

# Megiddo Message

*"How thankful I am to Christ Jesus our Lord for choosing me as one of His messengers, and giving me the strength to be faithful to Him, even though I used to scoff at the name of Christ. I hunted down His people, harming them in every way I could. But God had mercy on me because I didn't know what I was doing, for I didn't know Christ at that time. "Oh, how kind our Lord was, for He showed me how to trust Him and become full of the love of Christ Jesus. How true it is, and how I long that everyone should know it, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—and I was the greatest of them all..."*

*—Paul (I Tim. 1:12-17,  
Living Bible).*

The  
Man  
From  
Tarsus



# Megiddo Message

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KENNETH E. FLOWERDAY, *Editor*

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone.

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- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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## About Our Cover

This month being the anniversary of the birth of our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, we feel it is an appropriate time to introduce a special series on the man who was his foremost inspiration and example, the Apostle Paul. Though divided by centuries of time, both men were sent to the Gentiles and both gave themselves totally to the advancement of the cause of Christ in preparation for the day of His return which, we are confident, is now imminent.

For Paul, it all began on the road to Damascus, where a light above the brightness of the sun struck him to the ground. From that moment forward, Paul's life belonged to Christ.

For information in the series that follows we express our deep appreciation to many authors, historians and commentaries.

—THE EDITOR.

## Editorially Speaking...

### For Me To Live Is?

"THE trouble with me," says a student, "is that I don't have any reason for living. Many seem to get along without one, but I need a reason, and I haven't one."

"For to me to live is"—what? That is the question. We are living in a time when secular success has outrun the quest for real meaning; and although we have never before had so much to live *with*, many find they have nothing to live *for*.

A reason for living was never any question mark in the life of the apostle Paul. "To me to live is Christ," says Paul (Phil. 1:21). Since that day on the Damascus road, Christ had been the beginning and purpose of his life. There was not a single day that Paul did not live as in His presence.

To Paul, Christ was the end of life. Everything present worked toward that eternal glory Christ had set before him.

To Paul, Christ was the inspiration of life. Christ, His life and teaching, was the dynamic, motivating power of life.

To Paul, Christ was the task of life. From Christ had come his commission to bear His name to the Gentiles.

And to Paul, Christ was the reward of life. To Him Paul looked for the "crown of righteousness" which the Lord has laid up for "all them that love his appearing." If Christ were to be taken out of life, for Paul there would be nothing left. Christ to him was nothing less than life itself. And conversely, should he lose everything of the present and retain his hope in Christ, he would have lost nothing.

Under no circumstances could this dedicated apostle lose sight of the purpose of his life. His absolute devotion to the supreme personality of Christ gave him his reason for living every day.

Paul's commitment to Christ reached even to a willingness to surrender his physical life, should that be necessary. For once his surrender of himself was complete, when he had achieved that perfect self-mastery for which he fought, death could only mark the completion of the task. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord," wrote Paul to the Roman church; "and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:8).

"For to me to live is Christ"—we might get this same intention from other words of his brought together from different Epistles: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "Therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, . . . present your bodies a living sacrifice . . . that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (I Cor. 2:9; Rom. 12:1-2). To live is not merely to *get* but to *give*.

For to *me* to live is—what? There is no escape from the question. Each of us must answer. It is very easy to rest content with what is good enough, with what "gets by," with what is generally expected and approved. But life *for God* demands our best for Him through every waking moment and day. ●●

# The Man From Tarsus

WHEN God has work to be done, He chooses the right time, and He chooses the right man.

Following the ministry of Christ, God had work to be done—He had people over a wide area of the Roman Empire to be enlightened with His saving knowledge. Whom would He select to go and find them?

On the road that led into the city of Damascus in Syria, God designated His man—a young Jewish firebrand, a man from Tarsus. Even when God called him, this zealous crusader was bearing papers authorizing him to root out the Christian community in the city of Damascus and drag them to Jerusalem in chains to be tried before the Sanhedrin. But—

This Saul of Tarsus was stopped. He never carried out his plans. A flash. A light “above the brightness of the sun,” and Christ struck him to the ground, terrified, speechless, blinded. From that moment on, Saul’s planning was over. Now he was *God’s* man, ready to do *God’s* work.

Saul was the man God needed. And only a few years later, the time was right to launch the greatest missionary project ever undertaken—the Mediterranean mission of the apostle Paul.

There was never any question but that God had found the right man to head this great new venture. And when the right man is leading the right movement, something happens! With Paul leading the mission, no wonder the Mediterranean Basin began to shake!

God knows how to find the man to do the work He wants done. And when God finds that man, we shouldn’t be surprised if the whole world is turned upside down.

And now, what of the mission? There are several things worth noticing about this extraordinary mission. It had a long history behind it. There was the special power the disciples had received on the day of Pentecost; their constant proclamation of the good news of the Kingdom and its King; the daily prayers of the disciples; their remembrances of the risen Lord; the growing interest of the bystanders; the opposition of the government; the growth and expansion of the new faith; the break

with Judaism; and finally, the flowering of its life in Paul’s mission to the Gentile world. Paul’s great missionary work did not begin at the conference table; it was not planned on paper, or on maps of the Mediterranean. It grew out of the soil of events; one thing led to another, though no one at the time could see that anything was leading anywhere.

But Paul did not undertake the project alone. He had the fellowship of the Church behind him. He was one of several men ministering to the Christians in Antioch. Those were the Christians who, after they had fasted and prayed, laid their hands on him and sent him off. Paul therefore had more than his own experience and strength to count on—he had also the fellowship of the faithful behind him; he represented them; and they prayed for him.

Besides the brethren who were behind him, Paul had Barnabas beside him. God sent them out not only one by one but in pairs and teams. Paul, with all his zeal and brilliance, needed the even-tempered, gracious Barnabas. The two together did what neither could have done by himself; and by working together the two accomplished more than the total of what each could have done separately.

The Christian ministry is always like that. No one man has all the talents. There is no such thing as a perfectly rounded human being. Everyone has a rough or flat spot somewhere. Each needs the man by his side to supply the talents he himself lacks.

As we look back at this first Christian team, Paul towers above Barnabas. But we cannot be at all sure that in the sight of God the difference in stature is by any means so great. Paul left the footprints on the pages of history, but nobody knows how much Barnabas contributed to the spirit and strength that kept those feet moving. There is no indication that Barnabas felt himself in a lower order or in any way secondary to his partner. When Christian leaders can work together in that spirit of joint leadership, the work of God moves forward.

The whole missionary movement had the spirit of God behind it. The Holy Spirit had said through the inspired utterance of one of God’s prophets,

"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Neither history, nor men, nor fellowship, nor teamwork by themselves alone make things move. Things begin to move when God is working in them and through them. One cannot help but feel as one looks back over the history of the early Church that the primary mover was God, that He was working all things together for good.

The time was right. And the thirst for the gospel was great.

The Greek language was universal.

There was peace in Rome.

The roads were good.

The leaders were ready.

And quietly, the masses in the empire scarcely realizing what was happening, God launched His mighty movement.

As God was with that early Church, so He is with us today. Nothing moves but by His power. He is guiding, directing, spurring us on. He is using men and women to do His work today. He is using everyone who will witness for Him. He is the power over and above all, working all things together for good. He is God the Almighty, and His purpose is the same yesterday, today and forever. ●●

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## *Tarsus: Birthplace of Paul*

GEOGRAPHY plays an important part in any life. And so it did in the life of the apostle Paul. He spent his life in the great cities of the Roman Empire, but always he retained a connection with his own city—he was "Paul of Tarsus." This fact he considered to be of some importance—"I am . . . a citizen of no mean city," he said.

Tarsus was the capital city of the province of Cilicia. It was situated on a river, in a wide plain, with hill country behind and the snow-covered Taurus mountains in the distance. The early inhabitants were Greeks mingled with Orientals. East and West flowed together in Tarsus. It was a Roman town with a Jewish colony, about twelve miles from the Mediterranean Sea and about eighty miles from Antioch.

But the crowning glory of Tarsus was not its Greeks not its Orientals; its trading nor its high standing in the Roman Empire. The reason the world remembers Tarsus is that it produced the apostle Paul. It was the one city which was suited by its geography, its people, and its background to mold the youthful character of the extraordinary vessel of God's own choosing. The city gave Paul his early schooling. It gave him his background in social, political, intellectual and moral values. A historian writing about 19 A. D. tells of the enthusiasm of its inhabitants for learning. Many famous men learned and taught in Tarsus. The Tarsians in general were famed for their ability to speak promptly with ease and fluency.

The city of Tarsus gave Paul a broader point of

view than he would have had had he been born in Jerusalem. Because Tarsus was a cosmopolitan city with a mixed society, it was especially suited to molding one who would in future years bear the gospel to other provinces and peoples.

Paul was a free-born Roman citizen—a privilege that went with him all through his life. We have no knowledge of how his parents may have acquired that citizenship; it may have been by purchase, or by political or military service. But it is quite possible that his parents were planted in Tarsus as part of a colony with full municipal rights. Being Jews, the family must at some time have emigrated from Judea, perhaps during some persecution; but this must have been some years previous, as they seem to have identified themselves with Tarsus.

Being a citizen of Tarsus—and of the Roman Empire—Paul enjoyed special privileges which he used to further his career for Christ. The chief privileges of citizenship were 1) freedom from degrading punishments such as bonds, scourging, and crucifixion, and 2) the right of appeal from any official in the Empire to the Emperor at Rome. Roman citizenship was Paul's passport to distant lands, and proved to be his help in many seasons of difficulty and danger. As a Roman citizen, Paul stood above the common herd. He ranked with the aristocracy in any provincial town. Also, being a citizen, he had a kindly feeling toward the Roman government in return for this high privilege and protection. All these factors contributed to the success of the great cause to which he gave his life.

How long Paul lived in Tarsus before beginning his studies in Jerusalem, we cannot say. His own declaration that he was "born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city [Jerusalem]," seems to indicate that his training at Jerusalem began at an early age (Acts 22:3).

After his conversion, Paul returned to Jerusalem; but because of plots by the Jews to kill him, he returned to the quieter country of Tarsus (Acts 9:30), where he remained for a time, possibly for several years.

Meanwhile, as a result of the death of Stephen and general persecution, certain disciples, driven from Jerusalem, traveled along the coast past Tyre and Sidon as far as Antioch, where they established the first Christian Church—Jews and Gentiles became one. This church was the first to be called by the name Christian.

When news of the Christians and their work at Antioch reached Jerusalem, there was some alarm. Might a second church cause a division in the church at Jerusalem? Barnabas was dispatched by the apostles to visit the young Church. He came, gave the work his hearty endorsement, and remained to direct it.

But soon Barnabas began to feel the need for a co-worker with whom he could share the responsibilities and problems involved in the growth of the church and the admission into it of large numbers of Gentiles.

What did Barnabas do? He went to Tarsus to find Paul.

At Antioch, Barnabas and Paul labored together for a year and aided in establishing a church, which became one of the most important in the early age of Christianity. Friendly relations prevailed between the Jerusalem and Antioch churches. This was the beginning of the Christian movement. ●●

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## Words to WALK By

*Suspicion and jealousy never helped any man in any situation.*

*Life is pretty much what we make it, regardless of circumstances.*

*Kindness keeps friendships in repair.*

*A truth that is never shared is never really possessed.*

*It is the act of a simpleton to get all stirred up and angry.*

October, 1973

*From A Reader—*

## Keep Your Faith Living

It is with great pleasure and spiritual benefit that we can meditate on the Word of God which strengthens our faith and keeps us working and pressing toward that future coming Kingdom. If God's Word is not read, studied and obeyed, our faith will soon weaken and our zeal for God will die out. Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God (Rom. 4:20) because he kept it active. The strength of faith can overcome everything, even overcome the world (I John 5:4).

By faith we purify our hearts and serve the Lord diligently. Faith gives us endurance, strength and hope. Once we lose that faith in God, we have lost everything and are without God or hope in the world. With some in the world this has already happened. Greed for power, for money and material things, for pleasure in sports seems to have overtaken God and become their god and idol of worship. For such, the fire of faith dies out, unless it is rekindled. Jesus knew this would happen near the time of His coming, for He said, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

Anything dead becomes useless; even so our faith, if it becomes dead. We are then dead and of no use to God.

If we have any faith at all, the reading of Malachi 4:1 should arouse us to wake up and make quick decision. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." When I was a farmer years ago, we used to set fire to the stubble, and with any amount of wind, the fire would clean up many, many acres of stubble in a few minutes. The flames would rage with all fury, and in no time it would be all over, quiet, dark and black. So shall the Lord deal with those who are proud and do wickedly. In the day of God's judgment, it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

But let us look on the brighter side of God's judgment, as we find in Malachi 4:2, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

Let us say with fear and trembling: "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this?" Shall I? Shall you? Shall we? Shall they?

We can, but now is the accepted time to prepare. Right now we must give our all to God.

*J. G., Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada*



# THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY of Paul the Apostle

PAUL'S first missionary journey began from the ancient capital city of Syria, Antioch. The location of this city at the crossroads of ancient trade routes from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean, only eighteen miles to the west, and from west Arabia to Asia Minor, made it a great commercial center. Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire (its population was about 500,000), often called "Antioch the Great" or "Antioch the Beautiful."

And here in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

A remarkable group of men had gathered in the church at Antioch. Prophets, and teachers, they were men of great faith and wide vision. The new work among the Greeks which had begun in Antioch and its surprising success opened their eyes to still larger possibilities; and directed by the power of the Holy Spirit, they ordained Barnabas and Saul to go out into the Greek and Roman world as missionaries. A young man named John Mark, a nephew of Barnabas, also went with them.

So Antioch became the first missionary church, and the Gentile mission was begun.

Their first objective: the island of Cyprus. Their port of departure: the city of Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch.

## Sailing to Cyprus

The keenness of early spring was in the breeze and sparkled on the Great Sea as the ship nosed her way westward out of the harbor of Seleucia.

And it was spring in the heart of Saul as he sailed out on his new Great Sea of Adventure.

From the stern of the ship he waved to the swiftly diminishing figures on the end of the stone breakwater. Then he turned and walked to the bow of the boat where, in the clear morning, Cyprus lay like a cloud on the horizon.

The ship slid from the bright crest of a rolling wave down into the darker trough. But always her bow lifted, and she came to the summit again and shook the spray from her sides. Saul's spirit, too, would rise and fall between the joy of the new quest on which he was embarking, and a shrinking doubt of the darker unknown to be explored.

As they ran westward, the ship would meet others—swift, high-peaked ships carrying fruits from Cyprus to Antioch. South of them heavy tramp ships slowly crept east, carrying copper from Cyprus to the Phoenician coast.

Barnabas, however, eager to show Saul the place of his birth (Barnabas was a native of Cyprus), drew him from these things to catch the first glimpse of the city of Salamis. So the comrades stood at the bow, steadying themselves against the ship's bulwarks, their eyes gazing over the sea. They would talk over plans while their young attendant, John Mark, stood quietly behind them.

First they saw, thrust out into the sea like the snout of a giant swordfish, the long peninsula of the Karpass. Soon they came under the lee of its rocks. Stretching away on the north side of Salamis, this ridge of mountains in the sea protected both the harbor and the city from the boisterous winds from Asia Minor. Ahead of them, Barnabas and Saul could now see, above the long line of white-edged waves, and the greyish-yellow sand, the walls of the city and the roof of a great temple.

Then the ship was steered into the large harbor. She threaded her way through the crowded shipping-vessels from the coast of Africa, from Greece and Rome, as well as from Tyre and Seleucia.

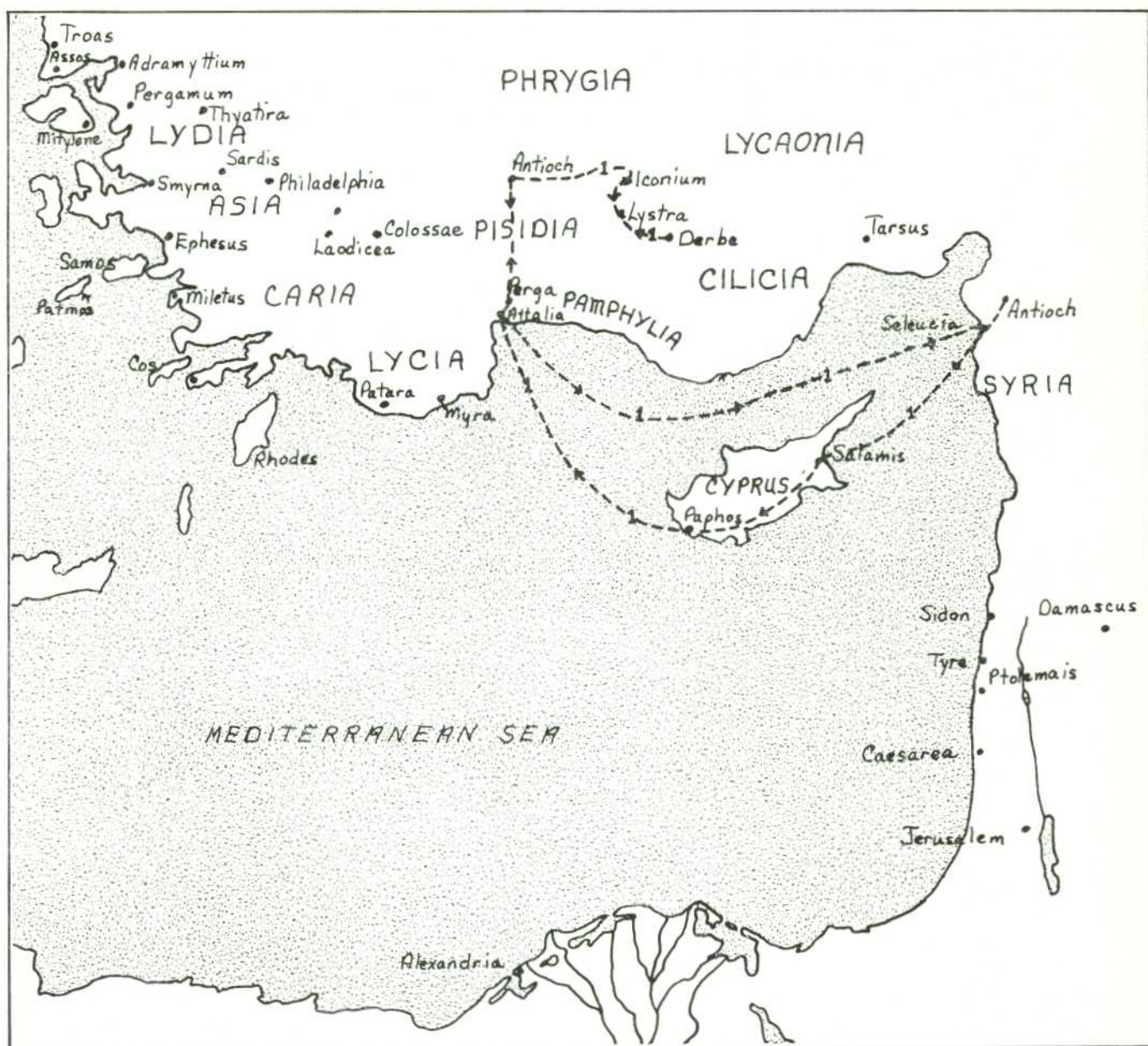
An order was shouted, followed by the creaking of cordage through the pulleys, and the rattle of rings on the mast. The sail was furled and the ship brought up at her berth on a taut cable.

## On Cyprus

Landing at Salamis, Barnabas and Saul began an extensive missionary tour which took them to the opposite end of the island, one hundred miles away, to Paphos, the seat of Roman authority.

Paphos was a city teeming with industry and activity. It also teemed with idol worship. And superstition. And magic. And fortune-tellers. It was a hard place to preach.

And the three missionaries found themselves in



Paul's First Missionary Journey

the very center of it all—in the governor's palace. The governor of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, a wealthy Roman patrician, had invited the missionaries to visit him. He wanted to hear the message they were bringing to his island. A welcome invitation, it seemed; but underneath there was trouble. For in the governor's court was a fast-talking magician and sorcerer who styled himself a "prophet." His name was Elymas, also called Bar-Jesus. Luke does not cover up the fact that even the most sophisticated and educated Romans consulted oracles and believed in astrology.

When the missionaries arrived, Elymas grumbled, but the Roman waved aside his sorcerer's protests. These visitors had a new doctrine, and Sergius

Paulus was determined to learn about it.

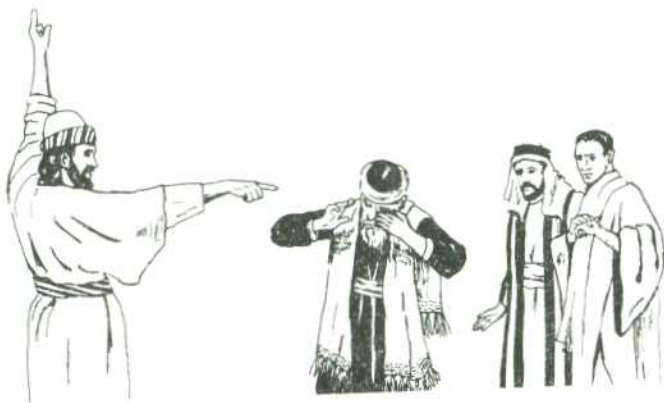
Now Elymas knew that if the governor accepted the teaching of these men, it would mean only one thing: Elymas would have to go out. He was jealous and afraid. So he did his best to make sure that these missionaries would go out and he would stay in. He argued with them. He tried to make their message seem foolish. He tried to influence the governor against them—anything to prevent the governor from accepting this new faith.

Paul knew what Elymas was up to. And, looking straight at the magician, he said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all good, full of craftiness and cunning, will you never stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord? See here, the Lord's



hand will fall on you and you will be blind, unable to see the sun for a time."

Instantly Elymas began to grope—he was blind.



"You will be blind."

Someone took him by the hand and led him out.

When the governor saw what had happened, that this was indeed the power of God, he listened the more eagerly to Paul's message. And "he believed," says Luke, "admiring at the doctrine of the Lord."

Some religious leaders today withdraw so completely into the mists of polite language that their true meaning is never guessed. But this was not Paul's method. The best thing Paul could have done for Elymas is what he did—to tell him exactly what he was, a fake, a quack; and to show him exactly where he stood—under the threat of blindness—the Lord's judgment.

Paul was greatly encouraged by this experience in the capital city of Paphos—here was success at the very onset of the missionary enterprise! If the Roman Proconsul of Cyprus would listen, was there not great prospect of success in the broader fields that lay beyond?

## On to Asia

Leaving Cyprus, the missionaries sailed to Pamphylia, a distance of about 170 miles. At the city of Perga, young John Mark decided to return home. We don't know why he quit—whether he was homesick or afraid of the perils ahead; but his reason could not have been justifiable, as Paul years later still remembered Mark's failure when they were considering a second missionary journey and refused to take Mark along.

Paul and Barnabas did not preach in Perga at this time but continued northward some 150 miles over treacherous mountains to a high plateau region. Possibly they were making an escape from

the disease-ridden climate of the coast.

Reaching Antioch in Pisidia, they preached in the synagogue on the sabbath. The people were impressed, and Luke records that on the next sabbath "almost the whole city" turned out to hear them.

But there was something to be noted in Paul's preaching here in Antioch. Paul used a warm, affectionate tone as he addressed his people: "Brethren, sons of the family of Abraham..." (Acts 13:26). But at the same time he made it clear that God was offering salvation to all men on an equal basis, whether Jew or Gentile. "Let it be known to you, therefore, brethren, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and that by him everyone that believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).

Many in the audience were thrilled, but to the Jews these words were a sharp discord. Such preaching made Jew and Gentile equal in the sight of God, and this was unthinkable. They began to stir up trouble. Paul, they shouted, was wrong, all wrong. But the two missionaries stood firm on their statement. "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46).

But the strife in Antioch was too great, and Paul and Barnabas had to flee—they shook off the dust of their feet against them, a declaration of protest against their ill-treatment.

Travel was easier now, facilitated by the Royal Road through this thickly populated plateau area. Their next stop was Iconium, about 90 miles from Antioch. Here again they went into the synagogue, and a great multitude of Jews and Greeks believed. But again, unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles. The city was divided—part with the Jews, part with the missionaries. And the cry of the mob was violent: "Stone them!"

They fled again—homeward? No, indeed! They simply went on—on to Lycaonia, Lystra, Derbe—

In Lystra, Paul and Barnabas encountered a new problem. The crowds went wild over their miraculous powers. "These men are gods!" they shouted. "Gods in human form!" They called Barnabas the Greek god Jupiter, and Paul they called Mercury. The result? The local priest of the temple of Jupiter brought them carloads of flowers and sacrificed oxen to them at the city gates.

Now Paul and Barnabas could have accepted their worship and settled down to live among them as kings. But they never thought of such a thing. They ran out among the people, tearing their clothes to show their protest and anguish. "Men



why are you doing this? We also are men, of like nature with you . . ." (Acts 14:15).

Disillusioned, the people turned sour. And Paul and Barnabas were plunged from the heights of worship to the depths of persecution. Troublemakers from Antioch and Iconium arrived, and the crowd whipped up in fury. There were shouts of rage—pounding feet—dust—flying stones—shrieks and cries for blood—Paul was being stoned! When it subsided, a human body was left, abandoned, on the dump outside the city.

## Get Up and Go On!

Yes, Paul was there, a crumpled heap, a few believers standing by. Slowly he struggled to his feet. The believers helped him into the city.

Next day—God was with them!—Paul and Barnabas went on to Derbe, where they preached the gospel and taught many.

From Derbe, they could have gone on—down to Tarsus, and then on eastward to Antioch in Syria. But there is no hint in the story in Acts that they ever thought of such a thing. The people in the cities who had listened to their message and given them a welcome could not be left unorganized and unstabilized. At Derbe, Paul and Barnabas made the momentous decision to return to the three cities from which they had barely escaped with their lives—Lystra, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch—and try to put their work in them on a permanent basis. At each place they cheered the Christians, telling them to stand firm, to expect rough times, and to face everything bravely for the sake of the Kingdom. Over each church leaders were placed.

We do not hear of Paul going to synagogues at all on this return journey, but only to the bands of Christians, whom he strengthened in the Lord.

*(Continued on page 10)*

## Through Much Tribulation

Paul and Barnabas exhorted these brethren that it was only "through much tribulation" that they could "enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). The apostles had good reason to have the tribulation angle of the Christian life fresh in their minds. Indeed, the Apostolic Church was to suffer much at the hands of the unbelieving world, for that age was in the "heat" of the day of salvation. The scorching sun of active persecution beat down almost mercilessly on the heads of the zealous workers of the early Christian Church.

The great Apostle himself after his conversion had a taste of the same type of persecution he had formerly inflicted on others.

However, physical suffering at the hand of those not in sympathy with his preaching was not the only tribulation which he and others in God's service have experienced. Every man or woman striving to live the higher life experiences the conflict with himself. All who enter the Kingdom must enter by this same road—through much tribulation. All must fight this good fight of faith to lay hold on eternal life. It was Paul's fight, and it is ours also.

No one who has made a serious effort to conquer the evils of his nature will challenge the use of the word "tribulation" in connection with that effort. Let the doubter try living a whole month without once losing his temper; without once giving his tongue free rein to speak whatever enters his mind. Let him practice to control his emotions so that not one feeling of envy, malice, hatred, bitter-

ness or jealousy rankles in his heart, always doing to others as he would like to be done by; let him practice to curb that feeling of self-importance and not think of himself more highly than he ought to think, realizing that God respects only the humble. Practicing these things, no one escapes trial and affliction.

We can be thankful that God has permitted us to live in the "cool" of the day of salvation when we do not face active persecution. We have laws to protect our rights as individuals. We have the sacred right to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and under national law this right cannot be taken from us. Nevertheless, the enmity between the children of darkness and the children of light is real and is a form of tribulation that we must endure successfully if we would enter the Kingdom of God.

The need to encourage and strengthen our faith is no less today than it was in Paul's day. We are spared the active physical persecution, but our modern world offers much more to attract us away from God than did the world of the first century. We need strength and courage, lest we fail to heed the command, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Religious intolerance against the Christians was an ever-present threat to the early Church; today it is religious indifference that threatens to undermine our faith and slacken our zeal. No one cares what you believe. Such an attitude is disarming, hence our great need to maintain our ardor for the eternal truths of God. Only through "much tribulation" shall we enter the Kingdom of God.

## On to Antioch

Leaving the brethren on the plateau, Paul and Barnabas once more passed through the mountains; and this time they preached at Perga. Then at the sea-harbor of Attalia, they found a ship bound for Seleucia.

Taking passage, they found themselves again on the Great Sea. The ship turned eastward along the coast. Above them on the left they could see the snow-covered ridge of the Taurus mountains from which they had just descended. Paul thought of that splendid Roman road up there on the plateau and those Christian friends he had left there. And he saw also, as through an arch, a still untraveled road of wonderful possibility. That road ran west, to Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, Rome. He thrilled as he dreamed of a campaign that would capture those great cities also.

The ship at last sighted Seleucia. They landed, and Paul and Barnabas hastened up the riverside to Antioch where eager brethren welcomed them once more. We can imagine how their faces glowed as they heard how Sergius Paulus had been convinced of the truth of Christ, and of all the people in Asia who had turned to the Lord. But how their faces darkened when they heard of the mistreatment the missionaries had suffered—Paul had been stoned almost to death!

But the work had only begun. Soon they would be on their way again.

## The Council of Jerusalem

The success of Paul and Barnabas in Asia Minor made clear that Christianity was not to be confined within the borders of Palestine. But it raised a practical question: Should converted Gentiles be required to practice Jewish customs of circumcision and to keep the law of Moses? Were the new Gentile converts to be Christian-Jews, or simply Christians?

The question had to be settled, for it was not a new issue. It had come up many times, and had been side-stepped—the leaders of the church at Jerusalem were aware that the question had dynamite in it. But the time had come for an answer; the increasing number of Gentile converts demanded an answer.

So a council was called at Jerusalem. And as at most general assemblies, there were present the conservatives, the liberals, and those who kept in the middle of the road. Some said the old and tried

way was best; some wanted time to think before they approved a change. The liberal side, ably presented by Peter, believed that since God had given the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles just as He gave it to the Jews, no unnecessary obstacles should be placed in the way of the Gentiles who wanted to become Christians. Why should they make a difference that God did not make?

Paul and Barnabas reported to the Assembly how God had worked many miracles through their preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles. "This new life," they said, "must be given freedom to grow; the gospel is for all."

It was really this fact, that God was already at work among the Gentiles, that finally determined the decision of the Council. James, the leader of the Church, who presided at the assembly, rendered the decision: "I believe that we should not insist that the Gentiles who turn to God must obey our Jewish laws." The apostles and elders acknowledged the decision and extended to Paul the right hand of fellowship as the apostle to the Gentiles.

The church also sent the decision in writing to the church at Antioch and with Paul to the other young churches. ●●

*Next Month: THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.*

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*From A Reader—*

## Present vs. Future

When I compare the fleeting things of this present mortal existence with the future enduring things, I want the latter above all else. How can we set our affections on things temporal when the eternal is before us!

David, the shepherd, was dissatisfied. He asked what greatness was there for him in the work he was doing. Young and full of energy, he could not understand why it took so long to become somebody. He wanted to do something spectacular, something big. But after it was pointed out to him he finally understood.

God puts His people in different surroundings. For some, the daily unromantic chores, the same thing over and over again have a most galling effect. But it is in the daily, minute occurrences that the most valuable lessons can be learned and applied. From Abel to Moses, the prophets and sages, all have had to pass through the same daily testings.

Lord, help us never to weaken.

*Mrs. L. M. K., South Amboy, N. J.*

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

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## 9 Kicked Against the Pricks

I WAS threatening with every breath, eager to destroy every Christian I could lay my hands upon. These followers of Jesus—they declared that *He* was the Messiah—the very Messiah predicted in our old law! They claimed to believe in God, and even called themselves true Israelites, as if they were the inheritors of all the promises given to Abraham.

These audacious claims—particularly those of a crucified and resurrected Messiah—were contrary to my Jewish training. Such ideas threatened the very basis of Judaism as we Pharisees understood it; there seemed to be only one right thing to do—exterminate them!

I went all out to destroy this blasphemous heresy, root and branch. This determination became the supreme passion of my life. Certainly, I thought,



"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60).

I was doing the will of God. Why shouldn't God be pleased if I did what I could to eliminate His enemies? I desired to make the most of my life. And so, with all the means I had, I pursued to the death men and women alike, even dragging them out of their homes and jailing them.

But do you know, what really fired my intensity for persecution was my innermost soul. I was trying to stifle the pricks of my conscience.

For one thing, I could not forget that angel face of Stephen as he stood before the council. I saw the young man brutally stoned to death. I consented to it. I saw how a saint could die. I heard him as he was dying—he asked for the forgiveness of his persecutors—I could hardly believe it! This pricked my conscience.

Another thing disturbed me—some of the people I knew became converted to this new faith. There was Barnabas—he sold his land and laid the money at the apostles' feet.

Still another thing made me think—and that was the tone of Rabbi Gamaliel's defense of the apostles. I really wondered if he secretly believed in Christ—could it be possible? Were his words of warning to the council directed to me, to restrain my fiery zeal? My conscience was pricked.

Then, too, I learned much about Jesus while hunting down His followers. I secretly admired their conduct, their courage; they possessed an inner peace in the face of trial that I could not understand. It made me think more deeply about their Master, for whom they so willingly suffered. How could they do it!

As you know, I was by birth, by training, and by habit a part of Judaism. From the very beginning my mind was made up that Jesus was the arch-enemy of Jewish religion.

Yet, doubts arose. Was the law able to save a man? I could not help but notice that the *outward* observance of the law and the *inward* fulfillment of the law were not one. I was torn between the demands of the law and my own conscience, between the stern religion of my fathers and the new faith of Jesus: My conscience was pricked with misgivings and doubts.

Somehow these uncomfortable pricks just intensified my zeal to obliterate this Christian movement—I was in reality fighting against myself!

I sought authority from the High Priest to ap-



prehend the saints at Damascus. I determined to make these Christians tremble.

I was going along the road and nearing the city. Suddenly, there, above me, as brilliant as the noon-day sun, I saw a light. It was brighter than the sun. I fell to the ground. The light was overpowering—blinding. A voice spoke to me—tenderly—repeating my name. “Saul, . . . why are you persecuting me?”

“Who are you, Lord?” I could barely speak the words.

“I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.”

I spoke, trembling. “Lord, what will you have me to do?”

“Arise,” He said, “and go into the city, and there it will be told you what you shall do.”

As I picked myself up, I found that I was blind. I had to be led into the city.

In Damascus, I took a room and kept to myself. I prayed and pondered over and over what had happened. It was Jesus—Jesus of Nazareth—He *was alive!* The Messiah! The risen Lord! It was all true, just as Stephen had said—all gloriously *true!*

After three days, a man named Ananias came to my door. “Brother Saul, you may see again!” he said to me, and immediately, miraculously, my sight returned. He said, “The God of our fathers has chosen you to become His witness before all men of what you have seen and heard.”

I was immediately baptized. Afterward, I went into the synagogues and told what had happened to me on the road to Damascus. I proclaimed Jesus as indeed the *son of God*.

Those who heard me were amazed—and some were suspicious. It was too much for them. They were aware that I had purposed to arrest them—and take them in chains to the Chief Priest. They would not trust me. Some even plotted to take my life. I had to escape.

All this happened with such suddenness. Everything was changed. Everything in my life from now on would be changed. I went into a desert place to meditate and to seek God. I needed guidance for my new life. I needed strength for an almost overwhelming task that had been given me. I needed time to reorganize my life, and my thinking, and my plans for the future.

I could see the law and the prophets now in a new light, with new eyes, as it were. *The law was not the end*—it was as a tutor in charge of us until Christ should come, when we should be justified through faith; and now that faith has come, the tutor’s charge has ended. It was so reasonable—how could I have been so blind?

So now, forgetting the things which are behind, I forge ahead to new goals. I concentrate on this:

with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead, I go straight for the goal—because I have had the honor of being called by God in Christ.

You also have been called—won’t you also go *straight for the goal?* ●●

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## A Prayer

**O** GOD, EVEN THE FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, this morning brings us under renewed obligation to praise and extol Thee.

**WE THANK THEE** for Thy kind consideration for such frail, mortal, insignificant creatures as we, in that Thou hast opened to us a door of hope, providing a way whereby we can lift ourselves above the worthlessness of our carnal natures and fit ourselves to become Thine eternal associates.

**WE THANK THEE** for the consolation and assurance that Thy beloved Son rose triumphantly over the grave, ascended to Thy right hand and now is alive for evermore. May this be an earnest to us that a holy life will not go unrewarded, but if we keep Thy just and holy law, we too will be placed beyond death and inherit immortal life.

**GRANT THAT THE HOPE** of these unspeakable blessings may so enthuse and inspire us with zeal that to do Thy will will be our chief delight. May we never allow the fires of our zeal to become banked or become inoculated with a mild form of Christianity until we are immune to the real thing. But may our zeal be a living, compelling force, a fire that burns brightly and continuously, a perfume that we diffuse wherever we go, a radiance that always glows in our faces, an influence for good that will be felt by all whom we chance to meet.

**GIVE US AN UNDERSTANDING HEART** that we may understand our errors and having seen evil in all its hideousness may we abhor it, turn from it, and make Thee an offering in a clean vessel. Give us humbleness of mind, and may we ever remember that before honor comes humility. Give us the strength always to say *no* to self when tempted to sin. Give us what is best for us, whether prosperity or adversity, and may we see Thy hand in every affair of life and always say, Thy will be done.

**OPEN OUR EYES** to see Thy divine purpose. Open our hearts that the King of glory may come in; and may we welcome the restraining influence of divine law, until our lives shall become unspotted and pure, reflecting the character of our perfect Example, our soon coming King whom we delight to honor. We ask all in His Name. **AMEN.**

# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Ministration of the Spirit

FROM time immemorial, God's Spirit has been at work in the world, but it may not always have been recognized as such. Man likes to think that he is able to do great things of himself alone, but the truth is that without God, man could do nothing—not even breathe. What would happen should God withdraw His control from the universe? "All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 33:4). It is only through the will of God and the power of His Spirit that all creation lives.

Through this power God not only gives us the very air we breathe, but He also has in the past equipped men for tasks they could not otherwise have performed. In the Bible record, some men were fitted for works of valor while others performed rather mundane services under the influence of His power. Bezaleel was chosen and given special skill to supervise the making of all the appurtenances of the tabernacle in the time of Moses. "And I have filled him [Bezaleel] with the spirit [power] of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. 31:3-5), was the word of the Lord to Moses concerning him.

Gideon accomplished a great victory with his three hundred men—men chosen according to God's instructions—by the simple expedient of trumpets, lamps and pitchers—and the power of God. We read of the great strength of Samson (strength overshadowed by moral weakness), but given him by God for some reason; of the spirit of wisdom that was with Joshua (Deut. 34:9), and of the Spirit of the Lord that came upon Saul and caused him to prophesy.

Isaiah wrote prophetically that the "spirit of the Lord shall rest upon [Christ], the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (11:2). With this power Christ was able to heal all manner of diseases (Matt. 14:35),

and "many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did" (John 2:23).

These examples are but a very small sample of the evidence contained in the Scriptures of God at work in the world, His Spirit working for the benefit of the human race. In our previous lessons on the subject, we have learned something of the nature of God's Spirit or power. We have briefly covered its workings from the time God called to Adam through the period of the patriarchs. In this issue we will continue our study, following our outline:

### IV. The Ministration of the Spirit—Old Testament

#### C. The Spirit in the Time of Moses and the Judges

God never left His people in doubt concerning His power and His might. From the time of the call to Abraham, throughout the Exodus, the rule of the judges, the reign of the kings and the captivity and exile, God was never silent for more than comparatively short periods of time.

But since the time He withdrew His Holy Spirit power from the earth more than nineteen hundred years ago, God has been silent. Nevertheless the planets revolve in their orbit and the sun continues to shine, a perpetual reminder that He is still in control. Men may doubt and scoff, but the whole creation gives evidence of a Creator, a divine Hand governing all.

God's Spirit, once so evident on this small planet of ours, will one day be restored according to His promise, when "he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets" (Acts 3:20-21). The "restitution of all things" will include restoring the power of the Holy Spirit, the power that was withdrawn at the end of the Apostolic Age. (This phase will be studied in detail in a later lesson.)

### IV. THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT—OLD TESTAMENT

Probably at no time in the thousand-year history of Israel was God's might or power, a facet of His

Spirit, more apparent than during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. Before the departure from Egypt and throughout the Exodus, His invincible might was made known to Israel through acts that could not be disputed. Surrounding nations, not knowing the power of Israel's God, often challenged that power. But with God on Israel's side, always they fought a losing battle.

God's power was not always shown in battle. Sometimes it was in the spirit of prophecy through which a future event could be accurately predicted many years in advance. Sometimes His power was demonstrated through the miraculous: Witness the water that flowed from the rock, the fire that consumed the offering on the altar, the ass that talked to his rider, the axe that floated—and many, many more. Manifestations of God's power in the Old Testament are so numerous that we will be able to cover only a very small portion of them in our study.

### C. The Spirit in the Time of Moses and the Judges

Jacob and his family, numbering some seventy souls, had gone down into Egypt to escape a famine in the land of Canaan. But now, more than four hundred years later, the tiny mustard seed planted in Egypt, had become a great tree and it was God's will to transplant it in a new land. God had chosen these people to make for Himself a nation, and whatever His will, He would accomplish His purpose. He had purposed to remove His people from the heathen nation of Egypt, and through His Spirit, His power, He would accomplish His purpose.

Seventeen years later, Jacob died, but his posterity "increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Ex. 1:7-8).

The new king made slaves of the children of Israel and "made their lives bitter with hard bondage, . . . all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour" (Ex. 1:14).

But God had not forgotten His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. He was still working on the earth and arranged circumstances that the infant Moses should be brought up in the house of Pharaoh with his own mother for a nurse. The children of Israel were still slaves to the Egyptians, "and it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the

children of Israel, and God had respect unto them" (Ex. 2:23-25). God was not asleep. He would rescue His people from the Egyptians by His power, His Spirit working on the earth.

**1. Moses is chosen at the burning bush.** Moses received his call to his great task direct from an angel of God. The brightness of the glory of the angel caused the bush to appear to be on fire and the sight attracted the attention of Moses. And when Moses "turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush" (Ex. 3:4). God Almighty was not in the bush; it was His angel as stated in verse 2: "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." **The angel bears the name of God, hence the words "angel" and "God" are used interchangeably.**

The angel spoke for God and he said, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (vs. 5-6). The angel had been sent to inform Moses of his calling: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, . . . and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:7-8).

**God Himself did not come down to deliver the message. He sent His angel to speak for Him.**

Moses' calling was the beginning of a time in history during which God worked closely with His people. We will review some of Moses' experiences, showing the evidence of God's power.

**a. Proof of his calling.** Moses, being human, was not easily convinced that he had been called by God, and furthermore he protested: the people "will not believe me, or hearken unto my voice." God offered proof of his calling and authority through miracles. Moses' rod, probably a shepherd's crook, became a serpent when cast on the ground. Taken up, it again became a rod, a symbol of the power God had given him. As further proof God caused Moses' hand to become leprous and later to be cleansed. **Such miracles can be attributed only to God's power, His Spirit at work to convince Moses that he had truly been called by God.**

**b. God and Moses versus Pharaoh.** Had Moses not had the Lord on his side, the encounter with Pharaoh might have had a different ending. But one man plus God forms a majority, thus the hosts of Pharaoh could not prevent the children of Israel from leaving Egypt.

The ten plagues brought upon the Egyptians to force the hand of Pharaoh, as frightful as they were, did not soften his hard heart until the very last. The water that turned to blood, the frogs, lice,



flies, the plague that killed multitudes of the cattle, the boils, hail, locusts and darkness all served to incense the stony-hearted king the more, and he was adamant in his refusal to free the people. But the tenth plague, that of the death of the first-born, which took the life of even his own heir, convinced him that God meant what He said, and he not only let the people go, he ordered them to go at once.

Again, it was the power of God, His Spirit working through His servants, Moses and Aaron, that caused the plagues and concluded them. The plagues were God's means of accomplishing His purpose of freeing His chosen people from Egyptian bondage.

c. **The pillar of cloud and fire.** From the start of the journey from Egypt to Canaan, God provided a guide for His people. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light" (Ex. 13:21). **God Himself did not personally guide the travelers; He sent His angels. The brightness of the cloud at night was the glory of the angels, comparable to the bush that appeared to be on fire and was not consumed. Angels were a major factor in carrying out God's plan for His people.**

d. **The Red Sea crossing.** The first major obstacle to the exodus of the children of Israel was the Red Sea, a forbidding barrier between them and the area they must traverse to reach the Promised Land. And more, Pharaoh had changed his mind, and his hosts were pursuing them. But God would provide a way; they would cross the Red Sea without so much as getting wet feet! God's power, His Spirit, was working with them and when Moses lifted his rod over the water, the sea divided and Israel went "on dry ground through the midst of the sea" (Ex. 14:15-18). And at the same time, the protective cloud "went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians" and Israel.

**The sequel to this event that ended in the destruction of the entire Egyptian army is familiar history, but another evidence of the working of God's Spirit; nothing less than the power of God could have brought it about.**

e. **The giving of the Law.** One of the highlights of the forty years was the receipt of the Law on Mount Sinai. According to the narrative God spoke out of the cloud directly to the people and the law was written on the two tablets of stone by "the finger of God." **The "finger of God" is but another means of expressing God's power, His means of working on the earth.**

The law was given with much fanfare: thunder-

ings and lightning, blaring trumpets, fire and smoke and dark clouds. All these were means of impressing the minds of the people, God's way of reminding them that He was more powerful than they. **It is reported by Stephen in his discourse in the book of Acts that the Law was received "by the disposition of angels," and also that it was an angel "which spake to him [Moses] in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers" (Acts 7:53, 38). The Law was from God, but given through His angels.**

f. **The death and burial of Moses.** Moses, forbidden to enter the Promised Land for the sin of disobedience, was given a long-distance view of the land from the top of a nearby mountain. Then he died there "according to the word of the Lord, and he [an angel] buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, . . . but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. 34:5-6). Moses was buried by the angels who chose to keep his burial place a secret that will be known only at the Resurrection Day. **God through His angels had watched over Moses for 120 years, from the time of his birth to his death. It was God's Spirit, His power that had saved him from the wrath of Pharaoh and preserved his life until his mission had been fulfilled.**

2. **Joshua succeeds Moses.** Joshua, one of two of the original horde of people that departed Egypt to reach the Promised Land, was chosen by God to be Moses' successor. Like Moses, he was given supernatural power for the job. The Bible narrative suggests that Moses transmitted his own honor and power to Joshua through the laying-on of hands. **Moses was fulfilling the command of the Lord, but the power Moses had possessed and that which was given to Joshua was from God. His Spirit that had been working through Moses would now be with Joshua (Num. 27:18-23).**

Joshua's career as leader of the children of Israel was not nearly as long as that of Moses, but it was not uneventful. The task of conquering the land promised to the Israelites fell to Joshua. We will review this period only briefly to show the ministration of God's Spirit.

a. **Entering the Promised Land.** The first demonstration of God's power under Joshua was the crossing of Jordan. The priests who carried the ark of the covenant were to step into the water, and as soon as "the soles of the feet of the priests" touched the water, the waters would be divided so that the people could pass over on dry ground.

God's Spirit, His power, caused the waters to separate to permit the crossing. The priests who were required to step into the water to bring about the parting of the waters acted on faith, but it

was the power of God and not of the priests that caused the miracle. It was God's angel, not God Himself, that gave the instructions (Josh. 3:9-17).

**b. Conquering the land.** God had promised His people the land, but it was not to be given them without effort on their part. With God on their side, the outcome was never really in doubt. That which God had promised, He would fulfill, the Canaanites notwithstanding.

Evidences of God's power or His Spirit were numerous during this period. The walls of the city of Jericho were caused to fall flat at the sound of the people shouting and the blowing of trumpets (Josh. 6:1-5); Gibeon was miraculously defended because they had made peace with Israel; Ai was quickly overcome on the second try, the first having ended in defeat because of sin; city after city was overcome by the Israelite armies. **But throughout the campaign one thing was clear: The victory was the Lord's; it was God's help that delivered the enemy into Israel's hand. God was teaching them that without Him they could do nothing, but that with Him all things were possible. Through His Spirit, His power, He purposed to establish Israel as His Kingdom on the earth: "And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein" (Josh 21:43).**

Joshua, on his deathbed, summarized the conquest: "Ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you" (Josh. 23:3). **Joshua was not seeking the glory for himself; it was God through His Spirit, His power that had won the battles for them.**

**3. God at work through the Judges.** Joshua had been God's instrument, but he was not indispensable and after Israel had conquered the land of Canaan under his leadership, God allowed him to die. Afterward "there arose another generation. . . , which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:8, 10). Because they forgot God and did not keep His commandments, God allowed them to be overcome by their enemies.

God allowed them to be oppressed by their enemies as a means of teaching them. God had said, "Ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars." But Israel forgot the commandment and worshiped the pagan gods of Baal and Ashtaroth.

They had forgotten God, but God had not forgotten them. After they cried unto Him in their distress, He provided a means of deliverance. We read that "the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled

them" (Judges 2:1, 16, 18). God used these judges as His instrument in fulfilling His plan for His chosen people over a space of some two hundred years. We will review briefly God's work through some of the more outstanding judges.

From the first judge of Israel, **Othniel**, to the last, **Samuel**, all were chosen or appointed by God working through His angels. And through God they were given whatever supernatural power they needed to accomplish their appointed task.

Of Othniel we read, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel" (Judges 3:10). With the help of God Othniel overcame the enemy, "and the land had rest [peace] forty years," a rare occurrence in those early days.

**Deborah**, the only woman judge and a prophetess, is remembered for going to battle with Barak, the commander of Israel's armies. Israel had turned away from the Lord and He had allowed them to be oppressed by their enemies for twenty years. Before they went to war Deborah said to Barak: "UP! This day the Lord gives Sisera [the enemy captain] into your hands. Already the Lord has gone out to battle before you" (Judges 4:14, NEB). **The glory of the victory was not to Deborah and Barak, but to the Lord. It was His Spirit or power that had subdued their enemies.**

**Gideon** was one of the few of his time privileged to have direct contact with God through an angel who came to deliver the message that he had been called to deliver Israel. Gideon's army, selected according to the instructions received through God's angel, won an easy victory over the enemy, but again, **it was the Lord's doing, His Spirit or power working on the earth.**

**Manoah**, the father of Samson, also had a face-to-face meeting with an angel, sent to announce the birth of their son. That the child would grow into a man that would deliver Israel from their enemies was also told them by the angel. After the visit, Manoah made an offering on a rock, and "when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame" (Judges 13:20).

The judges mentioned, as well as others of which we have record during this period of the Israelite nation, were acting under the direct influence of God's Spirit, His power on the earth. Each one's part was important to the establishment of the nation of Israel. Without God's help, the new nation would have perished at the hand of her enemies.

*Reprints of these studies are available upon request.*

# Christian Consecration

*The following discourse by our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, is typical of his sincere concern for the salvation of his followers and his many stirring admonitions to right living.*

*Mr. Nichols, born October 1, 1844, delivered this message some seventy years ago, but his thoughts are as timely as when they were spoken.*



REV. L. T. NICHOLS  
(1844—1912)

WE have met here today for the purpose of drinking at the fountain of living waters, so as to be filled with the wondrous Word of life in such a way as to be enabled to more fully carry out its teachings, and not only become more joyful now, but in the ages to come to be filled with joy beyond the present capabilities of our mind to comprehend or enjoy.

Paul declares that the promise is beyond all that we can even ask or think. Not only this, but if Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, so that we are rooted and grounded in love, we then can "comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height," so that God will give unto us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." We can think of many grand and glorious things to enjoy; and then to think that a keeping of the commandments will bring us so much *more* than we can ask or think. If this is always kept in view it will cause us to bring our whole being into play, and serve the Lord with joyfulness and gladness of heart. It will enable us to keep a steady, onward move, always pressing towards the prize with renewed energy and strength. It will also assist us to use all we have in the service of Him who has promised us such wonderful things to enjoy, not only in this life, but to have them so wonderfully increased in the world to come.

When we look around and see to what extent the world are fulfilling the words of Holy Writ, it

causes us to more fully realize that the day of the Lord is indeed speeding apace. And it does afford us much pleasure, to think that it is a sure omen that the day of peace is likewise at hand, when the tables will be turned, and the glorious change in earth's administration will begin, which will result in all nations being brought into union with God, all speaking the same things, being perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.

We can plainly see the way the world are going, but it seems quite difficult to see the way that *we* are conducting *ourselves*. It is quite an easy thing to see others, but when it comes to our own faults it is quite a different thing. But we must become more interested in our *own* failings than we are in anyone else's. And seeing how frail human nature is, it is indeed time to go to work and look at ourselves with a greater determination to see ourselves just as the Word pictures the human heart to be.

When we look at ourselves it will be very necessary to be more careful, and exercise greater care and reverential fear, or we will deceive ourselves; for it is evident that the natural mind is more than likely to deceive, and will begin to justify self. As soon as one begins to justify self the harder it then becomes to get him to see himself. Each of us knows this by experience, and it is high time to put on a double guard, and watch ourselves with a greater determination to never more justify ourselves. We should be extremely anxious about this



matter, seeing it leads away from the ever-blessed summer-land of love.

### Make the Very Most of Our Time

As time is getting shorter for us to travel over the road that leads to the Eternal City, it is indeed high time that we were taking heed to our walk to see that every step is, without mistake, taken in the right direction. The time will soon come when one step taken in the wrong direction will forever seal our doom as one who will be placed on the left hand to woefully lament because of our own doings. And then to think, that one step taken in the wrong direction many times causes many more steps to be taken in the same way; and all this just because of self-justification. This should cause us to be vigilant in our search of self, and see that no self-justification gets in to lead us astray. This is one of the most difficult points for us to be all of one mind, perfectly joined together in the same judgment.

It is not so difficult to see that we must be all of one mind in regard to our not justifying ourselves, but to be of one mind and see that we *are* justifying ourselves is the great difficulty. We can see plainly enough when others are justifying self, but to see when *we* are doing so is quite another thing.

The Word of the Lord was not caused to be written and cared for all down through the dark ages for us to fix up to suit our own notion, nay, verily; but was thus cared for that a few might receive and walk in obedience unto and pay attention to every word, without discarding or changing a single sentiment or idea. To do this it will be absolutely necessary to throw away our own ideas, and receive with meekness the engrafted word which alone is able to save. We must not only receive it upon one point, but upon every point. All must be lived up to in order for salvation to be the result. For we are distinctly told, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

### Consecration Allows No Respect of Persons

Another great point for us to consider is, not to be any respecter of persons, but go to work and submit ourselves to the Word until we will bring all up to the same standard, whether rich or poor, high or low. This may seem an easy thing to do, but experience teaches us to the contrary; and we will have to watch ourselves closely in order to always be found walking in obedience to this God-given commandment. The human mind is often blinded to the faults of our own relations, or to the faults of the rich, or to the faults of some particular

friend. All this is to be a respecter of persons, and needs to be put far away in order to be found living in obedience to the commandment, "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment." It is quite an easy thing to violate this commandment. Habit has such an influence on the mind, before we are aware of it we are found doing what is not good, and the Book states: "It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment." And seeing that we are told that it is not good to have respect of persons in judgment, we had better be extremely careful, and see to it that we do not let our natural ways lead us in looking upon anyone when they are being judged.

"If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well," wrote the apostle James; "but if ye have respect to persons ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors," therefore the reason why it is said, "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." These sayings of the Word must be lived up to if we ever expect to be welcomed by our Master into the Vale of Beulah, within the wonderland of celestial peace and glory.

### The Necessity of Knowing and Doing

It will not do for us to treat these things lightly by any means, but we must read the Word with the greatest of reverence, seriously considering that "every word of God is pure." We are not to add to it nor take from it. In order to have God for our shield, we must be found trusting in Him. No one can be trusting in the Lord unless he is believing, and doing as our Father has commanded him to do.

To *say* we believe in the Scriptures of truth is one thing, and to show it by our everyday life is quite another thing. One is but idle talk, and the other induces fruits of righteousness, which will cause the everlasting God to look upon us in mercy. And to the truly instructed one this is above everything else; for apart from God's mercy there is no possible chance to be saved. And apart from works of righteousness there is no possible show of obtaining God's mercy; so it is plain to be seen that we must produce fruits of righteousness in order to be saved.

There is no possible way to evade this plain statement.

We are informed that "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them." We may

know the commandments of God, but apart from remembering to do them in our everyday life, that knowledge will do us no good whatever. All depends upon our doing the commandments; apart from this there is no reason for us to expect any pity or mercy from God. It is only to those that *remember* His commandments to *do* them that God's mercy is great. This is as it should be; for if the wonderful reward that is promised to the faithful, of endless rest and quietude in the grand summer-land of love to partake evermore of the endless beatitudes of this sweet and ever-joyful home in glory, is not worth our entire time to be spent in doing the commandments, great and small, then we are not worthy of the mercy of God. And rest assured, we will not be the ones upon whom God will shower His mercy in great flowing streams, speaking peace to our souls, and adding daily comfort to our onward march toward this haven of everlasting rest.

### Consecration Defined

To fully consecrate ourselves in the service of the Lord, with all we have and are, needs careful consideration and serious thought. To be wholly consecrated to the service of God is a long way from being the vain consecration that the world enter into. Yes, verily, it is far from being an empty bubble or dream of the night, but it is to enter into the work of the Lord with zeal, until we will become all pure of heart and clean of hands by an actual keeping of all the commandments of God just as He has given them to us to be kept.

To consecrate ourselves, with all we have, to do this work aright, so as to be sure of the reward, is not a hardship or laborious task in the sense of wearisomeness, but with the glorious reward in view it is quite the contrary. It is not only a delightful work, but a *very* delightful work, a work that grows lighter and lighter all the time; and a work that will cause a greater joy than anything else that we can engage in. As we see our heart getting purer and purer, we are filled with joy. The more we live the truth the better we like it, and the more happiness we get.

We will have to keep our minds constantly upon the grand eternity of bliss, with a determination to live up to every mandate of Jehovah. If we do not do this, we will not succeed in coming off victorious over the old natural ways of the old man. The doing of the commands must be first and uppermost in our minds. We cannot be double-minded and expect to gain the prize. The mind must be single to the glory of God. If we become interested in the things of this world, either in its pleasures, ways, sayings or doings, we will have our mind divided,

and cannot serve the Lord as we should. God will not give an endless home in glory, surrounded with every comfort and pleasure, for a half service; it must be a full surrender of our entire being with all we have and are.

### The Necessity of Self-Examination

In order to do this and keep our minds single to the glory of God, we must take heed and not become entangled with the affairs of this life. Jesus took particular pains to charge His followers, "Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." It is utterly impossible to be entangled with the affairs of this life and war a good warfare. It is vain indeed to expect to gain the reward without giving our undivided attention to the carrying out of the commandments of God. Such a hope as this will only prove a delusion in the end, indeed it is worse than no hope.

What care we should exercise in seeing to the matter of our endless existence! How we should examine ourselves in the light of truth to see that our conduct is such that we can rest assured that we have not a false hope! In order to do this we must let the light of life beam into our inward parts, and search diligently to see if there be any evil ways in us. Search, not to cover, but to uncover, so as to see the evil in ourselves when it is exposed. And when our evil ways are pointed out to us, make no delay, but go to work with a will to lay aside the evil; throw away the weights so we can run and make some headway in the race for endless life and glory.

We will have to take a retrospective view of all our conduct every day, in order to be enabled to know to a certainty that our hope is not a vain hope. And when we look over the past day we must do it with but one object in view, and this is to do better the following day. Yes, really see to it that we do; not simply promise to do better, but go to work and *do* better. Each time that we succeed in doing better, the easier it will be to do better the next time. And as we accustom ourselves to doing right, the easier it will become: that is, it will if we are in earnest, and accustom ourselves to doing well long enough. It will then become second nature, and practiced long enough it will become easy to do.

Before we can thus exclaim, we must form a part of the new creation that will be in waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Oh, to be children of God! Oh, what a deliverance, what a great deliverance that will be!

And it should also cause us to say, "I will, I will, God helping me, I will from this time on do all

things He has commanded me to do." "Let come what may, I will serve with my whole mind so as to be worthy of this much more than wonderful deliverance." And say with emphasis, "I will do all things to the glory of God." It should arouse our hearts to their full working-capacity, until we have enthusiasm sufficient to really perform the work with great delight.

This work must be done, everywhere, and at all times to make sure of the reward. And we should feel a willingness to pass through trials to obtain the glory. But alas! This is the trouble; if there were no trials many could then be induced to work for the Lord. But remember, if there were no trials, there would be no virtue; and humanity then, like beasts, would have no reward. It is only through tribulation that we enter the Kingdom. But it is too often true that every one is led by his own liking.

By this time we should fully realize that our ways lead in the wrong direction, and unless we turn from them, we are lost. But, O my! How great is the force of habit, and what a power will have to be brought to bear in order to change it. Only the power of God's Word, working effectually within our hearts, can enable us to do this work, for Truth is mighty and it will prevail. There must be one continual pushing forward toward the prize.

As we think of the *everlasting* summer-land of love, surrounded with an atmosphere of celestial glory knowing no bounds or end, filled with every delightful joy and pleasure, yea, far more than the human mind with its present capabilities can possibly conjecture, it causes us to exclaim, in the language of John the Revelator, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Come quickly, that the grace, this wonderful grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may be with us all. Amen. ●●

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# Did Jesus Commend Dishonesty?

**H**ONESTY, integrity, strictest adherence to uprightness and principle in all business and personal dealings is an unshakable fundamental of Christian conduct. What, then, could Jesus have meant by the parable of the Unjust Steward? Was He recommending greed and unjust gain?

In Luke 16 Jesus is discussing the proper use of worldly wealth. To illustrate He employs a parable. Now a parable is a story which teaches a lesson, but not every detail of a parable is meant to be specifically applied. Thus in the parable of the Unjust Steward, Jesus is not holding the steward's conduct up to admiration except in one particular—that he acted quickly in his own best interest in temporal affairs, which, as Jesus points out (verse 8) is more than the prospective children of the Kingdom often do in regard to eternal affairs.

The parable tells of a steward who lost his position as administrator of his lord's property. Realizing that he would need friends to help him face the world, he set about to win the friendship of his lord's creditors, settling with each of them for whatever they were able to pay. It has been suggested that very possibly stewards often worked on a basis of shares, and this steward gave his lord all that he had collected, not retaining the share which would have normally been his, had he collected the full amount of the account; by so doing he was seeking to win both the friendship of the creditors and that of his lord.

"And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely [acted shrewdly, in his own best interest]: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (verse 8). Jesus is not using the story to commend unjust dealing; nor is He recommending the steward's conduct. Jesus is pointing out the steward's shrewdness—when he saw his temporal interests in danger, he took immediate action; he made an all-out effort to do all he could to secure himself in this world; he acted with prudence and foresight. Such is the action taken by the children of this world to preserve temporal security. Should not the children of light, earnest life-seekers, be just as prudent, and just as foresighted, and just as shrewd in doing all they can to win the friendship of their Lord in heaven?

In verses 10—13 Jesus further clarifies the les-

son of the parable and eliminates any question that might be raised as to the proper use of money. To make sure His hearers would not misapply the parable and think that He was advocating a careless use of worldly wealth, He says in effect: "The steward was dishonest in money matters; I do not infer that it does not matter whether you be honest or not. It is very necessary to be faithful even there, for he who is faithful in little is faithful in much, and he who is unfaithful in little is unfaithful in much. He who is untrustworthy in connection with worldly goods is unworthy of being entrusted with true riches; the unjust administrator of another's property will not secure confidence as an administrator even of his own."

Thus Jesus says in verse 9, "And I say unto you"—He attaches positive personal authority to the words which follow—"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." What is mammon? It is a term applied to treasure, worldly wealth, riches; in a figurative sense, that which is trusted in. In other words Jesus is saying, Make yourselves the friends you will need, God and Christ, just as the steward made himself the friend of his lord's creditors; you can do this by using the mammon of unrighteousness, your earthly wealth and possessions, to their credit. Make yourselves friends of God and Christ by using the mammon of unrighteousness rightly.

The next phrase of verse 9 is stated in two different ways in the original Greek manuscripts, but either makes a suitable point. It may be rendered: "that when it fails"—referring to the mammon of unrighteousness. Worldly wealth has no value beyond the termination of mortal life; when life ends, the mammon has failed. Or it may be rendered, "that when ye die"—the point is the same; when we die and the mammon of unrighteousness no longer has any value to us, we will need the "friends" we have made—the God of heaven and His Son Christ. If we have made these friendships secure, then when the mammon does fail, or our mortal life ends, they (God and Christ) may "receive" us into "everlasting habitations"—even the Kingdom of God when it shall be established on earth.

In the following verses Jesus establishes even  
(Continued on page 27)

# Bible A B C's



**S** is for Silas—a name I am sure you want to know.

Silas was a companion and fellow traveller with Paul. That would recommend him as a devoted follower of Christ. Silas, like Paul, must have bravely suffered much persecution for his faith and preaching. He must have been very zealous, for after a long, hard day he was singing praise at midnight. Do you remember where he was that night? In prison.

It must have been a very exciting time. Just when Silas and Paul had aroused the keen interest of the other prisoners—you remember what happened? There was a great earthquake! It shook all the prisoners free. The jailor was so frightened that he was about to kill himself. Why? Because it was Roman law that if a prisoner escaped, the jailor must die.

He was so glad to find out the prisoners were still there. He knew it was because of Silas and Paul. Do you know what happened then? He wanted them to preach to him what he must do to be saved.

I don't think Silas forgot that night—do you? ●●

**S** is for  
**S**ilas

**T** is for  
**T**ryphena

**T** is for Tryphena, also Tryphosa. Paul sent special greetings to these two women in his letter to the Romans.

Their names being so nearly alike suggest that they were twin sisters.

The greeting sent to them is all that is said of them. But we gain some information by the meaning of their names. Tryphena means dainty and Tryphosa means delicate. But one

word in the greeting tells us something else. It was, "Give my greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa who toil in the Lord."

You probably have heard that the Bible was not written in English. English was not even known at that long time ago. In the Greek language the greeting spoke of "toil" which to us means work. What Paul was really saying was Tryphena and Tryphosa worked till they were ready to drop.

So while they might have looked dainty and delicate, they really were very hard workers for the Church and for God.

That is a good lesson for us.

Boys and girls can be hard workers for God by working very, very hard to be obedient. They can work until they are "ready to drop" doing everything that Mother and Daddy tell them to do. There was once a little girl who got up on certain morning almost tired to death. When asked what made her so, she answered, "I worked myself nearly to death yesterday trying to be good!"

She could have been called Tryphena or Tryphosa, couldn't she? ●●

## Frank's Lesson

AN ill-natured brier came up out of the ground with her thorns, saying spitefully, "I shall try to see how bad I can be. There are few that can match me at scratching." Children who touched the brier went away with their fingers scratched and bleeding. The gardener's wife happened along one day, and the brier caught hold of her dress and tore it. She called the gardener and asked him to dig it up and throw it into the fire. And that was the end of the ugly, scratchy brier.

Did you ever see a boy and girl who acted just like the thorny, ill-natured brier to Father and Mother and everyone at home?

One morning Frank got up on the wrong side of the bed, and how fretful and disagreeable he felt! The whole world looked gloomy.

"I'll not wash my hands and face nor comb my hair this morning, neither will I brush my teeth," he said. He wanted his mother to hear him; but as she did not appear to notice he said again, "I shall not wash—it's a bother to wash every morning of my life."

Mother who was dressing baby Billy looked up and said in a surprised way, "Why, so it is! Why haven't I thought of that before?"

She smiled, and Frank went down for his breakfast. He sat down before an empty plate. Mother had eaten earlier with Father, so Frank was to have breakfast alone. He could smell something like muffins, and maybe there was an egg ready for him, too.

Mother came down just then with his baby brother. Now Mother would get him something to eat. But no, she set Billy down and went into the living room and sat down to read a book. Billy sat on the kitchen floor cooing and laughing, trying to get Frank to play with him, but naughty Frank just scowled back at him.

"What is there to laugh about?" sputtered Frank. "When a man is hungry, he wants something to eat. And look at it rain! I wanted to finish the dog house today," he grumbled. Of course Billy decided to leave Frank and go see his mother.

Finally Frank helped himself to a drink of water, hoping Mother would look up. But she kept right on reading. It was about nine o'clock, and Frank knew she usually had all the dishes washed and the kitchen tidy by that time.

"Aren't you going to wash the dishes, Mother?" he asked, thinking if she washed them she might notice his breakfast and put it on the table.

Mother smiled and said in a cheerful tone, "It's too much *bother*, Frank—I'd rather just read—it's more interesting."

Frank's eyes grew round. But just then the telephone rang. Frank answered the phone. It was Father calling. "Mom," Frank called to his Mother in the living room. "Dad wants to know what time you're planning to have dinner today."

"Tell your Father he'd better not come home to dinner. It's too much bother to get dinner every day," said Mother.

That was enough for Frank. He stood in the middle of the floor and said very earnestly, "Mother, I'm going to wash my hands and face and comb my hair. Please let Father come home, and I'll *never* be bad like this *again*."

Mother laughed and said Father might come home about twelve o'clock. But she had taught her little boy a lesson which he did not soon forget. After that he washed and combed his hair and sat down to the breakfast table as quickly as he could, without any complaints.

Then Mother gave Frank some breakfast. ●●

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## Don't Quit

When the mountains look high,  
And the valleys seem low,  
It's not time to quit,  
It's just time to go.

When life's battle is rough,  
And you can't seem to win,  
It's not time to quit,  
But the time to begin.

When your friends let you down,  
You know not where to turn,  
It's not time to quit,  
But the time to stand firm.

With the world in a turmoil,  
Unbelief in the land,  
It's not time to quit,  
But time for a stand.

When looking at others,  
They do nothing but sit,  
You still should go on.  
It's no time to quit.

Just think of our Lord,  
He ne'er flinched a bit—  
Our Saviour and King—  
What IF HE HAD QUIT?



## Learn Not to Complain

When the going gets rough, we must learn not to complain. I often think of Moses, when the Lord told him he could only *see* the Promised Land; he could not go in. We never read where he complained or murmured. He kept right on going and teaching the people right things.

So let us learn not to complain. We have much to be thankful for. No matter how old we are, there is something we can do for God and others that we have never done before. And let our meditations be on spiritual matters, for our lives are affected by our thinking.

*Laurel, Indiana*

E. M.

## Where Is Our Heart Set?

We all set our hearts on something, whether godly or earthly. We who are trying to work for an eternal life set our hearts on spiritual joys rather than on the riches and trifles of this world that will soon melt away.

Abraham was not asked to give up his flocks, but his obedient son. Jesus gave up His own ways to do as His Father asked. We must give up what we value most highly—all idols must go, and only God remain.

So we must set our hearts unto God's truth, and live according to all the words of wisdom it contains, because it is our life.

*Winterset, Iowa*

F. B.

## Putting First Things Last

Around us rolls the seething tide of business, toil and care, and scarcely can we turn aside for one brief hour of prayer. Many times we are afraid of seeming unsociable, and often indulge in worldly pursuits, leaving first things to be last, when we are too tired to do them justice. What if the Lord treated us in like manner? We should soon complain and think ourselves justified in doing so.

Time is running out, and it behooves us to run the race with all haste, casting aside the things which would hinder us from entering at the straight gate.

*Thermopolis, Wyoming*

J. A.

## Needed: Trained Hindsight

As Christians we often fall down in grasping opportunities because of our dim, misty views of foresight. So a trained hindsight is necessary in order to look ahead. We often say, "If only I could turn the calendar back, I would most certainly do something about it."

But since this is impossible, we must work more conscientiously on the besetting sins that trouble us now, not on those that used to trouble us. Today is our accepted time.

Today is the day in which to follow wholly in the path of the right.

We need to look back in order to develop hindsight. Our forward vision can be greatly strengthened by our rear views of life. By looking back we can avoid duplicating past errors. The Bible gives us many admonitions we need to heed. "Consider your ways," as wrote the prophet Haggai. Only three words, but oh, so full of meaning!

*Wausau, Wisconsin*

J. T.

## Purity—A Big Word

Purity seems to be the theme throughout all Scripture—it is mentioned over forty times. Surely God will not hear us only as we are making our lives pure.

Paul gives us a thought about being pure in I Timothy 5:22, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." James also says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, . . . to keep himself unspotted from the world." This last part of the verse is noteworthy.

There's quite a work to do whichever way one looks at it, for we cannot expect that the shedding of Jesus' literal blood on Calvary did anything for us except as an example that we must not give up in our struggle, whatever the cost. Whatever afflictions come our way in our effort to become pure, we must bear them without a murmur, for we read, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all" (Ps. 34:19).

Another wonderful promise is given by God through the Psalmist (34:22): "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." What a glorious promise to encourage us to become pure!

*Swansea, South Wales, United Kingdom*

M. S.

## On Perseverance

Much perseverance is needed to acquire a strong faith, to patiently endure; to put on kindness; humility of mind, meekness, longsuffering, and to hold "fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," for only the pure will receive the promise. So as the days go rushing by, we really "ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard."

God's plan for humanity is so wonderful! to think we are here for the purpose, and opportunity of making ourselves over into new creatures!

Perseverance strengthens in every worthy cause. So let us be brave, and never give up in this most worthy cause of righteousness.

The fleeting things of this life can change in a moment, but God's great and exceedingly wonderful reward is for Eternity; and this is something worth persevering for!

*Swansea, South Wales, United Kingdom*

R. B.

## Needed: Fence-Mending

We seldom pick up a paper or magazine that does not remind us of man's inhumanity to man; the misery and suffering heaped on the innocent is an appalling situation. Lawlessness appears to be on the increase, in most every nation on the globe, and over us hangs the ever-present threat of war, famine and national disaster.

Since it is not possible for most of us to unravel the mysteries of the world around us, we must look to the work that lies within us. Without God's love, man's life becomes a fearful and lonely business; but if we become worthy of His love, many of us have a lot of fence-mending to do.

We therefore must not waste our time complaining; rather, we must endeavor to better serve and please Him who is the way, the truth and the light.

*Saint John, N. B., Canada*

A. L.





# Meditations

## On the Word

ON the surface, this would appear to be an unusual, unlikely, and rather puzzling proposition. Considered in its context, however, the passage is obviously spiritual and eschatological. The opening words, "In that day," indicate that it is a matter of the future. In what day? The 13th and 14th verses of the preceding chapter provide the key: "The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people. The Lord will enter into judgment. . . ."

The remainder of the third chapter (vs. 16-24) is often quoted as a protest against feminine vanity and a warning of its consequences; and so it is. But even more, as the context indicates, it describes the fall of spiritual Babylon (Rev. 18) with her costliness, her pride and superfluities. When the present order, this vast, world-wide system of error and superstition, misrule and exploitation, crashes before the judgments of the Eternal, when there ceases to be profit in war and its kindred iniquities, when the teaching of fables is sternly suppressed, when "no man buyeth her merchandise any more," great will be the ruin thereof, and loud the wailing (Rev. 1:7). Stripped of her jewels, her purple and scarlet raiment, Babylon the Great shall lie, broken and humbled, in the dust, her power for evil destroyed.

The prophets, Jesus, and the apostles all testify that it will take nothing less than the judgments of God to bring the world into a state of peace and obedience to divine law. In order to abolish evil and establish justice and righteousness in the earth, the Almighty reveals through Micah 4:3 that it is His purpose to "judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off"—this will be done through Christ at His second coming.

The destruction of human life incident upon the

*"In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach"*  
—Isaiah 4:1.

conquest of the earth by its rightful King is described in Isa. 3:25-26, "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the

ground." More detailed is Zechariah's prophecy concerning the same events: "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein" (13:8).

In the face of this newly arrived Power and its destructive advance, the surrender of the "third part" is no more than might be expected. In fact, the marvel is that so large a proportion should be so stubborn as to resist the change, even to their own death. One would expect people to be more sensible, but this proves how foolish they can be; and God, who can read the heart and the future of every individual, now proposes to make a clean sweep of all who have no possibilities for His Kingdom. To leave the overtly rebellious would be to invite a return of present conditions. The survivors of the cleansing judgments are a class who are at least controllable by law, and will form the nucleus of a new world, the subjects of the Kingdom of God, who will "multiply and replenish the earth" and fill it with His glory.

We are now in a position to consider our text, with its definitely figurative language. Both the "seven women" and the "one man" are inclusive terms. The "man" is none other than Christ and His saints, the multitudinous King who shall rule the world in righteousness (Rev. 3:21; Dan. 7:27). To them shall be given "power over the nations" (Rev. 2:25), and with them only is safety (Joel 2:32). Of this glorified number the Preacher says (Eccl. 7:27-28), "Behold, this have I found, . . .

counting one by one, to find out the account: . . . one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all these have I not found."

Here again we have the other inclusive term, the women ("seven" being a round, or perfect number) representing the nations who know not God, the masses governed by the "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (I John 2:16). When these "daughters of Babylon" are faced with acceptance or destruction, a definite portion of them will see the light and lay hold on one man, seeking His protection. As a result of the preliminary work of Elijah the Messenger and his associates (Mal. 4:5-6), followed by the visible judgments of God, there will be such a revival, a turning of the tables, as the world has never seen. The way of righteousness will suddenly become the popular way. Not only the political but the religious leaders of the past will be repudiated. It is then the world shall see the fulfillment of Jeremiah 16:19, "O Lord, . . . the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." Then missionary work will be done on a grand scale.

Zechariah tells of the same events (8:23) but with the symbols reversed, so that the "seven women" become "ten men"—all who submit to Christ. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." This "Jew" is the spiritual Jew of Rom. 2:29, circumcised at heart, "whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Yet notice the proposition which these "seven women" make in their surrender: "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." By this time God's judgments have made them humble and they are not asking for temporal favors, but are imploring protection from the King of kings; they are willing to come into subjection to the "one man."

When we come over on the Lord's side we are required to leave everything of self behind. Wisdom calls, "Come, eat of my bread"—not your own, which is full of poison and gravel (Prov. 9:5; 20:17). We must lay off the "filthy rags" of our own ways, and be clothed with the "fine linen, clean and white, . . . the righteousness of saints" (Isa. 64:6; Rev. 19:8; Zech. 3:3-4). Among the "third part" who share in this mass surrender there will be, as always, good and bad, faithful and unfaithful. Many are sincere and welcome the new order with

its blessings; others merely join the winning side to save their lives.

In Revelation 9 we are carried down to the end of the Millennial reign of Christ and the saints, when, just before the dawn of Eternity, there is "silence in heaven" for a brief period. The second resurrection has taken place, all who have died during the Millennium being brought forth for judgment, and the law is suddenly suspended to reveal what has been in their hearts. There will be, we are told, a formidable rebellion, which will be swiftly extinguished by the destruction of the rebels (v. 9). This will be the last violence this planet will see; peace and progress shall now be eternal and uninterrupted. ●●

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Recently a clergyman told me that there is an example of the trinity in Genesis 18:3. He states that Abraham addressed all three 'men' here as Yahweh. Since Abraham addressed all three as Yahweh, he states that Abraham was recognizing God to be three persons. Please explain."

In Genesis 18:3, Abraham says, "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." The fact that Abraham addresses his heavenly visitants by the name commonly applied to the God of heaven is not strange, as angels, being part of the family of God, bear God's name. Exodus 23:20 and 21 states this plainly: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee [the Lord is speaking], to keep thee in the way, . . . Beware of him, and obey his voice, . . . for my name is in him."

In the Bible, angels are sometimes termed "men" by those to whom they appeared. The "man Gabriel" appeared to Daniel and touched him while he was praying (Dan. 9:21). The fourth "man" seen walking in the midst of the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:26) was an angel sent to deliver them.

Abraham addressed his three visitors as one: "My Lord," but is that strange? Could he not speak to them as a body or a group? In our English language we have words which can convey either a singular or a plural meaning ("you" is a common example). In the Hebrew language, "Lord" (*adonai*) may mean either "God" or "gods,"

which may refer to "God" and other members of His family, who bear His name.

Were we to say that because Abraham addressed the three visitors as "My Lord" he was recognizing them as the three persons of a triune Godhead, as trinitarians might believe, we would be saying that Abraham met God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—an idea too unreasonable to discuss. For God the Father certainly never left heaven and no man has ever seen God, and God's Son Christ was not yet born, nor was the Holy Spirit (a power, never a person) yet given. (For further explanation see the *Megiddo Message*, September, 1973, "Trinity or Unity?").

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*I took a piece of plastic clay  
And idly fashioned it one day;  
And as my fingers pressed it still,  
It moved and yielded to my will.  
I came again when days were past—  
The bit of clay was hard at last.  
The form I gave it, still it bore,  
But I could change that form no more.*

*I took a piece of living clay,  
And gently formed it day by day  
And molded with my power and art  
A young child's soft and yielding heart.  
I came again when years were gone,  
It was a man I looked upon;  
He still that early impress wore,  
And I could change him nevermore.  
—Author Unknown*

## Did Jesus Commend Dishonesty?

(Continued from page 21)

more firmly the responsibility of every man to use his share of the mammon of unrighteousness—worldly wealth and possessions—however much or little, rightly; for if we cannot administer this small trust properly, how will God ever trust us with His greater gifts? "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" (vs. 11-12). "Faithful" suggests the character of one who can be relied on. By mentioning "that which is least" Jesus implies the fleeting, that which belongs to another; "much" suggests that which is enduring, "the true riches," even life and immortality (Rev. 3:18; Eph. 3:20). The true riches are the ideal, as opposed to the small, shadowy reality of anything we might now call our own. For "if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (v. 12). Whatever we may have now is not our own, we are only stewards of what belongs to God (I Chron. 29:16).

But nevertheless, Jesus goes on to say, only proper administration of the mammon of unrighteousness must concern us; such mammon must not be our master, for "no servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Mammon must be our servant, not our master. ●●

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Great winds Thy clarions, lightnings Thy sword;  
Show forth Thy pity on high where Thou reignest,  
Give to us peace in our time, O Lord.*

*God the All-merciful! earth hath forsaken  
Thy ways of blessedness, slighted Thy Word;  
Bid not Thy wrath in its terrors awaken:  
Give to us peace in our time, O Lord!*

*God the All-righteous One! man hath defied Thee,  
Yet to eternity standeth Thy Word;  
Falsehood and wrong shall not tarry beside Thee:  
Give to us peace in our time, O Lord!*

*God the All-wise! by the fire of Thy chastening  
Earth shall to freedom and truth be restored;  
Through the thick darkness Thy kingdom is hastening:  
Thou wilt give peace in Thy time, O Lord!*

*So shall Thy children with thankful devotion  
Praise Him who saved them from peril and sword,  
Singing in chorus from ocean to ocean,  
Peace to the nations and praise to the Lord.*

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