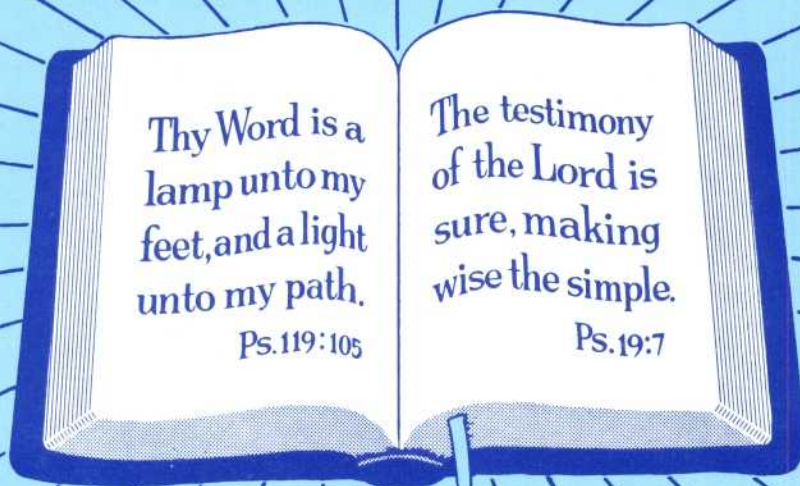


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Fidelity Is the Issue

No Walls, No Bars

In the Days of the Judges

Finding Favor

Do We Really WANT Him?

WHEN WE think about the returning of our Lord to earth, one thought persistently rises in our minds: Will He actually come back? If we make any profession of believing the Scriptures, we cannot escape this message: that Christ *will* return. There is no mistaking the evidence. Christ said so Himself. It is one of the most positive of Biblical promises. He *will* come again.

Into the midst of life as we know it will suddenly burst the presence of the Divine—whether we choose to believe it or not, whether we choose to anticipate it or not. The plan of God is marching steadily on to completion. And an inescapable part of that plan is the second advent of Christ.

But with the impact of this fact comes also a shocking thought which Scripture addresses to each of us individually: What is our attitude and our relation to it? How do we feel about it? Are we thrilled with the expectancy of hope, or is there a slight shadow of dismay upon our expectation—for whatever reason? Do we really *want* Christ?

How instinctively in the throes of pain or sorrow we long for the redeeming Christ; or when life seems to fall apart and nothing is secure. When we think of the devastation of war, or of man's inhumanity to man, or of the tragedies of fire and flood, or of the needless suffering caused by human mismanagement, we long for Christ. It is the only answer.

But when health is abundant and all is well, when we temporarily forget the ills of the world in our excessive involvement with near goals, the pull of eternity is not so strong. When life is pleasant and days come and go in peaceful succession; when work is fruitful and neighbors are friendly and life has more than its share of creature comforts, then there is danger—grave danger—that deep down in

our hearts we may feel satisfied with things as they are. Not for a moment would we deny our belief that Christ is coming—*Never!* But so absorbed are we in our own small circle of existence, so settled in a selfish, shortsighted contentment with the present that we feel not the fiery fervor which kept the Christians of an earlier age living on hope.

The thought was expressed by a young mother who told her minister: "There must be something wrong with me. You asked us this morning whether we 'love the Lord's appearing,' and I don't. I'm happy with my family. . . . I guess you could say I'm *reconciled* to Christ's coming back, but it's not exactly top priority on my list of wants."

What of us? The apostle Paul said Christ would return to those who "love his appearing," who are looking and longing for it so intensely that to prepare for it is their one and foremost desire. Do we qualify? Are we among these?

Christ is coming. What is *our* reaction, yours and mine? Are we each day loving—looking—living—longing to see Him? Do we really *want* Him?

Some day soon the trump of God will shock us from our smug, selfish complacency, and things as they are will disappear in the sweep of the things that shall be. Are we prepared for that moment, mentally, morally, spiritually? Are we so prepared that we are really longing for it?

Jesus is coming, and He has told us to be ready. Not only should we be getting ready, but we should be eager. For however good the present may seem, the future will be better—ininitely better. "The things no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him."

MARANATHA!

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.

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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*.

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MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.

No Walls, No Bars

SOMETHING there is that doesn't love a wall," wrote one of the early poets of our nation. That "something" is the spirit of independence and freedom born and bred in each of us.

Walls suggest confinement, limitation, restriction, and a hundred other ideas all hostile and cold.

In ancient times, strong walls were a sign of security. A strongly fortified city meant safety. The city was as safe as its walls. Generally, walls were from 9 to 15 inches thick, with projecting bastions to add strength. Cities built for defense had walls many feet thick. If the walls went down, the city was at the mercy of its persecutors. The cities of refuge appointed in the time of Moses all had "great and high walls."

The City of Babylon was encircled by a double system of defenses each comprising two walls. The inner wall was twenty-one feet thick and 300 feet high, reinforced with 420 foot towers every sixty feet. The outer was eleven feet in width and also had protruding watchtowers. Do we wonder that the Babylonians thought their wall impregnable?

The ideal of peace is pictured in Scripture as "towns without walls" (Zech. 2:4); in other words, cities having no enemies and needing no defense. Isaiah looking far into the future saw a time when God will make "thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise"—no defense structures will be needed! (Isa. 60:18).

In ancient times walls had other uses. They were erected around vineyards and fields to keep out thieves, wild animals, or whatever intruder might threaten the property. That is why the Lord is described as a progressive farmer who "fenced" His vineyard when He wished to give it every possible opportunity (Isa. 5:2).

Even in our modern day, walls offer limited protection from various types of enemies. In recent years one

particular wall has served another purpose. The Berlin Wall is the only wall of its kind existing today, and its alleged purpose is to "protect" those in East Berlin from the "threat" of western capitalists. Officially, according to East German leaders, it was built to keep "revenge-seeking politicians and agents of West German militarism" from Red territory. In reality, the Communist government was imprisoning its own people, to cut the flow of millions to the West.

After World War II, Germany was divided into two sections, East and West, and Berlin was divided also. But travel between the areas remained relatively unhampered. Then suddenly everything changed. It all happened in one night—on August 12, 1961. A million people went to bed in East Berlin without any idea of what was going to happen. More than likely many were planning to get out of Communist Germany. More than three million had already left the Soviet zone, and the rate was increasing to about 2,000 a day. But at 2 a.m., tanks and trucks rolled in with East German troops and People's Police. Train service to the West stopped, stations were sealed, and building of a wall of concrete and barbed wire began. A million people woke up in jail.

Today, twenty-three years later, this 28 mile wall of concrete and barbed wire remains, reinforced several times with additional concrete and barbed wire, a key link in 840 miles of border barricades, fleshstripping fences and minefields designed to keep East Germans in East Germany. A tragic symbol of division, it is more than a wall. Along it is what is known as the "death strip." To get across the wall one must run a gauntlet of tank traps, trip wires, police dogs, watchtowers, and sentries whose orders are to shoot to kill.

Even so, people who prize freedom more than life have devised almost unimaginable schemes to cross

the barrier. Some have succeeded. Last September, a family of 8 floated over the wall in a homemade balloon. Only a year ago, two persons, assisted by a friend in West Berlin, designed a means of throwing a string over the wall, to which was attached a wire which, securely anchored in the ground on the other side of the wall, served as a slide. Quick as a flash the two designers slid down the wire and over the wall—to freedom. It was worth the risk.

Can we appreciate our freedom, we who have never had to risk our lives for it, we who live in this land of the free?

We are continually bombarded by news of our nation's problems and faults. News of Washington politics distresses and the prevalence of crime is a menace to all. But where would we rather be? All facts considered, we live in the best country in the world. Consider the following facts:

We in America today enjoy freedoms unknown to most of the world's population, freedoms difficult to appreciate because we have never known anything else. We are free to choose our vocation in life, our activities, our lifestyle and livelihood, our pastimes, our relaxation. We are free to come and go, to make our own travel plans and return when we wish. In the U.S.S.R., a citizen who is so fortunate as to own a car must secure a pass to travel to the next town. We are free to buy and sell, and to speak or publish what we believe, without fear of government interference, so long as we do not interfere with the rights of another to do the same.

Especially valuable to us is our religious freedom. Less than one out of five persons living on the earth today enjoys religious freedom, and not even all of these are as free as we are. The other 80% have limited freedom—or none—depending on the extent to which their religious rights are respected or violated.

No walls or fences prevent our citizens from escaping. In fact, laws must restrict entry. Thousands of applications for immigration visas are denied each year.

Investments by foreigners in our country have more than doubled in the past five years.

The United States has the cheapest and most functional telephone and electrical systems to be found in the world.

Our highway and airline systems are the envy of all nations.

We continue to be blessed with massive quantities of natural resources, including fuel. We have enough known coal deposits to last the next 300 years.

While many nations do not produce enough food to supply their minimal needs, we must encourage our

farmers to grow less. We export more food to the rest of the world than any other 12 nations combined.

Although man-hour production is considerably down over the past decade, American workers still out-produce the Japanese by 49% and the Germans by 17%. That is why the American, in terms of buying power, is the highest paid worker in the world.

Twelve million Americans are enrolled in universities and colleges. In proportion to our population, that is more than twice as many as in Germany, the closest runner-up.

Though many inequities continue to exist, tremendous progress is being made to erase prejudice and discrimination. America represents more diversity in religious, ethnical, political and cultural backgrounds than any other nation in all of human history. Today there are over one million blacks in U. S. universities, more than all the students enrolled in all the universities of Great Britain.

There are more colleges and universities in the state of Pennsylvania than in the entire nation of Italy.

Americans give more to benevolent institutions than the rest of the world combined. On a given weekend in the United States, approximately 80 million people engage in some sort of religious activity or assembly.

There are more newspapers in the United States than in all the rest of the world combined.

The American worker on unemployment, or the citizen receiving welfare benefits in terms of buying power, is better paid than the professional and skilled workers in all but a dozen nations in the world.

Americans travel more outside their own nation than all the rest of the world combined.

America has problems a plenty, to be sure. There is an abundance of justifiable criticism which may be levied against our government, our institutions, our culture, our attitudes, and our shortcomings. But it will be some time before we are obliged to build walls to force people to live and work in "*America the Beautiful*"!

Yes, thank God for America!

MM

Never falter, never waver
When temptation comes your way.
God will give you strength in measure
All you need, from day to day.

Praise Him for His loving kindness
Thank Him for His mercy too
Truly yield to His dominion—
In that Day He'll honor you.

Fidelity Is the Issue

Scripture Reading: Psalm 101

YES, FIDELITY is the issue, whether we are serving Christ, or our nation, or one another. Any noble cause demands fidelity; without it there can be no true success.

Fidelity is a mighty word. It means "the quality or state of being faithful; accuracy in details; exactness." Is there any better description of the character God requires of each of His faithful children, each one to whom He will be able to say those glorious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

America and Fidelity

Our own American history affords us numerous examples of fidelity. Among the sung and unsung heroes of freedom runs one pervading trait: loyalty, even loyalty at the cost of great personal sacrifice. If freedom was worth anything, it was worth *everything*. And whoever was not willing to sacrifice everything for it was not worthy of it.

The struggle for independence was long. The story of England's intolerable and despotic rule is familiar history. How arguments and petitions to the Mother Country for redress were ignored; how wrongs heaped upon wrongs until the rebellious colonists could no longer endure the weight of grievance and united to declare their desire for freedom and independence—we have heard the story many times.

Under such strain was drafted the first solemn declaration of the nation's independence. In one document it demolished the lawfulness of any government founded on conquest, declaring that all men were by natural right free.

On July 4, 1776, there assembled in the old hall of the Liberty Bell fifty-six men who, actuated by their ardent desire for liberty, signed the Declaration of Independence. Whether it meant life or death for them they knew not. But of this they were confident: that the Declaration would stand; and to its support they

solemnly pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

From that point forward, fidelity was the issue. Not because they *pledged* to stake their all upon that declaration of inalienable rights do we remember the Fourth of July; but because they *remembered* and *were loyal* to that pledge. Had they failed in this, our nation with all its privileges and blessings in abundance, would never have been.

But it was not an easy pledge to fulfill. Loyalty had a price, a *high* price. The years that followed were years of perplexity, internal strife, jealousy, suspicion, war. Even many victories did not establish their rights as free men. Not until the treaty was signed at the close of the Revolution was that Declaration made fact. Only then had they truly gained the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness which they had outlined in that Declaration. And why? Because of their unflinching faithfulness. Fidelity was the issue.

Personal Fidelity

Near the close of the Revolutionary War a moving scene occurred that should inspire any one who has committed himself to a great allegiance. At this time, the Revolutionary War had, to all intents and purposes, been won. But though the fighting was over, there were almost two full years of uncertainty about the future. No peace treaty had been formally signed, hence the army had to be maintained in case there was a resumption of hostilities.

For men who had stood the rigors of active duty it was a hard time. As day followed monotonous day, it was hard to keep up morale among men who were terribly underpaid, poorly fed, miserably supplied, and idle, and who could think of nothing other than getting home. It was a time of testing, and all were not equal to it.

Hoping to improve their lot, some of the soldiers

began a movement to take matters into their own hands and redress some of their grievances. Even some of the officers were lending their sympathies to the idea. Didn't they have a *right* to be weary of the war? Surely things could be no worse!

The keen General Washington heard the mood if not the message of these restless, war-weary soldiers. And what did he do? One day Washington called his men together, not to chastise them or silence a righteous protest but to explain to them the value of the service they were even then rendering to their country. With no show of anger or offense, very solemnly he took something from his pocket. It was a statement he had prepared about the meaning of the war and the hopes for peace. "Gentlemen," he began as he opened the folded paper and lifted it to read. Finding himself unable to read, he adjusted his spectacles, then began in a choked voice: "Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles. . . . I have not only grown old and gray but also . . . almost blind in the service of my country."

It was enough. He did not need to say anymore. Suddenly his officers and men saw in their great leader a sacrifice and suffering greater than their own. They saw in him the hard fact that the victory of freedom over evil always means suffering. And after all that had been done in the name of freedom, would it not be sad and foolish indeed if they undid the whole purpose of the war and the ideals for which so many had suffered and fought—all for the gratification of a moment's impatience? Fidelity was the issue. Fidelity, all the way to the end. Fidelity until the treaty was signed and the last soldier had been honorably discharged.

On the less glamorous side of the history of the Revolutionary War is the name of Benedict Arnold. A brilliant and esteemed commander, his name has become synonymous with "traitor" and shame. His could have been an eminent place in the nation's annals of achievement. He could have kept his name clean and his honor pure. But he didn't. In a moment of weakness, he chose to disclose American secrets to the English—and was caught. To avoid being tried and punished for treason, he fled to Canada, where he was granted asylum. But in place of the honor he might have had, he lived the rest of his days in silence and died in ignomy. Why? Because he had failed his country. Not capability, or brilliance, or service, but *fidelity* was the issue.

Our Fidelity

Is not our fidelity to God as serious and as far-reaching a matter as the soldier's fidelity to his country? And are

On July 4, 1776, in the old hall of the Liberty Bell, fidelity was the issue.

we not engaged in a cause with benefits surpassing even the declaration of independence? Are we not also soldiers in the army of our King? And as soldiers, are we not called to render the supreme in allegiance and personal sacrifice?

We have promised to be true, loyal, steadfast; and not for a day or a month or a year but for a lifetime. We have promised that we will not go back on our sacred honor, that we will not retreat, that we will not compromise our convictions for any goal of self-interest or self-gratification. *We will not!*

But have we ever found that, in the words of Jesus, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"? (Matt. 26:41). And a brief moment of weakness is all that is needed to plunge us far back into the night of sin.

It may be only a single decision that causes our backtracking. In every life there are brief crises which determine the entire future of that life, critical moments on which great decisions hang; opportunities which, rightly used, can lift us above the dead-sea level of common days into everlasting eminence. Our task is to recognize these as opportunities and make them work for us. They may not come again.

Our Pledge

There is a time in the life of every aspiring Christian when we recognize our servitude to sin, error and self, renounce our former life of ignorance, and declare ourselves, with the help of God, spiritually free. The noble principles of God's holy Word impress us, inspiring in us a holy zeal to burst the bands of sin, misery and death. The eternal principles of justice, righteousness, mercy and truth cause a divine enthusiasm to overflow within us while the glorious promises of God ring in our heart like the bells of liberty. *We are free!*

Such was our experience when first we caught a glimpse of the divine light, when the voice of God first called to us, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16).

But we who responded to the call, we who solemnly

subscribed to the principles of God's law, we who covenanted to serve our God unto the end—what have we done? How faithful have we proved? Like the colonists, we pledged our all—our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor. Fidelity is the issue.

How faithful have we been? How is it with us now? Are we remembering that pledge? The command of Moses to Israel re-echoes to us: "Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out from this place. . . . Remember when thou camest forth out of . . . Egypt all the days of thy life."

Have we forgotten the wonderment of our deliverance? Does the same gratitude and zeal move us now as then? Or can Christ say of us as He said of the

Ephesian Church: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, . . . Thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love"? (Rev. 2:2-4).

"I Know Thy Works"

"I know thy works," said Jesus. No idle, listless people were they, but active, alert, open-eyed, working for the Kingdom with heart and hand. They were active in His service, and the Lord looked upon them with these approving words: "I know thy works."

"And thy labour." Twice this quality is mentioned, denoting divine delight in the *quality* as well as the

Let Us Pray . . .

O Lord our God, Thou great and eternal God, keeping covenant and mercy with them that love Thee and keep Thy commandments to a thousand generations, we come before Thee this morning to receive fresh impressions of Thy greatness and fresh visions of Thy grandeur and Thy unfathomable goodness in calling us into Thy exalted service.

O Lord, Thou art great above all. To Thee belongeth wisdom, praise, and all the glory for anything we are able with our finite minds to accomplish here. Thou art the giver of all. From Thee we come; by Thee we live; and unto Thee at last do we return. On Thee we depend for every breath, every heartbeat, every nerve. And what can we do for Thee, O Thou Eternal One?

May the realization of Thy greatness and our littleness draw from the depths of our being such heartfelt gratitude that we will keep our pledge to fidelity in every aspect of our lives and never turn our faces from Thy truth or settle for anything less than our very best.

Lord, we confess that many times we have sinned. We have knowingly done the things we should not do. We have been unmindful of our covenant with Thee and unfaithful to our vow. We have majored in minors. We have promoted the things that matter least at the

expense of the things that matter most. We have said we were seeking first Thy Kingdom and glory when our first thought was of our own.

Lord, in Thy presence this morning we reaffirm our longing for purity, for holiness, for the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Help us each day to see deeper into our own hearts and lives and eradicate anything Thou dost forbid, anything which will lessen our chances of having the final verdict of the Judge rendered in our favor.

God of our worship and Lord of our lives, grant us such a receptive mind and such ordered affections that petty cares will recede before the splendor of Thy holiness and that all the trials and experiences of this life will be viewed against the backdrop of eternity. Lord, let not our comforts lull us into lethargy, nor our privileges into blindness. Reorient and realign all in us, that we may be sensitive to every opportunity, instant in prayer, and quick to reply to every divine command, "I will."

We pray Thee to be with all wherever they may be who are serving Thee in sincerity and in truth. Be with those in sickness or pain, and those who have trials of illness or confinement, who are finding their solace in Thee. Grant them courage, presence of mind, and a resilience of spirit that transcends declining health. And provide each of us a sense of belonging to Thy family as we resign our lives to Thy will, that we may be always young in our commitment, adult in service, and old in trust. So may we someday belong to Thy heavenly and eternal creation, for Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

quantity of their achievements. It was strenuous, wholehearted, earnest. Too many who work for the Lord do so as if they had but one hand, or even one finger. It is the merest shred of their activity that they give to the Lord. But here were those who worked with both hands earnestly.

Then too, they were not afraid of suffering: "and hast borne" (v. 3). Their work was not without opposition. Some criticized; others scoffed; still others hated. Relentless and unjust though the sufferings were, they did not daunt, dismay or deter these Ephesian brethren from going straight on.

Then their patience is commended. Generals in the armies of earth value highly what is called *elan* in their troops, the dash and rush and enthusiasm with which the brave men spring to obedience. But they value yet more the "staying power," that dogged perseverance and enduring courage. Both of these qualities have their parallel in the spiritual warfare. High, eager courage at the outset, hearts filled with enthusiasm—these are good; but better still is what will be needed to finish, the grace of patience, the steady power to endure and not to faint. For one who has this remarkable quality of perseverance are many who set out and set out well, but who soon turn aside or stop altogether. Oh, blessed is the grace of endurance.

Then there is in this church a holy intolerance. The men and women in this church at Ephesus honor no compromise with evil. As we read of this church in the book of Acts, when they turned from idolatry to serve the living God, they brought their books of magic, and what did they do? Did they sell them, or shut them up, or give them away? No, they *burned* them. Some might have argued for milder measures. But any milder measure might have provided an avenue of retreat, should the sacrifice seem too severe. There was no surety short of flames. Hence, they burned them.

Surely if ever there was a church that seemed able to ask without fear, "What lack I yet?" it was they. Yet they *did* lack. Says the Lord, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (v. 4). This censure is very grave. The issue is fidelity.

Whenever there is a lessening of our love, a slackening of our devotion, a weakening of our strong desire for life in the world to come, are we not endangering our fidelity? If we are truly faithful to our own pledge to God and the cause of His Kingdom, we will mark with sorrow any decline in our own spiritual life. When one must drag himself to do his duty; when prayer and worship and work for Christ are turned aside, in heart if not in act; when there is no longer any glow or fervor or feeling Christwards; when temptation, once resisted

The victory of freedom over evil always means suffering.

and spurned, now approaches and solicits, and is allowed to do so; all these are symptoms, sure and sad, that the Lord has this against us, that we have left our first love.

Fidelity is the issue.

Fortified

If we would maintain our fidelity, our own virtue and courage must be renewed and fortified continually against the hour of temptation. Our Saviour fortified Himself with this constant defense, "It is written." He had vowed a vow unto God and He deferred not to pay it. He remembered it. We, His followers, should do the same. Fidelity is the issue.

Fidelity touches every aspect and avenue of our lives. In our dealings with one another, the issue is fidelity. In our stewardship of whatever gifts, capabilities, possessions or energies God has entrusted to us, fidelity is the issue. In the rendering of our bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to Him, fidelity is the issue. In a very real and literal sense, all that we have and are belongs to God.

Numerous have been the times in the history of God's people when fidelity was the issue. See the Israelites busily building the golden image which was to prove the ruin of thousands of them. What does Moses do when he sees the abomination? Forth goes the ringing cry: "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me."

Fidelity was the issue. They did not *have* to perish. There was still opportunity to join the Lord's side, even at that last crucial moment, if they would acknowledge their sin and turn. But they would not, and "there fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (Ex. 32:26, 28).

Fidelity . . . in Babylon

In the same divine record are many more inspiring examples. There is the account of Daniel's three companions, when they refused to bow before the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up. What was the issue? Again it was fidelity. Of this they were convinced: that it is better to do right and suffer, than to do wrong and be at ease.

There was no hesitating, no parleying with tempta-

Like the colonists, we have pledged our all. Fidelity is the issue.

tion, no allowance for circumstances or situation ethics to confuse their conviction of the duty of fidelity. "Our God whom we serve," they said, "is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3:15-18). What greater testimony to fidelity could there be!

God did not intervene to hinder the executing of the royal decree, but He *did* deliver His children from the harmful consequences of it. In the same manner, God does not take us out of the world; nor does He spare us all the sufferings of this world. We may be asked to suffer pain in the furnace of affliction, but always in His divine providence He will sustain, protect, direct, lest the heat become more than we can endure.

Fidelity a Challenge

Again and again throughout the history of the Israelites, fidelity was the challenge, to keep separate from the nations among whom they lived and maintain the purity of their devotion. Lack of fidelity was, in reality, the cause of the captivity. If only they had remained faithful to the God who created, sustained, delivered, protected, and blessed them, how great they could have become!

But they did not.

After the return from captivity, during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, fidelity was still the issue. Stern law forbade the Israelites intermarrying with the heathen nations around them, lest they be defiled and the ancient faith contaminated.

But flesh was stronger than spirit, and they did it. News of the offense reached Ezra: "The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, . . . for they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass."

What was Ezra's reaction? Did he say, Oh, that

doesn't matter—a little poison won't hurt the whole nation. The people can't be so restricted in everything? Is this what Ezra said? No! "When I heard this thing," he writes, "I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished" (Ezra 9:1-3). Most important of all, he prayed.

This beautiful prayer, unsurpassed in humility and supplication, is recorded in Ezra 9. It closes with these words: "O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this" (v. 15).

What was the solution to the offense? Ezra called the people together, explained the law and their abominable offense, and pleaded with them in these words: ". . . make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives." It was a severe order, but the people cooperated. Fidelity was the issue.

Fidelity in the New Testament

In the New Testament we have several heroic records of fidelity. Foremost is that of Jesus Himself who was obedient unto death, "even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Refusing honor, station, wealth, when tempted to bow to little gods of this world, He chose death rather than deny His calling and betray His cause. He could not because He would not. And He would not because of His faithfulness to His Father. Fidelity was the issue.

Also in the New Testament we have record of two persons who, having heard the law of liberty, were inspired by its promises and pledged their all—their lives, fortunes, and their sacred honor. But when they came to fulfilling that pledge, they reserved a part of their fortune to themselves while pretending that they were giving all.

But Peter, full of the Holy Spirit power, was not to be deceived. Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property, but "reserved part of the price for himself. He brought the remainder to put at the apostles' disposal. But Peter said to him, 'Ananias, why has Satan so filled your mind that you could cheat the Holy Spirit and keep back for yourself part of the price of the land? Before the land was sold it was yours, and after the sale the disposal of the price you received was entirely in your hands, wasn't it? Then whatever made you think of such a thing as this? You have not lied to men, but to God!'"

(Continued on page 20)

And Still She Speaks

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



"O Lord, correct me" now; tell me my faults and besetting sins now, don't wait until the Day of judgment.

I wonder how many of us feel this way in our hearts, that we want to be told of our faults and besetting sins now that we may forsake them. If they are recounted to us in the day of judgment, it will be too late then to rectify them. But if now we plead with God and show by our fruits that we are anxious to know all evils that dwell within us so we can eradicate them, then in the day of judgment the Judge will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." Our sins will all be cast aside by virtue of right living; God will forgive every sin we forsake.

How we should practice to hate evil, that which is low and degrading; and how we should continually practice to love that which is high and noble and elevating; to love God's thoughts, to love His ways, to love the things He commands us to do! It will stimulate us to so fashion our lives by obedience to His truth that we may be worthy of His mercy in that coming Day.

We will be men and women of character, keeping His commandments, if we do not forget His law. That was the sublime thought we commenced with this morning, and now we will close with it—"lest we thy holy law forget." Oh, let us remember these commandments to do them! As the Wise Man said, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"—Eccl. 12:13.

Paul did not follow after the things which were behind; he reached forward to higher things. If we always remember some grievance from the past, we are not forgetting the things which are behind, and cannot grow. We could look back fifty, forty, thirty or twenty years ago when some one had not treated us right and our feelings were hurt. We could remember many things; but we must forget the things which are behind and reach forth unto the things which are before. Work for the prize. Work for eternal life in that glorious Kingdom.

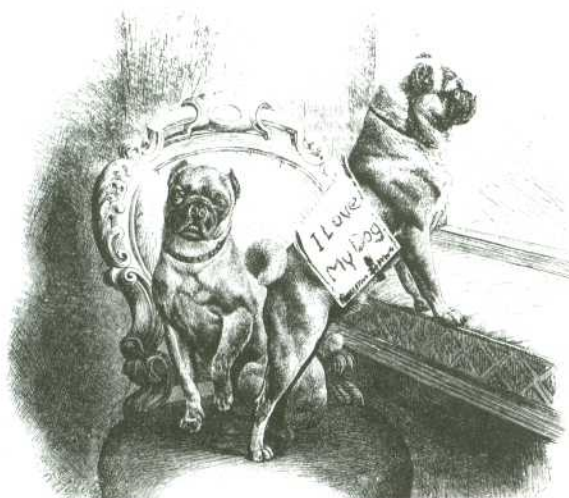
Just as surely as we walk with Jesus, following in His footsteps; He will walk with us, and in that Day to come He will acknowledge us.

Paul made every moment count. He ran in earnest because he knew the prize was at the end of the road, and he kept it in view. He says, I am watching my thoughts, I am watching my words, I am watching my actions. He says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." He kept his hands, his eyes, and his thoughts in subjection, and his feet in paths of righteousness. He did not conform to this world, and neither can we.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, . . . singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Sing these wonderful hymns. If I could sing, I would not let the days pass by without a hymn of praise. I never could sing. I suppose it is a good thing, as I have had to talk so much in the last forty years. But if I am faithful, I think that is one of the first things I will want then—to be able to sing.

I would like to have heard those angels sing. We shall hear something in the future we never could have thought of hearing here. We will hear such singing then that we will think the best music we hear now was nothing at all!

If you want to get a clean heart, first learn to think right.



Dogs Stay Dogs



CATERING to pets and all their fancied "needs" is currently an 8-billion-dollar-a-year business. With 139 breeds of dogs and 31 strains of cats available, the selling of pets has become a growth industry. Specialty shops across the country provide animal owners with a wide variety of luxury items for their pets—such as inlaid wooden dog beds costing up to \$4,000, scratching posts for cats at \$100, fur coats and after-dinner jackets for dogs, and leashes and collars made of Italian or English leather and studded with imitation jewelry. There are pet motels, restaurants offering gourmet dog food, and special pet care centers. Grooming is another important area of the business, certain agencies offering hair coloring that lasts "up to four weeks." And there is medical insurance for the dog, including dental care, surgery, and comprehensive health coverage. Besides medical care, some companies offer elaborate burial accommodations for dogs—at an appropriate price.

It is quite obvious, even to the casual reader, that in the Scriptures

dogs merit a far lesser place. Away back in Exodus 11:7 dogs are mentioned. Frequently throughout the Scriptures they are mentioned, and never in a commendable way. It is true that the dogs licked the sores of Lazarus, but only a dog would do it. It seems strange that this pet which is so admired and esteemed among men should not find some commendable place in the Scriptures.

Dogs do serve some useful purposes in our society today. We all admire those dogs that are trained to save life in the mountain passes, or to lead a blind person safely across a busy street. We see the beautiful posture of the bird dog as it "points" or "sets" before the prey. We admire the swiftness of the greyhound and the courage of the mastiff.

But dogs get no word of commendation from the Lord. "Without are dogs" is the terse comment that suggests the final ending of these peculiarly attractive animals (Rev. 22:15).

Many have time for a dog who have no time for God. Those who

will not walk with God are glad to walk with a dog. Those who care little for God's glory, often care much for a dog's comfort. Some who give nothing to God will spend much on their dog.

The price of a dog was not acceptable in the service of the Tabernacle (Deut 23:18). The Tabernacle was holy, while the dog was unholy. The Tabernacle was clean, while the dog was unclean. The Tabernacle was for priests, not for puppies. The time spent in the Tabernacle was profitable, while time spent on dogs was wasted. God arranged for the fellowship of saints in the Tabernacle. There was no provision there for any fellowship with dogs. The presence or the price of a dog had no place in the sacred courts of God.

David, speaking prophetically of Christ, compared His enemies to dogs in Psalm 22:16, saying, "For dogs have compassed me." There were wild dogs in those days. They were like wolves. They wandered around the cities seeking the dead bodies, killing and destroying and were feared by men. Even today,

men in hatred call each other dogs as a name of shame.

Christ hugged no dogs to His bosom. He did not spend His morning in the park giving a dog its morning exercise. He held no Pekingese against His cheek in loving embrace. Christ chose the company of those who loved His Father, who worshiped God and who followed Him, and all His affection was reserved for God and those who loved God.

A certain class of preachers is described in the Scripture as dogs (Isaiah 56:10-11). They seek to feed themselves on the fat of the land, but give no warning to others. They love their own comforts, but have no care for others. They "talk in their sleep," as the marginal reading gives it, so unaware are they of what they say. They are not awake to danger, nor to the fearfulness of the wrath of God. They are sleeping when they ought to be fighting the battle with sin. God calls them dogs and says they will be outside the city walls of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:15).

On the gates to many farm houses may be seen the sign, "Beware of Dogs." This is really a Scripture found in Philippians 3:2. There Paul wrote, and the Holy Spirit has preserved the statement through the centuries: "Beware of dogs." Certainly he was not referring to the animals of the street. His warning was against cruel men, misleading men, selfish men, men who invite the gift of your confidence and trust and then bite the hand that held it out. These are false, religious teachers. These are ungodly men who teach and preach a gospel which is not of God, and a faith which is not from Heaven.

Yes, beware of dogs.

MM

Major portions of this article from *The Sword of the Lord*, March 24, 1978, by Dr. Walter Lewis Wilson.

Watching

“UNTO YOU that fear my name.” There is great meaning in the word “fear”. Unlike the world at large we are well acquainted with Bible fear. To fear His name is to reverence His Word, which teaches us to depart from every evil and propensity to which flesh is heir.

The evils of our nature are many. Some of us are more inclined toward impatience than others, some are more readily provoked to anger, some to outbursts of unreasonable jealousy, to pride that goes before destruction, which can be the ruin of our chances for eternal life if not checked in time, before it etches itself deeply into the fibers of our daily character. Foolishness may be at the bottom of the list of the 13 evils mentioned by our Master, nonetheless it is an evil which must be dispensed with. “For the thought of foolishness is sin.”

The worst of all mockeries is a religion that leaves the heart unchanged. As Christians we are in the process of being changed, trained, disciplined, made over new. Every day is a training, disciplining school for us. There can be no weekends off or month-long vacations, to do as we please. It is an all-out commitment taking in all the leisure moments as well as all the active hours of every day.

The Word of our God stands forever. It does not alter to suit our individual fancies or notions. We must be true to the cause of righteousness. Every day must see some sin crucified, some battle fought, some good done, some victory won; let every fall be followed by a rise and every step gained become not a resting place but a fresh start to further and higher progress. Ours is a banner which must be displayed because of the Truth. There is no other equal to it.

Yielding a hearty and happy obedience to our Father's statutes and judgments, we tread the bright pathway to life. Gracious is the Lord and righteous, yea our God is merciful. Can anyone boast of a greater and more merciful, all-wise Being than is our God? He has made every provision for His earthly children to become like Him in all the attributes of His own holy and unblemished character. We must strive to please Him, gladly and willingly doing His will, do what we know is right and avoid what we know is wrong.

As we face our challenges, the cares and concerns of our days, may we perceive that all is for our good, that the law of God may be displayed in every activity of our lives. It is our daily assignment. To forget it is to come short in the final day of account and miss the glory just ahead.

Is our present life full of problems? The life to come will be full of joy. Be of good cheer, some day soon, if worthy, all will be different.



Lines to Live By

Whatever You Do

*Wherever the battle may take you,
Wherever the field may be,
Your thoughts are the things that will make you
Or break you—just take it from me.
Your thoughts are the things to preserve you
You'll ride on the crest or you'll fall;
It takes your own mind to unnerve you;
While calm, it can rule over all.*

*How perilous the way, take it striding!
How towering the barriers or how grim—
You can't make them topple by hiding,
Strike into the current and swim!
You'll never ward off a disaster
By waiting with fear in your breast.
Whatever the task, be its master!
Whatever you do, do your best!*

Thy Will Be Done

*WE SEE not, know not; all our way
Is night; with Thee alone is day.
From out the torrent's troubled drift,
Above the storm our prayers we lift;
Thy will be done!*

*The flesh may fail, the heart may faint,
But who are we to make complaint
Or dare to plead, in times like these,
The weakness of our love of ease?
Thy will be done!*

*We take, with solemn thankfulness,
Our burden up, nor ask it less,
And count it joy that even we
May suffer, serve, or wait for Thee,
Whose will be done!*

*Though dim as yet in tint and line,
We trace Thy picture's wise design,
And thank Thee that our age supplies
Its dark relief of sacrifice.
Thy will be done!*

*And if, in all our lowliness,
The sacrificial wine we press;
If from the ordeal's heated bars
Our feet are seamed with crimson scars,
Thy will be done!*

*If, for the age to come, this hour
Of trial hath its latent power,
And, blest by Thee, our present pain,
Be bringing an eternal gain,
Thy will be done!*

*Strike, Thou the Master, we Thy keys,
The anthem of the destinies!
The minor of Thy loftier strain,
Shall breathe in us the old refrain:
Thy will be done!*

—Selected.

Not for Ourselves

*O LORD of life, and love, and power,
How joyful life might be
If in Thy service every hour
We lived and moved with Thee;
If youth in all its bloom and might
By Thee were sanctified,
And manhood found its chief delight
In working at Thy side!*

*Now is the time, while time doth last,
A new life to begin;
Now is the time to leave the past,
And break with self and sin;
So we this day, both old and young,
Would earnestly aspire
For hearts to nobler purpose strung,
And purified desire.*

*Nor for ourselves alone we plead,
But for all faithful souls
Who serve Thy cause by word and deed,
Whose names Thy book enrolls:
Oh, speed Thy work, victorious King,
And give Thy workers might,
Till all the earth with Truth shall ring
And all men see Thy light.*

—Selected

Lose the Day Loitering

*Lose the day loitering, 'twill be the same story
Tomorrow; and the next more dilatory.
For indecision brings its own delays;
And days are lost lamenting o'er lost days.*

*Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute;
What you can do, or think you can, begin it!
If you delay, the mind grows yet more heated;
Begin it, and the work will be completed.*

Points for the Month:

- Week 1:** In everything one must consider the end.
- Week 2:** Clear the road, and then RUN.
- Week 3:** Too low they build who build beneath the stars.
- Week 4:** Thinking without constructive action becomes a disease.
- Week 5:** Every cloud will wear a rainbow if your heart keeps right.

In the Days of the Judges

Introducing the Judges

NAME ANY sin you can think of: Idolatry, lust, envy, immorality, pride, hatred, deceit, even murder—you can find them all in the book of Judges. Why? Because it is the story of a people who forgot God. “Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 17:6). They were doing the wrong things because they had left God out of their lives. In spite of all God had done for them—delivering them from Egypt, supporting them totally for forty years, and settling them safely in a new country that was to be their very own—still they were quick to disregard God and follow their own inclinations.

Is there not a lesson here for us today? Just when this chosen people had moved into the land promised them, everything seemed to fall apart. Joshua, their faithful leader, tutored by none other than Moses himself, died. Before his death he had given them sound advice: “Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God” (Josh. 23:11). He also warned them of the consequences should they fail to serve the Lord faithfully. But when Joshua was dead, only another generation and he—and his God—were forgotten. The people served the Lord as long as he lived, “and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel.” But there the loyalty ended, and “there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judg. 2:7, 10).

GREAT was the spiritual heritage of this people, but faith that is ours only because it is inherited is no faith at all. Each of us must stand firmly on our own convictions or we, too, will be like the Israelites, a “people in whom is no faith.” Time and again they proved it. Spirituality is not inherited. Only a few years, and no one was left to remind them of the solemn vow



they had made to Joshua and to Joshua's God.

Joshua had done on his part. In his farewell address, he had urged them to serve the Lord: “Now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the [river], and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve, . . . and the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey” (Josh. 24:14-24).

Joshua had given them fair warning, and the people had readily agreed to serve the Lord. How could they forget so easily? Was it because they had received an inheritance which cost them nothing? “And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities

which ye built not, and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and olive yards which ye planted not do ye eat" (Josh. 24:13). Yes, we have all heard it. Easy come, easy go. Had they forgotten there was yet work to do? that large portions of the Promised Land still lay under the control of Canaanites, and that God had commanded them to drive out the inhabitants of the land and break down their altars?

God was explicit. Never has He permitted His people to compromise or co-exist with evil.

THE Israelites made an attempt, but they were not thorough. Here and there they left remnants of the heathen Canaanites, with their heathen altars. A summary of their conquest of the land as related in the first chapter of Judges makes it sound like nobody drove out anybody: Judah "could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley" (v. 19); Benjamin "did not drive out the Jebusites" (v. 21); Manasseh did not "drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean" (v.27); "Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer" (v. 29); "Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron" (v. 30); "Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho" (v. 31); Naphtali did not "drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh" (v. 33); "And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain" (v. 34).

What was the result? Exactly what the Lord had said. The Canaanites became a "snare" unto them.

God sent His angel with stern warning. "And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the

inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?" (Judg. 2:1-2). But even this warning failed to move them to action. What was their answer? Only tears. They felt sorry for themselves!—for *themselves*, not their sins! "And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept . . . and they sacrificed there unto the Lord" (v.4-5). They were speechless; their only answer was their tears. But their sorrow was only for themselves. There was no sorrow for sin, and no repentance.

Needless to say, they were soon following the pernicious ways of the Canaanites, "and they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, . . . and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth . . . and he sold [delivered] them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies" (Judg. 2:11-14). The defeat was the end result of doing what was right in their own eyes. How could they do it? we ask. But we forget that they were people like ourselves. They, like us, could rationalize almost anything in their own mind. We can almost hear them saying, "Our situation now is different than it was in the days of Joshua and Moses. We are living in another man's land. To reject his gods might offend him and turn him against us. And think of the harm he could do us! Why, there is no reason for alarm. We can worship his gods right along with our own God, and neither will be slighted."

THE book of Judges is a story of people doing what looked right to them, people willing to compromise their beliefs, people who forgot the God they had promised to serve. And let us remember, the things "written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4). God was their King, but He was afar off, and they readily turned to the gods of the Canaanites that were near at hand. The Baals of their neighbors to the east attracted them. And so they carved themselves idols of wood and of stone and worshiped at the shrines of the Canaanites, bowing to Baal and Ashtaroth.

The history of this period is a vicious cycle of rebellion, retribution, repentance, and restoration. It begins with human achievement at a high peak (with Joshua), falls to a new low (with Abimelech and Samson), and climbs again to the mountaintop (with Samuel).

THE time of the Judges appears to have been counted as a very definite period. Certain passages in Scripture refer to it in this way. For example, the first verse of the book of Ruth: "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons." This passage mentions the period of the Judges as a way of dating the story; it was a definite period in the minds of the people. The famine was so severe that it would never be forgotten, hence it was used to date the story of Ruth and Naomi; all Israelites would remember that period in their history as a time of great distress. Historians date the book of Ruth about midway in the period of the Judges, perhaps during the quiet time following Gideon.

THE apostle Paul, recounting the history of Israel, made mention of the period of the Judges: "And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet" (Acts 13:20). To us with an average life span of 75 years, 450 years seems a long time. The time the Judges ruled was long, accounting for about one third of the time from Moses to Christ.

In spite of the wars and tumult, 200 of these years were peaceful, uneventful years when it is recorded that "the land had rest." We are unable to account for all of the balance, for of some judges it is recorded only that they ruled a certain number of years. But we do know that during this 250 year period, there was much trouble: seven different times Israel was oppressed by her heathen neighbors, and seven times rescue was necessary. Each time a repentant people called upon God, and each time a merciful God answered with a deliverer.

Why the oppression, and why the need for rescue? We find the answer in that one pointed statement so typical of the time: "Everyone did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6). It was the old story of prosperity and ingratitude: God was crowded out. Vineyards they had not planted and wells they had not digged were taken for granted, accepted as their just due and used for their own selfish purposes, not to God's glory.

God was still their King; they were accountable to Him, but He had been silent so long that they neglected His service. There was no rule, no acting judge, no one was giving orders; no one was telling them what to do. As a result, God's commandments were forgotten and sin was out of control. They left God out of their lives and became self-centered. Everyone

wanted their own way. Everyone did that which was right in their own eyes.

WHY JUDGES?

It was not by accident that Israel had judges. The judges were persons chosen by God for a specific role. They were His representatives, acting under His direction. God was their king; the judge was God's surrogate on earth. Being a judge in those days was not an honorary position as are judgeships we know; their work extended beyond the judiciary. When an enemy was oppressing, their role was military. When all was peace, their role was that of a civil governor. If the judge was a God-fearing man or woman, the judge's role was that of spiritual revival. And always there was the task of trying to control sin among the people.

It should be noted that in raising up these judges, God was looking for a particular type of person to perform a particular service which He needed done. All were not God-fearing men of spiritual insight. Some were military leaders and organizers, some were spiritual leaders as well. But all were used by God in doing what He wanted done at the time they were called.

In raising up a judge, God had a specific purpose in view. Usually it was an emergency-type situation. When He called a judge, immediate action was needed to rescue Israel from an enemy. We read, "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them" (Judges 2:16-18).

Government by judges was God's choice for His people at this particular time. It was not a form of government where the people had a say. It was not a democracy, nor a monarchy, but a theocracy. God was the King and the people His subjects. With God the ruler, all were expected to honor Him and make Him the center of their lives. He was the One to be worshiped and obeyed.

The theocracy was the highest form of government the people could possibly have had. We might say it was the grandest opportunity of the 6000 years, the one time when it was possible to have this form of government, with all its potential blessings. There was no Congress to design red tape, no Parliament to be making demands of the people. There were no taxes, and no one required their sons go to war. There was no chance for profiteering, and no inflation. All God asked was that the people cooperate and be obedient and in return they would receive the richest benefits and blessings. Had Israel kept their part of the agreement, what a tremendous source of happiness for them and what a splendid advertisement for the honor of God in the world!

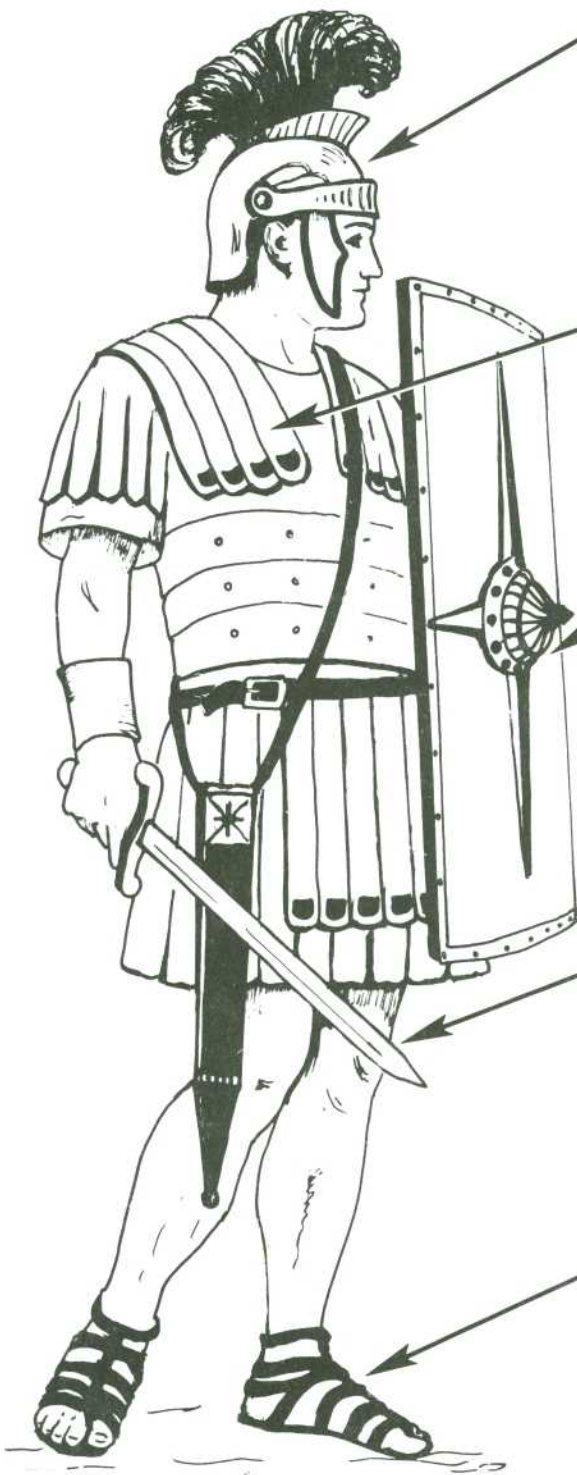
Was God to blame because this government did not work? No, for God had said, "I will never break my covenant with you" (Judg. 2:1), and we can be sure He never did. It was the people who failed to keep their part of the agreement. We cannot blame God. They sinned in turning to other gods, bringing the wrath of the true God upon them.

(Continued Next Issue)

**Every time we hold our tongues
instead of returning the sharp retort,
we are stockpiling goodwill for peace
instead of making armaments for war.**

Have You GOD'S Armor On?

Ephesians 6:13-17



The HELMET of Salvation

The helmet is for head protection. This suggests that Christ's way of life involves the mind. "All things that pertain unto life and godliness come through knowledge." There is first of all something to be learned, something to be believed.

When we commit ourselves to God, we commit our minds to Him, to think His thoughts, to pursue His ideals. When we do this, our minds are protected by the helmet of salvation and we can endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

The BREASTPLATE of Righteousness

Can you say your life is fortified and protected by righteousness?

Do you stand firm for the right whenever it is assailed, knowing that God is a God of righteousness?

Is it your first thought, your first ambition and your first concern at all times to do and be *right*?

The SHIELD of Faith

Can you believe without seeing?

Can you acknowledge what you read in God's Word and then act upon it?

Is your patience growing?

Can you make yourself do what you ought to do whether you like it or not?

Are you aggressive in attacking the problems of life, in seeking the good, the spiritual, the true?

The SWORD of the Spirit

Do you have the gospel of Christ with you at all times? Is your life a living testimony of this?

Do you appreciate and use the Word of God to guide you in determining right from wrong?

Do you care more about what your heavenly Father thinks of you than what your friends may think?

The SHOES of Preparation

Have you set your goals?

Do your feet take you to the right places? Do they travel the right paths?

Do you know your own weaknesses and guard against placing yourself in a situation where you know you'll be tempted?

Are you prepared with answers of faith, strong convictions, and unswerving determinations which strengthen you to stand firm, even if alone, no matter what?

What is your conclusion? Have you GOD'S ARMOR on?

Fidelity Is the Issue

(Continued from page 10)

"As soon as Ananias heard these words he collapsed and died. Only hours later, his wife, delivering a like report, met a like fate" (Acts 5:1-11, Phillips Translation).

Where lay the sin? Not in the fact that they were not willing to give all their goods. It lay in their lack of fidelity to their word. As far as we are told, they were not *compelled* to present the proceeds of the sale. They could have reserved all or any part for themselves, had they chosen to do so. Their sin lay in their claiming or appearing to give all, when in reality their offering was only part.

What an example to those of us who may sometime be tempted to set aside our sacred pledge for "convenience." And what a lesson that we *cannot fool God*. He knows the deepest needs and intents of our hearts. He does not guess, He knows. And whatever the treasured sin we harbor, whatever the secret idol we have vowed to give up and still clutch to our hearts, He knows. Whatever we are keeping that will divide our loyalty to Him, He knows.

We read that great fear fell on those who witnessed the doom of Ananias and Sapphira. Shall we review this incident and not fear, we who have so often held

Fidelity for us is faithfulness to our pledge to God.

back part of our sacrifice? For the God that read the thoughts and intents of Ananias can still read hearts today, even yours and mine.

More Fidelity

The apostle Paul counted all things—not part, or most, but all—but loss for the cause of Christ and his hope of eternal salvation, and at the close of his career could say, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Again, the issue was fidelity. "So fight I," he wrote, "not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Christians living in the early centuries, during the heat of the day of salvation, endured untold physical sufferings and persecutions in the cause of truth and righteousness. And when they knew that the simplest

word of denial would mean their release—fidelity was the issue.

It was not an easy age in which to serve God. But one thing the persecution did: it sifted out the half-hearted, half-committed, half-dedicated. If you didn't have the courage and the vision to see it through, all the way, come what may, you didn't give Christianity even a passing pretense. It wasn't safe. It wasn't popular.

Jesus judged the "faithful and wise servant" on the basis of his fidelity, his steady and unwavering faithfulness to duty. It was he whom "his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season." And what is the word of commendation to that servant? "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods" (Matt. 24:45-47). Again, fidelity was the issue.

In the parable of the Talents, Jesus impresses the lesson that fidelity is not simply keeping but *using* what is committed to us. Serious doing of serious duty must accompany a divine trust. At the same time Jesus points out the great dishonors and heavy penalties that follow disobedience and negligence.

"For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey."

What is a talent? It is anything that gives scope and facility for service. It is whatever we have that we may use in serving God, whether time, energy, interest, health, wealth, intellect, position. All are God's and must be used to His glory.

To each servant in the parable was given specific areas of responsibility. Each was accountable for what had been specifically assigned to him, no more and no less. Responsibility was measured according to the measure of the trust. Greater trust meant greater responsibility.

What did the servants do with their responsibilities? "Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two."

Each of these first two stewards felt honored by the greatness of the trust and each immediately set to do his best for his lord. They lost no time. Each worked in proportion to the trust given him. Each did his master's work faithfully. And the Master was pleased.

"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh,

and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." The man entrusted with two talents also had two talents additional, and was commended for what he had done.

What about the man who had received only one talent? "But he that had received one [talent] went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." What is the word for such reasoning? It is only excuses, and more excuses, as his lord quickly reveals: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents" (Matt. 25:14-28).

What was the problem with the man of one talent? He had not been faithful in the use of it—he had not even used it at all! Fidelity is the issue, and fidelity means action. There is something to do. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). Again, fidelity is the issue. Whatever the trust, we must be faithful.

Our Test of Fidelity

There are so many tempting side-roads from the path of fidelity, so many seemingly justifiable "reasons" to digress. "You've got to be realistic," says one. Or, "it's just legitimate self-interest." Or, "business is business." Or, "You have to get out and see a bit of life." Or, "if you don't look out for yourself, no one else will." Or, "one religion is as good as another." Or, "you don't need to be so strict. God doesn't demand all that—or He'd never get anybody," etc., etc. The list is endless. Or it may be experiences of disappointment, frustration, or adversity that tempt us to waver.

Whatever the test for us, let us always remember that fidelity is the issue. And fidelity to us is faithfulness to our pledge to God, to our sacred vow to be what He wants us to be, to do what He wants us to do, wher-

ever, whenever, however and in whatever way He allows. Here is fidelity. Here is our chance for service. Here is our opportunity to achieve. It is right here and now.

The colonists were sustained through many trying periods by the temporal benefits they would receive when the Declaration was established. Should courage, faith and endurance fail us when we are engaged in the highest, noblest possible endeavor—the cause of God's liberty and truth—and for *eternal* reward?

When the sacrifice or suffering would daunt us, and the effort seem to outweigh the prize, let the memory of the sages who toiled and bled in the defense of truth and freedom inspire us. We, too, are called to fidelity, to prove ourselves worthy of the glorious eternal freedom which will belong to all the children of God. As Moses said to Israel, "Remember the day when ye came out of Egypt," think of the day when first the promises of God rang in your heart. Let memory bring back the day and say, "This was a great moment. God's call was for volunteers, for men of faith in His Word, patience in service, of charity and of vision. I volunteered to give myself, my honor, my fortunes, and all my being. Shall I forget my sacred pledge?"

We must not. We *shall* not. Fidelity is the issue, and all eternity the reward!

MM

*AND IS there, Lord a cross for me
As through this wilderness I stray,
Which, if I would, I must not flee,
But Thy Divine command obey?*

*I would not, Lord, pass by that cross,
For Thou hast placed it in my way;
To turn aside would be my loss,
I, therefore, lift my heart and pray—*

*"Show me the cross that I must bear;
Bend my proud heart that I may take,
In holy faith and humble prayer,
The cross of shame for Thy dear sake:*

*"So will I take my cross with joy,
And bear it onward to the end;
My shame and pride, O Lord, destroy!
My faith and hope on Thee depend.*

*"If I will bear this cross each day,
Thou'lt place a crown upon my brow
In that bright world of endless day,
Where I no more a cross shall know."*

—Selected

Finding Favor

"Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man"
(Proverbs 3:3-4).

WHEN the Wise Man says, "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee," it is really just another way of saying that we should not forsake God's mercy and truth, for "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." God's mercy is always available, but always it is on condition that we fear Him. And what is the fear of the Lord? "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil," we learn in Proverbs 8:13. God is constant; man is changeable.

The tuning bar that makes a certain number of vibrations per second does not respond to other vibrations, but when a musical instrument sounds the tone which has that same number of vibrations per second, the tuning bar vibrates in response. So it is with God and man. God is the tuning bar, always constant in all His attributes. Man is changeable; but when he rises to godliness and matches God's tone, God responds to his efforts.

During the six thousand years of his probation, life and immortality are held just out of man's reach, just beyond his actual grasp. The gap can be closed only by his own efforts toward the Giver of every good and perfect gift—plus the final saving power of the Giver. For "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" before he can enjoy the fullest benefits of the mercy of God.

The apostle Paul told us how he closed the gap between himself and God. He said in Philippians 3:13-14, "... forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul, who had seen Jesus and

been instructed by Him, knew that he had something to do himself, and admonished us to do exactly the same: "Copy me, as I copy Christ" (I Cor. 11:1, Moffatt). Jesus told us that He did only those things that pleased His Father.

God wants inner change. The apostle Peter told us, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:3-4). One translator renders "hidden man" as "beauty of character." Individuals are beautiful, not only to God but to those who are godly, when they have adorned their minds and characters with the beauties of God's mercy and truth.

As we study the pages of Holy Writ and observe those whose achievements stand out, it is not difficult to observe that their chief aim was to live closer and ever closer to God. God's love, God's Word, God's thoughts, God's standards became a living part of their lives. They seek to bind His words about their necks, and write them upon the tables of their heart. And wherever we find one who has done this, who has developed this close relationship with God, we find a great character whose life we can copy and follow with profit. David cried out, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Ps. 19:14).

But there is another step which comes ahead of all this, as mentioned in our text. Before the attributes of God can adorn our characters, they must make an

impression upon us. The word here translated "table" is used thirty-two times in connection with writing or written records. That which we write upon the mind makes a lasting impression upon us.

To read a fact or sentiment does not mean that we agree with it. It may only brush our consciousness as it passes. But that which we write upon our mind is that which we have studied, weighed, and accepted. That which we write upon the table of our heart or mind becomes a part of us. We may not at the time realize it, we may not mention it to others; on the other hand, the Christian remembers when God's laws and precepts entered into his mind and, once lodged there, began to influence his thinking and his viewpoint—his way of life.

The casual thought can scarcely have any deep effect upon anyone; but when we do as the Apostle admonishes, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15), this is writing mercy and truth upon the

table of our heart, allowing them to make deep impressions to the extent of altering our whole life.

What will be the result? "Then shalt thou find favor, and good understanding, in the sight of God and man." There is favor to be found in the way to life, provided that it is sought according to the rules God has laid down. A very important promise is recorded in Proverbs 22:4, "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life." Would not these be loving favor enough for anyone? Would not these favors be enough to satisfy the most ambitious?

And yet, before all of these must come humility. As the darkness comes before the dawn, so must humility first be written upon our hearts before we can find that loving favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man. When God's favor has been poured upon the earth and God's plan has been consummated worldwide, and all know the Lord from the least to the greatest, then shall the righteous find favor in the sight of every man, for all shall be righteous. MM

All for God

CHRIST is our Perfect Example, and we must do everything as He did it. Our lives must be above reproach in every way. Always we should ask the question, Is this to the glory of God? How important is our testimony.

We no longer have signs and miracles to help bolster our faith. Nor are we able to perform great miracles to get the attention of an unbeliever. We have the Word of God and that alone to back us up. We might know every law and precept of God—even memorize the entire Bible; have a vast storehouse of spiritual knowledge. But if we refuse to live by this knowledge, to what avail is it? None whatsoever! As a matter of fact, great harm, irreparable harm, can be done by someone who "preaches" righteous-

ness but refuses to live it. This person can see faults in everyone else, but he is like the one who views himself in a mirror and straightway forgets what manner of person he is.

What a wonderful thing it is to find a genuinely honest person. It is a privilege indeed to be associated with someone of this nature. He is honest to his fellowmen, and above all, honest before God.

Jesus said, "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23:13). Are we concerned enough about our conduct before the world? These people notice our lives more than we realize they do.

We can never get anyone to listen to us if we don't live what we speak.

Are we a stepping-stone or a stumbling block to our neighbor? Words uttered in anger can do great harm. We may ask forgiveness, but these words can never be recalled. They are like a cup of water spilled upon the sand, never to be picked up again. These malicious words and actions can be a great detriment to a brother or sister—even to the point of completely turning them from the Truth.

"And let us provoke one another unto love and good works"—not to ill feelings and misdeeds. Oh, time is so short! Too short to be wasted on forbidden pleasures of sin.

Let us ever be mindful of our responsibility to our "co-workers." We must if we ever hope to enter the Kingdom ourselves.

Truth makes you burst your bonds and then helps you keep your balance.

• Yahweh and Yashua

"I am wondering why the Editor of your magazine does not use correct names Yahweh, Yashua, and so forth. Would greatly appreciate it if you could enlighten me on this point."

The proponents of the idea that the heavenly Father's name is Yahweh and His Son's name is Yashua appear to have some Biblical support for their position. However, it does not seem that the question has attached to it the importance that some schools of thought try to attach to it. The greater part of the Bible is concerned with instructions to mankind on how to live a life that will qualify for future existence. To obey its precepts is of far greater import than the exact pronunciation of the name of its Author.

The entire discussion seems to center around whether the Father should be called by His title or His name, and whether the Son's name should be translated or left untranslated. The term *God* is a title, not a name. But why should its use be any different than to speak of the person who has the highest authority in a kingdom as the *King*? Is it not possible that they try to force a point which is nonessential, as it were to "pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin," and omit "the weightier matters of the law"?

The claim is made that the name *Jesus* is a derivative of the name *Zeus*, a Greek god. That claim may or may not be true. However, no Christian today uses the name *Jesus* with any reference to the Greek god. The names of *Jesus* and *Joshua* are used interchangeably in the New Testament, and it hardly seems that God could condemn us for using the names He saw fit to have used in Scripture (see margin Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8).

The Moffatt translation employs the term "the Eternal" to designate the Almighty. In the introduction to his translation to the Bible, Dr. Moffatt admits that *Yahweh* is properly the name of the Deity. Speaking of the difficulty of making a correct translation he states: "One crucial instance of the difficulty offered by a Hebrew term lies in the prehistoric name given at the

Exodus by the Hebrews to their God. Strictly speaking, this ought to be rendered 'Yahweh,' which is familiar to modern readers in the erroneous form of 'Jehovah.' "

In our publishing, we often employ the terms "God," "the Eternal," "the Almighty," as well as terms describing His attributes or powers ("the Creator," "the Lord of hosts," "the Omnipotent God," etc.). We also use "Jehovah," "heavenly Father," etc., where the terms seem appropriate to the context. It is on record that the Hebrew people thought the name *Jehovah* too sacred to pronounce, and usually used the term *elohim*. An explanatory note in *Young's Analytical Concordance* under the word *Jehovah*, is as follows: "The incommunicable name of the God of Israel. In the Common Version of the English Bible it is generally, though improperly, translated by 'The Lord.' "

The Hebrew words *elah*, *elohim*, *eloah*, translated *God*, and meaning "object of worship," occur roughly 2300 times in the Old Testament. To translate all of these *Yahweh* would seem out of place. The Hebrew word *Jehovah*, probably read by the Hebrews *elohim*, occurs perhaps 300 times. Four times it is rendered *Jehovah* without translation.

But God's name is not His chief concern. Psalm 138:2 reads: "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified *thy word above all thy name*." He values His Word—His promises, His decrees, His precepts—above the name by which He is known to men. And Rev. 19:13 reveals the Messiah's name, "his name is called The Word of God."

We do not have the slightest idea of the language spoken at the throne of God or by His holy angels. Even the best languages of this world must seem very crude to immortal beings who have existed for untold ages. But there is no command in Scripture which tells us our salvation or our acceptance of God will depend upon properly pronouncing the Creator's name. He is looking for our honor, our dedication, our commitment, our obedience. As long as a person shows the proper respect in speaking of God and does not take His name in vain or in any way blaspheme His holy name, we do not feel that the exact term we use is a

matter of serious concern to God. He is not concerned, whether we use God or Lord, Creator, Judge, Redeemer, Jehovah, God of our fathers, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or the term "I AM", YHWH, or Yahweh. It is the spirit and motive behind the use of the word that God will judge. "For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed" (I Sam. 2:3). And, "In every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness"—not he who properly pronounces His name—"is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

• Joshua and the Sun

"Did Joshua stop the sun and moon?"

If the literal sun had stood still "about a whole day," not only would the Amorites have perished but also Joshua and the Israelites.

Read carefully the account in the 9th and 10th chapters of the book of Joshua, and you will learn that the Gibeonites deceived Joshua into making a league with them that they should be his servants, in misrepresenting that they had come from a long distance.

When the surrounding nations heard that the Gibeonites had submitted to Joshua, they assembled their armies and came against the city of Gibeon to destroy it and the inhabitants. And the men of Gibeon appealed to Joshua for help, so he went with his army to their deliverance.

In Joshua 10:2 we are told that when the different kings of that country heard that the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel, "they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities."

The Hebrew Lexicon gives the definition of "royal" as: "dominion, rule, chief of rulers." This is why Gibeon was called a sun city; it was the chief city, the greatest of all.

In verse 12 we read: "Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Notice, Joshua addressed the sun upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon; not the sun and moon in the literal heavens.

Also notice the definition of "stand" in the marginal reading from the Hebrew, "be silent." It could not have been the literal sun and moon that were commanded to "be silent." The definition in the Hebrew Lexicon reads: "To be silent to anyone; to listen to him in silence; to wait in silence, patience and confidence for his help." These royal cities which worshiped the sun

and the moon were to take no part in the battle, therefore were commanded to stand still, be silent, to wait in silence, patience and confidence for Joshua's help.

His command, instead of being addressed to the literal sun and moon, was to the inhabitants of the **royal cities**, worshipers of the sun and moon, not to join in the conflict, but to wait in silence, patience and confidence for deliverance. That Joshua's command was to the royal cities is made plain in chapter 11:13, "As for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them."

In II Kings 23:11 is an example of the way the word "sun" is used. During the reign of the righteous king, Josiah, when he was cleansing the land of the idolatrous worship "he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun . . . and burned the chariots of the sun with fire."

• Sacrifices Today?

"Is the ceremony of sacrifice still required today?"

The sacrifices which were offered on a literal altar by the children of Israel had nothing to do with the eternal salvation of the persons who offered them, and they are not required of us today. They belonged to the Mosaic system and were for a specific purpose, to teach the people respect for God and obedience. They were taken away at the crucifixion of Christ when the veil of the temple was rent.

The apostle Paul in Galatians 5:18 is conclusive, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." The Mosaic law under which the sacrifices were required is no longer binding on Christians either Jew or Gentile.

There is a type of sacrifice much more inclusive than the literal burnt offering, and that is the sacrifice of our own ways which is required for salvation. David describes that sacrifice in Psalm 51: 16-17, "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." And again in Psa. 4:5, "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord." And the apostle Peter speaks of "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet 2:5).

The spiritual sacrifice, or as Paul called it, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24), is more difficult than the burnt offering, but it will bring far greater rewards, even eternal salvation. MM

Combat error with truth. Always defend the Bible.

Keeping Your Perspective

I have had time to think, to meditate, and to read and study. The pressures can be so extreme that you can lose your sense of perspective when the world closes in on you. I have resolved that I am not going to allow this to happen again to me. But permitting this world to run over you and to take away everything is nonsense and foolish in the extreme.

We can be the biggest winners; our winnings will exceed the rewards of this world by such a large measure that the mere mention of a couple of million dollars would be just amusing and foolish.

We are of all the people who have ever lived on this earth the most fortunate because we have the promise of eternal life in the Kingdom. Life in the Kingdom will be so fantastic and so incredible that words will be useless in describing the joys and delights and wonders of it. When you set this on one side of the scale and then look very carefully at the other, it makes you want to be very, very careful about losing such a prize. And indeed, how careful we must be. A single sin, a careless word, a tinge of jealousy, a hint of bitterness, careless thoughts, self-pity, and the like are enough to tip the scales in the wrong direction and we will be losers.

We can be extremely thankful that our Father is a Father of Lights in whom there are no shadows, no turning, nor variableness. He is a God of knowledge and by Him actions are weighed.

The time slips by so fast when you allow yourself to be overcome by this world. First it's a week, then two, and before you are truly aware of the time passing, it's a month. The Scriptures

warn of this and it's true. We have to be very, very alert to this danger. We are building our spiritual houses, and if we don't have them built on solid ground, then they will be swept away by the coming Judgment. I am determined not to allow this to happen.

No honest person can deny the impending judgment on this world when viewing the tragic state of affairs of all nations. Only Christ with His authority and power can make righteous war against the merchants of spiritual wickedness that now abound.

I am certainly happy and filled with joy knowing that Christ will return very shortly to bring about a change. We, as brothers in Christ speaking truth to one another, share the same goal of becoming like Christ, ever striving to live above this world and its ways that we may become possessors of the Kingdom. To come through all of this without the smell of fire, . . . what a task! but one that we can achieve.

I can't change any of my mistakes. I am grieved about them, but I can't alter their being there. But I can push on to the high calling in Christ. I can demonstrate to the Father that I can overcome and be an obedient son. I thank Him from the very bottom of my heart for an extension of my days of probation, and during whatever is remaining, I will prove myself true and faithful.

Louisiana

D. K.

Getting Ready

The apostle Paul said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Really, when we think of the good-

ness of God, we have a very valuable reason to dedicate our life for God, a reason that will be for our benefit as well. I know that to benefit from all the good things of God, we must not only let God into our words, thoughts and actions but we must let Him govern them. God and not self must be King in our lives. Replacing the old man is what makes us a new creature, and the new creature is the fellow that is pleasing to God.

Christ came and showed us it could be done by immediate obedience, and now is our day of opportunity to prove it. And the greatest thing is that the Day is near at hand.

I believe we have been especially called in these last days to witness the return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. What an exciting and wonderful day that will be. I want to be ready to be there and to welcome my Saviour. We do not know how much time we have, therefore it is always important that we make the most of our time to love and serve the Lord with all our mind, might and strength.

May the God of heaven continue to help us control our thoughts and our spirit.

Haiti

M. D.

Living in Readiness

We have been called to live in readiness, that we may be ready to inhabit that beautiful world "when God doeth this."

May we work while our time is allotted. We can win. God would not have called us, if we could not handle the work.

Time is slipping away, may we hurry our steps.

Nebraska

M. M.

Obituaries

Helen A. Snyder

On May 29, we met to pay our last respects to a friend and lifelong sister of our Rochester Congregation, Helen A. Snyder.

Sister Snyder was a very exuberant person, always cheerful, always looking on the bright side. Afflicted with severe suffering for many years, she kept the vision of future life always in mind. As long as health permitted, she was an energetic, willing worker, always ready to help in the work of the church which she and her husband joined in 1926. Being exceptionally missionary-minded, they made many trips to visit interested brethren around the country and in Canada. These visits were followed up by an active correspondence program, which Sister Snyder continued even after the death of her husband in 1977.

Sister Snyder is survived by one son, Carl S. Snyder, of Rochester, New York; one sister, Mrs. Leona Heitzinger of Bradford, Pennsylvania; one brother, Floyd Dominick of Hubbard, Oregon; and eight grandchildren.

John Ellis Craven, Sr.

On April 28, Brother John Ellis Craven of Kinards, South Carolina, passed away suddenly at his residence. He, together with his wife, Sister Helen Craven, have been subscribers to the *Megiddo Message* and actively corresponding members of the Church for nearly fifty years. A cordial reception at their home has been a highlight in the travels of numerous members of our Church that they will never forget. Brother and Sister Craven took literally the Bible command, "Use hospitality one to another without grudging."

Surviving Brother Craven are his wife, Sister Helen Craven; one daughter, Sister Ruth C. King of Clinton, South Carolina, who is also a subscriber to the *Megiddo Message* and is an active correspondent with the *Megiddo Church*; five sons, John Ellis Craven, Jr. of Gaffney, South Carolina; William D., of Kinards, South Carolina; Richard, of Phoenix, Arizona; Derrill Edward of New Castle, Oklahoma; seven sisters, three brothers, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

FINALLY, BRETHREN

What Is Important?

WITH THE advance of civilization, life becomes more and more complex. We find ourselves in a synthetic world created by mechanical inventions, a situation which relieves some problems while creating others. And in the midst of all, we so easily find ourselves neglecting the important and occupied with the unimportant. Like Martha, we are "careful and troubled about many things."

As Christians we should beware of the barrenness of a busy life. Activity without purpose is pure folly.

This means that we must have a new value of time and things. We must learn to value time as the most precious commodity of life. Too often the words of a great Englishman apply to us: "So much to do, so little done." The things that we *do* are what count, not what we *intend* to do. We must make up our minds what should be done, and then say with the apostle Paul, "This one thing I do."

There are many books to read, but which is the most important, the most edifying, the most strengthening to our Christian undertaking? There are many things to do, but which is most urgent? There are many people we might visit, but who needs us most? There are things we must leave undone if we are to do what must be done.

We must also put new value on things as well as time. Money in the bank, food on the table, clothes on our bodies may seem all-important and their attainment may consume all our effort. But most important are the things which will outlast life, those things which death cannot take from us. How much have we invested in *those things*?

The story is told of a lawyer who was famous for drawing wills. The death of a certain respected neighbor aroused much speculation as to the value of his property, and a village gossip undertook to find out the facts.

"I suppose you made out the will?" one villager asked the lawyer. "Yes," was the reply. "Then you probably know how much he left. Would you mind telling me?" "Not at all," answered the lawyer deliberately; "he left everything he had."

If he left everything, he lived only for the things a man must leave. Jesus suggested another type of treasure which need not be left behind: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

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