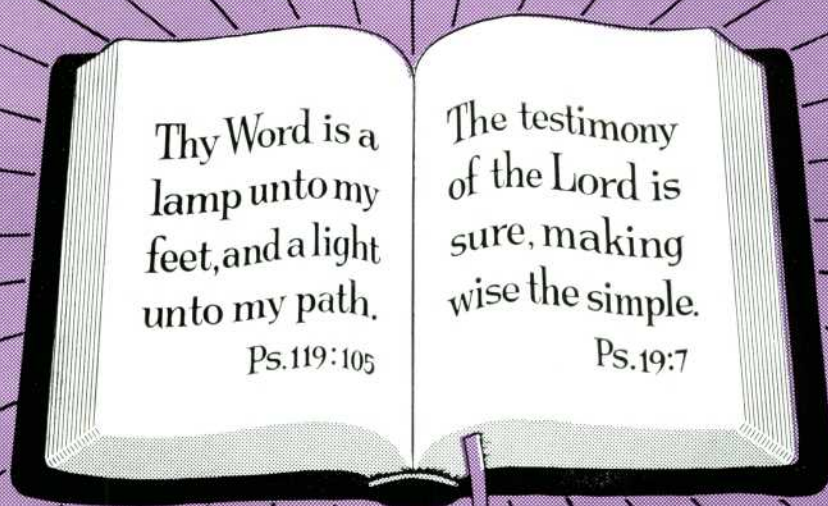


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



**God Is Working!**

**A Thousand Years of Learning  
Owls, Pelicans and Sparrows  
Pro & Con**



# How About the Lily-Work?

**I**N the book of First Kings is a detailed description of the work Solomon had done in building the great Temple of the Lord. Everything to do with its construction had to be absolutely the best. All stones had to be pre-cut and polished to perfection; every part had to meet exact specifications.

In the midst of the account is a description of two pillars which were to be set on either side of the entrance to the temple. We read that "He cast two hollow bronze pillars, each twenty-seven feet high and eighteen feet around, with four-inch-thick walls" (I Kings 7:15, TLB). When the necessary work on the pillars had been completed, we read, "And upon the top of the pillars was lily work" (I Kings 7:22).

Solomon's father David had cherished grand hopes of someday erecting this beautiful Temple to the name of the Lord his God. From the time he was still young, he had dreamed of doing something great for the Lord. But God said No.

Even after the Lord told David that he would not be allowed to build the house because he had "shed blood" and been a "man of war," David's thoughts were still on the house of the Lord, and he did all he could to prepare the work for his son. David chose the site. Furthermore, we read, "David . . . set stonecutters to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God. David also provided great stores of iron for nails for the doors of the gates and for clamps, as well as bronze in quantities beyond weighing, and cedar timbers without numbers. . . . For David said, Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the Lord must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands; I will therefore make preparation for it" (I Chron. 22:2-5, RSV).

So David made what preparations he could, and Solomon took over the building

plans. And when the pillars were made, upon their tops was lily-work.

Now this was not man's imagination seeking to add something ornamental or superfluous to that which was already complete. God Himself gave the plans for the temple, even to the topmost ornament. In Chronicles we read the story of David's instruction to Solomon. He handed the set of plans to his son (I Chron. 28:11), and then turned over to him the material with the specific statement that all was to be done according to the plan. "All this," said David, "the Lord made clear to me by the writing from the hand of the Lord upon me."

What about the lily-work, then? It was part of the plan. The temple was not complete without it.

Is there not lily-work in our lives, too? When we have done what we know we must, is there not yet a little more we can do? Is there not something over and above the letter of the law which will add a crowning grace of beauty to our lives?

Ours must be a *living* sacrifice, a *willing* work, a *free-will* offering. When we have done that which is our duty to do, we haven't done enough. God wants our all—even the little "extras."

Let us do all we can. Give the extra gift, go the second mile, be unwearied in well-doing, make the additional sacrifice graciously and lovingly, forgive unto seventy times seven. This is our lily-work, and the Lord delights in it. ●●

*"Most of the differences between top people and average lies in three words.*

*"Those who succeeded were thoughtful of others, considerate and kind—and then some. They met their obligations fairly and squarely—and then some. They could be counted on in emergency—and then some."*

That "and then some" is "lily-work."

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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).

# Megiddo Message

Vol. 64, No. 9

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## EDITORIAL

### 2 How About the Lily-Work?

There are little "extras" that can make the difference between success and failure.

## ARTICLES

### 4 God Is Working!

Open or silent, it is all God's work.

### 9 What is Thought?

Thoughts need "aiming," and then "firing."

### 14 Owls, Pelicans and Sparrows

A lesson from the birds

## SPECIAL FEATURES

### 10 A Thousand Years of Learning

Education for Mortals

The Gospel Spreads

More for Mortals

Millennial Teachers

Education for Immortals

## REGULAR FEATURES

### 16 Pro & Con

Discussing the goodness and the severity of God.

### 21 From Parent to Parent: Family Worship-Time

### 22 One Lord, One Faith: The Devil of the Bible, Part 2

### 24 Our Readers Write. . .

### 27 Scriptural Spotlight: Busy Here and There?

On I Kings 20:40. We have a responsibility; how well are we fulfilling it?

### 28 Cover Feature: Just For Today

Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version

Other versions are abbreviated as: *New International Version* (NIV); *New English Bible* (NEB); *Revised Standard Version* (RSV); *The New Testament in Modern English* (Phillips); *The Living Bible* (TLB); *New American Standard* (NAS).

# God Is Working!

**G**OD is working!  
Is He?

He does not come down and dictate to our President, nor do we see His prophet teaching in our streets. His rains refresh the just and unjust alike. We have no visions, or divine revelations, not even a divinely inspired dream such as Joseph or Daniel had. Multitudes go along from day to day totally unaware that He even lives. No one has Holy Spirit power from God by which to bring the dead to life, or heal the sick, or subdue the forces of nature, as the apostles could. We have never had so much as a single glimpse of one of God's glorious messengers.

Does this mean that God is not working?

Does this mean that He has abandoned His plan? Does this mean He has deserted us and left us without help or hope in a world full of strife and bewilderment? Does this mean we are bereft of spiritual blessings and divine guidance?

The answer is NO. A thousand times NO! God has worked in ages past, and He is still working. In fact, we might say His work grows more intense as His plan approaches the culmination of its first important phase.

God *is* working!

And the work shall not cease until every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall shout His praise.

## The Work Began

The author of the Genesis allegory gives us in symbolic terms a long-range view of God at work. The narrative recorded in the first three chapters is all astir with divine life and activity. Whatever the inspired writer wanted to tell us of the physical creation, he gives us a vivid picture of the *living* God *at work*. His goal and purpose is a whole new spiritual creation, complete with new executive powers and new populace, a super-race fashioned out of the raw material of the old. The Master Mind behind the plan, the Designer, the Executor, the Expediter, and finally the Inspector of this vast creative project, is God Almighty.

The plan outlined in Genesis is the subject of the entire Bible. It is a steadily ongoing plan, a plan that reaches as far as His mercy—"from everlasting to everlasting." It is God's "eternal purpose."

When does this work go on? and how long does it take?

The Genesis allegory describes the first phase of the work as taking place within six days. Step by step the plan goes forward until at the close of the sixth day God stands aside to inspect the finished portion and pronounces it "very good."

Now if we apply the Bible rule for prophetic time and see the time as God sees it, we must allow a thousand years for each day (II Pet. 3:8). This makes six thousand years of creating time, six thousand years during which the Creator is working. There is no break in His plan until the six days, or six thousand years, are finished. This does not mean that each day is equally productive, but the plan is operating. The work which commenced when God first called men into His service (at the time of Adam) continues through the next six thousand years; at which time there comes a change in God's methods of working and the introducing of a new phase.

What does this six-thousand-year working period mean to us? It means that *we are part of the plan*. There have not yet been six thousand years since the time of Adam, hence the work of the first six days is *still going on*.

God is working—*even now*.

Just as certainly as He was working two or three or four thousand years ago, God is working *now*.

In view of this fact, how can we live even a single moment as though He were not? The world is His. The earth is His. The plan is His. And *we* can be His—if we *will* be.

This has been His purpose through all the six thousand years, to find among humankind those who will fit themselves into His eternal plan. He wants the best, the *very* best, and He will find it. Nothing less than the choicest can suit His cause. Whom will He have? Who will qualify? Who will prove himself sufficiently interested in God's plan

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

to stake his all upon it? Who is willing to give himself heart and soul and mind and strength in prospect of that which now can be seen only by the eye of faith, but which is magnificent beyond mortal comprehension? Who will relinquish everything of *his moment* for everything of *God's eternity*? Who will make his own life a living testimony that God is working?

Let us think now of *how* God works.

The Bible tells us that God in His infinite knowledge and wisdom has many and various ways of working. We find one comment in the prologue to the book of Hebrews. The author is viewing the divine plan from the perspective given him by the Holy Spirit. And he writes: "At various times in the past and in various different ways God spoke" (Heb. 1:1, Jerusalem Bible).

At various times and in various and different ways God *spoke*. And at various times and in various and different ways God *worked*.

### His Open Work

Much of the work of God recorded in Scripture was by open manifestation. Sometimes He sent one of His glorious messengers to give divine assistance or information just when and where it was needed. Abraham, Sarah, Lot, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Daniel, Jesus and Paul were among those privileged to see God's working in this way.

At other times God revealed His will openly through visions or dreams divinely inspired. Joseph, Daniel, Peter and Paul enjoyed such experiences, and communicated or recorded the message as they were commanded by the Lord.

The prophets of Judah and Israel felt the power of God's working. Often they served as divine mouthpieces. "The word of the Lord came," and "again the word of the Lord came," and they delivered it to the people. So potent was this method of working that the Lord described it as a burning fire: "Behold," He said to Jeremiah His spokesman, "I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them" (Jer. 5:14). God was speaking openly and miraculously.

Other prophets, like Elijah and Elisha, were given special power from God by which to advance God's work. It was power that could bring down fire from heaven to consume even an altar of stone and many barrels of water. It was power that could bring a dead child to life, that could part the waters of the Jordan, and heal leprosy.

God was working.

During the ministry of Christ, the apostles and some of the disciples were favored with a special gift of divine power, by which they could teach or

preach or perform miracles. For a short space of three years God worked mightily through Christ, endowing Him with divine power which He used to guarantee the divine authority behind His message.

God's work did not end when Jesus was taken to heaven. Endued with "power from on high" as Jesus had promised them, the apostles went forth with fresh zeal for God. They now were able to preach and to confirm the authority of their message by open demonstrations of divine power. God was working. The result was the greatest missionary effort of the six thousand years.

We would like to have seen God working in this wonderful way.

### The "Open" Work Suspended

But this open arrangement, the audible voice and the visible signs were not God's only means of working. The same apostle Paul who was himself a partaker of the Holy Spirit foretold that that means of God's working among men would end. "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (I Cor. 13:8).

Other Biblical writers before Paul had forecast this. Daniel had written that the vision and prophecy would be "sealed up" after a definite period of time (Dan. 9:24). Jesus had promised to be with His disciples "with signs following" until—and only until—"the close of the age" (Matt. 28:19, RSV). Open manifestations and the Holy Spirit, by which the apostles and those who had the power could do various types of supernatural work, were a temporary provision for a limited time.

Thus at the end of that age, when the promise of the Spirit had been fulfilled and its mission accomplished, and the "perfect", or written revelation of God, was complete (I Cor. 13:10), the Holy Spirit power was withdrawn.

But did the withdrawing of this means of God's working suggest that all who should live after that time would be left without divine help or guidance?

Not at all! Who are we to suggest that because God does not work *openly* He *does not work*? Did not the inspired writer tell us that God works in "various and different ways"? (Heb. 1:1-2).

All through the ages, even when God was working openly among men, He was also working silently behind the scenes.

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NOTE: "GOD IS WORKING" is available as a church-service recording on cassette. Price: \$3.00

## His Silent Work

In the days of Queen Esther, when the King, at the instigation of the evil-minded Haman, made a decree that all the Jewish people in the kingdom should die, God worked. He worked silently through human instruments, but the fact of His working was no less certain because of the method He chose to use at that time. God could have sent an angel to speak openly to Mordecai and Esther. He could have stricken the wicked Haman dead before the plot reached the palace and became a royal decree. In a hundred different ways God could have delivered His people, openly.

But God chose to work in silence. The task fell upon Esther, who was supported by her God-fearing cousin Mordecai. Mordecai's faith in deliverance from God is seen clearly in his words to Esther: "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place"—by *some* means God would work; by *some* means God would spare His people; He would not allow the seed of promise to perish. "But . . . who knoweth," said Mordecai to Esther, "whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:13-14). Perhaps *you*, Mordecai told Esther, are to be God's means of deliverance.

Another example of God's silent working was with another Persian king named Cyrus. It was the will of God that when the years of Captivity had been accomplished the Israelite people should be free to return to their homeland if they would choose to do so. Accordingly, Cyrus "made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build. . . . And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:1-4). Was this Cyrus' idea? No, Cyrus was playing a part in God's drama. God was working. But Cyrus never knew it (Isa. 45:4).

Some eighty years later the city of Jerusalem was still in a state of disrepair, and the Lord worked similarly with another Persian king, Artaxerxes, to allow Nehemiah to leave his serving

in the palace in Shushan and go up to Jerusalem and organize a fresh work effort. King Artaxerxes never knew, but his granting of permission to Nehemiah was a direct answer to Nehemiah's prayer.

Behind the scenes, God was working.

There were other times in the divine record when there was "no open vision" (I Sam. 3:1). But God was working nevertheless.

## Silent and Open Work Combined

On a few occasions God worked silently to a point and then opened human eyes to see His work. An example of this was in the time of Elisha. The King of Syria was seeking Elisha, whom he suspected of foiling his plots against Israel—because "the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the King of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber" (II Kings 6:12). One morning Elisha and his young servant awoke to find themselves surrounded by Syria's army. The servant was fearful and alarmed—what could they do? Had God forsaken them? Were they to become captives of the Syrian King? Elisha knew God was working, though the servant could not see. So Elisha prayed: "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see." The Lord did, and the invisible work became *visible*—the servant beheld the mountainside full of chariots of fire, a host of angels, ready to defend them. Suddenly there was visible proof that God had been working all the time; Elisha and his servant were not alone in the hands of the Syrians. Far from it!

And we wonder: If the Prophet were among us today and prayed that *our* eyes might be opened, what would *we* see! Just because God's work is not visible to our eyes is no sign that He is not here, *and working!*

Open manifestations—the audible voice and visible signs and appearances—were never God's only means of working. Alongside them in all ages was God working quietly, behind the scenes, planning, arranging, governing, directing the affairs of men in behalf of His people. In all ages His ear was open to the earnest prayer of His servant; and His angel, though usually unseen, was near to protect and bless. In all ages God was watching over the instructing and disciplining of His own, and no one who would believe and do was ever denied the opportunity to learn.

## God's Work—through Written Inspiration

As in any well-planned project, one phase did not terminate until ample preparation had been made for the next. Long before God withdrew His

Holy Spirit and ceased His open workings, He was making special preparations for the needs of those who should live and serve Him during the long silent years. For the work had to be continuous.

It was God's plan that those who should be denied the privilege of witnessing His open work should have something else: they should have *a written rule of faith*. So perfect and so complete would be this divine writing that it would contain all they would need to sustain spiritual life by faith.

The writing and compiling of this work was a tremendous project, involving not only the writers themselves but thousands of other people who would be unwitting instruments in His hand. Those who wrote, those who preserved the writings, those who copied them, those who translated them into common languages, those who developed methods of printing and publishing and distributing, those who took charge of protecting the writings from the merciless hands of tyrants and all-out enemies

—all were instruments in the hand of God.

God was working. He was working in behalf of those who should have to believe without seeing open manifestations.

The writing of the Bible required many years. It began when God inspired Moses to write the laws and commandments and journeyings of Israel, together with the other books of the Pentateuch. Joshua in his turn wrote "in the book of the law of God" the things which were revealed to him (Josh. 24:25-26). Samuel "told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book" (I Sam. 10:25), which was preserved for the future.

The writing continued in the time of King David, the king himself contributing many psalms and hymns inspired by God. Psalm 119 is a book poem praising the perfection of God's truth and the life-giving power of His law. The Old Testament was far from complete in his time, six centuries before Malachi; nevertheless he exclaimed, "The law of

*(Continued on page 8)*

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## Let Us Pray . . .

Almighty Creator, ruler of this wonderful universe, Thou omnipotent Being who giveth to all life and breath, and all the blessings that come to us daily as we journey through life, help us to realize more and more Thy matchless wisdom and greatness as we behold Thy magnificent creation. The heavens declare Thy glory, and the firmament shows Thy handiwork, the scope of Thy infinite wisdom.

May the realization of Thy power, might and wisdom cause us to listen to Thy Word, intent upon keeping Thy holy commandments. Alert us that we must form characters to qualify for Thy approval, or we shall never get it. All good things of this life and the future come through Thy mercy, Thy power, and may we prove ourselves worthy of Thy mercy and of life eternal.

It is comforting to know that a book of remembrance is being written for every one that fears Thee and reveres Thy Word, and that all such shall be Thine in the day when Thou shalt make up Thy jewels; they shall be spared.

We rejoice to know Thou wilt be with us as long as we are with Thee, that a day will come when all Thy loyal servants will be brought into one

happy company. Thou wilt say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back, and all Thy true sons and daughters will be brought together from the ends of the earth into one happy family. If now we will qualify as a son or daughter of Thine, it will be said of us in that auspicious day, "I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."

It gives us joy to know that Thou art our Saviour and King, that Thou art a God of activity. Thou hast declared, Thou hast saved, Thou hast shown Thy creative power; and Thou *dost* work, and *will* work, and none can hinder Thy work.

Help us to realize the deceitfulness of the human mind, of our own mind, how prone it is to evil. Help us to watch self, watch our words and thoughts. Alert us that in our flesh dwells nothing good according to Thy holy standard. Thy ways are as much higher than our ways as the heaven is higher than the earth.

Then help us to get down into the depths of humility before it is too late, before our feet stumble on the dark mountain and the shadow of death overtakes us and all hope of future life is gone. May we realize what our fate, our anguish, our sorrow will be then if we miss the reward.

We pray Thy blessing on all striving, on all who are not trusting in their natural mind, on all letting Thy Word work freely within, that having overcome all evil with good we may be worthy of eternal life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. . . . Thy word is true from the beginning" (Ps. 19:7-8; 119:160). The canon was far from complete, but its authority was already well established; it was the work of God.

**Solomon** added many proverbs, which the Lord inspired him to write. We read, "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much. . . . And he spake three thousand proverbs" (I Kings 4:29, 32). He himself was not true to their message, but God was using him as an instrument to do His work.

The prophets preserved the revelations and messages they received from God by putting them into writing. As each wrote his message, it was added to the books already existing and accounted as part of the law of God, the law by which God's people should speak and live. The prophet **Isaiah** was explicit concerning the authority of these messages: "Should not a people seek unto their God?" he wrote. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:19-20).

**Jeremiah** wrote the words which he received from God. On one occasion the book he had written was read in the presence of the king. The book immediately impressed deeply both the people and the king. It was too much for the king; so as the book was read, he cut it up and threw it into the fire piece by piece. By the time the reading was finished, there was nothing left of it! But God was not to be so easily set aside. "Take thee again another roll," came the word of the Lord to Jeremiah, "and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned." Jeremiah did, and "*added besides unto them many like words*" (Jer. 36:20-32).

The work was God's, and God would not be defeated by an offended man.

The writings of the prophets were preserved through the captivity, for **Daniel**, while in Babylon, had in writing the words of some of God's former prophets—even including writings of Jeremiah, who lived only a generation before Daniel. Daniel made clear that it was "by the books" that he believed in the imminent fulfillment of the prophecy of the seventy-year limit of the captivity (Daniel 9:2). Daniel's writings were also added to the law of God, as were those of his contemporary **Ezekiel**. It is interesting to note that **Ezekiel** placed Daniel, a man of his own day and time and acquaintance, alongside the patriarchs Noah and Job as representatives of the most devout men of Israel.

After the captivity **Zechariah** added to the writings of the prophets, and insisted that the solemn words and judgments pronounced by the earlier prophets were of God and had been fulfilled just as predicted (Zech. 1:4-6).

It was all God's work.

### The Writings Were of God

By the time of the apostles, the books of the Old Testament were already together and were common property of the synagogues, well studied, known and accepted among the Jewish people. The writers of the New Testament showed plainly their confidence in the sacred Scriptures, the Old Testament, as the word of God. They constantly referred to the Scriptures. They used them in addressing Jews and Gentiles, friends and enemies, rulers and common people. They based their arguments and illustrations on the Scriptures; they drew from them instructions, prophecies, and warnings. Always and everywhere they were quick to show their confidence in the impregnable authority of the Word of the Lord.

God was working.

There are at least 295 quotations or direct references to the Old Testament in the New, which shows the high respect Jesus and His apostles held for the Old Testament. If we add to this the evident allusions to the Old Testament, we have something in one out of every ten verses referring back to the Old Testament—and allusions go back to every book without exception.

It is interesting to observe that in the entire New Testament there is not one explicit citation from the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, those books which the Roman Church declared to be part of the canon in the sixteenth century.

God was working! What was not part of the canon was omitted—left outside.

### The New Testament—God's Work

All the books of the New Testament bear the stamp of divine workmanship. The teachings of Jesus would have been lost had God not arranged to have them preserved in writing. But God was working, and before Jesus ascended to heaven He promised His apostles the supernatural help they would need to compose the books which would complete God's written message for men. "The Holy Spirit," He promised them, "shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Nothing less than the Holy Spirit of God

(Continued on page 19)



# What Is Thought?

NO one has ever seen thought; we can only visualize the effect thought has upon us and others. Of one thing we may be sure, thought has an affinity for the physical.

Someone has this theory about thought: Every thought you develop sends an impulse to every tissue, every cell in your body. The body responds, and in this way thought results in physical expression. Without thought-expression there would be no voluntary physical action.

We cannot escape the effects of our thoughts upon our well-being; our life is what we think to make it.

Our character today is the sum total of the thoughts we have produced in the past. Our thoughts have created our habits and our habits have induced the circumstances we now endure. If we want to change our character, our habits, or our circumstances, then we must alter our thoughts and we will soon alter our lives. We must start to entertain thoughts that will build the life we most desire. What we think, we do.

Paul had some wonderful advice for the Philippians: "Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others. Think about all you can praise God for and be glad about" (Phil. 4:8, Living Bible).

The human mind will always set itself on *something* and Paul wished to be sure that the Philippians would set their minds on the right things. If a man thinks about something often enough and long enough, he reaches the stage where he cannot stop thinking about it. His thoughts will be, quite literally, in a groove out of which he cannot jerk them. It is therefore very important for a man to set his thoughts on fine things.

There is an analogy between the successful marksman and the successful thinker. The marksman with the rifle takes careful aim before firing a shot. He doesn't just fire at random hoping he will hit something that will bring him the prize. He desires to hit the bull's-eye; therefore, he knows that his aim must be accurate. The same thing is true of the successful thinker. Thinking at random will get him nowhere. He must aim his thoughts at a specific target.

A person may never have fired a rifle at a target before, but he knows that the rifle must be carefully aimed in order to "ring the bell." However,

just *aiming* never hit the target, either. There have been many people who were good "aimers"; they were always "aiming" to do this, and "aiming" to do that, but never got around to firing the shot. Others keep firing away without "aiming" at anything. They may hit something, but more times than not, they are not aware of it.

We must choose our target carefully, then load our minds with thoughts that will make the right impression. Our thoughts are our ammunition. How we direct our thinking will determine whether we hit the target or not.

There are many different types of thoughts: constructive, inventive, creative, optimistic, stimulative, and many other positive types. There are also negative types: destructive, pessimistic, hateful, evil thoughts. A person must choose carefully the thoughts he wishes to entertain. Remember, positive thoughts tend to bring much happiness to us and others, adding to our pleasure of life. Negative thoughts tend to result in a discord vibration that will deteriorate the body and mind.

If we indulge in careless, wishful thinking, we will express a careless disorganized life. We are the ruling master over our processes of mind. We have intelligence with which to control our thoughts, so we must direct the production of creative thoughts. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

To be a success, we must be success-minded. Our thoughts will be transmitted to physical expression and we will soon find ourselves on the way up. Keep this image ever before you, expect to win, and you are sure to see yourself on the way up.

We can literally think ourselves into the Kingdom. To do so we must set our goal, load our mind with success-thoughts (the Bible is full of them), then put these thoughts into action, pressing until we have reached our goal.

The heart is a garden where thought-flowers grow,  
The thoughts that we think are the seeds that we sow;  
Each kind, loving thought bears a kind, loving deed,  
While a thought that is selfish is just like a weed.

We must watch what we think the livelong day,  
And pull out the weed-thoughts and throw them away,  
And plant loving seed-thoughts so thick in a row  
There will be no more room for the weed-thoughts to grow.



*This is the sixth in a series  
of articles on the coming  
MILLENNIUM.*

*"... When thy judgments are  
in the earth, the inhabitants of  
the world will learn  
righteousness"  
—Isaiah 26:9*

*"And many nations shall come,  
and say, Come,  
and let us go up to the mountain  
of the Lord, and to the house  
of the God of Jacob;  
and he will teach us of his ways,  
and we will walk  
in his paths"  
—Micah 4:2*

*"And all thy children shall be  
taught of the Lord;  
and great shall be the  
peace of thy children"  
—Isaiah 54:13*

# A Thousand Years of Learning

ONE of the major departments of the new government will be education, and its programs will be active worldwide. There will be education for all—old and young, great and small. There will be education for the young immortals, and there will be education for the vast populace and their children.

## Education for Mortals

Perhaps the greatest single task of the new government will be re-education.

Close to half of all people on earth today are illiterate. Many of them are so ignorant that it would be impossible to teach them anything about God or salvation without first giving them some elementary instruction. At the very onset this problem will be solved, for God will have all His people informed. It is His purpose that all shall know what, why, how and wherefore about the new arrangements, and that each person shall be informed of his own duties and responsibilities.

But the illiterates will not be the only people to educate. Today's educated will find themselves ill-prepared for life in the New World without a period of serious study and training. For centuries men have centered education around themselves and their concepts and ideas. For centuries men have viewed the universe and God Himself from a faulty, human perspective. People have been trained in a false approach to knowledge and have developed a false sense of values. To them, much that is truth appears as fiction, and God's ways seem like foolishness, so distorted is their thinking. This mis-education holds modern minds in captivity.

Before mankind can seek God and learn His ways, their minds will have to be re-directed, away from men and toward God. Even the basic concepts upon which much science today is built will have to change. Education in the New World will mean a total conversion of men's minds, a re-orientation, a re-directing, a complete change of persuasions. It will be no small nor simple task. And it will be possible only under the superior authority and power of the new government.

But wherever there is good material which can be trained and used, God will find it and see that it is developed. No one will be denied the development of his fullest potential.

Millennial education will be strikingly different from education

today. First, it will teach with authority. No counter-ideas will be tolerated; the purpose of education will not be to teach men and women to think their own thoughts and develop their own ideas but to think as God and Christ and the new administration thinks and to learn the patterns of truth and righteousness. It will be education such as our world has never had before, and we can be sure all will not be willing pupils. But rebellious minds, unwilling to learn the new way, will not be tolerated. Christ and His saints will brook no opposition. If any refuse to cooperate, they will simply be dismissed from the scene of action. To be permitted to live during the Golden Age will be a sacred privilege not to be treated lightly, and those who do not honor and appreciate it will lose it. When anyone wonders what is right or wrong, "thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21). If a person heeds the admonition and does what is right, he lives on in happiness and blessing; if he refuses to listen, he proves himself unusable material, and dies; it is as simple and straightforward as that.

There doubtless will be people who will refuse to accept the new patterns of thought and will attempt to broadcast their disbelief. A certain scientist today is said to have had proved to his satisfaction that evolution is not the right solution to the origin of all things. He was willing to acknowledge the evidence, but would not change. "All my life," he said, "has been devoted to science and philosophy as based on evolution. I am continually in contact with scientists; I have absorbed that atmosphere completely, and I am utterly unable to disbelieve it, even though you disprove it." Such is the obstinacy of human nature—a sad fact; but such will find no sympathy in Millennial schools. All will have to adopt the new thinking of the new administration or be removed. Does this sound like dictatorship? It is, but it is righteous; it is just, and for the good of all. It is the only way to progress.

## *The Gospel Spreads*

One immediate result of the new educational program will be the universal spread of the gospel. Many passages in the Bible describe this:

No portion of the earth will remain untouched. "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9). Again, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

A certain major prophet describes the wide-spreading knowledge of God. He represents the knowledge by an ever-increasing stream of water which proceeds from the sanctuary (an evidence that it is *divine* knowledge). The volume of water increases rapidly, not from any side streams or tributaries but from its own central, sacred, life-giving source.

As Ezekiel saw it in vision, a man with a measuring line noted the steady increase. He measured the water at a distance of some fifteen hundred feet beyond the point of its emergence from the temple, and the water was ankle deep. Another fifteen hundred feet from the temple, it reached to the knees. Another fifteen hundred

*"And thine ears shall hear  
a word behind thee, saying,  
This is the way, walk ye in it,  
when ye turn to the right hand,  
and when ye turn to the left"*  
—Isaiah 30:21

*"For the earth shall be full of  
the knowledge of the Lord,  
as the waters cover the sea"*  
—Isaiah 11:9

*"And they shall teach no more  
every man his neighbour,  
and every man his brother,  
saying, Know the Lord:  
for they shall all know me,  
from the least of them  
unto the greatest of them,  
saith the Lord"*  
—Jeremiah 31:34



feet, and it was up to the waist. Another fifteen hundred feet and there was enough water to swim in—the water was everywhere! It was “a river that could not be passed over” (Ezek. 47:1-5).

Just so will the knowledge of God's law spread until everyone everywhere on earth will be acquainted with it.

The prophet Isaiah and Micah tell of some eager students and what they will do and say. “And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Mic. 4:2).

Eventually education in the basics of the Lord's knowledge will no longer be needed, for all shall know. We read, “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord” (Jer. 31:34).

## *More for Mortals*

But the spreading of the gospel to all corners of the earth will be only the first preliminary of Millennial education. The possibilities for learning beyond this will be all but limitless. Those who submit to Christ's authority will still have much to learn, much every way. They will have opportunity, first of all, to take pre-immortal training. In the course of such training they will learn the full scope of God's plan and what God requires of them to merit life beyond their allotted millennial span. Besides the essentials, there are sure to be interesting courses, such as the Lives of the Ancient Prophets, the Twelve Apostles, and the Life of the King Himself! There may even be courses in the most effective methods of self-mastery and self-discipline. No millennial mortal need find life fruitless and without direction. Training will be intense—and fruitful; thousands and millions will be fitted for life in the glorious eternal world that lies just beyond.

Besides the training in the basics of character-perfecting, there will be training for special positions of service or administration during the Millennium. The possibilities for learning will be limitless indeed.

“There will be an ever-expanding scope of knowledge to be gained by Millennium citizens. And they will experience a surge of mental energies to match their assignments. Millennium think-power will get a boost as a result of the mind's being coupled with vibrantly healthy bodies. Fear,

tension, and sickness war against the perfect operation of the mind. When sin is gone, the mind will blossom. This new think-power will bring giant leaps in the fields of communication, transportation, energy, and agriculture.”\* Such is the best of mortal speculation!

## *Millennial Teachers*

Who will be the teachers?

Angels will accompany Christ when He returns to earth; angels will be present at the Judgment of the saints; angels will attend the coronation of the King; angels will be present at the Marriage of the Lamb. Shall we exclude them from the Millennium classroom? Certainly not! (Matt. 16:27; Dan. 7:10; Rev. 19:6-8).

It is very possible that many of the new immortals, the one hundred forty-four thousand co-rulers with Christ, will also be employed as teachers of the mortals. Fully qualified, they will find delight in sharing their experiences and knowledge with the new generation, imparting to them the learning that will teach them how to live both through the Millennium and on into Eternity.

The book of Revelation supports this possibility by assigning a very special title to these very special people: they shall be “kings and priests” (Rev. 5:10); they shall be “priests of God and of Christ” (Rev. 20:6). Isaiah long before gave them this same classification: “Ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God” (Isa. 61:6). The priests' function is not to govern but to teach. Many of the saints may be full-time teachers, for great will be the need and great will be their resources.

It is also possible that those of the mortals who prove more advanced in their own training will be promoted to positions of teaching their fellow-mortals. Says the prophet Isaiah again, “I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord” (Isa. 66:21).

All teachers during the New Age will be recognized and visible—in contrast to many of the “silent” and “unseen” instructors and protectors of the saints during the first six thousand years. As the Prophet says, the teachers will no more be “removed into a corner,” but “thine eyes shall see thy teachers” (Isa. 30:20). What a sight!

## *Education for Immortals*

Will earth's newly glorified immortals have

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\* George Otis, *Millennium Man*. Published by Bible Voice, Copyright 1974. Used by permission.

reached the limit of their education by the time of the Millennium? By no means! The time and opportunity for learning shall have just begun. A whole new reservoir of knowledge will just have been opened up to them, and they will be eager to drink. The entire Millennium will be time for just the first sampling of real learning!

A current religious thinker has done some interesting speculating on Millennial Education for immortals. He writes, speaking from the viewpoint of the immortals:

"Angels will be holding classes for the young immortals. Maybe we'll be taking courses like Planet Management, Secrets of the Universe, Celestial Music, Universal Laws, Cosmic Energy, or Celestial Travel. Yes, it could be. . . . I can hardly wait to enroll in those classes where the Lord will be sharing deep secrets with us. By then we will have proven trustworthy to receive a firsthand unlocking of many of His great mysteries. . . . Because we will be joint-heirs with Jesus for eternity, such knowledge is essential for us to carry out our designated assignments."\*

What opportunities! What assignments! Oh, who will be there?

• NOTE: *If you are interested in these classes, you had better take your present spiritual studies very seriously. You have been exhorted, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).*

*Accelerate your intake of the Word of God in the time that is left you in this age. God gives privileges only to those who qualify for them. Right now you must be preparing to pass the entrance exams into the institute of higher learning. If you would participate in millennium classes, be sure you are grounding yourself solidly in His Word now.*

*(To be Continued Next Issue)*

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"Ye Have Need of Patience"—Heb. 10:36

The Greek word rendered "patience" in the New Testament literally means "to stay" or "remain under." It often signifies endurance. In a general way the word may mean "the ability to wait."

Patience is just waiting; and waiting often without knowing any reason for the delay.

Why do you need patience? Because God is ripening and mellowing you. God wants you to be "perfect," that is, mature. He wants you to be "entire," that is, no part lacking (James 1:4).

Just as the October sun flavors the apple, so the grace of patience gives us the "savour of life."

September, 1977

## Fruitful Fragments



*In trying times, don't quit trying.*

*If you are always dwelling on trouble, change your address.*

*Perhaps you can't be a star, but you need not be a cloud.*

*Recognizing a fault is the first step toward correcting it.*

*There is nothing so easy but that it becomes difficult when done with reluctance.*

*When we truly give ourselves to the Lord, all other giving comes easy.*

*God does not give any gift to His children for selfish display.*

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## None of Self and All of Thee!

*Oh! with bitter pain and sorrow  
I recall that ugly "me"  
That proudly said to Jesus,  
"All of self, and none of Thee."*

*Yet in mercy still He called me,  
And He showed what I could be,  
And my wistful heart said faintly,  
"Some of self, and some of Thee."*

*But His patience lingered longer  
And His kindness I could see  
As His chastening hand directed,  
"Less of self and more of Thee!"*

*When at last my "self" is conquered,  
I shall shout my deepest plea:  
"Lord forever Thine be my will,  
NONE of self and ALL of Thee!"*

# Owls, Pelicans & Sparrows

SOMEONE has said that a text out of context is a pretext. If that be true, let us take these words of the Psalmist as a pretext:

"I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top" (Psalm 102:6-7). The Psalmist used the three figures—owls, pelicans, and sparrows—to picture his solitude in trouble before the Lord helped him. We want to use these three figures to point out some characteristics too often found among those who profess to be Christians.

## The Owl Christian

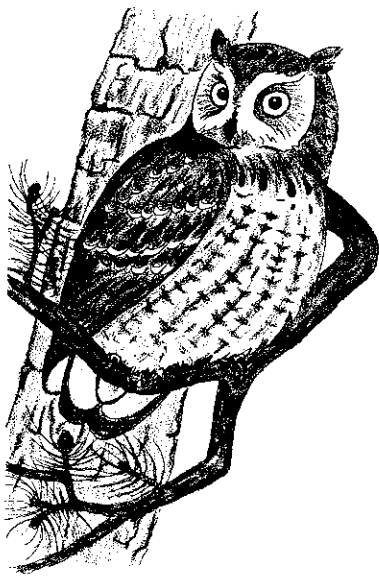
An owl is a sad creature. Its mournful hoot in the dead of night never cheered anyone. It is not a companion of sunlight and joy. It is rather the epitome of dour mournfulness and the utter absence of joy.

How many times we have been like the owl, when everything did not go just to please us. We act as though we had never heard the glorious word, "The joy of the Lord is your strength"; or that gracious command, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice." We look as though we were weaned on a lemon, when we have every cause to rejoice. No wonder some people think that becoming a Christian is the same as saying good-by to joy.

Who in the whole world has greater cause for joy than we have! So many people are searching the world over for something that will make life worth living. We have it! Should we not sing and shout for joy? Should not our glorious hope shine in our faces?

The life that is filled to overflowing with the true joy of the Lord is the life that will draw others to the way of Christ. Honey catches more flies than vinegar. Someone is seeking for what we have to give. Nothing will be more convincing to them than the life of heavenly joy lived in the week-day valley, day in and day out, through good times and bad.

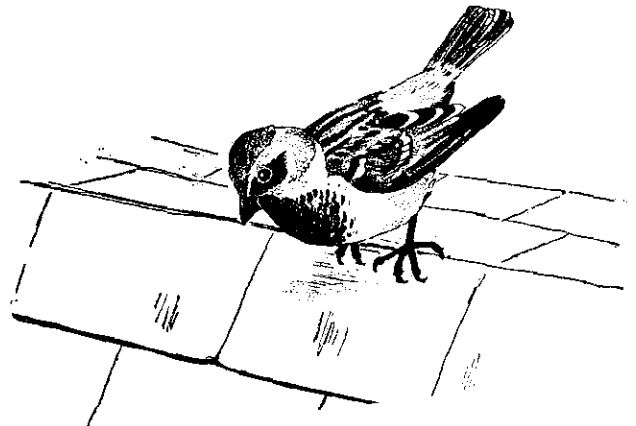
Do not be an owl! "Rejoice in the Lord"!



## The Sparrow Christian

Now let us consider the sparrow that sits alone on the housetop. The summer has ended, and rough winds shake the once-green boughs of the trees. Other birds are flying to warmer climates. Now on a bleak, gray autumn day, one lone sparrow is perched on the housetop. No other sign of life can be seen. Here is a picture of melancholy loneliness.

The true Christian need never be like this sparrow alone on the housetop. What a pity that we should ever attempt it! We need to do more com-





muning with God, more fellowshiping with his saints, whose lives have been recorded for our instruction and inspiration. We need to help others, and be helped. Our spiritual lives are sure to suffer if we cut ourselves off from any source of strength that God has provided us.

The sparrow alone on the housetop is missing the joy of fellowship, the stimulus of responsibility, the encouragement of accomplishment and the added strength of union. He stays away from the fire, and—then he wonders why he is growing cold!

We are not alone in our desire to please God. We are not alone in our work for His eternal Kingdom. We are like an army, fighting to win. And if we would win, we must keep in contact. We need all the help our allies can give us. As soon as we isolate ourselves, we will begin to lose the freshness of our hope, the keen edge of our zeal, and before long we will not be worthy to be called Christian.

## The Pelican Christian

The pelican has one outstanding feature that is always plainly visible. It is his big mouth. No one knows how much trouble has been caused because there have been too many pelicans in our religious circles.

What about you and me? Have we ever been pelicans?

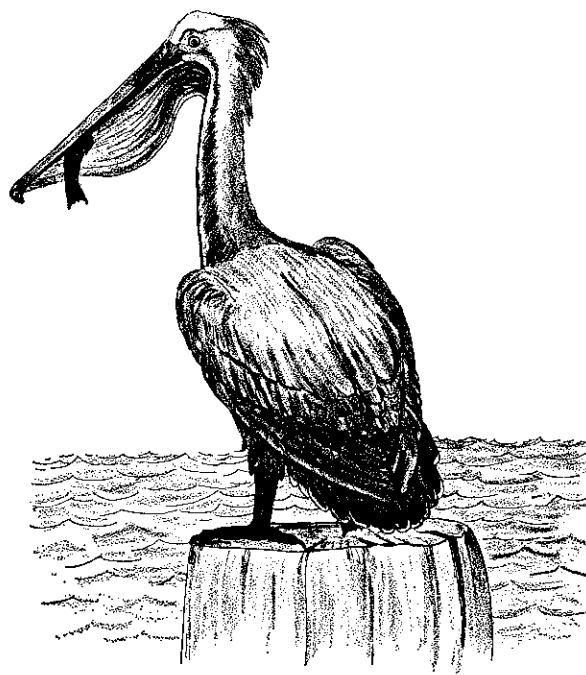
There should be a sensible ratio between the use of the mouth and the use of the ears. Too often we shift our brain into neutral and let our tongue idle. Too often we have gone about shooting from careless lips barbed words which can never be recovered. Too often we have been so lavish with

words of criticism and downright stingy in giving encouragement. What would happen if we made it our daily habit to encourage at least one person every day?

We shall have to give account for our words someday, and the pelican who is continually speaking will have much to account for.

Real wisdom is demonstrated in saying nothing that is untrue, unkind, or unnecessary.

Do not be a lone sparrow! Do not be a too-talkative pelican. And do not be a dour-faced owl. God has called us for special service, and it will require our utmost effort, devotion and enthusiasm.



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## Real Dedication Is . . .

Being dedicated to serving God is not the end of one's doing God's will, it is only the beginning. It marks the start of a happy life serving God with the future prospect of living forever in God's Kingdom. A dedicated Christian should always have the attitude of Jesus Christ, who said, "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).

If we take our troubles to God at night and leave them with Him, and then begin the next day, surely that will make a good beginning to our day. I do believe that each day should make a difference in our life, each day there ought to be a change in

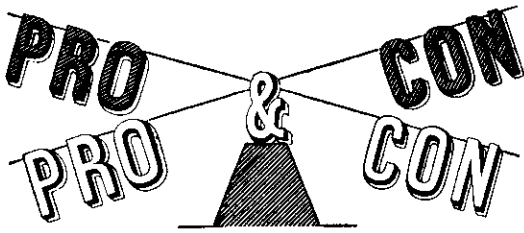
us, a change for the better. If we find there is something in our lives which should not be there then that is just the thing we can bring before God until we can gain a victory over self. We do not expect to be perfect in a day, it means hard work and sacrifice; but it can be done if we are only willing to put God first and trust in Him.

Men like Abraham show us that God's promises can be trusted. He left his homeland, set out at the age of seventy-five for a destination unknown.

Abram was ninety-nine when God appeared to him again, informing him that he was to be the father of many nations as well.

God will not fail to keep any of His promises—we can be sure of that. ●●

—H. L., Worksop, England



### *A Column for Open Discussion*

*All our readers do not agree with us. If you are among those who differ on some point, write us your views and we will publish them, together with Scriptural comment. Our policy is the Apostle's injunction: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."*

#### • HOW SEVERE will God be?

"In your April 1977 issue of the Megiddo Message, I read with particular interest your article on the Millennium, and in especial the section entitled 'Recipients of the Partial Reward.' My comments refer to this article as well as to the contents in general of the 'Pro & Con' feature in that same issue.

"As for the section on 'partial reward' in the Millennium article, your Scriptural foundations for what you say about recipients of the so-called 'partial reward' (which appears to be a reward partial to everyone else) impress me far less than your apparent great talent for delineating tragic scenarios.

"To digress on tragedy a little bit, now—it exorcises deep sorrow from our hearts, when we get involved with it. But I think that you, sirs, come closer to extorting sorrow from our hearts with your Millennium article than to exorcising it. Therefore I want to exhort whoever wrote it to be of better cheer: it ain't all as bad as what you say."

*C. L. A., Midland, Michigan*

Our correspondent apparently feels we are painting the picture of divine retribution altogether too dark, that God is not nearly so severe or the fate of the less-than-perfect servants nearly so tragic as we believe.

We have neither talent, passion nor interest for delineating what our friend calls "tragic scenarios." Our only desire and purpose is to speak the plan of God faithfully and unreservedly, as we find it revealed in His written Word.

Our correspondent seems to share the view of the vast majority of clergymen today, that God is "sugar and spice and everything nice." They feel that God originally planned a utopian world for all mankind, but that Adam sinned and God was so outraged that He damned the whole human race on account of Adam's sin. Then He had second thoughts. In His love He decided to send His Son to die as a sacrifice to appease His wrath, thereby freeing the whole human race from the penalty of sin, if they would only accept Christ as their Saviour. There are slight differences in the angle of interpretation, but such is the general belief. Jesus loves you, bled for you, died for you; accept Him as your personal Saviour, and your future life is assured. Many a hymn reflects this teaching, such as the following:

**"Redeemed—how I love to proclaim it!  
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;  
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,  
His child, and forever, I am."**

This plan is proclaimed ad infinitum from nearly every pulpit, Christian broadcasting network, and religious TV program in the world.

A most imaginative plan, it is comforting. It is pleasing, it is satisfying, it is relaxing. It is universally accepted. If true, it is the biggest bargain ever offered mankind. If it is not true, it is the biggest hoax ever perpetrated on an unsuspecting world.

We say flatly that it is *not true*. It is unscriptural; it is not worthy of an all-wise Creator.

By this we do not mean to infer that God is not a loving, merciful Father. He most certainly exercises the greatest forgiveness and long-suffering to His erring children. But He does punish those who disregard His just and righteous laws—not, of course, with hellfire as the old time New England preachers were wont to threaten their wayward parishioners.

To picture only the pleasant side of a given situation and ignore or at least minimize the unpleasant side is grossly unfair. Unfortunately it is the popular thing to do. Human nature tends to respond to the attractive and shun the disagreeable. But when our future life is at stake, it is imperative that we face the issue squarely.

If a patient near death from cancer was told by his doctor that he was in good health and had nothing to worry about, it would be a very comforting thought. But it would certainly not be true. And if he could go to another physician who would tell him the facts and prescribe a medicine which would effect a cure, would he not be foolish to disregard the advice of the second doctor?

God offers a magnificent reward for faithful service. Our correspondent seems to agree here. But what about the other side of the coin? If the Bible means anything, it pictures a time of trouble "such as never was" at the time of the end, after "Michael" stands up (Daniel 12:1). This is not a very comforting experience to look forward to. But are we to disregard this prophecy and pretend it does not exist?

In writing a book, it is frequently the practice to summarize the subject in the last chapter. Without going into the many, many passages in the Bible which foretell the punishments that are coming on the world and the unfaithful, let us consider a few in the last book of the Old Testament and in the last book of the New Testament.

First let us look at Malachi, chapter 3:1-3, 5, and 4:1, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. . . . And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages . . . and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts." Also Malachi 4:1, "For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

These texts are balanced by others which show God's goodness and mercy to those who submit and serve Him, such as Malachi 3:16-17: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Also Malachi 4:2: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." A careful reading of these two chapters cannot help but impress one with the two aspects of God's nature. Goodness and severity are what Paul called it (Rom. 11:22). Here is no "pie in the sky" formula,

but serious, very serious consequences for those who take God's law lightly.

Now let us consider what Jesus had to say to John in Revelation, after He had spent some time with the Father and had had opportunity to receive added information.

To the church of Ephesus he wrote: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil. . . . Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:3-5). And to the church at Pergamos: "Repent: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (2:16). And to the church at Thyatira: "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (2:22-23). And to the church at Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16). Again Jesus says: The "great day of his wrath" shall come; and "who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:15-17).

Here are more judgments: "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (Rev. 18:7-8).

Now for the other side of the picture. There will be an abundance of blessing for the righteous and upright. The same churches that were promised punishment for their sinfulness were also promised blessings if they repented and turned. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name" (Rev. 3:18). Again, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (3:21). "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (2:10). "To him



that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written" (2:17). "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (2:7).

There are other blessings promised in Revelation: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (21:4). Also, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (22:1-5).

Here we have both situations vividly portrayed, God's severity and God's mercy and blessing; the curse for disobedience and the blessing for obedience.

It would be most comforting and pleasing to stress the agreeable aspects of the plan of God and minimize the disagreeable aspects, but this would be a gross distortion of God's plan. In effect, we would be taking away from the words of the prophecy of this book, and God would then take away our "part out of the book of life and out of the holy city" (Rev. 22:18-19).

**"If you really love Christ deeply, even if, like those receiving a partial reward in your schematology, you have not completed your works or your service before you die, you will not be lost. Christ is The Forgiver, after all. And He will forgive your uncompleted service, if your death was out of your control [if you die a natural death]. What do you think?"**

First let me say that what we think, or what you think or I think does not matter at all. The question is, What does God say? What you propose is a most comforting thought, but the big question is, Can it be proven from the Bible?

Our organization is dedicated to proving all things from the Bible. If we can read in the Bible where a person who experiences accidental or natural death with his work unfinished is forgiven by Jesus and receives the reward of eternal life, we most certainly will believe it. We would be very foolish **not** to believe it.

Let us look at the evidence, keeping in mind that the Bible is divinely inspired and must present only one harmonious plan of salvation.

Jeremiah 13:15-16, 23: "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. . . . Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." The time arrives when change is impossible—and God's forgiveness is also impossible to obtain at such a time.

James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." A broken law stands between him and God, and between him and forgiveness, for we cannot be forgiven of sins we do not forsake. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

In Jesus' own parable of the Wheat and the Tares, at the time of the harvest He tells the reapers to gather together first the tares and bind them into bundles to burn them, but to gather the wheat into his barn (Matt. 13:30). And in verse 42 He says that all which "do iniquity" shall be cast "into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

If Christ is to forgive all uncompleted work, why any need for tares to be destroyed? Why not just convert the tares to wheat? Then all could go into His barn as wheat!

We would be delighted to find Scriptural proof for the theory that Christ would forgive all uncompleted work, but we just cannot find it.

**"Someone has said, sirs, that to pick up a pin with pure love for Christ is service of excellence when compared to grandiose works lacking fervor or understanding."**

Here we will agree. Building magnificent churches, wearing long robes and ornate costumes, worshiping via elaborate ritual is not serving Jesus. He was meek and humble and expects His followers to be the same. He does require a work to be performed by each of His followers. ●●

*We will continue this discussion in our next issue. If any of our readers have any comment, do not hesitate to write.*

## God Is Working!

(Continued from page 8)

could have met the needs of the four evangelists in their task of recounting all the essential teachings of Jesus, reproducing His words, and choosing the most significant events for the blessing and benefit of centuries to come, at the time passing over numerous less important details still fresh and vivid in their minds (John 20:30; 21:25). By the Holy Spirit they were also able to recount facts and events which were unwitnessed, else how could we know of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, or His struggle in the garden of Gethsemane?

God was working—for us!

As for the other books of the New Testament, the apostles could never have written all that they wrote without the aid of divine inspiration. It was the work of God, and was done by His power. The promise was fulfilled: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me"—not only in person, but also by pen! (Acts 1:8).

Paul received his knowledge by direct and unique revelation. The Lord gave him a special appointment at the time of his conversion. In the words of Ananias, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard"—again the witness was to be both personal and written (Acts 22:14-15). Thus Paul could write: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12).

Again, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, testifying to the divine nature of his message: "When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thess. 2:13). As a consequence, he who should reject the word of the apostles, Paul warned, was guilty of rejecting God (I Thess. 4:8).

Even during the lifetime of the apostles, their words were recognized as of God and on a par with the Old Testament scriptures. This was Peter's attitude, who said of Paul's writings that there were among them some things "hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures" (II Pet. 3:16)—showing plainly that he placed Paul's writings alongside the prophets of old who spoke for God. And Peter, when he wrote this,

was writing by the power of the Holy Spirit.

All the writing, from Genesis through Revelation, was done under God's supervision. It was the work of God, as Peter explained: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21).

### Written—for Our Learning

All the books of the New Testament were written before the end of the apostolic age, and during the next century were widely read, discussed and disseminated. Deviations crept into the teachings of the Church, but none found their way into the sacred Text. The Holy Spirit had been withdrawn but God was still working, overseeing, directing; thus books which might have been advantageous to the men who handled them were not admitted, and books which condemned the very things some of them were doing *were* admitted—a sure evidence that a higher power was directing. The men who compiled and copied and handled the Bible were only instruments in the hand of God. The book was—and *is*—His.

All this—and for *our benefit*! God is working.

What shall be our attitude toward this divine work and its supreme authority? Shall we regard it lightly, or criticize, or array one writer against another, seeking disharmony? Never! For "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). It is not a take-it-or-leave-it book; it is living, effectual, penetrating. It is the Word of God, which judges even our feelings and innermost thoughts. To set ourselves up as its critic is not our prerogative; *it judges us*. It is God working.

The Bible is divine inspiration available to us today. How else could we know the mind of God?

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, and by the Holy Spirit he wrote these words: "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. 3:1-6). Observe that the knowledge of God was imparted to the apostles and prophets "by the spirit," and the Gentiles could

partake of the same "by the gospel." Two different means of instruction are specified: one by open revelation, the second by the "gospel" which men of God received and delivered.

And so this divine inspiration comes to us: "Whereby when ye read, ye may understand" (Eph. 3:4). Of ourselves we can know nothing of God or His plan or His law, any more than the men of old could. We must be taught, and God has preserved the writings of His inspired men of old and given them to us so that we may learn and understand them and live by them, and someday be "partakers of his promise in Christ" (v. 6).

Can we think for a moment that God is not working for us?

### God Works . . . Through Prayer

Within His book are other timeless methods of working—which are as much a part of God's program today as they were in former times. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). As we sincerely seek God, as we live in His fear and serve Him in truth, we can know that He will hear our prayer and will help in whatever way His wisdom decrees. Prayer has been an open communication between God and His people in all ages, and its results have been far-reaching: "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16). And there is no time limit on the promise. Anytime, anywhere we can communicate with God. The only "if" is on our part—"If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us"; "if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth"; "if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (I John 5:14; John 9:31; II Chron. 7:14).

We should learn to depend more and more upon this divine provision for our needs. The fact that we may come "boldly unto the throne of grace" and "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16) is gracious evidence that God is willing and ready to be our constant friend, if only we will come to Him.

### God Works . . . Through Angels

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). Here is another promise without time limit. Angels minister to those who "shall be heirs of salvation," whether they live in the first

or the last of the six thousand-year days. He will never leave or forsake them in any age. For "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7). What a sublime promise! Angels ever present! Silent and unseen, but guiding, protecting, arranging circumstances so that no temptation befalls any God-fearing man or woman which will prove more than he or she can bear triumphantly; silent and unseen, but an ever-present help in trouble; silent and unseen, but ever arranging for the discipline and complete development and perfection of each child-to-be of the King.

### We Are Not Forgotten

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," is the divine promise to all God's people, and "never" is, thank God, a *long time*. It reaches from now clear through into eternity. God has worked, and He is still working in our behalf. And if we make ourselves a part of His plan, we shall find that He will work for us through all the ages to come! If we belong to Him, we are not forgotten; we are part of His work.

Right now God is working in behalf of those who shall be heirs of salvation. Indeed, the whole disposing of their lives is in His hands. Right now wills are being broken, and characters are being refined; understandings are growing deeper, and holy longings are becoming more acute.

God is working.

Right now someone is developing under His discipline. Someone is becoming more and more sensitive to the touch of sin. Someone is seeking to do God's will in ever-deepening sincerity of heart. Someone is preparing earnestly for a place in the new order that is just ahead. Someone is watching with keenest eye every thought, every word, every act, every motive. Someone is doing it, for some will be those "blessed" servants "whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching" (Luke 12:37). Someone is doing it.

Is it you?

Is it I?

Meanwhile God is working in other ways. He is seeing that no circumstance arises which could prevent the completion of our God-assigned task. He is superintending the affairs of men so that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. He is ordering the events of men and nations so that the stage will be right when He begins His work, His great open work among men.

But right now the unseen work goes on. Right now He is impressing some heart out of the depths



of His law. Right now He is showing someone wherein he errs, so that that person may turn and do right before it is too late. "If in any thing ye be otherwise minded," is the divine promise of the inspired writer, "God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil. 3:15).

Are our hearts humble and open to these divine impressions? Being receptive *could* mean the difference between eternal life and eternal death when we stand before the Judgment seat of Christ.

Right now God is working. He is listening attentively to the prayers of those who are seeking Him and praying according to His will. He is their ever-present help, and His angels are watching over them, recording their lives—their gains and their losses, their victories and their failures—against the day when the books will be opened and every one's record will be read.

Now God works silently; someday soon He will "roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel 3:16).

Thus will begin God's greatest work in behalf of the heirs of salvation.

When that Day comes we shall want above all else to be one for whom God works. How tragic then if we must hear Him say to us: "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. 1:24-26).

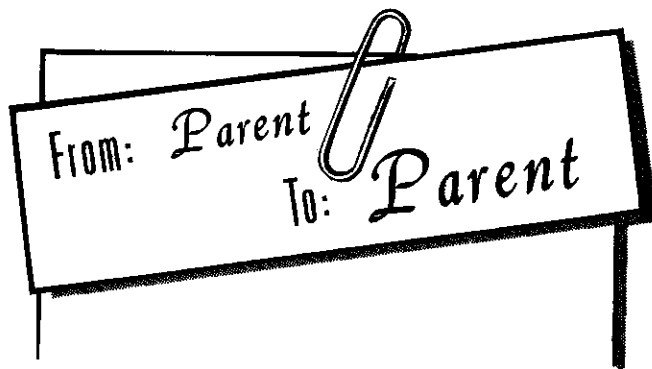
One of God's chief means of working now is through human instruments to guide, direct, teach and correct. How we should crave this loving help from one another; for if we would be without guile when we stand before the throne of Christ, we must *see* ourselves and *correct* ourselves *now*. If we refuse this important work of God in our behalf now, we shall find in that coming Day that we have refused the greatest boon He had to offer—even eternal life!

God is working now.

Let us open our eyes to see every evidence of it above us, around us and within us. And let us accept and acknowledge His work in all seriousness. He whose wisdom never mistakes, whose might never decays, and whose justice never punishes the innocent or rewards the guilty—we shall need Him as never before to work for us in the Day that is just ahead, and on through the endless cycles of eternity.

Someday soon we shall find ourselves face to face with immortal beings, to whom every thought and intent of our heart will be as open as the lines on our faces. Someday we shall stand in the presence

of the great King Himself. And when we stand there with the record of our lives before us, shall we look back upon this very hour and say with regret, "God was in this place, and I knew it not"? or shall we hear from Him those sublime words of approval: "Thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." ●●



## Family Worship-Time

"**M**OM, look!" Mary, our five-year-old, was excited. I turned in the direction of her pointing finger, and then I saw it—our very first morning glory in glorious bloom. I smiled with satisfaction; my watchful care had paid off at last, and we would be enjoying this small, but beautiful part of God's handiwork for many weeks to come.

I had so enjoyed watching the vines grow, and hadn't spared any effort in bringing the children's attention to them so that they could share my appreciation, not only of the morning glories but of all the growing things around our home—the flowers, the trees, and the plants in the vegetable garden.

We have always been anxious for our children to love and appreciate the beauties and wonders of nature, and with their natural curiosity they haven't needed much encouragement. It's one way they can become acquainted with God. They learn to reverence the mighty Being who creates such beauty and wonder and all the mysteries of nature.

But we don't want to stop there. What we need to teach our children about God goes far beyond the evidence of His works in nature. God wants us to instruct our children in the things of the Bible—its people, their struggles and hopes, and its outline of God's plan for this earth. We are to teach

these things to our children, speaking of them when we sit in our homes, when we walk by the way, when we lie down, and when we rise up (see Deut. 11:13-20).

That is why at our house we have set up a time each day for special family study and worship. We read Bible storybooks, read out of various translations of the Bible, recite verses, pray together and sing. But the crowning touch, especially as the children get older, is talking about God and the future. Through this time together the children can learn of their parents' convictions, as they get answers to their questions and help with their special problems.

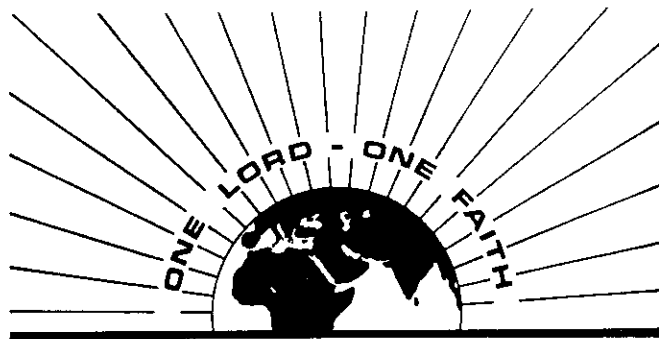
This time spent in worshiping God together means a lot to us. It has real family binding power. It is certain to have a big effect on the children as they grow up, providing them with a good foundation on which to build their own characters.

Some may feel that the pace of today's living is too rushed and too hectic; how can we find time for family worship? But how can we afford not to *take* the time? Setting aside as little as ten minutes a day will be well worth the effort, especially if we remind the children of the things they learn at other times during the day. A few minutes every day set aside is insurance against our neglecting this vital part of the childrens' upbringing.

Where do we find the few minutes for family worship? We had trouble at our house, until we started keeping a close watch of just exactly *how* we were spending all the moments of our days. These are some of the things we asked ourselves: How long did I take reading that interesting feature article in the newspaper (that didn't really have to be read at all!)—five minutes? And did I really need to talk to my friend on the telephone for half an hour? Couldn't the necessary topics have been covered in ten minutes? Or what about that long conversation I had in the backyard with my neighbor—was it spiritually upbuilding, or did we speak only of inconsequential things? And was it needful for me to browse around in the department store for twenty minutes "just looking"? Plain and simple, how much time did I spend *not* to the glory of God?

Do you know what we discovered? If we weed out those things of no account, those things we waste so many minutes on during the day, we have more than enough time left over for family worship.

We will never regret the time we spend teaching our children about God. Like the morning glories that bud and blossom under a watchful eye, so will our children benefit from the time we spend teaching them to know, love, believe, and serve God. ●●



## The Devil of the Bible

### Part 2

*So many people like to have some outside "power" to blame for their misdeeds that just about every religion believes in some sort of devil as a superhuman power responsible for all evil. But the Bible does not support this idea. It places the blame for evil where it belongs: on the evildoer. We are devils when we do wrong. Let's learn more about it.*

THE Bible teaches that the heart of man, his own evil imaginings, is the source of evil. The man or woman who does evil or promotes evil is the devil—not *possessed* of a devil or overpowered by a devil; but such a one is a devil. Jesus called Peter "Satan" when Peter opposed Him. "Get thee behind me, Satan," He said (Matt. 16:23). Jesus also said, speaking of one of His own apostles: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). He said plainly, "One of you is a devil."

Men have always felt more comfortable when they had someone or something to blame for their misdeeds besides themselves. They have always sought some outside source of evil. But Jesus taught that sin comes from within the heart of man. "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him," He said, but "from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23).

The prophet Jeremiah wrote that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"—here is the source of deceit (Jer. 17:9).

The author of Ecclesiastes knew that "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in

their heart while they live" (Eccl. 9:3). There is no devil to blame.

In the days before the Flood, 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" (Gen. 6:5). After the Flood, it was recorded that the "imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21)—there had been no change.

James clearly stated the process of sin's development and growth. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:14-15). It is a man's own lust, the desires of his own heart, that entice him and lead him into sin. The Bible gives no suggestion of any influence by a superhuman being or spirit creature beyond man's power to control.

Many churches believe they know the origin of their supposed "devil." They say he was "cast out of heaven." Once he was a bright shining angel, but he grew proud and rebelled, and so God cast him out for his rebellion, and he fell to the earth. They even know his name—Lucifer.

Now the Bible does tell about one named Lucifer. You can read about him in Isaiah 14. But the connection between Isaiah's Lucifer and their supposed "devil" who was "cast out of heaven" is entirely man's idea. There is nothing in Isaiah's words to suggest that Lucifer was ever an angel in heaven, nor is there anything to say he was or is the devil. And if he were literally cast out of "heaven," how did he chance to land on so small and obscure a planet as Earth?

In Isaiah 14, the Prophet was taking up "a proverb against the king of Babylon," by his own testimony (Isa. 14:4). It was the king of Babylon whom Isaiah was calling "Lucifer" in his proverb. It was the king of Babylon that was to fall from his kingly estate and pompous rulership. It was the king of Babylon of whom Isaiah wrote, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (14:11-12). It was the king of Babylon, not some monster or spirit of evil. Verse 16 shows even more clearly that this Lucifer was not a bright shining angel but a *man*. We read, "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?" The Lucifer of Isaiah's parable was a "man," not a fallen angel.

The devil as taught by theology does not stand the test of Scripture. And we can learn God's ideas only from His written Word. The devil we must fear and contend against is the tendency to evil

in our own deceitful hearts. It is our own evil desires that entice us to do wrong (Jas. 1:14).

It is our task now to "resist the devil" (Jas. 4:7). And how can we do this?

First we must recognize who he is—literally, ourselves, when we are tempted to do anything God forbids. To resist this temptation we need the armor God provides: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:11-17). Using these weapons, we shall be able to win over any evil that may assail us.

Another way to resist the devil is to arm ourselves with the mind of Christ, teach ourselves to think as Christ thought—about God, the future, and what we must do to be His people. "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (I Pet. 4:1). Christ did always the things that pleased His Father; and so must we. If we fill our mind with all that is "true, . . . honest, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . of good report" (Phil. 4:8), there will be no room for the devil. We resist the devil by "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

If we would share in Christ's coming Kingdom, we must use every weapon God has provided us now to subdue and conquer the devil that is within each of us, our own evil thoughts, our own lower nature, and bring all into subjection to the obedience of Christ. When we have done this, we will be able to say to every evil tendency that threatens, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and mean it. In this way we shall keep the devil under control, and win God's approval. ●●

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## True Friendship

*It is one of the severest tests of friendship to tell your friend of his faults. If you are angry with a man, or hate him, it is not hard to go to him and stab him with words; but so to love a man that you cannot bear to see the stain of sin upon him, and to speak painful truth through loving words—this is friendship. But few have such friends. Our enemies usually teach us what we are, at the point of the sword.*

—Selected.

# Our Readers Write...

## Fringe Benefits

I wonder if we have ever thought of the fringe benefits we have because we are striving to be Christians. There are many. Let me share a few to get us thinking about them.

**Crisis Support.** It is like an insurance policy because it covers both material and spiritual aid. Whenever there is a crisis, we can find comfort and aid in the Word of God and in our brothers and sisters in the faith.

**Better Appearance.** Have you ever noticed how a person seems to have an inner "light" which shines through when he has hope in Christ and the future?

**Physical Benefits.** Because they do not misuse their bodies, do not smoke or drink, and practice moderation in eating and working, Christians often live longer and healthier. And since they can rest in the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God," they have fewer worries and tensions.

**Security.** It is great being a Christian and experiencing the happiness that comes from solid confidence in the promises of God. There is security beyond anything in this world. I thank God, who makes it all possible.

—From a reader in Wisconsin

## You Get What You Give

I read recently of a vacationing minister who was asked to speak in a small church near where he was staying. The minister accepted the invitation gladly. And when the offering was taken during the service, the minister put in a dollar.

When the service was over, a church official gave the offering to the visiting minister as a token of appreciation for his help.

On the way back to the motel, his young son noticed that the amount of money was very small. He looked at his father and said, "You know, Dad, if you had put more in you would have gotten more out."

That is the way life is, especially our spiritual life. The more we put into it, the more we will get out. We will never get a "Well done" out of it unless we put a lot of well doing in.

—From a reader in Georgia

## The Battle Royal

When Elijah returns and prepares the way for Christ's return, this world will not welcome Him in the least, nor will the broad segment of man change. The privilege that we have of knowing the truth and the opportunity of gaining immortality with Christ is indeed the highest calling of this life. Nothing, absolutely nothing in this society can match it. I am just amazed, stunned and grateful beyond measure to be among the called-out ones of this age.

I have tried on occasion to impart this idea to others, but so many can't see any difference between sound doctrine and the doctrines of the nominal churches of today. We are told graphically to build our house on a solid rock, that being Jesus Christ and His example in our lives. And those who do not are building a house on shifting sand; and when the trials and tribulations of this world come upon them, they have no anchor or security to fall back upon. The fall of their house is great because they will not have eternal life.

Every day I find myself saying No! to myself. I would never do this wrong if Christ were present, so what gives me the right to do it if He's not present? Nothing, whatsoever! Will a moment's satisfaction of expressing my dissatisfaction be worth losing eternal life?

Are not thoughts really my own and private? They are not.

It's a struggle. Every day is a battle with the old man [our carnal nature]. At the least likely moments, the old man exerts himself and all the effort of weeks and perhaps months can be offset by a split second. Indeed, we will have achieved so much if we would just stop and consider for a moment what we have to say and avoid the mistakes of talking without thinking or saying those things from a response that is emotional. I know that Christ had the same problem, but He had to "bite the bullet" and restrain Himself and only say those things that were edifying.

The battle is real, and there are times when I truly consider that I have made absolutely no progress whatsoever. Control of our speech and thoughts is a battle royal that requires the greatest of self-discipline and training. But with time and effort we must improve. We must have lives above reproach if we would walk into His presence without shame.

—From a reader in Louisiana

MEGIDDO MESSAGE



## From A Friend Abroad

I am very grateful to our God that He has in such a miraculous way helped me to learn His true teachings and remove the blinds from my eyes concerning the false beliefs which disfigure the true image of God by their false teachings. These false ideas originated in the minds of men erroneously understanding the true God.

Praise be to God that He in these last days has permitted His people to understand the truths of God's righteousness.

I am immensely grateful to you for your help in making it possible for me to understand the truths of God. Already I have begun to organize my occupation so as to have adequate amount of time to spend on my study.

I like to think about the exemplary lives of God's holy men, who by overcoming self have reached higher levels of spirituality and holiness in their lives. Unquestionably it is most important to do this, because we all have had occasion to meet Sunday Christians who on Sundays put on their Sunday garments of holiness and during the rest of the week break union with God. The clergy has led them into false thinking, that all you have to do is to believe in the blood of Jesus and all your sins are washed away. This does not induce them to work on themselves until the spiritual blood starts flowing. It puts people in a state of self-satisfaction. With such teachings, the road to the Kingdom would not be narrow but very wide. That is why the people seek the broad road because it is so very comfortable.

Your Church is high in my estimation because you have bravely overthrown the error and teach logically and reasonably God's pure doctrine. I also share your great respect for your founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols. In observing the day of his birth, you are rendering your respect and gratitude for all he has done in God's service; it is the right thing to do.

Poland

Mr. K.

## Pro & Con—All Pro

Your "Pro & Con" column in the July, 1977 number, concerning discussion of Romans 2:12 was utterly true and fantastic. A bit of personal experience—I just finished a two-year stint of teaching a Bible Class, and I had to take a considerable "buffeting" concerning Romans 2:12, as there are a numerous host of Christians (so-called) who still believe in the time-worn pagan beliefs of "eternal torment." But as the old sage would say, I would not bow my bloody head.

My two years of teaching was a good experience (sometimes a lowly, self-examining job), but I did it for the Lord. I came under the guns of the "literal devil" proponents also, but there are scriptures quashing this belief (the Bible proves itself!). The critical arrows also were plentiful in the area of God deliberately blinding His children, but then the Bible has defensive verses contrary to this mistaken view also.

May we all grow in Christ.

Loveland, Colorado

E. G.

## Richly Blessed

God has so richly blessed me, worthless creature that I am, and I hope and pray I can become each day a little more worthy of His goodness. Truly, He knows how thankful I am for all spiritual and temporal blessings both.

Time is flying so fast, and I have so much work to do to try to be prepared for our Master's return. I am striving with all my might and main and trying to make at least a little progress on the road to the Kingdom each day. With God's help, I hope to conquer all the lusts and affections of the flesh, to truly kill out the "old man" and become a whole new creature.

Knoxville, Maryland

J. B.

## Inspiring Promises

The promises of God are indeed awe-inspiring and reassuring. If we did not have these promises written in the Bible, I am sure we could not do the work God wants of us. As it is, we have to keep reminding ourselves of the glories of God's eternal Kingdom and that we too can share in it if we put away every sin and make our lives conform to His divine standard.

God has given us so much here and now, but how much more glorious will be the reward of every faithful one. I personally want to share in the glories of that Day.

Tyro, Kansas

P. F.

## Deceased

We have just received word of the passing of Mrs. Hazel Garner, of Phoenix, Arizona, on July 22. Sister Garner had been in failing health for several years.

Sister Garner first learned of the Megiddo Church in 1934, and subscribed to the *Message* since that time. She and her husband shared their faith, making several trips to the church in Rochester.

Sister Garner is survived by three sons: Wayne, of Phoenix, Arizona; Ben, of Kalispell, Montana; and Melvin, of Winslow, Arizona.

# GOOD READING



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## Scriptural Spotlight

(Continued from page 27)

not be so "busy here and there" that we fail in our most vital undertaking—the attempt to conquer self. To be doing well is not sufficient. Our contract as business agents for God demands of us totality of effort, desire, achievement; nothing, then, is left with which to be "busy here and there." Doing our duty to God means doing all we can to conquer ourselves and to help others to do the same.

Are we doing all we can in speaking the encouraging word to help another on toward the Kingdom, or to help brighten the way for one in trial or even in sickness? How many times do we go out of our way to help lift a burden from one struggling against a besetment? Do we just wait until it is convenient? Sometimes there might be special need to do this little service even on busy days. Do we take necessary time for such emergencies? or are we too much "busy here and there"?

The Lord has entrusted us with His saving knowledge, and He does not want us to get so "busy here and there" with trifling interests that we fail to apply this knowledge or allow the pressure of busy days to cause us to lose our equilibrium as Christians. Remember, the Christian life is a fully controlled life.

When too "busy here and there" it is easy to lose our patience, our self-control, our refinement and distinction as Christians. There is so much coarseness of speech and so much boldness of deportment in our modern world that it takes constant watchfulness and reinforcement of the lessons of true nobility to keep us from being influenced by the popular trend.

In these days of stress, we should never allow the law of God to take a back seat in our minds; we must see that it is always in the driver's seat. One fragment of that law written especially for this time just before the Lord returns is: "Let your moderation be known unto all men" (Phil. 4:5). To fully control self in any and all of our emotions takes much application of this command. Someone might be all swamped with business and stimulated with the glamor of prosperity, but it is not worth it if eternal life is lost or endangered in the deal. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

A man should never get so involved in any enterprise, however honorary, that he allows the cares of life to choke out the Word and the living of it;

nor a woman so entangled with duties—domestic or otherwise—that her activities press the sweet virtue of Christian devotion from her soul.

Jesus gave a solemn warning against allowing our hearts to be overcharged with "the cares of this life" to the extent that the great Day of settlement come upon us unawares. And again He likened the cares of this life to thorns which choke out the Word. We do not forget it entirely, but our heart is so divided that the seed of the Kingdom does not receive sufficient nourishment to grow fruit to perfection.

The Bible forbids our laboring to be rich; but at the same time it advises us to strive to get above the state of poverty (Prov. 30:8). We are to be "diligent in business" (Prov. 22:29), but not all absorbed (Matt. 6:33).

It is a well-known fact that concentration is not compatible with commotion and haste, just so are the quiet moments needful for deeper meditation and reflection in acquiring character-perfection. This is why Jesus gave warning regarding the pressure of earthly duties. It would be impossible to live without being to some extent involved with the "cares" or concerns of our mortal life. Jesus knew this; He also encountered them; but He was teaching a lesson that there was such a thing as *lessening* the cares of life or *increasing* them. We have every reason to believe from a study of the lives of God's people that they were diligent and energetic—but not to the neglecting of their duty to God.

We can live a busy life and still live it to God by taking time to be holy, taking time and care to implant His principles in our hearts so they are first, uppermost, impelling us to a godly life in all our activities.

"So shall thy judgment be," said King Ahab in reply to the prophet's parable—thinking he was condemning the prophet. But the prophet was pronouncing God's condemnation upon Ahab. And King Ahab himself had decided that judgment by his own misconduct.

Just so are *we* deciding what judgment the Lord will render to *us*. Our standard of Christianity is of no higher rating with the Lord than our manifest behavior in times of stress and pressure. Whether we have our affections on the keeping of His law, or on a hundred and one interests of our own—this is what will determine our judgment. Our faults may not be so obvious at other times as on trying occasions, but the Lord does not overlook the unguarded moment's conduct. Our real character is displayed in our conduct in life's difficulties.

What judgment are we deciding for ourselves, as we are "busy here and there"? ●●



# SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

*"And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."  
—I Kings 20:40*

THESE words are part of a meaningful little parable told one day by a prophet of the Lord to King Ahab of Israel. Then and now they bear a message of duty neglected.

Israel's old enemy Syria had been giving trouble again. This time the King of Syria Benhadad was so bold as to openly defy the God of Israel and plan a full-scale invasion of Israel.

The Lord defended Israel, and thousands of Syrians fell in battle. But somehow the King of Syria Benhadad escaped. When the fighting was over, his messengers appeared among the Israelites seeking mercy for Benhadad at the hand of Ahab. To the astonishment of everyone, Ahab received Benhadad graciously and made a covenant of peace with him.

On his return from the battle, Ahab met a man who told him this parable: "Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone" (I Kings 20:39-40).

The speaker of the parable was a prophet of the Lord—unidentified—and his purpose in telling the parable was to reprove the disobedient king. God had given Israel victory over the wicked invaders; how could Ahab spare the life of the openly defiant and rebellious king? But Ahab, unaware of the prophet's divine authority, or of the implications of his ruse, answered jauntily, "So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it." But no such judgment was for the prophet of the Lord; the judgment was to be upon Ahab. In the next battle with the Syrians, Israel would be victorious; but Ahab would die.

This little incident contains several lessons for us. First, it shows the necessity of impartial judg-

ment, a standard every overcomer must reach. God spares neither king nor commoner from the punishment his sins deserve.

Another choice lesson is that of never shirking responsibility. The man in the parable did not take his duty seriously enough, or his charge—the PW—would not have gotten away.

If we would live up to the law of God, we must take even each small Christian duty seriously, be not only willing but eager to shoulder responsibility, not leave all we can for others so we ourselves can go carefree. One of the greatest secrets of happiness is found in the satisfaction that comes from giving our best effort to the discharge of every duty. This is the fullest type of living, and it gives elevation and strength to character. How can we ever expect God to reward us with greater responsibility if we are not faithful in the little that is given us now?

Perhaps the greatest lesson in the parable is contained in the words of our text: "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." How many times we have failed in our higher duty to God because we were too occupied "here and there" with our own interests. We of all people need this warning today; we are so inclined to be so much "busy here and there."

Most of us live busy lives, and we need to be on guard to always make our duty to God our *first* and constant concern. In being "busy here and there" temporal interests can easily take first place in our affections. True, it takes much of our time to earn a living and to attend to necessary duties; but it does not take so much that we have any legitimate right to neglect the Lord's work. It takes time and study to be successful in any enterprise; likewise, time and effort must be freely given if we would succeed in the Lord's business.

We pass this way but once; therefore we must

*(Continued on page 26)*



# *Just For Today*

*JUST FOR TODAY: I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that "most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be."*

*JUST FOR TODAY: I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.*

*JUST FOR TODAY: I will adjust myself to whatever is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires.*

*JUST FOR TODAY: I will be agreeable. I will act courteously, and criticize constructively, or not at all; not find fault with everything and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.*

*JUST FOR TODAY: I will take time to evaluate myself and get a better perspective of my life.*

*JUST FOR TODAY: I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life's problems at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt I had to keep it up for a lifetime.*

*—Selected.*

