



# Megiddo Message

My God!  
Let my faith be  
A living, growing thing in me  
That takes control of heart and hand  
And binds me to a loftier plan,  
That keeps me calm amid the strife,  
And trains me for a richer life;  
A life that sees beyond earth's woe  
To joys that only angels know;  
A life that tastes, e'en here, with Thee,  
The bliss of immortality.



## What Does God Think?

UNFORTUNATELY, this is not the most commonly asked question in the world. More nearly qualifying is, "What do you think?" But the problem with that is that *you* are human, just as I am, and what *you* think or what *I* think is just as inconsequential and non-authoritative as what the next human being may think.

What God thinks is a very different matter.

God does think. And those thoughts are much more than fleeting flights of fancy or passing dreams of the night. These are His own words, recorded by His prophet Jeremiah: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord" (Jer. 29:11). Yes, God knows what He thinks!

As surely as God exists, He is a thinking being. We certainly could not conceive of a non-thinking being ordering the vast reaches of the universe, controlling and directing the course of billions of galaxies each having billions of stars. If we think our little obligations require thought, what about God's!

But there is something else that is remarkable about God's thoughts. "I know," He says, "the thoughts that I think toward you." God has thoughts toward us, poor little creatures of dust that we are. He thinks, and He thinks toward us! Can we imagine what this means? Can we imagine the content of those thoughts toward us—on our behalf? This is the question that should concern us: What are God's thoughts toward me? Are they, in the words of the Prophet, thoughts of good and not of evil, to give me a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11)? Are those thoughts planning my reward? Are they arranging what *can be mine* if I meet His standard?

Let us beware of blandly assuming that all His thoughts toward us are automatically of this type. Being realistic and knowing how far short we naturally fall of meeting God's standard, we certainly *can* imagine what *some* of those thoughts are—and they are not all commending or approving. Toward disobedient Israel God had thoughts of punishment and judgment. And if we are disobedient, His thoughts toward us will be no better.

We must watch that we are never deceived by any

misreading of His thoughts. To properly perceive God's thoughts about us, we must be honest in our reading of His Word, open in our examining of our hearts, and sincere in our desire to get the facts. Thinking that He thinks us better than we are will not change either His mind or the facts. And thinking that what He thinks does not matter will not change the consequences of His thoughts toward us.

Yes, it is a comfort to us that God thinks toward us, that with the cares of the universes in His infinite mind, He yet has room for thoughts about us. But let us take His thoughts toward us more seriously, for whatever He thinks toward us, we ourselves are the architect of those thoughts. We ourselves have designed them by the way we live.

And God's thoughts toward us are the prelude to His actions. If we know what He thinks concerning us we know how He intends to act toward us. God's thinking is not the idle contemplation of the philosopher; it is the action plan of the commanding general. We forget this when we are so anxious about what the world will think of us and so indifferent about God's thoughts toward us.

The Christian will dare the world's misjudgment, its scorn, its condemnation. But who can face God's thoughts if they be evil toward us?

Unlike our thinking, God *knows*. There is never any question or speculation or invalid assumption on His part. God does not have to guess. He *knows*.

God's thoughts are true and wise and good. If, therefore, we can know God's thoughts about anything, we shall see the thing in its true light. Our thoughts are blinded by prejudice, colored by passion, limited by our ignorance, broken, fragmented, perverted. God's only are clear and perfect as His truth. The next time we are contemplating whether a certain thing is right or wrong, first priority or tenth, instead of stopping with "what do you think?" and wondering what others' opinions of us will be, let us ask ourselves in all seriousness, "What does God think?"—

Because He *knows*. And by what He knows we will be judged and rewarded. Eternally. MM

## 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*

## About Our Cover...

For our cover photograph we are indebted to the kindness of D. C. Lowe, who resides in Oregon. The photograph was taken at the Shore of Tenaya Lake, Yosemite National Park, California.

# Megiddo Message

Vol. 71, No. 8

September, 1984

### Editorial

WHAT DOES GOD THINK?

2

### Sermon

"TIME AND CHANCE HAPPENETH TO ALL"

4

A Christian Perspective on Suffering

### Article

"OWE NO MAN ANYTHING"

12

Proper control of finances is part of our Christian duty

### Special Feature

IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

16

Part Two: The Cycle of Unfaithfulness

### Articles

THE ILLUSION OF PERMANENCE

18

Even Herod's Temple was not forever.

IF GOD PREDESTINATES . . . ?

21

An unreasonable and unscriptural theory

### Sermonettes

. . . AND STILL SHE SPEAKS

25

### Letters

26

### Finally, Brethren

IS IT TRUE?

27

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, *Founder*; Kenneth E. Flowerday, *President and Editor*.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: One year, eleven issues, \$2.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

**MEGIDDO** is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.

# “Time and Chance Happeneth to All”

## —A Christian Perspective on Suffering—

Scripture: Psalm 37:1-11, 22-31

IN THE 37th Psalm, David is pondering the perplexities of life. From the breadth of his own experience he is comparing the life and final destiny of the God-fearer with that of those who know not God. Deep inside he is tempted to envy those who prosper in their evil designs; yet their pleasure is so short-lived, “for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb” (Ps. 37:2).

Everything in this world is short-lived at best, but why must it be tinged with suffering? Why must mortals confront such formidable foes as excruciating pain, hardship, and incurable disease?

Life can be meaningful. Life can be beautiful. Life is challenge, opportunity, growth. Life is pleasant relationships and delightful experiences. Adventuresome youth gives little thought to uncertainties or perplexities. There is an illusion that whatever comes can be handled without undue pain or grief, and that all will always be well.

But time has a way of correcting this illusion. Problems there are in less or greater measure, problems of health, or finance, or circumstance, or relationship; problems sometimes beyond our ability to control. There is disappointment, suffering, pain, loss. Why? Why should this be?

In a book *Acquainted with Grief* the author, Ada Rose, tells the story of her son, to whom she was especially close. They were very much alike in temperament, and since she was herself a widow, they were very much together. The son was handsome, industrious, intelligent, well liked, a boy of great promise. One day, when he was eleven years old, he was accidentally struck on the forehead with a baseball. It was not a hard blow, and yet somehow it caused a hemorrhage

on his brain. He was rushed into surgery, and his life was saved. But after the accident he was never the same. His speech was slurred. He walked with great difficulty. The damage to his brain caused him to lose his energy rapidly, so that he had to rest often from even the simplest tasks. He was the same person with the same desires, but now he seemed trapped in a different body. And as he grew to manhood, he often asked, in his writings and with his eyes, “Why?” “Why did this happen?” “Why me?” His mother asked also: “Why me? Why my son?”

### Various “Whys” of Suffering

When we think about suffering, we realize that all suffering is not the same. There are different types of suffering, with different causes.

The other day in the grocery store was a determined gentleman apparently attempting to do his share of the shopping. He wished to invest in a can of pineapple. But the woman with him said they didn’t need any more pineapple. And since she was thirty and he was two and a half, her word was law. The can of pineapple went back onto the shelf. Except that when her back was turned, the can went into the cart again. Only to be quickly retrieved when she turned again; at which time she picked him up and used her hand warmly to persuade him that he would not be doing that again for awhile.

The event is one part of the picture of human suffering. We cannot always have what we want. And when we disobey the authority to which we should submit, punishment comes. It is reasonable, it is just, and we are better for it. Punishment comes not only to little boys but to full-grown men and women who disobey

established laws to which they are—or should be—subject. A criminal violates the laws of society and finds himself in court, in confinement, paying a penalty or serving time. He interfered with the rights and privileges of others and as a consequence must bear the punishment imposed by the rule of the majority.

There is no question of “why” he must suffer.

Sometimes suffering is the result of misjudgment, human error, or simple blundering. We make an inappropriate decision, and we find that we lose respect, or time, or money, or advancement. We act to the limit of our ill-informed judgment, and must take the consequences of our error. Again there is no question of why we must face the suffering that results. We know well enough, and hope that we will be “wiser” when the next such situation arises.

Suffering may be the result of violating the laws of nature. We put our hand into the fire, and we get burned. Or we take an ill-advised risk. The first time all goes well, but the next time we get hurt. No one wonders why. We violate a law of health—knowingly or unknowingly—and get sick. By being more moderate or self-controlled, we could have avoided the problem. Why the suffering? We do not blame God.

There is another kind of suffering which we likewise dismiss without question. It is suffering that is chosen as a means to an end. The motivation for this type of suffering may be noble. It may be voluntary, in behalf of another, as a parent makes for a child. Parents expect a measure of suffering, but they view the sacrifice as a long-term investment. As the guardians of a human life, they look forward to the good that their son or daughter may accomplish in behalf of others.

Or we may suffer with another through an illness. Our love, our support, our sympathy may make the difference between that person giving up or seeing it through. The suffering is self-imposed, but no less real.

When we pursue a certain objective, we choose a degree of suffering. We may subject ourselves to the disciplines of education, of a career, or of service to others knowing in advance that there will be suffering. The athlete suffers stringent self-denial to achieve his goals. The doctor, the musician, the research scientist all suffer the loss of “normal” life while achieving their goals. But never does anyone ask “Why?” The suffering is part of the price of the goal to be achieved.

### **When We Wonder**

But what about those times when there is no reason for the suffering, when no conceivable good could result? What about suffering that is seemingly without cause, purpose or benefit? What about those events

---

## **All suffering is not the same. There are different types of suffering, with different causes.**

---

that we judge as senseless or cruel in the human picture, those tragedies that are somehow supposed to happen to other people but never to our own? Why does life for some terminate prematurely in tragedy?

There was a picture in the newspaper recently of an automobile driven by a couple on an interstate highway. Just as they drove beneath an overpass on which some repairs were being made, a large chunk of concrete broke loose from above and ripped their car in half and killing both occupants instantly. Under the picture was the question, “Why them?”

A typhoon strikes, or an earthquake, or a tornado, or a hurricane, spreading death and destruction in its wake. Why? Why does God allow this?

We learn from the book of Ecclesiastes the overall pattern of the Creator’s relation to His human family. It is a pattern of “time and chance.” We read, “Time and chance happeneth to them all” (Eccl. 9:11). No exception. Time and chance happen to all. God created the world and its inhabitants and set certain laws in motion. And at the present time He does not choose to openly interfere or redirect those laws; thus events take their course.

### **Physical Suffering Not the Result of Sin**

Some people have believed—erroneously—that tragedy indicates God’s disfavor, that those persons who suffer have sinned, and that God is punishing them by allowing the suffering.

This was apparently a prevailing misconception in Jesus’ time. When Jesus healed the man who had been born blind, certain of the onlookers asked, “Which hath sinned, this man or his mother?” assuming that one must have or he could never have been born blind. Jesus disallowed both. Physical affliction is *not* the result of sin.

On another occasion, Jesus used a current event to teach this same truth about calamity and suffering. Not long before a tower near the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem had collapsed unexpectedly, killing eighteen persons. Jesus’ question was this: “Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?” The implication was that they were not. It was a matter of time and chance, and since none of those eighteen

were under God's providential care, none were spared. But Jesus goes one step further to drive the lesson home to each: that no one has any assurance of continued life outside the care of God. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:4-5).

The eighteen were not singled out for punishment, but their fate was in actuality no worse than that of all of Jesus' hearers—all would perish sooner or later, unless they repented.

If we look closely at the human picture and the plan of God, we see this fact illustrated again and again. Except in isolated cases involving the immediate judgments of God, suffering and tragedy have ever been simply the result of time and chance.

### Examples of Time and Chance

God created the world and set in motion certain forces and laws by which life continues. Could God intervene? Could God avert floods, typhoons, hurricanes, and blizzards? Could God intervene to prevent all sickness, all accidents, all crises? He could, but such is not according to His purpose at the present time. It is not presently His responsibility to see that nothing happens to hurt or destroy His creation.

But what about His own people? Why must *they*

suffer? Why must they also be victims of the destructive forces of nature? We can understand that God is not responsible for the fate of all mankind who are not His children. But what about those who *are*? Why must *they* suffer? Why must good people, godly people, those who are seriously serving God, suffer?

Again we read from the Book of books, that "time and chance happeneth to them all." No exception. Godly and ungodly experience the same accidents, the same illnesses, the same weaknesses, the same problems. Both encounter hardship, trial, and tragedy. It is not that God *sends* these experiences, but that He does not intervene to prevent them. Paul's devoted disciple Epaphroditus was "sick nigh unto death." Dorcas, a woman "full of good works and aimsdeeds which she did," became sick and died. Timothy was afflicted with an "oft infirmity." At one point Paul had to leave behind his beloved brother and fellow traveler Trophimus because he was sick (II Tim. 4:20). Paul himself suffered cruel beatings, stoning, shipwreck, cold, hunger, and mistreatment.

Is this just? Why are not God's people exempt from suffering? Simply because it is not part of God's plan that they should be. If serving God meant immediate exemption from all pain and suffering, thousands would

## Let Us Pray . . .

Almighty God, who leadest Thy children out of bondage with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night: lead us, we pray, through this night of sin and evil, to the better Day that is just ahead. Lead us out of bondage to the near goals and small-minded desires which propel the masses, to cherish and seek the higher goals of Thy Kingdom.

Lord, we confess our tendency to covetousness, pride, and stubborn self-will. We confess that too often our priorities have been confused and we have sacrificed the things that matter most for petty gratifications of the moment. Help us to keep stretching, constantly reaching beyond ourselves, realizing that only so will we achieve the high calling to which we have been called.

We pray Thee to impress us anew this morning with some word of Thee, some message that will touch our inner lives, some thought that will stir us to

a more consecrated life before Thee. Thou hast spoken, and we must obey. Thou hast set the standard, and we must rise to it. Thine it is to command, and ours to humbly listen and obey.

Impress us, too, with the security of Thy divine providence, Thy care for Thine own, Thy supporting hand and the strength of Thine everlasting arms. If Thou art for us, naught on earth can ever be against us. And whatever the suffering, trial, or testing that may befall us in this life, we need not fear, knowing that Thou wilt never allow more than we can bear.

Our Father, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can change, the wisdom and spiritual discernment to know the difference, and the faith to trust Thee implicitly through all, knowing that Thou in Thine infinite wisdom will work all things together for our good.

We pray Thy blessing on all those everywhere who are seeking Thee in sincerity and in truth. Sustain, comfort and bless as Thou seest best, and keep us all looking steadily beyond, striving mightily for the crown of immortality that it may be ours to enjoy together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

be openly serving Him just to obtain that benefit. But God in His wisdom has arranged that all share equally in His munificence, and all share equally the limitations of mortality. The sun shines on the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45); likewise the winds of adversity strike the just and the unjust. Time and chance happen to all.

### **God's Care for His Own**

What then is the difference? Where is the hundredfold in serving God? Where is God's special care for His own? What do they receive that others do not? Where is there any present benefit in serving God? Is time and chance—ungoverned, undirected, unlimited—the lot of those who fear God?

The answer is no. God *does* have a special provision for those who serve Him. They are not left on their own, at the mercy of time and chance.

God does not interfere to prevent or interrupt the normal course of events in life, but He *does* step in to fulfill certain very definite and special promises to His own. Never can time and chance bring any experience into the life of one of His own that will violate His promises to them.

Let us look closely at a few of these promises.

### **God's Promise: Sufficient Life**

Disease may rage, bombs may explode, earthquakes and tornadoes may ravage and accidents take their tolls; but never will one be taken who has not had sufficient time to complete his or her work for God and His Kingdom. His promise is sure, that those fearing God have the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8). Until their work is complete, they simply will not be taken. No event of time or chance can overrule this promise. By circumstances, by "happenstances," by strange coincidence or whatever means God chooses, they will be spared. Exactly what means God uses to achieve this we are not told, but the result is assured. Nothing will befall the earnest life-seeker that will prevent his or her completion of the work begun. This does not mean that they will be exempt from painful illness, accident, sorrow or suffering; but nothing will make impossible the full completion of their appointed work.

### **God's Promise: Sufficient Strength**

Along with the promise of sufficient life comes another promise: that of sufficient strength to meet whatever comes. No suffering will be beyond our power to endure; no temptation beyond our strength to resist; no trial beyond our ability to withstand. For "there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempt-

---

**"Time and chance happeneth to them all." No exceptions.**

---

ed above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

God will not intervene to prevent the accident, the illness, the trial. But He does promise sufficient strength to endure. He will not allow anything to overwhelm us if we are putting our trust in Him, nor will He allow anything to deprive us of sufficient mental or physical strength until we have done all that we will do.

### **God's Promise: Divine Assistance**

Many are the promises of Scripture that show in symbolic language God's care for His own. Divine assistance may take a variety of forms, both mental and physical in their effect upon us. It may come in the form of mental strength to face what would otherwise be shattering. It may come in the form of physical endurance or stamina; it may be will power or insight. Or it may come in the form of a sudden turn of events which could not be foreseen or foreknown. It may come in any one of a thousand ways, for who of us can discover the workings of Omnipotence? Who of us can know the ways of God, or how His unseen agents minister? David attributed the help he received directly to God. These are his words: "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him" (Ps. 28:7).

### **Sometimes: Deliverance**

To the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, divine help came in the form of open deliverance. They did not know this in advance. But they placed themselves in the hands of God and let Him work according to His will. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not . . ."—oh, the trust in those three words! "But if not." Whether God chose to deliver or not, their course of action was set. They would obey, and leave the consequences with God.

This is still the proper course for us today. Even though we live in an age when God is silent, when He is not working openly to perform miracles, He still is working in behalf of His people, and should we come to a choice between doing what is right and risking our



---

## **God does not interfere to prevent or interrupt the normal course of events in life, but He does step in to fulfill certain very definite and special promises to His own.**

---

lives, or doing wrong and saving them, we must do right and trust the results with God. He still lives, He still works, and when it suits His purpose He still delivers. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" (II Pet. 2:9). And, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7).

### **God's Promise: Protection**

Those who are His special treasure are constantly within His watch-care and keeping, and nothing in heaven or earth can hide them from Him. This special care is described in Scripture in many different symbols. In Deut. 33:27, it is the support of His "everlasting arms." We read: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." It is the strong, supportive hands of Psalm 91:12, "They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." Whatever comes to them, He knows.

### **God Turns It to Good**

When physical sufferings strike, unbidden, undeserved; when circumstances seem to thwart us, try us, test us for no good "reason" we can see, is it possible that we err in asking "Why?" Is it not possible that God can turn our suffering to some purposeful experience, either for ourselves or for those whose lives touch ours—or both? May it not be a way through which God can reach us, impressing us with the brevity of life and of our desperate need to use the time we have while it is ours?

Someone has suggested that when we encounter what seems to us a severe trial, we should not ask, "When will I be getting out of this?" but rather "What will I be getting out of this?" God does not allow a single experience from which we cannot learn some valuable lesson. Whatever comes, God can turn it to our good.

The apostle Paul was "in bonds" at the time he was writing to his brethren in Philippi, but, he wrote, "I would ye should understand . . . that the things which

happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear" (Phil. 1:12-14). Lesser souls would have counted the hardship; Paul counted the gain.

This is how the misfortunes and sufferings of our lives work for us. Each and every experience, confronted with God, can be turned to our long-term benefit, to teach us what we need to learn, to make us what we need to be. Each experience is something which God can use to shape us into His plan for our lives. This does not mean that God designs the misfortunes or plans our trials, but whatever comes He will see us through it triumphantly and turn it to our spiritual good.

The Sacred Scriptures give us several examples of this. One outstanding example is the case of Joseph, who spoke of his sufferings as providentially decreed. These are his words to his brothers who had years before mistreated him so cruelly: "God did send me before you to preserve life." Again, "God meant it unto good, . . . to save much people alive" (Gen. 45:5, 50:20). This was not saying that the brothers did not do evil, or that Joseph did not suffer, nor does it say that God made Joseph suffer or that He influenced the brothers to do evil to fulfill His will. But God worked all together for good, both the good of Joseph and the good of the people who were saved by his being in Egypt at that time.

The patriarch Job was impressed with God's ability to use our experiences in life to teach us what we need to learn. He even thought of life as His God-designed program of tutoring. "For he knoweth the way that I take," he wrote. "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (23:10). This is the way King David viewed suffering. When it was passed, he could say triumphantly, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes" (Ps. 119:71).

Why is our judgment so often less generous?

There may be several reasons. First, our viewpoint is limited. Our vision is limited; and our understanding is limited. We are not in the position of God. We cannot see the entire field of conflict and know how all is working out. All we can see is our own small sphere of concern. Too easily we forget that God is in control, overruling both time and chance. Too often we forget the purpose of our lives, that when we are serving God the whole disposing of our lives is in His hand and that He will work all to our ultimate good.

If we are determined to use the experiences of life—



whether good or ill—to spiritual profit; if we are making ourselves His children, is not God capable of turning all these experiences to our good, to teach us the priceless lessons we need to learn for the eternal ages to come? Is not this the advantage of the Christian over those not knowing Christ, that God is indeed in control, that in all the vicissitudes of life we are not alone but in His keeping? Life is not a purposeless, pointless existence. As Christians we are here for a short and intensive period of development, and can we say that we truly understand all the lessons we need to learn?

But let us never forget His promises: not one uninterrupted life of pleasure and carefree, painfree existence, but the assurance that nothing will come to us but that which we can use to our spiritual and moral perfecting. As members of the human family, time and chance will happen to all. But as Christians we can be sure there will be benefit in the suffering, somewhere, somehow, for someone. We may not see at the moment, but in the words of our hymn, "Sometime we'll understand."

In the meantime, it is our privilege as Christians to utilize every joy, every sorrow, every pain as part of a short and intensive course of training for eternal service, as an aid in adorning our characters with those shining jewels of love, patience, meekness, and submission.

Who are we to judge the wisdom of Omnipotence? Who are we to say, "This should be" and "this should not be"? We need to take a lesson from the apostle Paul, who viewed his sufferings as long-term gain. These are his words: "We boast about our suffering. These sufferings bring patience, . . . and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope" (Rom. 5:3-5, JB).

If, when all is done, we hold in our possession the crown of life immortal; if all the experiences of life add up to a place of honor in the eternal Kingdom of Christ, what greater gain could we ask!

We need to keep this far-seeing perspective in our minds. And remember, He who sees from eternity to eternity, He who knows the end from the beginning and can bring to glorious fruition every promise of His Word, can we judge Him unjust and unkind if one encounters a long period of suffering and confinement—when He proffers that person a life of billions and trillions and quadrillions of ages of happiness and delight? Shall we, if ours be the immortal crown, look back and question "Why?"

We need the perspective of the apostle Paul who knew firsthand how God used present trouble to yield eternal good. This is his thoughtful commentary from

---

## **Whatever comes, God can turn it to our spiritual good.**

---

the basis of his own experience: "The slight trouble of the passing hour results in solid glory past all comparison." Or as translated in the Jerusalem Bible, "The troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them" (II Cor. 4:17). And when we get beyond this little interim of time, when we have passed the tests of this brief day and received the eternal benison of God, what will it matter?

Looking back upon our trials, what will they be? So small, so insignificant, so brief—we will marvel that we ever wondered!

The story is told of a missionary who saw one of the loyal adherents of the faith tied to a stake by his persecutors and then burned to death. This missionary believed, along with most nominal Christianity, that good people go to heaven at death. So, as the story goes, a few years later the missionary, after his own death, met the man in heaven. "Well," said the missionary to the loyal brother, "what was it like to be tortured in those flames and know that you were going to die?" The man hesitated a moment, then turning to his friend replied, "You know, my brother, I can't remember." That is how our trials will seem when we are able to look back on them—we will forget our misery, in the words of Job, remembering it "as waters that pass away." In the words of Isaiah, "the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17).

The apostle Paul offers another thought on the suffering and problems we encounter. It is the clay-pot connection of our lives. These are his words: "We are only the earthenware jars that hold this treasure, to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us. We are in difficulties on all sides, but never cornered; we see no answer to our problems, but never despair; we have been persecuted, but never deserted; knocked down, but never killed; always, wherever we may be, we carry with us in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus, too, may always be seen in our body" (II Cor. 4:7-10, JB). What is to be the final outcome of our earthly experience? It is to share in the sufferings and triumph of Christ, to learn the real meaning of life and develop the

"life" of Christ. Our clay pots are often helpful to this end.

Some things are guaranteed not to chip, crack, or break, but human beings are not on that list. We need not tax our memories to put ourselves in the middle of this—troubled, in doubt, badly hurt. The words fit. It is the clay-pot connection. "We who have this spiritual treasure are like common clay pots" (II Cor. 4:7, TEV).

No doubt about the spiritual treasure. All we have seen and said and sung in worship reminds us of the God we serve, His greatness and glory and omnipotence, His treasure that outglitters all the treasures of earth. The strength to work and the will to live, the ear that hears a prayer and the word that comes back to us through Scripture or sermon or song, how magnificent the treasure! But alas—only a clay pot to hold it. What a letdown!

"Yet we who have this spiritual treasure are like common clay pots in order to show that the supreme power belongs to God, and not to us."

We know what Paul meant—the forces of time and chance all working to chip, crack, and break us and the pushing and shoving inside which threatens to crush the thin walls of these clay pots. Paul said in another letter, "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7:15-16, RSV).

We know what he felt.

God might have excused us from this distress. He might have made us immune to pain and hurt and harm. He might have made us perfect so there would not be the inner struggle with our natures, the battle of flesh and spirit or life and death within us. But that was not His way. He made us mortal, and subject to all the mortal woes. He made us subject to all the laws of time and chance that govern all mankind. But at the same time He instituted a law that can override those laws to make all work together for our good, so that we will never be tested beyond what we can endure; and so that nothing that comes to us will hinder our growth into holiness. With these two bonuses, what eternal harm can our common clay pots face? None.

And so we can go on, carrying the treasure in this world, until the greater day dawns and our clay pots are changed in nature to shine as His glorious vessel. And oh, what a change, a change that will remove us forever from the ravages of time and chance. What a reward!—if we just prove faithful! MM

## Coming to Grips with—Ourselves

TIME IS what we do with it, especially at this moment when the end days loom great before us. It is rapidly running out. There is no way of halting the swift moving pace and making it wait for us. The only sensible and wise thing to do is to move with it by redeeming the moments and seconds to the utmost of our possibilities. Keeping the Kingdom first in all our thoughts and in all our activities is the surest and safest way to prepare for that coming harvest.

Failure and defeat repeatedly hound us. But that is no reason for slackening our determination. We must come to grips with our old nature and make it obey Christ. Others before us have had the same inward and outward struggles. If they wished to do so, they could have looked at their limitations with despair. But counting each a blessed occasion for dying to self, they exercised the highest faith in God's leading and were successful. Can we do less and make the most of our time?

Our day by day use of time determines the spiritual quality within us. This end time so graciously extended is laden with opportunities to help us in gaining that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

There is no time like the present to become what we ought to be. No other people have lived so close to the harvest time as we. No other people have had a more bountiful supply of the water of life than we. Whosoever will can come and dip into its crystal clear depths for soul refreshment and spiritual growth. God places no limitations or bars on His Word. It is there, a priceless possession, boundless storehouse to meet our needs today, tomorrow and in all the coming tomorrows until faith is changed to sight.

Not far off is the time when we shall have to give account. But meanwhile, today is still ours, and we must work and watch. It is a big order for the old man to change into the new man. But "My yoke is easy and My burden light," said Jesus. It is the anger, envy, jealousy, discontent that make the heart heavy and the very weight of these ills causes groaning. Every trace of evil must be dispensed with now if we would ever sing the song of the redeemed.

—Contributed

# I Will Come!

*WHILE the busy day dies slowly  
O'er the sea,  
And the hour grows quiet and holy  
With thoughts of Me:  
E'er you slumber, go and do  
What must be done,  
For it may be in the evening  
I will come.*

*As the evening shades grow longer  
And the night  
Descends to veil the hills  
From mortal sight,  
Behold, I say unto you, Watch!  
Let the door be on the latch  
In your home.  
For it may be at the Midnight  
I will come.*

*When the house is hushed in slumber,  
Quiet, still,  
And the hours grow long and dreary,  
Cold and chill,  
Keep the door upon the latch  
In your home.  
It may be at the cock crowing,  
In the chill before the dawning  
Between the night and morning  
I will come.*

*Keep your faith lamps brightly burning  
All the night,  
As you wait through vigils long  
The morning light.  
Behold, I say unto you, Watch!  
Let the door be on the latch  
In your home.  
For it may be in the morning  
I will come!*



# "Owe No Man Anything"

WHEN I was growing up in the depression days of the 1930's, "We can't afford it!" seemed to be a stock answer to the family's wants. And being one of seven children, there was barely enough money to satisfy needs, not to mention wants. By the time I reached my teens, we were motherless, and no one ever suggested that my father buy what we wanted and then pay for it later; buying on credit was unheard of; "plastic money," the credit card of today hadn't been invented. You simply didn't buy things if you didn't have the money. And on a farm, there was little cash available. The family's food came largely from the land; a few dollars brought home such staples as sugar and flour.

Because I was the youngest of four girls, my dresses were mostly hand-me-downs. A new dress was something special, to be saved for special occasions. Summertime meant bare feet; new shoes must be bought for cash, thus shoes were reserved for church and school.

But now, half a century later, everything is different. Wants, not to be confused with needs, must be satisfied on demand. Buy now; pay later. January ads urge you to have that new appliance—with no payments due until April. And that new car can be had on a monthly payment basis stretched out over 48 months, with interest of *only* 12.8%. Given the current apathy of the public toward debt, and with such advertising filling the newspapers, is it any wonder that consumer debt has risen from a paltry \$15 billion in 1950 to the astronomical figure of

\$388 billion at the end of 1983—up more than 2,000%!

This past year Americans have been on a spending spree of unprecedented proportions. Emerging from a severe recession, with prosperity returning they have splurged on everything their heart desired—and paid cash for but little of it. The average American worker brings home a paycheck at the end of the work week that is largely spent before he gets it. There is the car payment, the mortgage payment, payments on the new washing machine, payments on last year's vacation, department store charges for clothing, charges for groceries—the list could go on and on.

AMERICANS are literally drowning in debt, and nobody seems alarmed. A headline in a recent issue of *U. S. News and World Report* reads: "Americans—\$6 Trillion in Debt and Sinking Deeper." This figure includes debts of governments, people and business. According to the information given, it amounts to more than \$26,500 of debt for every American counted in the last census. And consumer debt is increasing at a rate of more than \$5 billion per month at the present time.

In a time of prosperity it would seem logical that there should be less consumer debt, but in reality there is more than ever. Why? Because people want "things"; material possessions are the god of this world. And the more they have, the more they want.

Meanwhile, the national debt stands at nearly one and one half

trillion and increasing at the rate of \$321,000 a second. Is it any wonder that people are not concerned about the seemingly inconsequential sums they personally owe? What is a few thousand in personal debt compared to government debt figures?

## Debt Unavoidable?

The prevailing attitude is that it is impossible to live without debt. But is it? Can such buying be reconciled with the Word of God? What about the Christian and debt? Can a Christian justify a houseful of things that he does not actually own? Is it justifiable to buy on credit until the weekly paycheck is spent in advance? Is it right for the Christian to follow the free spending habits of others? Are we free to spend our means for everything our heart desires without paying for it?

WHAT IS the Biblical position on such spending? The Bible gives one definite answer: "Owe no man anything" (Rom. 13:8).

"Owe no man anything," taken literally, would mean that the Christian would have to forego owning a home until he could pay for it. We are sure that such a meaning was not intended, for under the present circumstances, the cash purchase of a home is beyond the reach of the young family. Reasonable mortgage debt, on a manageable monthly payment basis, is not to be compared to credit card buying of consumer goods such as clothing, food and paper products.

What is the answer to unmanageable personal debt? Four short words spell the answer: "We can't

afford it." So easily a credit card in the pocket makes one feel there is nothing they can't afford. And so thinking, they spend themselves bankrupt.

### **Adopt a "Pay-As-You-Go" Plan**

Proper control of finances is part of our Christian duty. The Christian should be able to control his appetite for "things" within the limits of his pocketbook. It is a Bible principle that a man should live within his means. The apostle Paul's witness to all men was that he worked with his own hands that he be chargeable to no man (I Thess. 2:9). In today's English, that would mean "pay-as-you-go." He settled his accounts as he went along; he would be debtor to no one.

How do you avoid debt? The prudent wage earner puts a portion of his weekly pay into a savings account to prepare for the inevitable "rainy day," whether it be unexpected illness, the need of a new washing machine, or the breakdown of the family car. A nominal amount put into a savings account on a regular basis will soon add up to enough to buy a major appliance, and instead of making monthly payments with interest, the item can be bought for cash, perhaps even at a discount. Monthly payments, even if timely, add 10% or more to the price of an item.

**J**ESUS issued a warning to His hearers that is good in any age: "Beware! Be on your guard against greed of every kind, for even when a man has more than enough, his wealth does not give him life" (Luke 12:15, NEB). Money in the bank or money spent for "things" does not guarantee life. Earthly possessions form no part of the "good store" of the man who is wise toward God. The Wise Man stated it well: "Wisdom is better than possessions and an advantage to all who see the sun. Better have wisdom behind

you than money; wisdom profits men by giving life to those who know her" (Eccl. 7:11-12, NEB).

As Christians we must learn to beware of covetousness. We cannot have all things; only a choice of things. The fact that someone else has a certain item must never be used as the basis of its purchase. Some things we simply cannot afford for spiritual reasons. Anything that would blur our goal of eternal life should be avoided even if it might be lawful. As Paul said, there are things that may be lawful, but not expedient. Better to err on the side of caution than to overindulge a covetous appetite.

### **PLAN Your Spending**

Greed often leads to unnecessary purchases. Spending should be planned in advance; it is rarely necessary to buy something on the spur of the moment. The Christian who has his priorities properly ordered can distinguish between necessities and luxuries and thus avoid overspending. Remember, "we brought nothing into this world," and it is certain "we cannot take anything with us when we leave," hence we should be content with what we have (I Tim. 6:8, NEB), not be clamoring for more of the things of this world. Self denial, whether in things material or physical, brings spiritual benefits.

The Christian's foremost concern is eternal security, but financial security has its place in life also. There are several steps anyone can take toward financial security that will result in the peace of mind that is necessary to the Christian life. It is not enough for the Christian to trust in the coming of the Lord to take care of his needs in old age. We should work as though the Lord were coming tomorrow, but plan as though He were not coming for years. The Scriptures do not condemn planning; only planning that leaves God out. A small amount

saved weekly will provide the necessities of life in later years.

Nor is it safe to depend on prayer to satisfy our needs. Prayer is not to be discounted in the Christian life, but the Lord does not promise to do for us what we can and should do for ourselves. He promises us our daily bread—but not baked and delivered free of charge. Jesus' command was: Occupy till I come. We are to work with our own hands to provide for our needs and to help others in need.

### **Avoid Waste**

**"W**ASTE not; want not" is an old cliché, and true. Waste is one of the ways of the world denied the Christian.

Spending must always be aligned with income. No one can long endure spending beyond their income. It is our Christian duty to be good stewards of our means. All belongs to God; it is only loaned to us. Credit cards should be reserved for emergency situations when the cash is not at hand for a necessary purchase.

The Christian must never allow his decisions to be governed by pride. For many in the world, pride controls important decisions. Clothing may be discarded because it has gone out of style, not because it is worn out; automobiles may be traded for a newer model while the old one is still serviceable. Pride may also lead to excessive spending. Pride in any form is forbidden by God, including pride of possessions. Before you buy, ask yourself, Why do I want this? If it is only for show, then it isn't needed. Purchases should be made on the basis of practical value, and not to pamper our pride.

The apostle Paul's advice is for today: "Owe no man anything." Wise financial planning will yield benefits in a measure of security and a peace of mind that far outweigh the effort expended. MM



## *Lines to Live By*

*LORD, let my heart still turn to Thee  
In all my hours of waking thought;  
Nor let me ever wish to be  
Or think, or feel, where Thou art not.*

*In every hour of pain or woe,  
When nought on earth my heart can cheer,  
When sighs will burst, and tears will flow,  
Lord, hush the sigh and dry the tear.*

*In every dream of earthly bliss,  
Do Thou, my Saviour, present be;  
Nor let me think of happiness  
On earth without the thought of Thee.*

*And when before the throne I kneel,  
Hear, from that throne of grace, my prayer;  
And let each joyous hope I feel,  
Burn with the thought of Zion fair.*

*Thus teach me, Lord, to look to Thee,  
In every hour of waking thought,  
Nor let me ever wish to be,  
Or think, or feel, where Thou art not.*

*Selected.*



## The World's Bible

*"Ye are the epistles of Christ—written with the spirit of God"*  
(II Cor. 3:3).

Christ has no hands but our hands  
To do His work today,  
He has no feet but our feet  
To lead men in His way,  
He has no tongue but our tongues  
To tell men how He died,  
He has no help but our help  
To bring them to His side.

We are the only Bible  
The careless world will read,  
We are the sinner's gospel,  
We are the scoffer's creed,  
We are the Lord's last message,  
Given in deed and word.  
What if the type is crooked?  
What if the print is blurred?

What if our hands are busy  
With other work than His?  
What if our feet are walking  
Where sin's allurements is?  
What if our tongues are speaking  
Of things His lips would spurn?  
How can we hope to help Him  
And hasten His return?

—Selected.

*The antidote for crime should be administered in childhood, by the parents. The problem is not fundamentally that of the improper child so much as it is that of the improper home.*

## Roadblock

ARE the highways of your mind  
In need of long-deferred repair?  
Have you made them hard to travel  
Due to potholes of despair?  
Do your signposts want renewing?  
Do directions want reviewing?  
Are the crossroads of your mind  
Too dangerous, too "blind"?

Have you ignored the state of bridges?  
Have you checked the view from ridges?  
Keep your eye fixed on the highway,  
Not the low way, not a by-way,  
And someday you'll reach the City,  
Glorious city of the King!

## Busy

THE LORD had a job that he needed done,  
But I had so much to do,  
I said, You get somebody else,  
Or wait till I get through.

I don't know how the Lord made out,  
But He seemed to get along,  
And down, deep down in my sneaking heart,  
I knew I'd done God wrong.

Now when the Lord has a job for me,  
I never whine nor shirk.  
I drop whatever I have on hand  
And do the Lord's good work.

And my own work can go along,  
Or wait till I get through—  
For somebody else will take your crown  
If he does your work for you!

## Points for the Month:

**Week 1:** What do you have that God has not given you?

**Week 2:** To form a godly character should be our first priority.

**Week 3:** He that restraineth his tongue is wise in God's sight.

**Week 4:** A man of faith is ready to pay the price, whatever that price may be.

**Week 5:** We must put off the filthy garments of the flesh before we can put on the robe of righteousness.

# In the Days of the Judges

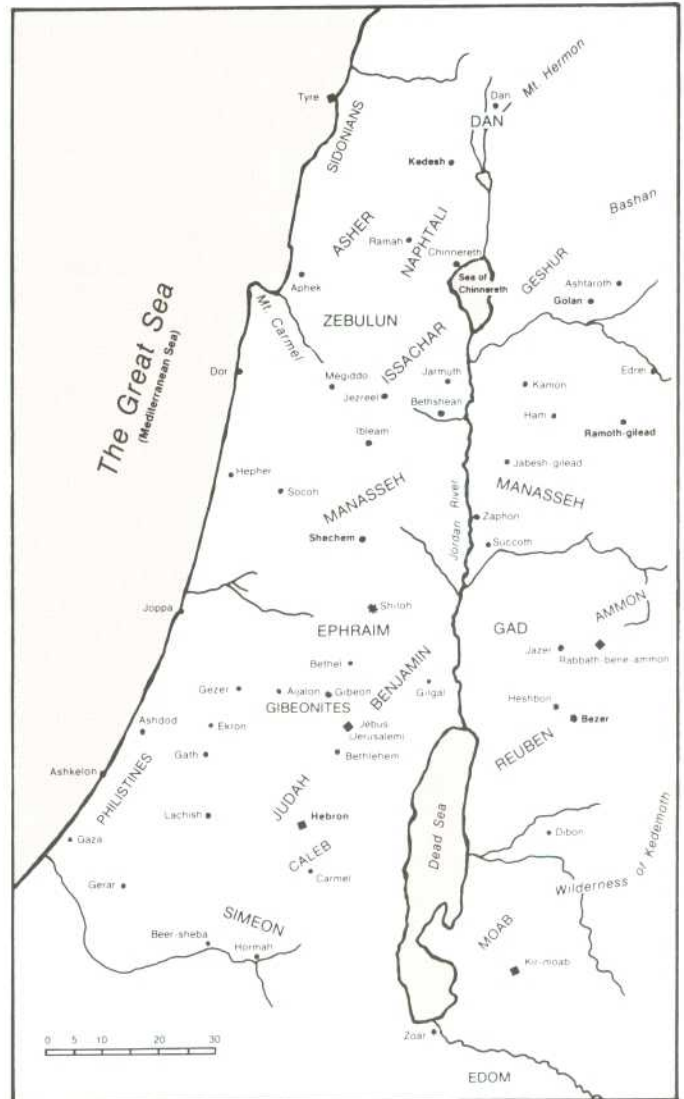
## The Cycle of Unfaithfulness Part II

**T**HE BOOK of Judges is the story of the cycle of unfaithfulness, punishment and restoration repeated again and again and again. After a few chapters, even a casual reader can predict the next episode. It is the story of almost unending struggle between human wilfulness and the forbearance and mercy of God. Times without number God could have cut off His people for their sinfulness, but times without number, when they repented and turned, He gave them yet another chance—just as He has done with us. And who is not grateful!

Although the most of the book of Judges concerns the sinfulness of the people and the consequences of sin, we know that throughout the time of the Judges there was a faithful remnant. Ruth and Naomi were of that remnant, and Ruth forms a link in the genealogy of Christ.

There were other people during that time who displayed commendable virtues. Some that should be remembered as part of the remnant God used include Hannah and Elkanah, the parents of Samuel, as well as Samuel himself; Eli, who acted as both priest and judge; Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson, whose upright lives merited the visit of an angel; Deborah the prophetess-judge who delivered Israel, and Barak her helper; and Gideon who had the courage to destroy his father's images and groves and who answered God's call to deliver Israel. We might also include Gideon's 300-man army, for they were willing, courageous and loyal.

However, Israel as a nation did not follow these examples. When those who remembered the results of earlier disobedience died, the survivors soon turned to evil, and God again allowed the Canaanites to plague them—the very people they had failed to drive out of their land as the Lord had commanded them.



### From Othniel to Jephthah

About many of the Judges we know little. Othniel was the first judge, called to deliver Israel from the king of Mesopotamia who had oppressed them eight years. After their deliverance, we read that "the land had rest forty years. And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, died" (Judg. 3:8-11). And then, how quickly they forgot God. The next verse reads, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord." Again their enemies overcame them.

Deliverance came this time in the person of Ehud. The story of Ehud is told in a few short sentences; we know only that he was a Benjamite, and "a man left-handed" but he subdued Moab and afterward "the land had rest fourscore years" (Judg. 3:30).

Of the judge that followed Ehud we know even less.

His record is written in 25 words: "And after him was Shamgar, the son of Anath, who slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel" (Judg. 3:31).

A peaceful eighty-year "rest" followed Ehud. Then, when Israel once again forgot God, oppression followed.

Jabin, king of Canaan, "mightily oppressed" Israel. With his 900 chariots of iron, he was able to crush all who opposed him. After 20 years of oppression under Sisera, the captain of the Canaanite hosts, God heard their cries for deliverance and used a woman to deliver them. We read: "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judg. 4:4-5).

Deborah is the only woman judge, and this incident represents the only time God used a woman in such a situation. Deborah was well qualified for the position, being a prophetess and already a judge at the time she was called. She, together with Barak, met the enemy and destroyed them. But Deborah did not take credit for the victory. The victory was the Lord's. We read, "And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, . . . So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel. And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed [him]" (Judges 4). Israel's rebellion had caused the trouble, but in spite of it, God was willing to give them one more chance. When they repented, He destroyed their enemy and gave them rest 40 years.

This great victory drew from Deborah and Barak a triumphant song of thanksgiving that is recorded for us (Judges 5): "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves." Would that this song might have been echoed by all in Israel!

But after forty years of rest, we find the same familiar story: Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, once more following the ways of the heathens they had failed to expel from their land, and once more God allowed them to be overrun by the Midianites and the Amalekites. For seven years the enemy destroyed their crops and stole their livestock until they were destitute. Again they cried unto the Lord, and the Lord sent His prophet to remind them of all He had done for them, and to warn them: "Ye have not obeyed my voice."

### The Deliverer: Gideon

THE Prophet's message went unheeded, and God sent His angel to the farm of Joash, where Gideon his son threshed wheat by the winepress.

The story of Gideon and his fleece, his army of 300, and their success in routing the enemy is among the most thrilling of Biblical narratives, showing God's ability to save by many or by few. When God was on Israel's side, nothing could defeat them.

The sifting process through which God put Gideon's army is also significant. God wants the best. And by whatever test He sees fit to sift them, He will have the best for the special service He wants done. This was true in Gideon's day. It is equally true today.

After Gideon's triumph over the Ammonites, we read that "the country was in quietness forty years" (Judg. 8:28). But as at other times,

it could not last. Human nature was as fickle then as now; and the people's memories were just as short. Only a few decades of peace and prosperity and they forgot the God who had so graciously given them the land and turned to other gods, of wood and stone.

"And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god. And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side: neither shewed they kindness to the house of . . . Gideon" (Judg. 8:33-35).

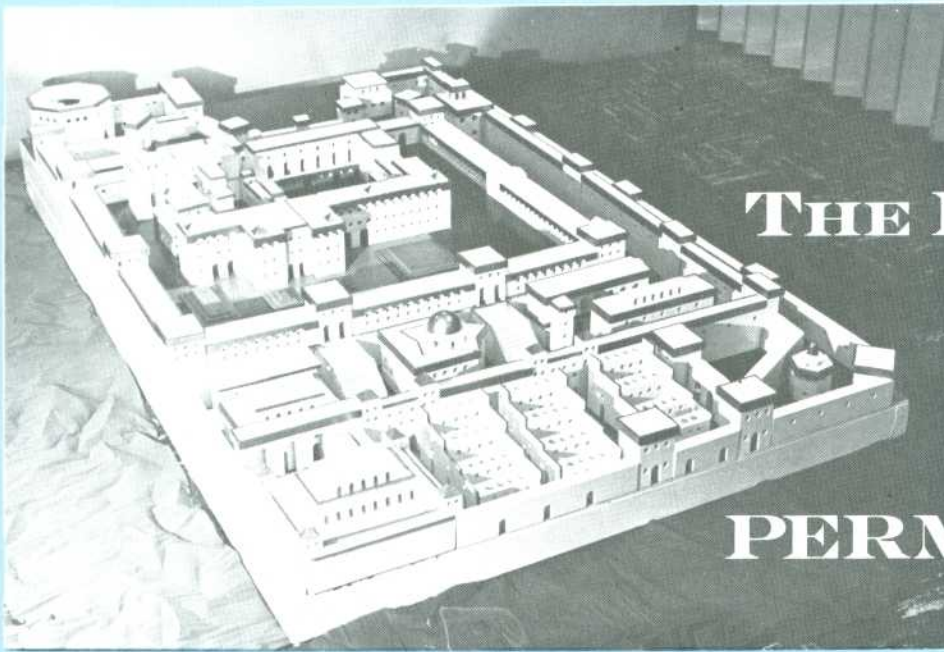
This time the wicked son of Gideon, Abimelech, set himself up as king over Israel, with disastrous results.

(Continued Next Issue)

*"The little we have to do in view of the grand reward seems so meager, brothers and sisters, that every heart should be not only willing but anxious to do this little readily, realizing if we will only do the little demanded of us now, God will (no guess work) multiply unto us and fulfill those great and precious promises. It seems amid the turmoil of this world and the misery it contains, it would cause every heart to long for something better, something more lasting, something more enduring. There is surely a better time coming. It is just as certain as I am standing before you this morning. But is it as certain and sure that we will be prepared for that day?"*

—L. T. Nichols





# THE ILLUSION OF PERMANENCE

*Replica of Herod's Temple, A.D. 20, as constructed by Emanuel Boyer*

**A**N ILLUSION of permanence pervades our lives and all that we see and touch. By some instinct we believe what we see, and conclude quite unconsciously that it will always be. This instinct belongs to all the animate creation.

The apostle Paul took this instinct and used it to develop a special, more advanced art, that of seeing beyond the "things that are seen" to the "things that are not seen." To him, the visible present was less real and less permanent than the invisible future. Pondering this fact, he wrote: "These little troubles (which are really so transitory) are winning for us a permanent, glorious and solid reward out of all proportion to our pain. For we are looking all the time not at the visible things but at the invisible. The visible things are transitory: it is the invisible things that are really permanent" (II Cor. 4:17-18, Phillips).

Only a century before the apostle Paul lived another man of note in the ancient world: Herod the Great. But Herod's greatness and that of Paul can hardly be compared—because the two men had almost nothing in common. Herod was great in power and wealth—and cruelty; Paul was among the outcasts of this world but great in the things that last—his honor is laid up for the final Day when he shall be acclaimed by myriads of angels. Herod sought the fleeting glories of this world, the things that are seen; Paul pursued the heavenly realities, visible only by faith but eternal in duration.

## Who Was Herod?

Herod the Great (73-4 B.C.), king of Judea under Roman suzerainty, is historically important because it was into his kingdom that Jesus of Nazareth was born. More than this, Herod's immediate descendants for three generations were the temporal or spiritual rulers of Palestine or parts of it during the ministries of John the Baptist, Jesus and the apostles.

Herod's father, Antipater, was an Edomite from southern Palestine, where Herod was born. Antipater was a man of great influence and wealth, who increased both by marrying the daughter of a noble from Petra. Thus Herod, though a practising Jew, was of Arab origin on both sides.

How did the family get into Roman favor and power? Julius Caesar, liking Herod's father Antipater, appointed him procurator of Judea in 47 BC and conferred on him Roman citizenship, an honor that descended to Herod and his children. In 37 BC at the age of 36 Herod became unchallenged ruler of Judea, a position he maintained for 32 years. After a few years he was made King under Roman authority.

## A Desire for Permanence

Every ancient ruler wanted to do something to add permanence to his name. What could Herod do that would bring him lasting recognition and greatness?

Herod chose what many before him had chosen: building. Within a short time he endowed his realm with massive fortresses and splendid cities. The two greatest were new, largely pagan foundations: the port of Caesarea on the coast of Joppa and Haifa, and Sebaste on the long-desolate site of ancient Samaria. In Jerusalem he built the fortress of Antonia Via Dolorosa, also a magnificent palace part of

which survives today. He also embellished foreign cities.

Still he was not satisfied. Herod had a problem. As King of Judea, he badly wanted the favor of the Jewish people. Yet, hard as he tried, he found himself in almost continual conflict with the Pharisees. To them, Herod, being of Arab descent, was a foreigner—worse, an enemy. And there was just no way the Pharisees would allow him to give free reign to his love of magnificence in Jerusalem.

But Herod was not to be outdone. Jerusalem was to have some

---

***Even the most permanent of earthly monuments is not forever.***

---

monument to his greatness. There was one thing he could do that would make him a friend of the Jews and at the same time give him "permanence" in the annals of history: *he could rebuild their ancient Temple.*

This he did, and in a proportion unequalled in history. The Jewish Temple became a monument to splendor. And it was all the work of Herod the Great.

## The Great Temple

Begun in 20 BC, Herod's Temple was not completed until 64 AD—some 84 years later! But it was one of the more important monuments of the early Roman empire in the near east.

Its dimensions were immense. The outer courtyard, the Court of the Gentiles, with a colonnaded perimeter of about 4140 ft., rested on mighty retaining walls, at points

reaching the height of 140 ft. The outer court covered 35 acres in extent. The temple itself rose on an elevated platform and was reached by passing two more courtyards.

Marble was used profusely—for colonnades, gates, and walls, and the magnificence of Roman carved decoration and architectural detail was blended with the Oriental arrangement essentially the same as in Solomon's Temple.

In this way, politically, Herod saw himself not merely as the patron of grateful pagans but also as the protector of Jewry in the Dispersion.

Where did Herod get his design? His elaborate Temple was modeled largely after Solomon's temple, and Solomon's Temple was built after the pattern of the simple transportable tent shrine used by the Israelites during their migration from Egypt to the Promised Land.

The Tabernacle is described in Exodus 25-27, 36-37 as a movable tent shrine, made of brightly colored linen and woolen materials. In accordance with the specification, it had an inner room, the holy of holies, and a larger outer room, both surrounded by a veranda-like structure. The total size was about 30 by 60 ft., and it was placed in a closed court measuring 150 by 75 ft. In the holy of holies stood the ark of the covenant, and the outer room contained an altar, the table for the shew bread and the seven branched candlestick.

## Solomon's Temple

The erection of the Temple was a highlight of the reign of King Solomon, probably erected in the years 959-952 BC. It had been the hope and dream of his father David, but God removed the task from David and gave it to his son, with the message that David had been too much a "man of war." The disappointment was keenly felt, but

David accepted it admirably and gave his best efforts to gathering materials and making preparations for his son.

In due time, the project was complete, and was dedicated to the service of the Lord, the Lord filling it with His glory (II Chron. 7). It was small, but built according to divinely drawn plans and richly decorated with gold.

When Nebuchadrezzar invaded Jerusalem in 586 BC, he destroyed Solomon's Temple.

### **The Second Temple**

When the Babylonian captivity came to an end in 539 BC, the re-erection of the temple began. It was preceded by the prophetic vision of Ezekiel. This so-called "Second Temple" was a valiant effort to reproduce the fabulous Solomon's Temple in a time of poverty and distress and may also have influenced the architect in planning for Herod's Temple.

### **The Bible and Herod's Temple**

What does the Bible record of Herod's Temple?

The earliest reference to the Temple with its special architectural features is in Matthew 4:5, where a pinnacle is mentioned. The decorations of the Temple (Luke 21:5) agree with Josephus' description. The gold was an item of pride, and by it oaths were taken (Matt. 23:16). Solomon's Porch (John 10:23) was one of the places where Christ taught. When He died, the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was rent in two (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). By the gate Beautiful (Acts 3:2) the lame man was healed, most likely the gate between the women's court and the Court of Israel.

The Temple complex other than the Temple itself was still under construction in the time of Christ's

ministry, which was about the forty-sixth year of its building (John 2:20).

In the first year of His ministry, Christ cleared out the clamorous trade in sacrificial animals because it interfered with access to worship in the Temple. This action of Christ was repeated in His last year (Matt. 21:12; Luke 19:45; Mark 11:15-18).

It was Christ's custom to teach in the courts of the Temple daily (Matt. 26:55; Mark 12:35; Luke 20:1; 21:37; John 7:14; 18:20), as well as to heal there (Matt 21:14). Children freely played in the outer court (21:15). After the Ascension, the disciples frequented the Temple daily (Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46) for worship. It was there that Peter and John went to pray (3:1), probably as part of their daily custom.

The Temple was under the control of the Roman guard quartered in Antonia (Acts 21:31); the captain was close enough to dash down the stairs to rescue Paul from the enraged Jews (21:32, 34-35). Paul in his own defence addressed the Jews from the stairs (v. 40).

In the time of Christ, the Temple of Herod looked like one of the most permanent of structures. When Jesus predicted its destruction, thirty-some years before it was even completely built, it was the equivalent of predicting an end to the Roman Empire, so enduring did the structure seem to the people of that time. Nevertheless, Jesus foresaw its fall: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Matt. 24:1-5).

### **How Did It Fall?**

A Jewish official named Florus incited the Jews to rebel against Roman occupation and this precipitated the destruction of the Temple. He deliberately provoked the Jews, turned his soldiers loose on them, and though Agrippa quieted them, yet they rebelled against his

suggestion of submission to Florus. In the turmoil that followed, the Zealots persuaded the priests to discontinue the daily offerings for the emperor and empire, which amounted to a subtle declaration of war. Vespasian, who began the campaign to subdue the revolt, was later summoned to Rome to assume the throne, and he commissioned his son Titus to reduce the Jews to obedience. This eventuated in an attack on Jerusalem and the Temple in particular.

In the spring of AD 70, Titus mounted the final siege. When initial efforts to persuade the Jews to surrender and thus preserve the city failed, Titus erected his encircling wall about the city to prevent help from reaching them, and began the final attack. The outer cloisters were burned, and on August 29, AD 70, the inner court of the Temple was encircled. At the desire of Titus in the attack in the inner court the next day, a soldier tossed a firebrand through a window into one of the side chambers. Others followed, and the Holy Place was set ablaze, which spread to the sanctuary itself. Soon the rest of the Temple complex was in flames, last of all the Royal Portico, and about 6,000 persons seeking refuge in it perished.

What is the lesson? that even the most permanent of earthly monuments is not forever. The Temple of Herod took longer to build than to destroy—much longer.

In short, there is nothing permanent in this world. "For the things which are seen are transient." Only the "things which are not seen are eternal." MM

Father, I thank Thee that everything furthurs those who follow Thee.



# If God Predestinates . . . ?

**W**E HAVE received the following from a thoughtful reader in West Virginia.

*"In the May issue of the Megiddo Message magazine, I read an article entitled 'Judas: Hero or Traitor?' The author stated in the article that 'man is a free moral agent,' refuting the doctrine of predestination and also said that 'God foreknows, but He does not predestinate.'"*

*"My question is this: If God knows for sure beforehand that something is sure to happen, it can't be avoided. Otherwise it would not be certain to happen. And if something can't be avoided, what is that but predestination?"*

*"Actually the author's statement contradicts what the apostle Paul said in Romans 8:29, 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.'"*

*"For several years I have wondered about the subject of predestination. I've discussed it with some ministers, but none of them ever gave me any satisfactory answers. Maybe you people can."*

**T**HE thinking on the subject of God's foreknowledge and God's predestination is too often confused by a wrong understanding of God's plan for this earth and mankind. A basic knowledge of the overall plan of God is necessary before we can understand predestination.

I am sure you are familiar with the plan of salvation as taught by the average theologian today: that Adam was created and placed in the garden of Eden; that the devil tempted Eve, who in turn tempted Adam to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree; that Adam and Eve thereby consigned all their future posterity to toil, pain, misery and death; that the only way that God could redeem mankind was for Christ in some mysterious fashion to come down to earth and be born as a man and die on the cross, to settle the account with God and appease His wrath for Adam's sin; that if we accept this redemptive work of Christ we are instantly "saved" and assured that when we die we will go straight to heaven.

We cannot imagine a more unreasonable, unjust or unscriptural arrangement than the above.

**V**ERY BRIEFLY, let us outline the Scriptural teaching.

God's whole purpose of work on earth is to fill the earth with what the Bible calls "His glory" (Isa. 46:13), righteous rulers and a righteous populace; with worldwide peace and prosperity. "He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18). "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

The plan of God is built around a symbolic seven-day week, representing seven thousand years. For nearly six thousand years now God has been selecting from the hosts of mankind those who will be part of that New World. His first work has been to select those who are most qualified for the high position of eternal rulers of His eternal Kingdom. Because all selection is on the basis of character, He has provided a certain law or standard of minimum qualifications. All must believe God; all must obey Him. These are the basic requirements of those who would receive a place of eternal honor in His eternal Kingdom.

Adam was the first to be called to serve God to qualify for the reward He was offering. Accordingly, God gave Adam this basic directive: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17).

All who serve God in any age, even today, must submit to His rules. All must obey. At the close of the six thousand years, Christ will return and reward all these according to the work that they have done. Those who prove worthy among these will become Christ's associate rulers. During the next thousand years or "seventh day" of the plan, Christ will work openly upon earth and opportunity will be given to those who will be part of God's plan. All who obey and serve God at that time will become part of the huge populace that will fill the earth with the glory of God. Then Num. 14:21 will be fulfilled, "As truly as I live,

all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.”

Throughout the plan, God is not concerned with all mankind but only with that segment who agree to serve Him. The rest live their lives as they please and die, and that is the end as far as they are concerned. The good do not go to heaven and the bad do not suffer in eternal flames. They simply go to the grave. God is dealing with three classes of people. Those who agree to serve Him and work for eternal life are divided into two groups, faithful and unfaithful. The rest are outside of His plan.

This may seem in one sense exclusive, as though God is “playing favorites” in choosing some and not choosing others. But we must realize that only a small minority are interested in what He has to offer to the extent that they are willing to sacrifice for it. Always all who have had a desire to serve God and work for His eternal rewards have had the opportunity. God never refuses opportunity to any who will obey.

**W**ITH these thoughts in mind, let us consider your questions, the first of which was, “If God knows for sure beforehand that something is sure to happen, it can’t be avoided. Otherwise it would not be certain to happen. And if something can’t be avoided, what is that but predestination?”

First let us distinguish between two often confused words: foreknowledge and predestination. Foreknowledge is *a knowing in advance*. Foreknowledge is God’s prerogative; it is strictly beyond our capability. We cannot foreknow what will be or what will happen even one minute from now. God can. God can see the future as clearly as we can see the present, hence He can know what will happen.

Now this foreknowing must be distinguished from forearranging or predestining. God foreknows all that is in the future, but this does not mean that He is directly responsible for all the decisions that everyone will make and for everything that will happen in the future. To use an example, He may foreknow that I will stumble on the sidewalk tomorrow and fracture my leg, but He is not directly responsible either for my stumbling or for the fracture, even though He foreknows—knows in advance—that it will happen. I stumble, and by the laws of gravity I fall, and being mortal, I am subject to injury. But God did not predestinate this.

The same reasoning may be applied to our spiritual lives. God knows what we will do. He knows whether we will eventually succeed, or whether we will give up. Suppose, for example, that I decide to turn away from Him. God foreknew that I would make this decision, but that foreknowledge does not in any way influence

or determine my decision. If, then, I decide in a short while to reconsider my decision and turn back to Him, He also knows that in advance of my doing it. But again He has not predestinated what I will do. He only knows in advance the decision that I as a free moral agent will make.

Let us never confuse foreknowledge with predestination.

**P**REDESTINATION, however, is used in more than one way. When we say that we do not believe in predestination, we are referring to the theory that one person is predestinated to eternal salvation and another person is predestinated to be eternally lost, and that nothing either of them may do can affect their future destiny. The person who lives a good life and is predestinated to eternal damnation is damned in spite of his best efforts. The person who commits all kinds of evil but was predestined to everlasting life receives everlasting life in spite of his sin. This doctrine is definitely not Scriptural. It is not worthy of an All-wise God.

There is a sense in which predestination is Scriptural. God has pre-determined His plan. He has fixed His rules, His standards, His requirements. He has also pre-determined the time frame of His plan, and has set the criteria by which mankind will be judged. In simple words it is this: “Obey and live, disobey and die.” This type of predestination was operative during the days of the children of Israel and the nations of Israel and Judah. When the people obeyed, they were blessed. When they disobeyed and served other gods, they brought suffering, hardship and oppression on themselves. Deuteronomy 11:26-28 describes the plan. “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God.”

We might mention two men who served the Lord faithfully during this period and were recognized for it: Caleb and Joshua. Three others, Korah, Dathan and Abiram were wicked, rebelled and were destroyed. Are we to say that this is unjust, that God does not have the right to do this? In a sense God does this according to a predestined plan, by predestination, if you will, in that He blesses those who are faithful and punishes those who are disobedient. But does not the law of our country do the same? God was not at fault because the disobedient disobeyed, nor was it His credit that some obeyed. Caleb was not predestined to receive the blessing so that nothing he did would prevent him from receiving it. We are told that, Caleb, “because he had

another spirit with him, hath followed me fully," etc. (Num. 14:24). This is the reason Caleb received the blessing: "he hath followed me fully." If Korah, Dathan and Abiram had followed fully they would not have been destroyed. All were free moral agents; they could serve the Lord, or they could do as they pleased, but God predestinated that they would be rewarded or punished according to their own conduct.

**Y**OU mentioned Romans 8:29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." The key to understanding this verse is the next phrase: "to be conformed to the image of his Son." God's plan from the beginning is that we must follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we must die to sin as He died to sin. In the words of the apostle Peter, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Pet. 4:1-2).

God predestinated that all those who conformed to the image of Christ would be rewarded with eternal life, and that all who will not conform to that image would be destroyed. Mankind has rejected this plan and chosen to go their own way, formulating their own plan of salvation.

**Y**OU ALSO state in your letter: "Concerning Judas' betrayal Christ said, '... That the Scripture may be fulfilled, he that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me' (John 13:18). This refers to a passage in Psalm 41:9. Then in the book of Acts is Peter's statement that 'This scripture must needs have been fulfilled' (Acts 1:16). Then in the 20th verse we read, 'For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.' From the way these Scriptures read, it seems that Judas' betrayal of Jesus was something he had to do."

The situation in regard to Judas is again the fact of God's foreknowledge as separate and distinct from predestination. The fact that God knew beforehand that Judas would yield to his covetous nature in no way meant that Judas could not help himself or that he could not have refrained if he had wanted to. Even after accepting the money and learning of the results of his sin, he could have repented and lived a righteous life and been forgiven, just as the Lord forgave Peter for denying Him. But there is no evidence in Scripture that Peter as an individual was predestinated to eternal life and Judas was predestinated to eternal death. All

who obey are predestinated to live, all who disobey are predestinated to die. But the choice is entirely an individual matter, determined by one's conduct. *God's foreknowledge of what the individual will do in no way affects that individual's conduct.*

**T**HE NEXT text you quote is Proverbs 16:4, "The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." The Lord has set in motion laws whereby the human race perpetuates itself. He has allotted 6000 years in which man can live on this earth, rule and govern pretty much as he sees fit. Some men turn out superior to other men, are honest, upright, and good citizens. Other men are wicked, murderers, drunkards. All men have within them the ability to become good, law-abiding citizens—if they will. But many will not put forth the necessary effort to become good. One could say that the Lord as creator made these wicked people. But He does not try to manipulate one individual to be good and another to be bad. His only predestination is in His own plan, that the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous rewarded.

Your next Scripture is Matthew 7:13, "For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." The next verse gives us the other side of the story, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." This text aligns perfectly with the Biblical teaching on this subject. Two roads are available. Each person is free to make his own choice. But when one chooses the beginning of the road, he also chooses its end. When he chooses to follow the broad way, he in a sense predestinates himself to destruction—simply because that is where the broad road leads. When he chooses the narrow way, if he keeps in that way to the end of the road, he is just as sure to find life. Surely there is nothing unfair about this.

You comment also on Matthew 7:13, "For this scripture to be fulfilled, wouldn't some people have to be lost?" The answer is yes, but their being lost is entirely their own decision—because they chose the broad road which leads to destruction.

**T**HERE is still another aspect of the subject of predestination which we might consider. Certain texts in Scripture picture God as moving upon a certain person to do a certain thing. We find an example of this in Isaiah 44:28, "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure."

Here we must distinguish between individuals who are under covenant to serve God and those who have



never agreed to serve Him. The latter group, Cyrus in this case, are not under covenant. In using Cyrus, God was neither helping or hindering him toward eternal life. Cyrus was a heathen king entirely outside God's family. (Not all human beings are children of God in the strict sense of the word—see Isaiah 40:15). And God influenced the king to do certain things to further His plan. In this way God overruled what Cyrus might otherwise have done, and in that sense God could be said to have predestined Cyrus' action. But Cyrus' salvation was not in the picture. All covenant-makers are promised their right to their own free choice, as Joshua so aptly said, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve. . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

If the commonly accepted view of predestination were true, we would have no choice.

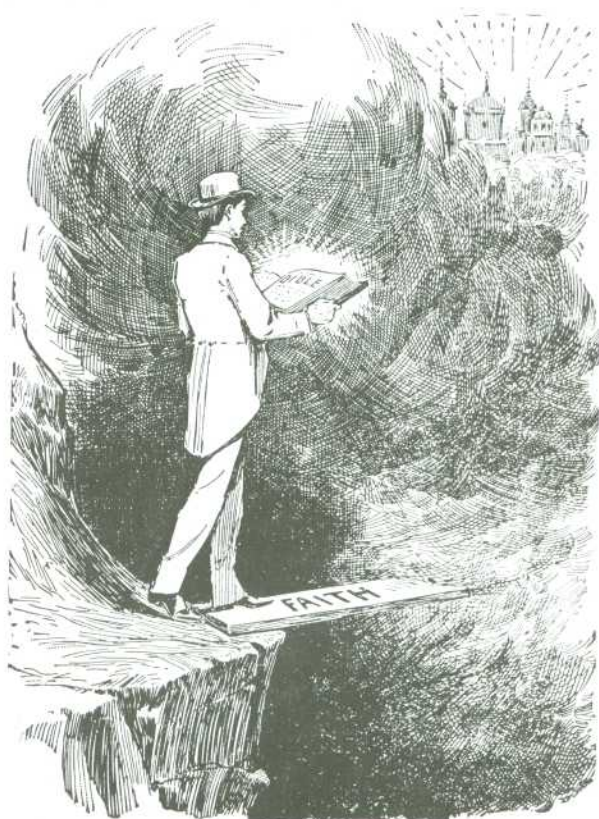
If the theory of predestination were true, what need for the Bible as a code of instructions to follow? And what right would God have in judging men for their conduct—good or evil—if all were His own direct responsibility, by predestination? Would it not be unreasonable, even unjust, for God to punish a man for disobedience if God had predestined that man to disobey?

THE prophet Ezekiel shows clearly that God is just and that all rewards or punishment are on a basis of merit—and subject to change at any time, in accordance with the individual's own conduct. We read: "When I say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live" (Ezek. 33:13-16). This fact is repeated several times in one chapter—how can we overlook it!

There is a text in II Pet. 3:9, which also shows the fallacy of predestination as far as the covenant-maker is concerned. "The Lord is . . . longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

God's standard has always been on an individual basis. Each is responsible for his or her own con-

duct. His rewards are "to every man according to his works." From this God cannot and will not deviate. MM



We walk by faith . . .

## The Neglected Book

*IN THEIR home there is a Book  
With pages seldom turned,  
Whose messages of truth and hope  
Are still by them unlearned:  
The Book that tells of Him who came,  
A better way to show,  
The beauty of a sinless life,  
Lived here so long ago.*

*'Tis said they do not really know  
This Man of Galilee,  
Who healed the lame, the blind, the deaf,  
Beside the sapphire sea;  
And still they read, and laugh, and cry  
O'er stories of the hour,  
And let the Book, dust-covered, lie  
Unopened in its power.*



# And Still She Speaks

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



Oh, watch yourself, be humble. Humbleness of mind ! You will be tempted to think you know more than you do. Oh, be humble and realize just how little you know of the depth of knowledge there is in the world, in this mighty universe!

Do not hold a root of bitterness, or a feeling against somebody. Get rid of the evil. Your mind will hold only so much. Do not carry anything against anyone. We can and must forgive a person as far as we are individually concerned, but God does not forgive unless the wrong is forsaken.

We must keep stirring each other up all the time; if we do not we will get cooled off. We must keep exhorting one another all the time. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another."

I would hate to sit down to the table in my house without saying something during that meal pertaining to divine things. I would want to say something that could cause us to draw our minds to higher thoughts and help rule ourselves during the day.

It is better to have some testimony on our mind and think of it and live by it, than to read a whole chapter without. We might not have time for a chapter—and we could not remember a whole chapter anyway; but we can impress one verse on our minds.

If we keep meditating upon the divine testimony, it will cause us to keep away from the evil. If there were a rattlesnake around, you would not keep near him. I can remember seeing rattlesnakes in the mountains; they would hide under rocks. It was a dangerous place. We should flee from evil the same way.

Our old habits, our old thoughts and our old ways must be put off, and we must put on the "new man," the new nature, in everything, become new creatures, form new habits.

Keep your mind constantly on eternal things; never let them slip. Your life depends on it. We have temporal things all around us, and they may perish tomorrow; but what God has promised—the eternal—will never perish.

If you just open your mouth and let whatever you please come out, you have not gained any victory. I remember once I remarked to Brother Nichols that I must bind the devil. "Oh no," he said, "you have to KILL him." Of course it would be a wonderful help if the devil were bound now, we would not see the immorality, the vice, the immodesty.

If we just had the power we would bind the devil in Rochester—so there would be no picture shows, no violent or immoral scenes to attract people, no suggestive pictures in the periodicals—how much better it would be! When Christ comes, He will not allow anything of that kind, anything that would lure or tempt to evil. It will be wonderful to live when every knee will bow to Him and every tongue sing to His praise.

Unless we are humble, meek and lowly, that future exaltation will never be ours. What will show if we are humble? If somebody says something cross, we will not get stirred up.

We must work to make everything we are doing right; all our daily work, all our business transactions, all must be with an eye single to God's glory, not to get the praise and honor of men.

## More Faith

The shadows of the evening are closing in about us, urging us on, to work harder than ever we have before. We are told to "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass," whatever kind of burden we have, whatever sorrow, or need, or difficulty.

The only way to achieve 100 per cent faith is to endure hardness as good soldiers of God, standing firm and strong amid severe tests. We can overcome anything, if we have the strongest faith. Paul tells us that the Promise was by faith, that it might be sure (Rom. 4:16).

South Wales

G. S.

## With God's Help

We know God is eternal, being from everlasting to everlasting. Then there are those wonderful promises of life eternal for all who patiently continue in well doing and are seeking and looking for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life—"Where there'll be no sin or sorrow and we'll live forevermore."

Oh yes, I want to be there to live forever. So, with God's help and much determination, giving diligence to make my calling and election sure, if I try hard enough, I can make it.

How it should impel us to keep a close watch on ourselves, to hate evil and every false way and to say with the Psalmist, "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

What a lot of our time is spent in providing for the temporal things of this life—how we may live in as much peace and comfort as we possibly can. Life may only last for those promised threescore and ten years, or, by reason of strength, a while

longer. So, if we are wise, we should be devoting much, much more of our time to preparing for eternity, where there will always be peace and comfort, joy and gladness with radiant health to enjoy untold pleasures forevermore.

Truly our finite minds cannot conceive of it, yet we know that this great reward for righteousness far exceeds anything we could ever imagine.

South Wales

R. B.

## Not Recyclable

Time is very precious to us. Time is not recyclable. If we fail to use it wisely, it is gone forever.

How thankful we should be to know God's plan and purpose, and that we have an opportunity to become a part of that plan; to live when the world is made over new, to escape the limitations of mortality, to make something of ourselves that will be worthy of perpetuation.

Missouri

H. W.

## Wonderful "Pen Pictures"

No one could possibly be short of spiritual nourishment. We have an ample supply from which to meet our needs, to keep us strong and healthy in the Lord. We can go to the storehouse of God and eat of the spiritual food and to the wells of Salvation, and drink of the living life-giving waters. Isaiah 12 is a lovely, joyful pen picture of a people rejoicing in the blessings of the Kingdom of God. What a glorious time to look forward to!

May the comfort and joy of the Lord be with you at all times. It certainly is a good thing to have this joy before us in these dark days. It does

strengthen our faith and hope in the promises of God, for we know these glorious things *shall be*, and we can be part of them, if we do on our part faithfully.

So may we press on, looking forward to the wonderful day when there shall be no more partings for those who shall participate in the everlasting joy of Eternal Life.

Warwick, Australia

A. B.

## "Tomorrow"

I hear so many things spoken of as being done "tomorrow." I always answer "Tomorrow never comes." For some it never will. Effort is essential in growing good trees that will produce fruits, and that effort must begin today. Brother Flowerday spoke in one sermon about a tree that put off making leaves until October it would find it too late. Yet we all put off many times.

The knowledge gained from the cassette sermons, the *Messages*, etc., all are upbuilding to me. The work put into them must be tremendous. We scattered ones have so much to be thankful for.

Time will not always tarry. The harder we work at self-mastery, the swifter the days go by. We must be ready, ere "the day of opportunity closes."

A solemn warning, certainly we need all the time up to then.

Crewe, England

N. T.

## Time to Work

This is no time for indecision. We are on this road to the Kingdom. Time is running out. Now is the time to work as we've never worked before. Soon it will be too late. We have to get ready ourselves.



We must never let the thought that it can't be done enter our mind, but know the work can be done and say as did Paul in Rom. 8:38-39, "I am persuaded. . . ." Nothing can stop us if we are determined to be ready when the Lord comes. To enter God's Kingdom should be our greatest concern.

We must grow as the Divine Hand directs and not in our own selfish way. James expressed a thought that a Christian can even welcome troubles, realizing that they come to test our faith and to produce in us a quality of endurance (James 1:2-3).

Spiritual growth is a necessity. Our start in the Way of Righteousness will not bring salvation unless we endure and finish the race.

Iowa

W. P.

## Obituary

### Ethel R. Barber

On August 5, we were reminded of the brevity and uncertainty of life when we learned of the sudden passing of Sister Ethel R. Barber of Hilton, New York due to a massive coronary attack. She had had no prior illness.

Sister Ethel was blessed with a God-fearing and law abiding family, who believed that they should do to others as they would be done by. She had a lifelong acquaintance with the Megiddo Church, having spent her entire life with her family in the environs of Rochester. She took loving care of her brother Clarence during his long illness, until his death last August.

Services were conducted by the Megiddo Church, Assistant Pastor Newton H. Payne officiating. Interment was in Mount Hope Cemetery, where rest others of our beloved dead awaiting the great Day of resurrection, which was our sister's hope.

## Is It True?

A traveling lecturer named Norman Cousins has told of a personal experience which vividly illustrates the point of "truthfulness in telling." It happened in the days when he was supplementing a modest salary by what he called "traveling the lecture circuit as a book reviewer." On this particular day he was reviewing a book authored by Ernest Hemingway.

After his talk a woman in the audience approached him asking for further information about a detail he had included in his biographical sketch of Hemingway. Mr. Cousins assured her that the detail was correct, that it was a "standard item" in biographical information about the now famous writer. He even promised to dig up the source material and send it to her. Thanking him, she wrote out her name and address. To Mr. Cousin's deep chagrin, she was Hemingway's mother!

Mr. Cousins wrote, "It was one of life's more embarrassing moments. Ever since, I have been wary of retailing personal information about authors—or about anyone else, for that matter."

How much embarrassment—and worse—we could spare ourselves if we would all develop a wholesome wariness about repeating unconfirmed and unsubstantiated information. How many people have suffered at the tongues of others because untruths or distortions of truth have been repeated!

A well-known commentator made this statement relative to retailing personal information. "Drawing on my fine command of language, I say nothing."

When we are about to tell something about another, unless we are sure that it is true we had better have sufficient command of language to remain silent.

And sometimes even if the information is true it is better left unsaid. It may be true, yet unnecessary and unkind.

MM

### A Billion Dollars - for an Hour's Work

*God is offering us so much for so little. Imagine!—eternal life with no pain, sorrow, sickness or weariness. All this is more than we could ever earn. That is why it is called a gift. To receive eternal life as a reward for a short lifetime of work is like receiving a billion dollars for an hour's work. How can we refuse it?*

Did You Get Your Copy?



## Millennium Superworld

**Send Now.**

Only \$2.00 postpaid

*It puts the reader on the pulse-point of tomorrow!*

NEW EDITION

## Understand the Bible

Study the Bible  
BY SUBJECT

|                                               |         |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------|
| In the Beginning God .....                    | \$ .40  |
| The Bible: Light of Life .....                | .50     |
| Of Life, Death and Immortality .....          | .40     |
| Jesus Christ .....                            | .70     |
| The Kingdom of God .....                      | .80     |
| Apostasy and Restoration .....                | .70     |
| The Hell of the Bible .....                   | .40     |
| The Devil of the Bible .....                  | .70     |
| Baptism and Baptism .....                     | .40     |
| The Trinity Mystery .....                     | .40     |
| Did Christ Pre-exist? .....                   | .40     |
| What About Original Sin? .....                | .50     |
| Atonement and Salvation .....                 | .60     |
| The Sabbath of the Bible .....                | .40     |
| The Three Christs .....                       | .10     |
| God's Spirit at Work .....                    | .90     |
| Of Origins, Evolution and Order .....         | .70     |
| Three Classes of Humanity .....               | .50     |
| World Religions .....                         | .40     |
| The Mosaic Law—Its Significance .....         | .70     |
| The Second Advent of Christ .....             | .70     |
| The Resurrection, Judgment and Eternity ..... | .60     |
| ALL OF THE ABOVE .....                        | \$10.00 |

**ORDER NOW!**

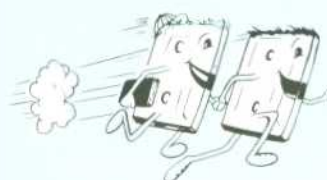
**FREE!**

## LEAFLET SAMPLER

Biblical leaflets to give your friends, neighbors, relatives

- CHRIST THE HOPE OF THE WORLD
- DO YOU BELIEVE IN A FUTURE LIFE?
- A MESSAGE FOR YOU
- READ FOR YOUR LIFE!
- NO SMOKING—WHY?
- WHY?

Available  
in quantity  
Price: \$1 per 100



## Cassette Subscription Plan

Six months ...  
One year ....

It works like this: We mail you two cassettes—two church services, complete with message, prayer and music. You play them as many times as you wish for one month, then return them to us and we send you two other cassettes.

Order now! Share the rich experience of hearing the Word of God in your home.

## READ for Your LIFE

**THE SABBATH  
THE HOLY SPIRIT  
THE ATONEMENT  
TRINITY OR UNITY?  
HELL AND THE DEVIL  
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?  
THE GREAT APOSTASY  
THESE THINGS SHALL BE  
GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION  
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?  
HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION**

**ALL for \$3.00, Postpaid**