for the basis of His illustration, Jesus, in few but graphic words, pictures the awful tragedy of carelessness.

"When that day comes, the kingdom of Heaven will be like this. There were ten girls, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five prudent; when the foolish ones took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the others took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was late in coming they all dozed off to sleep. But at midnight a cry was heard: 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' With that the girls all got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the prudent, 'Our lamps are going out; give us some of your oil.' 'No,' they said; 'there will never be enough for all of us. You had better go to the shop and buy some for yourselves.' While they were away the bridegroom arrived; those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. And then the other five came back. 'Sir, sir,' they cried, 'open the door for us.' But he answered, 'I declare, I do not know you' " (Matt. 25:1-12, NEB).

In these closing moments before His arrival, Jesus' words are sharply focused at us—"Watch



therefore!" or as the New English Bible words it, "Keep awake then; for you never know the day or the hour" (v. 13). He is warning us that no age is immune to the creeping paralysis of indifference. The chilling and deadening laxity which can so easily creep over the children of God is just as threatening today as it was when Christ's messenger warned the church at Laodicea, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

To slacken our efforts, to allow ourselves to become all absorbed with the affairs of this life, to drift aimlessly along the path of least resistance at a time when every moment is so precious and the need to prepare for fast-approaching events so pressing, is an evidence of gross unbelief. It is evidence that we have lost sight of the goal—eternal life.

The thought of arriving at the door too late should strike us with a force that moves us to action.

But let us return to the ten virgins. All of them share a common hope of welcoming the coming bridegroom; but there are two attitudes. First the foolish: Theirs is an apparent expectation—they "went forth to meet the bridegroom," but with it is this carelessness—they "took no oil with them."

The wise: Theirs is also definite expectation, for they, too, "went forth to meet the bridegroom." So far apparently there was no difference. They all set their faces toward his coming; they all spoke as though they desired to meet him. But the wise did something to support their expectation: They took oil. They said, "The vigil may be long, and he may not come so soon as many expect, so I must be prepared; I must take a provision for the waiting." These went into the marriage feast.

For our own benefit, let us mark a few other qualities of the wise virgins. They are *faithful* and *wise* and *alert* for the coming of their Lord. *Faithful* means they have staying power, and would not be diverted from their greatest longing, to be ready to meet the bridegroom. *Wise* means sound in both judgment and foresight. *Alert* means they are not pessimistic. If the kingdom tarries, they will not be beguiled by the delay, for they are on the alert for Christ's return. The wise virgins thus fulfill their appointed tasks, with eyes ever and again lifted to the door in hopeful anticipation of His coming.

The wise virgins demonstrate the true love that they have for the bridegroom. It is a love that in the very longing, anxious for every opportunity to prove staunchness during the time of delay. They are such as have no eyes, no thought, no care for anything except the Bridegroom, and the hour of His approach.

This parable warns us that there are certain things which cannot be borrowed. The foolish virgins found it impossible to borrow oil when they discovered they needed it because this oil represents an inner quality of the heart. It is the oil of faith, hope, and devotion—qualities that come only at great personal cost in right thinking and doing. A man cannot borrow a relationship with God; he must develop it himself. A man cannot borrow a character; he must develop that character in the daily transactions of life. We cannot live on the spiritual capital which others have amassed. This oil of faith is a singular commodity that we must work for and possess for ourselves; we cannot borrow it from others.

Neither can spiritual preparedness be instantly shared. Can a man who has gathered insight from long years of prayer, discipline, and proper thought-cultivation give that insight on request to someone who has always been careless to God? We know he cannot.

The true Christian is one who labors day in and day out to build up his belief—and even when belief is most difficult; who, in the most discouraging circumstances, refuses to give way to discouragement.

How should we apply the lesson of the parable and *watch*? To watch does not mean that we should forsake our daily tasks, or even become distraught in them. It means that we must live with open eyes. It is easy to become absorbed in livelihood, and thus forget life.

Christ's return will come with shattering suddenness on those immersed in material things. It is a warning never to become so immersed in time that we forget eternity, never to let our concern with worldly affairs, however necessary, distract us from remembering that life and death are in God's hands, and whenever the Bridegroom comes, at morning, at midday, or at evening or midnight He must find us ready. The cry sounding forth, "The Bridegroom has come!" will not announce a time for preparation. Those "virgins" without oil will be left in darkness only to find the door shut to their cries,

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*Faith came singing into my room,*

*And other guests took flight.*

*Fear, Anxiety, Grief and Gloom*

*Sped out into the night.*

*I wondered that such peace could be,*

*But Faith said gently, "Don't you see,*

*They really cannot live with me."*

"Lord, Lord, open to us," and the dreadful response, "I know you not."

In the daytime wise and unwise seem alike: midnight is the test; and with it will come a judgment which the unwise cannot escape, for there will be bitter "weeping and gnashing of teeth" when they see what they have lost, the reward which could have been theirs.

Do we wonder our Lord urges, "Watch therefore"?

Every time we resist a temptation and say "No" to self and "Yes" to God, every time we refuse to let anger, jealousy or sensitiveness rule us, we are storing another drop of oil in our vessel. Every time we push doubt into the background, we are adding strength to watch and work through the wee chill hours before that splendid Day dawns.

Does each day find more oil in our vessels? We would do well to ask ourselves the question: What am I doing in my daily life that would cause anyone to think or say, "How his light shines!"? There is no such thing as living our faith without its showing in our lives. True religion shows its influence in every aspect of our conduct; it is like the sap of a living tree, which penetrates and gives life to even the most distant boughs.

When it comes to the more tedious tasks of curbing the wandering thought, suppressing the unchristian emotions common to humans, can it be said that our light is brilliantly burning? Do we display patience to those who sorely try our souls? Do we possess nobleness of speech and action, purity of thought and uprightness of deed? From the windows of our personality and conduct does the Christ-light beam to the dark world around, or is our light flickering and growing dim?

Sometimes the hardest place to keep up the midnight vigil is at home; it is here we have the greatest tests—and the greatest opportunities; so many opportunities to warp and bend, to give and take, to be patient, considerate, kind and loving. It is in the home that we demonstrate if our lamps are filled with the oil of living faith.

The foolish virgins assented to the fact that the Bridegroom would surely come but failed to *prove* their belief by action. It is one thing to think we are in the faith, and quite another to be able to "prove" our own selves, to submit the record of our daily deportment to the acid test of comparison with the demands of the Word. Constant checking and comparing are essential to spiritual progress.

If not exceedingly watchful, we will be depriving ourselves of the boon of eternal life, and shall some day discover that we have traded intrinsic values for

that which is mere tinsel, worthless "things" that can turn to dust overnight.

The foolish virgins failed to give themselves wholly to meditating on God's life-giving Word. Inasmuch as it is our thoughts that have power over our lives, that which will develop our thoughts should be selected with care. To keep filling the mind with God's thoughts will change a flickering light to one that burns bright and steady during this dark night.

The writer of Hebrews admonished, "Now do not drop that confidence of yours; it carries with it a rich hope of reward" (Heb. 10:35, Moffatt). Confidence in God and His divine promises is indispensable; we simply cannot make any progress in the spiritual life without it. If we allow our faith reserve to lower to the vanishing point we shall surely find ourselves among the foolish virgins.

Our beloved Peter admonished: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Pet. 3:13-14).

The time is too short and the stake too great to take any chances. Every moment must be redeemed, and we be diligent if we would be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless. So let us *watch!*

MM

## Fourth of July

*(Continued from page 2)*

endure hardship and privation for the cause of freedom.

This is what happened when the Declaration of Independence was signed. Why? Because God was behind it. God was directing the hands that prepared it, and the men who adopted it. God wanted a nation on this planet where His Word could once again be proclaimed without interference from government. He wanted a nation where a handful of jewels could be polished to perfection in the centuries that would intervene before He should send His Son to take control. God was at the helm, working all according to His eternal purpose.

This is why the Declaration of Independence was written. This is why it was accepted. And this is why we remember the Fourth of July, to thank God who made it possible for us to have the opportunity to prepare for real life!

Yes, let us thank God from the depths of our hearts for the Fourth of July.

MM

## What Is Truth?

(Continued from page 19)

me less before it loved you less." What kind of sense is there in that kind of inspiration? None at all. So the book, as it is, is actually indicted and found guilty, with all the doubts in the whole trial given to its credit, and still it will not stand.

Let us take the parallel passages, and give my friend something to do. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword, for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:34-36). And pass down to Luke 12:51-53, and there you find this kind of language. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother," And there is hell on earth. Just as sure as you find that state of things you have no heaven. Let him reconcile this.

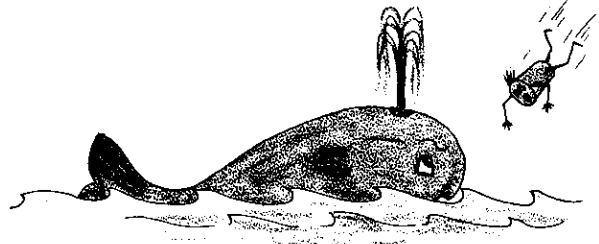
In John 2:15, we find this gentle Nazarene "when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple"—I am presenting the other side of the question—"and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables." The gentle Nazarene did that. What would you think of me if I went into a church festival and kicked over the tables, because you made my father's house a den of thieves? Jesus did this; but since His time they have worshiped Him as a very God. Oh superstition!

MM

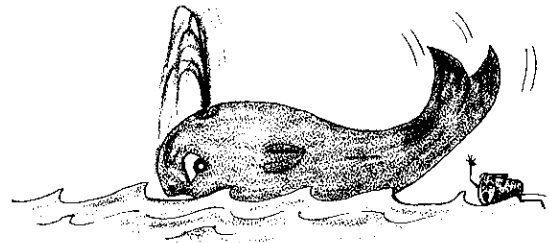
"Study to be quiet" (I Thess. 4:11)

"Be ambitious," says the Apostle, "to be quiet, and to do your own business." Here Paul is telling us in effect that it is scarcely worthwhile taking the trouble to appear to be holy if we are not holy at our daily tasks. Our sphere in life must be made to glorify God. In the ordinary duties of life, in the simplest and lowliest occupation, we can exhibit the new nature and the heavenly citizenship that is ours; nothing can hinder us in this unless we allow it. Commonplace duties reflect the glory of the Lord when quietly and consistently they are undertaken as unto Him.

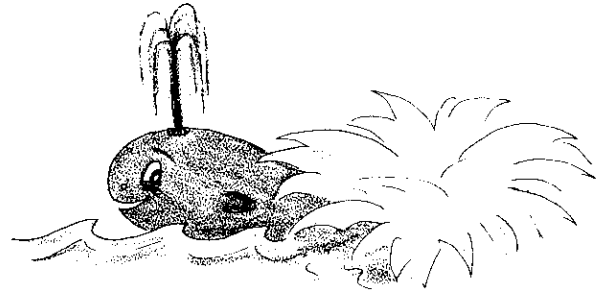
## FAITH



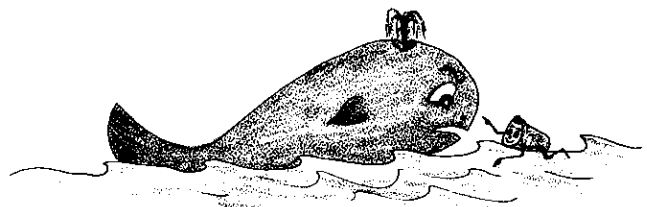
A little cork fell in the path of a whale,



Who lashed it down with his angry tail.



But in spite of the blows, it quickly arose,



And floated serenely in front of his nose.

Said the cork, "You can splash and sputter  
and frown,

But you can never get me down.

For I'm made of the stuff that is buoyant enough  
To float instead of to drown!"

# Chasing Fleas

**C**HASING BUTTERFLIES is often used as an expression of a fruitless activity. But there is something worse: chasing fleas. Why? Because fleas are not only worthless; they bite!

The Bible talks about this biting futility in the book of First Samuel. Saul, Israel's first and pompous king, was, underneath it all, a flea chaser. A mighty man with great responsibility, he had some glaring weaknesses. One was his jealousy for David, an evil trait that was surely a biting "flea." After seeing David's heroics as a soldier, the people of Judah began to sing, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands." Of course this was no charming tune to Saul's ears. He became jealous and bitterly hateful, and fell immediately to chasing his enemy.

"I will smite David unto the wall," boasted Saul. "Let the hand of the Philistines be upon him."

But Saul's evil wishes brought no harm to David. Saul had to do the chasing. And chase he did; from rock to rill, from cave to cavern he chased David, threatening his life. When Saul finally lay down in a cave to rest, David was already there hiding. Carefully David crept up to Saul and while Saul was sleeping David cut off a piece of Saul's clothing. Withdrawing to a safe distance he called out, "See how that the Lord . . . delivered thee today into mine hand . . . and some bade me kill thee: [but] I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed."

And then David asked, "After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea" (I Sam. 24:2-14).

Saul, besides being disobedient and disloyal to God, had his evil passions far from controlled. "What are you doing, Saul?" David seemed to ask. "It doesn't make sense for the mighty king of Israel to waste his wrath on the likes of me. He is nothing more than a flea-chaser." So disarranged were Saul's priorities that he was even seeking to capture a "flea."

This flea-chasing might be said to symbolize those who waste their strength and advantages pursuing things of no importance, things which will make them worse instead of better.

Who is a flea-chaser? He is one who makes his fleshly interests his god. He is pre-occupied with trivial gratifications. It might be motion pictures, TV, or radio that blares to glamorize the flesh and en-

courage people to chase fleas. It might be no more than one's own out-of-control, ungodly passions and desires. To all such the apostle Paul addressed these words: "Put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and never think how to gratify the cravings of the flesh" (Rom. 13:14, Moffatt). No flea-chasing whatever!

The flea-chaser's goal is small, not reaching even to the limited horizons of this world. It might be fame, or wealth, or some other earthly gain. But chasing any of these is so like chasing fleas. Is not fame a wind that blows one way and then the other? To use another simile, seeking to perpetuate one's name on earth is said to be like writing on the sand by the sea-shore. It lasts only until the arrival of the next wave.

The glamorous heroes of music or stage may skyrocket to fame; but soon it is all over, and what have they gained? They are not happy. And before long, the fame is gone, and life, and they are left with nothing.

Chasing fleas is, in reality, chasing sin; and sin is deadly. The record of Judas testifies to this. The Bible compares sin to the venom of a snake, the destructiveness of the canker worm, the craftiness of a fox, the filthiness of swine. There is nothing good about it. And, "the wages of sin is death."

Chasing fleas. And if we catch a flea, what is it worth? Why not go after better things, even the eternal realities which God offers, that which will bring everlasting joy and happiness?

MM

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## On Guard!

My soul, be on thy guard;  
Ten thousand foes arise;  
The hosts of sin are pressing hard  
To draw thee from the prize.

O watch and fight and pray,  
The battle ne'er give o'er,  
Renew it boldly ev'ry day,  
And help Divine implore.

Ne'er think the vict'ry won,  
Nor lay thine armor down;  
Thine arduous work will not be done  
Till thou obtain the crown.

Fight on, my soul, till death  
Shall bring to thee a rest,  
And thou shalt rise and stand approved  
Within God's kingdom blest.

## Getting Ready

I have accepted the invitation to the great coming Feast and am now in the process of getting my garments ready. I would not want to be ashamed when that day arrives. Some spot of pride, selfishness, impatience, etc. would cause great sorrow, even weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I have been reading in II Kings recently and as I read the accounts of the deeds of King Jehu, King of Israel, of all the good that he did—slaying all the remains of the house of wicked Ahab, destroying all the worshippers of Baal, I noticed there was one thing he lacked—he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam. He failed to destroy the golden calves that were in Bethel and Dan.

How many will be holding onto the “golden calves” of hidden sin when Christ arrives? In retrospect, I can see that I have made progress. I can look into the past and know that I have destroyed many “groves” of selfishness and pride, “images” of self-pity, envy, doubt, and that “brazen serpent” of fear. But, looking ahead, I see much work yet to be done. As I search my heart daily, I want desperately to rid my life of all the “high places” remaining.

The sacrifices at times may seem too great, the work just too hard to do. If we ever keep in sight the blessed hope, then the burden seems much lighter. Not until we follow the Lord with all of our heart, turning not aside to the right hand nor to the left, will we be acceptable in God's sight. King Hezekiah was one who wiped the slate clean. He utterly destroyed all the high places and departed not from following the Lord. Thus, “the Lord was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth...” (II Kings 18:7).

Are we not given the promises also that God will not forsake us? “For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints: they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off” (Psa. 37:28). Also, what a thrill to know that “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them” (Psa. 34:7).

The great and precious promises of God far, far exceed any fleeting moment of pleasure derived from holding onto one graven image of sin.

May our “golden calves and graven images” of sin be totally ground to powder and cast to the four winds and may our new temple be foursquare, founded on that Chief Cornerstone, Christ Jesus, having walls of pure gold and like unto clear glass.

—B. P., Georgia

## So What Do You Know?

### Bible Firsts

1. What was Jesus' first miracle?
2. Who was the firstborn son of Jacob?
3. Who was the first ordained priest of Israel?
4. Who was the first Gentile to become a Christian?
5. What is the first book of the Old Testament?
6. Who is the firstfruits from the dead?
7. Who was the first man to be translated that he should not see death?
8. Who were the first foreign missionaries of the Christian faith?
9. What was the first city the Israelites conquered on the west side of Jordan?
10. Who was the first martyred apostle?
11. What is the first book of the New Testament?
12. What is the first beatitude?
13. Who was Israel's first judge?
14. What is the first of the Ten Commandment law?
15. Who committed the first murder recorded in the Bible?
16. Who was the first king of Israel?
17. What was the first of the ten plagues upon the Egyptians?
18. Who performed the first miracle of resurrection?
19. What was the first recorded prayer in the Bible?
20. What was the first of the four great beasts in Daniel's vision?
21. What did John see when the first seal was opened?
22. To whom did Jesus first appear after His resurrection?

#### Answers:

1. Making water into wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:9-11);
2. Reuben (Gen. 29:32);
3. Aaron (Ex. 28:1);
4. Cornelius (Acts 10:30, 44);
5. Genesis;
6. Christ Jesus (I Cor. 15:20, 23);
7. Enoch (Gen. 5:24);
8. Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:2-3);
9. Jericho (Josh. 6:2);
10. James (Acts 12:2);
11. Matthew;
12. Matthew 5:3;
13. Othniel (Judges 3:9);
14. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3);
15. Cain killed Abel (Gen. 4:8);
16. Saul (I Sam. 11:15);
17. Blood (Ex. 7:19);
18. Elijah (I Kings 17:22);
19. Eliezer, Abraham's servant (Gen. 24:12-15);
20. Lion (Dan. 7:4);
21. A white horse (Rev. 6:2);
22. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9).



# Letters

## Go Forward

When we behold all the beauty which is shed abroad by God's living Word, we can realize how far it exceeds anything we may have in the temporal which is ours to enjoy for such a short time. But having the living Word of God working within us, to revitalize us and help us to overcome any evil which we may still possess, and awake to righteousness, when we put on the whole armour of Christ, we awaken to life, to life more abundant. Then can we say like Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."

May we go forward with the utmost determination to have our name included in the Lamb's Book of Life.

*Norton, South Wales*

G.S.

## At Self-Mastery

It's a great job we've undertaken, but it will far exceed anything we know or experience, or enjoy here. I'm working at self-mastery, as all of us must do to the end of day.

We do not know what our future holds, but we know who holds our future. This wonderful Truth makes one not only long for, but determined to be there on that Day, which can blossom into life more real than our finite minds can fathom. To make our calling and election sure is the main object of life now.

The literature and cassettes are a boon to me. Then the unfolding of Scriptural prophecies, showing the way we must tread, the pitfalls to avoid, the approach to learning, not setting up our own posts to lean on, not taking the line of least resistance or giving tag end of time, but redeeming the time as we see the signs of that Day approaching, all stimulate.

Getting old makes one hasten greatly to put those finishing touches to his or her garment, to grow to fit the Robe, that the Crown of Life may benefit us all our days. It's so nice to be of the family of true sisters and brothers of our heavenly Father.

*Crewe, England*

N.T.

## Promises to Cheer

We need to have our attention called often to the fact that the day of the Lord is close at hand. It will be worth something to be able to escape that oncoming storm. Let us sell out now while we have time and opportunity and buy the Pearl of Great Price.

We hear Paul speaking to the brethren at Rome and to us also. It is high time to wake up, for salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. It is far on in the night, the Day is almost here. There are many signboards which prove we are in the last days of perilous times. People love pleasure more than they love God.

Let us keep our eye on the prize that we might be accounted worthy to escape that coming storm. We have great and precious promises to cheer and encourage us to press on.

*Rome, Georgia*

S.J.

## Renewing Determination

We must make use of the extended time, so mercifully granted to us, we who are living in these last days.

There must be constant vigilance; it must become our second nature to always think before we act and be sensitive to the slightest touch of sin and not to mind earthly things, our fleshly desires must be crucified. We must make a firm resolve and renewed determination to overcome.

We will be amply repaid if we now serve God with all our mind, might and strength for in His "presence is fullness of joy; at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

May we emulate the words of our honored founder, Brother Nichols, to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of the hope of Eternal Life.

**"Oh, may each toil harder, this work to do,  
Press forward for the prize, the end keep in view!  
Then we'll enter the City with streets of pure gold,  
Where no sorrow shall enter, and none will grow old."**

*St. Joseph, Missouri*

H.W.

## Lessons from Bird World

I was thinking, as I was putting out the bread crumbs for my birds, about the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Let us eat every crumb that falls from the rich man's table, that is to eat every word of God no matter how small it looks to us.

Once in a while I have a new bird at my feeder. He will sit up on a branch and look all around and watch the other birds go to the feeder. This reminded me of the verse in Jer. 29:13. We must search for the truth and if we do we will find it. Just like the bird, he was looking for the feed and found it. He filled himself up and then flew away to come back again and eat more. We must fill our hearts and minds with the Word of God and come back for more.

I also have a pheasant that has come to my garden to eat the seed. This brings to mind the verse in Luke 8:11 which says that the seed is the Word of God. He searched the garden and found what he was looking for. The pheasant found what he was looking for. So let us search for the seeds of truth. If we do we will find them.

*Holley, New York*

C.B.

## Trying To Be Somebody

Isn't it wonderful to be sharers in this hope, trying to be somebody, trying to make ourselves useful to our heavenly Father? It's so wonderful to have something grand to look forward to and trying to make ourselves worthy of all the blessings we have received. There is no end to the blessings God bestows upon us every day.

Soon we will see the arrival of Elijah. It just can't be too far off. The world is getting worse and worse. One can hardly believe that such terrible things could happen. How we long for that great age of peace.

*Milton, Iowa*

E.T.



## We Need Help

We need all the help we can get to keep our minds and thoughts pure and undefiled from the world.

The Bible gives us hope for a future day if we follow in the footsteps of the prophets and apostles. The world has nothing lasting to offer. We must put our hope in God's divine plan and not in the pleasures of the world.

I have been reading of the travels of Brother Paul in some of the back *Messages*, telling of the trials he went through. It makes me want to take what few trials I have and overcome them, for the time is short and getting shorter.

Peru, Kansas

W. R.

## Thank You

I want to thank you for the cassette tapes; they were so good. Brother Nichols once said that he had to break up our spiritual meal and chew it for us so we could digest it. That is what the tapes do.

The lessons are helping us to get so much greater insight on God's plan and what we personally owe to ourselves and to our God for devising such a magnificent plan, a plan in which we are included if we make our natural self latch onto this greatest of all opportunities. The angel is about ready to thrust in his sickle.

Albion, New York

E. B.

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## Finally, Brethren

### "Forget It!"

**I**T IS the polite response we are programmed very early in life to make when we have given something to another and they thank us for it.

But isn't this, from a Christian's standpoint, backwards? Considering every person's need for character growth and development, is it not the *recipient* of the gift who should be saying to the giver, "Forget it!" Yet, etiquette being what it is, such a reply would seriously disrupt the pleasant feelings of the moment; we just aren't accustomed to such lessons at such moments.

Yet there definitely is a need for every one of us to learn to give and forget the gift. In fact, there are numerous times in our lives when we should be able to say to ourselves—and mean it—"Forget it!" We concentrate so hard on trying to remember, but there are things we should forget. Yet isn't it true when we come to these things we ought to forget, that we have memories like elephants?

Perhaps someone makes an off-hand remark that cuts. "He didn't mean it that way," we tell ourselves. "I know he didn't." And we should promptly *forget* it. But do we? Have we achieved that measure of spiritual stature that makes us too big for such small hurts?

Someone forgets to express their appreciation for a favor we really went out of our way to do. Have we the grace to "forget it," or do we henceforward think of their failing the first thing we think of them, and make the one

small slip the beginning of a long period of grudge-carrying?

Some little thing irks us, rubs us the wrong way, and suddenly we feel all "out of sorts." Can we tell ourselves firmly, quickly, plainly, "Forget it!"—and mean it?

Or we say something we regret. Deeply regret. If only we could go out and gather up the words we spoke, and bring them back. But they are gone forever. And anything we do to try to *undo* the harm we caused only seems to make matters worse. What can we do? Regret it for years to come, keep going over and over it in our minds until it stifles further spiritual progress? Definitely not! This is when we need to be programmed for that quick, polite response to ourselves: "Forget it!", to try again, go about doing as much of the *right* things as we possibly can imagine to do, until the offended person is compelled to forget it, too—and forgive.

It may be we didn't get the credit we thought we were due. Have we the far-sighted ability to "forget it," knowing that we will someday get our just due from God, and that is all we should be seeking anyway? Is not God due *all* the credit for whatever we are able to do with the body and mind that He has provided us? Are we not at the present time merely stewards, making use of that which has been entrusted to us? And if we cannot prove ourselves faithful in that which belongs to another, and give Him a proper accounting of our lives, how can we ever expect Him to give us that which is our own?

Forgetting, especially at critical moments, is an art to be practiced and carefully cultivated. For what does it show? It shows that we are part of a people who belong to God and are willing to forget themselves for the moment that they may be remembered by God forever. Isn't that reason enough to learn to say to ourselves, "Forget it!"?

MM



## The Dawn of Peace

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

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

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

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

