

# Megiddo Message

“And to some, this gift was that they should be...evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself”

—Eph. 4:11-13, *Jerusalem Bible*

## EDITORIAL

# Knowing How to Abound

**P**AUL, in writing to the Philippian Church, expressed his preparedness for any situation he might have to face. "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:11-13).

Paul knew what he was talking about—he had had plenty of acquaintance with abasement. Listen to his own account:

"I have been beaten times without number. I have faced death again and again.

"I have been beaten the regulation thirty-nine stripes by the Jews five times.

"I have been beaten with rods three times.

"I have been stoned once.

"I have been shipwrecked three times.

"I have been twenty-four hours in the open sea.

"In my travels I have been in constant danger from rivers, from bandits, from my own countrymen, and from pagans. I have faced danger in city streets, danger in the desert, danger on the high seas, danger among false Christians. I have known drudgery, exhaustion, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, fasting, cold and exposure."

—II Cor. 11:24-27, Phillips.

How could he endure such excruciating experiences? He tells how: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Only through the strength of knowing Christ, His hope, His example, His life, could Paul endure such abasement.

But there was more than abasement to be endured. Paul said, "I know both how to be abased, and . . . how to abound." Both situa-

tions, according to Paul, required the same strength to be endured—both are part of the "all things" which he found himself able to endure "through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

We think of abounding as a pleasant experience—having the things we need, being able to do the things we want to do, having enough and to spare—we see no problem in abounding. But careful!—Paul did. He needed the strength of Christ as much in abounding as in being abased.

Every situation of life brings its own particular testing. And as Christians, we need to prepare ourselves against either extreme. We need to learn how to take abasement, and we need to learn how to abound. We need God's help if we are to survive as the director, or we need Him if we are to survive as the servant. So far as God's evaluation of us is concerned, our position does not matter; all that matters is the manner in which we take that position. God is no respecter of station. If we have the trials of abasement, we must learn to cope with them. If we have plenty and are abounding, we need God's help to cope with that also.

Why "cope with" abounding? Because abounding brings its difficulties. We may be tempted to too much self-confidence, too much pride, too much forgetfulness of God (any is too much!). We may be tempted to try to run the course of our life without Him, being so contented in the abundance of the things which we possess. We forget that all good comes from God.

Perhaps abounding is more common in our age than abasement. And how are we taking it? Can we say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me"? Have we learned how to abound? ••

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*Take care that the lessons learned in difficulty are not forgotten in times of ease.*

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## Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Supremacy there has long been the envy of aggressive nations, and the prevailing power has guarded it with jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, it is a place of troops, where soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "The weapons we wield are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, **NEB**).

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October, 1976

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# THE WAY of LIFE



*Jesus in His first sermon spoke of two ways, one leading to death and the other leading to life everlasting.*

*In stirring and informal discourse, Rev. L. T. Nichols (1844-1912) often portrayed vividly the difference between the two. He pointed out, also, the abundant evidence that the Sacred Book is not the work of self-confident, fallible man.*

*In the following message the subject is the one straight and narrow road, which Jesus said would end in life, contrasted with the broad, easy-going way that ends in death. He appeals to one and all to choose the narrow, difficult way in prospect of what lies at the end—even life everlasting.*

AS we view the troubles and sorrows of life, it seems every one of us would be more than anxious to follow the path that leads to a blissful eternity. Why should we even bother our minds with the transient things of earth, when they are so short-lived and will bring only trouble, disappointment, sickness and death? Why will we not be all interested in something more lasting and eternal than the affairs of this world?

We see people everywhere all interested in the things around them, having no interest in the future and eternal. And all the while the world grows worse and worse. But if this were not so, the Book would not be true, as it declares that all the world lies in darkness and wickedness. It was foretold long ago that this would be the state of affairs at this time. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13). This was a statement made by one to whom Christ returned and whom He put into the ministry for our benefit. Do we be-

lieve it? or are we deceived and thinking that the world is growing better and better?

In some ways the world *is* better; but religiously and morally it is growing worse and worse; men are getting to have less and less faith in God; paying less and less attention to the future, thinking that will take care of itself. But when we read in the divine testimony and find that it points out two ways and says *few* are in the way to life, it suggests to our mind the question: Is there not something for us to do to be among the few, that we may find the way to life and glory?

Christ, after He had ascended to heaven, sent an angel back to tell us that there are a few names in Sardis which "have not defiled their garments," and "they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy" (Rev. 3:4). Why are they worthy? Because they have not defiled their garments. This is the only principle upon which to base salvation—to become worthy. That is why Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will



not hear me." If you regard iniquity in your heart, there is no need for you to bend the knee. "But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer." Why? Because I have not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful; but have delighted myself in the law of God, and meditated in it day and night (Ps. 1:1-2).

This is why Jesus said, "Few there be that find it." And how few! Is not the Book true?

**W**E realize there is and must of necessity be something for us to do, in order to be of that few. We are told in Revelation 2:26 what that something is: "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." That is what we have to do; not be overcome with evil but overcome evil with good. The religious world put it just the other way and say the great I AM has done the work through His Son. But here Jesus says we must do the work ourselves. "He that overcometh"—he does it himself. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And everyone that overcomes will realize that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; we cannot have anything carnal governing us; all anger and wrath must be put away if ever we pass the pearly gate. This is why there are few, so few in the narrow way.

Someday there will be a wonderful turning of the tables, when "all the earth shall worship thee, . . . they shall sing to thy name" (Ps. 66:4). He who said, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations," also said, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). At that time He will renovate this earth, until praises of Him who inhabits the throne of glory shall resound throughout all nations.

While these were not the last words from our Master while on earth, yet it was in the final message from above, after He had ascended to heaven: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." This is why Jesus said of the church at Ephesus, "I know thy works . . . and thy patience, . . . nevertheless I have somewhat against thee" (Rev. 2:2-4). There was something lacking yet; there were only a few names who had not defiled their garments; only a few who had brought every thought into subjection and cast every thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God away. Only a few were willing to delight in the law of the Lord and rejoice in the way of salvation. These

shall "walk with me in white." These have overcome. Is this way narrow? It is. For it will take study to bring every thought into subjection; it will take a following of Psalm 1 to delight in the law of the Lord and meditate in it day and night; it will take a planting by the water of life.

We labor and toil day after day, we grow tired and feel weary—and is this all we are living for? We have a promise left us of a life beyond the tomb, if only we walk as we have been commanded. A Christian gets all the cream of this life; he has more happiness, he has more joy and peace; it brings him more tranquility and more assurance than all the world can give, and then he will gain a future life. He has more vigor and health, because it is impossible for the one who gets angry to have as good health as the one who is always calm. And if we exercise ourselves unto godliness, we have a better chance to live. This calmness and gentleness gives us peace and joy now, and gives us a life that will never end.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." Oh, if we could only get this contentment! This evenness of disposition, this temperate mode of living is what lengthens out the span of life to us and brings us comfort in this life and gives a life to come. Through the instrumentality of Christ and His co-workers all the earth shall be brought to worship God and sing His praise.

**Y**OU remember He said in Acts 15:15-18: "After this I will return." But He said first that he would visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. Do you know this visitation is almost over? First He would visit the Gentiles, and He said that "after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down," trampled under foot—"and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

But there is a work to be done before we can join in the throng that will build again the tabernacle, and if this work is not well done now we shall not be permitted to have a part in that grand work, for we shall never have another chance; we shall never have another life in which to overcome all evil. If it were necessary, I would be willing to be set out in the street without a cent, for I could get more money; but when this opportunity is gone, it will never return. I would gladly be set out in the street without a dollar, if only I could be the means of getting the city of Rochester to sing His praise; and what would it be to get all

the earth to worship Him? But this would not do it; it is our own life's devotion and character that will be acceptable. And God means what He says; every one of us must devote our whole life to His service and overcome every evil that is common to humanity, for God seeks only such to worship Him. If we are not worshiping Him according to the blessed Book, we are not worshiping Him in spirit and in truth.

Narrow indeed is the way that leads to life. It stamps the Bible divine. We dare not speak a word not found in the oracles of God, or we too are outside the narrow way. Some people say, "I don't care whether what I do is according to that Book or not"; and they say, "You don't need to bring every thought into subjection." But God says that we *do*.

It should give us courage and consolation to cast aside every weight—remember *every* weight, not just part of them—"and run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame." Let us keep this great prize before us, and then we can come out from the world and be separate as God has commanded us through the apostle Paul (II Cor. 6:17-18). Oh, we can have a great deal more joy in being a separate people, wholly devoting our lives to the Lord, than we can to dabble in the things of this world. Why will we be so foolish as to try to mix in its ephemeral pleasures? "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," said Jesus. We cannot engage in any of their ways and doings which God condemns, their jesting or joking or foolishness. Seriousness, sobriety and reverence must dwell with us, or we shall never enter that everlasting rest.

**I** want to enter that rest; I want you to enter there too. But neither you nor I nor any one else shall enter there who has not laid aside every weight, every sin, and brought every thought into subjection to the law of Christ.

Which is wiser, to seek the world with its pleasures, or to follow the ways of the Lord? We cannot serve both; it will not do to have a divided heart, for James tells us that "a double minded man is unstable in all his ways; let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." God says if we seek the land of glory, we must seek with all our heart. God requires all our mind in one direction, in the way of His truth.

Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6); this is the way we must walk. He says it is direct from God. Your speaker is

not the author of these things, he never had a glimpse of the future or of any thing but this life; God is the Author of these things.

Let us turn to Hosea 14:9, "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein." You need not think you shall ever reach that long, sweet rest unless you walk in this way, the way in which the just walk. What about the transgressors? They shall fall therein. They shall miss this long, sweet home.

If we really hear these words of God, they will create a burning in our hearts. We will have such a desire for something better than this life. This life is too poor, too ephemeral, too short for us to trouble with. We cannot have a double eye—if we do, we shall be full of darkness; but if our eye is single our body is full of light, yes, *full* of it, says Jesus. And I would rather believe what He says, for the angels came from God and taught Him many things. If our body is full of light, there is then no room for darkness.

Though every religious teacher in the world should say we do not need to have the light, does that make it so? Does it prove God's word of none effect? We read in Romans 3:3-4, "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid; yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." We must get the wisdom that comes from above, for the wisdom of man is from beneath and "is earthly, sensual, devilish." The wisdom "from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits" (Jas. 3:15, 17). Purity of heart is the first step; we must have an upright character. It will not do to oppose God in anything.

Peter thought his Master should never suffer and that he himself would never deny his Lord; but Jesus said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Peter innocently thought that he would stand by his Lord through thick and thin, but Jesus told him, "Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Jesus knew he would deny Him; He knew Peter was not yet an overcomer.

**W**E have to cast down the vain imaginations and bring *every* thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The way is very narrow; we cannot have one thought in opposition to God. Can we not afford to lay aside our own thoughts and have only God's thoughts, for such a long

sweet home as He has promised us? This morning a chilly wind blew, but in that home no chilly wind will ever blow but only soft balmy air, laden with such sweet perfume; no discomfort of any kind shall ever be known; it will last, not for one year, but for billions of years, for an eternity. If this is not enough to cause us to work for it, we are not worthy and can go without it.

Where are the multitudes going? They say your body need not be full of light. But let us read Isaiah 35:3-4: "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you." It says, "He will come and save you," but many will tell you you are saved already. They sing, "Come to Jesus, come to Jesus, He will save you just now." But the Prophet of God says, "He will come and save you." Could He save you if you were already saved?

**T**HERE is not a truly saved man or woman on earth today. As long as you have sorrow and pain, you are not saved. Not one shall experience God's salvation until our God, Emmanuel, comes with a recompense. And this salvation means something—no more sorrow, no more suffering, no

more trouble; it is a salvation worth having.

"A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein"—now called wayfaring men and fools by the world, as Paul said, "We are accounted fools for Christ's sake"—these, the redeemed of the Lord, shall walk there. It will be for only those who have no iniquity in their hearts, those that are pure of heart and clean of hands.

Peter, the one who had been somewhat impetuous, said after he was converted, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." This is the only way we can be saved. If Jesus were here today He would speak the same as He did when He was here. If Jesus came here and said, "There is not a saved man on earth," you would tremble then; and I think you would believe; but you ought to believe now, when the Word of God says it. By and by He will come, and do you know what the people will say? "The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." Do you think he told the truth? These are the words of the prophet Jeremiah (16:19). And Jesus said likewise:

*(Continued on page 25)*

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## Our God Worketh Hitherto

(A Paraphrase of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address)

**F**OURSCORE and sixteen years ago our spiritual father brought forth upon this continent a new faith, conceived in spirituality and dedicated to the proposition that all men who should be saved should be like Christ.

Now we are engaged in a great internal struggle, testing whether that faith or any faith so conceived and so dedicated, may endure.

We are met on a great battlefield of this war. We have gathered today to dedicate a portion of our time to remembering the work of those who have gone before us, the better to equip ourselves to fight victoriously our own daily battles against the evil in ourselves, that that faith may continue to stand. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense, we cannot further dedicate—we cannot further consecrate—we cannot further hallow this cause. The brave men and wom-

en who have struggled for the faith before us have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. But we are here to assure ourselves that we may yet be victorious over sin and so prove ourselves worthy of a place of honor among them in the world to come.

The world will little note nor long remember what we say here today, but it shall someday see the effects of what those before us did for this great cause. It is for us, the living, now to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who have fought have thus far so nobly advanced. It is for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that the memory of the victory of these honored dead may stimulate us to greater fervor in the cause to which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not be called to stand in triumph alone, that the faith for which they lived is *our* faith, and that this church, under God, shall have a new birth of spirituality that it may be ready for that new government of the people, by the people, and for the people, which shall never perish from the earth. ●●

# Are You Worth It?

EVERY normal person wants to be worth something—to himself, to his fellowmen and to the world. Even if his worth extends no further than a very small circle of acquaintances, he wants to feel he is living for something. What pierces human happiness perhaps more sharply than anything else is not “What did you get?” but “What did you *deserve*?” One may comfortingly explain to himself why he did not get what he deserved, but if he knows in himself that he did not deserve anything, he feels condemned.

People of God have long been concerned with their worth, perhaps more than people in general, because they have set their goal upon being worth something to God. But in the face of God’s extreme generosity and benevolence, His supreme goodness and omnipotence, their instinctive feelings of worth have been humbled. Jacob acknowledged in humble gratitude that he was “not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which [God had] showed unto [his] servant” (Gen. 32:10). John the forerunner of Christ felt so small in comparison to Christ’s greatness that he described himself as unworthy to do the smallest service: “The one who follows me [Christ]” is so far “greater than I am... that I am not worthy to carry his shoes” (Matt. 3:11, TLB).

But there is a basic, identifying worth that is the goal of every striving Christian—it is the worth of a character acceptable to God. This worth grows out of a desire for the reward God offers and keeps one reaching higher. It is a special worth in this present time, and an inestimable worth in the future. Here and now it is the desire to be worthy to be counted as one of His, to be worthy of knowing Christ and the grand plan of salvation, to be worthy of being called to His kingdom and glory, and to walk worthy of that high calling (Matt. 10:37-38; II Thess. 1:5; Eph. 4:1).

God has invested heavily in us. He has given us all things richly to enjoy, at the same time showing us the way to a richer, fuller, more lasting enjoyment. He has given us our lives, our nation, and our circumstances. By His grace we live this

very moment. And He will hold us responsible for the proper stewardship and care of all this. Will we prove worthy of His investment in us? Will we make ourselves into material that He can use eternally? He has shown great interest in us—are we worth it?

There is yet one more point of present worthiness to consider. The early Christians desired especially to be worthy to be counted among the society of the saints, and membership in that society often meant persecution and suffering. But such suffering was looked upon as a badge of honor by those stalwart men and women. Naturally they shrank from the suffering, but they endured faithfully feeling honored that they were called to suffer as Christians. Suffering was the distinguishing mark of one’s loyalty to the cause. Hence, Peter and the other apostles, after being beaten with rods, “departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41). Being willing to suffer persecution was a sign of genuine faith and fidelity; to be worthy of it was an honor.

Were persecution suddenly to become our lot, what would our attitude be? Probably our first concern would be to muster the courage that would be needed. But beyond that, would we feel honored to be “worthy to suffer” for Christ’s sake? And when we had to face it, would we rejoice that the officers of the law counted us *worth* persecuting?

We can thank God that active persecution is not the test of worthiness for us, but we must meet the same standard of all-out dedication those early Christians met. We too must be tried and proven worthy of our high calling. We too must walk “worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing” (Col. 1:9-10).

If we can prove worthy of our high calling now, we can look forward to ascribing “blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might” unto “our God for ever and ever” (Rev. 7:12), and being worthy of escaping “all these things that shall come to pass” (Luke 21:36) and standing unashamed before the Son of man.



Will we be worth it? Will we prove ourselves so valuable to God that He will prize us as one of His own special children? Will He someday be able to say of us, "they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy" (Rev. 3:4)? ●●

From Parent to Parent—

## Needed: More Patience

**A**RE you a *patient* parent?  
I think I am—until those days when every-  
thing goes wrong.

It happened the other day. I had my day all planned—some laundry, a few pears to can, a bit of shopping, a little housecleaning, and hopefully a little time I could call my very own, in which I could revel in the things of the Spirit. What plans!—but it didn't take long for the youngsters to change them. As if it weren't enough for the baby to get sick and refuse to nap, the older children chose the day to play in the mud, and straight into the kitchen they trailed at noontime forgetting to leave their dirty tracks outside. Then a friend came unexpectedly and asked me if I could watch her children while she did some errands. And our four-year-old insisted on "helping" me clean up the kitchen (I knew I could have done it *much* faster alone). And I forgot to take the meat out of the freezer, so dinner was late. And, and, and—

Nothing singular, nothing strange, nothing new. But with the children finally tucked into bed that night, I collapsed into a chair exhausted and upset. I had failed, and I knew it. I had spoken too sharply; I had felt irritated because my friend had seen the house when it wasn't its cleanest. I had become tense from the baby's incessant crying. And then, my work still undone, I had complained of my weariness to my husband and had been silenced by a haunting fear that tomorrow could be even worse. I had failed. What was the problem?

Patience. I needed more patience.  
I turned to the Bible, and found it rates patience so very highly: "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience . . ." Paul put it first among those qualities which proved them to be ministers of God. Again he wrote, "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. 5:3). And, "rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation" (Rom. 12:12).

October, 1976

I thought about the parable of the Sower. When Jesus explained it to His disciples, He said, "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). The seed falls on good ground, but doesn't all spring up instantly. The growing takes time; bearing fruit takes time—the seed brings forth fruit only "with patience."

Since that day when I lost such a splendid opportunity for growing more fruit of patience, I've been trying harder—and I've won a few real victories. Like the evening our oldest boy complained and complained about having to go to bed with no stories, and I remained firm—and patient. Or those wee morning hours when the baby woke up with teething troubles, and I managed to greet her with a smile.

It can be especially difficult to keep patient when little unexpected annoyances come along. But I find that bringing James 1:4 quickly to mind is an unfailing help: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James gives no allowance, leaves no place for any annoyance or irritation or upset circumstances—there is never a situation so difficult as to justify *impatience*.

I'm learning—slowly. So can you. We won't master it in a day, but we all *can* learn to be patient parents—all the time.

If we will. ●●

## 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?  
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# Faith Healing

## and the Sovereignty of God

I HAD to break away from this conference to attend a secular luncheon at a hotel three blocks from here. I was a little pressed for time, and although I know beyond any doubt that God could have transported me instantly from that hotel to this spot, it never occurred to me to ask him to perform that miracle, the reason being that God has provided other means for me to accomplish that transportation. For God to have supervened and to have transported me here with the speed of thought would have been a miracle. But transportation must be according to God's natural laws. In like manner, all healing today is accomplished by God's natural laws.

For the purpose of this discussion, the word "healing" will refer to the recovery from illness, the restoration to health following sickness, the healing of a wound or an incision, and the disappearance of a symptom such as a headache.

There are instances recorded in the Bible where God worked above his natural laws and performed miracles having to do with the healing of men's bodies. The chief reason why I have been asked to speak today is that these former instances of healing, plus contemporary claims, have created tremendous confusion in the minds of many people about the subject of faith healing.

If I have any credentials to speak in this area, they are these. First, I am a Bible-believing Christian. I have been steeped in the doctrines of the Re-

formed faith and am totally committed to the belief that God is sovereign in all things. Second, I have an understanding many of you do not share; that is, I have an understanding of the art and science of medicine, where I do have the ability to see in perspective the process of healing as it ordinarily takes place. Third, by virtue of training and experience I am an expert in one little corner of the field of medicine where, fortunately for purposes of this discussion, the question of faith healing commonly arises; namely, in the pitiable situation where a child is extremely ill and is facing what the world would call an untimely death.

My final credential and one not likely to be held by many physicians who speak on this subject is that I do believe in miracles—miracles such as are reported in the Bible. Therefore, critics on either side of the question cannot rightfully claim that I have any built-in prejudice on the subject.

### Healing and Miracles

All healing comes from God. There is no other way that healing can take place. Take the simple fact of the healing of a wound. I can put the two edges of the wound together, but it is the natural law of God that sends the fibroblasts out to bridge the gap between the edges of the wound after which scar tissue is deposited in this lattice work. If I approximate the wound edges without precision, the scar will be unsightly but the wound still heals. If I have a child with kidney failure and put him on a dialysis machine, he survives only because God's natural law provides for the shifting of minerals across membranes during the dialysis. He survives ultimately either because God heals his diseased kidney or because God has established the natural laws that make it possible to transplant another's good kidney into his body. The wound heals regardless of the patient's faith in his surgeon or in God. The dialysis machine works regardless of the patient's faith in the dialysis machine or in God. The kidney heals regardless of the patient's faith in God or in his surgeon. But I repeat, lest there be any misunderstanding, none of

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these things could take place were it not for the natural laws established by God on which this universe, including the healing of men's bodies, runs.

Let me say what I have just said in another way but add one fact. I believe in miracles. I understand that all healing comes from God. I would love to see a miracle of healing where God supervenes his natural law and heals by miracle. If I were to see such a miracle, I would be overjoyed. I would give God the praise. But now, in spite of believing that all healing comes from God and in spite of believing in miracles, I have never seen one. That does not in any way upset my belief in miracles because in a sense we are living in an age where God is silent in reference to signs and where we are expected to live by faith in him through the written Word which he has provided for our knowledge.

### Cessation of Miracles

After the Sermon on the Mount Jesus himself performed miracles to authenticate his ministry. Jesus then invested the disciples with these gifts to authenticate the new religion. It is my belief, however, that after awhile these gifts ceased as Christianity became established, just as a newly planted tree ceases to need constant watering after it takes root. If miracles were commonplace, they would cease to be miracles. Miracles were the credentials of the apostles or of those to whom they gave the gift of healing. Whether you take the stand that these gifts have been withdrawn or whether they are just not operational makes little difference, although there are theologians who believe that these gifts have not been taken away and others who believe strongly that they have been.

B. B. Warfield believed that the gift of healing was removed at the end of the apostolic age. Tertullian, one of the early church fathers, carefully studied the frequency and duration of early miracles such as healing, and he believed that the miracles of healing carried out by the apostles and their disciples lasted only approximately two hundred years after the death of Christ.

The gift of healing was coupled with other miraculous gifts which are not claimed by many today. It must be concluded that the gift of healing ceased or ceased to be operational when those other gifts ceased or ceased to be operational. For example, in Matthew 10:8 the admonition was to "heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." Today we do not see the dead being raised, the lepers being cleansed or the demons being cast out. In Mark 16:17-18 Jesus said, "And these signs shall follow them that believe;

In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." I wonder how many faith healers who claim to have the gift of healing today would be willing to drink the poison of my choice to authenticate their "gifts."

Faith healing has been argued ever since the church was founded. For example, Thomas Manton, writing as early as 1693, pointed out that the authentication of Christianity by miraculous, merciful healings was to show us that in the gospel God would chiefly manifest his power in showing mercy. In Manton's day, as now, the rite of anointing with oil as described in James was non-productive of miracles. Manton suggested that until men can see the restoration of the effect, that is, the cure, they should cease the rite of healing. Why keep up idle ceremonies?

### Definitions

Let me backtrack a minute and define a few terms, asking you to view everything I say in the light of these definitions. Faith healing is the healing or correction of an individual's sickness, infirmity or deformity immediately and supernaturally by divine intervention in what we would have to call a miracle. In today's context faith healing supposedly follows the action of a person with the gift of healing who usually calls upon God to perform the miracle there and then. Unfortunately, in many instances God is sometimes pushed into the background.

A miracle is an act of God produced in unusual circumstances in which he uses means unfamiliar to us but which are perfectly normal expressions of his own character. Miracles, therefore, may be departures from God's usual ways of acting, but we cannot say that they contradict God's nature. Someone has suggested that in the miracle of the loaves and fishes the miracle lay in the instantaneous compression of time of planting, cultivating, harvest, milling and baking.

A miracle has been defined this way: "God in ordinary providence making use of means yet is free to work without, above or against them at pleasure." For example, in the raising up of Lazarus, the chemical and physical forces of decay in his body were stopped and reversed. When Christ told the winds to be still, the physical causes producing the storm ceased to operate. When Christ walked upon the water, the law of gravity was counteracted by his divine will.

These are miracles, and in every miracle per-

formed by Jesus Christ what He wished to accomplish was accomplished instantaneously. The blind saw, the lame not only walked but jumped and leaped with joy; lepers were cleansed; the dead lived again.

When I say that I have not seen a miracle in healing, then, you must understand that I have not seen something done by this extraordinary power of God but rather that I can explain things that I see in healing completely on the basis of God's natural law which is always operational. This does not in any way detract from the power of God, nor does it detract from the ability of God. There are some, you know, who feel that they have to save God's reputation. He is a miracle worker and, therefore, if a faith healer calls upon God to perform a miracle, he frequently shades the truth in one direction or the other in order that those who might not have the same faith in God will be impressed that he is indeed omnipotent.

#### Prayer of Faith

One of the questions that those who believe in miraculous healing ask people like me is how we handle Christ's statement that "if we ask anything in his name" it will be granted us. Certainly asking for physical healing should come under the title of "anything."

I answer that if anybody knew how to pray it was Jesus. Yet in the Garden of Gethsemane before His crucifixion He asked His Father that the cup He was about to drink might pass from him, if it were possible. Then he said, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." It is fitting and proper that we should be able to go to our heavenly Father just as we would go to our earthly father and ask a petition. Jesus did so. But once He had indicated that He would rather avoid the path of suffering and death, He then committed His will to the will of His Father. All Scripture which would appear to promise that God will do whatever we ask Him to do obviously cannot be taken as an absolute promise and in an unconditional sense because, if this were the case, God can no longer be sovereign. The conditions are equally clear in Scripture. "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7, RSV), "If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14-15). When a faith healer commands God to perform a miracle and in the absence of prayer which includes "if it be thy will," it is the most rank form of arrogance if not blasphemy.

The faith healer Bosworth said, "Our faith makes God act." That followed to its logical con-

clusion means that God is in His heaven but Bosworth rules the world. Another faith healer, Glen Clark, says that when two agree together in giving any illness completely into the hands of the Father He always takes it away. But how many times in your own experience have you and others completely desired the healing of a loved one and committed the matter into God's hands only to see the Lord take that person in death? Agnes Sanford said that it is within our power to encircle a son on the battlefield with God's love and render him immune to danger. I think Wade Boggs interprets this sort of thing properly when he describes it as magic.

Do you recall that in Deuteronomy 6:6 Moses said to the children of Israel, "Ye shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as ye tested him in Massah," referring to the story of Exodus 17:7 when the children of Israel fretted about the lack of water. Will you be shocked if I tell you that some prayers of a faith healer might be interpreted by God as sin? The tempter suggested that Jesus jump off the pinnacle of the temple to test God's promise that he would not dash his foot against a stone. Jesus refused and said, "Thou shalt not tempt [test] the Lord thy God." That is the sense in which I mean that it is a sin when someone tries to compel God to remove his suffering rather than to say, "Thy will be done."

Some years ago a group of us undertook a study of the cults. We employed a theologian to investigate one of the faith healers, and in order to do this he traveled to a southwestern city prior to a healing campaign. Outside the huge tent into which people would eventually pour for the healing ceremonies there was a smaller tent where those who sought healing could come several days in advance of the proposed healing meetings. For several days some of the healer's associates circulated through this tent choosing those individuals who would best demonstrate the healing powers of their chief. They were people with such diseases as asthma, which has a tremendous emotional overlay, or of the type curable by suggestion.

Among them was one who was ideal for the healer's purposes. He was an elderly gentleman who lived out on the prairie in a cabin lit only by a kerosene lamp, and he had gotten to that age where the natural loss of his vision, probably from cataracts, made it impossible for him to read the small print of his Bible. He was a true Christian. He certainly had the faith necessary if faith does heal. The night of his healing the atmosphere was that of a sideshow. Before a large audience and in

*(Continued on page 20)*

# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Second Advent of Christ

**T**HE Second Advent is the cornerstone upon which rests the finalization of God's plan for the earth. It is the focal point of the Scriptures, and an oft-repeated prophecy, yet often passed lightly over or ignored by many so-called Christians. At the same time, the "new birth," so strongly emphasized, is mentioned but nine times in the New Testament. Baptism, accepted by the majority as necessary, is mentioned but 22 times; while the Second Advent is mentioned no less than 318 times! Surely a doctrine so prominent cannot be overemphasized.

All human history awaits a glorious culmination in the Second Advent of Christ. His return will be literal, personal and visible. "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven," to set in motion the final phase of God's plan.

World leaders admit that much needs to be done in the world today; but they seek to accomplish it through their own efforts, and the results are small. Who would not vote to outlaw war, poverty and hunger? Who would not like to see everyone have a good home? Who would not like to see disease, pain and sickness forever banished from the earth?

Men have worked toward these goals for generations; yet today these goals seem farther than ever from consummation. Science and technology have been able to send men to the moon, but they have not been able to prevent human beings from warring against one another.

Agronomists have been able to more than double the yield of rice, wheat and other feed grains, yet they cannot avert poverty or stop death from hunger in some lands. Medical research has developed potions to alleviate pain and to cure certain diseases, but they cannot prevent disease and pain altogether.

In a London cemetery a large granite pillar marks the grave of Karl Marx, known as the "father of Communism." Chiseled indelibly in rock are these words: "The philosophers have only inter-

preted the world. The point is to change it." Karl Marx sought to change the world by converting it to Communism, believing that the distribution of goods by the State would eliminate poverty. Now, a century later, the inheritors of his philosophy are still trying—unsuccessfully.

Hitler thought to change the world through the elimination of his enemies, with the expressed aim of bringing the whole world under his control. But his plan did not fit into God's plan and he was himself eliminated. Mussolini had an ambitious plan to change things, but it likewise ended in failure.

To look to man to right the ills of our country and the world is to look in the wrong place. Truly, we need a change, but that change will not be brought about by man alone. Men may succeed in patching up things to a degree, but the great change will come only with the Second Advent of Christ. Only Christ can put an end to all wars. Only Christ can divide the world's goods equitably. Only Christ can abolish poverty and hunger. Only Christ can banish disease, pain and sickness from the earth forever.

## V. CHRIST RETURNS—THE SIGNS

"What hypocrites you are! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; how is it you cannot interpret this fateful hour?" (Luke 12:56, NEB). Jesus spoke these words to unbelieving Pharisees and Sadducees of His time. Were He suddenly to appear today, might He not say the same thing to our indifferent world?

In our last study, we reviewed some of the signs of His coming. These signs are so numerous that we will devote further space to them in this study.

### A. Signs—Moral

Conscientious Americans, viewing the contemporary scene, are appalled by what they see. What started out as a slow-moving decline of morals in our country has developed into an avalanche. Only a decade ago co-educational dormitories at colleges and universities were unthinkable. Pornographic literature was not available on newsstands and in bookstores across the nation. Few people worried



about being out on the street at night. "Four-letter words" were not commonly found in the local newspaper and never in school textbooks.

Ten years of moral decline have made all these things commonplace. Who could deny that "evil men and seducers . . . wax worse and worse"? As Christians, it is not for us to stand by and wring our hands and lament, "What shall be the end of it?" But remembering the words of the Master and seeing these things come to pass, we look up with expectation, knowing that our redemption is drawing nearer. It is not for us to know how long the "last days" might be, but there can be no doubt that we are living in them.

**4. The pleasure craze.** The Great Apostle ended his predictions for the last days with the words: "They will be men who put pleasure in the place of God" (II Tim. 3:4, NEB). Truly, pleasure has become the god of the masses. Not until our times have those watching for the signs of Christ's coming been able to realize what the fulfillment of this prophecy meant. Many years ago the pastor of this church saw the beginning of the trend, but little did she realize to what extent people would go after pleasure 40 years later.

To "have fun" has become the express aim of the majority. An "eat, drink and be merry" philosophy pervades our society. With more money to spend and more leisure time on their hands, Americans are spending more than 10 percent of our gross national product on the pursuit of pleasure. Industries that cater to the desire for pleasure are among the fastest growing businesses in the nation—their business has more than quadrupled in the last five years.

Spending for recreation has reached astronomical figures. In 1974, Americans spent nearly two billion dollars just going to the movies. Billions more were spent by the tourists who flock to the resort areas of our land. During 1975, Americans spent almost six billion dollars on sports equipment alone, and this year that figure is expected to double!

Millions more were spent to construct giant sports stadiums for the major spectator sports.

The desire to "have fun" starts early in life, fostered by indulgent parents. Their free spending habits have made the toy industry mushroom in recent years. The child of only a decade ago was content with a bicycle powered by his own limbs, but today so many children ride motor-driven vehicles in the fields and byways of the countryside that the minibike has been declared a major health hazard by the American Medical Association, due to the many deaths and injuries it has caused.

The "pleasure craze" also ties in with the prophecy of Christ in Luke 21:26: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." The desire for pleasure, to have a good time, or to "get away from it all" is seen by some as evidence of fear. "When people are fearful about the future, they look for escape," says one, and they seek this escape in pleasure, forgetting that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." In so doing, they are fulfilling the prophecy of Paul to the letter, being "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

## B. Signs—Religious

After categorizing the moral signs of the last days, Paul turned to the religious side of the picture. Here he spoke as accurately as he did concerning morality. After saying that people would be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," he added, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (II Tim. 3:5). The New English Bible says, "They will be men who put pleasure in the place of God, men who preserve the outward form of religion, but are a standing denial of its reality." Phillips renders it, "Loving what gives them pleasure instead of loving God. They will maintain a facade of 'religion' but their life denies its truth," and the Jerusalem Bible translates it, "Preferring their own pleasure to God, they will keep up the outward appearance of religion but will have rejected the inner power of it."

No one today could more accurately frame words to describe the present situation than did Paul. It seems incredible that church membership could be at an all time high at the same time that morals are at an all time low and crimes of violence are steadily increasing. Yet that is the present-day situation. Only an inspired writer could have forecast so accurately.

**1. Church membership vs. church attendance.** As evidenced by the statistics, there are many who wish to be identified by the name "Christian," and so join a church. But their convictions are not strong enough to keep them coming to church as a recent survey shows that only about 40 percent of so-called church members attend church with any regularity. They have "a form of godliness," they "maintain a facade of 'religion' but their life denies its truth."

**2. Unbelief and skepticism.** Our nation has become a nation of skeptics and unbelievers. Political corruption has caused many to lose faith in our government and its leaders. Slighted work,

halfhearted effort and wasted time cause employers to lose faith in employees. The failure of the nominal church to offer that which fills the needs of its members has caused many to lose faith in their church. Unable to satisfy their spiritual needs within the church, many are worshiping outside the church—or not at all, as evidenced by the increasing number of avowed atheists.

**Such a condition was envisioned in the negative statement of the Master: “Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). The answer is a resounding NO!**

**3. Signs and wonders.** In Jesus’ Olivet discourse, He spanned the ages and unveiled the future to His disciples. Among other things, He said there would arise “false Christs and false prophets,” who would “shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they [would] deceive the very elect” (Matt. 24:24). Today we see these self-styled prophets on every hand professing to have powers that they do not possess. One of the most notorious of these deceivers is the Korean Mr. Moon who claims to be the Messiah, telling his followers that he is “the second coming of Christ.” **Mr. Moon and any others making a similar claim are fulfilling the prophecy of “false Christs and false prophets.”**

There are but few today so bold as to set themselves up as the Messiah, but there are many who profess powers which they do not possess—the Holy Spirit. The Bible predicted and history confirms that this power ceased at the end of the Apostolic Age. Nevertheless, through the years there have been those who claimed miraculous powers such as speaking in tongues, casting out demons, communication with the “spirits” of the dead, healing by faith and taking up serpents, all of which fall in the category of “signs and wonders.” **In recent times there has been a dramatic increase in all these professions, fulfilling the words of Paul that “evil men and imposters will keep on going from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived themselves” (II Tim. 3:13, TEV). All who claim such miraculous powers as to “show great signs and wonders” are but deceivers, and as Jesus said, if it were possible they would deceive even the very elect, God’s chosen few.**

**4. Scoffers.** The apostle Peter wrote that there would “come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (II Pet. 3:3-4).

Some scoff openly, deriding those who believe

in a literal, personal second coming of Christ. Others fall into the category of those who say in their heart, “My Lord delayeth his coming” (Luke 12:45), scorning the prophecies of His return and taking His words lightly, showing their unbelief by their actions if not by their words.

Many who profess to be Christians are fulfilling this prophecy today by expecting to Christianize the whole world through their own efforts without the coming of Christ, wistfully believing that good will automatically overcome evil and all men will one day be brothers, living in perfect peace. However, a quick look at the record should serve to convince any and all that human progress is not inevitable.

An increased interest in religion has **not** led to an improved society. Rather, the reverse is true. In 1974 church membership reached an all-time high—and so did crime. Scoffers notwithstanding, all things do **not** continue as they were from the beginning—neither do they grow better. They grow worse; and though men may scoff, Christ will come. Then, and not until then, will we have a perfect society.

### C. Signs—Political

We live in the midst of a disordered world. Never has there been a time in America’s 200-year history that there was so much political turmoil around the globe. It is a world supposedly at peace, but marred by terrorism, civil wars and internal strife. Population growth in the poorer countries of the world baffles the experts for a solution, posing the danger of famine. Economic growth is hindered by labor strife and inflation almost worldwide. According to a reliable news magazine, “fantastic turmoil and famine on a mass scale” are inescapable.

But the darkest hour of the night heralds the dawn, hence earth’s darkest hour heralds the dawning of a better day—the return of Christ. The problems of the world were foreseen by the prophets centuries ago, but only now are they meeting their fulfillment, further marking the present time as within the “last days.”

**1. Distress of nations.** In answer to the disciples’ three-fold question concerning the signs that portend His Second Advent, Jesus gave one of His greatest prophetic discourses, spanning the ages. He said, in part, “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:25).

The sun, moon and stars of the prophecy represent the nations of earth, and the sea is the sea

of nations. Never were more of these nations in distress for one reason or another than at the present. "Distress of nations, with perplexity" suggests a crisis situation among nations and we see just such a situation today as the world is shaken by one crisis after another. Much of the distress is generated by religious factions such as Catholics vs. Protestants in Northern Ireland and Moslems vs. Christians in Lebanon. Racial strife in Africa also poses a threat to peace.

World leaders often find themselves unable to

cope with the situations within the borders of their homeland. They are truly perplexed. **Perplexity** means "confusion, bewilderment," words aptly describing today's distress of nations, distress caused by inflation, unemployment, monetary problems, energy shortages, racial strife and a host of other problems.

2. **The sea and the waves roaring.** Jesus continued His prophecy with these words: "The sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:26).

The waves of the literal sea have always roared when buffeted by strong winds. Sea in the Scriptures is often used to denote nations (prophetically used in Revelation 21:1—"there was no more sea," or no more individual nations of earth).

The "sea and the waves roaring" is descriptive of today's political unrest and turmoil the world over. Unstable governments are frequently overthrown, and many men of the world are fearful as to the end result of the political turmoil throughout the world. **Jesus' words are truly being fulfilled in our time**, but those who understand God's plan need not fear as do men of the world. Rather, they should fear God, and Him only.

3. **Beating plowshares into swords.** Through the power of God, the prophet Joel foresaw the consummation of God's plan on the earth. He saw clearly what would be happening just before the coming of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom: "Prepare war, . . . Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong" (Joel 3:9-10). The language is symbolic; plowshares and pruninghooks are not the tools of industry today, neither are swords the implement of war. But in the name of "defense," many nations today are sacrificing what we would term necessities (automobiles, washing machines and bathtubs) that they might have warplanes, tanks, missiles and submarines—and the manpower to man them—for "defense." Surely such war preparations can be classified as beating plowshares into swords and the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

Likewise, we see the fulfillment of the words "Let the weak say, I am strong." Small nations in Africa, newly independent, defy neighboring countries, and with a confidence born of ignorance threaten attack at the slightest provocation. They say by actions, if not by words, "I am strong," yet they are only fledgling nations hardly able to govern themselves. They are fulfilling Joel's prophecy to the letter: "Let the weak say, I am strong."●

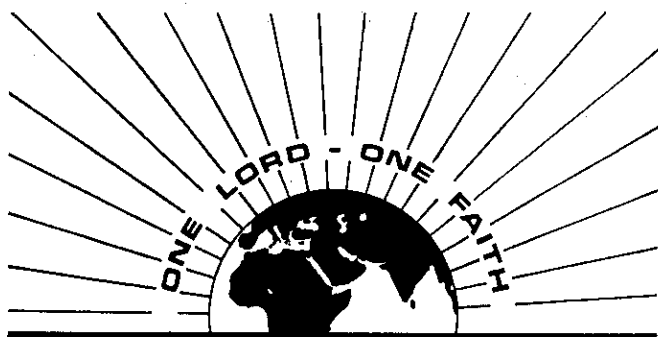
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## People God Used

### Part 3

*God has always worked through human instruments. He does not come down personally to do what He wants done. He finds men and women to do it.*

*After Moses had led the Israelites through forty years of wandering in the wilderness, God found another man to lead them on across the River Jordan and into Canaan. This man was Joshua, and the story of Israel settling down in Canaan has many lessons for us. These were people very much like ourselves, with the same weaknesses and the same struggles we face. How well—or how poorly did they do?*

THE Israelites were camped on the east side of the Jordan River, and Moses was no more. Moses had died on Mount Nebo, in sight of the Promised Land but still in the land of Moab. The honor and victory of entering the long-sought land was not to be his, because God means what He says and Moses had disobeyed (Numbers 20:8-24; Deut. 3: 26-28). The leadership of God's people now fell upon a new man, Joshua.

God never leaves His people without leadership. When He has people, He sees that they have the leadership they need to instruct and teach and guide them. This was true in the days of Israel, and it is still true today.

### Into Canaan

At last the time had come for Israel to enter the land of Promise, and God spoke to Joshua: "Prepare to cross the Jordan." Along with this command, however, came several other warnings for Israel, and also a personal assurance to Joshua that the Lord would be with him. "Be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant

commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. 1:7). God's providence and care would depend on Israel's faithfulness in abiding by His laws. God's requirement first, last and always was one word: Obedience.

How happy the Israelites must have been as they prepared to cross Jordan. They had heard about Canaan, the land of promise, as far back as they could remember. For the majority of these people were the new generation that had grown up in the wilderness. (Of the adults who left Egypt only Caleb and Joshua survived; all the others had died "because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord"—Josh. 5:6). They had never known anything but the wilderness. They had never eaten anything but manna. They had traveled and camped and traveled and camped and traveled and camped again and again and again. How they must have looked forward to the time when they would have permanent dwellings and fields of their own in the land of Canaan!

Their dreams pictured the ideal—everything heart could wish; peace, security, an abundance for everyone—all waiting for them in the new country. It was God's promise.

But—unfortunately—this was not the whole picture in reality.

How parallel with all real-life experiences. We envision just what we would like. But realities do not always match our dreams. There are facts to face and problems to solve. So it was with the Israelites who entered Canaan. God had done great things for them, but He had left some things for the people to do for themselves. Canaan would not be theirs just by dreaming about it. They would have to fight for it. God would be with them and help them, but there was something for them to do. This is always God's way of dealing with men.

The Israelites crossed Jordan according to the Lord's directions, and what a crossing it was! The priests who carried the ark of the covenant suspended between two poles led the procession. As soon as they stepped into the waters of the Jordan River, the waters divided and they and all the people of Israel walked across a dry riverbed. It was one final miracle to demonstrate the power of the God who was leading them.

Some people today try to explain their crossing of Jordan as a natural circumstance not dependent on divine power, as though the wind was just right and separated the water and dried the road for the Israelites. But such things do not occur at the precise moment and in the right degree just

by happenstance. The Bible says the waters parted and the people walked across on dry ground, and we should believe it as an act of God. The God of the Bible is a God who has power over the forces of nature whatever men may say; and when He chooses, He acts wondrously. Because His ways and means are beyond our understanding does not mean He always must let the blind forces of nature act by themselves.

## ***The Conquest***

Immediately upon entering Canaan, the Israelites were confronted with unfriendly people and fortified and walled cities. The Canaanites were suspicious. They did not recognize the host of new arrivals as the rightful possessors of the land. Who could tell what these new people might do!

The first stronghold facing the Israelites was a city named Jericho. They could make no progress in possessing the land whatever until this city was conquered. But how could they do it?

Then it was that as "Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand." Joshua challenged this "man," asking, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" The man with the drawn sword identified himself as the "captain of the host of the Lord," an angel, a messenger of God. And as such, he outlined to Joshua the strategy to be used in capturing Jericho (Josh. 5:13-15).

Joshua followed the instructions he had been given, and the walls of the city crumbled. "So the Lord was with Joshua; and his fame was noised throughout all the country" (Josh. 6:27). You should read the entire account of the miraculous experience; it is found in Joshua, chapter 6. It is a marvelous demonstration of what God is willing and able to do for those who are willing to cooperate with Him.

At this point in the story, faith and hope among the children of Israel were high. They were impressed with the power of their God and their heroic leader Joshua. They knew they were successful "because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel" (Josh. 10:42). And God fought for Israel because Joshua, Israel's leader, was on God's side.

Joshua led the Hebrew army from victory to victory until, within the short space of five years, the land of Canaan was ready to be divided among the various tribes. We read: "So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes" (Josh. 11:23). Joshua had proved faith-

ful to God, and God had been faithful to Joshua. "The Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hand. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Josh. 21:43-45).

Isn't this wonderful assurance of how God deals with men? When He promises, He performs. So with us. God has made promises to us, if we do on our part. Even now He is with us as we are with Him, though He is not fighting openly for us in battle. But after Christ comes, He will once again work openly. Then all the powers of evil and darkness will fall before His might, and all who see and live will be impressed.

When Joshua grew old he called a meeting of representatives from all the tribes. Many elders, chiefs and judges came and "presented themselves before the Lord."

Joshua was making opportunity for the people of Israel to renew their determination to serve God and to refresh themselves in the benefits such service would bring, also to warn them of the danger—and likelihood—of apostasy (that is, turning away from the true God).

Joshua reviewed their whole history from Abraham onwards, how the Lord had been with them and had brought them to this place. Then he said: "Now choose." "Choose you this day whom ye will serve"—whether the gods of the Canaanites or the true and living God.

The people answered enthusiastically: "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods; for the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt... and which did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way" (Josh. 24:16-17).

But as Joshua listened to their words, he thought of the day he had stood next to Moses on the mountaintop many years ago, when the people had said with the same enthusiasm, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do"—and he thought of all the dozens of times they had transgressed and forgotten since that time. He thought of Moses, how many times he had sorrowed because the people had so little faith in God. So now Joshua questioned their real intentions: "Do you know what you are saying? It is not easy to serve God!" He told them they could not serve the Lord in the way they had been doing it through the years



past, for "he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins" if you forsake the Lord and serve other gods. Joshua knew human nature, after all those years of dealing with it. He knew how easy it is to resolve in a moment of high endeavor and spiritual uplift, and then how easy to forget that resolution in testings of the days that follow. Joshua had seen it. If we are honest, we can see it in ourselves. Joshua knew Israel would wander away from the service of the true God in days to come. Whatever their high resolve at this moment, they would forget. So he had them build a monument, saying: "This stone is to remind you of your vow, so that you are not unfaithful to God" (see Josh. 24:26-27).

Joshua's prediction of Israel's unfaithfulness was not long coming true. Soon after the great assembly, Joshua died. And the effort he had so valiantly promoted—of conquering the land for Israel and obeying the commandment of the Lord—ceased. God had told them plainly that He did not want them settling down among the Canaanites who worshiped other gods, for as surely as they did they would be drawn away from Him by the pagan idol worship.

But conquering the land and driving out the inhabitants took effort—more effort than the people were willing to put forth. It was easier, they found, to compromise and accept tribute from some, and settle down right in the midst of others, than to follow the Lord's command completely.

This disobedience to the Lord was to prove their stumblingblock again and again through the years to come. The influence of evil is strong, even overpowering; hence Israel's need—and our need—to separate ourselves from it as much as possible. Time and again the influence of the pagan religions being practiced around them was too enticing for them to witness and still be satisfied with the plain, simple, unadorned worship of Jehovah. God was right. Joshua was right. Israel should not mix with other people. But Israel *did* mix. And Israel suffered as a result.

The mistake of tolerating the evil among them was entirely the fault of the Israelites themselves. God was willing to help Israel drive out the Canaanites; He helped so long as they took the initiative and helped themselves. But when their effort ceased, He allowed them to settle among the Canaanites and He withdrew His help. This is ever God's principle. This is how God makes heroes. He trains them, He disciplines them, He sends them out on their own—in His strength—to do whatever they will for Him. When they stop fight-

ing for Him, the good work ceases. And when they settle down to live with the evil and tolerate it, all hope is gone.

## ***The Judges***

During this time and the years immediately following, Israel was under the leadership of various judges who rose up to lead and govern the people of Israel, and to deliver them from their enemies. When all went well and they were prospering, who thought of God? They began to behave in just the same way as the people of that country, who made images and brought sacrifices to them. But as soon as they were in trouble they called out to God once more and God gave them another leader who administered the law and delivered them. These leaders were called Judges.

Some of these judges were men and women of strong godly character, even in such evil times. We will look at the record of their lives in our next lesson. ●●

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## ***Fruitful Fragments***



That man is not a Christian who fawns over strangers, feuds with his friends, and fails with his family.

*We grow in humility in direct proportion as our ego shrinks.*

God measures our love for Him by our works of righteousness.

*One who takes sin lightly never takes God seriously.*

There is nothing better than the high tide of trial to test our spiritual strength.

*No trial would seem too great if we could know God's reason for sending it.*

Christ sends none away empty but those who are full of themselves.

*Some people develop eye-strain by looking for trouble.*

## Faith Healing

(Continued from page 12)

front of television cameras, he was asked what his problem was. It was repeated for the benefit of the audience. "So you have gotten old, Pop, and you can't see. You can't read your Bible anymore, and your glasses don't seem to work," said the faith healer. With that he took off the man's glasses, threw them to the platform, stamped upon them and then handed him a large-print Bible which, under the bright lights necessary in those days for television cameras, the man could easily read. He praised God. The audience praised God. The healer praised God. But when the poor old gentleman returned to his kerosene-lit cabin without even the aid of his glasses, he could see nothing. What was the explanation? He was told that he did not have sufficient faith, for if he had faith, there was no doubt that the Lord would have healed him.

So this type of healing produces two classes of Christians: first-class Christians, who have enough faith and are healed, and second-class Christians, who are not healed because they do not have sufficient faith.

### A Man Was Healed

In Matthew 8 is the account of Jesus' cleansing the leper. We read: "And, behold, there came a leper, and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean." And the leper departed and slowly over the course of the next several weeks he had a remission of the signs and symptoms of his leprosy.

Is that what it says? Do some of you really know what it says?

Now those words are not in that passage. I put them there because that would make a modern-day faith-healing miracle conform to what usually happens. What the Word of God says is this: "I will. Be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matt. 8:3).

When someone goes to a faith-healer and over a course of months and years he has a remission of his illness or is completely cured of his illness, God is doing the healing; but He is not doing it by the kinds of miracles Jesus performed. And God is performing such a healing not because of man's faith but because God is working according to His natural law.

When you hear about a miraculous cure there are a number of things to be considered. The first is the possibility of wrong diagnosis. In spite of modern technology this is not an uncommon occurrence. The patient may not have had the disease claimed. The second possibility is that the illness "cured" was among that class of physical disorders that cure themselves. Third, many illnesses do not have a steady course. They go up and down in what you might picture in your mind as peaks and valleys. Physicians call the peaks exacerbations, and they call the valleys (when things are better) remissions. Even a disease such as multiple sclerosis is subject to remissions and exacerbations. Furthermore, some of the remissions can be seemingly endless plateaus so that it would be quite possible for someone after an encounter with any one of a number of phenomena to have a remission which he could think represented cause and effect. Both spontaneous cures and remissions and exacerbations take place according to the natural laws of God. God is still doing the healing, but he is not supervening his natural laws and intervening miraculously. If a drug is efficacious, remember that it too comes from God and it works according to God's natural laws. The mold from which penicillin is made is part of God's creation. Its antibiotic effect in killing bacteria is done again in accordance with God's natural laws.

It is also well to remember that a number of physical illnesses come from psychosomatic causes, from hysteria and auto-suggestion, for example. Many illnesses are caused by hysteria, and hysteria can be relieved by suggestion, hypnosis, or obviously by much of the stage setting present in some faith healing ceremonies.

When I talk to people who are convinced of the efficacy of faith healing, I make it very clear (as I have tried to do here) that I do believe in miracles but that I have never seen one that I cannot explain on the basis of God's natural law. I state that I know beyond any doubt that all healing comes from God. But if we are to pursue this matter of faith healing so that there are no questions, this is what I want to see. I want to see a man with one leg suddenly have two. I want to see a man with one eye suddenly have two. I want to see a man who is dead beyond any shadow of a doubt stand up and walk. Moreover, when these things happen I want to see them happen in such a way that there is no worth attributed to the healer, that the service is without an objectionable sideshow atmosphere, and in it and through it the

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

major result is praise to God rather than the physical improvement in the sick person. That is how the healings were carried out in New Testament times. God, not man, would get the glory.

### Current Practices

The rise of the professional healer is one of the most seamy sides of the whole faith-healing movement. As early as 1955 Oral Roberts was working on a \$3 million annual budget, and there is no doubt that by the time he had his own university he was in big business. For awhile he seemed content to strive for a championship basketball team, but on a recent trip to Oklahoma City I learned that his great desire now is to establish a medical school in Oral Roberts University. Could this mean that God has lost his power, or does it mean that Oral Roberts has lost his gift of healing? It is a ludicrous situation.

The Roman Catholic shrine at Lourdes in France is an example of a whole community living on the perpetuation of a belief in divine healing. The whole mirage built around Lourdes had its origin when a young girl, named Bernadette, was allegedly visited by a vision calling herself the Immaculate Conception. That in itself should turn any serious Christian from belief in the miraculous powers of that shrine.

Divine or faith healing is not part of the gospel, although it is often referred to in that way. Consider the acts of the apostles in the early days of the church. They were preaching the gospel to Jews and Gentiles alike. Even though in the course of their ministry they performed miracles of healing in order to authenticate their ministry in that the New Testament had not yet been written, nowhere did they ever preach the removal of physical illness as part of their message. Indeed there were fewer such miracles later in their individual ministries.

No place in the New Testament where we are treated to a systematic presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ is healing of physical ills ever referred to. It is logical to conclude that if Christ made atonement for physical healing in his death on the cross at Calvary, then these physical disorders and bodily ills would have ended. Also, sickness is not the consequence of sin. It is extremely clear in John 9:2-3 that physical ills do not always come because of sin in a direct one-to-one relationship. There Jesus' disciples asked him: "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should

be made manifest in him." If it were the perfect will of God that man be healed from all illness and afflictions, man would be immortal; and that, obviously, is not true.

To summarize what I have said thus far and to acknowledge the great contribution of B. B. Warfield to this subject, we can say the following:

First, there is no promise of such miraculous action for us on the part of God in Scripture.

Second, no facts exist that compel us to believe that such miraculous healing takes place today.

Third, such miraculous action on the part of God is unnecessary. God can heal the bodily hurt of his people without miracle.

Fourth, the employment of such a method of working is contrary to God's mode of working in other spheres of His activity.

Fifth, miraculous healing would be contrary to the very purpose of miracle, which would be defeated by it. If miracles were common everyday occurrences, normal and not extraordinary, they would cease to attract attention and lose the very reason for their existence.

Sixth, miraculous gifts in the New Testament were the credentials of the apostles and those to whom the apostles had conveyed them.

Seventh, faith-healing arguments presuppose or lead to many false doctrines, for example, that sickness and sin are always connected. This is not true, for sickness is often the proof of special favor from God. It always comes to His children from His fatherly hand and in His love works together with all things for good (Rom. 8:28).

Eighth, the faith-healing contention leads to dissatisfaction with God's means of natural healing. As Warfield put it, "We are not to refuse to cultivate the soil and then demand to be fed by miracle."

Ninth, the faith-healing practice leads to the production of professionals standing between the soul and God. There is grave danger in this both for the afflicted and (because it is a source of spiritual pride and arrogance) for the healer.

Probably many people harbor in their minds an episode of what they considered to be faith healing, which is a deterrent to an open-minded consideration of the entire problem of miraculous healing. These should remember that they do not have to protect God's reputation. They should remember that if the healing was not instantaneous, it was not miraculous.

All of us, including me, use words loosely. I am sure that I have said many times to parents when a child has gone down into the depths of illness and it has seemed, humanly speaking, that he

would not recover and then he did turn and come back to normal activity, "It certainly is a miracle the way things happened." That is loose talk on my part and does not have anything to do with miraculous healing. All that I acknowledge when I say something like that is that I do not understand God's natural laws of healing and that I am not a prophet. But what happens in those instances is by God's natural law, and he does not intervene supernaturally insofar as it is discernible to a scientific observer. Whether or not the patient recovers depends on which outcome is in the sovereign plan of God for that person.

#### False Powers

Christ warned that we should beware of false Christs and false prophets who would arise showing great signs and wonders. Jesus warned against false teachers. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? And in thy name done many wonderful works?" Surely healing must be in the category of wonderful works. But what does Jesus conclude? "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Faith healing may be false powers. Faith healing may be fraudulent in the hands of fraudulent faith healers. And natural healing *may* be misinterpreted by well meaning misguided Christians.

#### God's Favor

If Christians were spared illness, whether it be a cold or cancer, anyone in his right mind would jump on the Christian bandwagon just to avoid sickness. Therefore, the command to come to Christ through faith would be nullified. Faith is negated if one requires an outward sign such as healing. Certainly it is most pleasing to God to trust Him fully for what He will accomplish in our illness or the illness of loved ones, including death.

Christians are not exempt from sickness any more than they are exempt from other afflictions. We know that Jesus had a particular affection for Lazarus and his sisters, yet we read, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." It is true that God's children never question His love for them so much as they do when they are ill, but sicknesses are not tokens of God's displeasure.

This should be particularly clear in an examination of the lives of an Old Testament character,

Job, and a New Testament personality, Paul. It is obvious that it was not because God was displeased with Job that Job was visited with his afflictions. On the contrary, it was because he was an upright man that God permitted Satan to afflict him. It was to prove that in spite of all Job would not curse God. I would suspect that to our way of thinking Paul, who was entrusted with the presentation of the gospel to the Gentiles, could have been far more efficient in this task if he had not gone through life with his affliction. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that Paul requested healing of Christ, it pleased God not to do this.

There are other instances of sickness in the New Testament which were not removed by the prayer of faith. There is the example of Paul's leaving Trophimus sick at Miletum, his recommendation to Timothy when he was sick not to seek healing by the miraculous act of God but to use some medicinal means—the drinking of a little wine "for thy stomach's sake and thy frequent infirmities."

Faith healing must be considered in the light of the sovereignty of God. If a faith healer can command a tumor to disappear and if it does, God is not sovereign. Our attitude should be to have such faith in the love of God for his children that we are willing to commit ourselves in complete trust to God so that whether in sickness or in health, whether in life or in dying, we know that we are in God's hands.

It is when an individual is sick unto death, humanly speaking (with spread of cancer, for example), that one's faith and Christian witness are really on the line. In one's reaction to what God has planned there come the best opportunities not only to understand the grace of God in the midst of suffering but also the best opportunity to serve as a witness for Him as one accepts His desire under the circumstances.

This is the absolute crux of faith healing and the sovereignty of God. We sing a hymn to the tune of *Adeste Fidelis*:

*When through the deep waters I call thee to go,  
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;  
For I will be with thee thy troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

That is what God expects of us. He asks us to commit our way to Him, to trust Him and put our futures in His hands. His way may be completely opposite from what we wish, but whether it is sickness, deformity or approaching death, God will sanctify that distressful time to us if we have committed ourselves to Him. ●●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Kathy  
Kandor's  
Korner

## Reflections on Reading

O Kathy, *do* read it," Mrs. Jenkins had urged, handing me a small book. "It's really gripping. I couldn't lay it down until I had read it all, cover to cover!"

I had thanked her, glanced casually at the title—"The Day They Came"—and wondered what it might be about. Then I had laid it aside until I could find time to scan through it.

At last just such a time arrived. A free evening!—and a book.

"You've been extra busy this week," Neal said anxiously as he gathered the family together. "Do relax while I take the family to Grandma's."

I smiled at his concern. "That's just what I'll do, Neal. Please give her my love, and tell her I'll be seeing her Sunday."

"Better not wait up for us, Kathy; we may be a little late getting home."

As the sound of the car died away, I sank gratefully into an easy chair, adjusted the light, and fell into the book.

That is all I can remember. From that moment on I was living in another world.

The clock was striking eleven as I finished the last chapter. What a night it had been! I sighed. It was indeed a fascinating book.

But as I retired for the night, I could not escape a certain dissatisfaction with the way I had spent the evening. I certainly had gained a great deal of information on what civilian life on the dark continent can be like. There was much about the dreaded driver ants, their astonishing work, their methods of attack, their unusual achievements. Even mighty elephants have been subdued by these small creatures.

But the question kept nagging me. Was I justified in the way I had spent the evening? I had relaxed; but the problem was not so much that of

physical relaxation as of spiritual invigoration. While I rested my body, had I used my mind in the best possible way?

My mind went to the words of Jesus. When asked which was the greatest commandment, our Lord replied by quoting a verse from the Old Testament. But He did not quote it exactly like it was. He made a significant addition. The Old Testament passage was, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:4-5). Jesus added "with all thy mind." Not only must we love God with all our heart and soul and strength but also with all our *mind*!

The solemn words of Paul crowded in to prompt further self-searching. He admonished us to "be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Had I renewed my mind this evening?

One of the newer versions declares we as Christians ought not to allow the world to press us into its mold but to have disciplined minds which should accomplish striking alterations in our spiritual lives.

Without denying the legitimate place of recreation and relaxation, I was deeply aware that my mind's activity this evening (in the fascinating book) had not contributed to spiritual growth. It was not questionable literature; it was above the average; it was interesting and informative. But—

Suddenly it was clear where I had failed. The wrong was not in the contents of the book but in my choice. The book was good, but I could have done *better*. I had not made the *best* use of the precious hours granted me. I had filled my mind with second best. And time given me to work for eternal life is too valuable to be filled with anything less than the very best.

Had I used this evening storing my mind with God's promises, listening to His warnings, or reliving the lives of some of His saints, how much greater would have been my grasp upon the divine life! We are what we read. And we must give account to God for the thoughts we entertain.

As I searched deeper, I was jarred into realizing that even the better pursuits of this world become wrong when allowed to supplant the best. Anything short of making the "very most" of my time is second best.

As a Christian I cannot read for mere entertainment and be taking diligent heed to the wealth of warning, correction and edification in the Book of books. I must read to ponder my ways more and more, to freshen my meditations, and to keep my



mind crisp with holy enthusiasm. I must keep my mental energy charged with the divine purpose in my life. God offers heavenly riches—how can I afford to get so absorbed with the earthly?

"Dear Lord," I prayed as I knelt beside my bed, "when I have another choice to make, I want the dead-earnestness to ask myself, 'Is this the fastest, surest way to the Kingdom? Is this the best material I can store in my mind?'"

With God's help, I am determined to read only *the best!*

Yours for better reading,

*Kathy*

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## Our Readers Write...

### Studying

I scanned your booklets, and now I am going back to re-read them, this time studying the contents more closely. The one I am studying now is *The Atonement*. This material makes me more aware of my individual responsibility rather than claiming a substitute like the Messiah for my sins. I just can't understand it, but all these years I've been led to believe that Christ died for our sins. The booklet, through the Bible, has really opened my eyes to some new truth.

Your cassettes are a great help to me also. They make you feel that you are part of the congregation on Sunday morning. It is hard for me to put into writing just what they mean to me, but they seem to give me a different perspective in what God's Word is all about.

*Romeoville, Illinois*

J. K.

### Appreciative

Please find enclosed my subscription renewal for the *Megiddo Message*.

Also I would like to say that your publication is the most accurate, informative, upbuilding, disciplining, and interesting Christian magazine that I have ever read.

*Cicero, Illinois*

T. B.

I most thoroughly enjoyed the first issue of your *Message*. It is the most readable religious matter I have ever encountered. I have always been turned off to printed material of this nature. But yours is different.

*Richmond, Virginia*

V. T.

I read a copy of your magazine at the Centennial Library and it was just great. I was especially impressed by the article on Holiness. I would like to subscribe.

*Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*

W. G.

My daughter and I both read your magazine, and we are amazed by the volume of truth you print.

*Bethel, Pennsylvania*

O. S.

## Concerning Atonement

I want to share with you my final think-through on the sacrificial death of Christ on Calvary. I took a week's vacation in the mountains recently, where I had a lot of free time to spend in thinking through this whole problem.

In the quietude and peace of the mountains I came to see and understand the deep spiritual sense of this teaching, which unlearned people understand so primitively. Obviously, it is impossible for our heavenly Father, who created such a beautiful world, that He would require such a cruel sacrifice. To what purpose would it serve? After all, God is love. Would He require the death of His most beloved son? He did not permit Abraham to kill his son Isaac, and He made known why. Then could He of His own free will permit the sacrifice of a closer-to-Him relation, even His own Son? It was an abomination to Him when the Israelites offered their children to Moloch on the sacrificial altars.

God is justice and He establishes laws. If every law of the land possesses the law of grace in forgiving guilt, how much more can God offer grace in full without requiring sacrificial gratification! He wants the sinner to repent and turn from his evil way.

I came to the realization that the popular belief in the atonement and the sacrificial death of Christ are the remains of primitive teachings which the young Church in the second and third centuries could not throw off and so accepted from paganism. Reformation did a lot of good, but it could not clean up to the end the teachings from the false faiths, and the teaching of the death of Christ remained in an altered form.

I am very grateful to you for your help in understanding this teaching.

*A Friend in Poland*

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

## Truth Hurts--and Heals

I heard of an English bishop who was telling His congregation a thing or two. In the course of his rather savage remarks he said that "truth hurts."

Does it? Sometimes it does. Paul's first encounter with the living Christ overwhelmed him. He was blind for three days and took no food or drink. So it is in everyday life. Many a motorist has been "hurt" when told the truth. He is on the wrong road, and must go back fifty miles.

But there is a truth which heals; our Lord actually is the truth, and the "hurt" of His encounter with St. Paul was designed to heal; and heal it did, for this was and is His great purpose.

The proof of this has been made plain for us through His earthly life and ministry. But in our daily activities, truth is not always distinguishable. Many of us are guilty of bending it to match the occasion, and its meaning becomes clouded. We might question whether we should always tell the truth; but strictest honesty is a virtue we must develop.

May we ever be mindful to be honest in truth.

*A Friend in Canada*

## Death--Or Else!

The Christian life is one of overcoming and self-denial and self-discipline. These are hard lessons to learn and even harder lessons to live. The Christian life is not one for the faint-hearted or the wishy-washy types. It is stern and demanding and requires a rigorous purging of everything that is false. It is easy enough to talk about living the Christian life, but it is a horse of another color to buckle down and do it. There is no compromise or middle ground following Christ; you are either for Him or you're against Him. You either love Him and the Father that sent Him or you're on the broad path. There is no quibbling or skillful use of pretty words; you *are* or you *aren't* a Christian.

Each day the path becomes more straitened, and it means the death of the old man and his habits—or else! The "or else" is a rejection by Christ before the great and powerful and mighty angels upon His return. It is such a shame that the masses of humanity are so content to be on the broad path...!

*A Friend in Louisiana*

## The Way of Life

*(Continued from page 7)*

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and he will profess unto them, I never knew you," or I never acknowledged you.

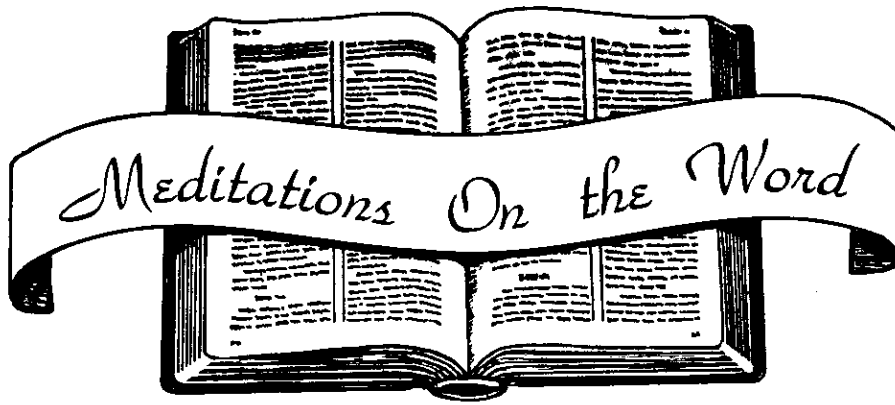
**T**HERE is a beautiful time coming. Do you want to be there? If you reject His words, He will reject you. That is why there are so few. "The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Would you not like to be one of those to participate in that wonderful time that is coming? Then you must become clean and speak just as Jesus does and live just as Jesus lived. You must give glory to God now, as we are told in Jeremiah 13:16; the time will come when it will be too late. "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." Then in verse 23 the Lord gives us two simple but striking illustrations: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Where is to be found a single provision for deathbed repentance? There is none. It is impossible for a man to do evil all his life and turn at the last moment, just as it is impossible that the Ethiopian can change the color of his skin, or the leopard his spots.

We are told in Zechariah 2:5, "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." Then in Isaiah 30:20-21, He gives us such a comforting thought. "And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." In that glorious coming Day, the right way will be plain to all, and we shall have these blessed teachers through all eternity.

May we all prove worthy. ●●

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I must be sure my glasses are clean before I look at your spots.



*"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love"*  
—(1 John 4:18).

IN many passages of Scripture fear is recommended as a desirable, even essential, thing. For example, Phil. 2:12, "... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." These texts, compared with our meditation verse and others of like import, lead us to the conclusion that there must be different kinds of fear. As the word "love" covers a wide range of meaning among men, so fear's meanings cover a wide gamut, from fright and panic, through prudence and foresight to awe and reverence, until "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Fear can be destructive to personality, but it is also one of the most indispensable elements in the human make-up. The human race could never have survived without fear, and even today, on the street of a modern city, a literally fearless man would probably be dead or dying by nightfall. Only fools are not afraid. Fear, then, is not to be eliminated, but to be controlled and used.

Indeed, fear can be a powerfully creative motive. In a profound sense schools spring from fear of ignorance, industry from fear of penury, medical science from fear of disease. So, too, personal righteousness is born of laudable fears—fear of eternal death, fear of the evils which bring this destruction, fear of setting an example which might be the downfall of others (Heb. 4:1).

"Happy is the man that feareth always," says the Wise Man (Prov. 28:14). This gives us an idea, a clue. Carnal fears and anxieties are most certainly incompatible with happiness, but the fear of the Lord, which is to hate evil (Prov. 8:13), brings true happiness in both present and future. Hatred of evil implies love of the good, a washing and becoming clean in the sight of God; and growth

in this divine fear indicates progress toward perfection of character and its reward, eternal life.

In any hazardous enterprise, it is not courage but foolhardiness to endanger one's own life and limb needlessly. Caution is always a good thing, no matter how much ground we may have for confidence. A bulletin on rat extermination states that the danger point is when we think we have them all, for then we relax our vigilance, and the wily old veterans who have escaped our traps and poisons are safe.

The danger to the Christian is no less present and no less real, or the Apostle would not have written, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). That St. Paul "took his own medicine" is evident from his words in 1 Cor. 9:26-27, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

The replacement of fear by love is never instantaneous, but progressive. One process in the grinding of pigments for the paint trade is first to grind the dry colors with water; then when the desired fineness has been attained, oil is gradually mixed or ground into the paste until the water is crowded out. It has served its purpose, but something better has replaced it. So the love of God, which is the keeping of His commandments (1 John 5:3), is incorporated into our lives little by little—all too slowly, it seems at times—according to our cooperation; and as love becomes perfect, fear lessens. Not that we shall ever, in our mortal state, be beyond the need of caution and watchful-

ness, but as our age in the truth becomes "clearer than the noonday" (Job 11:17), anxiety and fears, useful means to an end, are replaced by a peace that passes understanding, a peace which nothing can offend (Ps. 119:165), a confidence which is unclouded by self-deceit. The "hundredfold" gained in this life is well worth the effort expended; but perfect peace, perfect absence of fear, is impossible until divine love has been perfected in our lives. We need not expect it at or near the beginning of the race; it was only at the close of his matchless career that the great Apostle could say of himself, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (II Tim. 4:7-8).

"Fear hath torment." How well we know it! Too often we have learned the hard way that transgression of law brings pain that far outweighs and outlasts any small pleasure it might have afforded. Read the story of King David's sin, then read his confession in that great penitential Psalm (51), the cry of a sensitive soul in torment. Crime does not pay. After every fall from grace, be it ever so slight, there is good and ample reason to fear for our salvation, for our time is short. If not cast out by perfect love, this fear can and will be a source of grievous torment, in both present and future while life lasts. "The joy of the hypocrite [is] but for a moment" (Job 20:5). Those who flout the conventions of decent society are invariably miserable at heart, and those who have known the law of God and transgressed it cannot avoid the scourge of an enlightened conscience. We cannot escape from ourselves; we have to live with ourselves day and night, year in and year out. And, evade the thought as we will, at the end we shall have to face up to ourselves as we are, and to think of what we might have been.

It will be too late then for benevolent or useful fear, too late to fear lest we come short of the prize. That is settled. When we stand before our Judge with our work marred or unfinished, remorse for the past and foreboding for the future will be the fears which will make what is left of our lives unbearable. Behind us lie our wasted opportunities; ahead, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

Let us have that godly fear now which will keep us from doing evil, that we may escape that last dreadful fear and be able to stand unashamed before our Judge and King. ●●

October, 1976

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buying up the whole value of every hour.  
From this brief miracle of time, grant me to fashion a life  
so strong with integrity,  
so rich in usefulness,  
so keen in understanding,  
That it may stand up in the great and final Judgment  
to which Thou wilt bring us at the last.

Eternal Being,  
Whose power holds the galaxies of the sky,  
the ends of the earth,  
and the souls of all men,  
Use me in Thy mighty working.  
Stretch me for a far-reaching vocation.  
Toughen me and strengthen me for whatever difficulty  
or pain my service may entail.  
In this great and dangerous age, help me to live worthy  
of my generation,  
of my church,  
and of my God

Amen.

—Selected.

