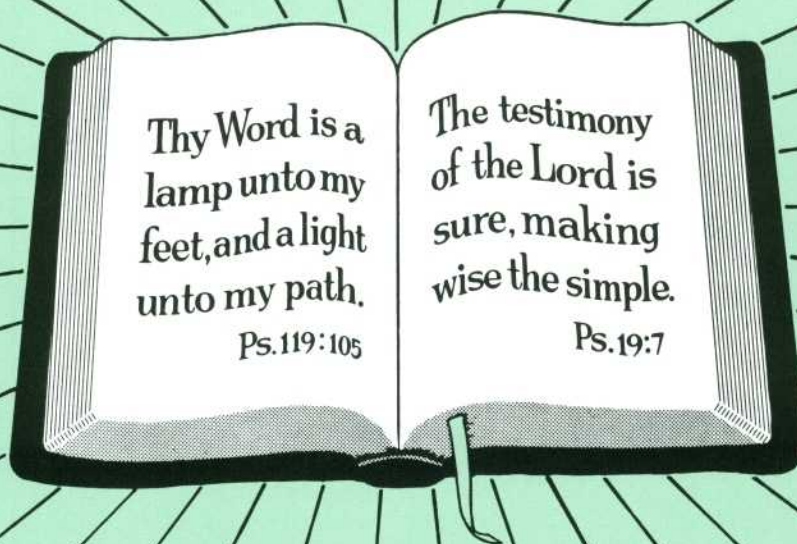


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Work with Eternal Worth

Our Wonderful Eyes
For Safer Traveling
When Christ Comes Again

Dealing with Doubts

THE PERSON who doesn't think doesn't doubt. But every person who thinks has, or has had, doubts. This is not all bad. Galileo called doubts "the father of invention." Tennyson suggested that faith may be born in honest doubt.

It may be a good plan to believe our beliefs and doubt our doubts—as a start toward eliminating the doubts. But the problem often arises because of the things we allow ourselves to doubt. Our doubts run from simple, insignificant things to sometimes doubting our sanity. Some go on to even doubting the ultimate purpose of God. There are many doubts which leave us none the worse for our doubting. Again, there are doubts that are devastating.

Some doubts can leave us with a life which is cramped, crumpled, wasted and ruined. If we doubt the final purpose of God, then what purpose is left us? If we doubt that God has a purpose and a good one, then we cannot make any sense out of history. If we doubt the rationality of the universe and its Creator, then is anything rational? If we doubt the worth of moral value, do we not become nothing more than breathing clods? If we doubt our worth in the vast creation of God, shall we find any valid reason for living?

To help us with our doubts we demand some sort of proof, and rightly so. After all, we have an inquiring mind. Many times we accept too much without asking for evidence; otherwise rumors would die young! Where, we ask, is any trace of plan or pattern in the unfolding of history? The world is a tangled web, almost a madhouse. Where is the sense of it? We seem to be on a ball of dust blundering blindly along, traveling in great circles, getting nowhere. We feel ourselves but victims of chance and change and accident, or of fickle fate, whatever that might mean. Our feelings were expressed long ago by the man who said, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2). Life, as we observe it and as we so often live it, seems to have no meaning at all. At best it is nothing more than an idle show.

Of course we do not discuss these doubts. Yet our questions, our feelings, show up times without number.

They show up in our bouts with discouragement and despair. As the Prophet of old put it, "If one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof" (Isa. 5:30).

It is a curious fact that doubt sometimes has no easy solution simply because we have made up our mind to doubt. But let us remember, the existence of a doubt is no proof that we would be willing to believe even if we had all the proof we could ask for. There is none so blind as he who *will* not see, and—unfortunately—most of us have taken a turn at belonging in this category. We convince ourselves on our own idea to such an extent that reason has no appeal.

How can we do this when evidence of plan and purpose is everywhere? The "earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). Again, "He created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18).

The heavens do not lie. They tell of plan and purpose. They may seem a jumble to the untrained, but the stars are all on course. We trust the sun, moon and stars every time we look at our watches. The Scriptures do not lie; and they tell us what can resolve our doubts. They tell us we are not alone; that we have a responsibility to a Creator. They assure us that history has a message and a meaning. They teach us that time is not only for now but forever. They teach us that we have value as a creature from the hand of God, real value just according as we make ourselves valuable. They teach us the way to live if we would add meaning and worth to life.

We all know there are questions we cannot answer at this time. But we need to remember with humility that just because we cannot now answer some questions does not mean there are no answers. There are days when doubts will come; there are times in this mortal state when we will be tempted by discouragement. But we can, as the great king did, lift up our eyes above the hills unto the Lord, from whom our help comes (Ps. 121). As long as we gaze only at the earth,

(Continued on page 12)

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

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

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

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

Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People

Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

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Work with Eternal Worth

Scripture Reading: II Thessalonians 3:1-13

LABOR DAY has an interesting history. It is nearly one hundred years old. The first labor day celebration occurred in Paris on May 1, 1889. Because most countries that observe it do so on May 1, it is widely known as May Day. In the Soviet Union it is an official holiday. Canada and the United States have fixed the first Monday in September as their Labor Day, and in these countries it is a national holiday to celebrate the causes espoused by the laboring man and to assess the progress made in improving working conditions. It is a day in which all, not simply the working people, participate.

Labor Day marks the fact that in civilized countries much of the toil of earlier days has been taken off man's hands. Children used to sweep chimneys and work in coal mines and mills. Now they have too much time on their hands. Immigrants who came to America thinking its streets were paved with gold often found themselves working in sweat shops. In recent years automatic machinery has taken on much of this burden.

The Work/Leisure Crisis

Today our society is suffering from what some analysts call a work crisis. And strangely enough, the cause of the crisis is not too *much* work but too little. Particularly detrimental is a widespread lack of initiative, industry and commitment among

many workers. Some even go so far as to say that no one should be required to do any work. It is somewhat reminiscent of the story of the beggar on the street who seemed to be the only man around to run an errand one day. When asked if he would do this man a favor and please run a short errand, the beggar replied, "I don't run errands, I just take alms." Everyone wants something for nothing.

In many areas of employment, work requirements have been lessened, solving some problems—and creating others. As heavy toil gives way to technology, heavy leisure takes its place, and plenty of people arrive at the shop or office on Monday morning worn to a frazzle—they get more rest on their jobs, intentionally or otherwise, than they do on their own time.

Fortunately, some people enjoy their work; many others do not; their attitude depends in part on what they do and whether they took their jobs out of necessity or as a career choice; whether they work for themselves and so take an interest in their work, or whether they simply put in time for someone else to get the recompense.

The recent heavy emphasis on leisure time and what to do with it has seemed to foster the idea that work is a thing to be shunned. One of the more obvious status symbols among many is the fact that for them work is not required. What is even worse, perhaps, is that for many people work itself has become little more than a dull and meaningless routine, unfulfilled, unsatisfying, unrewarding.

Note: *Work with Eternal Worth* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

Work a Curse because of Adam?

Adding to the negative feeling about work is a common error in thinking among Christendom, that work itself is a divine curse—due to what is called the Fall of man. How often the Scriptural statement, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Gen. 3:19)—has been used to forward this position! As though Adam’s transgression was the original cause of our having to toil to have sufficient to eat and wear! *We are condemned to toil—because Adam sinned!*

We quote from a current periodical: “Apparently Adam and Eve’s pre-fall work had both a physical and a spiritual aspect . . . and it still does. Adam and Eve’s plunge into sin fundamentally altered their spiritual and physical world. Through their lapse, work gained a new facet which still plagues us all—“painful toil” (Gen. 3:17). Work was not created as drudgery: it became such through sin’s flawing power. As a result we speak of “getting back to the grind,” or to the “salt mine.” Work became tedious, difficult, and frustrating. Not only this, but it became mandatory in the struggle to live: “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground” (Gen. 3:19).” (Cited from *Kindred Spirit*, published by Dallas Theological Seminary, Fall, 1981).

Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the Bible commands and demands that we expend effort, that we work. It is not the same type of work that we must do to earn our living, but it is work, and it sometimes is tedious and difficult. Nothing in the realm of the spiritual can be achieved *without* work. The ideas of the religious world notwithstanding, work—in proper type, style, and direction—is the entrance pass to all the blessings of the world to come.

What, then, is the meaning of Adam’s curse for disobedience?

First of all, let us note that the passage which records the curse upon Adam for disobedience is part of the Genesis allegory. In this allegory, Adam is being used in a representative role. He represents all who are called to serve God in every age. He transgressed, but his transgression brought condemnation upon no one except himself and those who, like him, transgress.

We are condemned to toil—because Adam sinned? No!

Secondly, the mistaken notion that Adam’s condemnation to work was the origin of all work and drudgery overlooks the fact that Adam had been commanded to “dress . . . and to keep” the garden even before he sinned (Gen. 2:15). Adam was given specific work to do, a divine commission to fulfill, a responsibility to which he was to be faithful. He had to obey whatever commands were given him, just as we have to obey. And this was *before* he sinned. Adam’s being made to eat bread by the sweat of his face had nothing to do with the need for humankind to toil, to plant and cultivate before they harvest, to work so as to be able to eat and live. The curse upon him tells us that all who serve God are tempted, and that when they yield and do not repent and reform, they are accountable for their misconduct.

Agreeing to serve God brings us under serious responsibility. God does not offer us His eternal blessings, accept us into a covenant-relationship, and then leave us to do as we please.

Work—Christian and Puritan

Labor is not a curse. Legitimate work, even work that is temporal in nature, can be consecrated to God, and as such can be meaningful, constructive, and of eternal worth. To the Christian, work is an instrument which he can use to prepare himself for a place in the future Kingdom of God. To the Christian, any honorable role may be—must be—offered as a sacrifice to God, and may be viewed as contributing to the good of man personally and to the whole community. It is not to be hated, despised, or counted drudgery or punishment.

What a contrast to the currently widespread feeling against work was the philosophy of our Puritan forefathers. The Puritans declared the sanctity of all honorable work. For them, all of life was God’s. Their goal was to integrate their daily work with their religious devotion to God. They

viewed work as the response of a steward to God, and taught contentment with one's task. These ideals are admirably captured in their motto: "Serve God in thy calling, and do it with cheerfulness, and faithfulness, and an heavenly mind." "There is no part of our life or conduct, however insignificant, that should not be related to the glory of God," wrote another of their spokesmen. John Milton satirized the businessman who left his

religion at home, "trading all day without his religion."

To the Puritans, work was to be rewarding, both spiritually and morally; as they viewed it, work glorified God and benefited society. The Puritan ideal was the Biblical "'Occupy till I come!' Your strength is a talent, your parts are talents, and so is your time. How is it that ye stand all day idle? Your trade is your proper

Let Us Pray. . .

O Lord our God, our light and our salvation; our defense and our fortress; our glory and the rock of our strength, who holdeth our soul in life and suffereth not our feet to be moved: we come into Thy presence this morning with grateful hearts. Thou who hast favored us with Thy high calling, who provest us, who triest us as silver is tried; who bringest us through fire and through water that we may be purified and cleansed: we worship Thee.

Father, we thank Thee for this rare and beautiful opportunity of being employed in Thy service. We thank Thee, too, for the cheerful and limitless enrichment of our days: for the beauty of field and forest, for the love of brother and sister, for the peace and quietude which surround us. We thank Thee for our nation and for those who administer its affairs, for those who keep law and order, for those who promote the general good, that we may be free to serve Thee in all godliness and honesty. Help us in these stress-filled times to realize that Thou art still at the helm and not to be unduly concerned with the course of this world or with our own temporal fortunes or misfortunes, knowing that if we do our part in fulfilling our contract with Thee, Thou wilt work everything together for our eternal good. Lord, we confess that too often we have been unworthy of Thy goodness to us. We have been guilty of kind deeds from selfish motives and profound words from

untouched hearts. We have spoken to hurt, instead of to encourage and bless. We have been thoughtless of the feelings of others and inconsiderate of their struggles with sin.

Adding to our transgressions has been this most dreadful ingratitude, that at times we have been lazy, careless and unmotivated in the quest of that which bears *eternal* worth. We pray Thee, Lord, to stir our hearts to repentance, quicken our spirits, and grant Thy gracious forgiveness as we turn again to Thee. We know that in Thy service is no place for drones; if we secure the eternal benefits of Thy employment, we must work.

We pray Thee, Lord, to quicken our hearts and stir us to labor diligently for the eternal, to use everything that is temporal in the securing of that which will be eternal.

Lord, we pray Thee to stir us deeply this morning. Stir us to a more serious scrutinizing of our own hearts, a true evaluating of our own efforts toward holiness, that we may purify the finest details of our lives. May we not grow weary, but work till Thy peace and holiness pervade the deepest recesses of our heart and search out every hiding place of sin. So may we find our highest joy in sacrifice and our greatest pleasure in pleasing Thee.

Stir Thy people, Lord, wherever they may be; and bless and strengthen them as Thou hast promised. And keep us all looking eagerly forward to the Day when, through the greatness of Thy power, all who live shall know and praise Thy name.

O God, Thou art our strength in youth and our stay in age; through Thee we shall do valiantly—today, and tomorrow, and through all coming to-morrows. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

province." To work in one's calling, in the Puritan view, was to work in the sight of God. Cotton Mather asserted, "Oh, let every Christian walk with God; and when he works at his calling, let him act in his occupation with an eye to God, act as under the eye of God."

This belief had practical results. It led to a contentment which is sadly lacking in our world today. If our vocation in life is God-directed, we have a reason to accept our lot that the unbeliever lacks. "Nothing is so bad, but what it becomes sweet and tolerable if only I know and am certain that it is pleasing to God." "The world does not consider labor a blessing. Therefore it flees and hates it. . . . But the pious, who fear the Lord, labor with a ready and cheerful heart; for they know God's command and will," wrote a Puritan father.

Cotton Mather encouraged his listeners to believe that "a Christian should follow his occupation with contentment. . . . Is your business here clogged with any difficulties and inconveniences? Contentment under those difficulties is no little part of your homage to that God who hath placed you where you are."

The Puritans derived much of their philosophy about work from the Bible, and how improved would be our present society if people today would do the same.

The Biblical Ethic of Work

The Bible is definite in upholding and advocating physical, individual responsibility and work. It was a provision of the law of Moses: "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work" (Ex. 20:9-10). So often discussion centers around the seventh day of rest that the six days of work are overlooked; but the time for work was as much a part of the divine arrangement as the time for rest. For the God-fearing among them, every day was a day dedicated to God. But on the physical side, life should be properly balanced; for the overly ambitious the law was a reminder that God should not be forgotten or crowded out, that one day a week should be exclusively set aside. For the less enterprising it served as a reminder that each

Labor is not a curse. Work, even temporal work, can be consecrated to God.

able-bodied person should be willing to do his proper share toward his own support and the general good, and not expect to live off the work of others.

Many are the proverbs encouraging effort and industry: "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. . . . He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread: . . . the hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute. . . . In all labour there is profit. . . . Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings" (Prov. 10:4; 12:11, 24; 14:23; 22:29).

God does not intend work to be a plague or penalty. He intended that Work should be healthful, productive, and for the general good. Work is to be welcomed, not shunned, or thought of as shame.

The apostle Paul's teaching on the subject was along this line: that Christians, of all people, should seek work, not try to avoid it, and should regard it as an opportunity to serve God and fulfill their responsibilities to Him. Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica:

"One order, brothers, we must give you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: don't associate with the brother whose life is undisciplined (living in idleness), and not in accordance with the tradition which you received from us. You know well that we ourselves are your examples here, and that our lives among you were never undisciplined.

"We did not eat anyone's food without paying for it. In fact we toiled and laboured night and day to avoid being the slightest expense to any of you. This was not because we had no right to ask our necessities of you, but because we wanted to set you an example to imitate. When we were actually with you we gave you this principle to work on: 'If a man will not work, he shall not eat.' Now we hear that you have some among you living quite

**"You, my brothers—don't
get tired of honest work!"
—II Thess. 3:13, Phillips**

undisciplined lives, never doing a stroke of work, and busy only in other people's affairs. Our order to such men, indeed our appeal by the Lord Jesus Christ, is to settle down to work and eat the food they have earned themselves.

"And the rest of you, my brothers—don't get tired of honest work!" (II Thess. 3:6-13, Phillips).

Work Is Honorable

Physical work is honorable. Our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, labored, and encouraged industry among his brethren. "If anyone will not labor for a home in this world," he said, "he will never have the ambition to labor for an eternal home."

The Biblical writers were also concerned about a proper relationship between persons concerned with the work: that is, between the employer and the employed, between the master and the slave, between friend and friend, as the case might be.

The law of Moses had special stipulations to govern both employed and employer. According to this law, every day was payday for the workman, to be sure the rights of the worker were not sidestepped by enterprising Israelites. We read: "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning" (Lev. 19:13). Again, "Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee" (Deut. 24:14-15). Again, "Woe unto him that . . . useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work" (Jer. 22:13).

Oppression and forced or slave labor were never allowed. All work was to be honorably

done, and adequately recompensed.

Jesus said it this way: "The labourer is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7).

Slavery—a Singular Calling

The days of the Early Church saw a different arrangement of employment, that of master and slave. Some persons converted to the faith were slaves in this world. Others were masters. Either condition made no difference whatever to their status among the believers or to their opportunity before God; but a large part of their Christian duty was to be Christians in their mastership or in their servitude; and this was not easy.

Imagine what it meant for masters who became believers to give up their heavily dominating role and treat Christian slaves as brothers—as Paul appealed to Philemon to do in the case of Onesimus. Masters were to remember that they were themselves servants of their heavenly Father, and to treat their slaves as they themselves would want to be treated.

But what was probably by far the more difficult role in the Early Christian's world was the role of the slave. Commands governing the conduct of the Christian slave were explicit. There could be no envy, no grudge-carrying, no disrespect for authority, even if you were a slave and were treated as an animal. "All who wear the yoke of slavery," wrote Paul, "must count their own masters worthy of all respect" (I Tim. 6:1, NEB). All. No exceptions—if your master was a believer, or if he was, in every meaningful sense of the word, a beast.

To Titus the apostle Paul wrote: "Tell slaves to respect their masters' authority in everything, and to comply with their demands without answering back; not to pilfer, but to show themselves strictly honest and trustworthy; for in all such ways they will add lustre to the doctrine of God our Saviour" (Tit. 2:9, NEB). "Add lustre to the doctrine of God"—that is what we want to do today, what we can do by our lives of obedience. We need not be slaves to show ourselves honest and trustworthy.

The apostle Peter also spelled out clearly the duties of the believing slave: "Slaves must be respectful and obedient to their masters, not only when they are kind and gentle but also when they

are unfair. The merit in the sight of God is in bearing it patiently when you are punished after doing your duty" (I Pet. 2:18-20, Jerusalem Bible).

Here is stated an eternal truth to be obeyed; but nowhere was its impact felt more keenly or more frequently, we can be sure, than among the slaves. No easy order was this. If you were a slave, obedience was the first requirement. If your master happened to be kindly and reasonable, thank God. If he was severe, demanding, and unfair, if he lashed and whipped you when you had done your very best to serve him—well, you had to suffer patiently, without talking back and without any wish or desire to retaliate. What a singular opportunity for abundant spiritual growth!

Believing Master, Believing Slave

There was one more possible situation which was unquestionably more desirable: a believing master and a believing slave. But even this situation could have its complications. Wrote Paul again, "If the masters are believers, the slaves must not respect them any less for being their Christian brothers. Quite the contrary; they must be all the better servants because those who receive the benefit of their service are one with them in faith and love" (I Tim. 6:1-2, NEB).

The overall point the apostles were making was the same that applies to us in the doing of our work today: that all work done by the believer will be recompensed abundantly by God, if it be done as unto God. Human recompense, human appreciation is immaterial. God is the Great Paymaster, and His pay we cannot afford to miss. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "Slaves, obey your human masters loyally with a proper sense of respect and responsibility, as service rendered to Christ; not only working when you are being watched, as if looking for human approval, but as servants of Christ conscientiously doing what you believe to be the will of God. Work cheerfully as if it were for the Lord and not for a man. You may be sure that the Lord will reward each man for good work irrespectively of whether he be slave or free" (Eph. 6:5-8, Phillips).

What if you were a slave and had to spend thirty or forty or fifty years serving a tyrant in this

Human recompense, human appreciation is immaterial. God is the Great Paymaster.

world—if you could serve honorably as "to the Lord" and know that all the ages of eternity would be your recompense! What if you were flogged and mistreated, even when you had done all your duty—if you could be sure of God's approval upon your work! Could you not, in the words of Peter, looking forward, be caused to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"?

This is the perspective we need today, we whose trials and crosses are, by comparison, the lightest of light afflictions. How shameful if we complain!

When Physical and Spiritual Combine

We need constantly to remember that all our physical work has a spiritual dimension. But that spiritual dimension will not develop automatically. We must develop it. We must exert the effort to keep on our minds our primary goal, otherwise we will find ourselves laboring, in Jesus' words, "for the meat that perisheth" and not for that "meat which will endure unto everlasting life" (John 6:27). Jesus knew how much easier it was for the average person to labor for the things that can be seen, and how difficult to labor for the *unseen*, for those glories that can be viewed only by the eye of faith. Nevertheless, we know in our sober moments that the "things which are seen are temporal"; only "the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:18).

Here is a perspective which requires work, and again we take a position that is frowned on and even scorned by large segments of Christendom. Everyone recognizes that goals in this world must be worked for if they would be attained; but Christians, they say, must not strive. Our spiritual goals are attained by prayer, by faith, by trust in the redeeming power of Christ's blood, and by the Holy Spirit which they believe comes into our

(Continued on page 21)

And Still She Speaks

Extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments
by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



I would not give a penny, no, not even half a penny for any man or woman who thinks he or she is all right. God wants men and women who know they have not been all right. He wants men or women who know they were all wrong.

I have been preaching for the last 40 years but that will not save me. I might know God's Word, but I have to feel what I say, and realize my own evil ways. I have to try my ways; I have to remember when I had jealousy and envy. I have to look back over the years to see what weaknesses I had here and there and watch that these faults are not ruling me. I want to have warnings to keep me in the strait and narrow way.

We must watch that we are not puffed up. The more knowledge you get of that Bible, the more humble you ought to be.

The only way we prove ourselves fit representatives of the high and lofty One is by living out what we profess, by becoming patient, not allowing any words to cross us. If we show any fruits of our lower nature we are not holding the banner high, but are letting it drag in the dust.

Do not think you will not need to be warned. We will need to be warned as long as we live.

It is written of the Children of Israel, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." We do not want to sit down to eat and drink of the fountain of life and rise up to play. We want to sit down to eat and drink and rise up to work in the service of the Lord.

We need to take time to be holy, take time to meditate on this law of God, take time to fill our minds with good holy thoughts, take time to watch that the evil does not come in, the old sensitive feelings and wrong feelings. If we do not take time to be holy, we will never get God's eternal blessing. Though we have a busy life, we can think and meditate while we work.

Men and women growing into holiness are afraid of anything that disturbs their peace of mind.

How humble Daniel was! He was humble enough to include himself in his petitions to the Almighty for forgiveness and pardon!

A time of trouble such as never was is coming. How are we getting ready for it? Daniel was praying for his brethren and getting ready for that coming Day. Are we?

The apostle Paul rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Still, I am glad I did not live in that time. From the time of his death until the return of Christ will be just a moment so far as he is concerned; but we ought to be so thankful to God that we are living down at the close of Gentile times, with the apostasy behind us. This is a wonderful age, the most wonderful age that ever dawned on humanity.

The old law said, "Thou shalt not steal," but the new law of Christ reaches to the intents of the heart. If I was tempted to steal something and refrained simply because I was afraid of getting caught, under the law of Christ I would be just as guilty as if I had actually stolen.

The truths of God's Word must not get old to us. Naturally, when we hear something over and over, it becomes commonplace to us; but we must always keep the law of God new. We have such a bright hope, because the City is getting near, the prize that God has offered is drawing near.

Our Wonderful EYES

THE IMPERIAL organ of the human system is the eye. It is also important from a Scriptural point of view, being mentioned 534 times in the Bible.

Modern science in its relentless research has done much to unveil the wonders of these two great lights of the human face; yet the vast majority of mankind goes to its grave without any special appreciation. Someone has said, "If God lacked anything of infinite wisdom, He would have failed in creating the human eye."

Serious thought about the make up of the eye should lead some modern educators to reconsider the theory of evolution. While many educators are teaching what they think we once were, some ought to demonstrate the wonderment of *what we are!*

The human eye probably excels all other organs in structure and adaptation. While any eye is a marvel, the human eye surpasses all—for the simple reason that man is God's crowning creation. The eyes of fish, bats, moles, and snakes are simple by comparison, having lesser tasks to perform. There are insects with a score of eyes, but their twenty eyes have less faculty than two human eyes. A certain species of black beetle has two eyes above the water and two beneath, yet his four are not equal to our two. Only man is so superbly equipped.

Sir Charles Scott Sherrington, the late famous British physiologist, was one of the most honored scientists of his day. In an essay entitled "The Eye," he commented that behind the intricate mechanism of the human eye lie breath-taking glimpses of a Master Plan.

John Perry in his treatise, "Our Amazing Eyes," writes: "No scientific instrument is as sensitive to

light as your eye. In the dark, its sensitivity increases 100,000 times, and you can detect a faint glow, less than a thousandth as bright as a candle's flame. You can see light from the stars, and the nearest of all the stars is 24 trillion miles away."

How do our eyes "see"? This is a simple question without a simple answer. Scientists have been studying for years to determine exactly how our eyes function, and still the answer is incomplete.

Basically, light reflected from an object (house, tree, bird, flower) is picked up by tiny light-sensitive organs in the eye. The image which is focused by the lens of the eye falls on a "screen" at the back of the eyeball known as the retina. From the retina, the information about the image is transmitted by nerve cells to our brain, so that we recognize what we are seeing (house, tree, bird, flower).

The retina at the back of our eye has about 100 million rods, or tiny photoreceptors, which record the light reflected from the image and help us determine the identity of what we "see." The retina has also about 6 million cones, tiny sensory organs sensitive to the speed of the light and instrumental in determining color. The concentration of these rods and cones varies on different areas of the retina, having a peak density of about 150,000 cones per square millimeter (this "s" is slightly more than one millimeter wide).*

The lens of the eye is far superior to any made of ground glass. This amazing lens can change its curvature almost instantaneously to allow proper focussing on both nearby and distant objects. The pupil of the eye is also self-adjusting. And both the lens and the pupil regulate themselves automatically, without any conscious thought—even without our knowing anything about it except the fact that we are seeing satisfactorily.

God has done more than design these marvelous

*Scientific information supplied through the kindness of Dr. Pulliam of Conyers, Georgia.

"cameras." He has provided them with valuable protectors, eyelids that open and close some 30,000 times a day—and without our even thinking about it.

Many creatures can move their eyes only from side to side, but the human eye has one muscle to lift the eye, another to roll it to the left, another to roll it to the right, another passing through a pulley to turn it around and around—an elaborate gearing of six muscles as perfect as perfect can be. Why? because God made it.

Yet there is more to the eye than pure mechanics. The eye can communicate what the heart feels. It can flash with indignation, be kindled with enthusiasm, expand with devotion, melt with sympathy, stare with fright, leer with villainy, droop with sadness, pale with envy, fire with revenge, twinkle with mirth, or beam with love!

Talk about the wonders of the human eye; how much more wonderful the searching, overwhelming eye of God!

The "eye of God" has several forms. Proverbs 15:3 tells us, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good." Again we read, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (II Chron. 16:9). Who are these "eyes of the Lord"? Are they not the angels, the inhabitants of other worlds who see and observe us, the "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"? "Are not the angels all attending spirits sent forth to serve for the sake of those who are going to be unceasing possessors of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14, Williams Trans.).

When Joshua was making the change from filthy garments to the robe of righteousness, the eyes of the Lord were watching, for we read "the angel of the Lord stood by" (Zech. 3:1-7). Even so, as we struggle to be clean from sin, the eyes of the Lord observe; the angel of the Lord stands by arranging the circumstances so that we will be tested to the full measure of our endurance but never beyond our strength. We need always to bear in mind the promise recorded by the Psalmist, that the angel of the Lord encamps about those who fear Him and delivers them (34:7). The promise of angelic ministration is conditional, however, dependent upon man's desire and effort to be true to God.

We read again of the eyes of the Lord in Psalm 101:6-7, "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the

land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight."

By acquainting ourselves with the Word of God we get a glimpse into God's tomorrow. In that better age to come, "the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick" (Isa. 33:24). Also, "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isa. 35:5-6). Jesus adds to the promise (Rev. 21:4), "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

No sickness, no pain, no suffering, no death throughout the world! What a glorious age! It is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

MM

Dealing with Doubts

(Continued from page 2)

we will see only what the earth can produce—darkness. Only when we lift our gaze to God will we see God's glory revealed. Only as we pay attention to God's Word will we see the plan of God disclosed, that plan in which there is light, beauty, glory—life.

What is the solution to doubt? Think faith. Think on the facts that will build faith. Ponder the evidence God has given to build faith, the immutable *facts* of His existence and His creation. Above all, do not be discouraged. Bring your doubts to God's Word. "Faith cometh by hearing . . . the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Believe in God. Delve into the depths of His Word and let the light break into your heart—and watch the darkness scatter.

MM

The bees sting only in self-defense, but some people seem to take pleasure in just plain stinging. And they are not honey-makers either. Those who busy themselves in extracting the sweetness out of every hour in the day have no time to sting.

Bible Facts

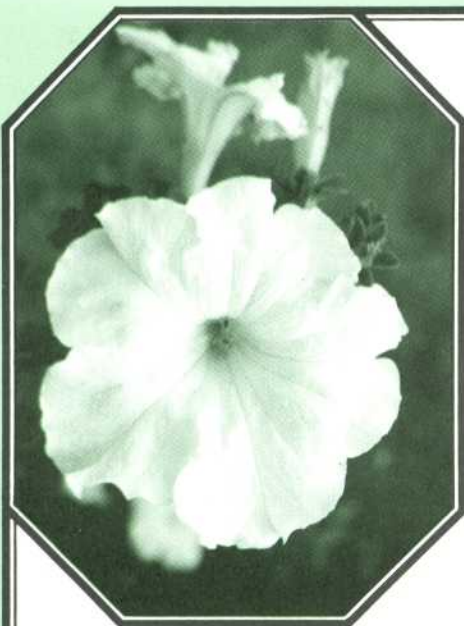
Can you detect which of the following statements are TRUE and which are FALSE? Write T or F on the line provided.

1. — Paul said, "My God shall supply all your wants according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
2. — Jesus had four brothers, James, Joses, Juda and Simon, and several sisters.
3. — It was a Mosaic law that a garment taken as a pledge had to be delivered before sundown.
4. — The queen of Sheba asked Solomon many hard questions and he was able to answer them all to her amazement.
5. — Paul, Barnabas, and other brethren were constrained by Lydia to stay at her house after she and her household were baptized.
6. — Daniel praised God after his deliverance: "Now I Daniel praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."
7. — Moses was permitted to see the land of Canaan.
8. — Judah kept the other brothers from slaying Joseph by urging them to put him in a pit from which he planned to rescue Joseph afterwards.
9. — Peter healed a certain man named Aeneas who had been bedridden eight years.
10. — Abraham offered Melchizedek king of Salem, the priest of the most high God, bread and wine when he returned after the rescue of Lot.
11. — Jacob worked 14 years for Laban, his father-in-law, before taking his family and returning to Canaan.
12. — Jachin and Boaz were the names of the two pillars before Solomon's temple.
13. — When Joseph's 10 brothers came to Egypt to buy food, Joseph recognized them and showed them kindness as he had no ill feelings toward them.
14. — Peter and James healed the lame man at the gate Beautiful.
15. — Jeremiah prophesied against the man who smote him and put him in stocks.

16. — A certain centurion sent the elders of the Jews to beseech Peter to heal his dear servant.
17. — When Ezra read the book of the law of Moses to the people and caused them to understand the reading, the people wept. Then Ezra sent the people home to fast and grieve over their sins.
18. — Ezekiel was commanded to eat the roll that was brought to him.
19. — God gave special talents to certain men who were to make the tabernacle and its furnishings.
20. — Jesus took Peter, James and John up into a mountain to pray. As Jesus prayed, He was transfigured and they saw Him with Abraham and Elijah.
21. — Paul's nephew saved Paul's life by warning the chief captain of a plot.

Answers:

1. False. Paul said, "My God shall supply all your *need*." (Phil. 4:19)
2. True (Mark 6:3).
3. True (Ex. 22:26-27).
4. True (I Kings 10:3,7).
5. False. Paul, *Silas*, and other brethren were constrained by Lydia to stay at her house after she and her household were baptized (Acts 16:14-19).
6. False. It was Nebuchadnezzar, not Daniel (Daniel 4:37).
7. True. He was permitted to see it, though he was not permitted to enter (Deut. 32:49).
8. False. *Reuben* kept the other brothers from slaying Joseph (Gen. 37:22).
9. True (Acts 9:33-34).
10. False. Melchizedek made the offering to Abraham, not Abraham to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18).
11. False. Jacob served Laban 20 years (Gen. 31:41).
12. True (I Kings 7:21).
13. False. Joseph treated them "roughly" (Gen. 42:7).
14. False. Peter and *John* healed the lame man (Acts 3:2-7).
15. True (Jer. 20:2-4).
16. False. The centurion sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus (Luke 7:2-10).
17. False. When the people wept at hearing the law, Ezra told them not to weep but to go home and rejoice, to "eat the fat, and drink the sweet, . . . for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:8-12).
18. True (Ezek. 3:1-2).
19. True (Exod. 31:2-5).
20. False. When Jesus was transfigured, they saw him with Moses and Elijah (Luke 9:28-30).
21. True (Acts 23:16).



Not Too Many Chips Falling

Lord,
 When I am tempted to give a piece of my mind,
 Help me to understand the mind of Jesus;
 When I feel like insisting on my own rights;
 Remind me that I could win in "rights"
 And lose in relationships;
 When I have thoughts of striking back,
 Show me that vengeance rips the sanctuary of my soul;
 When I have to be around people who seem unlovely,
 Teach me that someone knows my weaknesses, too;
 When I am cast in the midst of negative vibrations,
 Give me sufficient calm to avoid quick judgment;
 When I am armed with explosive information,
 Grace my mind with humility
 And seal my lips until You unseal them;
 When I believe that I have been wronged by someone,
 Enable me to direct my attention away from myself;
 When I have been misunderstood,
 Save me from the peril of constant argument.
 Help me not to go through life accepting opportunities
 To swing the little axes of getting even.
 Rather, let me live so that my spirit
 And my word embrace one compassionate goal:
 "Not Too Many Chips Falling."
 Amen.

"Search me, O God, and know my heart"—let me know about this heart of mine, what Thou dost know.

"Try me, and know my thoughts"—that is, my innermost motives, my undermost purposes, my hidden-away ambitions—what lies underneath all else and is really gripping my heart.

"Try me." "Try" is a fire word. It means a hotly heated furnace, and the metal heated to the liquid state, that all the dross may be freed and come to the top in clear view, and then be painstakingly skimmed off. "Try me." Let the fire-test come. It is the only way to true purity.

The rainbow of promise encircling the throne on high is an everlasting testimony that "God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and of great kindness."

WORK

Never fear work—good hard work. It is in reality a friend of man, a cure for many an ill, a preventative of such disaster as indolence and "rusting out."

Rarely do people work themselves to death; if it so happen, it is more likely to be the tension under which the work is performed. Work unhurried, unworried, is more often a preserver of physical well being.

This was the Apostle's great advice: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (II Timothy 2:15).

When the Day Dawns and the Shadows Flee Away

I am waiting, I am longing, for the dawning of the day
When the sun bursts forth in glory, and the shadows flee away.
When no thick cloud of darkness shall hide my Lord from me,
But His very form and beauty with gladness I shall see.

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, nothing then to mar our peace;
But life that is unending, filled with joy that ne'er shall cease.

It is coming! it is coming! I can tell that it is near.
God's Word sounds through the darkness that tells me not to fear;
But watch and pray in patience until Jesus shall appear,
To give perfect health for weakness and to dry up every tear.

Listen! listen! He is speaking; Oh, what do I hear Him say?
"Rise up my love, my fair one, and quickly come away;
The winter's past, its darkness and discomforts all are o'er,
The storms which beat upon thy head shall never hurt thee more.

"The flowers appear upon the earth, the birds begin to sing,
The earth is decked with glory in a never-ending spring;
The gloom for aye is banished, 'tis a bright and glorious day;
Arise, my love, my fair one, and with me come away."

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.

*"I'd rather see a sermon, than hear one any day;
I'd rather one would walk with me, than merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil, and more willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing, but example's always clear.
The best of all the preachers are men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.*

*I soon can learn to do it if you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
The lectures you deliver may be very wise and true;
But I'd rather get my lessons by observing what you do.
I may not learn the precepts that you are glad to give,
But there'll be no mistaking how you act and how you live."*



It Does Not Pay . . .

To "have a good time" at the
expense of an uneasy conscience the next morning.

To lose our temper at the
expense of losing a friend.

To cheat a corporation at the
expense of robbing our souls.

To go to church in the morning,
if we are planning to go to
the "devil" in the evening.

To have an enemy if we can have
a friend.

To sow wild oats if we have to
buy our own crop.

To spend the last half of life in
remorse or regret for the
first half.

To be discourteous, irreverent,
cynical, cruel, or vulgar.

To give God the husks instead
of the heart.

To live at all unless we live for
God.

For Safer Traveling

THE PAST summer has witnessed an intensive campaign in the press and elsewhere for safer driving, something which, everyone knows, is needed badly enough. The daily toll of death and injury on our streets and highways, even with reduced speeds, is something of a national disgrace, and none of us can be too careful, whether we drive or walk. In fact, Christianity and reckless driving are incompatible, nor will the true Christian be careless in any temporal matter involving life, limb or property.

There is a deep lesson, a timely warning for us in all the agitation for safety. True, we need at times to be reminded of our responsibilities in the natural; but that is not so hard to take, since most of us value this life rather highly, and some of us have learned that it hurts to get hurt. Nor do we wish to hurt the other fellow. Reason, observation, and painful experience have taught us—or *should* teach us—to be careful, to “watch our step.” But how highly do we value our spiritual life and our *eternal* welfare? If really interested in preserving it, we will be constantly thinking and practicing safety.

Just what do we mean by safety? Simply *taking no chances*. Never play with danger; it's dangerous! If eternity means anything at all to us, it should mean *everything*. If we lose it we have lived in vain, and in that coming Day there will be no sorrow like our sorrow, when we see what might have been ours had we only been more careful. A treasure so precious as our hope is not to be carried about absent-mindedly. If you were carrying a hundred thousand dollars in cash on the street (highly improbable these days), would you be likely to lose yourself in window-shopping or daydreaming? You can see this point readily. Very well. But can we say with the Psalmist, “The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver”?

How is it with us?

We see, then, that the first step in safety is *thinking*. A safety poster once displayed on our streets read, “Think, driver, think!” Eternal vigilance, never relaxing the tension in the fight against self. “I didn’t think,” is as poor an excuse as “I didn’t know it was loaded.” Both wore out centuries ago. Let our slogan be, “Think, Christian, think.” Have both eyes wide open to detect danger and *avoid* it.

Right there lies the basic principle of the whole safety program. *Avoid temptation*. I don’t mean a weak-kneed dodging of trouble, a peace-at-any-price philosophy, even though the cause of God might suffer. Always hold the banner high, and if trouble comes because of your good conduct, God will see you through. What I mean is, keep away from things which you know—or suspect—cannot be handled safely. Sensible men recognize the fact that certain things are best let alone. Among them we might mention thin ice, cross dogs, brakeless automobiles, hornets’ nests, supposedly unloaded firearms—the list is a long one. But infinitely more dangerous are the thirteen evils enumerated in Mark 7:21-22, some of which are present naturally in each of us, and any one of which can easily destroy us. When we learn to treat the warning sign “Foolishness” with as much respect as we give a “POISON” label, we can be said to be really awake and thinking. When we abhor and avoid jealousy or impurity as we would leprosy or even measles, we are progressing. Fear is a bad master when uncontrolled, but normal fear is the preserver of the human race. So in the Christian life: dare to do right, whatever the cost, but be mortally afraid of doing wrong. Be afraid of yourself.

A concrete example or two of the applications of this Divine principle of caution might not be amiss. As we have said, the first step is to think, to know self. Without some knowledge of our weaknesses it is useless to proceed. And the more you know of the

"old man", the more certain you become that he cannot be trusted. For example:

Perhaps you like to read, even to the extent of "stopping to pass the time of day with every printed vagabond that plucks at your sleeve," as some one has aptly put it. That is a failing which has to be watched incessantly, or soon the mind is filled with a hodgepodge of trifles, with no room for spiritual things. Certain kinds of books and magazines are easier to pick up than to lay down, and the logically safe thing to do is to refrain from picking them up.

Most of us have plenty of curiosity, a certain amount of which is essential to progress. But the morbid or insatiable curiosity which would lead us to touch, taste, handle, or at least know a little about everything in the world, good or bad, is a dangerous thing. There is much it is better not to know; and Paul had the right idea when he said, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, but simple [ignorant] concerning evil." So if an unedifying picture or printed article lies in your line of vision and the "old man" clamors for another look, that's the time to *think*. Better to be safe than sorry. Think, "Would I like to share this with the ministering angel with the thought of whose presence I have comforted myself?" If not, hands off. Look the other way. A good driver keeps his eyes on the road and does not gaze at every passing sight.

Everyone of us has a strong love of approbation—a good thing if properly guided, but a deadly menace unless controlled by the brakes of Divine law. Perhaps I have two friends; one has a way of pointing out my faults, the other obligingly feeds me flattery. Whose company should I seek?

Our safety sense can be measured by the company we seek. Another person finds that he is easily led and influenced.

If properly cautious, he will, as far as possible, place himself with those who will lead him to higher ground.

The above brings to mind one of the best-known problems of literal motoring, viz., the "backseat driver." We all know him, and love him, as we do an alarm clock. Sometimes he is an unmitigated nuisance; but there are times, we must admit, when his counsel is good. However, much as we may dislike his warning voice in our automobiles, we know he is absolutely indispensable in the spiritual. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and none of us can see himself perfectly through his own eyes.

Reproofs and warnings are the way of life, and we should listen humbly and thankfully no matter through whom they come or the manner in which they are bestowed.

The spiritual backseat driver is all right. He's a good fellow to have along, even if he isn't perfect himself—or if he happens to be a member of our own family. That last is hard to take, sometimes.

The battle with wandering thoughts is an endless one. When a line of thought presents itself, a line of thought which must inevitably lead to a profitless or destructive conclusion, or when doubt or depression begin to work, play safe. Drop it immediately. Change it forcibly. Repeat a verse of Scripture. Or a dozen. Or ten dozen verses. Have a chapter in the course of memorizing for such an emergency.

Each of us by searching our own heart can multiply examples appropriate to our own particular case. There is the danger of overconfidence, the danger of falling asleep at the wheel, the danger of being distracted and taking our eyes off the road, the danger of negligence, the danger of neglecting to follow our roadmap and going our own way. It can all be summed up in the familiar motto:

"Do nothing you would not like to be doing when Jesus comes."

"Say nothing you would not like to be saying when Jesus comes."

"Go to no place where you would not like to be found when Jesus comes."

Of course, as in the cases cited, victory is possible by following the example of our Master, who had so filled His mind with the law of God that every temptation was met instantly and automatically with "It is written." If we are too lazy mentally to study or meditate or remember the rules of the road, we are driving in the dark with no lights, and the ditch awaits us at the first curve.

Let no one cherish even the faintest idea that it is unmanly or cowardly to flee from temptation, or that safety is synonymous with slowness. Often safety calls for quick and dramatic action. Joseph was quite a man, and on one occasion he set us an excellent example. He ran. Had he stayed to argue it out or to see what would happen, trusting in his own strength, the story might have had a less brilliant ending. The world may call us cowardly, but if so, better be a live coward than a dead hero. It is not

(Continued on page 23)

When Christ Comes Again

By W. Herschel Ford*

“UNTO them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

Sometime after President Kennedy was inaugurated he had a conference with Billy Graham. They spoke about world conditions. Mr. Graham told him that the only hope for the world is the Second Coming of Christ, that Christ is the big answer to all of our problems. The president was amazed; he had never heard of such a thing. Mr. Graham explained the Bible teaching about the Second Coming and Mr. Kennedy said, “Does my church teach that?” “I don’t know,” replied Mr. Graham, “but it’s in the Bible.” The President seemed deeply interested and said, “Sometime I want you to come to Washington and tell my cabinet what you have told me.”

I do not know whether or not this opportunity ever came. I am glad that Mr. Kennedy was interested in the Second Coming. I am glad that Billy Graham told him about it. Every Christian ought to be interested in this good news and every Christian ought to be ready to tell it to others.

*Although this article overlooks the mission of Christ’s herald Elijah, our readers will appreciate the author’s realistic insights into the Second Coming of Christ and the place it should occupy in our minds and lives.

Here is what I believe the Bible teaches about Christ’s return. I believe in the bodily return of Christ. I believe in His imminent return—it could happen any minute. . . . I believe that He will come to the earth and that He will reign upon the earth a thousand years. This period is called “the millennium.” I believe that His coming is the only thing that can straighten out this old perplexed and sinful world. All of these beliefs are based upon the Word of God itself.

There are various attitudes today toward the Second Coming. There is the sneering attitude. If you bring this matter up in some religious circles, they sneer at the idea and say that it is ridiculous. In doing this they are fulfilling prophecy and proving the truth of the Bible.

Then there is the ignorant attitude. Some people say, “I don’t know anything about it. I am too busy with the problems of this life.”

Then there is the mystical attitude. Some people say that He will not come bodily. They say that He comes in a spiritual way into the heart when you are converted and that is all. That is not the Second Coming.

The Bible tells us that He will come with a shout, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. The Bible tells us that when He comes the dead will rise and together with the living Christians will

be caught up to meet Him in the air. Did all that happen when you were converted?

Then there is the “don’t care” attitude. These people say, “He is coming some day. But it doesn’t matter.” I tell you that anything which is emphasized so strongly in the Bible *does* matter. Let me tell you the attitudes that we should have toward His coming. We can back up every point with Bible truth.

We Are to Preach His Coming

In Titus 2:13 we are told that always we are to be looking for the “blessed hope” and the glorious appearing of Christ. Then verse 15 tells us to speak of these things. A preacher who never preaches the Lord’s return is out of line. The teacher who never mentions the Second Coming is not obeying the Scripture. I don’t mean that we should preach on this subject every Sunday. Some men have gone to seed and ruined their ministry by preaching a one-sided Gospel. I like home-made peach ice cream, but I don’t want it for every meal. Once in awhile is sufficient. Likewise it is not necessary to preach every Sunday on the Second Coming. But this great doctrine ought to have its place in every preacher’s sermon program.

Let us preach all of the great doctrines of the faith, but let us not

leave out this precious doctrine.

The Book of Titus was written to a young preacher. The older preacher told him to speak often about the Second Coming. Surely every young preacher, and every Christian worker should study this subject and use it effectively in Christian work.

Many people believe in the virgin birth, the death, the victorious Resurrection and the Ascension of our Lord, but they know nothing about the Second Coming. Yet the Bible has more to say about His return than almost any other subject. One thing that makes people shy away from this subject is the manner in which extremists have handled it. They set dates and claim to know the exact time. Recently a man called the assistant postmaster general in Washington and urged him to issue a stamp commemorating the Second Coming. The Washington official said, "If you will tell me the exact time and place of His coming, I will get the stamp ready." The caller hung up. But Jesus said, "No man knows the day nor the hour, neither the angels nor the Son of Man." We are to preach His imminent coming, but we are not to set dates.

We Are to Look for His Coming

This doesn't mean that we are to be looking up so intently that we can't see the needs around us. I read of an old philosopher who walked around every night gazing up at the stars. He fell into a hole and lost his life. We are not to look that way. We are to be busy working, yet always expecting His return.

You remember how God thinned out the ranks of Gideon's army? He told Gideon to bring ten thousand men down to the water to drink. Those who bent over and lapped up the water like a dog drinking were to be left behind. Those who

got down on their knees were also to be left behind. But the three hundred who lapped up the water with their hands while still looking toward the enemy, were chosen. So we are to be busy working, getting ready, our eyes looking forward to His return.

It is said of a certain preacher that the first thing every morning he would go to the window, raise the shade, look out and say, "Perhaps today, perhaps today, Lord. I will be busy, but I will be ready." Then at night he would go to the window before retiring and would say, "Perhaps tonight, Lord. I will be asleep, but I will be ready. I will be ready when You come."

We Are to Pray for His Coming

In the model prayer we find the words, "Thy kingdom come." What does it mean? It means this, "Come back, Lord Jesus. Come back and establish Your Kingdom. We can't straighten things out. We need You to do it."

Some of us have looked in on a national political convention. We saw crowds of grown men marching up and down the aisles, waving banners and shouting. At one convention they cried out, "We want Reagan!" At the other convention they cried out, "We want Carter!" But we don't hear men crying out, "We want Jesus. We want Him to come and reign over us." Yet He can do more for us than all the Democrats, Republicans and Independents put together.

Do you know what is the last prayer in the Bible? John, the beloved apostle was on the Isle of Patmos, and Jesus said to him, "John, I am coming back." And the dear old preacher cried out, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." That is the last prayer in the Bible.

On many a Saturday afternoon in the fall a crowd gathers at the foot-

ball stadium. Soon the home team is almost on the goal line. The cheerleader cries through the megaphone, "Go, go, go." Then the big bass drum begins to beat and the band chants, "Go, go, go." They are all anxious for a touchdown. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they got that excited about Christ and His return? If they would pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come back. Come and take over. Come and straighten out this world. Come and set up Your Kingdom. Come and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords."

We Are to Love His Appearing

When Paul came toward the end of his earthly journey, he said, "I am going to get a crown of righteousness." You can have one, too, if you love His appearing. Some people don't love His appearing. They don't want Christ to come back. He would break up their little games. He might keep them from shining in the social world. He might prevent them from getting some office that they have set their heart on. He might keep them from doing those worldly things they find their joy in. Oh, you poor things, don't you know if Christ came to rule over this world, it would be a million times better than all these things could ever be?

I wish you women would turn your back upon all of your social ambition and start reading your Bible, serve the Lord and love His appearing. I wish you men would give up those worldly ways, that neglect of your Christian duty, and dedicate your life to God and His church. Some of you are saying, by your actions, "I don't want Jesus to come right now. I have plans of my own." Alas for you!

There are two words in the Bible for love. One word is the word "phileo." This word has the meaning of loving to eat or read or sleep.

Then there is the word "agape." This means a deep love, a yearning love, a heart-throb love. This is the word Paul uses in connection with His coming. It means that we are to yearn for His coming with all our heart.

We Ought to Be Comforted by His Coming

In the fourth chapter of I Thessalonians, Paul is talking to those Thessalonian Christians about the Second Coming. They had lost some of their loved ones and they wondered what had become of them. So he told them plainly that Jesus was coming. The dead would be raised first and with the living would be caught up together "to meet the Lord in the air." "Now," says Paul, "you can find comfort in remembering that you have lost your loved ones just for a short time. Someday they will awake and together we will stand in the presence of Jesus."

Do you want to comfort someone who is ill? Then tell them that when Christ comes He will take away all sorrow, and pain, and suffering, and death. There shall be no funerals, no more cemeteries. Paul says, "Comfort one another with these words."

We Are to Be Purified For His Coming

We read in I John 3:2-3, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." What does the Apostle say here? He says in effect, "Since you know He is coming, get ready for it. Purify yourself, get rid of your sin." The reason so many (professing) Christians are living unworthy lives is because they forget that He is com-

ing soon. They go and spend time with those who do not know Christ. They read their magazines far more than they read their Bible. They forget to pray. They spend their time and energies for this world instead of using that time to serve Christ. They do all of these things because they are not remembering that Christ might come and disapprove of the way that they are living.

Do you shudder as you think of Jesus Christ standing before you while you do the things which do not please Him? Oh, I tell you that if we fully realized that He could come any minute, we would get busy and purify our lives. We would throw away all those things that do not count and take a tighter grip upon the things of God.

What do you do on Sunday night? Do you stay at home and do your own things? Would you rather have Christ find you there, or in His house? What do you do on Wednesday night? Are you too indifferent to pray to Him? Where would Jesus find you if He came back on Wednesday night? What do you do with the time, the interest, the energy, the money which belongs to God? Do you use it to please yourself or do you bring it to God's storehouse for His work?

We do not like anyone to point out our sins. Yet I know you would thank me forever if I could get you to cast the world aside and get ready for the coming of Christ. I wish I could get everyone of you to say from your heart, "Dear God, there is something in my life that I am ashamed of. There is something that keeps me from being a whole Christian. I still have sin and worldliness in me. But right now I rededicate my life to Thee. From now on You can count on me. I want to be ready when Jesus comes."

You know Jesus said, "In such

an hour as ye think not, the Lord cometh." I plead with you to get ready now.

A little girl heard her mother and another lady talking about the return of the Lord. Later in the day the mother went upstairs to the girl's room and found her standing by the window. The little one said, "Mother, I heard you say that Jesus was coming back. I am looking for Him, for I want to be first to see Him. So I took a bath and put on my clean clothes and I am ready."

Oh, this would be a wonderful time for you to take a spiritual bath. Throw off all the old clothes of sin and worldliness and put on the new robes of consecrated Christian living, so that you will be ready to meet Him when He comes. MM

"How To" Gain Peace Of Mind

Reaffirm your faith in God as your Creator and Protector. Ask for strength to endure conditions beyond your control and wisdom to correct matters within your control.

Determine right now that you are going to achieve this. Substitute activity—physical as well as mental—for worry and discouragement. Activity leaves little time for evil thoughts.

Accept with grace whatever befalls you and profit from each experience. Set goals for yourself; in other words, have a purpose. Strive toward this goal, and peace will be part of your success.

Work with Eternal Worth

(Continued from page 9)

hearts. To mention "working" for salvation in many circles is to declare oneself a non-Christian according to their standards. To work for a reward, they say, is self-exalting rather than God-exalting.

However, this is not the mind of the Lord, if we are going to accept and believe what He has revealed in His Word. There are literally hundreds of passages in Scripture declaring our responsibility to Him for the knowledge He has entrusted to us, our duties to Him, the requisite measure of our obedience and our love—all to be manifest by work, effort, individual initiative. How does one who is a thief cease to be a thief? Paul's answer is: stop stealing. Isn't this work? How do we overcome our tendencies to covet what is not ours, or to exalt ourselves, or to seek the things of this world and its ambitions? How do we change our pattern of thought and action? How do we accomplish anything in this world? Is it not by doing something on our part? Any achieving for Him requires serious work on our part. Faith is necessary; but faith alone cannot accomplish the task. Prayer is necessary; but we must do all in our power to help ourselves.

We Must "Help"

The story is told of a mother who had been teaching her young son Bobby to pray, and how much God can do to help us when we pray. One day the neighbor's dog tipped over the family garbage can and spread the trash all across the backyard. Bobby saw it happen and came in to report to his mother. Then quickly, before his mother had any chance to reply, he added—"But Mother, you won't need to worry about the mess—it's going to be all right. I prayed about it." "Bobby," replied his mother with all seriousness, "I think the Lord is going to need some help answering that prayer."

Just so do our prayers, and our meditations, and our most exalted thoughts need *action*. God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves. And can we expect Him to share the depths of His infinite riches of eternal grace and happiness

and life with anyone who shows so little interest in what He has to offer as to be willing to do nothing for it?

God grant that we may take more and more seriously our work for Him, as we see the Day of the Lord approaching. Whatever our age or stage in life, we can work; we must work; and if our eye is fixed on the prize ahead, nothing in all the world will be able to keep us from working. Let us take Jesus for our pattern, who said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: The night cometh, when no man can work." Here is work that is of eternal worth, the rewards of which will grow and grow gloriously through all the cycles of eternity.

MM

It's Nothing but a Grind . . .

A SHAFT of steel was mumbling to itself: "It's all a grind, nothing but a grind." But out of the torment of the grinding came a sword to save a cause.

A dull pebble was complaining: "It's all a grind, a dull, deadly grind." But e'er long the pebble shone with an inward light in the hands of the cutter, and another gem was added to the world's store of jewels.

Do we groan with the grinding and raise our voices in protest? That is the human way of it. But there is also the Divine way. We can grow beautiful and valuable in the daily grind.

For it is the daily grind, often dull and purposeless though it may seem, that rounds off our rough edges and makes us ready for greater service and usefulness.

It is the daily grind that makes us fit to endure.

Is the pressure hard upon you today? Look forward to tomorrow, when you can be a precious gem adorning forever the heavenly city—because you took the grinding.

Otherwise you will never discover what you are made of, what you are good for, and how much you can stand. Life is a sculptor, and, "the more the marble wastes, the more the statue grows."

—Contributed.

Whatsoever Ye Do

**"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."
—Colossians 3:17, 23**

IN THE Epistle to the Colossians, chapter 3, are two "whatsoevers" that have strong bearing upon our everyday lives. The first is specifically all-inclusive: "whatsoever ye do in word or deed . . ." The second is fully as inclusive, with the simple statement: "Whatsoever ye do. . . ."

"Whatsoever" means *everything*, without exception—whether we are drilling holes, or driving nails, or plowing fields, or stringing wire, or sweeping floors, or sitting in our living room, or even lying in bed. *Whatsoever*. It includes work that is interesting, and work that is monotonous. It includes work we enjoy, and work that we would be very glad to delegate to someone else. It includes work that is destined for great praise and acclaim and work that will never be noticed by anyone. It includes work for which we will be compensated, and work that is a sacrifice of ourselves. It includes work that men call worthy and work that is unnoticed and unworthy.

What does this "whatsoever" say about all our work? Simply this: that it is gloriously possible to honor the Lord in everything, if we do it as to the Lord. Whatever we do will be "joy unspeakable and full of glory" because of the weight of glory it is preparing for us. The important point to remember is all our work, whatever its nature, must be done as for His inspection. Do it thoroughly, as for His approval. Strive for excellence, as for His reward. And when the task seems long? Pray. A prayer will always hasten a long hour and turn solitariness to joy. Whatever we are doing, we can always commune with God and seek His help.

The other verse in Colossians 3 with a "whatsoever" is verse 23: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord

ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." That word "heartily" is a lively word. It means, put your soul and your enthusiasm into your work, for you are working for the King of kings. And He is going to reward you! Payday at the shop may come every Tuesday, or Friday. We may have worked many years, and the heavenly payday has not arrived; but rest assured, it *will* come. And if we can hear those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," we shall feel abundantly repaid for the little we did here.

So much of our lives is of necessity oriented around temporal concerns, and we find ourselves engaged hour after hour with that which, of itself, has no spiritual dimension. What is the answer? The answer lies in consciously giving to every hour a spiritual dimension. Adopting the attitude expressed in this thoughtful bit of verse can help us:

*There may be some who say,
Oh, in what way
Can such a life as mine is
Glorify our heavenly Father
Or be a reasonable sacrifice?
What can I do
To fit me for His Kingdom, whiles that I
Must work and toil and struggle day by day,
And scarcely wrest my daily reading from my
 needful rest;
Troubled, like Martha,
Though my dearest choice
Would be to listen to the Master's voice?

Oh, when I stand on Sunday
On the hilltop, as it were,
And get bright glimpses of the far-off land,*

While the fresh breeze
Of goodly exhortation lifts the screen
Of mist that gathers on the hills between,
And with the Word supreme
I feed on things divine,
And earthly things seem blotted out of sight
In that great light
That shows the truth a rock—all else a bubble.

Ah me! No trouble
Would seem too hard to bear at times like these.
Yet though my heart has thus within me burned
And leaped to reach perfection, I have learned,
All of this earnest purpose will not stay,
When to the actual duties of the way,
Down into the week-day valleys I must go
And meet the little things that "vex me so";
Get "put upon" and "worried,"
Perplexed, beguiled, surrounded every way
By things that seem to have no small connection
With God-ward aspiration
And Apostolic exhortation.
Here is a heart for light and glory crying,
Here are dull and dusty duties round me lying;
What can I do to reconcile the two?

This is the problem we all face. Yet, what is the answer?

Just stop and think:
These are the pens and ink
With which you have to write that daily book
Wherein the Lord will look
In the great Day of our examination.
Christian, remember,
These are the thorns with which you have to
fashion
A crown of sweet compassion,
That, knowing how they prick, you may refrain
From giving others pain.
To bear the cross with Christ and with Him die
Is still to crucify
Each natural thought and act,
And daily dying, daily live again.

It is difficult—nay, impossible—to separate temporal work from spiritual, for temporal work is spiritual if properly done. By the way we use it, we can either advance or hinder our spiritual development.

All our work, whatever it be, can glorify God. All our work can be preparing us for an eternal place of honor in His eternal Kingdom. It is all a matter of how we handle ourselves in all the "whatsoever" situations each day presents—our thoughts, our words, our attitudes,

our motives, our secret longings—during all the ordinary hours and minutes of every day. *What* we are doing is immaterial compared to *how* we are doing it.

The off-hand remarks, the little feelings, the inner compulsions, the spirit we give to the task at hand—these are the things that determine the worth of our work. Whether our task is to till the land or conduct worship services, the same potential for heavenly reward is there, if only we do it "unto the Lord." If our commitment is complete, if we are in deed and in truth not our own but Christ's, then for everything we do we can know that "of the Lord [we] shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for [we] serve the Lord Christ." MM

For Safer Traveling

(Continued from page 17)

heroic nor smart to take unnecessary chances, either in things natural or spiritual. In temporal affairs you may have "fool's luck" for a while, but in the spiritual you are certain to lose.

The great apostle Peter gave us one exacting admonition on safety from the depths of his own bitter experience. Peter took a chance. Once inside the High Priest's palace on that sorrowful night of the betrayal, instead of staying by the side of his stronger companion John, he stopped to warm his hands at a stranger's fire. Cold fingers made him careless. In bad company, cornered, unfortified, he fell. He denied his Master, and his transgression and bitter sorrow are recorded for all time. But, once converted, he wrote to the believers, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if ye do these things ye shall never fall."

Think we that he did not know the meaning of these words?

And then what? What is the object of this constant vigilance, this unrelaxed caution and care? What is our destination? "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:10-11). Yes, the careful drivers, those who have remembered the rules and obeyed the signals, shall arrive! And what a celebration when the last traveler rolls in safely at the end of the trail and the prizes are awarded.

May we all travel safely, that we may be there with clear records and confident hearts, when the King comes in to see the guests. MM

• When the Dumb Ass Spoke

"In II Peter 2:16 we read of the dumb ass speaking with a man's voice to Balaam the son of Bosor; who forbade the madness of the prophet. If the ass in this instance spoke, could it not be possible that the serpent in the garden of Eden could have spoken to Eve? Could it not be that the Lord opened the mouth of the serpent?"

God in His infinite power is surely capable of making a way for an animal to speak if it suits His purpose. And how He does this is beyond our knowledge and probably our understanding too, if we were told the particulars. Whether He actually made the animal speak, or let His angel be what we would call a ventriloquist so that it sounded as though the voice came from the animal—which seems altogether possible and likely—we do not know. This is the only such instance in Scripture, so there is nothing with which to compare it.

Could the Lord have opened the mouth of the serpent in the same way? No doubt He could. But the first three chapters of Genesis seem so much more meaningful when taken as allegory—if the serpent is literal, then Adam and Eve and the fruit they picked and the fig leaves they sewed, and the ground they tilled must all be literal—and what do we have that is useful on a level of divine revelation? What would there be to instruct us in the principles of God and things to come?

In the book of Genesis, the whole plan of God is outlined in a brief allegory. But we must always remember when studying it that we must "compare spiritual things with spiritual," hence literal with literal. We cannot make a spiritual symbol of one item/article/person in a story, and have the next literal (I Cor. 2:13).

• Concerning Armageddon

"In the booklet, 'The Kingdom of God,' speaking of Armageddon you state that Isa. 13:6, 9, 11

refers to Armageddon. However, if you read verses 17 and 19, does it not refer to the overthrow of Babylon by the Medo Persians? Chapter 13 starts with the 'burden of Babylon.' "

The term "Babylon" is often used in Scripture as a symbolic term, representative of the whole system of evil or some particular part of it. Of course, Babylon was a real place and was overthrown, as God prophesied. But many Biblical prophecies had a close-range and also a long-range meaning.

Many of the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, also of the minor prophets, fall into this category. For instance, the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14-15 had a near fulfillment in the birth of Maher-shalal-hashbaz, the son of the prophetess; and the long-range—and greater meaning—applied to Christ and did not meet its complete fulfillment until Christ came and learned to "refuse the evil, and choose the good." Often the near fulfillment is partial, the long-range fulfillment is complete.

This was also true of many of the prophecies in Ezekiel concerning the return that would follow the Captivity. The Israelites did return and did restore many of their former practices in their homeland. But the complete fulfillment of those prophecies is future, when they shall abide "forever" in their land and the faithful worshipers of God shall be abundantly blessed with peace and safety.

The same point might be applied to Isaiah 13. There was a short-range prophecy here concerning Babylon, which was fulfilled; but the longer-range prophetic meaning would seem most applicable to Armageddon, when "he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it [the land]." The Medes and Persians, taking Babylon, were not concerned with "sinners" or "righteous" in their destruction. Also along with the shorter-range application of this prophecy, Babylon was destroyed; and as predicted in vs. 20-22, it has never been rebuilt and inhabited and made great again—a fulfilled prophecy that increases our faith in God's Word.

• The Cause of Suffering

"In John 9:3 we read of the man who was born blind. The disciples asked Jesus the cause of this. 'Master,' they said, 'who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered 'Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents.' Yet when Jesus healed the man sick of the palsy (Mark 2:5-9), he said, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' This seems inconsistent."

Your observation is correct. In the healing of the man born blind, Jesus explained clearly that suffering is not the result of sin. He went on to say that this case of suffering was going to be used as an opportunity to demonstrate the great power of God—"that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:3).

The passage in John 9, according to Bible scholars, does not contradict this. The man's paralysis was not caused by his sins. In the ancient world, sin and suffering were viewed as cause and consequence. Jesus, knowing their thought, said to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," knowing that the bystanders, whom the miracle was intended to impress, would understand this. When they still complained, Jesus further showed His own understanding—that the forgiving of sin was in this case the same as saying "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." These are His words: "Whether is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." The result was the man's physical cure: he rose up and walked.

There is one additional thought we may get from this passage. The scribes of Jesus' day were always questioning Jesus' Divine power and authority, and Jesus may have taken this opportunity to prove that He was of God. He asserted His Divine *authority* by stating plainly His power to forgive sins and then performed the miracle to support His statement and demonstrate unmistakably His Divine *power*.

The miracle had this direct effect. "Immediately he [the sick of the palsy] arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion" (Mark 2:12).

• Rewards vs. Salvation

"The Bible makes no distinction between reward and final salvation. How can we harmonize this statement with the parable of the Talents? Each is given a reward according to how well he puts the talents to work. Doesn't this imply we will be rewarded, some more, some less?"

Do you mean by this that, as some teach, everyone who "accepts Christ" receives "salvation" (i.e., eternal life) but that *rewards* are over and above this and are "according to our works"?

The reward of eternal life, though abundant to all who do reach the standard, will apparently vary in glory according to the achievement of the person receiving it, or according to the use he made of the talents entrusted him. For instance, if you or I should be successful in our Christian lives and be granted eternal life, we would not expect a reward equal in every respect to that given the apostle Paul, or Jeremiah, or Moses, whose work was so much greater and whose tests so much more severe. The promise is that God will give to "every man according as his works shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

In Jesus' parable of the Talents, two of the persons to whom He had entrusted the talents *did* something with their talents. And each received a reward; only the one who did *nothing* received nothing—and lost what he had had. This also seems to run parallel to the plan: If we do not make use of our spiritual opportunities, God will not continue to grant them perpetually. The person who does not obey will not receive eternal life.

• What about Anti-Christ?

"There has been a lot of talk about anti-Christ, which will be revealed shortly. But there were many anti-Christ's in the days of the apostles already."

Your statement is surely true. Some religious groups today feel some particular individual or group will arise and be the "anti-Christ" just before the Lord returns. But the fact that, as the apostle John said in his First Epistle, there were already anti-Christ's, a more logical understanding would seem to be that anyone opposing Christ, anyone literally *anti-Christ*, is the one spoken of. MM

Prayerful Petition

We are reminded of how dependent we are on God and how humble and thankful we must be to receive our Heavenly Father's blessings.

As we petition for the strength to overcome, to become pure and holy, we must do on our part. For God will not hear our prayers nor help us if we do not put our effort into the working out of our own salvation.

The barbs and thorns of this life help to remind us that the present things are fleeting and we must be ever looking ahead for the eternal riches. We should be thankful that these trials have served to jolt us back to a right line of direction. Even as we know that the sun will always shine after the clouds have gone, we are assured that God will answer our prayers if we are earnest and sincere. For said the Psalmist, "But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and plentiful in mercy and truth" (Ps. 86:15). He knows what is best for each one of us and will answer according as He sees fit to produce the desired result. May we be prepared to accept whatever is granted to us.

This closeness with God can be maintained by our acknowledgment of Him in prayerful thoughts and meditation, also in song with praise and thanksgiving. It helps to brighten our hopes and press on to victory. Prayer can be termed our lighthouse where we seek for our direction and follow it to the letter, if we are wise. We know by the experiences and examples of those who became shipwrecked and lost because of choosing their own ways.

May we follow the admonition of those faithful ones, whose worthy

examples stand high on God's honour roll, and continue instant in prayer.

What a joy it will be to be there when the Book of Life is opened and we will be among those saints whose prayers rise up before the Throne of the Lamb as sweet incense.

Australia

J. B.

In Modern Noah's Day

Pertaining to Jesus' coming down here in this modern age of man's rule, Jesus said in Matt. 24:37, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

After reading the shocking account of Noah's day, we can plainly see that the same immoral conditions exist on the earth today. It behooves us to keep a vigilant watch over self, as Jesus commanded, lest we also become a part of this modern Noah's day which will be swept away.

Truly, God is so just and good to us to give us a choice of destiny in this life, giving us a choice between Him and the flesh; giving us the choice between life and death. But regardless of our freedom of choice, the bright lights of Babylon, the path of least resistance, and the daily promptings of our carnal nature, let us be wise by continually choosing God and life.

Idaho

R. B.

Climbing

It is so much easier to go down than to climb, but climb we must if we are ever to reach the top.

Georgia

S. J.

Thankful

Cicero believed "a thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue but the parent of all the other virtues."

Gratitude frees the spirit of pettiness and opens the heart to receive countless blessings. It is a healing force, renewing a right spirit, refreshing the soul and restoring our bodies. The giving of thanks is twice blest: it blesseth him that gives and him that receives. We cannot imagine what joy our expression of appreciation will bring into another's life.

Let us work to cultivate that continually thankful spirit which can only enrich our lives in the narrow way. We, above all people, have no excuse to do otherwise. "In everything give thanks!"

Michigan

D. J.

Never Falter

We must be very careful we do not let our spiritual zeal falter. Yesterday is gone forever but tomorrow is yet to dawn. Today is another chance to redeem the time. Our day of probation is fast drawing to a close. We must apply ourselves more diligently than ever before to win this great race before us. It has been done by others and we can do it too.

In these dark days of distress when men's hearts are failing them for fear, we have an anchor for the soul. We can look to the future. We know a higher power is going to intervene and man's rule will end.

The only fear we have is the fear of doing wrong, so let us keep our lamps burning and keep watching for the Master's return.

Newfoundland

G. W.

A Great Work

We have a great work to do with self, to do God's Way and not our own. It will not be easy but we must keep it in mind all the time and work harder while we can.

Texas

B.N.

Day by Day

One day those that fear His name will be living in a land where the shadows of death no longer linger . . . no more sickness, sorrow or pain. Won't it be wonderful! In that Day, all the earth shall be filled with the righteousness of God.

What joy should fill our hearts that we are living in this age, an age that is so very close to its completion.

The days go by without incident. Spring follows winter, night follows day and yet the people remain in their sins. There is a hunger throughout the land, but not for the righteousness of God. It is a craving for the temporal, fleeting, transient "things" that seem not to satisfy.

Isn't it a marvelous promise also that we who are exercising unto godliness are promised this time in which to perfect our characters, and then, that life which is to come . . . time never-ending!

This precious time should be spent carrying that banner, putting down all evil. We should let it wave daily. If our hand grows weak and feeble, then let us draw strength from that fountain, and what a fountain we have to draw from—the Word of God, our uplifting letters, tapes, the MESSAGE, the booklets, daily conversation with our brethren—so very much to draw from.

When we stand before God, all the excuses in the world will not suffice. We have no excuse whatever to be lacking in strength. If we fail, no one is to blame but we ourselves.

"There is a time for all things" and our time should be spent to the glory of God.

Georgia

B. P.

Drawing Close

Thank you for the book *Elijah Then Christ*. It surely tells us in good plain language that Elijah truly shall first come. I don't know how anyone can believe that he already has come.

The times are drawing so close now that we all must strive that much harder. I have wasted so much time; I haven't a minute to spare now.

I am enjoying the tapes so much. The hymns and the MESSAGES are beautiful. We really can rejoice in hope.

Virginia

G. G.

On Habits

I read a good lesson on habits this morning, about letting the bad habits take hold in our lives. In the beginning they are quite easy to remove. But as time passes, uprooting them becomes increasingly difficult, almost impossible. The longer they grow, the deeper they go.

The best solution: Don't let it get a start in the first place. "A bad habit is like a soft chair—easy to get into but hard to get out of."

New Jersey

L. K.

Help Wanted

When God wants a man to do an important work for Him, He does not call the idle, but those who are already busily engaged in useful service.

Amos was busy with his herds when God called him.

Elisha was plowing in the field.

Joseph was on a mission for his father.

Moses was keeping the flocks in the desert.

Saul was hunting his father's lost asses.

David was tending his father's flocks.

Daniel was serving the king.

Peter and James and John were fishing.

Matthew was collecting the taxes.

Saul of Tarsus was zealously stamping out what he thought was heresy.

So it has always been. Those who are performing well the lowly tasks of life are those whom God calls to His greater tasks. They have been tried and have not been found wanting.

It is not the big task that counts in God's plan for us, but the doing of any task well, whether great or small. The doing well of the lowly task fits one for the accomplishment of the greater.

Remember Jesus' words: "Thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

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