

Megiddo Message

Help Wanted

Local division of Universal Organization looking for enthusiastic, dedicated applicants. Success record of organization's prior projects 100%. Unlimited potential for growth and advancement. Widely varied assignments will include hardship, suffering and personal sacrifice. Full and continuous support of Employer guaranteed. **Requirements:** No prior experience or education required. No age or ethnic restrictions. Full-time commitment necessary (7 days a week, 24 hours a day). Strong emphasis on self-discipline and development. Self-motivation a must. **Benefits:** Generous promotions based on performance. Extra pay for extra work. Liberal fringe benefits during entire term of service. Compensation unsurpassed; all rewards and bonuses perpetual and compounding, but applicant must be willing to wait until completion and acceptance of total project. No vacations, sick leave or holidays. Possible loss of friendships and popularity. For more information see Mark 10:28-30.

Are You An Applicant?

More Cedar . . . More King?

THE NOBLE prophet Jeremiah, to whom God had denied many of the normal pleasures of life, nevertheless lived richly and fully. But his riches and his fullness came not from his earthly circumstances but from his Divine supporter and protector, God.

Hear the courageous Prophet as he put this stabbing question to the grasping King of Judah: "Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar?" (Jer. 22:15, NIV).

Jeremiah had been quietly observing the course of one who could have been God's servant but who was going steadily from sin to sin. Cedar was prized for its beauty and durability. The king was now planning to build a great palace with rooms paneled in cedar. But it was all for a monument to his massive ego. And to do it he was exploiting slave labor unjustly, oppressively, thereby incurring God's wrath.

Jeremiah's warning was timely. Do you think it makes you more kingly to *have* more?

The answer was a resounding No. And judgment soon fell upon him.

An extravagant palace does not make a king. God is not impressed by one who seeks status by the acquisition of things, either in Israel or in America or anywhere else in the world. Wearing feathers won't make you a peacock. Roaring loudly will not make you a lion. Donning the robe of a Prophet

will not make you recognized by God. Appearing holy and pious will not make you a saint. In God's sight, righteousness and righteousness alone makes the man. If one does not have a regal spirit that is willing and anxious to submit to God, living in a palace won't make him a king.

It has been said that clothes make the man. But clothes do *not* make the man. Throughout the world are those who adorn themselves with splendid robes and bear lofty titles but whose lives are corrupt and whose gospel is false. They are heretics in thought and libertines in behavior, and earn only contempt in the sight of God. Jesus saw them for what they are: wolves in sheep's clothing.

The difference lies in how one sees. "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (I Sam. 16:7, NIV). Appearances too readily impress us. We look down on the lowly, the ordinary, the commonplace. God sees deeper. He looks at the heart, the heart, the heart!

Possessions, honors, titles—how madly do men scramble for them in this world, often trampling on one another to acquire them. But they are all hollow victories, cosmetics on corpses.

When we are tempted to desire more in this world, let us remember the judgment of the Lord as He looks upon us and asks, "Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar?"

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 life, all men, and all things.

We believe

—in the Bible as our only source of knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for the salvation of humankind.

We believe

—in Jesus 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 humankind 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 applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God in our own lives, in this way 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

NASB—New American Standard Bible

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

Goodspeed—The New Testament translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

AAT—The Bible: An American Translation

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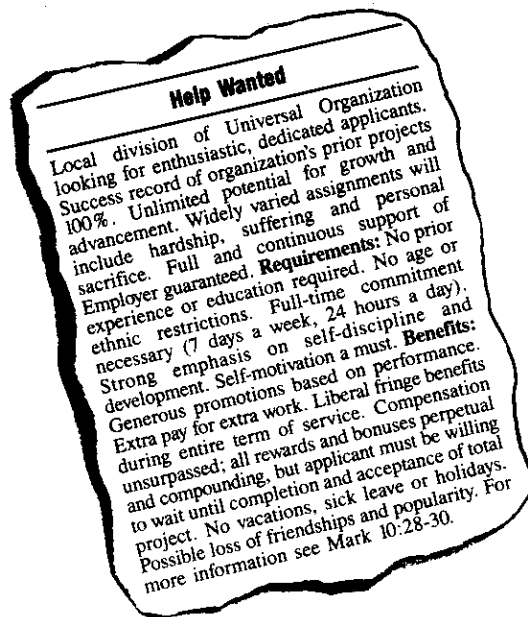
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MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom 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.



Are You An Applicant?

GOD is looking for workers, men and women who are willing to venture their all on His long-range project. For nearly 6,000 years He has been looking. Quite a number have applied, but His requirements are so high that the number is not yet filled. It is not that He rejects men; they disqualify themselves.

It is not that they *can* not meet His demands; rather, the majority *will* not. Some work well for a time, then retire. Others have joined His workforce with admitted reservation, that if the job proved too much, they would leave it for something else. Others have come without misgiving, worked for awhile, then silently slipped away. Few, very few have come wholehearted and wholesouled, determined to see the project through to a successful finish.

What is the project?

God has purposed to fill the earth with His glory, His people, happy immortals who will be able to enjoy His creation for ever. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21). This is His purpose, and He will not rest until He has accomplished it.

For this extraordinary project, no ordinary workers suffice. Not that God is looking for unusual skills or talents; He wants heart-qualities of the highest and most distinguished nature; heart-qualities of integrity, purity, holiness, humility, faith. Then, too, those who apply must be prepared to give themselves *totally*. No part of their life remains under their own jurisdiction. What they do, what

they think about, how they feel, where they go—all are subject to the dictates of their Employer. They are not their own; they are committed. They have hired themselves out—body, soul, mind and strength. They are not free—they are working!

They are working for *great pay*!

But—and here is perhaps the greatest deterrent to many would-be employees—they must be willing to *wait* for the benefits. God does not pay in advance. He does not even pay at the end of each week, each month, or each year. There are some outstanding benefits during the term of service, but full pay comes only at the end of the project. And only the one who holds out to the very end will get it (Matt. 24:13).

However, to the far-sighted individual, the “waiting” is more than worth it. In fact, there is so much to be done that there is no real “waiting” at all, and no want; for the Employer meets all the day-to-day needs of His employees (Matt. 6:33). The “pay” is over and above all this—in a sense, it is all “bonus,” and will be given at the end of this phase of the project, at the return of Jesus (Isa. 40:10; Rev. 22:12; I Pet. 5:4).

But when it is finally awarded, what pay it will be! exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think (Eph. 3:20). This is the promise: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Cor. 2:9).

God’s requirements are high, but His rewards and benefits are unsurpassable. Nothing of this world can begin to approach their grandeur. Imagine the highest honors, the choicest riches, the greatest fulfillments this world could offer—all these are nothing at all beside the recompense God is offering each faithful, wholehearted worker.

Add to this the security of the job.

On this project there is *absolutely no* chance of failure due to circumstances beyond our control. No other career ever carried such a guarantee. The success of the overall project is predestined by God Himself; and *our* success depends directly on what we put into it. If we give our very best, consistently and wholeheartedly, we will succeed. If we are determined to serve faithfully, nothing in all the world will be able to thwart us.

In addition to all this, our heavenly Employer promises us Himself—as our Supporter, our Advocate, our constant Companion, one to guide and direct and provide at every turn. While working on this project we are never alone. Never. As long as we are working for Him, we have His care and providence in everything. Has He not promised, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee”? (Heb. 13:5).

ARE you an applicant? Can you turn down an offer like this?

True, there is something to give up. You cannot have *this* AND *that*. You cannot have everything this world has to offer and serve Him also. This is what Jesus meant when He said, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Luke 16:13). We cannot divide ourselves between two employers and give either a full commitment. Either we are serving self, or we are serving God. The decision is ours.

But what are the satisfactions of a life of self-serving worth in comparison with eternal usefulness, eternal happiness, eternal joy, eternal life?

HAVE you put in your application? Are you ready to go through with the commitment? It is a serious question, requiring serious deliberation. And once the decision is made, we must be prepared to stick to it, come what may. The term of service may be difficult, the sacri-

fices greater than we had anticipated, the hardships more than we were prepared for. There will be struggles within and battles without. But if we are far-sighted, if we really want the compensation He is offering, nothing—absolutely nothing—will be able to deter us from seeing it through to a victorious finish.

Hear this spirit in the words of the apostle Paul, as translated by J. B. Phillips: “I have become absolutely

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convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of Heaven nor monarch of earth, neither what happens today nor what may happen tomorrow, neither a power from on high nor a power from below”—had he missed any possibilities? Just to be sure he had not, he added one more phrase—“nor anything else in God’s whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!” (Rom. 8:38-39).

There is one more benefit: the Employer-employee relationship in this Heavenly Organization has no likeness in this world. Farthest from being cold and unfeeling, it is warm and vibrant. Heart touches heart and

(Continued on page 26)

God Is Working!

**Just because God's work
is not visible to our eyes
is no evidence that
He is not here,
and working!**

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

Does this mean that God is not working?

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

The answer is NO. A thousand times NO! God has worked in ages past, and *He is still working!* In fact, we might say His work grows more intense as the first phase of His plan approaches its culmination when "He shall send Jesus Christ" as conqueror and King (Acts 3:19-21).

God *is* working!

And the work shall not cease until every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall shout His praise (Phil. 2:9-10).

When the Work Began

The author of the book of Genesis gives us in the first three chapters a symbolic description of God at work.

The narrative is all astir with divine life and activity. Whatever the inspired writer wanted to tell us of the physical creation, he gives us a vivid picture of the *living God at work*, making a wholly new, *spiritual* creation. What is His goal and purpose? It is nothing less than a *new world*, complete with new executive powers and new populace, a super-race fashioned out of the raw material of the old. The Master Mind behind the plan, the Designer, the Executor, the Expediter, and finally the Inspector of this vast creative project is God Almighty.

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

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

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

If we apply the Bible rule for prophetic time and see the time as God sees it, we must allow a thousand years for each day (Ezek. 4:6; II Pet. 3:8). This makes six thousand years of creating time, six thousand years during which the Creator is working. There is no break in His plan until the six days, or six thousand years, are finished. This does not mean that each day is equally productive—at times there are no applicants at all. But the plan is still

How can we live a single moment as though He were not?

The universe is His. The earth is His.

The plan is His. And we can be His—if we will be.

operating, going forward according to schedule.

Then, at the end of the six-thousand-year period, six thousand years from the time of Adam, when God commenced the plan and called His first workers into His service, there will come a change, a dramatic change in God's methods of working, and the introducing of a whole new phase.

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

God is working—even now.

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

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

This has been His purpose through all the six thousand years, to find among the human race those who will fit themselves into His eternal plan. He wants the best, the *very best*, and *He will find it!* Nothing less than the choicest can suit His cause.

Whom will He have? Who will qualify? Who will prove sufficiently interested in God's plan to stake his all upon it?

How God Works

Let us think now of *how* God works.

The Bible tells us that God in His infinite knowledge and wisdom has

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

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

His OPEN Work

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

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

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

and this people wood, and it shall devour them" (Jer. 5:14). God was speaking openly and miraculously.

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

God was working.

During the ministry of Christ, the apostles and some of the disciples were favored with a special gift of divine power, by which they could teach or preach or perform miracles. For a short space of three years God worked mightily through Christ, endowing Him with divine power which He used to guarantee the divine authority behind His message.

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

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

The "Open" Work Suspended

This open arrangement, the audible voice and the visible signs were not God's only means of working. The same apostle Paul who was himself a

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partaker of the Holy Spirit foretold that this open part of God's working would end. "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (I Cor. 13:8).

Other Biblical writers before Paul had forecast this. Daniel had written that the vision and prophecy would be "sealed up" after a definite period of time (Dan. 9:24). Jesus had promised to be with His disciples "with signs following" until—and only until—"the close of the age" (Mark 16:17-20; Matt. 28:19, RSV). Open manifestations and the Holy Spirit, by which the apostles and those who had the power could do various types of supernatural work, were a temporary provision for a limited time.

And so, according to the prophecy, when the promise of the Spirit had been fulfilled and its mission accomplished and the "perfect" or written revelation of God was complete (I Cor. 13:10), the Holy Spirit power was withdrawn.

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

Not at all! Who are we to suggest that because God does not work *openly* He *does not work*? Did not

the inspired writer tell us that God works in "various and different ways"? (Heb. 1:1-2).

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

Silent Work

In the days of Queen Esther, when the King, at the instigation of the evil-minded Haman, made a decree that all the Jewish people in the kingdom should die, God worked—silently. He could have sent an angel to speak openly to Mordecai and Esther. He could have stricken the wicked Haman dead before the plot reached the palace and became a royal decree. In a hundred different ways God could have delivered His people, openly.

But God chose to work in silence through human instruments. The task fell upon Esther, who was supported by her God-fearing cousin Mordecai (Esther 4:13-14).

Another example of God's silent working was with another Persian king named Cyrus. It was the will of God that when the years of Captivity had been accomplished the Israelite people should be free to return to their homeland if they wished. Accordingly, Cyrus "made a proclamation...saying,...Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build" (Ezra 1:1-4). Was this Cyrus' idea? No, Cyrus was playing a part in God's drama. *God* was working, though Cyrus never knew (Isa. 45:4).

Some eighty years later the city of Jerusalem was still in a state of disrepair, and the Lord worked silently through another Persian king, Artaxerxes, to allow Nehemiah to go up to Jerusalem and organize a fresh work effort. King Artaxerxes never knew, but his granting of permission to Nehemiah was a direct

answer to Nehemiah's prayer.

Behind the scenes, all silent and unseen, God was working.

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

Silent and Open Work Combined

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

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

Open manifestations—the audible voice and visible signs and appearances—were never God's only means of working. Along with them in all ages was God working quietly, behind the scenes, planning, arranging,

I Need You, Lord

*All through today, help me to be
Quick to praise, slow to criticize;
Quick to forgive, and slow to condemn;*

*Grant that I may maintain all through today
Complete control over my temper, that I may do nothing I will later regret;
Complete control over my tongue, that I may speak no hasty word;
Complete control over my thoughts that I harbor none which will dishonor You.*

*Give me today
Strength to conquer every temptation which comes to me;
Strength to do every task which is assigned me;
Strength to shoulder every responsibility which is laid upon me;*

Don't let me let myself down today, Lord.

Let me not hurt or disappoint those who have confidence in me.

*I want to make everything I do fit for You to see, and
everything I say fit for You to hear.*

Let me never forget the hope You have set before me.

I need You, Lord.

Amen.

governing, directing affairs in behalf of His people. In all ages His ear was open to the earnest prayer of His servant; and His angel, though usually unseen, was near to protect and bless. In all ages God was watching over the instructing and disciplining of His own, and no one who would believe was ever denied the opportunity to learn.

God at Work— through Written Inspiration

As with any well-planned project, one phase did not terminate until ample preparation had been made

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

The writing and compiling of this work was a tremendous project, involving not only the writers themselves but thousands of other people who would be unwitting instruments in God's hand. Those who wrote, those who preserved the writings, those who copied them, those who translated them into common languages,

those who developed methods of printing and publishing and distributing, those who took charge of protecting the writings from the merciless hands of tyrants and all-out enemies—all were instruments in the hand of God.

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

The writing of the Bible required many years. It began when God inspired Moses to write the laws and commandments and journeyings of Israel, together with the other books of the Pentateuch. Joshua in his turn wrote "in the book of the law of

**The Bible is not
a take-it-or-
leave-it book;
it is living,
effectual,
penetrating.
It is the Word
of the God
of heaven.**

God" the things which were revealed to him (Josh. 24:25-26). Samuel "told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book" (I Sam. 10:25), which was preserved for the future.

The writing continued in the time of King David, the king himself contributing many psalms and hymns inspired by God. Solomon added many proverbs, which the Lord inspired him to write. We read, "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much.... And he spake three thousand proverbs" (I Kings 4:29, 32). He himself was not true to their message, but God used him as an instrument to do His work.

The prophets preserved the revelations and messages they received from God by putting them into writing. As each wrote his message, it was added to the books already existing and accounted as part of the law of God, the law by which God's people should speak and live. The prophet Isaiah was explicit concerning the authority of these messages: "Should not a people seek unto their God?" he wrote. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because

there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:19-20).

The writings of God's prophets were preserved through the captivity, for Daniel, while in Babylon, had in writing the words of some of God's former prophets—even including writings of Jeremiah, who lived only a generation before Daniel (Daniel 9:2). Daniel's writings were also added to the law of God, as were those of his contemporary Ezekiel. It is interesting to note that Ezekiel placed Daniel, a man of his own day and acquaintance, alongside Noah and Job as devout men of God (Ezek. 14:14).

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

It was all God's work.

The New Testament—God's Work

By the time of the apostles, the books of the Old Testament were already together and were the common property of the synagogues, well studied, known and accepted among the Jewish people. The writers of the New Testament showed plainly their confidence in the Old Testament as being the Word of God. There are at least 295 quotations or direct references to the Old Testament in the New, which shows the high respect Jesus and His apostles held for the Old Testament. If we add to this the evident allusions to the Old Testament, we have something in one out of every ten verses referring back to the Old Testament—and allusions go back to every book without exception.

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

canon in the sixteenth century.

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

All the books of the New Testament bear the stamp of divine workmanship. The teachings of Jesus would have been lost had God not arranged to have them preserved in writing. But God was working, and before Jesus ascended to heaven He promised His apostles the supernatural help they would need to compose the books which would complete God's written message for men. "The Holy Spirit," He promised them, "shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

Nothing less than the Holy Spirit of God could have met the needs of the four evangelists in their task of recounting all the essential teachings of Jesus, reproducing His words, and choosing the most significant events for the blessing and benefit of the believers through centuries to come, at the time passing over numerous less important details still fresh and vivid in their minds (John 20:30; 21:25). By the Holy Spirit they were also able to narrate facts and events which were unwitnessed, else how could we know of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, or His struggle in the garden of Gethsemane?

God was working—for us!

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

Paul received his knowledge by direct and unique revelation. The Lord gave him a special appointment

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

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

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

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

Written—for Our Learning

All the books of the New Testament were written before the end of the Apostolic Age and during the next century were widely read, discussed and disseminated. Deviations crept into the teachings of the Church, but not into the sacred Text. The Holy Spirit had been withdrawn, but God was still working, overseeing, directing; thus books which might have been advantageous to the men who handled them were not admitted, and books which condemned the very things some of them were doing *were* admitted—a sure evidence that God was directing. The men who compiled and copied and handled the Bible were instruments in His hand. The book was—and *is*—*His*.

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

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

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

God Works...Through Prayer

Recorded in God's Book are other timeless methods of working—which are as much a part of God's program today as they were in former times.

"The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear" (Isa. 59:1-2). As we sincerely seek God, as we live in His fear and serve Him

in truth, we can know that He will hear our prayer and will help in whatever way His wisdom decrees.

Prayer has been an open communication between God and His people in all ages, and its results have been far-reaching: "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avail-eth much" (Jas. 5:16). And there is no time limit on the promise. Anytime, anywhere we can communicate with God. The only "if" is on our part—"If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us"; "if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth"; "if my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (I John 5:14; John 9:31; II Chron. 7:14).

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

**To set ourselves
up as a critic
of the Bible is not
our prerogative; *it*
judges *us* and all
our inmost thoughts
and feelings.
It is of God.**

God Works... Through Angels

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). Here is another promise without time limit. Angels minister to those who "shall be heirs of salvation," whether they live in the first or the last of the six thousand-year days. He will never leave or forsake them in any age. For "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7). What a sublime promise! Angels ever present! Silent and

As we sincerely seek God, as we live in His fear and serve Him in truth, we can know that He will hear our prayer and will help in whatever way His wisdom decrees. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

unseen, but guiding, protecting, arranging circumstances so that no temptation proves more than any God-fearing man or woman can bear triumphantly; silent and unseen, but an everpresent help in trouble; silent and unseen, but ever arranging for the discipline and total development of each child-to-be of the King.

We Are Not Forgotten

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," is the divine promise to all

God's people, and "never" is, thank God, a *long time*. It reaches from now clear through into eternity. God has worked, and He is still working in our behalf. And if we make ourselves a part of His plan, we shall find that He will work for us through all the ages to come! If we belong to Him, we are not forgotten; *we are part of His work!*

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

God Is Working.

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

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

Right now He is working. Right now He is impressing some heart out of the depths of His law. Right now

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

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

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

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

Someday soon we shall find ourselves face to face with immortal beings, to whom the thoughts of our heart will be as open as the lines on our faces. Someday soon we shall stand in the presence of the great King Himself. When we stand there with the record of our lives before us, shall we look back with regret, or shall we hear from Him those sublime words of approval: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

MM

God Is Working

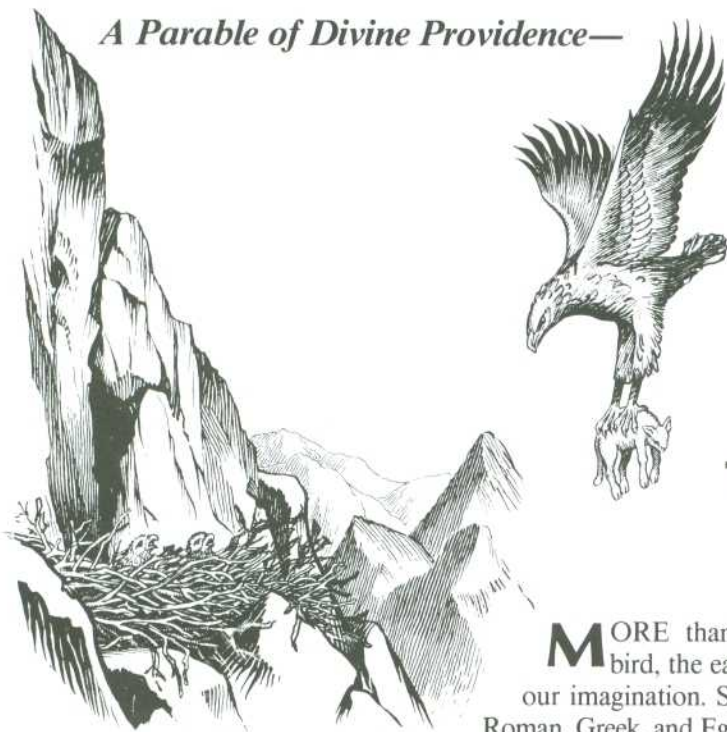
*God is working His purpose out
As year succeeds to year:
God is working His purpose out
And the time is drawing near;
Nearer and nearer draws the time,
The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea.*

*From utmost east to utmost west,
Where'er man's foot hath trod,
By the mouth of the many messengers
Goes forth the voice of God;
Give ear to Me, ye continents,
Ye isles, give ear to Me,
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea.*

*March we forth in the strength of God,
With the banner of Christ unfurled,
That the light of the glorious gospel of truth
May shine throughout the world:
Fight we the fight with error and sin
To set their captives free
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea.*

*All we can do is nothing worth
Unless God blesses the deed;
Vainly we hope for the harvesttide
Till God gives life to the seed;
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
The time that shall surely be
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea.*

A Parable of Divine Providence—



“God Is Teaching Me To Fly”

**When God allows disturbances in our lives, we can snarl and fight and protest and complain, or we can say simply, gratefully—proudly—
“God is teaching me to fly!”**

MORE than any other bird, the eagle captures our imagination. Since ancient Roman, Greek, and Egyptian times, people have revered and even worshiped the eagle. Nations use it as their symbol because it embodies strength, speed, power, justice, endurance, and farsightedness.

Above all this, God has chosen the eagle to symbolize some of His own actions in behalf of His human family. The way that an eagle trains its young to fly gives a striking picture of how God brings His people to spiritual maturity.

As Moses wrote long ago, God is “like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions” (Deut. 32:11, NIV).

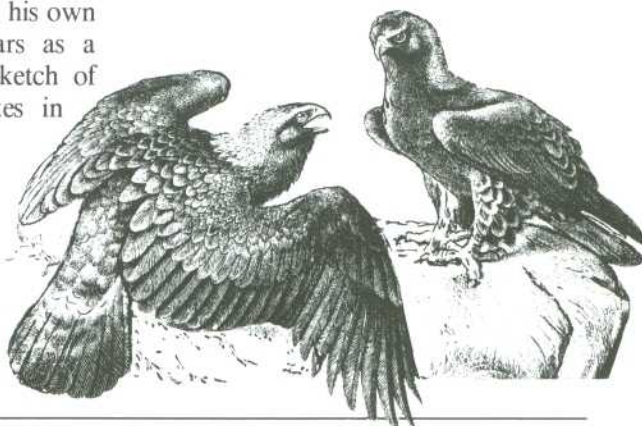
Moses’ account, drawn from his own observations during forty years as a shepherd, provides a telling sketch of the steps a parent eagle takes in teaching its young to fly.

It may be that Moses had seen them soaring high among the rugged cliffs when he was trekking in the mountains to retrieve a lamb that had strayed. Or perhaps he watched as, hour after hour, they carefully

built their nest in the rocky crag. Eagle nests are very large, often measuring as much as six feet wide and six feet deep.

To form the base of a nest, the eagle uses large sticks, leaves, cloth, anything it can find on the ground. Then the eagles fill the depression of the nest—where the young will first live and grow—with brambles, sharp sticks, stones, bones, and other sharp objects. Over this prickly base the eagle weaves a mat of furs, leaves, and feathers plucked from their own breast. When this is done, they lay up to four eggs in the soft, warm bed.

Imagine the baby eagle about to hatch. Mrs. Eagle is still covering the eggs as Mr. Eagle arrives with fresh rabbit meat. When the little eaglet cracks his way out of the egg, he finds himself in the coziest, most comfortable



world he could ever imagine; nothing to worry about, nothing to fear. There he is fed until he grows a splendid feather covering some three months later. Meanwhile, his parents provide everything he needs. All the baby eaglet has to do is eat, sleep, and squawk.

THE scene provides an analogy to the early stages of Christian nurture. Picture yourself as a new believer, to whom everything is new, resplendent, wonderful and satisfying. The wonders of God's plan are magnificent beyond anything you could have imagined.

Your Christian friends welcome you into a warm fellowship full of joyful, caring, exuberant believers. God is indeed great and good, and every aspect of life is radiant with hope and promise.

Yet neither we nor the eaglet can remain in this blissful condition for long. Eagles are made to fly. Christians are made to mature in Christ.

For the cozy eaglet, dramatic changes begin to occur. Up until now, the eaglet has been looking around at his nest and musing, "I'm quite happy here. I don't lack *anything*."

But his parents want him to fly. As Moses observed, they start to "stir up the nest."

Suddenly they shift from friendly to apparently fierce. They fly at the nest, ripping out the cozy lining and exposing all those sharp brambles and stickers. When the eaglet tries to sit back comfortably, a thorn punctures him. As he dashes around, he scrapes his legs and falls deep down into the thorny patch. His face begins to bleed, and he screams at his parents, "What is going on? What did I do wrong? Don't you love me anymore?"

They say nothing, but simply watch from a short distance away.

The little eaglet, disillusioned, fi-

nally hops up onto the edge of the nest and peers out—hundreds of feet straight down! He feels dizzy sitting there on the brim, but miserable in the nest. He grips the sticks on the edge, gaining some balance, and waits.

In the same way we encounter disturbances in our lives. Things go wrong. Problems arise—problems with family, problems with people, problems with work, problems with ourselves. We begin to feel anxious

beating his wings, trying to knock him off the rim of the nest. The eaglet only grips the sticks more tightly and shrieks, "What are you doing? I'm going to fall off!" But the parent continues his uncanny attack.

This is what Moses was talking about. "Like an eagle that...hovers over its young." The adult bird hovers close and flies at him, to motivate him to jump.

Even so, we come to times in our

*God uses circumstances to teach us.
And while we are learning He protects us
as only a loving Father will do.*

and worried. "What is God doing? Why are all these things happening to me?" we ask. Or we look at our spotted record and wonder, "Am I really this bad? It seems like I'm getting *worse*, not better!"

God is stirring up the nest. He is preparing us for greater things, if we would only realize it. And to do so, He has to get us out of our comfortable, cozy nest. So He allows difficulties to pierce us, to test us, to bring us almost to the brink of our faith. He may even leave us there for awhile, teetering.

THE young eaglet hasn't learned to fly yet. He's still clutching the edge, thinking he can hold on a little longer. He's telling himself, "Things aren't so bad. Look on the bright side: You're still in the nest."

He thinks if he can just endure this for a short time, maybe everything will be back to normal. He believes that soon his parents will fix the nest and he'll be warm and cozy once again.

But Mr. Eagle has no such intention. Instead, he swoops at his child,

lives when it almost seems that God is attacking us. We pray, but God seems to have gone deaf. We shout for help, but not a bush twitches.

More problems tear into our lives. Yet no matter how much we try, no matter how many times we seek God's help, He seems to have vanished. "I will never leave you nor forsake you" appears as a dead promise. "I am with you always" sounds empty.

What is wrong?

We read again the courage and faith of the prophet Habakkuk. "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights. For the director of music. On my stringed instruments" (Hab. 3:17-19, NIV).

Nice words, we say; but how do we apply them to ourselves?

It appears odd that our loving Father seems to act this way. Yet clearly, God allows His people to go through suffering. This is His means of perfecting them. Even the Captain of our salvation was "made perfect through suffering" (Heb. 2:10). Even *He* had to "[learn] obedience by the things which he suffered." Even *He*, "when he had offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from

in the end it yields for those who have been trained by it the peaceful harvest of an honest life" (Heb. 12:5-8, 10-11, NEB).

A runner learns endurance only by putting his body through severe pain. An athlete gains strength only under extreme strain. A child grows to maturity only by being corrected and punished when he does wrong. If we were already perfect and mature, God would not need to deal with us

only a loving Father will do. He uses the same circumstances that try us to shelter and rescue us. Whatever our hardships, we can feel secure in God's keeping if we are totally submissive.

AFTER many trials and failures, the young eaglet finally flies. Moses didn't mention this, but that is the obvious goal and the determined ambition of the eaglet's parents. Soon the young eaglet is soaring, like his parents, into the sunset.

Can we not see the similarity Moses recognized, the parallel between the eaglet's training and the way God deals with us? Over and over again, through many and devious ways, God helps His people toward maturity; through intimate nurture, through painful disturbances, through persistent motivation and consistent protection, He teaches them to fly.

Can we see the process at work in our lives? In the daily testings that confront us; in the difficulties that almost overwhelm us, can't we see God working daily in our behalf? Can't we see Him teaching us to bend our will to His? Can't we see Him strengthening us to serve? The question for each of us is whether we will submit to His discipline and profit by it.

When God allows disturbances in our lives, we can snarl and fight and protest and complain, or we can say simply, gratefully—proudly—"God is teaching me to fly!"

Original of this article published by *Moody Monthly*, June, 1988 under the title, "You Can't Rest in the Nest," by Mark R. Littleton.

Do we question that the same loving Father develops us through discipline?

death...was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (Heb. 5:7-9, NIV).

Do we question that the same loving Father develops *us* through discipline? Small wonder that the writer to the Hebrews admonished his brethren to accept the chastening of the Lord as evidence of His love. These are his words, as he cited them from the book of Proverbs:

"My son, do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline, nor lose heart when he corrects you; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves; he lays the rod on every son whom he acknowledges.' You must endure it as discipline; God is treating you as sons. Can anyone be a son, who is not disciplined by his father? If you escape the discipline in which all sons share, you must be bastards and no true sons. They disciplined us for this short life according to their lights; but he does so for our true welfare, so that we may share his holiness. Discipline...is never pleasant; at the time it seems painful, but

severely; since we are not perfect, we should look upon His severity as an expression of His love.

In the eagles Moses saw God's way of working with His people. Eagles do not learn to fly in the comfort of the cozy nest. Even so God allows pain to motivate us to go on.

ULTIMATELY, that eaglet, seemingly "attacked" by its parent, is going to lose his balance or jump to get out of the way. But even this seemingly desperate situation includes the father's loving protection.

As the eaglet lets go of the edge of the nest and starts to plummet, his parent is watching and takes quick action. With a great whoosh, he swoops down and catches his offspring on his back, "carrying him on his pinions."

As the parent carefully returns the little eaglet to the nest, the eaglet feels sure that this will never be repeated. He will never do *that* again. But the process happens again and again until the little bird finally flies.

In the same manner God uses circumstances to teach us. And while we are learning He protects us as

*The greater the difficulty,
the more glory in
surmounting it.*

Get On With Your



Needlework!

THE greatest wedding in the history of the world is about to take place. It is the marriage of the great King and His faithful Bride. The banquet is scheduled, the angelic guests have been invited, the King is ready. All that remains is for the Bride to finish her dress!

And a most important task this is, for "She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework" (Ps. 45:14).

The Revelator emphasizes this same point about the preparation of the bride: "His wife hath made herself ready." Hers are the most beautiful garments ever fashioned, even "fine linen, clean and white...[which] is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:7-8).

Every member of this bride will be dressed in this finest of all raiments, the perfect beauty of a righteous character. But it cannot be made after the wedding is announced; it must be done *in advance*. Day after day, day after day the bride must keep at her needlework, stitch by stitch, stitch by stitch, until the perfect garment is complete.

This is why God wants us to get on with our needlework *now*, before the day of the wedding arrives. Day by day He wants us to beautify our characters with all the lovely graces of holiness, righteousness, and purity. This is our duty, and our privilege. For when the King arrives *we must be ready*, our raiment without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. No time then to finish our needlework.

"The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework."

How are you getting along with your needlework? Will you be ready when the great day of the wedding arrives? Will you be ready to be presented to the great King before all the assembled hosts of heaven in your fine linen, clean and white?

Get on with your needlework! Get ready for the great presentation!

"To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen."

—Jude 24-25, TLB

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Opportunities Unlimited

The Glory of God's Second Chance

Part I

*From unpromising and seemingly hopeless beginnings, men have risen and may yet rise to the heights of character and achievement, by the power of faith and the help of the Eternal.
"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof" (Eccl. 7:8).*

Introduction

The life of Jesus of Nazareth, from His miraculous birth to His ascension, was unique. Subject to all the temptations of human flesh, He dealt with them so directly and so decisively that He set the Perfect Example for all time. Never did He have to learn the same lesson twice; after knowing the law of God, He never transgressed it.

With the rest of us, it is not so. We learn slowly, the hard way. Day after day we stub the same old toe on the same old stumbling block. Yet the long-suffering of God still reaches out to save us from the results of our follies. Fortunately for us, the Creator is more patient than His creatures.

"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23).

Again and again the vessel of clay in the hands of the Potter has been marred by its own hardness and perverseness. Yet the wisdom of the Creator gives us the comforting assurance that a marred beginning, or even a disastrous fall, does not mean that the case is hopeless. In all

of Scripture there is no more blessed message than the simple words, "So he made it again" (Jeremiah 18:4).

It is possible, of course, to make any sin unpardonable by neglect; but in one case history after another, the Scriptures proclaim the glory of God's Second Chance.

Scene 1: Testing

The Story of Joshua

He was originally named Oshea, meaning "God helps."

Born a crown slave in Egypt, his future held little of promise, so far as anyone could see. Yet here was one upon whom God had set His eyes, one to whom a tremendous future was even then beckoning, all unknown to him.

He appears in this scene at the nadir of his career, a laborer in the brickyards of the Nile. The grinding, unrewarding labor and the harsh treatment of the taskmasters keep the minds of a misused people focused on freedom, while they think of Jehovah as a possible help. The person who is successful in rendering a small service under

adverse conditions often has the opportunity to be useful in more important tasks later.

In this scene Joshua finds a way to help a fellow-worker while serving the taskmaster.

Characters:

Oshea Joshua, slave in Egypt
Ephraim Another slave in Egypt
Abner Slave Boy
Caleb Friend of Joshua, also a slave
Taskmaster

Setting:

Oshea is tallyman for a brick-making gang. He is seated on a low stool, with his records on a somewhat higher crude table which serves as a desk. In the distance are the pyramids and the Nile.

Ephraim staggers in with a yoke of bricks, which he sets down while Oshea makes a quick count and gives him a ticket.

Oshea: I see you've got an extra brick for me again. Thanks Ephraim. They come in handy. I'll just stack it here with the others.

Ephraim: (Wiping his dripping forehead with bare hand) That sun's killing today. You're fortunate to be here in the shade, with a jar of water, nothing to do but make marks.

Oshea: Maybe you think so. But when the bricks don't tally up, who gets the beating? Me!

Ephraim: It's rough for all of us—*hard* to get used to.

Oshea: Worse than that, Ephraim. I often wonder why I was ever born. I'd have been better off in the old days, when they used to throw them in the Nile as soon as they were born.

Ephraim: Better than this slow death. Not so slow, either, on days like this.... How many do you suppose die every day on this project?

Oshea: I'd have no idea. There was an old man this morning, fell right here by my desk, and couldn't get up. They pounded him hard, but it didn't help. He died about noon....

Ephraim: Well, at least his troubles are over. That's *our* future, Oshea.

Oshea: No wonder Egypt has such fertile soil. It's been soaked with the blood of so many millions of slaves. Just think what that pyramid over there cost in human life!

Ephraim: I don't *want* to think about it. The brickyards

are bad enough—. What I want to know is, what are our chances of getting out of this?

Oshea: Not a chance in the world. Get that idea out of your mind. *Once* a slave, *always* a slave.

Ephraim: Maybe it'll be easier when these two cities are finished.

Oshea: (Laughing bitterly) You think they'll send us back to Goshen, where the grass grows green? Forget it! They'll start another project—dig a lake, or a canal, or something. With all this cheap labor, they've got to use it.

Ephraim: Probably. It was bad enough under the government, but now that they are leasing us out to private contractors, it's ten times worse. Look, Oshea, I often wonder why this happens to us. Aren't we as good men as the Egyptians? Weren't we free once? What have *we* done? Why, we have no chance to do anything, good or bad. And we're not even suffering for the sins of our fathers. As I hear it, they came down here a long time ago from Canaan, because of a famine. For a while they were well treated—but, *now* look!

Oshea: I don't know. Maybe their mistake was overstaying their welcome.

Ephraim: That's right—they should have gone back while they could, to the land God gave to Abraham.

Oshea: God! I've heard those old tales, Ephraim, but all I see is bricks, bricks, bricks. I even see 'em in my dreams. Where *is* this God? Why doesn't He *do* something for us?

Ephraim: I don't know. I *believe* in God, although I don't know much about Him. Maybe we should put Him to the test.

Oshea: What do you mean?

Ephraim: All get up and go—head for Canaan.

Oshea: Fine idea. And suppose God doesn't help us—what happens? Do you realize the power of the Egyptian Empire? Why, we'd never get past the first fortress, if we got that far. No, our future is to sweat and tug and strain until we go back to the mud, and the next generation of slaves comes along to wear its lives out—making bricks.

(The boy Abner appears, with a heavy yoke of bricks)

Oshea: (After checking) You're short four bricks, Son. How come?

Abner: (Breaking into tears) I fell down and they broke. They weren't good and dry. What'll I do?

Oshea: (adds four bricks to the lad's load, and after giving Abner a drink of water, asks Ephraim to help the boy with his too-heavy load. An ugly taskmaster, arriving on the scene—lashes the whip freely, Oshea getting the worst of it, for showing any sympathy to his fellows.)

Taskmaster: (angrily) I'll teach you who's boss here! I'll teach you who these bricks belong to! I'd have you put back in the pits or the furnace today if it weren't for the fact that you can write. Now remember, I'm watching you from now on. (Exits slowly. Oshea shakes his fist at him when it is safe to do so.)

(Enter Caleb with laden yoke)

Caleb: Sorry for you, Oshea. I saw a little of it.

Oshea: Oh, it's nothing new. I've taken a lot of it, but it's not easy to take. (fans his sore back pumping air with his garment)

Caleb: Well, maybe it will be better some day. It can't last for ever.

Oshea: Neither can we (holding his almost broken jaw).

Caleb: You know, I've been thinking—

Oshea: (grimly) Don't. Slaves are not supposed to think.

Caleb: Why don't we get out of here?

Oshea: Go ahead, if you want to. I'll never stop you. I've got my aged parents in Goshen to think of, and my own family.

Caleb: I don't mean that. I mean all of us...Just walk out, all together.

Oshea: Go ahead and dream. there's no law against it. Who'd get this thing started? Who'd organize a horde of ignorant slaves? Who'd take the lead—the responsibility?

Caleb: Maybe you.

Oshea: Me? A fine leader I'd make! Why, I can't even defend myself against this swine of a taskmaster, even if I am a prince of my own tribe. Wake up, man!

Caleb: It's not the taskmaster you're fighting, Oshea. He represents the whole power of Egypt, and you can't fight that alone. But if God helps us, and we all stick together, and if we can get the right leader, we might do something. I believe *you* could do it.

Oshea: Nonsense! I'm no leader. Anyway, I'm too old.

What can you do after you're forty? (Looking around cautiously) You'd better keep those ideas to yourself. That's dangerous talk.

Caleb: Here's a secret—Prince Moses is back in Egypt.

Oshea: Moses?

Caleb: Yes. You've heard of him—how he was born some 80 years ago, back when the babies were being drowned, and was saved and raised by Pharaoh's daughter. About the time we were born he got in trouble—he killed an Egyptian taskmaster to save a Hebrew's life, and had to run. The older people have wondered for years where he was. But he's back. Palti saw him yesterday, he's sure. What do you suppose it means?

Oshea: I wouldn't know. Probably nothing—for us... You'd better go, Caleb. One a day is enough.

Narrator:

The return of Moses did mean something. It meant that the time for release had come. From the first ringing demand, "Let my people go!" it was one steady succession of events, culminating in the awful night when the first-born of Egypt died and the Israelites left Egypt.

In the trying task of organizing an undisciplined horde for an orderly departure, some quality of leadership in Oshea must have attracted the attention of Moses and brought him to the front.

Loyal and capable helpers are always needed. By force of his ability, Oshea became Moses' second in command, his trusted and trustworthy lieutenant throughout the long Wilderness experience.

Scene 2: Trial

Narrator:

Our first sight of Oshea in the book of Exodus is as captain of the forces chosen to fight against the treacherous nation of Amalek.

We cannot realize what it meant to make a fighting force out of a mob of men who had never before handled arms. What it meant was that Oshea, a prince of Israel in his own right, was no ordinary man but a born leader. Modern military experts, analyzing his conquest of Canaan, pronounce him a first-class strategist.

Such men cannot be held down by slavery, or anything else.

The field of service has broadened and Joshua, who thought himself capable of doing only small service, finds himself at the head of an army fighting for his people's existence—and winning.

Characters:

Moses God-appointed Leader of the Israelites

Aaron Brother of Moses and High Priest

Hur

Setting:

A hillside at Rephidim, overlooking the battle against Amalek in the valley. Moses is seated on a stone, with Aaron and Hur holding up his hands, one of which holds his rod. Gazing intently, they discuss the battle excitedly.

Aaron: Look, brother, look! He's driving them into a huddle in that ravine, so close their camels are no use to them. What a maneuver! Amalek is doomed—he cannot win *this* battle!

Hur: Not while the Lord Jehovah fights with us.

Moses: And while Oshea leads our host so bravely and skillfully. What a captain the Lord has given us!

Aaron: Amalek *would* try to block our passage, would he? Cowardly savages that they are, ambushing our stragglers, preying on the sick and weak, and now trying to hold us in this narrow valley. Oh!—does Oshea see that band working around to his rear?

Hur: Yes, he sees them—he's sending a troop to cut them off. Ah! he has them! Look, out, Oshea! (turns and sees that they have absent-mindedly lowered their hands) I'm sorry, my Lord Moses. It won't happen again... Why is it, do you suppose, that we win only if your hands are held up?

Moses: I do not know. I only know what the angel told me to do. We have seen that it is as he says—when they are down, Amalek prevails. So—

Aaron: So it is none of our business why. It is *our* business to hold up our ruler's hands.

Hur: And to pray for Oshea. See, he is rolling them back again! If only we had horses like they have!

Aaron: Oshea doesn't need horses. He's doing all right without them. I just wish he wouldn't expose himself so recklessly. He is definitely not expendable. But he's winning—he's winning! *Did you see that?*

Hur: Magnificent! They'll never recover from *that* one!—Oshea has come a long, long way from the brick-yards. Not bad for a former slave!

Aaron: Not bad at all. He is Prince Oshea, now and forever—the captain of the hosts of the Lord! With such a man, we need have no fears.

Moses: Praise God for Oshea! Would that I had a thousand like him!

Hur: Look, look, my Lord! they run! they run! com-

pletely overwhelmed! Amalek is fleeing like chaff before the sword of the Lord and of Oshea. They trample each other, they cut each other down in their haste to escape. Ah! he has cut them off at the head of the valley! Camels—horses—men—all in a tangle! They are ours! The victory is ours!

Moses: (rising to his feet) God has given us the victory! Praise His holy name! Prince Oshea! thy name shall no more be called Oshea, but Joshua—for God is with thee; Jehovah is thy salvation!

Scene 3: Triumph

Narrator:

Israel's wanderings in the wilderness are nearing their end. Moses, the peerless leader, approaches his end. The Promised Land is not yet attained. The need for strong personal leadership still exists. Moses petitions the Lord to reveal his successor.

The answer to his prayer is what he must have expected. To whom shall he better turn than to Prince Joshua, who with his companion Caleb bears the honor of having "wholly followed the Lord."

By his consistent obedience he became a fitting prototype of the greater Leader who should bear his name, Jesus and Joshua being one and the same word, meaning "Jehovah is salvation."

In Numbers 27 is recorded the solemn investment of Joshua. Later, when the end is very near for Moses, he presents himself again with his successor before the high priest, to deliver his farewell charge.

Oshea, the slave, has come a long way from the slave-pens of Egypt—the glory of God's Second Chance.

Years of devotional service bring Joshua to the leadership of his people. Few are qualified for such a spectacular rise, but all of us are capable of better and greater service if we are willing to make the effort, and the results could be surprising.

Characters:

Moses God-appointed Leader of Israelites

Joshua Moses' Successor-to-be

Eleazar High Priest

Setting:

Moses is preparing to die. Eleazar stands before the Tabernacle, Moses enters with Joshua, whom he sets before the priest, and faces him himself.

Moses: (very impressively) And now I go to the generation of my fathers, and another hand must guide and lead this great people into the land of promise, for the Lord hath forbidden me to pass over this

(Continued on page 26)



That

Stumbling Block!

WEBSTER'S Dictionary defines a stumbling block as "a bar or hindrance to righteous living, an obstacle in the way of a planned or progressive development or action."

The apostle Paul said it twice in his letter to the Romans. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way....Mark them which cause divisions and offences [stumblingblocks] contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 14:13; 16:17).

As used by the ancient Greeks, the word "stumbling-block" or "offense" was especially interesting. Its classical equivalent, we are told, means literally the bait stick in a trap. The bait stick was the arm or stick on which the bait was fixed. The animal for which the trap was set was lured by the bait to step on the stick. The stick touched off a spring, and so the animal was enticed to his capture. In classical Greek, we are told, the word is used for "verbal traps" set to lure a person into an argument in which he will surely be defeated. The original flavor of the word, then, was not so much a stumbling block as we would think of one but of enticement to lure someone to destruction; in other words, a temptation.

The Greek word translated stumbling block is used to translate the Hebrew word *miksol*, which also means a "stumbling-block". It is used in Lev. 19:14, "Thou shalt not put a stumblingblock before the blind." It is used again in Ps. 119:165, "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." That is to say, Nothing will trip them up, nothing will tempt them, nothing will make them fall.

Jesus says in Matthew 13:41 that in His Kingdom there will be no stumbling block. In other words, anything which might tempt or cause one to fall will be removed, taken away.

When Paul used the word, he was forbidding us to put a "stumblingblock" or "occasion to fall" in our brother's way. In other words, we are not to do anything to hinder our brother or to put any barrier in his path. It is the word that would be used for a tree that was felled and laid across the road to block it. We must never do anything that will block the way for another.

If we would avoid the offense of causing others to stumble, we must also learn to walk without stumbling ourselves. One of the best ways to do this is to avoid whatever is a stumbling block to us, i.e., temptation, insofar as we are able. We will find that as we resist or avoid them they will actually change their identity—they will no longer be stumbling blocks, they will not bother us at all!

Everything God forbids, either by principle or by law, is a potential stumbling block and must be removed from the pathway of our lives, however great the effort needed. It must be done, for our own good and others' also, for God will not hold us guiltless if we knowingly put a stumbling block in another's way.

MM

A “Superior” People?

“I have just received the June 1988 issue. Please enlighten me about a point in your statement of faith.

“In the fifth statement, you believe that humankind provides the nucleus from which a ‘superior’ people shall be chosen to receive the ‘blessings of immortal life.’ Would you please define the term superior and briefly indicate what the blessings you feel will be to those who are receiving them. Is your position that only those who are to receive blessing will receive immortal life? My understanding from Scripture is that we will all be raised incorruptible (having internal life), but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will live with the Lord. The rest will live eternally but apart from the Lord.”

We are not surprised at your questions, as our whole approach to the Bible is totally different from that of the nominal church. We see the Bible as God’s communication to humankind and our only source of Divine knowledge today. More than this, we see the Bible as revealing God’s plan for the human race, the earth, and the universe. It is His purpose to fill the earth with His glory, a righteous, happy, prosperous, immortal people (Num. 14:21, Hab. 2:14, Isa. 11:9), so that His “will” can be done here as it is already done in other parts of His vast creation. It is all according to one ongoing, ageless, eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11).

It is difficult briefly to convey very much of what the Bible teaches about this great subject. It might be best if you would read another of our publications which deals directly with this subject: “Millennium Superworld.” This should answer many of your questions and give you an insight into what the Bible teaches.

Now let us address your question.

God gives this present mortal life to all by right of birth. He created the human race and designed the laws by which it could be perpetuated, and all of us live because of the operation of those laws.

However, this present arrangement is not the ultimate

of God’s creative work. God has purposed to find, among this earthborn race, select individuals to whom He will give the blessings of everlasting life in His eternal kingdom on earth. His long-range goal is a glorified earth annexed to heaven and filled with happy immortals. This is the stated purpose of all His work on earth: “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord” (Num. 14:21). It was expressed by Jesus in His prayer: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

At present God is selecting and developing those who will be “joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17); “kings and priests” (Rev. 5:9-10); co-rulers with Jesus on His throne (Rev. 3:21). They are “superior” people because of the high standard required of them. In the words of the apostle Peter, they must be persons who “fear God and work righteousness” (Acts 10:34-35). We use the word “superior” to indicate not an inborn quality but a *developed* quality—these persons are distinguished from the masses of humankind by their high quality of character. God has not promised to give His eternal blessings to all mankind indiscriminately. Many will be heard saying at the day of Judgment, “Lord, Lord,” only to be set aside as unqualified (Matt. 7:21). He wants—and will have—the best.

God is seeking the highest quality for His eternal Kingdom. The Bible illustrates this repeatedly. If the simile is a “city,” as in Revelation 21, the city is “four-square,” or perfect. If the simile is trees, they are trees of righteousness of God’s own planting (Isa. 61:3) which bear *much* fruit (John 15:8). And the fruit they bear must be *good* fruit, indicating the tree is a *good* tree (Matt. 7:18-20). If the simile is “vine and branches,” again quality is emphasized: only fruit-bearing branches are allowed to remain. All others are cut off and burned (John 15:1-6).

When the simile describing God’s faithful ones is the Bride of Christ, she is said to have “made herself ready,” and her clothing is “fine linen, clean and white, ... [which] is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:7-8).

The apostle Paul prayed that his brethren would

abound "yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment," that they might be "sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:9-11). Again he wrote to the Ephesians that God has chosen us "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4). He wants His church to be without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). Called to be His saints, we must all "come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:12-13). We must put off the old nature and put on the new (Eph. 4:22-24). All of God's directives for our lives are intended to eliminate the bad and cultivate the best.

The apostle Peter said that "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" come "through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue." And he continued that "besides this" we must give "all diligence" to make certain additions to our lives: "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (II Pet. 1:3, 5-7). We must "give diligence to make our calling and election sure...for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:10-11).

Meeting these requirements develops that "superior" character God is seeking—superior because of inner qualities of virtue, holiness, godliness, love. These are the Christian's marks of distinction (I Pet. 1:14-16).

In each of Jesus' parables, the eternal blessings are indicated as being reserved for those who are "faithful" (Matt. 25:21-23); self-denying (Luke 9:23), self-sacrific-

ing (Mark 10:29-31); watchful and alert (Luke 21:34, 36; Mark 13:35-37), wholehearted and single-minded (Luke 16:13). The apostle Paul set the standard again in II Cor. 7:1, "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (NIV). The purpose of the character is the obtaining of the promises, and the promises to which he refers are those he has just mentioned in the preceding two verses, of becoming sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty (II Cor. 6:17-18).

We must "sow to the Spirit" if we expect to reap life everlasting; sowing to "the flesh," our natural instincts, yields a harvest of "corruption" (Gal. 6:7-8). Sowing "to the Spirit" includes bearing in our lives the "fruits of the Spirit," which are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23).

We must "overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). And we could go on and on. The whole Bible focuses upon how we can become among those whom God will eternally bless. To become "sons of God," part of God's eternal family, we must "purify ourselves" even as Christ is pure" (I John 3:1-3).

You indicate that those resurrected will be incorruptible. If this were true, as you suggest, those resurrected whose names are "in the book of life" would live eternally "with" the Lord, all others would have to live eternally but apart from the Lord.

However, we do not find Scripture to support this position. On the contrary, we find Jesus saying that the "broad road," the following of our natural inclinations, outside His directing, leads to "destruction" (Matt. 7:13-14). The unfaithful shall be punished with "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (II Thess. 1:7-9). In the parable of the wheat and the tares, the

"We are honored..."

*to represent our King and to perform His work during His absence;
to live obediently and faithfully without fearing what may come;
to know the glory ahead will obliterate anything of the grim past.
God grant that when our term of service is complete, we may be
privileged to hear from our Lord, "You are honored..."*

wheat represents the faithful; the tares the unfaithful; and the "tares" are "burned" with "unquenchable fire"—a punishment from which there is no release, not that it is everlastingly burning. We do injustice to the parable if we apply a spiritual meaning to some terms and a literal meaning to others. Spiritual tares cannot be burned with literal fire.

The purpose of the resurrection is to allow all servants of God to be judged, so that they can receive for what they have done. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). The resurrection returns them to a state of mortal life, after which they are judged and rewarded with either eternal life or eternal destruction. Some resurrected will come forth to receive the eternal crown of life, others to receive eternal damnation (Dan. 12:2-3). Jesus said the same: "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).

Since there is no consciousness in the death state (Eccl. 9:5), those receiving "eternal damnation" will simply sleep a sleep from which there is no waking. (For further discussion of this subject, see our booklet, *The Devil and Hell of the Bible*.)

• More on the Cherubim

"Referring to your article, 'Who are the cherubim?' please explain Gen. 3:24. Did God place inanimate objects to guard the garden?"

In view of the task assigned to the cherubim in Genesis 3:24, your question is logical. If the cherubim were not living animate beings, how could they "keep the way to the tree of life"?

The cherubim is not the only question that arises if we try to understand Genesis, chapters 1-3, in a literal sense. What about grass that could grow before the sun; or men made literally in the image of God (pigmies or giants or black man or yellow man?); a serpent that could talk with people; the making of a woman from the rib of a man while Adam was sleeping, etc.? These and many more impel us to see Genesis, chapters 1-3, as an allegory and not an account of literal creation.

If we view Genesis, chapters 1-3, as an allegory, with its people and objects as symbols having deeper, spiritual meaning, then all these problems are gone and instead we have a vivid pictorial description of the plan of God. Among the symbols used are the "cherubim," which you question.

Cherubim are used symbolically in Scripture to represent the providential care and keeping of God.

This Day

*This day is mine to mar or make,
God keep me strong and true;
Let me no erring by-path take,
No doubtful action do.*

*May all I've met along the way
Speak well of me tonight.
I would not have the humblest say
I sinned against the right.*

*May I have something true and fine,
When night slips down, to tell
That I have lived this day of mine
Not selfishly, but well.*

In the account of the garden in Genesis 3, this figurative representation is understandable. The entire narrative describes the plan of God for the salvation of humankind and gives far deeper insights into the workings of God than could any relating of a physical act of creating. The serpent, the tree of life, Adam and Eve—all are far more meaningful when understood as metaphors teaching deep spiritual truths. Combined they form an allegory which tells of God's way of working with the human family.

The cherubim in Gen. 3:24 fit meaningfully into this context. Adam had sinned, and God was punishing him. "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

Once Adam, representing the unfaithful servants of God, are driven out of the garden, they must be forcefully kept from reentering by some means, which is illustrated in this allegory by the cherubim and the "flaming sword which turned every way." We do not visualize a literal garden, a literal flaming sword, or any literal beings guarding a literal roadway. All are symbolic terms, the garden representing the field of service God provides; Adam and Eve representing His servants (there were also a literal Adam and Eve, the parents of Cain and Abel, apart from the allegory); the tree of life representing the knowledge that will perpetuate life; the flaming sword and the cherubim, the God-provided means of reserving the knowledge of life for those worthy of it.

To understand the topic more fully, please refer to our booklet on *God's Spiritual Creation*. It is a deep and meaningful study, on which we hope to publish a series of articles in the near future.

MM

Opportunities Unlimited

(Continued from page 21)

Jordan. Here must I die, because I disobeyed Him at Meribah, in the place where thy first great victory was won. And He hath commanded me, saying, "Charge Joshua, and encourage him, for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.

"Now therefore, O Joshua, may my spirit and my strength and the glory of the God of Israel be upon thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people into the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

"And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee; fear not, neither be dismayed."

(To Be Continued Next Issue)

Are You An Applicant?

(Continued from page 5)

love touches love, creating a bond so strong that no power in heaven or earth can sever it. "I love them that love me," says the Eternal (Prov. 8:17). What relationship could be richer, fuller, deeper, or more rewarding! When the employee affirms "I am Yours, Lord," and demonstrates it by his or her commitment, how encouraging to know that the Employer replies, "Whenever you need Me, I'm here. I'll never fail you nor forsake you!"

How can we hesitate? How can we give less than our best to one who has been so gracious, so generous, so kind, and who has so much to give?

Put in your application *now* and see it through. It's the first step in a career of infinite possibilities, world without end. MM

OUR READERS WRITE

Thankful

We are thankful and pray that God in His goodness and mercy will continue to bless and inspire you. May your Church ever grow in that spirit of oneness, unity, love and peace which God, our Father, requires of us His children.

British West Indies

E. L.

We thank you for the *Megiddo Messages*. We enjoy reading them. Those who are elderly and cannot see to read, we read to them.

Thanks to the Megiddo Church, which enlightened us with these truths, and may that church flourish until the coming of Elijah and Jesus Christ our Lord.

British West Indies

M. M.

More than Good Intentions

Intentions are no good until they are acted upon. Jesus tells us in Rev. 22:12 that He is coming to give to every man according as his work shall be. I remember hearing someone say a long time ago that this means we will be rewarded for what we have *done*, not for what we intended to do. Good intentions are not good works. This is a truth well worth remembering.

We know the uncertainty of this mortal existence and long for a better life. Jesus, "for the joy that was set before him...endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the Father" (Heb. 12:2). We, too, can endure the trials and temptations of this life because we know they are only temporary and that an eternal future of unspeakable joy awaits us if faithful. If we cannot look past this life it means we have no faith in God.

If we are always thinking of temporal things and spending very little time thinking and meditating on divine things, we are losing sight of the eternal reward. And when we forget what we are working for we soon stop working.

We need to read, study, meditate and pray every day. We also need to communicate with those of like faith, to constantly admonish and encourage one another to good works.

I remember Bro. Flowerday telling me

one time that as we get older we have new problems arise as our health goes down. He cautioned me that we should ever be watchful because we never reach the point in this life that we can say we have no more problems or besetments to overcome. If we are not careful we can let a physical illness and or any kind of temporal problem turn into a spiritual besetment.

To conquer the old man is a never-ending struggle, as long as we are in this mortal state. But it is a struggle we can win if we keep fighting and never give up.

Tennessee

S. K.

No Small Task

It is no small task to perfect an acceptable character. When we realize that our God is of too pure eyes to behold any degree of evil in His people, that His law is inflexible and will not bend to suit our individual taste, what an undertaking to be acceptable before Him.

But we have vowed all these things we will do and be obedient, therefore we must perform, for He has no pleasure in fools.

Every step of the narrow way into the Kingdom must be trod with much spiritual caution and prayerful self-denial. Why? The spirit is weak, and temptations are many and man in and of himself cannot direct his own steps. At every turn we must seek the wisdom of God, His counsel, His leadership.

New Jersey

L. K.

Grateful

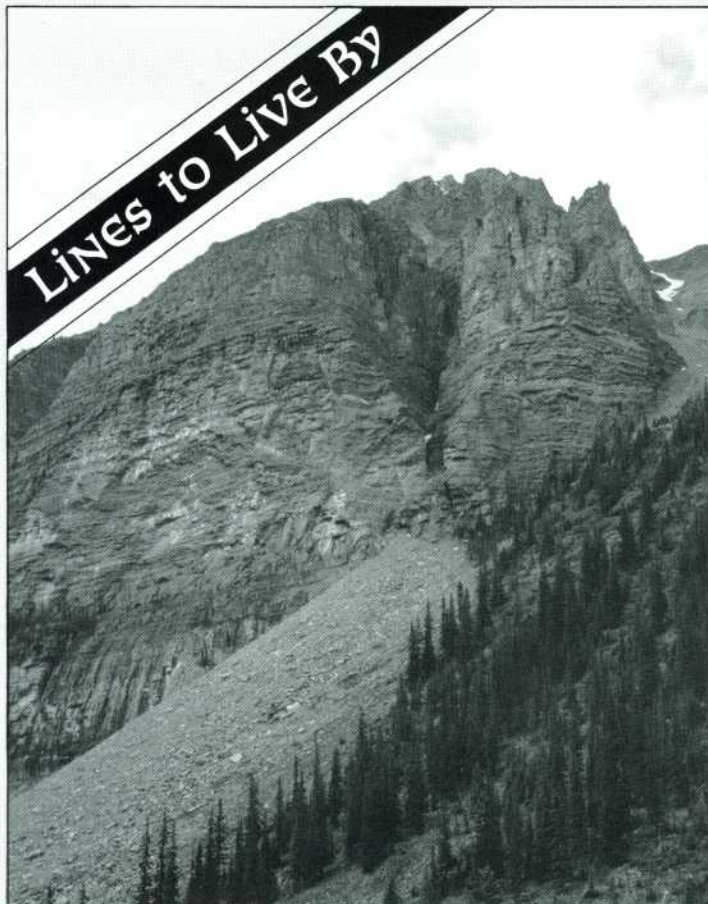
Yesterday I picked up your magazine and was so inspired by the different messages and beautiful poems that I was hoping I could read it through before I had to leave; but I didn't get to. So I decided to write for a subscription. I would love to have the latest issue if possible so that I can finish the other messages I didn't get to read.

It is good to know that you do such a good job at spreading the Gospel of our Saviour.

West Virginia

Mrs. H. K.

Lines to Live By



*LORD, give me courage to be true
To You in all I say and do.
Give me Your love to keep me sweet
To everyone I chance to meet.
Give me power to keep me strong,
Grant me Your presence all day long.
Give me the faith that all may see
How very real You are to me.
Give me wisdom to choose the best.
Help me perform each task with zest.
Give me vision to see Your plan:
Use me, Lord, wherever you can.*

Flattery corrupts both the receiver
and the giver.

*The more you do for your religion,
the more your religion will do for
you.*

The man who lives only for himself
runs a very small business.

I WONDER, how many of the amber stones of God's promises are strewn along our pathways? We stumble over them while all the time they contain the power to move mountains of difficulty, power to calm troubled emotions, and power to bring complete spiritual victory if we only exercise the faith that causes them to work for us. Through achieving faith these promises can cease being dormant and become dynamic; they cease being latent and become levers; they cease being idle and bring about the ideal.



*Don't hunt after trouble, but look for success.
You'll find what you look for; don't look for distress.
If you see but your shadow, remember, I pray,
The sun is still shining, but you're in the way!*



HE who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself,
for we all need to be forgiven.

HOW SMALL IS SMALL?



ALL matter is composed of atoms, and each atom is a tiny universe in itself, composed of a nucleus and orbiting electrons. Let us look, for example, at a single copper atom for size. It has 29 electrons orbiting around each nucleus. The 29th electron is orbiting in a path far from the nucleus and is therefore termed a valence or "free" electron; that is, it combines with other free electrons forming a vast cloud of electrons that move freely within the copper.

Within one cubic centimeter of copper there are 8.5×10 to the 22nd power free electrons (85,000 million, million, million)! Then imagine what this piece of copper may look like if we could magnify it large enough to see its structure. It would no longer look solid, but rather much like the steel skeleton of a skyscraper with the wind passing through it. This shows how very small an electron is.

Just how tiny is an electron? One electron weighs 8.999×10 to the minus 28th power grams (0.000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 899 9 grams). It baffles our minds to even begin to try to understand the minuteness of this number. Bear in mind that it was once thought that the atom was the smallest existing structure. Might we someday discover that even the electron may be subdivided?

We might compare the atom with its nucleus and orbiting electrons to the sun and its orbiting planets. The question is, where does it all "end"? Could entire galaxies be as a tiny nucleus with other masses orbiting around them to form an even larger mass which may in turn be a nucleus for even greater expansion, and on and on? We wonder...just how small are we, anyway!

We know that God has been working from the everlasting past. Our finite minds cannot even begin to appreciate His infinite work. We have yet to touch upon even its size and scope. No wonder Isaiah exclaimed, "Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust" (Isa. 40:15, NIV).

With all the evidence before us it seems that our faith would need no stimulation; but this is far from reality. We need to continually remind ourselves of our omnipotent Creator, the laws that regulate all His vast creation from the keeping of the tiniest atom to the greatest universe under His control, and we should indelibly mark in our minds the laws which are moving us forward toward the "world to come." These are the laws which He set in motion on this planet about 6,000 years ago, laws by which He would select rulers to govern the new world and rapidly populate it with joyful individuals who knowing no pain or sorrow (all the former things will be forgotten) will live abundantly above this present level of life.

May our constant prayer be, "Help us to grow in faith and godliness, laying aside the ways of the flesh and obeying Thy precepts with a perfect heart. O may Thy truth create in us a new man patterned after our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our living Example. Amen."