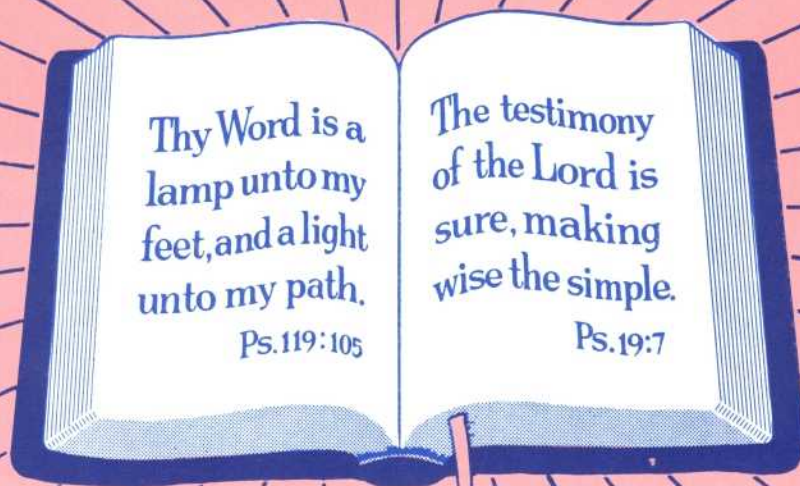


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Dangerously Faithful

The Joy of a New Face

The Gospel: God's Good News

What Shall I Wear?

The Art of Getting Into Trouble

WE HEAR much of the art of keeping out of trouble. And it is a needed art. In these days of social unrest and tension it becomes extremely important. Especially is the thought associated with young people, who need guidance to keep out of trouble.

But from the Christian standpoint, there is need for the reverse of this as well. We need to learn the art of getting into trouble. Someone may exclaim: "How foolish." But it is the "foolishness of God."

By this statement we do not mean to suggest that we should invite problems or walk into situations which will strain our endurance. But there are certain types of "trouble" which we should welcome, even seek. Jesus did not say, "Follow me, and you will never have any trouble." He said, "Take up your cross and follow me." If we follow Christ, we will have trouble—not the trouble that results from having our own way but the trouble with our lower nature that comes when we insist on being controlled and directed by the new Christlike nature.

Christ is the great Teacher of the high art of getting into trouble. He was never complacent with evil. Never did He agree to a policy of peaceful coexistence. Wherever there is evil, there must be trouble, the kind of trouble that results in the evil being expelled and replaced with good. It is really the art of displacing the old nature with the new.

And this inevitably means trouble. You can keep out of this kind of trouble by avoiding any serious commitment to doing right. You can avoid it by never trying to do anything. You can keep out of this kind of trouble by always holding to your own opinion and your own way. Or you can keep out of it by never saying anything on a question. Eyes closed and mouth shut—that is the program that some people follow! It avoids all trouble—

except the greater trouble of not counting for anything in this life and not laying up anything for the future.

Think of what the world owed the men and women who mastered the art of getting into trouble—and made it work for them. Didn't the great apostle Paul deliberately walk "into trouble" when he was immediately obedient to the heavenly call? Were not many of the early Christians clearly asking for "trouble" simply by professing belief in Christ and loyalty to His principles? To have lived passively and prevented all "trouble" would have meant desertion, denial, and eternal oblivion. Was not the prospect of eternal life worth the "trouble"?

Ours is not an age of active persecution—God be praised! Still there are times when we must invite "trouble" by standing firmly for what we know to be right and true. It may be in the form of the hostility of former friends or neighbors; it may be the severing of bonds formerly near and dear. It may be trouble with our own old nature, caused by the demands of the new and higher nature. There is sure to be conflict, for "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:16-17)—a sure formula for trouble.

Whenever we strive to maintain in our daily lives an example of dedicated Christianity, we get into trouble. It is much easier not to care, to be satisfied with ourselves as we are. But self-satisfaction is not the way to self-improvement. And it is not the way to a character acceptable in the sight of God. The path to the heights of Christian character is sometimes steep.

Hence the need to get into trouble, the right kind of trouble, trouble that will transform us from what we naturally are into the likeness of Christ. May this be our highest desire.

MM

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

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

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July/August 1983

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The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, **Founder**; Kenneth E. Flowerday, **President and Editor**.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. **SUBSCRIPTION RATE:** One year, eleven issues, \$2.00. **POSTMASTER:** Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

Dangerously Faithful

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 1:1-2; 2:1-4

SOME years ago there was a resistance fighter in France. It was during World War II, and he was facing the invasion of his land. Tyranny had come in and things looked hopeless for a long time ahead. What should he do? Come to terms with the tyrant? That is what a good many were doing. Or join the underground movement and risk his life? In that moment he wrote down these words: "This is not a time for me to desert my faith. It is not a time to seek for new images for my belief. This is the time for me to be *dangerously faithful*." Here is the word for us today. This is the time for us to be faithful, even if that faithfulness means danger; dangerously faithful.

This same message comes to us from the founders of our nation. Faithfulness was their watchword, faithfulness even in the midst of danger. We are especially aware of this fact as we celebrate our Fourth of July. We Americans today enjoy a heritage of freedom unequalled in the world. But this freedom did not come without price. In the early days, freedom meant danger, grave danger.

We trace our national heritage of freedom back to the founding fathers and the days of the Revolutionary War. Had it not been for the unfaltering faith and courage of those early patriots, their strong and unflinching belief in individual liberty, and their willingness to suffer for that belief, we might not have the freedoms we enjoy today. Had it not been for their willingness to be *dangerously faithful*, freedom might have perished in infancy.

Do we recall what happened to the original Signers of

the Declaration of Independence? First, what kind of men were they? Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants. Nine were farmers and wealthy plantation owners. They were men of means and well educated. But when they signed the Declaration of Independence, they did so knowing full well that they might have to suffer, should they be captured by the British.

What happened to them?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors and tortured before they died. Twenty had their homes ransacked and burned. Nine of the fifty-six fought and died from wounds or the hardships of war during the Revolution. Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy trader and planter, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy, was forced to sell his home to pay his debts, and died bankrupt. Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family constantly and keep in hiding. His possessions were confiscated, reducing him to poverty. British soldiers or vandals looted the properties of Effery, Clymer, Hall, Walton, Swinner, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson, Jr., noting that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for the British headquarters, quietly urged General Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed; Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and property destroyed. The British jailed his wife, who died within a few months. John Hart was driven from his ill wife's bedside. Their thirteen children fled for their lives. His fields and gristmill were destroyed. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves. Returning home after the war, he found his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later he

Note: *Dangerously Faithful* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

died from exhaustion. Both Morris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

Tales of horror, to be sure. But these men were not wild-eyed ruffians. They were good-living men of means. They had temporal security, but they valued freedom and liberty more, and were willing to pay the price. Faithfulness to their convictions came first—they were willing to be faithful whatever—dangerously faithful.

Are we as willing to sacrifice for our Christian heritage as were those brave men who signed our Declaration of Independence? Shall we give less, for an *eternal* freedom? Will we prove ourselves dangerously faithful?

Faithfulness—Habakkuk's Style

But the challenge to be dangerously faithful did not originate with the signers of the Declaration of Independence. It has been a challenge that all of God's servants have had to face through the centuries. Let us go back some twenty-six hundred years and hear how it was preached.

Times were hard in the land of Judah—socially, economically, and worst of all, spiritually. A people rebellious at heart and totally lacking in spiritual perception were wandering further and further from God, and by this time were wholly oblivious to any sacred obligations. What of the good land that sustained, the fathers who had taught them, the prophets who had warned them, the God who had nurtured them and cared for them all through their long history, who had delivered them from Egyptian bondage and established them in a land of their own? They had but one desire: to go their own way.

These apostate Israelites had ignored the true message of the Lord so long and had traveled so far down the road of their own corrupt ways that the Word of God no longer impressed them. They had become "past feeling," as the apostle Paul later described this condition. By their own hardheartedness they had willfully ended their own day of opportunity. So deep-rooted was their sin that it was impossible to uproot. And now, with punishment and captivity pending, what could they do—what *would* they do? They were not ready to face the judgments of God upon them because of their iniquities, nor were they ready to repent and reform. The result: despair.

At such an hour there arises a man of God, one whom God can use to deliver His message, one who is eager and ready to serve both his people and his God, one who is ready to be faithful at all costs, dangerously faithful. The man's name is Habakkuk, and his message is one of hope and doom—hope for the faithful, doom for the unfaithful. The exact date of his prophecy is uncertain, but it seems that Habakkuk was contemporary with

God has been long-suffering, but the end of that long- suffering is at hand.

Jeremiah, and we know how desperate was that time, both for the nation of Israel and for the individuals in that nation. God has been long-suffering, but the end of that long-suffering is at hand. The cup of their iniquity is full. Now their land is about to be devastated, their children taken into captivity, and their temple profaned. For years they had hoped for deliverance, trusting in the false prophets of the land, but deliverance had not come. Now the end is imminent.

Feeling the imminence of the time, Habakkuk opens his prophecy by exclaiming, "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! Even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save." It is not a complaint but the passionate plea of an earnest man of God in a troubled time. Why is God seemingly delaying, postponing the help He *could* send, when it is so urgently needed?

Habakkuk desires a message from God. So what does he do? He takes action. He places himself where the Lord's message can surely reach him, and where he can stand ready for any commission, any revelation, any precept, any word of warning or reproof that God may have for him. His *nation* is corrupt; but *he* wants to be right, above all things to be right. This is why he says with unfaltering resolution: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved" (Hab. 2:1).

For Habakkuk, it was time to watch—upon the tower. What was this tower of Habakkuk's? It was not built of stone and lime. Hiram's workmen, with all their skill in timber, iron, and brass, had no hand in building Habakkuk's tower. "The name of the Lord" was Habakkuk's high tower (Prov. 18:10). The truth and faithfulness and power of God were the deep and broad foundations of Habakkuk's shelter into which he continually escaped, and from the high top of which he could look out upon the land and up to God. And God's great mercy and long, long-suffering were the doors and stairs, the walls and battlements, of Habakkuk's high tower; and God's sure salvation was the golden and far-shining roof of it. "Art thou not from everlasting?" prayed

this Prophet as he again stood upon his watch and set himself upon his tower.

Have we not such a tower today, an elevation which we can ascend to lift us above the world around us, an elevation from which we may lift our prayers to God and be heard? It is the sublime tower of hope, a tower that gives us faith and vision to see far back into history those events which confirm and build faith; and far into the future to that which God has yet promised to do. Our interests lie beyond this world; all our hopes are above. This tower is also our protection. Standing upon this tower we are safe from contamination by the evil influences around us. This tower is also a separation. It sets us apart and above, so we may be able to hear what God will say. Oh, let us never forget Habakkuk's watch tower—it is ours also.

Let Us Pray. . .

Holy, everlasting Father, whose creative genius can be seen in the magnificence all about us, whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, and whose faithfulness endures to all generations: we rejoice that we may call Thee Our Father. We rejoice, too, that beyond the uncertainties and the transient, fleeting joys of our ever changing world, is that which changest not; that Thou, Lord, art forever, and Thy years know no turning.

We praise Thee for the priceless knowledge Thou hast entrusted to us, for the magnificent purpose with which Thou hast crowned our lives and for the love of the heavenlies which Thou hast put in our hearts. All good comes of Thee, and of Thine own do we offer to Thee.

We praise Thee, too, for the warmth of true friendship, for the love of Christian kin, for those holy men and women Thou hast appointed to be over us in the Lord and to lead us through this age and into the next. All are ours by Thine appointment, in whom we may rejoice both now and through all eternity. We deeply thank Thee.

Father, our Lord and Creator, who hast created us, called us with Thy high and holy calling according to Thine own purpose and grace, Thou desirest that we dwell together in unity, brotherhood and peace. Forgive us for the times we have sought our own goals rather than the larger goals of Thy Kingdom, when we let

It is possible that Habakkuk stood many times upon his tower alone—alone, with his faith in God on one side, and guilty Judah on the other. Yet he was not alone, for God was on his side.

The Lord answers Habakkuk's plea. But first come special instructions on the handling of the message. It is no ordinary message of ordinary action for an ordinary hour; every aspect of this message vibrates with urgency: "Write the vision and make it plain . . . that he may run that readeth it."

"For an Appointed Time"

What does that mean? The Lord says, Write the vision, and write it clearly enough, plainly enough, so there can be no mistake about it, so that whoever gets it may read it on the run, in haste—speed-read it, if you

personal grudges and an unforgiving spirit mar the image Thou art fashioning in us. Remind us that Thou hast called us to be like Thee, who art ever good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all who call upon Thee.

We thank Thee, Lord, for calling us to be faithful, even dangerously faithful. May we never think of ourselves, but only of our duty to Thee, and be faithful, come what may. We thank Thee for this the cool of salvation's day; but may we seize each new opportunity, doubly watchful, lest the indifference around us dull our keen edge of faith and we be found unfaithful.

Lord, may we find our highest delight in that which delighteth Thee. We know Thou alone art able to save, Thou alone art able to bless, Thou alone hast the power to perpetuate life. And Thou wilt surely reward each faithful one with infinitely more than our highest dreams can imagine. So may we welcome crosses, adversities, testings, aware that the severest test may Thy expression of choicest favor and merit Thy greatest reward.

O Thou who watchest over every one who will be Thine, be with those who join us in spirit today, though separated by many miles of land or sea. Be especially near to those who feel the stinging blows of pain or grief, and sustain them by Thy promises. So anchor their trust in Thee that amid the sharpest provocations they may find light from above, strength from within, and support from Thy holy Word.

Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

like. This says two things: that time is critical, and that those who will be interested in this message will be people on the run. They will realize it is not a book to be tucked away in the library and read in leisure hours. Every moment is packed with opportunity, and every step is measured. They have no time to stop and read casually. They are a people moved by a profound and overpowering sense of urgency that is with them day and night. They are a people on the run, spiritually speaking, running faster and faster as the time passes.

Why? "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Bound up in these words is both a near and a far meaning. This vision from the Lord is a vision of destruction, but also of deliverance; of judgment, but also of justice. In the immediate future, for the people of Habakkuk's day, there will be judgment. Devastation is coming; punishment is coming. But there is also coming a great deliverance for the upright, a time of rejoicing, and a crown of joy—in the far future. Take heart, says Habakkuk. All is not lost.

When will it all come? At the appointed time. "The vision has its own appointed hour, it ripens, it will flower; if it be long, then wait, for it is sure, and it will not be late" (Hab. 2:3, Moffatt). What assurance, what hope, what sublime certainty. The vision is sure; the end *will* come—the end for that particular dispensation, and also the end of the ages, when Christ the King of all the earth will return to change the course of history. This was the vision that sustained Habakkuk, and the urgent message of preparing reaches even to us, we who live at the time when His prophecy shall be fulfilled, when the vision does indeed seem to tarry; and yet we know that this apparent "tarrying" is only God's mercy giving the covenant-makers the time they need to complete what is lacking in their faith. Habakkuk's message of urgency was for those who live when the greater vision—and reality—is indeed imminent.

It was with precisely this kind of feeling and vision that the Early Church was born. Jesus came preaching the imminence of divine intervention. "Repent," He said, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Again and again He referred to Himself as "the Son of Man" who would be coming "in the clouds, with power and great glory," with saints, and angels and trumpets. It was a matter requiring immediate action. To wait was to lose all.

Jesus spoke often of His second coming. He said there would be signs in the sun and moon and stars, the political powers of earth. He said there would be great distress among nations, with perplexity, the "sea and the

***"Write the vision, . . . so
whoever gets it may read it
on the run."***

waves roaring." And He said, just before He bade them farewell, "If I go away, I will come again," sealing the promise of His return.

The authors of the New Testament saturated their writings with the promise of Christ's return. In that day, when they would meet in the marketplace or along the street, believers would whisper to one another, "Maranatha," meaning, "The Lord cometh."

Even more upon our minds should be the reality of this prophecy, we who live so near to its fulfillment. Any day could bring us the reality of our hope. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we should keep it in mind: Jesus is coming, and I must get ready. Right now. No time for any low aims or ambitions; no time for self-will and self-satisfactions. No time for anything less than the very best that we can do for God, for Christ and the church. Do we not partake of the Lord's supper each year that we may "show forth the Lord's death *till he come*"?

Living by Faith

Then comes that line in Habakkuk's message that is our topic today: "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). It was the watchword of the early patriots of our nation; it is the watchword of every servant of God through the ages: "The just shall live by his faith."

Let us ponder its import. It was first a message of urgency, and finally a message of faith: "The just shall live"—not die but *live*. How should men and women be able to live even in the worst of times? "By faith."

That word translated "faith" in our King James Bible might be more accurately rendered "faithfulness"; i.e., "the just shall live by their faithfulness." Faith . . . faithfulness. The two terms are inseparable. If there is no faith there can be no faithfulness. If there is no faithfulness, there is surely no faith. This is why the author of Hebrews, quoting the words of Habakkuk, was able to write, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:38-39).

Faith—faithfulness—"to the saving of the soul." This is the faith we need, this living, working faith, this faithfulness

"The just shall live on by his faith."

to God and all that He demands of us to bring us to our best. Faithfulness—steady, persevering, enduring, whatever, until the vision becomes reality. Dangerously faithful.

Our problems are not those that Habakkuk faced. Nor are they the problems faced by the founding fathers of our nation. Nor are they the problems faced by the French in World War II. Nevertheless, we today have need for the same zeal, the same stalwart dedication, the same courage to act on our belief, the same determination to be faithful no matter what, dangerously faithful.

Every aspect of our Christian living is a test in faithfulness. It may be a matter of faithfulness in holding to what we know to be right in the face of opposition. Onetime friends or associates might press us to compromise, and thus stain our soul. It's a problem of life. What must we do? Be faithful—even dangerously faithful.

Then, too, it may be a matter of being genuine, through and through. There was a college band that wanted to play for homecoming and impress the crowd. But they didn't have quite big enough a band. So they hired some fellows who could march. They couldn't play, but they could carry tubas and look very impressive carrying their big, shining horns; very impressive. The drama went well, and the crowds were impressed. But as they marched down the street, there was a little boy sitting next to his mother who was watching very carefully. And just as the band went by, he turned and said to his mother, "Mamma, there's nothing coming out of those big things." Is this ever said of us? Are we real, or might it rightly be said of us, "There's nothing coming out of it. Nothing very much at all." What is our faithfulness worth in real value?

Our challenge to faithfulness may be a matter of faithfulness to our commitment. It may mean proving the full surrender we have pledged, throwing ourselves upon the rock of divine truth and allowing our wills to be broken. The process may be painful, but such breaking may well be the making of us, spiritually speaking—and our salvation in the day when the rock of divine judgment shall fall upon and grind to powder all who remained unbroken.

It may be a matter of faithfulness in supporting wholeheartedly those whom God has appointed to be

over us in the Lord. Their counsel, their judgment, their opinions may not be entirely ours, but this gives us no license to disregard them. We are commanded to "esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake" and "be at peace among yourselves" (I Thess. 5:12-13). No small task is this, when we feel strongly that we are right and they are wrong. But what should we do? Should we pull back and withhold our support, placing our judgment above theirs—thus saying by our actions that God is incompetent, that He is not able to select and train the proper leadership for His people in this day? Or shall we submit, realizing that our judgment may not be the last word in "rightness," and that the God who lived in Moses' day is just the same today, that all *will* work together for good. And God forbid that we ever allow our loyalties to divide us, that we stand some by Paul, and some by Apollos. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" Are we not called to be all one in Christ and together confront the challenge of our high calling?

Real Zeal, Real Conquest

Let us beware, lest in our zeal for the cause of right we set up our own standard of self-righteousness which is not of God and by our severe judgment of others find ourselves fighting against God. Perhaps we need more of the good sense of Gamaliel, to realize that if the movement is not of God it will come to naught—it would have long ago; that it is not our duty or calling to redirect it; and that what is truly of God we with our puny strength can never overthrow.

But such faithfulness has its dangers—it may mean a loss of popularity among our friends—it will surely mean suffering the loss of much self-esteem, and our own private opinion—which is, unfortunately, a loss that has proved too great for many to sustain. How strong are we? Our faithfulness will tell.

It has been said that humility is the fairest flower that grows in the garden of virtue. And that flower is very often brought to fullest bloom when we give up our own opinion, our own thoughts, our own ideas, what seems right to us, and humbly seek and accept the advice of those who are over us in the Lord. It is the only way to spiritual growth and maturity. It is the only way to true faithfulness—and salvation.

We may not always understand all that is done in commanding the old ship of Zion. But God is still at the helm. And we might do well to remind ourselves that the ship will not go down because we decide to jump overboard. By our rashness we will harm only ourselves.

(Continued on page 20)

DANGER from WITHIN

WE ARE what we think, not what we say, read or hear. Our spiritual strength grows or withers according to the power and character of the thoughts we harbor.

Someone has determined that "per capita, the United States has more cases of extreme mental illness than any other nation in the world. One out of every twenty Americans can expect to be a patient in a mental institution sometime during his lifetime. One out of every five families will have to contend with the problem of alcohol. Even Christians at times let their minds wander, and when we peg our thoughts to something other than God, frustration results."

The Wise Man offers an antidote for this condition in Proverbs 4: "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law. He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh" (vs. 1-2, 4, 21-22).

Thoughts are powerful. Conditions are created by thoughts just as powerfully as conditions create thoughts.

Jesus knew what was in man, and He tells us in Mark 7 why our greatest danger is from within. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications,

murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." These words are just as applicable to our generation as they were to Jesus' time.

We can't say "yes" to the inner promptings of the flesh, or even "maybe." We have to say "no" and mean it—"no" to the things that would come between us and God. The value of a positive "no" in the conduct of our own lives should not be underestimated. A hesitant "no" often leads to disaster. Sin cannot be patched up or mended; it has to be expelled. Nursing only helps it to its feet for a fresh start.

On his deathbed Alexander the Great is reported to have commanded that when he died, his hands should not be wrapped as was the custom of the day, but should be left exposed so that all men might see they were empty. He wanted everyone to realize that although he had ruled the world and had gained much of the world's riches, he left life as a common beggar, taking nothing with him.

Strange, isn't it, that men should hoard and sell their souls for that which they must lose! But in reality that is what we are doing when we hoard our own ways and let our baser passions rule us.

Right living is the greatest challenge to humanity. It involves a constant struggle against temptation. It costs self-discipline, self-sacrifice, self-con-

trol and courage to stand for right, and against wrong.

Paul, writing to the Philippians, finalizes his epistle with excellent words of advice concerning true relationship with God and a proper inner life—"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

If we have a deep faith in God, then we can know that everything that happens to us is controlled by Him and the frustrations and vicissitudes of life will not tear down our faith; instead they will help us grow in peace and confidence toward Him.

One of the weirdest phenomenon of celebrated Death Valley is its rainstorms that never reach the ground. Author Ben Lucien Burman told of one. "I saw an ominous black cloud in the distant sky," he said. "Long streamers of rain streaked down against the horizon." He hurried not wanting to get caught in a flash flood, but to his amazement no water fell. The air was so dry and hot that the rain evaporated before hitting the ground.

(Continued on page 10)

The Joy of a New Face

IN THE BOOK of Job we find a significant promise—conditional, of course, as are all the blessings of the Almighty. “Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver” (Job 22:22-25).

All these are blessed assurances for loving obedience, but the next statement crowns the whole: “Then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.”

What a happy event to anticipate! Who has not seen a young child’s radiant expression as he lifts up a shining face to a loving parent. It is a luminous picture of innocence, complete joy, confidence, trust, and adoration all in one. But how immeasurably greater will be the joy when the exultant child of God shall feel the upward surge of the divine nature within his being and shall be able to lift up a radiant face to his heavenly Father, even God Almighty!

But such a face is not bestowed by nature. For who of us has naturally a face ready to lift up to our Father’s pure and all-discerning eyes?

Earlier in his book, Job writes of this same accomplishment: “If you will turn your mind to God and stretch your hands to him, if sin you banish from your life, and evil from your house, then you can face him unashamed, you may be firm and fearless” (Job 11:13-15, Moffatt). What newness we must complete to face heaven’s King unashamed, without spot or blemish! How thorough must be the change!

Let us consider a few of the needful changes which the Scriptures (our examining physician) recommend.

Face washing is the first necessity, to cleanse the surface of any outward uncleanness before any spiritual surgery can be performed.

Then there are cross-eyes that must be correctly focused on the straight line of right and rectitude. Says the Physician’s manual, “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the

path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established” (Prov. 4:25-26).

Double vision is another serious flaw. Our eyes are naturally so far off center that we can easily fasten one eye on the things of God and the other on the pleasures of the world and the things we would naturally pursue. Much spiritual exercise must be accomplished before we can keep both eyes focused steadily on the “joy that is set before” us.

Then there are malformations of the lips that must be corrected. The Lord will be pleased with “joyful lips” and lips that sing His praise, but “lying lips are an abomination” to Him. Lips curled with bitter words or filled with foolishness mar the show of the countenance—which shall surely witness against their possessor.

Mouth deformities are also common. “The evil way and the froward mouth do I hate,” says the Lord (Prov. 8:13), therefore all such mouths must be surgically altered. The only mouth acceptable to God is that mouth which “speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment” (Ps. 37:30). The “mouth of the foolish is near destruction,” “but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them” (Prov. 10:14; 12:6).

We remember that Job laid down various aspects of righteousness as corrective treatment. The conditional terms include a renewed heart, hands, and a sin-free life. Only by these is the face made ready for the joyful meeting face to face with our heavenly Father.

And what is the benefit of all these major facial alterations? “Then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.” “Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast and shalt not fear.” No, thou “shalt not fear,” either now or to all eternity.

What joy, what reward for getting a new face! MM

Danger from Within

(Continued from page 9)

Are we like these dry rainstorms, passing through life but dispensing no living water to refresh others? Do we harbor feelings and emotions that are spiritually destructive to ourselves and others? If so, we need to submit ourselves completely to inner inspection and prayer, realizing it is because of our inner dryness that others are not spiritually watered, and that we will never turn from a sin until we feel its vileness to the sickening point.

May we be ever watchful that the fine inner judgment of our conscience does not get “past feeling” and tolerate that which is dishonorable or impure. MM

And Still She Speaks

Extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments
by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



It is a wonderful privilege in this age of sin, darkness, immorality, and iniquity that the Lord has given to us the means by which we may be cleansed from our own evil ways, our pride, immorality, and vice of every kind.

If we do not let our evil desires conceive, they will not breed sin.

If we tamper with our evil desires and yield even a little, they will lead us into sin.

We will never be able to get our tongue right and keep it right until we get our mind right and keep it right.

"Let every one be quick to listen,"—oh, every one is quick enough to listen to the promptings of his own mind; there is no trouble in that. But let every one be quick to listen to the Word of God.

Stop long enough to think before you speak. Think what you are going to say. Think, Is it true and to the glory of God?

Dig up every weed, every root of bitterness, wrath, immodesty, immorality, every evil. Dig up the foul growth.

I wonder how deeply we realize that the only way God is calling now is through His Word. He is calling now, just as truly as He called in past ages. He is calling us to become a finished product, to watch our thoughts, our words, our feelings, and not allow our evil desires to conceive and bring forth sin and death.

During the Dark Ages no one would listen, but God preserved His Word so each one who would listen could have it. We must let this word impress our hearts and minds, let it make impressions so deep and so lasting that they will never be effaced.

Oh, that word watch. If we counted, I am sure we would find it in the Bible so many times! Just watch your mind and your words are sure to be right, your hands are sure to go right, your feet will be right. We must watch.

If we never had any trials or any persecution, we would tend to get lazy. If we will stand up for God's Word and pass through trials joyfully, we will be rewarded.

Bible love is not like the sentimental feeling so commonly called love. You are loving each other when you are warning, helping, aiding, encouraging each other.

I do not know how people have time to play cards, gamble and all. We can hardly get time to read and store our minds with useful knowledge. But we must redeem the time and read all we can. Still the days are not long enough.

The Book says, let all jesting, joking and foolish talking not once be named among you as becometh saints. We cannot take part in such things. We must rejoice in God's Word.

We have the example of Gabriel who flew swiftly, with the freedom of the wind. And God has promised (John 3) that the faithful will be able to come and go with the freedom of the wind. No accidents, no death. What a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful picture before us! And to realize that God has never failed in His Word.

That first love! At first we were zealous in belief, zealous in doing what we understood. We want to have that same zeal now in perfecting a character.

We must watch we do not lose our first love, that we do not let something else come in and sever us from loving God with all our heart, that we do not let something come in and make us a transgressor.

What Shall I Wear?

"I would appreciate instructions and proof from the Word regarding wearing pants. I have decided to make the change in my wardrobe, but I know the people where I work will question me and I would like to be 'forearmed.' I live in a rural area and have always felt that pants are more suitable than skirts for some types of employment."

The women of our church group confine their style of clothing to dresses and skirts, feeling that in this age "skirts" identify women and "pants" commonly identify men. We do not feel that there is only one "right" style of dresses but our major concerns are these: 1) to choose a style that is modest; 2) to choose a style that is representative, becoming, and appropriate to our high calling as followers of Christ, and 3) not to follow the fickle dictates of Dame Fashion. Clothes are not our chief concern as Christians, but neither are they unimportant. We want our clothes to speak for our faith and the high principles we profess. When we go out, we want to be sure that we are neat, clean, and dressed appropriately and becomingly as representatives of God's great cause on earth, and that our clothes help to identify us as distinct from the multitudes who have no thought but the things of this world. We want to show that we are citizens of another world—a heavenly world, a heaven that is soon coming to this earth.

Your desire to be "forearmed" is in accordance with Scripture—we are to be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh" us a reason of the hope that is in us "with meekness and fear." And when you suddenly change your style of clothing, some will no doubt wonder what has happened. If you could only communicate the far greater possibilities to which you are opening your life and show them that you are not losing but *gaining*—but so many do not seem to think deeply enough to even *want* to know our real hopes and goals.

In comparison with an aspiration so lofty as "the high calling of

God in Christ Jesus," does it not seem that wearing "pants" is rather "earthly"?

As for what you may consider "proof from the Word regarding wearing of pants," I am sure you realize that the Bible, though a "thorough furnisher unto all good works," does not provide explicit or specific replies to all the questions we confront in the 20th century. It is, however, still a thorough furnisher unto all good works (II Tim. 3:17) and is amply adequate to direct our steps. But we have to use the capabilities God has given us, to read the examples in His Word and apply its *principles* to the situations we confront.

For example, God did not leave us any specific directives about how we should drive our automobiles. He does tell us, however, that we must be courteous to all (I Pet. 3:8), and that we must be subject to the "powers that be" (Rom. 13:1-3). The Christian is fully as obligated to obey these laws and apply these principles when driving on the highway as he is in his own home or Christian family circle.

God did not leave us a command saying, "Thou shalt not read novels or trashy literature" or "Thou shalt

not attend the movies," but when we do read that we must think on things that are "true . . . honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report" (Phil. 4:8), there isn't any room left for the low, often immoral and degrading publications and entertainments we hear about these days. And we are told directly that we must put away all that is immoral and unclean (Col. 3:5-10; Eph. 5:3-5; II Cor. 6:17). All-inclusive is the admonition from the apostle Paul, "Do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

The Bible does not say "Thou shalt not spend thy time in amusement parks," but surely no dedicated Christian would feel comfortable among those who find delight in such environs. Then there is always the command to "redeem the time" (Eph. 5:15) and "Come out from among them" (II Cor. 6:17).

The same principle might be applied to the wearing of pants. There is no direct command that we can quote and say "this is it." But there are several factors that should govern our decision.

The first point is, of course, modesty. God has always been very explicit about the standard of morality among His people, and His laws establish a definite link between clothing and morality, as in Deut. 22:5 (see "Questions and Answers," this issue, p. 27). Paul was very direct, that "women adorn themselves in modest apparel, . . . as becometh women professing godliness, with good works" (I Tim. 2:9-10). Modesty is subject to definition, but that definition must also be in line with our Christian principles. We know that the people in general, when choosing their styles, do not put modesty first; but modesty is foremost in our obligation as Christians. And pants are not generally regarded as being as "modest" a style of apparel for

women as free hanging skirts. (We do feel, however, that some styles of pants are more modest than too-abbreviated styles of dresses.)

There is another command that affects our choice of clothing. It is found in the words of Paul (Rom. 12:2): "And be not conformed to this world." As a church group we have selected a basic style of dress, not because it is the only right style to wear but because it is comfortable, modest, and easily adapted to individual needs. We do not change styles just because Dame Fashion dictates a change. Our group adopted this pattern of dress before women ever thought of wearing pants in public, and what was modest in 1900 is still modest today—if we comply with Paul's command to "be not conformed."

I am sure you have observed the fickleness of many women who think so much of style and so little of being practical or sensible in their attire, whose one concern is to be "in style." Perhaps living in a rural area you do not see as much of this as we do in the city, but fashion sways multitudes. And it is so futile. Old women try to make themselves look youthful and attractive—and for what purpose? Then, too, it is always difficult to measure how much of our own natural "tastes" are the result of the time in which we happen to live. If we were born, say in 1880, we probably wouldn't feel the least temptation to "pants" or any other style or fad that tempts womenkind today.

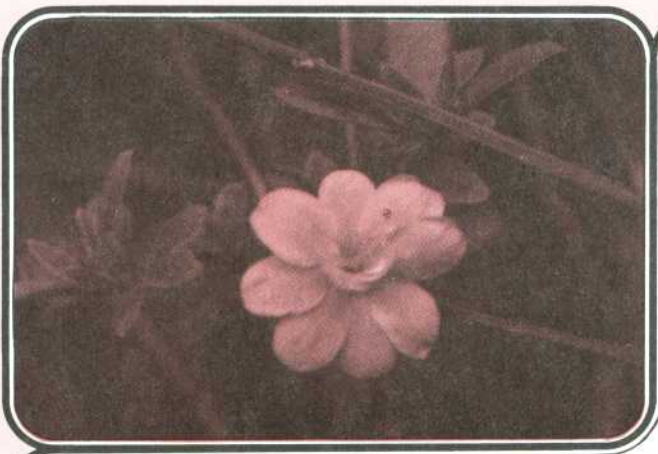
As regards your "wardrobe" change, I would venture to say that it will not be as "bad" as you expect. The first while may be difficult, but there is a kind of pride you can claim—you can be proud to represent our great coming King! (Jer. 9:23-24). And this is one great way to do it. The change will also help you by keeping you reminded

of your Christian profession.

This will be especially true when you are among non-believers, as in a case of employment. You mention that in some types of employment pants are almost a necessity for safety's sake and for modesty. There may be some exceptions because of necessity, but generally speaking, if modest attire is not appropriate to our work, we're doing the wrong kind of work. In choosing a line of work, a means of support, a vocation, we must choose something in which we can serve God without compromising our convictions, in which we can behave and dress in a manner appropriate to our Christian obligations. This must be our first thought always, for the work in this world is temporary; our richest gain from our life on earth now is what we do to prepare for life in the "world to come." If we miss out on that, we have missed everything.

Generally speaking, we find our modest style of dress a great asset and people respect us for it. We have absolutely no trouble from the low-minded, and we actually feel safer, more confident and more comfortable in our style of dress. We wear skirts and blouses, dresses, or suits, all of a pattern that suggests to the world that we stand for something dignified and different.

There is also a point to identity. Isn't it a privilege to be identified with so great a cause, and shouldn't we want to do what we can to "look the part"? Of course clothing is only one small part of this—we must have the integrity, the virtue, the fairness and courtesy that are so vital a part of our Christian profession. That is why the apostle Paul words it as he does: If we are "in Christ" we are a "new creature," a new creation. Everything about us is becoming "new." MM



Touch Me, Lord

PRECIOUS Lord, look in my heart,
Fill it with love anew,
That my ways may be just like Thine,
I do what Thou wouldst do.

Touch my spirit, Lord of all,
That I may long endure,
And that Thy will may be mine own,
My thoughts and ways all pure.

Breathe on me, my Saviour dear,
Fill me with grace divine,
Till every earthly part of me
Is purely, wholly Thine.

Let my light shine brightly, Lord,
So some may see the way,
And I may learn to love Thee more
With every passing day.

Lift me up that I may reach
To heights sublime and pure;
Where saints exult and sing for joy,
And all for aye endure.

—Contributed

TO SPEAK TRUTH, a man must not only have the martial courage which goes out with sound of drum and trumpet to do and suffer great things; he must have also that domestic courage which compels him to utter small truths in spite of present inconvenience and outraged sensibilities.

LIFT ME, O God, above myself—
Above my highest spheres,
Above the thralling things of sense
To clearer atmospheres.

Lift me above the little things
My poor sufficiencies,
My perverse will, my lack of zeal,
My inefficiencies;

Above the earthborn need that gropes
With foolish hankerings,
About earth's cumbered lower slopes
For earthly garnerings.

Lift me, O God, above myself,
Above these lesser things,
Above my little gods of clay,
And all their capturings.

And grant my soul a grand new birth,
And fledge it strong new wings
That I may soar above the earth
To nobler prosperings.

Lift me, O God, above myself,
That, in Thy time and day,
I sometime grace Thy fosterings
And climb Thy loftier Way.

IF NOT FAITHFUL in the little things of life,
we shall not be faithful in the greater things.

THE END of the day is approaching,
The journey is almost complete;
Soon the Master's voice will be calling
His laborers to a place of retreat,
Where the stormy winds of the tempest
Cannot prevail o'er His flock;
For they listened when He was calling,
They answered His timely knock.

LOOKING upward every day,
 Sunshine on our faces,
 Pressing onward every day
 Toward the heavenly places;
 Growing every day in awe,
 For Thy Name is holy;
 Learning every day to love
 With a love more lowly.

Walking every day more close
 To our Elder Brother;
 Growing every day more true
 Unto one another;
 Every day more gratefully
 Kindnesses receiving,
 Every day more readily
 Injuries forgiving.

Leaving every day behind
 Something which might hinder;
 Running swifter every day,
 Growing purer, kinder—
 Lord, so pray we every day;
 Help us in Thy pity;
 That we enter in at last
 To the Holy City.

—Selected.

"BY FRIENDSHIP you mean the greatest love, the greatest usefulness, the most open communication, the noblest sufferings, the severest truth, the heartiest counsel, and the greatest union of minds of which brave men and women are capable."

THIS learned I from the shadow of a tree,
 Which to and fro did sway against a wall:
 Our shadow-selves, our influence, may fall
 Where we can never be.

USE what talents you possess. The woods
 would be very silent if no birds sang there except
 those who sing best.



Neglected Gardens

IT WOULD have been no task at all
 To keep the weeds from out this patch,
 To train this ivy on this wall
 And give this grape a place to catch.
 But weeds have choked the blossoms out;
 The hands that might have giv'n it care
 Found other things to be about
 Than making their own garden fair.

It would have been no task at all
 To make this home a lovely thing.
 Where never angry words would fall,
 Where many a happy heart would sing.
 But no one trained the vine of youth,
 It lies disordered on the ground.
 The minds that might have taught it truth
 Some poorer pleasure sought and found.

It would have been no task at all
 To make one's life a garden, too,
 Where only kindness men recall,
 And peace and gentle deeds we do.
 But every weed we left to grow,
 Each selfish wish, each jealous hate.
 Now by our tangled patch men go,
 And not a stranger clicks our gate.
 —Selected.

YOU WILL never see driftwood
 floating upstream.

The Gospel: God's Good News

"Jesus went to Galilee to preach God's Good News. 'At last the time has come!' he announced. 'God's Kingdom is near! Turn from your sins and act on this glorious news!' " (Mark 1:14-15, TLB).

WITH these words, Mark introduces us to the gospel Jesus preached. Only a few months before, John the Baptist had arrived on the scene, preparing the people to receive Jesus. These were his words: "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." At the same time he called on the people to repent, saying, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

The beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee was without fanfare. No one sounded a trumpet as Jesus came to John to be baptized; but before long, the people were pressing upon Him everywhere He went. Matthew reports that "Jesus traveled all through Galilee teaching in the Jewish synagogues, everywhere preaching the Good News about the Kingdom of heaven. And he healed every kind of sickness and disease. . . . Enormous crowds followed him wherever he went—And whatever their illness and pain, . . . he healed them all" (Matt. 4:23-25, TLB).

The word *gospel* as used in the Bible means literally "good news" as it is often rendered in newer translations, or occasionally "good tidings," "glad tidings." The angel

said at Jesus' birth, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy," and Luke later wrote of His ministry that Jesus went everywhere, "preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God."

JESUS began and concluded His ministry preaching the gospel of the

most unlikely candidates. His standards were not at all like those exacting rules taught by the rabbis. According to Jesus, entrance was for all who would listen and do the will of the Father, not for Jews alone.

According to His gospel, long prayers and fine speeches were of no avail in God's scale of values. That

The word "gospel" means literally "good news," "good tidings," "glad tidings."

Kingdom. His many miracles attracted large numbers of people, but the majority failed to comprehend His message. In a nation dominated by the heavy hand of Rome, good news was a rarity, and His words of blessing, peace and joy were music to the ears of those who knew only hunger, hardship, and strife. But little did they comprehend of the obligations and duties that must precede those blessings.

From the beginning, His teaching was recognized as different. He promised a place in His Kingdom to those whom the Pharisees considered

which was done to be seen of men counted for naught; all outward show, so important to the Pharisees, was but hypocrisy. No wonder the people were so "astonished at his doctrine" that they said, "Never man spake like this man."

Were they astonished because He said He would die for their sins? Were they astonished to learn they could be cleansed from their sin by His blood? Were they astonished to learn that even the vilest sinner was welcome in His Kingdom if he would only believe? Were they astonished to hear that multitudes would

be entering the Kingdom?

No, Jesus taught none of these things; no pleasing platitudes ever crossed His lips. Such ideas may be part of the "gospel" according to theology, but they are no part of the gospel according to the Scriptures. Nor did Jesus think of His Kingdom as a spiritual entity, a phantom, or a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men. Today Jesus' gospel of the Kingdom has been lost in a maze of the doctrines of men, a doctrine granting easy access to the Kingdom.

The gospel, according to *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, is "the death, burial and resurrection of Christ . . . full and free deliverance from sin on the basis of simple faith in Jesus Christ, the 'vicarious sinbearer,' " or in other words, the atonement. But this is not the gospel or good news preached by Jesus. Not even a hint of the atonement is to be found in Jesus' teachings. In fact, the atonement theory was not even formulated until several centuries after Christ. The true gospel is unchanging and was the gospel taught by the apostles. Paul received it personally from Jesus, and through the power of the Holy Spirit it was transmitted to others so that they could recall to their memory information as needed in their teaching and in their writing for the "latter days."

THE gospel Jesus preached throughout His ministry was the same gospel that He came into Galilee preaching, the "gospel of the kingdom of God," God's Good News. It was the good news of God's plan as contained in the Scriptures, the promise of God's Kingdom to come on earth and how men might gain an entrance to it. The gospel is in part a rule or way of life; it is sometimes called "the way," that is, the way men should live to be worthy of the Kingdom. Jesus Himself testified that this was His mission, saying when the

people attempted to detain Him, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43).

The gospel of the Kingdom of God was central to Jesus' whole ministry. His first sermon, laying the foundation for His later teaching, included the master key to acceptance: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). Using other metaphors, He contrasted the two ways, one leading to life and the other to death: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).

Jesus began His ministry with the call, "Repent." True repentance is more than a confession, more than remorse, more than admitting a mistake and saying, "I'm sorry." It is an about-face, a thorough change, a turning around and going in a different direction, becoming a new creature in God's sight. Only after true repentance are sins forgiven and the believer freed from the guilt of past sins and ready to receive the gospel.

Jesus' gospel stressed obedience: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21); and "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteous-

ness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). The Pharisees were outwardly religious; they had a good memory for their version of the Law, but for the things that really mattered, "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," they had little concern. They prided themselves in being God's chosen people, but compared to Jesus' standard of righteousness, they were far from the Kingdom of God.

According to Jesus' gospel, seeking the Kingdom must come above all else: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Concern for the things of everyday life must take second place to seeking the Kingdom.

JESUS' gospel was always practical. In simplest terms, it was "Follow me." He asked nothing of His followers that He had not shown them by example. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). He had left home and family and familiar surroundings to preach the gospel, and He asked His followers to do likewise.

Cross-bearing was a commonly used figure in Jesus' day and would have been readily understood by His hearers. It meant "doing a thing that was disagreeable to do, or bearing a thing that was painful to bear because it was right." That is what the Christian must do; there must be a real effort to follow His example, a real striving to enter in at the strait gate because Jesus commands it, because it is the "right thing" to do.

Cross-bearing is discipline; it is saying no to ourselves in all which we know to be contrary to the gospel, remembering that the Master said, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of

**The gospel Jesus
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me." It is for the Christian to do what he ought rather than what he likes.

THE gospel of Jesus added "heart" quality to the old Law. Under the old Law, a man had to openly disobey to be judged guilty. But as Jesus expanded the law, the thoughts and intents of the heart are judged as well. He placed "evil thoughts" at the

tures the things concerning himself . . . Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."

Then He gave them their commission: "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:27, 45-48).

have seen and heard. . . . And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 4:20, 33).

THE gospel as preached by the apostles was the gospel preached by Jesus. It involved more than knowing about Jesus and the good works He did. Their first call to the multitude assembled after Pentecost was in keeping with the mandate left by their Master, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). They did not call for fasting or almsgiving or any outward form of righteousness but a heart repentance, a genuine regret for wrongdoing, a turning to God to seek His favor. Remission or forgiveness of sins was possible if they truly repented.

Paul, the last of the apostles, was the foremost gospel preacher in the days of the young church. In his own words, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (I Cor. 1:17). And preach the gospel he did, as witnessed by the appearance of the word "gospel" more than sixty times in his letters to the young churches. "Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God," he wrote, "so have I strived to preach the gospel. . . . I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 15:19-20; 1:15-16).

Can we know that the gospel preached by the apostle Paul was the same gospel that Jesus and the eleven had preached? Paul gives the answer in his letter to the Galatians: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the

There is no salvation if there is no departure from sin and no growth into holiness.

head of the list of evils that come from within and defile. Such vices as "slander, pride, and foolishness" rank alongside "theft, murder, and adultery" (Mark 7:21-23, RSV) as sins that defile. We might think them minor matters, but not so in God's scale. He demanded that the heart be pure; if the heart is right, that which comes out of it will be right.

Much of Jesus' teaching of the gospel was done through parables. Matthew 13 alone contains seven parables relating to the kingdom. His parables were based on commonplace experiences that would be readily understood by His hearers, but the deeper meaning He explained only to the Twelve.

The forty days between His resurrection and ascension were bonus days for the apostles, a time for a refresher course in teaching the gospel of salvation. He took up His work where He had left off, instructing them in the work which lay before them. As He walked with them on the Emmaus Road, He called to their remembrance what He had taught before: "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scrip-

Matthew's record of His commission reads: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). They were to observe and preach *all things* He had commanded them, nothing more and nothing less. There is no evidence that He taught them anything new during this forty-day period; He began and ended His ministry teaching the same gospel of the Kingdom of God, as recorded by Luke in the Acts: He was "seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3), again reminding them that they were to be witnesses of all that they had seen and heard.

They were to be witnesses, witnesses of His ministry, His life, His death, and most of all, His resurrection. The whole gospel rests on the reality of the resurrection and the risen Christ. The resurrection of Christ is God's seal on their hope and ours.

Their time to witness began immediately after receiving the promised Holy Spirit at Pentecost, with Peter and John declaring, "We cannot but speak the things which we

revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). We are confident that Jesus revealed nothing to Paul that He had not taught, nor anything other than the gospel He came into Galilee preaching, the good news of the kingdom of God, the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God" of which He reminded His apostles before His ascension.

The gospel preached by Paul was more than a knowing about Jesus, His death and His resurrection. The resurrection is central to the gospel, but the hope of the resurrection rests on remembering the commandments taught by Jesus; it is more than believing. "I declare unto you the gospel," said Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, "which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (I Cor. 15:1-2).

Reading the Scriptures is not sufficient to gain a place in Christ's kingdom. To "keep in memory" what has been preached or what we have read means *doing* what has been learned. Paul cautioned Timothy about forgetting: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them: and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:14-15). Salvation is in the Scriptures; the Scriptures and the gospel are one. Knowledge is valueless if not applied.

The gospel was no afterthought in the mind of God. The patriarchs and prophets died in faith; they were heralds proclaiming the advent of the King. Jesus Himself reproached His disciples as being slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken; He bade the Jews "Search

the scriptures," for "they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Paul before Agrippa said "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22).

The gospel was the fulfillment of prophecy; it is the only means to salvation. And let us not deceive ourselves: there is no salvation if there is no departure from sin and no growth into holiness. MM

Cheap or Costly?

WE WITNESS daily the sad spectacle of millions of dollars being spent for things of no value. In many instances the money is worse than wasted, bringing the words of Isaiah forcibly to mind: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?"

Life is like a great store window in which pranksters have switched the price tags so that things of great value are priced as worthless, while cheap trash is priced so exorbitantly high.

The Bible informs us that Babylon is costly, and that the merchants of earth are going to wail sore at her downfall. Her pride, luxury, extravagance, vanity and depravity keep the majority of people's pockets drained, while filling the coffers of a few.

It is a tragedy that so many go through life believing the switched price tags.

It is easy to become blind to the true values of life. No one likes to be cheated. But tragic as it may seem, it has been true in our own lives, we have so often bought the dainties from Babylon's shelves and failed to partake of the life-giving fare on the Lord's table. Too often we have clothed ourselves with other apparel than the robe of righteousness. God's wisdom has not always held first place in our heart or esteem, and we have worshiped other gods beside Him.

We are so apt to exchange that which is valuable in our life for that which obviously is not worth having. We are commanded to come out from the world. As we look out on the world we see business men who exchange their sense of honesty for the sake of business; politicians who exchange their reputation for the sake of office; nations who seek to enslave the minds of men for the sake of power; individuals who exchange their soul for the sake of passing pleasures.

Why not purchase those things which are enduring, those values which God has guaranteed for eternity, those things that give us the deepest possible satisfaction even in this life?

Let us cease to trade the things of eternal value for those things that are but a mess of pottage now, and will prove but a heartache at the last. MM

Dangerously Faithful

(Continued from page 8)

Faithful to the Finish

Paul in his closing letter to Timothy penned a message familiar to all of us. In it he declared the excelling standard of his own faithfulness. He states that he had been faithful to the faith, faithful to the fight, and faithful to the finish. He wrote: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7-8).

If this is what secured for him that final reward, why not let this be the pattern for our lives—faithfulness through all!

We must be faithful to the faith. We need to be strong in doctrine, strong in conviction. We need to affirm, as did Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12). He was convinced, satisfied, assured. Like Job we need to be able to say: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25). He was faithful—faithful to his God, strengthened by that bright hope which illumines the path of the saints. Just so must we be strong in conviction.

Then we must be faithful to the fight. To what fight was Paul faithful? What was he warring against? Read his words: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This is the fight that we must be faithful to.

There was a man who was a director of some amateur musicians. He said one time, "These boys dream music; they eat music; they sleep music. Oh, if only they could read music." And that's about where we are if our faith is not accompanied by action. It might be our dream, our meat and our drink; but it must be our life also. Yes, we love God, and how we love to talk about Him and the glories of His Kingdom. If only we would listen to Him and submit ourselves to all His laws and those whom He has appointed, and let Him lead; if only, like that ancient prophet, we would rise up into the watchtower and DO whatever he says, then when the vision does come, we will be ready. For lo, it *will* come.

We must, by persistent conflict with the "good-enough" attitude, change ourselves over into the new creature God loves. To accomplish this, every thought and way of our own must be brought into subjection to

How strong are we? Our faithfulness will tell.

the law of God. Every natural instinct must be controlled, every work of our lower nature subdued. This requires patience, diligence, persistence. It takes courage to always be faithful to the fight, to stand up bravely and resolutely when the wrong is discovered in ourselves. The resentfulness, the carelessness, the slight indifference to duty, the uncontrolled tongue, the petty, malicious or wayward thoughts are not going to fly away by themselves. We must fight them. But our fighting is sure to succeed. Evil will not linger if we stand up and face it. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," wrote the author of the book of James (4:7). Be faithful to the fight, not laying down our weapons for a single moment, keeping in our hand the sword of the spirit, ready for action, and we shall surely conquer.

If determined to be faithful to the fight, the Lord will stand near. He will not suffer one of His children to be tempted more than they can bear but will, with each trial, make a way of escape so that we may be faithful to the fight.

Then, we must be faithful to the finish. Here is the endurance test. If not faithful to the finish, no crown will be laid up for us. Oh, who would be faithful to the faith, and faithful to the fight, and give up when it comes to being faithful to the finish? God forbid. But many zealous beginners grow weary in well-doing all too soon and give up the battle, not enduring to the end. Their strength and the faith to "keep on keeping on" wanes. But though our Lord seems to tarry, we must wait. This is the message of Habakkuk: "Though it tarry, wait for it." Wait, and not grow tired by waiting. But it is not waiting in idleness—never. It is working while we wait; waiting with a purpose.

To be finishers, we must endure. And we must wait. This is part of the price. This is the test of remaining dangerously faithful. But the finishers shall see triumph and glory of victory and wear the jewelled crown of endless life. Who does not long for that!

Cost in Faith

Our faith doesn't really mean enough to us until it has cost us something, until we have learned to hold to it through thick and thin. We might have our convictions, but not until we have done some earnest struggling, some inner wrestling, some genuine sacrificing, do we

know how fully we believe or how truly. We have to be ready to believe, even in danger. We have to be faithful, dangerously faithful.

This was the test of the early Church in a measure we can scarcely imagine. Their philosophy was simple: "This we believe, and no matter what it costs us, here we stand." Our faith costs us practically nothing, by comparison. It cost them something. If you and I were to attend some of their services, we would have felt the difference in those services. It does not take any large measure of courage in 1983 for us to meet together to worship God. But in the second or third century, it was different. Even to be a friend of a Christian was to risk your life. It was to say "no" when everybody else was saying "yes." And this took courage. A man knew in that moment exactly how much his faith meant to him and what he believed. He discovered it in a hurry. Today it is different. It is not difficult now to hear a chapter read on Sunday morning, and to accept it. But the challenge to faithfulness is still with us; to be faithful to all that we know through all the ups and downs of every day, come what may, still has its price. It still costs to be dangerously faithful.

Job knew what it meant to be dangerously faithful. As the account reads, the devil comes along and God taunts him a little. He says, "What about my servant Job? You haven't been able to reach him." And Satan replies, "Well, You are so good to him. How can I get to him? Why shouldn't he serve You? He has everything—health, riches, a good family. No wonder. He has found a very good deal indeed, serving You. But let him be sick. Let him suffer the loss of his children. Let him suffer and see what he does then." There is a point here. And God said, "We will test him." But the great thing about it is that when it was dangerous and this man Job had lost everything, he still held to that noble affirmation: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." At this moment Job really knew how deep was his faith, when it cost him something. Our faith ought to shine. It ought to shine so bright and so warm that the blind can see it.

When we need help, where do we go for the answers? Do we go to God? That is what Habakkuk did. He said, "I will climb up into the watchtower and confront God." That is where we too can get answers. But to quote the words of a current religious thinker, "Are we living as though we believed it? Yes, let us say to ourselves, If God is true and what He has promised is sure, then I've made up my mind. I had better adjust my life to that. Either He is or He isn't, and if He isn't, let's stop this nonsense. No sense wasting our energy on keeping church if there's no God. But if there is, it's about time we began to live as if

we believed . . . that God is, God rules, and God's purposes are for tomorrow."

Oh, this is what we have to do, and this is why we are here. We will hold on until the appointed time, come what may. As Tom Paine put it in 1776, "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink." Yes, but to those who can say, "We will be faithful, dangerously faithful, and we will be saved by faith," this will be the great day of trial—and triumph.

It is not an easy time. Our faithfulness must be tried, thoroughly tried, to prove our worth. As a famous British statesman said one time, "I bring you nought for your comfort. Yea, nought for your desire, save that the sky grows darker yet, and the sea rises higher." It is not an easy time.

No, but it is a great time. It is a wonderful time to be alive. Never has anyone lived nearer to the Great Day of the Lord. Though it seems to tarry, it is near, "speeding apace." And when it arrives—lo it *will* come—we shall have no reason to regret, nor shall we be disappointed, if we are only faithful.

Someday we shall be permitted to join the ranks of the immortals, to travel with the angels, to explore the far reaches of the universe, and even to look upon the face of God—if, if . . . it all depends on the quality of our life now; upon our faith and upon our faithfulness. It is indeed time to be dangerously faithful—for we shall be saved by our faithfulness.

MM

*I am list'ning, Lord, for Thee;
What hast Thou to say to me?*

*Speak to me by name, O Master!
Let me know it is to me;
Speak, that I may follow faster,
With a step more firm and free,
Where the Shepherd leads the flock,
In the shadow of the Rock.*

*Master, speak! though least and lowest,
Let me not unheard depart;
Master, speak! for oh! Thou knowest
All the yearning of my heart;
Knowest all its truest need;
Speak, and make me blest indeed.*

*Master, speak! and make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.*

*I am list'ning, Lord, for Thee,
Master, speak, oh, speak to me!*

—Selected.

Growing In Grace

**"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
To him be glory both now and for ever"**
—II Pet. 3:18

WHAT IS the biggest room in the world? It is room for expansion, room for improvement, room for growth.

There are many passages in Scripture concerned with Christian growth. One key passage is found in II Peter 3:18, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This challenge implies action upon the part of everyone who names the name of Christ.

How do we grow in grace?

We may grow in grace through the process of Christian training received in the home and church. As we learn to discipline our minds to dwell on thoughts divine, as we challenge ourselves to higher and yet higher levels of obedience, we grow in grace. This growth in favor with God results in a strengthening of our spiritual relationship with God, ever challenging us to higher heights of spiritual maturity and ultimately drawing us into an eternal bond with God.

Peter exhorts us also to grow in the "knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This was knowledge that Peter had learned firsthand from the Master Himself. Doubtless as he wrote these words, deep impressions from the early years with his Master flashed through his now mature mind. There had been lessons aplenty, lessons which disclosed ever so keenly his own deep need to grow. It was all part of the knowledge of Christ as he knew it. There was no doubt in Peter's mind as to the verity of that knowledge.

This same knowledge of Christ enlarged the heart of the apostle Paul and caused his mind to grow. Notice in all his Epistles that He never argues with matters of faith or confidence. The knowledge is true—God is true—Christ is true. All this is a foregone conclusion. There

is absolutely no question. And so with great adoration the Apostle sings, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

Because of this supreme confidence, the apostle Paul is a prime example of a man growing in the knowledge of Christ. Day and night, year in and year out, it was on his mind. Christ had called him with a purpose—he had been planted to grow.

And so with us. How little we naturally know about Him. All we learn we learn by being like Him, following His example. But as we grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, we learn to resist temptation as He did, to pray as He prayed, to work as He worked, to imitate Him in godlikeness as He imitated His Father, what spiritual stature we shall attain!

As we grow in grace and in knowledge, shall we not also grow in love? "God is love," wrote the apostle John, and if we would be godlike, if we would be Christlike, we too must grow in all the many meaningful aspects of this love—a love that draws us to God and to what He is offering us and which demands of us a corresponding growth in our love for all that God loves?

The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is also our Heavenly Father. Because of this divine relationship, we can never be orphans—unless we choose to be. If we cooperate with His plans, we are a part of His paternal—and eternal—purpose. How this thought should fill us with appreciation for our high calling and with a desire to grow to fulfill it.

Our spiritual growth results from a conscientious stewardship of all of life, acting responsibly for all the powers of mind and body that God has entrusted to our

care. But growth is not automatic. It is only as we apply what we know to our own lives that we will grow in grace.

As we mature in the Christian life we will be able to see that our chief hindrances to growth arise from our own spiritual deficiencies, our lack of faith, and our strong wilfulness as we attempt to think and plan without taking God into all our thoughts.

This is why Peter admonishes, "But grow in grace."

The greater the spiritual man's growth in grace, the more perfect and complete will be his likeness to Christ and the greater will be his desire to keep reaching for higher and still higher attainments which, ultimately, shall invite him into the very presence of God.

What greater goal could we seek?

MM

In Proper Order

Because we are naturally "of the earth, earthy," it takes much practice to get ourselves away from dwelling too much on our cares, our interests, even our very own selves.

God is the owner and giver of everything of this present life, and He must be our all and in all and the center of our devotion and daily interest. If we do not make Him our chief interest every day of our lives, He will not think much of us. He concerns Himself only with those who concern themselves with Him. What He has outlined in His book of promises is beyond our mental comprehension now; all are reserved for the faithful. They will not deteriorate or fade away. Some day we shall profit by what we have sown.

Today is our day of opportunity, but we must hurry. Today's events are shaping themselves rapidly toward the final hour when all will be lost by delay. Limitless opportunities are no longer assured. As one of our sermons pointed out, "we are a church on the run."

MM

LOVE Never Ends

IS THERE anything in this modern world that will endure eternally? Is there a single invention which we can be sure will never be outmoded?

Of all the works of art, science, literature, there is but one supreme good which will survive when the wings of Time shall have fanned to dust the monuments marking man's greatest achievements. It is divine love, a love which "never ends" (I Cor. 13:8, RSV).

Is it not reassuring in this transitory world to know there is something so noble as never to be destroyed by either Time or Eternity?

What is this love? As a man of science takes a beam of light and passes it through a crystal prism and it comes out on the other side broken up into its component colors, so the apostle Paul passes love through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect and gives to us this analysis of its spectrum:

"Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient."

While men give themselves to the goals of this world and work feverishly to attain their souls' ambitions—ambitions noble when weighed upon the human scale of values but less than a feather-weight when balanced against Eternity—give yourself first to love, that love which is real, genuine, godly; that love which binds us to God in an unbreakable bond of obedience to all His just and righteous laws. Covet this supreme good, "this one thing which is certain to stand the ravages of time, this one coinage which will be current in the Universe when all the other coinages of all the nations of the world shall be useless and unhonored." Do this and you, with Love, shall endure eternally.

MM

• Concerning Apostasy

"How does God forgive those who apostatize?"

You have asked a very thoughtful and important question.

Perhaps the best answer is to look at a few examples which were "written for our learning."

There are several in the record of God's dealings with the children of Israel. When they obeyed God's law they were blest and the Lord protected them from their enemies. But when they grew careless in their worship and made other gods of wood and of stone and neglected the service of the true God, He brought famine and pestilence upon them. He always sent His prophets to warn them long before His judgments were meted out. But in many cases they disregarded the warnings and continued in their evil ways until it was too late to turn.

We must always keep in mind the apostle Paul's warning in Romans 11:22, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

The popular theological concept that God and Jesus love everyone regardless of their character is not taught in the Bible. Jesus in John 17:9 said, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." The people in the world most precious to the Lord are those who are serving Him and making themselves worthy of sharing eternity with Christ on this earth. All others are outside God's eternal plan.

The first step in the Christian life is to learn what God requires of us to obtain salvation. In the words of the Wise Man, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). The next step is to live out that knowledge in our everyday life. The third step is beyond our power to take on our own; it is the change from mortality to immortality, which Christ will bestow on all who meet the requirements.

God is most loving and merciful to those who seek Him, but He is also a God of justice and judgment. If we want to partake of His love and mercy, we must live as He would have us live. On the other hand, if we have agreed to serve Him and apostatize and neglect our duty,

we will find ourselves partaking of His severity. But that severity is never cruel or vindictive.

God is long-suffering with sinners. He does all He can to get them to repent and turn from their evil ways if they backslide. When they repent and cease doing wrong He extends His forgiveness. This is the message of Isaiah, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). See also Ezekiel chap. 18, especially verses 20-24. Any sin that a man may commit can be forgiven unless that man continues that sin too long. A man must turn from his sin and do that which is lawful and right, then God will forgive.

• What Happened to Elijah?

"There are many trains of thought on the subject of Elijah. We are told that nobody except Jesus Himself has yet gone to heaven. We are also told that Elijah 'disappeared into the clouds'; but Moses, having ascended up the mountain, died physical death. Truly, their spirits are in heaven. But since Christians do not believe in reincarnation, how does your church interpret this?"

Your questions about Elijah going to heaven, is discussed on page 11 of the booklet "Elijah, Then Christ." Please review this section, as there is not much that I can add to it.

Exactly where Elijah was taken we do not know. II Kings 2:1 reads, "And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal." Please note that the "Lord would take up Elijah into heaven." In the account of Moses' death, no such phrase is used. It does not say that the Lord took Moses up into heaven. It does say, "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. 34:5-6). When we compare the two accounts, there is a vast difference between them. Moses was buried; Elijah was taken up into heaven.

It is strange that people are so opposed to the return of the great prophet Elijah when this world needs his services so badly. Perhaps it is because he was recognized as the sternest of the prophets, and the last thing people want today is a stern prophet. Nevertheless we believe the Bible prediction that the same prophet that confronted the followers of Baal on Mt. Carmel will confront the powers of darkness in this day.

Permit me just a brief comment on your remark that the "spirits" of Moses and Elijah are in heaven. We find the thought of a spirit as a living intelligence separate from the body in the writings of Plato and the Greek philosophers and among primitive peoples, but we do not find it taught in the Bible. According to the Bible, a living person is a living soul. The spirit is merely the "breath," that which animates the body. When the breath ceases, the body is dead.

The prophet Ezekiel states plainly that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). There is not one text in the entire Bible that associates the soul or spirit of man with the words immortal, undying, or deathless. (See Eccl. 9:5, 10.) On the contrary, human beings outside God's plan are compared to animals. "Like sheep they are laid in the grave" (Ps. 49:14).

• A Spirit in a Body Called Elijah?

"I love your pamphlet entitled, 'Elijah Then Christ.' You have so wisely stated on page 14, referring to the confusion between John the Baptist and Elijah in Matt. 17, 'We believe the latter to be true, that Jesus spoke the truth and that He was indeed speaking of two different men as fore-runners of His two different comings.' This is great! You recognize the fact that John the Baptist came in the spirit and ministry of Elijah in the first coming of Jesus to the world.

"This is great, for our real self is our spirit, or our invisible essence. The body called by our human name is just the casing we use while on earth. This 'spirit' was cased in a body called Elijah."

The person of Elijah seems to be shrouded in mystery. This was true when he was on earth in the days of the kingdom of Israel and it is doubly true today. Most theologians do not believe that he will return to announce the second coming of Christ. They feel that John the Baptist fulfilled that mission at Christ's first coming, instead of recognizing that John came in the "spirit and power of Elijah." We are always glad to hear from someone who believes that he will return.

I am not sure I understand your concept of "spirit." You say "our real self is our spirit." We would prefer to

say, "our spirit is our real self." Our spirit is our breath, which animates and gives life to our body, making us a living being (Job 27:3). It is not a personality distinct from our body. We do not find anything in the Bible to support the idea of our "invisible essence" apart from our body. When a person dies, "his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:3-4). There is no conscious life in the "breath" or "spirit" after death.

"Do read Revelation 11:3-13 about the two true witnesses. See if you don't think Elijah's spirit will be in them at our next evidence of Christ's second coming."

We believe that the two witnesses in Revelation 11 are not two individuals but the Old and New Testaments. They could not refer to a person because the text states that "their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." The Revelator is not referring to a literal city but a *spiritual* city, and literal dead bodies could not lie in a spiritual city.

For further information on this subject, see the *Megiddo Message*, Vol. 58, No. 9 and No. 10.

• Concerning Clothing

"Could you please explain Deut. 22:5, 'A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man?'"

God gave Israel very definite laws regarding matters of morality, and this text is one of those laws, expressing a timeless principle as needed in our modern Sodom as it was among the heathen Canaanites. A woman was not to put on "that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment."

This seems to refer specifically to the immoral practice common among the Canaanites at that time, of exchanging clothing. The newer translations point this up plainly: "A woman must never wear anything belonging to a man, nor must a man put on woman's clothes; for whoever does that is abominable to the Eternal your God" (Moffatt). "No woman shall wear an article of man's clothing, nor shall a man put on woman's dress: for those who do these things are abominable to the Lord your God" (NEB).

The *Interpreter's Bible* offers this comment: "The impersonation of the opposite sex is usually for vulgar and lewd entertainment. In heathenism such exchange of garments was generally for immoral purposes," and God abhorred it. His people must be holy and undefiled, and proper clothing—men's for men, and women's for women—was always required.

MM

To Live Forever!

Of all the things and knowledge I possess, the greatest is the fact that I can achieve a status which will allow me to live forever and ever. The more anyone thinks about this and the fantastic implications associated with it, the more it grows. Major events in your life dry up to trivial nothings. But to live forever in the Kingdom will provide the means whereby you can really learn and gain wisdom and understanding. The thought of it is so exciting that I pray all the more earnestly that the Kingdom will come soon. Can you imagine living for a million years?—and then double that and then live a billion years! How gracious our Father to give us time and to forgive our transgressions when we turn from them.

Not to be perverse, but this world is really coming apart at the seams. With budgets (Federal) deficits at record breaking figures, and strife all over the world, we can be filled with joy and look up. It just can't keep going like it has been. The population pressures, the infiltration of aliens by the millions, and the ungodliness are enough to bring this great country to its knees.

And then I look at the brighter side of things and think that all the faithful from Christ to Paul, Abraham, Moses, and even we ourselves can be here to bring about the greatest change this world has ever seen. I look forward to the Day when I can stand in the presence of the greatest human that ever lived on this earth, Christ. He is sincere, honest, forgiving, and absolutely devoted to the Father. He can be trusted and never a menpleaser. Can you imagine a world filled with like humans praising the Father continuously daily.

Louisiana

D. K.

Little Things Significant

How apt human nature is to brush aside the little stinging, petty irritations of daily life that trip us as too insignificant for the Almighty to consider as evil.

When we read what Jesus said in Matt. 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect," we must conclude that perfection is a complete whole neither marred nor spoiled in its entire dimension. "That he may present it to himself a glorious church, not having a spot or a wrinkle or any such thing but that it should be holy and without blemish." Here is conclusive evidence of what is required of us.

We have enrolled in God's school of learning to be trained, to be tried, to be purified. And this means the little things. His wisdom knows all our needs and His loving concern provides all things necessary for character formation. We cannot get away from life's demands, which are always present, nor evade the daily cares that press us, nor bypass the burdensome problems that must be met. They are there for a purpose and come to us in many guises. Great or small, they can and must be met in quietness and with much self-control.

God is as much concerned with how we take the little things of life as He is with how we meet the great things of this life.

In our growth to perfection, seeking the Lord must become a daily habit with us. Many a time we must plead on bended knees for divine assistance. The flesh, being weak, easily succumbs to the promptings of the lower nature and we would almost give up. As we seek to do God's will, we are lifted

above ourselves and the petty annoyances besetting us to go forth with power and victory over sin.

"Watch and pray" was a command in Jesus' day, and it is just as much in force in our day—if not more so. We have not the Holy Spirit power, neither do we have Jesus or the Apostles with us. But we have their words, which speak to us plainly, forcibly our mission in this world of evil and sin. We have also the admonitions given to them and to us: "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer." But "do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:14-15).

Unspeakable acts of violence are a daily occurrence. Almost the entire world is engulfed by the desire to do much evil and create mischief. How rapidly human nature is going down to their final destruction. God foretold that these things would be, warning us to keep ourselves separate, becoming a peculiar people, zealous of good works. We have to work to get ourselves right, and it must be done in haste. The remaining moments are few. "Make haste, O man, to live, for thou so soon must face the Judge to give account."

New Jersey

L. K.

A Greater Work

Our very life depends on our being rooted deeply, developing a sound mind and coming out from the world. But coming out from ourselves is a still greater work.

Iowa

G.M.

Gratitude—from Poland

Cordial greetings to you with best wishes for health, happiness, peace and spiritual prosperity.

Thank you for the extensive information to my questions concerning the Kingdom of God. It was very convincingly explained. After much thought, I have concluded that your words harmonize with the teachings of Jesus.

Our winter was mild, and we are all well. Most of all, we are happy about the state of war suspension. Solidarity has completely fallen down, very little heard about it. No more strikes, or manifestations on the streets as before. It is quiet. The new party is trying to help itself with the gigantic agricultural and political crisis which unfortunately still exists. Somehow we must live with it. There is a decided improvement, however. Such products as flour, cereals, rice, sugar, salt, baked goods, potatoes, macaroni, butter, margarine, soap, and meat in moderate portions can be had through card system and this suffices us. Such products as coffee, tea, raisins, citrus fruit, nuts, are practically unable to be purchased. Clothing and shoes are hard to get. But thanks to our brothers and sisters, for the time being we are supplied. We are most thankful to all of you. We will never forget all your help during our hard times.

The government is preparing an anti-inflationary program which will indicate further hikes in rates (rents). Rates have been moderately raised. I can hardly visualize further raises, all our monthly earnings literally are eaten up, nothing can be put away into savings. Am not writing this to complain about our fate but for information. I feel you are interested in what is taking place in Poland.

We are very interested in spiritual nourishment for the soul. Personally, I am looking forward to the successive Messages.

Mr. and Mrs. K, Warsaw, Poland

"In Thy light shall we see light."

The light of God can penetrate to every corner of life, and everywhere it brings significance and purpose instead of meaninglessness, hope instead of despair, beauty instead of ugliness. Seeing life in the light of God means seeing it as a gift from God, a sphere in which God's grace and power can operate, in which we can co-operate with Him in His glorious purposes.

Obituary

John Gizen

We have just received word of the death of Brother John Gizen of Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada.

His wife writes: "It is hard for me to begin to write you this letter, but I thought I should let you know that my husband, John Gizen, passed away on April 23. He had been sick with cancer for over a year, and within six months had two major operations. I looked after him at home as long as I could keep him with us. He was in the hospital only two days before he died.

We were a very close family and it made it so much harder even on him, but he knew there was no more help for him.

We had the funeral at the funeral home. He had made up his sermon from the first time he became sick, with the help of one of your sermons. We selected the hymns and prayer. We had someone read the sermon for us, as that was what he had wanted.

We wish the best for all the Megiddo Friends. Please continue sending us the tapes."

Brother Gizen was a subscriber to the *Megiddo Message* for more than 40 years, and made a serious effort to live his religion.

He was also an active missionary, regularly placing advertisements in publications in his neighborhood at his own expense and mailing literature to those who responded. Through the

years he has distributed thousands of our booklets and leaflets in this way, always longing to share his hope with others.

Brother Gizen was also an active correspondent. His thoughtful and regular correspondence will be missed. This is one of his letters to Brother Flowerday during his last illness:

"May I express my many thanks for your letter of encouragement, cheer and hope. As the Lord promises that blessed hope, what else matters?

"This mortal life seems long but in the end is short. Only eternity is worth living for. The thought is expressed in these few words: 'Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last.'

"After all, I was blessed with a life of good health, and a loving family. And I only hope my family will not sorrow as do others who die and have no hope.

"I have so much for which to be thankful to the Megiddo Church, which has presented me with plain truth; and may that Church flourish till the coming of the Lord.

"The world has rejected Bible standards and set their own standards. And we may question ourselves: Who is wrong and who is right? Let God be true, though every man a liar.

"Can man rule much longer with all the problems? Man has no solution to cope with them. Only Jesus Christ is the answer.

"Again, may I thank you so much for your letter. As my life of outdoor activity has ended, receiving letters boosts my morale."

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