

Megiddo Message

Vol. 85, No. 9
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*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows, like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
"It is well, it is well with my soul."*

It Is Well With My Soul

WHEN SILENCE IS ^{Not} GOLDEN

Few people enjoy controversy. Most wish to keep the boat reasonably steady, even if they have to forfeit expressing themselves occasionally. The spirit of today is generally one of tolerance. Keep your thoughts to yourself if they do not match those of the crowd, or better still, keep quiet. Silence is the only answer that cannot be argued against.

This may be good at times, but who are the people who have moved the world for good? Were the prophets of God silent witnesses? They were people of conviction, people who stood for something when it was unpopular to stand for anything; people who stood and spoke, even though they had to undergo a bit of name-calling—or worse. Multitudes rejected them, but a few listened and took heed. And it was these few whom God was seeking.

Broad-mindedness is not always the best policy. It has been said that the difference between a politician and a statesman is that the politician sees which way the people are going and tries to stay with them, while the statesman sees what is best and goes that way, even if no one will follow him.

There have been few figures in history more controversial—but none more mighty—than Jesus of Nazareth. He was born in obscurity and raised in a quiet little village. Yet, when He came into view, He spoke as no other man had spoken. Did He seek support for His thoughts? He found it only in the Law and the Prophets. In His speeches He paid no recognition to philosophers, poets or politicians. *"You have heard...but I say unto you"* He said as He overruled their comfortable traditions. Were the people pleased? It did not matter. When He was choosing His topic, He did not consider what was popular or what the audience was eager to hear. Rather, He delivered

the message of His Father, whether it was a message of love and kindness, or of judgment. Did His hearers like it? That was not an issue; it was what they needed to hear. His duty was to speak the words which His Father had given Him to speak, and this He did faithfully.

One time shortly after He had fed the five thousand, the people gathered, thinking they would get another free meal. They did—but not the kind they had expected. True enough, Jesus talked of bread and meat, but not the kind they were accustomed to. This kind came from heaven, and would give life everlasting. Who wouldn't thrill at such a prospect! But no, they found the bread hard and the meat tough to chew. Jesus, sensing their disturbed feelings, said, *"Does this offend you?"* (John 6:61). And He watched while scores of them went away. A lesser man might have called it a disaster, but not Jesus. He only turned and put the question to His disciples: *"Will you go too?"* Truth was truth, and it had to be spoken, without regard to what anyone might think. It was a matter of life and death.

Jesus never tested to see which way the wind of popular opinion was blowing before He spoke. Why should He be concerned with human support, when He had the authority of heaven behind Him? *"Heaven and earth shall pass away,"* He said, *"but my words shall not pass away"* (Matt. 24:35).

Do we wonder that He changed the course of history?

The apostles carried on with the same spirit. Imprisoned, beaten and threatened by the civil authorities, they replied with all confidence, *"We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4:20, NIV). They had a message that needed to be delivered, and they did it.

(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 (2 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, with the help of God, of applying to 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 Jesus Christ will soon return to rid the earth of all sin and suffering and inaugurate an eternal and worldwide kingdom of peace and righteousness, until God's will is done here as it is now done in heaven.

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.

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Who Did

by RUTH E. SISSON

In a recent issue of the Smithsonian, an article called "Digging for Dinosaur Gold" highlights the excavation of some ancient mammoths. One apparently carnivorous creature unearthed had foot-long teeth shaped much like a serrated saw blade.

How did the creature come by such an ideal tool for rending flesh? Said the author, "I marveled at the exquisite efficacy of Darwinian selection, which had lined these killer teeth with fine parallel serrations." Who did it? Who designed these teeth for this meat-eating animal? If it were a work of art, one would credit an artist. If it were a machine, one would seek out the engineer who designed it. But an animal that lived and sustained itself for many years, that reproduced its kind and performed all the life processes—such a creature is said to be the result of blind and undirected chance (natural selection)! Such reasoning requires more faith than to believe in a supreme Deity that can create and order at will. It almost seems that every effort is made to deny and discredit the Creator. What an insult to Omnipotence!

Or take the continual discoveries of galaxies in the heavens, vast beyond fathoming. What do scientists conclude? Only that they are seeing nearer and nearer to the time of the Big Bang, that supposed tremendous explosion that resulted in billions of galaxies, each populated with hundreds of billions of suns.

We look at nature. We look at the stars. We look at a cell, or the atom, or our own bodies, all incredibly complex. And the question repeats itself: Who did it? Can any thinking person really believe that such precisely functioning, intricate structures came about without any intelligent mind directing?

It?



Can we even faintly realize the debt we owe to our gracious God for the simplest blessings of life—sunshine, food, breath, eyesight, sound, and we could go on and on? How deep and heartfelt is our gratitude to Him, and how accurate is our estimate of ourselves and our own strength by comparison? What could we do without Him?

And so the ever present question: Am I really grateful to God for all that He has done? Am I ready to say with the Psalmist, *"Great things Thou hast done"*? Am I anxious and ready to give Him all the glory He is due? And then the question that follows: What does God expect of me? What should I be doing in return?

Thanksgiving is an excellent time for self-evaluation. It is a time to realize that we did not do even a very little of the work of providing for ourselves, much less all of it.

To be truly thankful is to be aware of the many forces that combine to make our lives what they are in spite of difficulties, in spite of our thoughtless ingratitude.

To be thankful is to realize that whatever we have or whatever we have done, we did not do it alone.

To be thankful is to acknowledge that we have been blessed by others and that we have been blessed by God; thus we need others, and above all, we need God.

To be thankful is to acknowledge that we did not do it all by ourselves.

A current religious thinker writes that thanksgiving is "an acknowledgment of the fact that man did not create himself, that nothing belongs to him.... What he has is given to him. Every serious giving of thanks implies an acknowledgment of one's finitude."

Finitude—doesn't that describe our natural mortal condition? The word has not a single definition that applies in the immortal sphere. But among mortals, how appropriate!

When We Want Credit...

Yet how easily we are tempted to exalt ourselves, poor little creatures of dust that we are. We smile at the story of the woodpecker that gave a mighty peck to the great tree just as lightning struck it, and when the

giant oak came crashing down, said "Look what I did!" But there is danger, great danger, that when our blessings multiply and the work of our hands prospers, we will think just as proudly—and vainly—as the poor woodpecker, "Look what I did!" We so easily remember our small part and forget the great debt we owe to God for our blessings, our lives, and our very being.

At times we may sorely crave the satisfaction of blessing ourselves in the work of our own hands, but can't we see how foolish it is? Who wishes to emulate the great King Nebuchadnezzar who said, *"Is not this great Babylon which I have built?"* For, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, God will *"punish the fruit of the arrogant heart.... For he has said, 'By the power of my hand by my wisdom I did this, for I have understanding; and I removed the boundaries of the peoples, and plundered their treasures, and like a mighty man I brought down their inhabitants, and my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest, and as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth; and there was not one that flapped its wing or opened its beak or chirped'"* (Isa. 10:12-14, NEB).

Hear the reply of the Lord: *"Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it? That would be like a club wielding those who lift it, or like a rod lifting him who is not wood"* (v. 15).

A Time to Remember

Many passages of Scripture stimulate our thinking and remind us of our need to remember God. A sermon by Moses, recorded in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, has been preserved especially for our learning, we who like to think too much of ourselves and too little of our great and matchless Creator. These words were spoken when the nation of Israel was standing on the brink of the Jordan, ready to enter the Land of Promise. It was a time to remember. Too, too easily would they forget the lessons learned in the wilderness.

"Beware" was the key word in Moses' message.

"Beware that in your plenty you don't forget the Lord your God and begin to disobey him" (Deut. 8:11, TLB).

"Beware that in your plenty you don't forget the Lord your God," for well Moses knew—and well God knew—that they would forget. The time would come—and soon—when the Children of Israel would forget by what means they reached the Land of Promise. They would forget the God who had led them, fed them, guided them, supported them, protected them. When would this happen? When they should begin to prosper, when their barns began to fill and their herds began to multiply and all was well with them.

"Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house

of bondage;...And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day" (Deut. 8:12-14, 17-18). Or, as phrased in the Jerusalem Bible, "Beware of saying in your heart, 'My own strength and the might of my own hand won this power for me.'"

Or, in simple paraphrase, Beware, lest you think you did it!

A grateful attitude toward God and a proper acknowledgment of His omnipotence is a problem that faces us just as surely as the Great Apostle addressed "every man that is among you" with his warning: "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment" (Rom. 12:3 NIV).

Have we examined our own hearts to see how it is with us? As long as we take the "We did it" attitude and do not recognize the tremendous debt we owe to God, we cannot be truly thankful.

Are we able to maintain a truly thankful spirit in everything we do?

Are we able to say honestly, in the fear of God, that we are more concerned that God gets all the credit due to Him than that we get the little due to us?

Are we willing to remain unrewarded for the time, if need be, if only we can qualify for that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?

God seems to know the clay of which we are made. He had blessed Israel, given them all they needed to sustain them for forty years in the wilderness, yet He foresaw that when they would be comfortably settled in the Land of

Promise they would so soon begin commending themselves for what they had accomplished, instead of honoring God.

"Beware—lest you think you did it."

Ingratitude is one of the symptoms of our godless age.

Gratitude to God is one of the greatest evidences of humility. Gratitude and humility are virtues that walk hand in hand all the way into the Kingdom of God—in fact, they cannot be separated.

The apostle Paul, writing to the overconfident and over-exalted in the church of Corinth—and to us—was well aware of this human shortcoming. He wrote: "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

However glorious the exalted feelings we may entertain of our own worth, God knows. There is

no need to commend ourselves. Perhaps we have done well. Perhaps we have rendered distinguished service in behalf of the Lord's cause. Still the question of Paul remains: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" What did we use to render that service but the health, the strength, and the ability given us by God—which was only our rightful duty to use? In fact, if we had not used our God-given ability and rendered the service, condemnation would be ours for not doing what we could have done.

In no case are we justified in commending ourselves. If we had not rendered that bit of service and God wanted it done, it lies not one iota beyond His ability to have found someone else to do it. When we say "I did it" and take the credit to ourselves, we disqualify ourselves for the blessing that would have been ours, for God will find another to take our crown.

God Will Reward

Whatever our age or stage in life, whatever our responsibilities, whatever we are able or not able to do for God and His Kingdom, God knows, and we must trust Him to bless and reward accordingly. Never are we right in taking credit to ourselves. It is our part to obey; God's to reward.

The prophet Daniel is a striking contrast to the ungrateful "I did it" complex. Hear the king asking him what he was able to do in interpreting the King's dream, and hear him reply nobly, meekly, humbly in these God-exalting words that heaven rejoiced to hear: "As for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than

(Continued on page 8)

**Whatever
we have or whatever
we have done, we did
not do it
alone.**

A father was recalling to his young son Bobby a few exciting experiences he had had while in the army. With as much description as he thought the child could comprehend, he told of his great deeds of valor, his long marches and sleepless nights, how hard and bravely he had fought, what distinguished service he had given—until suddenly Bobby interrupted his father's tale of valor with this simple question: "But Daddy, what were the rest of the soldiers for?"

Still Lord, I Thank You!

I'm grateful, Lord, that You have not withdrawn Your mercies—because my thanks have been so long in coming!

Your goodness continues to be new every morning, even though I so often fail to acknowledge it.

Your handiwork shows in each golden leaf, each sparkling raindrop, each radiant sunbeam.

I thank You that You have not cut me off from a hundred expressions of Your loving-kindness and tender mercy, because of my negligent gratitude.

Even though I am so undeserving, Lord, You still permit me to enjoy the delights of fellowship, the joy of sharing, the thrill of understanding, the peace of knowing that You are in control and are working all things together for my good.

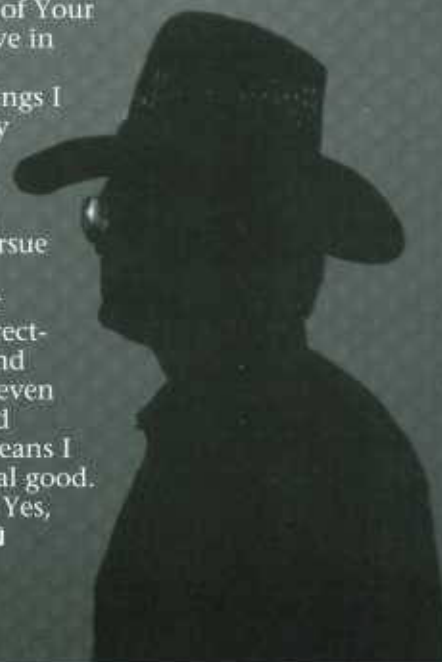
I could not blame You, Lord, if You were to cancel some of my benefits, when I have been so often thoughtless and unkind. You could say "Enough!" to the angels who are dispensing mercies toward me, if You so desired.

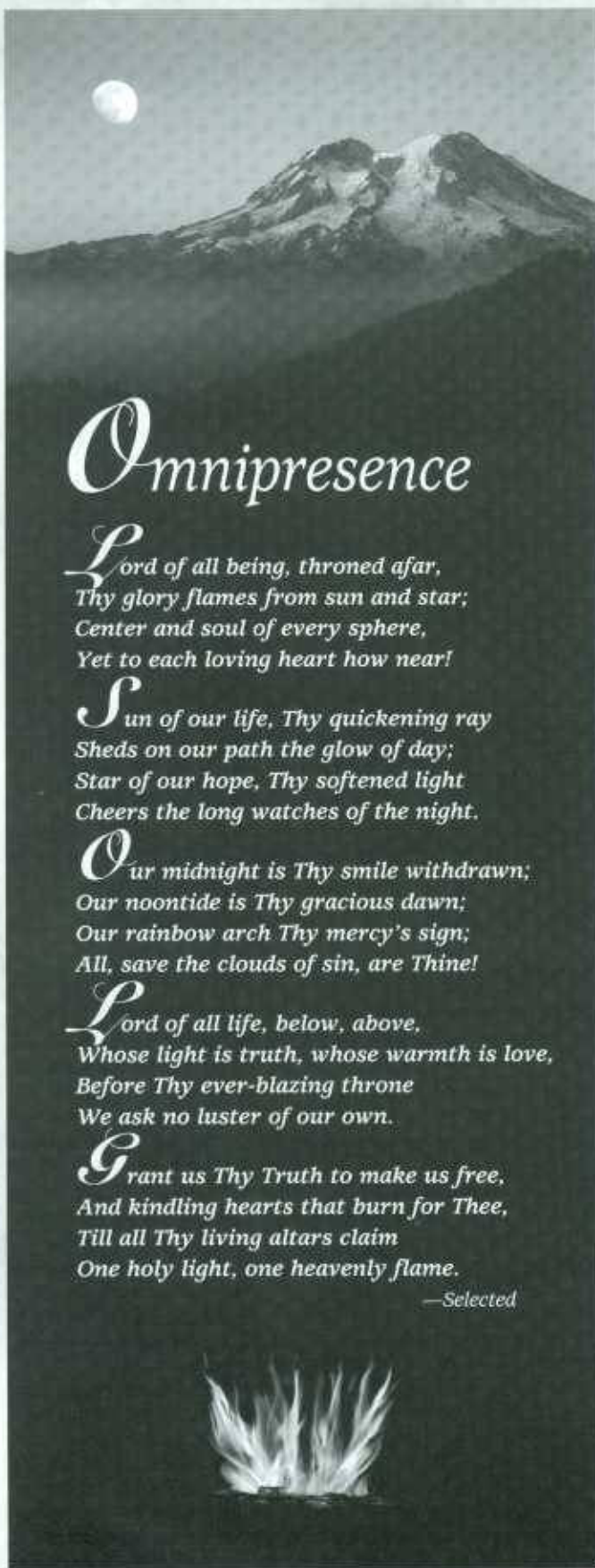
And now, O God, as I pause in this moment of thankfulness that is so long overdue, I think of Your steady patience. In spite of my failings, You still are letting me taste some of Your richest, most special blessings. In spite of how unworthy I have proven, You are still offering forgiveness as I turn from each sin. In spite of my unloving and hardened attitude, You are still drawing me with bands of love. How is it possible, Lord? Is it that You want me to have a foretaste of Your real delights? Is it to make me hungry for better things?

I believe this is it, and so I thank You for letting me know the beauties of truth, the surety of Your word, the fullness of Your promises, and the bright expectations You have in store for all who truly love and obey You.

Accept my overflowing gratitude for the things I have taken for granted far too long. Accept my gratitude for a knowledge of You and Your great purpose; for a work to do and a place to do it; for a challenge to meet, and strength to meet it; for a hope to live for and a goal to pursue with all my mind, might and strength.

God, thank You for taking time out of Your busy schedule of administering worlds and directing planets, suns, moons and stars, to teach and encourage Your earthly children. Thank You, even though I have been many times unworthy and ungrateful. You are still giving me life. This means I can use it for Your eternal glory and my eternal good. Accept my earnest gratitude, so long overdue! Yes, Lord, *I still thank You!* □





Omnipresence

*Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!*

*Sun of our life, Thy quickening ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day;
Star of our hope, Thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.*

*Our midnight is Thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is Thy gracious dawn;
Our rainbow arch Thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are Thine!*

*Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before Thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no luster of our own.*

*Grant us Thy Truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for Thee,
Till all Thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame.*

—Selected

any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.... There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (Dan. 2:28-30). Daniel was too great a man to take the credit to himself. God's honor was supremely important. He knew that if he honored God, as every mortal should, God would take care of whatever belonged to Daniel.

Still, we are not by nature like Daniel. Thanksgiving comes to remind us that we need help. No one is self-sufficient, either for this world or for the world to come. We need God. We need also to recognize God's work in our behalf. And we need to feel and to acknowledge this—with gratitude.

We need to give credit to those who have lived before us, who made possible the blessings we enjoy. Little credit can we take for making, designing or imagining the multitude of common items we use every day. What about the automobiles we drive, the fabric in the clothes we wear, the homes we live in, with their countless conveniences and comforts; simple items like pencils, pins, paper, and plastics. How many of these would we have if we depended on our own skills, if we had to say of everything we had, "I did it"?

Our ancestors and the work they accomplished are very much a part of our lives. We owe them a very large debt of thanks.

We owe them again for the degree of health that is ours. Of course, how we care for our health is very important in whether we live a long and healthy life. There is no substitute for good health habits. However, our background is a major factor; and there are often misfortunes beyond our control.

To our ancestors we are indebted, too, for our country. We are indeed fortunate in that regard. Our ancestors left comfortable homes to brave the Atlantic in frail crafts to settle in a wilderness, to cut the trees, till the ground and plant their crops and fashion here a new and wonderful way of life. The land they settled, the Constitution they framed, the nation they created, the battles they fought to preserve the nation—all of these, and more, they did on our behalf. We did not do it. We can only give them credit. Like the officer talking to St. Paul, our forefathers can claim: "With a great price obtained I this freedom." And so they did. We have inherited the treasure, priceless and unique. We did not do it; they did.

We need, also, to remember our ancestors in the faith, those fathers and mothers in spiritual Israel who were for us the means to a life of purpose, meaning and destiny. We dare not think, even for a fleeting moment, that we did it. Left to ourselves, we should be yet wandering, aimless, and without hope. But praise God! We know the way to a better world because of those God-sent, dedicated men and women. And let us never fail to appreciate God's instrument in these last days to bring forth the "pre-

cious from the vile," to separate the Divine gold from the dross of centuries of superstition, to deliver a people from the darkness of error; neither let us forget those who were God's means of conveying the message to us. Without them, who could hope for anything beyond this life?

We need also to appreciate the circumstances in our favor. The fact that we are in the right place at the right time for our spiritual benefit is more than chance. If we are among those who truly love Him and are called according to His purposes, our circumstances are evidence of God working through natural means for our good.

Chance or Plan?

A writer once asked one very successful businessman how he happened to make the decision that led to his success. His answer was simply: "I was just there. They asked me if I would do it. I recognized a good thing when I saw it, and told them I would. Launching the venture was pure chance. After that it was all hard work." Events in this world and in the lives of those not bound to God's purposes are pure chance; events in the lives of Christians are opportunities which by the help of God may be used to fashion us for eternal usefulness.

Things inanimate have played an important part in our lives—sometimes to our detriment, but more often to our benefit. Did we ever think what the chances were that we would be born in the U.S.A.? There are just a few other nations where we could have been born and have the opportunity to serve God that is ours. Calculate the chances of being born in China, or in India, or Africa, and they are phenomenal. Just what did we do to deserve the benefit of being born in this free land?

Recall the words of the Sacred Page once again: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" In other words, "Beware—lest

you think you did it."

We are indebted, too, for our ideals, those marvelous lights of purpose that keep us on a definite path and out of trouble. The course we have chosen is no chance route. Principles and ideals have guided us to the point where we stand, and we need to give credit to that fact. These same principles and ideals shall continue to guide us all the way into the Kingdom of God, if we will let them. How thankful we can be for these high ideals!

We are also indebted for Christian brothers and sisters right here and now, those who are willing to listen when we need understanding; who rejoice when we rejoice, and weep when we weep; who admonish when we need strengthening, and warn us when they see us in danger; who reprove us when we are going wrong and restore us when we have fallen; who show us genuine love and Christian brotherly kindness, and encourage and strengthen us in the Lord. How can we be thankful enough for these lifelines of hope!

Indeed, we have inherited great traditions. Ours is a Christian heritage beyond our fathoming. To realize that we hold in our hands the veritable Word of the God of heaven, a thorough furnisher unto all good works; a map that can show us the way to a full salvation. How can we count or measure the times our Christian heritage has helped us—to make the right decisions, to choose the right course, to follow the right examples, to take the right stand or the right attitude? Our heritage is indeed priceless.

Our Christian culture is also a storehouse of ancient wisdom helping us deal fairly and honestly with each other. It supplies us with

practical solutions to many of life's everyday problems. Who can improve on the ancient prophet who said, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8). We have been guided by the holy and righteous commandments of God, summarized in this the greatest of all:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark.

12:29-30). Should we not be thankful—so thankful that we will show our thankfulness by a fuller consecration of ourselves to God?

Of course we have not kept all these great traditions and principles flawlessly, but thank God for the continued opportunities that they bring into our lives, and the possibilities of moral and spiritual expansion they set before us. What could be greater, more exalting, more inspiring? And what could be more rewarding than the glory and honor they will bring, power to be and do through all the cycles of eternity? Surely it is the call of the centuries and the ages. How we ought to listen!

Our nation today has largely abandoned its principles and ideals. One by one they have thrown them overboard, so to speak, to lighten the ship. They have become satisfied with that which is low, and forgotten the high ideals of the founding fathers.

Let us be doubly watchful against the danger of low aim, we who name the name of Christ and are joined to the covenant of promise. Let us be watchful lest we esteem too lightly—or even throw overboard—that which may prove our lifeline. Our trouble is not that we do not know, but that we too often do not esteem sufficiently, that we do not believe seriously,

Why
*is genuine
thanksgiving difficult?
Because in thanking God
we are admitting
our need for
Him.*

that we do not apply earnestly. And if we allow this to happen to us, when we come to the end of our day of opportunity we shall find that we forgot the things that really mattered, that we side-stepped the challenge and opportunity that might have opened for us a door into Eternity. For when that time arrives, we shall have to face the fact: that the fault lies wholly with us, not with the Divine arranging of our lives. God did His part—amply!

Now is the time to remember the ideals and principles which guided our fathers in the past, to give credit to these ideals, and to pray that we may learn to keep them. And again comes the warning, "Beware—lest you think you did it."

Thanks to Whom?

To whom do we give thanks when we recall the circumstances that surround our lives and all the blessings that we may combine to form a character for the ages? We thank God!

As people professing to belong to God, we believe that God has a hand in the affairs of mankind. His hand may seem to be temporarily thwarted and ignored and frustrated, but God does have a plan; He does have a will, and His will cannot be thwarted. His plan will be consummated.

The author of Deuteronomy pointed out the patience of God with the Hebrew people. He men-

tioned first the forty years in the wilderness and the times of testing when the Hebrew people complained and would have gone back to the flesh pots of Egypt. "Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you." It is a passage filled with the activity of God in the lives of people—corrective activity, constructive activity, glorious activity. Should we not be thankful? Should we not marvel that He even recognizes us, much more that He is working out His purpose in our lives?

This is what makes the difference between the believer and the unbeliever. The unbeliever is convinced that life goes on blindly, that life is purely chance and fate, and that there is no initiative by another. The believer affirms that God has a plan and a way and makes every effort to work His purpose out. And when He sees fit, He intervenes.

When we think about our ancestors, fathers and mothers in the faith, our ideals, our circumstances, and even our very lives, we are talking about only one source to which we can give credit: God. All is God's activity. All these events are working out His purposes for us. This is the meaning of Paul's words in Romans: "In everything God works for good to them that love him." In other words, we have to be in a covenant relationship with God so God can have

His way with us. This is what belief in God is all about. It is letting Him take over the directing of our lives—in the words of Proverbs, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). God will work, but we must resign to God our consent, our will—our all. Otherwise we are not truly believing.

Who cannot say, "God has blessed my life?" Is there one who has not some special cause for gratitude? It was more than chance and fate that we are what we are, that we are where we are, that we have what we have. It is God rescuing us from the darkness of this world that we may be part of His Kingdom and glory—if only we will submit to His governing.

Thanksgiving is a time when we say thank you, for we have not done it all ourselves. We cannot take the credit. The final credit belongs to God, and He will give us our portion in due time. In the meanwhile let us heed this admonition from the apostle Paul: "In everything give thanks," knowing indeed that "Great is our Lord and greatly to be praised."

Let us have the humility to relinquish our natural claim to any credit for ourselves and give all to God. Then in the age to come He will abundantly recompense.

What have we that we did not receive? Nothing, save perhaps our sins and failings; and these we must dispense with. And then, for all that remains we can truly thank God through ages upon ages upon ages of joy. For what power have we to do anything eternal for ourselves?

So let us thank God now, humbly, gratefully, "lest we think we did it!" □

Believing in God means trusting Him to direct our steps.

"I have never been desperately hungry. I have never been a refugee. I am free to serve God according to the dictates of my conscience. I have never been a prisoner. The secret police have never knocked on our door. No lepers roam the streets of our village. I have always lived within a few minutes of a doctor. In our town I have never heard the guns of approaching armies. I have never seen enemy troops occupy our town. No one died in our community this year of starvation."

—A Grateful American

On-the-Job Prayer

My Father, I thank You for being my provider, for giving me a source for my needs. Help me never to forget that every good thing I have comes from You.

Help me to earn my money honestly and fairly. I want to see my work as Your work. My goal is to do my best on my job, so that I can represent Your cause and gain the respect of my coworkers and employer.

Thank You, Father, for letting me work at a job which does not conflict with my relationship with You, or with the priorities which You have put into my life.

Help me to have an enthusiastic attitude, and a strong desire to do my work well and be dependable. Help me to remember that whatever I do, I am working for You, that You are the ultimate paymaster and the ultimate Judge of my work. Help me never to grow tired of doing what is right.

Teach me to manage my life, my time, and my money so that I will not waste it or throw it away.

Help me always to be considerate of my coworkers and obedient to my employer. If something goes against my conscience, help me to be clear and definite in my communication to my employer, so that Your cause will not be defamed nor Your work slighted.

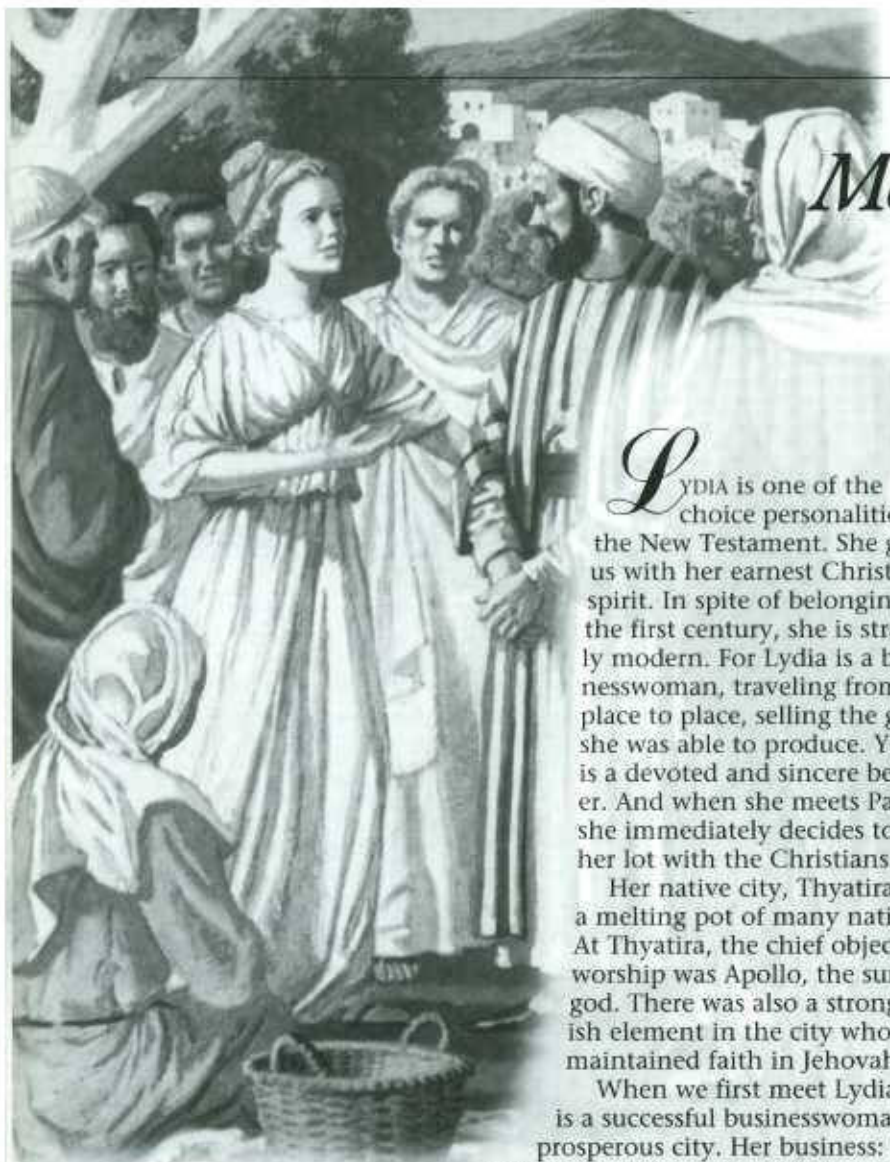
Help me to be an effective witness for You, to work hard, diligently, quietly, and with a humble spirit. Help me to do my best at all times, not just when I am being watched, remembering that You are watching always and whatever I do, I am working for You.

I want to be one who can be trusted, because I belong to You and my highest loyalties are to You. Help me never to be part of the gossip train.

Thank You for Your peace in my heart and Your protection in my life. Help me to keep my mind on You in every situation, and to look to You for strength and guidance.

Lord, please help me to keep absolute control over my tongue, over my conduct, over my feelings, so that I will not murmur, complain, or backbite.

In everything I do, help me to advance the cause of Your soon-coming Kingdom, for which I pray. AMEN.



Modeling the Gospel: *Lydia*

Read about her in Acts 16

LYDIA is one of the choice personalities of the New Testament. She grips us with her earnest Christian spirit. In spite of belonging to the first century, she is strangely modern. For Lydia is a businesswoman, traveling from place to place, selling the goods she was able to produce. Yet she is a devoted and sincere believer. And when she meets Paul, she immediately decides to cast her lot with the Christians.

Her native city, Thyatira, was a melting pot of many nations. At Thyatira, the chief object of worship was Apollo, the sun god. There was also a strong Jewish element in the city who maintained faith in Jehovah.

When we first meet Lydia, she is a successful businesswoman in a prosperous city. Her business: selling purple cloth, for which the city of Thyatira was famous.

From all appearances, she was successful in her business. But her success had not spoiled her. She had not become coarse or hard by her dealings, nor swept from her moorings. For above all, she was a worshiper of God. Many business people are so engrossed in their affairs as to have no time for faith. Not so with Lydia. She found time to worship according to the Jewish faith, and our first meeting with her is at the riverside, where she is gathered with other women to offer prayer.

Lydia was eager to meet with her friends and refresh her faith in God. A follower of the Jewish religion, she had not heard of the Christian church. But she was faithful to the opportunities at hand.

The fact that she was gathered by the riverside with a group of Jewish women for prayer indicates that Philippi did not have a synagogue. Perhaps there were

not enough male Jews to form a congregation. Custom required a minimum of ten men for the reading of the Torah. When there was no synagogue it was customary to have a place of prayer outside the city, where Jewish men and God-fearing Gentiles could gather for prayer. Lydia longed to know the true God, and so she attended the meetings by the riverside under the open sky. If her opportunities were meager, they were no less precious, and she eagerly grasped them.

❖ *Her First Business: Her Faith*

This businesswoman made a business of her religion. She was not alert and alive six days of the week and then silent on the seventh. She was not all interest and enthusiasm in the marketplace and listless in the place of prayer. She was not clear-eyed in the presence of a chance to buy and sell purple cloth and dull-eyed when faith presented an opportunity to "buy wine and milk without money and without price." She brought to her religious duties the same earnestness, the same clear-eyed intelligence that she brought to her business enterprises.

Since Lydia made a business of her religion, we find her rising early to be on her way to this place of prayer. She went in spite of the fact that she knew there would be only a small group of women there. She did not go only for what she could get. She went also for what she could give, of her faith, her hope, her energy. She was living to the best that she knew. She was walking by the light God had granted her.

This was the first step in Lydia's finding the true Gospel: her fidelity to the light she already had. The next step came through the ministry of the apostle Paul. God works through human instruments. He sends His message upon human lips. He walks upon His errands of mercy with human feet. He lifts those who are down with human hands. For

*Even before
she met Paul,
Lydia was living
to the best that
she knew.*

these special tasks He uses those who are striving to have pure hearts and clean hands, and consecrated wills.

Paul was such a man. When he set out on his missionary journey, he had no thought of attending that little prayer meeting by the riverside. He tried to go to Asia, but God shut the door. Then he turned to Bithynia. Again God said No. Then there was the call to come over into Macedonia. To this Paul responded, because he recognized it as God's call. And so he set out, accompanied by Luke, Timothy and Silas.

Why did Paul go to Philippi? He went there to help. A man of Macedonia was calling for help, and Philippi was in Macedonia. Paul did not find that man in the city, so he went to the little prayer meeting at the riverside.

Paul did not go to Philippi seeking fame. If he had seen only with the eyes of this world, he would have been terribly disappointed with what he found in that city. This little prayer meeting was a mere handful. Most people love crowds. Every preacher loves a large congregation. A small audience disheartens. A large audience creates enthusiasm and generates hope. Here was only a very small handful, perhaps no more than half a dozen. But they were whole-souled and sincere.

Not only was this audience depressing because it was so small, but also because it was made up entirely of women. There was not a man present. Perhaps the men had gone to the gladiatorial contests, or to business, or somewhere else. They apparently had not enough interest to attend the Sabbath prayer service. That fact alone does not suggest that the service was worthless. The fact that there are more men in the penitentiary than women does not prove that it is a desirable place. No more does the absence of men at this prayer service suggest that it was worthless.

What did Paul do in the presence of this insignificant audience? He might have thought, "I'm too busy to stop here and waste my time with this handful. I have a long way

to go, I must find large fields of labor." But Paul was wise enough to be faithful to the seemingly small opportunities. He was not seeking the applause of this world. He was looking for any opportunity to help, even one individual. And so when he saw this small group assembled, he sat down and talked. He did the simple thing that was closest his heart. He spoke to them the words of life. He told them of the new life in Christ—a refreshing message indeed.

As Paul spoke, there was one who listened with rapt attention. She was fully persuaded that everything he said was true. And the conviction of Lydia at this little prayer meeting was the beginning of the Christian Church in Europe.

❖ *She Brought Her All*

Now look at the outcome of this conversion. Lydia brought her all to Christ—all her enthusiasm, all her earnestness, all her intellect, all her love. She was as zealous for her new faith as she had been for herself and her business. We do not have to wonder that she won all her household to her side. She at once began to preach the Gospel at home, and they, too, joined her cause.

Lydia's transformation was evident by her eagerness to give the missionaries the hospitality of her home. Paul was not one to be dependent. He made it a matter of conscience to pay his own way in the world. But Lydia would not let him go. She was bent on serving. She was determined to give. She had a passion to help. And so she earnestly urged the believers to make her home their home. Luke says, "*She compelled us.*" And so Paul and his friends found a home in her house, and were in this way freer to do the work to which God had called them.

This consecrated woman opened her house as a place of worship. It was evidently a roomy place. She might have used her home for other forms of social engagements, but no, she dedicated her home to the service of the Lord. Here the believers could gather, and here perhaps the first Christian Church in Europe was formed.

This Christian Church that began in Lydia's house became one of the most helpful churches Paul founded. The Philippians were grateful and devoted to the apostle Paul. They shared Paul's missionary spirit. They provided for Paul's needs while he was at Thessalonica. Years later, this same church remembered him while he was a prisoner at Rome, and sent him food and money. The moving spirit in all this good work may well have been this businesswoman Lydia.

Lydia was first of all a consecrated believer, then a conscientious businesswoman. She used her means to help God's servants in their ministry. How her care of Paul and Silas, and many others, must have cheered their hearts. When selling the purples of Thyatira, she was energetically clothing herself with a superior fabric—the "*fine linen clean and white,*" "*which is the righteousness of saints*" (Rev. 19:8).

There is an important lesson here for us. We, too, should not despise the day of small things. That prayer meeting at the riverside seemed like such a trifling service, but it was a service with eternal importance. Let us never despise the day of small things. The task that seems most insignificant may be supremely great.

We can never tell just what sowing of ours is going to result in an abundant harvest. We cannot know the importance of our small efforts. We may never know until we look back upon them from some pinnacle in the eternal city.

There is a precious lesson here for every seeker after God. Keep your face toward the light. Keep faithful. Keep in the path of duty. Be obedient today. "*To day, if you will heed his voice, harden not your heart.*" Today, heed the words of the Master, "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*"

Today, if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.

Today, if you would go after Jesus, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow Him. What will you gain? Your returns will be greater than you can imagine—both now and in the world to come. □

Dialogue

by GERALD R. PAYNE

How has the MEGIDDO MESSAGE changed since the days of Kenneth Flowerday [pastor, 1958-1985]? When the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy with these instructions: 'I suffer [not] a woman to teach or to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence...', he was not contradicting his own words in (Gal.) saying there is neither male nor female in Christ. Paul did not suffer this for 2 reasons: 'For Adam was first formed then Eve, and the woman being deceived was in the trespass.' For God made the woman not to teach the man, but rather to learn of him. Because of this inherent tendency in the woman, it is both unwise and unsafe for her to be allowed to teach anyone other than younger women and anything other than those listed in the 2nd chapter of the letter to Titus.

Increased disregard for this has made itself apparent in many articles of your magazine. What was once a source of warm inspiration and exhortation seems to have become a pulpit for a pedantic schoolmarm. In the increasing number of stories which are centered on young boys and their admonishing mothers, where are the fathers?

This tendency of women to 'take things over' is ever increasing in our society and seems to have infected religion as well. But it can never be right or good so long as there are still men and women in the world. The man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man. Surely this 'turning of things upside down' shall be esteemed as the potter's clay. I have written to you since you are in the position of responsibility. May your magazine be redirected from the 'do's and don't's' of self-imposition to the encouraging principles of the New Testament.

—M.A., Ohio

I can certainly agree that modern women in their striving for equal rights have many times overstepped reasonable and realistic limits. God designed the two sexes with different built-in capabilities, and certainly there are tasks more appropriate for men, others more appropriate for women....

However, our discussion here pertains to the role of women in the Church, a topic that has often aroused heated debate.

In many churches, women are barred from church boards and ministry, teaching and preaching, on the grounds that Paul did not permit women to teach (1 Cor. 14:34-36), and that Eve was deceived and became a sinner.

Paul should be good authority, and he spoke very

matter-of-factly on the subject. But unfortunately—for us—he did not clearly define all that he said. So we must use the rest of Scripture to understand him.

And, perhaps, we can expect this not to be easy. Peter, speaking of Paul's letters said, "there are some things in them hard to understand" (2 Pet. 3:16, NRSV). Paul was a learned man and well acquainted with the use of symbolic language, which he used freely in his epistles. If Peter, a man acquainted personally with Paul and also with the time these letters were written, saw them as hard to understand, we in this age should not be surprised if we find them difficult.

The texts you question are the following:

- 1) One is the passage you cite in Galatians 3:27-28: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." This passage indicates that there is no discrimination whatever, and those referred to are baptized believers, those who had "put on Christ."
- 2) Another is his seemingly contradictory statement in 1 Tim. 2:11-12: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Though this statement is made to believers, Paul does not specifically apply it inside or outside the Church.

When talking about the roles of the two sexes within the Church, Paul definitely indicated in the first passage that there was to be no distinction: "neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). And his actual practice, as we shall see later, supports this.

Now, how shall we harmonize this statement with the apparently contradictory passage in 1 Tim. 2:11-12? As I am sure you will agree, it is not fair to Paul, or any other Bible author, to take certain statements and ignore others to prove a point. So there must be other factors to consider. First, Paul addressed his letters to the various churches, sometimes to individuals. When reading them, we should remember that we are hearing only one side: Paul's reply. We do not always know everything we would wish to know about the other side, i.e., the problem Paul is addressing. We should keep this in mind while studying Paul's letters.

SHOULD WOMEN TEACH IN CHURCH?

Second, it may be helpful to understand something about the customs of the time. During the time Paul lived, prejudices were rife, especially against the Gentiles and women. About this period of time William Barclay has written: "In the Greek world Sophocles had said, 'Silence confers grace upon a woman.' Women, unless they were very poor or very loose in their morals, led a very secluded life in Greece. The Jews had an even lower idea of women. Amongst the Rabbinic sayings there are many which belittle their place. 'As to teaching the law to a woman one might as well teach her impiety.' To teach the law to a woman was 'to cast pearls before swine.' The Talmud lists among the plagues of the world 'the talkative and the inquisitive widow and the virgin who wastes her time in prayers.' It was even forbidden to speak to a woman on the street. 'One must not ask a service from a woman, or salute her'" (William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series*).

It is also possible that Paul was addressing a local situation, not stating a universal principle for all time. Paul instructed the women in this Church not to teach because he knew they were at that time not adequately prepared for it—not because they were women but because women in the Jewish society were not given the benefits of instruction that their male counterpart would have had. If they should try to teach when not prepared, the cause of Christ would suffer. By saying that they should learn "quietly and submissively" from their husbands, Paul may actually have been offering them a new and unheard of opportunity.

Another fact was that contemporary Jewish culture dictated that women not confront men publicly. If Christian women should do this, it could cause contention and division in the Church and again, the cause of Christ would suffer. Paul's purpose, then, was to promote Church unity, not to teach about the role of women as opposed to that of men. A parallel point is the position Paul took on eating meat: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13).

Yet another fact may have bearing upon Paul's words to the church in Corinth. The Corinthian Church was in a city known for its drunkenness, immorality and debauchery. Mr. Barclay writes of this: "Above the isthmus toward the hill of the Acropolis, ...stood the great temple of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. To that temple there were attached one thousand priestesses who were sacred prostitutes, and in the

evenings they descended from the Acropolis and plied their trade upon the streets of Corinth, until it became a Greek proverb, 'It is not every man who can afford a journey to Corinth.'"

If such were the social conditions at the time Paul wrote his letter, doesn't this suggest why Paul may have requested that women in the Church refrain from certain activities or manners that would make them appear indiscreet or contemptible in the eyes of the people of the time? His advice may not have been because such activities were wrong but because of the possible effect on those outside the Church. Along the same line he wrote to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 5:22), "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

This thought may apply also to the passage you question. It was not because it was wrong for a woman to speak in Church, but an outsider coming in would have thought the Church no better than the Aphrodite temple.

The General Teaching of the Bible

The general teaching of Scripture never implies that only men should teach. We have no examples where a woman was removed from a position of teaching because she was a woman. On the contrary we have these definite principles:

- 1) *God is no respecter of persons* (see Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Jas. 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:17). He does not respect nationality, color, race or any physical quality—how then could He discriminate against anyone because of sex? Is not all His creation by His design and purpose?
- 2) Paul again speaks on the subject in Col. 3:11. "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (NIV). Notice that the last statement "Christ is all and is in all," is all inclusive.
- 3) Paul says again, in the passage quoted earlier, that in Christ there is neither "Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Being "in Christ" or Christ being "in you" are terms indicating "likeminded" with Christ. "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Rom. 13:14, NIV). Christ said the same thing a little differently:

"...that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one..." (John 17:22-23).

You mentioned 1 Tim. 2:13-14, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Can we be sure Paul is pointing out what you call "an inherent tendency in the woman"? Whatever we conclude from the Genesis event, Adam was fully as much a sinner as Eve. What is the difference in his position before God because he sinned *second* instead of *first*? The literal story would seem to add nothing to Paul's argument if he is using it to establish a difference between the ability of the two sexes to serve in the Church.

And according to the Scriptures the man shares this "inherent tendency" to sin just as much as the woman. "The heart [no distinction for man or woman] is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..." (Jer. 17:9). The word "man" is used in the preceding verses and does not seem to change in gender before this statement. The word "man" (literally, Adam) includes both male and female (see Genesis 5:2). If not, then we see in this verse that the male's heart is desperately wicked, not the female's.

(One more point: If we admit that the word "man" is in many instances in Scripture used as a generic term for the human race, including male and female, then we must also admit that many passages speaking of "men" working in spreading the Gospel also include women.)

You say in your letter that "God made the woman not to teach the man, but rather to learn of him." I am sure, though, that you would allow that many factors enter into one's being qualified to teach besides one's sex. Certainly a poorly trained, compromising, easily swayed man (of whom there have been and are many) would not be nearly as good a teacher as a well-instructed, strongly disciplined and fully committed woman.

In the case of Timothy, Paul certainly implies that he had been taught by his mother and grandmother. He mentions specifically the sincere faith of Timothy's grandmother Lois and also his mother Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). There is no mention of either his Greek father or grandfather having taught Timothy. Therefore, it seems a logical sequence that Timothy owed his knowledge of the Scriptures to his maternal parent and grandparent.

Men and Women Witness for God

If Paul literally meant for women to keep silent and never to teach or exercise authority over males, then why do we find women giving voice to the words of God in both the Old Testament and the New Testament?

- ◆ **Deborah**, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel. Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided (Judges 4:4-5). She usurped authority over Barak, Israel's military leader, who went to war against Sisera, the king of Canaan, on condition that Deborah go with him (Judges 4:6, 8-9).

- ◆ **Huldah** was a prophetess in Israel. She must have been well known in Jerusalem because King Josiah sent five men, the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Michaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and the king's servant Asahiah to Huldah to inquire of the Lord. Notice that Huldah held authority even over the priest in religious matters. Men, even the king, held her in high regard. Notice also that the king did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Ki. 22:2, 12-20; 2 Chron. 34:23-28).

- ◆ In Acts we find four **daughters of Philip** who were prophetesses. "And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:8-9). They had no husbands. From whom did they ask for their knowledge?

- ◆ Paul commended **Priscilla** and Aquila as his helpers in Christ (Rom 16:13), and they were said to have instructed Apollos, whose preaching was deficient (he knew only the baptism of John—Acts 18:24-26). They—Aquila and Priscilla—took him aside and instructed him; and from anything we can read, Priscilla was not condemned for being in on this teaching of a man.

- ◆ **Phoebe** was a deacon of the Church in Cenchrea. The apostle Paul held her in high regards: "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchrea, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well" (Rom. 16:1-2, NRSV). The term "deacon" is derived from the Greek word *diakonos*. Paul referred to himself as a deacon or minister [*diakonos*] of the Gospel (Col. 1:23). In the New Testament, the noun is used to refer to ministers of the Gospel, ministers of Christ (1 Tim. 4:6). "If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant [*diakonos*] of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed" (NRSV). It stands for servants of God (2 Cor. 6:4, NIV, NRSV), those who follow Jesus (John 12:26), and in many other similar ways (see *Holman Bible Dictionary*).

- ◆ Paul made special mention of a woman named **Mary**, "who bestowed much labour on us" (Rom. 16:6).

- ◆ **Junia** was a fellowprisoner. "Salute Andronicus, and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me" (Rom. 16:7). It seems that Junia was well respected by the Apostles, a woman of note, likely for her steadfast zeal in spreading the Gospel, even to the point that she was imprisoned.

- ◆ In Romans 16:15, Paul mentions **Julia** and the **sister of Nereus**. "Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them."

- ◆ Just before the day of Pentecost we read about women followers of Christ assembled with the men. *"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren"* (Acts 1:14). And to the best of our knowledge it was to this same group that the Holy Spirit power was given on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). This means that both men and women received power. If women were to remain silent, why did God give them the gift of prophecy that they should speak to the nations? It was God's doings that both men and women prophesied. Both men and women had received the Holy Spirit and were prophesying to people from many different places and languages.
- ◆ Peter also quoted Joel's prophecy for the future, and it specifically says that women will be speaking by the power of God: *"In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy....Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy"* (Acts 2:17-18, NRSV).
- ◆ Paul said definitely that women in the Corinthian Church prayed and spoke publicly, and gave instructions on how it should be done properly (1 Cor. 11:5-6).
- ◆ We hear **Anna** prophesying when the infant Jesus was taken to Jerusalem by Mary and Joseph to present Him to the Lord. *"There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel...Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem"* (Luke 2:36, 38).
- ◆ Who did the angel, and shortly afterward, Christ Himself, send to bear the news of His resurrection to the Apostles? It was none other than **"Mary Magdalene and the other Mary"** (Matt. 28:1-10), two women that were not to keep silent. Their mission was clear: *"Go quickly and tell his disciples..."*—these women were told by an angel to instruct men.
- ◆ Paul entreats others to help certain women who labored with him in the Gospel. We are not told exactly what their role was, but could it not have been in preaching or teaching the Gospel as did Paul? *"And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life"* (Phil. 4:3).

You mention the tendency of women to "take things over." I cannot find any statement where Paul recognized this as a "tendency of women" or warned against it.

It was mentioned earlier that we need to understand something about the times these Scriptures were written to fully understand what was being said. We have seen several occasions where women did take an active role and were approved of God. I am very certain that the Gospel did not mention every incidence. Nor do we

need examples of every incidence to show that women do have equal authority with men. During such times as when Paul lived it must have taken a very brave, strong and determined woman (or man) to go forth teaching the Gospel. Even some of the men did not fare so well. At such a time it seems only natural that men would do the preaching and teaching, particularly to the outside world, both because they were physically stronger and also, perhaps because the Christian message would be better accepted from men than from women in a culture where preaching was considered inappropriate for women.

But what is to keep the dedicated, well-instructed and committed woman from taking an active role in the Church today—except prejudice against her by the male counterpart?

Suppose some men stood in the way of the women that received Holy Spirit power on the day of Pentecost, or the ones Jesus commissioned to *"go tell."* Would they not be standing against the will and work of God Himself? If we have women who are knowledgeable of the Gospel today, have we any right to prevent them from speaking? Do we have any Biblical basis for preventing any godly one—man or woman—from speaking the Word of God?

The few isolated texts that appear to forbid women

***What is to keep the dedicated,
committed woman from taking an
active role in the Church today—
except prejudice against her by the
male counterpart?***

from taking an active role in Church leadership must not be interpreted simplistically and in contradiction to the rest of Scripture, but their interpretation must take into account their relation to the broader teaching of Scripture and the context of the time in which they were written.

You mention that we have published stories about young boys and their admonishing mothers, then you ask, where are the fathers? After reviewing the stories published since the first of 1996, I would have to conclude that there is a good balance. I see stories about mothers and sons, mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, and fathers and daughters. The father seems to be represented in most of these stories. In some, the mother has a dominant role, but if a story is published that was written in the previous century, when it wasn't necessary for both parents to work, is it not entirely possible that the mother would have the greater amount of time with the children anyway?

In conclusion, we feel confident that Paul did not intend for those learned in the word and ways of God, whether men or women, to remain silent on matters pertaining to faith, salvation and godly living. □

Know Your Bible?

FIGURES OF SPEECH

1. To what animal did Jesus liken "false teachers"?
2. What words did David use to express the longing of his soul after God?
3. In the Song of Solomon the writer says, "My beloved is like a _____, or a young _____"
4. The staff of Goliath's spear was likened to a _____
5. Elijah's servant from the top of Mt. Carmel saw "a little cloud...like a _____"
6. Complete Jesus' statement, "I am the true _____, and my Father is the _____"
7. Who called Ananias the high priest a "whited wall"?
8. What prophet uttered these words, "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap"?
9. Whom did Jesus call "whited sepulchres"?
10. To what did Jacob liken the following sons, in his dying speech:
 "Reuben, thou art unstable as _____"
 "Judah is a _____"
 "Joseph is a _____"
 "Benjamin shall ravin as a _____"

EXCEPTIONS

1. "They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except _____."
2. "How shall they preach, except _____?"
3. "Can two walk together, except _____"
4. "Except _____, ye shall all likewise perish."
5. "No more can ye [bear fruit], except ye _____"

DO YOU KNOW...?

1. What was the object of the man who said, "I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal"? _____
2. Who felt his trade was endangered by someone teaching that there is but one God? _____
3. Where do we read of some women who were builders? _____
4. What purchase was made by a man which showed publicly his faith in the future? _____
5. Who showed his faith in God by making an unusual request concerning his remains? _____
6. What did Israel shout when they beheld a king that looked good to them? _____
7. Of whom is it said, "He is exceeding proud"? _____
8. Where in the Record is it revealed that God blesses His faithful children with all spiritual blessings? _____
9. What prominent Jew warned the Council to leave the disciples alone? What was his reasoning? _____

FEET

1. Whose foot was once crushed against a wall by an animal?
2. Who was "light of foot as a wild roe"?
3. Who had twelve toes and twelve fingers?
4. From what book did Jesus' tempter quote the following passage, "They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"?
5. Who gave this wise advice: "Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor's house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee"?
6. Why did the Jews look upon swine as "unclean," though they "divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted"?
7. Who was Jonathan's son who was lame in his feet?
8. Which Old Testament prophet foretold concerning Jesus, "His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives"?
9. Who was told by Ahijah, "When thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die"?
10. Whom did Paul cure saying, "Stand upright on thy feet"?

Answers on page 26



The Best Kind of Love

*W*hat a perfectly splendid day we will have!" cried Davy Jones, waving his spoon in sheer excitement.

The three brothers, Davy, John, and Pryce, were eating their breakfast of thin broth and bread in the old kitchen of Pen-y-Bryn Farm. In the summer some of the rooms were let to visitors.

It was now about the middle of a very hot summer. The hay harvest was nearly over, and the fields left bare were dry and brown. How to get sufficient water for the cattle was becoming serious.

The son of one of the Pen-y-Bryn lodgers—a boy about the same age as Davy—was in the kitchen talking to them while they breakfasted. From their manner the boys could see that something very unusual about to happen. The lads were looking forward to a day in the park with one of the neighbors whose son and heir had come of age. The event was to be celebrated by a huge entertainment for his tenants and their families.

Farmer Jones's three sons were of course invited, and the son of the people staying at Pen-y-Bryn.

Naturally all were very excited, and talked and laughed noisily as boys do under such circumstances.

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Jones, a pale, delicate-looking woman, who sank into a chair, sighing wearily.

"You lads will have to wash and dress yourselves

without my help this morning," she said. "Your father is busy with his last field of hay; there is the food to be cooked for the men as well as the visitors' meals to be seen to. I have some washing I must do too, and there is the water for the cattle that must be fetched up from the river. However I am to get through all the work I do not know."

Again she sighed, exhausted in great heat.

"Never mind us, mother, we will take care of ourselves," cried Davy, cheerfully. "Come along, boys, let's get ready."

Davy and John were the first to make their reappearance.

"How did we do, mother?" they asked in chorus.

Mother was in the back kitchen by this time, busy with her washing. "Quite well, boys," she answered, looking them over from top to toe. "Now mind your man-

ners, and be good."

They promised, each giving her a resounding kiss. They were always very loving to mother.

"Now have a good day, my boys. But where are Master Walter and Pryce?"

"Not ready yet, I suppose. Tell them we have gone and they must follow. And Mother, don't work too hard."

"Don't work too hard!" she muttered to herself with another long sigh. "How is that to be helped?"

Just then the visitor they all so politely called Master Walter rushed in.

"Where are the others, Mrs. Jones?"

"Davy and John have gone on, leaving word that you were to follow," was the reply. "Pryce cannot be ready yet."

"Silly owl! I must run and hurry him up," and out rushed Walter as excitedly as he had entered.

A short time after, to Mrs. Jones's great surprise, Walter and Pryce appeared both dressed in their work clothes.

"Pryce, why are you so late? Your brothers started a long time ago. It isn't kind of you to be so slow, when there is so much to be done."

"I am thinking that I will not go at all," answered Pryce, good-humoredly, "and Master Walter has decided to stay and keep me company."

(Continued on page 22)



They Did It—Their Way

INSIGHTS INTO THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Part Two

STATISTICS:

Primary Message of the Book:

Sin has consequences; disobedience and apostasy end in death.

Key Verse:

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."—Judges 21:25

Setting:

Palestine (Canaan), later called Israel.

Time Period:

About three centuries, ending near the 10th millennium BC.

Author and Date:

An unnamed prophet, about 1000 BC. Probably Samuel. If not Samuel, a contemporary of Samuel or someone else living during the reign of the Kings, because the book says in four places, "in those days there was no king in Israel" (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25)—there was a king in Israel at the time of writing.

Place in history:

"Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass ..." (Judges 1:1). Immediately following the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan by Joshua, and before the establishing of Israel as an independent monarchy.

Meaning of Title:

"Judges," Hebrew *shophetim*. Not judges as we know them today; these leaders were Divinely appointed rescuers who delivered the nation from its enemies, then governed the people during the era of peace that followed.

The Unfinished Conquest

The people left Joshua (Joshua 24:28) with words of willing obedience on their lips. They saw Joshua write the words of their promises in the book of the law.

They went home with the wonderful promises of God in their hearts.

Now how did it work out in actual practice?

The Conquest

Joshua died, but the task of conquering Canaan remained. Each tribe was under oath to drive out the remaining inhabitants of their territory, breaking down their idols and centers of heathen worship.

How did the conquest go? What happened when they actually moved into their territories? Look in Judges 1, and notice how stark and negative the record is:

"And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountains; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron..."(v. 19).

"The children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem until this day..."(v. 21).

"Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Bethshean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land (v. 27).

"And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; and did not utterly drive them out (v. 28).

"Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell in Gezer among them (v. 29).

"Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwell among them, and became tributaries (v. 30).

"Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob (v. 31).

"But the Asherites dwell among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out (v. 32).

"Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of

Bethshemesh, nor the inhabitants of Bethanath... (v. 33).

"And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley (v. 34).

"But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbin: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries" (v. 35).

What a record of failure! No one completely drove out anyone!

The Lord took notice. An angel of the Lord "went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, 'I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this?" (Judges 2:1-2 NIV).

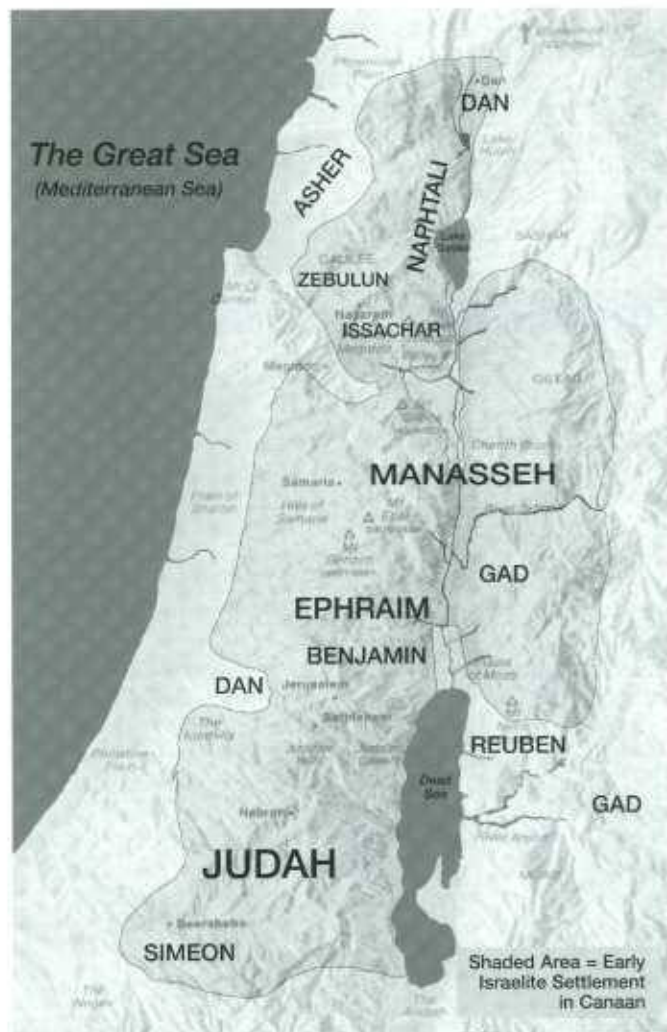
What had become of their good resolve and promise to Joshua: "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey"? Now the Lord says, "You have not obeyed me."

Then comes the searching question: "Why have you done this?" What is their reply? They have no answer. They knew in their hearts that they had failed, but they did not want to voice the terrible truth.

But the question persists: Why? It was not that God refused to help them. And they did not lack leadership. With God's help, victory was sure.

No, the awful truth was that they did not want to drive out their enemies! They chose to allow them to remain so that they could share in their evil, lustful ways. The Israelites wanted something that they saw in those heathen people and their religion. It was exciting, it was heathen, it made the blood tingle and

(Continued on page 22)



Was it right for the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites and to take their land?

First let us ask: Why did the Israelites do it? Who gave the order? The command came from the God of heaven, the God who knows the end from the beginning and can know in advance what individuals and nations will do. Who are we, finite creatures of a moment, to challenge His decrees?

Who were the Canaanites? The Canaanites, the native inhabitants of the land of Palestine, were worshipers of pagan gods, a practice abominable to the true God.

The task of expelling and destroying the Canaanites was an act for which God took direct responsibility. The people of Israel were only instruments in His hand—they had but to cooperate so that God could carry out His plan. Even before they reached Canaan the plan was clearly stated: "By little and little I will drive them [the Canaanites] out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.... for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee" (Ex. 23:30-31).

It was God's plan and decree that the Canaanites be destroyed and their land be given to the Israelites. Why? Because at this point the Israelites, rebellious and

hardhearted though they be, were a better people and of more use to God than the Canaanites; and God did not want His people to be influenced by their wicked ways. Only by eliminating the source of the evil could the evil be contained. The law in Israel was severe, and for good reason: "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee" (Ex. 23:32-33).

Again and again the warning was repeated. But the Israelites did not cooperate with God's plan to eliminate the Canaanites, and all that the Lord foretold came to pass—including these words of the Lord spoken prophetically through Moses: "If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell" (Num. 33:55).

The history of the nation confirmed the accuracy of this prophecy: the Canaanites who were allowed to remain were a source of constant grief to the Israelites.

As always, God knew best. □

the pulse quicken, while the worship of the true God was dull and meaningless to them.

They had a craving for this "new" culture. So no one completely drove out anyone.

They compromised, and as a result the Word of the Lord came true: *"Since you have done this, I will no longer drive out the people living in your land. They will be thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a constant temptation to you"* (Judges 2:3, NLT).

The Lesson

What can we learn from Israel's disobedience? When God commands, He wants us to obey—for our own good. When we disobey, we hurt ourselves.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

Compromising with evil doesn't pay. Disobeying the command of God doesn't pay. Even if we think we're ahead for doing wrong, we're not. It's a hard lesson to learn, but it never changes. We cannot do evil so that good will come.

What happened to the Israelites can happen to us also. We make sincere promises of love and dedication—just like they did. But do we carry them out?

It is easy to talk big and live little. It is easy to say what we mean at a moment of emotional response, but when it comes down to the everyday fight, driving out the enemies of righteousness from our hearts, we have a dozen reasons for not doing so. We prefer to go our own way, and do what is right in our own eyes—just as they did.

It is so easy, so effortless to go our own way. But where does it end? That is what we want to remember: the end of the matter. *"There is a way that seems*

right to a man, but in the end it leads to death" (Prov. 14:12, NIV).

Notice how this all ties in with the story of the Judges. They made great promises, and immediately broke them. They failed to drive out the enemy. They settled down in a situation of compromise, living side by side with the enemy. The result: trouble.

They were the right people, in the right place, at the right time, under the right conditions, under the right authority, with the right leadership. But they went wrong because they insisted on doing it *their way*!

We, too, can be the same kind of people, sincere and committed, yet too weak willed to drive out the enemy. Every time we compromise, every time we yield in any area of our lives, we say that we know better than God, that we would rather live with the enemy than drive him out.

If we would be safe, if we would keep our lives pure and clean before God, if we would have His favor and His approval and be sure of a place in His coming Kingdom, we must obey. We must actually choose to drive out the enemy. We must consent to spiritual surgery where necessary, so that the evil can be removed—so that the new life can live.

This was Paul's chosen course, and if we want His destination, it must be ours also.

We cannot expect to drive out all of the enemies in a moment, but with God's help, we can be victorious. We can live the new life, we can walk the new walk, full of grace and power and peace. With our hearts set on holiness and the promises of God bright before us, we can walk with the people of God all the way into the Kingdom.

If we just consent to live *God's way* instead of our own. □

The Best Kind of Love

(Continued from page 19)

"Why! why?" she cried, bewildered.

"You will find out by and by, Mother. It is nothing wrong keeps us at home," said Pryce, with a mysterious, yet roguish expression on his rosy face. And beckoning to Walter, he went off into the yard.

Carrying the water for farm use was really a hard job. It had to be brought from a river that flowed along the foot of the hill on which the farm stood. A donkey cart containing a barrel and some tin pails, conveyed the water up the steep, stony path from the river to Pen-y-Bryn, but before this could be accomplished, the donkey had to be led down to the river, the barrel filled, and the donkey led up again—sometimes with more than a little coaxing.

Still vexed at Pryce's strange behavior, Mrs. Jones was bending over her tub when she heard the rumble of wheels outside. Looking up she caught sight of the donkey cart, followed by her stay-at-home boys, turn through the yard gate.

"I can't believe my eyes!" she exclaimed. "Dear, dear

little Pryce! He has given up his pleasure to carry the water for me."

Tears of joy gushed from her eyes as she saw what a kind and unselfish son she had, and she returned to her work with a lighter heart.

Down by the river the two boys were perfectly happy. Pryce, who had led the donkey into the shallow water at the edge, was standing in the cart emptying into the barrel the pails of water which Walter then handed up to him from his station knee deep in the cool river.

"I have had the best of it, Pryce," he remarked, "I feel as cool as a cucumber. It is just lovely standing in this water."

"It is right you should have the better part, Master Walter, since you were so good as to stay at home and help me."

The last pail for the barrel had now been handed up, and Walter was resting, his arm supported on the shaft of the cart. "You think a great deal of your mother, don't you?"

"We all do," was the reply. "We all love her dearly."

"But your kind of love is the best," said Walter sturdily. "You try to help her." □

Jesus Returns *from* the Wedding?

"Why did Jesus compare Himself to a 'lord' returning *from the wedding*?' If we understand the Bible right, the wedding is on the earth, not up in heaven."

The passage to which you allude is recorded in Luke 12, where Jesus is talking about His coming Kingdom and circumstances around His return. Because He is talking about the conduct of those who will welcome Him, it seems that He is speaking especially to those who would be living at the time of His return. He says, *"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding"* (Luke 12:35-36).

What is the wedding *"from"* which He will return? Did He go to heaven to attend a wedding?

The Bible does not tell us of any major event that was to take place between the time of His ascension to the Father and His return. In fact, we are told almost nothing about His activities during the time He is at the Father's right hand. Several passages, however, tell us about a wedding which will take place *after* His return, when He is united to His faithful bride (His church) in happy matrimony (see Revelation 19:1-8).

What could Jesus have meant by saying that He was returning *"from the wedding"*?

Part of the answer may lie in the meaning of the word translated by the preposition *"from"* in our Common Version. The original word is *ek*, which is very common in the Greek language. The meaning of the word is often *"from...on, since,"* but there are other meanings we should look at. The Lexicographer gives many uses, among them: "of the seed of, family of;...from the midst of (a group)...down from (a surface)...of the direction whence is from, of the condition or state out of which one comes...of any kind of connection...of generation...of the power on which anyone depends...of the cause for which, from this time on." We also find the following note: "used of the cause (whether the thing or person) by which the action expressed by the accompanying verb is aided, sustained or affected" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*). Another Lexicon gives: "used of the effective cause by, because of, whether personal or impersonal in nature, of the reason which is a presupposition for something; by reason of, even a result of, because of." Yet another definition in the Lexicon is: "of the temporal point from which, used of the place something is emanating from."

With these definitions in mind, what might Jesus have meant when He asked His disciples to be *"like men who wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding"*? Recall that the lexicon said this word is "used of the cause (whether the thing or person) by which the action expressed by the accompanying verb is aided, sustained or affected." The wedding with His bride is certainly one of the causes of His return. Again it is the "effective cause for" His return. He is coming to be united to His bride, to save His people, to rule with His saints, to bring the

reward to His faithful, chosen ones.

Used in this sense, a better rendering of the passage might be: *"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return for the wedding."* The wedding is indeed the purpose of His return, and *"blessed are those servants"* who are found watching when He comes—theirs will be the privilege of being part of that august occasion.

◆ Are Melchizedek and Jesus Christ the same ?

"Please, I have a few perplexing questions which I would like you to help me with. First concerning Melchizedek: Are Melchizedek and Jesus Christ our Lord the same or different entities?"

Jesus Christ is not Melchizedek. Melchizedek is described in the Bible as *"king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means 'king of righteousness'; then also, 'king of Salem' means 'king of peace.' Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever."* (Heb. 7:1-3 NIV). Certainly this description does not fit Christ, for He could not be said to be *"without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life."* The Bible repeatedly speaks of God as the Father of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2 Cor. 11:31). Though His conception was unique in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, He certainly could not be said to be *"without Father."* Neither is He *"without descent."* His lineage was clearly documented, even in advance (John 7:42; Rom. 1:3). The angel who prophesied His birth said He would be *"of the seed of David,"* and the details of that lineage are given in Luke 3:23-28.

Nor was Jesus *"without beginning of days or end of life."* Moses prophesying of Jesus said that God would *"raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers"* (Deut. 18:15, NIV). If Jesus was *"without beginning,"* so was Moses. And when He was crucified, His life ended—though God very soon restored it in the wondrous power of the resurrection.

There is nothing in the Scriptures to identify Jesus Christ as Melchizedek. Rather, the writer to the Hebrews described Christ as *"a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."*

Who was or is Melchizedek? Being at the head of the priesthood, and being in existence even in the time of Abraham and still mentioned after Jesus' time, we can only conclude that the term is used as a representation of the entire system of Divine knowledge, much as wisdom is personified in the book of Proverbs and called *"she"* (see Proverbs 8). When Abraham met and paid tithes to a *"priest of the most high God"* who was identified as Melchisedec, he must have been meeting one who was acting as God's special representative. □

TODAY

*With every rising of the sun
Think of your life as just begun.*

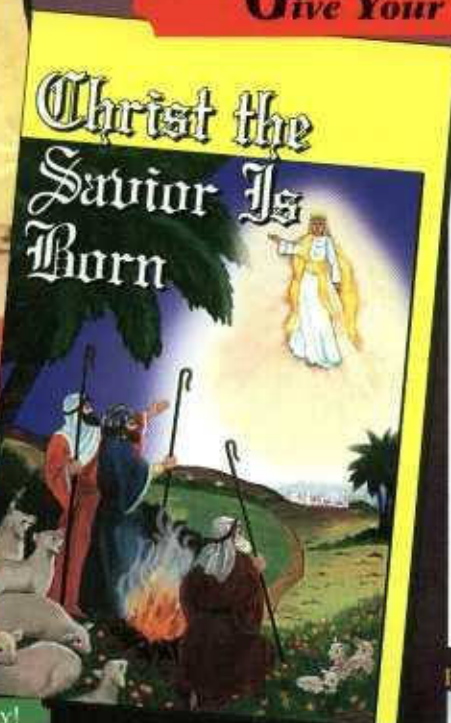
*The past has cancelled and buried deep
All yesterdays. There let them sleep.*

*Concern yourself with but today;
Grasp it, and teach it to obey.*

*You and today! A soul sublime
And the great heritage of time.
With God himself to find the twain
Go forth, brave heart! Attain! Attain!*

—Author Unknown

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The background of the entire page is a photograph of a dense forest. Tall, slender trees with thick trunks stand in a misty or foggy atmosphere. Sunlight filters through the canopy in some places. In the foreground, there is a path covered in brown leaves and ferns. The text is presented in a dark, rounded rectangular box with an orange border on the right side of the page.

The LAW of LIFE

*The tree that never had to fight
For sun and sky and air and light,
That stood out in the open plain,
And always got its share of rain,
Never became a forest king.*

*The man who never had to toil,
Who never had to win his share,
Of sun and sky and light and air,
Never became a manly man,
But lived and died as he began.*

*Good timber does not grow in ease;
The stronger wind, the tougher trees;
The more the storm, the more the strength;
By sun and cold, by rain and snow,
In tree or man, good timber grows.*

*Where thickest stands the forest growth,
We find the patriarchs of both,
And they hold converse with the stars,
Whose broken branches show the scars
Of many winds and much of strife.
This is the common law of life.*

—Author Unknown

Repetition Needed

Dear Friends,

Though the things we often say to each other in our letters and when we talk face-to-face would seem repetitive to those not understanding us, they are sweet music to the ears of us who are seeking an eternal inheritance. We need constant stirring up to keep us from growing slack in doing the things we should be doing.

Warnings against procrastination are always helpful—there is never any danger of being overwarned. Putting off is not good in temporal affairs, and it is certainly much worse in regard to spiritual things. To put it bluntly, it can prove fatal. Our day of opportunity is growing short, and we should be living lives which show that we sincerely believe that the time is short. We may have good intentions, but good intentions won't save us. We don't want to end up in the condition described in Jer. 8:20—our opportunity gone and we not saved.

There is much to be done but we can do it. Daily reading of the Bible and spiritual admonitions derived from its pages will keep us well armed for spiritual battle. We cannot make much of a fight without our weapons. But when we are armed with all our spiritual weapons we can easily defeat the enemy (our old nature), and turn every calamity into a victory.

If we can run all the way to the end of the race, then relief from the ills of mortality is just around the corner.

S. Kincannon, Tennessee

Thank God for the Scriptures!

We are now listening to the tapes of the studies on Acts. One thought that struck me was that even though the disciples had been hearing Jesus preach the Kingdom for three years, they had not grasped the thought that the Kingdom was not to be established in their time. Hence the question in Acts 1:6, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" It was difficult for them to think future when they wanted their evil troubled world changed as much as we want ours changed.

Thank God for the rest of the Scriptures we have available to us today! The book of Revelation has some vivid word pictures of what the end times will be like. We don't know that people before that had such a revelation of things to come. But they had what they needed to prepare to live in Christ's Kingdom, just as we have what we need.

There are many things we all wish we knew more about, then we would find the way easier. But God wants us to trust Him. We don't need all the answers. He has given us enough to find our way, to build our faith and overcome our sinful tendencies. His Word is a thorough furnisher—from it we can draw everything we need.

P. Fleming, Texas

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 18

FIGURES OF SPEECH

1. Ravening wolves (Matthew 7:15)
2. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks" (Psalm 42:1)
3. Roe, hart (Song of Solomon 2:9)
4. Weaver's beam (1 Samuel 17:4-7)
5. Man's hand (1 Kings 18:42-44)
6. Vine, husbandman (John 15:1)
7. Paul (Acts 23:2-3)
8. Malachi (Malachi 3:2)
9. The scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:27)
10. Water, lion's whelp, fruitful bough, wolf (Genesis 49)

EXCEPTIONS

1. The apostles (Acts 8:1)
2. They be sent (Romans 10:15)
3. They be agreed (Amos 3:3)
4. Ye repent (Luke 13:3, 5)
5. Abide in me (John 15:4)

DO YOU KNOW...?

1. The destruction of Baal's prophets. 2 Kings 10:18-29

2. Demetrius. Acts 19:24-28
3. Nehemiah. Neh. 3:12
4. The purchase of Hanameel's field. Jeremiah 32
5. Joseph. Gen. 50:24-25; Heb. 11:22
6. "God save the king!" 1 Sam. 10:24
7. Moab. Jer. 48:29
8. Eph. 1:3
9. Gamaliel. Acts 5:34-39

FEET

1. Balaam's (Numbers 22:25)
2. Asahel (2 Samuel 2:18)
3. The giant of Gath (2 Samuel 21:20)
4. Psalms (91:12)
5. Solomon (Proverbs 25:17)
6. Because they "cheweth not the cud" (Leviticus 11:7)
7. Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 4:4)
8. Zechariah (Zechariah 14:44)
9. Jeroboam's wife (1 Kings 14:6-12)
10. The impotent cripple at Lystra (Acts 14:8-10)

Oh, to have an eraser that would wipe out painful memories of our sins, those stabbing memories of the times we've disobeyed God's holy law. Thank God that we can turn, and that He will forgive.

A man might be very tenderhearted and sympathetic, but if the law of God makes no impression upon him he is, in God's view, hardhearted.

If obstacles get in your way, do as the wind—whistle and go around them.

Some books are for our INFORMATION; the Bible is for our TRANSFORMATION.

The Temple of Your Heart

In ev'ry heart there's a temple,
And there enthroned is a king,
Some choose their self to be honored,
There all their tributes they bring,
Some give their soul to win riches,
Others seek honor and fame,
But I have enshrouded One greater than these,
He is living, the LORD is His name!

In ev'ry heart there's a temple,
Someone is ruling within;
You make the choice of the monarch
Who is to reign as your king.
Why choose to follow the broad way?
Why live to seek worldly gain?
Come open your heart to the Master of Men,
Let His truth be your bulwark and stay!



Days and weeks so quickly pass,
We must use them, or, alas,
Soon our journey will be run,
With our labor still undone.
Work for God must now be done;
Victories must now be won,
Day by day, and week by week,
If salvation's goal we seek.

Our business in life is not to get ahead of others but to get ahead of ourselves.

The door of opportunity is marked "PUSH".

If we fill our hours with regrets of yesterday and with worries of tomorrow, we have no today in which to be thankful.

It is never too soon to give up a prejudice.

Great occasions for serving God may come seldom, but little ones surround us daily.

Watch your **thoughts**; they become words.
Watch your **words**; they become actions.
Watch your **actions**; they become character.
Watch your **character**; it becomes destiny.

(Continued from page 2)

WHEN SILENCE IS ^{Not} GOLDEN

The prophet Ezekiel encountered the same type of opposition. A rebellious house was the house of Israel, and the last thing they wanted to hear was about their sins. But the Lord told Ezekiel to tell them anyway. "You must give them my messages whether they listen or not" (Ezek. 2:7, NLT).

Our world today has enough of "maybe," "perhaps," and "we hope so." We need to speak with humility, but we must speak. Though we are limited both in what can be known and in our ability to know, on the matters of greatest worth, matters of right, life, hope, and salvation God has given us His Word, and we have no reason to doubt it.

There certainly are times when silence is golden; there are also times when it is deadly. To be silent when we are asked to defend our faith is to deny it. Said the apostle Peter, "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Holding in our hands the true Word of the Lord, we have a duty to speak. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully," said the Lord through His ancient prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 23:28). To fail to speak is to fail in our duty to defend God's cause.

As echoes of God's prophets let us speak forth by word and deed. And let our message be that of truth and righteousness which is mighty to save—first ourselves and then those who will hear us. □

PRAISE
HIM



We thank Thee, then, O Father,
For all things *true* and *good*, The seedtime
and the *harvest*, Our *life*, our *health*, our *food*:
To Thee our *lives* we offer, For all *Thy love* imparts,
And that which *Thou desirest*,
Our *humble, thankful*
hearts.