

# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

## The Cursed Ground

OUTGROW YOUR ENVY  
TIMELY TOPICS  
UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE  
FROM FEAR TO FAITH  
OUR NEW PAVILION  
DEEDEE THE THINKER  
MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
TO THE ETERNAL MOVER

# Megiddo Message

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L. T. NICHOLS, Founder  
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A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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# Editorially Speaking . . .

## The Elims of Life

THE CHILDREN of Israel were journeying through the wilderness. They had crossed the raging Red Sea, and were on their way to the land of promise. They had marched over the burning sands, their hearts well-nigh broken and their spirits crushed when, the narrative reads, "they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters" (Ex. 15:27).

If God's ancient people had not come to Elim that day, they might never have reached Canaan. But just in time to save them from surrender, apostasy and despair, God provided. He was watching out for His people, and at these sparkling waters their bodies were refreshed and their drooping spirits caught new courage.

God does not plan that our lives be one uninterrupted struggle. He has provided opportunities for rest and spiritual refreshing, the Elims of life. It is at these wells and beneath these palm trees that Christians are encouraged and refreshed to press on to the heights beyond.

1) The Christian home is one of God's Elims. Experiences in the world are often hard and painful. Men chafe and irritate and hurt and bite. But in the Christian home there is peace and rest and quiet, and physical and spiritual nourishment in an atmosphere of love.

I have wondered how the Master had strength that last week to continue His work. But He too had His Elim. When the "eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve" (Mark 11:11). Bethany was the Master's Elim. The spring and the palm trees were there. What the home at Bethany was to Christ our homes should be to us.

2) The place of prayer is another of our Elims. Prayer is the breath and life of the inner man. Prayer puts us in touch with the Divine. We can take our burdens to the Lord in prayer and go away with new courage and hope. The mountaintop, the wilderness, the olive garden proved to be veritable Elims to Jesus. Do you pray without ceasing? Do you delight to linger before the Lord?

3) Christian fellowship is another of our Elims. The writer of the Book of Hebrews says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is" (Heb. 10:25). Wherever and whenever possible we should strengthen each other in the Lord. How encouraging is the word of a Christian brother to the tired heart. And Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). In fellowship is refreshment.

The Israelites only encamped at Elim for a time. It was not their abiding city. Neither can we remain at our Elims, but they are God's provision for our needs, to strengthen and sustain us until we reach the end of our pilgrimage. ••

# The Cursed Ground

## PRAYER

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; may Thy Kingdom come, and Thy will be done in earth as now it is done in heaven.

O Thou eternal God, Creator of men and nations, make us into men that fear, honor, love, and serve Thee in all our ways. When we consider all the ways in which we have dishonored Thee and each other, we wonder at Thy patience. We wonder that Thou hast borne with us with all our shortcomings and failures.

Heavenly Father, free us from complacency, that we may search; free us from ignorance, that we may understand Thy will for us; free us from warlike attitudes, that we may bring peace; free us from selfishness, that we may share; free us from bigotry, that we may not think of ourselves higher than we ought to think; free us from indifference, that we may care; free us from hatred, that we may love; free us from aimlessness, that we may seek first Thy Kingdom and the righteousness that will fit us for it; free us from idolatry, that we may love and serve Thee wholeheartedly; free us from the vain philosophies of men, that we may be good stewards of Thy saving gospel; free us from egopride, that we may come before Thee in humility.

Dear Father, Thou hast warned us of the dire consequences of neglect, indifference, apostasy and rebellion. If we fall away into the ways of the flesh, if in our daily living we crucify Thy dear Son afresh, putting Him to an open shame—and persist in our evil practices until our day of opportunity expires—as the garden that bears briers and thorns, we will be rejected, and in the end feel the fire of Thy divine judgments.

Thou hast set before us a blessing and a curse, a blessing if we fulfill our sacred covenant with Thee, and a curse if we break our word. As the unfaithful Adam was driven from the "garden," so ultimately all evil covenant-makers will be driven from Thy loving service, obliged to spend their short existence in compulsory service, tilling the ground from whence they were taken, until they shall perish from the good land that could have been theirs, and be locked in eternal slumber.

Father, grant us the wisdom to take the right steps while now the day of grace is open to us, that in place of the curse we will be blest to remain in Thy service, and perpetually eat of the tree of life.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

SEPTEMBER, 1970

## DISCOURSE

ACCORDING to the Genesis narrative, God gave Adam the ground of the Garden of Eden to inhabit and enjoy. Along with this privilege He gave also certain definite and inviolable rules: ". . . the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." But the serpent, which we have found to be an illustration of mankind's lower nature, enticed Eve, and Eve enticed her husband, and they partook of the forbidden fruit; they disobeyed the command of the Lord.

Because of this disobedience, God placed a curse upon the ground. We read: "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:17—19).

Are we to believe that the potato bugs, bean beetles, aphids, and grasshoppers that plague the farmer today are all a result of the curse which God pronounced upon literal ground some 6000 years ago? Strange, isn't it, that these destructive creatures, also the thorns and thistles and purslane, multiply as rapidly on a righteous man's land as in the garden of the worst scoundrel!

The Bible is filled with symbolic language, meaningful illustrations of essential truths. Were we to take them all literally, we would find ourselves lost in a maze of contradictions and impossibilities, missing both the depth of the expression and the beauty of the illustration. But as we study them from a spiritual point of view, discussing these symbols in the light of more lucid passages of sacred Scripture, they become illustrations of divine and eternal significance.

In former articles we have compared the Garden of Eden to the Church, and its trees to men and women who are known by their fruits. Now we shall find the thorns and thistles representative of evildoers who receive God's curse—eternal death.

In God's physical creation much land is produc-

tive and beautiful—timberland, cropland, fruitland—contributing to the physical and moral sustenance of mankind. Again, much land is desolate and barren. The same is true of mankind. Every society has its wide range of humankind, from the highly productive and creative genius to the base and destructive criminal. The former we might call good ground, the latter is rough and unsuitable for cultivation. The author of Genesis is making a similar comparison.

The Almighty is not engaged in cursing literal ground, nor would a God of justice curse men and women irrespective of character; for it is plainly recorded, "The curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. 26:2). In defining the symbols which the Genesis allegory employs, the prophets, Jesus and the apostles reveal the ground to be the hearts of men, and the thorns and thistles their evil conduct.

Productive and unproductive soils are used frequently in the Bible to illustrate human worthiness. The prophet Isaiah speaks of God, the Master Gardener, as having a "vineyard in a very fruitful hill" (Isa. 5:7). He looks forward to the time when "the spirit [shall] be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field" (Isa. 32:15, 16). God has a "good land," a "pleasant land," a "fruitful field," a "land of uprightness" (Gen. 2:12; Ps. 106:24; 107:34; 143:10).

But not all of God's ground merits such complimentary description. There is also "dry land," "desert land," "barren land," "terrible land," a "land of trouble and anguish" (Jer. 51:43; Deut. 32:10; Isa. 21:1; 30:6)—characteristics caused by the human inhabitants of the literal land.

### The Parable of the Sower

We find basic information on our subject by examining Jesus' parable of the Sower. He teaches that a sower went forth to sow, and his seed fell into four types of ground: namely, "by the wayside," "upon a rock," "among thorns," and "on good ground." He explains the seed to be the Word of God, and the good ground the good and honest heart.

"That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). The seed takes root and flourishes in the good ground and produces the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22—24).

However, there are many people upon whom the seed or Word of God is cast, but has little or no effect. Of them Jesus says, "That which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14). Instead of uprooting the thorns

—anything that would hinder the expansion of God's Word in their minds and lives—they continue as before, so absorbed in the cares and pleasures of the present that the seed of the Kingdom finds no room in their minds: they bear naught but the fruits of the flesh (Gal. 5:19—21).

Such is the ground to be cursed.

The book of Hebrews records information about a class of people in whose hearts the seed of the Kingdom was planted. They were even granted special privileges to promote its growth in their lives; still they persisted in yielding only briars and thorns.

We read, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4—6). Christians of the Apostolic Age who apostatized after being made partakers of the Holy Spirit, which empowered them to raise the dead, heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, etc., giving them a taste of "the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," these Christians could not be restored again to the Church. Having experienced and demonstrated supernatural power, they by their apostasy committed the unpardonable sin. (In the absence of the Holy Spirit power today, the unpardonable sin cannot be committed.)

We read further in Hebrews 6, "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned" (vs. 7, 8). Privileged to enjoy heaven's richer blessing, such ground should have yielded in abundance the fruit of the Spirit; but bearing only briars and thorns, it was rejected, and justly so; it was "nigh unto cursing."

### Causes of the Curse

Every divinely pronounced curse has a just cause, for as we quoted earlier, "the curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. 26:2). Justice and judgment are the habitation of God's throne (Ps. 89:14), therefore He cannot curse except as mankind opens the way by transgressing His laws. Every curse from God is a penalty for the wilful transgression of the man upon whom the curse falls. The same was true of the curse in Eden.

In Moses' final address to the Israelites before they entered the land of Canaan, the terms of God's contract were clearly stated: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye

will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God" (Deut. 11:26—28). Such are the terms under which we labor today; God will not retract from His position. Anything short of full obedience is disobedience, which inevitably brings the curse.

The Wise Man says, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just" (Prov. 3:33). Here the cause of the curse is *wickedness*.

The law states: "Trust in the Lord," and "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help" (Prov. 3:5; Ps. 146:3). Jeremiah records, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (17:5): Here the cause of the curse is *misdirected trust*.

Further in Jeremiah we read, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully ['negligently,' margin]" (48:10). In this case *deceit* or negligence causes the curse.

Paul's letter to the Galatians enumerates the works of the flesh as, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Then he informs us plainly that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (5:19—21). Such worthless "ground" merits only the curse of God.

Further Paul says, "Fornication and indecency of any kind, or ruthless greed, must not be so much as mentioned among you, as befits the people of God. No coarse, stupid, or flippant talk; these things are out of place; you should rather be thanking God. For be very sure of this: no one given to fornication or indecency, or the greed which makes an idol of gain, has any share in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:2—4, NEB). And he adds, "it is for all these things that God's dreadful judgment is coming upon his rebel subjects. Have no part or lot with them" (v. 6). Unless we as tillers of the soil root out these noxious weeds, our "ground" is subject to the curse of Almighty God.

#### Wicked Men as Thorns

In all ages God has prescribed for His people a code of ethics infinitely higher than the human standard of moral principles. To aid His people in conforming to divine law He has decreed that they live apart from the surrounding world, that they refrain from social and political entanglements.

Such was Joshua's advice to Israel in his farewell address: "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; . . . Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant

of these nations, . . . know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you" (Joshua 23:6—13).

It had been planned that Israel should go on and complete the conquest of Canaan, but soon after the death of Joshua that divine goal was set aside while Israel made friends with the Canaanites, compromised and fraternized with them and tolerated their heathenish way of life. Every day the people violated the prime ordinance of the Ten Commandments by bowing to the strange, false gods—Baal and Ashteroth, at whose altars they sacrificed—whose help they besought, so that, when war overtook them, they went down to defeat. The Lord was true to His word through Joshua: Because of the degeneracy of Israel, He no longer drove out the nations; they remained as thorns to vex and distress apostate Israel (Judges 2:1—3).

#### The Faithful Among Thorns

David found Israel in chaos; he left it a well-organized monarchy. However, not without many years of storm and stress, of war and bloodshed, of political complications and even a brief usurpation of the throne by his own son, was this state achieved. Thus it was that after forty years of encounter with so wayward and rebellious an element, he was led to exclaim, "The sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: but the man that shall touch them must be fenced [armed] with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place" (II Sam. 23:6, 7).

The author in Young's *Analytical Concordance* offers enlightenment regarding the "sons of Belial." He says, "Belial should not be regarded as a proper name. It is generally associated with the words 'man,' 'son,' 'daughter,' or 'children.' Hence 'son' or 'man' of Belial, simply means 'a worthless person.'" The English equivalent of the Hebrew word is "worthless, reckless, lawless."

The "sons of Belial" are timeless characters, belonging to no certain age. Whenever "worthless, reckless, lawless," individuals bring irritation to the servants of God, the "sons of Belial" are the thorns inflicting the pain.

Because of their persistent and continuous annoyance, the prophets of Jehovah who dwelt among an oftentimes stiffnecked and rebellious people had to be spiritually fortified to withstand them. Jeremiah was not sent to warn Israel of the oncoming Captivity, the consequence of their apostasy, without first being divinely girded to endure their piercing and stinging rebuttal. The Lord said, "I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole

land" (Jer. 1:17, 18), which was thickly populated with the thorny element.

In Babylon, the Jews seemed slow to develop a clear realization that their captivity was the direct result of disobedience. Ezekiel's appointment as pastor of the exiles and watchman of the house of Israel, made it his duty to convince them of this fact. By way of preparation for the task, the Lord said unto him, "Thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house" (Ezek. 2:6). These were the spiritual thorns and briars.

Not only did David, Jeremiah and Ezekiel encounter thorns and thistles, but we find this to be the portion of all of God's faithful ministers through the ages. In Song of Solomon 2:1, 2, we read, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." The Song of Solomon expresses the love of Christ for the Church. In the passage quoted, His Church, or Bride, is likened to a pure and fragrant lily among thorns. True indeed, there is no escape from the thorns in this mortal vale. As long as sin exists in the heart, in the home, or anywhere in the circle of our daily intercourse with one another, we are certain to feel the irritating prickle of thorns and thistles. It is important, it is *vital*, however, that we be the *lily* among thorns, not the *thorns* among lilies.

Paul, greatest of the apostles, found escape from his thorn impossible. Thrice he besought the Lord that it might be removed, but the answer was returned, "My grace is sufficient for thee." That thorn, that "messenger of Satan to buffet" (II Cor. 12:7—9), was necessary for his spiritual development, that he might the tighter gird the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, for it should be remembered that thorns cannot reach to pierce and wound the heart of the follower of Christ who is fully clad with God's invincible armor.

#### Two Pictures: Today . . .

Portraying national and international conditions of this age, the prophet Micah gives briars and thorns a place of prominence in the picture. We read, "The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge" (7:2—4). How forceful are the words of this prophecy, and how exactly it is fulfilled! Men have always done evil with one

hand, but what a flood of wickedness almost submerges the nations as men and women daringly commit iniquity wholesale—"with both hands earnestly."

Perhaps Dr. Moffatt's rendering of the passage is still more expressive of the corruption, the unfairness, the cruelty of human administrations today: "The devout have vanished from the land, not an honest soul remains; everyone lurks for bloodshed, each man preys upon his fellow. They have quick fingers for foul play; the judge must handle a bribe, the high official acts as he pleases, and between them they baffle justice. The best of them are no better than briars, the straightest are like thorns twisted in a hedge."

This appalling condition—the increase of crime, the collapse of morals, the disintegration of the home, the overwhelmingly ruinous lawlessness, the national and international disregard of authority—all has its source and rootage in the human heart where thorns of evil desire have grown unchallenged and unrestrained, and will continue to do so until they are destroyed by earth's coming King of righteousness.

#### . . . Tomorrow

Looking into the future after the coming of Christ, we see another picture unsurpassed in loveliness—no injustice or oppression, no crime or violence, no war or destruction to mar the scene; in fact, there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy (Isa. 11:9). And why? Evildoers shall be cut off—the thorns that nettle, the briars that sting, shall be eliminated.

We find the fate of the cursed ground to be like that of the thorns and thistles. "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" (Isa. 24:5, 6). By divine decree, the physical earth shall endure forever (Eccl. 1:4). It is the inhabitants—those who transgress God's laws—that are the "earth" destined to be destroyed.

Besides foreseeing the cursing of the ground, Isaiah also envisioned the destruction of the thorns at the Messianic advent. We read, "Wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briars and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke. Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire" (Isa. 9:18, 19). Isaiah again pictures the destruction of the thorns and briars: "Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his

Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day; and shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them" (Isa. 10:16—19). His destroying the thorns and briers and forests "both soul and body" characterizes them definitely as human beings.

According to Zechariah the prophet, this is to be the fate of two-thirds of earth's inhabitants—the incorrigible element that refuses to submit to divine authority (Zech. 13:8).

The choicest promises in the Book describe the glorious future age that will result from the destruction of the thorns and briers and the filling of the earth with pleasant, righteous plants. We read in Ezekiel 28:24—26, "And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them: and they shall know that I am the Lord God. Thus saith the Lord God: When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God."

#### In Summary

What was the curse upon Adam? "Cursed is the

ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground" (Gen. 3:17—19).

These words picture the unhappy fate of all who, like Adam, are disobedient, unfaithful to their sacred covenant with God. At the coming of Christ, they shall receive the curse of divine disapproval, condemned forever by the judge of all the earth. They wasted their day of opportunity, growing thorns and thistles where they should have been cultivating righteousness; thus, they shall spend the remainder of their days "in sorrow." They can never partake of the joys of the faithful. Theirs shall be the lot of servitude. They are the "sword" of the Lord, with which He shall smite the nations (Ps. 17:13). Theirs shall be the yoke of iron with which Christ shall subdue all nations, a yoke which they shall wear until they perish.

On that auspicious Day when God calls to Judgment all who have agreed to serve Him, when the sheep are separated from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the trees of righteousness from the thorns and briers, all that ground which has not yielded to the full cultivation of the Master Gardener will be cursed. And at the end of the Millennial reign of Christ, when all workers of iniquity are finally removed and none but the trees of righteousness remain, the cursed ground of Genesis shall be brought to its final consummation and only the good ground shall remain, to bring forth fruit in abundance throughout the ages of eternity. ••

## Outgrow Your Envy

CONSIDER well these words of the Lord's messenger:

"Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" (Mal. 3:14).

Breathes there a man with soul so great that he has never entertained the feeling herein described? Think well before answering, and be honest with yourself.

This envy of the ungodly seems to be a phase which at some time touches virtually every life, stubborn and insistent in some cases, mild and transitory in others. To a few the emotion may be subconscious, though disturbingly so; to more it

is a painfully evident and indwelling fact. Part of the difference may be attributed to temperamental variations; still more to the degree of faith and depth of conviction.

In the first flush of enthusiasm, God's way may seem a wonderful way in which to travel; but when the going gets rugged, when the discipline of the law of God strikes a cherished propensity, an unchanged taste is likely to cause us to murmur, "And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea they that tempt God are even delivered" (Mal. 3:15). At such times we fail to look to the end of the matter.

The psalmist David, that all-too-human character to whom we are indebted for so much that is beautiful and inspiring, was frank to confess that this had once been his frame of mind. A dangerous con-

dition he found it, too. "But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. . . . They have more than heart could wish" (Ps. 73:2, 3, 5, 7).

There was much that is true in his complaint. While the ungodly have troubles and problems which do not appear to the observer whose view is clouded by envy, still they do have a degree of prosperity and earthly consolations, of riches and power, which for very good reasons may be denied the travelers of the strait and narrow path of self-sacrifice. The difficulty is in seeing the reasons. As Paul once wrote, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterwards"—ah, yes! *afterwards*. In the longer view, the outcome of it all, is what makes the effort worthwhile. It was the "afterward" which proved the Psalmist's salvation, as he relates in Ps. 73:17, "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end."

The desire for immediate interest on investment is a plague which affects all classes of humanity and every branch of activity. The speculator expects his shares to rocket in value from the day of their purchase. The "reducer" is grieved when the scales fail to show a loss of ten pounds at the end of the first week of the diet. The junior gardener digs up his seeds to see if they have sprouted. Even in religion, millions are taught to expect salvation at the beginning, rather than at the end of the race. One of the stern lessons of the Christian life is that the eternal rewards are not for the quick-profit speculator but for the long-term investor, the individual willing to invest his entire lifetime in the King's business, who can learn to labor and to wait. Such a one will never say, "My lord delayeth his coming." Nor will he say, "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?"

When the disciples, in a mood of reflection, came to Jesus recounting their sacrifices, and inquiring, "What shall we have therefore?" He promised them, in addition to eternal life, a hundredfold in this present time; but nowhere did He intimate that this comes at the very beginning. Far from it. For one thing, we are naturally in no condition to receive it; our hands are not clean enough to hold the blessings of the Eternal. Our tastes are such that we would not recognize the "hundredfold." Much of it we might not even like.

We must learn again and again the elemental truth that we cannot have everything, only a choice of things.

What do we want? We shall find ourselves encumbered with a great deal of "excess baggage," of which we must divest ourselves, before the hundredfold of blessings can be realized.

The future is the all-important matter, for this life is short, and eternity is very long. The hundredfold in this life can certainly be attained, but only when we throw our whole soul and mind and body into the quest of righteousness and eternal life. With our tastes and relationships changed from human to divine standards, from self-seeking to God-honoring, we would not change places with those whom we once envied for all the world. Happiness eludes us when we pursue it with a selfish motive, but walks close by our side when we lose ourselves in a higher service. Peace of mind comes by the pursuit of truth, regardless of consequences.

It all adds up to one fact: "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39). In other words: Absorb yourself in this present life, and you will lose the world to come; or—lose your life in the service of God that you may find it in the Kingdom of God. ••

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## Timely Topics

ONE OF the very important signs of these last days of Gentile times is the prevalence of excessive drinking and its tragic consequences. With opinion even among religious leaders so widely divided as to the propriety of drinking, what should our attitude be? Should we engage in occasional social drinking? a glass of beer, perhaps, with a friend, or a glass of wine with our dinner?

These are questions to which a young person today may find it difficult to obtain an honest answer. On one hand are the **Alcoholism** brewery and distilling interests, so powerful and (I dislike to say) unscrupulous that anything which furthers their monetary gain, regardless of the consequences, is recommended as the "in" thing. Even respectable people think it perfectly all right to drink, if not to excess. On the other hand are the fanatics who refuse to drink anything from a bottle, even though it be a milk bottle.

Before answering any of these questions or attempting to establish Christian guidelines, let us note some of the evil effects of drinking.

We quote from a recent advertisement of the National Safety Council:

"Nothing adds color to our highways like a car crash. And drunk drivers are involved in at least

800,000 crashes a year. And drunk drivers are involved in the killing of at least 25,000 people a year. Highways don't have to be this colorful. It's up to you. Drunk drivers, problem drinkers, and abusive drinkers may be sick and need your help. But first we've got to get them off the road. For their sake and yours. Do something. Get in touch with the National Safety Council. *Scream bloody murder.*"

A Continental Insurance ad in a current issue of *U. S. News and World Report* projects this information: "Drunk drivers will kill half of the approximately 56,000 people who will die in traffic accidents this year."

According to a recent National Survey by George Washington University, "there are at least nine million adult Americans who are alcoholics." Housewives and mothers in suburbia seem to be the fastest growing group to succumb to the perils of alcoholism. When husbands and fathers became chronically drunk, it deprived the family of many of the necessities of life. It was the cause of much unhappiness, and was a bad example to the children growing up. But the children still had the support and encouragement of the mother. But when the mother loses her restraint and becomes a problem drinker, the children are neglected and abused, family life is disrupted completely, divorce is common and suicide frequent. This condition is by no means limited to the disadvantaged segment of society, it can be found in many affluent neighborhoods.

An article by Albert Q. Maisel, published this year by *The Reader's Digest* (Vol. 96, No. 578), gives this astonishing information: "It is a fact of life in present-day America that more than 85 million adults—about 79 percent of all men and 63 percent of all women—drink alcoholic beverages. One drinker in 18 (more than 4,800,000 Americans) is an outright alcoholic. Four to five million more are "heavy" drinkers—meaning their alcohol consumption is great enough and frequent enough to cause serious personal problems. That leaves more than 75 million who are so-called moderate or social drinkers."

The article states further than *any* consumption of alcoholic beverage causes some irreplaceable loss of brain cells. "The only real difference between his [the moderate drinker's] loss of brain tissue and that of the heavy drinker is one of degree."

Consider these figures from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1966 edition): "It is safe to say that there are in the U. S. alone over 4000 alcoholics per 100,000 of the adult population admitted to hospitals annually." The World Health Organization estimates indicate that alcoholism is widespread in western countries. Data (approximate for 1953) of the Number of Alcoholics, proportional to the population, show that the United States leads, followed in descending order by France, Sweden,

Switzerland, Denmark, Canada, Norway, Chile, Finland, Australia, England and Wales, and finally Italy. In addition to the moral and physical consequences of drinking are others. There is the physical damage to the drinker himself. These range from the more moderate symptoms of nausea and vomiting, fever and rapid heart rate and impairment of brain function, to the extremely debilitating effects of liver damage, convulsions, hallucinations and even delirium tremens.

The origin of distilled beverage is obscure. In China, a fermented liquor was made from rice, and in Ceylon and India a drink was made from rice and molasses or palm sap before 800 B. C. In ancient Egypt, both rich and poor drank beer. In the days of Cicero, the Romans disregarded his advice to "Eat to live, not live to eat" and at their banquets, reclining on couches would eat and drink for hours. We cannot help but loathe the disgusting scene. It was during a feast when King Belshazzar and guests were drinking wine that the Babylonian Empire was lost to the Medes and Persians. Alexander the Great, who was able to conquer the civilized world before the age of 33, died from a fever induced by his uncontrollable thirst for wine. It has been said that the reason France was defeated by the Germans in World War II was that its army was drunk. We might cite many instances of crimes of all kinds committed while under the influence of alcohol. The newspapers are full of accounts of crimes—murder, rape, criminal negligence—that follow drinking sprees.

Just recently a Portland, Oregon youth was killed after climbing over a protective fence and kicking at a lioness. The youth and his two companions had been drinking beer.

What does the Bible have to say about this very important subject? We have one outstanding example in the prophet Daniel. As a captive in Babylon at the king's palace, he was appointed a daily portion of the king's meat and of the wine which he drank. But "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank" (Dan. 1:8). Following the experiment which Daniel and his companions requested, their countenances appeared "fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat" (v. 15).

In the 20th chapter of Proverbs we read, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (v. 1). And again in chapter 23 we read: "Be not among winebibbers; among riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: ... Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it

is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (vs. 20, 21, 29-32).

Again we read in chapter 31: "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy heart" (v. 6).

From these verses it would seem that the drinking of wine or any intoxicating beverage is condemned. What about the water which Jesus turned to wine at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2)? Was wine always condemned? Certainly drinking to excess or to the point of drunkenness is undeniably forbidden the Christian. And of one point we may be sure: Jesus would never produce a drink that would intoxicate those partaking of it. The purpose of the miracle at Cana was to demonstrate the power of God and confirm the words He was preaching. There is some evidence to support the theory that not all wine spoken of in the Bible was fermented. Approximately thirteen different Greek and Hebrew words are translated "wine" in the King James Version. And without going into research which is outside the scope of this article, it seems plausible that several of them refer to grape juice. Some refer to wine diluted with water, popular with the Greeks. The Bible Dictionary states that "new wine" was "preserved in the state of 'must' [unfermented] by placing it in jars or bottles and then burying it in the earth." This is most likely the kind of wine Jesus furnished in the miracle.

As for the consumption of wine, Paul's advice to Timothy should answer our questions: "Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (I Tim. 5:22). Notice that it is only a *little wine*, and that for "often infirmities"; not as a beverage but as a medicine. But should we be tempted to go beyond the prescribed amount and acquire a taste for liquor as a stimulant or a beverage, we should abstain wholly. The familiar saying is apropos: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

The Christian has dedicated his life, his body, his mind, his all to the service of the Lord. If his mind is even slightly benumbed by alcohol, he cannot adequately control his actions. Therefore the Megiddo Church believes in total abstinence from all alcohol, the only exception being its use as prescribed by a doctor as a medicine. Paul gives one safe guideline: "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). ••

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God makes us a loan of time, and we must give Him an account of how we used it. It is not our business to "kill" time, but to use every moment of it. There will never be another minute like right now.

## Words to WALK By

The chains of habit are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken.

*The most inflammable kind of wood is the chip on the shoulder.*

There is always a reason for anger, but never a good one.

*Anger is quieted by a gentle word just as fire is quenched by water.*

Most footprints in the sands of time were made with work shoes.

*We are not fit for triumph if we can't endure the discipline of toil.*

No man is as empty as the man who is full of himself.

*When you take responsibility on your shoulders, there is not much room for chips.*

Most of us know how to say nothing—few of us know when.

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## Obituary

John P. Boyd

On the seventh of July death came suddenly and peacefully to a friend, brother and long-time subscriber to the MEGIDDO MESSAGE, John P. Boyd. Though often called an enemy, death for our brother wore a less terrible guise, coming as an agent of relief from many years of ill health and affliction. Nevertheless, he shall be missed.

Our brother's first acquaintance with our church came through his response to a small advertisement in a local paper. Impressed by the sound doctrine contained in our literature, he subscribed to the MESSAGE, corresponded steadily and faithfully with other interested brethren, and with his sister made several visits to the Megiddo Mission headquarters in Rochester, N. Y.

Brother Boyd is survived by his sister, Mrs. Lillian R. Walton of Carrollton, Ohio, with whom he made his home for many years; also two nephews, Homer C. Walton, and John T. Walton.

Funeral services were conducted July 9 at the Sweeney Funeral Home in Carrollton, Ohio, by our assistant pastor, Brother Newton H. Payne. Interment was in Westview Cemetery. ••

# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Kingdom of God

**H**OW MANY hours did you ever spend reading a dictionary? or a thesaurus? or an encyclopedia of dates and days? Imagine how much zeal you would give to your Bible study if all the facts in this book were presented in such a style. Be it ever so lucid and comprehensible, it would lack much in capturing power. Such a book could neither inspire nor absorb.

Such a method did not suit the noble purposes of God. Instead, He has supervised the creation of a literary masterpiece, complete with allegory, parable, picture and portrait. From His limitless resources He has drawn countless illustrations and figures to impress, stimulate and encourage our human minds and interests. The more we read, the more we want to read. The more we understand, the more we are capable of understanding.

Especially is this true in our present course of study: The Kingdom of God. Bible illustrations of the Kingdom, that glorious destiny of all human history, the ultimate purpose of creation, are far too numerous to enumerate. Nevertheless, we shall discuss a few, following our outline of study:

- IV. Bible Illustrations Reveal the Kingdom
  - A. The Genesis Allegory—A Type
  - B. The Mosaic Tabernacle Arrangement—A Type
  - C. The Kingdom Portrayed in the Psalms
  - D. The Kingdom as Seen by the Prophets

These illustrations are only a few starting points. From these you may expand your study to include more and more of God's marvelous revelations to the children of men.

## IV. BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS REVEAL THE KINGDOM

### A. The Genesis Allegory—A Type

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This, the first verse of the Bible, is generally understood to pertain to the creation of the literal heavens and earth. That God did create the literal heavens and earth we do not deny; but we are not told when. We believe that these words—as well as the entire first three chapters of Genesis—are but an introduction to God's plan of the ages, beginning with His first call to man and

concluding with His eternal Kingdom established on this earth. This plan for the ultimate salvation of man is told in Bible symbolism. We will review these symbols only briefly since they have been explained in detail in a series of articles in the **Megiddo Message** beginning with the January, 1970, issue.

1. **The heavens and earth of Genesis.** We understand the **heavens** to be composed of **Christ the head and the church His body**, the ultimate rulers over the earth, the people over whom they rule. This terminology is not foreign to Scriptural usage. Isaiah 1:1, 2, 10 employs it. "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, . . . Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah." Here the kings of Judah are addressed as **heavens** first and then as **rulers**.

The use of the term "**earth**" for the people to be ruled over is also employed in the same verse. The subjects are first referred to as **earth**, then as **people**. These will be the new heavens and new earth spoken of in Isaiah 65:17 and as referred to in II Peter 3:13: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

2. **The two lights of Genesis.** "And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night." The **lesser light** of this verse represents the Word of God and those who bear the light by allowing it to shine out through their lives. In this study we are more concerned with the **greater light** that is said to rule the day. This light is **Christ**, the sovereign ruler of God's Kingdom when it is set up on this earth. The **day** over which He shall rule is the Day of the Lord which will begin with His return to earth. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12), the Day when the "Sun of righteousness [shall] arise with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:2).

3. **The man made in God's image.** It is apparent to all that today's inhabitants of the earth are not made in God's image, hence a literal interpretation of this Scripture is impossible. The man of Genesis 1:26 that is in God's image is a composite man composed of Christ the Head and the Church, His body. They are being created in preparation for the establishment of the Kingdom. To be made in God's

image necessitates knowing what God requires in His Word and then putting that knowledge into practice to become Godlike, as it is written: "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Pet. 1:16). Then we shall receive the physical change to immortality (I Cor. 15:50—56), be made equal to the angels.

4. **The garden of Eden.** Men have searched the world for the garden in which God placed the first man that He made. They have looked for a literal garden, but this expression cannot be understood literally since it is a part of an allegory, symbolic of the spiritual garden or vineyard of the Lord, in which people are being cultivated to become "heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him" (Jas. 2:5). This garden is described in Isa. 5:7: "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant."

5. **Adam and Eve in the garden.** We learn in Genesis 2 and 3 that God placed a man and a woman in the garden. Adam and Eve, believed by the religious world to be the first two people to live on the earth, are merely symbolic of the first of earth's inhabitants to be called to enter His Kingdom. They are representative of men and women of earth, both faithful and unfaithful, who have covenanted to serve Him, their reward to be determined when the Kingdom is come.

6. **The six days of creation and the day of rest.** We learn from Genesis that God finished His work in six days and rested the seventh day. The six days of labor represented six thousand years during which men and women are being created "in righteousness and true holiness" to form the multitudinous man that will be given dominion over the earth at the end of the six thousand years. The one-thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints over the mortal nations permits the Almighty to rest on the seventh day. The rule for figuring prophetic time is found in II Pet. 3:8. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

## B. The Mosaic Tabernacle Arrangement—A Type

The law as given to Moses for the purpose of educating and civilizing the children of Israel, known as the **Mosaic Law**, made extensive use of symbols and types. It contained a ritual of sacrifice and altar, a priesthood and a tabernacle arrangement. These ancient symbols are of value to us as "having a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1), for we read that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4). We will discuss these symbols and their relationship to the Kingdom.

1. **The Sabbath law.** While the Sabbath law was given to Israel for the purpose of protecting the people from a life of incessant toil, it was also of deeper significance. Not only did it give the people

a day of rest at the end of six days of labor, but it also typified God's plan. According to the Genesis allegory, God purposed to work for six one-thousand-year days and rest during the seventh. This thousand-year rest, also known as the **Millennium**, follows Christ's return to earth. In observing the literal sabbath, Israel would be perpetually reminded of the better enduring rest to come as recorded in Rev. 20:4, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

2. **The Priesthood.** As in the Sabbath, in the priesthood there is a pattern or symbol of God's eternal plan. The **Levitical Priesthood**, appointed at the time of the Exodus, served the nation both in matters civil and spiritual in a capacity similar to the **Royal Priesthood** which shall guide the mortal nations during the Millennium. Just as each member of the Levitical Priesthood had to conform to the standards of the Mosaic Law, so must the members of the Royal Priesthood conform to the standards of God's royal law.

a. **The High Priest.** Under the Law, the descendants of Aaron were to be the priests. Aaron, brother of Moses, was the first high priest. The office of high priest is symbolic of the office of Christ, mentioned by the writer to the Hebrews as our "great high priest" (Heb. 4:14, 15). In the time of Moses, Aaron, the high priest, went into the holy place alone and returned to bless the people. Christ, our High Priest, has entered into heaven alone, to return with blessings for His people. Just as the people under the law were prohibited from entering the most holy place with the high priest, so are we today prohibited from following Christ, our High Priest, into heaven to receive our reward. Christ said: "Whither I go, ye cannot come," but He added "I will come again." Thus we must await the arrival of our High Priest to receive the blessing.

3. **The Tabernacle.** In ancient times the tabernacle, established under the Law of Moses, pointed forward to God's future Kingdom. The tabernacle was made according to the exact specifications given to Moses on Sinai. It served the people throughout the forty years, but it ultimately gave way to the temple constructed by Solomon. Moses erected the first tabernacle according to the pattern and sanctified Aaron and his sons as its ministers. Thereafter the tabernacle directed Israel in their journeyings until they entered the Promised Land (Exodus 40). This typifies God's plan in which 6,000 years are required to erect a spiritual tabernacle and sanctify a royal priesthood. When this is accomplished Christ will return as High Priest and take over the direction of this earth. Throughout the Millennium this spiritual tabernacle, the antitype of the first, shall be the guide of the mortal nations.

### C. The Kingdom Portrayed in the Psalms

Many of the Psalms of David contain beautiful word pictures of the Kingdom of God. Others picture the necessary judgments of God at Christ's coming. Psalm 15 is titled by the translators: "David describeth a citizen of Zion." Zion is representative of the perfect state of the Kingdom of God. We will review a few of these Psalms.

1. **Psalms of the glories of the Kingdom.** Psalm 93 describes the majesty of the kingdom: "The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved. Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting. . . . holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever" (vs. 1, 2, 5).

a. **Psalm 89 pictures Christ the King reigning:** "For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted" (vs. 18, 14, 17).

b. **Psalm 22 pictures Christ's ultimate triumph and the establishment of the Kingdom.** Verses 27 and 28 are plain: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations."

2. **Psalms picturing God's righteous judgments.** The Psalmist was acquainted with the necessity of God's judgments upon the earth before the Kingdom could be established. This fact was included in many of his Psalms, but we will mention only a few.

"He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment." "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." "The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob." "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth" (Ps. 72:2; 89:14; 99:4; 67:4).

3. **Psalms that picture other aspects of the Kingdom.** Psalm 2 gives a vivid description of another step in the establishment of the Kingdom: **The joining of the nations of earth to resist the new government.** "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (vs. 2, 3). The Almighty is said to "laugh" at man's futile attempt and the following verses picture the King established in Zion.

**The destruction of the wicked**, another vital part in setting up the Kingdom, is found in many Psalms. Ps. 92:7 and 9 show the end of the wicked, as do Ps. 145:20; 146:9; 147:6 and many others.

The Psalmist knew that the earth was not to be left desolate, for he portrays the righteous as "flourishing." Ps. 92:12 says "the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." Other Psalms give the same thought with slightly different wording.

In connection with the study of the Kingdom it would be well to read and study carefully all of the following Psalms: 2, 15, 24, 72, 92, 97, 99, and 145. They contain word pictures of many and varied phases in the development of the Kingdom of God.

### D. The Kingdom as Seen By the Prophets

That God would one day have a King and a Kingdom on this earth was known to the earliest of His prophets; and the words God gave to them, they wrote for our learning. We will review briefly some of these prophecies.

1. **Isaiah foresees both the King and the Kingdom.** Isaiah, the first of the major prophets, prophesied that a Child should be born to a virgin. This prophecy, in Isa. 7:14 is most familiar. And in chapter 9:6, 7, he tells in detail the offices He will fill in the future. These prophecies have been covered in detail in the series on Jesus Christ. "Great shall the dominion be, and boundless the peace bestowed on David's throne and on his kingdom, to establish it and sustain it with justice and righteousness from now and for evermore" (Isa. 9:7, NEB). Isaiah foretold a kingdom of peace and righteousness as did the Psalmist before him. Again in chapter eleven he pictures this righteous Kingdom when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9).

Isaiah also gives us other important clues to the setting up of the Kingdom. Chapters 25 and 26 should be read in entirety. Significant facts contained in them are:

a. The world in general will not learn to do right until God's judgments are in the earth (Isa. 26:9, 10).

b. Death will be swallowed up in victory and there will be no more sorrow when the Kingdom is come (Isa. 25:8).

c. Christ will come to His waiting people and bring salvation with Him (Isa. 26:9).

d. There shall be a resurrection of the dead in that Day (Isa. 26:19).

e. A time of trouble will be necessary before this state can be brought about, but God's people will be protected (Isa. 26:20, 21).

Isaiah 32 through 35 should also be read in entirety. They contain more detail about the Kingdom. In chapter 35 Isaiah saw in vision the time when the Kingdom is established and all is joy and gladness.

2. **Jeremiah's prophecies of the King and the Kingdom.** As with Isaiah, the prophecies of Jere-

miah concerning the King have been covered in the lessons on Jesus Christ. They are found in Jer. 23: 5, 6 and 33:14, 15. Both of these prophecies picture Christ as a King who shall reign and "shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." That it is yet future is shown by the following verse (Jer. 33:16): "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely." And through Jeremiah, God gave His assurance that the prophecy is as sure as that day follows night! (Jer. 33:20).

**3. Daniel's vision of the Kingdom.** Daniel was one of the captives carried away to Babylon when the Kingdom of Judah fell to Nebuchadnezzar. God gave him special insight to interpret dreams and in so doing he revealed much about the Kingdom. In chapter 2 he interprets the king's dream. Study the chapter, also chapter 7. In the second chapter the four world empires that would rise and fall are represented by an image made of different substances; in the seventh chapter they are represented by four beasts. The four world kingdoms represented are:

a. **Babylon.** In the course of the interpretation of the dream, Daniel said to the king: "Thou art this head of gold" (Dan. 2:38). In the vision of the four beasts Babylon was represented as "a lion, and had eagle's wings" (Dan. 7:4). The Babylonian kingdom fell about 561 B. C.

b. **Medo-Persia.** This kingdom, formed by the joining of the Medes and Persians, conquered Babylon and became the next great world power. It is represented by the silver in the image (Dan. 2:32) and as a bear in Dan. 7:5. The kingdom of Medo-Persia fell about 331 B. C.

c. **Greece.** Greece became a world power when Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire. Alexander's glory was short-lived. Eight years later he died, however, the kingdom continued under his four generals for some time. The kingdom of Greece is represented by the brass in the image (Dan. 2:39) and by a leopard in Dan. 7:6. The leopard is described as having four wings and four heads, representative of Alexander's four generals who took over his kingdom at his death. The kingdom of Greece continued until conquered by Rome in about 149 B. C.

d. **Rome.** Rome, the fourth and last of the great world empires, was gaining strength while Greece's strength was declining. Rome became a great power when she conquered Greece. The Roman kingdom is represented by the iron and clay of the image (Dan. 2:33) and by an unnamed beast, "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly" in Dan. 7:7. Rome, as a kingdom, or the Roman Empire fell in A. D. 565, but its remnants remain today.

The stone of Dan. 2:34 which was "cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet" is significant. Note in verse 35 that "the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." This stone is representa-

tive of Christ and the saints who will be the means of filling the earth with the glory of the Lord, a righteous, immortal people. Hence, the stone is said to grow until it becomes a great mountain that fills the earth. This is the **fifth kingdom that shall never be destroyed**—God's Kingdom. It is the one of which Daniel prophesied: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (2:44).

**4. Other prophets foretell the Kingdom.** Every prophet of the Old Testament had something to say regarding the future Kingdom. Their prophecies are too numerous to cover all. We will mention a few of the most outstanding:

a. **Zechariah** covered many aspects of that future time. He points out Jerusalem as the capital city of the earth, relating it to the coming of Christ (Zech. 2:10—12); he tells of the many that will go up to Jerusalem to seek the Lord (Zech. 8:20—23); he pictures Armageddon, when all nations are gathered against Jerusalem and the end result of the Lord being King over all the earth (Zech. 14:2, 9).

b. **Micah** also prophesied of this same time. He saw in vision the Lord's house established in Jerusalem and many people seeking the Lord as did Zechariah (4:1, 2), and in verse 3 he pictures a time of peace when war implements are turned to farm implements and "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

c. **Ezekiel**, a prophet of the captivity, had a vision of God's Word, the water of life, spreading over the whole earth. Read Ezek. 47:1—12. At first the Word is represented by water coming out from under the house of the Lord. The waters rise and spread until they become "a river that could not be passed over." ••

To be a messenger you must know the message.

## TEST YOURSELF

1. What details of God's Kingdom plan does Genesis reveal?
2. Discuss briefly Daniel's preview of the Kingdom.
3. How did the Mosaic arrangement typify the Kingdom?
4. Discuss Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

*Reprints of these studies are available upon request.*

# From Fear to Faith

## WHY FEAR?

We can be sure of three things: 1) Whatever our Lord commands us, He really means us to do. 2) Whatever he commands is for our good always. 3) Whatever He commands, He is able and willing to enable us to do.

We must obey all of His commands, whatever our feelings or wishes to the contrary, if we desire the eternal blessings of the Lord. And one of these commands is plainly stated, "Fear not, little flock." There is no qualification, no exception, no modification. Fear makes a definite breach between God and ourselves. Yet when we grow fearful—of the world, the future, or even of ourselves—how often we double our guilt by excusing as infirmity and natural weakness that which is really disobedience! No wonder we are left to suffer the fruit of our own thoughts when we do not even recognize our unbelief, much less overpower it.

But praise the Lord for His merciful kindness! He does not let His children go on comfortably when they wander from Him! That wretched mental nausea, a sense of discomfort and restlessness, a misgiving that something is wrong, though we can't say what, which results from a rightly educated conscience—these should be definite warnings to us of our waywardness.

## Why do we become fearful of heart?

Fear develops when we feel weak. It may be that we have come to see ourselves hedged in on all sides by foes, with no seeming way of escape. Like the children of Israel at the Red Sea, we are tempted to say in our hearts, "Wherefore hast the Lord dealt with us to carry us forth out of Egypt, to die in the wilderness?" Let us recall how mercifully the Lord heeded our cry when we were in the prison house of error and superstition and delivered us out of our distresses. We can rejoice that we are able to see the persistence and power of our enemies: pride, envy, impatience, selfishness, laziness, sensitiveness, indifference, deceit. How else could we sense our need to put our complete trust in Jehovah?

And though we do not now see our way of escape, God, who cannot lie, has promised that He will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear, but will always provide for our deliverance. We should never forget the great deliverance at the Red Sea, when Moses entreated the Israelites: "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

Why does God deliver us from darkness and religious error? Did not Peter tell us that it was for the purpose of showing forth the praises of our Great Deliverer (I Pet. 2:9, 10)? The Lord has delivered us that we might serve Him in holiness and righteousness.

Our Deliverer must be more to us than anything or anyone on earth, if we would render perfect obedience to Him. We must say to our Lord, as the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule, Thou, over us, for Thou hast delivered us." There is no other way in which our deliverance can be complete.

Fear lurks in the shadows. It thrives in darkness. Has sickness, bereavement, or disappointment so filled our mind that we have no time or desire to praise and thank the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men? Or are we overcome by the cares and duties of our everyday lives? Do we not recall our Master's command, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. . . . In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

There is a "fear not" for every possible type of human fear, and it is for us to search the Scriptures for the help we need. It is the entrance of God's Word into our consciousness that fills us with light. Then only can the shadows and darkness disappear, and with them all fear and anxiety.

Would our Lord tell us over and over again to fear not if there were to be no cause for fear? Not at all. But to counter these forces of fear God gives us multiple causes for faith—faith in Him, His Word, His promises, and the certainty of His revealed plan. Let us study it, meditate on it, and fight those fears by filling our minds with God's wonderful promises to help us, strengthen us, encourage us and guide us in all our ways. Then we shall be able to say from the heart, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

Have faith in God—what can there be  
For Him too hard to do for thee?  
He gave His Word to make you free—  
Have faith, have faith in God.

## Six Most Important Words

The six most important words:

"I admit I made a mistake."

The five most important words:

"You did a good job."

The four most important words:

"What does God think?"

The three most important words:

"If you please."

The two most important words:

"Thank you."

The one most important word:

"We."

The least important word:

"I."

## Our New Pavilion

*Fresh air, sunshine, and adequate shelter (in case it rains)! All the essentials for an ideal outdoor gathering have finally been realized this summer with the erecting of a large pavilion in the nearby Bristol hills. Scarcely three months old, it has already been put to good use for two of our annual gatherings—Independence Day, and the Maranatha Gathering—and a third, the Progressive Picnic, is imminent.*

*The pavilion's period of service began officially on the Fourth of July, with an appropriate ceremony of dedication. Brother Uly Tremblay, as chairman of the committee for the day's activities, invited all to "build for eternity," and introduced our assistant pastor, Brother Newton Payne, who offered the prayer of invocation:*

**A**LMIGHTY and everlasting God, we beseech Thee to direct, sanctify and govern our lives in the ways of Thy law. As we gather to dedicate this shelter to our worship of Thee, may everything be done to Thy honor and glory and not to our own aggrandizement.

We pray that Thou wilt find delight in our assembling today. Look with loving favor on this congregation. Here may the fires of faithfulness be lighted. Here may we receive strength to fight the battles of sin within our own hearts. Here may we receive the inspiration to follow the footsteps of the saints of past ages and here may we receive the peace of mind which eludes so many in the world who seek their own will instead of Thine.

As we partake of the spiritual and temporal

food in this shelter, may we never forget the Source of this food. We thank Thee from grateful hearts that we have been recipients of Thy true plan of salvation when so many in the world are lost in a sea of confusion. We thank Thee for the temporal blessings we are continually receiving when so many are deprived and hungry. Father, help us to so live that we may share in making this world a place of righteousness and prosperity for all mankind.

As we dedicate this building to Thy service, may we re-dedicate our lives to a closer walk with Thee that we may be worthy of a place in that temple not made with hands. Amen.

*Then all were greeted and welcomed by another member of the committee in charge, Brother John Kapica:*

I deeply appreciate the privilege of presiding at this ceremony. The building of this shelter or pavilion has been a goal for which we have planned, worked and sacrificed. All of us should applaud the committee, the many workers and contributors, for this dream-come-true.

The church's need for a place where our church picnics and out-of-door assemblies can be held is obvious. Its completion is a monument to those who having envisioned it, made the vision come true.

The places where our church has held its annual get-togethers in years past have been inadequate. There was the problem of too close proximity to the gaze of the public; too much interference by noise and din; public or private retreats were often hard to secure, and there was always the problem of interference.

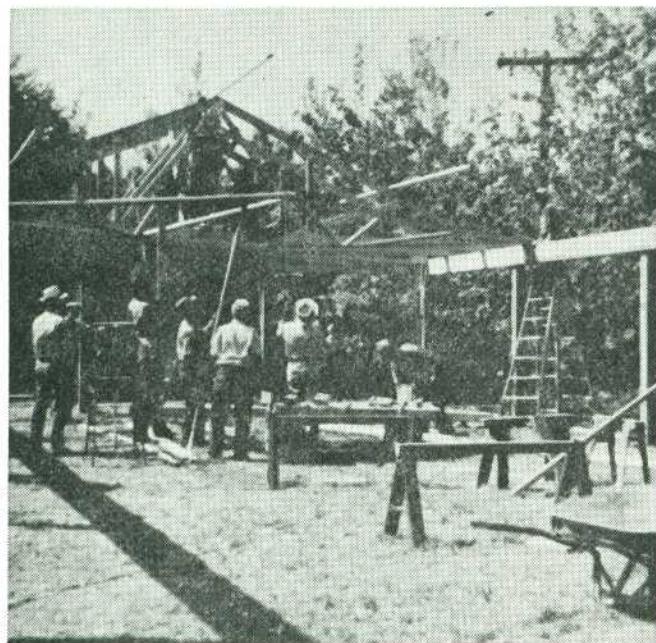
Of recent years this beautiful spot has proved its worth as a place for open-air gatherings, and the picnics and assemblies under yon large oak tree have been enjoyed by all. However, there was always the possibility of rain or inclement weather; this pavilion will be of inestimable value at such times as a place of shelter.

The chairman of the building committee has served with energy and effectiveness, and has started wheels rolling that has resulted in this finished project. I present our pastor, Brother Kenneth E. Flowerday.

*Brother Flowerday speaks:*

I am happy to be able to take part in the dedication of this fine addition to our church's provision for picnics and seasons to get together.

This pavilion is something that has been much needed, and it should prove a blessing in our effort to maintain the spiritual atmosphere that must



be maintained if we are to qualify for life in the world to come.

A part of our program today is to dedicate this new structure. In one sense we cannot dedicate a structure to anything. It remains mundane materials. In reality we are here to re-dedicate ourselves as members of the body of Christ. This structure is but a symbol—the outward manifestation of an idea and an ideal. The pavilion we are dedicating memorializes our responsibility to our organization, to one another, and to our God.

The maintenance of the spiritual atmosphere is one of our obligations. Brotherhood in Christ must be attained and maintained if we are to show our concern for the spiritual welfare for each other as a "brother's keeper" should. Our founder and those who have followed him have all done their part in providing for us the rich heritage of hope of eternal salvation that is our priceless possession, and it is now for us to show our appreciation by striving to remember our former leaders, and copy their good efforts in behalf of the small flock over whom they were made the overseers, and now do all in our power to maintain the spiritual glow.

We publicly express our sincere thanks to all who have aided in bringing about the completion of this project. We are thankful to the brothers who spent a number of Saturdays helping build this shelter. The first step to be taken, after the design and size of the structure was decided, was the selection of a suitable spot here on these pleasant grounds that would be acceptable to the owner, Sister Shirley Byers, and the laying out of the places where the holes for the poles that support the structure should be dug. This was accomplished on a beautiful spring day, the third Saturday in May.

The following Saturday the work of digging the holes for the posts was undertaken, and proved the most difficult part of the program. There was a drizzling rain nearly the whole day long. The digging was most difficult as the soil proved to be hard clay with many flat stones to interfere with the digging. We had secured the use of a pneumatic jack-hammer which was very much needed. But trying to operate such a heavy piece of equipment in the bottom of holes four to five feet deep proved a tiresome task for even the strongest of the brothers, and before the job was finished they realized they had done much more than an ordinary day's work.

To make matters worse the drizzling rain had made all the grassless portions of the terrain into a gumbo, with up to one inch of same sticking to the bottom of one's shoes.

The following Saturdays the weather was in our favor, hence the work progressed with little difficulty.

I am happy to report that a Christian spirit pervaded among the brothers taking part in the project, and all present tried to keep a right spirit dur-

ing the many situations for disagreement that were bound to arise in the fabricating of such a structure by inexperienced men. At such times we needed to plead, "Help me to keep a right spirit, Lord," and then make the effort to keep that spirit. In this the brothers did well.

It is popular these days to speak of the generation-gap. Age-wise, our workers represented a generations-gap—a gap of a number of generations—the youngest being 9 years, the eldest 93. The boys present did very well.

A number of the sisters volunteered to fill a place that is always much needed where men are hard at work. They provided us a fine dinner each of the Saturdays we were working on the project.

Before a decision was made on the design of the construction, a bit of research was made for the forming of a structure of this type. Plans and prices were sought from a number of suppliers, and advice was secured from the State Agricultural College. We wanted the structure to endure when erected. Some advised a roof truss every 2 feet, others every 3 feet, still others a truss every 4 feet with purlins crossing the rafters for strength and rigidity. We chose the latter. There was also the question of the weight of the trusses, whether 2 x 4 or 2 x 6 construction.

There was also the question of how far apart the supporting posts should be, and how many posts there should be to the entire structure. After it was decided to use posts spaced every 10 feet on the long sides, one supplier advised no posts on the gable ends. Some advised the use of braces at the top of each post. The plan of the completed structure is a composite of all these ideas. The committee tried to use their best judgment, and it is to be hoped that the resultant structure is sturdy enough to resist the elements, and stay put.

We are confident that this pavilion will be adequate for the purpose for which it was built, and we feel to thank the Lord and all the willing workers who made its erection possible.

This completed structure also forms the background for a spiritual lesson which we should not fail to apply. In unity there is strength. Each of the posts supporting this roof is needed. Remove a post here and there and the roof would sag. Remove enough of the posts and the entire upper structure would collapse to the ground.

Likewise each of us must be a pillar in the church of God upon the earth today. If our organization is to be strong each one must be a support. I repeat, in unity there is strength.

It gives us satisfaction to see each of these supporting posts perpendicular—or very nearly so. Imagine the unhappy spectacle if one post leaned 12 inches toward the north, another post 12 inches toward the south, the corner posts leaning in two directions. We can imagine how our house of

(Continued on page 20)



## Deedee the Thinker



MOTHER waved good-bye to her nine-year-old daughter as she watched her disappear around the bend in the narrow road that led to the nearby town. It was a lovely spring morning. How very innocent Deedee looked that morning as she left for school, dressed neatly in a gray plaid skirt, saddle shoes, and a new blue sweater Aunt Ruth had recently given her.

Mother took a mental inventory, as though she were seeing her daughter for the first time. What was her duty as a mother? How could she teach Deedee the worthlessness of the evil enticements that seek to lure children today? How could she impress on her young child's mind the more important values in life—holiness, purity, virtue, truth?

As she stood motionless on the front step this bright spring morning, Mother sent a silent prayer to God for help. Where else could she turn in this day and age?

As Deedee skipped happily down the road toward the school, her quick eye caught what she knew to be a sure sign of spring. Mrs. Meadows was working her garden. "Good morning, Mrs. Meadows"—Deedee's high, cheery voice aroused Mrs. Meadows from her planting.

"Good morning, young lady," Mrs. Meadows replied. "Today I am planting seeds that will grow into food. You know, food is the most important thing in all the world. . . . Work hard at your lessons today, Deedee. Good-day."

Mrs. Meadows returned to her work, and Deedee walked on, pondering what Mrs. Meadows had told her. She hadn't thought much about it before, but was food the most important thing in the world? Yes, Mrs. Meadows should know. Without food all living things would die.

Deedee entered her classroom, sharpened her pencils, and was prepared to study when Mrs. Hall, her prim young schoolteacher, tiptoed in. She asked the children to get out their health books. "Today, boys and girls, we shall learn about the most important thing in all the world—our health." Mrs. Hall spoke crisply. She surely looked as though she knew what she was talking about. She went on to explain that in order to enjoy life a

person must have good health. She then named some of the different things we must do to protect our health. It all seemed to make sense, as far as Deedee could understand. But she could not forget the words of Mrs. Meadows just this morning, that food was the most important thing.

Deedee was puzzled. "Oh well," she shrugged, "I'll ask my big brother when I get home. He is so big and he will know. He knows just about everything," she reasoned. And this was just the right time to talk with him, for David was home for a short spring vacation from school.

That evening Deedee decided to join her brother on the porch. She placed before him a large frosty glass of lemonade, and seated herself on the porch swing, hoping David would notice her. She could see that he was very busy, and the expression on his face showed that he was deep in thought. Another exam must be coming soon, thought Deedee. But she wanted so much to talk to her brother.

Cautiously she pronounced his name, but he did not answer. She spoke again, a little louder this time. And after what seemed like a long time to Deedee, David laid his papers aside and gave his sister an affectionate smile. He started to sample his drink and noticed that Deedee was watching attentively; she was waiting for his approval.

"My, this sure is good lemonade," he said, and drank the whole glassful. Deedee beamed, for she delighted in pleasing her big brother, even in her small way.

But Deedee sat still in the porch swing, looking intently at her brother. "Did you want something special, Sis?" David finally asked.

Then Deedee told her story, of the two conflicting ideas she had heard. As she finished, Deedee looked up so trustingly at her brother and asked, "Please tell me, David, what is the right answer?"

"Neither of those things you have mentioned, my sister. We need food, yes, but money is the most important," he assured her. "Money buys food. Money pays the doctors who help protect our health. Don't forget this, my sister, money is the most important. That is why I study so hard. I

want to be able to make a lot of it when I get out of school."

Of course David was right. Deedee could understand that very clearly now, and she slipped quietly away, leaving her brother with his studies. He sure was smart! And Deedee was pleased! Why her big brother knew more than Mrs. Meadows, and even more than her own teacher!

It was the following Saturday, and Deedee hadn't thought much about her new lesson in the meantime. After all, she was much too young to try to earn much money. She was only nine years old.

This Saturday was a special "Clean-up Day" in their town, and Deedee was with a group of other girls from her class. They were each equipped with pick-up sticks and a basket. As they began to work, their group leader, Mrs. Proctor, laughingly told the girls that they could keep anything they found. That also included anything of any value.

Deedee worked diligently. She found many bits of papers, gum and candy wrappers, and other debris, putting them into her basket, until she was startled by a loud clap of thunder and a sprinkle of rain. How she wished it would rain, for she was getting rather weary. A sudden gust of wind blew some papers out of her basket. As she bent over to pick up an old potato chip bag—there she saw it! Right on the church lawn! Five dollars! Deedee forgot all else—she had found five whole dollars! She couldn't believe her eyes. She held it up; it was crisp and new. She hugged it. Now she could tell her brother that she had the most important thing in all the world! *Deedee had money!*

The rain started, and Deedee deposited her basket with the other girls and ran for home.

"Mother! Mother" she called breathlessly as she rushed in through the door of her home. "Guess what!" And Deedee told her mother about what she had found.

Mother could understand Deedee's excitement. But how could she explain to her?

"My dear," she said, calling her young daughter to her side, "yes, we need money. We need it to buy food, and clothes, and to pay for many things we enjoy every day. But even more important than money, my Dear, is wisdom. We read in Proverbs 8:11 that 'Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.' Also Proverbs says, 'Wisdom is the principal thing.'"

Mother put her arm around her child and asked most earnestly, "Now what kind of wisdom do we need, Deedee? Think hard, for I'm sure you can tell me."

Deedee began to toy with the bright yellow ribbons in her hair. Then suddenly she exclaimed, "Oh, Mother. Wisdom—from God—from on high—so we can gain life. Life must be the most important thing in all the world. Even money is no good,

unless we have life! And only God can give life!"

Deedee put her weary arms around her mother. "Oh! Mother," she exclaimed, "how foolish of me! Why didn't I ask you in the first place? Mothers know best, you know," Deedee gently teased, her blue eyes twinkling.

Mother was very pleased to see her daughter beginning to think about God and the true meaning of life.

Hours passed, and the household was still. Deedee had long ago been tucked into bed, when Mother slipped silently upstairs and into Deedee's room. Another day had passed. Another lesson had been learned. Another prayer had been answered. How peaceful Deedee looked. Mother knelt beside her bed and gave thanks to God for His trusting hand. Before she left she lightly planted a kiss on the cheek of her sleeping daughter. This day had been most unusual.

But Mother still had one very important duty to perform before she could retire for the night. She slipped silently down the stairs to her desk in the corner of the living room, to write a letter to her son David. ••

## Continuance

IT IS TRUE that a good beginning means nothing unless there is a proper finish. It is also true, in the spiritual realm, that unless there is a proper beginning there may not be a good finish.

When we first start out hungry and zealous for the knowledge and ways of God, we often imagine that extensive progress has been made, when as yet we have barely begun. As our Lord takes us along through the years it slowly dawns upon us that there are vast, almost infinite, areas of development through which we must pass.

Many of these development areas are just plain desert—no special service, no exciting activity, no tremendous responsibility. Much of everything seems to add up to nothing. Despite our efforts, we seem to be getting nowhere. In fact, we often seem to be traveling in reverse. It is during these times that the believer often feels that God has ceased to carry out His part, and there is little or no use to continue on. And yet there is an unfulfilled desire deep within that will not allow him to quit.

Are we to love and trust and respond to God only when He seems to be "blessing" us? What sort of love is that?

Our Father strips everything away from time to time in order to give us the opportunity to show our sincere devotion to Him. He knows what the cross is going to mean to us. He knows the death march that lies ahead of us. And He will bring us all safely through—if we continue to follow. ••

# LETTERS

## Good Things

We have a great many intangibles to consider: faith, inward peace, hope, self-mastery, watchfulness and diligence. But these are the very things of our religion that make it good, and our works good also. It is part of the goodness of God, toward which we must keep working hard.

St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

A. G. S.

## A Hardy People

Christians are said to be a hardy people, able to take the bumps of life. When we consider how wisely measured are our trials to our strength, we need not fear to be broken. Our light afflictions can be endured successfully. It is greatly to our advantage to be much and variously exercised by the Lord.

There is no question but that we can all work with a will if we want to. What we need is to visualize the coming Kingdom as the ultimate object of our earthly attainment, something we want to attain above all else. Then we can vigorously and calmly, without allowing anything to distract us, commence to keep our hearts clear of all evil. We should be more than willing to be real progressive Christians.

Let us become engaged in more serious meditation, taking ourselves deliberately apart and make short work of our hindering besetments.

South Amboy, N. J.

Mrs. L. M. K.

## Keeping Unspotted

It is no easy thing to keep ourselves unspotted from the world's dust. The only safe method is daily study of the blessed Word, that we may have a storehouse full of spiritual food to keep up our strength against evil.

With so much evil all around us, we dare not fold our hands and rest.

Potsdam, N. Y.

O. B. W.

## Learning Our Lessons

God has made everything beautiful in its time; as you have truly observed, there is a wealth of beauty provided for us now. There is so much to cause us to rest awhile and ponder His marvelous handiwork; the mighty rivers and how they are fed and how they have very small, humble beginnings. On they go, growing steadily wider and deeper, mightier till they meet the vast ocean, and are lost in its might. They can be compared to the truly Christian life, which ever increases and grows, little by little, until it reaches "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

We remember again the same spiritual lesson for us, concerning the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt and journeyed toward the Promised Land. God told them their enemies would be driven out before them; little by little would He drive them out until the children of Israel were increased and would inherit the land. It was to be a slow and thorough process, according as God commanded them. Alas, they wearied of the change, and we know how they suffered as a result.

But may we learn the lesson meant for us in these writings recorded for our admonition and learning.

Warwick, Queensland, Aust.

A. B.

## True Religion

I do feel I should write and say again how grateful and happy I am that the good Lord brought me in contact with you. You have done so much for me spiritually that I will always be thankful. The Bible means so much more to me now than ever before, and I understand it much better than I ever did.

I have told many people about you and your good work, and that you strive to live a truly Christian life. You have certainly been a great influence in my life, and I believe that I am a better Christian from being in contact with you.

I try to get people to read your publications, but am not very successful. But I believe with all my being that yours is true religion.

Mifflinburg, Pa.

H. R.

## Our New Pavilion

(Continued from page 17)

brotherhood looks to our heavenly Father and His recording angels if we are plagued with an endless variety of opinions, and are divided in our judgment.

The words of the apostle Paul are forceful and direct: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

The type of weather we are having today (rain) points up the importance of a tight roof. In our Christian life also we need a tight roof. We need protection from the elements, whether the burning rays of the sun or the inevitable rain. There are bound to be trials to endure from which we need to be protected. The Word of God provides this protection; and spells of inclement weather in the forms of seasons of discouragement and frustration are bound to come. But God's Word provides shelter for all of these.

The promise is that we shall not be tempted above that which we are able to endure, and that with the trial a way of escape will be provided. The spells of discouragement are fully covered by Jesus in His declaration to His intimate disciples the night of the betrayal: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Brethren, we are on the home stretch. Soon the great Day of the Lord will be here. Soon the devastating storm will break over an unsuspecting world. Let us now build a shelter that will assure us of safety then. Let us work to build the house of life that we may be a part of that greater house which one day shall be established in the top of the mountains, above all earthly authority, and share with the noble Master of the house the delights of the world to come! ••

# Meditations

## On the Word

*"Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1, RSV).*

When we look over our past we see failures. It is a rare life indeed that can look back without regrets, or that can see nothing but a bright shining track of good behind him. Failures, whether great or small, are, nevertheless, failures; and being such, they will bar our entrance to Eternity. Our failures need not always be characterized as those ascribed to the lowest of humanity, but by Christian standards and in view of the wisdom entrusted to us, any transgression of God's law makes us, in that respect, a failure.

We can be failures to our calling through numerous transgressions of law or because we have not made the best of our opportunity, or have not used our ability as we should. When one looks back over his life since coming under the influence of God's law, if he cannot see glaring offenses he certainly can see periods where he could have done better, or, as a summary, he must admit that he could and should be much farther ahead in divine things, both in knowledge and in experience.

Our text points to the danger of the present. The ever present tendency is to relax and be at ease, and once in that condition people are carried away like driftwood from the things of primal importance. People do not necessarily deny their high Christian calling, they merely drift from it. The results are the same.

What is the cause of drifting?

The obvious answer is a want of anchorage. A boat does not drift if it is anchored, nor do people move about from one way of life to another when they are settled and established in their belief. When men and women have no settled religious convictions, then they are dangerously likely to drift. In a general way they may believe in God, in Christ, in His coming, and the work that needs to be done, but that belief or faith is of little value when it does not restrain them from evil. That faith is near the drifting point which does not inspire to good. That faith which is in reality anchored, and grounded, and settled will not only manifest itself in abstinence from evil, but will be alive, energetic and zealous for everything that is good. It will be pushing its way upstream.

Drifting is also caused by winds and currents. What is easier than to go along with the crowd! To go along in the conventional manner of life is

what most people desire, and even after one has had a vision of better things that tendency still persists.

Companionship is another source of danger. The apostle Paul warned: "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.' Come to your right mind and sin no more. For some have not the knowledge of God" (I Cor. 15:33, 34, RSV). In questionable company one may feel himself strong to resist any alluring invitation into bypaths, but little by little the evil wins.

Circumstances and the many influences of modern life are yet another cause of drifting. We allow the cares of life to influence us; we are lured by the deceitfulness of riches and the many attractive items money can buy. We labor and tug to lay up stores for the years ahead and forget, or rather, sacrifice, the things of the spirit. We grasp the perishing and spurn the enduring! That which should be first (Matt. 6:33) is neglected.

The process of drifting needs to be arrested!

Rocks and sandbars can be marked on a chart and a boat under good command can avoid them. But it is not so with a ship that has broken loose from its moorings. Drifting means ruin. A drifting vessel is also a source of danger to other vessels. The dangers involved and the wreckage that may result is incalculable.

In successful business enterprises men never think of drifting into success. No department can be neglected even for a short time without noticeable loss. If a gardener or a farmer lets his fields "drift" what happens? A bountiful harvest? Never! It is so in our religious life; drifting means loss and ruin.

Drifting in spiritual things is all the more dangerous because so often no one can perceive the drifter's condition. From all outward appearances he may appear all right. This is illustrated in the message to the "angel" of the church at Sardis: "You have a name of being alive, and are dead. Awake, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God." It is a sad situation; most unwholesome to be sure. But the Lord is merciful and offers hope: "Remember then what you received and heard; keep that, and repent. If you will not awake, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you" (Rev. 3:1—3, RSV).

In order to avoid drifting or to arrest our drifting condition we must confront *ourselves*. This is difficult, for most of us through habitual practice, conscious or unconscious, have become incredibly skillful at avoiding ourselves. We fear to face ourselves honestly and do almost everything else to excuse our laxity. But certainly the only way to right our wrongs is to start with ourselves—not another, not circumstances, but self.

Next we must consider ourselves and know the

kind of creatures we are. Successful spiritual living demands singleness of purpose. One cannot crowd a little of everything under the sun into one's life and succeed. The principal theme must dominate.

We must pay attention to our choice of the numerous things that would claim our interest. Our ability to choose is our greatest asset, but there can be no success as long as mean or beastly traits in us are allowed freedom.

We must exercise control. The effective way to do this is to stir up the imagination of our minds. Pay attention to the precious promises. Picture the best, the glory to be revealed, vividly. Speak habitually of the good and righteous way of living. Think optimistically of all it is possible for you to become—pure, brave, conscientious, helpful. Thrust your best efforts into every good work in which you are involved. Avoid talking to no purpose about the devilish, carnal, degrading things that are already done. Give no portion of your mind to bitterness or revenge however severe the injury you felt. Entertain only the good, the true, the beautiful.

Finally, according to Paul's admonition (Phil. 4:8), think upon the things which are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, gracious. ••

"I cannot feel I have been true to my Lord if I close my letter without answering your statement that 'the apostle Paul anticipated immortality as the result of a righteous life.' Let us listen as he speaks and see if he even hints that righteous living has anything to do with salvation or immortality: 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit' (Titus 3:5)."

We would like to ask our correspondent to read further, including verse 8 of Titus 3: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

If the "works of righteousness which we have done," in verse 5, and the "good works" of verse 8 were the same works, then Paul contradicts himself point-blank. Impossible! Hence the "works of righteousness which we have done" must be the ways of every man that are "right in his own eyes" (Prov. 21:2), the way that "seemeth right unto a man" (Prov. 16:25), self-designed or self-imposed good works. Such were the works of the law of Moses to which many self-righteous Jews of Paul's day persistently clung, thinking that by them they were performing the law of God (see II Corinthians 3; Galatians 3).

But we are saved by works good in God's sight, by our obedience to the commands of the law of God. Read Titus 2:11—13: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I read and reread the MEGIDDO MESSAGE, and find many articles that are inspiring. But I will have to say frankly, but kindly, that I cannot accept your interpretations completely. On the subject of Satan, or the devil, I'm sure Satan has brainwashed you into believing that he does not exist. Read John 8:44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.'"

I am aware that our position on the subject of Satan differs greatly from the viewpoint of fundamental theology. However, we cannot but believe that the terms "devil" and "Satan" simply mean sin and/or sinners. Speaking of Judas the betrayer Jesus said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). Not one of you *has* a devil, but one of you *is* a devil. When Peter opposed Jesus, He said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Peter was the "Satan" in this case.

The same principle applies to Jesus' words in John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil." The Jews were boasting themselves in the fact that they were the children of Abraham, but Jesus told them: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." They had wandered far from the obedience of Abraham; they were sinful, just as their parents had been.

"I was purchased with a price, the precious blood of Jesus, and by faith I am now a child of God and heir of all things. Read II Tim. 1:9, 10, 'Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' Does this sound like Paul anticipated the receiving of immortality as the result of a righteous life on his part? How did Paul say life and immortality comes? Through the gospel to all who believe by faith."

If the way to salvation is as simple as your words indicate, why did Jesus say, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24)?

Most assuredly life and immortality come through the gospel. But what does the gospel demand of the man who would have life and immortality? For Paul's answer read Eph. 4:17 to end of

chapter, also chapter 5. These chapters include such commands as: "Walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, . . . put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt, . . . put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. . . . Let him that stole steal no more: . . . Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, . . . Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. . . . But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient [becoming]. . . . See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Can we possibly admit that salvation comes by a gospel that demands such actions from us, if we pay no earnest heed to live by these demands? Certainly not! Read also Colossians, chapters 3 and 4; and Romans 12.

Paul expected to receive immortality as the result of good works on his part. He said: "I have fought a good fight, . . . I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (II Tim. 4:7, 8).

"What was God's attitude toward polygamy in Old Testament times? Certainly Jesus did not believe in it. Please comment."

It does not appear that God ever promoted polygamy; however, neither does it appear that He condemned it in the time of the patriarchs. Bible scholars have suggested several possible reasons for this.

First, children were needed for the strength of the family and the tribe. Hence, the childless woman felt disgraced. To have many children was the chief blessing she could desire. "Give me children or else I die," expresses the longing throughout Old Testament times. To the Israelites, childlessness was the ultimate calamity; it meant sorrow and humiliation. Note the grief of Abraham and Sarah when for so long they had no heir born of their own flesh (see Gen. 15:2, 3; 16:2).

Second, the strength of a tribe was measured by its numbers. Many children meant a greater nation, greater military strength and greater power. And through polygamy the family was preserved and enlarged. It was the custom of the times that if a wife did not bear children to her husband, he might take another wife, that he might have descendants after him, as the case of Sarah's giving Hagar, her maid, to Abraham for a wife. The children of such a union were reckoned as the children of the first

wife by adoption, according to the Bible Dictionary.

Moses, however, warned kings against the danger of having many wives: "He shall not multiply horses to himself. . . . Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" (Deut. 17:17). The great ideal, whether for king or commoner, was: "that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left" (Deut. 17:19, 20).

Solomon's fate is familiar history, and one of the primary causes of his shipwrecked life was the influence of his multitude of wives.

Paul's recommendation to Timothy expresses God's ideal: "The bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife" (I Tim. 3:2).

"My Bible tells me, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, and hath passed from death unto life.'"

You probably refer to John 5:24, which reads: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

To hear Jesus' words and believe on the God that sent Him is to believe what Jesus taught, and to practice that belief in one's daily living. And among Jesus' sayings is the following:

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Such a person has the promise of eternal life; he shall never come into condemnation, shall never suffer the second or penal death, but shall receive eternal life at the appearing of Jesus from heaven. However, that life is not yet in his possession.

When Jesus spoke those words, that the believer "hath eternal life," He Himself had not yet passed from physical death to physical life. A short time later He suffered the death on the cross. The most righteous man living today can suffer physical death. Through virtue of righteous living one can pass from a state of being "dead in trespasses and sins" and become alive to God, and in that way obtain the "promise of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). He will ultimately pass from death unto life, will be made equal unto the angels never to taste death, but now it is a hope, a promise, not a present possession.

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A bridled tongue is a guarantee of a pure heart.

# To the Eternal Mover

Eternal Mover, whose diffused glory,  
To show our groveling reason what Thou art,  
Unfolds itself in clouds of nature's story,  
Where man, Thy proudest creature, acts his part,  
Whom yet, alas! I know not why, we call  
The world's contracted sum, the little all;

For what are we but lumps of walking clay?  
Why should we swell? Whence should our spirits rise?  
Are not brute beasts as strong, and birds as gay,  
Trees longer liv'd, and creeping things as wise?  
Only our soul was left an inward light,  
To feel our weakness, and confess Thy might.

Thou, then, our strength, Father of life and death,  
To whom our thanks, our vows, ourselves we owe,  
From me, Thy tenant of this fading breath,  
Accept those lines which from Thy goodness flow;  
And Thou, that wert Thy regal prophet's Muse,  
Do not Thy praise in weaker strains refuse.

Let these poor notes ascend unto Thy throne,  
Where majesty doth sit, with mercy crown'd  
Where my Redeemer lives, in whom alone  
The errors of my wand'ring life are drown'd,  
Where all the quire of heav'n resound the same,  
That only Thine, Thine is the saving name.