

Megiddo Message



Vol. 68, No. 9

October, 1981



Spiritual Pushups

THERE IS a certain law of continuity in this world that says a certain level once achieved cannot be sustained without continued effort. At what point can the athlete say, "I have done all the calisthenics I shall need, I am strong enough. From now on I shall take life easy"?

At what point can the musician say, "I have done all the practicing I shall ever need to do; from now I shall only perform"?

At what point can anyone say, "I have eaten all I shall need for the rest of my life," and expect to go on vigorous and healthy?

At what point can the Christian say, "I have had enough of spiritual disciplines; my knowledge and experience are adequate. From now on I shall not have to worry"?

The apostle Paul spent nearly his entire life strengthening and encouraging others so that their faith in Christ might continue to grow. "I know," he wrote to the brethren in Philippi, "that I shall continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." He knew that they would continue to need his loving help and encouragement.

It was not that these brethren were just beginners. They were already well advanced. Every time Paul remembered them, he said, he thanked God for how they had helped him (Phil. 1:3-5). And yet he prayed that their love might "abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment: that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere, and without offence until the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:9-10).

Why if they were so advanced did he not rest con-

tent? Why did he feel he must still work to *advance* their faith? And why should each of us be similarly concerned with building ourselves up in our most holy faith? Is there not a point at which we can be satisfied, relax and take things easy?

We know there is not, just as Paul knew there was not. Strength is a fleeting thing; the pushups that an athlete did daily for many months will not keep him strong unless he continues the program. Just so with the Christian. Spiritual pushups must be a daily matter, or the strength we have managed to build will wane.

What are some of the spiritual pushups we can do to maintain our strength?

Our founder once summarized them in three meaningful words: "Read, meditate, grow." Reading builds faith, and provides the seed for serious meditation. As we fill our minds with thoughts of God's plan, His purposes, His creative works, His promises to us, and what He expects us to do to have part in those promises, all the wonders of the new world come alive in our minds and our enthusiasm mounts. Invigorated, we become more and more determined that we will be a part of that new world. And when a temptation comes to test our faith, we find ourselves instinctively taking the *right* side—how can we do otherwise without jeopardizing our prospects of sharing in that world?

Spiritual pushups will assure us the strength, the fortitude, the endurance that we will need to triumph in the tests that lie ahead. And what will this mean? That we can someday stand among the winners, if we endure to the end.

MM

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

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

About Our Cover

For this intriguing photograph we are indebted to the kindness of photographer D. C. Lowe.

In this Memorial Issue it serves a dual purpose. First, it gives us a close view of a mammoth glacier atop Mt. St. Helens—as it was before the volcano showed its fury on May 18, 1980 (see this issue, page 11); neighboring Mt. Adams is in the background. Second, the photograph contributes an illustration to our Centennial topic of "Coasting, or Still Climbing" (see page 4).

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The MEGIDDO MESSAGE is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, Founder; Kenneth E. Flowerday, President and Editor.

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Coasting or Still Climbing?

WE ARE here today because we have heard whispers of eternity. There is something better up the road, something great, something new and altogether wonderful. Life is ahead, and glory and happiness far beyond our ability to imagine. The question is, how are we getting from here to there? What are we doing to get ourselves up the road?

Any vehicle that has smoothly operating wheels will coast. All that is needed is a reasonably smooth, unobstructed surface, and a downward slope. Gravity does the rest. No effort is required; just sit back and let it roll.

Now position that same vehicle at the base of the hill. Just sit back, and—what happens? Where does the vehicle go? Nowhere. Why? Because there is no such thing as coasting uphill. The momentum created from a previous application of force may carry the vehicle a short distance uphill, but very soon, if the force is not renewed, gravity takes over and the vehicle either halts or begins to coast downward. *Downward.* There is no such thing as coasting up.

Coasting. Not pedalling, or pushing, or forcing, or climbing. Just coasting. Does the word spell progress, speed, alacrity? Only if the direction is down. If there is any ground to be gained, any higher levels to be reached, coasting will do no good. Momentum may be great, but how long will one continue to roll forward if he is just coasting? Most everyone has tried it at sometime, when the auto's fuel supply became suddenly and unexpectedly exhausted. It is just amazing how little coasting the exhausted vehicle will do, especially if there is the slightest upgrade.

If you want to win a race, you don't coast. If you want to climb a hill, you don't coast.

If you want to be a Christian, you don't coast. There is a special kind of coasting that concerns us. A certain historian has commented on the Christian

faith in a particular period of history saying that it was a time when "the grandchildren of believers were coasting along on the momentum of a faith they no longer held." Coasting. Not pedalling, pushing, forcing or climbing. Just coasting. Just doing that which is effortless and easy, taking what comes in an unconcerned manner. Coasting.

There is a similar pattern in history that shows periods of fervor, followed by more mature but less committed life. We have seen it in families where a dedicated father is followed by a not-so-dedicated son, and a grandson who grows up totally indifferent to faith and God. Decline in fervor, however, need not be between generations. It can happen in individuals. We are all prone; we are all tempted by the ease of coasting; none is immune.

At this point in the history of our church, in this centennial year when we are just one hundred years removed from the fervor of our founder's central discovery of true religion and its application to life, what of us? Should we not be thinking how best we can preserve the insights, commitments and faith of those who went before us—lest we fall to coasting? Should we not be thinking what we can do to keep ourselves pressing, pushing, climbing in the footsteps of those who have gone before, rather than to relax and coast?

Keeping Awake

It is said that shortly before Lindberg made his famous first flight across the Atlantic, he had occasion to spend the night away from home with several friends. In the middle of the night, one of the party was surprised to discover that Mr. Lindberg had not even laid down—there he was, sitting in a chair by the window in the darkness of the night, looking out at the stars. "What are you doing?" queried the friend, not able to imagine. "Why," replied Lindberg, "I'm practicing for my flight." "Practicing!" exclaimed the friend. "Yes," he explained, "I'm practicing staying awake all night." Isn't that what we need to be doing in this dark night

Note: "Coasting or Still Climbing" is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

of evil, just before the Lord comes? Staying awake isn't easy, but to fall asleep is deadly. The night is far spent, and lest we fall asleep before the break of the new day, lest we lose the faith and zeal of those who went before us, we must keep practicing—practicing staying awake.

Again and again, as the night grows long, we will find ourselves tempted to relax, to drowse just a little, to relax in our climbing and coast. It is oh, so easy!

At Ease in Zion

We are, for the most part, comfortably situated in this world. This fact—a God-given blessing—may have a tendency to cause us to coast rather than climb, especially if we allow ourselves to forget the source of all we have and are. This was apparently a problem in ancient Israel, and the Lord sent the prophet Amos to arouse the people to reality. They needed Amos' stirring message. And let us remember, they were people with the same human tendencies as we ourselves.

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion," cried the Tekoan herdsman, "and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!" (Amos 6:1). Such an unlikely time, it seemed, to come with messages of doom! These people were rich in this world's goods. It was a time of prosperity and these leaders of the nation had made sure that their nests were lined, their bread buttered, and their coffers full. They were at ease in Zion because they were financially secure. They enjoyed every delicacy they could procure for themselves and lived lives of comfort and ease. They could have been using what they had as a trust from God, but they were not; God was forgotten.

Then, too, they were at ease because they had been successful in war. This was a time of relative security. They were still jubilant over the recovery of two towns on the east of Jordan, which had been held by the Syrians. And their military experts assured them that both Samaria and Jerusalem were impregnable. They were safe behind their Maginot line. Why shouldn't they take their ease? How quickly they forgot that their only real security was in God.

Added to this was an ease the Israelites felt through their confidence that God was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob their fathers, and that He was therefore *their* God also, whatever they might do. They were *His* people, and He would never let them down. Did not their father David write, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever"? (Ps. 125:2). Jerusalem was *still* the city of

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God and Bethel His dwelling place. Whatever happened, they would stand inviolate, forever defended by chariots of fire and hosts from heaven.

What did Amos have to say to this overarching confidence? "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken" (Amos 5:14). Only as they would seek good and not evil could they depend on God to be with them. Their confidence was worth nothing without obedience! Yes, that was the message of Amos. It was hard to take, for they who were accustomed to being "at ease in Zion" doubtless enjoyed their ease and wanted it to continue. But ease vanished when Amos came along; Amos was a realist. He was not governed by feelings but by his knowledge of God and the facts of life. Thus Amos condemned those who he knew were living in a fool's paradise. They were blind to reality, and he told them how they could remove the scales from their eyes and see life clearly as it really was.

The Realities

What were the realities to which those people in Zion long ago were so blind?

They were blind to the reality of their dwindling relationship with God. They assumed that because God loved certain of their fathers, he would love them also and shelter, shepherd and protect them. Did not God drive out the Amorites before them? Did He not bring them out of Egypt? Did He not provide for them during those forty long years of wilderness wandering?

They realized all this, but they failed to see *their* side of the covenant—which had not been kept. There was something *they* should be *doing* about keeping that covenant in good repair; hence Amos cried, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

Is not this the same danger *we* face, even in this twentieth century? Just because we have had fathers and mothers in the faith to whom God was very

near is no assurance that He will be near to us—if we are far from Him! *Their* stalwart steadfastness can benefit us no more than that of Paul or Peter, unless we develop the same quality in ourselves. Living with good people is a definite influence for good, but goodness does not transfer itself automatically from them to us; we ourselves must do and be good in God's sight if we are to be good and faithful servants. We may succeed for a time in coasting on the momentum of a former generation, but such coasting is sure to leave us stranded by the roadside still far, far from the Kingdom of God. There is no easy way. If we would share their reward, we must also share in their virtues—by developing those virtues ourselves.

The Reality of Law

Let us look again at the people in Amos' time. They were blind to the reality of the law of God which they were under. We all know that it is

madness to violate the law of the physical world. Who in his right mind would put his hand into the fire, insisting that fire should not burn? Who would challenge the law of gravity by jumping from a ten-story building and demand that the air should support him? These are laws we have no power to change.

This is Amos' line of reasoning. Who but a fool would drive horses over the rocks, and who but a madman would dream of ploughing the sea with oxen? (Amos 6:12). But is it any less foolish to violate the laws of God? Is it any less foolish to openly and knowingly disobey Him? Is it not true that "they [who] have sown the wind shall reap the whirlwind?" (Amos 8:7). Do we not reap just as we sow in every case? Is not the reality of law such that by disobedience we bring judgment upon ourselves?

This is Amos' appeal.

And shouldn't we submit ourselves to the laws of God for the same reason? We may sincerely feel that some particulars of His law are not necessary, that

Let Us Pray...

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; and may we strive to hallow that worthy name by living a life wholly consecrated to Thee. May we not be so foolish as to say "Lord, Lord," without doing the things commanded us, and think that by so doing we can gain anything eternal. We know only too well that such vain dissembling is only an abomination to Thee and that such insincere petitions will go no higher than our heads; they will never reach Thy holy dwelling place.

May we not spend our days as mere creatures of the dust, daily wending our way through a maze of temporal concerns, but with the higher aspect of a truly intelligent being may we spend them building for eternity. Help us not to daydream, or to live in a world of fantasy, making ourselves believe that we can freewheel into holiness. We cannot effortlessly rise to the heights of true Christian living. We cannot coast uphill; we cannot lift ourselves above the low

tendencies of the carnal mind by wishful thinking. A definite effort must be made; the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and the spirit cannot win without definite effort on our part.

Help us to be firm and unswerving in the profession of our hope, for Thou, the Giver of the promise, may be trusted. Open our eyes to see how each of us may best arouse others to love and good works, encouraging one another all the more because we see the day drawing nearer.

May we remember the days gone by when Thy Law was new and a vital force to us—but not for the purpose of building upon our past reputation—and in the long stretches of the way maintain the spiritual glow that at that time was so easy to generate, and add continually to our store of determination and never coast.

May we not throw away our confidence in the things which Thou hast promised, confident that it will bring us a sure reward. Help us to promote endurance, that we may do Thy will and secure what Thou hast promised. May we not be among those who shrink back and are lost, but may we have the faith to make life in the world to come our own. Help us to flee out of Babylon, this present world which is so rapidly drifting to destruction, and so save our souls from ultimate defeat. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

there is no absolute need to practice to keep *every* thought under control, or to watch *every* word, or to govern *every* action and reaction of our too temperamental dispositions; that we can win God's approval without so much attention to detail. But is this for us to say? Shall we take a chance and go by our own reasoning—and still expect His approval? It is just as reasonable as thinking we can put our hand into the fire and not get burned. This is the way Amos reasoned.

No. The law of God is definite, and there is no place for ease, no time for coasting, no room for spiritual complacency and indifference. We may claim to have the faith, but let us never forget the *demands* of that faith; true Bible faith is always more than mere words. It is commitment, surrender, and obedience. And the more we realize the potential of our faith and the ground of our hope, the more earnestly we will strive for purity of heart and holiness of life.

Lightly Esteeming . . .

This brings us to an aspect of coasting which is perhaps the most subtle and the most dangerous. It was written of Israel of old that they "lightly esteemed the Rock of [their] salvation" (Deut. 32:15). Can this be said of us? Can it be that in matters so grand and mighty as concern our eternal salvation, we feel but *light esteem*? Yes, we mean well; but in the forgetfulness of daily life, in the hustle and bustle of care-filled days, in the multitude of other involvements that fill our moments and days, it is possible. And if we allow ourselves the least opportunity to coast, if we relax our effort in things spiritual, if we allow ourselves to get further and further from the realm of the divine, thinking less and less of His thoughts, caring less and less for His interests, we shall find this same attitude overcoming us and we will "lightly esteem" the rock of our salvation—with the consequence that God will lightly esteem us.

Another prophet in Israel gave a similar rebuff: that a certain people had been given "the great things of [His] law," but they had counted them "a strange thing" (Hos. 8:12)—something alien, as though coming from a strange God and therefore without validity. Could this ever in any way be said of us? Is not our every disobedience just another way of saying that the law of God and the great things it contains are invalid so far as having any effect upon us?

What kind of value do we place on the faith that is

No coasting. What can we do to keep ourselves pressing, pushing, climbing in the footsteps of those who have gone before?

ours, the faith that has been handed to us, a faith for which we have not had to labor and dig, a faith for which *other* men and women have lived and died? To them it was a faith obtained at so great a price that it was worth the whole world—and more.

How much is it worth to us?

Then let us think further: What are we doing to make it our own? How much sacrifice are we willing to contribute? How much of time that we would naturally like to give to our own interests? Are we as willing to pay any price for staunch belief as were those who went before us? Are we ready and willing to place all our confidence in the Word of the Lord and to stake everything we have and are upon the reality of His promises?

How shameful indeed, if ever we are ashamed to be identified with it, something so grand and wonderful. Yet there is danger, for Jesus warned: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

Thoughtless Disregard

Perhaps, though, the greatest danger to us is not so much that of outright shame or denial as of quiet neglect or thoughtless disregard—coasting. In the midst of day-to-day life, Christ and all that He represents to us becomes common, ordinary, and the "something special" about our faith disappears. Oh, God forbid!

With so much done for us—by God, in calling us out of the darkness where millions and millions are perishing, and giving us a chance to participate in an infinitely better life in an infinitely better world; by Christ in showing us the right way to go; and by those of our own acquaintance who have been instrumental in teaching us the vital lessons of life—God forbid that the faith which calls us to all this should ever become common! Should we not rather be the proud possessors of hope in a world of

Let us beware, lest the sacred treasures we hold and handle become common and ordinary.

hopelessness, of light in a world of darkness, of solid and firm foundation in a world where the very roots of civilization are being challenged and there is no place sure? Did not the prophet Jeremiah write, "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jer. 9:24)?

Is not ours a glory and joy that should keep us continually pressing, climbing, invigorated and strong in the prospect of obtaining *everything beyond*? Is there not rightfully a woe upon us if ever we try to hide it, belittle it, deny or falsify it? Is there not rightly a woe upon us if ever we handle this great and priceless treasure of God, this life-giving Word of knowledge, deceitfully; if ever we knowingly misrepresent or misconstrue its letters of gold to suit our own notions or ideas; if ever we let it become commonplace and ordinary and so miss the power that it should wield in our lives?

In the Days of Uzzah

Oh, the danger of coasting, of letting that which is sacred and precious and powerful become common and ordinary. It was a lesson vividly demonstrated to forgetful Israelites in the days of Uzzah, and the warning was recorded for us. How often we have marveled that Uzzah could have been so openly disobedient to the law of God. Wasn't it written plainly, Thou "shall not touch any holy thing"? How dared he put his hand upon the ark, even if he was fearing for its safety! But then, we have thought, he did it (innocently, almost), in a moment of forgetfulness, when his instinctive thought for its safety came ahead of his awareness of the "Thus saith the Lord" that was written in the law.

But is there not also in this brief account another lesson—lest we forget the sacredness of that which we have seen so oft? Let us recount a bit of the history of this strange piece of furniture that Uzzah touched. This was the ark of the covenant, constructed under Moses' guidance and by God's explicit direction. This was the ark that contained the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. Some

four hundred years had gone by, but it was still sacred property, and the original commands concerning it were still in force. Remember how Phinehas and Hophni carried it proudly into battle against the Philistines to give them miraculous victory? They knew what great power came with that ark; but they forgot that the will of God was supreme; the ark was no instrument of magic; and in spite of its presence, Israel was defeated—and, worst of all, the holy ark was carried off into enemy territory.

But even then, it was still the ark of God, as they soon found out. No ordinary piece of furniture, this carefully ornamented wooden box. The Philistines moved it from town to town, only to find themselves plagued with trouble wherever it went. Finally, after some seven months of its distresses, they loaded it onto a new cart and sent it off toward Israel—they had had enough!

When the cart containing the precious ark, and drawn by two milk-cows, reached the town of Bethshemesh in Israel, it halted, and the people of the town declared a holiday to celebrate the wonder that had come their way. But in the midst of their celebrations, some of the people did not show due respect—they opened the lid and looked inside—and paid with their lives! Divine retribution, sudden and severe. The survivors were stunned. "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" they said, "and to whom shall he go up from us?" (II Sam. 6:19-20). The ark symbolized the presence of God among them, and He was no ordinary God. So the ark was taken to Kirjath-Jearim, where it was placed in the house of Abinadab.

Years went by—about seventy—and the time arrived that David was king. Where was the ark of God? Shouldn't it be brought back to the city of David and capital of the land? David made the arrangements for the trip, and Uzzah and Ahio, both sons of Abinadab, were on hand to help with the moving. Can't we picture the naturalness of the event, the ark jostling along on the new cart, Ahio walking in front and Uzzah alongside, to see that all went well? And wasn't it perfectly natural to look out for it, to put forth a hand when it shook too much? After all, by this time it was rather ordinary. Uzzah had, of course, grown up in his father's house, and he couldn't remember when the ark had not been around. So far as he was concerned, it "belonged" there. With the passing of time, the sacredness had been forgotten and this symbol of God's presence became ordinary.

But God does not approve of the holy being treated as something ordinary. And when "Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold

of it," this was flagrant transgression—even after years and years of living with it! "And God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God" (II Sam. 6:6-7). Surely Uzzah knew the law—they had complied with it as long as the ark had been in the house; everyone knew the law was "Don't touch!" But oh, it is so easy to forget when the sacred becomes commonplace.

Let us take the lesson to heart. God means what He says; and even though our acquaintance with the sacred be long, it is still sacred. And someday, if we forget and neglect too long, there will be divine retribution for us. It is true no less of the sacred things *we* handle, and which deserve *our* highest respect—not objects for us, but priceless treasures of hope and holiness. Let us beware lest they become ordinary and common to us. It is one of the greatest hazards of coasting.

Not Coasting But Climbing

Let us turn now to the more positive part of our subject for today and see one who was not coasting but climbing. "Not that I have secured it yet," writes this great traveler, "or already reached perfection, but I am pressing on to see if I can capture it, because I have been captured by Jesus Christ. Brothers, I do not consider that I have captured it yet, only, forgetting what is behind me, and straining toward what lies ahead, I am pressing toward the goal, for the prize to which God through Christ Jesus calls us upward" (Phil. 3:12-14, Goodspeed's translation).

These words were written by the weather-beaten, tough-minded, forward-looking, unfaltering apostle Paul. And they were not written in a comfortable study or at a pleasant summer retreat. They were written from prison.

This great hero had much he could have recounted with pride. He could have been coasting. Descended from Israel, he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. As to the law, he was of the strictest sect, a Pharisee. His zeal was undying. In fact, he was a persecutor of the church of Jesus Christ. Judging by the law of Moses, one would have had to call him blameless. He had much in which he might have gloried.

And by the time Paul wrote to the Philippians, he had already had many a notable experience on his new course, in the cause of Christ; he had already crossed many a formidable barrier and could have been telling many a tale of heroic adventure. He might have prefaced his remarks to his brethren with something like, "Now when I was young . . ." or "Back when I was contending for the faith in

True Bible faith is always more than mere words. It is commitment, surrender, and obedience.

Damascus I" did such and such; or "I really stood up well when it came to" such and such. He could have been coasting on momentum. But none of this for Paul. "I press on," was his slogan, "if by any means I might attain."

Still Climbing

It was said of a certain mountain climber, "When last seen, he was still climbing." We do not know Paul's story down to the last day of his mortal career, but this we know: "When last seen, he was still climbing." Still climbing, right to the end; this was the apostle Paul.

Hear this great climber's declaration: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, . . . if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." This was the supreme advantage of knowing Christ. Every other career had an end; not so when he was serving Christ. This fact kept this dynamic man charging full speed up the hill of perfection; he was sure of his way.

To know Christ, the "power of His resurrection," Paul was ready to endure the same suffering and death, "if by *any means* I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11). "If by *any means*"—said he, and he meant it. What mattered the beatings, peril and dire affliction along the way? Beyond lay the goal! What mattered if he should suffer disgrace, ignominy, shame, be ostracized as "the filth of the world, . . . the offscouring of all things"? (I Cor. 4:13). He was ready to suffer the loss of all for the supreme advantage of knowing Christ.

This captured dynamo, this steady, persevering climber determined that his would be the unshakable confidence of Job, who exulted: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and



"When last seen, he was still climbing."

that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (19:25-26). He resolved that he *could*—and that he *would*.

And what was his resolve? "This one thing I do." Paul's mind was not divided in ten different directions. He was wholly captured by the upward call of Christ, and so it was impossible for him to retain all of the world or even some of its allurements in his mind's eye. He deemed everything that did not serve this one hope as useless.

"Not that I have...already reached perfection, . . . only, forgetting what is behind me, and straining toward what lies ahead, I am pressing toward the goal." He not only put the past behind him; he left it there and *forgot* it. No coasting on momentum for this great apostle—when last seen, he was indeed *still climbing!*

Our Duty Today

Even as Paul, this is our duty today, to forget the things that are behind, to retain only what will help us as we go forward. The past is irreparable; only the present is ours.

Still climbing! The ideals are higher, always higher. However high we may have climbed, we can still go higher. Higher levels of thought and aspiration always beckon the Christian. The Lord has set before us an ideal of character; He has opened up dim and enticing vistas of possibility which leave us, after every conquest, with new dominions yet to be won, new summits yet to be conquered. The reward of every new victory is a greater vision of further glory. It is this incentive that keeps us climbing, still climbing. Faith looks forward, and so does every power that propels faith. All our efforts are directed toward that time when the promises of God shall become glorious reality and all the ends of the earth shall "see the salvation of our God." Coasting, traveling on the power of past momentum, will never get us to the top of the hill of perfection. We will never be able to *coast* through the gates into the city. If we arrive at that point, it will be by steady, steady pressing, with all the power that faith can muster.

Power To Climb

Where shall we get added power that will prevent coasting? Perhaps the best source lies in a fresh encounter with the heroes of faith from other days, those who, when last seen, were "still climbing." Will we not be stimulated as we are "reflecting upon

the outcome of their life and work," and "follow the example of their faith" (Heb. 13:7, NEB)? Even before the time of Christ, one generation was building upon the faith of another. How often we hear them addressing the God of "Abraham, Isaac, and Israel." The fathers in the faith were a vital source of strength to those who sought to carry on with the same fervor.

There is another source of power we must never forget: What can give us more press-ability than the vision of the glory ahead, a glory that we can have for our *very own!* Without this divine motivation we soon fall to coasting; *with* it we forge ahead! And the pleasures of that world will not fade and end but will grow richer and better with every passing aeon.

*When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
There's no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.*

Shouldn't the thought of such a life keep us far, far from any impulse to coast? Even a short distance of coasting is exceedingly dangerous, for it slows our progress; and when time is so critical, when the last bit of pressing may mean the difference between eternal *life* and eternal *death*—who can afford to relax?

God has not given to all the same potential, nor does He expect the same accomplishments from all. We may not be able to accomplish as much as some who have gone before us. But we must do all we can. We must use *all* the potential God has given us, and *climb*, not *coast*. The more we concentrate on climbing, the more forward thrust we will have and the higher we will climb. We recall the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:24: "The disciple is not above his master"; the pupil is not above his teacher. But when his training is complete, the pupil must have reached his teacher's level.

Here is our calling, our hope, our challenge, and our ambition. And it *can* be done. All the great good work of the people of God is not in the past. Some of it is very much in the *present*. How can it be otherwise, if *we* expect someday to stand approved with those who went before us? How could we ever stand in their company unless we have followed their faith?

Oh! Let us keep climbing, climbing, climbing—it is the only way to reach the summit—and LIFE! MM

A man's worth in God's sight is according to his conduct.

*A year after Mt. St. Helens' great eruption, we do well
to reflect on the power that was displayed*

THE FURY OF THE MOUNTAIN*

by Donald L. Roberts

MAY 18, 1980, will remain etched in the minds of citizens of the Pacific Northwest as a day of staggering dimensions. For that was the day of the terrible fury of Mt. St. Helens, when indeed a mountain fell on men.

A century of volcanic buildup exploded in a day, as more than a cubic mile of material was discharged into the air—a ton of debris for every man, woman and child on the globe—and the top 1,270 feet of Mt. St. Helens disappeared. What preceded that dizzying manifestation of natural force? Scientists calculated that inside the mountain an estimated 55 million tons of ground water—13 billion gallons—had collected at temperatures up to 424 degrees Fahrenheit, trapped between the surface and the approaching magma chamber, like a giant pressure cooker.

And the lid was blown away, as the climactic shock opened a crater two miles long and a mile wide, and unparalleled devastation inundated a countryside which had already been convulsed by some 10,000 earthquakes in the previous eight weeks. The terrible fury pulverized rock and sent a “stone wind” of 100 miles an hour across the immediate environs. Trees weighing tons went down like proverbial matchsticks before the force of that wind whose real speed, because of atmospheric conditions, was more like 300 miles an hour.

The grim reaper followed in the train of that cataclysmic onslaught as human beings, animals, trees and countryside fell before its fury. Some of those who died of suffocation were later found to have succumbed from about a teacupful of ingested ash, a minute portion of the millions of tons of pulverized rock catapulted into the air that unforgettable day.

Though the eruption soon became an interna-

tional oddity, and the focal point for much national attention, those who lived through, or have seen the results of that day, are still stunned by the destructive natural power. However, we cannot allow the event of Mt. St. Helens to be filed away in geology textbooks, or merely become concerned about possible future ash fallouts.

There is a certain teaching of the mountain to be considered. The Christian needs to see lessons in this event. The universal response that came from many in the region of the mountain was, “What is man?” How insignificant a creature he is, thrust against the backdrop of such power! The Psalmist carried the question to its fullest, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Ps. 8:3-4). Yet that spectacularly visible display of destruction must be balanced by the recognition of the equally overwhelming concept of construction. “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth” (Ps. 33:6). “What is man?” and what capacity does his mind have to grasp such a thought?

The Psalmist called on creation itself to praise the Lord: “For he commanded, and they were created” (Ps. 148:5). “Praise the Lord from the earth. . . Stormy wind fulfilling his word: mountains, and all hills. . .” (Ps. 148:7, 8, 9). Should not Mt. St. Helens be a sign to this unbelieving generation? A race, boasting of its weapons of overkill, has now been confronted by real energy, a terrible fury, over which it has no control, with no button to push or not push.

Return to the consequences of that day. Huge stones were found five miles from the mountain, coughed up from hundreds of feet inside Mt. St. Helens, while rocks three stories high landed nearer to the site. That stone wind lashed out at D-8 Cater-

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pillar tractors, three to ten miles away stripping them of tracks and blades, shredding solid steel to confetti, and scattering it for miles. Search teams and doctors, performing autopsies on recovered victims, described the results of that force on human bodies in terms too terrible to repeat.

The towering cloud of ash rose 12 miles over the volcano and left areas to the east awash in waves of ash. Cars self-destructed from the intake of that ash, people groped in a darkness akin to that of Pharaoh's day, and modern society screeched to a halt from the ashen sallies of Mt. St. Helens. More than 120,000 acres of wasted forest land, millions of dollars of loss in crops, serious damage to fisheries, and the endless nuisance and cost of road cleanup have marked the volcano's target areas for years to come.

Countless are the stories of people who fled from the fury, and others of tragedy as people failed to heed warnings and entered too close to what would become the scene of their deaths.

Foremost of these was a certain man named Harry Truman, the blithe spirit of Spirit Lake, who urged reporters on May 11 to return and visit him. Spirit Lake was his home, and "I'll never leave it." But on May 18 the destructive force of 26.5 megatons of TNT swept out, burying him and his lodge beneath tons of debris and mud.

Controversy remains over the state of preparedness before the eruption, but who could have imagined what finally happened? Somehow there was an attitude that "It won't happen," and no one could have conceived of the possibility that human beings would be disintegrated seven miles from the mountain or asphyxiated by volcanic ash 16 miles away. Had the eruption occurred on May 17 many more would have died, for owners were allowed into the Red Zone to check on their property, though one wary state trooper said, "We hope the good Lord will keep that mountain from giving us any trouble."

Although far removed in terms of miles, Mt. St. Helens and the Persian Gulf remind us that we live in the presence of powers far beyond human control. Even so we all seem hypnotized by the routine of daily life. As one couple saw the eruption 11 miles away, they raced back in their vehicle to escape the ominous, black mass behind them. They warned one family who were casually preparing breakfast, but the warning was not heeded.

The idea of warning in the Scriptures encompasses the thought of advanced information, as well as divine instruction. One of the classic illustrations relates to Noah: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear,

prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Heb. 11:7). In so many words God told Noah, "Something is going to happen to this earth!" Though ridiculed by his generation, Noah responded to the warning and did something about it.

The prophets warned Israel and Judah, with but moderate success; Joseph responded to divine warning and fled to Egypt with the child Jesus. John the Baptist warned his generation of the wrath to come, and Paul warned the Ephesian elders of doctrinally dangerous days before them. To accept warning is to act in faith and see the unseen as real.

For years the Church has debated the minutia of eschatology, but seldom has it really taken seriously that mandate from the Mount of Olives, our Lord's clear warning about the end times. Many have charted the chaos of the last days, yet few have responded to the warnings of the Word of God and world events. We are like some of the photographers who wanted to get closer to Mt. St. Helens for better pictures and dismissed the warnings of wiser folk.

One "prophet" was present at Mt. St. Helens, David Johnston the volcanologist. On March 28 he told a group of reporters, "This is an extremely dangerous place to be. If it were to erupt now, we would die." Less than two months later, he died at his post some five miles from the mountain. On that awesome day he shouted into his radio microphone, "Vancouver, Vancouver! This is it! . . ." He and his car simply vanished before that terrible fury.

As the Christian sees the clock of human history winding down, he must step briskly through life, knowing that time is running out, and that it is not merely a prophetic cliché of the ages to sense that "the coming of the Lord draweth near." He awaits that trumpet call of God which will suddenly announce "World, World, this is it. . . He is coming!"

Paul in one context wrote, "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them. . . and they shall not escape." He could also say, "Be strictly careful then about the life you lead; act like sensible men, not like thoughtless; make the very most of your time, for these are evil days" (Eph. 5:15-16, Moffatt). The apostle grasped the future and its possibilities of danger, even as he determined to improve every moment of the present.

Let Mt. St. Helens be a sign to us of the power of God and the unpredictability of life. Heeding the warnings of Scripture, let us persevere in the work of the Lord (I Cor. 15:58), knowing even now that the "great day of the Lord is near. . ." (Zeph. 1:14).MM

Kindergarten or College?

SCHOOL DAYS! Probably most everyone looks back on them with mixed emotions and a somewhat sketchy memory. Remember those relatively carefree and undemanding first years? Little was required, and the subjects necessitated the minimum of concentrated study. But the years kept creeping by and school terms kept pace—sixth, seventh, eighth, and so on. What a difference! The subjects became increasingly difficult, and study much more time-demanding. Oh yes, there were a few students who dropped out when their age allowed it, but nearly everyone continued to forge ahead, with several exerting the extra effort necessary to graduate at the head of their class. College beckoned to many; a broader education, or a rewarding profession were the motivating factors. They had specific plans for their futures, and they did whatever necessary to make their dreams become reality.

Now what does all this have to do with us? We have chosen to enroll in God's school of learning, a school with a curriculum unparalleled and unexcelled, and a teaching staff highly qualified. Basically, the pattern of this school is similar to that experienced during our former education. God, too, requires that we advance step by step, grade by grade, ever onward and upward to greater moral and spiritual achievement. Kindergarten or low grade students will never receive the coveted diploma of excellence.

There is, however, one major deviation from our former school days. Where we were then allowed to choose at least some of our major subjects, now we find it mandatory to adhere strictly to the curriculum laid out by God and His inspired spokesmen. However, we can be assured that the courses required of us are matched to our individual talent and ability. God knows our capabilities and will never require us to bear a load beyond our strength. Even so, the educational process will test our mettle severely at times and temptation will be strong to seek an easier way and deviate from the stern inflexibility of the course.

Do you remember, though, when we first agreed to the conditions necessary to enter the Lord's

school? Remember that initial flush of fiery zeal and high resolve? Determination to graduate with honors enthused us to the point where nothing seemed too difficult, no task, no course of study beyond us to perform. Our hearts were fixed on attaining the ultimate: the opportunity of participating in higher levels of study in the New World when this earth is annexed to heaven. The thought of a bright and glorious eternity, going from strength to strength and from grand to ever grander heights of knowledge and understanding captured our imagination. But, I wonder. Just how well have we done thus far?

Every earnest, wholehearted student will find self-evaluation and honest analysis an invaluable aid in ascertaining his position and actual scholastic standing. Does every passing school day find us adding new gems of wisdom to the storehouse of our mind? Remember, the Textbook provided us by our Heavenly Father and His appointed teachers admonishes that we are to seek diligently; yes, we are to search as for hid treasure to acquire this true wisdom. Are we taking great delight in these deep and beautiful truths, or are we content to just idly skim the surface? Are we just exerting kindergarten effort when our hearts could be tuned to higher and grander achievement? Have we forgotten about God's college-level work and its glorious, eternal opportunities?

The most important aspect of the course we have enrolled in is the stipulated standard of conduct, which requires that each and every besetting sin be eradicated totally from our lives. That means there can be no angry outburst; impatience must go, along with the envy, the hurt feelings and a host of other besetments human nature is so prone to. No small task this, but it must be accomplished if we hope to graduate and realize our dream of unlimited opportunity in the college of tomorrow. But, so often we grow weary of the constant struggle, become frustrated and discouraged. And with discouragement in command we utter the age-old

(Continued on page 21)




And Still She Speaks


Part Two

Though the ministry of Rev. Maud Hembree closed some forty years ago, her words still speak to our needs today.


The following lines are extracts from her sermons, discussions, talks, comments. Seen together, they convey her practical approach to life and her keen appreciation of eternal values—which we trust will be of benefit to our readers.



I wonder how many of us are watching our thoughts and trying to keep them right; for as a man thinketh, so is he. A person never rises above his thoughts. By keeping down imaginations, putting away pride, envy, jealousy and bitterness, conquering impatience, ruling and governing sensitiveness, we will bring our thoughts into harmony with the Word, get a new mind and rise higher. Our own ideas, reasonings, whims and notions make us excuse ourselves when in the wrong and keep us from giving cheerfully to the Lord. What a wonderful work to cast down evil imaginations, and let God's Word rule our minds.

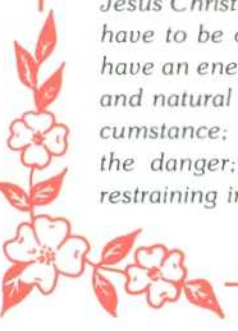


The wisdom of God is the only thing that can expand the mind and drive away the low, groveling, sensual things; that can expand the mind to take in pure thoughts and lofty aspirations. His Word alone can do it.




Certain things are lawful, if a person keeps in subjection and keeps the thoughts right. One goes out for a little rest—it is all right to rest—but it is quite natural to throw off restraint when we relax. To take time for rest and recreation is beneficial for our physical well-being, yet when on a vacation if not careful and vigilant, we might not be doing all to the glory of God.


A soldier has a restraining influence over him all the time, especially if preparing for battle. As a soldier of Jesus Christ, we never can lay down our weapons; we have to be on our watch and guard all the time. We have an enemy always at hand—self, our natural ways and natural thoughts. It does not matter what the circumstance; we must be on guard all the time. That is the danger; we get too careless and leave off the restraining influence.




We think fine gold is a choice thing, and so it is. How people try to hoard it up. Gold is wonderful, they think; it is wonderful to have gold. But this wisdom of God we are learning day by day is more precious than rubies; yes, "all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." Why is it more precious? Because it will give life!



We want to put ourselves in the control of a power higher than our own. God tells us to listen; we cannot go where we please; we have to consult the Divine Record. People spend their time as they please, playing cards, going to movies. We cannot do that; we must feel we are in subjection to a power that we must obey.




We should always keep in mind the contrast between the present and the eternal; the contrast between the little petty trials of life, and immortality, what it will be to live in that wonderful day. If we keep that comparison in mind, it will keep us from falling by the way.



Search and try your ways. Ask yourself every hour, Am I walking in the footsteps of Jesus? Am I doing as Jesus would do under like circumstances? Am I becoming dead to the world, its ways and its folly, its jesting, joking and foolish talking?

How few realize what this Bible says, to not let jesting nor foolish talking be once named among you, as becometh saints. We do not have to have a long face; we are to "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice"—but not in foolish things. We must rejoice in the Lord, not rejoice in earthly things.



"Watch!" Watch what? Watch our thoughts and feelings, watch out for pride, watch for those roots of bitterness, watch lest any root of evil come in, watch that doubt does not lead us astray, watch that drowsiness does not creep over us, watch lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping, not wide awake. "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13:33).

We are dependent on God for the very life we live and the breath we possess. If we honor Him, it will have its influence on the young generation and they will grow up with that influence. Although we did not know the law of God when young, we are thankful for parents who had reverence. It had an influence on us.



Watch the little things; we are more liable to choke on the little things—the little bones—than on the bigger ones. The little fish bones are more dangerous than the larger ones. So in this spiritual life, there is not much danger that we will murder someone, or steal something; but we must watch on the little things. We must be more careful, if we want God's loving, protecting care over us.



Cease to do evil, put away the jealous thoughts that contaminate, and the wrong feelings, and the pride that rules the human mind; cease conforming to the world in fashion, pride and foolishness. Then you can see that you are growing.

We need to watch against pride and not change with the fashions of this world. Naturally we are just as prone to conform to the world as water is to running down hill. Womankind especially are prone to follow the fashion, and we need to watch.



Men and women growing into holiness are afraid of anything that disturbs their peace of mind.



God's thoughts are so elevating, so grand, so noble, so pure, so holy; while man's natural thoughts, born of the dust, of the clay, are of no worth; they are vain, proud and corrupt in every way.



We must climb the hill of perfection. We cannot stand still. If we do not go forward, we will go backward. We must be constantly moving ahead in this way of life. If we are, we are sure of this promised rest, sure of an eternal home.

We must take up our cross and deny ourselves of evil things, deny ourselves of what we like to read if it is not to the glory of God, deny ourselves of those things that we like when they are not to God's glory, deny ourselves by refraining our tongue from speaking that which is not to the glory of God.



The Lord disciplines us for our eternal good; He has more than this life in view. He does not discipline those who are concerned only about this life; He lets them do as they please. But if we want to be His sons, if we want the eternal weight of glory, if we want to follow Jesus, we must receive discipline.



To cling to self is to endanger our eternal life. The law of God never brought us any trouble. It is clinging to our own ways that brings us trouble. We can look back at the times when perhaps our feelings were hurt at something somebody said, and what miserable feelings we had. They did not bring us joy and comfort. God's wonderful law teaches us never to become hurt over anything.

What a blessing to get off Blue Avenue and not have blue spells every so often, or a spell of anger.



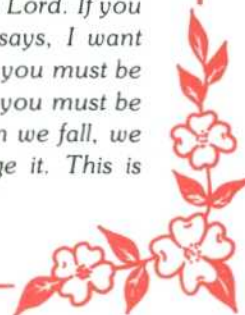
We must practice religion every day—not a long-faced religion, and not a Sunday religion, but a religion that is part of everyday life.



If satisfied to be like the insect—eat today and perish tomorrow—we can; but if we want to live, we must apply our hearts to wisdom.



A "scant measure" is abominable to the Lord. If you cheat in selling, it is abominable. God says, I want honesty. If you lose in dollars and cents, you must be honest. If you do not have this honesty, you must be humble enough to acknowledge it. When we fall, we must be humble enough to acknowledge it. This is how we "walk humbly with [our] God."





What Is Truth?

The Great Infidel Discussion



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

Section II, Part Three

IN THIS SECTION of the debate held in the year 1890 between our founder Rev. L. T. Nichols and the great infidel debater Professor W. F. Jamieson, Mr. Nichols continues to take the lead, making the first address, which Mr. Jamieson then answered. The discussion at this point centered around the second thesis:

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

L. T. Nichols, Affirmed.
W. F. Jamieson, Denied.

The last two nights of the debate (October 1 and October 2) were given to this topic. The following is the third of four parts of an edited distillation of this final portion of the discussion.

Mr. Nichols' Address

Tonight closes this discussion that we have been at for the past seven nights; and it is with pleasure that I stand before you for the purpose of calling your attention to a further consideration of things revealed in the Holy Oracles of truth.

I told you in the beginning of this discussion that my friend would not touch one of my arguments, or endeavor to handle the explanations that I made of those contradictions and absurdities. Has he done it? You know he has not. Now, what is the matter? What is the question that we have come here to discuss? Is it that science is a great moral and intellectual teacher? I tell you, nay. The question is, "Resolved that the New Testament teachings are all moral and elevating." I hope, then, that our worthy chairman will tonight keep our opponent in his place, as I shall call upon these moderators to call

upon our opponent to follow me in these moral teachings, and show where there is any immorality in the New Testament. I might follow him throughout his meanderings, and carry your minds back thousands and millions of years, when our world began, but what has that to do with this question? Pray, tell me how does that prove the New Testament moral or immoral? He delivered an oration. He delivered a fine speech, but it has nothing whatever to do with the question. The most of it as regards science I endorse, but what has that to do with our subject? Does that prove immorality in the Bible? If you could show me that every individual in this city was moral and elevating to the society around them, it would have nothing to do whatever with the Bible or the New Testament teachings. You see he is afraid (to all appearances at least) to grapple with this question, and come right square up to the mark. Did we not produce the testimony of one of their great and terrible immoralities that they bring

against that book, "if any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," and did we not give you the Greek word and its definition which harmonized it? Did he grapple with it? No, not at all. Did he grapple with the testimonies we brought before you? Not one of them. What is the matter? Do you suppose that His running off on his sky-scraping theories will help this matter any?

Now tonight we shall bring forward some more testimonies which they hold as teaching immoralities. We want our opponent to take these questions up, and handle them, and let us have one night's discussion instead of listening to anecdotes and flowery speeches.

I shall proceed now, instead of following him through geology—we do not propose to take up the age of the earth, or go through physiology or astronomy, or any other of the arts or sciences. If that were the question, and Mr. Jamieson wanted to put in such a speech, why in the name of common sense did he not challenge me, "Resolved that science is against the Bible," and I would have met him on that. I am not afraid of him on science, not a bit. But if our moderators will bear me out in this, it is contrary to the rules of discussion to drag in any long flowery speeches not relevant to the question. Let him attend to the question we came here to debate.

The people have come here to hear a discussion in reference to the Bible, in reference to its teachings. When he took the lead, I followed him chapter and verse right through, as far as my time would allow, and answered his questions. But when it comes my turn to take the lead and affirm this question, he slips around the question, and flies off on flowery beds of ease to tell you something that he, and you and I know but little about, and some of which he knows nothing about. Away back there when he says the moon was inhabited, was he up there? When it was so far from the earth that it looked like a silvery light to him, was he there? No, sir. I am prepared if he wants to discuss that, as I said, to prove that scientific studies disagree in reference to the matter. But I am not going to bring that into this discussion. So much for his speech which he compiled from Herbert Spencer. In its place it is all right; but it is irrelevant here.

We shall call your attention, then, to another immoral teaching that they claim is presented to us in the Oracles of Truth. Colossians 3:18: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." He stops there, but I do not. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." The in-

fidels try to make you believe that a man could come reeling along and get drunk and a woman would have to submit to him anyway. No, sir, nothing of the kind is taught in the Bible. The woman is to submit "as it is fit in the Lord."

I have not told any anecdotes, but in every instance where he handles the Bible, it is like the boy that wanted to get the best of his father. So he had some cotton, and his father came along and said, "What are you doing?" "Why, I'm going to get cider out of cotton," says the boy. "You can't do it," said his father. And the boy says, "I will show you." He had a pail of cider there, into which he dipped the cotton, and then squeezed it out and said, "There, don't you see, I can get cider out of cotton?" That is the way my friend gets discrepancies out of the Bible; he puts them in there before he can get them out.

He does not desire to go back to the original with me. The truth is worth seeking for. It is worth more than anything else. We find, then, instead of this testimony teaching that you have to submit yourselves to a drunkard, the Colossian brethren were commanded to love their wives as their own selves. I would like to know if a man who gets drunk is keeping this commandment in the Lord, which says, "Be not drunk with wine, . . . but be filled with the spirit." We find, then, instead of its teaching any such doctrine as the infidels endeavor to set before you, it teaches entirely another doctrine, a doctrine that is both moral and elevating.

We will call your attention to another passage of Scripture upon the same subject: "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." If you turn with me to Ephesians, fifth chapter, you will see what Paul says in reference to this matter. He declares (verses 26, 27 and 28), "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." Isn't that good enough if you love your wives as you do your own selves? "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh." Friend Jamieson gave that verse as a contradiction of "whosoever hateth not his father, mother, brother, sister," and so on. But there is no contradiction whatever. I cleared that away with that original Greek word in a former speech.

Paul continues, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." But mark you, Paul is teaching us something more than what would appear on the surface. "This is a great

mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." He is not speaking so much of our wives as of Christ and His Bride, "the Church." He is the Head and the woman represents the church. And now we the Bride, the woman, have to be subject to Christ, to be saved. No difficulty whatever. The difficulty is with our friend. He has talked with his eyes shut so long, as a trans-medium, that it has left him with an inability to fairly grapple with this matter.

Can a man be justified by faith alone? Yes, we say, by a *living* faith, as opposed to works which will not justify. But the works spoken of in Romans and Galatians were the works of the law of Moses, and not the works of the law of faith. A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the working of faith. The Bible says "faith without works is dead." And consequently, when we let Paul be his own expositor, let him tell his own story, there is no difficulty here whatever.

We pass on from that to another one.

"It is not permitted that women should speak in the churches." If you will go with me to I Corinthians 14:34, where you will find that recorded; and if you will pass back a little with me to the 27th and 28th verses, you will find that it is not permitted that men should speak in the church either, except under certain conditions. I want to know what he is talking about. Friend Jamieson snatches this out and endeavors to make a point. But what is Paul talking about? He says, "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God." It was speaking with *tongues* that Paul had reference to,

and not a woman speaking in the church or exhorting others. No, no, it is the qualifying terms that tell you what Paul was saying. There is no trouble or difficulty whatever here if you only apply the qualifying terms, take Paul at his own word and let him explain it himself, as every honest man ought to do. We find no difficulty, so we pass on to others.

Luke 12:51, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay; but rather division; for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father, and the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law," and what a hell on earth, as he said. But no, it is not that at all! Here is a prophetic teaching. It tells what true faith is going to do; that on account of it there is going to be a division. Friend Jamieson himself has by teaching his theory of Free Thought made division in more cases than one; he has caused a division between a certain husband and wife and thus created what he calls hell on earth; but is Mr. Jamieson to blame because he has taught what he believes to be true and that has made a division? By no means. I do not blame him, neither should he blame the true faith because it has caused divisions. The truth has caused a division, so that the wife of a brother who is now here hid his clothes to keep him from coming to this discussion; but are we to blame the truth for this, or am I to be blamed because I teach the principles I find in the Divine Record? Because this makes a division, is that anything against the record, or the author of the record, or the teacher of the record? No, the difficulty is on the other side.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace?" He did not come to give peace; is not this the fact? His mission here was not to bring about peace; but there is a time coming when He will bring about peace. That good time coming is not very far distant. And to that good time coming I would like to call your attention. We find, when we read the Divine testimony, that at that time Christ will be a king over all the earth, and be a king of peace. If I were only to tell you what I thought these things meant, then you would have no reason to have faith in them whatever; but I have not in a single instance placed myself here as an authority. The Bible tells its own story.

You find recorded in Hebrews 2:7-9: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all

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things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." This is spoken just as Romans 4:17 says, "God . . . calleth those things which be not as though they were." He spoke of it as though it were already an accomplished fact. It is a special use of prophetic language, as in Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulders: . . . and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever." This is a prophetic statement. It is fully explained when he says, "He calleth those things which be not as though they were."

And we find that the time when all things would be subject to Him is future. As II Peter declares, in chapter 3, verses 8 and 9, "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night." This is the time when Christ shall come back to this earth. He is going to come back to this earth, and that day is going to be a day of peace.

In Psalms 72:6-7, it declares, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." You see, this Book teaches us that there is a good time coming. No, Christ came not to send peace when He came the first time; but He is a man of peace, and He is a man of war too. When He returns to earth, He will come as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, conquering and to conquer. Before He can have peace, He must conquer the world, and when He goes forth to conquer, He will conquer the entire world, and "shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (Ps. 72:8-9, 11).

No wonder I am happy! I am happy today, happy every day, happy all my life through. My people are happy, too, and no wonder. In view of this eternal, good time coming, who is not happy? All who believe in it are indeed happy.

Go to Zechariah 2:10-12. "Sing and rejoice, O

daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again." This time spoken of will be a day of glory, a day of peace, when the righteous shall flourish in the abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth. This is the time spoken of as the time of peace from one end of the earth to the other. In Zechariah 14:4 and 5, it declares unto us: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." We find that recorded. Turn to it and read it for yourselves. I have only one short half hour. I wish I had a week. I feel more like talking tonight. (At this point the bell rang, which announced that the speaker's half hour had expired.)

Mr. Jamieson's Reply

More boasting. I will remind my friend of that passage of his Bible, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." I told you in my speech on science of the connection between science and moral influence. I quoted so insignificant a man as Herbert Spencer. All that, in his judgment, passed for nothing. I gave him all the latitude he chose to take in his affirmative. Now he flutters. He rushes off into Psalms and to Scott—anywhere he pleases, and it is all right because that is discussing the question! If I relate an anecdote, or indulge in any "flowery speeches," that is not the question, no matter how pertinently it may illustrate any given point in our discussion. What is the use of getting mad about it? Just keep good-natured. "I have not told an anecdote yet," he says, and so he told us, "I will tell you one." And such an anecdote as he did give us! Wasn't it a beauty? I would advise him never, never to tell another. He is better in another line. I think he can

talk more eloquently about big horns and little horns. I think that is his stronghold. He had better keep to the kind of work he can do. But if it is right for him to tell a cotton anecdote, isn't it right for me to tell one that is not cotton but that is all wool and a yard wide?

How much of his talk was to the point? "I am happy today, my people are happy"—how pertinent that is! "Therefore the New Testament teachings are all moral and elevating." There is no connection between the two. You can see he is off the track.

In my last speech I told you my object was to show the moral and elevating influence of science. In the last half hour, how much has Mr. Nichols done to show that the teachings of the New Testament are all moral and elevating? Not one thing. He did better in his very first speech after he took the lead in this discussion. He seemed to fire off all the ammunition he had on hand. Since then we are only getting a rehash of the former debate.

Swedenborg had his double meanings, one spiritual and hidden. My friend has a double meaning. Let me call his attention to Mark 12:25, and I ask the question whether this is a moral and elevating teaching or not? I say this is immoral; what say you? And if I show but one—but I have shown many—that settles the question against him. "When they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."

Now turn to Luke 20:34-35. Jesus said: "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage." I pronounce that immorality of the basest sort. There are his moralities; right in his New Testament. Those passages in connection with the doctrine of the immaculate conception have given rise to much immorality. Do you doubt it?

How about these words of Jesus': "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:34). And, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one" (Luke 22:36). Then, "Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear" (John 18:10). But did not Jesus, we have been asked, rebuke Peter for this act? and thus condemn the use of the sword? Yes, but why should his apostles have swords if they were not to be used? After that, Jesus evidently thought discretion was the better part of valor; evidently this was the case.

"Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on

thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:39). And, "If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (Matt. 5:40). "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (Matt. 5:41). "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matt. 5:42).

Are there any followers of Jesus according to the plain instructions of these teachings? My friend Nichols said the old dispensation is done away. Is it? Read this: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" (Acts 2:44-45).

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need" (Acts 4:32,34-35).

Night after night my friend has paltered with us in a double sense, from English to Hebrew and Greek, and back again to English, playing peek-a-boo between the living and the dead languages. If the English did not suit him, he imagined it was divine providence that helped him out of every difficulty by supplying just the right word at just the right time. His God must have raised him up for this express purpose. Wherever the English Bible suits him as it stands, he is willing to let it stand. Where it does not suit him, off he plunges into the realms of the dead languages, and comes back smiling with just the right word every time. He has asked us if it is not singular. I admit it is, altogether too singular. The next thing we will hear, will be the "Holy Bible by God, revised and greatly improved by T. L. Nichols." Get that new Bible printed, he ought to do it; it will be interesting at least, for we will see him moving like lightning from English to Hebrew and Greek, back and forth like a shuttle-cock. Strange performance!

But to the present hour, God has been utterly unable to get His Word to a perishing race in such shape that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein"—until He went into partnership with Mr. Nichols. The Almighty has had a hard time of it with his awkward squad of bungling translators; but at last Brother Nichols was born, the man who can

make it all straight and easy, as easy—to quote his beautiful language—as “falling off a log.” I suppose that is from the Greek too.

Did Jesus teach poverty or not? Go to the book. They had all things in common, sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need. Peter said, “Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? They had forsaken houses, lands, kindred, even wives and children. This their master commended. In as forcible terms as language would allow, He indicated who could not be His disciples. “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

MM

Kindergarten or College?

(Continued from page 13)

lament, “I can’t possibly do it. God asks too much.” Then, to our shame, we retreat once again to the comparative ease of kindergarten, contenting ourselves with a milk diet instead of the strength-giving strong meat provided by our Textbook.

Most certainly everyone is going to fail the daily tests at times, but does that give us an excuse to quit trying? Isn’t that what life is all about? Our Heavenly Father doesn’t condemn us for falling, but He does judge us severely if we fail to get up and try, try again. Why not spend more time studying the Textbook? Read how our illustrious teachers victoriously completed their courses. None of them sailed through on flowery beds of ease; they failed at times, too. But they had the courage and perseverance to try again.

If the record of successful finishers recorded in the Textbook is not enough, just take a long look around you. Study the examples of your dedicated fellow students in today’s class room. Yes, they are struggling with their daily tests, too; but you don’t see them getting discouraged and quitting. They would be more than willing to help you with your homework, if you would only ask. Don’t you remember that in unity there is strength? Oh, reach out and grasp that helping hand. Accept the proffered help, the admonition or stern rebuke, and leave behind forever the stunting confines of kindergarten. There is just too much to lose by staying in kindergarten—and incomparably more to gain by an all-out effort.

So What Do You Know?

Matching Bible Objects

In the left hand column are Bible objects generally associated with one of the persons listed in the right hand column. Can you match them?

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. parched corn | _____A. Peter |
| 2. shoe latchet | _____B. Daniel |
| 3. ark | _____C. Benjamin |
| 4. fleece | _____D. Jeremiah |
| 5. axe head | _____E. John the Baptist |
| 6. chains and bonds | _____F. Gideon |
| 7. bulrushes | _____G. Esau |
| 8. sling | _____H. Ruth |
| 9. dry, mouldy bread | _____I. Moses |
| 10. manger | _____J. Elijah |
| 11. rod | _____K. Jesus |
| 12. lions | _____L. Isaiah |
| 13. mantle | _____M. Jeremiah |
| 14. colorful coat | _____N. David |
| 15. marred girdle | _____O. Aaron |
| 16. pottage | _____P. Joseph |
| 17. cock | _____Q. Elisha |
| 18. live coal | _____R. Noah |
| 19. silver cup | _____S. Joshua |
| 20. yoke | _____T. Paul |

Answers:

A. 17 (Luke 22:60); B. 12 (Daniel 6:16); C. 19 (Gen. 44:2); D. 15 (Jer. 13:7); E. 2 (Luke 3:16); F. 4 (Judges 6:36-40); G. 16 (Gen. 25:30); H. 1 (Ruth 2:14); I. 7 (Ex. 2:3); J. 13 (II Kings 2:8); K. 10 (Luke 2:16); L. 18 (Isa. 6:6-7); M. 20 (Jer. 28:10); N. 8 (I Sam. 17:40); O. 11 (Ex. 7:12); P. 14 (Gen. 37:3); Q. 5 (II Kings 6:1, 5); R. 3 (Gen. 8:1); S. 9 (Joshua 9:12, 15); T. 6 (Acts 26:29).

What is the secret of steady advancement in this special school in which we have enrolled? Think about the goal, the prospects of advancement in the age just ahead. Read about it. Dream about it. Visualize, if you can, a little of what it will mean to enter that new era that is so soon to dawn. Yes, before us lies the realization of all God’s promises to us—unlimited educational possibilities and unlimited time in which to enjoy the reward of our efforts. It’s just much too good to miss! Shall you be there? Shall I?

MM



Sins That Separate

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"
—Isaiah 59:1-2.

WE HAVE here an extremely solemn and heart-searching word to ponder. God's displeasure, His withdrawing of Himself is a shocking aspect of truth we seldom consider, yet it is found on page after page of Scripture. In the Book of Hosea (5:15) God says, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." Not only is God displeased; God has withdrawn.

What is it that veils the light of His countenance from His children? The answer is a single word: sin. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1).

While there are no "little sins," while the slightest deviation, unconfessed and unforsaken, will in the end defeat us, it is nevertheless true that some sins are more dangerous than others. In this category of unusual hazards or "great transgressions" the Psalmist lists "presumptuous sins." David brings to view his dread of these when he exclaims: "Keep back thy servant also from *presumptuous sins*: let them not have dominion over me" (Ps. 19:13).

The definition of presumptuous is: "venturing upon without permission; blind or overweening confidence or self-assertion; passing the bounds of good breeding, respect or reverence; arrogant conduct or expression; affrontery."

It is *the sins of the servant* that cause the rift.

The sins of the servant of God show themselves in three directions.

The first is in the servant's relationship to the Master of the house. In the words of the Queen of Sheba concerning Solomon, "Happy are these thy

servants, which stand continually before thee." The place of the servant was to stand in the presence of the master, ready for any type of service he might perform.

The Psalmist says, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God" (123:2). Here, watchful and wakeful, the servant demonstrates his availability for his master's service. What presumption it would be for a servant to say "I have no time for this!" Yet how many of us say by our actions that we have no time for prayer, no time for Bible study. Is it true that we as the servants of God have no time to stand in the presence of our Master—we who call ourselves His servants?

We have all the time there is. Out of the twenty-four hours that make up each day and night, some eight hours may be spent in bed and eight may be spent at work, leaving eight hours over. Yet out of those eight hours the vast majority of professing Christian people (and among those, us?) have no time to stand in the presence of our Master. What kind of a servant is this, who never stands in the presence of his master? If his master be royal, what presumption; and if his Master be God, what blasphemy!

How long is it, servant of God, since you stood humbly as a servant before your Master? Have you forgotten there is a Master of the household? Can you commune too often with your Lord and Master?

If we are not anxious to go into His presence, to share with Him our most intimate thoughts and ask Him to bless them, then He is not the Master of our soul.

If we actually love our Master, His requests will be the joy and rejoicing of our heart. No task will be too hard to perform. Our only thought will be, "what more can I do for Thee my merciful and loving Master?"

The second failure is in his relationship to the members of the household.

Not only is there a Master; there are other servants. There can be, and there often is, failure here.

Said a noted missionary, "I was somewhat startled to find that among the missionary force the greatest problem is not in the climate or the indifference of the people, but in achieving a happy, healthy, harmonious relationship with one another."

It is a vital part of every true Christian's duty to "as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18). Also, "I pray . . . that they all may be one," said Christ in His great prayer. There are two ways in which we tend to fail on this point: in making demands of others which are utterly selfish, and in being exacting and unreasonable, the kind of persons who insist that their way is the right way and that if everybody else will not play the game their way then they will not play.

Our founder spoke a great truth when he said, "Never find *unnecessary fault*." This is the best way to "live peaceably with all men."

Paul, a real servant of God admonished, ". . . and be at peace among yourselves" (I Thess. 5:13); also "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and the things where with one may edify another." If we love our fellow servants as we love ourselves, how considerate we will be, wanting only the very best for them. When speaking to each other we will use the kindest tones and give each other the benefit of every doubt, instead of being faultfinding and disagreeable.

Among the servants, gifts differ. If our fellow servant has gifts that we desire, let this not cause any feeling of envy. God has need for all our gifts great or small. If done to His honor and glory, no task will go unrewarded.

Failure comes, too, in *setting limits upon our forgiveness*. Do you set any limit on your forgiveness? Is there another Christian with whom you are not on speaking terms? Is there a good name that you destroyed with the poison of your tongue?

Was the reason that you did not forgive? That you *would* not forgive? If so, it is a failure in your life as a servant of God, a failure in relationship to the members of the household.

Of the early Church it was said, "See how these Christians love one another!" Is our life one warm, throbbing concern in kindness and love for others;

or is there a harsh orthodoxy, a fanatical zeal, a rude intrusion?

There is also the problem of the servant requiring time for himself. Is not this a servant's sin, to take of the time that is his master's and use it for himself? Work is to be thorough; work is to be faithful; if it is to be done, it takes time. Yet possibly the most common excuse when duty calls is, "I haven't time." That is seldom true. Whatever our singular, individual interests, we generally find time for them.

Can we honestly say before God that we have no time for earnest, heartfelt, searching prayer; no time to read our Bible and feast our souls upon His holy Word; no time for Christian service? Until we get a clarified, renewed vision of the precious gift of time; till we begin to think honestly and soberly and in a responsible way about our use of our time, the wrath of God will not turn away from us.

Finally, there may be a failure in representation.

There is a lovely text which belongs to the next world which I would like to borrow now. The text is found in the final chapter of His Word: "His servants shall serve him: . . . they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. 22:3,4). Wherever the servant goes he bears his master's name. "His servants shall serve him: . . . and his name shall be in their foreheads." The name of the Master is linked with the life of the servant; and wherever the servant goes, he bears his master's name.

Is the name displayed by you? Are you known to be a Christian? Just as the servants are known to be the servants of a master, are you known to be the servant of Christ? Is your faith in Christ, and are you striving to be His true servant? If so, the name is displayed wherever you go.

Is the name honored or dishonored? Do people say of you, as they say of some, "I wouldn't trust him an inch"? Is the name dishonored in your home, at your work, or in your leisure hours? Servant of God, you bear the name of Christ. It is displayed wherever you go.

The supreme tragedy of our society today is that we have become so familiar with sin that it no longer disturbs us.

O servants of God, shall we esteem lightly the forceful words of God which are sent to us to awaken our consciences from the deadening effects of sin?

The law of God is designed to warn us. It has not only its green light and its red, but also its yellow.

A rightly educated conscience acts in three ways: it counsels, it approves, and it condemns. It serves to keep alive a sensitivity to what God loves and what He abhors—which is particularly important.

We may be very careful not to go against the "red" lights; deliberate and calculated wrongdoing comes only with degeneracy. But are we constantly taking chances with the yellow light? God does not let us slip into disaster without warning. But the paths of life are strewn with moral jaywalkers who did not heed the "stop, look, and listen" of conscience; they seem to have developed a moral color blindness. Yellow becomes green until at last red and green become interchangeable. And, soon or late, the last and fateful crossing is made.

The sins of the servant—failure in relationship. Have you failed there? Are you ready to confess it, forsake it, and make it right?

Is there a failure in responsibility in the tasks

received, in the time required? Is there a failure representation? Everywhere you go you bear the name. It is displayed; is it dishonored? May God help us to compel ourselves to go into the silence of God's presence and face the facts about our sick souls.

Our part is to serve to the limit of our capacity that He may someday say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

What will be the result of correcting these failures in our lives? It is this: that sin shall no longer separate us from Him. The sin removed, His ear will hear us, His arm will save us, and His face will shine upon us and give us peace—now and through all the ages to come.

MM



Hallowing Halloween?

ORANGE and black greeting cards, costumes, and masks. Costume parties. Witches, ghosts, vampires, and weirdly carved pumpkins with glowing teeth. It is all part of what our country calls "Halloween."

Then there are the pranks: window-soaping, dumping garbage cans. Most unfortunate is the annual malicious destruction of property.

What brings on this strange behavior every October 31? Where does Halloween get its name?

The name is incredibly strange. When we think of ghosts and goblins, it's hard to imagine anything hallowed. The big celebration gets its concept from ancient days when the Druids lit bonfires to appease the god of death and drive away ghosts and witches. On October 31, the Romans had festivals in honor of Pomona, goddess of fruits and flowers. People

today still crack nuts, bob for apples, and tell ghost stories as did the pagans, so how can Halloween be hallowed?

Very plainly, it isn't!

Hallowed Saints

Actually, the history of Halloween began to be "sacred" in the fourth century. As early as 359 A. D. the Christian (apostate) church named May 13 as All Saints' Day.

Church officials (of the Roman Catholic Church) believed that one who did especially good works or lived an exceptionally good life—according to the standards of the Church—should be recognized as a "saint." A special day was set aside to honor each of the many well-known "saints." But in the course of time, there came to be more "saints" than days in the year,

so All Saints' Day was created to solve the problem.

However, somehow the date for the feast to All Saints was changed to November first. By the twelfth century most professing church members observed All Saints in autumn. Historians can't agree as to how this change took place. Popes Gregory III and Gregory IV did the official maneuverings, but other records indicate Irish influence was instrumental in the switch.

The All Saints' festival bore certain similarities with certain elements in the Druid religion of the Celts. Since these pre-English cultures celebrated "summer's end" on October 31, then naturally their customs meshed with All Saints' observances.

What were these Druidic traditions that finally evolved into the present-day Halloween hysteria?

Pagan Past

The Druids saw their "summer's end" celebration as the end of the year. November 1 marked the new year. On October 31 they exalted the Lord of Death, because the sun's power waned, harvest was finished; darkness, dying, and death prevailed in nature, and they believed, the strength of the gods of darkness, winter, and the underworld grew great.

The name of this celebration, Samhain (pronounced sowin), denoted both the name of the god (Lord of Death) and the time of the year. During Samhain huge bonfires brightened the fall sky while stories of mysterious sights and sounds were shared. The tales took on the morbid spirit of the season. Because nature was dying, many of the tales around the fire described the deaths of people and what they thought happened to their souls. The souls of good people entered other human beings; while the souls of the perverted entered the bodies of animals. Cats (especially black ones) were held as sacred. They were seen as human beings who had been punished for evil deeds.

Another ancient legend illustrates the strange customs of the times. A penny-pinching man named Jack was supposedly barred from heaven because of his stinginess and barred from hell because he played tricks on the devil. In modern times we burn jack-o'-lanterns as an outgrowth of this fable.

But other practices from Roman influence also contributed to Halloween.

When Christians (so-called) came to the Celtic Isles, they worked the Celtic traditions into All Saints' Day. And as if these many features weren't enough, the church itself added a new name to the event.

The name "Halloween" is a contraction of "Hallowed even." It comes from the Eve of All Hallows,

which refers to the evening before All Saints' Day. So instead of celebrating this "holy day" under the pagan name of Samhain, the church called it "Halloween". But so many pagan practices had been incorporated into the observance that Halloween celebrations continued to be characterized by pagan customs.

All Souls' Day

In the eleventh century an abbot named Odillo of the Cluny monastery established an All Soul's Day on November 2. In this observance a Mass and special prayers were said for the dead, but especially for souls in "purgatory."

Soon traditions grew up around this new Halloween celebration. For instance, during the Middle Ages folks believed that on this day souls could appear as will-o'-the-wisps, witches, toads, etc. Today's "trick-or-treat" custom of going from house to house begging on Halloween came out of "souling," practiced on All Souls' Day.

As Christians, what should be our attitude toward Halloween? In the words of Scripture, we have "neither part nor lot" in the matter. There is nothing Christian about it, nor anything Christlike in its observance. Nor is there anything Scriptural in its foundation. All Saints' Day was not of divine origin, nor are All Souls' Day stories of ghosts, goblins, witches, etc., according to Scripture. The "living soul" is not a disembodied spirit according to the Bible but a *whole person*. Neither does the Bible support any idea of a continuing "spirit" existence beyond death.

What, then, is "hallowed" about Halloween? The answer is one word: Nothing. Halloween is *not* a Christian occasion. MM

A great oak is only a tiny nut that held its ground!

Wearing Masks

HALLOWEEN is weird, and as Christians we have no part in its celebration. But someone has said that wherever people meet together and interact, it is like Halloween. It doesn't matter when it is or how many people are involved, it is all too often Halloween, for people are always wearing masks. We seem to think we can hide behind our mask, be it a loud-talk mask, a happy-all-the-time mask, a laughing mask, a stiff-upper-lip mask, a nervous laughter mask, a know-it-all mask, a humble mask, a strong mask, a fragile easily-hurt mask, a prim and proper mask.

The problem of wearing a mask is that if you wear it long enough, your face grows into the shape of the mask. Pretty soon the mask isn't hiding anything at all. The mask is no longer a fraud—we are.

Let's all put away our masks. Of course we'll feel unprotected and exposed at first. But isn't that what it means to be a Christian?

—E.S., Wausau, Wisconsin

To Follow

O Lord our Captain: teach us to be like Thee, . . . And where Thou leadest we will follow on; . . . We do not know what orders may await us, . . . Just let us say, "O Lord, Thy will be done."

It shall be done, if we are strong to follow. . . The path which Thou didst follow day by day; . . . It shall be done, if true to Thy example, . . . We follow Thee in patience all the way.

—Sel. and Alt.



Letters

In Times Like These

In these times we need to keep one another stirred up. Without frequent communication with others of like faith our vision of the Kingdom could grow dim and our hope fade. So we need to frequently encourage one another to keep pressing on.

When we think of the wonders of that future age, it seems strange that we could let anything hinder us from doing the work which would qualify us for a place in that Kingdom. Yet, we have many examples in the Bible of people who became so engrossed in the present world that they lost sight of the future world. But, I know from experience that there is nothing in the world which is worth turning back for. On the other hand, God has promised us so much—exceeding abundantly above all we could ask or even imagine. By forsaking the world and seeking after God we have lost nothing, and, if faithful we could gain everything.

The world certainly is in a desperate condition at the present. There is unrest everywhere and the worldwide economic system appears to be on the verge of collapse. How true it is that we need Jesus to come and set things right. Then there will be no more starvation and political upheaval and no more wars. There will be justice and peace and goodwill throughout the world.

Jesus said in Luke 13:24 (New World Trans.), "Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able." Let us daily keep a close watch on our conduct, on our words and thoughts, and bring ourselves into subjection to the law of God. Let us go into this work with a wholehearted enthusiasm and a strong determination to come out victorious.

Cleveland, Tennessee

S. K.

Very Inspiring

Thank you for sending the MEGIDDO MESSAGE so faithfully. I am very interested in these magazines. Thanking you again for the magazines which are very inspiring and worth reading.

Christchurch, New Zealand

W. DeH.

In Desperate Need

Any and all wholesome Christian literature, I would truly like to read.

Please send me a copy of your free booklet "Prophet Elijah Coming Before Christ."

I'm living in Fulda, W. Germany, and the Word of God is desperately needed. Could you send me as many copies as you can? I assure you all materials will be prayerfully used.

A. P. O. New York

K. R.

Thankful for Life

A young prince asked his tutor how he could find the way into the Kingdom of Heaven. He did not need to think about such things now, the tutor told him; there was time enough for that when he was older. But the prince answered, "No, I have been to the churchyard and have measured the graves and found many that are shorter than I."

This young prince had wisely proven to himself that there was no time to waste in finding his way to the Kingdom of Heaven. For many younger than he had gone to be eternally with the congregation of the dead.

How fortunate we are to be still alive and still able to correct past mistakes, and improve our record. For when death comes the die is cast and no further chance will be ours. In that day, "where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. 11:3).

I have just been listening to the cassette—sermon "Yearning For Newness." How wonderful it will be if we are worthy to have this yearning desire quenched for all eternity.

Minnedosa, Manitoba

E. H.

God Will Help Us

The Millennium book is certainly a spiritually stimulating book for all who are awaiting our coming King. How grand indeed to be there when the angels "sing and rejoice in the joyfulness of being accounted worthy," and we can be.

God has given us every help, and is ever near in our times of trial. So may we consider His good advice through the prophet Haggai, may we go to the mountain and face the work to be done, with courage and determination. God has given us our every requirement to build His house of righteousness and holiness, and that He may be glorified and praised in our work.

So let us lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and let us square ourselves to the task of enduring all our trials and tribulations along the narrow way. May we look upon them as purifying processes, fitting us ready for a place in His glorious Kingdom. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy" (Psa. 147:11).

Warwick, Australia

A. B.

Keeping With God

In the past year I wasn't close to God. Now, I'm looking for the way which would lead me to Him. Maybe I'm tired? Tired with the violence, war, jealousy, and nonsense, death. . . .

I think that if we want to love God, we must see Him in the smallest things. It is very important to try to be with God in every moment of our life. We should remember that the most important thing is to try to be with Him.

I find this journal MEGIDDO MESSAGE very interesting and I hope you will send me some copies, plus some cassettes.

Targowa, Poland

W. F.

Thank God

I thank God for His mercies which are ample even at the time of great distress and dire need.

Bangalore, India

S. P.

Serve God

The Good Father has allowed us so many wonderful blessings, but we should never serve them; we must serve God and let all the blessings serve us.

I have enjoyed of late reading the book of Samuel—in the Bible and also the book you published on his life. He left many good lessons and good advice—on that we must obey God always, if ever we expect to live in the latter days.

I find we must study, meditate and read over and over to get our minds really fixed on all these good truths. You don't get all taken up in this world of social whirls by staying home and reading, studying and meditating.

Kinards, South Carolina

H. C.

No Wobble

If we make proper use of our blessings now, some day we will be blessed with the greatest of all blessings, life eternal.

We have been riding our bicycles for exercise. While riding our bikes, I have noticed that the faster you ride, the easier it is to go in a straight line, without any wobble. And so it is in the spiritual, the faster we travel, the easier it will be to keep in the straight and narrow way. No wobbling allowed.

Think of the power Jesus had. He could say to the waves, "Peace be still." And the water became like a sea of glass.

N.Ft. Myers, Florida

E. & C. B.

Before Too Late

I have read my MESSAGES several times each, and each time I get something more to meditate on. It seems that they are more stirring than ever.

And what if it is as Jeremiah wrote in chapter 8 verse 20 "and we are not saved"? What a sad ending! so now we had better run as never before so it will be a different saying for us or it will be "too late, too late."

In Gal. 1:16, Paul wrote "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Not even his own and I thought how different from us when we first heard the Truth. We have conferred with our own flesh far too often.

As the world grows worse and worse, let us strive to grow better and better.

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

F. F.

Inspiration

Would you please place us on the mailing list so we could receive the copy of MEGIDDO MESSAGE?

Recently someone gave me a copy of your magazine and I found so many wonderful articles and messages of inspiration that I would like to place a copy in our Retreat House Library.

Oxford, Michigan

M. M.

Growing Better

I hope we are growing better and improving each day; anyway we try to think we are, but only God knows if we are really growing. I know our faith needs to keep growing, for when Elijah makes his appearance so suddenly, it's going to be a shock. It will cause us to suddenly think: Am I ready? For we know "without faith it is impossible to please him." So let us work harder than ever. We would not want to be left out. And let us put on the robe of righteousness, clean and white.

When working for the Kingdom we are bound to have trials and problems. "The Lord is my strength and my shield: my heart trusteth in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth: and with my song will I praise him" (Psa. 28:7).

Milton, Iowa

E. T.

God Will Reward

It is sufficient for us to know that individuals, whether many or few, who put their trust wholly and truly in the Almighty will receive His protection. Neither their labor nor their faith will be in vain.

The record of the past clearly shows that when God's people were obedient and lived up to His requirements, they prospered and were protected from their enemies. There is no account of His people ever being forsaken when they walked in the ways of God. Incidents are also recorded of how the Lord sent deliverance to His people when they turned to Him after following the customs of their neighbors and fulfilling the unlawful desires of their own hearts. We need not expect results today as dramatic as some of those witnessed in previous ages, but for all who will turn to Him with all their hearts, there is the promise of protection and assistance.

Our success, whether individually or as a church, depends greatly upon how we take God into our aims and motives and allow Him to direct. First of all we must be on the right foundation. The house or church founded and built on the doctrines and traditions of men has not God for its helper. The teachings of the prophets, Jesus and the apostles furnish the only true foundation on which to build the house of God (Eph. 2:20).

Monrovia, Liberia

J. D.

Right On

We must go right on. The New Age is still coming. God knows the exact time. This may be the year Elijah and Jesus will begin the great work here upon earth!

Crawford, Nebraska

M.M.

The Lord Is Leading

Thus far the Lord hath led us...

In darkness and in day, ... Through all the varied stages of the narrow, homeward way; ... Long since He took that journey—He trod that path alone; ... Its trials and its dangers full well Himself hath known.

Thus far the Lord hath led us...

The promise hath not failed; ... The enemy, encountered oft, has never quite prevailed; ... The shield of faith has turned aside, or quenched each fiery dart, ... The Spirit's sword in weakest hands has forced him to depart.

Thus far the Lord hath led us...

The waters have been high, ... But yet in passing through them we felt that He was nigh. ... A very present helper in trouble we have found, ... His comforts most abounded when our sorrows did abound.

Thus far the Lord hath led us...

Our need hath been supplied, ... And mercy hath encompassed us about on every side; ... Still falls the daily manna; the pure rock-fountains flow; ... And many flowers of love and hope along the wayside grow.

Thus far the Lord hath led us...

And will He now forsake. ... The feeble ones whom for His own it pleases Him to take? ... Oh, never, never! earthly friends may cold and faithless prove, ... But He is changeless pity and everlasting love.

Thus far the Lord hath led us...

Through joys and sorrows past, ... We know that all is mercy now, and shall be well at last; ... Calmly we look before us; we fear no future ill, ... Enough for safety and for peace, if Thou art with us still.