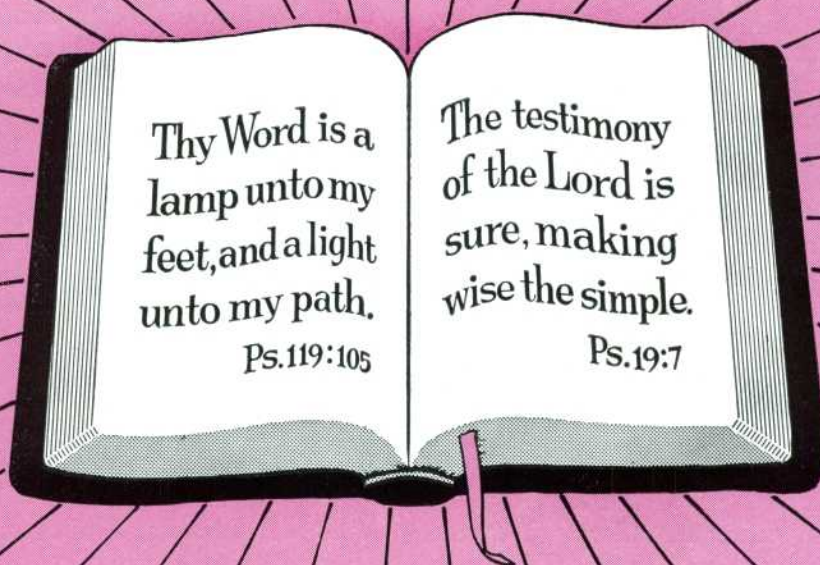


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Watch Those Motives!

**The Great Apostasy
Others May, You Cannot
We Are What We Think**

EDITORIAL

Almost and Altogether

THE word Christian is so common in our vocabulary today that we scarcely give it serious thought. But it was apparently not so used in the early days. The New Testament uses the word Christian only three times. The followers of Christ are often called disciples, brethren, believers, saints, beloved, children; but so uncommon is the name Christian that James describes it as "that worthy name by the which ye are called" (Jas. 2:7).

Only three times, but those three texts paint a portrait of what a Christian really is.

The first text is found in Acts 11:26. Apparently the term Christian originated on the lips of unbelievers who observed these strange men and women and their points of distinction and related them to what they had known of Christ. These people were different. They had no visible idol, no racial barriers, no mysticism, no magic, no folklore—even the self-absorbed people in the sinful city of Antioch could see the difference. A fellowship of people whose theme was obedience and whose goal was the Kingdom of God commanded respect and honor—they were a people worth naming.

"Who are these?" would come the repeated query in Antioch. And soon everyone had the answer. "These are the Christians. Just as we belong to Caesar and honor his image and obey his laws, so they belong to Christ." Individually they were dedicated to Christ. Collectively, they composed the body of Christ, a vibrant, living, composite man.

The second New Testament reference to Christian came also from the lips of a man foreign to the faith. It was spoken in a palace courthouse of another imperial city, Caesarea Philippi.

"Almost," acknowledged the King Agrippa, "almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Did he mean it? Was he really convinced—almost? We do not know. The record does not tell all we would like it to

tell. But this statement tells much about the man who was doing the persuading. Even King Agrippa could see in Paul his prisoner a belief and a life distinguished and worthy of note—almost worthy of emulation. Even he could see that Paul was a follower of Christ. Even he could see Paul's convictions unmistakable.

In every circumstance of his life, Paul was a living witness of the living Christ. And his reply to the king is his unwavering mark of dedication: "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds" (Acts 26:29). Paul did not stop at *almost*—he was "altogether" for Christ.

The third reference to Christian in the New Testament gives another mark of their identification.

"If any man suffer as a Christian," writes Peter, "let him not be ashamed" (I Pet. 4:16). If any man would spend his life in the service of Christ, he could expect a certain measure of unsought suffering. But it was not the kind of suffering endured by a criminal at the hands of the law. Suffering for principle and for the sake of the gospel of Christ was another matter—it was even honorable. In it there should be no spirit of fear or shame or retaliation, for the sufferer could look forward to the day when he would be rewarded abundantly by "him that judgeth righteously." Future compensation was assured, if the sufferer proved "faithful unto death."

What if we had lived in that first century? Would we have been among those in whom strangers could see unmistakably the example of Christ? If men had seen us in the streets of Antioch, would they have *known*, ere long, that we too were Christians? Would they have known by the way we lived, by the way we talked, by the way we walked among men, by the way we bore our suffering? Would they have known that we were "almost" and "altogether" a follower of Christ?

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Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Supremacy there has long been the envy of aggressive nations, and the prevailing power has guarded it with jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, it is a place of troops, where soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "The weapons we wield are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, NEB).

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Watch Those Motives!

IT isn't altogether what you do," says one, "but why you do it that counts." This is another way of saying that the Christian has a special obligation. The world would judge by outward expression; so does God—He wants clean hands. But He wants more—a pure heart. Here, then, is the double duty of every would-be child of God. He must not only do the right thing; he must do it for the right reason, with the right motivation. In God's sight, the motive is half the deed.

If the desire of our life is a place in God's heavenly Kingdom, there is no possible way of side-stepping our responsibility for our motives. For "when the Lord comes he will bring into the light of day all that at present is hidden in darkness, and he will expose the secret motives of men's hearts" (I Cor. 4:3, Phillips).

Every act of our lives, however simple or complex, has a motive behind it. We may not always be conscious of it—and there lies our greatest danger—but it is always there. In the final analysis, the motive is the source of sin or the source of goodness. Sin is voluntary transgression of known law. Righteousness is voluntary obedience. To avoid sin means to avoid doing the wrong thing for any reason, right or wrong. It means also that we must skirt the self-defeating course of doing the right thing from the wrong motive. Motives are all-important.

And motives have a wide range—all the way from the loftiest to the most corrupt. The majority of our motives lie somewhere in between, and they are usually mixed. Seldom do we do anything without some plausible-sounding reason, though often underneath is the less-honorable truth. Mixed motives are part of our very nature. We are torn between a desire to live up to what we know and another desire to satisfy ourselves. Such mixed motives are natural, earthly, human.

But God calls us to a higher service, to rise above ourselves as we are and live our lives on a purer plain. This was Jesus' appeal in the sixth beatitude. A free translation by William Barclay reads: "Blessed is the man whose motives are always entirely unmixed, for that man shall see God."

What a sublime goal—"They shall see God," the Creator and Sustainer of the countless universes! What high honor!—and all for achieving what Jesus calls purity of heart, for purifying the motives of our lives.

What an incentive for employing the most serious scrutiny of our own hearts and minds. What a fruitful reason for searching out the motives that impel us. How vitally important that we continually shoot the penetrating "why" at our own heart and conscience, lest our apparently acceptable conduct degenerate into a self-centered, self-justifying holiness that gives no credit to God and merits none from Him. It has happened before—to greater humans than we; it could happen again.

"Why?"

A very common question in circles of human contact is "What are you doing?" Seldom, if ever, is the question followed by the one Jesus would have been sure to ask: "*Why* are you doing it?" He made very clear in His Sermon on the Mount that *why* we do what we do is just as important as *what* we do. Giving alms is a good thing; but, says Jesus, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them." Prayer is vital, yet it should not be done on the street corner to attract attention and invite notice, or it becomes an abhorrence to God. "Verily I say unto you, they have their reward" (Matt. 6:1-18).

Our human speck-worthiness being what it is, there is no work or effort we can engage in which is of itself worthy of lasting merit or honor. Time erases the loftiest creations of men. No human endeavor has lasting merit unless the Lord grants it His recognition and blessing. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Ps. 127:1).

How disastrous, then, to cut off God's blessing by our own self-seeking motives!

Looking Inward

The God who has called us into His exalted service has so arranged our lives that we can never lack for opportunity to serve Him. Opportunities

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range from the simplest glance of encouragement to the greatest sacrifice we could make for His cause. And in between are all shades and grades of Christian service—no area of our lives is excluded. We are responsible to Him for some kind of service during every waking moment of our lives.

This means that our opportunity for service is as far-reaching as life itself. It means also that the area for self-examination and responsibility is as broad as our lives.

It is possible to drift along day after day without giving serious thought to the forces that move us; but this is no time for drifting. We are nearing the end. It is time to wake up, to grab the oars and pull for our life! Gaining control of our motives may well be the key to gaining control of ourselves. It is vital, it is urgent, lest unconsciously, almost imperceptibly we lose our hold on the real and genuine and retain in our hands only a shadow of what we set out to be.

Let us look at our own lives. If our age and health permit, we are gainfully employed. We work, day after day, week after week, year after year. But why? Do we work to satisfy our temporal needs and provide for unforeseen necessities, and use the balance as may be acceptable to God? Or are we striving for higher and higher temporal positions that leave us less and less time to serve the Lord? Are we content with what we have, or are we always "getting and spending" and laying waste the spiritual powers that we should be exercising unto eternal gain?

The command is: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23).

We talk. But again the inescapable "Why?" Is there beneath our abundance of words any slight desire to sound impressive or well-read? Do we check each word before we let it pass our lips, to be sure we want the Lord to hear?

We use our words to commend. But why? Do we honestly desire the prosperity of our brother, even when he is surpassing what we are able to do?

Or we criticize. More words, but what is our motive? We disapprove of how something has been done, but *why* do we criticize? Is this the most constructive manner of improving the situation? Is our criticism solely to encourage—or is there deep in our hearts some hidden desire to berate another's efforts or to win attention to ourselves?

Our words are important. Said Jesus, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

We read. Perhaps we pick up a newspaper or

current magazine. But why? Is it to keep ourselves informed of the abundantly fulfilling prophecies around us and to strengthen ourselves in our most holy faith, or do we read these things simply because our interest in them is greater than our interest in our eternal salvation? Perhaps our eye is caught by articles or books of human interest or fiction. Why? Are we reading these to be edified and strengthened, or is there underneath this reading a desire to escape from the reality of our struggles and revel for a few moments in an unreal world of fantasy? Can we say of everything we read that it strengthens our grasp upon the higher values of life and broadens the perspective of our lives within God's plan, or is our reading a vain seeking after the wisdom of men and "science falsely so called"?

We study our Bible. This is good, but why do we do it? Do we go to it as a hungry child seeking vital nourishment, or is it a daily ritual from which we get a feeling of self-satisfaction in having done our duty? Do we study to keep our faith fresh and living, or just to do what is expected of us?

No human endeavor has lasting merit unless the Lord grants it His recognition and blessing.

We discuss heavenly subjects. But is it to pride ourselves in what we know and are able to put into words, or to stimulate our minds to higher thinking and our lives to holier living?

We give—our time, to help others. But do we feel even slightly that by helping others we are winning admiration? or do we help from a genuine motive of longing to be of service in God's world?

We give—our talents, to promote work that needs to be done; or a project that interests us. But here again, *why*? Is our giving an attempt to show others what we have and what we are able to do, or is our whole interest the work of God and the salvation of His people?

We give—our money, to further the efforts of the Christian work. Again, *why*? Do we give that we may be able to say to ourselves and any who inquire, "See what I have done"?

We engage in special activities directly related to the service of the Lord. Here again we should rigidly question our motives: Why? Why did we write that letter? Why did we sing that hymn? or visit that friend? or speak as we did? or play that instrument? Is our motive always to inspire and

Is all our living and all our giving such that the Lord can set it down to our credit in His book of remembrance, or does He say of us, "Verily, . . . they have their reward"?

upbuild toward God and His heavenly Kingdom, or do we feel in our serving some selfish satisfaction, some desire to look impressive?

In short, is all our living and all our giving such that the Lord can set it down to our credit in His book of remembrance, or does He say of us, "Verily, . . . they have their reward"?

The command is, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). No exceptions—"do all"!

Our God is a jealous God. His purpose in creating us and our world was to further His own purposes and enlarge the borders of His mercy and goodness for the benefit of all who would take advantage of His offer. What folly that we, small creatures in His vast domain, should ever exalt ourselves in the gifts that *He* has given us! As someone has remarked, "Of all marvelous things, perhaps there is nothing that angels behold with such supreme astonishment as a proud man." Every inch dependent, what earthly or heavenly right has any man to work for his own proud satisfaction?

God is gracious, but He is not set on having *us* in His eternal plan. If we become so absorbed in pleasing ourselves that we forget His long-range purposes, He will find other men with purer motives who can give Him the glory that is His due. The loss will be ours.

We should always remember that the highest good and goal in life is not our personal comfort or pleasure. We are here to glorify God, and He in turn will glorify us. Is not that sufficient reason for watching those motives and purifying them—even the hidden motives of the heart?

The Desire To Impress

Whence comes the self-seeking spirit that is so much a part of us?

The desire to be outstanding is as natural as breathing. It is part of the pattern of thought and behavior in which we are trained from infancy.

Early in life we learned what others expected of us and what centered their attention upon us. Before we could think for ourselves, we learned what sort of behavior brought from the oldsters the type of response we liked and what brought the type of response we disliked, and instinctively we aimed to please. In this way we learned and acquired their values, their judgments, and their standards. This is a vital part of the learning process of a child, and it is motivated by the child's desire to please. The trouble is that too many of us fail to outgrow this desire to please, or to transfer our allegiance from our peers and superiors to God. So we go right on up through youth and mature years still living for the approval of those around us, satisfied with ourselves so long as our behavior is acceptable to our friends, substituting popular approval for personal convictions, and forgetting to seek God's approval. We tell ourselves that we are right, when our whole motivation is to be right in the eyes of those around us. This is not maturity; this is not godliness. This is not the standard of character God requires.

Making a favorable impression on other people is an aim far too low and far too limited for the intense life-seeker. After all, what can human opinions do for us? They cannot save us. They cannot justify us before God. They cannot extend our life or our happiness a single hour.

And what is more fickle and uncertain than human opinion? A man may flatter one day and deride the next, so unstable is human nature. Or he may slander what is good and justify what is evil; human opinion cannot be depended upon. Or he may overpraise for an accomplishment that took little effort and scarcely appreciate something which took all we could give. No wonder the Psalmist advised, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help."

Pleasing God is different. He gives exactly what we deserve: "to every man according as his works shall be." What could be more just!

People can so easily misjudge our motives and misunderstand our efforts. They may even condemn us when we are right—and it takes great strength of character to "do well and suffer for it" and "take it patiently," trusting in the assurance that God knows and will be just. Human weaknesses and limitations being what they are, we simply cannot depend on the favor of men, so why make such favor our goal? When we do right, we can depend on God to remember and reward. In due time, every man will get "his meed of praise from God" (I Cor. 4:5, Moffatt), so why worry? People may misunderstand, but God? Never!

The Christian Imperative: Pleasing God

Pleasing God is the highest achievement mortal man is capable of. It is not only the highest and best but also the most difficult, and for this reason one of the rarest. Few ever attempt it.

But it has been done. Enoch, some five millenniums ago, did it. It is written in heaven and earth that he "had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5). Had Enoch lived in our day, it is doubtful that he would have gone down in history as a great preacher, or a great teacher, or a great servant of mankind. Yet the divine Record announces divine satisfaction with his life: "Enoch . . . had this testimony, that he pleased God." What more could he need!

We have no record that Abraham was great among his countrymen. He did not have thousands swarming to acclaim his monumental victory of obedience on Mount Moriah; yet God acclaimed, and Abraham's record of obedience is summarized in one short statement of approval: Abraham was "called the Friend of God." He pleased God, and God was pleased with him.

David committed some very unwise, unmoral

and ungodly deeds. It was written after one vain attempt to whitewash his wickedness that "the thing that David had done displeased the Lord" (II Sam. 11:27). Doesn't this indicate that David's ambition was to please the Lord, and that David had been pleasing the Lord before this transgression, and that if he repented and turned he could please the Lord again?

Daniel pleased God. More than once he was called "greatly beloved." And this was not because he spent a stipulated number of hours in prayer or because he was born in the land of Judah or because he won the favor of the king's court in Babylon. Daniel pleased God because day after day he walked with God.

Jesus praised John the Baptist as a great man. Here was one who actually helped the man whom he knew would outshine him. John came to usher in the man trained by God, the King of righteousness Himself. John said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Not every man would have been big enough to do this. John was. He was the man God needed for this important mission,

(Continued on page 21)

Prayer

Holy Father, Lord God of the heavens, supreme in glory, radiant in majesty, wondrous in power, the very essence of mercy and justice; Thou who hast breathed into us the breath of life, and art able to give us an eternal existence if only we fit ourselves for it:

As we look upon Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, may we be moved upon to ask, What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and what are we, that Thou hast looked down upon us frail creatures of the dust, and opened to us a door of hope, and directed our feet into a pathway that leads to endless life and glory?

Help us, Father, to be more submissive to Thy leading. May we not be so unwise as to hold on to some foolish way of our own and so render our worship unacceptable, and our character so full of flaws as to be unfit to form a part of Thy glorious house which soon shall be established above all earthly authority.

We thank Thee for the words of the prophets, apostles and Jesus, for the preview which they

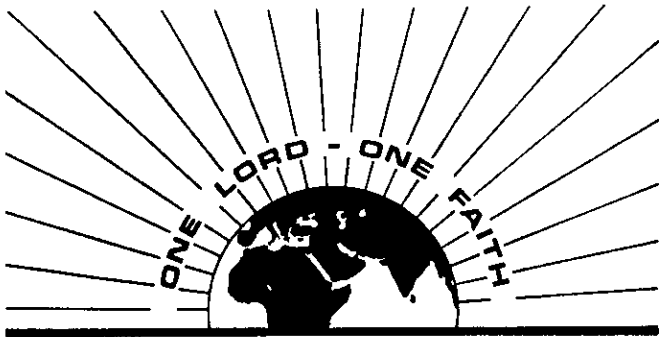
give us of the great work so soon to be inaugurated on this earth. May the accuracy with which future events were forecast re-impress us with Thy greatness and the truthfulness of Thy Word, assuring us that the things yet unfulfilled will as surely meet their fulfillment, whether blessings to the diligent, or curses to the dilatory.

As we see great events stirring in the world, may we not lose our poise or be swept from our feet by human accomplishments. But may we become more keenly aware of the imminence of the much greater events that will unfold when Thy Son shall return to earth armed with power and knowledge a thousand-fold greater than the accumulated scientific discoveries of today.

May we not be too absorbed with human wisdom, too much influenced by the sayings and reasonings of men, remembering that Thy foolishness is wiser than men, Thy weakness stronger than men.

We know the things that Thou hast promised are sure and certain, then may we exert our best efforts to complete our work, so when our Master comes He will bring us a blessing, that through eternity we may enjoy with Him an ever-expanding horizon of knowledge, coupled with joy unspeakable and a life that will never end.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



People God Used

Part 2

We have looked at a few of the early members of God's family, that family in which we also are seeking membership. We want to learn what kind of people they were, so we can be like them. We cannot know them all, for many are not even mentioned in the Sacred Record. But enough has been written so that we can judge the quality of their characters and see the standard toward which we must strive.

Joseph

BEFORE we travel too far from the Patriarchs, we need to take note of one more man of God. The eleventh son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, Joseph was an illustrious star in an illustrious line. This was not because life came easy to him—Joseph was taken captive into a foreign land when only seventeen years of age. But one event after another proved the sterling quality of his noble character. Not once did his faith in God fail. Not once did he succumb to the darkness in which he lived.

Many are the lessons to be learned from the story of Joseph. Have you ever felt like taking revenge on someone whom you thought had done you wrong? Joseph may have felt like it, too—such feelings are part of human nature, and Joseph surely was wronged; but he didn't return it, not once.

Have you ever been tempted to rebel against circumstances beyond your control, which seemed to be thwarting your whole life purpose? Joseph felt that same rebellious spirit, but he controlled it. He knew that above all that happened was the directing hand of God.

Have you ever been tempted to betray your moral dignity and seek excitement in sin? Joseph was tempted, and severely; but he did not yield.

His reply to his temptress was unrelenting: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" His obligation to obey God came ahead of any and every earthly passion or pleasure.

Now on the opposite side of human character: Have you ever had opportunity to do a real favor to those who have mistreated you? This is just the opportunity that came to Joseph, and he was big enough to seize it. Years later, recounting the mistreatment he had suffered, he could say, "God meant it unto good." He had learned to see adversity as God sees it. He had used his adversities to grow into a better man that the Lord could use. A noble character was the result, a character God will reward and honor all through eternity.

You should read the account of Joseph from your Bible. It is found in Genesis, chapters 37 through 50.

Just briefly let us mention a few high points. Joseph was sold by his jealous brothers to some merchants, who took him to Egypt, where they sold him on the slave market. This bitter experience was for Joseph the beginning of a long series of problems, including years of languishing in prison and years of victory on the throne as second ruler of Egypt. But in either position, Joseph was master of himself and loyal to God.

After many years of separation from his family, a severe famine in Israel brought Joseph's brothers into Egypt in search of food—which Egypt had laid up in store, a direct result of Joseph's communication with God and Joseph's wise provision and management. The brothers came and went. And they came again. Finally, the entire family migrated to Egypt with their aged father and settled there. Joseph saw to it that they were well provided for.

But before many years had passed, things changed. Another Pharaoh rose to power, who "knew not Joseph," and the descendants of Jacob's sons (the children of Israel as they came to be called) found themselves being treated as foreign subjects of a hostile power. They became slaves to Egyptian taskmasters, who forced them to do hard labor in bondage.

Slavery is not a lot which any people would choose. But the Israelites had no choice. There was no way out. And as the years wore on, conditions of servitude became worse and worse.

The time arrived, however, when God saw fit to arrange a means of deliverance for these people. They were not to be slaves to the Egyptians forever. Among these people and their descendants would be men and women God could use, who would deliver His message and perform His work.

God had chosen these people for a purpose. But before that purpose could be realized, the slaves had to be delivered from bondage, be trained and settled as a nation in their own right.

Moses

God's first need was for a man who could act in the capacity of leader for this people. He found such a man among the Israelites themselves. Trained in the faith of his fathers and also in the culture of Egypt, Moses had a dual background particularly suited to the performing of his God-appointed mission. For Moses would have to go before Pharaoh many times before he would get permission to take the Israelites from the country (there were now thousands of them).

At the time God called the man who was to be Israel's great deliverer, Moses was a shepherd in the wilds of the Midian desert. Eighty years old, he was as strong and vigorous as ever. God sent His angel to deliver the message to Moses: "Go deliver my people Israel."

Moses went and did as the Lord commanded him, but it was not easy. Time after time Moses went to Pharaoh to ask if the Israelites might leave. And time after time the hardhearted Pharaoh said no. Why should he lose all this good, cheap labor that was making his name great and his land prosperous? Only after a series of ten terrible God-sent plagues which brought much suffering and grief upon his own people did Pharaoh consent to let the Israelites go (see Exodus, chapters 7-12). And even then Pharaoh did not give full consent, for he sent his armies pursuing them even into the Red Sea (where his armies were drowned).

The task Moses faced, of conducting this horde of undisciplined slaves through more than two hundred miles of open country, with all their cattle and possessions was a gigantic one. But God's angels were ever-present to lend assistance and direction. Always before them was the pillar of fire to lead the way—guidance by day and protection by night.

The Israelites were not long out of Egypt when God sent a special law for their government. We call it the Mosaic law, or law of Moses, because the law was delivered to Moses for his people. It was a law designed especially to teach them to live with one another as citizens of a civil nation, to respect one another's lives and property, and to make them good, God-honoring citizens of their nation. This law was given amid a spectacular display of divine power upon Mount Sinai, where God spoke in thunders and clouds and darkness. It was an awesome, unforgettable experience for

all who witnessed it. How we would like to have seen that mountain quake! (Read the account in Exodus 19.) This was the first such demonstration of divine power to be witnessed by mortal eyes.

But the Israelites did not remember it long. In fact, they were so rebellious and unwilling to obey and trust God's leading that God declared they should spend forty years in the wilderness, so that the old, stubborn, die-hard generation might be replaced with a younger, more pliable, more promising nation. God wanted a people who could settle into civilized living, an exemplary nation in the land He had promised them.

The story of the forty years of wandering in the wilderness south of Israel and all the lessons that came out of the experience is found in the book of Exodus, chapters 13-40. It is a circular story—of sin and chastisement and repentance, and sin and chastisement and repentance. How slow these people were to learn their lessons! But let us look to ourselves before we judge too harshly—do *we* always do all that *we* know? Do we live up to the best that is in us? Are we always ready to give up our way for God's? The Apostle of the New Testament wrote a solemn warning to us about these people: "Now all these things happened to them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition. . . . Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. . . . Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (I Cor. 10:11, 10, 6).

Several great names stand out in this period of history. Foremost is that of Moses, and his godly character was exemplary. We read, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). "Very meek, above all"—what a high commendation! But how could he be otherwise after years of dealing with a halfhearted, stubborn and rebellious people! Any lesser man would have given up long before the forty years were ended. But Moses was a man of long endurance, and what God told him to do he tried to do with all his might. He did it every time but once, and that one time he failed—he struck the rock instead of speaking to it as God had commanded (see Num. 20:10-12). This was disobedience, and to impress the lesson the Lord told Moses he would not be permitted to enter the promised land of Canaan—all because of one disobedience. But Moses found favor in the sight of God and bore his disappointment nobly.

And the quality of meekness which he perfected in his life is just as needful to us today. Like Moses, we want to be meek, for the promise is:

"He will beautify the meek with salvation."

Joshua

Another name that emerges from this period of time is that of Joshua, the young man who left Egypt with the horde of slaves but proved to be of quality far superior to the majority of his brethren. Through all the years of wilderness life, it is written, "he wholly followed the Lord." And his was the honor of taking up the rod of leadership where Moses was forced to lay it down. His was the honor of leading the Israelites into the land of Canaan, completing the work Moses had begun, and then conquering and subduing the natives until the Israelites could settle in safety.

Of only two men is this written: "He hath wholly followed the Lord." And Joshua was one of those men. What high commendation! To "wholly follow the Lord" among a wicked and rebellious people! But Joshua did it.

And so can *we* do it *today*! ••

From A Reader—

CONSIDER GOD...AND MAN

We must concentrate on doing those things that please our God and how best we can serve Him, on obeying His Word and loving His ways. When you come to think of it, who are we to disobey God or to think that we know better than He? After all, we are only dust; surely He is the Potter, we are the clay. We are His to use as He pleases. We are but man, He is the very God. "What is man, that God is mindful of him?"

The wonder of God is that after being so great Himself and we so small, He would even think of us or consider us worthy of His notice. Isn't it wonderful? Here we are, less than mud, and God makes the worlds and the heavens, the seas, all kinds of living things. When you stand back and view the wonderful scenery in our world—the trees, the hills, streams, clouds, stars, not to mention our own bodies, it gives you just a little idea of how great our God is.

Having all this in our mind, just think that this same God thought enough of you and me that He made a plan to enable us to work for eternal life! And He sent His Son to show us just what He expects of us, to be our example and pattern. What gracious love!

If the thought of God and His ways fails to bring tears of love and happiness to us, we surely have missed our way; we have missed God's best.

A Friend in England

The Fighters

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses"

— I Timothy 6:12

I fight a battle every day
Against discouragement and fear;
Some foe stands always in my way
The path ahead is never clear!
I must forever be on guard
Against the doubts that skulk along;
I get ahead by fighting hard,
And fighting keeps my spirit strong.

I hear the croakings of Despair,
The dark predictions of the weak;
I find myself pursued by Care,
No matter what the end I seek;
My victories seem small and few,
It matters not how hard I strive;
Each day the fight begins anew,
But fighting keeps my hopes alive.

My dreams are spoiled by circumstance,
My plans are wrecked by fate or luck;
Some hour, perhaps, will bring my chance—
But that great hour has never struck.
My progress has been slow and hard,
I've had to climb and crawl and swim,
Fighting for every stubborn yard;
But I have kept in fighting trim.

I have to fight my doubts away
And be on guard against my fears;
The feeble croaking of Dismay
Has been familiar through the years;
My dearest plans keep going wrong,
Events combine to thwart my will;
But fighting keeps my spirit strong,
And I am undefeated still!

—Selected.

"Blessed be the Lord, my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight"

—(Psalm 144:1)

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

**Kathy
Kandor's
Korner**

Don't Let It Happen

OF all the sloppy jobs!" Gordon stepped back to observe Ken's work as he went to rinse his sponge in the pail of suds.

"Sloppy?" Ken's voice sounded deeply hurt.

"Yes, sloppy. Didn't suppose you did things that way. Look at the mud on that hubcap, and around that front fender!"

"Hold on a minute, will you? I haven't finished yet!" Ken tried to defend himself.

"Then why are you starting on the headlight?" And so the argument grew hotter and hotter, until Ken flung his sponge to the ground and strode into the house.

Gordon's head dropped. He felt sorry. It was really *his* blame, he felt, for criticizing Ken's poor work. He should be more careful not to say such things to his cousin. He would think twice before he said anything again. After all, he hadn't come to make trouble.

Neal, who had overheard the argument through the open doorway, came out to the car to talk with Gordon. Gordon's self-condemning spirit was evident as he looked up at Neal.

"Ken has a problem that way, Gordon. It's not your fault. We've seen it before."

"Well, I—I was surprised. Kind of thought Ken was different. But—but if that's your kind of Christianity, I don't need it."

I was dismayed. Just one short week before, our whole family had been eagerly awaiting the arrival of cousin Gordon. Since he came from a non-religious home, we were eager to share with him the "light of life," and to show him by example that the pleasures of righteousness far exceed the pleasures of sin. Also, being aware that we might be the only Bible he would ever read, each of us determined to let Christ shine out through everything we might say and do.

Everything had been going just wonderfully well, the whole family co-operating with each other in such a Christlike manner. Just a half hour ago, the boys had returned from an early morning fishing trip with shining eyes and glowing faces. And looking into the creel full of fish, Gordon had exclaimed for the umpteenth time, "What beauties!" then glancing at the car had said mournfully, "But that muddy old road didn't improve the complexion of the car."

Ken's happy laugh had rung out. "It *does* need a bath. Doubt that I could even guess its true color. Shall we let Mom keep the creel of fish while we fix up the car?"

I had listened with pleasure to their happy talk as the boys unwound the hose and gathered sponges and brushes from the garage cupboard.

Gordon had seemed quite impressed with our practical, meaningful religion and our hopes were beginning to soar—until—

Ken stumbled into the kitchen, distraught with the realization of what he had just done.

"How could Christ have let me down like this?" he asked his father. "I was so excited about showing Gordon a real 'life for Christ.' "

"*Christ* let you down?" Neal asked in disbelief. "Ken, the failure is not Christ's but *yours*. You were the one that let it happen. It's a case of the old nature getting the better of the new, Son. You've been doing well lately, controlling your temper. But I'm afraid you—"

"I know, Dad. I know. But how can a Christian avoid such defeats?" Ken's broad shoulders slumped in discouragement as he leaned his head against the door casing.

"The Bible has the answer: 'Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.' Son," Neal continued, "it takes time, and untiring effort, and lots of prayer and meditation to make the new nature strong."

Had Ken ever really learned to begin a day with God? I wondered, so I spoke: "Son, I know you and Gordon enjoyed your early morning fishing trip. But before you went, did you think to pray to God for help to make this day a success?"

Ken's eyes dropped.

"But Mom, how did I know Gordon was going to find fault with my work?"

"You didn't, Ken, but Gordon didn't mean you any ill. And even if he did, you had *no* reason to lose your temper. What was that verse we discussed the other night?"

The red crept up Ken's throat and spread over his face. Embarrassed, he leaned down to pick a piece of grass off the kitchen floor.

Neal waited patiently.

"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in anywise to do evil."

"That's it, Ken. And that's what you're going to do, isn't it?" Neal always had a way of encouraging.

"We read and hear lots of good things, but they help us only as we apply them to ourselves. We can't overestimate the value of keeping our mind filled with the true, the just and pure. It works, Ken, every time."

"Well—" Ken spoke with reservation. "Maybe. Anyway, thanks!" and turning on his heel he bounded out of the room and up the stairs.

A few minutes later two smiling boys entered the kitchen.

"Uncle Neal, Aunt Kathy, your religion must be for real. This is the first time I've ever seen someone admit he was wrong in losing his temper. I want to know more about your faith. Seems like it is different."

The two boys resumed their car washing, and I returned to my work with a happy heart. This wasn't the lesson I had planned for the day, but I was sure neither boy would ever forget it. And Gordon had had an opportunity to see that our Christianity must affect us all the time—even when we're washing the car!

Yours striving to get the old nature down,

Kathy

Fruitful

Fragments



Only those who are slaves to Christ know what it is to be free from sin.

Faith in God makes the uplook good and the future glorious.

The Kingdom will have a prepared place for prepared people.

Take your place on the fighting lines, not on the sidelines. Christians were never meant to be spectators.

Are you the "salt of the earth"? Does your life make others thirsty for the water of life?

Spiritual success requires consecration without reservation.

From Parent to Parent—

Remember Your Manners

RECENTLY I was jolted by a real friend into considering my manners.

It seems my manners, or lack of them, was beginning to show. I was becoming, like too many mothers, I fear, an expert in giving orders, something like an army sergeant: "Come here!" "Don't do that!" "Go upstairs!" "Clean up your room!" My list of commands can be endless.

Anyone who has ever been ordered around by a spouse or a friend who has forgotten his or her manners knows that it isn't easy to respond favorably. We are immediately on our guard, defenses up, even resentful. But let the other person speak politely and we are cooperative, helpful, and friendly. We've probably all discovered that a little politeness goes a long way.

Why, then, do we so often forget to use our manners in our daily dealings with our children? I suppose we become so accustomed to being "boss," or so engrossed in keeping up with our abundant daily tasks that our manners disappear without our even realizing it. (And do we ever wonder why our children tend to be so unmannerly toward one another?) Of course, children *do* need to be told, and there is nothing wrong with orders and commands. In fact, children *must* be told. It is *how* they're told that makes the difference.

Even the tone of voice enters into it. Aggravation, impatience, an attitude of superiority—all these can come through in the tone of voice we use. But so can patience, kindness, friendliness—these are the things we want to learn to convey to our children by the calm tone of our voices.

I know how I react when my *children* forget *their* manners—I remind them speedily. It isn't often they can get away with asking for something and forget to say "please."

No, it isn't too much for our children to expect good manners from us. We need to be reminded as well as they, "Remember your manners." I'm really trying to improve mine: "Come here, please." "Please don't do that." "Thank you for cleaning your room." "I appreciate your help." How much better these sound. With practice, I'm sure that speaking this way can become a habit.

By remembering our manners, we'll probably be delighted to discover that our children are better at remembering to use theirs. ●●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Second Advent of Christ

JESUS is coming again! We sing it. We say it. We write it. We read it in prose and in poetry. But do we live as though we really believed it?

Bible prophecies fulfilled and being fulfilled point to our time as the last days of Gentile times. Elijah the prophet could appear upon the scene at any time, followed closely by the King Himself.

While we have the benefit of the centuries on our side, we are not unaware that others have thought the Lord's coming was near—some of them centuries ago. Tertullian, an early historian, records that the early church believed that the fall of the Roman Empire would mean the end of the age and the consummation of the Second Advent. But Rome fell, and Christ did not come.

Martin Luther, the German monk who dared to stand alone against the established church, thought that world conditions had become about as bad as they could be in his day and that things could not last much longer—yet the Lord did not come, and time continued.

The successful crusades of Napoleon at the beginning of the 19th century were seen by some as fulfilling the part of the "antichrist" of the Bible, presaging the Second Advent. But Napoleon conquered his kingdoms, though not himself—he died a drunkard and left his kingdom to others. And the Lord did not come.

A century later, World War I was being publicized as "the last war," and "the war to end wars." Many honestly believed that it would usher in the new age, only to have their hopes shattered by an even greater world war a quarter of a century later. Since that time, there have been many smaller conflicts, but the King has not returned to take His throne.

All this serves to point up man's fallibility. Lacking the infinite mind of the Creator, his interpretation of conditions is often inaccurate. His view is too limited to properly assess events. Nevertheless, Christ will come. The fact that men have

been expecting Him before the time does not in any way diminish the certainty of His coming. He will return according to God's plan, not according to man's speculation. The date has been pre-set: "He [God] has fixed the day on which he will have the world judged, and justly judged, by a man of his choosing" (Acts 17:30-31, NEB). That Man is Christ.

Our present decade has been described as "man's nearest approach to the golden ages of his span on Earth." And, says the same writer, "Today, in the last decades of the 20th century, man is at the threshold of what could be the greatest of all possible golden ages."

This could be the dawning of the golden age! But it will not be brought about by man's efforts. Science and technology have accomplished much, but a truly Golden Age for this planet Earth can come about only through the intervention of a higher Power, when God sends His Son to this earth to reign. And today, there are more signs than in any previous age which indicate that the time cannot be far distant.

V. CHRIST RETURNS—THE SIGNS

Most men are naturally idealists. However, their ability to dream far surpasses their ability to bring those dreams to reality. In general, history is the written record of man's efforts to translate his ideals into reality. Had all the plans and dreams of past and present world leaders been brought to fruition, we would have long ago had a utopian civilization.

Following the close of the first World War, a certain professor who was a "post-millennialist" wrote a book entitled, *Is the World Growing Better?* The writer saw the end of the war as the beginning of a new age which would develop into the Millennium. Time has proven his book to be only a record of one man's hopes and dreams—shattered by conflicts the world over that have claimed more than 100 million lives in this century.

We are now nearly six decades this side of the first World War—and the world is still not growing better. Educationally there has been great

progress. Men's dreams in this field have been realized beyond our comprehension. Advancement in the physical sciences and technology in the past two decades beggars description. It is said that there has been more knowledge gained in these fields since 1950 than in the entire history of the world before that time!

With such advancement, we should expect to be living in a paradise. But such is not the case. Paradoxically, during this same period of time, political unrest has multiplied. Man's ability to live in harmony with his neighbors has worsened; they have seemingly learned how to control almost everything except themselves.

Thinking people throughout the world admit that we live in troubled times. The daily newspapers and newscasts mirror the unrest and commotion that is so common throughout the world. Riots, strikes and political upheavals are frequent. Assassinations and assassination attempts are in the news all too often. Kidnapping for ransom has become commonplace. There are droughts, famines, floods and earthquakes often bringing death to thousands of innocent victims.

The general breakdown of discipline and authority has given rise to a juvenile delinquency problem law officers are unable to control. Racial tensions, violence and crime have resulted in jails filled to overflowing, with more cases pending than can be handled in the courts.

All these events might be labeled "signs of the times," but they are not necessarily all signs of Christ's coming. There are some students of prophecy who would claim that they are, pinpointing certain events as fulfilling certain prophecies. But we must beware of this practice. The Christian can know the "times and seasons" by watching world events, but he cannot pin a "fulfilled" label on any particular prophecy by associating it with this or that world happening. It is not for us to know the precise moment when the greatest of all dramas will begin, but watching the unfolding of events should serve to keep us alert and encourage us to watch our conduct and be ready.

The history books of the world are filled with records of wars both great and small. Likewise there have been earthquakes, floods, famines and other natural disasters—but these do not forecast the Second Advent. Jesus said, "And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled; for such things must needs be, but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the be-

ginnings of sorrows" (Mark 13:7-8). **These things must needs be—but they are not signs of the end.**

There are, however, clearly recognizable signs in the political, social and religious realms that point to the time of the Second Advent. These we shall study in the light of Bible prophecy.

A. Signs—Moral

In recent years our country, and the world as well, has been undergoing a moral revolution. Revolution means change, and in no segment of society has that change been more noticeable than in the accepted moral standards. No longer are right and wrong clearly definable. That which was once taboo is now accepted practice. Nothing is absolute; all things are relative. Morality based on God's law has been abandoned for a code based on man's personal likes and dislikes. We have what is described as "situation ethics," that is, making a decision wholly on the basis of circumstances rather than on any moral law.

True, there have always been those who violated the laws of society, but never before has there been a generation that rejected the idea of any binding standard of morality. The current idea seems to be that no moral standard is really important. The law of God is no more sacred than the law of the land.

The general breakdown in morality set the stage for the great increase in crime and lawlessness that we have been witnessing in recent years, an increase that shows no signs of abating. At the same time, alcoholism has become a major problem, as has drug abuse—especially among our youth.

1. The days of Noah. Jesus forecast nearly two millennia ago what world conditions would be at the end of the age. Answering the apostles' query of, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the [age]," He compared the time of His Second Advent with the days of Noah: "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26-27, NIV).

Going back to the record in Genesis, we find what caused God to bring about the deluge: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," and "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6:5, 11). The Hebrew word here translated violence is **chamas**,

which means "a violation of the right of others; man's rights being trampled upon and this condition universal in its extent."

Violence was the cause for God's great judgments upon the world of the ungodly in Noah's day, and says Christ, we will have these same conditions at the end of this age. Violence characterizes our society today. We have it in the streets, on the TV, in the movie theaters and even in the schools. During the 1960's, crime was up 148% in the United States. Arrests of persons under eighteen years nearly doubled. There were approximately nine major crimes committed every minute during that ten-year period!

Wilbur M. Smith, a retired pastor and professor, says that this statement from Jesus (Luke 17: 26-27), "not only affirms that world conditions will be characterized by a great outburst of crime, murder, theft, adultery, etc., but it implies a condition in which basic law, the moral law, is repudiated. It is not simply man's determination to act wickedly, to engage in destructiveness, but living, thinking, and acting, wholly divorced from the great basic laws that make society possible and property secure. A good illustration of the use of this word is in Peter's remarks to the Jews of Jerusalem regarding the crucifixion: 'Ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain' " (Acts 2:23).

2. The days of Lot. Jesus' words concerning the days of Lot speak to us as well: "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed" (Luke 17:28-29, NIV).

"It will be just like this. . . ." There was nothing wrong with people eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting and building. These are the experiences of everyday, ordinary life. And today, it is "just like this," people go about their everyday life as though God did not exist. "God is not in all [their] thoughts."

The sin of Sodom was not in the things of ordinary life, but in their manner of living carelessly, their immorality, from which the term **sodomy** has come into our English language, referring to crimes against nature, homosexuality (a practice not only being condoned today, but recognized as legitimate by some professed ministers of the Gospel).

We learn from Genesis 13:13 that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly," and from Peter that God turned

"the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, . . . making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy [manner of life] of the wicked" (II Pet. 2:6-7).

Immorality and vice has reached the point in our land where many are comparing our times with the Biblical Sodom and Gomorrah. We do not say that the condition could not get worse, for it was also prophesied that "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (II Tim. 3:13), but the prophecies of a return to the likeness of the days of Noah and of Lot are surely meeting their fulfillment in our day.

3. Perilous times. Paul's words concerning the last days reinforce the prophecies of Christ concerning those days: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:1-4).

The fulfillment of this prophecy can be found in the current news media. Our newspaper and news reports are filled with accounts of youth in troubles—drugs, robberies, muggings, vandalism—particularly at schools; barroom brawls, and every imaginable crime. Rebellion against the authority of parents and law officers has led to a sharp increase in youthful offenders.

Barclay makes an interesting point on Paul's prophecy concerning the last days. He renders v. 1, "You must realize this—that in the last days difficult times will set in," commenting that "the word **difficult** is the Greek word **chalepos**. It has certain usages which explain its meaning here. . . . There is the idea of threat, of menace, of danger in it. In the last days there would come threatening times which would menace the very existence of the Christian Church and of goodness itself; there would come a kind of last tremendous assault of evil before its final defeat." *

Barclay renders vs. 2-4 thus: "For men will live a life that is centered in self; they will be lovers of money, braggarts, arrogant, lovers of insult, disobedient to their parents, thankless, regardless even of the ultimate decencies of life, without human affection, implacable in hatred, revelling in slander, ungovernable in their passions, savage, not knowing what the love of good is, treacherous, headlong in word and action, inflated with pride, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

This, says Barclay, "is one of the most terrible pictures in the New Testament of what a godless world would be like.... It is no accident that the first of these qualities will be a life that is centered in self.... **Love of self** is the basic sin, from which all other sins flow.... Once a man erects himself as his own god, obedience to God becomes impossible.... and the essence of Christianity is ... the obliteration of self."*

Commenting on the terms "braggarts" and "arrogant," Barclay comments on the derivation of the words. **Braggart** was derived from a Greek word used to describe a quack doctor or medicine man such as traveled about the country offering cure-alls for disease. The word carried the idea of "The claim to good things which a man does not really possess; the man who pretends qualities that he does not possess, or possesses to a lesser degree than he makes out." And says Barclay, "The world is full of such to this day: the clever 'know-it-alls' who deceive people; the politicians who claim ... that they alone are born to be leaders of men; the people who advertise to give beauty, knowledge, and health by their system; ... those whose one desire is to be noticed, by fair means or by foul.

"Even worse is the man who is **arrogant**. The Greek word used here means **to show oneself above**. Such a man has a kind of contempt for everyone but himself.... In his heart there is a little altar where he bows down before himself, ... while he looks upon others with contempt." *

Concerning **disobedience to parents**, Barclay says that the ancient world set duty to parents very high, and, says he, "It is the sign of a supremely decadent civilization when youth loses all respect for age, and fails to recognize the unpayable debt and the basic duty it owes to those who gave it life."

Of **refusing to recognize even the ultimate deficiencies of life**, from the original Greek this does not necessarily mean breaking the **written laws**, but the **unwritten laws** of society. It is for a man to be mastered by his passions that he will stoop to the lowest level, seeking his "thrill in the pleasures which are a shame even to name."

"Men will be **without human affection**." The Greek word used here is used especially of family love. "If there is no human affection, then the family cannot exist. In these terrible times men will be so set on self that even the closest ties will mean nothing to them. In their selfish quest for pleasure they will refuse to acknowledge even

the fundamental duties and ties upon which life is built."*

"**Implacable in their hatreds**" can mean two things. It can refer to bitterness and bearing a grudge over a quarrel, or it can mean that a man is so dishonorable that he breaks and disregards the terms of the agreements that he has made.

To be **ungovernable in their desires** is to lack self control, to become a slave to habit or desire. "That is the inevitable way to ruin, for no man can master anything unless he first masters himself."*

The Greek word translated **savage** carries the meaning of being without human sympathy or feeling. It is more fittingly applied to a beast than a man, but men can be savage in rebuke and in pitiless action.

In the last days men will have **no love for good things**. There can come a time in a man's life when the company of good people and the presence of good things is an embarrassment to such a one.

Treacherous in the Greek means being a traitor. It refers to those who would pay back evil, to satisfy an old hatred, to gratify an old spite, to win a moment's cheap reward.

To be **headlong in words and action** is from the Greek to be reckless. It describes the man swept on by passion and impulse so that he is unable to think sensibly.

To be **inflated with conceit** is in the Greek comparable with the English "swelled-headed," to be inflated with a sense of their own importance.

Lastly, they will be **lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God**. Here we come back to our starting point: men who worship self instead of God, who make their own desires the center of their life.*

Paul's prediction of perilous times, or terrible times, or difficult times as some render the passage, is proving true to the letter. A lack of self-control is evident in so many of today's happenings. It is the lack of it that leads to the general state of lawlessness that pervades our society. It is the lack of it that leads to murder, theft, adultery, drug addiction, alcoholism—all of which rank high among what's wrong with the world. No one but a true prophet, inspired by God, could have predicted so accurately! The test of a prophet is in the accuracy of his prophecies. Both Christ and Paul stand the test. Therefore we can depend on their statements and know that we are indeed living in the last days.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

* William Barclay, *Letters to Timothy*, pp. 208-219.

"For a time is coming when men will not tolerate wholesome instruction, but, wanting to have their ears tickled, they will find a multitude of teachers to satisfy their own fancies, and will close their ears to the truth and will turn away to fables"

—II Timothy 4:3-4, Weymouth

The Great APOSTASY

(Book Feature: Part Four)

How Long, O Lord?

THE divine writers foresaw the coming of the long dark night of sin and evil, when true religion would be totally extinct upon earth. They also foretold the duration of this night.

In at least five separate chapters of the Bible specific mention is made of the length of this period of apostasy: Daniel 7 and 12, and Revelation, chapters 11, 12 and 13.

The prophecy of Daniel 7:25, which we have already studied, reveals that this power should "speak great words against the most High" and "wear out," or cause to fail wholly, "the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they [should] be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

To start unveiling this enigma, let us assume a "time" equals one year; on that basis "times" could be two years, and the "dividing of time," or "half" time, one half year, which would aggregate three and one half years.

If our knowledge of this mathematical problem were confined to this one statement by Daniel, it would be difficult to prove correct. However, the book of Revelation forecasts the same period using more specific units. The following periods are given: "time, times and a half a time"; "three days and a half"; "forty and two months"; "a thousand two hundred and three score days." Obviously the "forty and two months" and the "thousand two hundred and three score days" are identical, and careful analysis reveals the other periods cover the same time.

Students of prophecy agree that in Scripture, prophetic periods are figured from the basis of a thirty-day month, a three-hundred-sixty-day year. We are provided an example of this in Genesis 7: 11; 8:4; and 7:24. Hence, forty-two thirty-day

months would equal 1260 days. The "time and times and the dividing of time," also the "time, times and a half," covering as they do the same set of events, must of necessity be a period of the same length, or three and a half years. And it is reasonable to believe that the three and a half days, employing the shorter unit of time, refers to the same period. In this way the length of Daniel's "time, times and the dividing of time," also becomes obvious. The reading of Revelation 11: 9, 11, as translated in the King James Version is "three days and a half"; however, according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, the original word for "days," *hemera*, may mean "years" when used figuratively (*hemera* is rendered "years" in Luke 1: 18). Thus we again have "three and a half years."

What do the different time intervals signify?

Let us summarize:

The "time and times and the dividing of time," of Dan. 7:25; the "time, times, and half a time" of Revelation 12:14; the "time, times and an half" of Dan. 12:7; the "forty and two months" of Revelation 11:2 and 13:5; the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of Revelation 11:3 and 12:6; and the "three days and an half" of Revelation 11: 9 and 11, all could refer to the same time, the dark Medieval Age.

Now it is obvious that the 1260 days represent 1260 years, as we know of no event in the history of God's people lasting only three and a half years, or 1260 twenty-four-hour days, of sufficient importance to merit the position in prophecy given to the 1260-day period. In two instances in Holy Writ we are authorized to count a year for a day. The first instance is in Numbers 14:34, where Moses told Israel they would have to wander forty years in the wilderness because of their disobedience and rebellion. "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for

a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years."

The other instance where this rule was employed is recorded in Ezekiel 4:6. "...Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year." Applying this rule to the 1260 days we have 1260 years.

Another evidence that a "time" is a year is a statement in the Hebrew Lexicon: "Specially in prophetic style of a year... Specially a year, Daniel 7:25, during three years and a half."

In Revelation 11:2 is another statement of the duration of the apostasy: "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." The "holy city" is the city of true believers, those professing and living by the true teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus addressed His disciples as "the light of the world" and compared them to a "city that is set on a hill" (Matt. 5:14). The faithful administrators of the New Order to be set up on the earth are to be called "the city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 60:14).

In Revelation 11:3 is another mention of its duration: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

First, what are the two witnesses?

The Two Witnesses

Many interpreters have supposed them to be literally two persons, such as Enoch and Elijah, or Moses and Elijah. But the whole setting of the chapter is spiritual, and how can we have literal men in a spiritual situation?

Verses 5 and 6 definitely allude to Elijah and Moses, and those who sponsor the theory that the two witnesses are two men use these verses as support: "If any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy [a definite allusion to the time of Elijah]: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will [as Moses did]." But the application is not wholly consistent. If the men are literal, their power must likewise be literally fulfilled; and can we imagine human beings with live flames spouting from their mouths, as we read: "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies" (11:5)?

No, the prophecy of the two witnesses aims higher and reaches further than the person and existence of any child of man. It is dignity, divine; universal in duration and extent. Neither Moses

and Elijah, nor Elijah and Elisha, nor Enoch and Elijah can exhaust the significance of the two witnesses who "prophesy... clothed in sackcloth" during the 1260 days.

In Revelation 11:4 is a suggestion as to the identity of these two witnesses. We read: "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." The meaning of the candlesticks and the olive trees of Zechariah's vision is implied in the two witnesses. And what are they?

The simile is original with Zechariah 4. The Prophet saw in vision a candlestick all of gold, seven lamps with seven golden pipes supplying the lamps with the golden oil, and two olive trees which were providing the oil.

The question was asked: "What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?" (v. 12). The description is meaningful. These two olive branches empty the golden oil out of themselves. They contain the oil of divine truth. Hence, can the symbol of the two witnesses represent anything less than the entire Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, and those human witnesses making them available to the world?

But why are these two witnesses "clothed in sackcloth" during the 1260 days?

Sackcloth as used in the Bible frequently suggests a state of distress, anguish, mourning, lament. The witnesses, the written Testaments or Word of God, do indeed contain the prophecy during this interval of 1260 days (or years), as much as at any other time; but they are clothed in "sackcloth," garments of distress and mourning. The apostasy is, for the time, supreme—they "all slumbered and slept" (Matt. 25:5)—while everything beautiful and sacred in Christianity was as if clothed in the sackcloth of humiliation and lament. It is God preserving His Word in a clothed, sackcloth-covered state, while paganism prevails. The preserved testimony of the words of loyal adherents is continuous through all the ages.

The Revelator then uses another picture to describe the silenced state of the witnesses; they are killed. We read: "And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them" (v. 7).

As long as God needed living witnesses He had them; so long as anyone would listen to His Word and respond to it, God made sure that that Word was proclaimed. Only when their mission was for the time being accomplished, when there were no good and honest hearts to hear them, when "they

shall have finished their testimony," did God permit them to be silenced.

If we apply verse 7 as another representation of the prophecy of verse 3, where the two witnesses are clothed in sackcloth, we have a picture in harmony with Sacred Scripture. The two witnesses were seemingly dead, perished, inactive with the death or desertion of the last true Christian in the centuries immediately following the Apostolic Age. The Bible was left without a single defender or advocate.

Then is repeated the symbolic representation of the time interval involved: "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves" (vs. 8-9). Three days (or years) and a half, prophetic time, equals 1260 years.

We must remember that we are dealing with symbols and imagery in a passage such as this, and that the death of the witnesses is described as it seemed to those who accomplished it. Therefore, in one sense, the dead bodies lying in the streets is only a vivid picture of the conviction that their enemies held—a mistaken one, as the event proved; for in reality, the witnesses were not dead as their enemies had imagined.

Here again is a point showing that the two witnesses cannot possibly be two literal persons. Their dead bodies lie in the streets of a city "which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt." How could dead bodies literally lie in the streets of a figurative city?

The Revelator tells further: "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth" (v. 10).

The cause of the joy, we should note, was not so much the death of the Witnesses as the relief which accompanied the cessation of their testimony: "These two prophets tormented" or "tortured" their hearers. As long as the truth of God's Word was being proclaimed, as long as there was a living soul to testify to its unyielding demands for moral purity and perfection, that Bible was a torment to mankind's lower nature. Therefore, the death of the last loyal Christian, which brought to an end the testimony of the two witnesses (equivalent to their death, v. 7) was an occasion for great rejoicing. People were no longer harassed with the plain truth which they had neith-

er desire to know nor inclination to follow.

But their "death" was only temporary. The "dead bodies" were not even put into tombs (11: 9). The triumph of evil seemed complete, but God would not allow His Word to perish.

A Wonder In Heaven

Revelation 12 again projects the duration of the time of the apostasy, using another set of symbols and more symbolic description. The chapter begins by describing the appearance of a wonder in heaven, "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (v. 1). This suggests "Jerusalem which is above, . . . the mother of us all" (Gal. 4: 26), God's saving knowledge and its sponsors. She is in the process of bringing forth a "man child" who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron (v. 5)—the man-child represents Christ and His saints. He is a man because fully grown, characterwise; and a child because he is just beginning an immortal life.

The "dragon," or powers of darkness, stand ready to devour this "child" of our "mother," the truth, as soon as it is born. Revelation 17:14 describes this sinister action on the part of the powers of darkness at Christ's second coming, with the words: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Now Revelation 12:6 refers back again to the time during the dark night of the apostasy when divine truth would have been destroyed by the powers of darkness were it not for some provision having been made for its preservation. Here was the plan: "And the woman [divine truth and its sponsors] fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand, two hundred and threescore days." Here again is pictured the duration of the apostasy.

The woman is "given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, . . . where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time" (v. 14), safe from the destructive forces that wore out the saints of the most High, and "cast the truth to the ground" (Dan 8:12). The work of this wretched power and the duration of its tenure is identical with that of the "little horn" power of Daniel 7 and 8.

Then a "beast" is seen rising out of the sea, "having seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 13:1). This description is much the same as that of the

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Others May, You Cannot

IF you have set your heart upon securing for yourself the highest and the best; if you are looking for recognition from God and His holy angels; if your goal is set in the grand heavenly order that is soon coming upon this earth; if your vision reaches beyond the bounds of time and your horizon is eternity itself, then, though you look forward to great and eternal expansion, you will now for a short while have to live within certain restrictions. For before God can bestow upon you the wonders of His glory, He must shape and develop you for His purposes. He must train and discipline you. To do this He places upon you such demands of obedience and humility that your life even ceases to belong to you. You are not free to choose your course in life. You are not free to follow the best of humankind. You are not your own. He lets other people do things which He denies to you. Others may, you cannot.

Others may push themselves forward in this world, may work schemes and carry out great plans. You cannot. Your first concern is your commitment to God and principle. You are seeking above all a place in *His* plan, and you cannot absorb yourself in this world's plans.

Others may boast of themselves, their accomplishments, their successes, their abilities. You cannot. You have been told, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Others may glory in themselves—that is their reward. But it is not yours. Your goal is set beyond this world and what it can offer. Let God be your glory—it is He who gives you the power to succeed.

Others may receive honor and recognition from their fellowmen. You cannot. Your life is obscure, because God wants to produce in you some choice, fragrant fruit for His coming glory, which can only be grown in the shade. He may let others be great in the sun; he keeps you small. He may let others work and get the credit for it; He knows what you are doing, and in due time you shall be honored—by Him. And to make you still more valuable, He may let others get the credit for work you have done. If you still go on, He will greatness your glory in the world to come.

Others may spend time doing anything they feel like doing. You cannot. You have duties to perform and schedules to meet. Your life must be dis-

ciplined and denied. You are not your own.

Others may waste time if they feel like it, or kill it, or squander it. You cannot. For you, squandering time is squandering eternity—and you cannot afford a moment's loss there.

Others may talk about anything that comes into their mind, and use any words their society will understand. You cannot, for "by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned" (Matt. 12:37, RSV). Your words must edify and upbuild. Your words must have direction and purpose, or they are "idle" words which will bring you condemnation. And your words must be words becoming to your Christian profession—unclean, God-dishonoring, faith-belittling words have no place in your vocabulary. When such words would seek to pass your lips, you must tie your tongue.

Others may spend their means for whatsoever their heart desires. You cannot. Your money, like everything else you have, is not your own. It is a trust from God and you are responsible to Him for the use you make of it. Others may spend as they please; you cannot. Before you make a purchase, you must ask, Will God be pleased?

Others may seek pleasure, diversion and entertainment in any way they wish and indulge their desires to the limit of their conscience. You cannot. Their life is their own; yours is not. Before you indulge, you must ask: Is this to the betterment of myself and others? Will God be glorified by what I am about to do?

Others may give their energy to whatever may capture their interest. You cannot. You must be constantly enquiring, Am I spending myself wisely? For you are accountable to God for the use you make of all your God-given powers, whether they be mental, moral, or physical. They are a trust from God and must not be dissipated in selfish, unprofitable pursuits.

Why all this bothering about the details of life? Why such limitations and restrictions?

Because you are training for a higher level of life. You are seeking goals beyond the best this world can offer. For you, this life is but the preparation. Real life and pleasure and happiness is ahead! Glory and honor and immortality are ahead, with everlasting joy and everlasting challenge and everlasting usefulness in the ages to

come. It is the promise of God to those who meet His mark.

So settle it forever that you are dealing with God and that, since He is offering the reward He has the privilege of stating the conditions. He may not explain to you all the reasons why He deals as He does, why He requires what He does. But if you will let Him tie your tongue, or chain your hand, or close your eyes, or sever your desire as He shall choose, you shall—in the end—be abundantly blessed. And you shall be eternally grateful that He rescued you from the common lot of humankind and managed your life for His eternal purposes. The training time will seem so brief—eternity will be so long! ●●

Watch Those Motives!

(Continued from page 7)

and John accomplished it and pleased God.

God was pleased with Cornelius, whose prayers and alms had come up "as a memorial before God." There was also that great man named Stephen, who so preached and so applied the truth he preached that men had either to accept it or dispose of him. And when they chose the latter, Stephen was granted a wondrous vision—even a glimpse into the realm of heaven, where he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. God was pleased with Stephen.

Jesus made it His life ambition to please God. After He had spent his first thirty years in quiet service to His heavenly Father, learning and growing in His favor, there came to Him a voice from "the excellent glory," which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). He had done no miracles at this time, preached no sermons, moved no multitudes, taught no disciples. He had done absolutely nothing of those things which would make Him seem important in the eyes of men. Yet He received this high commendation. This was because He could say, "I do always those things that please [the Father]" (John 8:29).

Pleasing God is our most important business today. Indeed, it is our very reason for living. Is not this the ambition which inflamed the apostle Paul? Said he, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Why did Paul press ahead? Why did he count

all earthly things as loss? What was his motive? **That he might receive the commendation of Christ,** that he might win His approval and be accepted for a place in His kingdom. Paul had no thought of acceptability in the eyes of his peers; he was working for an acceptable judgment from God.

Are we laboring as intensely to please God as did these holy men of God?

Motives Tested

We may not always be conscious of it, but God allows circumstances which test our motives.

When Naomi was leaving the land of Moab to return to her homeland and her daughter-in-law Ruth asked to go with her, Naomi severely cross-questioned Ruth to be sure her motives were right. Did Ruth want to go because of the security she felt in Naomi as a mother? or because of a feeling of kinship? or friendship? or love of adventure? But when Ruth responded: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," Naomi could be sure Ruth's motives were right (Ruth 1:13-17).

The early Christians were often tested for their sincerity of motive. Persecution sifted them, and all who sought only temporal advantage and position soon fell away. Only those whose whole motive and purpose was to make themselves acceptable to God endured to the end of the ordeals they had to face.

We can thank God that we live in the cool of the day, that we are not asked to suffer persecution for our beliefs. But our motives can be no less pure than theirs, nor our conviction any less solid. They were working for *life*. We too are working for life.

The Danger of Self-Deception

As pilgrims pressing Zionward, we must be continually on guard against the spurious and the counterfeit in the world—and, most importantly, in ourselves. Ever since God started calling men and women into His service, the human mind has been working overtime conjuring up holy-sounding "reasons" to justify conduct not always inspired by the holiness of God. The ancient Prophet was right when he said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9).

However, the entire effort toward such self-justifying is in reality self-defeating. It is vain. It is fruitless. It is ruinous. What possible gain is there in seeing ourselves better than we are, in not admitting to ourselves that we do have thoughts and motives that are not godly? If the supreme desire of our life is purity of heart and ultimately an entrance into God's heavenly Kingdom, should

we not welcome every opportunity to cleanse our impurity? Should we not be anxious to learn the real truth about ourselves? Why *cover* the motives that need *eradicating*? Why not rather pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24)?

If the desire of our heart is spiritual growth and attainment, we shall not be afraid to expose our unworthy motives and face ourselves as we are. But unless we keep a continual watch on our own hearts, we shall find ourselves many times concealing the real motives that impel us and telling ourselves and others only what sounds good—the real serpent thus goes unscathed.

Any activity we engage in for God and the salvation of men is good; any activity which we do to evoke the recognition of others is self-destructive. In the ears of God it is "sounding brass" and "tinkling cymbal." Not being motivated by the self-effacing power of God's law, it profits nothing. It even classifies us as unbelievers. Says Jesus, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44).

The trouble is, the people are so much nearer than the Lord. It takes faith to forego present honors in hope of future honor that can be seen only by faith. But it is an honor far more sure and far more lasting than the loudest, longest laud of men. There is no realistic comparison between the two.

We need to be conscious of the opinions and judgments of those around us, so that we may live and grow together in peace and harmony. We need the love and encouragement and brotherly affection of those who share our faith in Christ. But let us be sure we are not making their favor our motive or their approval our goal. When we speak, let it be words that edify; when we sing, let it be the expression of our heart; when we work and walk or wander, let it be our supreme desire to be pleasing God—"that God in all things may be glorified."

If we do this, we shall find that God has prepared for us a place in His heavenly Kingdom, where we shall receive "glory and honor and immortality, eternal life"; where there will be "fulness of joy" and "pleasures for evermore," where we will be able to spend our "days in prosperity" and our "years in pleasures." In fact, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

What more could we wish, in exchange for the small privilege of seeking our own motives? With so much in prospect, why not "watch those motives!"

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2). ••

Our Readers Write...

Stirred Up

We can see through these troublous times to the time when God's Kingdom will be established and Micah 4:1-4 becomes reality. To be worthy to live in such a blessed world as that we can and *must* sell all we have, all our own ways and ideas, and become poor in spirit. Then we will be rich toward God and assured of a place in His eternal Kingdom.

This religion we profess is not a matter to be taken lightly. We need frequently to remind one another of that. Certainly none of us wants to be part of the Lord's sword with which He will smite the nations, but that will be our sad end if we don't keep ourselves stirred up and alert. Reading and meditating every day, keeping our minds filled with wholesome things is the only way to stay alert against the wiles of the flesh. A daily and honest examination of ourselves is helpful, too, because we all know or should know more about our own weaknesses than anyone else. Then, if we must be critical of someone, why not criticize ourselves? Who else does deserve it more?

Let us press on to maturity in all the Christian virtues, developing in ourselves the mind of Christ, adopting His attitude in all we do.

Athens, Tennessee

S. K.

Do, Brother, Do

I like the song, "Do, Brother, Do," particularly. It is a constant struggle to overcome my irritability. To pull myself up I have to speak often about giving an account of what we do with time. I want to put as much into each day as I can.

I do not want to be interested in the state of the nations only so far as they fulfill their part in God's plan. When Elijah and Christ come, we do not want to be found idling, for blessed are those who are found working for the Master. We have to work out our own salvation with fearing to displease God and trembling lest we unknowingly do.

God has given different people different tasks to do. When Jehovah decreed that a deluge should destroy that old world long ago, to Noah He gave a commission to build a boat, preach the word, and let men know. Now did Noah refuse because he had never built a boat before? Oh no, he got right on with building one, and he preached more and more. What an example for us to follow.

Cheshire, England

Mrs. H.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

THE power of thought is the power of life. Thought is the first thing that proceeds from the mind of man; it precedes all action and all speech, whether it be good or evil. We have this testimony from our Lord Jesus: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts. . . ." (Mark 7:21).

Many centuries ago, before the development of the science we call psychology, there arose a man who through the mercy of God was given great wisdom that he might observe why men behave like human beings. And he wrote the book of Proverbs. He condensed great wisdom into the compass of a few hundred proverbs and epigrams and left them for the ages to read. They are good reading for our hurrying generation. One proverb which bites into our minds with double-edged teeth is this: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

Thoughts are to the mind what horsepower is to the motor; they determine the mind's worth and wealth. We cannot hide from ourselves—much less from God—the things that take place deep in our minds. And we cannot do anything to reverse the consequences of the laws of thought. We are what we think.

We humans do three kinds of thinking. We think of our various desires. Millions never get beyond this stage of thinking. The motto of such is: "Where shall we go?" "What shall we wear?" and "When do we eat?"

A second kind of thinking is wishful thinking. We wish that a certain thing might be, or not be, and we go on daydreaming. But little do we do to make our dreams become realities.

The third kind of thinking is what we may call constructive thinking. It is the hardest work on earth, and few there be who will pay the price of the thinking that really builds.

Thoughts are things; they are the great workers which transform or which deform life. What they do for us depends upon which thoughts we choose to entertain. We should always remember this: When we choose the level on which we do our thinking, we also choose the results of those thoughts. They follow as surely as night follows day.

Which way shall we think? We cannot combine them all and make any progress. We cannot climb uphill and downhill at the same time. Nor can we think weak, sinful, fearful thoughts and grow strong by the process. The only way to think, then, is to think right.

Prayer is often our highest form of creative

WE ARE WHAT WE THINK

thinking. It is the mind thinking with the top windows wide open toward heaven. Forgiveness is thinking which is aware of its own weakness. Hope is thinking with its eyes on the sunrise. Faith is thinking which sees no unsurmountable obstacles.

God Almighty made us as we are and set us in our corner of creation, and gave us minds with which to work out our destinies. About us, and beneath everything we may ever do He has also set this law—we cannot evade it: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

*Think smiles, and smiles will be;
Think doubt, and hope will flee;
Think love, and love will grow;
Think hate, and hate you'll know;
Think good, and good is here;
Think vice, its jaws appear.
Think joy, and joy is here;
Think gloom, and dusk descends,
Think faith, and strength's at hand;
Think ill—it stalks the land;
Think peace, sublime and sweet,
And you that peace will meet.
Think fear with brooding mind,
And failure's close behind.
Think this, "I'm going to win,"
Think not on what has been,
Think "Victory," think "I can,"
For so God builds a man.*

Every man is a king in the castle of his own mind. As king of his thoughts he can make his reign turbulent and dreadful by thinking about those things which can make him unhappy. Or he can open his mind and listen to the Father above and make himself a triumphant, victorious monarch who lives all the time in joy and harmony.

Questions

"In Zechariah 14:16-18 we are told the Feast of Tabernacles will be enforced in the Kingdom, and Paul tells us in Acts 20:16 that he wanted to be in Jerusalem the day of Pentecost, a day which the early Church kept. Don't these facts indicate that the law of Moses was eternal? Hebrews 13:8 says, 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever.'"

You seem to suggest that the "feast of Tabernacles" will be enforced in the Kingdom, and that the early Church kept Pentecost, and therefore we should be keeping both of these festivals today because the Bible says "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).

Now if you are saying that the various feasts, which were part of the verbal law given by God to Moses, are binding today and have never been rescinded, then it follows that all the other verbal laws and ordinances are still in effect. We cannot select just certain laws and disregard all the others. Unless we find in Scripture a specific exception we must accept the New Testament evidence that the law of Moses was done away. Paul said in Galatians 5:13-18, "Ye are not under the law." Again, he speaks of that "which is done away" (II Cor. 3:11) and "that which is abolished" (v. 13).

As far as the future observance of the Feast of Tabernacles is concerned, only the future will reveal the full meaning of the prophecy. We cannot say that we understand fully its meaning now.

It is true that the law of God must always be obeyed; this is the principle expressed in the words: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." God's plan, His authority, His purpose, His requirement of obedience never changes. But the commandments, which are to be obeyed, have changed from age to age. Noah was commanded to build an ark, but every God-fearer since the days of Noah has not had to build an ark. Abraham was commanded to sacrifice his son, but God does not ask this of us. In the same way we are not expected to live by the law given to Israel, the law of Moses, which was a civil law for the governing of their nation at that time.

When the nation ceased to exist, the law came to a natural end.

"Would you have a brief explanation of Revelation 11:12: 'And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them?'"

Judging from the context in which these words occur, we must classify the passage as figurative, a picture of the time when Christ and His church will ascend into political power.

Revelation 11, verses 1-10, describes the 1260-year night of darkness which overtook mankind some time after the close of the Apostolic Age. Verse 11 pictures the rebirth of divine truth: "And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." We must always be aware that the living truth includes not only the system of divine teaching making up that "truth" but also its sponsors. Apart from its sponsors, truth would be inanimate and lifeless. (For a more comprehensive explanation of Revelation 11, see our booklet *The Great Apostasy*.)

The "they" of verse 12 ("they heard a great voice from heaven") depicts the worthy members of Christ's church, the "people of the saints of the most High" (Dan. 7:27). The "voice" from heaven saying to them, "Come up higher," will be the new Authority headed by Christ. Having been faithful in a "few things" He will speak to them the most gracious of words: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

Verse 13 pictures the next great event, the "great earthquake," the great upheaval which will write *finis* upon man's faulty structure. And verse 15 spells out the outcome: "and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ," His Church, "and he shall reign for ever and ever."

The same set of events is spelled out again in Revelation 12:5, where the "man child" (composed of Christ and His saints), who was to rule all nations with an iron rod, "was caught up unto God, and to his throne." This is a symbolic way of describing His ascension to the throne of political power.

"There is a question troubling me. If we go to heaven at death, what need for Jesus to return? Some churches I have attended teach both doctrines."

There is no evidence in the Bible that we go to heaven at death. In fact, the evidence is quite to the contrary.

The theory that a person has a soul that goes to heaven at death is based on the erroneous belief that man possesses an immortal soul. But the Bible says plainly, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20). An immortal soul could not die!

The truth is that the dead are not conscious. The Bible is specific. "For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing" (Eccl. 9:5). "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10). "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4). Jesus was taken up to heaven, and before He ascended He said, "Whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8:21). And in John 3:13 He said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven."

Both the faithful (righteous) and unfaithful (wicked) wait in the grave for the resurrection and judgment. If the good went to heaven and the bad went to hell, as you say, then what need for Jesus to return and judge and separate righteous from wicked, as He said clearly that He would do? (see Matthew 25:31-46).

We are assured by many passages of Scripture that Jesus will return and set up His kingdom on this earth (see Daniel 7:27), and "the righteous shall . . . dwell therein forever" (Ps. 37:29).

"In Deuteronomy 29:29 we learn that the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong unto us and our children. What is the secret thing? Is it the way God made the world and created human beings on it?"

The text reads: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." The New English Bible words it: "There are things hidden, and they belong to the Lord our God," etc. The Moffatt Bible translates it: "The hidden issues of the future are with the Eternal our God, but the unfolded issues of the day are with us and our children for all time. . . ."

This statement from either of the above translations is forthright. Surely we cannot deny that there are many things known to God that are not known to us. But it doesn't seem practical to try to associate this statement with any one factor of Bible teaching. The hidden issues of the future are with the Eternal our God. The secrets of the

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laws of nature; the secrets of endless time and boundless space; the secrets of perpetual existence; the secret of how life itself was developed and how it is maintained—all are "hidden things" not revealed. Thomas Edison, the famous American inventor, once made the statement that all that the scientists know equals less than one tenth of one percent of what there is to know. Surely when compared with what God knows the aforementioned percentage is far too high.

The two chapters preceding the 29th of Deuteronomy list the curses for disobedience. But it doesn't seem that there is any relation between these forewarnings and Deuteronomy 29:29. This text states a fact that is timeless. ●●

The Great Apostasy

(Continued from page 19)

"beast" of Daniel 7 and 8. And his work and the period of his activity are also identical: "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months"—again the length of the apostasy is mentioned (Rev. 13:5).

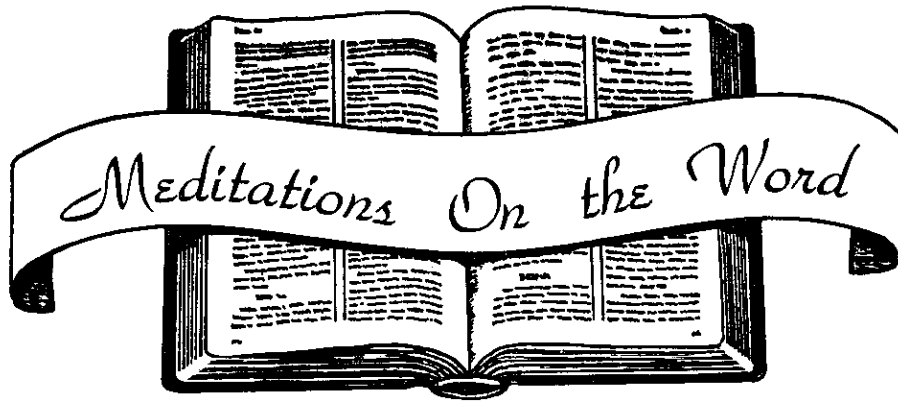
The Bible leaves no question as to the length of the apostasy. It began, and its end was fixed. God would not allow His truth to perish forever. And an end of the night of darkness was as sure as its beginning.

(NEXT: *The Apostasy Terminated*)

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"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" —(Jude 5)

THE early records of the Hebrew people reveal an event so dramatic, so significant, that they could never forget. Repeatedly in the writings of the historian, prophet, and psalmist, we come upon warnings, or exclamations of wonder and joy, based on the remembrance of the way in which God had "brought them out of the land of Egypt." After a series of miraculous demonstrations God led His people out. There could be no doubt of that. Egypt was back of them; Palestine was before them; and the desert was all about them. Now all they had to do was go forward and possess the Promised Land.

As Israel, upon leaving Egypt, began to encounter difficulties, we detect the existence of three parties, or groups. First, there is the group that wants to go back. They are afraid of this desert life, they long for the comforts and stability of the old order, such as it was. The second group loves the desert. They feel they are free. Bedouin existence is a joy to them. In this state a man can do as he pleases and roam as he wills.

The third group seems to be exceedingly small. It is made up of the few who can see deeper and farther than the rest. They will not turn back. They are done with Egypt, attractive, or unattractive, good or bad; it lies behind them and it can never be home again. But neither will they settle down in the desert, because it must be traversed. They will tramp through it with good cheer and unflagging courage. Never will they let die out from their hearts the assurance that ahead of them lies the land of promise.

The story of Israel's passage from Egypt to the Promised Land has become a favorite illustration of Christian progress. How truthfully Egypt typi-

fies our unregenerated state before we entered the way of salvation! Here, while passing through various experiences for our development, we are represented as going through the desert, drear and barren where no water of life is. And just beyond Jordan, the last barrier—the final Judgment—lies the Promised Land, the Kingdom of God.

When we consider the state of present-day Egypt, our deliverance cannot be esteemed lightly. There was a false sense of security, but neither its social nor religious systems had foundation or power to give life eternal.

After the first exultant shouts of freedom, it takes faith to live and work and press to the Promised Land in spite of difficulties. Israel fell by the way because of unbelief; they feared giants, or hardships; they despised discipline.

These are things which we encounter today. At such times one yields all too easily to the temptation to look back, to clutch at the receding past. One feels he would be better where he was before, and many return to their former mode of life. But there is no hope or happiness in that.

Nor yet is it in any way desirable to rest content with an unsettled state of mind. Unwilling to return, and fearful and faithless to go ahead to the Promised Land, many wander in the desert of their own making. Undoubtedly one of the strange phenomena through the years has been that of men and women entering the way of salvation and then wandering aimlessly rather than going forward. They leave the old creeds and systems but do not remold their lives completely by the pattern of the Master. They are content to live in doubt and uncertainty rather than to press on in faith. Such

a state of the soul cannot last or satisfy. To be content with the desert is to invite defeat.

The glorious thing is to move on. There is death back in Egypt; there is starvation and disillusionment in the desert; but in going forward there is life, thrilling, abundant, eternal.

Now Jude's warning is full of meaning. In his life he saw many fall away from the way of Truth, and then he strongly denounced in his Epistle. He had not a good word to say of them for whom the Judgment of God is reserved. Thus, his warning to us is both timely and poignant.

We all need to remember that danger constantly threatens. No living person is beyond danger. The youth needs to watch the numerous byways; the middle-aged must fortify against the ever-present temptation to retreat or to grow weary in well doing; and the elderly, though often more settled and their hope more firm, are not entirely safe. Their danger is in being set too strongly in ways that are not right. Unbecoming habits, negative attitudes, exalted personal ideas, cherished through the years, do not drop off automatically with age. At the close of probation's day when the secrets of the hearts are disclosed there will be sorrow and disappointment for those whose lives have been found faulty. For all such, at the entrance to the Promised Land will stand the sign—bold and final—NO ADMITTANCE!

Whatever our age or status in the Way, we must take some definite steps to insure our safe arrival.

Always remember that you are not infallible. WATCH!

Examine your life for blind spots—sins which you do not want to see, habits around which you have built defenses. These defenses of our own making are hard to get by. Fling them away decisively and forever.

Have God and His Cause the center around which you revolve. Cease being self-centered. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. If you miss this important step you may wander in the desert of confusion and defeat all your days.

Finally, follow the instructions of your superiors. Israel never went wrong when they obeyed Moses. Study the lives of those who have gone before you and copy them as they copied Christ.

God has brought us out of Egypt that He may bring us into the Promised Land. Whatever difficulties we encounter or however long the way through the desert, blessed are they who cheerfully go on with God. Blessed are they who will not turn back in fear, nor yet be content to roam in the desert, but will hold on and push forward until at last there shines before them the Promised Land. ●●

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(Psalm 91)

*Call Jehovah thy salvation,
Rest beneath th' Almighty's shade;
In His secret habitation
Dwell, and never be dismayed.*

*There no tumult can alarm thee,
Thou shalt dread no hidden snare;
Guile nor violence shall harm thee,
In eternal safeguard there.*

*God shall charge His angel legions
Watch and ward o'er thee to keep;
Though thou walk through hostile regions,
Though in desert wilds thou sleep.*

*Since with pure and firm affection
Thou on God has set thy love,
With the wings of His protection,
He will shield thee from above.*

*Thou shalt call on Him in trouble,
He will hearken, He will save;
Here for grief reward thee double,
Crown with life beyond the grave.*

—Selected

