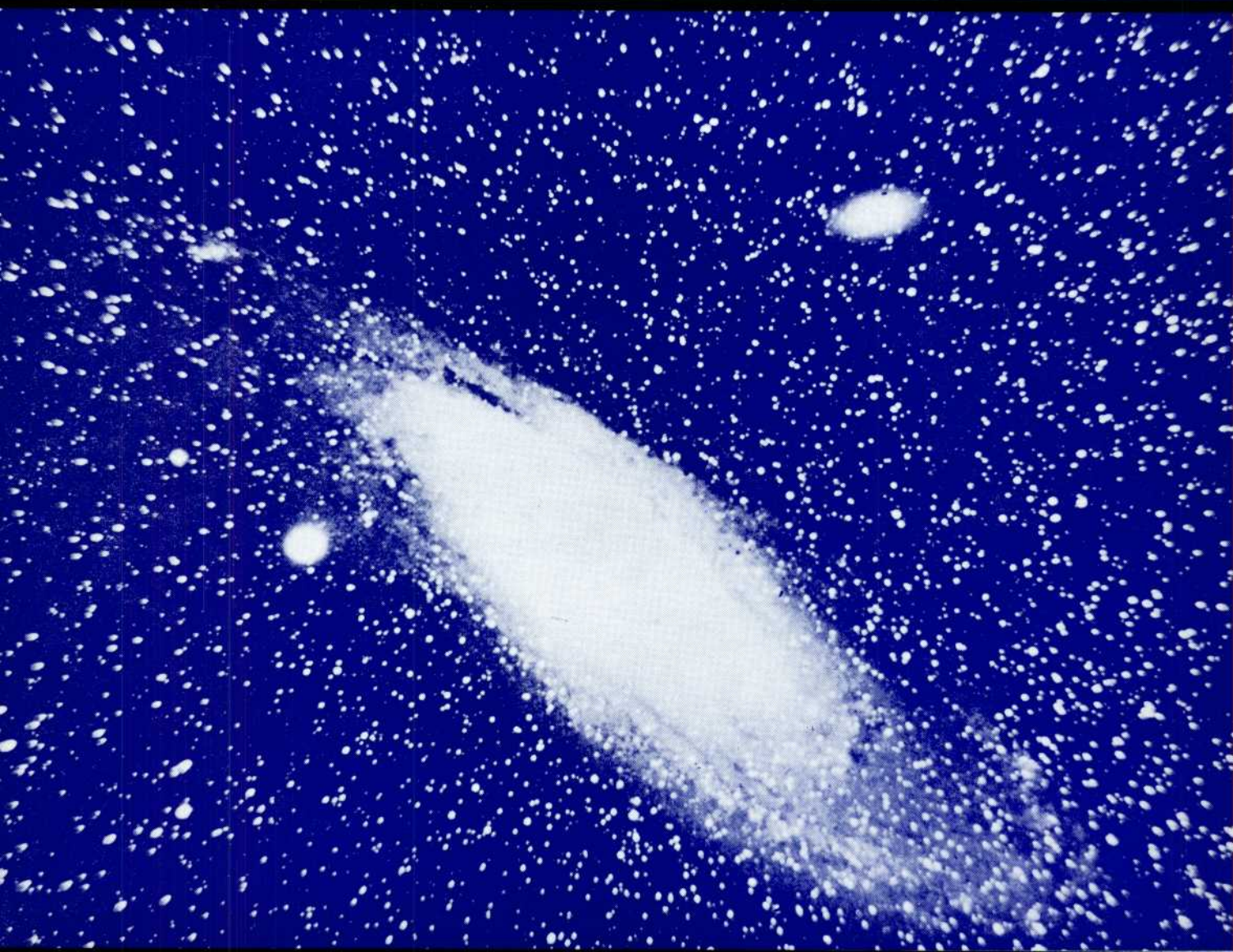


Megiddo Message



When I Consider the Heavens . . .

Megiddo Message

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Editorially Speaking...

NARROWminded?

"DON'T be so narrowminded!"

A common criticism in a world where everybody wants everybody else to be his equal. Ideas to be acceptable must be broad and easy-going. Narrowness belongs to a yesteryear whose disciplines people are happy to forget.

Just what is narrowmindedness? We may think of it as the opposite of broadmindedness, and the dictionary defines broadminded as: to be tolerant of varied views; to condone minor departures from orthodox behavior.

What about narrowminded then? It is "to be straitened; intolerant, illiberal, restricted in point of view."

The idea of narrowness does not appeal to us naturally, and in many areas of life it is out of place. To judge another narrowly because he prefers a different colored house than we would choose, or a different make of car, or a different line of work—this adds nothing to our Christian stature.

But there is a definite place for narrowmindedness, and it is on the line of principle. If we would be faithful to what God calls right, we must be "straitened; intolerant, illiberal; restricted in point of view." There is no other way.

This is what Jesus was teaching when He said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The narrow way *is* restricted. But notice what Jesus said about its destination: it leads to LIFE!

When we have committed ourselves to following Christ, we must keep within this narrow path. We are not free to accept the broadminded view of the world around us. We are not free to think just as we please, to act just as we please, to go just where we please, to feel just as we would naturally feel, or to work from the motives which would naturally impel us. We are on a special road, and we must keep within it, whether at school, at home, or in the shop. To deviate only spells despair and disaster.

If we are so broadminded that we can read *any* books, or attend *any* place of recreation, or listen to *any* music, or condone *any* behavior, we are far from the narrow way Jesus marked out and far from the goal He gave to men.

There are many areas of life where we would not want others to be broadminded with us. When we are sick, we do not want a doctor so broadminded that he will give us just any medicine. When we travel by jet, we do not want our pilot to be so broadminded that he pays no attention to his instruments or directions. We do not want judges so broadminded that they will condone any crime and free any criminal. Narrowness has its place.

In this easy-going, tolerant world, we need to be exceedingly careful that broadmindedness does not permeate our attitudes and remove us from the company of the "few" who are on the road to life. For there is only one way, and it is *narrow*.●●

When I Consider Thy Heavens...

GO outside on a starry night and gaze upward. You will be doing something people have done from time immemorial. Marvel at the beauty, the majesty, the depth and vastness of the visible creation. Realize what a privilege you are enjoying—you are seeing *firsthand* evidence of the work of your great Creator. These are *His* worlds, shining with *His* light. You feel like exclaiming with the Psalmist:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). And again, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens" (Ps. 8:1). And again: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man..." and there words fail you. You look down and return to your own little realm of touch and taste and sight and feeling—a world so real, so tangible, so near, so all-absorbing.

But thanks be to God for the vision of the nighttime! Thanks be to God for providing an escape from the absorptions of the day and for granting mortal eyes a few small glimpses into the greater realms which lie beyond.

Today more is known about the universe than ever before. In the last few years scientists have invented all sorts of instruments to probe the heavens and answer the questions that perplex them. Powerful telescopes are used to look at the stars and photograph their activities. Radio telescopes capture signals coming from outer space and reveal more and more stars beyond. Advanced instruments analyze the light and heat produced by the various heavenly bodies. To help with "local" study (within the four-billion-mile-wide circle of our own little solar system) man-made satellites have been launched which can collect and relay information about the sun and the planets which revolve around the sun.

All these sources are flooding men today with celestial information, which is being published along with hundreds and thousands of theories, conjectures and conclusions drawn by those who study and observe. The latter, we must realize, are

but emanations of human minds as they try to make sense and meaning of what they see and record. But their information is necessarily incomplete. And theories are changing constantly. What was "certain" yesterday may be rejected today.

For insight into all the "why's" and "how's" of creation we must wait upon the Creator—God. But in the meantime, God is allowing us some almost unbelievable insights into the regions which lie beyond. Why? Why is so much open to view? Perhaps He wants to stimulate the faith of those few earth-borns who are living in constant expectation of the great work He is about to begin on this planet, when the "Son of man" shall launch His flight from one of those heavenly worlds above and, accompanied by a great retinue of glorified angels, travel all the way across the unmeasured expanse to that little planet whirling on the outskirts of the Milky Way, that planet we call Earth.

Where Are We?

Scientists tell us that our planet is part of the Solar System; that is, we are one of nine planets (non-luminous bodies, in contrast with "stars" which give off their own light). These nine planets revolve around a nearby star which we call the Sun, and reflect its light.

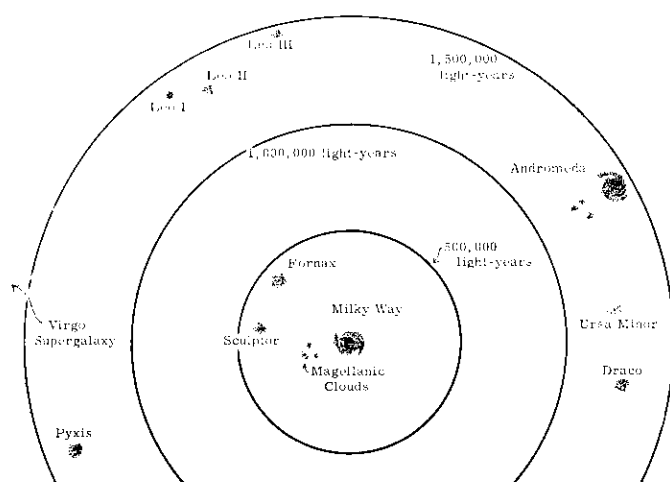
This Solar System is located in a vast, rotating group of stars, gas and dust and probably many other planets we cannot see, altogether known as a

About Our Cover

The extended oval of light pictured on our cover is a galaxy of stars known as the Andromeda Galaxy. It is so distant (about 2 million light-years) that the combined brilliance of all its billions of stars reaches our naked eye as but a very faint, fuzzy patch of light.

The stars surrounding Andromeda in this photograph are actually in the foreground, "near" stars belonging to our own galaxy.

For this photograph and the photograph on page 5 we are indebted to the courtesy of the Strasenburgh Planetarium, Rochester, New York.



Our LOCAL GROUP OF GALAXIES
—each galaxy containing billions of stars!

galaxy. Our particular galaxy has been named the “Milky Way.”

The Milky Way galaxy is only an averaged-sized one. Yet it is almost beyond our understanding. Its diameter is so great that if you had started across it in Adam’s day, traveling steadily at the speed of light (186 thousand *miles every second*), today you would be less than one sixteenth of the way across it! Light requires 100,000 years to travel from one side of it to the other. Therefore we say that it is 100,000 light-years across. Converting this to miles, we must multiply 100,000 by six trillion, for light travels about six trillion miles in a year. Our figure is the number “6” followed by seventeen zeros—and this is the number of miles across the diameter of our own home galaxy!

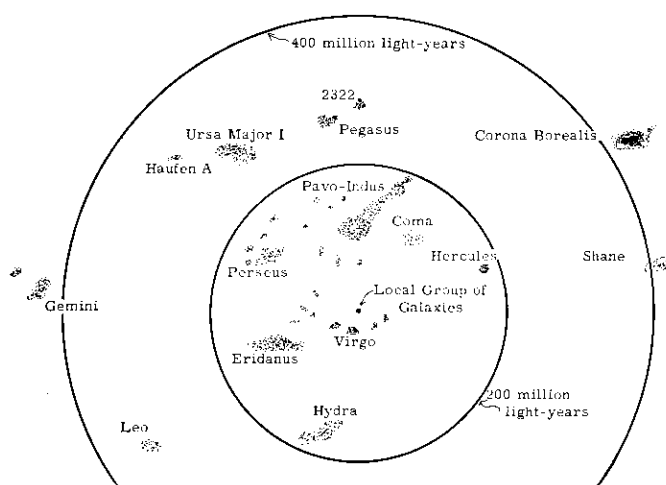
Such distance is beyond human comprehension. Yet consider this fact: So many galaxies have been detected in space that their current total is estimated at one hundred billion! Not one hundred billion stars, but one hundred billion *galaxies*, each containing billions of heavenly bodies! A report released from a group of scientists using the 200-inch telescope on Mount Palomar in California recently tells of a study of the small area enclosed by the bowl of the star pattern called the Big Dipper. Within that bowl formation alone they estimated that they could see a million galaxies!

Such vastness, such immensity, such complexity is mind staggering. But then, our minds need staggering occasionally. Our vision is by nature so limited, so earthbound. It takes so little to blind us to what lies beyond. We need continually to broaden our view, to realize that the things which are so close to us are not all there is. We must learn

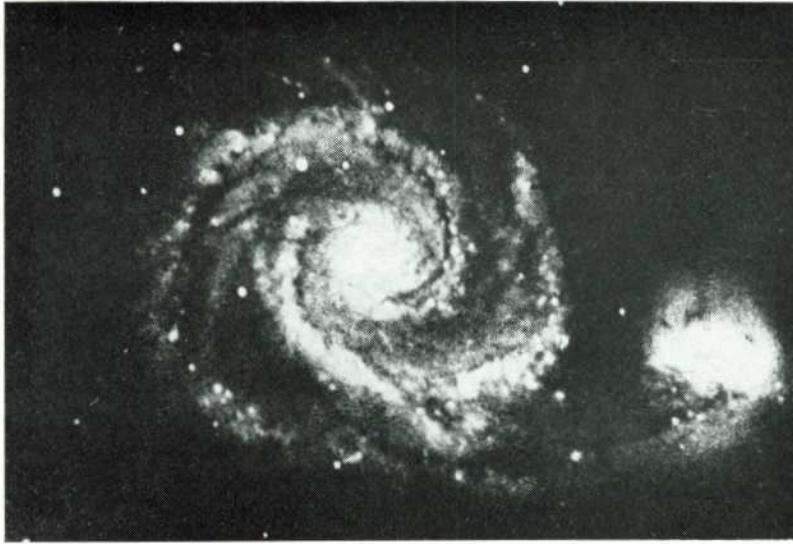
to think beyond this life, with its small horizons, its limited pleasures, its joys and sorrows, its blessings and trials. We need to realize the greatness of the Being who has called us to be His own. We need to keep ourselves impressed with the unknowable magnitude of what He has offered us. We need to open our eyes and see His creation as a whole, one perfect over-all enormous plan of which our earth is only one small infinitesimal part. “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting” upon someone, somewhere in this mighty universe. Our lives began but yesterday, and without the sustaining power of our Creator they would end tomorrow. How can we close our eyes to His greatness and become so absorbed in our own little sphere! How can we fail to open our eyes and minds to what God has done, is doing, and will continue to do as long as eternity rolls!

Clusters of Galaxies

The billions of galaxies in the heavens are not scattered helter-skelter through space. They are arranged in clusters. The Milky Way belongs to a small cluster of about twenty galaxies, which includes all the galaxies within two or three million light-years of the earth. Among these galaxies is one called Andromeda, on a very clear moonless night faintly visible to the naked eye. Actually, it is a whirling sea of thousands and millions of stars, a spiral-shaped galaxy much like our own. Only a haze of light of all these stars combined reaches our eye because it is so far away—two million light-years away. (This means that the light that reaches us left those stars two million years ago!)



But even our LOCAL GROUP of Galaxies (at center of drawing) diminishes to a pinpoint among the clusters of galaxies that make up the universes beyond.



The 'Whirlpool Galaxy,' located just south of the handle of the Big Dipper, is so distant that none of the light of its myriad suns can be detected by the unaided human eye.

Where are we in such immensity? And what does it all mean? Is there a limit?

Long ago the prophet Job observed that the "secrets of wisdom are double to that which is"—need we "double" the observations of astronomers to be impressed with the greatness of God's realm? And what then? Greater telescopes only reveal greater expanses filled with greater creations. Where does it all end?

Ages ago the prophet Jeremiah, inspired by God, declared that "the host of heaven cannot be numbered" any more than "the sands of the sea" can be "measured." A Greek astronomer who lived a few hundred years after Jeremiah declared his superior knowledge: "There are only 1,056 stars in the heavens. I have counted them." A few hundred years later another scientist, Ptolemy by name, also counted the stars and affirmed that the earlier astronomer was right. "There are 1,056 stars." Not until Galileo built the first telescope and looked through it did men acknowledge that there are many more stars.

And today, what lies beyond the range of our vision?

Our Place In It All

Who are we, frail creatures who inhabit this small planet Earth, and where do we fit in? Can the God who orders all this mighty, incomprehensible vastness even take notice of our little planet, to say nothing of the minute individuals who live and die upon it?

The answer is Yes! God is mindful, even of the smallest creatures of His creation—if, if, IF they

are mindful of Him. If they are not, He lets them go their way. But if they are interested in Him and what He has to offer, they become His "special treasure," His own "prized possession." Try to fathom such a Being!

When we commit ourselves to live by His law and to fit ourselves into His pattern for our lives, He promises to take us in someday as part of His eternal, heavenly, glorified family! This is according to His "eternal purpose," which has been in operation for untold ages. "And ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6: 18). Can we dimly comprehend the meaning of *this*? Can we picture ourselves a son or daughter of such a great Creator?

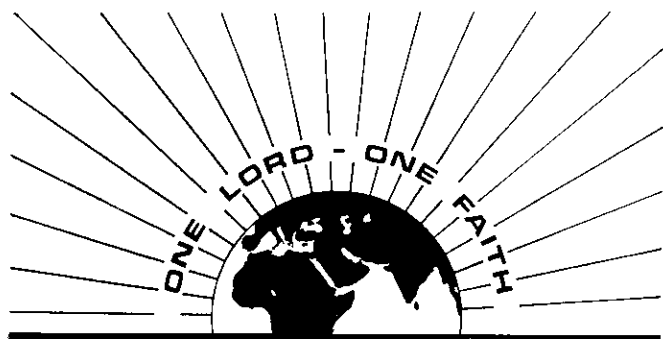
Actually, God is under obligation to me.

Impossible? The very thought that the infinite God could be indebted to a mortal man is at first staggering. Yet it is a fact. He has obligated Himself to me by the covenant I have accepted. He has set an offer before me, and I have accepted it. I have said, "This will I do," and He has said, "Then, this will I do." If I fulfill my part of the covenant, He is obligated to *me*!

Oh, how can we wilfully sever ourselves from the favor of so gracious a Being? How can we think for a moment that anything we have or desire or can do to fulfill our own lives is worth anything beside His greatness and His offer to us? How can we possibly even for a moment forget His offer of recognition, glory, honor and life eternal?

May our heartfelt prayer ascend continually to Him who orders our world and all the worlds in His vast universes, as we say and feel from the depths of our heart: "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Heavenly Father, forbid that I should ever be so absorbed in my own little world that I forget the greatness of Your plan and purpose. I long someday to feel the pulse of immortality within my being. I yearn to share Your power, to touch Your majesty, to taste Your glory, to visit Your family, to belong to Your eternity. Help me now during my little moment of probation to keep reaching above and beyond myself and my small sphere of acquaintance to Your great and glorious realm, until You must fulfill your obligation to me. Amen.



Christ LIVES!

You have heard about many men who lived in many different ages. Perhaps they were great thinkers, or great teachers, or great reformers, or great leaders. But they all have one thing in common: they died. And in many cases, their fame perished with them. If it did not, they had no power to enjoy it once their life had terminated. Their contribution to humanity remained, and often other men used it to gain greater victories for men. But none had the power to extend his life, or happiness so much as a single hour. All lived their allotted number of days and perished forever.

Not so with Jesus Christ, the man we honor. He was crucified, He died; but less than two days later He was alive and walking among them!

Can you believe it? Can you actually believe that a man can die, be buried, and return to life again?

You CAN! You can because it did happen. The Bible tells about it, and we have already shown that the Bible is true.

Read the account of Christ's resurrection—it is told near the end of each of the four Gospels. The accounts may differ in details—what four different men, seeing the same incident, would tell the story exactly the same? But in essence and in fact they solidly unite to proclaim one message: "He that was dead now liveth!"

ANY man can die. Death is as natural to the human race as birth. It is a state of nonexistence. As surely as life begins, so surely it ends. The life processes cease, all physical and mental activity is curtailed, and man lies cold, silent and powerless in death.

Any man can die. But when a man dies publicly—is even crucified—is entombed and guarded by soldiers, and shortly is living among the very men and women who knew Him best, men stop to look. And wonder. And question. And—they believe.

Even a doubting Thomas is forced to exclaim: "My Lord and my God [Emmanuel, God with us]!"

Perhaps this is the greatest single reason why God allowed Jesus to die. Had Jesus not suffered an unusual death at an unusually young age and had His death not been so widely known and confirmed, how much of the power to convince and convict the resurrection would have lacked! Nothing could have been more convincing, even to the most hardhearted Pharisees and Jewish authorities of His day, than to see the tomb which they had so carefully sealed and guarded—EMPTY!

In the whole course of human history, only one man has been able to say in positive testimony: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18).

The history of the life of Jesus Christ stands out in contrast to that of every other human life ever recorded. There is no note of sadness spread through its final hours, no diminishing activities, no faltering step or parting sorrows. Rather, the further the story advances, the more glorious it becomes! There is the night with the Eleven, when they partook of their final Passover meal together; then the stimulating, heartwarming admonitions and assurances as Jesus warns them of dangers to come, of trials and testings that lie ahead, and tells of the faith and courage and divine assistance by which they may be victorious. There are words of love, and blessing, and peace. Then follows the final moment of surrender in the Garden, when Jesus laid the last measure of a full obedience upon the altar of self-sacrifice, saying, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Then come the horrors of the crucifixion—terrible in the extreme, but brief and curtailed by the Father's mercy. Jesus faced death unflinchingly—but how could He do otherwise, when He knew that less than a thousand hours away was a meeting with His heavenly Father!

The crucifixion accomplished, Jesus was buried and lay in the grave over the day of the Jewish Passover and Sabbath, Abib 14. And on the morrow of Abib 15, certain women who came early to the tomb found the tomb empty—Jesus was alive!

From this moment forward the story of Jesus is one steady crescendo of glory and triumph, the climax of which is yet future. The reporter Luke records of these extraordinary days that followed the Resurrection morning: "To whom [His apostles] also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Forty days He was among them, until suddenly, as He walked with

them toward Bethany (a small town not far from Jerusalem), he "lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50-51).

The Resurrection was the beginning of a chapter of His life which should have *no end!* For He was, as He had styled Himself, a "nobleman" going into a "far country," even heaven itself, to "receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke 19:11-27).

This was the message which the attending angels gave the disciples who watched Him ascend. Luke also tells us about it in these words: "And while they [the disciples] looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:10-11).

Jesus was taken to heaven, even to His Father's right hand, where He was to be judged and rewarded for His life of perfect obedience—even to receiving immortality and glory eternal. His next mission in behalf of earthborns is His return, when He comes to be crowned King over all the earth and to rule in justice and equity and righteousness forever.

The Resurrection was the opening of the door to all that lay—and still lies—beyond. Had Jesus not risen from the dead, we would be victims of the plight which Paul described in one of his letters to his brethren: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised, . . . your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Cor. 15:14-19).

Paul was making two primary points, both of which are very meaningful to us:

1) If Christ did not rise from the dead, our faith in Him would be in vain. We would be looking to a dead man to do something for us—which would be utterly impossible.

2) If Christ did not rise from the dead, then no one of us could either; for His life was surely far more meritorious than ours.

But the fact is that *Christ did rise from the dead.* There is far too much evidence for us ever to doubt this fact.

October, 1975

First is the evidence of the empty tomb. If the disciples had stolen the body from the tomb—which would have been physically impossible under the heavy Roman guard which had been placed—what would they have done with it? And surely Christ's enemies would have done their diligence to find it. As one historian has remarked, "If His body could have been found the Jews would have produced it as the briefest and most complete answer possible to the whole story." They wanted to end the tale; they wanted to prove that Jesus was still dead—but the fact is, they *couldn't!*

Second, who can believe that the entire Christian movement of the early centuries, a movement that affected most of Europe and the Near East, could have been based upon a fact that didn't happen? Though the Church wandered far from the original teachings of the Christ, still the advent of Christ was its beginning, the subject of many of its ceremonies, and the hero of all its services. In fact, the Church over-capitalized upon Him. And always it was the *living* Christ, never a dead man.

Third, there is convincing proof of the resurrection in the life and ministry of the apostle Paul. Read Acts 9, and you will see that the beginning point for all his dynamic activities in the Christian Church came from a personal meeting with the risen Christ. Paul was ordained an apostle after Jesus had been crucified—and one of the requirements for apostleship was that a man had seen Jesus Christ. Paul was fully qualified, as he testified on numerous occasions (see Acts 26:8-10, 12-19, 21-23).

Abundant more evidence for the resurrection of Christ can be found in sources both sacred and secular. But what tremendous consequences followed in its wake! If there had been any grounds for disproving it, Christ's enemies at the time would surely have found them and would have made the very most of them.

But the fact is that there was no evidence against it. All the evidence was positive. Jesus Christ arose. And what does this mean to us?

It means that we can look for the living Christ to return to earth as He went away, to bestow immortality upon all whom He finds worthy.

It means that we can have full faith in the power of God, who raised up Christ and who likewise can raise every true believer from the power of death.

It means that God is a God of life, and no good work will go unrewarded, even though death intervene.

It means that the dead in Christ shall be resurrected, judged and, if worthy, crowned and made like their Savior, alive forevermore! ●●



A General Letter

To All the Churches



No mortal career is without its interruptions. Even so the career of our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, was interrupted as he was forced to retire with his wife to St. Augustine, Florida for some months during 1894. Isolated from the brethren he loved and served, he felt the time was long. But the period was not unproductive—indeed, it produced a letter that still warms and warns us today.

For the benefit of interested readers, we are quoting choice portions of it. Though written over eighty years ago, its kindly admonitions and its glow of heavenly love shine on without regard to time.

Dear Brethren, all, from far and near,
A word I'll pen, your hearts to cheer.

ALTHOUGH separated in body we are with you often in mind. We would like to write to each one separately, but the pen is such a slow means of communication. You will excuse us and take this letter, each one, as written to yourself.

First, let us thank you all for your kindness in writing to us so often in our isolated situation. Your letters have a mission, and they have cheered our hearts and helped much to pleasantly pass the time. To be so far away from loved ones, with no one to talk with who cares the least for divine things, can be experienced, but not expressed.

Well, here we are in just such circumstances. However, we do not feel like murmuring, but say, "Thy will, O Lord, be done." It is for some wise purpose, and we must look at it that way. Jehovah's hand, well directed by wisdom, is indeed in the entire matter. This affords us comfort. What a consolation to realize fully that God is in the whole affair! It speaks peace and causes quietude

to reign. Blessed be God for His ever-glorious truth which lifts the gloom to a wonderful extent and causes joy and comfort to hover closely around, so that although lonely we are always rejoicing.

We have many things to rejoice in and be thankful for. What a solace and true consolation to feel fully assured that the whole disposing of the true Christian's life is indeed of the great and everlasting God who will cause all things to work together for the good of those who in reality love Him. And what is it to love God? It is to enter His service with our whole heart and in love faithfully keep His commandments.

But alas! how few even give it an intelligent thought. We are not so much concerned about the world at large. The all-important question is: Are *we* doing this great work which alone can assure our hearts and in the end secure to us a home beyond all isolation, trials, sickness, death or woe? a home where death can never pluck from our fond embrace the ones we so dearly love; a home surrounded with ecstatic joy; a home well surrounded with pleasures of every kind; a home where minds will expand and knowledge never cease to abundantly increase; a home that shall never know a sorrow of any kind! never a pain! How different is this from the joys and pleasures of this fleeting, short-lived world, which are more or less mixed with sorrow, pain and death. What a contrast! One is brilliant, grand, glorious, lovely, eternal; the other is dark, uncertain, mixed with much sorrow and finally cut short by death.

What a rich boon the All-wise, Omnipotent God has held forth as an inducement for us to faithfully serve and obey Him. And then to think all we do, every good deed, will be set down to our account,

we the ones to reap the benefit of our service. Also to think the benefit will be unending in its duration, far above all we can ask or think in its wonderful volume of glory, joy and light! This thought should cause every nerve to spring into action, with a determination to completely render our bodies and minds a living sacrifice. This work can be done, but not by halfway workers; it will be absolutely necessary for us to throw our entire being into the work, without any reserve, in order for us to be successful in accomplishing this grand and noble work which alone can yield to us life, glory and happiness in the good time to come.

Pause, and look at the evidence: "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Now, any amount of sophistry or reasonings of men will not alter this God-stated fact in the least. No one can scripturally claim the one only saving hope unless he believes it absolutely necessary to go to work in real earnestness and purify himself.

There can be no dispute whatever by anyone, who is truly a child of God, as to what we must do to have the hope of being made like Jesus by seeing Him as He is; for the Scriptures plainly declare, without any ambiguity whatever that we *must* purify ourselves "even as He [Christ] is pure." Let others go on in their unbelief; but, beloved ones, let us go to work with renewed energy and accomplish this noble work. It is folly for people to cry out, as if horror-stricken, "It cannot be done." It *can* and *must* be done, or there is no salvation for us. We, many of us, can testify from our own experience that it can be done, for we have overcome some very hard things and become pure and holy in them. And if we bring our whole mind into the service, we can become pure and holy in all things, even as Christ is pure.

It is written, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." It does not say or even hint that this blessing will come upon any one but he that *doeth*; not he that tries and does not succeed, no, no! but they that do. To them alone will belong this right. And he who is found there without a right will be bound hand and foot and cast out. Although unbelievers may ridicule the idea, all true believers will steadily onward march to perfection.

What a consolation to have this sure word of the Lord to support this noble, saving principle of truth! It is worth more than oceans of the sayings of men.

It is one thing to acknowledge this God-given truth, but quite another to really do. Remember the

promise is only to them that do; not to the ones saying "Lord, Lord," but to those doing the will of the Father. This work calls for all pride and anger, in fact for all of self to be put away. How foolish to let a little self-importance stand between us and such a glorious future as portrayed in the blessed Word of the Lord! How apt human nature is to think too highly of self! Will we sell our birthright for such an insignificant mess of pottage?...

We should be always found searching self, and comparing self with the plain demands of the Word. Are we like our Master yet? When temptation comes, do we always have the plain saving truth at our command? and can we say, as did He, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"? If we do not have the Word always at our command, we had better be about it until the Bible teachings will flash upon our minds at every temptation. We should be constantly meditating on the law of the Lord, until it will be ever present with us; only then shall we become like unto our Lord, pure and holy.

We need more Peters in our midst. He thought it meet, so long as life lasted, to stir up the minds of the brethren by putting them in remembrance, although they not only knew these things but were established in them. We need to write them upon the tables of our hearts, that these plain commands



This month marks the 131st anniversary of the birth of L. T. Nichols, founder of the Megiddo Mission Church. He was born on October 1, 1844, in Elkhart, Indiana.

may be with us when we lie down, or rise up, sit in the house or walk by the way.

We are glad to know that some of the brethren are making progress toward purity of character, in their onward march to the Kingdom of God. Stop, and seriously consider: Who are making the greatest progress in that direction? Is it those who are constantly seeking to solve some hard saying? or is it the ones who every night take a retrospective view of the actions of the day and compare them with the plain commandments and seek and study to better them in the day to come?

Indeed, apart from our reconsidering our acts, thoughts and words, we shall never be able to "purify ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh" and thus "perfect holiness in the fear of God."

Brethren, beloved, are we thus doing in our daily walk? If any are not, let me entreat, heartily entreat of you to set about it at once. For the time will soon be here for the Master to come, and then it will be too late, lamentably too late. Now is the time to perform this work; let us, each one, make good use of the time; and let us apply ourselves strictly to the most necessary, the weighty matters, which call upon each individual member to "cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring . . . into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Our work is to watch and pray, and "walk circumspectly, . . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil," "crucifying the flesh," with its "affections and lusts."

Let no one be deceived, for without this work being actually performed we shall be weighed in the balance and found wanting in the day of the Lord's coming.

The Judgment time is near, 'tis almost here,
When Christ our Lord for judgment will appear;
'Twill then be told by Him in power
The doom of all, in that great hour.

O brethren, beloved, what shall our lot be?
A right to pluck and eat from life's fair tree?
Or dismal gloom, with blushing shame?
'Twill be ourself, none else to blame.

Our every thought and word and act will tell
If then, with each of us, it will be well.
How careful then we all should be,
All sinful words and acts to flee!

Brethren, let each one ask: Where am I? How much farther have I to go? How much have I to do before I am ready for this soon-coming event which shall determine my doom? Remember, when that day comes, there will be no appeal; the decision will

be final. It is now within our power so to live that the unalterable decision of the Judge will be an everlasting source of joy and comfort to us.

Why should any be so foolish as to spend either time or means in any way that will not increase our chance of having the final decision rendered in our favor? But—

Human nature is weak and needs stimulating:
It requires:

Reading, daily reading of the Word;

Careful meditation;

Prayerful self-criticism;

Humble confession of faults;

Chaste conversation, coupled with fear;

Godly example in everyday life;

Heartfelt, sincere exhortation;

Rebuking in love;

Watchfulness for each other's welfare;

Fervent desire to do right;

Deep sense of self-respect;

An abhorrence of evil;

Purity of motives;

Kindness of words and purpose;

Unbiased judgment;

Love unfeigned;

Courtesy to all;

Stability of character;

Uprightness in dealings;

Fervency of spirit;

Diligency in business;

Reverence for superiors;

Truthfulness in telling;

Holiness in conversation;

Cleanliness of person;

Loving the right;

Hating the wrong;

True godly sorrow when we have done wrong.

Aiding the needy;

Chastening the guilty;

Upholding the righteous;

Crucifying all flesh that tempts to do
wrong.

We should rejoice with the lowly;

Weep with the truly penitent;

Give the water of life to the thirsty, and
bread to the hungry;

Ever be merciful;

Dare always to do right;

Be thankful for favors;

Never find unnecessary fault;

Live unto God, not unto men;

Never be weary, but walk in the light;

Do unto others as we would have them do to us.

Be easily entreated,

(Continued on page 24)

EXCUSES!

EXCUSES!

EXCUSES!

IT is impossible to live without discovering—often within our own hearts—the excuses which for centuries men have been giving to God.

In Luke 14, Jesus speaks in parable of a man who “made a great supper, and bade many.” When the hour of the feast arrived and all was ready, he sent his servant to bid them “Come.” But they all made some excuse. Jesus sums up all the excuses in these three: “I have bought a piece of ground.” “I have bought five yoke of oxen.” “I have married a wife.” Let us examine them in order, that we may be alerted to the excuses that *we* prefer to call reasons.

“I have bought a piece of ground.”

Notice first the tense: “I have bought.” This is not in the past tense, but the present perfect, which is used when a speaker wishes to denote an action just *completed*. Immediately the “reason” becomes ridiculous when one considers that the transaction for the land is already complete. Who could take from him what is rightfully his?

Yet he excuses himself so that he may go and see it.

How easily can earthly possessions mean more to us than eternal realities. For the vain things of this world many are willing to exchange their prospects of eternal verities in the world to come. The things that can be seen, touched and handled seem so much more real than the incomparable promises which must now be seen through the eye of faith; yet the latter are a thousand times more certain and a thousand times more lasting.

“I have bought five yoke of oxen.”

Again Jesus paints a picture with words. Here is a man who had completed the transaction for five yoke of oxen. He states his reason for not coming to the feast—“I go to prove them.” Why? Why is proving them so urgent? Simply because the oxen mean more to him than the invitation to the feast. They were his, he had bought them.

Here is a common excuse. “I would be a Christian, but where I work it is so difficult to be different from the world and live for Christ.” Well, if it is that difficult, perhaps it would be better to take another job. Don’t lose your soul to make your living.

What matter how successful we may be in this life if for that success we must sacrifice our right to life eternal?

“I have married a wife.”

Here is the last excuse for not coming to the supper. The man’s affections are too diverted for him to be able to get any benefit from the feast. It is a matter of placing human affection ahead of God. This man might normally be a man of keen judgment and good sense; but his heart had become entangled in earthly affections to the exclusion of every other interest.

Hence, the timeliness of the Apostle’s admonition: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). Why? Because we cannot have our first interest on two goals. Affections, like every other aspect of human life, must be directed to serve heavenly goals if we are to have any share when heavenly realities are brought to earth.

Now let us look again at the unreasonableness of these reasons. Is there anything wrong with buying a piece of ground? Certainly not. Can a man buy land and still be a Christian? The obvious answer is yes. Could this man in the parable have bought land and still have gone to the supper? Of course he could. The only reason for not going was that he did not wish to go. His heart was in the land, not in the supper.

Can a man buy five yoke of oxen, or five tractors, or five factories, and still go to the supper? Of course he can. There is nothing wrong with honest labor; in fact, toil is needful and honorable. But

(Continued on page 27)

Prayer

Our heavenly Father, Thou who hearest every heartfelt prayer, once again we approach Thy throne thanking Thee for the many abundant blessings that we enjoy, for the mercies of the day now terminating. We thank Thee for life and for the opportunities it presents to build a character for the ages, to lay up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life. May we appreciate Thy merciful provision for us, and now make the very most of it.

Thou forgivest us when we are truly repentant and forsake the evil ways that have hid Thy face from us. May we likewise forgive all who sin against us, even as Thou forgivest us. May we count no sin too heinous to pardon; no man too hardened to reclaim, but always be ready to help the fallen one back into Thy graces.

Help us to find our chief delight in work wherein we join our hands, our brains, our hearts, to Thy power, Thy laws, Thy love. May we choose that task which most taxes our highest powers, and best serves the world's deepest needs and glorifies Thee. Thus may we become not mere creatures, but creators; not one of Thy works, but Thy co-workers.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From A Reader—

No Instant Christians!

There is a saying, "I don't care when you do it, as long as you do it now." The emphasis is on the time element—now, fast, quick, instant.

Our modern world seems to have fallen victim to the instant-fad craze. Go to any supermarket and you will see labels of instant coffee, instant tea, instant pudding, instant mashed potatoes, instant oatmeal, etc.

Everyone wants to save time. But as one man said, "My wife can make a cake in minutes, but I can't apply the same method in studying the Bible."

There is no instant Bible knowledge. Learning the content of God's Word takes time. There is no shortcut.

And you can't become an instant Christian. It takes time, effort, and patience to "grow in grace and knowledge" into a mature Christian.

There are some who think that if they read the

daily devotional articles in the newspaper written by some clergyman, with a one-sentence prayer ending it, they have become instant Christians.

But real prayer and real Bible study takes time. Someone has said, "Mushrooms spring up overnight. Great oaks take years to grow."

Remember the words of the Psalmist, "He [one who loves God] is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers" (Ps. 1:3, RSV).

Mrs. E. S., Wausau, Wisconsin

I Must WANT To

*When I arise to start the day
With clouds or sun—let come what may—
If I resolve to make it pay,
I must want to.*

*If I would kneel to thank the Lord,
And seek to understand His Word
And for Him live in sweet accord
I must want to.*

*If I befoul my way with hate,
Let it remain and come too late,
With wicked boldness choose my fate,
I must want to.*

*If I neglect the place of prayer
And godly principles despair
And fail to exercise due care,
I must want to.*

*If I would do the best I can
To lengthen out life's fleeting span
And strive to fit into God's plan
I must want to.*

*If I would look beyond the thrill
And seek to climb yon distant hill,
If I would conquer mine own will
I must want to.*

*If I but live the way I should
And try to be what God calls "good",
And live to strengthen brotherhood,
I must want to.*

—Contributed.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Mosaic Law

WHEN we think of the Mosaic law we naturally think of Moses. The title given the Law is derived from the name **Moses**. In reality, the Law was not Moses' law, but God's Law, given through Moses. It was a national law, a law for Israel alone, but it was also the Law of God. Moses was simply God's spokesman to deliver the Law to the people. God always works through human instruments, and Moses was that instrument.

Moses was more than God's spokesman, however. He was the President, the Cabinet and the Congress all combined! His job was a momentous one. He was the leader of the people, their teacher and their judge. And he was more. He was an orator, a historian, a statesman and a legislator. His was not a job for any ordinary man—and he was no ordinary man.

Moses' life is divided into three forty-year periods. Someone has said that during his first forty years as Pharaoh's son, he learned how to be **Somebody**; during his second forty years, in the solitude of the desert he learned how to become a **Nobody**; and during his third forty years, from the Exodus to his death, he learned that **God was Everybody** and that through God he (Moses) could be **Somebody**.

We are indebted to Moses for the first five books of the Bible, commonly known as the Pentateuch. Some modern Bible students question the authorship of these books, but according to Exodus 24:4, Moses himself "wrote all the words of the Lord." Jesus added His seal to the Mosaic origin of the books when He said, "Moses wrote of me," and again when "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (John 5:46; Luke 24:27).

It has been estimated that the children of Israel numbered more than three million when they left Egypt. To bring this swarming mass of uncivilized humanity through forty trying years of wilderness living was no small task. But with God on his side,

Moses could not fail. One with God is always a majority—and Moses was one with God.

Because Moses did not receive the Law until nearly 2000 of the allotted 6000 years had elapsed, we need not think that the world was without law until that time. The Bible gives us abundant evidence of the existence of law in these early centuries. These laws were not coded and preserved as a rule of law as was the Mosaic law, but they were known to the people of that time.

Without law there could be no sin because there must be a standard for comparison. Without such a standard, none could be said to be either righteous or wicked, but we read that in the days of Noah "the wickedness of man was great in the earth and... every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... and it grieved [God] at his heart," while "Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations" (Gen. 6:5-6, 9).

Abraham was called "the friend of God," and of him God said, he "obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen. 26:5), proving beyond doubt that Abraham knew God's law. It is also recorded that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly," while Enoch "walked with God, and was not because God took him" (Gen. 5:24; 13:13).

Were these people judged according to the Mosaic law before it was given? Were they setting their own standards of right and wrong? No, they were under the "royal law," a law that came **before** the Mosaic law and to which Moses' law was added. The royal law continues to exist even in our day.

In our first lesson on this subject we traced the history of the Jews through their long stay in Egypt to the time of the Exodus. In this issue we will briefly review the giving of the Law from Sinai, studying some of its more important points, both secular and sacred.

II. THE LAW FROM SINAI

The Law from Sinai was accompanied by a spectacular show of God's power. Three days' preparation was required for the sanctification of the peo-

ple before they were ready to receive the Law. On the third day they stood in awe at the thunder and lightning, the thick cloud that covered the mountain and the sound of the trumpet that grew louder and louder (Ex. 19:16-19). Following this spectacle, the Ten Commandments were delivered, directly from God by His angelic messenger (Acts 7:38). The Law was holy, for it came from God. God not only laid down the laws; He also set the penalties, often severe.

The Scriptures contain three separate instances of Moses' meeting with God (His angel) in the mountain to receive the Law. At the first meeting he received the Ten Commandment law and a reminder to the children of Israel that they must obey the limits at the foot of the mountain. Later, Moses was called up into the mountain to receive the tables of stone "written with the finger of God." Moses broke these tablets, making necessary a third meeting for their replacement.

The Mosaic law was an elaborate system of legislation given to Israel for their education and government. In its complexity it provided for every situation that might arise between man and God, man and man, and man and animals. Its main purpose was to improve the lot of the people. God set up the Law and set the penalties for law-breaking. He was building Israel into a nation, developing a kingdom from a multitude of slaves. God had chosen Israel for Himself, but they were as yet a far cry from a people to be described as His "special treasure," or "above all people upon the face of the earth." Before they could qualify as His people they had first of all to be civilized and educated. The Mosaic law was God's means of teaching them; it was a law fitted to their capacity for understanding.

A. The Ten Commandment Law

Probably the best known part of the Mosaic law is that which is known as the Ten Commandments. These commandments were the first given and remain at the heart of Judaism today. In addition, they form the basis for many civil laws in nations of the world today.

The Ten Commandments covered man's basic relationships toward God, his family, and his society. We will briefly review these commandments.

1. **"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"** (Ex. 20:3). God was to be their King, and He alone was to be worshiped. The Israelites had grown up in a land where gods were multiple. They must forget the gods of the Egyptians and worship Jehovah alone. The penalty for violation of this command was death.

2. **"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth"** (Ex. 20:4). This command was likewise directed toward what they had learned in Egypt. The Egyptians worshiped gods in the forms of animals and the Israelites had become acquainted with images of these animal-gods in the homes and temples of Egypt. All images and idols were forbidden, again under penalty of death.

3. **"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain"** (Ex. 20:7). God demanded reverence and respect for Himself; He was holy and His holy name was not to be used lightly. Again the penalty for violation was death.

4. **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"** (Ex. 20:8). Six days were to be set aside for work and one for the Lord each week. Laws governing Sabbath observance were strict—and strictly enforced. The law benefited the working class by giving them one day of rest from their labors. The penalty for Sabbath-breaking (even for gathering sticks) was also death.

5. **"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"** (Ex. 20:12). The basis of any civilized nation is the family. God recognized the value of family life and decreed that parents should be honored and obeyed, again under penalty of death (Deut. 21:18-21).

6. **"Thou shalt not kill"** (Ex. 20:13). Human life was sacred under God's law in sharp contrast to pagan nations who offered human sacrifices. God had long before forbade murder; the penalty was decreed in Gen. 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Under the Mosaic law the penalty was the same, but mercy was provided for inadvertant killing.

7. **"Thou shalt not commit adultery"** (Ex. 20:14). This command was also for keeping family-life pure. Under the Mosaic arrangement, the penalty was death for both parties involved.

8. **"Thou shalt not steal"** (Ex. 20:15). This law was directed toward the protection of property rights. As slaves the Israelites had but little they could call their own. Now, on their own, protection was necessary. The penalty for theft of animals was restoration—four and five fold. For kidnapping, it was death.

9. **"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"** (Ex. 20:16). Lying can do irreparable harm. This law was to promote honesty. The penalty for false witnessing was severe: "If the wit-

ness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother. . . . And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deut. 19:16-21).

10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, . . . wife, . . . manservant, . . . maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's" (Ex. 20:17). The Mosaic law did not govern the thought or intent unless it was expressed openly. Covetousness had to lead to the sinful act before it was punishable. The law was directed to the protection of personal property.

The Ten Commandments formed only a small part of the Mosaic law. Like the rest of the Law, it was civil law to civilize. It was a simple introduction to the more detailed laws to be given later, a code that was to shape these crude and largely illiterate people into citizens from which holy men and women could be made. An individual must be first civil before he can attain to God's standards of holiness, hence the necessity for a stern law, rigidly enforced, a law fitted to the Israelites' capacity for understanding.

B. The Law—Secular

When Jesus said to the young man, "Keep the commandments," the young man assumed that He referred only to the Ten Commandment part of the Mosaic law. The same is true today. The majority assume that the Ten Commandments are the whole Law of God.

In reality, the Ten Commandments formed only a very small part of the Mosaic law, and a still smaller part of the whole Law of God. Moses' law contained provisions for every conceivable situation that might arise and the commands written on the tables of stone were only a preface to the more detailed "judgments" and "ordinances."

In this part of the Law we find laws dealing with morals, with the food they ate, with personal cleanliness. Nothing was omitted; everything from the use of borrowed tools to ownership of property was covered. Always the Law was for their betterment. God never required anything of them that would not be for their good. Many of the provisions of the Law are as good for humanity today as they were for the Israelites. God's standard of morality has not changed since the Law was given to Moses; He still demands purity.

Much of the Law is found in the third book of Moses, **Leviticus**. Here we find both religious and secular laws. **Holiness** is the key-word throughout the Book of the Law, as **Leviticus** is known. God

was giving these laws that Israel might become a holy people, a people worthy of His name. To become holy, they were to walk in His ways. They had much forgetting to do: "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; . . . Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: . . . which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord" (Lev. 18:3-4). God was establishing a belief in one God through His constant reminders of their duty to Him.

We will review some of the secular laws given to Israel.

1. **Dietary regulations.** Distinction was made between "clean" and "unclean" animals. The division was based partly on religious considerations and partly on health reasons. The main benefit to be derived was good health, with the lesson of obedience to the command. It further served as a mark of separation between Israel and the other nations around them.

2. **Ceremonial cleanliness.** Much of the washings concerned sacrifices, but they were mostly for the purpose of promoting personal cleanliness. It has been said that "Cleanliness is next to godliness," and it would seem that that was also God's viewpoint. A person that would be clean spiritually must first be clean physically.

3. **Consideration for the poor.** Under the Mosaic system of law, great consideration was given to the poor of the people. Gleanings of both field and vineyard were to be left for their use. Kindness was to be shown to strangers, widows and orphans. Any wages due a poor man were to be paid daily; loans were to be made to the needy without interest.

4. **Laws regarding property ownership.** Laws concerning the land they were to possess were given many years in advance of the inheritance. When they came into the Promised Land, the land was divided evenly among the tribes. This equitable division prevented one person from having too much and another from having too little, because it was divided according to families. Land could not be sold outright; the original inheritor had the right to redeem it at any time. Land sales were actually leases of 50 years or less, for in the Year of Jubilee all land previously sold reverted to the original owner.

a. **The sabbatic year.** The Law provided rest for the land—one year out of every seven. For six years they could plant and harvest, but in the seventh all sowing of fields and pruning of vineyards was forbidden. They had to store enough during the sixth year to eat during the seventh.

b. The Year of Jubilee. Every 50 years was another year of rest for the fields and vineyards. Since it followed the 49th year which would have been a sabbatic year, it made two consecutive years of rest for the land. Of necessity, they must store enough food for two years previous to the Year of Jubilee. In this year, the debts of Israelites were cancelled, Hebrew slaves were set free and land that had been sold was returned. The Law provided for equality in property ownership and served to relieve the poor from debt. The Year of Jubilee began with the Day of Atonement and was to be a holy year. It was in connection with the law of the Year of Jubilee that God said, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Lev. 25:10).

5. Laws of responsibility. The Israelites were taught responsibility for their actions through the Law. Many of these laws seem elementary to us, but we must remember that the children of Israel were mostly uneducated when they left Egypt. They had been only unpaid laborers, a class considered unworthy of education. We will mention some of these laws.

a. Responsibility for injury. If a man's ox injured a person, the owner of the ox was held liable for the injury and the ox was to be killed. If the ox killed a man, then the owner was to be put to death also.

b. Responsibility for theft. Stolen oxen or sheep had to be restored four- and fivefold. If the thief had nothing with which to make restitution, then he was himself to be sold. Oxen were used for working the land and were valuable.

c. Responsibility for words. Talebearing, or gossip, was forbidden. Slander was looked upon as a heinous sin. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people," is rendered in an ancient version as "Thou shalt not go after the slanderous tongue," with the explanation that slanderous means literally "triple tongued." This implies that slander affects three persons: the slanderer, the slandered one, and anyone who repeats the tale. The Israelite was to have respect for his brother.

d. Responsibility for actions. If a man struck another, whether it be his slave or his brother, he was held responsible for the injury. There was justice for the slave as well as for the landowner. In case of injury, it was "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Ex. 21:24-25).

6. Other laws. The Law covered so many situations and in such detail that it would be impossible to mention them all in our study. We will list a few others of importance:

a. Idol worship. Worshipping of idols or sacrificing

to other gods was forbidden in the Ten Commandments, but further emphasized later. Heathen nations by whom they were surrounded worshiped idols and many gods, and God foresaw the danger of Israel's adopting the practice.

b. Kindness enjoined. Gleanings were to be left for the poor. Neighbors were not to be defrauded, but loved. Due wages were to be paid. Strangers were to be treated as brethren "for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." The elderly were to be treated with respect. They were to help with the ox of their enemy as though it were their friend's.

The laws we have reviewed thus far in this study actually comprise a very small part of the laws given to govern the Israelites' everyday life. Among them were many more concerning their food, detailed instructions concerning leprosy (a term used to cover all diseases of the skin—which were common), and family relationships.

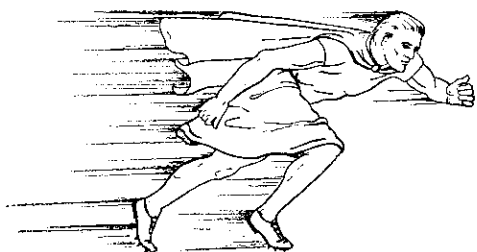
In the laws concerning the relationship between men and women, morality was stressed. God's people must have moral standards above those of the surrounding nations, hence He set strict guidelines for their behavior and He would tolerate no deviation from His law. The heathen nations who occupied their borders and through whose territory they would pass recognized no moral standards and they should not do as did these nations.

God's people must be separate from the nations, a people recognized as superior. To develop such a people from a previously uneducated mass of slaves required laws, strictly enforced. God never left any question as to the source of the Law. Always the laws were prefixed with "And the Lord spake," or a similar phrase, and often suffixed with the words, "I am the Lord." It was "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not." There was no rationalizing of the Law. It was to be strictly enforced and the penalties meted out according to His word.

God demanded a holy people, and by way of emphasis the Hebrew word **qodesh**, rendered "holiness" or "holy," appears more than 150 times in the book of Leviticus, and the command "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy" is repeated five times.

God's standard of holiness has not changed. The Apostle Peter repeated the words of the Lawgiver when he wrote, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Pet. 1:15-16).

*Reprints of these studies are available
upon request.*



Are You **STRAINING** to Arrive?

DOES regret and remorse often dog our footsteps because we feel we haven't made maximum progress toward becoming a better person? Do we often despair, stumbling over the same old sins again and again?

Do we feel that the way Christ has mapped out is too long, the requirements too stringent, the life too demanding, that we will never *arrive* at our desired goal? Take courage, for it may be that the very knowledge that we haven't yet arrived is what we need to spur us on to greater attainment!

Listen to a man who had all kinds of reasons to feel he had arrived, yet who confessed that he had not. His name was Paul, and writing from a jail cell as he looked back upon his long pilgrimage toward perfection, he said, "My brothers, I do not consider myself to have 'arrived,' spiritually, nor do I consider myself already perfect. But I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me."

What an impassioned will! what overpowering determination! Were we to go back over the trail this man had blazed with his life, we would find that he had come a long way. Many a station had he passed at which he might have settled down in the satisfaction that he had arrived. But no, not the insatiate Paul—he kept pressing on!

Look at the proud record he could have claimed as sufficient. For one thing, he had a good heritage. That is something many men are proud of. He came from good, solid stock. He was no riff-raff. He had been properly ushered into the religion of his fathers. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, the religious aristocracy of the day. He had had religious training in his home since he could remember.

Such a heritage might have been adequate; it is to some.

And Paul had more than a good inheritance. He had some genuine achievements of his own. He belonged to the Pharisees—no mean attainment this.

The Pharisees were an exclusive club. They were the "Separated Ones." And Paul was more than just a member of the class; he had been an ardent supporter of his understanding of religion, even making a name for himself as a "persecutor of those heretics called Christians."

Here was a man with a splendid background, who was ardently, zealously, scrupulously religious. What more could one ask?

Yet, if Paul had not encountered Christ, he would never have known how much more there was to life. But he did encounter Christ; and when he did, it was like beginning life all over again. Like the second stage of a rocket, he was thrust into a new orbit.

How did he describe what happened? He said: "Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ." It was as if a man who had been keeping books on his business suddenly realized one day that through some freakish mistake he had been putting everything on the wrong side of the ledger—that his supposed credits were really debits and the debits, credits.

With this new spiritual experience he came to see the whole creation from a different perspective. He saw that everything the world had to offer was not to be compared with what God had to offer him through Christ Jesus. "Indeed, I still count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord."

Paul had a completely new set of ambitions, a new priority in values. New long-range objectives possessed him. He wanted to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. He wanted the assurance that he too would be brought forth from the grave to live eternally. He wanted to die to the carnal mind as Christ had died. And so he discarded as worthless everything that pertained to the old life; he went forward.

At this point we might protest, "Paul, you have most certainly arrived! What more could anyone

aspire to be and to do than the program you have outlined, "to know [Christ] and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings"? With such aspirations, what more does any man need?

But listen to him. "No, I have not arrived. Those are my goals, but they are not fully attained. I am still pressing on, trying to grasp the life for which Christ took hold of me. I am not full-grown yet. I strain forward toward what lies ahead."

Simply put, Paul is saying that no one ought ever to stop moving ahead. He himself is pushing on to eternal riches in Christ. He wants the goal. He runs for it like a runner straining lungs and heart and muscle, reaching for the prize. He craves it like a thirsty man with red-rimmed burning eyes searches the desert for an oasis. Paul is reaching out for the things which are in front. He is as a racer going hard for the tape. With eyes for nothing but the goal, with arms almost clawing the air, with head forward, body bent and angled to the goal, he is going flat out for the finish.

From the day of his conversion, Paul offered everything to God—his money, his scholarship, his strength, his time, the vigor of his body, the acuteness of his mind, the devotion of his passionate heart. And the day came when Paul could cry tri-

umphantly, "The last drops of my sacrifice are now falling. I have fought the good fight. I have completed the course: I have kept the faith. As for what remains, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which on that day the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me—and not only to me, but also to all who have loved his appearing" (II Tim. 4:6-8, Moffatt Bible).

He goes on to say, "The time of my departure is at hand." Paul could joyfully exclaim, "I have kept the conditions of the contract; I have been true to my engagement. I have never lost my confidence and hope."

In that moment of triumph, Paul turned from the verdict of men to the verdict of God. He knew that in a very short time he would stand before the Roman judgment seat, and that his trial would have only one end. He knew what Nero's verdict would be, but he also knew what God's verdict would be. The man whose life was so dedicated to Jesus Christ was indifferent to the verdict of men. He cared not if they condemned him, so long as he could hear his Master's "Well done."

Looking back over that rich life, Paul said what few men would dare to utter, "Come, imitate me as I imitated Christ." Come, run for the prize as I ran—struggle, strain, strive—arrive!

Have we accepted his invitation? Are we straining to capture the prize for which he gave his all? How rapidly are we running in the common, everyday things of our lives?

Paul had much to say about the use of the tongue, and were he to listen to our daily conversation would he with pleasure say, "Ah, my brethren, I rejoice to know you are making the *very most* of your time. You realize you cannot afford to waste precious moments talking of secondary things when the shortness of time urges you to speak only to the upbuilding of the new man."

When those we loved have injured and rejected us, when we are tempted to recall things we did or said in former years, old injuries and bygone ills, do we hear Paul saying, "Come, come, *forget* the things which are behind and press forward. Did I allow my feelings to be injured when all Asia turned against me? or when brethren I loved and trusted turned their backs on me and by evil report added to my afflictions? Do I spend time going over and over again the thoughtless and unkind things done me?"

When the alluring page that is not edifying tempts us to fill our mind with that which is only second best, does Paul's admonition "Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God" cause us to close

(Continued on page 23)

READ *for Your LIFE!*

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH

WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE GREAT APOSTASY

AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

THE DEVIL AND HELL

TRINITY OR UNITY?

THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE ATONEMENT

THE SABBATH

ALL for \$1.00, Postpaid.

Kathy
Kandor's
Korner

Honesty--How Far?

"KATHY, I've just made the biggest mistake of my life. And I don't know what to do." Neal was just home from work and thoroughly discouraged. "I can't do it, Kathy, I just can't."

"Whatever are you talking about, Neal? What can't you do? What's wrong?"

"I'm through with something—it's either my job or my Christian faith. I've come to the point of either-or. It can't be both. If I'm going to insist on being honest, I'll lose my job."

"You don't mean Mason Incorporated wants a dishonest bookkeeper?"

"No, no, that's not it. It's all a matter of honesty—how far?"

"I'd say honesty *all the way*," Kathy spoke with firmness. "But tell me, Neal, what has happened."

And the story came. It all started—apparently—from a casual visit with Bud Wilson a few days back. Bud Wilson was top sales manager for the firm.

Bud happened by when Neal had just discovered a sizeable mistake—nine hundred dollars worth of material the company had received and never been billed for. "There's \$900 Maxell's would never have gotten if we didn't tell them about it," he had told Bud.

"You mean you *told them*?" Bud was shocked that Neal would report so fortunate a mistake. "Nobody reports mistakes in their favor," he had said. "And I mean *nobody*!"

"Certainly I told them," Neal had replied. "Couldn't think of doing anything else. Wouldn't we want to know about it if we were in their place?"

"Certainly we would," interrupted Kathy. "That's only the Golden Rule, which everybody likes to think they live by."

"Well, Bud couldn't see it that way. He told me plainly I should have kept quiet and made \$900

for our company. And then he left, rather anxious to forget the embarrassing little matter, if I am any judge. I don't think he liked the idea that I was trying to be a little more honest than he felt necessary. But neither did he like my reporting the mistake. So there you are."

"But that's not the whole story, Neal. Bud isn't your employer."

"No, I didn't really think too much about that incident until today when the president called me to his office. He said he wanted to brief me on what he called 'company policy.' Reporting mistakes on bills, he told me, was to be strictly a one-way business, and always in our favor. 'We can't afford to keep you on our payroll otherwise,' he said. 'Competition is too keen. We need all the advantage we can take. And,' he assured me when I showed a look of objection, 'there's nothing wrong about it. You'll just be following company rules. Understand?'"

"That's a nice way of putting it," interposed Kathy. "What did you tell him?"

"I told him I understood, and he shook my hand and dismissed me. That's all there was to it. But that's where I went wrong, Kathy. I can't be dishonest in my work and be a Christian, even if the dishonesty is called 'company policy,' can I? What do you think?"

"Never, Neal, never, never!"

"But Kathy, do you realize what this means? If I insist on reporting mistakes and I lose my job—"

"We'll make out, Neal. There is always a way. God will provide—somehow. We're both young and healthy."

"But jobs—especially good, steady ones like this one at Mason Incorporated—are hard to come by. Especially now."

"Don't worry, Neal, our greatest concern is that we do what is right. Why did you agree to go along with the president's policy?"

"It didn't strike me at that moment what it meant. Following 'company policy' sounds innocent enough. But—"

"But there's nothing innocent about it. God calls wrong, *wrong*, whatever name we like to give it. He wants us honest *clear through*."

"I'm going back to the president's office in the morning, first thing."

"And if he says you are through and you lose your job—"

"I'll be gaining far more than I could ever lose. My job isn't worth anything compared with my prospects of eternal life. Being even a little dishonest is far too dangerous to risk."

God wants us honest *all the way*. ●●

Facing Our Problems

MANIFOLD are the problems which confront us on our earthly pilgrimage. Problems of circumstance and problems of society; problems of security and problems of character. And many times they are of our own creation.

The deepest and most dangerous troubles which afflict our lives come from within, not from without. The enemy that challenges our peace of mind entered through a gate that had been opened from within. The outside dangers and temptations of the world have no power over us until they receive the cooperation of the foe within our own heart. Our chief adversary in life is our own self.

The story is told of a man who had a dream. He was haunted by a mysterious veiled figure. As soon as he had gained a fortune, the veiled form snatched it from him. When he was hungry and sat down to eat, the veiled figure stole his food from him. When he had won fame, the veiled figure took away his reputation. When he was overcome with slumber and lay down to sleep, this enemy of his life filled his mind with thoughts which banished sleep. At last when he stood at the door of a great opportunity and was about to enter, the hand of the veiled one suddenly closed the door against him.

Enraged, the unhappy man cried out to his adversary, "Who art thou?" Stretching forth his hand, he seized the veil and ripped it from the face of his tormentor—and lo, the face that he saw was his own.

Someone once said, "I have more trouble with myself than any other person." But we are often reluctant to admit this, preferring to blame our troubles on other people or on circumstances.

Our most difficult problems today are spiritual rather than temporal. We are living in an age when life is not the rugged struggle for survival that it was in former times. Science and modern invention have made conveniences and luxuries available to nearly all. At the same time, hours of leisure have greatly increased; whereas a man used to employ twelve or sixteen hours a day to eke out a bare existence, the average wage-earner works eight—

or less—hours a day and is able to live comfortably.

Our problems often result from our efforts to live the higher, spirit-directed life. And how are we, as professed followers of Christ, going to face them?

When the prophet of the Lord was giving instructions to King Ahab, who was about to face the hosts of Syria, the king said to the prophet, "Who shall order the battle?" and the prophet answered, "Thou" (I Kings 20:13-14). And this is true forever. Others can advise, counsel and warn; but in this battle, *you* are the sole commander. If you lose, you are the sole loser. And if you win, you are the sole conqueror. And remember this, that any worthwhile victory requires effort.

We have entered a contest, and its final termination will have far-reaching consequences, even death or life.

What are the problems that we must face, and how are we to dispose of them that we may be a successful contender with a right to live? Paul, in Galatians 5:19-21, enumerates seventeen traits of human nature any one of which is sufficient to disqualify the contestant.

Let us consider "wrath" or anger. It is one of the most common sins, yet one of the most dangerous. It injures the peace and well-being of man. It blasts the flower of friendship. It destroys peace and concord in the home, incites to crime and violence and turns love and affection into hatred. Psalm 37:8-9 classes anger as evil and prohibits its indulgence under penalty of death. Angry people are to be avoided (Prov. 22:24-25). We are not to make friendship with them or travel with them because of the danger of learning their ways and ensnaring our own soul.

The folly of anger and the wisdom of controlling it is illustrated in the narrative of Naaman, the prime minister under Ben-Hadad, King of Syria (II Kings 5). He had come to Samaria from far-off Damascus with his chariots and servants and costly presents to visit the great prophet Elisha, hoping that Elisha would cure him of his leprosy. To his astonishment and chagrin, Elisha would not even come out to see him but sent a servant with a message to Naaman to go and wash himself seven times in the Jordan River. This was humiliating for Naaman, and he started away in a rage. His servants, however, were more sensible, and persuaded him to try the prophet's instructions. Naaman listened to his servants—and he was healed. But how near Naaman came to missing the great blessing through the indulgence of his anger, because his pride had been wounded.

Another of life's problems which we must face is the proper guidance and control of the tongue. The apostle James classed this as one of the most obstinate evils to deal with (James 3:2). "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." It is not easy to keep this little member always under control, for the tongue is "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison."

It is almost impossible to calculate the injury which can be wrought by an ungoverned tongue. "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" No fountain does that—except the fountain of the tongue.

Since all of us do more or less talking, we should think about our words and our responsibility for their use, especially those words which may bring us into judgment. In Proverbs 21:23 we find this sensible advice: "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles." We can all testify to the wisdom of these words.

Words are the transcript of the mind, the index of a man's character. Jesus not only pronounced judgment upon words, but He gave the reason why we are accountable for the words we speak: Words reveal the heart, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34). Every idle or injurious word will bring condemnation in the day of judgment (Matt. 12:36-37).

Problems to be faced are many and varied, and sometimes they appear suddenly in unexpected places.

You step out and pick up the morning paper. At once you are faced with a problem. What meets the eye? What are you going to read? How much time can be profitably used in perusing its pages? It will be necessary to discriminate carefully or time will be worse than wasted reading sports items, crime news, comic sheets, and human interest stories not upbuilding to the spiritual life. To the average reader all might seem legitimate and proper. But the Christian is under obligation to obey the word found in I Corinthians 10:31: "... do all to the glory of God." We cannot read just anything and everything to the glory of God.

This problem of reading is not confined to newspapers only, for from the printing press come an endless stream of books, magazines and pamphlets rating from the educational and instructive all the way down to the vicious and worthless trash.

These few problems which are so much a part of our daily routine point up the need for watchfulness on the part of those who would live when problems have vanished. And that happy day is fast approaching for all who have faced their problems

in the God-appointed way. How needful, then, to heed the words of Jesus: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36). ●●

Words to WALK By

Better to be alone than in bad company.

Every man must do his own growing, no matter how tall his father was.

He who will not forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass.

A man who says it can't be done is likely to be interrupted by someone doing it.

The consecrated one-talent man has greater promise of reward than the intellectual genius who does not know the Master.

Wanting to make peace? First make peace within.

We have heard of many people who did too little for God; but have you ever heard of anyone who did too much?

Men show their character in nothing more clearly than by what they like.

Shadows fall behind us when we walk toward the light.

Nothing stands between God and man except sin.

Christian compassion is two hearts bearing one load.

Obituary

Lizzie Schmidt

On August 22, death claimed another of our aged members, Lizzie Schmidt, bringing release from years of failing health.

Sister Lizzie—as she will always be remembered—first became acquainted with Megiddo literature in 1921 while residing in Illinois. She made her first visit to the Church in 1926, from which she never returned, and she gave many happy years of energetic service.

Sister Schmidt leaves no known survivors.

Funeral services were conducted by Rev. K. E. Flowerday. Interment was in Mount Hope Cemetery, where rest others of our beloved dead awaiting the glad morning of the Resurrection. ●●

The Arithmetic Prize

“AT THE end of the next six-weeks’ period,” Miss Kingsley announced, “I am going to have a prize for the one who has the highest average in arithmetic.” Just then the bell rang and the usual buzz filled the air as the pupils crowded the door to leave.

“Dick Ralston will get it,” whispered Helen to Joanne. “He’s so good in arithmetic. Teacher’s pet, too.”

“I just hope Henry doesn’t get it,” broke in Catherine. “He’s so mean, he’d cheat to get it.”

“Oh! don’t say that!” exclaimed Margaret. “You shouldn’t accuse anyone unless you are sure!”

“Well, I *won’t* then, but just the same, I hope Henry doesn’t get it,” said Catherine firmly as she picked up her books that Dick had knocked out of her arms.

There was extra interest in arithmetic the next day. Everyone was thinking about the prize. And for three weeks, Henry and Dick handed in perfect papers. But so did one other, a shy little newcomer named Harriet.

“Just three more weeks,” said Margaret one day, “and then we’ll see who’ll win. Maybe Harriet will get it.”

But that very day, Harriet’s paper had two mistakes on it.

Two more weeks passed, and Henry and Dick still had a perfect record. Then Henry did a problem wrong. Dick had the prize, unless he should miss a problem during the last week.

Saturday morning came at Dick’s house, and the family gathered as usual for breakfast.

“What’s the matter, Son?” asked his father. “Got a toothache?”

“No, Dad,” answered Dick, “but I can’t seem to make my jaws go.”

“I do believe the child has the mumps!” exclaimed Grandma, examining the swollen jaw.

And mumps it proved to be—and the contest had not ended yet. Dick had been trying so hard to win!

“What can I do, Dad?” Dick asked in dismay. “I can’t take my arithmetic assignment to school. And Miss Kingsley always takes off points when papers are late.”

“She’ll make allowance when you’re sick, Dick. I’m sure she will.”

“But the contest, Dad. It ends this week!—and if my paper isn’t there, someone else is sure to get the prize.”

“Well, now,” said Dad as he tried to think real hard. “I think I can find a faithful little errand-runner who goes to kindergarten. Why can’t Margery May take your papers to Miss Kingsley?”

Margery beamed all over. And Dick looked eagerly at his little sister.

“Why, yes!” Mother assured him, “I’m sure she can do it.”

So next Monday morning, Margery May was trusted with the precious papers.

In the school yard she saw a boy who had been at Dick’s house. She went up to him timidly. “Are you in Dick’s class? I brought his arithmetic papers.”

“Yes,” said the boy, “and I’ll hand them to Miss Kingsley for you. Bring them to me every day and I’ll be sure to get them in on time.”

Margery May was delighted. She had been a little afraid to ask any of the “big” boys to take Dick’s papers. But here was one she could talk to. He made it so easy. So she skipped happily away to her own schoolroom.

On Friday afternoon, the whole school gathered in the assembly hall. Each class had been offered a prize in some subject, and the prizes were to be given to the winners.

Miss Kingsley walked on to the stage with the small, mysterious-looking package that would go to someone in her arithmetic class.

“In my class,” she said, “the special prize was offered to the one with the highest average in arithmetic. It was a close race between two of the boys until this last week, when one of them came down with the mumps. It must be that he is very sick, because he hasn’t handed in his papers. And since they are not in—and late papers always must be marked down—it will be impossible for me to give him the prize, therefore I am presenting this award to . . .”

Miss Kingsley hadn’t noticed the small squirm-

ing tot in the front row. But suddenly a shrill little voice piped up. "But Miss Kingsley, I brought Dick's papers every day and gave them to a big boy in your class to give to you."

"You did, Margery?" asked the teacher. "Which boy did you give them to?"

Margery May stood up and looked around. She looked and looked and finally pointed a pudgy finger—"To that boy, that one right there"—she was pointing to Henry.

"She did not! I never had his papers!" broke in Henry.

"There will be no prize given to my class today," said Miss Kingsley and she left the stage.

As soon as the assembly was over and all the pupils were back in their classrooms, Miss Kingsley brought Margery May with her to her class.

"Now," she began, "we will have to straighten this matter out. Open your desks, books, everything you have with you." And Miss Kingsley went around the room and examined each one's. When she came to Henry's she found nothing that did not belong to him.

"There," he exclaimed, too loudly, "you see I don't have them. And I never saw his sister!"

"Are you sure, Margery, that it was *this* boy?" asked the teacher.

Margery May looked him over with frank eyes. "Yes, I'm sure. I know 'cause he has orange hair and brown specks on his cheeks." There was a murmur of laughter, which the teacher instantly hushed.

"Please, Miss Kingsley," said Margery, "where is my brother's desk?"

"Well, I did forget to look there," said Miss Kingsley. She looked, and sure enough! There were the papers! "Class is dismissed."

The next day Miss Kingsley stood up with the prize. "I'm very sorry I have a boy who would steal and lie to win a prize. But the prize rightfully belongs to Dick. And his faithful little sister will take it to him."

A smiling tot trudged happily home that night to her idolized big brother with the prize clutched tightly in her hands. ●●

Are You Straining to Arrive?

(Continued from page 18)

the book immediately, and never to open it again?

Are we at times moody, quarrelsome, sensitive, fault-finding and hard to live with, throwing tantrums when we can't have our way? If we are straining in the footsteps of that flying figure Paul, his words will float back to us and reprove our waywardness. Brethren, there is no time for moodiness, quarrels, sensitiveness; "follow after the things which make for peace and the things where-with one may edify another." As for being critical and fault-finding—if you would "be critical, be critical about *your own* conduct and see that you do nothing to make a brother stumble and fall."

Are we that sort of person who easily becomes blue, discouraged and self-pitying? Turn to the New Testament and read of Paul's life, of his extreme hardships and trials. Do we hear of his having the blues? Do we hear words of discouragement or self-pity for the beatings and cruel persecutions? No! a thousand times *No!* In his discouraging situation he sat down and wrote words of cheer to his brethren. His letters overflow with encouragement, radiating the joy of a true follower of Christ.

In whatever trying situation we find ourselves, whatever besetments we are struggling against, Paul encountered the same. He knew the convulsive struggles with the lower nature that we ex-

perience, for he said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me" (Rom. 7:21).

Our days for spiritual growth are passing rapidly, and is our determination to complete the work intensifying? Are we leaving our past behind us? Like the second stage of the rocket, are we being thrust into a new orbit of holier living? Do we have a new set of ambitions, a new priority in values? Are we like the runner straining lungs and heart and muscle for the prize? Do we have eyes for nothing but the goal? Are we going flat out for the finish?

Are we giving God our strength, our time, the vigor of our body, the acuteness of our mind, the devotion of our heart? Are we *straining* to arrive?

Very soon now we shall meet Christ's chosen runner Paul, and may we be able to say with joy, "Brother Paul, I am here today because I imitated you—I 'strained to arrive.'" ●●

**"The Lord I will at all times bless,
My mouth His praises shall express;
In Him shall all my boasting be,
While all the meek rejoice with me.**

**"O magnify the Lord with me,
Let us to praise His name agree;
I sought the Lord, He answered me,
And from my fears He set me free."**

A General Letter

(Continued from page 10)

Throw all stubbornness away;

Have no relish for error. . . .

There is great need of each and all who have entered the race for eternal life to take the more earnest heed to these things, so that they will never let them slip. This work is highly elevating to the mind and healthful to the body, always making us better, besides increasing not only our own comfort and joy but also the pleasure of all with whom we come in contact in our daily life. Even apart from the great reward, many of these noble commandments should be obeyed in our everyday life if we would be happy ourselves and be somewhat helpful in imparting happiness to others. As we behold ourselves instrumental in aiding others to take comfort, it will increase our own pleasure if we are in reality of any worth or value in the world.

There is immediate need for every one to be aroused to a more critical examination of self, so that the weights of sin can be discerned in order that we may lay them all aside. Having a longing desire to see you all in the soon-coming and ever glorious Kingdom, and being far away where we cannot speak to you by word of mouth, we thought we would spend a little time in penning a few pages as a general epistle to all the brethren whom we have come to love so well. We want to stir up the minds of all who are desirous of obtaining the unending reward at any cost, even to the loss of all things, and who are not only willing but anxious to count the fleeting pleasures of this life but dross that we may finally win Christ and be found fully in Him.

Oh, the glory! unspeakable glory that is coming! Wonderful beyond all compare! A continual wonder of amazement, filling us with increasing happiness as the "seven thunders" unveil to our mental vision the now veiled wonders of the great eternal future of the grand and glorious plan of the All-wise, Omnipotent God!

Brethren, can we afford to miss this magnificent future? And consider, it will be continually increasing, immeasurable in quantity; purest and best in quality; far beyond all that we can, with our present capabilities even ask or think.

In view of this endless future, is anything too hard to do? It was this that caused Abraham to offer his only son; Joseph to endure his trials; Daniel to enter the lion's den; the three Hebrew children the fiery furnace; and Paul to suffer his many trials and the loss of all things that he might

win Christ. Yes, win Christ! When we have won Him, we have won all.

If any are fainthearted with all this before them, they had better either get strong or turn back at once, for no halfway work will ever secure to us such wonderful glory. He who says, "I can't lay aside every weight; I cannot cease from sin and become perfect," is only saying that he cannot enter the golden city; for Jesus says, "Blessed are they that do my commandments." They alone have a right to the tree of life and the aforementioned and faintly pictured glory. . . .

We trust this epistle may have the desired effect. Oh, that it may stir up the brotherhood to a greater determination to make *everything* subservient to the cause of truth. Stop and consider the past; look at the future; find wherein you lack and then go to work as you would in any secular business, with a will, and this work will readily and easily be accomplished. What is done must be done quickly, for we fully realize that time is very limited. If we do not bestir ourselves it will soon be everlastingly too late. "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we [first] believed." . . .

We shall try to see most of you as soon as possible and cheer you by word of mouth, which will be far preferable. "As iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." In the meanwhile, read, meditate, grow! And may the richest blessings of a kind, merciful Father be with, bless and aid each one to rapidly prepare for the Master's coming.

With unbounded love to all, we subscribe ourselves,

Yours lovingly,

(signed) L. T. and H. E. Nichols

Are You Still Plowing?

Remember the day when we set our hand to the Lord's plow and dreamed of plowing straight and true furrow after furrow until our work for Him was finished? Yes, we remember. But we stopped the plow one day in order to catch a mouse. We forgot the higher goal for the lower.

We were occupied with small things; we chased the mouse. And we caught him. But in the meantime, the furrow lay uncompleted while the weeds grew along its borders.

Is this true of you and me, or are we still plowing?

Small wonder that the ancient proverb should read: "One should never stop the plow in order to catch a mouse."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Why did Jesus tell the high priest, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven' (Matt. 26:64)? Surely Jesus did not expect Caiaphas to literally see Him return from heaven."

To understand this statement by Jesus, we need to be familiar with the situation at the time. Jesus had been arrested and was being tried. Two false witnesses had just testified against Him, and Jesus was before the high priest, who was waiting for an answer to the testimony of the witnesses.

Momentarily Jesus was silent. We read, He "held His peace."

But the high priest demanded an answer. "Tell us," he said, "whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus' whole ministry had made this question inevitable. He had said definitely that He was the Messiah, and now they were asking for one final statement of the claim.

This was Jesus' opportunity to let them know that He was indeed the promised Messiah. To remain silent would have been to deny His cause. So Jesus affirmed the high priest's statement: "Thou hast said." But He did not stop with that; Jesus said more, as if almost to challenge the authority of the high priest who would listen to such false witnesses. "Nevertheless"—that is, I have something more startling to tell you. What follows describes the future of the "Son of Man" in terms of His second advent. "Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." In other words, Jesus was saying, "The time is coming when you and I shall change places. I will then be the Judge, and you the prisoner at the bar. Now I am at your mercy; but then you and all your kind shall be at my mercy. Your power is for the moment; mine shall be forever."

The whole passage is not meant to be a literal description of Christ's coming, but a statement to confirm His Messiahship and to impress a proud and unreasoning high priest.

"All the vast hours of study that scholars, students and ministers give to the Bible and all the wisdom and knowledge they acquire is without profit to them unless they have the Holy Spirit. Don't you agree to this?"

I know of no passage of Scripture which says any such thing. On the contrary, the apostle Peter

said that "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" come "through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:3-4). No mention is made of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle Paul also spoke of how we may learn, again omitting any mention of the Holy Spirit. We may learn *by reading*: "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). We may learn *by hearing the word of God*: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). We learn *by study*, as Paul admonished, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (II Tim. 2:15).

The book of Revelation lists these same means of acquiring spiritual knowledge and discernment: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

Some who had the privilege of tasting the gifts of the Holy Spirit enjoyed the "gift of knowledge." Doubtless they received knowledge by some more direct—and easier—means than is known to us today. But this was the privilege of a very few, and for a very limited space of time. For as the Apostle foretold, "whether there be knowledge [by divine revelation], it shall vanish away" (I Cor. 13:8).

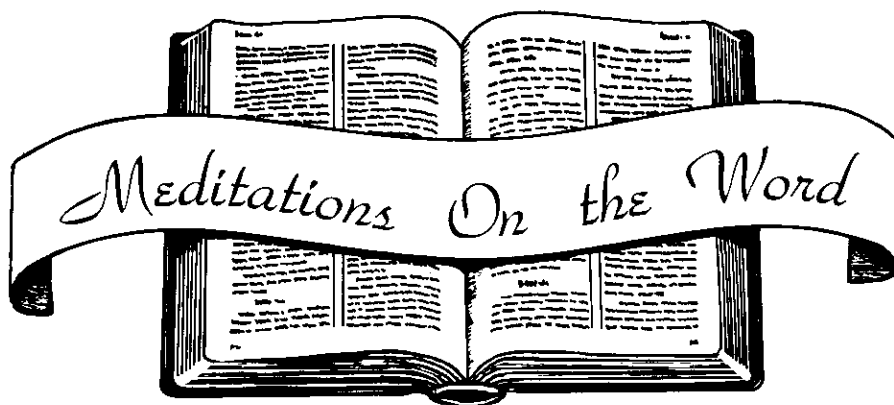
"Who was the devil that sowed the tares?"

Jesus in His parable of the Tares (Matthew 13) describes another of the devil's mischievous designs. An enemy sowed tares among the wheat in a wheat field. After Jesus had sent the multitude away, He explained the parable to His disciples.

And "he . . . said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one." (The word "one" is added, it does not appear in the original Greek manuscript. Two of the modern versions read: "The weeds are the wicked"; "the tares are the sons of evil.") "The enemy that sowed them is the devil" (vs. 37-38).

Like begets like, hence if the tares are the sons of evil, the devil that sowed them must be fathers of evil. The answer is obvious: The devil represents evil men.

Success is for those who will take it. It will be taken by those who are diligent, prayerful, ambitious and alert.



*"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you,
Nay; but rather division"*
—Luke 12:51.

THIS passage, standing alone, might seem to contradict the established concept of our Lord as the Prince of Peace, and of the Father as a Being who is not the author of confusion. Throughout the Scriptures runs the golden thread of Unity, of oneness of mind—a direct command: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, . . . that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). "Be perfect, be of one mind, live in peace" (II Cor. 13:11).

A comparison of these and similar commands with the complete passage in Luke 12:51-53 makes it readily apparent that here is quite another sort of division. All members of the body of Christ must be in perfect union in both doctrine and practice; but between the world of believers and the world of darkness there is and must be a division. True, it is not a division of compulsion but of fact and of circumstances. Jesus does not "send" it, except as He sends His law, calling us upward from the mire of human thought and

fleshly ways. The division is inevitable as one class accepts the call and the other rejects it.

God is not willing that any should perish; He would have all men to be saved, and so would any godly man or woman. There is no room for a misanthropic or Pharisaically exclusive attitude; but, as Jesus said to the masses of His day, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life" (John 5:40). How often God would have gathered His erring children to Him, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but they would not. He will force salvation on no man, and if they choose death, then death they shall have.

From the very beginning this division has existed. In the allegory of Genesis, there is found an abiding enmity between the "seed of the woman" and the "seed of the serpent," between the children of the flesh and the children of God, an enmity to be terminated when the serpent's head, all evil, is crushed once for all by the rising power of the King of kings. In this day of loose thinking, when religion has become so broad that it has lost all its depth, it is popular to regard all men everywhere

as the children of God, in defiance of the Scriptural principle that this royal sonship is obtained only by adoption (Rom. 9:8; Gal. 4:5). But that is another subject, for which we have not space here. Suffice it to say that there is no period or instance in the recorded history of God's dealings with men when this division has not been included in the Plan. And so long as flesh and Spirit exist, we shall find with Paul that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

The world would like to deny, at least in words, that this enmity exists. They talk of tolerance and universal brotherhood, and would welcome us into their assemblies, *on their own terms*, but not—repeat, not—if we stand up for our principles. This has been proved again and again. For, regardless of what they say, the world does not like the high standard of conduct which the Way of Christ requires; and when that standard is preached and practiced in their presence, they feel its reproof and resent

it. In the days of Pagan Rome, there was the greatest democracy of worship; all religions were welcomed, except Christianity, which refused to burn one grain of incense upon any heathen altar; and so it has always been, and so it is today. Their talk of brotherhood is both deceitful and dangerous. "They zealously affect you," said the Apostle, "but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them" (Gal. 4:17).

It is an immutable law, both of Nature and of God, that we cannot have everything, but only a choice of things. It is equally certain that he who plays with fire shall be burned. Very wholesome advice is that of Paul: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" None whatever, under the law of God, and for an excellent reason: "Do not be misled. Bad company ruins character" (I Cor. 15:34, Goodspeed). Evil is far more infectious than good, since it is more congenial to our old, untamed, savage nature.

The only sure and safe way is to follow the admonitions in I John 2:15 and II Cor. 6:17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world"; "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." Always and everywhere, those who have tried to serve two masters have made shipwreck of their lives. Pursuing two hares in opposite directions, as the old Oriental proverb has it, they catch neither. "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned," mourned the prophet Hosea (7:8).

This separation is not necessarily in a physical sense, for that is often impossible and equally undesirable. Jesus prayed for His disciples, "Not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). Contact with the world brings trials, and trials develop character. Isolation of the monastic type is not the answer. It may well be easier, but the truly good things of this life never come easy.

In a book called *The Social Triumph of the Early Church*, the writer points out, with an unmistakable air of "I could have told you," that the church, so long as it maintained its other-worldliness, did not grow in numbers or influence. Only when its members began to intermarry with the world and to mix in pagan society, politics and pleasures, did "success" come. To the writer, it was a social triumph; to us, it was a moral defeat. The Apostate Church gained the world, but lost its own soul.

In the two verses following our text, Jesus warned that this division would inevitably invade the family circle, and so it has been. While the family as an institution is the foundation of much that is beautiful and ennobling and comforting, yet the law of God transcends fleshly ties. God first. The natural family is a comfort in this life, but this life is too brief for us to make it our all in all. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2). If our kindred are also of the household of God, there is a double tie; but if not, there is a higher and nobler spiritual connection. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven," said our great Example, "the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Those who have had fleshly ties severed by the Truth are promised a hundredfold of spiritual brethren and sisters and fathers and mothers (Mark 10:29-30), members of the royal family of the Lord Almighty. ●●

Excuses!

(Continued from page 11)

our employment must, as far as possible, not deter us from our *first* interest—which is responding to Christ's invitation.

Finally, why did Jesus condemn the man who had married a wife? Verse 26 of the same chapter (Luke 14) reveals the answer. Any human love which comes ahead of Christ—whether it be the love for mother or father, wife or sister, brother or child—excludes a man from the bonds of full discipleship. Jesus said, "If any man come to me, and hate not [or regard with less esteem or affection] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Heavenly interests must be first and foremost *always*.

A teacher required all absentees to bring a note from home stating the reason for the absence, or to stay after school. One boy brought a note which read, "Please excuse John's absence yesterday." At the end of the day the teacher said, "Johnny, you must stay after school." Johnny protested. "But teacher, I brought my excuse." "That is true, Johnny," the teacher replied, "but you did not bring a reason."

And so it shall be in the Day when every servant of God shall stand before the Judgment seat of Christ; there will be many excuses for lack of faithful service, but no reasons. ●●

Thy Kingdom Is At Hand

*O Lord of life, Thy kingdom is at hand,
Blest reign of love and liberty and light;
Time long foretold by seers of every land,
The cherished dream of watchers through the night.*

*Lo! in the heav'ns shines forth the morning star,
Shedding its luster on our darkened way;
And we behold, as pilgrims from afar,
The holy dawning of Thy perfect day.*

*Now gleams at last upon our waiting eyes
The glory of the kingdom that shall be;
When truth in conquering grandeur shall arise,
And man shall rule the world with equity.*

*Forward again we move at Thy command,
The flaming pillar leading on anew;
One in the faith of all Thy prophet band,
Onward we press until the vision be true.*

-Selected.