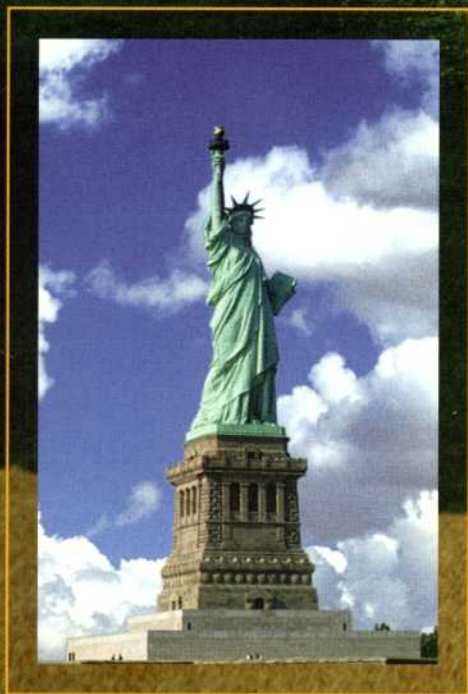


Megiddo Message



YE SHALL KNOW
THE TRUTH,
MY PEOPLE,
AND ITS MIGHT
SHALL SET YOU
FREE."

—JESUS



Where Pride Is Proper

There are few tasks more exacting than the proper assessment of ourselves. The apostle Paul realized this when he appealed to *"every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith"* (Rom. 12:3).

When we reflect upon it, we realize how unreasonable, how indefensible and absurd it is to entertain any sentiments of self-importance and self-esteem. What are we, anyway, but mortal, dying creatures, destined to live a few years and then pass away? What have we that we did not receive?

But there is also a need to guard against undue depreciation of ourselves and our abilities, using our inabilities and our lack of outstanding credentials as an excuse for doing little or nothing. As Jesus taught, it is desirable neither to neglect one talent, nor to boast of five.

Paul set the pattern. He called himself "the least of the apostles," one who was "not worthy to be called an apostle," "less than the least of all saints." Yet he was not a shirker. He did not use his "lesser" position as an excuse for small service but gave himself even more fully as if to compensate for his black past. "I labored more abundantly than they all," he said—not for himself but for the cause of Christ.

Herein lies the difference. We tend to swing between unreasonable pride and unwarranted self-abasement. Paul was realistic.

There is a legitimate pride in which we can properly indulge. In fact, it is the pride we must feel—not taking credit to ourselves but giving credit to God. It is a pride not in what we can do but in the cause to which we belong.

Paul was proud of his work,

*Proud of our cause, our
God, our goal, our work as it
glorifies God— here is pride
that we need.*

not of himself. He wrote, *"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Gal. 6:14)—the glory was in the sacrifice, not in anything he possessed or achieved in this world. And so he set strict limits on the kind of glorying in which he could indulge. His confidence did not arise from anything that he could do of himself, but from what he was *in Christ Jesus*. These are the critical words: Not what we are *of ourselves* but what we are *in Christ*.

The fact is that we can do nothing at all except through the power and strength given us by God. Whatever we have is what we received, and it is our duty to return it to God. In doing this we become part of a great cause, which we must never depreciate or diminish.

The distinction between legitimate and illegitimate pride, then, is clearly drawn. But it is not always easy to maintain—we are so often tempted to exalt ourselves. We may know that we ought to have high regard for our office and a humble estimate of ourselves. We may know that we should glory only in our hope, never in ourselves (II Cor. 10:17). But something in us still wants to promote "me."

The real secret of humility is the bent of our heart, the desire of our will. Is it *for me*, or *for Christ*? Where do I get my greatest joy, my strongest boost? Is it from bringing glory to myself, or to the cause of Christ?

Humility is not in depreciating ourselves but in exalting *our cause*. Humility is the by-product of placing our resources at the disposal of God, and being willing to be used by Him as

He sees fit. In the presence of God no individual has any possible pretext for pride. By seeing ourselves in the light of God's holiness, all human self-confidence is ridiculous and irrelevant. Only by keeping the central issues of our life clearly defined can we hope successfully to preserve

(Continued on page 27)

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 and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

SOON-COMING EVENTS ...

The Herald and the KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: ...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all who live will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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Megiddo Message

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Needed: Radical Faith

radical \ˈrad-i-kəl\: 1 [DICTIONARY] marked by a considerable departure from the usual or traditional

radical: 2 [NEW ENGLAND, 17th C.] the idea that a state could exist apart from the authority of an established church

radical: 3 [CHRISTIAN] all-out, all-demanding, all-fulfilling, all-encompassing, all-disturbing, all-transforming, all-absorbing

When the Jews reported about Paul and his company that they were men who had turned the world upside down, they were talking about men with a radical faith.

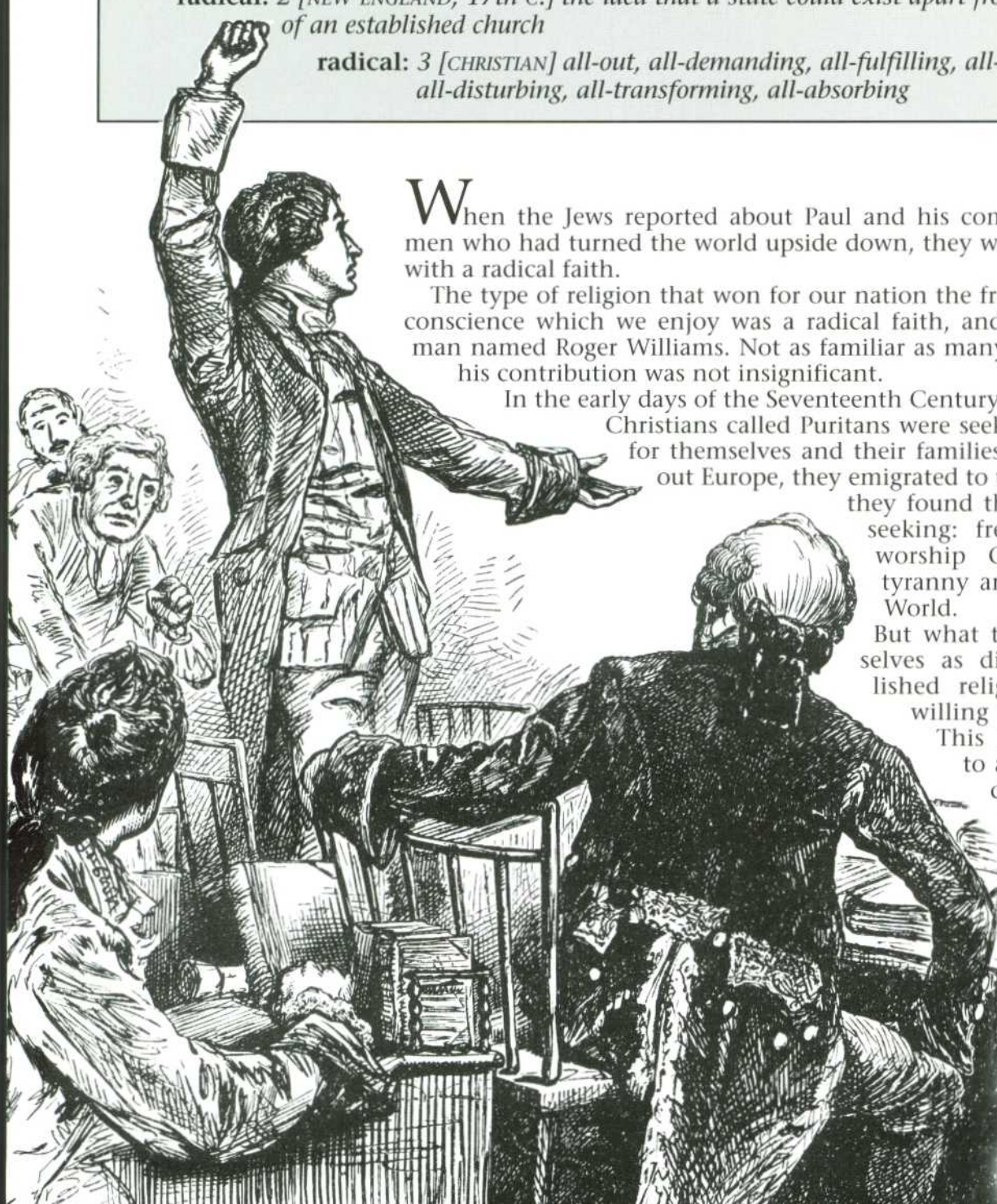
The type of religion that won for our nation the freedom of religion and conscience which we enjoy was a radical faith, and its proponent was a man named Roger Williams. Not as familiar as many in American history, his contribution was not insignificant.

In the early days of the Seventeenth Century, a group of Protestant Christians called Puritans were seeking religious freedom for themselves and their families. Persecuted throughout Europe, they emigrated to the New World, where

they found the freedom they were seeking: freedom to serve and worship God, free from the tyranny and trouble of the Old World.

But what they found for themselves as dissenters from established religion they were not willing to extend to others.

This presented a problem to a few serious minded, devoted believers, who felt firmly that God was true but who disagreed with the manner in which the Puritans were administering the church. Accordingly, in 1636, the Puritan representative of



their so-called "Christian commonwealth" threw Roger Williams out of their civilized Massachusetts Colony and into the rugged forests of New England. To make matters worse it was the dead of winter. In exile, as Williams later wrote, he was denied "the common air to breathe in, and a civil cohabitation upon the same common earth; yea and also without mercy or human compassion, exposed to winter miseries in the howling wilderness."

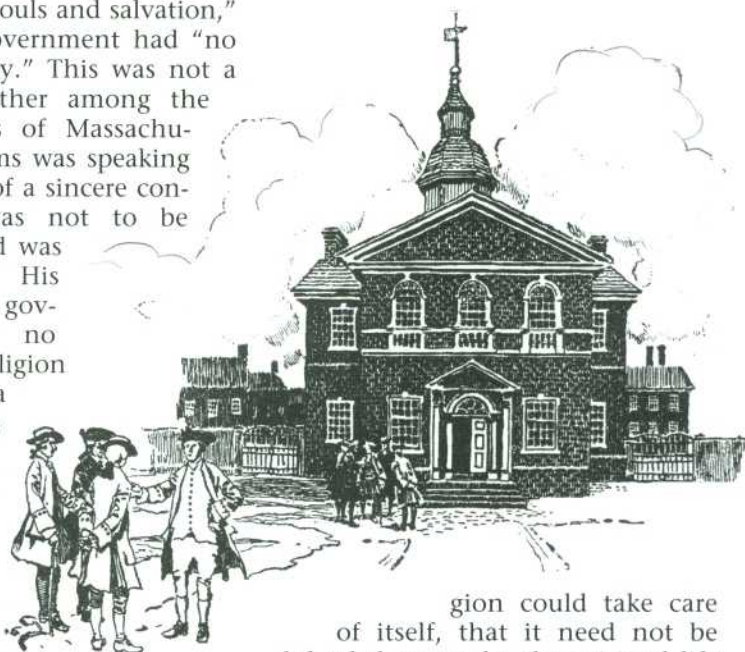
For fourteen weeks Williams wandered about, not knowing, as he put it, "what bread or bed did mean." The Narragansett Indians rescued him, and he purchased land from them to found the city of Providence. By 1638, only two years later, the first Baptist Church in America was accepting members. Of Rhode Island and its tiny Baptist community Williams wrote: "I desired it might be a shelter for persons distressed for conscience. I then, considering the diverse conditions of my distressed countrymen, I communicated my said purchase unto loving friends...who then desired to take shelter here with me." Rhode Island became the first colony for religious liberty in America. And the new Baptist church became a church born in exile, and a sanctuary for Seventeenth Century religious fanatics, Holy Rollers, and assorted theological perverts. Actually, the Massachusetts "moral majority" was glad to see them go. As one Puritan preacher declared, "All Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and other enthusiasts, shall have free liberty to keep away from us...The sooner the better."

From the beginning of the establishment of Massachusetts, Roger Williams had been the pain of the Puritans. No sooner had he disembarked from the boat than he was disseminating what they called certain "erroneous and dangerous" opinions. For one thing, he said that the Indians, not the English King, were the rightful owners of the American soil and that they should be justly compensated for it. This idea was unpopular. Then, too, he declared that the authority of the state extended only to "bodies and

goods," not to "souls and salvation," that the civil government had "no access to divinity." This was not a popular idea either among the civil magistrates of Massachusetts, but Williams was speaking from the depth of a sincere conscience, and was not to be silenced, for God was behind him. His belief that civil government had no authority over religion or churches was a radical shift in political and religious thinking—a shift which became, years later, the foundation of our American government. But in his time it was a new idea, and not acceptable. Most Puritan divines believed that without Christian magistrates imposing definite religious beliefs and practices, theological chaos and moral anarchy would prevail.

John Cotton was one of those magistrates, a brilliant Puritan preacher, who insisted upon state protection for religion. He said: "If civil weapons be debarred from defending religion, upon pretense that church weapons are sufficient, and then no churches or church weapons are to be found upon the face of the earth, then let all seducers to apostasy, idolaters, and heretics,... rejoice in an open door to liberty and safety." But Williams was unperturbed and unchanged. Heretics, idolaters, and apostates abounded in the early church, he said, yet it grew without state protection.

The New England Puritan hierarchy justified the exiling of Roger Williams and the Baptists, as well as the executing of certain Quakers, as being "proper protection for the true gospel." Williams maintained that if New England churches were truly *Christ* churches, they would neither need nor desire political protection. God by the power of the Spirit and the Word of the Lord could take care of His own. Here again was Williams' radical faith: The idea that true reli-



gion could take care of itself, that it need not be defended except by the spiritual life of its people.

Williams' faith was counted radical in his time, so radical and so daring that others did not fully comprehend where it might take them. Nor did they wish to venture it. But God was working, and the radicalism that challenged the Puritan establishment was His doing.

And so it prospered. On two very

Religion that is comfortable and convenient will never make in us the character God is seeking.

basic issues Williams took a firm stand. First, he said that Christian belief cannot be compelled. The sword of the state might compel a nation to be baptized, but it could not make them Christians. "Christening," he said, "no Christians make," and he was emphatic. Fur-

thermore, he declared that the duty of the church was to preach the Word of God, preach it, not enforce it. And in that idea of uncoerced faith was born the doctrine of true religious liberty—faith is personal, not political; that each individual is responsible to God and God alone for his or her faith; that it was not the duty of the state to coerce the heretic or the atheist. God alone is Sovereign Judge for the conscience of believer and nonbeliever alike.

Second, Roger Williams declared that faith cannot be nationalized. There are no Christian nations, he insisted, only Christian people bound to Christ, and they are bound not by citizenship but by faith.

*Jesus' religion
was radical in the
change it effected
in the individual,
a complete
transformation
of heart.*

Massachusetts might be the *new England* but it was not the *new Israel*. God might have had one chosen nation—Israel—as His own long ago, but that was a unique event and long past. Accordingly, Williams believed, it is not the prerogative of any state officials to “set up a civil and temporal Israel, or to bound out new earthly lands of Canaan by exercising authority over religion in God’s name.” He said, “There is nothing special in God’s mind about England or new England or any other people or place in the world.” The entire earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.

Williams further denied that individuals or nations could measure the godliness of their conduct by the beneficent results it might bring them. “The more godly, the more

persecuted,” he wrote. Again, “The nearer Christ’s followers have approached to worldly wealth, ease, liberty, honor and pleasure, the further and further they have departed from God, from truth, from the simplicity, power and purity of Christ Jesus and true Christianity.”

Obstinate Roger Williams—challenging the devout leaders of new England’s dream, shattering the political and religious status quo, reminding all that faith at its best ever lives on the edge of exile—Williams was far from popular, but he was doing a task that God wanted done. More than the discovery and founding of America was necessary to create the free atmosphere in which true religion could yet be born and grow. The change from religious tyranny to true religious freedom was not the result of one mighty upheaval. Step by step events had to take their slow and painful course, until both the time and the situation were right. America had to be discovered, but without Roger Williams, new England might have easily become new ground for religious tyranny and persecution.

The will of God was prevailing, and Roger Williams’ ideas stuck fast. Years passed, the Revolution came and went. The Constitution was written and accepted, and at the persistence of a determined few there was soon added to it a Bill of Rights, securing religious freedom and liberty of conscience to all citizens. And finally, at long last—in 1833—even stubborn Massachusetts had to relinquish a state church. The “radical” idea had won—that a state *could* exist apart from the authority of an established church—incomprehensible though such an idea had seemed.

This type of radical religion won for us our religious liberty, and “radical” religion is also what will win us a place in the eternal Kingdom of Christ. But by “radical” we do not mean extreme in the sense of being unreasoning or unfounded but rather in the sense of being all-out, all-demanding, all-fulfilling, all-encompassing, all-disturbing, all-transforming, all-absorbing. Religion that is comfortable and convenient

will never make in us the character God is seeking. Religion that is comfortable and convenient will never produce the character to which God will grant eternal life. The change from the old creature to the new requires a motivating power that is drastic, all-compelling, all-immersing. So drastic is the change that the Bible uses such contrasting terms as darkness and light, old and new, heavenly and earthly.

Much religion today is valueless, not because it has been liberalized but because it has been “trivialized,” says a current preacher. “We have trivialized conversion from an overpowering, transforming encounter with God to a transaction that merely fulfills a salvific requirement.... Regeneration, the dying to the old self and rising again to new life, has become conversion which takes place on a Sunday morning during the singing of the last hymn or twice a year when the revival preacher comes to town.... Now we, not God, control salvation through spiritual laws, Roman roads, and sinners’ prayers. Such a gospel,” he says, “is safe and manageable, but it will not produce Christians.”

A gospel that is “safe and manageable” is not the religion of Jesus Christ. His was a radical religion, radical in transforming one’s heart and life. His religion struck at the root of evil, and would not tolerate the existence of the slightest sin. Nothing easy, comfortable, or “safe” here.

What is the effect of the true Gospel upon us? How far are we ready to take it in our lives? How much are we ready to give? Are we willing to go all-out for it? Are we willing to submit every aspect of our lives to its transforming power? Are we willing to take the risk of an all-out surrender of ourselves, our time, our talents to the cause of Christ? Are we as committed as were the early founders of our nation, who were willing to risk home and hearth for the sake of conscience? Are we ready, in the midst of a corrupt generation, to demonstrate the Christ life in all its purity and holiness? Are we ready in the midst of doubt and

uncertainty to proclaim by our life and our example the truth and power of real faith? Are we ready to call ourselves prisoners for His sake, bound body and soul to fulfilling His will, doing His work, meeting His standards of uprightness and principle and living by them in every large or small transaction every day?

Are we willing to go all-out for God and holiness, to serve with all our mind, all our soul, all our might, all our strength?

Are we willing to have our lives turned inside out and upside down, swept clean of every fleshly desire, every selfish motive, every thought and feeling and motive that God cannot bless—for the sake of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue?

Such is the call of the radical gospel of Jesus Christ today. And it is not a gospel that is different for the sake of differing. It is a gospel that calls us to give up the good of this world that we might have something better—and eternal—in the coming new world. God is looking for those who are willing to take the risk, to let go of the present in the interest of securing that which is infinitely greater. He is looking for those who are willing to give up what they cannot keep in order to place a firmer hand upon that which can never be taken away from them.

Who will answer the call of Jesus? Who will let go the good of this world for the sake of the best in the world to come? Remember the words of Jesus, *"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"* (Matt. 10:39). Here is the radical gospel of Jesus Christ, so radical that not even a trace of the old thinking can remain. *"All things"* must become *"new."*

And when we come to comparing, what is our grandest imagination beside what God offers us? It is something like giving up one hundred dollars in exchange for one hundred billion; or like sacrificing a moment for a millennium. But even these terms do not do justice to the difference, for *"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"* (1 Cor 2:9).

Let us today re-echo the call of the ancient king of Israel: *"Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?"* (1 Chron 29:5). □

Truth and Freedom

*On the page that is immortal,
We the brilliant promise see:
"Ye shall know the truth, my people,
And its might shall make you free!"*

*For the truth, then, let us battle,
Whatsoever fate betide:
Long the boast that we are freemen
We have made, and published wide.*

*He who has the truth, and keeps it,
Keeps what not to him belongs,
But performs a selfish action,
That his fellow-mortal wrongs.*

*He who seeks the truth, and trembles
At the trials he must brave,
Is not fit to be a freeman:
He, at best, is but a slave.*

*He who hears the truth, and places
Its high promptings under ban,
Loud may boast of all that's manly,
But can never be a man.*

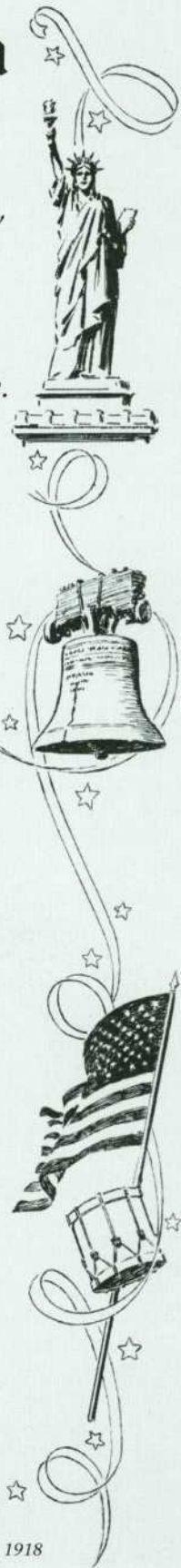
*Wise in speech, and bold in action,
Be forever! Time will test,
Of the free-souled and the slavish,
Which fulfills life's mission best.*

*Be thou like the noble ancient,—
Scorn the threat that bids thee fear:
Speak!—no matter what betide thee,
Let this truth be ever near.*

*Be thou like the dear apostles,
Be thou like heroic Paul:
If God's thought doth seek expression,
Speak it boldly, speak it all!*

*Face thine enemy—accusers;
Scorn the prison, rack, or rod;
And, if thou hast truth to utter,
Speak, and leave the rest to God!*

—Reprinted from the Megiddo Message, January, 1918



Sow an Act,... Reap A **HABIT**

How many familiar details of our lives take care of themselves—because of our established habits.

Habit is one of the most fundamental laws of life. It underlies everything the mind does. Without it, there would be no acquiring of tendencies, abilities, or information.

We all know how easily bad habits are formed; what today seems but a small matter soon becomes fixed and holds us with the strength of a cable.

Fortunately—all habits are not bad.

Someone has explained that the physical basis of habit lies in the fact that nerve cells, like all other living tissue, are modified through use. A nerve cell that has once acted in a certain manner is so changed that it is easier for it to act in the same manner again. For this reason, a nervous or mental condition tends to recur. The degree of probability it will recur depends upon 1) its frequency of repetition, 2) how recent, and 3) how intense the experience.

Frequency of repetition: Every time we think or act, we fix more definitely our habits of thinking and acting.

How recent: The pathways over which the nerve currents travel will become obliterated in time unless they are freshly traversed.

How intense: A traumatic experience may stamp a pathway so deeply that it will remain as long as our brain is functioning.

How many actions we perform without conscious thought! We take out our keys as we approach the home door step. When we are driving we touch the brake pedal at the first sight of danger ahead. The bicy-

clist instinctively balances himself as he feels his body inclined to one side or the other. At first many actions which are now unconscious may have been the result of conscious training and intense effort, but as the mind masters the situation, the mechanics of habit take over and soon the mind is free to concentrate on new and more important tasks. Just think how many familiar details of our lives take care of themselves—because of our established habits.

The laws of habit reach even further than our ability to act. They affect also our patterns of thought, our opinions, and our ways of dealing with great moral issues. One idea may call up another that had not been previously associated with it, if the second is similar in point or purpose.

The simplicity and earnestness of the Christian life reminded Paul of the athletic games at Corinth, and so he wrote: "*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, 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*" (I Cor. 9:24-27). In a time when athletic games were a common sight, the comparison was obvious.

In this same way habit can work

powerfully for us. If we keep our minds occupied with spiritual matters, we will be able to see God in every act of our lives. By storing our minds with God's thoughts, we can learn to apply them to our everyday affairs, and in this way we see God's guiding hand wherever we are.

We can use the laws of habit to keep our minds on upbuilding subjects, and our entire life free from anything that would not be beneficial or helpful to ourselves or others.

We are spinning our own fate, good or evil, never to be undone. The only safe rule is: Put all the strength you can into the act that is to become a habit, and do not relax until the new habit is securely rooted. Each lapse is like the stitch that is slipped in a knitted garment: it quickly unravels many more. Seize the first opportunity to act on any resolution you make. Keep the faculty of effort alive by a little extra exercise every day. Be very particular in little unnecessary points. Do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire necessity arises, it may not find you unnerved and untrained.

We who have pledged to make the law of God the ruling object of our lives must exercise great care in forming our habits of thinking and acting, so that these habits can aid us in our spiritual growth. All the knowledge that men have acquired through observation, experience and study, though helpful, is a mere trifle compared with the infinite wisdom of God. And He tells us in unmistakable terms how weak and naturally prone to evil we are, and commands us to begin at once to amend our ways and our doings, before the time comes when we will not be able to change our character (Jer. 17:9; 13:15-16, 23; Rom. 8:5-14).

What are some desirable habits we should be forming, as God-fearing men and women?

#1 Plan every day in advance.

It is astonishing how much more we can accomplish by having our work previously marked out. This is important, because time is a priceless gift committed to our stewardship,

and we are responsible for our use of it. "See then that ye walk circumspectly," wrote the apostle Paul, "not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16). Again, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10). If at the close of the day we find all our tasks done, it will encourage us to greater effort the next day. Sometimes, though, we will find we have miscalculated, or marked out more than we could do, or have been hindered by unexpected interruptions. All of these facts can influence our plan for the next day. But even if our plan is not successful, or is only partially successful, we still benefit from living by plan, and can lay out what we will strive to do if God grants us another day. In this way we shall form the habit of thinking and acting by plan.

#2 Be more careful to practice strict economy.

We are not only committed to redeem our time and watch that we do not waste precious moments talking about trifles, but we are also responsible to God for how we spend His money. The command is: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). We cannot spend for anything that is not useful and expect God's favor. Our means are not ours to use for unnecessary or useless trivia. All must be used to the glory of God. If we yield to the temptation to buy simply to gratify a natural craving, or to conform to the world in any of its extravagant ways, our mind will be distracted from the law of God and slowly but surely we will be pulled downward. Every time we deny ourselves even some of the comforts of life we could afford we are strengthening the inner man and adding peace and contentment to our lives. And "Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:6-8). The very best safeguard is to realize that we are

accountable to God for all we possess, and that we must answer to Him for its use or abuse. Let us, therefore, cultivate our conscience on this subject and try to be better Christian stewards.

#3 Practice concentrating on the law of God.

We have several commands along this line. In the words of Paul: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself

*If you would serve the Lord aright,
Spend some time in pray'r;
If you would keep your armor bright,
Spend some time in pray'r.*

*If you would daily do His will,
Spend some time in pray'r;
For strength, His bidding to fulfill,
Spend some time in pray'r.*

*For pow'r to run the Christian race,
Spend some time in pray'r;
Come often to the throne of grace,
Spend some time in pray'r.*

*God can your every need supply—
Spend some time in pray'r;
Rich blessing cometh from on high,
Spend some time in pray'r.*

*Pray'r has value none can measure,
It will bring you lasting treasure;
Present help and purest pleasure:
Spend some time in pray'r.*

wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Tim. 4:15). "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates" (Deut. 11:18-20). "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come upon thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart" (Job 22:21-22). "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things

are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

Our minds are never idle. How important, then, to keep them engaged in the right activities. Fill them with good thoughts, and evil will find no room.

As a means to this end, let us plan what we will think about. Let us form the habit of fixing our attention on a particular subject, for our Guidebook says, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1).

#4 Practice self-government.

The Bible tells us, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city....He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Prov. 16:32; 25:28). Jesus did it, and we are commanded to "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our

faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. 12:1-3). If we let the Word of Christ dwell in us and hide God's Word in our hearts so that it rules us in every act of life, it will help us acquire the habit of being calm and patient under all circumstances. We are assured "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28), so why should we not be contented and thankful, and forget to complain!

Our trials are light when compared with the sufferings and privations of those who ran the race before us. Consider the apostle Paul, yet he could write, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). With the history of all those worthy ones before us, and the mighty evidence of the truthfulness of the Bible in the fulfillment of prophecies right down in our own day, let us say with the Psalmist,

"Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5). Again, "Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Ps. 89:13-14).

There is only one way to be an overcomer: to exert the effort to obey the law of God, to cease to do evil and learn to do well (Isa. 1:16).

Let us ask ourselves daily: Am I living right? Am I more zealous in Divine things today than I was yesterday?

Am I really making a sacrifice for God?

Am I crucifying my old nature, dying daily to every sinful tendency, becoming a new creature through and through (II Cor. 5:17)?

#5 Have a regular time for prayer.

God has promised to hear His children if they pray according to His will, and Jesus in His moment of supreme testing spoke those immortal words of submission, "Not my will, but thine be done" (Luke 22:42). We read, "The Lord is nigh unto all

FORMING HABITS

*We people are creatures of habits, 'tis sure;
Without them the species would not long endure;
From day's early dawn they are there to direct,
Though often their presence we cannot detect.*

*We rise in the morning and put on our clothes
According to habit, statistics disclose;
And all the day through, if at work or at play,
The forces of habit we're bound to obey.*

*We cultivate habits—they spring up like weeds,
Oft' times without thought to the source of the seeds;
And quickly we find, ere the stalk has grown high,
A poisonous plant, now reluctant to die.*

*We try a thing once, just to get all the facts,
Then do it again, as our guard we relax;
Till soon, ere we sense it, our fort has been stormed
And we go to defeat as a habit is formed.*

*A habit respects neither person nor age,
Descending alike on the fool and the sage;
The difference comes in the habits acquired,
For many are not all that could be desired.*

*And he who is wise will discover in youth
The best ones to form are of kindness and truth;
These habits that help him in reaching his goal
Are the ones he will nurture and keep in his soul.*

*Are you one who to virtue and goodness aspire?
Good habits you surely will want to acquire;
So start to obey the commandments of God,
And walk in the path that the Patriarchs trod;*

*Your lower emotions resolve to control,
The anger, the envy that poison the soul;
Then cultivate meekness and pureness of heart,
And give to your courage a vigorous start.*

*Just bear this in mind as you go on your way,
Check up on your garden of habits each day!
Determine to weed out the ones that defile,
The low and the groveling, the sensual and vile.*

*Then as you uproot them, replace every one
With habits that show you've a new life begun;
Far happier now you will be, and in time
You'll share in eternity's pleasures sublime.*

—L. L. Snyder

them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth" (Ps. 145:18). And, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Paul tells us to "Pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17), and again, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Tim. 2:8). Jesus warns, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41).

The Bible contains several beautiful prayers that were written for our comfort and learning, so that we may know that not only Jesus but all of God's people were strengthened by communion with the Father.

Daniel, greatly beloved of the Lord (Dan. 9:23), who also found favor with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (Dan. 2:46-48) and with Belshazzar and Darius (Dan. 5:29-30; 6:1), had regular hours for prayer. If he, as prime minister of Persia, with the affairs of 120 provinces resting on his mind, could find time to go into his chamber three times a day that he might pray and give thanks to God, how much more should we spend time alone with our Father. Let us put aside a certain time each morning and evening for prayer. In the morning the mind is calm. The temptations of the day have not beset us, and its duties have not yet filled our minds. Let us ask our heavenly Father for wisdom and guidance for the day before us.

When we realize our own littleness and how often we have failed miserably, we will pray to the Almighty One to send us just what we need to help us gain eternal life—trials, losses, blessings, anything that will aid us in our warfare with self and make us realize our dependence upon a higher Power.

And when the day is done, let us look over our record and balance our account with God. If we are honest with self, we will surely find that deficiencies and shortcomings must be marked on our daily record chart; but we must be courageous and press onward. Then with a determination to do better, let us ask God meekly and humbly for strength to improve tomorrow. □



A homeless Bad Habit went searching one day
For a spot where it snugly could settle and stay;
It hung around Fred's house for three hours or more,
But never found courage to enter his door.

The place was too busy and crowded, you see;
Inside all was humming with young energy;
There were lessons to learn and good books to be read,
But no time to be idle from breakfast to bed.

I'd push my way in," thought the Habit—"but then,
Every corner is filled—I'd be turned out again!
It is no use to hang 'round; this is no place for me"—
And he went off as downcast as downcast could be.

But Jim's door stood open, not far down the road;
No crowd was about it, no bustle it showed.
The hall was deserted, the study was bare—
Bad Habit stepped in with a satisfied air.

Ah! here's what I want," he exclaimed with a grin;
"I can settle in peace, and can grow into sin.
Jim's life is so idle and empty, I see
It is just the right place for an inmate like me."

So it stayed, and it grew till it filled the whole place,
From attic to basement, an awful disgrace.
Poor Jim! Let all others be warned to look out,
For many Bad Habits go searching about!



Preview of Triumph

"Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels"—Hebrews 12:22.

In these dazzling terms, the author of Hebrews attempts to portray the glory of the magnificent finale in which every one of His true children shall participate.

What will it be like? First he describes what seemed glorious to the Israelites at Sinai. Hear his comparison: *"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more"* (Heb. 12:18-19).

That manifestation of God's power was spectacular, awesome, terrifying; but it was not the ultimate. Great though that was, we are coming to something greater—*"unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect"* (Heb. 12:22-23).

What does it all mean? First of all, **we are coming to Mount Sion**, that mountain which became associated with sacred remembrance many, many years before the book of Hebrews was written. Great significance does Mount Zion carry for the New Age about to dawn. Upon Mount Zion Jesus will set His feet when He returns. Upon Mount Zion

the house of the Lord shall be established when God completes His work on earth.

Still more than all this, Mount Zion includes a reference to all the people of God. *"Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad"* (Ps. 48:11). "Mount Zion" is His holy habitation, the people with whom Christ will dwell.

So the book of Hebrews says we are coming **"to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God."** Here is another reference to God's people, who shall compose the heavenly Jerusalem, that new city which shall become the metropolis of the whole earth. It is the city which shall have walls of "Salvation" and gates of "Praise" (Isa. 60:18). Think of the honor in this title! Think of being called a part of the *"city of the living God."* Here is a promise of the eternal companionship of all God's people on earth. God dwells with

them, sustains them, blesses them, and gives them eternal light and power.

But this is not all we are coming to. *"Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."* We are reminded of the vision John received on Patmos, when he saw *"many angels round about the throne;...and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands"* (Rev. 5:11) as though John tried counting them, then estimated that there must be ten thousand times ten thousand—he could not count them. Then fearing that even this generous estimate was much too low, he added, *"and thousands of thousands!"*

The Jerusalem Bible translates Hebrews 12:22, *"What you have come to is...the heavenly Jerusalem where the millions of angels have gathered for the festival."* It is an occasion of great rejoicing, and millions of angels have come to attend the festival.

What is this festival? It is the great Marriage of the Lamb, when Christ is joined eternally to His faithful bride. Myriads of angels have come to sing the praises of the high attainers composing this bride, 144,000 of them who have arrayed themselves in *"the fine linen clean and white."* They have come to join in her acclaim, and their shouts of "alleluia" shall resound from one part of heaven to the other and *"all*

*The triumph
ceremony is being
prepared right now—
have you made your
reservations?*

the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Rev. 19:5-8; Isa. 52:10).

What a day, glorious day that will be! Day of beauty unsurpassed/Day of joy that e'er shall last/Day of peace, secure, serene/Day of happiness supreme/Day of love, day of life/Day of freedom from all strife.

What a Day, glorious day that will be!—enough to draw the attention of the angels of heaven! The angels who come may be those who have been our spiritual helpers; the minis-

tering spirits who were sent "forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). They, who have watched through centuries the development of this planet, shall not want to miss the final step in the salvation of earth's nobles!

How many of the saints will be present for the festival? Every member of the "general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." They are the consecrated ones. Many are sleeping now, but their names are scribed in the

album of heaven, written in the Lamb's book of life. It is not that they are themselves in heaven, but their names are enrolled there. These people have made their reservations for a place in the new world, and when the proper time arrives, they will be summoned.

How magnificent the scenes just ahead! How far surpassing our fondest imagination! And it is all true. It is all sure.

We can be there—if our names are written in the book of life. □

The Bible is not a book for general interest reading. It is the Word of the Almighty Creator. Being His Word, it bears the stamp of divinity. And bearing the stamp of divinity, it speaks with authority, Divine authority, which is not to be taken lightly. In this book God is speaking, telling us what to do, and what not to do, if we would be part of the Divine scheme for our planet. Of course, the choice is ours. We do not have to pay any attention. We do not have to listen. We do not have to obey. We are free to choose our own course. But if we want what God has offered, we must exchange this freedom for obedience.

In a thousand different ways the Bible presents the plan and informs us what to do. Many statements are commands, defining closely the principles and patterns of conduct God would have us observe. Some of these serve as signposts, showing us the best road to travel. Others are danger signs, marking potential hazards. Others are plain "Thou shalt not's" to save our lives from disaster. For we live in a universe governed by law and not by chance. If we choose to disobey, we do not break God's laws; we break ourselves upon them by our disobedience. Someone once observed that the man who leaps from a cliff does not break the law of gravitation; he merely illustrates it. The absoluteness of God Almighty is reflected in His universe.

A passenger on a river vessel once asked the pilot if he knew where all the rocks and shoals were. The pilot smiled. "We don't know where all the rocks are. We know where the channel is, and we stay in it."

This is the plan by which we also may succeed. If each of us had to learn where all the hazards of life lie,



if each had to experiment to find what makes life successful and what makes it miserable, if each had to try out every possible course of action to know its worth, we

would fail utterly. But thank God that we can learn from the experience of others. That is why Paul wrote to his brethren at Rome that they should be "wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." It just isn't necessary to know all about everything wrong. Enough for us to occupy ourselves learning what is right, and then to practice it.

This is the purpose of the Word of God. It serves as our map, our guide by which we can avoid the hazards of life's journey and arrive safely at our destination. If we follow its directives, we can rejoice in the possibilities it opens to us. We can travel without fear of shipwreck. Free from the fear of reefs and rocks, we can rejoice in God's promises of safe voyage and sure haven. Above the necessity of knowing where the rocks are is the joy and freedom of knowing where they are not—where the deep channel is—and staying within its safety. This latter course restricts our freedoms, but what can surpass the peace that comes from knowing—not guessing but knowing—that we are safe.

But this requires faith, faith that can say, "I realize it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps, that this privilege belongs only to God. He is the commander of my life. I know that He knows, and what He says I will do."

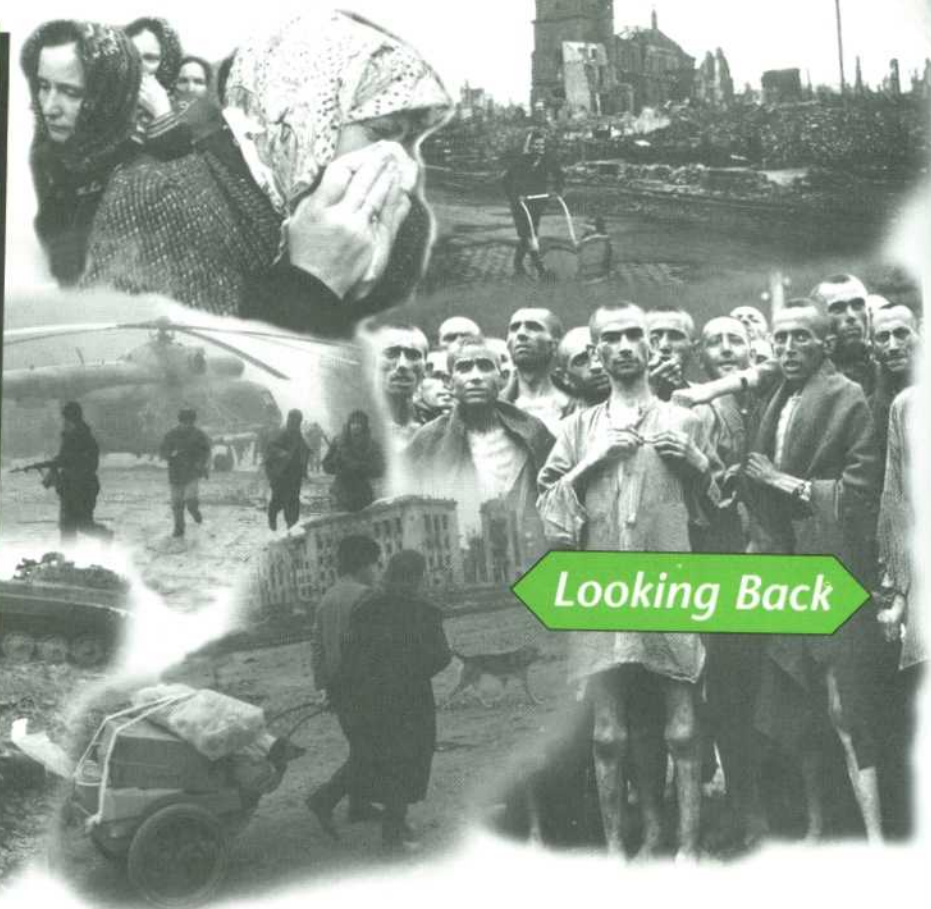
Following His markers, we can travel safely. His markers show the safe way, and His plain "Thou shalt not's" will warn us when we need to know where the rocks are. □

An open Book before me lies;
I sit alone in dimming light,
While ev'ning shades fall o'er me.
Day's brightness changing into night
Shuts out the world before me.

While thoughts Divine engross my mind,
I glance upon the open Book
Where Wisdom speaketh to me;
And in my mind's eye, as I look,
Two pictures pass before me.

The one great pleasure to me gives;
It fills my heart with joy and peace,
Those happy forms before me;
No sadness, but a constant feast
Of blessings looking toward me.

On other one I shuddering pale;
At it the stoutest heart must quail,
So fearful, dark the picture.
I long to draw o'er it a veil,
To hide its frightful horror.



Looking Back

Two Pictures

I see earth's rulers in dismay,
No peace, no safety and no rest;
Each jealous of the other,
With hatred rankling in his breast,
Is crying, "Peace, my brother."

And while their lips are crying "Peace!"
Their minds with ghastly, frightful skill,
Are planning great inventions;
And dextrous hands untiring build
Great weapons of destruction.

God's mercy will not longer wait,
His Day of Judgment is at hand,
His Judgment just and righteous
On all the wicked of the land.
None can withstand His justice.

Think you earth's tribes will own their King?
Will they allegiance to Him bring?
With open arms receive Him?
Lay off their robes of state and bring
Their all to lay before Him?

Nay! nay! the nations of the earth
His proffered mercy will not take.
His awesome blessings scorning,
Together they a compact make,
Uniting to oppose Him—

When, lo, a sound falls on their ear;
What means this rushing that they hear?
A foe is right upon them!
An army flying through the air,
And naught can stand before them!

It is the war long prophesied,
This bloody scene that 'fore me lies;
And standing high toward heaven,
Great fiery letters meet my eyes
That spell out "ARMAGEDDON."

Oh woeful scene! Mine eyes to screen,
I clasp my hands before my face,
And hide the vision from me.
Where wickedness did run its course;
Now Christ doth win the vict'ry!

I gladly turn me to the right,
And there I catch a gleam of light
As other picture greets me.
It drives away the fearful sight,
And, oh, it soothes and cheers me!

This picture greatest pleasure gives,
With heav'nly thoughts of joy and peace,
Such happy forms before me!
No sadness but a constant feast
Of blessings looking toward me.

A scene in Kingdom fair I see,
Oh, sight of joy and gladness
Beyond earth's pain and anguish;
A scene within the pearly gate
When Christ His foes hath vanquished.

I see the work of Jesus Christ
Whose coming was so long foretold
By prophets through the ages.
He reigns in majesty and might;
All people sing His praises.

At last the age of peace has come
The age when righteousness shall stand
To rule earth's conquered nations;
I see them humbly bow before
The God of all creation.

No sight of battle horror there,
No deadly feud, no jealous hate,
Is seen the wide world over;
No need of wall or bar or gate,
Each trustful of the other.

I hear the happy shepherd's song,
And see the fields spread wide and long
Where flocks and herds are feeding.
No serpent bite, no beast by night,
No fear of thieves molesting.

At peace are all the tribes of earth,
Such peace as never was before;
The Lord of Hosts hath spoken,
And men shall study war no more,
His oath cannot be broken.

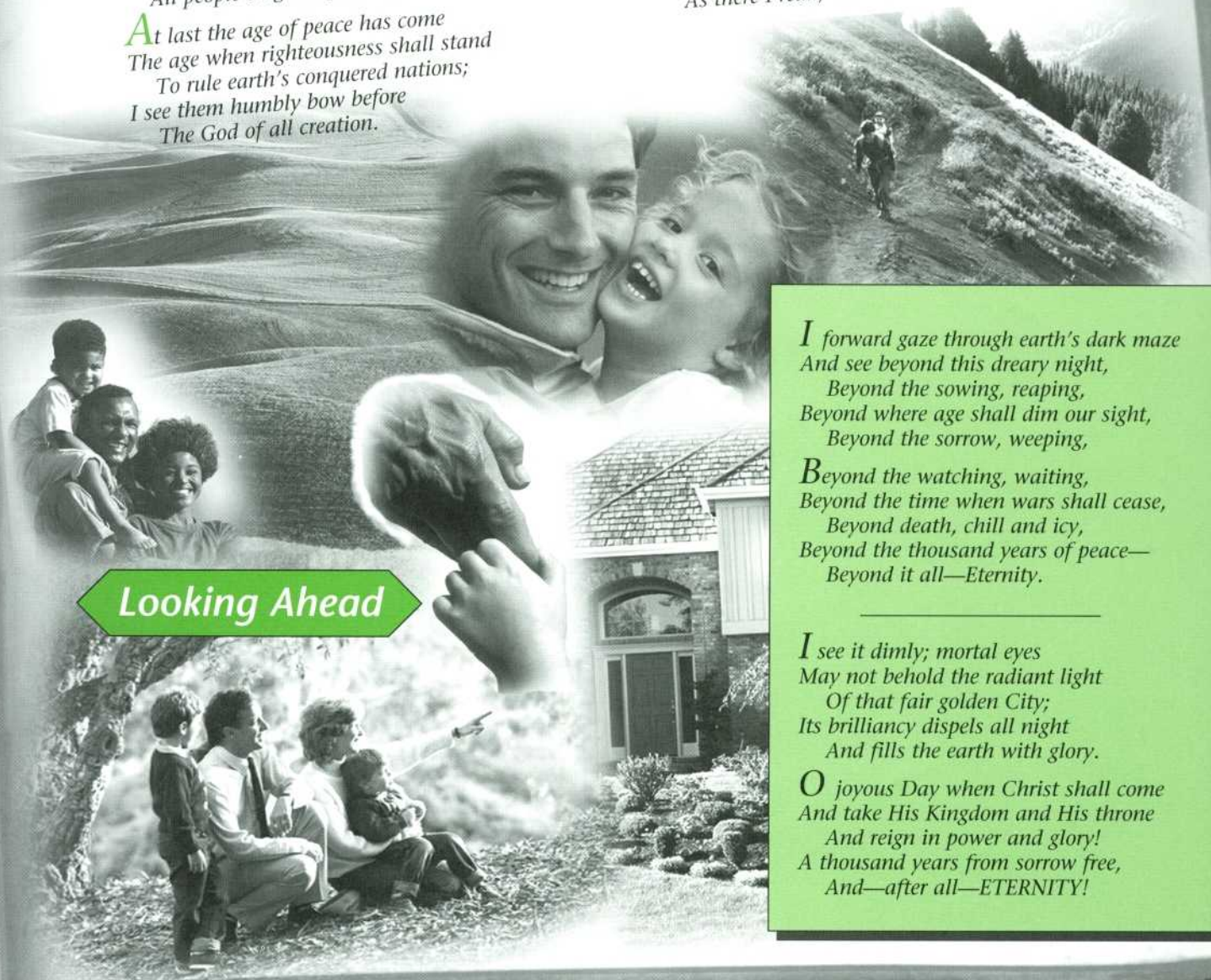
With pleasure in full measure
My heart wells up unmixed with fears,
At wreath of golden letters;
My happy eyes o'erflow with tears
As there I read, "A thousand years."

I forward gaze through earth's dark maze
And see beyond this dreary night,
Beyond the sowing, reaping,
Beyond where age shall dim our sight,
Beyond the sorrow, weeping,
Beyond the watching, waiting,
Beyond the time when wars shall cease,
Beyond death, chill and icy,
Beyond the thousand years of peace—
Beyond it all—Eternity.

I see it dimly; mortal eyes
May not behold the radiant light
Of that fair golden City;
Its brilliancy dispels all night
And fills the earth with glory.

O joyous Day when Christ shall come
And take His Kingdom and His throne
And reign in power and glory!
A thousand years from sorrow free,
And—after all—ETERNITY!

Looking Ahead



Elijah



God's Man of the Hour



Northern Israel, shut off by political considerations from the central shrine of the true faith at Jerusalem, was slipping rapidly into idolatry under a series of wicked kings, of whom Ahab, the present ruler, and his queen Jezebel were the worst.

In this scene, in the king's palace, preparations for the great coming dedication of the new temple to the Phoenician god Baal are in progress. Ahab and his heathen priests, Baal-Zekar and Arzaad, are counseling each other.

Meanwhile, Jezebel, aided by jealous priests, has set afoot a dastardly plot aimed at the destruction of the school of the prophets. The evidence indicates that this school had been founded by the prophet Samuel some two centuries earlier, and was the last reservoir of spirituality in Israel.

At this hour in Israel, the religious sky was jet black.

A DEATH WARRANT AND A DEFENDER

ACT 1 SCENE 2

Characters:

Obadiah—God-fearing Palace Prefect
 Baal-Zekar—Priest of Baal
 Jehu—Captain of the Guard
 Arzaad—Priest of Ashtoreth

Setting: Beside a pillar in Ahab's palace. Baal-Zekar and Arzaad enter from right, conversing. They are highly pleased about something.

ARZAAD: Well, that was easy.

BAAL-ZEKAR: Beautiful! beautiful! Couldn't have been smoother.

ARZAAD: That woman Jezebel is a smart one. We would have been a long time getting this order from the king. Somehow he seems afraid to touch those

prophets of Jehovah. I suppose it's his early education.
BAAL-ZEKAR: No doubt. But now, think what this means for us: the order I hold in my hand certifies the end—I mean the END—of the school of the prophets. And see...see right here...the seal of the king's own ring!

ARZAAD: How do you suppose she got him to seal it?

BAAL-ZEKAR: She didn't. You don't know Queen Jezebel.

ARZAAD: What do you mean?

BAAL-ZEKAR: She had a duplicate ring made sometime ago, which she keeps for her own private projects (both laugh). So he makes the decisions!

ARZAAD: How many of these students are there?

BAAL-ZEKAR: Not over three hundred, according to what I have been able to learn. But realize that they are—every one of them—a possible leader of the opposition. Don't forget that. They'd like nothing better than to swing this country back to Judah, religiously and politically—and then where would WE be? No, we're far safer without them. They will make a very fine offering for the dedication of the new temple of Baal. Ha! Ha! Ha! How's that for an idea, in spite of the king's wishes?

ARZAAD: I only hope that, since it was I who first suggested it to Her Majesty, that it will bring greater recognition for the cult of Ashtoreth. After all, she is the Queen of Heaven. She deserves the best.

BAAL-ZEKAR: Come now, Arzaad, let's be honest—with each other at least. The common people, we all know, are ignorant as swine and have to have religion to keep them in check. Without religion we wouldn't even have a government. And if we don't supply the religion, someone else will. But after all is said and done, what is the difference between one god and another? You tell me.

ARZAAD: You're right, Baal-Zekar, you're right.

BAAL-ZEKAR: I know I'm right. The gods are only symbols of an idea.

ARZAAD: And that idea is power.

BAAL-ZEKAR: Exactly. Power over men. Why shouldn't you and I serve the gods—they do give us a pretty good living. At least you're not getting thin.

ARZAAD: They satisfy our lust for power, and keep kings on their thrones. You are right, Baal-Zekar. It is a beautiful system. But let's not bite the hand that feeds us. Getting back to these sons of the prophets, how do you plan to handle the matter? Hunt them down and kill them on the spot one at a time, just like that?

BAAL-ZEKAR: No, no, nothing so crude as that. We don't want trouble

with the people, and I understand they command some respect in their cities. I plan to round them up in a swift midnight raid and bring them secretly to Jezreel in Samaria, and throw them into the dungeons. Then we can liquidate them quietly. You see, Arzaad, it's not that we are bloodthirsty. We are simply eliminating a rival system. Competition may make good trade, but priestcraft requires monopoly. This is our chance. We have the power. Let's use it.

ARZAAD: How soon?

BAAL-ZEKAR: The plan is already operating, my friend. The patrols are on their way right now to the four centers, and the raid in Samaria should actually be over by this time. I moved fast once I got the imperial warrant, just in case there might be a leak.

ARZAAD: Good! Good work! You have handled the situation just as well as I could have.

They move off stage. (Enter Servant with Obadiah).

OBADIAH: Boy, run and find Jehu the captain and send him here. Tell him it's urgent.

SERVANT: Yes, sir. (Exit).

OBADIAH: (*kneeling to pray*) O God of our fathers, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, grant that Thy servant may be used to thwart the bloody scheme of those who oppose Thee, and save the lives of at least some of Thy prophets. Wherefore should the heathen triumph over Thy truth, and Israel's last hope perish? O Lord, spare them! Spare them! Spare them! O God, if it be Thy will!

(Enter Jehu)

OBADIAH: Good morning, Captain. Are you on duty today?

JEHU: No, my lord, I am free. Three days free.

OBADIAH: Good. I need you for some urgent business, but I'd rather not...Jehu, you had a good father and mother, didn't you?

JEHU: None better in the whole world!

OBADIAH: They taught you to worship the true God, didn't they?

JEHU: Yes, they did.

OBADIAH: Jehu, do you still fear Jehovah?

JEHU: (*hesitating*) Yes, I think I do. More than any *other* god. I know I'm not all I should be, but at least I've never bowed the knee to Baal—and meant it. I see how things are going here, and I don't like it either.

OBADIAH: Do you fear Jehovah enough to risk your life for Him, Jehu?

JEHU: Such a question! What's the story? (Continued on page 26)





Thank God, I Can Hear!

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ... that our brain analyzes the pattern of sound waves picked up by our ears, so that we can know whether we have heard a foghorn or a birdcall.
- ✓ ... that our hearing equipment is so sensitive that our nerves respond to vibrations of the ear membrane no greater than 00000001 millimeter in width!
- ✓ ... that we identify sounds by their volume, pitch and tone.
- ✓ ... that all sound has pitch and volume.

Pitch is related to the frequency of the sound wave, i.e. how many vibrations per unit of time. Each vibration is one cycle (one wave, one back-and-forth). The units of frequency are called Hertz (Hz). One Hz is equal to one vibration per second.

Volume depends on the intensity of the sound wave (how deep or "high" the sound wave).

- ✓ ... that the human ear is sensitive to frequencies between 20 and 20,000 Hertz (between 20 and 20,000 vibrations per second). The higher the frequency, the higher the pitch of the sound.
- ✓ ... that a dog is able to hear higher pitches than our ears can register—in the range of 30,000 Hertz.
- ✓ ... that bats are able to produce and hear sounds of approximately 100,000 Hertz.

For the scientific data in this article we are indebted to S. V. Letcher in *Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia*, copyright 1993 by Compton's NewMedia, Inc.; Dr. A. J. Duvall, III and P. A. Santi in *The 1995 Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia; The Incredible Machine*, published by National Geographic Society, Washington, DC, copyright 1986; *Sound and Hearing*, published by Time, Inc., 1965; *Principles of Anatomy and Physiology*, copyright 1993 by Biological Sciences Textbooks, Inc., a division of Harper Collins New York, NY; and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th Edition, 25:204ff.

Our world today is full of noise—screeching sirens, blaring radios, rushing traffic, roaring jets—sometimes we almost wish we could not hear. But only *almost*, for hearing also brings us the singing of birds, the rustle of wind in the trees, the deep breathing of a child, the majesty of music, the loving voice of a friend, the warning of danger. There is just no substitute for hearing. Thank God, we can hear!

Yet hearing is one of the most delicate functions of the body. After many centuries of study, the most brilliant minds still admit that they do not fully understand the intricate process by which we hear. And shall we think that the delicate mechanisms in our body that transmit and interpret sound came about by chance? What human engineer could compress into one cubic inch a complete sound system, including an amplifier, an equalizer, a transducer, a power supply, and all the other equipment necessary to receive and relay sound? And even if an engineer could perform this feat of miniaturization, he could not hope to approach the ears' performance.

Even looking briefly at the mechanisms by which we hear should increase our gratitude to the God we serve, and our deep longing to please Him who has provided so bountifully for His human family. If He has done so much for His *earthly* creation, what of the wonders He is holding in store for every loving, faithful, obedient child?

What Is Sound?

Two centuries ago the question set debates raging among the intellectuals of Europe. "If a tree falls in the forest," said the eighteenth century thinker, "and no one is there to hear it, will there be a sound?"

"Of course," said the physicists, who were then struggling to measure and analyze everything around them. "Sound is the result of vibrating air molecules, and the air vibrates whether or not any human ears are present to interpret them."

"Of course not," said the philosophers, who were questioning all nature in search for the "real" world. "Sound is a sensation known only in the mind of the listener."

Actually, both were right. Sound originates when a body moves back and forth rapidly enough to send waves through the medium in which it is vibrating (usually the air). But before the sound can be "heard," the sound waves must be received by the ear and changed into electrical impulses which can be interpreted by the brain.

Sound is the result of molecules—whether in the form of a solid, liquid, or gas—in motion. In 1663, a British scientist named Robert Boyle suspended "a watch with a good alarum" from a slender thread in a glass jar, then pumped the air out of the jar. "We silently expected the time when the alarum should begin to ring...and were satisfied that we heard the watch not at all. Wherefore ordering some air to be

let in, we did...begin to hear the alarm." Boyle had demonstrated that sound does not exist unless there is a substance through which its vibrations can be transmitted.

Any vibrating object (a taut string, a solid plate, or a column of air) can be a source of sound. Let a drummer crash a loud cymbal. The vibrating plate sets the surrounding air molecules in motion (in waves), much as when you drop a pebble into a pond of water. The waves travel in all directions. Our ears pick up the vibrations, concentrate them in a small area, amplify them, then change the vibrations to electrical impulses which our brains interpret, and—we hear!

Our ears are designed to be very, very, *very* sensitive to vibration. A normal young person's ear is able to detect sound for which the motion of the air molecules is less than one 10 millionth of one percent—this represents a particle displacement of less than the diameter of one atom (100 million atoms set edge to edge equal the thickness of a single sheet of paper).

Even a very loud noise causes only microscopic movements of our eardrum. A high frequency sound may move the membrane no more than 0.0000001 millimeter—and we hear it!

How is it possible? How can we hear a whisper—or a mosquito flying by? Because the force pushing on our eardrum is increased as many as 180 times as it travels some two inches through our ear system.

Yet the amplification process is selective. Conversation (a range of 3,000 to 5,000 Hertz) receives the greatest boost (by chance?); and our equipment is too stiff to respond at all to the very lowest tones. Do we wonder why? If the range were not limited in this way, we would be assailed constantly by the sounds of our own body—our muscles contracting, food digesting, blood gushing through our veins, our bones creaking as we move—and how would we ever be able to think or concentrate! (Did such a limitation—on a marvelous amplifier system—come about by chance?)

Ears By Two's

Our Creator has given us two ears. Did we ever wonder why? If we were to try hearing for awhile with just one ear, we would quickly know.

First of all, two ears give us a pleasing and understandable reception of many sounds—having an ear on each side of our head means that we actually hear in stereo!

Second, two ears are useful in maintaining a sense of balance—the fluid in our inner ears tells us what is "level" and what is not.

Two ears are also useful in identifying a source of sound.

Distinguishing Sounds

From the time we are born we are receiving an uninterrupted stream of sounds from the outside world, which we screen, sort, and file away. A normal adult has stored in the brain some 400,000 different signals, for future reference. Here is a recording and retrieval system worth noting—at the very least, we should give credit to the Designer!

But when—if ever—do we hear only one sound at a time? Go outdoors, and see how many sounds you hear—simultaneously. If we analyze them, we realize that each is different. How does our ear process and sort all these different wave forms at the same time?

Our ears can actually hear some sounds and reject others. No one really understands how, but from a confused and unorganized maze of signals we are able to hear what we really *want* to hear. We can shut out a volume of background noises—

even very loud noises—to distinguish a familiar voice. A conductor can screen out the sound of many instruments to hear a particular line of music. A mother can identify the cry of her own infant in a nursery where many children are crying. How is it possible? We can only thank our marvelous Creator!

Even while we sleep, our ears sort and select with incredible efficiency. Because the brain can interpret—even independent of our conscious mind—we may sleep soundly through train whistles and screeching traffic, yet awake promptly to the gentle voice of someone beside us—which tells us that our ears receive as well as send messages to the brain.

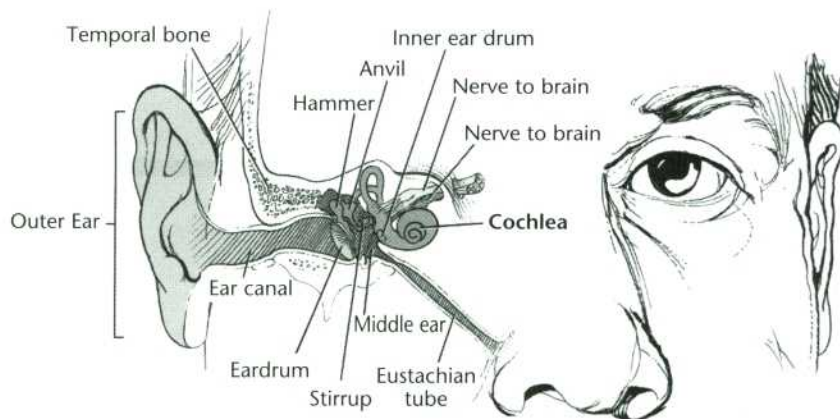
What is the process? Dual sets, there are thought to be dual sets of nerve fibers which serve as transmission lines between our two ears and the brain. Auditory signals from each ear travel to both sides of the brain, so that a dysfunction in one path will not significantly affect hearing in either ear. Who can think that such a system came about without intelligent design?

How We Hear

We can appreciate our Creator's gift to us even more if we look closer at the three different parts of our ear: external, middle and inner.

The External Ear

The external ear is basically very simple. It consists of a sound collector (what we call our "ear"), and a short canal which funnels the sound waves down to the eardrum. The

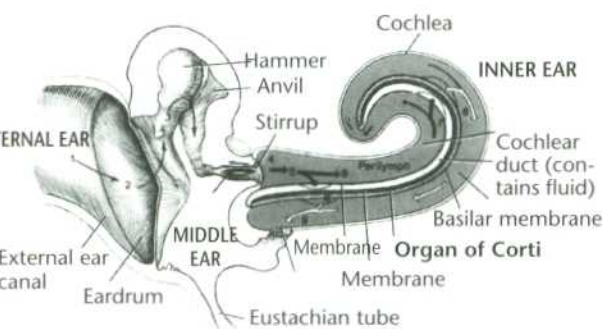


Frontal section through the right side of the skull

canal leading to the eardrum is lined with tiny hairs projecting outward, which are covered with droplets of sticky wax—an effective device for snagging tiny insects or dust particles that might stray in. (Did “chance” design such a simple protection?)

The eardrum is surely no chance mechanism. A thin, semitransparent partition stretched across a round

opening in the skull, it is made up of three layers: the outer layer (skin), under which is a mucous membrane lining, inside of which is a layer of circular and radial fibers that give the drum rigidity and tension. It is also well supplied with blood vessels and nerve fibers that make it acutely sensitive to pain. The eardrum covers the entrance to the middle ear, and is designed to accurately transmit sound waves to the inner ear.



The cochlea (above) has been uncoiled to show how sound waves are transmitted from the fluid of the inner ear to the membranes, then to the hairs of the organ of Corti.

opening in the skull, it is made up of three layers: the outer layer (skin), under which is a mucous membrane lining, inside of which is a layer of circular and radial fibers that give the drum rigidity and tension. It is also well supplied with blood vessels and nerve fibers that make it acutely sensitive to pain. The eardrum covers the entrance to the middle ear, and is designed to accurately transmit sound waves to the inner ear.

The Middle Ear

The middle ear is a small, air filled cavity in the bone. It is separated from the external ear by the eardrum, and from the inner ear by a thin bony partition which contains two small membrane-covered openings: the oval window and the round window. The middle ear also contains a tiny tube (the Eustachian tube), just over an inch long, that opens into the throat. This tube is very important in equalizing air pressure in the ear. If pressure on either side of the eardrum were not equal, the eardrum would not be free to vibrate at the correct rate, and we would not know what we were hearing! The tube to the throat is nor-

mally closed, but opens when we swallow, or yawn, allowing air from the throat to enter and leave the middle ear, making the inside and outside pressures equal. The tube is also lined with small, movable hair projections facing downward, which help to speed the drainage of secretions from the middle ear into the throat. (Did such a device come about by happenstance?)

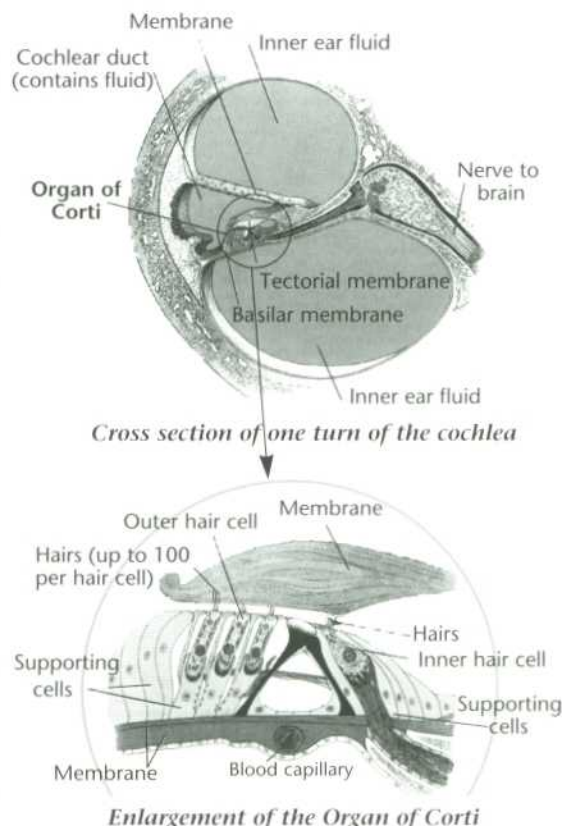
Carrying sound waves across the middle ear and amplifying the sounds are three tiny bones, interlinked, commonly known (because of their shape) as the *hammer, anvil, and stirrup*. Here again is an intricate structure, for which we must thank our great Designer. The first tiny bone, called the “hammer,” picks up the vibration of the eardrum, to which it is attached, and relays it to the next tiny bone, the “anvil,” which in turn transmits the vibration to the third bone, the “stirrup.” The stirrup (about one tenth of an inch in height) is attached to a membrane that stretches across the oval window of the inner ear; thus the vibrating pattern is transferred directly to the inner ear.

The Inner Ear

The inner ear is where hearing really gets complicated. We can only touch on a few high points, but it should be enough to increase our gratitude to our Creator for designing such a high tech hearing mechanism—that really works!

First, the inner ear is heavily protected—it is located in a cavity in the hard bone of the skull, deep behind the eye socket, so that its intricate operations are well protected. Inside the bone cavity is a delicate bone structure called the bony labyrinth, which consists of two main parts: a set of semicircular canals, which control our sense of balance; and a spiral-coiled cochlea (*pronounced ko-KLE-a*), which is the real center of hearing.

The cochlea is a pea-sized tube consisting of two and one half spiral turns around a hollow central pillar (its name was derived from the Greek word for “snail”). Winding with the spiral are three fluid-filled canals and a gelatinous membrane, through the center of which runs the most vital organ of hearing: **the organ of Corti** (named after the sci-



entist who discovered this organ).

How does sound travel through the inner ear? Sound vibrations received from the middle ear move the membrane that stretches across the oval window—which moves the fluid in the canals of the cochlea—which moves the membrane that lies between these canals—which moves special hair cells that are attached to the membrane. In each ear are approximately 12,000 of these hair cells, and projecting from each hair cell are approximately 100 hairs. As the hair cell vibrates, these hairs move, creating an electrical stimulus. These hairs are connected to some 30,000 nerve fibers, which dispatch the messages to the brain—and we hear! (Aren't we thankful that we do not have to understand

the process before we can hear?)

But none of the hairs have an exclusive right to a nerve transmitter. All the nerve fibers are "party lines"—over a million hairs must share a mere 30,000 nerve fibers. But this limitation does not seem to slow down the process of hearing—someone has calculated that our ears pick up as many as 100,000 signals a second!

A cross section of the organ of Corti is striking in its detail, especially when we consider how minute this organ is, and how critical in the process of hearing. (The entire organ is only about 1.4 inches if uncoiled.) Is it not a miracle of design?

How can we distinguish between low sounds and high? It seems that the cochlea is a "tuned" structure, i.e., different areas register different

frequencies; but the process is by no means fully understood.

What shall we say? Do we not feel like standing in silent awe before our great Creator, who made us lowly mortals—and millions of animals besides—able to hear? Who can think that such an intricate system came about by chance? Can we even faintly appreciate the wonder behind the simple statement we make again and again, "I heard..."?

And He who can do such wonders for a mortal body, what can He do for immortals? Do we not owe Him our very best in dedication and service?

How can we but bow our heads in reverence to Him who has put sound in our lives! Truly, *the hand that made us is Divine!* □

What a foolish thing it must have seemed to the Israelites, to march around the walls of Jericho. In absolute silence. Not a word could they say as they marched around. And they had to march not once but day after day after day, for seven days. Then they were told to shout. When the trumpet blew they shouted—and the walls came tumbling down!

It was a supreme test—not of fighting skills but of their personal obedience. Those massive walls would never have fallen had they not

This method is taught all through the Word of God. *"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"* (Eph. 6:11). Win without a battle? Never!

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called" (I Tim. 6:12). Win without a fight? Never!

If experience teaches us anything, it teaches us that we win when we stay on God's side, when we adhere strictly to His rules, when we

Remember Jericho!

marched around them as they were directed.

The real battle was fought not in the daily circuit of the walls but in the hearts of those who had to choose between doing what looked logical and obeying God.

That is where the battle is for us, also, even in 1995. Faith does not come easily, nor does obedience. But the two working together can assure our victory and bring down the Jericho walls in our lives.

place ourselves under His command. *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"* (Rom. 8:31).

The real battle lies not with any outside enemy but right within our own hearts. We must obey God—first—last—always. There is just no other way to bring down the walls of sin in our lives.

Are we tempted to forget? Perhaps we should take this two-word memo for ourselves: *"Remember Jericho!"* □

Of Saints and Angels

♦ Do the saints go to heaven at death and become angels?

"I recently read your booklets on Bible topics, and have found them quite interesting, containing a lot of truth but also containing much about which I am unsure as yet. There is one point about which I am quite confused, and that is your belief as to the state of the faithful dead and their ultimate reward.

"In your booklets you indicate that you believe that the dead are unconscious and that the unfaithful simply will not be resurrected. You also indicate you believe in a physical resurrection of the faithful to take place at Christ's return, where they will live eternally on earth as their reward.

"However, recent articles in your magazine (*Megiddo Message*) on angels seem to indicate that you believe that the faithful who died go to heaven and become angels. As a matter of fact, on page 11 of the March issue there is a short article entitled: 'Called To Be Angels.' It starts out by saying: 'God has called us to become angels,...' so what is all this saying? Do you believe the faithful rest until the return of Christ and are rewarded with eternal life on earth? Or do you believe that the faithful dead go to heaven and become angels? If you could clarify this point for me, I would very much appreciate it!"

You raise a thoughtful question, which we will try to address from a

Biblical standpoint. It is always important to separate Scripture fact from theological tradition and simple "I think...."

First, we must understand God's view of the human family as it is revealed in the Bible. God looks upon His human creation as divided into two classes: 1) those who live and die without knowing God or His plan; and 2) those who become acquainted with God and His plan and agree to be subject to it.

The first group, those who have no knowledge of God, are free to spend their lives as they choose, without any obligation to God. When their life ends, that is all they have. God does not promise them anything eternal. Jesus described this class in Matt. 5:45, "...for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." At death, this very large class go to the grave and sleep the sleep of death, from which they do not awaken. Their state is described by the Psalmist (Ps. 49:12, 14-15): "Nevertheless man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling." We read also of them in Jeremiah 51:57, that "They shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts."

The second group might be assigned the general title of "covenant makers." This group is comprised of all who learn of God

and agree to serve Him. Those in this group are further divided, on the basis of their faithfulness to their covenant, into two subclasses: faithful and unfaithful. However, this division will not be visible until the individuals in this group are called to the judgment seat of Christ at the time of Christ's second advent. At that time, all in this group will be judged and rewarded for what they have done, either good or bad (John 5:28-29; Eccl. 12:13-14; II Cor. 5:10). Because they must be judged, all in this group who are sleeping in death at the time Christ returns must be resurrected. As Jesus said, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14). This resurrection is described by the prophet Daniel, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:2-3). At the Judgment, the faithful among the covenant makers will be rewarded with eternal life in Christ's Kingdom on earth (Matt. 5:5; 6:10; Rev. 5:9-10); and the unfaithful will die a penal or "second" death (Rev. 21:8; Rom. 6:23).

To summarize, then, the Bible projects two classes, one who live and die without knowing God or His law or agreeing to serve Him; and the second class who agree to live by the law of God, and who will be resurrected, judged and rewarded for their compliance with that law. The apostle Paul pictured both groups in

Rom. 2:12, "For as many as have sinned without law [those outside the plan of God, who make no effort to serve Him] shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law [those under covenant to serve God, both faithful and unfaithful] shall be judged by the law."

You have the right thought about the faithful (and unfaithful) dead resting in the grave until the return of Christ, at which time they are judged and rewarded. But there is no promise in the Bible that the faithful go to heaven at death. This is a pagan concept which crept into church doctrine, but it is not Biblical. It may be comforting to those who do not know otherwise, but of what benefit is any belief if it is not true? No person alive on earth today has been through the death state, therefore no one can tell us anything about it. For all facts about the state of death and about life after death we must go to the Bible. So we must say, Let God be true, though every man a liar (Rom. 3:4).

What about the faithful becoming angels? This was the promise of Jesus: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead...Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:35-36). If the faithful servants of God are to be "equal unto the angels," does it not follow that they will be angels also?

Also supporting the thought that immortals can be changed physically to the angel state are Paul's words in I Corinthians 15, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50). If "flesh and blood" describes our present mortal state, Paul is saying that we in our present state cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. This thought accords with Moses' experience, that he as a mortal being could not look upon the full glory of God's angel and live (Exodus 33:12-23). The apostle Paul in another place described the glory of God as "light which no man can approach unto" (I Tim. 6:16).

Returning to I Corinthians 15, we find Paul's description about the

state of our mortal bodies after the resurrection, that "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality," and that only then "shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:52-54). When "this corruptible" puts on "incorruption" and "this mortal" puts on "immortality," the result is, so far as we can understand, the level of life experienced by the angels of God. And these individuals changed to this state will be living right here on the earth. This was the promise of Jesus in His prayer, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). The same level of life now experienced by the angels in heaven will one day be experienced by individuals right here on earth.

Paul also spoke of the change from the mortal state to the immortal when he wrote about the coming of Jesus Christ, who "shall change our vile [corruptible, mortal] body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. 3:20-21)—again he seems to be describing the life enjoyed by the angels.

Those receiving this change, being made like the angels, may have slept in death for many years between the end of their natural life and the time of Christ's return, when they will be resurrected. And after they are resurrected and judged faithful and receive the change to the state of the angels, they will live forever—not in heaven but on the earth. Jesus said plainly, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5). It is written of the saints, that they shall "reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). And six times in the 37th Psalm it is stated that the righteous shall inherit the earth, the land, and dwell there for ever (37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34).

Being made like the angels does not in any way presuppose that these individuals go to heaven, or that they are living in heaven. Jesus prayed, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In other words, Jesus is saying that whatever state now exists in heaven will one day exist right here on earth. This, too, supports the

thought that the level of life which the angels now enjoy will one day be experienced by people right here on earth, who will be in every respect "equal to the angels." The angels are currently God's heavenly family, residents of other worlds already glorified (Eph. 3:14-15), and when this earth becomes annexed to heaven, its inhabitants will be like the angels, children of God, whom God has rewarded for their life of faithful service.

So when we say that "God has called us to become angels..." we mean that God has called us so to live that we may be judged faithful when Jesus comes and be granted the change to the immortal state, made like the angels, never to die.

◆ Do you believe in immortality?

"After reading your December 1994 Megiddo Message, I am slightly confused. On page 3, in your doctrinal statement, paragraph 6, you say, 'The blessings of immortal life,' and in paragraph 7, 'With eternal life....' Then in the questions and answers, on page 17, you say, 'Our Founder in the 1880's offered \$1,000.00 to anyone who could find anywhere in the Bible that the soul of man is described as immortal, deathless, or undying.'

"It seems to me that the writer of the Q&A does not believe your doctrinal statements, or I am confused...?"

Much of the confusion may be stemming from the fact that the paragraphs you cite from our doctrinal statement refer to the reward God will give those who comply with His demands. These will receive the reward of eternal life (immortality) which God has promised (Rev. 22:14; Rom. 2:7). Our founder's offer was to anyone who could find in the Bible a single statement that we are by nature immortal.

The Bible states that in our natural state we are mortal, and any hope of life after death must come from our Creator. "If there be no resurrection of the dead," said the apostle

Paul, our *"preaching is vain, and our faith is also vain"* (1 Cor. 15:13-14), for none of us has any ability to perpetuate our existence. The theory of the immortal soul has been widely accepted for centuries, even millenniums, and has been a comfort to many, but it is without Bible support. The evidence from Scripture is exactly the opposite. Psalm 49 is specific: *"For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish"* (vs. 10-12). Also, *"The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything...Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest"* (Eccl. 9:5,10).

For this reason our founder years ago offered an award of \$1000 to anyone who could find a single text in the Bible stating that in our natural state we have any immortal principle or soul which is immortal,

undying or deathless. To date no one has received that award. Occasionally someone will write us claiming to have the evidence, but when we explain that the condition is that the Bible must say that the "soul" (or equivalent term) is immortal, deathless or undying, they quickly retire.

Does this mean that there is no hope of life beyond death? Definitely not. The Bible tells us of hope; in fact, the Bible is God's book of instructions on how to obtain eternal life. We are not born with the right to it, but it can be obtained. Scores of passages instruct us on this point: *"Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore"* (Ps. 37:27); *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth"* (Matt. 5:5); *"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"* (Rev. 22:14). And the apostle Paul informs us in Romans 2:7 that to them who *"by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honor and immortality,"* God will give *"eternal life."*

Immortality is, and immortality can be ours, but we must seek it. We must meet God's requirements before He will give it to us. □

Success— Nothing Less!

According to the fable, a fox one fine morning stretched himself luxuriously, licked his jaws, and said, "I believe I will dine on sheep today." After a short while of looking and not finding his prey, he said to himself, "Very well, a mouse will do."

Somewhere along the road of life many people compromise their expectations. They satisfy themselves with easier goals, taking the path of least resistance, and give up their former aims and high ideals.

Let us who have dedicated our lives to the service of God, seeking the full reward He has offered, even life in the eternal Kingdom of Christ, be satisfied with nothing but a complete victory over self. Let us never compromise our high ideals: a full surrender of self, for a full reward.

Success, and *nothing less!*

WIDE or NARROW?

Walking demands effort. Walking implies progress. And walking assumes a destination.

To begin this walk, we must understand the plan of God, what He offers, and what He requires of us. Then we must actually walk, take the steps

that will lead us to be more and more like Him.

Paul wrote of his brethren, before they were committed to Christ, that *"ye walked according to the course of this world"* (Eph. 2:2). Now they were to walk in a new way, walk in light.

Jesus told of two roads, one wide and one narrow. He told of a wide road which leads to destruction, and a narrow road which leads to life. Which way will we walk? The choice is ours, but we cannot take both roads. We cannot walk awhile in the broad way, then take the narrow road. If we choose the narrow road we must keep in it.

What is the greatest difference between the two roads? The greatest difference is in their destinations. When we choose the road, we choose also its destination.

Which road will you choose—and which destination? □

Me Impatient?

"Kathy, you're the most impatient person I know!"

This accusation from my sister tore a gaping hole in my smug, self-righteous attitude, causing me to take a long, hard look at myself.

It is never pleasant to face one's faults and failings, nor is it easy to render unbiased judgments in one's own behalf. Thus I began immediately to justify myself: "Isn't she *overdrawing* the picture? I certainly am more patient than that! Indeed, I think I'm *above* the average in patience."

But something kept nudging my conscience until I began to search. And the deeper I searched, the more I realized I was not to be justified. I was that sort of person who gets all aquiver with impatience at the slightest alteration of my plans. Just a little delay could start me fretting and fuming until I lost all composure.

Looking back I could see where I caused myself much unhappiness by wanting *what* I wanted *when* I wanted it, regardless of the feelings of others or the inconvenience it might cost them.

I was further dismayed to realize that impatience is a sign that one is displeased with his task or his place in life. For whoever became impatient doing the thing he enjoyed doing? I had always thought of myself as content with my situation. Our home is ideal, and my work a pleasure. But my impatience revealed to me an underlying problem: Everything was ideal, so long as everything went *my* way, according

to *my* plans. But what Christian woman would ask to have *her* way all the time? The problem was not my situation but *me*. My spirit of impatience had to be conquered.

I turned to the Bible in search of help for my problem. The first thing, I turned to the words of Jesus. He was talking about the Sower and the four types of human soil. The fourth, the good and honest heart, He said was that which received the Word of the Kingdom, kept it, and brought forth fruit *with patience*. Those last two words struck me—with *patience*.

new tablecloth—all this, and the countless things that can happen in the course of a day test the real quantity and quality of our patience.

Working with other people may be a real test of patience at times. One is fast, another slow, and always there are different ways of doing a job. Of course, *my* way seems right to *me* (and it *is* the best way!), but there is always something to learn from others, if *only* patience. And there is bound to be clashing of personalities. Still we are faced with that direct command: "*Let patience have*

Be patient with everyone, but above all with yourself.

Bearing virtuous fruit *with patience* calls for strenuous effort on *my* part (and I doubt that I am alone).

I found another Bible text which reads, "*But let patience have her perfect work*" (James 1:4), *Me—perfect* in patience?

To be patient when there is no cause for impatience is no special virtue. But to be calm and composed when everything seems to go wrong—when the family seems critical and fault-finding, when the washing machine quits, and the telephone keeps ringing, the soup boils over, the clothesline snaps, and little Barbara spills her cup of milk on the

her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." There is no eternal life laid up for me until I have perfected my patience.

A delay can seem so needless, especially in the middle of a day that is not half long enough to accomplish all that needs to be done. But think of the glories of the Eternal Tomorrow! If I can be living then and look back on this day, the little delays that annoyed me will seem so, so small.

Perfect patience—for me? Yes, it is my aim; and with the help of God and just one problem at a time, I'll master it! □

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

I must comment some on the answers in the May 1995 issue of the *Message* regarding "church fellowship." I agree totally with the answers. However, my comment is on the last paragraph that has to do with "one other factor might be considered." I also feel that there are limitations that need to apply when one is attending for the "possible opportunity of speaking to the group or of talking to those attending, possibly to help some to understand the truths of the Bible."

Having been down this road a number of times with this "possible opportunity" in mind, I feel that there is danger of exposing oneself to spiritual harm unless extreme caution is used. Let me explain.

First, the theory is fine—with proper limitations. Without these limitations, a no-win situation can easily develop; and unless one is prepared, prepared, prepared, the disappointment tears at one's faith because it is sometimes hard to understand why any so-called Christian won't at least "listen." You know that you disagree with what you are hearing, but sitting in that church and getting a chance to speak up—and doing so—then finding that you are rejected and/or ridiculed—well, you have to be prepared, prepared, prepared. That is, know what you are saying, in full.

I have my own limitations/requirements on accepting invitations to speak in other churches. I will not speak or participate on the invitation of one representative of a church. I will lecture on a particular Bible subject if "all" official church leaders agree. Sometimes it seems prudent to request a vote of the membership. If the majority are not favorable to hearing an outsider, forget it. The tide is against you.

As for attending Bible studies in the church, be careful that you are not used to promote other doctrines. If you feel you must attend, and use the possibility of "helping someone" as a crutch, you are lost at the door. The only way is with similar limitations, and even then you must be prepared, prepared, prepared.

Remember this: when you are among those who believe differently, the typical response is several persons talking at once. Any statement you make can become really twisted, get added to, or deducted from, etc. The result? Confusion.

Your summary use of I Corinthians 10:31, to do "all to the glory of God," is why one must be prepared. I'm not criticizing the answer given in the *Message*, I just happen to agree to the point of adding to it so that no one misunderstands and takes such approval in a free-will manner to justify their association with non-believers. Only truth counts!

—From a subscriber in Texas

Unload

There is so much to learn and time is short. How blessed we are to have all these truths so we can study and get that wisdom and knowledge we need. "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). We need complete faith in God and His Word. Time is fast running out.

We would never think of ourselves as "pagans," but that is what God counts us when we do wrong. So let us ask, Am I always patient and kind to all, to friend or someone I do not particularly care for? Do I always treat such a one with all due respect? Jesus was not a respecter of persons and neither can we be. We have to banish all our own ways or we will be found with those "outside" the city gate.

In Eph. 5:1, Paul tells us to be God's followers and walk in love. We disobey at our own peril.

Today there is so much uncertainty in the world, but we, knowing the plan of God, must expect it and not become disheartened. The world in general seem to have lost all faith. So let us unload our own ways and put all our trust in God and His plan for this earth.

Canada

L. S

Deceased

We have received word of the death of **Clarence Boyer**, of Holley, New York, on May 19. Brother Clarence was a long-time subscriber to the *Megiddo Message*, and corresponded regularly as long as health permitted. He has been in failing health for a number of years, a victim of the dreaded Alzheimers disease.

What a day when "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Isa. 33:24).

Elijah God's Man of the Hour

(Continued from page 17)

OBADIAH: Will you promise not to betray me?

JEHU: Never. Never. You can trust me with anything.

OBADIAH: The queen—may she not live forever—has signed an order in Ahab's name to destroy all the prophets of the Lord. Patrols are already on their way to raid the school of the prophets, and execute them. Think what this means for the nation! Here is our source of spiritual leadership since the days of Samuel. We can't let their bloody plan succeed, Jehu. It may be too late for some of them already, but if we move fast we may be able to save the rest.

JEHU: I'll do anything I can. Tell me what to do.

OBADIAH: You are a fast rider. Get your fastest horse and

go north, to Jezreel and Mount Tabor. I will give you the names of the men to see. Tell the Mt. Tabor group to hide in the old grain warehouse, in the cave of Salathiel. They know where it is. And so do I. If you can do anything at Jezreel, tell them to get out of the city into the mountains—anywhere—until I can get word to them. They may know a safe place. Now keep out of the way of the patrols, and out of sight of everyone as much as you can. I'll head south, to Bethel and Jericho, and do the same.

JEHU: (shaking Obadiah's hand) Very good, Sir. It's a promise. If they can be saved, we'll save them. I'm on my way.

OBADIAH: With all speed. Speed is our salvation! May God be with you. (Takes Jehu's hand again.).

(To Be Continued)

*Peace! The perfect word is sounding,
like a universal hymn,
Under oceans, over mountains,
to the world's remotest rim.*

*Light! At last the deadly arrows
of the archer find their mark.
Loathsome forms are shuddering
backward to the shelter of the dark.*

*Hope! The nations stand together
on the borders of a dawn
That shall dim the noonday splendor
of the ages that are gone.*

*Peace, and light, and hope of morning!
Let the belfries reel and sway
While the world is swinging swiftly
out of darkness into day.*

*Let the forests and the steeples,
blown by one compelling wind,
Swing and sway and clash together
one vast peal for all mankind,*

*While we roll up out of darkness,
out of death, out of the gloom
Of a blighted planet plunging blindly
downward to its doom;*

*Into light beyond our dreaming,
into peace, good will toward men,
Hope beyond the poet's vision,
joy beyond the prophet's ken.*



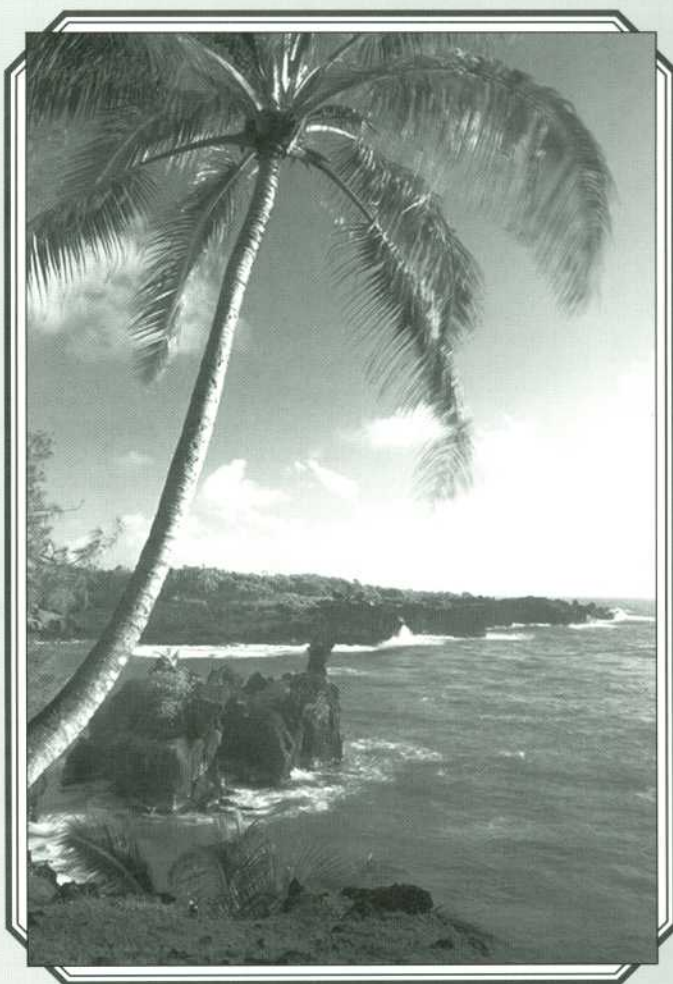
Where Pride Is Proper

(Continued from page 2)

the distinction between our task (about which we can be justly proud), and ourselves (concerning whom we feel only humility and deep gratitude to God).

Romans 15:17-18 (RSV) is a fitting summary, for Paul and for us: "In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed."

Proud of our cause, our God, our goal, our work as it glorifies God—here is our Christian calling and assignment. Meeting this test successfully will put us far along the road toward the eternal Kingdom of Christ. □



Worry never robs tomorrow of its pain; it only saps today of its strength.



True faith is not just believing that God can; it is trusting that He will.



The Lord gets His best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction.



Unless we have within us that which is above us, we soon shall yield to the pressures around us.



When you pray, don't give God orders—report for duty.



God gives us faith to face our problems, not to flee from them.



Interplay

*The weaving of sunshine and shadow
Forms the intricate patterns of life;
A blending of joy and of suffering,
Glowing peace with the darkness of strife.*

*This contrast of gloom with bright radiance
Like the dancing of shade 'neath a tree
Forms a delicate, balanced designing
That we sense but just faintly can see.*

*The harmonious whole is so fashioned
That the edges look misty and dim;
As it ebbs and it flows without focus
As if moved by some purposeless whim.*

*Yet viewed from above it has purpose,
And a master design starts to form,
As the beauties of goodness and mercy
Every angle and crevice adorn.*

*All of life is a blend of the sunshine
With the grayness of trial and pain;
But if we could discern the grand pattern
We would thank God for sunshine and rain!*

