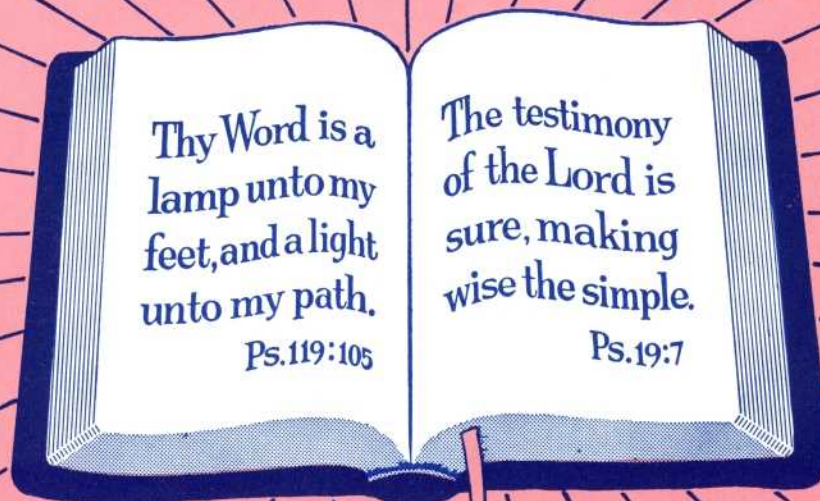


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Declaring Our Dependence

Understanding the Bible
Selecting Entertainment
From the Land of Oppression



Period. Question Mark? Point!

HOW DO WE punctuate our faith?

Every written sentence requires some kind of punctuation before it can be properly terminated. In our English language there are three of these marks. The simplest, and most common, is the period. This (.) is a period. It takes very little effort to make one. If you can't write anything else, you can surely make a period. No matter whether your penmanship or composition is good or poor, your period will look as good as anyone's. All a period was ever intended to be was small and round and black.

But how needful is the humble little period. Without it we could make very little sense of what we wanted to say. Life would be an endless jumble, just words, words, words. The period says "Stop. I've said it, and that's that."

The second of the three major punctuating indicators is the question mark. It looks like (?) this. It, too, comes at the end of a sentence, which at times presents a problem, for had we anticipated it we would have changed our inflection accordingly.

The Spanish people have a way of solving this problem—they put the question mark at the beginning of the question upside-down, to let you know a question is coming—a useful idea. There are times we would like to know a question was approaching.

But a question mark is also a mark of humility. To use a question mark means to confess that there is something you don't know. That is why some people do not like them. A question mark even looks like a question, with its queer little curl. It is a very indefinite thing.

So we come to the last of the trio of major punctuation marks, the exclamation (!) point. Although having the same handicap of being placed at the end of the sentence, when you get there you are glad. If a period is

placid and a question mark is doubtful, an exclamation is excited. Its job is to convey gladness, joy, surprise.

All of us as Christians are, by all we do and the way we do it, punctuating our lives for better or for worse. There is a time and place for dogmatic, self-assured periods in our faith, to say we know and mean it. We must be convinced of the basics of our faith, and be ready always to state them affirmatively, without question. We know whom we have believed, what we have believed, and where we are heading. The period is the basic punctuation mark for all that. You have to have something to go on, something to build on. Periods are the building blocks. A period affirms. It says quietly, "I believe." It says without fanfare, "For me, this is it."

But for many, that's it, period. Faith needs to go on and grow, and growth comes by thinking, questioning, and then seeking answers to those questions. Faith needs to expand, to inquire in order to learn. If it does not, there will always be that question mark unresolved, which will someday bring dismay.

It should not bother us that we have questions. What we must do is seek until we find the answers. To keep affirmations and questions in balance is the skill we must learn.

And then, don't forget the exclamation points. What seasoning they give to faith and life. What triumph, what joy!

Faith is affirming. It is questioning. It is triumphing, too. What happiness to be enthusiastic, alive, forward looking. How much more whole, how much more real, how much more spiritually alive we shall find ourselves to be if we punctuate our life properly.

Alive. Just barely.

Alive? Perhaps not quite.

Alive! That's it!—and growing.

Megiddo means

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

Bible quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NAS—New American Standard

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

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.

Megiddo Message

Vol. 69, No. 7

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Editorial PERIOD. QUESTION MARK? POINT! How do we punctuate our faith?	2
Sermon DECLARING OUR DEPENDENCE Not INdependence but DEpendence—upon God	4
Feature DECLARATION OF DEPENDENCE	9
Sermonettes ...AND STILL SHE SPEAKS	11
Article "THIS IS THE WAY" Walking with God	12
Understanding the Bible APOSTASY: DEPARTING FROM THE FAITH Concluding our Study of the Great Apostasy	13
Article SELECTING ENTERTAINMENT —by the highest moral standards	17
Article STOPPING THE LEAKS OF LIFE ... the little things	18
FROM THE LAND OF OPPRESSION	20
Meditating on the Word GREAT EXPECTATIONS A lesson from Proverbs 29:18	22
Inquiries and Answers	24
Letters	26
Finally, Brethren FACSIMILE CHRISTIANS!	27

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Declaring Our Dependence

WE HAVE often honored the fathers of our nation for declaring their independence from the mother country. To anyone not knowing the story, this might sound like rebellious ingratitude. But such was part of the master plan of our mighty God, that this nation should be born, that it should grow and become independent so that independent thought could flourish and the soil be prepared for the growth of true religion in these last days. How hardly could this have happened a few centuries earlier, when superstitious darkness held every mind in abject slavery, and any who ventured to think beyond the rigid patterns of established thought were threatened with tortures worse than death. But by the 18th century the climate had changed, the Age of Reason had come, and with it the liberty to think for oneself.

By the time the Declaration of Independence was framed, the colonies were—or thought they were—ready to be on their own. They had come “of age,” and declared themselves ready to fight for their independence, if necessary.

Modern Independence

Today a modern generation is also declaring its independence, but the motive is far from political independence. The spirit of this declaration is a spirit seeking independence from anything restrictive, independence from the mores and morals that have confined the animal nature in former times, independence from any set pattern of religion, faith or virtue. It is a declaration of independence even from God. So far has our modern world wandered in this direction of independence that we may do well to look to ourselves, to be sure we are not becoming contaminated with the independent spirit of our times, that spirit that exalts individualism, humanism, and paganism, and tells us subtly that we do not need God. Let us be sure that we are not saying by

our actions that we know how to steer our own course and do not need the guidance of God or His teachers.

The new spirit of independence has not brought with it an abundance of happiness. Rather, the result is often loneliness, defeat, despair. “We pray,” says one, “and the heavens are silent.” The human race has long had great faith that everything is going to turn out all right. But today, in a world gone wild socially and morally, the human race finds itself harried, anxious, and experiencing “nothingness,” according to one writer.

Independence from What?

The disillusionment is all a direct result of declaring independence from the power that created us. We don’t need God, according to the humanists, among whose ranks are thousands of our modern-day thinkers, writers and educators. Yet, disenchanted generally with life and with the religion that has long made life more tolerable, they see it all as futile. What was it that the preachers were telling for so long, that all would end well, that every person is a child of God and as soon as you believe everything bad goes away? What is that worth in a world of hard facts, of suffering, misery and hopelessness; a world of war and strife and bloodshed; a world where thousands and millions drown their troubles in drugs and alcohol, a world where everyone seems to be, sooner or later, destined to nonentity? If God is God, says one, why doesn’t He declare Himself? Why doesn’t He show His authority like a good God should? If He is there, why is there so much crime, so much suffering, so much evil in the world? As someone has said, If God is God, when is He going to start *acting* like God? They are totally oblivious to the fact that the problem is with *them*, not God.

Consciously or unconsciously, for several generations now, multitudes have been turning from a basic feeling of *dependence* upon God to one of *independence*. Our former pastor, Maud Hembree (1912-1935), saw it happening in her day. And the trend has accelerated since. “The whole of life was once organized around God,” says an article in *Time* magazine. “Now it is organized around man, and God does not seem to matter any more.”

Note: *Declaring Our Dependence* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

"God Is Dead" Philosophies

This line of thinking, during the 1960s, produced the "God is dead" theory. The shocking statement that "God is dead" came first from a German-born philosopher of a century ago, Friedrich Nietzsche, who in a forced rebellion against Christianity, its faith, ethics, ideals, and foundations, sought to replace "God" with "Superman," and humanity with a race of "Supermen." But against the strong religious surges of the nineteenth century, the idea of a Christianity with a "dead" God was too far-out to scarcely be heard beyond the ranks of philosophers. However, in a modern society which feels itself more and more self-sufficient with all its flaunted scientific achievements, a society that has progressed "far beyond the need of God," the possibility of eliminating Him from their proud sphere is not so strange.

Over four millennia ago the patriarch Job saw this tendency in man and described it in these words: "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?...Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?" (Job 21:7, 14-15). Yes, "what is the Almighty that we should recognize Him?" What use is He to us? *We are independent, now; we are on our own!*

In the same vein is the story which came out of Russia after Communism had displaced the ancient and oppressive Orthodox Church. An old kulak on a cooperative farm told the visitor, "We used to call priests in to bless our fields in the spring when we planted the crops. But we don't need to do that anymore. Now we have commercial fertilizer and tractors to help us." To go a little further along this line of reasoning, "if you have tractors to move mountains, you don't need faith. If you have penicillin, you don't need prayer. If you have positive thinking, you don't need salvation. If you have the state, you don't need the church. If you have science, you don't need God....It is to science that man looks today for the blessings which make life more comforting and stimulating."

"God is irrelevant in today's society," says one. "He has no value." Isn't this attitude the same as that voiced by the proud Pharaoh in the days of Moses: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" (Ex. 5:2). Is it not the attitude of the evil man described by the Psalmist when he said, "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it" (Ps. 10:11)?

Modern Independence: Humanism

This type of thinking is the foundation of Humanism, a philosophy which denies all reliance upon God. In 1973 the Humanists met to draw up what they called their

"The whole of life was once organized around God. Now it is organized around man, and God does not seem to matter any more."

"Humanist Manifesto II," and a dastardly document of independence it is—independence from any recognizing of the Creator who furnishes every breath of air they breathe, every ray of sunshine that gives them light, and every bite of food that they must eat to survive. Here are a few brief extracts from their doctrine.

We quote: "False 'theologies of hope' and messianic ideologies...cannot cope with existing world realities. ...Traditional religions that place revelation, God, ritual or creed above human ends and experience do a disservice to the human species. We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race. Humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves."

Imagine *mortals*, subject to pain, sickness and death, saying that belief in God is "meaningless or irrelevant," that "no deity will save us; we must save ourselves." What can we do to save ourselves? What can we do to stay the hand of death? Truly, the life expectancy has been increased, but who has found the eternal fountain of youth? Who has learned the secret of revivifying the worn-out human mechanism?

Yet humanism has thousands and millions of adherents. They say further:

"Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization, and from rectifying social injustices."

When did God's promises of immortal salvation ever "harm" anyone? When did belief in God and obedience to Him ever deprive anyone of any good, or distract from the rectifying social injustice? Was not this part of the message of many a prophet in olden times—men like Amos, Micah, and Nehemiah? Were they not working for the good of the people, both temporal and spiritual?

On such a basis the humanists have designed their new "religion." The basic affirmations of that "religion" are:

First, that there is no divine, omnipotent Creator. "Humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created."

Second, that "Man is a part of nature," not created but the result of a continuous process" (e.g., evolution).

Third, that man is the only creator. Man fashions his own gods, his religious beliefs along with his cultures, according to his own needs.

Fourth, that the laws of science make unacceptable any supernatural forces.

Fifth, humanism must "discourage the sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking which accompany religion and hinder human progress."

Can we imagine a philosophy of life more hopeless, more pathetic, more lost? Add to this the fear of atomic holocaust that grips the hearts of many today, and can we wonder at the widespread disillusionment and despair—and the ever rising rate of suicide among youth?

Try to Comprehend...

Consider now just a touch of the wonderment of this universe we live in, this universe which is supposed to have created itself. We are quite unable even to comprehend the size of the universe, to say nothing of understanding the laws by which it is ordered or controlled. Confronted with figures that are common to the universe, as one writer has said it, "the human mind can't even be bothered to boggle; it just gives up."

Suppose we try to draw a map—not of the universe but only of our own local group of stars, our own galaxy. We put two dots on a large sheet of paper about an inch apart, to represent the earth and the sun. Our scale is about one inch to ninety-two million miles. Some map, when normal scales are something like one inch to not more than fifty miles!

Now, where do we put dots to represent the stars? Unfortunately, we discover quickly that our sheet of paper, however big, is much too small, for if we want to

Let Us Pray...

Loving Father, as once again we draw nigh Thee in prayer, we praise Thee because we know Thee, and bless Thy holy Name for all those ways through which Thou hast revealed Thyself to men. In the long ago Thou didst permit men to see Thy handiwork in the heavens, and to recognize the beauty of the earth as Thine. And the same visible proof of Thy existence is open to our vision today.

Thou didst call men to the contemplation of their own lives, and the histories of nations, and therein they discerned Thy judgments; amidst the agonies of war and the blessings of peace alike they beheld the outworking of Thy laws of righteousness and justice.

When they were released from bondage they came to acknowledge Thee as Deliverer; as the darkness of their minds was dispelled they knew that knowledge and human skill come from Thee; in the adventurous discoveries of seas and continents, amidst storms and sunshine, they came to declare the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and that all the wonders of nature are of Thy making.

In many ways Thou hast provided us with an assuring knowledge of Thyself. Yet men live as if Thou dost not exist; they have outgrown Thee; they declare their own independence and self-sufficiency. Some even have the

audacity to proclaim that Thou art dead. They disown any trust in Thee. They become content with ignoble ways, lovers of their own selves, haughty, stubborn, self-conceited.

Instead of seeking Thy will for them, they seek only personal advantage, and brazenly, Lord, they declare Thou art not, because they have not sought Thee where Thou art. Instead of the truth of the Gospel, they have proclaimed a gospel of scientific truth, and when their science does not proclaim Thee, they forget Thee.

Instead of the goodness of the Gospel, they proclaim a gospel of human goodness. Not having Thy law, they become a law unto themselves, their sin-seared conscience their only standard of right and wrong.

Instead of the beauty of the Gospel, they proclaim a gospel of beauty; but when beauty as they are able to fashion it does not contain Thee, they forget that Thou art God, and hast Thine own beauty of holiness which they should seek.

Grant, Father, that we may not be adversely affected by the godlessness of our times. May we firmly and unchangeably declare our dependence upon Thee, always aware that Thou art, that Thy authority is still supreme, and surrender fully to Thy leading.

We pray Thy blessing upon all who are striving to overcome evil with good, and for strength to continue steadfast to the end, that having worked out our salvation with fear and trembling, that having become dead to the rudiments of the world and alive to Thee, we may merit Thy mercies in the Day of Final Account. We pray Thee to be with and bless all who love Thee in sincerity and truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

include the very nearest star of all, we still need a map that is four miles long!

The center of the group of stars, or galaxy, where we live, would be about 25,000 miles off the map. And our galaxy is only one tiny corner of the universe. Thousands of millions of galaxies have been discovered, each containing thousands of millions of stars. That means countless millions of millions of millions of stars in the known universe. And how much more universe is there that is still out of sight? Can we think for one moment that the humanists have the answers, that there is no power beyond ourselves?

And consider the report of several astronomers just this year, to give us just a little insight into the greatness of our great God. They have discovered several "previously unknown galaxies 10 billion light years from Earth—the farthest part of the universe yet seen"! This means that the light reaching our telescopes on earth right now left these galaxies some ten billion years ago! The discovery was made possible by using a special new type of "scanner" which captures and stores minute quantities of light from a distant point in the sky night after night until there is enough to be measured. And these "most distant galaxies," we are told, "are much larger than our Milky Way Galaxy"—probably five to ten times larger!

The scientists are enthused, because they feel they are getting so much nearer to unraveling the puzzle of how it all began—which many now believe to have been with some "primordial explosion or big bang" some 18 billion years ago. Will they not be amazed when the Great Creator makes Himself known?

A God Great Enough for the Universe?

Some people find it hard to believe in a God great enough and wise enough and powerful enough to create this gigantic universe. But what are the alternatives? Shall we declare our independence from faith and say it just happened, that it just sprang into existence on its own, so to speak? or shall we say that it always existed? Neither possibility is any easier to believe in than the other; in fact, any theory projected by man offers only a very limited amount of help with the problem. Who are we to tackle problems of infinity—with our miniature minds?

Nature Is NOT God

But there is still a large segment of persons who wish to believe that "nature" is God. A free thinker once said, "When I came to the conclusion that religion was based on a primitive fable, I found I had great peace of mind. I knew that to live best I must learn to follow nature's

Can we imagine a philosophy of life more hopeless, more pathetic, more lost?

laws." Who can support such "weak" thinking in the face of the magnificence we behold all about us?

Many are the poets and philosophers who have extolled Nature as supreme. But where do Nature's laws originate? Did they come into being without an intelligent originator? Are we independent of all supreme power? Did *we* design the laws by which we exist? What universe did "nature" ever organize or order? What galaxy did "nature" ever design? Are we not reminded of the questions that the Lord put to the overexalted Job many centuries ago?

And the laws that keep the worlds in motion—perfect, harmonious, unfathomable—did "nature" establish them? The laws of force, of gravity, of magnetism, of electricity—did the powers that "nature" chanced to have organize and design these?

The Concept of Life...

Consider the many forms of life. Can you honestly believe all these evolved from a series of mistakes that "nature" made in forming itself together? How did life originate? A number of researchers have concluded that the possibility of life arising by chance is so small that we can only say it is an impossibility. Modern research has disclosed that the cells which compose our bodies "live" by some 38 special particles which are "lined up" in a certain order. The probability of the required order in a single protein molecule resulting from "chance" would be one time out of 10 to the 43rd power (the number 10 followed by 43 zeros)—a figure which totally removes any "chance" arrangement of these molecules from the realm of possibility. And we are speaking only of "chance arrangement," not of *functional* arrangement, that is, an arrangement that *works*. I might put all the necessary gears inside a clock, and even have them in the correct order, but the clock will not work unless the gears are properly meshed, spaced, secured, and so on.

The problem with the concept "life" is that we do not know exactly what we are talking about. We do not even know what makes the right combination of chemicals *live*. We can try to determine what elements are present in living beings, but putting these same chemicals together does not give us "life." Thus, the proper

Thousands of millions of galaxies have been discovered, each containing thousands of millions of stars.

arrangement of the elements is only one small aspect of life. Most animals are made up of cells which, according to one author, are each one "as complicated as New York City." Can any thinking person believe that "nature," given millions of billions of years of time, could ever produce so complex a mechanism as a single living cell—without any *higher* direction, much less produce a creature with such physical and mental capabilities as the human body? In the face of such intricacies, how can any living person declare himself independent from the God who has given him life? Must we not say with the Prophet of old, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God"? (Deut. 29:29).

The Whole Creation Testifies

During an interview with the editorial staff of the *U.S. News and World Report*, Dr. Billy Graham was asked, "Is there really a God in heaven?" to which he replied: "Yes, sir, there is a God. God is not 'dead.'" He then continued: "There are many evidences pointing to the fact that there is a God, but I don't think we can draw a scientific conclusion. We can't go to a laboratory and demonstrate Him. And we are living in such a scientific age that people today doubt almost everything that they can't put in a test tube."

That is the source of the problem to many people. We can't demonstrate God as we can a chemical reaction, but how can we argue against the silent evidence of His creation? Are we to place so much confidence in our scientific process that we fail to recognize the marvels of creation in which we live?

A large part of the problem with modern humanism arises from two factors. One is the falsities which have been proclaimed so long in the name of religion, giving mankind a distorted picture of the Creator and His plan; and second is man's unwillingness to acknowledge a power above and beyond himself.

The Old False God...

Is it not true that the "God" men used to believe in was a worthless God of their own creating—a God who

would punish His unworthy children with eternal torment; a God who required the death of His innocent Son to appease His anger toward His erring children; a God who had lived through all eternity and had never done anything until about 6000 years ago when He made this little earth, the sun, the moon and the stars; a God who would condemn all the human family for the sins of their greatest greatest grandfather Adam? Is it any wonder that such a God can no longer exist in the enlightenment of the 20th century?

How thankful we can be to know that such a god is not the God of the Bible, but is only the creation of man's imagination. And how thankful also, to know the true God of the Bible, and that "the God who lived in Moses' time is just the same today." Did not the prophet Jeremiah express what our attitude should be? "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me" (Jer. 9:24). Is not this our highest glory and joy, that we know the one, eternal God of heaven, that we know that He is and that He will reward all those who diligently seek Him, so that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6)?

In a world of disillusionment, we can proudly declare that we are not our own, that in God "we live and move and have a being," that on Him we are dependent for every breath we breathe and every prospect we have of life beyond this world. We are not *independent*; we are totally *dependent*. Is it not a fact in which we can rejoice?

What is the real reason that men doubt God and overlook His plans? The problem is that He is silent. He has not spoken now for so many years, that most people conclude He never will. Like the volcano that is silent, that has not erupted for so many centuries, they think it never will. But the imminent intervention of God is even more sure than the erupting of a volcano—it will happen, as surely as He has spoken, and in His own appointed time, no sooner, no later.

Today God is silent. We see no miracles, have no visions, and no visitations. It was a subject of prophecy that this condition would exist during a part of the day of salvation. And the forgetful attitude of mankind was also forecast: Men would say, "God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it" (Ps. 10:11). They say in their hearts, "The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil" (Zeph. 1:12). Sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, "therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11).

But the fact that God is silent is sure evidence that He *will* someday speak. In one dramatic moment, as the "lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west," our Lord (Emmanuel, God with us), will arrive, and God's long silence will be broken. "The Lord also
(Continued on page 10)

Declaration of Dependence

July, 1982

"When in the course of human events there comes an opportunity for people to separate themselves from the world into which they were born, when there is revealed a means of separation from the way of living which is taking millions to destruction, from the existence which is merely to eat, drink and tomorrow die; and to acknowledge the One who is the source of all truth and all good, who is in fact the Way to Life—life as a present quality and eternal life in the future; when there comes an opportunity to secure this eternal prospect for ourselves and to offer the same to others, there comes also a time when such people must recognize their dependency.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people are incapable of living as their own masters; neither do any of us have power to extend our lives beyond that which is allotted us. We are unable to save ourselves.

"Yet we have within us a desire for fruitfulness, for meaning and fulfillment. The great Creator has set eternity in our hearts, and built within us a willpower capable of transcending ourselves and our low surroundings and reaching even to His levels of thought.

"But we need guidance. We need the help of a Higher Power to save us from ourselves. We need help from above. We hereby declare our only hope to be this—that we have been noted by our God, in Him have been called to a Higher Life. We therefore, the people who are gathered here today in His holy Name, do hereby declare our dependence upon Him, with a firmer resolve that we shall show ourselves indeed worthy of our privileges, that sin shall no longer reign in us but that we shall henceforth be His, and shall recognize our right to take no liberties with anything He forbids, but to live wholly within His will, to do always and only the things that are pleasing to Him, and thus to find freedom ultimately from the bondage of mortality.

"In humble recognition of God's graciousness to us, and His handiwork all about us, we do hereby declare our dependence upon Him and pledge ourselves to a life of faithful obedience."

Signed _____

shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem" (Joel 3:16). Those who survive that roaring forth will know that God is alive.

Our Declaration of Dependence

We are living in an age of science and technology—and scepticism. What should we do? While men and women everywhere are forsaking Him and forgetting that He exists, what should we do? Let us counter the disbelief around us by being living examples of the strength of genuine Christian faith in God; and let us reaffirm our faith by signing our own *declaration of dependence*.

What are we saying in declaring our dependence on God? We are telling God that we want Him to tell us what to do, that we are depending on Him for directions in this project we call "life," how we should act, what we should think about, how we should feel. We are depending on Him to establish our scale of values, our attitudes, and our patterns of behavior in this world. We are depending on Him for everything that makes us what we are. We are depending on Him for instructions in every particular, and saying that we will obey. No small matter is this declaration of dependence!

Oh, let us take seriously our dependence upon God, and remember it through all the days ahead of us, that we may be chosen as one of His eternal dependents, even to be His own sons and daughters, to join His eternal family and be *His* forever. MM

Give Up All—and Follow

WE MUST always be willing to give up all and follow Jesus. This means to give up our own ways and accept God's ways and thoughts. This is not an easy task, for we sometimes think God is asking too much of us. But who are we to judge what the Lord should ask us to do? Of course, it is in our best interest to do what He bids us to do. We know that "the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by his actions are weighed" (1 Sam. 2:3).

History tells us of men who had knowledge and wealth, but these things in themselves do not count in the Lord's sight. It is not enough to have these things, but to give up all and become meek followers of God is our duty. To give up all does not mean we should give away all our temporal belongings or money, but it means to give up our own ways and accept God's ways and thoughts.

As we reflect on the lives of Moses, Abraham and Paul, we wonder often if we could give up the things these men of old gave up. It took an unwavering faith in things not seen to give up all and follow the Lord's commands.

In order to be partaker of the same glory those men worked for, we must run with determination, as Paul described in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (9:24-26). If we would look to the joy at the end of the race, we would gladly renounce all sin.

Since the Lord hates men who are half and half (Ps. 119:113, Moffatt Bible), it behooves us to put away our own ways and accept the Lord's. If we intend to win the battle, let us fight with vigor and win it!—Cont.

Stick Fast to Your Faith

Stick fast to your faith.

Through the darkness of grief
Hold the torch of belief;
Through the long hours of care,
Thick with doubt and despair,
When the brambles and thorns
Tear your flesh; and the scorns
Of the thoughtless attack,
And men stab at your back—

Stick fast to your faith.

Stick fast to your faith.

Meet your care face to face,
Do not stoop to disgrace;
To the dangers that wait
Journey head high and straight,
And fall, if you must,
But go down to the dust
Clinging still to the truth
Which was taught in your youth—

Stick fast to your faith.

Stick fast to your faith!

'Tis your armor of might
As you dare to be right;
'Tis your strength for the blow
That is struck by your foe,
Your counsel and guide
When your soul's being tried,
The one treasure real
That no pirate can steal—

Stick fast to your faith!

Stick fast to your faith,

It will live through the years
And sustain you through tears;
It will teach you to smile
Though the whole world revile,
All the way to the end
It will serve as your friend,
It will help you to bear
Every burden of care—

Stick fast to your faith!

— *And Still She Speaks* —

Part Seven

The following lines are extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).

In the 27th verse of our lesson (Job 5) are these striking words, "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know it is for thy good." We have searched it and heard it, now let us obey it; if we do, we shall be putting away some evil every day and we will be ready for that great Day.

Think of Isaiah 40:26, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things." Millions and billions of worlds in the vast immensity of the universe, show the handiwork of that Mighty Being! I do not wonder that we read in Job 5 that He "doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number."

We are like clay in the hands of the potter; and if we will allow it, the Potter will mold us into vessels of honor. If we will not submit, we shall be cast out; but that will not be the fault of the Potter.

We could look back fifty, forty, thirty or twenty years ago when someone had not treated us right and our feelings were hurt; we could remember many things; but we must forget the things which are behind. Our eyes should be on the grand eternal things and we should be working for that glorious prize of eternal life.

Jesus pictures two ways (Matt. 7:13-14); one is the broad, easy way, but it leads to destruction, only a few fleeting years to enjoy it in. On the other hand is the narrow way, not many will walk in it, but oh, it leads to eternal happiness and joy that will never end, pleasures that shall never pass away.

"We faint not," wrote Paul. If he, living in the first century with all the terrible persecutions, did not faint, we certainly should not, living in the cool of the day of salvation.

How strange that we reason better when working for temporal things than we do on eternal matters! Say, for example, there is a young man starting out in life, and someone comes and offers to hire him, and says, "I will give you so much of all you want to eat and wear, and you can go to the picture shows every night; I will buy you everything your heart desires, and what your eyes lust after, but I will not give you any money, nothing to lay up for you when you grow old.

But a Mr. Ford comes along and offers the young man work at a wage that would assure every comfort and necessity of life, but nothing to be spent for luxuries. He would say, "I will give life insurance, accident insurance, and when you are 50 years old I will pension you. You will have the assurance that you shall have something for old age."

You would say in a moment, if you were reasonable, that the young man ought to choose what Mr. Ford offered. You would see that would be the wiser plan for this life, in the temporal.

Now God says you can have this life, and you can use it just as you please, but in the end you will get eternal destruction. Or if you choose to serve Me, I will give you not only sufficient for this life but a life that shall never be destroyed. And I can prove that I have sufficient strength to carry out My promises.

Are we not far wiser to choose the second plan?

"These are murmurers, complainers..." (Jude 16). Oh, we do not want to be a murmurer, a complainer; we do not want to think God's way is hard. It is a glorious way, a way of freedom, a way of life and glory, a way to conquer our nature. God's way is best. That is the very way we want to feel. When we listen to God's words we are becoming better, happier than when we listen to the promptings of our own mind. It makes us happier in this life; it has been a glorious way to make us better. Every individual who has followed it through will testify to it.

"This is the Way"

ONE OF the many meaningful words of the Bible is the word *walk*. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). "Abram . . . walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1).

Some of the wonder of the miracle recounted in John 5:8 is highlighted with the words, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The cripple in a wheelchair feels it would be a wonderful thing to be able to rise up and walk.

Spiritually, many are content with an easy-chair religion which leaves everything to God and makes few demands upon them. But in I Thessalonians 2:11-12, the apostle Paul says, "(We) charged every one of you . . . that ye would walk worthy of God." Something to do!

There is about this an element of urgency that cannot be ignored. The Apostle might be saying, "If you want to overcome evil, walk in God's will." Walking in this way implies diligent action and a *close relationship* with God, such as that manifested by the Old Testament patriarch Enoch with his God.

Here was a man who was more at home with God than with any of his earthly friends. In Scotland there is an old phrase which is used to describe a deeply religious person. His friends say, "He is far ben with God."

Likewise, when the two early Christians walked along the Emmaus road with Jesus, they afterwards declared, "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?"

This kind of walking is necessary for those who would benefit from walking with God. Amos, the shepherd-prophet, God's mouthpiece to a wayward nation, says, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

Are we walking in the same direction as God? Are we walking along with Him? God is always in the right way; and if we are walking with Him, we too must be in the right way. He chooses best who chooses God.

Walking in this way involves us in a willingness to *share*. When we walk with a friend we can often unburden our hearts. Are you opening your heart honestly to God? Recognize the needs of your life—and then share these needs with your Heavenly Father.

Walking together requires communication—sometimes by words, sometimes by spirit with spirit. Much of the misunderstanding of life can be resolved if we keep the lines of communication open. Two people, walking hand in hand, may not be uttering a word but they are very much aware of and communicating with each other.

We must be concerned with the quality of our life. Paul

expresses this when he says, "Walk worthy of God."

A healthy, meaningful relationship with God means having His standard of values. What is expected of me? Is the quality of my walk with God at any point dishonest or insincere? Am I constantly changing direction or being less than frank and honest with God? Am I living up to what He expects of His partner?

A proper relationship must always have *priorities*. Daily walking worthy of God means that God's will stands at the very center of my life.

Is it home, work, friends, or success which is the dominant factor? All of these are important but they must take second place to God. Jesus said, "If any man come to me, and (be not willing to suffer the loss of) his father, and mother, and wife, and children and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Strong language whose implications we would like to avoid—but we cannot and remain true to the priorities as they stand.

Furthermore, the worthy walk means *personal integrity*. In recognizing this, Paul sees it as a call to Christian perfection. It is possible to achieve this only by strictest moral and spiritual integrity.

Personal worth to God is bound up in the New Testament with our human relationships and how we conduct ourselves among the members of our family, our friends, our business acquaintances or whoever we chance to meet. In the worthy walk we should be developing more and more openheartedness toward God and allow Him daily to lead us into all truth, establishing our hearts unblamable in holiness before God at the coming of Jesus Christ.

Personal integrity and honesty require this—all this and nothing less.

Holiness of heart is that relationship of worth we are called upon to exhibit as we walk worthy of God.

As we learn to walk closer and closer with God, we can more confidently face the future with hope and trust in God, increasing and abounding in all the beautiful virtues of holiness.

And what is the promise for so doing?

The prophet Isaiah says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Allow God's Word to rule and direct your life. Walk "worthy of God."

"This is the way, walk ye in it."

MM

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

APOSTASY: Departing from the Faith

WHEN WE read the history of our nation, we shudder to think what might have been had not our country been favored to be under the hand of God. Had our forebears not been men of strong will and foresight, we might not have had the freedoms we now enjoy.

Because of the importance of freedom of thought to the ending of the apostasy, we will review briefly the history of our nation in this final section of our study. The freedoms that we have inherited were not obtained without cost. Many fought, sacrificed, and died that freedom might live.

V. NEW FRONTIERS

Tierra Tierra! Land at last! It was 2:00 a.m., October 12, 1492. The sea was calm; a full moon lighted the warm, summery night, silhouetting the islands ahead against the horizon. Only 48 hours before, Columbus had promised his crew that if land were not sighted within three days, they would turn back toward Spain. So distraught were the men after weeks on the open water that they threatened mutiny, fearing they would never see land again. But now, land was in sight.

Columbus with his three small ships had reached the islands of the Caribbean Sea. Thinking he had reached the area of India and the Indian Ocean, he confidently called the islands the "Indies" and their inhabitants "Indians." He made three later journeys to the area, still believing it to be part of Asia. Men had not yet comprehended the expanse of the oceans or mapped the continents. Columbus died in 1506, never knowing that he had discovered a new continent.

The discovery of this new continent across the ocean was but one more step in God's plan for the earth. The reformation of the 16th century brought some relief from Roman domination in Europe, but it did not end all religious persecution. In England, religion was no longer limited to the Catholic Church, but it was still under the direct jurisdiction of the king, and far from

free. Any other form of worship than that officially prescribed was forbidden.

A. The American Colonies

In 1603, James I of England (the King James for whom our common version of the Bible is named) restated a decree of Henry VIII, declaring the Church of England (also called the Anglican Church), to be the only legal church in England. Any who defied the rule were arrested and jailed.

But not all were pleased with the king's decree. Education was improving, and people were beginning to think for themselves. They wanted to be free to choose their minister and to study their Bibles as they saw fit. So a certain group separated from the state church to hold private meetings in their several homes. Threatened with arrest and imprisonment, these Separatists crossed the English Channel to Holland where they were free to worship as they chose.

It was now 1620. The Separatists had been in Holland more than ten years. But Holland was preparing for war. Where could they go? Some had heard of the Jamestown Colony that had been established in America several years earlier. Sailors had returned to Europe with glowing reports of land that could be had for staking a claim, virgin forests, fertile valleys and, above all, land where no one would persecute another for his religious beliefs. To America they would go.

1. The Pilgrims. The story of the Mayflower and the perilous crossing of the Atlantic is familiar history. The Separatists had obtained permission to found a colony near Jamestown, but due to faulty calculations in navigation, the Mayflower landed several hundred miles north, on the New England coast. By the time they found a safe harbor and went ashore at Plymouth, Mass., it was December 20 and winter—a season for which they were ill prepared. Before spring arrived, their numbers had been cut in half. But when the Mayflower sailed for England the next spring, not one of the survivors chose to go.

The faith and courage of these people beggars description. Doctrinally, they knew only the religion they

had received from their forefathers. But they believed in God and trusted Him to deliver them. Their last thought upon leaving the old country was to ask His blessing on their voyage, and their first thought on reaching the shores of America was to thank Him for a safe journey. They believed that it was God's will for them to depart their homeland and carry the Christian religion to farther shores. It is recorded that their pastor preached a special sermon the day before their departure using as his text the words of Ezra: "The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him" (8:22).

William Bradford, governor of the colony who wrote the history of the early years of Plymouth Colony, wrote that the "sermon on this text took most of the day...a day spent very profitably," that as the Lord was with Ezra, so might He be with them. The day before they embarked was "proclaimed a day of solemn humiliation...a day for pouring out prayers to the Lord with great fervency."

From these small beginnings, America grew. We gratefully acknowledge our religious heritage. Without it, America would never have become the "land of the free," nor a safe haven for the rebirth of the true religion.

2. The Puritans. Like the Separatists before them, the Puritans fled religious persecution in England and came to America, but under more favorable circumstances. About a thousand of them left England in 1630, arriving in Massachusetts in mid-June, joining a small colony already established. Before they left their homeland their leader, John Winthrop, preached a sermon reminiscent of Moses' farewell address, in which he emphasized their responsibility to God. Like the Pilgrims, they knew only the religion of their ancestors, but they believed in God, and that it was His will for them to inhabit the New World.

The Massachusetts Bay Colony was described as a "Bible Commonwealth," with a code of laws based on the Old Testament. Civil rights were restricted, however; the stranger was not welcomed as under Moses' Law. Only those who would make "public testimony of their conversion" could attend services or enjoy civil rights.

The Puritans, so named for their scrupulous moral lives, dominated the colonies for nearly a century. For them, the church was as important to a new town as a school and their houses. Puritan family life was a model that Americans today might do well to copy. The family sat down together for all meals. Before breakfast and again before supper, the father of the family read from the Bible, then all joined in prayers before the father gave thanks to God for the meal.

After supper there was again Bible reading and prayers before bed. Their whole life was centered about the church. Sunday was reserved for two church services and rest. No work was done; food to be eaten was prepared the day before.

By the end of the 18th century, Puritan dominance, though still strong, had declined. But Puritan influence remained. The Puritans were the forefathers of the founders of our Constitution; their strong religious faith was so thoroughly instilled in their posterity that it is evident in all the documents that secured the independence of our nation. Only God-fearing men, guided by an unseen hand, could have accomplished such a formidable task.

B. Religion in the Colonies

While the majority of the early settlers of America came here seeking religious freedom, religion was not entirely free from government interference until the Bill of Rights was approved by the states and became part of the Constitution. Each colonist wanted it for himself and his particular religion, but made no allowance for the religion of another. Consequently, those who made laws in the colony made them according to their own particular beliefs, and there was no tolerance for the beliefs of another. Nor were they above persecuting those who did not agree with the established religion. All citizens, regardless of individual preference, were taxed to support the state church. Those who refused to pay received harsh treatment, often being banished from the colony. Boston expelled the Quakers and set a death penalty for any who might return after expulsion. Roger Williams was banished from Massachusetts because he protested church control over state affairs. He founded the colony of Rhode Island, naming the town of Providence to show his gratitude for God's protection. He was the founder of the Baptist Church in America.

Virginia had laws that denied civil rights of property and inheritance to any "person brought up in the Christian religion who denies the being of God, or the Trinity, or who asserts that there are more gods than one, or denies the Christian religion to be true, or denies the divine authority of the Scriptures." Men like Thomas Jefferson, himself a Virginian, deplored such laws, but they remained in effect in Virginia for more than 30 years.

Maryland was the first colony to practice religious toleration toward all faiths, passing the Religious Toleration Act in 1634. Outside of Maryland, there were no religious or civil rights for Catholics in America until about 1700. Religious freedom, even in America, did not come quickly or easily.

C. Free at Last

"We therefore, the representatives of the United States of America,...appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do,...solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown,...And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge...our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

With these words, the 13 colonies declared their independence, relying on the God in whom they so firmly believed, to help them to this end. This was our first Independence Day, July 4, 1776.

The Declaration itself did not actually establish the independence of our nation; but it stated an intention to be free. And once stated, there was no turning back.

Total independence was secured only after several years of war and at great cost in men and money. But a new nation had been born, "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Its discovery had been Divinely ordained that God's plan for this earth might be fulfilled.

In all ages, God has operated through human instruments. To such men as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and others not as well known we are indebted. Through their efforts came the freedoms we so highly prize: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the right to assemble peaceably, and the right to own property. These freedoms, and others, were spelled out in the first ten amendments to the Constitution, identified as the Bill of Rights, freedoms that to this day are enjoyed by only a small part of the world's population. It was all part of the plan of God for the ending of the long apostasy.

D. The Awakening

Prophets of God foresaw the beginning of the apostasy. They foresaw also its end. Daniel, in a vision, saw both: "Then I Daniel looked, and behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" (Dan. 12:5-6).

The water Daniel saw was symbolic of the "water of life," the Word of God, and the "man clothed in linen" that was upon the water was God's angel, guarding the Word of life until someone on this side of the apostasy should arise and again teach the sound doctrine of the Bible. We have seen in this study how the Bible was preserved through the darkest ages of the history of

the world, unaltered and intact. We have also seen how tradition and philosophy, were combined to cover the sound doctrine of the Word with the commandments and doctrines of men. Centuries of teaching error had totally obscured its true teachings, and it remained in that obscured state until someone had the courage to challenge the commonly accepted ideas with a plain "Thus saith the Lord."

In Matthew 25, Jesus spoke a parable which was a prophecy of the apostasy—its beginning and its end. While the bridegroom (Christ) "tarried, they all slumbered and slept"—when they should have been alert and watching for His return. But at midnight, "there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The "midnight cry" foretold the ending of the apostasy; someone would dare again to speak and live by the Word of God.

We believe that "someone" was our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols. We believe this, not because he claimed any supernatural gifts or powers but because his accomplishments parallel the divine record and the forecast of the end of the apostasy as those of no other man we know of.

The new frontier had a special purpose in the plan of God; it proved to be the forum where true religion could once again be proclaimed. But not in a moment, not in a dazzling blaze of glory did it happen.

There was no still small voice speaking in a dream, nor were there any angelic visitations. God works slowly, using human instruments and human situations as He finds them for His purposes. And in this instance, He used a country that was less than a hundred years old.

The original thirteen colonies prospered and grew, and as they grew the groundwork for religious freedom was laid. Westward they spread, as new states were added. By 1850 there were 30 states stretching all the way to the Pacific Ocean. The population had multiplied ten times—from two million to more than 20 million. But much of the frontier was still unexplored and inaccessible. And for good reason. Highways were poor and impassable in winter. Railroads were few, bridges were scarce, and the airplane was still confined to the realm of dreamers.

Our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, was a frontier youth, born in Indiana in 1844. At 14, he moved with his family to a new frontier in northern Wisconsin. When he was 30 he moved with his wife to Oregon, where he was a farmer.

Raised by a devout mother, he was taught from a child to reverence God and His Word. Bible reading was a regular part of each day's activities, and he soon began to read and study the Bible for himself. His mother knowing only the "orthodox" doctrines of the

nominal church, he and his sisters were taught these.

By the time he had reached his teens, his keen mind had noted discrepancies between what the minister said and what the Bible seemed to teach, and he vowed to study until he could understand what the Bible really taught, and to speak the truth whether or not it agreed with accepted teaching.

Relying on God's words, "If thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. 2:3-5), he began the monumental task of seeking the true teachings of the Bible.

Through the years those who would accept the true teaching of the Bible have been but few, but that is in accord with the words of Jesus, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14)—yet how many believe that the majority of mankind will be saved.

Points of Difference

We will review a few of the commonly accepted religious doctrines which differ strikingly with Scripture.

1) The immortal soul. Since the philosophers came into the church, Christendom has accepted almost universally the idea that man has a separate soul that leaves the body and goes to heaven at death. The Bible says that man *is* a soul; the words "immortal soul" cannot be found between the covers of the Bible. But we do find that souls die: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20).

2) The cross of Christ as an instrument of our salvation. Nearly all Christendom worship the cross on which Christ died as the source of their salvation. But the Bible says that daily cross bearing is the means of salvation: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). The death that saves is not Jesus' death on Calvary, but the death that crucifies us to all that opposes God, the death of our own sinful natures and sinful tendencies, the death "to sin" (Rom. 6:10).

3) Adamic condemnation, or original sin. It is commonly accepted that all mankind, being descendants of Adam, are condemned because Adam sinned. But the Bible reveals that "his own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins" (Prov. 5:22), not the sin of Adam. "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20b).

4) The reward in heaven. Contrary to the widely believed idea that the righteous go to heaven at death,

the Bible teaches that the righteous will remain on the earth. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," were the words of Jesus' (Matt. 5:5). The fact is stated six times in the 37th Psalm, and again in Proverbs: "The righteous shall never be removed; but the wicked shall not inhabit the land" (Prov. 10:30).

5) "No human being was ever perfect," is an oft repeated phrase. But Jesus commanded, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48)—He said it and He meant it. Not that we are expected to be as God in nature, but we are to become morally perfect, and this is a state not beyond human capability. Neither God nor Jesus ever asked us to do something we could not.

6) Elijah the prophet—not John the Baptist—is to be the forerunner of Christ's second advent. Again the Bible is explicit: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5), and Jesus confirmed the prophet Malachi: "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11). Jesus could not have referred to John, for John at this time was already dead, and Jesus spoke of a future event: "Elias...shall first come." Elijah will be the forerunner of Christ's second coming, just as John heralded His first coming.

7) Right living, thinking, believing, and acting is the key to salvation. "There is nothing you can do to save yourself," is the common theme of the evangelist. But the Bible teaches "good works" from beginning to end. Jesus promises to reward everyone "according to his works" (Rev. 22:12); Paul wrote to Titus that he "might be careful to maintain good works," for they "are good and profitable unto men" (Tit. 3:8); he reminded the Ephesians that "God hath before ordained that we should walk in" good works (Eph. 2:10); and Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Praise God, the light of true religion again shines. "The light shines in the darkness," though the darkness "has not understood it" (John 1:5, NIV). The apostasy has ended. The message is again sounding: "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.... Even so come, Lord Jesus."

Selecting Entertainment

THE BIBLE states in clear terms the ethics of the Christian. Those who follow Christ must do so within boundaries that He has established. They are not free to do as they please. As the apostle Paul stated it, "... 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).

Not only does following Christ involve the great positives of doing right but also the avoidance of wrongdoing. This is especially true in the area of entertainment. Especially in this area must the Christian exercise his powers of decision and discretion to avoid music, literature and activities that in any way dishonor God. As the word of God says again, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). As we all know, most that "entertains" does not do so to the greater glory of God.

Maintaining a Christian standard of entertainment means accepting three basic principles:

1. *The Christian's responsibility for leisure time.* As Christians we are responsible for the use we make of all our time, including that which we use for relaxation and diversion.

2. *The Christian's obligation to apply the highest moral standards at all times.* In this day of great moral confusion and degeneration, the encroachment of the evil into nearly every home by radio, literature, and television is a constant threat. Over these potentially evil influences we must be constantly watchful. We are responsible for the evil we allow to enter by each of these means.

3. *The Christian's obligation to refuse to patronize those industries that are known to be promoters of evil.* Here our church takes a firm stand against motion picture theater (cinema), most television, and other ventures which portray the cheap, the violent, the sensual and pornographic, lawlessness, etc., which undermine God's lofty standard of holiness of heart and life.

4. *The Christian's duty to refrain from social involvement or association with those who seek the loves and interests of the present system, and to avoid the company of those who might tend to weaken or tear down our high ideals.*

Always we are confronted by the opportunity for evil in one form or another, from without or within. It is our duty as Christians to follow the advice Paul gave to Timothy centuries ago: "Keep thyself pure." We do not have to be entangled; we do not have to be degraded; we do not have to be involved in the evil that is all about us.

Dr. Sorokin, late sociology professor of Harvard, once discussed the powerful influence of evil entertainment. He stated that the movie industry, which for the most part portrays the violent and criminal and sensuous, was and is the greatest single destructive force in the land. Since his death it has continued to worsen.

Our church believes that the serious Christian cannot attend these portrayals and maintain his high standards, not only because of the degraded content of the films but also to keep from supporting the evil element or partaking with them. If we would demonstrate that we belong to Christ, we must not knowingly support evil either by influence or patronage. All we are and have is the Lord's. We cannot transgress our stewardship to Him and contribute to the forces that now rage almost unchecked as a plague across the world or we will find ourselves someday partaking also in the harvest of the evil, when our Lord returns with judgments upon all who know not Him and obey not His gospel.

In this day of relaxing standards our church continues to rigidly maintain its ban on movie and theater attendance as Biblically supported and the only position that can truly honor God. In this day of sorely degraded minds and social appetites, let us continue to maintain our high standard and keep ourselves pure in the midst of a wicked and adulterous generation, among whom we are commissioned to shine "as lights in the world." MM

Mistakes of Man

The tendency to worry about things that cannot be changed or corrected.

Insisting that a thing is impossible because we cannot accomplish it.

Refusing to set aside trivial preferences.

Neglecting development and refinement of the mind, and not acquiring the habit of reading and studying the Bible.

Stopping the Leaks of Life

Author Unknown

ONE DAY John D. Rockefeller of the great Standard Oil Empire was inspecting one of his plants. The plant superintendent was escorting his distinguished boss down a long row of machines. When they came to an apparatus that was soldering lids on cans of motor oil, Rockefeller stopped in front of a machine and bent down to study it closely. For several minutes, he stood there, watching carefully, as the drops of molten metal fell down from a spout along the edge of the lid. At last he raised up and spoke to the superintendent: "How many drops of solder does it take to seal the can properly?" Surprised, the superintendent replied that he did not know. In fact no one had even thought of it. They just adjusted the machines, turned and went about their business, trusting it to get the job done. "Well," said Mr. Rockefeller, "I think you use too many drops. I counted 45 on each can but I see some excess is lost every time. I wish you would check this setup very carefully and determine exactly how many drops are needed to seal the can. Let me know what you find out."

In a few days, Mr. Rockefeller got his report: Thirty-six were not quite enough and thirty-seven were just a little too much. So the machine was adjusted to deposit 37 drops on the can. What was the difference? They had been using 45 drops and now they were using 37. Who would quarrel over 8 little drops of solder? Well, John D. Rockefeller would! That 8 drops of solder saved on every can of oil amounted to an increase of \$50,000.00 a year in his income. This is as good a lesson as I have heard on the subject of thrift.

Thrift is a word little understood in a day of squandered values. But before a young man can hope to succeed in a business world, before he can use his time to the best advantage, he must understand something about thrift. Most people have some understanding of dollars but few have any understanding of pennies. Yet, in the penny lies the secret of success in business. Big men learn to handle the pennies and let the dollars fall in line. A man who cannot control his pennies will find his dollars leaking away. This is a law of economics, and must be recognized and respected by any human being before he can hope to succeed in the business world.

Watching the leaks of life: How easy it is for pennies to

leak through our hands. A nickel here, a dime there, another nickel here, and in a course of a day, a dollar has slipped away and we cannot account for it. Tomorrow will be the same, and the next day. In a week \$6.00 or \$7.00 has slipped away as silently as the fog disappears before the morning sun. In a year several hundred dollars have gone. In a lifetime, many thousands of dollars have slipped down the drain, not doing anyone any good. It is never good to be stingy. Every man ought to pay his way and share in the expenses of life. But we speak here of leaks, the leaks that sap our substance and leave us with nothing but a puzzled frown and wondering what happened to our money.

I have noticed when I start out in the morning with a pocket full of change, that that change is usually pretty well disappeared by the end of the day. Where did it go? It is gone! If I had not taken that change with me, I would not have spent the money, and would still own it. For this reason I know it is not good to carry a pocket full of change all the time. It is one of the leaks of life.

One of life's serious leaks is impulsive buying. A fellow sees an object in a store window, it captures his fancy, on the spur of the moment he buys it. For a few minutes, he admires it, then lays it aside. It gathers dust and one day he will give it to charity to be handed down to the poor. It was a leak of life. A fellow needs to use his head when buying. Never buy on impulse. Wait a few hours or a week before you buy the object that so strikingly hit your eye. Usually, after a week you will be glad you didn't buy the thing. Impulse buying is even more serious when one buys on credit. Turning some people on credit is like releasing a pack of starving hounds in a Frankfurt factory. A fellow sees something he likes. "Put it on the ticket," he says, and packs the ticket away. But, at the first of the month when he gets the bill, he condemns himself for having bought it. Credit is a good thing and every man ought to have good credit. But, one's credit ought to be used carefully as a druggist fills a complicated prescription. Credit buying can destroy those who use it unwisely.

In the old days, before the modern rifle was invented, it took one minute to load the rifle with wadding, powder, cap and ball. That minute could be critical. An Indian

could shoot a dozen well-aimed arrows in that time. For this reason the pioneer knew he had to make every shot count. He studied his target, he used all the patience he could muster. He fired his rifle only when he was satisfied it would count most. His very life and the life of his family often depended on it.

Money ought to be spent in exactly the same way. This isn't being stingy. It is simply using one's every means to the best end. It is conserving one of God's blessings. Money must be respected. It is a tool for good. Man can build an industry; create jobs so others can make money. With money, a man can send out the gospel; he can feed the poor; clothe the naked; and he can heal the sick. The right use of money is wholesome, pure and good. To disrespect money is to disrespect one of God's blessings.

Time is another blessing of life that can leak away, if one is not careful. Once I thought I would never get old enough to graduate from high school. The days were so long! But now I've lived three times that long and it seems to have happened overnight. Sometimes I find it a little hard to believe. And the man who faces me in the mirror in the morning is almost a half century old. Invest your time, young fellow, as the western rifleman invested the shots from his gun. Make it count! When you waste hours, you waste life for time is what life is made of. Unless one is careful one will let life leak away, and be far on toward old age before he knows what is happening to him. God help you to stop the leaks of precious time. Make the hours produce something of material or spiritual good for yourself and for the world.

A man may let his talents leak away. The gift of intellect can lie around unused or used on trifles until one day the talent has lost its glow. When one allows his talents to go untrained, he is as foolish as a man who casts his dollars in the whirlpool. Talents must be developed or they will die. Beethoven had a natural talent for music. From the time he was 5 years old, he practiced hours every day.

Opportunity can leak away unless one is careful. A splendid man whom I respect highly told me a little story about himself. As a youth, he attracted the friendship and goodwill of a doctor. The doctor made him a proposition. "Son," he said, "I want you to come and live in my house. When I go on a call at night, you will go and harness my horse to a buggy and have things ready for me by the time I'm dressed. Help me in this way for a while and I will send you to a medical school." This lad was an orphan with no hope; but he was sharp, keen of mind, and gentle of heart. He would've made a topnotch physician or surgeon. But he thought things over. He was young and liked freedom. He could make more money than a doctor could pay him at that time. "No doctor, thanks, you see I have other things I want to do." Later this talented man regretted his decision. He spent his working days at extremely hard labor and was never

able to accumulate the many good things that would be available to him as a physician and he missed the chance to serve humanity in a much more effective manner. But by the time he had realized it, all this opportunity had leaked away.

Naturally a young man cannot be expected to have as good judgment as an older man perhaps possesses. But now and then one finds a boy willing to take a long look.

This is especially true in the matter of accepting the offer of eternal life. Though the things of here and now seem much more glittering, of much more value, the long look reveals a rare offer of a place in eternity. There, all we can desire and immeasurably more will enrich the youth who is able to recognize a good thing when he sees it and is willing to work for it, and, not only the world but the angels will extend congratulations when his race is won.

The Alphabet of Success

Attend carefully to details.

Be prompt to do all things.

Consider well, decide positively.

Dare to do the right at any hazard.

Endure trials patiently.

Fight your battles bravely.

Go not with evil associates.

Hold integrity sacred.

Injure not another.

Join hands only with the virtuous.

Keep your mind free from evil thoughts.

Lie not for any consideration.

Make few special acquaintances.

Never appear what you are not.

Observe good manners.

Pay your debts promptly.

Quality before quantity.

Respect parents' counsel.

Sacrifice money rather than principle.

Touch not, taste not intoxicating drinks.

Use leisure for improvement.

Venture not on the threshold of wrong.

Watch carefully over passions.

Xtend to all kindly greetings.

Yield not to temptation.

Zealously labor—

& success is certain.

Light from the Land of

W E IN America feel deeply for the Polish people in their recent plight, especially those among them who are of the household of faith. During recent months, words arriving from Poland are sparse, but all the more precious.

Below are a few extracts from an extensive correspondence between one of our local Polish-speaking members and a family in Poland (Richard and Elizabeth K.). Together the letters are a reminder which seems apropos at this season when we—so richly blest—remember our own Fourth of July. We who enjoy such peace, such freedom, and such abundance can only thank God that we were born in this free nation, and take more seriously our obligation to repay the debt we owe Him. —Editor

May 1982 Grateful

Sincere greetings to you, all the brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. I trust all is in good order with you. Our spring this year was very cold, lots of snow and little sun. I do like this season, though, very much. At this time of year we can observe the rebirth to life of God's great handiwork. But sadly, how few people see God in all His handiwork. How thankful I am He allowed me to recognize true knowledge contained in His creation and in His Word. I plead that He may help me to continue steadfast to the end, and I wish the same to all who love God.

With all our heart we thank you for the successive proofs of your friendliness. The package of clothing sent was all good and useful. Daniel was especially happy with the pants—I speak of them first because Daniel did not have any long ones for the summer, and I already was making a pattern to make him a pair—there are none in the stores to buy. I would have to sew late in the evening to do it. You have given me many hours of sleep.

We are happy with every little thing we get. Many of these items will not be in the stores for a long time, and the children are growing.

The black sweater is very warm and I have enjoyed its warmth already many times. Goes well with the black skirt I made over from my mother's dress. Sewing cotton and hooks are appreciated very much; for the longest time these articles cannot be bought here. All things sent were most needed, and thank you again.

As for myself, am happy to be returning to

my old habit of systematic study of God's Word. This past winter was the best for me in five years, concerning spare time. I feel quieter, in spite of all the hardships which are taking place in our country....We review various Bible subjects in our talks. We prize highly our knowledge of God, because our eternal life depends upon it.

The boys, Daniel and Mark, are learning more of the Bible history, its laws, precepts and promises. I trust in the Lord that these will take permanent hold in their hearts. With pleasure am observing Mark, who a short time ago could not concentrate sufficiently but who now is taking in our talks and readings. How engaged he is in the contents. (E. K.)

February 1982 Contact through Prayer

Out of necessity it seems much time is devoted to temporal things. God is my judge; they would not compose first place in our home if it were not for the existing situation in our country.

Of late have been reading a very interesting subject on the theme of prayer. It is a new observation to me in this present time, how easily we may contact God through prayer. Thanks be to God, every day, for that, that even in my most solitary aloneness am able to converse with Him. I pray never to lose this contact.

How very much I would like for our two boys to serve the Lord. As for us, thank God, as husband and wife, we chose the same path, which is a great blessing.

At present, can only say thank you for your Christian love. Some day, in harmony with the words of our Teacher, "Because I

live, ye shall live also." It will not be too long, everything points to it. God grant we may live to see it. (R. K.)

March 1982 Grateful

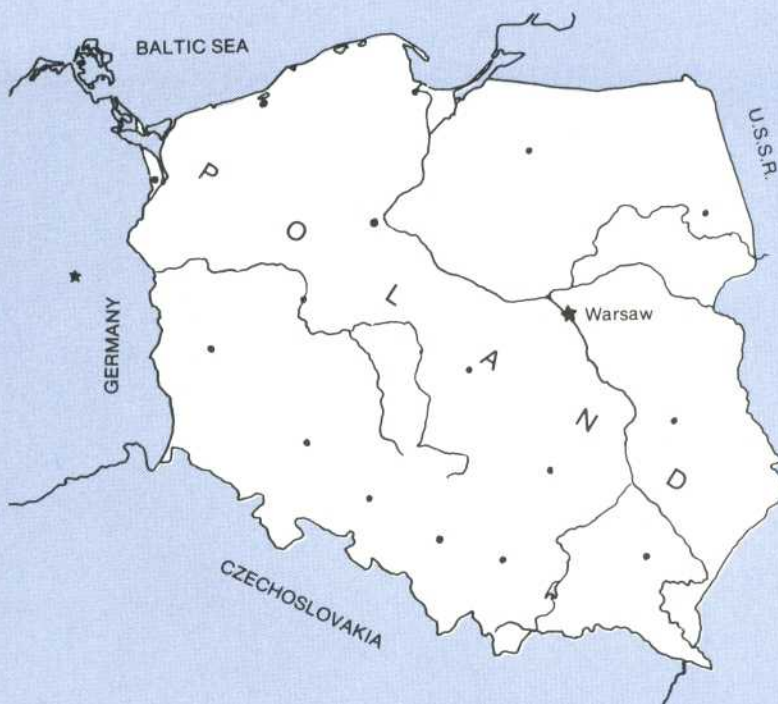
In these few words I wish to thank you very much for the alimentary assistance you supplied us with during recent time, coming from the deep of your heart and dictated by true Christian love.

We are very thankful for this as at present moment, in a very grave food situation, what you had sent means a lot and in an essential way makes wider our poor menu. In this situation when practically it is impossible to buy anything, as money lost all its value and is only a piece of paper without any coverage, when everywhere around there is only black market and man thinks only how to survive next day, we with great humility, and at the same time, with great gratitude accept all your aid, thanking the Omnipotent God for the existence of true God's people, who like Samaritan has an opened heart for the misery of its twin in Jesus Christ.

It is in the same time practical realization of these wonderful sciences and ideas which were preached and to which our Founder Rev. L.T. Nichols devoted himself. The great charity shown to us in these difficult days is proving to us your authentic and cordial engagement in following our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

Please accept from us our warmest thanks and wishes of many graces, peace and blessings of our God in our common pilgrimage to the Kingdom of our God. (R. & E. K.)

Oppression



January 1982
Relying on God

First of all, thank you for the Word of the Lord, to which you gave so much space in your letter. You are an example to me, having first of all in mind the things that are most important. We also, like you, desire to rely only on God, deriving from His Word joy, happiness, trust and love toward God and our fellowman. Thanks to His Word, I can think of you as a very close person although have never met you personally. At the same time I also greet my known and not known brothers and sisters with the words found in Numbers 6:24-26.

Trusting God, we are not concerned about tomorrow, even though many people around us have many reasons for concern. We have long before chosen the highest Authority, which we have given ourselves over to; therefore, we do not involve ourselves in the present disturbances taking place in our country but in accordance with the words of the Apostle Peter, II Pet. 3:13, we say as it is written there, "We according to his promise look for new heavens, and a new earth," and the glorious new holy city that shall be soon coming down (Rev. 21:2). Having this before our eyes with the help of the Lord we can bear patiently our difficulties and even the distresses of this present world.

Thank you for all your good advice rendered. Our actual conditions do not permit a separate bedroom for our son Daniel. My husband, our two boys, and myself, live with my mother in her apartment, which consists only of 1 bedroom and a kitchen. For our own personal apartment we've paid in 10 years already.

We will have to wait for it about 5 years more. Present time of waiting for living quarters has jumped from 15 to 20 years. This is sad, but nothing that can be helped. Time of waiting begins when one ends his 18th birthday. It is impossible to change one's place of living among others because of lack of apartments.

Up to this year we took our vacation with the children to the mountains and by the seashore for a month's period. This year we will not be able to go anywhere. With the price of food and tourist fare, we are not able to afford it. There will be no summer vacation.

I am very grateful for all you have sent the children to teach them the truth about God. They are very helpful and diversified. In all this I try to benefit to the utmost. You have helped me very much and I am responsible before God, how I make use of it. Thank God and the whole Megiddo Church. We do not have excessive demands in our lives; we live from principle, "having food and raiment and a roof over our heads, therewith we remain content." (R.K.)

November 1981
Trusting God

Your letter gave us much joy....Richard was as happy as I.

Dear Sister, all you and the others are sending we are receiving. We thank you especially for the fruit, like raisins and figs, which we have not eaten for a long time. These cannot be bought here. Package of soap was received also. Soap is highly prized. With the present card system we get only 50 g. per person monthly.

Once again from the depths of our hearts

we give thanks for everything.

I agree with you and think often that good upbringing of children is an art. We do not neglect discipline and punishment, although our children are certain they are loved. I do work away outside the home—it is a must for a woman to work here, a man's pay is not sufficient for the upkeep of 4 people, or even a smaller family. But I do not neglect the home because of my work outside of it. In my absence my mother cares for them. Like most grandmothers they care more for their grandchildren than they did for their own. Mother is 76 years old, quite energetic and a hard working person. I value her care over the children. Even though she loves them she does not spoil them. With her help I am able to go to work.

Thank God for the joy I am experiencing thinking of it, that in a far country which I have never visited—a person who never saw us, thinks of us, and wonders if we have enough heat during a hard winter. Thank God that He has singled us out and called us to unite with people who are so far away, yet are so near.

Wish you all to continue in this calling. Daniel's letter is included. Will close with the words of the Apostle Paul. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with all of you. (E.K.)

April 1981
Continuing

It has been a long time since I have written to you and have not received an answer. I presume it must be due to troublesome communications which have developed.

Also have written to Bro. Flowerday,
(Continued on Page 27)

Meditating on the Word



Great Expectations

**"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law,
happy is he"**
—Prov. 29:18.

VISIONS, goals, aims, objectives—all are vital to those who refuse to see themselves as mere victims of the forces of creation and extinction. While this is probably not the intended thought of our text, it is a lesson from which we may benefit, for all of us live by goals, of one sort or another.

The Bible is a book of goals. It sets before us the highest of high rewards and then tells us to reach. Well did its authors know that high ideals are prerequisite to high attainments. And attainments as high and lofty and far-reaching as eternity require the utmost in incentives.

Any success plan includes the affirming of a clearly-defined goal. People who are content to recline comfortably on the bosom of the status quo are not the builders of tomorrow. The future belongs to those who are dissatisfied with themselves as they are, and who are willing and eager to accept the challenge to improve, even to compel themselves to be what they ought to be. This means setting goals and bending every effort to achieve them.

In the Christian success effort, two types of goals are needed—long-range and immediate. Long-range goals give ultimate direction to life. The apostle Paul was setting his long-range goal when he wrote, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"; or again, "Till we all 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" (Phil. 3:11; Eph. 4:13).

But all of us know that the "perfect" moral state, the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" is not attained in one grand leap. The Christian attainment is the end result of many small steps taken consistently,

consecutively, steadily, without any backstepping.

For this reason we need immediate goals, goals which will move us forward step by step towards the fulfillment of our ultimate. Life is too long a span to live in expectation of one final achievement. We need to see that we are making continual progress. Hence, short-range goals that can be reached in a day or a week.

What might be a short-range goal? First we need to identify the areas for improvement upon which we wish to work, and then concentrate on implementing the improvements. We might be quick to speak and slow to think. Reversing this tendency is a challenging task. But if we set our goal for the day and concentrate upon it, when the test comes we will be ready; and even if we have to bite our tongue to hold it, we have taken a significant step toward our goal.

Short-range goals may be set in any area that troubles us—they are a sure help in controlling feelings of jealousy, pride, bitterness, and pettiness; in controlling worry and increasing trust; in stifling evil thoughts and building holiness. We might set a goal for an hourly "thought-check," to set down or mentally review what we have been thinking about for the preceding hour. Or we might set active goals, such as going out of our way to be kind or thoughtful to a friend or brother in the course of our day.

There are just innumerable short-range goals that we can set to give meaningful direction to our lives. Short-range goals break down the total task into life-size chunks which offer encouragement and a sense of accomplishment, which we need to keep us reaching toward our long-range goal. Both are essential, for "where no vision is, the people perish." MM

P. M. (Preventive Maintenance) Specialists

IN OUR VOCATION we must become "preventive maintenance" specialists, specializing in maintaining a steady working record in the perfecting of our characters.

For several years I was involved in preventive maintenance for medical instruments. In order to be successful in maintaining medical instruments, one must be trained to understand all the minute details of each instrument and be capable of recognizing any deviation from normal performance or any abnormalities in functional physical appearance.

The term "preventive maintenance" implies that inspections and maintenance are performed on a scheduled basis to prevent failure of an instrument due to environmental hazards such as contamination, wear, burns, explosion or emission of hazardous gases.

In order to maintain our spiritual growth, we must be continually making inspections. Our first critical inspection of self likely revealed a mass of broken-down parts which seemed hardly worth the effort of putting together. But with much heart-searching and counting the cost we eventually set out for a complete overhaul.

The first thing we do is to cast aside the bad parts, exchanging them for good: hatred for love; wrath, strife and seditions for peace and contentment; envyings for meekness; revilings for joy; uncleanness for purity (Gal. 5:19-23).

By the time we are finished, all the working parts have been replaced (Ezek. 18:31). But we haven't been working alone. The Master Mechanic has been long-suffering in oiling each part liberally with the Word of Truth and testing each part against any contamination by self-opinion, impatience, high-mindedness, and a host of worldly impurities.

At long last we have everything working smoothly, keeping a close watch (Hab. 2:1) that nothing goes wrong and that no impurities get in, and that we continue applying the oil of truth and the fuel of obedience liberally.

But even in this great condition we realize we can't continue forever. The Master Mechanic wants us to have a new body. So, when the right time comes, He has promised to give us this new body, which is like nothing we have ever seen, a new body shining like the sun: a body that will last forever. And He will give such power to all those new parts that they will be perfectly joined together throughout eternity.

With this new body, all those new parts will become so efficient that we will be able to travel many light years into space, endure the hottest flames or the greatest explosion

unscathed and unpolluted. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard what the Lord has in store for us.

But unless we become preventive maintenance specialists now, we will never be approved for this glorious new body. In the secular, we make evaluations each time before maintenance is performed to determine whether the repair is economically feasible. In the spiritual, we look toward something everlasting. There is no question about the cost. The only question is, Will we continue steadfast to the end? Will we continue to apply the Word of Truth, accept reproof, and keep in good working condition?

Solomon started out in this preventive maintenance work. But he did not keep at it. A bolt worked loose in his spiritual helmet, and he was not alert to notice it. Soon, the bolt was lost and impurities flooded in, engulfing his whole being. He once was in a good working condition, but he lost all and will not be worthy to receive a new body.

Will this be our state when Christ returns? Or will He find us highly tuned, freshly lubricated, and functioning at utmost spiritual efficiency?
—G. P., Georgia.

*LONG have I seemed to serve Thee,
With unavailing pain:
I prayed and read Thy word, dear Lord,
And heard it preached in vain.*

*Oft did I with the assembly join,
And near Thine Altar drew;
A form of godliness was mine,
The power I never knew.*

*I rested in the outward law;
Nor knew its deep design:
The length and breadth I never saw,
The height of love divine.*

*To please Thee thus, at length I see,
Vainly I hoped and strove:
For what are outward things to Thee,
Unless they spring from love?*

*I see the perfect law requires
Truth in the inward parts:
Our full consent, our whole desires,
Our undivided hearts.*

*But I of wealth have made my boast,
Of wealth an idol made;
The spirit in the letter lost,
The substance in the shade.*

*Where am I now, or what my hope?
What can my weakness do?
Jesus! to Thee my soul looks up:
'Tis Thou must make it new.*

Inquiries and Answers

"Why is it that you people do not go house to house, teaching the Gospel, when this is how the Bible tells us it should be done? Read Acts 20:20."

Acts 20:20 is part of Paul's words to the Ephesian elders. It reads: "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

The "house to house" preaching and teaching practiced by certain religious zealots today would seem quite different from that which Paul spoke of. First of all, the "house to house" teaching often practiced today is in an effort to enlighten those who have no knowledge of what is being taught; the house-to-house callers are often ill-received, or shunned. Paul's house-to-house efforts were in behalf of Ephesian brethren, not the city dwellers at large. He is speaking to "the elders of the church" at Ephesus and is saying how he taught "you," meaning the people he was addressing, "house to house," as contrasted with "publickly." It would seem that the "house to house" was a private means of helping them, perhaps meeting in their homes, as opposed to general or public gatherings. This thought is supported by a number of the newer versions, which read "teaching you in public and in private" (Williams); "in public and in your homes" (TEV); "teaching you in public or in your own homes" (Phillips); "instructing you both in public and in your homes" (JB and NEB).

The Bible clearly teaches that the true gospel is not intended for everyone and should not be forced upon the unwilling. Jesus compared such imprudent teaching to "casting" one's "pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. 7:6).

No, there is nothing in the Bible to indicate that the ideal method of preaching and teaching is "house to house"; under certain circumstances it might be the desirable method; under other circumstances it might

be undesirable; hence the absence of any such directive.

"We know that God did not crucify Jesus, but how do we explain Romans 8:3 of God 'sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh?'"

Romans 8:3 reads: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The "law" that Paul refers to is the Mosaic law, which was a national law to the children of Israel. There were many things this "law" could not do—it could not "make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1); it could not "take away sins" (10:4). Obedience to that law assured those under it of present protection, but the keeping of that law could not bring eternal life.

But God sent His own Son, who was "tempted in all points as we are" (Heb. 4:15), yet without sin, to show in real life how sin could be put to death. Christ sacrificed His own desires, gave up His own way, and did always those things that pleased His Father. In this way He condemned sin "in the flesh" (He was mortal as we are—Heb. 2:16-17), and showed us how we too may crucify our fleshly natures and please God, so we too may "fulfill the law of righteousness" (Rom. 8:4).

"How do we understand Romans 8:32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all?"

Romans 8:32 reads, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The verse seems a bit clearer in the *New English Bible*: "He did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all; and with this gift how can he fail to lavish upon us all he has to give." There is no question but that God sent His Son into the world for the benefit of those who would believe Him, love Him and obey Him. But the gift of Christ that is of the greatest benefit is not His death but the gift of His holy life and perfect example, which is a tremendous boon to all of us, showing us the way to life. We shall be "saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). His life is truly the key to "all that He has to give."

"In Genesis 39:7 there is a clear indication that Joseph

must have been aware of the Seventh Commandment (the command against adultery), for he himself states, 'How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Obviously Joseph must have known about the Ten Commandments, even before they were given on Mt. Sinai."

Joseph was well acquainted with God's law, long before the Ten Commandments were given to Moses, but I find it difficult to equate "the Ten Commandments" with the complete law of God, the former being so small a part of the latter. The law given to Moses on Mt. Sinai was "the law of the land" to Israel, and the Ten Commandments were only part of that law. There were hundreds of other commands concerning just about every aspect of civil life; there were laws concerning cleanliness, sacrificing, the observance of specific feast days, etc. But the observance of the Mosaic law (which included the Ten Commandment law) had nothing to do with obtaining salvation. It was added for a particular period of time (Gal. 3:11), and when its purpose was over it was done away. It was a civil law, and demanded civil obedience. God's moral law unto life eternal compasses much, much more than the Ten Commandment law included.

For further discussion of this topic, see our booklet *The Sabbath*.

"What about Genesis 4:6, 'And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.' If the Ten Commandments were not known to Adam and his progenitors, how could it have been spoken of as sin?"

Where does the Bible tell us that sin is the transgression of the Ten Commandment Law? If Abraham had refused to obey God in sacrificing his son, he would have been sinning (disobeying God). But the command to offer his son had no place among the Ten. Lot's wife was cut off because of her sin (of looking back), but she did not transgress any of the Ten Commandments.

God's moral law was known to everyone who was called to serve Him from Adam's time onward; it was a law of faith and obedience. The people of God were responsible to do whatever God commanded them to do in any age. The particular laws that were given to each are not spelled out, but we know there was law that had to be obeyed. This is God's eternal principle: "Obey and live, disobey and die."

"If the Ten Commandments were abolished, how could Paul have stated in Romans 7:7 that he had not 'known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet'? In Romans 2:12-14, especially verse 13, isn't this referring to the Ten Commandments ('the doers of the law shall be justified') and not to the Royal (Spiritual law) for would not mankind all know the Royal Law? but

doers of the law are those keeping the Ten Commandments. Paul states that he would not have known sin, but by the law. Thus by the law is the knowledge of sin. What law are we talking of here? If the Ten Commandments were abolished, which other law is Paul referring to (Romans 7:7)?"

It would seem in Rom. 7:7 that Paul is speaking from his own background and is using this to make a point on law and sin. Where there is no law, technically, there is no sin, for sin is transgression of known law. Paul uses this particular commandment to illustrate his point. "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Actually, it seems that Paul is not talking about any law in particular but is making a point on law in general: that law comes to show up sin.

In Romans 2:12-14, Paul makes the point that we are answerable to a law and will be judged by that law once we are "in" that law: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified)." You will notice that verse 13 is parenthetical; so the next words following "as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" are these: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (v. 16). What "secrets of men" could God be judging if the entire standard required were the Ten Commandments? Are not all of these outward, open, external commands? What is there among these to show that we must cleanse the heart of all evil thoughts, that we must have no evil intent, nor any thought of hatred?

Earlier in the chapter (v. 7) Paul is writing of seeking "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" by "patient continuance in well doing," hence he could not be referring only to obedience to the Ten Commandment law, for that law was not a law that could give eternal life. It was a civil law "added" for a specific purpose. And when Jesus in Matthew 5 delineated the superior law of faith, He took each of the Ten Commandments (except the Sabbath commandment) and made it more inclusive, deeper and more demanding.

"In Isaiah 26:20 it speaks of one entering into his chambers. Is this referring to the time of our Lord's Day when the transgressors shall be punished, and those of His people who do understand are told to hide themselves as if for a moment?"

Your conclusion is in harmony with Bible teaching. There will be protection and deliverance for the people of God. Compare with Prov. 18:10: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe."



Letters

Choose Ye

One of the higher treasures which is ours to enjoy is the added health and vigor to earn our livelihood, also spiritual fortitude to carry the beacon of morality and honor toward our Great Lawgiver, which is our first and most important obligation, as we bend our efforts toward His eternal Kingdom.

Truly, there is no better place to begin than with the thoughts—especially thoughts of purity and fidelity, leading us into more than impressions, as we fasten our minds upon the greatest of promises—yes, the reality of the elixir of life. And to think that we humans have within us the ability to choose this day whom we will serve.

Therefore, as David writes, let us “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and bless his name” (Psa. 100:4).

I am thankful to be a recipient of your correspondence, as well as the MESSAGE and other literature from time to time.

Basin, Wyoming

J. A.

Make Sure

Physical health is always a concern; but I am far more interested in my spiritual condition, and to make sure the Master finds me acceptable when He returns. If we don't put away those things that separate us from the Lord, we might be caught unawares ourselves. We need to be like the five wise virgins, making sure we have oil in our lamps.

Stanley, Virginia

R. C.

Striving to Be Worthy

We need to keep our minds and thoughts pure and undefiled from the world and follow in the footsteps of our Saviour.

The world is getting in a very bad shape, which only proves the coming of our Lord is very near. So let us watch and pray that we enter not into temptations. May we keep this uppermost in our minds.

Let us strive to be worthy in that soon coming Day.

Peru, Kansas

W. R.

True Love

In I Cor. 13, we are told that “now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love.”

How gloriously this love that God's Word speaks of, has shone upon me. Like light passed through a prism, this love comes forth from God's called ones in a dazzling array of beauty.

This spectrum of love is a wonder to behold and must be displayed in the multitudinous words and acts which make up the sum of every common day. Much of Christ's life was spent in doing kind things—yes, in merely doing kind things, in making people happy, in giving pleasure. There is a vast difference in trying to please, and giving pleasure. There is only one thing greater than happiness in the world, and that is holiness, and this is largely secured by being kind.

Truly the question the rich young ruler posed to us, “You out there, what would you do?” is one which strikes like an arrow to its mark. I shall try to go forward with greater determination to sell all, that I may one day gain the true riches, and be with my loved ones for all eternity.

Minnedosa, Manitoba

E. H.

On, On, On

I have received from you such splendid tapes. To hear them makes one feel good. It leaves me thinking of the joy of Christian worship. The foretaste whetted one's appetite for the bliss which can be ours only if we make ourselves over into creatures worthy of perpetuation. Nothing like it had ever come my way before.

I am resolved to go on in narrow way. It's the only way leading to LIFE. I am so happy, so glad to hear such reassuring words on the tapes. I am so pleased to be one of such a happy band of Pilgrims.

Let us follow the example of our dear Lord Himself, giving up this life in obedience to let His Father's will be done. There's nothing to look back upon. The forward one will pay huge dividends, abundant living in paradisaic conditions and even for evermore. I have been asked if I never look behind me. I answered, “I have trained myself to look ahead, not behind.” Eyes straight, I was taught in childhood. “Look where you are going.” And how much more the need now, to look where we are going, keeping our eyes on the prize which is certainly right before us. If nearly 6,000 years have gone by, surely we are that many nearer that Day. Let us ever keep in mind God's goodness. It will pay.

Life lies before thee: Life full of zest:

Purged of all self: true life at its best:

Only believe, and thou surely shalt see

In the bright dawn, the best yet to be.

That hallelujah chorus, what will it be to hear it from the angels of heaven?

Crewe, England

N. T.

Trusting Christians

The trusting Christian does not fear trouble. I don't mean he looks for it, or welcomes it. But how often we find that when we look for happiness, it eludes us; but when we trust in God, "All things go on working together for good."

The trusting Christian does not fear old age. Old age brings weakness and limitations. But the way we meet old age really depends on how much faith we allow God to give us. After all, we have the greatest of all friends with us always, and He should be enough.

We know, too, that it will take a lot of work on our part to be worthy of His companionship.

Davenport, Iowa

W. P.

Light from the Land of Oppression

(Continued from page 21)

thanking him very much for all he has done for me.

Am very anxious what new teachings and thoughts from the Bible are contained in the recent MEGIDDO MESSAGES. Am continuing further by myself with textbooks and cassettes. Twice a week am translating interesting articles. Lately, besides the Sabbath brochure, which will be shortly finished, I am reading the History of the Megiddo Church. Truly very interesting.

Since I am a member of the Church, everything that concerns our society is to me very close. Numerically we compose a very small community, but all the more we feel a close brotherly tie with the members of our spiritual family. I know that a number of brothers and sisters live far from the Mission. Am interested how they uphold their contact with the Church. I know they receive cassettes with Bible sermons and teachings, that they come for the special gatherings observed by the Church. But on Sundays do you organize home services? Do home members living closer to each other come together for mutual spiritual upbuilding?

I would be happy if you would share with me the crumbs from the Lord's table from your latest Church observance. (R.K.)

September 1979 Studying

Please excuse my late writing, but we have just returned home after a month's vacation in the mountains. During my vacation I read the Devil and Hell of the Bible. Part Two about Hell is solidly supported by the Word and I understand the same.

Truly all events surrounding us clearly point to the signs of the times in which we are living—which all the more should cause us to mobilize our efforts in the perfecting of our characters and deeds.

Truly the supreme task of our lives is in daily walking with God, imitating in all things such grand personages as Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah and our most perfect example, Jesus the Son of God.

Once again, sincere thank you and God's blessings be upon you and upon our whole spiritual family. (R.& E.K.)

Finally, Brethren

Facsimile Christians

IN OUR modern society, we have become experts in a number of things that do not count for much—the "reasonably exact facsimile" sort of things. The instant foods, instant wisdom, instant success—instant everything from rice to riches—suggest that we are living in a hurry. We want the shortcut, the substitute. We do not seem to go in much for the authentic, the original, the real.

Perhaps there is no danger when we are involved in a relatively unimportant matter. In just about every sort of situation, however, the short-cut attitude tends to seep into life and contribute to the state of mind that is prevalent today. How often do you find anyone who is trying to be a craftsman at anything, whether it is building a house, teaching a class, or preaching a sermon? Very seldom does anyone even do the work necessary to be a skillful workman. We live in the day of the throwaway. When this attitude reaches the center of life, the consequences are perilous.

One serious matter is the existence of "reasonably exact facsimile" type of believers. They are apparently alive, but in reality they are dead for there is no such thing as a "real imitation" of a Christian. They know the words, they know how to look, they go through all the motions but there is no life. They may deceive themselves. They may deceive other men. But they do not even look alive to God. They are not real, and He knows it. To them it may be something of a game, or perhaps a therapy that makes them feel better. It makes them feel more honorable, more significant, more whatever, because to them it is the proper thing to do, to be somewhat religious. But it is worthless.

In reality they are only sloppy copies of the real thing. They are not going back to look at the original at all. They are simply copying others who have failed to copy well.

What are we, you and I? Are we real, genuine Christians through and through, our own "reasonably exact facsimiles"? We are told to be "like Christ." This is to be our goal. But too easily we settle for some stage of immaturity. And, to console ourselves, we compare ourselves with others who are also immature.

Everyone needs to grow, and everyone needs time to grow. But even as we begin to grow we must be real; we must be genuine. God wants no facsimiles, no imitations, no copies of the real things. Real Christianity—which will receive real and eternal blessing—requires real faith, real belief, and real work.

MM

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