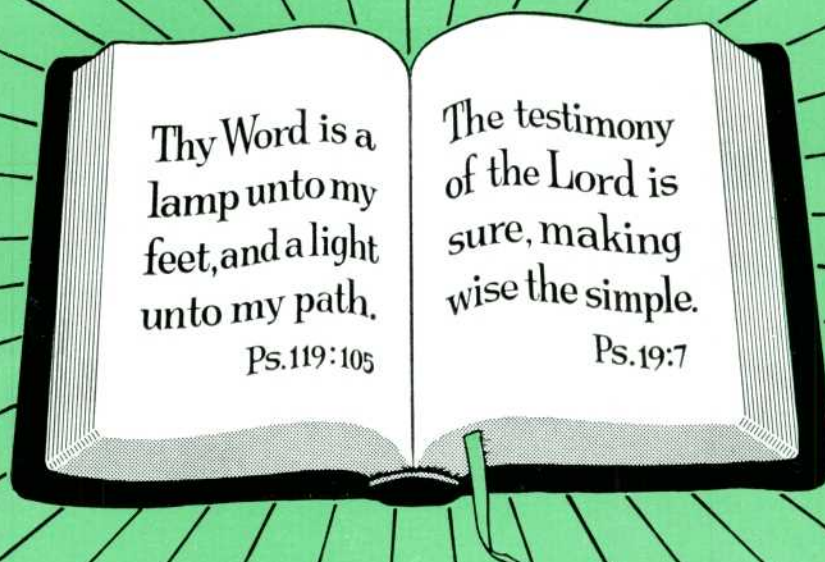


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



**"Ye Which Are Spiritual"**

**"Ye Are the Temple of God"**

**Love Not the World**

**The Sabbath of the Bible**



# Good Start, Bad Finish

**P**ROBABLY no one in Scripture ever had more going for him than Solomon did when he became King of Israel.

The nation of Israel was a strong and prosperous Kingdom when Solomon mounted the throne; but Solomon did not make it that way. Solomon did not have to fight for any of it. David had done the work; all Solomon had to do was to inherit it.

Solomon had great wealth, but Solomon did not have to earn it. The Lord asked him what he would like, and Solomon answered, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people." And the Lord said, "Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, . . . wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee" (II Chron. 1:10-12). All these were Solomon's, through the blessing of God.

Then, too, God allowed Solomon to do what had been forbidden his father. To Solomon was granted the privilege of building the Temple in Jerusalem, the most splendid house of worship Israel would ever know. David had received the plans and gathered the necessary materials, but the project was Solomon's to execute. The building was his to oversee and dedicate.

Besides all this, Solomon had a father who through the years had grown in spiritual stature and had lived close to God. Some of the best advice ever passed from father to son was given by David to Solomon. It is recorded in I Chronicles 28:9,

"And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."

How glorious the record of Solomon's life might have been, but—

But Solomon, with all his advantages, had a consuming passion that ultimately led to his ruin. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines. This in itself was bad enough, but many of these women came from among pagan peoples such as the Egyptians, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Sidonians, the Hittites. God's law against intermarrying with people from other nations was definite; He wanted to keep His people and their worship pure. The law read: "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me" (Deut. 7:2-4, 6).

But Solomon gave no heed, "for it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father" (I Kings 11:4-6). The result was disaster. Solomon lost God's favor, and judgment was pronounced upon his kingdom.

Here is an example of one who had everything going for him; but he lacked the willpower to resist sin, and ruined his life. What a tragedy that a life so well begun should end in ruin. Let us take heed to his preaching, which was far ahead of his practice. Solomon advised: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil" (Prov. 4:25-27). ●●

## Megiddo means

"a place of troops" (*Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*); "a place of God" (*Young's Analytical Concordance*). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4, 5).

### We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

### We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

### We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

### We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

### We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

### We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

### We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

## Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—*New English Bible*

NIV—*New International Version*

NAS—*New American Standard*

RSV—*Revised Standard Version*

TLB—*The Living Bible*

TEV—*Today's English Version*

Phillips—*The New Testament in Modern English*

Berkeley—*The Modern Language New Testament*

Weymouth—*The New Testament in Modern Speech*

Moffatt—*The Bible, A New Translation*

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# "Ye Which Are Spiritual"

UPON the pages of sacred Scripture, four words stand out in radiant splendor: "Ye which are spiritual." They stand apart, describing a higher state of existence than is found in nature. They stand above, beckoning us enter exclusive portals and be initiated into the brotherhood of the heavenly ones, the Christlike ones, the sons and daughters of God Almighty; and who can hope to be accepted into such a society, save he who is "spiritual"?

But what does this term imply? We speak freely of spiritual life and spiritual goals, and high levels of spiritual attainment; but what does it all mean? How would we define that which is spiritual? Do we always know whereof we speak?

In our modern world, spirituality is much misunderstood. Sometimes it is used as the equivalent of "religious." Then there are those who go around wearing a long face, saying by their actions that solemn demeanor is spirituality. Suffice it to say that all these are non-spiritual.

Spirituality is not something that one dangles on the outside, nor does a certain tone of the voice or a certain folding of the hands in prayer designate a spiritual man. Spirituality is something that issues from within, deep within. It is like the sap of the vine, continually nourishing all the fruitful branches; it is the lifeblood of that which is spiritually alive.

Spirituality is not a mood, or a feeling, or a sentiment, though each of these may be influenced by it.

Neither is spirituality something acquired automatically by living in a certain environment. A man might spend his entire life in the company of the noblest saint and die a non-spiritual man. King David's spiritual inclinations and aspirations did little for the unscrupulous Joab, and they were close associates for more than forty

years. Israel produced few sons more noble and more spiritual than Samuel the prophet, but his own sons absorbed or imitated little, if any, of their father's virtue.

## Spirituality Is . . .

What is this special, distinguishing quality?

The apostle Paul, with divinely given insight, separated all men into three categories. First there is the natural man who lives and dies, never reaching higher or seeking further than the mortal plane of existence. Utterly without divine knowledge, insight or inspiration, he is content; he is the "natural man" who "receiveth not the things of the Spirit, . . . neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). He lives and dies without God and without hope in the world (Eph. 2:12).

Second are those Paul calls "carnal." These are they who, knowing a better way of life and possessing some knowledge of God, are still living most of their time on the low level of the natural. "For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as [ordinary] men?" (I Cor. 3:3). Torn by petty jealousies, party spirit, and rivalry, theirs is still the human point of view. Long ago they became acquainted with higher values, but they have not yet cut loose from what James the servant of God describes as "earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. 3:15). Such are the carnal in every age. Theirs is a half-grasp of the true wisdom, while their affections remain entwined with the things of earth. Not captured by a full vision of hope, they cannot rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8). They are "yet carnal," "babes in Christ."

Third, there is the category of spiritual men, those whose minds and hearts are centered not in this world, nor even in themselves, but—in God. This is by far the smallest of the three groups—and the choicest.

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NOTE: "Ye Which Are Spiritual" is available on cassette as a church-service recording. Price: \$3.00

In an age when people were so worldly-minded as in the first-century Roman world, Paul must have felt a justifiable pride in having children he could address in Christ as "Ye which are spiritual." In the churches of Galatia were many whom Paul felt compelled to reprove, "foolish Galatians" who would "not obey the truth," who were "so soon removed from him that called" them (Gal. 3:1; 1:6).

But there were also some whose good fruits warmed Paul's brotherly heart and moved him to address them with loving, godly fondness as "ye which are spiritual." And notice the subject upon which he is admonishing them; it concerns the most intimate and loving favor they can minister to one another as brothers in the faith—for what man or woman who truly loves life could wish to slip into sin and remain there?

These are Paul's words: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). No room here for any spirit of conceit, or fancied superiority, or pride; no room for any selfishness or jealousy or "I-told-you-so" spirit; only a genuine devotion to the highest good of all and a sincere desire to prosper together in Christ. Such is the mutual duty of "ye which are spiritual."

But let us consider the term "spiritual." Primarily it is used in Scripture to describe the level on which God dwells, and all that is godly. God is the source of everything that is truly "spiritual." All which has its origin with God and which is, therefore, in harmony with His character, may be called "spiritual."

### God Is Spirit

"God is a spirit," reads the gospel of John. Some people conclude from this that God is a non-physical entity, having no likeness, form or substance; that He is the mysterious essence of a sublime nothing. But a fleeting specter or a vanishing wisp is not the principal use of "spirit" in the New Testament. "Spiritual" describes a plane of morality and virtue, a level of existence that is the opposite of all that is earthly and carnal. This seems to have been the thought of John 4:24, for in the same sentence that we learn "God is spirit," we learn also that we who worship Him must worship Him on His level, "in spirit and in truth"—and surely God does not want us to become invisible nothings before we worship Him. "God is spirit," as the verse reads in the original (the article "a" has been supplied

by translators). In other words, God is the supreme sovereign, in contrast to man's low, limited existence; and those who wish to truly worship Him must approach Him on His exalted level of "spirit" existence, that is, the level of holiness and virtue supreme.

God does not condescend to the human plane of His earthly creatures. Someone has written that a man worships God "in spirit" when under the influence of God he brings all his affections, appetites, and desires to the throne of God, when every purpose and passion of his heart and every act of his being is guided and regulated by the Word of God. God is the ultimate standard of all that is right, the ultimate truth of all that is true. How can we think of worshiping Him, or of communing with Him, without ourselves reaching for that higher, "spiritual" plane?

"Spiritual," then, describes that which is lost to the low and groveling. It defines a level which is as high above the natural instincts of man "as the heavens are higher than the earth," for such is the distance between God's thoughts and man's. No wonder that Paul was led to exclaim, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Rom. 11:33).

### What Is Spiritual?

God is the source of all that is "spiritual." This thought lends meaning to the various passages in the New Testament which describe something as "spiritual." For example, Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). What is a "spiritual" song? It is a song that voices the highest aspirations of him who is seeking God with all his heart. It is a combination of melody and words which stimulate our highest thoughts and desires, and renew the vitality of the spiritual life within us. Don't we all need the uplift of "spiritual" songs?

Then there is "spiritual understanding." The apostle Paul writes also of this, as he prays that his brethren "might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9, 10). Here is understanding more profound than the finest human philosophy; it is understanding of things pertaining to God and holiness. It is understanding the real meaning of spiritual life, holiness and happiness, this understanding that can bring us to eternal life. Shouldn't we also pray that we might share in this rich, spiritual understanding?

Then there is the "spiritual house," composed of those who are growing in the new and divine life as "lively [living] stones." No ordinary building is this; it is a "spiritual house"—termed "spiritual" because of the holy and God-like character of those who compose it. This is the house which Ezekiel described, whose "whole limit thereof round about . . . [is] most holy" (Ezek. 43:12). So perfect is this structure that it is fit for the habitation of God (Eph. 2:21-22). Do we not long to be part of this "spiritual house"? But do we realize how perfectly cut and polished must be each living stone that composes it?

The apostle Peter tells a little more about this house. In another figure it is a "holy priesthood" which is ordained to "offer up spiritual sacrifices"—another direct reference to the God-like quality of all of its members, for the "spiritual sacrifices" are "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

To think that we human creatures of earth can offer a sacrifice that will be accepted by the high and holy God Himself! What is this sacrifice? It is no less than the living sacrifice, the sacrifice of a living, fully dedicated man, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our "reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1)—reasonable indeed when it can authorize our eternal acceptance!

Then there are "spiritual blessings." In a broad sense, all of our blessings are "spiritual" in that they all come to us from the hand of God "to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (I Tim. 4:3). But by mentioning "spiritual blessings" in particular, Paul suggests the blessings which benefit directly the life of the spirit-man, the new nature that must be growing in every believer. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly

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## Let Us Pray . . .

Loving Father, great, eternal, just, wise and munificent, we thank Thee for every expression of Thy care, consideration and concern for us. We bless Thee for Thy Word which is as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. We thank Thee for a knowledge of that Word, and an understanding of the things written aforetime for our learning.

We thank Thee for the chance to work for a reward that will be eternal in its duration, when we shall be blessed with an eye that will never dim, an ear that will never grow deaf, a beauty that will never tarnish, a vigor that will never diminish, an intellect that will never weaken, and a life that will never end.

We thank Thee for teaching us how to live above the flesh: how to put away the anger, the malice, the pride, selfishness and indifference. May we banish that selfish spirit and think more of the welfare of others. Grant that we may get our greatest pleasure from self-sacrifice. May we glory in our daily cross of self-denial, exult in doing the things that come right across our natural desires, and in doing the things we would not care to do, because Thou demandest it.

Father, help us to build into our lives such supreme qualities that we can truthfully be termed *spiritual*. Alert us that the carnal mind is always at odds with Thy way of thinking, hence to be spir-

itual we must break completely with carnal-mindedness.

It is natural for us to be self-centered; it is natural for our thoughts to be on worldly interests, to want to put ourselves in the best light so as not to discredit our human ego. It is our natural tendency to want to seek the things of here and now, to exhibit divided loyalties, to seek some of self and some of Thee. But we know we cannot do this if we would be spiritually minded. It is natural to want to know men after the flesh, to evaluate them according to our own human likes or dislikes, but this we cannot do if we would be spiritual; we must be prepared to judge ourselves and others only by character.

Naturally we are prone to put second things first; to seek first Thy Kingdom and Thy righteousness is not natural to us. We are too short-sighted, we cannot readily sense the difference between Thy service and the service of the flesh. Time, effort, and Thy help is needed to empower us to change all of this; so help us to become wise before everlastingly too late, to become fully alert to our own best interest as every spiritual individual must be.

And while trying to restore others who have been overtaken in a fault may we consider ourselves, aware of the possibility that we might also fall if not fully alert.

And may we never grow weary in well doing, but continue steadfast to the end that we may merit a place in Thy eternal Kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). Just think of it—we lowly mortals receive "spiritual blessings"—and "in heavenly places in Christ." These rich spiritual blessings give new dimension and meaning even to our present earthly abode; for with the prospect of an endless future before us, a life that will be filled with pleasure and wonderment beyond what we can now think of or imagine, we are able to see everything of the present as in a different light. Difficulties that would be otherwise unbearable become the "slight trouble of the passing hour," and momentary thrills that otherwise might be counted as the best we could hope to enjoy, seem nothing at all. The real significance of life lies in what we do with it in preparing for the better world to come. This is our greatest "spiritual blessing."

### Becoming Spiritual

But the question remains: How can you and I in our everyday, ordinary circumstances, live *spiritually*? What can we do to make ourselves over into spiritual men and women—for most of us must admit that at times we feel very *un-spiritual*.

We think of those holy men and women of old, whom we would not hesitate to call spiritual. What would they think if they could observe our daily lives? Would they think of us as being their brethren, seeking the same spiritual attainments that they sought—and found? Would they recognize us by our thought and conduct as members of God's family?

Think of Enoch of old, who walked with God for three hundred years untroubled in a troubled world—that was a long time to maintain faith and courage. Think of Abraham, who was always ready to obey the word of the Lord any day, any where, he who talked with God as a man talks with his friend. There was Elisha, who bore the likeness of God in his life so vividly that the Shunammite woman meeting him for the first time was able to say, "I perceive that this is an holy man of God"; Daniel, who prayed with his window open toward Jerusalem, whatever the man on the throne of government chose to decree—his relationship with God mattered far more than the favor of the King. Think of Jesus, pursued by the multitude, but all the time living in such close association with His Father that He was able to do "always the things that pleased Him," and to speak none other words than those He had received of His Father. The Jewish Sanhedrin, cross-examining Peter and John, knew immediately by their dauntless courage and surety of faith that they had been with Jesus.

### Mentally Like God

Why do we judge these men spiritual? What set them apart for God? What changes can we make in our lives that will bring us to their standard of approaching, dwelling, being nearer to God?

Perhaps the first step is to set aside our own natural standards and values, our own concepts of right and wrong, and come to God to learn His thoughts. If we would ever be among those who are "spiritual," we must first *think* spiritually, that is, think on the level of things spiritual. Spiritual thinking is the practiced art of those who have tuned their minds with the infinite, who have listened to God so intently and so continuously that they have exchanged their thoughts for His, and—consequently—their *ways* for His.

The apostle Paul described this all-important change-over as being "transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). It means giving up the right to think as we please and instead letting "this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). It means being "renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. 4:23). It means setting "your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks and the body acts; evil thoughts are the root of all other evils. Cleanse the mind, change the pattern of thought that directs the life and the whole life will be changed. How can we possibly expect to bear in our lives the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—if our mind is filled with self-centered, carnal, fleshly thoughts?

There is a story of a mountain man who spotted a city tourist trying to get a drink of clear water from a muddy Arkansas streamlet. "Stranger," he advised, "you won't get any good water until you go up and run the hog out of the spring." Thus it is in our lives; we can't expect to live pure and holy and upright lives until we cleanse the source, the mind. When our mind is filled continually with pure thoughts and our aspirations are always the best, we will have taken a long step toward holiness of character and genuine spiritual life.

But exchanging our own natural mind for the mind of Christ is a drastic change-over not accomplished in a moment. It involves a complete re-orienting of our lives. Naturally our entire world of thought and interest is on the human plane. We think of what we need to sustain life, then what we want, what we like, and what we like more, and we spend our lives getting more

and more of anything we fancy will satisfy us. Jesus described it as being wholly absorbed with "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Where-with shall we be clothed?" Our modern world has, if anything, strengthened these natural motivations. The end product of all industry, all production, all education in this world is first to meet the needs of the individual, and then to tickle his fancies. Man learns more to earn more, and earns more to spend more, and spends more to gratify more of his basic desires. And so the selfish race goes on; and God is forgotten.

In the midst of all this, the mind of Christ turns the natural pattern of thinking squarely around and says: God first, all other things—even necessities—*second*. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Here is spelled out the change from natural thinking, the thinking of the natural man, to spiritual thinking, the mind of Christ.

### Morally Like God

The second step toward genuine spirituality is to draw near and yet nearer to God, for that which is spiritual is that which bears the likeness of God. And when we draw nearer to God, think His thoughts, follow His ways, and become more and more like Him, He will draw near to us. This is the assurance that the book of James gives us: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." And then he reminds us that nearness to God is a direct result of spiritual cleanliness; "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (Jas. 4:8). Seeking life on the spiritual level is seeking God, for spiritual life is that life which dwells nearest to God. And the purer our hearts, the nearer we are to God. But oh! the washing we need before this natural heart of ours is anything God can call "pure." How we need His mercy and long-suffering, and His help in the cleansing operation. And as we seek to draw nearer and nearer to Him, how we need to pray; we need to pray earnestly, fervently, as we examine our souls in the light of God and of all things spiritual and see wherein we lack. We need to pray as did the penitent David, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10).

Then we need to nourish our souls with spiritual food. It is quite literally true that we become what we eat, and that on which we feed is that which grows. By instinct we feed our lower nature. We go after what we want, governed by our natural desires and animal passions; and that which is fed is that which grows. Do we wonder some-

times why our lower nature seems so much stronger than the higher spiritual nature within us? Might it not be that we have been feeding it more—much more—than we have been feeding the new nature? Suppose we exert a conscious effort during four hours each day to think upon things spiritual, and give little thought to our thinking during the other twelve of our waking hours; do we wonder why our lower instincts—besides having been nourished for years before we even attempted to change—are so much stronger and better established than the spiritual?

To have an abounding spiritual life we must feed it abundantly, constantly, and starve that nature that tends to the dust. This requires strong measures of self-discipline and spiritual determination, but it can be done. Selfish passions will faint in time if we do not give them the satisfaction they require; unholy desires will starve to death if never exercised; sensitive feelings will be completely overpowered by the stronger interests of brotherly love and understanding; self-exalting motives will slowly but surely fall from weakness if never gratified; and our complaints will not be able to find breath to make themselves heard if all of our breath is used in praising and extolling our Great God for His abundant goodness to us. Oh! There *is* a way for spirit to triumph over flesh! There is a way *we* can become spiritual!

What will be the final result of feeding the Spirit and starving the flesh-man within us? The result will be "ye which are spiritual," a whole new spiritual being in which there will be not a single desire that is contrary to the will of God.

As the spiritual life grows and develops within us, we will feel less and less a part of the present system of things. Our interests, our desires, our hopes will be bound up not in what *is* but in what is coming. We will be otherworldly-minded, displaced persons, sojourners seeking a better land. Our temporary residence will be here; our citizenship will be in the world that is coming. Our whole absorption will be in what we can do to be ready for the new world; the lesser interests of the present will receive a minimum of our time and thought.

### Spiritual Identities

There are some fine lines of balance which go into the making of a person who is truly spiritual. They are matters of the mind and spirit. Let us consider a few of these.

*One who is spiritual is discriminating without being critical.* There is a fine line between discernment and criticism. The spiritual life is not  
(Continued on page 18)



# "Ye Are the Temple of God"

WE WHO have taken it upon ourselves to serve God, are we not the temple of God? Did not the apostle Paul say, "Ye are the temple of the living God" (II Cor. 6:16)? How can we allow the temple of God to be broken down? Can we allow unclean things to spoil the temple of God?

When Christ saw those moneychangers and dove-sellers in the temple, He drove them out, saying unto them, "Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Shall we allow unclean things to come into the temple of God? You may say that money-changing and selling doves is a clean and genuine business. It may be, just as some worldly pleasures seem harmless; but they are not harmless in the temple of God. We are warned to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. To be a friend of the world is to be the enemy of God (James 4:4).

In the first chapter of Haggai, we have a people who did not wish to work for God. God wanted His temple rebuilt. This, of course, meant hard work. It meant giving up leisure time and it meant giving until it hurt. The people had been far too busy making their own houses comfortable, looking after their own everyday work. But God said, "Consider your ways." He said, "Ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes" (Hag. 1:5-6).

This was God's payment to a people who allowed His temple to remain in ruins.

You and I are the temple of God; we too, can become broken down by the weight of sin. What will we have left if we allow this to happen? Can we find lasting pleasure in the world? I think not, brethren. Our aim has been too high for us now to turn back; we have set our faces like a flint with determination to gain eternal life. Can we turn our back on so great a reward for the flimsy things of this world?

God's temple must be kept clean. Just let dirt and decay get into this temple, and soon you will find that you can devour the Word of God, but with no satisfaction. You will eat, but not be nourished.

You may drink, and still be thirsty. If you are cold spiritually, all your efforts go for nothing.

To serve God, we have to be clean vessels. If we are unclean, we can find no satisfaction from God.

Let us take Haggai's warning and consider ourselves. Are we really keeping God's temple clean?

Hebrews 12:3 says, "Consider him [Jesus]." "Compare him who steadily endured all that hostility from sinful men, so as to keep your own hearts from fainting and failing" (Moffatt).

Here we have the secret. How can we look back if our eyes are on Christ? What a wonderful example He really is. He never fails us, if we do not fail Him. What a help He is to those who are striving to live a life of perfection. Many times we fail, yet as we consider Christ and His devotion to God, we are filled with fresh strength and determination to battle on.

As we draw on that strength which we find in Christ, we ourselves can be a good example to those we have fellowship with.

With this exhortation in mind, "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good deeds, not ceasing to meet together, as is the habit of some, but admonishing one another—and all the more so, as you see the Day drawing near" (Heb. 10:24-25, Moffatt). ••

This article is contributed by a member who resides in Nottinghamshire, England.

Oh! what a day to hope for, eternal life and joy!  
No single care to pain the heart, no trouble to annoy;  
No anxious thoughts to weary, naught that shall mar  
our peace,  
But life that is unending, filled with joy that ne'er  
shall cease.

Oh! gladly will I listen, my beloved, unto Thee,  
And give up all I now possess, that I may be with  
Thee,  
And know Thee in Thy glory, and see Thee as Thou  
art,  
And do Thy will as angels do, with all my mind and  
heart!

From  
*John the Elder*



Fourth in a Series on the Epistle of First John

## Love Not the World

### A Study of First John 2:15-29

JOHN now turns to exhortation. He warns them all not to rest upon their laurels. Aware of the darkness all around and the dangers and difficulties that beset, John charges them all to avoid the greatest snare that lies in the believer's path: the world. Even to faithful believers the world holds out its temptations.

*"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*

*"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."*

*"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (2:15-17).*

To John, the "world" was nothing more or less than the pagan society around them, and all that pertained to it—its false values, false standards, and false gods. The "world" was an ethical term referring not to the planet Earth but to that segment of humanity with its traditions, customs, things and thoughts—all that belongs to the "darkness" or that sphere of human existence that is alienated from God. The standard of life of the Christian believer had to be such as would be appropriate in the new age, the coming Kingdom of God. Hence, there had to be a sharp separation between the Church and the world. There could be no fellowship, and no compromise.

John is specific. He says it is impossible for a person to choose or esteem the world and God at the same time. Life emphasizes the temporal and material aspects of human existence. All this, declares John, is of the world. The "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"—the word "pride" is braggadocio, empty talk, fool-

ish presumption of one who has confidence in himself and his own resources and disdains the power of God. John is focussing our attention upon the transient nature of the world and all that belongs to it, all that drives men to crave the things of the world, over against the indestructibility of him who does the will of God:

*"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (2:17).*

John's warnings are for us. By loving the transient things of the world we are bound to lose our relationship with God and that which is eternal. With hearts set on worldly enjoyments, there can be no love of God.

However enticing the things of this world, says John, whether the fleeting pleasures that gratify the lower nature, the outward show that attracts the covetous eye, or the vanity that feeds pride, none of these come from God. And none of these abide.

John most earnestly tries to arm Christians against temptation. He points out that the man who attaches himself to these worldly things is giving his life to that which has no future. The world and all its attachments will pass away. Jesus said, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction." We need not think that we have eternal life now. Immortality comes by doing God's will, by relinquishing our hold on the unsatisfying, fleeting, fading, soon-to-perish things of the world and setting our hearts on the blessing and glory that will be given to those who persistently do the will of God. They experience substantial, satisfying and abiding joy even now, and they stand in favor with God and shall in the end have everlasting life. So why love the world?

It is characteristic of John in his Epistle to discuss a subject that touches a chord of memory, diverting his attention to another subject. His words flowed from a mind crowded with a vast accumulation of memories and convictions. Here again we reach a break in his line of thought, as he speaks another warning.

*"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is [a] last time" (2:18).*

The original word for "last time" refers to the consummation of one age and the beginning of another. The Apostle says literally that it is "a last hour"—there is no definite article "the" in the original Greek. This suggests that he was not predicting the imminent return of Christ but rather pointing to the critical nature of the time in which they were living. Paul had warned, "...of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch . . ." (Acts 20:30). This time had now come; Paul's words were fulfilled; the Church was entering the "last hour" before the approaching apostasy. Everywhere there were "antichrists," men teaching perverse ideas against Christ. Anyone who teaches against God is an antichrist. John recognized the presence of many antichrists and said this was a sign of the last time. The complete falling away from the truth of which Paul had warned would soon be realized. "Let no one in any way deceive you," Paul had said, "for it [that day] cannot come unless the apostasy comes first" (II Thess. 2:3, Weymouth).

John's warning is always timely, though. We must in all ages be on guard against any perverse teachings.

By speaking of "a last time," John would also have had in mind the close of the Jewish Age, and the time when the power of the Holy Spirit would be withdrawn and believers would have to carry on in faith, hope and charity. Supernatural manifestations would no more be theirs to strengthen and convince. John was writing with the pen of inspiration; it was a serious time.

Some had already departed from them. John writes:

*"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

*"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

*"I have not written unto you because ye know*

*not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (2:19-21).*

According to John, many had already gone out from the young Churches. These people had been worshiping together with them, had enjoyed the doctrine and the spirit of unselfish brotherhood; now they turned away and denied the holy principles of the faith, and chose to walk no more in the light.

"They were not of us" reveals the character these departed ones bore as hypocrites within the fellowship. They were actually not Christian disciples while in the fellowship because "if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us" (v. 19).

John does not say these people never were "of us"; whether they were or not, their departure proved that they had ceased to be. It was God's will that their characters be manifested this way. The secession of such members should also make those who remain more careful to scrutinize their own lives and conduct, so that each could be sure of the genuineness of his own conviction. It would also point out the lesson Paul had preached, that "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6).

Those who "went out from us" may boast that they possess superior knowledge, says John (another direct attack on the Gnostic heresy); but he reminds the faithful followers that each of them has an "unction" (an anointing).

In speaking of the "anointing" of the believers, John is pointing up the true anointing in contrast to that which was being claimed by the false teachers. At that time, the Gnostics performed an elaborate ceremony of initiation upon new members, during which each received a spiritual anointing that was supposed to impart knowledge and prophetic insight superior to Christian truth and insight. John says to his brethren, You have been anointed, and not by some false teacher. Your anointing is of "the Holy One," that is, of Christ Himself ("Christ" means literally "the Anointed"). Such an anointing implies the close relationship that exists between Christ and the "anointed ones," the earnest believers who are seeking to be "little christs" by copying His example and living in union with Him (v. 20). This very special anointing was such as could sustain and make visible in the lives of the believers the teachings of Jesus Christ; its end result is that "ye know all things" (v. 20)—which may be better translated, "ye are in union with him."

John wished his brethren to bring into ever more active and decisive use the knowledge they had. And that is just what we must do.

## The Essence and Power of Truth

*"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

*"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: . . .*

*"Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (2: 22-24).*

John once again identifies the liar. No lie comes from the truth. The liar is he who denies that Jesus is the Christ. This perverse idea had to be made clear. The heretics were everywhere proclaiming their strange ideas. John repeats and emphasizes *the truth*: that Jesus was and is the Messiah, the Saviour and hope of the world. He was not merely the essence of knowledge, a spirit being, nor was He God incarnated in human flesh. Jesus was born of a woman and became perfect in character by obedience to the Father. Just, holy and pure, He showed in His flesh (or life) the wonderful attributes of the Father. Any man who knows the Son knows the Father for this reason. On the same basis, any man who denies the Son denies the Father also—and He is antichrist.

Therefore John exhorts, Hold fast to the truth which you have learned from the beginning. Then you shall have fellowship with the Son and the Father (2:24).

If we do nothing to deny Christ, we shall be following Jesus' injunction given in His Sermon on the Mount, and shall be making our lives perfect even as the Father in heaven (Matt. 5:48). If we do this, we can cherish John's next words:

*"And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (2:25).*

*"These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

*"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (2:26-27).*

John has been carefully warning the Christians concerning those who would seduce them. That spirit of antichrist which was working in John's day is working now in these last days also, before the coming of the Lord. Paul foretold in his letter to Timothy: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come . . . Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (II Tim.

3:1, 13). These deceivers will come, not as open enemies, but as professed friends. They would have you believe that truth is false, that evil is good and good evil, that unbelief is independent thought and indifference is impartiality. But *beware of these deceivers.*

Again John reminds the Christians that they have been anointed by the Word, through Jesus Christ (v.27). They need no philosophical ideas to live by; the truth is complete, and with it one can withstand the deceivers. This truth has strength and power if one will hold it fast and fix it in his heart as an abiding principle. If they would be strong, Christians must avail themselves of this anointing power. It is their responsibility.

And it is ours today. This same truth, the word of God, will teach us all we need to know for salvation. We need follow no heresies.

Then John makes one final point.

*"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

*"If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (2:28-29).*

Christ is the embodiment of all truth and righteousness; therefore, "little children," abide in Him.

How do we abide in Christ? The word "abide" signifies continuity. It means holding fast to one's convictions in thought and in deed. The Christian must be continually living out the holy precepts of Jesus. Under all circumstances, even in the presence of seducers, he must prove by his actions that He abides in Christ, by doing righteousness continually.

When Christ appears suddenly to judge the world and establish His Kingdom, anyone who is truly "abiding" in Christ will not have to shrink away from His presence in shame. Those who are "abiding" will be able to face Him with confidence, knowing that they have met Christ's standard of righteousness and are sure of His favor.

John is looking ahead to that great Day of Christ's appearing—a day then distant; a day now so very near. How urgent, then, that we "abide in him," that "*we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming*" (2:28). We must meet His standard, we must be "righteous," for righteousness is the quality that identifies all of God's children: "*Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him*" (2:29). ●● *Coming Next: SONS OF GOD*

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*Get rid of the crabgrass of bitterness in your garden.*



# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Sabbath of the Bible

**S**ATURDAY or Sunday—which day is the Sabbath? Which day should we keep? Seventh-day Sabbath believers loudly proclaim Saturday as the true Sabbath, the exact anniversary of God's chosen day—a day they say has been kept inviolate by God's people from the beginning of time.

"It is a holy, heaven-blessed institution—no ordinary day," proclaims a believer; "a day when the hustle and bustle of everyday life is put aside. . . . It is a time to get reacquainted with the family, a time to visit the sick, and a time to fellowship with other believers and with God. It is the happiest day of the week."

But can we truthfully say that observing the Sabbath on Saturday would add an extra dimension to the day? Would not any other day of the week—Sunday, Monday, or Wednesday, for that matter—afford the same opportunities for rest, family and worship if all secular duties were laid aside? One day of the week is no more the Lord's than another; all are His, and we cannot limit our service to Him to one day per week.

We agree that one day of rest in seven is good. Laying aside the secular and accentuating the spiritual is good. Setting aside a specific day for worship is a good thing, for as someone has said, "It is a law of life that what can be done at any time tends never to get done at all." Hence, we need that special impetus to think more on the heavenly things.

But there is no proof available to support the contention that the Sabbath has been kept continually from the beginning of time. The Sabbath was not identified as such until the giving of the manna in the Wilderness. At that time it was established as a memorial, a reminder to the children of Israel that they had been delivered from Egyptian bondage by the mighty hand of God. It was a law for Israel, and for Israel only. It was part of a covenant between them and God. It was to be a day of rest and

refreshment for both man and beast, as well as a day for worship, "an holy convocation" (Lev. 23:3).

## II. THE BIBLICAL SABBATH

The Sabbath of the Bible was set apart by God for the nation of Israel. It was part of a national law for them, their household servants and guests. All "within their gates" were to cease from labor on that day.

The day was not one without any activity, although many activities were forbidden. It was on the Sabbath that the bread was to be renewed on the Table of Shewbread in the Tabernacle (Lev. 24:8). A special sacrifice, one in addition to the daily sacrifice, was to be offered on the Sabbath (Num. 28:9-10). It was also proper to perform the rite of circumcision on the Sabbath (John 7:22). The Sabbath was also listed as one of the "feasts of the Lord" which were proclaimed to be holy convocations (Lev. 23:2-3).

When God gave His law to Israel He promised much—but He demanded much in return. Not the least of what He demanded was obedience: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32). The command applied as much to Sabbath-keeping as to any other law. The penalty for forgetting was severe; but as was the case with many another God-given law, the Israelites were prone to forget.

### A. Prohibitions and Penalties

Present-day Sabbatarians emphasize little more than the day of worship, the major contention being over Saturday or Sunday worship. As to their manner of observing the Sabbath, there is little difference between those who keep one day or the other. But it was not so with Israel. The law specified both what they could and could not do on the Sabbath, as well as the penalties involved.

1. **Cooking and baking were forbidden on the Sabbath.** Moses said to the people, "This is what

the Lord has said: "Tomorrow is a day of sacred rest, a sabbath holy to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake now, and boil what you want to boil; put aside what remains over and keep it safe till morning" (Ex. 16:23, NEB).

**2. Gathering wood or making a fire was forbidden on the Sabbath.** "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day" (Ex. 35:3). Israel's climate is moderate year round; this command worked no hardship on the people. The lesson was obedience.

**3. All work was forbidden on the Sabbath.** "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord; whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death" (Ex. 35:2). The penalty for breaking this law under the Mosaic arrangement was death.

**4. Work by servants and animals was likewise forbidden on the Sabbath.** ". . . In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates" (Deut. 5:13-14). Rest was provided for all slaves as a reminder that Israel had served the Egyptians before their deliverance.

The penalty for breaking the Sabbath was severe: nothing less than death. Moses received the word direct from God on the mountain and delivered the message to the people: "Whosoever doeth work therein [on the Sabbath] shall be put to death" (Ex. 35:2).

We find an example of a Sabbath-breaker being punished with death in Numbers 15: "While the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. . . . and they brought him unto Moses and Aaron"; Moses inquired of the Lord, "and the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death" (vs. 32-35).

The penalty was severe, but God demanded obedience to His law.

The prohibitions and penalties that accompanied the Sabbath Law were as much a part of the law as the day upon which it was kept. But most present-day Sabbatarians ignore both. Jesus said no part of the law could pass until all had been fulfilled. If the Sabbath law is still in force, the penalty must also be in force.

## B. Sabbath Observance—B. C.

God knew Israel's need when He commanded them to observe the Sabbath. Unbroken toil is monotonous and leads to stagnation in the spir-

itual life. One day of rest in seven breaks the monotony and provides time for spiritual renewal, for meditation and study.

When the law was given, the penalty for breaking the Sabbath was harsh and unrelenting, and as recounted above, a man was put to death for disobeying the command. But in later years, all Israel turned away from God and the Sabbath was broken, along with other commands, and God punished them as a nation.

**1. In the days of the Judges.** The period of the Judges was a constant cycle of rebellion, retribution, repentance, and restoration. When Israel rebelled against the Lord and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6), we can be sure they were not keeping the Sabbath, although it is not definitely stated.

We read in Judges 2:13 that "they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroath." As a result, God allowed them to be punished by their enemies, until they repented and turned again to Him; then He raised up a deliverer for them. This cycle was repeated many times, but in between there were times when "the land had rest forty years" under a God-sent judge. At such times they were obeying the commandments, and we may safely assume that the Sabbath was being kept.

**2. In the days of the Kings.** Little is said concerning the Sabbath in the time of the kings, but Israel was guilty of frequent apostasy during this period of history. It was after one such apostasy that **Joash**, the "boy king," began his reign. He repaired the temple, replaced the vessels in the Lord's house and restored worship services. But he did not continue his good work, for we read that after the death of Jehoiada the priest, the people "left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon [them] for their trespass" (II Chron. 24:18-19). God punished them as a nation for their disobedience.

**Hezekiah** is notable for restoring worship services in the temple. His father, **Ahaz**, "sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, . . . and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. . . . and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers" (II Chron. 28:23-25). Again it was a case of God punishing the nation for their disobedience.

After the death of Ahaz, Hezekiah his son became king and instigated a revival. He "opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them," and cleansed the temple, restored the ves-

sels, and called together the priests and Levites to prepare the daily sacrifices. They kept the Passover for the first time in many years, and a joyful Israel walked in the ways of the Lord once more. We may be sure the Sabbath was kept at such a time.

**3. In the time of the Prophets.** The Prophets were contemporaries of the kings. God sent them to warn Israel of the consequence of turning away from Him—but they would not listen. Little is said directly about the Sabbath, but their message indicates that the Sabbath was not being kept according to His law.

Isaiah decried their insincere worship. Apparently they were keeping up a show of worship, but it was all form; their heart was not in it. Such worship is not acceptable: "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them" (Isa. 1:13-14).

Sabbath-keeping, attendance at feasts or worship services, means nothing to God unless it comes from the heart. God is not pleased with mere form.

Other prophets also spoke out concerning Israel's lack of devotion. Amos accused Israel of insincerity. His testimonies indicate that they were keeping the Sabbath, but only in outward form. In their heart they were saying, "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat . . . ?" (Amos 8:5). They assembled to worship, but their mind was elsewhere. They said in their heart, "When will it be over so that we may sell our grain?" Their heart was not in their worship.

Jeremiah issued a warning "in all the gates of Jerusalem" at the behest of the Lord: "Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye kings of Judah, . . . and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your house on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not . . ." (Jeremiah 17:19-23).

If they obeyed, the Lord would bless them, but if not the city would be destroyed. They failed to hearken, and God allowed the city to be destroyed as He had said.

**4. In the time of the Captivity.** During the period

of the captivity, the Lord moved Cyrus to allow those who desired to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple so that worship services might be restored. The majority were comfortably settled in Babylon and Assyria and had forgotten God in their prosperity. A remnant went back and repaired the temple "and the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month" (Ezra 6:19). Sabbath worship was restored, but not for long. They were soon mixing with the nations around them and forsook God and His laws—and neglected their worship.

Nehemiah took leave of his palace job to return to Jerusalem to repair the wall. The remnant that had returned before him had again turned away from God, even after Ezra's revival. Nehemiah supervised the rebuilding of the wall in the face of much opposition, after which the "book of the law of Moses" was read and explained to the people and worship restored. It was at this time that a review of Israel's history showed plainly when the Sabbath law was given: "And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant" (Neh. 9:4). This text fixes beyond the shadow of doubt the time when the Sabbath was instituted.

Israel's memory was short. They soon turned away from God again, and when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem the second time he found the temple being used as a residence, the worship of God neglected and the Sabbath being violated.

Nehemiah was a man of action. Finding people harvesting and selling on the Sabbath, he "contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? . . . ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath" (Neh. 13:15-18). He lost no time in ordering the traders out of the city, commanding that the city gates be closed over the Sabbath and that the day be kept according to the law. The Sabbath was again honored, but for how long we do not know.

### C. Sabbath Observance—A. D.

In the years following the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah the scribes and the priests added to the old Sabbath law such rules as they thought necessary to preserve the sanctity of the day. Their intentions may have been good at the beginning, but their Sabbath rules and regulations became so numerous that they obscured the true nature and purpose of the day. The Sabbath had been established as a day of rest, worship and

meditation. Now it became cramped with minute rules and regulations.

The original commandment against work was meant for good, but it developed into a never-ending debate among the rabbis as to what constituted "work." How much weight constituted a burden? Was it legal for a man to carry his wooden leg on the Sabbath? Was it all right for a man to carry out his bed should his house catch fire on the Sabbath? And with each debate another rule was added to the list until the observance of the Sabbath meant nothing more than adhering strictly to the rules of the rabbis.

**1. Jesus and the Sabbath.** Such was the state of Sabbath-keeping when Jesus began His ministry. Conflict was inevitable. "He went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, as his custom was," writes Luke. But in all His actions, He sought to de-emphasize strict Sabbath-keeping according to the law of Moses. "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27), said Jesus. Jesus' appearances in the synagogue were to Jews who refused to believe in Him. He went there when He knew they would be assembled; He tried to show them the error of their ways and in no way upheld their Sabbath doctrine.

On several occasions Jesus contended with the Jews in regard to Sabbath rules and regulations, and the Jews sought to use these occasions to find something for which they might accuse Him.

**a. Jesus heals on the Sabbath.** The occasion was on a visit to the synagogue where Jesus healed a man with a withered hand. "And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? . . . And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days" (Matt. 12:10-12). Jesus let it be known that it was acceptable to do good on the Sabbath.

**b. Jesus defends His disciples concerning the Sabbath.** Jesus with His disciples went through the corn, and being hungry they picked some to eat (Matt. 12:1). When the Jews criticized Him for this (which according to their law was forbidden) He defended their actions by quoting to them from the Scriptures concerning David, "How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread," and was not condemned for it. It was on this occasion that Jesus said, "For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day" (Matt. 12:8). Again, He made no pretense of obeying their Sabbath laws; His law superseded the old Law.

**c. More healing on the Sabbath.** In defiance of the Jews' opposition, Jesus performed two more healings on their Sabbath. On one occasion He healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-15), and the other was the healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-7). On the first occasion He defended His action by calling attention to His Father: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5:17). God's beneficence is not suspended every seventh day. As in the previous case, He was showing that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath and that their law could not be upheld. He used the healing of the blind man to condemn the spiritual blindness of the Jews. He was emphasizing that external observance of the Sabbath counts for nought.

It is notable that Jesus not once commanded anyone to observe the Sabbath, nor did He do anything to indicate that the Sabbath should be perpetuated. Rather, He was laying the groundwork for abolishing the external provisions of the Mosaic law, it having outlived its usefulness.

**2. Paul and the Sabbath.** Like Jesus who was his pattern, Paul frequently went into the synagogue to preach on the Sabbath day. But like Jesus, he took advantage of the Jews' assemblies to attempt to convert them to Christ. The Jews to whom he preached were unbelievers in Christ, following the old law of Moses. It was Paul's hope that he might convert some of the Jews, not to keep their Sabbath. His last recorded visit to the synagogue shows his purpose: "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and [sought to persuade] the Jews and the Greeks. And [he] . . . testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:4-6).

Paul was not keeping the old Law; he was trying to free them from it. His writings show clearly that the law was fulfilled in Christ and no longer in force. (This subject will be discussed more fully in the next part of this study.) •

*Reprints of these studies available,  
10 cents per copy*



# THINK VICTORY

THE SCIENCE of psychology plays a major role in modern life. Not only in medical science but in the student and business world, people are influenced by others' attitudes. Salesmen are trained to create or stimulate purchasing desire in their prospective customers. Executives are trained to deal with their employees to encourage the best and most efficient service from them. So why should not Christians train themselves likewise to think in terms of efficiency, success, and victory?

Negative thoughts will never produce positive results. A cheerful, hopeful attitude goes a long way toward conquering obstacles. Let each of us form the habit of always picturing ourselves as overcomers. This will help us in times of trial and temptation to back up our ambition with the necessary effort.

The lives and sayings of all of God's people through the ages have been positive and authoritative. They had conviction; they were convinced that God would do what He promised, and their actions were decided and steady, not half-hearted or spasmodic. They knew their goal, and pursued it in a straight course. Their stakes were firmly set; there were no "if's" or questionable plans for them, no variation of purpose.

The same prize is still being offered. A firm resolve that we can win, and that we *will*, at any cost, combined with a consistent perseverance through the rough places of life, increases our strength and will encourage us to keep on until we have attained. We may have many lessons to learn, but we shall never be defeated unless we lose courage. In other words, we are bound to be victorious if we do not *think* defeat. The saints meditate righteousness on their beds; they are making preparations for victory.

Sin has actually to be encountered and dealt with; it is not all a mental attitude. But victory *starts* in the mind. It is easier to win—and we

are much more sure to win when we are determined to do so.

Victorious thinking will result in victorious living. Jesus taught the lesson that all evil results from evil thought; just so will virtue spring from virtuous, victorious thinking.

By having my mind set on being an overcomer, I am thinking more of the promises; they are vital to me, for I am anticipating having a share in them myself. They are mine, and I am living my life now in vivid expectation of them. For this reason, things of earth neither have the attraction nor cause the distraction they otherwise would.

If I keep on anticipating these things, they will become more and more real to me, and I will keep myself alert to spiritual opportunities. It will keep me at work squaring my life with the Record, and before long I should have solid ground for my confidence.

Think victory! ••

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## By and By

*A better day is coming,  
A morning promised long,  
When girded Right with holy might  
Shall overthrow the Wrong;*

*When God the Lord will listen  
To every plaintive cry  
And stretch His hand o'er every land  
With justice—by and by.*

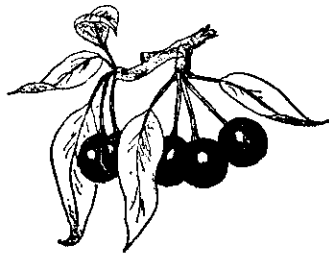
*The boast of haughty error  
No more shall fill the air,  
But Age and Youth shall love the Truth  
And spread it everywhere.*

*No more in want and sorrow  
Will helpless mankind cry,  
But strife shall cease and perfect peace  
Shall flourish—by and by.*

*Oh! for that holy dawning  
We watch and wait and pray,  
Till o'er the height the morning light  
Shall drive the gloom away.*

*And when the heavenly glory  
Shall flood the earth and sky,  
We'll bless the Lord for every word  
And praise Him—by and by.*

# Fruitful Fragments



True education should bring together the highest in thought with the deepest in spirituality.

*O God, turn up my hearing aid and fit me with new glasses so I may be aware of otherwise unnoticed wonders!*

Are you in trouble or pain? Say not, "When will I be getting out of this?" but rather, "What will I be getting out of this?"

*Only eternity will reveal the full results of all your efforts.*

Moral cosmetics cannot avail in the presence of God. He sees no substitutes. We must have the real thing: character.

*I must get my life in tune with God's pitchpipe. That is my responsibility.*

When the routine of worship becomes mechanical, the keen edge of spiritual vitality will dull.

*Life must have spiritual direction if it is to find God.*

A slip of the foot may break a bone or two in you; but a slip of the tongue can injure many others.

*A sorrow that's shared is half a trouble; a joy that's shared is a joy made double.*

Every member of God's church must grow. God has no use for deadwood.

*Try doubting your doubts, and believing your beliefs; it may work wonders for you.*

Living for God means losing ourselves in a cause that is bigger than ourselves.

*No life is as happy as the pure life.*

When "everything" seems to go wrong, try counting the thousand things that are right—blessings so ordinary that they are overlooked.

## *This Is Not All*

*This is not all that God can give;  
Were it, we might do well to live  
Just for today, enjoying all  
The pleasures that so subtly call.  
We might do well, were such the case,  
To compromise with things more base  
And revel in this "little while."*

*Were this life all—but it is not!  
This little need not be our lot  
If we will give ourselves to God  
And bow beneath His chast'ning Rod.  
For Christ shall soon return to earth  
To bring His own the Spirit birth;  
Then through the ages they shall live,  
Happy in ALL that God can give.*

—Contributed

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## "Ye Which Are Spiritual"

*(Continued from page 8)*

the critical life. The spiritual brother is not a self-appointed spiritual detective continually pointing out thorns and never seeing a rose. The perspective of such a one becomes so warped that the whole landscape is distorted. Nothing looks right to him; there is something in just about everyone or everything that is wrong. This critical attitude makes it hard for one to give another due praise or commendation, for fear that the recipient will become proud; and pride—how abhorrent! At the same time the critic has set up his own standard (not God's) to which he thinks everyone should bow; it is his golden calf. Such a one is not spiritual.

This does not mean, however, that it is wrong to be discriminating. Gullibility is not spirituality either; neither is extreme tolerance and non-recognition of evil. Says Paul, "He that is spiritual judgeth [examineth, RV] all things" (I Cor. 2:15). The spiritual man tries to inspect all things from God's point of view. He knows that love which is tempered with knowledge and discernment (Phil. 1:9-10). He knows what to love and what not to love. He is grieved at another's faults, but he is supremely concerned for the faults that lie within himself—which, when he sees, he readily admits and goes to work to correct. Particular will he be—especially with himself—for well he knows that the divine Architect will never accept one stone for His eternal temple that is not presented "faultless before the presence of his glory" (Jude 24.) The standard is exacting.

*One who is spiritual is separate without being Pharisaical.* Pharisaism is farthest from spirituality. Pharisaism thanks God that it is not like other men. It stands in the temple aloof, self-satisfied, feeding on its own egotism and enjoying the diet. It prays to itself, not to God. Its standard is "other men" and their approval, not God. Pharisaism says, "See how spiritual I am." It is separated, but separated unto itself, seeing only its own "holy" figure in its mirror of self-admiration. Pharisaism pulls its self-righteous robes around it and cries, "Stand by yourself, for I am holier than you are." Pharisaism sits on its pinnacle apart from men—and infinitely removed from God.

The spiritual man is separate, but his separatism is not Pharisaic. He is, first of all, set apart *from himself*. This is difficult, to get where selfhood does not taint anything we do. It rules out totally the attitude of "I told you so." It rules out pouting, for one who pouts is feeling sorry for himself. It rules out all feelings of hurt and injury to oneself or one's reputation, for the spiritual person has learned to trust himself and all that he has to the keeping of God. And in all of his duties, he thinks not of himself and the esteem of others which he may gain, but of pleasing God.

In the second place, *the spiritual man is separated from the standard of others*; his one standard is Christ. He realizes that there are many things which others may do which he cannot. Others may spend their time in any way that appeals to them; he cannot. Others may parade themselves and adorn themselves to please themselves; he cannot. Others may engage in any pleasure or pastime that suits their fancy; he cannot. Others may ruminate upon any thought that comes into their minds; he cannot. And so it goes. The spiritual man thus becomes a man of discipline, restricted at every turn by his one supreme desire—to fellowship with God.

And yet it is wrong to call spirituality a restriction, for there is nothing hampering about spirituality. Rather, it is the most broadening and expanding of all experiences possible to the human being, for in being separated from the lesser—from the self and the standard of others—we attach ourselves to the infinite, even God. And when our will becomes united with God we can know that we shall someday enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God, and are therefore able to say any time and without reservation, "Thy will be done."

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the truly spiritual person is *his new tastes*. To cut ourselves off from certain associations, to break a long-established habit, to divorce ourselves from

old settings and old temptations is accomplishment. But to change our basic *tastes*, our *desires*, until we love what God loves and abhor all that He abhors, is accomplishment supreme. This is what the truly spiritual person succeeds in doing, for his very aspiration speaks his one desire: to be "spiritual," to be "like God." And so, when a would-be temptation comes along, he does not say, "I want to do that, but I cannot because I'm spiritual." Nor does he even admit to himself, "If I weren't committed to God I'd go along with that." Such may be points of progress along the way, but the spiritual man keeps progressing until he is able to say in the face of what used to tempt, "I don't even *want* that. Such folly I *abhor!*"

Our opening text points out one more notable quality of him who is spiritual. Let us quote again Galatians 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." The problem is not that of deliberate sin, but a slip as might come to a man on an icy road. There is danger, even to those who are spiritual, those who are making an earnest effort to live the Christ-life. And when one does slip on a spot of ice and falls, it is the duty—even the privilege—of the loving spiritual brother or sister to help that one to his feet again, to help him lovingly, meekly, realizing full well that *he himself* could be the next to slip.

Here is a sharp rebuke to all conceit and superiority. There is no place for either in the heart of the spiritual one. We must help one another as we ourselves need to be helped, for who among us can say he has never slipped—and worse; many are the times we have known what is right and have deliberately allowed ourselves to do wrong. Never have we any right to punish our brother for his sin, or to entertain even the slightest desire to suffer vengeance upon him. The spirit of Christ is the spirit of meekness and the genuine greatness of brotherly love.

Oh, the sublime beauty of that character which is truly spiritual! And what is there that makes it worth the effort, the sacrifice and the continual conflict? One sentence from one of God's most spiritual men answers our question for ever: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6). There is the difference: between "death," and "life and peace."

Will you choose to follow the easy, carnal mind—and find death, when you can attain *spirituality* and *LIFE*? ●●



# The Holy Spirit Today?

## Part 1

*We hear so much of the wonders that are being performed—of people who can heal, or speak in tongues, or interpret dreams, or do other super-human feats. Some claim no association with religion; others claim to be working by the power of God as did the apostles of old. Many profess to work by God's Holy Spirit.*

*What are we to believe? Has God empowered any man or woman on earth today to perform miracles in His name? Is His Holy Spirit present as it was in the days of the apostles?*

*We must go to the Bible for our information. We need to learn what God has revealed about His Holy Spirit, when it was given, for how long it was given, and what are its possibilities for the future. Then we can understand better what is happening—or not happening—today.*

**G**OD is all-powerful. At different times in history, He has entrusted a measure of this power to human beings for special purposes, enabling them to perform wonders and miracles beyond what they would normally be able to do. Often God gave this power to men so they could convince other men of His reality and power. In the time of Moses, God gave special demonstrations of divine power. Moses was able to throw his rod upon the ground, and it became a serpent. No magic was this; the power of God made it possible. The same power of God acted upon the Egyptian magicians' rods, so that when they threw down their rods they also turned into serpents. But God was demonstrating His power in favor of Moses: Moses' "serpent" ate up the magicians' "serpents" (Ex. 7:10-12).

When the Israelites were escaping from Egypt and were being pursued by the Egyptians, they came to the Red Sea. What could the escaping Israelites do? The Lord gave the command, and

Moses obeyed; he lifted his rod and the sea parted, and the Israelites passed over on dry ground. The pursuing Egyptians attempted to follow the Israelites through the divided waters, but the waters came down upon them and they were drowned. Again, this was a miraculous demonstration of the power of God in defense of His people.

Again and again God showed His power to His people in the wilderness. The manna that fell from heaven was a daily demonstration of God's power (Ex. 16:14-35); He gave them water out of the rock (Ex. 17:5-7), and sent angels to go before and behind the people as they journeyed (Ex. 23:20-23) to show them where to go. When the people rebelled, God sent punishments. The earth opened and swallowed the rebellious Dathan and Abiram and "all that pertained unto them" (Num. 16:31-35). God was working wondrously among His people, to support the good and eliminate the evil.

During the time of the kings of Judah and Israel, the prophets Elijah and Elisha performed many miracles by the power of God. Elijah was able to call down fire from heaven to consume the altar he had built to God, and the sacrifice upon it, and twelve barrels of water that had been poured upon it (I Kings 18). The king and the people of Israel who were present affirmed that "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God," so convincing was the demonstration of divine power. Then, as they left the mountain, the "hand of the Lord was on Elijah" and the prophet was able to run ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way to the entrance of Jezreel, a distance of more than twenty-five miles.

By the same power of God Elijah was able to see that the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil did not fail the faithful widow through the long famine (I Kings 17:14-16). He was even able to restore this widow's son to life after the child had been dead a number of hours (I Kings 17:17-24).

Elijah's successor Elisha did even more miracles, healing Naaman the Syrian of leprosy (II Kings 6) and giving it to his unfaithful servant Gehazi; multiplying oil that could be sold to pay the debts of "a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets" (II Kings 4:1-7); raising from death the son of the Shunammite woman (II Kings 4:32-37); causing an axe-head that fell into the water to float (II Kings 6:5-7); and smiting an entire Syrian army with blindness (II Kings 6:18-20). There was no question but that these miracles were possible only through the power of God.

Jesus performed many miracles that have been



recorded for our learning, and all were done by the power of God which He possessed. He calmed the raging storm at sea (Luke 8:22), He miraculously multiplied fishes and loaves to feed thousands (Matt. 14:19; 15:32). He healed ten lepers, He restored the widow of Nain's son to life (Luke 7:11). He walked on the surface of the water (Matt. 14:25). He healed the centurion's servant of palsy (Matt. 8:5), Peter's mother-in-law of a fever (Matt. 8:14), and Bartimaeus of blindness (Luke 18:35). These are only a few of the miracles Jesus performed by the power of God.

When Jesus went away, He promised that He would send His disciples "power from on high." (Luke 24:49). "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you"—the power was from God—"but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." They did, and on the day of Pentecost the power came. We read about it in Acts 2: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-2, 4). There are some people today who claim to be able to speak in "other tongues," as the apostles did. But let us note what happened on the day of Pentecost as they did this. There were "dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven" (v. 5)—there were seventeen different languages present, and they all heard the apostles speak, each in his own tongue, "the wonderful works of God" (v. 6-11). Each man, listening to the apostles, could understand the words as in his own tongue! Has this been done since Pentecost? Has anything like it happened in our day? We know it has not.

Using the power given them on that day of Pentecost, the apostles went forth to preach and to "confirm the word" they preached with the "signs" that followed—that is, the miracles, the wonders which God empowered them to perform. By this power they could heal (as Peter and John healed the man at the Gate Beautiful); they could read the mind (as Peter read the mind of Ananias and his wife Sapphira when they tried to lie and deceive God); they could restore the dead to life (as Peter restored life to Dorcas); they could strike a non-believer with blindness (as Paul smote Elymas the sorcerer), and many other miracles.

From all these accounts we can know that God has power which He can bestow upon men,

and that miracles are the result. Miracles, therefore, are genuine demonstrations of the power of God.

The miracles of the Bible were all done with a specific purpose in view: either to convince men of God's power, to give divine authority to the apostles' message, or to further God's purposes in some way.

Therefore, if anyone asks us if we believe in miracles the answer is Yes.

But, do we believe that men have power from God to perform miracles now, as Jesus and His apostles did? The answer is No. We shall study this in our next issue. ●●

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## Pray!

Pray in the early morning  
For grace throughout the day;  
Thou knowest not what evil  
May come upon thy way.

Pray in the gladsome noontide,  
When day is at its best;  
Pray when the night o'ertakes thee,  
To Him who giveth rest.

Pray in the silent midnight,  
If wakeful hours be thine;  
Pray for a heart submissive,  
That never will repine.

Pray in the hour of sorrow,  
Pray in the hour of grief;  
Go to the heavenly Father,  
Thy soul shall find relief.

Pray when the sun shines brightest,  
Thy path with roses strewn;  
Pray that thy heart be ever  
With the Saviour's kept in tune.

Pray when the dark day cometh,  
And clouds hang overhead;  
In the secret of His presence  
Thy soul hath naught to dread.

Pray for the Father's guidance  
In all thy works and ways,  
So shall thy days be fruitful,  
Thy life be filled with praise.



# SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

*"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:3).*

**E**NDURE hardness." Here is a divine admonition. God's service is not spasmodic; it is continuous; there must be endurance. Only he who endures to the end shall be saved, said Jesus (Matt. 24:13). The test of endurance is certainly one of the severest tests of faithfulness. It is the test which gauges and registers the strength of every other virtue and grace, and no soldier of the cross will be crowned with the laurels of victory who has not stood this test.

The test of endurance is a test of allegiance. No man can serve under two flags. Those who would be good soldiers of Jesus Christ must prove their willingness to sacrifice every other interest for their Lord; they must be such as would sacrifice the love and fellowship and approval of every other being, if necessary, in order to retain the love and favor of God. This will be one of the elements of our trial, and it behooves us to set our affections on the heavenly things accordingly, and to mortify all affections that would tend to compete with our affections for our Lord and His service.

"Endure hardness." But it is not all hardness, because we can look to the end of the matter and see that whatever our trials now may be, the cause of right is bound to triumph. And what a blessing to realize that we are not left without help in this warfare. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7). How it enlarges the confidence of the Christian to realize that while earthly powers may be in opposition, while we ourselves may feel powerless before our adversaries, while we may be fighting against spiritual wickedness in high places on one hand, and on the other, against the very insidious evils of our own flesh—yet, through it all, greater is He that is on our part than all that be against us. All the heavenly hosts are subject to the divine

will and may be employed for the advancement of the Divine cause according to the Divine wisdom.

The Lord is always present with His people. He is always thinking of us, looking out for our interests, guarding us in danger, providing for us in temporal and spiritual things, reading our hearts, shaping the influences around us for our discipline and refining, and hearkening to our every call for aid or sympathy. He is never for a moment off guard, whether we call Him in the busy noon hours or in the silent watches of the night. How blessed the realization of such abiding faithfulness!

As we look back over the leadings of Divine Providence, we are indeed caused to lift our hearts and voices in thanksgiving to the Giver of all good and perfect gifts. Not only would we render thanks, but realize that He who began a good work in us is both able and willing to complete it, if we but fight on as good soldiers in His cause and let His goodness and mercy stimulate our faith and confidence in the days to come.

All who have become convinced by the evidence that the Lord is faithful and will reward all who diligently seek Him, are counted as recruits in His glorious army. They are called to be "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

Now a true soldier does not debate his cause. He has already settled upon its justice and righteousness before he enlisted; thereafter he avouches it and defies contradiction of it. He is ready to spend all and be all spent in its defense.

And who is this "good soldier" serving? It is no less a personage than Jesus Christ. Consider this great Captain of our salvation. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. Like a true captain, He has led the way, always going before His people, leading and guiding, not driving them forward. The courage of our

Lord in this narrow way fills us with admiration. What a strong character was His! He had no thought of turning back. He was intent upon accomplishing His Father's will. A noble pattern was He to the apostles; they saw His greatness in humility, His victory through service.

What a glorious privilege to serve Christ in honest and full fidelity. There is an ineffable joy in being on the right side, in knowing that beyond the field of blood and the valley of shadows is an abundant entrance into the joys and peace of the triumphant King of kings. For that hope none should shrink from the harness of battle, none quail before the rage of the enemy, none tremble in fear of possible suffering and hardness.

This fight of faith consists in considerable measure in our defense of the Word of God. It means we must be willing to stand for the truth of God at any cost, and against any assailant. As the apostle Paul wrote, "I am set for the defense of the truth." We can do no less.

Then, there is the victory we must gain by aggressive warfare against the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life. Love—love for the Lord, for His Word, for righteousness must inspire us, or we shall never be victors. Love alone will keep us faithful unto death and make us meet to be inheritors with the saints in light. Where fervent love rules the heart, the heart is fully submitted to God; this means that the battle is already nine-tenths won. But even then, as the book of Jude tells us, we must keep ourselves in the love of God (Jude 21). We must keep ourselves in watchfulness and prayer and zeal, zeal to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

As good soldiers, we must expect opposition. We must be ready to fight to the end, to sacrifice our own natural preference for the friendship and pleasures of the present and be ready to endure hardness as good soldiers for the truth's sake, whatever shape that hardness may have.

We are warned that the conflict will not be easy. The apostle Paul, who was a veteran of many a campaign, wrote, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). The greatest part of this persecution today comes from within our own evil hearts. We have the Lord's word that he who rules his spirit is greater than he who takes a city (Prov. 16:32); this is because he has learned to what extent to exercise the combativeness of his nature in the right direction, toward self-control.

For this warfare our armor is provided (Eph. 6:10-17). All we must do is to put it on. The girding of truth, the sandals of the gospel of peace,

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the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the brightly burnished shield of a never-wavering faith—all are provided for our use, with full instructions. Our one weapon is the all-sufficient sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

Our tactics are also spelled out. Never are we to resort to those of the enemy; never are we to do evil that good may come. Never are we to take up or use evil words or methods or manners. To do so is to join the enemy, or to conclude that his implements and methods are better than those provided by our Captain, to whom we belong. To answer anger with anger, evil report with evil report, bitter words with bitter words, slander with slander, blow with blow, is the equivalent of attempting to overcome evil with evil. It cannot be done.

Brethren, we have enlisted in this army. We have signed up to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Mutiny and desertion are punishable by death, certain and eternal. On the other hand, faithful service brings us pay of an hundredfold now, in the midst of the hardness and fightings, and in the end a pension of everlasting life. Have we not reason enough to fight on as good soldiers of Jesus Christ? ●●

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## Our Readers Write...

### Beginning to See

If we can but subdue our own thinking, our own petty decisions, our own whims and desires, until we have taken out time enough to prostrate our mind and spirit in subjection to God, then we may begin to see and learn something of His fathomless greatness.

To say that "the time is short" is wording it mildly. Not only does the Handbook confirm this fact, but the indifferent and iniquitous behavior of the populace of this planet warrants a change.

If one such as I can detect this, what must be the facts from the Head Office?

*Thermopolis, Wyoming*

J. A.

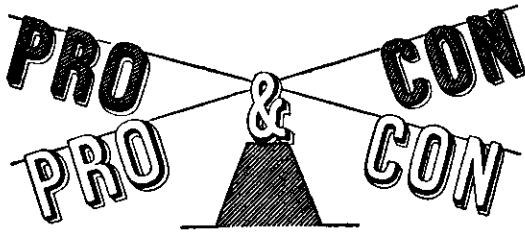
### Looking Ahead

Man has an awful lot to be humble about!—or should I say ashamed. In any case, we can sense a general worsening of our world. It goes on sliding downhill.

Assuredly, man can't look to himself for any remedies. It is time to make peace with God, and plan to welcome His Son! Whatever the time, we have been told to be ready.

*Topeka, Kansas*

L. P.



### *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 consider them in the light of Scripture teaching. Our policy is the Apostle's injunction: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."*

#### ●More on the Devil

"What do you do with the incident in the life of Jesus, as recorded in all three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke? 'And when He went forth to land there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.' Jesus cast out these devils, and they 'entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked' (Luke 8: 26-36)."

—E. A. P., Armstrong, B. C., Canada

There was an article published in the January, 1977 issue of the *Megiddo Message*, entitled "Labeling and Curing," in which the writer made the point that Jesus in using the term "devil" or "Satan" was simply using a term which the people could understand. To cure a sick person, He might say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or He might command the devil to come out. By using those terms the people could relate to what He was doing. But that did not infer that Jesus thought that all disease was caused by sinning or that it was caused by demon possession. We cannot and must not overlook Jesus' plain statement in Mark 7:20 that "that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man." When the people believed that demons were the cause of illness, the natural manner of effecting a cure was to remove what they believed to be the "cause" of the problem.

William Barclay, in his commentary on the gospel of Matthew, makes the following comments: "The ancient world believed unquestioningly and

intensely in demons and evil spirits. The air was so full of these spirits that it was not even possible to insert into it the point of a needle without coming against one. Some said that there were seven and a half million of them; there were ten thousand of them on a man's right hand and ten thousand of them on his left; and all were waiting to work men harm. They lived in unclean places such as tombs, and places where no cleansing water was to be found. As to the origin of the demons, different views were held. Some held that they had been there since the beginning of the world. Some held that they were the spirits of wicked, malignant people, who had died, and who even after their death still carried on their evil work. . . .

"To these demons all illness was ascribed. They were held to be responsible not only for diseases like epilepsy and mental illness but also for physical illness. The Egyptians held that the body had thirty-six different parts and that every one could be occupied by a demon. One of their favourite ways of gaining an entry into a man's body was to lurk beside him while he ate, and so to settle on his food.

"It seems fantastic to us: but the ancient peoples believed implicitly in demons. If a man gained the idea that he was possessed by a demon, he would easily go on to produce all the symptoms of demon-possession. He could genuinely convince himself that there was a demon inside him."

Mr. Barclay, in telling the story of the healing of the two deranged men, uses the logic that the only way Jesus could convince those men that they were healed was to tell them that the demons had gone out of them. Mr. Barclay suggests that "the shouting and shrieking of the men alarmed the pigs and in their terror the pigs took to flight and plunged into the lake." It seems probable that Jesus caused the swine to be deranged and so drown themselves in the sea to make a visible demonstration of miraculous power. Other people of the day professed to cure the insane, but to make animals insane was surely beyond anything they could do.

There is nothing in the passage that says Jesus believed in demonic spirits of evil that tempt men to do wrong. James stated very plainly in the Epistle bearing his name: "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Why would James have made this statement if Jesus had taught that the atmosphere of the earth was permeated with a spirit of evil controlled by a personal devil? The devil of mythology and theology is said to usurp more power over men's lives than God. It makes no difference how the supposed power came about, whether the



devil was created perfect and then fell, or whether he was created evil; His power in either case came from God, for God is the source of all power in the universe. How unreasonable to think that God would give power to a being opposing Him so mightily as does the devil of theology!

Luke 8:35 shows definitely the result of Jesus' casting out devils: When the people of the region came to Jesus to see what was done, they "found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind." Jesus had clearly restored the man's mind to a state of health.

**"In Matthew 10:1, it reads that Jesus 'gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.' If healing sickness was described as 'casting out devils,' why did Jesus have to give His disciples power against unclean spirits and sickness?"**

—D. V., Ripley, Tennessee

Your criticism does not seem valid. We could ask also, Why did Jesus give them power to heal all manner of sickness AND all manner of disease? Is not sickness a diseased condition of the body? and is not a disease a sickness? Could it not be that Jesus was covering all angles of the problem? In that day, as well as in our own, there were many uncivilized peoples (and unfortunately some civilized people as well) who believed that sickness is caused by demons which can only be exorcised by the *shaman* or medicine man. To relate to the people of their day, to communicate to them what they were doing, the apostles would cleanse the spirit, heal the sickness, cast out the devil; it all meant the same; only the nomenclature differed.

We of course are saddened to know that in this age when the study of medicine has advanced so far, so many people still hold to unfounded ideas of mythology and try to associate them with the Bible.

It is high time that we discarded pagan mythology in favor of proven Bible truth. Even some in the Catholic Church, which has a long tradition of belief in the devil and the practice of exorcism, are realizing that it can no longer be substantiated. The following is from an article published in the *U. S. Catholic*, July, 1974. Father Peter J. Riga writes: "The wholesale revival in the occult, of course, is a long way from Christian faith, which is absolutely removed from all forms of magic and superstition. For that reason we ought to remove from Christianity every vestige of belief

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in devils—at least as truly personal entities—and the forms or rites of exorcism to drive out the devil. We may certainly keep the language to express symbolically the reality of sin and evil, but in our catechesis it ought to be understood as a symbol. True Christianity neither needs nor should it desire such a fallacious prop. As we move further into modern history, belief in a personal devil will only prove more and more of an embarrassment to true Christianity. Better to experience a slight trauma now as we demythologize the demonology of our tradition and history than continue to raise the distinct possibility of misunderstanding in our modern age.

"It is true that Christianity is, and always will be, a stumbling block to many men; but we ought to make certain that when they reject Christianity, it is for the right reasons, and not because of the residue of magic and superstition which still plagues us in our teaching about the devil and exorcism."

**"In Matthew 4, who was speaking to Jesus and tempting Him, if not a devil?"**

—D. V., Ripley, Tennessee

Believers in a personal devil regard Jesus' temptation as proof positive of their position. Actually, it proves just the opposite. This "devil" that tempted Jesus could talk. Can anyone who believes in a personal devil today honestly say that the "devil" has ever *talked* with them? Does anyone have a recording of the devil's voice?

This "devil" Jesus confronted could also offer Jesus the kingdoms of this world that could be seen from a very high mountain. Could the classic "devil" of theology make any such offer? Would

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he have the power to give that land to Jesus?

This "devil" that tempted Jesus also commanded Jesus to worship him. What living man or woman today has had such an encounter with the supposed "devil" of theology? The most confirmed believer in the devil usually concedes that the devil is secretly manipulating men behind the scenes, throwing his power over his victims and manifesting himself secretly through them. There is no verifiable record of open encounter with the strange creature.

If the tempter of Jesus had been a personal being other than a man, the story of the encounter would have been entirely different. But if we take the Bible position, that evil men are called "devils," the story is removed from the realm of superstition and becomes divine truth. It is very possible that the "devil" in this case was a representative of the Roman government, for such a one could have offered serious temptation to a young man of Jesus' capability and could have had authority to grant Him power and authority in exchange for "worship." As an opposer to the humble-minded, submissive Jesus, such a man was rightly termed a "devil." Our Lord, referring to Peter when Peter was opposing Him, said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." He called Peter a satan. He did not try to exorcise any little demons in Peter but called Peter directly "Satan," because Peter was opposing Him.

**"In Matthew 25:41, Jesus says 'hell was created for the Devil and his angels.' If we were all devils or Satans, He would have said hell was created for the devils (plural)."**

*—D. V., Ripley, Tennessee*

I believe you have misquoted Jesus. The passage does not mention "hell." It simply speaks of "everlasting fire," and "fire" is used in the Bible as a symbol of destruction; it in no way refers to a literal burning hell where the damned will be tortured to all eternity. Let us read the passage: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Who are those on His left hand? They are the "goats," for He sets "the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. 25:33). It is a picture of the Judgment scene, but does anyone think Christ will be separating literal sheep from literal goats? The apostle Paul tells us to compare "spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13), and to do this we must be consistent in our applications of a passage. Figu-

rative goats cannot be sent into literal fire; "fire" is a symbol of destruction, and that destruction will be "everlasting," it will be permanent; in other words, they will be destroyed forever. Verse 46 calls it "everlasting punishment"; it will be a punishment from which there can be no escape. And it is prepared "for the devil and his angels," that is, for the evildoers and all who follow them into evil.

**"I want to ask you to read Ephesians 6:12."**

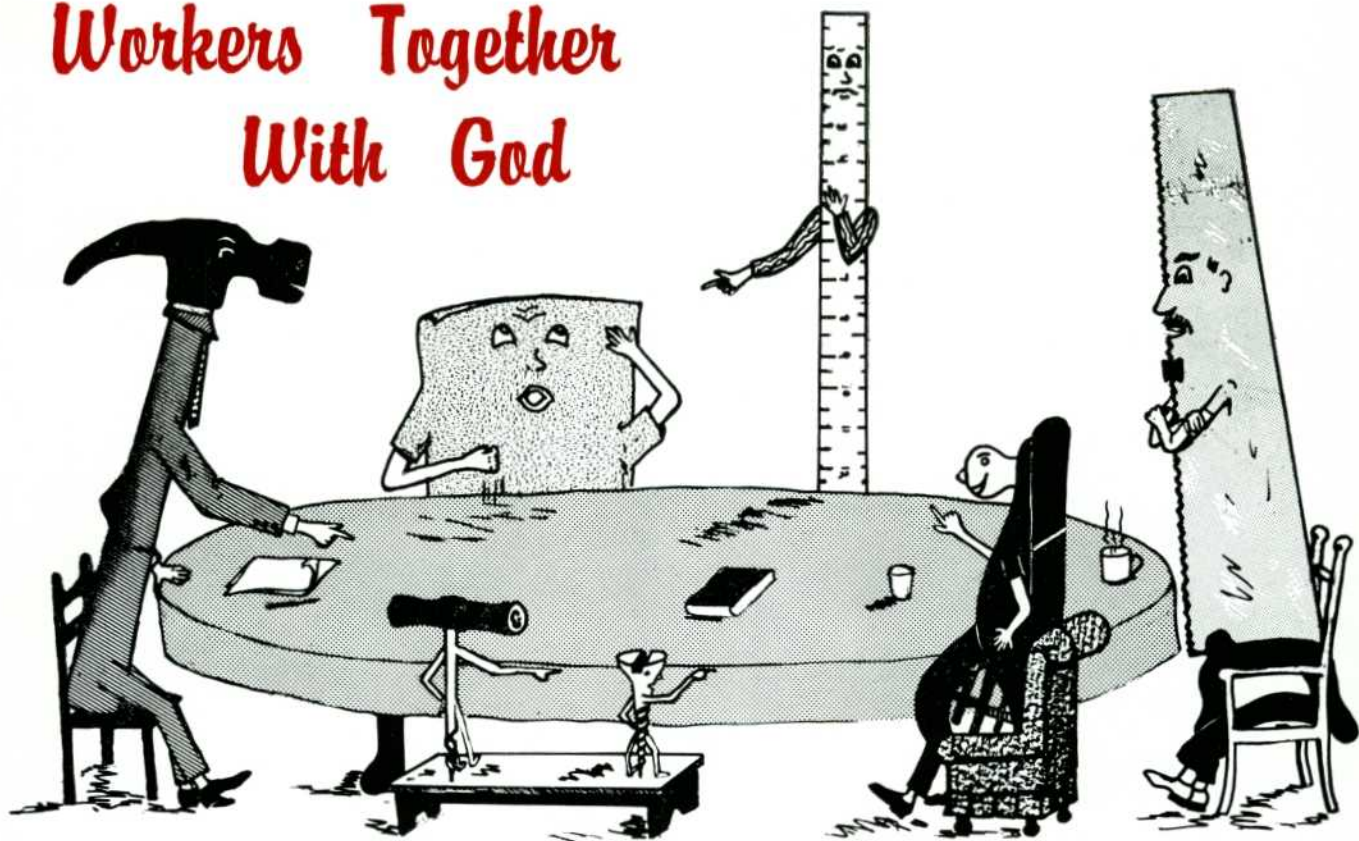
The passage reads: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Paul is referring to the wicked elements in the world, which he contends against. He is not fighting in a literal army, against flesh and blood soldiers, but he is fighting in a spiritual battle against stubborn Jews who cling to their old law, against all forces that oppose God, against "spiritual wickedness in high places," against the evil in his own nature (Rom. 7:21-25). It is the same battle we must fight today, using the same God-given weapons Paul lists in the verses that follow (read Eph. 6:13-18). Of how much value would a "shield of faith" or "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," be against the personal devil so popularly believed?

**"If your teaching that the devil is only the evil in man is carried to its logical conclusion, then it goes without saying that the good in man is God—that there is no personal God. And that is exactly what thousands believe—that we (men) are gods."**

Your criticism could also be turned around. You do not believe that the good in man is a personal God, which is true. Then why do you believe that the evil in man is a personal devil?

Jesus was very specific as to the source of all evil: "From within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts," etc. He never once hinted that the evil was first implanted by a demonic gremlin of some kind before it could proceed from the human heart. We would much rather believe what the Bible tells us, that God is, that He is all-powerful, and that He created men with the ability to exercise their own free will; each has the option of obeying His laws and receiving eternal life, or of following his own lusts and desires and receiving eternal death; there is no suggestion of any interference from a God-created devil. ●●

# Workers Together With God



**T**HE CARPENTER'S tools had a conference.

Brother Hammer was in the chair. The meeting of the tools had voted that he should leave, because he was too noisy. But Brother Hammer protested: "If I am to leave this carpenter shop, then Brother Gimlet must go too. He is so insignificant, and makes very little impression."

Little Brother Gimlet then rose up. "All right," he said, "but Brother Screw must go also. You have to turn him around and around again and again to get him anywhere."

Brother Screw could not keep silent. "If you wish, I will go; but Brother Plane must leave also. All his work is on the surface, there is no depth to it."

To this, Brother Plane replied, "Well, Brother Rule will also have to withdraw if I do, for he is always measuring folks, as though he were the only one who is right."

Brother Rule then complained against Brother Sandpaper, and said, "What about him? He is rougher than he ought to be; he is always rubbing people up the wrong way."

In the midst of the discussion, the carpenter walked in. He had come to perform his day's work. He put on his apron, and went to the bench to make a wheel. He used the screw, the gimlet, the sandpaper, the saw, the hammer, the plane, and all the others.

After the day's work was over and the carpenter had gone home, the tools met again. This time Brother Saw arose and spoke first. "My brethren," he said, "I perceive that all of us are too quick to criticize. The carpenter today has used all of us. We are all laborers together, each doing the particular task he is designed to do. Why should we fuss at one another because our brother doesn't do things just the way we think he should?"

All the tools knew Brother Saw was right. There was not an accusation made that day that was not absolutely true; yet the carpenter had used each of them. He used each one where none of the others would have done any good at all.

Isn't that the way we should be workers together with God? Why should any complain about another just because he isn't what *we* think he should be? Why not let the Carpenter judge each tool and use each tool where he is needed?

"We then as workers together with God beseech you," wrote the apostle Paul (II Cor. 6:1). He was a master tool in God's carpenter shop for many years.

How careful each of us should be, doing our best to labor together with God and accomplish the task He has assigned us, and not hinder His work by finding fault with others of God's tools! ●●



## Father, Teach Us

*Father in heaven, Thou God of all,  
Oh, help Thy children when they call,  
That they may build from age to age  
An undefiled heritage.*

*Teach us to bear the yoke in youth,  
With steadfastness and careful truth,  
That, in our time, Thy grace may give  
The truth whereby the nations live.*

*Teach us to rule ourselves alway,  
Controlled and cleanly night and day,  
That we may bring, if need arise,  
No maimed or worthless sacrifice.*

*Teach us to look in all our ends  
On Thee for judge and not our friends,  
That we, with Thee, may walk uncowed  
By fear or favor of the crowd.*

*Teach us the strength that cannot seek  
By deed or thought to hurt the weak,  
That, under Thee, we may possess  
The strength to stand through all distress.*

*Teach us delight in simple things,  
And mirth that has no bitter springs,  
Forgiveness free of evil done  
And love until our race is run.*

—Selected.