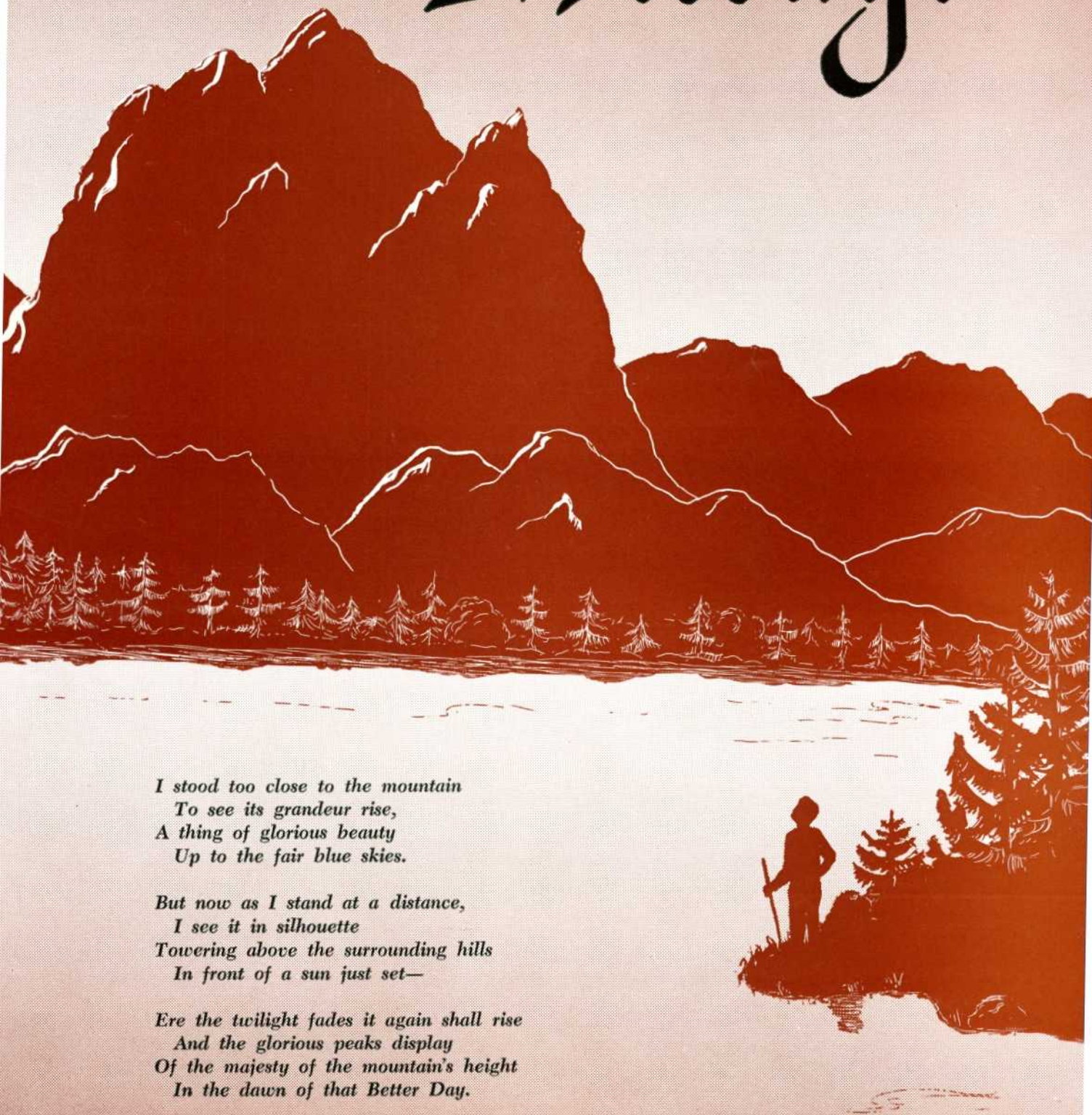


Megiddo Message



*I stood too close to the mountain
To see its grandeur rise,
A thing of glorious beauty
Up to the fair blue skies.*

*But now as I stand at a distance,
I see it in silhouette
Towering above the surrounding hills
In front of a sun just set—*

*Ere the twilight fades it again shall rise
And the glorious peaks display
Of the majesty of the mountain's height
In the dawn of that Better Day.*

In Memory of Our Founder

Choosing Our Memories

AS PART OF God's human creation, each of us is endowed with a marvelous faculty of memory. By some process not fully understood even by those who have studied it the most, the "gray matter" of our brain is able to record an impression, to file it away, and then to recall it at some future time.

The physical process by which we remember is beyond the scope of this article. What concerns us here is the fact that we can choose what we shall remember. By going over and over something, we can fix the memory of it in our minds. This is why the child reviews his spelling words; the actor recites his lines; the engineer studies his plans.

The process also works in reverse. What we do not review or rehearse or recite or write down, we are quite likely to forget. This is a fact in our favor, for who wants his mind to be the home of every flitting notion that passes before him?

In First Corinthians 13:5, the apostle Paul writes, "Love thinketh no evil." This is surely true in its obvious sense; love can never plot evil against another. But that is not all that the text is about. Paul is concerned about what we remember, and what we forget. The text would be more clearly translated, "Love keeps no record of wrongs." Love does not store up memory of wrongs received.

The Greek word Paul used is an accountant's word. It is a word used for entering an item on a ledger so that it will not be forgotten. When a man takes account of a wrong, whether fancied or real, and marks it down in the ledger, it is because he plans to recall it. He plans to use it later either to accuse his neighbor, or to get some satisfaction of justice, perhaps even revenge.

In other words, when someone does us a wrong, and we remember it, we show that we want someday to be able to pull it out and show ourselves right and the other person wrong. Paul pleads that true godly love keeps no such accounts. It is the India rubber that erases the record. Still more, it is the spirit that forbids the original entry.

True godly love forgives and forgets; it refuses to be resentful; it refuses to take any opportunity to "get even." This is the way we must do if we would follow Christ's pattern of love. Not only must we leave revenge to God, but we must let Him do the book-keeping, let Him keep account of the wrongs we suffer, even when we feel they are too great to forgive, too intentional, or too undeserved. If we try to keep our own record, it is a good indication that we have never realized how many times we ourselves have wronged others and how great is our own need of forgiveness.

By what we remember we show what means most to us, what we are most interested in, what we are living for. We show whether we are thinking first of ourselves and our own selfish interests, or whether the interests of God and His kingdom are uppermost in our minds.

The choice is clear. We can hold out for our rights, our reputation, our pride, and our self-centered, self-exalting ego, judging as we don't want others to judge us, imagining the worst and forgiving not the slightest slight; sometimes this can even take the form so subtle as rejoicing in others' failures or wishing them ill (God forbid!). Or we can be convinced that an unforgiving mind is a sin against ourselves, against others and against God.

But one fact remains forever: We will be judged as we judge others. What does this mean? It means that he who shows no mercy will receive none; he who does not forgive another cannot be forgiven.

This truth should lead us to cultivate a new habit of living forgiveness. Why not leave the ulcers, the indigestion, the high blood pressure of criticism, backbiting, and spiritual apathy often caused by our unforgiving spirit, and adopt the spirit of Christ?

Then we can know that "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

And each of us needs to be forgiven. ●●

MEGIDDO means

"a place of troops" (*Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*); "a place of God" (*Young's Analytical Concordance*). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4, 5).

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—*New English Bible*

NIV—*New International Version*

NAS—*New American Standard*

RSV—*Revised Standard Version*

TEV—*Today's English Version*

Phillips—*The New Testament in Modern English*

Berkeley—*The Modern Language New Testament*

Weymouth—*The New Testament in Modern Speech*

Moffatt—*The Bible, A New Translation*

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The Last Call in the Cool of the Day

In Memory of Our Founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols

GOD IS calling, calling. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men." Not that we literally expect to go outside on a still night and hear God's voice, but He calls through the words He has caused to be written, words that reveal His plan and purpose for this earth, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand" (Eph. 3:4). God calls through His written Word and through the human instruments whom He uses to proclaim that Word.

The thought of God calling delights us. To think that the great God of heaven's hosts looks down on our little planet and sees some among earth-borns whom He wishes to enlighten, so they may serve Him and become part of His family. What a privilege! What an honor to hear His call!

For nearly six thousand years now God has been calling. And still today He calls. But how much longer will this call continue? How long will He wait for us to respond? Could it be that even today we are hearing God's *last* call?

There is something sobering about a *last* call, something startling, something shocking as we think about a *final* issue. If we hear a call but think that many more will follow, we tend not to take it too seriously. But if, for some reason, we believe this may be God's *last* call, our heartbeat quickens; our nerves and muscles tense; our whole being is electrified, and we wonder: Is this true? Is this indeed the *last* opportunity I will have?

An End of Opportunity?

We know that every period of opportunity has its limit. Even so does the call of God. He will not always call. An end is approaching, an end which will be also the beginning of a new dispensation. But for many of us it may very well be an end of

opportunity. God is a God of unfathomable mercy and kindness. But at the same time, the far-reaches of His mercy are not for everyone. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him" (Ps. 103:17). He has hatred for all workers of iniquity, and those who postpone doing what they know they ought to do will not be tolerated forever. His longsuffering already has far surpassed any ever known among men, and He plans to eliminate all evildoers. Of the coming age it is written, "Thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 3:15). And we should never forget that this means we ourselves will be absent in that time if we still have evil in our hearts. "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God" (Eccl. 8:12-13). "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land" (Ps. 101:8). All who do evil "shall be cut off from the earth" (Prov. 2:22). "Behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1). God's longsuffering has its limit.

The Perfect Plan

Whenever we stop to view God's work, we must say with the Psalmist, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes (Ps. 118:23). Jesus drew a brief sketch of God's dealings with men in the parable of the Laborers and the Vineyard. It is recorded in Matthew 20. In this parable Jesus pictured a householder who goes out at various times during the day seeking men to work in His vineyard. To each one who will come and work He offers a penny. A few respond, and at the

NOTE: "*The Last Call in the Cool of the Day*" is available as a church-service on cassette. Price \$3.00

close of the day, each faithful worker receives the penny, just as agreed (vs. 1-16).

Bound up in this simple story is a beautiful sketch of God's plan. God is the great householder who owns the great vineyard; even the whole earth is His—"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 24:1). The entire duration of this phase of God's plan is called a "day," the "day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2), the six-thousand-year period during which God calls men. Throughout this "day" He is seeking workers for His vineyard. He wants workers—not drones but workers—men and women who are willing to toil and sacrifice in His service. And what will He give them? No one is asked to work for nothing; the pay is all agreed in advance. Each will receive the "penny," the reward for faithful service is the same to all. But the value of this "penny" reward is tremendous—it represents eternal life in His glorious Kingdom on this earth. What more could God offer!

But few sense the value of the offer and respond. Even among those who come are some who do more murmuring than working. How can it be, when His offer is so generous?

Men are quick to criticize the plan of God, but who are we to declare ourselves wiser than He? Is not the problem our faulty understanding of His workings? Should we not be grateful that God has a vineyard into which He invites men? And should we not count it a tremendous privilege to have heard His call, instead of complaining about the way He runs His business?

The prophet Isaiah tells us about the vineyard of the Lord. "My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it" (Isa. 5:1-8). It is the same spiritual garden of Eden pictured in the Genesis allegory (Gen. 2:5), into which God calls men to work. Every man's own life and circumstances is his plot in this vineyard of the Lord, a plot which is his own responsibility to make fruitful.

At Various Hours

God knows what He is doing, and when the time is right, when there are men and women who will answer, God calls. His first call went out very "early in the morning" of this day of salvation, when God first set before men life and death, and asked them to choose. In the parable, Jesus compares the spiritual day to the working day which began at 6 o'clock in the morning. So the first call "very early in the morning" would literally be a call between six and seven in the morning. This

represents the time of Adam, and those who were enlightened in his age.

Again, during the third hour of the day, about nine o'clock, the call went forth. We may apply this third hour to the time of Noah, whom God sent as a "preacher of righteousness." This was the time when "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth" and planned to send a flood to destroy the ungodly. Noah delivered the call, but very few responded—in fact, so far as we are told, none listened except his own family.

The hours went by, and about the sixth hour, or noon, another great call went forth. This may represent the time of Moses, when God started working with a nation He had chosen. He raised up Moses to be their deliverer and arranged a whole system of laws for their instruction. This was indeed a great call, and a number responded—including Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Aaron, Miriam, and many another unnamed saint whose name is in the book of life.

Three hours later—about three o'clock—another call was heard. We might compare this call to the time of Jesus and His apostles, when a major effort was made to find workers for the vineyard. Jesus came preaching and teaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God; and after He was taken to heaven He gave special power to His apostles so that the gospel might be preached to all parts of the then-known world. What a far-reaching call this was, the greatest during the day. This was also the "heat" of the day, the time when persecution was rife and he who chose to work in the vineyard chose also a life of possible hardship and physical suffering. God's enemies were strong, and the opposition was fierce.

So intense was the heat that fewer and fewer responded, until finally the last faithful voice was extinguished. All was silent for a time; true religion was extinct in the world, having no living witnesses to give it life.

But was God weary of calling? Did He say that the day was so far spent that it was not worthwhile to call for any more laborers?

One More Call

No, about five o'clock, at the eleventh hour, there was to be one more call. Perhaps in the cool of the day, beyond the time of active persecution, He could find a few. We read, "And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive."

Another call, away down in the eleventh hour of the day. So late it seems, but can we not praise God with all our being that this call has gone forth? If faithful workers, even we in this late hour may share in the great reward that is offered, the same which the saints of old worked to receive: the penny, the full reward of life and immortality in the glorious Age to come. What a privilege! What an honor!

Our thanks arise to God who has made it possible for us to hear this last, late call. Our thanks go also to the human instrument through whom He worked. How did we hear it? We know the Lord did not come down and speak to us personally. When He had a call to go forth, He always found a man to deliver it, whether Noah, or Moses, or Jesus or Paul. And even in our own day, when God needed a man, He found him, even in this eleventh hour. This man we believe to have been our founder, our father in the faith. How humbly grateful we should be!

The vineyard had been quiet for many years, no one tilling the soil or bringing forth any fruit un-

to eternal life. All slumbered and slept, spiritually speaking (Matt. 25:5).

All slept during the long absence of the Bridegroom until "at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh." And so God's call was heard once again, the last call in the cool of the day.

It has sometimes been suggested that this eleventh hour in Jesus' parable represents the final hour of a man's life, as if Jesus were teaching in His parable that a man could live a life of sin and at the last moment call on God for mercy and be delivered. But such a theory is never once taught in the Scriptures. The last hour, the eleventh hour, is the last period in this day of salvation before Christ returns. It is the short space of time when God in His continued grace and goodness gives one last opportunity to a few more willing workers. It is the last call before Christ returns. The parable shows plainly that this eleventh hour immediately precedes the Judgment. We read in Matt. 20:8, "So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers,

Let Us Pray . . .

Kind Father, as once again we approach Thy throne we come with thankful hearts, realizing that from Thee cometh every good and perfect gift, both in this life and in the world to come. We come acknowledging our own littleness and Thy greatness. We come to Thee with the assurance that like as a father pitieth his children, so Thou wilt pity, spare, and eternally save every one who will conform his life to Thy divine standard.

Help us then to be up and doing, not wasting our time in halfhearted service, or putting off till some more convenient season the important things that should be done at once. We come to Thee confessing our faults, realizing how many times we have sinned wilfully after knowing Thy law, that so often we have walked carelessly; that we have been stubborn and rebellious, and have chosen to go our own way, being proud, haughty, and unappreciative of Thy great goodness.

We thank Thee, dear Father, that the eyes of our understanding have been opened to behold the beauty and harmony of Thy blessed Word, Thy glorious plan which some day shall be consummated upon earth; the glory, power and dominion await-

ing those who complete the work; also the shame, disgrace and eternal darkness awaiting us if we fail to keep our covenant with Thee.

Father, help us to be aware of the swift passage of time, to be conscious of the value of time as it passes. Over the ages Thou hast been calling for laborers to come into Thy service and work for eternal pay. And Thou art still calling, but that call will not always continue. A time of reckoning will come. Some year will be the last year, some day will be the last day, some hour will be the last hour, some minute will be the last minute before the Husbandman will come to reckon with His servants and give them their hire.

And may we be aware that this call will not always continue. The call that goes forth this very day may be the last call for workers in this the closing hour of the day of salvation. May we realize the seriousness of this prospect, the seriousness of our sacred covenant with Thee, and fear lest, failing to qualify, that Day comes before we are ready for it.

Alert us that only faithful service will be duly rewarded; as we sow so shall we reap. Only the faithful worker shall receive the prize of endless life in the world to come. As we stand at the Judgment Bar with all our human shams removed, only righteousness will avail. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first." Far from being neglected or slighted, these last late workers shall be first.

We who find ourselves living in this eleventh hour, should we not thank God from the depths of our heart that the call has been extended to us, that we have this opportunity? Where would we be without it? We would have nothing more than the multitudes who have lived and died before us; we would have no prospect of anything more than we could glean from this life.

When the eleventh hour is gone, when this phase of the plan is complete, Christ will come and a new age will begin, a new day during which multitudes more will be called to work in the vineyard of the Lord, and under vastly superior conditions. For the Lord comes to cleanse the earth, and to "destroy the sinners thereof out of it." He comes to establish His laws and His judgments in the earth, until "wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times," until the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord "as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 33:6; Hab. 2:14).

All this is coming; it is in the plan of God for the day beyond the end of this day of salvation that is pictured in the parable of Jesus, this day that is nearly spent. All this is coming.

The End—When?

But *when*? When will this day end?

We who live today during the closing minutes of the eleventh hour look ahead eagerly. For upwards of a hundred years now our Church has been looking for the arrival of our King, Saviour and Judge. People of other religious groups are also looking. And still the eleventh hour is extended.

The lively expectation of Christ's return did not begin with the eleventh hour. It began shortly after three o'clock in this representative day. No sooner had Jesus disappeared into the azure blue than His apostles started talking about and looking forward to His return. That was the next great event in the day, so far as they were concerned. True, years were to intervene, but only in time were they to learn this. Jesus had told them plainly, but they could not comprehend. He had told them it would be a "long time," but He had said so much about coming to set up His Kingdom that they could think of it only in terms of immediacy. And it was well, for only with a feeling of urgency could they persuade themselves and others to prepare—a preparation that had to be done during their own lifetime, for they would have no other time.

And so, after they received "power from on October, 1979

high," they went everywhere preaching the message of His coming. Jesus would come again? Yes, Just as He went away? Yes! This same Jesus they had seen and known? Yes! They told it again and again, before rulers, governors, deputies, or common people; wherever they happened to be, they proclaimed it. And always with a tone of certainty, of immediacy, or urgency. Jesus would surely come; their whole task was to *prepare*.

We today can look back on all this, and see it in perspective. But to the apostles it was all current, alive, present. They maintained this hope as long as they lived, and when they fell asleep, other brethren kept alive the cherished expectation, spending their lives preparing to be ready when He should come. The message was proclaimed until the last believer perished and there was no one left to carry it on.

But was this the end of the day? No. There was still one cry to go forth. There was to be a long period of silence; for more than a millennium no one would be even vaguely aware of the plan of God for this earth or of the monumental work Christ would initiate at His return; hence, no one was getting ready for it.

But when the time was right, a man arose according to the plan of God, and the cry was sounded. "Behold the bridegroom cometh."

This was the message of our founder, nearly one hundred years ago. Now, a century later, it seems the eleventh hour must be nearly spent. Truly it is. But still Christ has not come.

Seeming Delay

Why so long? Why the seeming delay? What are we to conclude?

Surely the apostles, even after they comprehended that the time was not then, did not anticipate another near-two-thousand years before they would awake to see the fruition of their hopes. Nor did those earnest Christians who kept their faith and hope burning brightly during the days when the light of knowledge was penetrating less and less into the minds of men. The situation to them looked dark enough without the knowledge that thirteen centuries of midnight darkness lay before them. Thirteen centuries to them would have looked like an eternity.

And surely our founder at the turn of the century did not anticipate a span of more than seventy years before the end.

Why this great outstretching of the eleventh hour? Does Christ tarry? Why had the Lord seen fit to disappoint so many yearning, expectant

(Continued on page 23)

Busy Here and There

MOST OF US have no problem finding something to do. The question is, how productive and how far-reaching are the results of our labor? We each are allotted the same number of hours in a given day. How we use or misuse those hours depends entirely upon ourselves. One man may rise early and work late, all the while being busy here and there—and accomplish very little of real worth, spiritually speaking. Another man may do the same, but being a prudent man, may be up and doing spiritually. He has convinced himself that busyness in itself is not enough. By his conduct he says, "What I am doing is so important that I cannot be influenced nor led astray into forgetting my commitment. I am responsible."

The keeping of God's commandments is our most urgent business. Not only is it a sacred duty but a binding contract that cannot be broken with impunity nor stepped out of, should we change our minds. As potential members of a better country, we are under a moral obligation demanding the keenest of foresight and a good sound mind. Living in an age where overmuch attention is given to indulging physical wants and desires, the giving of second-place status to basic Christian loyalties is a very present danger that must be seriously guarded against.

At one time Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." So must we. We must work; but the Lord, who was imbued with power from on high, never said nor implied that we should take on the world, meet every need, and be all taken up with a load of cares and a multitude of common ordinary things that appeal to us and so fail in the one thing most needful.

What then is the solution to a busy program? First Kings 20:40 provides a lesson for us. The text reads in part: "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." King Ahab, charged with a task requiring special caution, failed to perform it according to the word of the Lord, and his leniency with Benhadad, a prisoner of war, brought the dire consequences of the Lord's displeasure against him. Busy in a multitude of earthly functions he forgot the one job God had specifically ordered him to do. The verdict was severe:

"Because thou hast let go of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life."

The king's negligence in executing a necessary duty, we admit regretfully, was shameful and disastrous for him. A commandment from the Lord demanding obedience without delay should have been carried out readily and speedily. But we must remember kings are no different than other men; they have the same minds and dispositions and desire to have their own way. Shirking one's duty and procrastinating are close allies of the human nature, kings not excepted.

We may choose to do or not to do, we may take our time or be up and about our duties, become a success or wind up a hopeless failure; the choice is ours. Our present determination, if persisted in, will become our eternal condition. We ourselves decide our future, what our final judgment shall be.

If we despise the Word of the Lord, we despise our very own heritage. In attending to the immediate, we let go the most important, the care of our souls. Our lives become cluttered, confused, and we try to think, reason or act without God.

There is no question that the king failed and failed miserably to his own hurt. Did he fail because he did not understand the word of the Lord? Was it an impossible task, more than he could do? Was it something beyond what the human mind and hand could accomplish? The answer is no. The Word of the Lord at the mouth of the Prophet was too clear to be misunderstood: "Destroy utterly."

Like most people, the king, and we ourselves, are inclined to take everything and everybody seriously, except God. We think because God is far off, what He says and means for us to do can be put off to be carried out some time or perhaps not at all. God will forget, so we think, and we shall be free.

We read again, "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." Here is conclusive evidence that he was not idle. Busy he was, everywhere and at everything. That is why he failed. He had a mind to work; but unfortunately, for all his fuss and running about, his life became misdi-

rected. With so many burdens to carry, where was the time to think and to reason things out? In his busyness life's most valuable lesson eluded him—to do what we have to do when it ought to be done, and once begun never turn back until it is done and done well.

However much the command of the Lord comes against our natural disposition, it cannot and must not be thrust aside; it must be carried out. We have promised, we are responsible.

Had the king remembered the Lord will not be mocked, that with the Almighty, obedience and duty rank first, he would have gone on his way home a happy man, rejoicing and praising God for his faithfulness in dispensing the Lord's command. Instead, the evil verdict justly deserved ringing in his ears with an unpleasant sound sent him on his way sullen and wretched to brood in moody discontent over his just deserts. Had he surrendered his will to God with every faculty of his yielded nature, the Lord could have been his song and his strength.

Let us consider our own doings. Are we doing our duty? Are we as alert as we ought to be? Surely there is not much time left to be about our Father's most urgent business. For many years the word of the Lord has been sounding in our ears with an insistent tone. Dreamer awake! Awake to righteousness and sin not. Our Lord warns that the life of an all-out disciple is not a dream but a continuous bestirring of ourselves to discipline; it is a discipline which calls for the use of all our powers. We imagine that God in some way is going to make us walk in the light by and by; but not so. It is we who must walk in the light ourselves. God is not unmindful of His children; He gives them the power to do it, but we have to use that power. We have to do the walking. We must be willing to put the whole truth into our daily practice, with all the carefulness we are capable of.

We may console ourselves with the thought that the Lord is patient, He will wait. But the time for work is getting shorter and shorter; we ourselves are getting older, and perhaps more set in our own self-importance and faulty judgment than we care to see and even dare to admit. The Lord could come tomorrow, to our joy or sorrow; we know not the day nor the hour. And there is yet our salvation to be worked out. Should He find us busy here and there, dabbling in a multitude of petty interests, anxious and feverish about everything but our duty to Him, what then? We could lose out.

We say and repeat frequently that we know wherein our duties lie. But knowing one's duty is one thing, and facing one's duty and doing it is

quite another. Without knowing, it cannot be done. But after learning and not doing—there is where the tragedy is. In our absorption with things here and there, some of them not especially the worst but nevertheless not the best, we put the emphasis on the perishables of this earth, we strain at trivialities and let the non-essentials become primary concerns.

While we cannot overlook the necessity of regular maintenance of our homes, and our own persons, we must not let our Christian work grind to a halt. The real purpose of our life is soon defeated if all we care about is to worry and care for the things of this life. If we abuse our God-given time through neglect, or unconcern, and forget to let the Word rule and guide us, we are squandering our time and consequently—eternity!

Knowledge we have and we cannot escape the consequences of disloyalty to God. Eternal life, if it is worth anything to us, is worth our all. There is no escaping it; we have to make a living, feed and clothe ourselves; but we have no excuse to have our hands filled to overflowing with the dominion and slavery of earthly things so that the seeking of the Kingdom is crowded out. The choice of seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness should be the most absorbing interest of our lives. Being busy here and there usually builds tension, causes stresses and reduces mental alertness. Why should we be thus engrossed when the crying need at such a time as this is to spread out our doings before the Lord and prayerfully sort through them? Let us do it at once, then do what needs to be done, dispose of what needs to be disposed of, and wait no longer. Surely this is the time for prompt action and firm decision.

We are not of this world but we are in it. To the average human being this life holds an irresistible attraction. And it is no less alluring and dangerous to the life-seeker. Skills, crafts, and undertakings can so easily become a source of pride and enjoyment to us today and use up more and more of our leisure time. Thus we have little time to spend laying up treasures in heaven.

Busyness in itself is not enough. The emphasis must be on the right kind of busyness. To be absolutely consecrated to God is to serve Him in definite practical ways. First things first. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

If once we get the habit of doing a thing physically, we do it again and again until we break the habit deliberately. The same is true in our spiritual lives; so let us not be busy here and there but up and doing. ●●

From
John the Elder



Second in a Series on the Second Epistle of John

The Proper Treatment of Error

A Study of II John 9-13

NOTHING is more critical to the experienced Elder than the separation that must exist between good and evil, between the Christian and the world; and that separation is a direct result of abiding or not abiding in the true doctrine of Christ. He says,

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (II John 9).

In these words, John seems to imply that there are some who have professed the teachings of Christ but now are in grave danger of accepting (or have already accepted) false teachings. We quote, from the New International Version: "Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son." In the King James Version, the text reads, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." The original Greek word for "whosoever transgresseth" means "Everyone who goes ahead." "To go ahead" is used here in the unfavorable sense of "to go too far," "to go farther than one should." The wordings of almost all versions other than King James give this meaning. We quote: "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God" (NAS); "Anyone who runs on ahead of God and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ . . . does not have God" (Amplified Bible); "Whoever assumes leadership, and does not remain in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God" (Berkeley); "Anyone who runs ahead too far and does not stand by the doctrine of Christ is without God" (New English Bible); "The man who is so 'advanced' that he is not content with

what Christ taught has in fact no God" (Phillips); "No one has God who goes too far and fails to stay by the teachings of Christ" (Williams); "If anybody does not keep within the teachings of Christ but goes beyond it, he cannot have God with him" (Jerusalem Bible).

The thought thus expressed harmonizes with the situation that John was concerned about. The false teachers who were on the move proposed to enter on new regions of truth, leaving the old behind. They believed that for intelligent people (like themselves) belonging to cultured Gentile civilization, and for the winning of the Gentile world, Christian doctrine must "advance" from its native Palestinian mold and into a shape recognizable, and acceptable to the pagan intelligentsia of the time. They made a vast number of converts to this idea, but their progress was beyond the limits of the teachings of Christ. They may have claimed to know God, but they severed themselves from Him.

John will have none of this false progress. While John scrupulously avoids any compromise with the original gospel of Jesus Christ, he does believe in Christian advancement. We must guard against false development, but at the same time we must guard equally against old formality and deadness, dryness and indifference, the lack of spiritual power. The Church is a living organism, and what lives must develop or die. We have a living God, a living Christ, and the living Word to lead us on to a life that is forever alive. John conceives the Christian life to be movement and growth. But we should not falsely suppose that the new is always better or that mere movement is always progress. We find John's kind of advancement bursting forth in his letters. He rejoiced in those who walked in the truth, those who kept the commandments, who practiced brotherly love, who kept themselves from the evil, those who fellowshipped with

the Father, and those who lived so they would not be ashamed at His coming.

He assures the believers that all who faithfully continue in the will of God, as taught by Jesus, will have the favor of both the Father and the Son.

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 10-11).

These words of John remind us that the gospel has its intolerance as well as tolerance. John here is not speaking of the casual visit of a stranger but of such who would seek to disseminate false doctrines or draw away others from the true faith. In these early days of Christianity, the teachers and missionaries of Christ were freely entertained by their Christian brethren on their journeys. To receive and entertain such a visitor was to endorse and aid him in his missionary efforts. The Apostle here urges his Christian friends not to aid one who would take advantage of the hospitality to spread false teachings. We are in no way to become the patrons of error or leave the impression that we are indifferent to what is believed. The friends of truth and piety we should receive cordially into our dwellings; strangers we are not to forget to entertain, for thereby we may entertain angels unawares (Heb. 13:2). But false propagandists we are not to receive in any way lest our treatment of him be construed as patronizing his errors. Anyone who knowingly aids another, who sows seeds of error or discord is partly responsible for the harvest of destruction and death that is sure to follow.

The apostle John is not talking here about saying "Good morning" in the market place; ordinary courtesy is not forbidden but commanded: "Be pitiful, be courteous" (I Pet. 3:8). But to extend the right hand of fellowship and to share the warm hospitality of our home with false teachers or heretics would be to condone their false ideas and to be partners to their evil deeds. Hospitality is a grace everywhere encouraged in the New Testament, but John would not encourage it beyond the limits of the law of truth.

In the King James Version, John's advice toward such is "neither bid them God speed." Other versions read, "Do not welcome" or "Do not give him a greeting." The meaning of the original word is "to tell to rejoice," "be glad." We should never say or do anything that might be understood as a wish for the success of another in a career of sin and error.

Each follower of Christ should seek to conserve, uphold and defend the true cause of God. May

Christian homes be its nurseries, in which the weeds of error are not allowed to grow. There are enough temptations within and without, enough hazards, enough pitfalls, without the addition of new perils in allowing seed-plots of evil and error in the home. It is for each of us to put on and keep on a holy guard against all deceivers.

God will be no patron of falsehood, seduction or sin. And in this respect His people should imitate Him. A true faith is the root of Christian fruitfulness and beauty. True faith is essential to spiritual life, holy love and hearty obedience. False teachings lead to evil deeds.

There are many ways of sharing the guilt of other peoples' evil deeds. It may be done by culpable silence, by indolence, by private contribution, by public countenance, or by inward approbation. Let us watch that we be not partakers of other men's sins.

John's Closing Remarks

"Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

"The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen" (II John 12-13).

John has written only the things that are of immediate and urgent importance. There is so much more he would like to say, but he does not choose to do so by letter. Some matters are better dealt with face to face. As he thinks of their circumstances and needs, he hopes to come to them soon and have a long talk with them—and how they will all enjoy it!

We are glad that John was able to communicate with paper and ink. God wisely saw to it, and kept this little letter for us, now almost 2000 years old. His message is brief, but complete with encouraging words and timely advice, even for our day. We note that the Elder knew when to end a letter, what things to reserve for personal interview, and also that he was not too old to travel.

We can understand John's happy anticipation of meeting with this ecclesia, which he endearingly addresses as "the elect lady." Speech is far quicker and easier than pen. The swiftest pen travels far too slowly for the utterance of a full heart. And one cannot convey in writing the tone of the voice or the expression of the face. The effect of words depends not only upon what is said but also *how* it is said.

According to John, meeting face to face with these believers will be fulness of joy both for him and for them. How delightful is the converse and communion of saints!

We have learned from John's letters that certain things are essential for joyous Christian relations. Mutual interest in achieving eternal life affords delightful converse and communion. Mutual fellowship with God and brotherly love are essential. There must be confidence and trust in one another, otherwise there would be no fulness of joy in meeting and talking face to face.

Where these mutual and heavenly interests abound, how delightful is Christian fellowship! It is one of the purest and fullest joys that Christians share. And it will be a source of rich delight in heavenly places when this earth is forever glorified with a blessed and holy society!

Though John had many things to communicate which he deferred until his personal visit, he did not omit the sending of greetings from the children of the elect lady's sister-congregation. This no doubt was the Church from which John was writing. All Christians are members of one family in the faith. These brethren knew of John's writing, no doubt, and why he was writing. They lovingly sent their greetings. It was a warm and affectionate closing. ●●

In the Right Spirit

Sometimes I think back over the past years of my life and the hardships and trials I have encountered, and I wonder why all these things have to be. But I am trying to accept whatever comes knowing the Lord knows far better than I what is best for me, and I pray that with His help my trials and hardships can be used by me to help Him cut, polish, and mold me into a good and acceptable vessel for His service. I have a problem with worldly things crowding out the spiritual too often; it takes much concentration and prayer to keep them in their proper place and not let them take too much of my time or thoughts. I constantly pray for strength and guidance to be able to learn to be *in* the world but not *of* it.

If only we can all learn to live now, so that we can be citizens of God's coming Kingdom, then all these things of here and now will fade away and we will surely consider every trial but a "light affliction," if only we have attained unto that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

J. B., Knoxville, Maryland

Can You Explain?

Can you explain the mystery
Of how the little eye can see,
How it distinguishes the light
And colors from the dark of night?

Or can you analyze the ear
And tell what causes you to "hear,"
How it can recognize a voice
And cause its owner to rejoice?

Or perhaps you can tell how man
Articulates, each one is different than
His brother—no two sound the same,
But you, perhaps can place the blame.

Or failing here, it may be you
Can tell why violets are blue,
And roses red, some others white,
And how they know when it is night.

But if, like me, you do not know
These answers, you perchance can show
How acorns grow to giant trees,
Or scents are wafted on a breeze;

Or how the air can carry sounds
From here to earth's remotest bounds
Without a change from here to there;
If you know how, this feat declare.

But if, like me, you are at sea
Concerning all these things that be,
Why think it strange that God has said
That He will surely raise the dead?

Because you cannot understand
The workings of a mighty Hand,
Say not, "It cannot be, because
I do not understand such laws."

But let the things you daily see
Yet can't explain be proof that we
If worthy shall, as God has said,
Be one day ransomed from the dead.

What is humility?

The fruit trees were chided once by the shade trees: "Why don't you make a noise in your branches like we do?"

The fruit trees replied, "Why do we have to make a noise? Our fruit speaks loudly enough of us."

The Victorious Life

ALEXANDER the Great is said to have conquered the world, and then sighed for other worlds to conquer, but many people today have to admit that the world and its troubles have conquered them. Jesus said, "Be of good cheer." Yet He knew that within a few hours He would be facing death in its most agonizing form. He said, "I have overcome the world," but how could He truthfully make that claim? Did not Calvary mean that His enemies had triumphed and that He was defeated?

No! Jesus showed that pain and trouble, and even death itself had no power to conquer Him. And although His enemies jeered at Him and mocked Him as He hung and suffered on the cross, He had the victory when He prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And when at the end He cried, "It is finished," He did not mean that *He* was finished, but that the work He came to do was complete. He had fulfilled the task; He had done the job; He had snatched victory from the very jaws of defeat. This He proved when He rose victorious over the tomb.

There are many today who believe that circumstances determine the success or otherwise of our life. But that is a mistake; man is not the creature of circumstance; he is not dependent on his environment. He may rise superior to it; instead of being overcome by trouble and the trials of life he may rise above them and, with the help of God, dominate them.

Remember, Jesus did not say, "I have solved the problems of the world," but "I have overcome them." He promises to you and me not the removal of difficulties but the power to surmount them.

That is how Paul could truthfully say, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." The power that Jesus possessed which enabled Him to triumph over circumstances He will give to you as He did to Paul. When Paul wrote those words he was chained to the wall of a damp, dark prison of Rome, but his letter is full of joy and triumph.

Life has many problems which we cannot solve, but He is willing and able to help us to overcome even as He overcame.

The great question we must settle is, What is

our aim and purpose in life? If you are looking for this world's wealth, if your supreme object is popularity, if your great purpose is to live a life of gaiety and pleasure, then this world can crush you. If your purpose in life is to develop your character, to improve your personality, to be a better man, then the world has no power to crush you. You may defy the world, the flesh, and all forms of evil, in the strength that Jesus gives. Surrender your life to Jesus, give Him complete control of all you have and are. Let Him direct your future, and you will find it is possible to resist the temptations and to bear the burdens of life without complaining; in short, to live a victorious life.

It takes all kinds of weather to make a real sailor, and it takes all sorts of circumstances, unpleasant as well as pleasant, to make a fine and noble character.

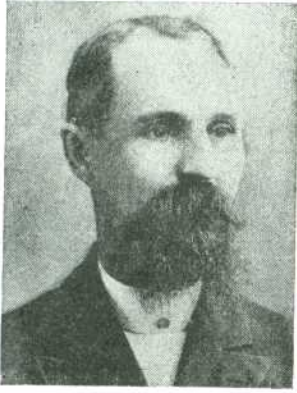
Before his trial, Job was a fine man; but after he had lost everything and yet maintained his trust in God, he became a much finer man.

One of the greatest needs of the present day is to put discipline back into life. Have you noticed the similarity between the words disciple and discipline? If you are to be a real disciple of Jesus you must learn by the discipline of life. When life is hard and things are difficult, don't pity yourself, and don't blame the Creator. Remember, He is your heavenly Father and seeks your highest good and noblest development. It is not how much trouble you have that determines a successful life, but how you take it.

*A trouble's an ounce, or a trouble's a ton,
Or a trouble is what you make it.
And it isn't the fact that you're hurt that counts,
But only, How did you take it?*

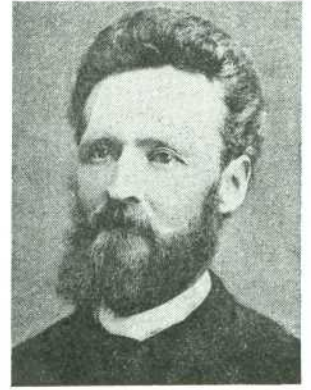
Religion is not a means of escape; rather, it is an assurance for a life beyond the grave. God sent His Son into the world to show us how possible it is to triumph over circumstances, to conquer our environment. Be sure of this; He loves us, and seeks our highest good.

May our aim and purpose in life be to make the very best of circumstances, to learn something for our future good from all our experiences, to live a victorious life. ●●



What Is Truth?

The Great Infidel Discussion



Reverend L. T. Nichols vs. Professor W. F. Jamieson

Part One

IN THE YEAR 1890, our founder Rev. L. T. Nichols engaged in a series of debates with the great infidel debater Professor W. F. Jamieson. The debates extended through eight consecutive evenings between September 25 and October 2 and centered around the two following theses:

FIRST THESIS:

Resolved, That the Bible is wholly of human origin, and abounds in contradictory, immoral, absurd and inconsistent teachings.

W. F. Jamieson, Affirmed.

L. T. Nichols, Denied.

Six nights were spent discussing the First Thesis.

SECOND THESIS:

Resolved, That the teachings of the New Testament are all moral and elevating.

L. T. Nichols, Affirmed.

W. F. Jamieson, Denied.

The debates were a result of Mr. Nichols' challenge to the leading infidel, Colonel Ingersoll, who declined but recommended Mr. Jamieson as one "fully able and qualified to do justice" to his side of the question.

To record the full text of the debates, two of the best court stenographers in the state of Minnesota were employed. The debates were held at Kasson, Minnesota.

The following articles are extracts from both speakers in the debates, which reflect the opposition our founder encountered and his sincere desire to discover fully the true teachings of the Word of God.

Mr. Jamieson's First Address

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen Moderators, Ladies and Gentlemen, and My Esteemed Opponent:

The grandest pursuit which a human being can have in life is truth. No man ever yet hurt the truth. It is true that we may hinder the acceptance of truth, but I believe with Paul on that point that "we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." I never met Mr. Nichols until today, and if I am any judge of human nature, and I think I am, this debate will

be the closest and the sharpest that I have ever had, and I have had more than one hundred debates. I believe in debate thoroughly. I hold that any man who is afraid to risk his conviction in debate exhibits moral cowardice. Any Christian, or Christian minister, that would advise his people, as I understood one of your clergymen here in Kasson has done today, in this latter part of the Nineteenth Century to keep away from this debate, that it would not result in good, that it is not profitable, and so on, it may be that that gentleman has a religion which might be hurt by debate. Some people with their religion remind me

of the Irishman who drank some pretty strong liquid, and bending half over, exclaimed:

"My God! How much agony I do enjoy!"

Now any man that has a religion of that sort, I have only this to say: That religion deserves to be hurt. You never can injure a single eternal principle in this universe by all the discussion of which human beings are capable. The very attitude which some take in regard to their religion does no credit to them. That Christian who has such little confidence in his or her faith that he or she dare not trust their faith exhibits at once a spirit that ought not to belong to the Nineteenth Century.

I hope that throughout this debate there will be not one unkind word between my friend and myself, or between you and each other. I hold that debate is not quarreling; it is not a contention for mastery one over the other, but we ought to enter it with a noble spirit, that we will help each other as brothers and sisters to find the priceless jewel of truth. I know there are elegant men and women in all church denominations. The trouble with too many of them is that they have scarcely any confidence in their religion today. The inroads of science, free thought, free speech have made many of them tremble for the safety of their creed and their theology, and so in this view of the matter I am, and I say it from the bottom of my heart, glad to meet a gentleman as I have today who shares with me the conviction that if he is worsted in any conflict, so much the better for the truth. If I am worsted, so much the better for the truth. It is good, anyway; and debating is one of the best means to get the truth. Do away with it, and you do away with free speech, free press, and mental liberty, and what would our country be without these? I tell you frankly that those clergymen who are expressing their fear of injury to their system of religion are doing it more damage than all the infidels in the nation. They exhibit that feeling of distrust in principle, in their own teaching; that they are reflecting on their own system no glory whatever.

Now I have this to say: If my friend has the truth, I am bound to get it before this debate ends. If I have the truth, and you may think I have, why, then, I say so much better for him as well as myself. What might be more unfortunate for us both is that, after listening to us patiently for eight nights, you may conclude that neither of us has any truth. That would be bad for everybody.

And so I appeal to you, What is more fair than to hear both sides? He who knows only one side does not half know that, and if all the clergy in this nation would change fronts and would meet the hosts of free thought that attend this general meeting, they, at least, would create a feeling of confidence among the masses; if not in their theology at least in their

moral courage to defend their opinions.

One minister has said about this coming debate that Jesus Christ and his apostles never went about the country debating. Well, that shows that that man ought to be here; he ought to get the benefit of this debate, and of every other. For I tell you, before we are through with these questions, there will be more light upon the Bible than has been shed in Kasson by all the pulpits in the last twenty years. And that is what you need. You need light, and we will see many of the people of Kasson, I think, poring over that Bible, studying it, studying its history, searching for the truth, investigating; for the man who imagines that he has the truth and that every other man who differs from him has error, has not even commenced to see.

The trouble with some people is, they seem to be afraid of the truth. I am rejoiced in declaring here tonight that all Christians are not of this character. Why, I do not know really the denomination to which my friend belongs. I do not know whether he has a denomination or not. I do not know whether he has a brand on the plow that he plows with or not; and what is more, I do not care. It is of the utmost importance to me to know that my opponent who meets me as a gentleman, as a man, contending for his convictions of truth, that he, with myself, wants the truth, the whole truth, if we can get it, and nothing but the truth, if possible. So I am with him there. We are together thus far, and as a result of our good-natured controversy—for, mark you, controversy—debating—is not quarreling. We must get this out of the public mind, that debate and contest between two men is for the mastery of one over the other. We must get rid of the idea that this is mere pugilism. We must elevate debate, and so I will repeat now what I had written to my friend before I ever saw him, and that is: "Whenever and wherever" people anywhere want a debate, a candid comparison of ideas, I will meet my friend.

And now that I have cleared the deck for action, let me begin on the proposition before us.

First: I want to show you what leading Christian believers in the divinity of the Bible have claimed for it. Our question as it has been read in your hearing by our worthy chairman, is that the Bible is wholly of human origin. That will be my theme for two nights, then on the third night I will take up for consideration: "It abounds in contradictory teachings," on the next night, "absurd teachings or immoral teachings," and on the last night "inconsistent teachings." Here is a great deal of ground. The Christian does not believe this; I do. Here is a square issue, and we will be compelled to deal with it in the first clause of the resolution: "The Bible is wholly of

human origin." Not that it is some of human origin and other parts of Divine Origin, but that there is, according to this broad proposition, nothing in the Bible that is Divine. Now that makes it pointed and sharp. That leaves nothing out; not a ray that can be credited to the Divine, if I maintain my thesis.

Bishop Horsley said: "Every sentence in the Bible is from God, and every man is interested in the meaning of it."

Horne, in his introduction to the Bible, page 142, Volume I, says, "Nothing false or immoral can be taught by a God of truth and holiness." I agree with that, that if there is anywhere in this universe a God of truth and holiness, he cannot teach anything that is false or immoral.

Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon, a great English preacher, in *The Christian at Work*, 1872, said: "We are equally certain that the book which is called the Bible is inspired; not inspired in a sense in which Shakespeare and Milton and Dryden may be inspired, but in an individual higher sense, so that granted that we have the exact text in every passage, we regard the words themselves to be infallible." "We believe that everything stated in this book which came to us from God is to be accepted by us as His sure testimony, and nothing else than that." And I believe that is my friend's position. It will be for him to develop his own views in the matter.

Mr. Spurgeon said further: "The book is a Divine production; it is perfect and is the last court of appeal, the judge which ends the strife." "I would as soon dream of blaspheming my Maker as of questioning the infallibility of His Word." I give these references not merely as authority but as showing the trend of thought among the Christians who accept the Bible as the infallible revelation from God to man, which the free thinker, as such, does not accept.

It has been said by *The Chicago Interior*: "As long as that picture of a God, holy and mighty, yet gentle, patient and loving; a God as deeply interested in every trusting human heart as in the harmony of the spheres, stands on the pages of the Old Testament, we know that it was never painted by a human hand." There we make an issue. I don't believe it, and I am not afraid or ashamed but proud to say I do not believe it. "The picture," he says, "came from God, and therefore, the Bible is inspired." There will be our battlefield on just such propositions as this. I will call your attention to the matter of God this evening.

Now if there is a personal God who governs and controls all things, he or she must be something. Why should a God of the Bible or of nature either be considered in the masculine gender any more than in the feminine? It is, I think, because men have been the makers of gods instead of any god the maker of

man. Mr. Ingersoll once remarked, as did A. J. Davis years ago, that "an honest god is the noblest work of man." If you mean to worship a god, have an honest one, and in order to have an honest god, you must be honest yourselves. Man makes God, then, in his own image. Woman, being physically weaker than man, and subject to him, has bowed to a man-like God, masculine gender, of course.

Now, as God is something—if there is any such being—He must be the author of Himself because He is believed to be the Creator of all things which He governs and controls. Take space as a fact of consciousness. Space must be mightier than a Deity; it must embrace Deity, and itself again be embraced by nothing, because it is a recognized fact of our consciousness that it is absolutely illimitable, boundless. If there could be an infinite mind pervading space, that mind could not be personal because personality always implies that which is limited—local—possessed of boundaries. Infinity and personality, therefore, cannot co-exist, as one author said, in the same being. Infinity as to space implies limitless, boundless; personality on the other hand means an individual, distinct person, a thinking and intelligent being. Hence it is a self-contradiction to conceive of an Omnipresent God as a personal being. If a God is everywhere present, then He is not an individual; how can that which is in and through everything be separate from?—which proves that an eternal unchangeable, personal being is an absurdity.

Let my opponent try to answer these questions: Did space ever have a beginning: Was there a time when there was no space? Can a spaceless universe be thought of? Is it thinkable? If space which includes all worlds, and all atoms, was never created, is there any proof that it is controlled? Is there the least evidence that a god ever wrote a book or books claimed by the Christian world generally to be the infallible word of God and not human at all but all Divine?

A clergyman in Minneapolis, of All Souls Universalist Church, has expressed it this way: No book has been a greater hindrance to truth than the Bible; for it has opposed every reform, every new science, and has been the greatest foe to human progress.

When the ministers begin to talk like that, I have hope for them. They are coming over into our ranks of secular free thought. Well, now, if there is a personal God, to make a book more than human, who knows anything about Him? I propose to go down to the very foundation, if it can be reached, of this question. Is there a Divine—is there this influence spoken of, outside of the human, that can write books? Can a God living outside space dictate such a volume? Did life ever have a beginning? Did God create life? If it is answered that life had a beginning, then I ask who gave birth to life? But life has been cited as one

of the best proofs of design, and consequently a designer God. If life always was, and space always was, and matter and energy always existed, then a God had nothing to do with bringing them into existence, because they always were. Yet life has been offered as proof of a planning, designing, personal intelligent God.

And God created light. Did He? Then there was a time when there was no light?

Mr. Nichols' First Address

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, and My Able Opponent:

It is with pleasure that I stand before you for the purpose of calling your attention to those things which I deem to be of vital importance to every individual. The preliminaries of my opponent, that he has stated to you, save me the trouble of saying certain things that I intended to say myself. I am of the firm conviction that discussion is the means, and a good means, of our obtaining a greater understanding, a greater knowledge of facts that are extant in the world; and facts are the things that I am after. I have no disposition whatever to uphold an error in any way, shape or manner, and let me say that if my opponent can show to me that that Bible, which I treasure above everything else in the wide universe, is wholly of human origin, and abounds with contradictory, absurd, immoral and inconsistent teachings, I shall, as an honest individual, say Amen to it and throw away my present faith.

Let me say, though, that I have no fears whatever of my opponent sustaining the position that he has undertaken in this investigation. The old saying is: "By investigation we gain information," and certainly we should be deeply interested in those things which lead to information, knowledge, wisdom and understanding. I believe this book which you style the Bible to be of Divine production, although I was somewhat astonished in my opponent's bringing before you certain views of men. I supposed that he would confine himself to his own ideas; to the ideas contained in the Bible, and wait for me to unfold my position to you before he would take that part of the subject into consideration. I care not the snap of my finger for any man's say-so in reference to theology. I do not stand on this platform to tell you what Mr. Watson or this man or that man believes or has said. I do not pretend, nor shall I attribute any opinion that is not avowed in this discussion. I shall not therefore waste my time bringing before your minds what Colonel Ingersoll has said upon the other side of the question, or what Tom Paine, or Voltaire, or Charles Bradley has said, but I shall endeavor to bring myself within

the scope of our proposition, namely: Resolved, that the Bible is wholly of human origin. We shall then claim that it is wholly of Divine origin; for, as an honest disputant, and as an honest man, I shall have to confess that it stands or falls together. If Mr. Jamieson proves to me that it is partly of human origin, I will confess that it all goes together.

From the Divine Record I have become fully convinced of its truthfulness and divinity. Let me say that I have been—so to speak—upon the fence, and ready to go either way, looking abroad at the ideas of men and seeing them inconsistent to the teachings, or rather to my own feelings, and my own knowledge, and my own thoughts of right and justice; and, consequently, my own faith was somewhat shattered at one time in that Divine book. But I made up my mind that I would go to work like an honest man, and before I would throw away a book of its pretention I would give it a careful and candid consideration and endeavor to dive down deep until I had canvassed the matter thoroughly before I would dare to take a stand against the Holy teachings of its pages.

The result of the matter has been with the direct opposite of that of my opponent, and I attribute to him all honesty and fairness, for I must say that I am well pleased in the conversation I had with him today, the first time, as he announced to you that we have never before met in our lives. We have passed some correspondence, but we have been together but a little while today, and I am well pleased with his deportment. I agree with him that we will have a discussion that will cause you to say, before we get through, that "it is good for us to be here"; and that in this discussion you will have opportunity of sounding to some depths, I hope at least, the divinity of that Book, or its humanity, as the case may be. And let me say before I proceed further, that if Mr. Jamieson proves to your mind that the book styled the Bible is of human origin, don't be governed by my say-so in the matter. Let me say that I believe in free thought, yet I do not believe in free thought. You may say, how can that be? I believe in every individual thinking for himself, but I believe that no individual has a right to free thought; every individual should have his thoughts governed by evidence, by facts in the case. I have no fears whatever of Mr. Jamieson, or of any other son, in the universe. Why? Because I want truth, and if Mr. Jamieson has more truth than I have, what have I to fear? A minister in your town said to me today in the presence of a gentleman I see right over there, "I don't know about this discussion." "What have you to fear?" I remarked. "Well, those fellows have nothing to lose." Well, I said to him, "What have you to lose?" Why, a principle of truth cannot be harmed or hurt by

investigation. I am a unit with my opponent upon this point. As I remarked to that individual, "If you have a religion, or I have a religion, that will not stand the test of a free, open hand and honest investigation, let it go down. We had better lose it than save it." And let me say that if I have a theory or a religion that does not stand the test, it is not worth the snap of your finger; and, consequently, Mr. Jamieson is my best friend to show me that I have a false religion, if it be a false religion.

Let me say to you, though, that I believe this is impossible to be done; yet it may be within the scope of possibilities. I trust, at least, that we will have a discussion that will be, as I feel tonight, a friendly, kindhearted discussion. I feel kindly towards Mr. Jamieson; I feel kindly toward my moderators. I feel kindly toward you. I have no occasion to feel otherwise, and consequently I do not see how a discussion upon such principles can fail to be productive of good.

We shall now dwell for a little on the argument that he has presented to us. First, he has endeavored to bring before you that there is no such thing as a Divine Being, that there is no such thing as an all-wise, self-existing Creator. He has gone to the source of nature for his proof so far and drawn it from the surroundings of life in nature as he looks at it. I do not propose to judge this matter from my finite mind. If Mr. Jamieson and I had been upon the stand fifty years ago, and had been told that there would be invented at this time, or was in existence at that time, a device by which we could speak distinctly, as they can now, from Owatonna to Faribault, he would have said: "Impossible. It is out of the range of my comprehension, it cannot be." If I were to judge this matter from my own finite mind, my own free mind and comprehension of facts by which we are surrounded, he might be able possibly to convert me upon this subject. But I do not propose to let him place his brain caliber or mine upon the stand as the judge as to whether such things can or cannot be.

I propose to deal with the argument "Space is unlimited." In that we will agree. Space is unlimited. I say so too. But can Mr. Jamieson comprehend space being unlimited? Has he traveled through the mighty universe and can he solve this question? Is it not wrapped up in mystery more or less? It certainly is.

Mr. Jamieson says a person supposes form, and form brings to our mind some one that formed it. A Deity, he says, cannot be a personal God; there cannot be a personal God, a personal Deity, a being universal, because personality is limited. I say a person is limited but the power of that individual may be

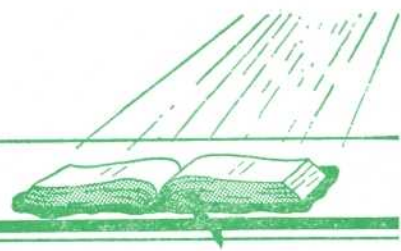
universal. I take this position then, that the Bible teaches that God is a person, for we read in the Divine Record, if you will turn to Hebrews, the first chapter, that Christ was in the express image of God's person; consequently, this book holds out before us a personal God, a personal, intelligent Being. One man in the world has more power than another, and still another has more power than they two. We find this distinction in the world, and yet a person exclaims that a being cannot exist with unlimited power. Again we say, if it were not for other things that we have to offer to you, we might be a convert upon this point; but there are many other things that guide us and we are driven to the conclusion that there can be a personal being with more power than myself or Mr. Jamieson. And if one being can have more power than another, it is possible for another to have more power than us both. We do not, however, rely upon such arguments as this, but as an honest disputant I am driven to follow my opponent wherever he may see fit to run, and then, if I have any time left, to present to you the ideas why I believe in a personal God.

As I remarked one time to an infidel who had heard several of my lectures. "Did man have a creator?" he asked. I said, "Yes." He asked who created man; I answered, "God." "Who created God?" I tell you, my friends, He is the uncreated One, and there both Mr. Jamieson and myself are lost in mystery; it goes beyond our comprehension. And let me say because it goes beyond our comprehension does not in the least prove it untrue. Can you tell me how a child grows in the womb? Can you tell me, Mr. Jamieson, how that eye of yours sees, or that brain of yours thinks? But that is no evidence whatever of its untruthfulness; you see, you think; consequently I claim that Mr. Jamieson's argument upon this point falls to the ground without any force whatever.

I believe now, as I remarked to that infidel, "What do you believe? He remarked in reference to what he believed. (I do not produce that now as any evidence whatever in this matter or as a position which I shall attribute to my opponent in any way, shape or manner.) "I am a Darwinian," he said, "and I believe that man sprang from the orangoutang, and he from the monkey and going on down down to the tadpole, and so on." Said I: "Then from whence did the tadpole spring? and when you get down there, from what did the next one spring? You are lost in the mighty chasm of mystery as much as I am when you ask me the question, 'Who created God?'" Let me say that there is not a man in the world that can answer this argument. They produce an argument that severs the head from their theory and leaves them without any means of carrying on the gigantic work before them.

(Continued on page 26)

BIBLE STUDY HOUR



God Is Love

(Part Two)

Q. There is another facet of God's love that has often been shown which we have not covered.

A. His mercy is part of His love.

Q. Yes. To have mercy is to show compassion—especially when it is not expected. God is like that. If not, the human race would have been cut off long ago. What text suggests this?

A. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10).

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

"But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Ps. 86:15).

Q. Can we have some examples of God showing mercy on His servants?

A. In all His dealings with Israel, God showed more mercy than any human being would have. Without the help of God, Moses would likely have given up far short of the Promised Land. After all the miracles of the plagues and the Red Sea crossing, they were soon complaining. When they wanted water, He provided water. When they wanted meat, He provided meat.

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. 63:9).

Q. God was certainly longsuffering with Israel even though He frequently allowed them to be punished severely.

A. In the days of the Judges the Israelites frequently forgot God and strayed far from His commands, but after they had been oppressed by their enemies and driven to their knees, God would raise up a deliverer for them. It was always their own sin that caused them the trouble, and it was God's mercy that came to their rescue.

Q. There is another very good example in the Old Testament that we have not mentioned—this one an individual. He was more than once in transgression and more than once forgiven through God's mercy.

A. That must have been David. He sinned greatly in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. The offense was so serious that the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to confront him with his misdeeds. Under Moses' law, David could have been put to death for adultery, but God was merciful and spared his life after he confessed his sin and pleaded for mercy.

God showed mercy in helping David escape from the angry King Saul. Perhaps it was because David had experienced so much of the mercy of God that he wrote so much about it in his Psalms.

Q. Forgiveness goes with mercy and it is another way God shows His love to His children. God is willing not only to forgive, but also to forget. Can we have some proof for this from the Bible?

A. According to Ezekiel, a man's sins will not so much as be mentioned to him if he will turn from them and do that which is right. "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live" (Ezek. 33:15-16). That shows love beyond that of mortals.

Q. Forgetting is an important part of forgiving. If we say, "I can forgive but I cannot forget," then we have not forgiven at all, because God forgets when He forgives. Can we have some further testimonies showing God's forgiveness?

A. The Lord was forgiving with Paul. Before his conversion, Paul had openly persecuted the church and opposed the teachings of Christ, but the Lord forgave him. Paul testified of God's mercy toward him: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (I Tim. 1:16).

The children of Israel many times forgot God dur-

ing their wilderness journeyings, but in the end God was willing to forgive and forget. "They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; and forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them. But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time he turned his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath" (Ps. 78:10-11, 38). Only a loving, long-suffering God could forgive so much and then forget it in the end.

Q. One of the apostles needed the mercy and forgiveness of God more than once. Can someone tell us about him?

A. You must be thinking of Peter. At one time he withstood the words of the Master, causing Jesus to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matt. 16:23). And just before the crucifixion, Peter three times denied his Lord. But Peter overcame his weaknesses and was forgiven, for at Pentecost he spoke fearlessly to the assembled multitude in defense of Christ and the Christian faith.

Q. Yes, Peter is a good example for us. Even though we sin, we know we can be forgiven if we confess and forsake our sin. What does the Lord's Prayer say about forgiving?

A. "Forgive us as we forgive others." We are asking for forgiveness from God as we forgive those who have wronged us. If we do not forgive our brother, God will not forgive us. The apostle Paul exhorted us to be "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven [us]" (Eph. 4:32).

Q. We have all needed forgiveness at one time or another and that is a good thing for us to remember. There is a verse in the Old Testament that states the conditions under which God will forgive. Can someone think what it is?

A. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14).

Q. That is right. We must first humble ourselves, then we are in a condition where we can pray for God's help. Then we must "seek his face," do His will. And if we are doing His will, we will turn from our evil ways, then we can be forgiven.

There is yet another facet of God's love that we have not covered—His grace. Theology teaches that the grace of God is unmerited favor. Is this correct?

A. No. God's favor is never unmerited; He does not give something for nothing.

Q. If God's grace is not unmerited favor, what is it?

A. Grace has more than one meaning. 1) His mercy or kindness in showing us the way to salvation is called grace; 2) grace that saves, which is the knowledge of the way to salvation, and 3) grace that is the reward awaiting those who prove worthy in the end.

Q. Can we have something from the Scriptures to show the different meanings of grace?

A. Paul's words to Titus make the meaning of one form of grace very clear: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Tit. 2:11-12).

Q. God's grace teaches us what is required for salvation—that we must come out from the world and live a sober, righteous life, denying ungodliness.

There is another statement of Paul's that is also good on this same grace. It is in his farewell at Ephesus.

A. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). That shows that His grace and His Word are one and the same.

Q. God's love or His grace toward us in showing us the way to salvation is probably the most important part of His love. Why is this?

A. Without it we could never have eternal life, or even the opportunity to work for it.

Q. Not the least of God's favor is making this knowledge known to us. But why should it have been shown to us?

A. God's foreknowledge tells Him of those who will do the work. While we were still living like the world, God foreknew that we could do the work and made it possible for us to learn.

Paul said, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-7).

Q. There is more than one kind of grace in those verses. The grace He showed us while we were "dead in sins" is grace that is His favor, or kindness. The grace that He will show us in the ages to come through

Jesus Christ is our reward which will be brought by Jesus Christ at His return. Whether or not we are worthy of that reward will depend upon our use of the first grace (or knowledge) that has been given us.

There is another good verse on the grace that is the reward.

A. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:13). That grace could be nothing other than the reward.

Q. *There is one more thing in connection with the love of God that we have not mentioned—and I think it is one of the most important aspects of His love. That is His promises to the overcomers. Maybe we could mention just a few.*

A. Probably the greatest is the hope of eternal life. Without that hope, we would never make the effort to do the work (I John 2:25; Tit. 1:2).

He has promised to send Jesus Christ to earth again (Acts 1:9-11).

He promises us strength that will not fail (Isa. 40:31).

He promises an end to wars, and He promises to send peace on earth (Ps. 46:9; Lk. 2:14).

He promises us more than we could ask or think (Eph. 3:20).

He promises us pleasures forevermore (Ps. 16:11).

Q. *I'm sure we could go on and on with these! In closing could we quote I Corinthians 2:9 together. This verse shows God's love to us in return for our love to Him.*

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." ••

To Be Continued Next Issue

Keep Stepping

IT IS OUR daily duty to help each other onward in the right path, and so create bonds of friendship that will make life blessed now and forever. There is a right and safe way for us all to go, and it is not hard to keep if we watch our step and look straight forward.

It does us all good to bear responsibility. God has given us noble work to do and helps us to do it well, but we must try to help one another. We can hardly realize how much we promise when we say we will serve God with all our mind, might and strength. But this is such a high and noble work that we cannot commit ourselves to it too strongly.

The strength with which we begin a hard task may not be enough to carry it through, but we grow strong by effort. The more earnest and determined we become in a good work, the better able we are to do it well. If it be true that the young beginner does not know how much he undertakes in the attempt to live a Christian life, it is just as true that he does not know how strong he will become by using his strength, or how much help God will give him when he is doing his best to help himself.

This blessed light we have to guide us through the dark, misty vale shows us exactly where to set our feet step by step. To get through the hardest journey we need take only one step at a time, but we must keep on stepping. The child's first attempt at walking is very sure to be a failure. It is by falling that he learns to stand, and by stumbling he learns to go.

J. D., Liberia, Africa

How to Be Perfectly Miserable

1. Think about yourself.
2. Talk about yourself.
3. Use "I" as often as possible.
4. Mirror yourself continually in the opinions of others.
5. Listen greedily to what people say about you.
6. Expect everyone to appreciate you.
7. Be suspicious of others.
8. Be jealous and envious.
9. Be sensitive to slights, especially from your friends.
10. Never forgive a wrong.
11. Take every suggestion as a criticism.
12. Trust nobody but yourself.
13. Demand that everyone agree with your views.
14. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors.
15. Never forget a service you may have rendered.
16. Shirk any duty you can.
17. Do as little as possible for others.
18. Insist on consideration and respect.
19. Love yourself supremely.
20. Be selfish.



SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke 8:8).

THESE are not words to be regarded lightly. The Master is speaking. He has said it before, and He will say it again. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Eight times this message is recorded in the Gospels, and eight times again it is repeated in the book of Revelation. Surely Jesus means for us to *hear* it.

What does it say?

"He that hath ears to hear." We can conclude immediately that everyone does *not* have "ears to hear," because Jesus is using "hearing" ability to distinguish a certain group of people.

Now there is nothing singular about having ears that can perceive literal sounds. Every normal person is equipped with ears capable of receiving and interpreting sounds.

Obviously, Jesus is not talking about the tiny drum, hammer, anvil and stirrup inside our ears. To Him, "hearing ears" means something more. "Hearing," as Jesus spoke of it, is an act requiring a conscious application of the mind to understand what the ears receive. It means to have ears within reach of the sound of the gospel and a mind to understand. Such hearing ability is indeed a choice blessing.

But more than the ability to hear is needed to obey Jesus' command. Note the last three words of our text: "Let him hear." It is not enough to be *able* to hear; we must actually take in the sounds and communicate them to our conscious minds.

If the multitude who heard Jesus had "ears to hear," their ears did not "hear," for Jesus said of them: "This people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15). What was the problem? It was not that the people

were being denied the opportunity to hear, nor that they lacked the necessary mechanism to hear. The fault was entirely their own. They were not applying their minds to understand what they heard, hence did not really hear. They *could* have heard, if they *would*—but they would *not*.

Notice how Jesus points out to His disciples their special blessing. They had opportunity which many before them did not have—they could hear the words of the Son of man firsthand; and they had receptive ears so that they could truly "hear," which the multitude could not. "Blessed are . . . your ears, for they hear," He told them. "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to . . . hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (vs. 16, 17).

What a blessing was theirs! eyes that could see, ears that could hear. They had ears to hear and they were hearing.

What of us? If Jesus were among us, would He be able to say to us, "Blessed are your ears, for they hear"?

On another occasion Jesus said that only he who is of God is able to hear God's words; "ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:47). Jesus was talking with Jews who were within hearing of the gospel, and who had ears to hear; yet they were not hearing, because they had closed their minds. "Why do ye not understand my speech?" said Jesus. "Even because ye cannot hear my word" (John 8:43). They could not "hear" because their minds were closed.

It was the command of God delivered through His ancient Prophet centuries before Christ was born: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). The command was repeated on the Mount

of Transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son: hear him" (Luke 9:35).

We find it again in Jesus' last message to us: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear . . ." (Rev. 1:3), and again more than physical hearing is implied. When we "hear," in obedience to this command, we understand and are persuaded to go ahead and "keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand."

If we have hearing ears and if we use them to listen to Jesus, His words will stab us wide awake with their clarity of command. We will hear words that shame us for our lethargy, our halfheartedness, our indifference, our procrastination. We will hear words that tell us to "take heed," and "beware" and "watch." We will hear words that warn and reprove and chasten us. We will hear words that promise hope and redemption and salvation. There is so much to "hear," if we will open our ears to listen.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." How is our hearing? How well are we fulfilling our duty of obedience? Are we hearing all that the Lord would have us hear?

When we open our ears—and our minds—to hear, we are obeying the divine command; but the benefit will be all our own. When we close our ears to the wisdom of God, we harm no one but ourselves. It is a command Jesus has given for our own best interest.

To become dull of hearing at this critical hour could prove fatal, for what we do not truly hear we will not be impressed to *do*. So let our consciousness be re-awakened by what we hear, that our obedience may be perfect and complete. So let us ever remember those oft-repeated words of Jesus: "He that hath ears to hear"—and that includes you and me; and having ears to hear, we are responsible for what is being declared in our hearing. So "let him"—let US—"hear." ●●

The Last Call in the Cool of the Day

(Continued from page 7)

hearts? Are we tempted to say or feel in our inmost secret hearts, "My lord delayeth his coming"? God forbid!

We want Christ to come; but let us at the same time see in the extended time the great mercy of God. Have we looked carefully—critically—inside our own hearts and lives? Where will we stand when He *does* come? What will He think of *us*? Are we ready to look up and see Him standing before us? Can we face Him unashamed?

God Is Longsuffering

Let us praise God for the seeming delay. Where would we be without it? What chance would we have had if God had not disappointed those who lived before us? Where would we have fitted into the divine scheme had God chosen to terminate the day when the apostles wanted Him to? or the Christians of the early centuries? or the first zealous followers in our own age? If the householder had stopped calling at noon, or three o'clock, or even at five o'clock, at the beginning of the eleventh hour, where would *we* be? How would it be with us if Christ had come even five years ago? How ready would you and I have been at that time for the great change? Haven't we gained spiritually in that time? Shouldn't we thank God for the delay?

Isn't it evidence of our longsuffering God working for us? Such debtors are we to our merciful God. How can we afford to waste even a moment at this late hour?

So far extended is the hour now that every day granted us should be gratefully received as an extension of divine mercy. Ours especially is the sacred responsibility of making use of this extended time. For any day, any moment it could end.

The day of the Lord is near. It is nearer this very moment than it has ever been before. "Now is our salvation"—or our destruction—"nearer than when we [first] believed" (Rom. 13:11). It was true when Paul wrote these words. It is equally true—and more imminent—today. "Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts 17:31). The Judge is chosen, even Christ; and the day is appointed. The promise is fixed; and with every passing day, it draws nearer, nearer.

We need the arrival of that Day. At times our longings surge. We see problems ahead which we feel incapable of solving without divine help. The future of our world looks bleak and uncertain. We see less and less people listening to the sound of the gospel and coming to work in the vineyard. We feel like crying from the depths of our being, "Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

We are anxious to see the new age and all that it will bring. This is as Jesus would have us. If we were not anxious, if we were not looking eagerly forward, we would be unworthy indeed of our high calling. Ahead, just ahead, is the culmination of the ages, the hour to which all of God's men and women in ages past looked forward! Why should we grow weary as the time seems to linger? The seeming

postponement is entirely in our favor. God is making a way for *us*, if we will use it. And we need not fear the time will be longer than we can endure. Did He not give His promise long ago, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be"?

As God Counts Time

God is able to see us through. And if He is with us, what have we to fear?

Perhaps part of our anxiety is due to our faulty concept of time, compared with God's. A young child cannot anticipate an interval of a week, much less a year. Neither can *we* comprehend *God's* time. To us, seventy or eighty years is a long time; it is just about all we can really comprehend, so closely are we bound by the limits of mortality. But to God, a thousand years is as a single day. Wouldn't we like to experience just one or two of God's days! We shall, if faithful. But if a thousand years is as a day, have we any reason to feel anxious or doubtful if He in mercy extends this present age some twenty, or thirty, or fifty or sixty years beyond what was anticipated? An entire century is only a matter of a couple of hours to God!

No, puny creatures that we are, let us look up in faith. Let us praise God that He is still calling, that we in this hour can still be among His faithful laborers. What an honor! What a privilege!

By Faith

But can we know? Can we be sure our calling is genuine? It is true that we can know only by faith. But do we not have firm foundation for faith? Let us look briefly at the evidence before us.

The Bible forecasts of the long night of darkness are clear and unmistakable. And what about its end? How would we in this eleventh hour have any knowledge of God's plan except through the efforts of His human instruments?

If we would have a faith that will endure to the end, let us open our eyes and see how wonderfully all things are working together as part of His plan. We need to see the whole creation moving forward to the great Day of culmination, when the Son of man shall come with glory and blessing to all who have proven themselves true heroes of faith. It is happening according to His Word, whether we choose to recognize it or not.

We need unlimited faith in the plan of God and the ultimate triumph of right over wrong, truth over error, justice over injustice. The Word of God proclaims it. Man will not always fight with man. Millions of earthborns will not always languish in poverty and hunger and ignorance. Men will not forever be burdened by sorrow and suffering

and woe. All creation has purpose and direction. God has a plan, and our earth is part of that plan. God has designed it and its creatures as a long-term project of development. This is what the Bible tells us. This is what our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, pointed out to us. Without his help, where would we be? Let us accept it, believe it, and build on it—by faith.

Our Solid Foundation

Then, too, we can build faith by reviewing our beliefs. We have every reason to feel and know that "we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness." We do not say this to be bigoted, or to think of ourselves more highly than we ought, but to extol the greatness of God and His marvelous workings among us. We can say and feel it for the very same reason the apostle John said it. We feel humbly privileged to be "in" on God's plans. We are overwhelmed by the goodness of the God who would entrust us with such priceless treasures of knowledge. And we feel a deep gratitude and debt to the human instrument He found among us to rescue us from the darkness in which the masses grope. In view of all this, is it not our great responsibility to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith" we have been called, "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

Still, how can we know that we have heard the call of the eleventh hour?

Let us think: Who taught us that God has a family in heaven as well as in earth, and that angels are glorified mortals, a company to which we may some day belong?

What other church or denomination or religion acknowledges no literal or spiritual superpower of evil contending against God and stirring up evil?

Who does not look to some form of the Holy Spirit for invisible guidance?

Who does not depend on the atoning blood of Christ for some degree of righteousness?

Where else can we learn a harmonious, realistic approach to the creation story of Genesis, that sees the whole as an outline of God's plan for this earth and mankind? Where else might we go for an understanding of God's eternal purpose by which He is ordering all parts of His vast creation?

Where else might we learn of a Christ who was not part God and part man, but who was made like His brethren and tempted in all points as we are, "yet without sin," who had to learn "obedience by the things which He suffered," to become our perfect example and the captain of our salvation?

And how could we believe in God and His plan without these basic tenets of faith?

Who else today can show us the way to *LIFE*?

Few, Few, Few

We are small, and at times feel our limitations more than our possibilities. We may wonder at the extreme smallness of our work, the fewness of those interested in God's plan, and the feebleness of any assault we are able to make against the mighty bulwarks of error and evil about us. But let us remember that one with God always was and *still is* a majority. Noah had only eight. In the days of Lot, only three were saved. And Jesus said, "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:30). "Even thus." Do we not see His words fulfilled? Right now our first anxiety must be the completing of our own work; and all that we need for this is being provided us.

Our founder was once questioned by a sympathetic well-wisher as to how he could stay and labor with such a few. He replied that he belonged to a group far outnumbering the largest church denomination in the country. He was serving the "Lord God of hosts." If we are serving God, we have *hosts* on our side, hosts of angels! And in the end, God is going to judge us not by our quantity but by our *quality*, by our likeness to Himself.

When was God's cause ever popular with the multitudes? When was the reward of eternal life ever attractive to hundreds and thousands? When was the narrow way to life ever crowded? When did the choicest jewels ever come by mass production? We know how it takes a bushel of fruit to yield a few choice specimens; and two thousand pounds of copper ore must be refined to produce twelve pounds of the pure metal. Even so does God seek out the choicest and He knows they will be few.

The Challenge To Us

Oh, let us thank God for the knowledge of His plan that is ours. And thank Him for giving this last call in the cool of the day; thank Him for causing to go before us one who could show us the way, so that we may treasure and use what we reverently love to call the "truth."

Can we equal his intensity of spirit, his constancy of purpose, his completeness of consecration, his fearless denouncing of every wayward thought and inclination of heart? Can we rival his love and faithfulness to God and goodness?

The answer is *Yes*. We can. And this is what we *must* be doing. Why stand we idle in the vineyard? There is work to be done. Here is the challenge he extends to us. Let us accept it with

both hands outstretched, with fullest confidence in the God who stands behind us, knowing that He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the Day of Christ.

Someday soon we shall meet him face to face, our spiritual leader and father in the faith. How shall it be with us then?

Oh, let us keep on. Not long, now, until the close of this eleventh hour. This may indeed be God's last call. And may its last moment find us able to say to our resurrected brother,

*Because of your firm faith I kept the track,
Though sharp-set stones my strength had almost
spent—*

*I could not meet your eyes, if I turned back,
So on I went.*

*Because of your strong love, I held my path
When battered, worn and bleeding in my fight—
How could I meet your true eyes if I failed?
So I kept right.*

Self-Deceived?

There are people who think they can fool God, but they deceive themselves. "If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange God; shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart" (Ps. 44:20, 21). Nothing can be hidden from God.

If we say we have no sin, if we say we love God and despise our brother, if we say we love God and are not good Christians and show respect of persons, we deceive ourselves.

If we say we shall not reap what we sow, if we think we can twist God's Word to suit ourselves, if we think we can serve God and live as we please, we deceive ourselves.

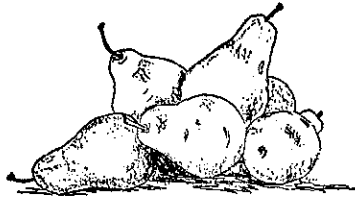
If we think God is too good to punish us when we make unkind remarks, are bitter and selfish, if we have forgotten God expects us to obey Him, we deceive ourselves.

If we think we can claim the name of Christian and be spiritually dead, if we think we love our brothers and sisters in Christ and do nothing to show true brotherly love, if we think we have all that God has for us, we deceive ourselves.

"'Tis inward truth that thou desirest; grant me then wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me clean with marjoram, wash me whiter than snow; fill me with gladness and rejoicing, that the life thou hast crushed may thrill with joy" (Ps. 51: 6-8, Moffatt Bible).

—From a Reader in Georgia

Fruitful Fragments



Children of the King should use the language of heaven's court.

Always cheerful?

This is my text for today: "Therefore, we glory in tribulation." And g-l-o-r-y does not spell "growl!"

Sin is not harmful because it is forbidden, it is forbidden because it is harmful.

True faith will always weave a pattern of good works.

If in doubt what to do, don't do it.

A tart temper never mellows with age; and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener and sharper with constant use.

Think all you speak, but speak not all you think. Thoughts are your own, your words are so no more.

Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it you have to start young.

When love and skill work together for God, you can expect a masterpiece.

Sin is that awful thing that looks God in the face and says, "I won't."

Those who would not eat of the forbidden fruit should not come near the forbidden tree.

There is nothing noble in being superior to some other man. The true nobility is in being superior to your former self.

Debate

(Continued from page 18)

I tell you, my friends, that this fear and tremor that is going on in the so-called Christian world is making more infidels, two to one, than infidels are making themselves. If every man would step upon the platform and say "I am not afraid to submit my positions, my arguments, my theory, my religion to the severest test and investigate to the bottom, would it not unfold to the world that they had at least confidence in their theory? And if a man has no confidence in his own theory, how can he expect others to have confidence in it? I have confidence in the Bible. The Bible sets before us certain things that prove to me that it is of Divine origin, and I am ready to show why I believe it to be of Divine authority instead of human origin. It has been written, to my firm conviction, in different times throughout sixteen hundred years, from Moses to John. It has been written by statesmen, by prophets, by herdsmen, by shepherds, by fishermen, by wise men, and by all classes of individuals, and their writings so unanimously agree that it drives me to the conclusion of its divinity, because a writing composed of 66 books, distributed over a period of 1600 years could not be compiled by 40 different authors and have them so unanimously agree and not be of Divine origin. I do not believe you can put your finger on as many different books extant in the world today by as many

different authors that agree upon so many different topics as are presented to us in this Bible.

Of course, I want to admit that if Mr. Jamieson upon the third night of this discussion proves to you the contradictory part concerning this Bible, it takes my argument away. Yes, he may throw out to you as many times as it has been thrown out to me, and he may think I am like the different denominational preachers in the world; for instance, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Spiritualists, and all the other Ists and Isms that are extant in the world; but he will find himself mistaken. Let me ask him once and for all to leave them out of the question and deal with me and with my positions and have no more of this man and that man and the other man. Let us consider Nichols' views and the Bible of the God of heaven in this matter and let all other men be laid upon the shelf till a more convenient time at some other season. But as I say, if he shall prove to us the contradictory part, then my argument will fall. But as I say, I have no question but that he will utterly fail upon every point that he undertakes in establishing a contradiction between the two lids of the Bible. Mr. Jamieson claims that it is full of them; that is, in the sense of abounding, not that everything in it is contradictory. So let him commence and give us one after the other, and I will endeavor to follow him through and to show that the blessed Volume does not contain even one contradiction. ●●

(To Be Continued)

Our Readers Write...

He Is Coming

Whatever our circumstances may be, we must be making progress in our growth toward holiness. We are perfectly aware of the wonderful and precious promises of God, wonderful beyond the power of human perception—for all who obey His commandments; and have we not all started out with the yearning to participate in all those wonderful wonders? However, before we can enjoy them we must really set to work as never before and make the very most of every second of the time which God is so mercifully extending to us. How our hearts should thrill at the thought of meeting the greatest King of all the earth. May we make this our greatest desire and strive to be like men ready and waiting for their Lord, worthy to hear those wonderful words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" from His lips.

It is the last state of man which counts. How we should fear, lest coming suddenly our Lord and King should find us spiritually naked, not ready to be recognized or acknowledged by Him.

With so noble and perfect an example as Jesus to emulate, and with all the lovely tapes and wonderful *Messages* which we so thankfully receive, and which are filled to the brim with God's Word, let us do away with all wishful thinking and with great desire and enthusiastic determination strive to clothe ourselves with righteousness that we may dwell forever in the presence of the King.

Swansea, South Wales

R. B.

Complete Each Task

Breaking the old fleshly habits such as boasting, anger, malice, greed and all the other ugly sores of the flesh is not easy and to be successful in this great work we must tackle one ailment at a time and concentrate on it until we have it under control, then move on to the next besetment.

It is said that successful people learn to break big problems into small ones. The principle is as old as Aesop. We can gain a good lesson from one of his fables.

A farmer asked his son to gather a bundle of sticks. The farmer tied them together with a strong cord. "Break the bundle," he asked each of those present, but they could not do so. "Now untie the bundle and break each stick separately," said the farmer. This they did with no trouble at all.

It is very discouraging to look at a lot of tasks that have to be done and think about them all at one time; but if we concentrate on one until it is finished, we are then making progress. However, even though we are making progress let us feel the urgency in completing this task, as our greatest fear should not be "that thy life shall come to an end, but rather fear that it shall never have a beginning."

Minnedosa, Manitoba, Canada

E. H.

October, 1979

Finding Delight

Time is fast slipping away and each day brings us ever nearer to the coming of our future King "Christ Jesus." How true is Psalm 37:4, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." When we read our Bible, meditating on God's holy words, it becomes a delight to our hearts. The former things we used to read hold no interest for us. The Bible becomes to us a joy, not something to be endured but something to delight in because it holds the promise of what is to come for those who wait upon the Lord. "Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it."

This present time is our life, and just think—for the short time in which the Lord asks us to serve Him He is willing to give us a life that will never end. Our hearts should be filled with the utmost gratitude and thankfulness for the manifold blessings which the Creator has bestowed upon us.

Monrovia, Liberia

S. Z.

Time Is Precious

It is always rather sad to see the flowers when they die and fade away. Such a short lifetime, and being so beautiful, they give us a reminder of the brevity of our own sojourn here. God is stretching out the time for us to complete our work, waiting for the last few of the triumphant band to complete their wedding garments.

Every moment that is so freely given to us now means a lot more and is more precious by far than ever before. So we must work harder as the day draws near, work harder to make our calling and election sure, to count all things as loss because of the priceless privilege of knowing Jesus Christ our Lord. And we can be absolutely certain that whatever promise He has made He is able to make good.

Swansea, South Wales

G. S.

Are We Happy?

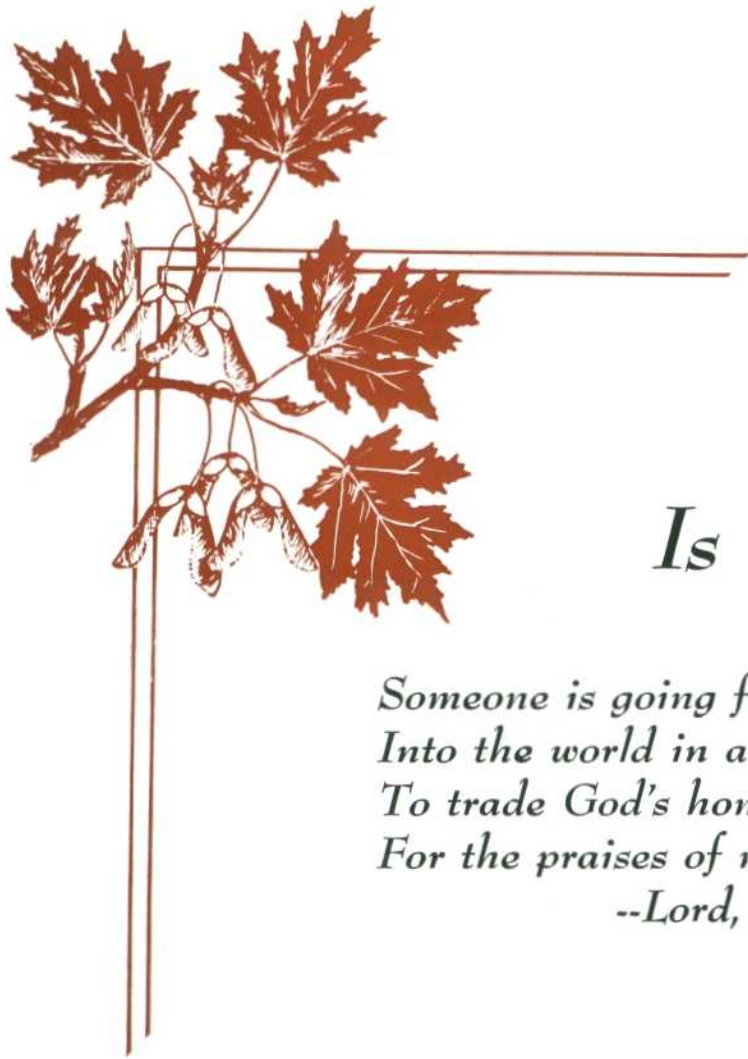
God certainly wants us to be happy at all times, happy in His works, doing His commands and keeping the great reward in view at all times; if we have true faith in God and our Lord Jesus, nothing on this earth should worry us. We know it is a testing time and those who come through it will be greatly honored and rewarded.

Swansea, South Wales

M. S.

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Is It I?

*Someone is going forth today
Into the world in a business way
To trade God's honor--what dreadful pain!--
For the praises of men, or earthly gain.
--Lord, is it I?*

*Someone is going out tonight
To give up a hope that is warm and bright
For the pleasures that last but one brief day
Then fade forever and pass away.
--Lord, is it I?*

*O search my heart, Lord, and make it pure,
Strong in the things that will endure,
And when dark deeds blacken night or day,
I'll lean on my Lord, and humbly say,
"Lord, is it I?"*