

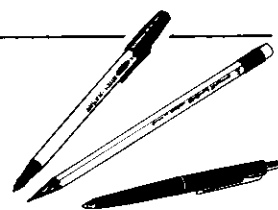


Megiddo Message

Vol. 69, No. 9

Upon This Rock . . .
Memorial Issue

October, 1982



Upon This Rock

ROCK has long been a symbol of strength, stability, endurance, timelessness. A blast of wind, a pounding rain, even an avalanche of ice and snow can easily reduce to ruin a strong structure of wood and steel. But the pounding of centuries only polishes the rock. Why? because it is massive, solid, and abiding.

While all about us is shaking, we stand today solid and secure upon the Rock of Divine Truth, firmly established upon the faith once delivered to the saints. For this we are indebted to the accomplishments of our Founder, whom we remember at this Memorial season with deepest gratitude and heartfelt thanks. Were it not for his tireless efforts in searching out the pure substance, taking forth the precious from among the vile, we too would be building on the shifting sands of human thought.

Because of his valiant efforts, we stand today upon the solid rock of reason and evidence. There is nothing nebulous, shaky, or uncertain about our foundation. It is all solid rock, and upon this rock we take our stand. In the midst of doubt and uncertainty, we say and say with confidence: *We believe.*

*We believe...*in the Bible, our guide for life, our source for faith, and our only source of knowledge of the divine mind today. Its message of wisdom was "given by inspiration of God" and is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17). Scripture was designed for our enlightenment in the plan and purpose of God, also for our practical instruction that we may know what God wants us to do and what He would have us refrain from doing.

*We believe...*in one God, the great Creator of all who, in the words of Nehemiah, has "made the heavens, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts; the earth and all things that are therein; the seas and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (Neh. 9:6).

*We believe...*in the plan of God, ongoing and eternal, His "eternal purpose" (Eph. 3:9). "From everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. 103:18) He is seeking out of His vast creation those who will serve Him in sincerity and truth. These He is perpetuating, bestowing upon them every conceivable and inconceivable blessing and benefit. We believe that God will fulfill all that He has promised in His Word, that a new age is coming—indeed, is near—when this earth will be annexed to heaven and filled with the glory of God, His people (Matt. 6:9; Num. 14:21).

*We believe...*in Jesus Christ, the son of God and coming King of all the earth. He was born of a Virgin, in fulfillment of divine prophecy, made "like unto his brethren," and "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Deut. 18:15, 18; Heb. 4:14-15). He lived and worked among men, demonstrating in finest detail the life that is pleasing to His heavenly Father, finished the work He was given to do, was crucified by an angry mob, buried, and resurrected by the power of God. Forty days later He was taken to heaven, where He is seated at the right hand of God, awaiting the Day when He shall return to Earth with power and glory to establish a Kingdom of peace and righteousness that shall endure forever, "world without end."

*We believe...*in man, created lower than the angels, but having the potential to become equal to the angels, never to die anymore (Heb. 2:6; Luke 20:35-36). The change, from the mortal state to the immortal, will be consummated by God but only in those individuals who, through proper training, discipline, and development, have been mentally and morally remade and are thereby qualified for the change, according to His high standard.

*We believe...*in faith that lives and works. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6); and without accompanying works of righteousness, right doing, right thinking, right living, faith is dead and useless (James 2).

*We believe...*this is the rock, and upon this rock we take our stand.

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 our cover photograph we are indebted to the kindness of D. C. Lowe, who resides in Oregon. The photograph was taken at Cape Kiwanda, Oregon Coast.

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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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Recollections

Brother Flowerday recounts his acquaintance with our Founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols

IT MUST have been when I was only four years old that I first met Brother Nichols. We were living in the city of Minneapolis at the time, about eighty miles from Brother Nichols' home at Ellington, Minnesota. There were a number of families of believers living in Minneapolis, and they met and held services in a hall, and Brother Nichols made occasional trips to the city to officiate at these services and to stir them up to a closer walk with God.

When five years of age my parents moved to Ellington and built a home right next to Brother Nichols', deeming the opportunity for spiritual growth well worth the effort, and from that time till the day of his death I enjoyed almost constant association with him. While we were living neighbor to Brother Nichols he took a keen interest in the mental and physical development of my sisters and me, and at the same time never missed an opportunity to impress upon our youthful minds the practical lessons of Christian living. If our conduct during the week was not what it should be, he would sometimes mention it openly in his Sunday sermon in the little church located near his home.

It was at the turn of the century, during the tenth year of my life, that the divine command for God's people to gather together and appoint themselves one head impressed itself upon Brother Nichols' mind, and a plan for a missionary boat on the Mississippi River, where the gathering together and sounding of the midnight cry could be accomplished at one and the selfsame time, took shape. It was around Thanksgiving time in the year 1901 when *Megiddo* steamed south on her maiden voyage, and it was my rare privilege to be among the ninety occupants of that beautiful floating home.

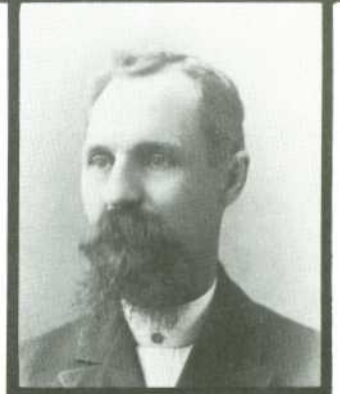
Much training and discipline was necessary for the children—and the grown-ups as well—to transform them to an extent that so large a group of people could live together peaceably in such cramped quarters. The rule was: no quarrels between the children, and no cross words nor

disputes among the older ones. Each one must learn to consider the interests of the others, a great change from living in individual homes with members of their immediate families only.

While living on the Mission boat, Brother Nichols took a keen interest in the welfare and growth of the children. A schoolroom was provided, and he would make occasional visits to the school to speak a cheery word, and note the progress of the pupils. Occasionally at the evening gatherings a part of the time would be devoted to giving the children exercises in mental arithmetic or spelling lessons, as he wanted to develop our young minds and teach us to think. We derived much pleasure and profit from these exercises, and were especially elated when it was our good fortune to go to the head of the class.

Traveling on the boat was delightful, especially when passing between the wooded bluffs on either side of the upper Mississippi. Helping to erect the large gospel tent in preparation for a series of meetings in a town or city was an event of especial interest to us boys, as was the cleaning and arranging of halls and public places for services.

Brother Nichols was a powerful and magnetic speaker, and having the real truth to proclaim to the people he would often hold his audience spellbound by his eloquence and logical arguments. Even now I can picture his towering form addressing the crowds at night in the brightly lighted tent, in the park on a warm summer afternoon, or from the rostrum of the large Tabernacle at



L. T. Nichols (1844-1912)

The life of our noble Founder has proved a paragon for us. Observing him, we may have the courage to invest our life, our very best, in the hope of rewards that can be seen only by the eye of faith. —K. E. Flowerday

Nashville, Tenn., where he conducted services for a number of months.

Amid the stress and strain of holding almost continuous public meetings, and in addition to the countless duties arising from the management of so large a missionary enterprise, Brother Nichols never lost sight of the more important work of perfecting his own character and sanctifying the congregation, preparing a few to shine in his crown through eternity; and some of his most powerful and soul-searching sermons were preached to his immediate followers on board *Megiddo*. First, last and always, his chief aim was to save himself and those that heard him.

After the group moved to Rochester, it was still my privilege to be associated with him daily and have many practical lessons of character-building impressed upon my youthful mind. Among other things, he taught us that we must be strictly honest even in the smallest matters. He always said anything worth having was worth asking for. I might cite one instance of this sort that comes to mind in which I personally was concerned. Those being the days before the advent of the electric washing machine, the family washings were usually done in a wash tub, and, of course, a wash bench, or some other suitable support for the
(Continued on page 12)

With Summer Past . . .

This letter was written by our pastor, Brother Kenneth E. Flowerday, to the Progressive Brothers in the year 1941. The thoughts are as timely today as when written.

I WILL try to write a few thoughts that will cheer and encourage you, and may serve as a stimulus to us both in our effort toward the goal of perfection.

You know, we all need stimulating. I need it, and you need it. Paul, the greatest missionary of all time, knew very well that those over whom the Holy Spirit had made him overseer, needed stimulating. To accomplish this he employed three of the same methods as we use these days: namely, by word of mouth; by sending his personal representative, as when he sent Tychicus to the brethren of Ephesus; also by letter. The speed of this last named means of communication has been greatly stepped up in recent years, till a letter may travel as much as a thousand miles in twenty-four hours—or by air mail much further—whereas it would have taken weeks, or even months, for a letter from Paul to reach the outposts of his spiritual domain.

Well, here we are in the month of September. The summer for 1941 is about spent. How short it has seemed, and, no doubt, with many of you, as with myself, there are many things left undone which we had hoped to accomplish. We should draw a great spiritual lesson from our observation of the rapid flight of time, for life also is fleeting. Twenty, thirty, fifty, or even eighty summers may pass over our heads, but once they are gone they are gone, we have no power to bring them back. Our days pass away as a tale that is told, and unless we have spent them in laying up treasure in Heaven, and built up for ourselves a reserve of good works against the time to come, we shall have missed the opportunity for which this short life was given us, and in the end our doleful lament will be, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

If engaged in God's service, if working to do all we do to His glory, if striving constantly to be a pattern of good works to our brother and to uplift all with whom we come in contact, we will never be satisfied with ourselves as we are but
(Continued on page 13)

Standing On Holy Ground

GOD WORKS in wondrous ways, curious ways, mysterious ways far past our fathoming. And through all He wants us to regard Him with awe, reverence and the honor due to Him. There have been times when He did something very out of the ordinary to teach men this fact.

In the Divine Presence

It happened one time to an apparently ordinary man, an Israelite, rather elderly, one of the many thousands who were born slaves in Egypt. The man's name was Moses. And it happened when this man was doing the most ordinary job (the same job he had been doing for nearly 40 years)—what could be less spectacular than watching sheep for his father-in-law? And he was doing it in a most obscure and ordinary place—on the backside of the Midian desert.

But this particular day, as he herded the sheep near a certain mountain named Horeb, he looked, and behold, a "bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." In the desert, burning bushes were not uncommon, we are told; but such fires were brief and the bush afire was quickly consumed. Not so this bush. "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt."

We might think it strange that Moses did not immediately suspect something miraculous. But in all his eighty years he had never once seen an open manifestation of divine power, so far as we are told; in fact, several centuries had gone by since *anyone* had. The visions of Joseph were the most recent, and Joseph had been dead more than two hundred years when Moses was born. Loyal Israelites in Moses' younger days, it would appear, lived very much as we do: by faith.

But Moses was not long in discovering that this was no ordinary burning bush, for there came a voice from the midst of the bush, calling "Moses, Moses."

Quietly, humbly, Moses replied: "Here am I."

Can we imagine the thrill Moses felt as he realized he was meeting an angel of God? After forty years under the clear desert skies, alone with the rocks and the sand and the sheep, Moses heard the voice of God's angel speak his name—can we imagine what it was like? And can we imagine what Moses' first thought might have been at such a moment, when first he realized that he was face to face with a Divine being, when the angel spoke and he answered, "Here am I"? Can we not imagine that his mind immediately began to whirl, as he scrutinized his life to see what imperfection remained, what wilfulness, what stain of sin might make him unworthy of the holy Presence before him?

How can we know that it was an angel of God in the burning bush? Most religious teachers conclude that it was God in the form of the pre-existent Christ, the God of the universe making an early appearance prior to His birth—though the Biblical account in Exodus 3 gives no hint of such an idea. The voice identified itself in these words: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." However, in the book of Acts, chapter 7, where Stephen was recounting the history of the Jewish people to an assembly of Jews (who knew the story well and would have liked nothing better than to catch him in an error), Stephen declared plainly that it was an angel bearing God's name. He said, "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush." He also explained how God works: "This Moses . . . the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:30, 35). God "by the hand of the angel" commissioned Moses.

Picture Moses standing there, trembling, petrified with fear, yet slowly, cautiously edging toward the mysterious bush; but his steps are halted by the next word of the angel: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Commanding words, yet not a rebuke. Moses was not being disrespectful; it was only that the Divine Presence demanded special respect—outwardly demonstrated as well as inwardly felt. No ordinary desert

Note: "Standing on Holy Ground" is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

encounter here. This bush burned with holy fire, the immortal light radiating from an angel of God.

In the Presence of Pharaoh

Now consider Pharaoh when Moses and Aaron went to him with a message from God. Picture the situation: the King, Pharaoh, wholly self-satisfied, worshiped as a god, absolute ruler over the lives of thousands. Surrounded by obsequious servants, none to contradict, none to disobey. Enthroned in a palace. Then, enter: two envoys, two men grown old in slavery, one of them for forty years a shepherd. See this shepherd looking now at all of Pharaoh's pomp as a man who dimly recalls some distant dream. Does Moses think for a moment of what might have been—perhaps he himself seated upon the throne? (Heb. 11:24). But no. Greater honor far to be an unknown envoy of God than to be the Pharaoh who receives His message.

To Pharaoh, the invisible is unreal. He sees not the human representatives of the omnipotent Creator; he sees only two Hebrew slaves, who are completely devoid of anything with which to impress the king of the peril of obstinacy. Had they borne high-sounding titles; or had there followed a large and victorious army, Pharaoh's reaction would have been different. But there is no threat of danger, no sense of any overarching divine curse, nor any evidence of "holy ground." So far as Pharaoh can see or hear, their words are nothing but a challenge to his undisputed supremacy. And is not such—to Pharaoh—the height of audacity and presumption?

The Conversation

Then comes the message: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go." Strange words for a king to hear: not a request but a command. The sender of the message was speaking as to a servant.

And Pharaoh's reply: the demand met by contemptuous refusal. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

Contrast Moses' humble reply when the voice out of the burning bush spoke to him: "Here am I," with that of the haughty, angry monarch: "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord. He is at best your God and not mine. How can He tell me what to do? I do not want such a God, and I acknowledge Him not. Let Him be who or what He may, I have no obligation to obey Him. I am not within the range of His jurisdiction; I have my own gods. And even if I were within His domain, would I consent to such a request from Him?" The Pharaohs believed that they themselves were gods, on a par with

The Divine Presence demands respect—outward as well as inward.

the national gods, and not bound to obey any but themselves.

Pharaoh surely would have been wiser to inquire more fully into the character of Him whom the Hebrews held in such great awe; but so far as he was concerned, it was all fiction.

If We Disdain . . .

Did Pharaoh's haughty disdain change the facts? Did his arrogant reply change the holiness and power of the mighty God of heaven? Not at all. And will our closing of our eyes, or our disregard for the divine plan do anything for us? Will it release us from our obligations or their consequences? We know it will not, for "God is no man to change his word, no mortal to change his mind." He promises, and does He not carry out His word? He does.

Joshua . . . in the Divine Presence

Some forty years later Joshua had an experience similar to that of Moses at the burning bush. Moses had died, the Israelites had crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land of Canaan. Now the great task of conquering the land lay before them. "And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." Like Moses, Joshua did not seem to sense immediately that it was an angel of God. But now, he "fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?" How humble Joshua was, how eager to hear whatever the angel might have to say to him, of good or ill. "And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so" (Josh. 5:13-15). Again, it was not that Joshua was being disrespectful; but the holy presence of God's angel demanded an extra measure of respect.

Standing in Awe

It seems that God has always wanted men to stand in awe and wonderment in the presence of His greatness. Never was anything of His to be thought of as ordinary or common. At Sinai, Moses was commanded to "set bounds" to keep the people off, that no one might go "up into the mount, nor touch the border of it" and so perish (Ex. 19:12). In the time of David, when the holy Ark had been in foreign hands and was on the way back to Israel, seventy men of Bethshemesh were smitten with death, because they lifted the lid and peeked inside the curious-looking box (I Sam. 6:19). Uzzah was slain for putting forth his hand to touch it, even when it had rested in his home for years and when his one desire was to protect it (II Sam. 6:7).

In a multitude of ways God sought to instill in His people an awe for His greatness. He did this often by a physical unapproachableness. All the arrangements of the Temple; the veil guarding the sanctuary, into which only the high priest could enter once in the year; the

main temple-building, entered only by the priests; the courts of the Levites, of the Israelites, and of the Gentiles, each more and more remote from the Divine Presence—all served to protect Israel from the curse of the ordinary. All were lessons in reverence and humility.

The ceremonies of purifications of the priests and of the Levites before they could acceptably offer sacrifice served the same purpose, at the same time prefiguring the sacrifice of perfect obedience which each of us must offer to be acceptable to God. The ark was to be carried by means of staves which formed no part of it—to give it a complete separation from earthly things. For the same purpose there were built sidechambers in the Temple, placed on "rests" in the walls, "that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house" (I Kings 6:6).

So serious was the need to make an impression upon men who were so apt to conceive of God as "such an one as themselves," to check any rash intrusion into a Presence for which they were unfit. Thus were taught humility, awe and reverence, and the unexcelled purity and holiness of God. He was holy, and everything that

Let Us Pray...

O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that ledest Thy people like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. Before the nations of the earth, stir up Thy strength. Turn us again, O God, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

We come to Thee this morning, eager to have our eyes opened, our minds challenged, and our hearts consecrated anew to the deeper realities of life. Thou alone art our God; Thou alone art able to save.

Lord, we thank Thee this morning for the hours that we may spend within Thy house. We thank Thee for the fellowship we enjoy within it; for the teaching which is given us; for the guidance for life and living which we receive. We thank Thee for the reading of Thy Word, for the preaching of Thy truth, for the singing of Thy praise, and for every bestowment of Thy grace. We thank Thee especially for the shining of Thy light in these last days that we may be led unto Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacle. Grant that we may go forth today more alert to Thy leading and more aware of Thy Presence.

Forgive us, Father, for the many times we have given Thee less than our best. As we turn and prove to Thee and to ourselves that we can do right, Father, forgive. Forgive us for the times we have had hands not content

with Thy bestowments; lives not directed by the perfection of Thy law; ambitions not in line with the level of Thy will; hearts not in rhythm with the beauty of Thy peace; attitudes not shaped by the magnitude of Thy love; tongues not moved by the exaltedness of Thy praise.

Forgive us, also, for living too seldom cognizant of Thy Presence. We stand as it were on holy ground. Though multitudes come and go about us all unmindful of Thee and Thy great plans, all unaware, we know that Thou art indeed in this place and that it is Thine. We ourselves have committed ourselves to Thee, to be not our own but Thine.

Father, in the days to come, help us to spend every moment mindful of this fact, that we are standing on holy ground, the very ground where some day soon the angels of God shall tread. Keep us reminded, Father, that we can be among them if now we hallow Thee in our lives.

We pray Thee this hour to draw near to all Thy people, both near and far. Keep them mindful of Thy Presence, and of their obligation to Thee, wherever they are. Be especially near to those who have trials which seem almost to the limit of their ability to endure. Remind them that Thou hast promised: strength for each trial, help from above, unfailing sympathy, undying love. And may we keep ourselves diligently within the restraints of Thy law that we may one day be part of that joyous company of saints who shall tread the high road to Zion with songs of praise and everlasting joy upon their heads. Lord, we pray Thee to hasten the Day. Amen.

was dedicated to Him was likewise set apart to be treated as holy. Thus were men made to know and feel their smallness, their weakness and their insufficiency, and little by little to develop some faint conception of the absolute perfection and incomprehensible greatness of their Supreme Creator.

Our Holy God . . . Holy Ground

God being such a God as He is, a God of such absolute purity and perfection, each place where He made Himself manifest became, in one sense, "holy ground." Though heaven is His "throne," and earth His "footstool," and no earthly "place" seems worthy of Him, yet from time to time it suited His purpose to choose certain places above others, holy ground, where He made Himself known and His presence felt. And this ground was counted sacred. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all consecrated the sanctity of the places where they met God's representatives or experienced an unusual manifestation of God's power. It seems to have been their way of preserving the sacredness of the experience and deriving from it the spiritual strength and inspiration that could carry them through the many "silent" days.

Jacob in the Divine Presence . . . at Bethel

There have been other men and women of God who found themselves likewise on holy ground. Jacob, when he camped at Bethel that night, had no idea that he was so directly in the presence of God, and yet he looked and beheld angels of God ascending and descending from heaven. It was a majestic experience, a vision from God drawing heaven and earth together in one grand union, demonstrating unmistakably the heavenly agency that pervades, actuates and directs all things terrestrial in the interest of those who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14). Whatever else it may have meant, it was, at so critical a juncture in Jacob's life, a preparation for him to meet whatever might come with the conviction that all was working together for his good and that God would indeed be with him as Jacob was with God.

But hear the promise which came to Jacob from this vision: "I am with thee." I shall direct, help, and support thee in thy present journey and will bring thee again into this land; for "I will not leave thee"—not until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of (Gen. 28:15). It was a spiritual awakening for Jacob, as his response indicates: "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not" (v. 16).

No ordinary place was this, but holy ground, a place for renewed consecration, devotion and a firm and binding covenant with God. "And he called the name of that place Bethel," which means "The house of God." Thus he made it a holy remembrancer, holy ground.

God has always wanted men to stand in awe and wonderment in the presence of His greatness.

Jacob Wrestling with the Angel

This was only one such experience in Jacob's life. Another came to him some twenty years later when he was leaving Laban's household and fearing an encounter with his brother Esau. Again we read, "Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him." Nevertheless, he was still fearing the meeting with Esau. As a loyal servant of God, when he had done all he could do to help himself, he addressed his problem to God. These are his words: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, . . . I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me. . . . And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude" (Gen. 32:1, 9-12).

God did not answer his prayer immediately, but that night, we read, when Jacob was alone by the river Jabbok, "there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he [the angel] said, Let me go, for the day breaketh." And Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

We have little idea as to the meaning of the wrestling, but a few facts are clear. First, it was an intense struggle, a struggle involving the whole of Jacob, body and mind; very likely a major turning point in Jacob's life, momentous crisis.

Second, Jacob was not all bad before Jabbok, nor all perfect immediately afterward; but the experience left him with several remembrancers. There was the experience itself, with its lasting impression on his mind; then there was a disablement in his thigh; and last but by no means least, Jacob was now to be known as Israel, "for as a prince hath thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:28).

Still another result of the "wrestling" was Jacob's

**“Surely the Lord
is in this place;
and I knew it not.”**

awareness that life has a divine dimension besides its material fact, for every life that would belong to the ages to come must have the help of God. The encounter with the angel that night at Jabbok was a significant spiritual experience in Jacob's life, perhaps a turning point in his

Others May... We Cannot

Holy ground—holy opportunity on earthly soil! When we realize that we are indeed standing on holy ground, every aspect of our lives will appear different. When we see others doing something we would like to be doing, we suddenly realize that we cannot—for very good reason. We have higher goals, for we are consecrated to God; we are standing on holy ground.

Others may use their tongues to discourse upon any topic which comes into their minds; we cannot; it is our obligation to use every opportunity to direct the conversation to God, for we are standing on holy ground.

Others may think about anything that pops into their minds—good, bad or indifferent. Thinking for us must be real work, regimented, disciplined, for it is our obligation to take every opportunity in our life to think holy thoughts, to make our minds holy. Why? because we stand on holy ground.

Others may spend their time as they please; go where they please, satisfy their own selfishness and pride. We cannot, for we are called to be holy.

Others may spend their means for whatsoever their heart desires; their money is their own. Ours is not. Our money, along with our heart, our will, our words, and our time, belongs to God and must be used to His glory. Before we make any purchase, we must ask, Will God be pleased?

Others may seek pleasure, diversion and entertainment in any way they wish and indulge their desires to the limit of their conscience. We cannot, for our lives are not our own. Before we indulge, we must ask ourselves, Is this to the glory of God?

Others may...while we cannot. But the time will come when the greater privileges will be ours, because we obeyed.

involvement with God. The purpose of the encounter was to elicit the most earnest endeavor on Jacob's part—which is what God always wants of us. He wants our whole heart, our whole desire, our deepest longings, our greatest efforts. It shows also Jacob's eagerness to obtain the spiritual blessings God is ready to bestow.

Then there is the point of Jacob's determination. Jacob “prevailed”—yet the angel could easily have escaped Jacob's grasp; but might it not be another illustration of the importunity which Jesus taught, that God honors our persistence because it is an evidence of our sincerity and deep desire? It would seem that Jacob by nature was a mixed character—like all of us. He had in him some of his mother Rebekah's quick thinking, and also some of Isaac's loyalty. He had some of Sarah's jealousy, but some of Abraham's farseeing faith. And he did what each of us must do—eliminate the bad and refine the best. This is all God asks of any of us, to make the very most of the material He has given us.

It is noticeable from very early in his life that Jacob's ambitions were on a higher level than the physical. He wanted the birthright because the one who held it would be the representative of the family toward God—a fact which interested Esau not at all. Jacob was not living solely for the present; he had caught a vision of something beyond this world, and he believed what he saw. And when he had once fixed the goal of this desire, he had unlimited determination in moving toward it. How could he do otherwise, when God had promised to be with him?

Such was Jacob's holy ground experience. And what of ours?

Our Holy Ground

Standing on holy ground is something to be taken seriously, very seriously, for God does not intend us to treat Him as one like unto ourselves.

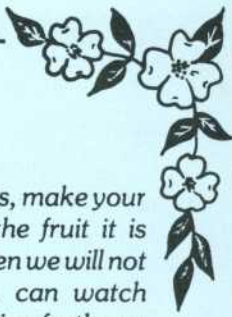
But we today have had no encounter with any of God's holy messengers nor any prophetic revelations or dreams. We have not seen the bush that burned with fire or been struck with blindness with the light from heaven. Is there any holy ground for us? What is there in our world or in our lives that can give us the deep and lasting impressions that these holy men of old received from their divine experiences? for God has promised to supply all our need.

Let us not think for a moment that we are left with nothing to enthuse or impress us. Have we not the living Word of God in our possession, a monumental miracle in itself, a book far surpassing in harmony, prophecy, and authenticity any work of man? Have we not a living wonder before our eyes in our knowledge of the plan that

(Continued on page 23)



— And Still She Speaks —



Part Nine

The following lines are extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



We want to labor in the vineyard of the Lord to dig up every root of bitterness, pride, envy, hatred. How easily, if left to themselves, the weeds will grow in our spiritual garden. Prepare a soil of humble modesty and morality. As a natural garden has more than one kind of weed, so does our spiritual garden. We have to watch diligently to pull them up.



We must learn to watch our tongue, see what it is doing. We will, if we want eternal life.



It ought to impress every heart, how long God has been calling—calling us from death and destruction—and how slow we are to hear the call.



We will see that we have a deadly thing right in our midst, and we will watch it as we would a deadly enemy. If somebody were seeking to take our natural life, we would be on our guard trying to get out of the danger. Just so should we watch the enemy trying to take our eternal life. If we could become alarmed, become afraid of our own individual selves, we would be more alert.



We need to look back on our lives and see how we have been using this organ of speech. Some let the tongue run more than others until it is like a sword cutting right and left. The tongue is a terrible thing if uncontrolled, and when only partially controlled it is still bad. I think I never realized it any more than at the present time. We have had this chapter (James 3) often, and we need it more right in this church.



If you do not realize your besetting sins: the anger, bitterness, pride, jealousy, you will never put forth an effort to get rid of them.

If you want to be a good tree of the Lord's, make your fruit good. He will judge every tree by the fruit it is bearing. You know if we judge ourselves then we will not have to be judged. We, as individuals, can watch ourselves now and see what we are bringing forth; we can see when at home whether we are bearing good fruit, see how we are talking and acting. We do not have to be deceived, if we are honest with ourselves.



Mankind is of no value to the Lord unless disciplined. That is much of the trouble with the world today. When we were children we were brought up to obey. We had to obey. That was the rule; there was discipline. Now there is so little. There has to be discipline in the spiritual life, a complete making over.



I can remember back in school days we would be jealous of some of the scholars. Some scholars were preferred. If you cannot realize you were jealous it is because you have not searched your hearts to see what is within. Jealousy is as cruel as the grave. It is a terrible sore, a loathsome disease. We have to recognize that we have the sore so we can heal it. The longer the jealousy lasts, the deeper it gets into our hearts. We are all naturally inclined to be jealous, more or less.



Back before the days when we were on the Mission steamer, we knew a man who loved to talk of the Kingdom. He would talk of that wonderful Kingdom, that glory to be revealed, how he longed to live in that glorious time. But just try to reach his heart, tell him of his faults, show him where he could improve his character, and he was all out of sorts. At eighty years old he still wanted to make some more money. He had a broom factory, and he would make extra good brooms to send out as samples by his agents. Brother Nichols told him that he could not do that, that he must go to the brooms and pull samples from them just as they came, not that he had to take an injured one, or the poorest, but take them as they came. As Christians we have to be strictly honest. Well, he was a very affable old gentleman, but he had a great love of money.

Women of Purpose

Women of purpose!
Dear God, let me be
One of the holy ones
Living to Thee;
Not just in word
But in deed, yea, in truth
Marching straight forward
Like Rebekah, like Ruth!

Not shunning their duties
But faithful and true.
Through spiritual vision
They see—and they do!
There was Sarah beloved,
Who bore Abraham's seed;
Huldah and Deborah
Known for righteous deed.

Through Rachel and Leah
Came Israel's band,
And Miriam was counted
When they left Egypt's land.
We see Jael and Rahab
Who helped with the cause;
Though their lives were endangered
They never would pause.

There was Esther, and Anna,
Devoted to Thee,
Also Elisabeth and Mary
And one Magdalene.
There was Martha, and Mary
Whom Jesus oft fed;
And Joanna and Phebe
Who longed to be led.

These women of purpose
Of courage and grace
Holy virtuous women
Have secured their place
In God's righteous kingdom—
He has His own plan
To honor such women.
They're part of His band!

Recollections

(Continued from page 5)

tub, had to be provided. With a few spare boards one handy with tools could easily make such a contrivance, and a number of such benches had been made by the different members. One day, when in my early teens, one of the older sisters asked me to make her one of these benches. House-building being the major industry among the members of the group at the time, new and used lumber was abundant. Feeling the few boards needed to make the bench too insignificant a quantity to offer to buy and pay for—and knowing Brother Nichols would not accept pay for them anyway—I picked up a few boards of what I considered “waste” lumber, and shortly the job was finished. At the time Brother Nichols was buying all the building materials for the construction of the houses, and selling them to the brethren at cost, hence the lumber was his.

A few days later Brother Nichols' attention was called to the fact that I had taken this lumber without asking for it, and felt that I should have a lesson to more firmly impress upon my mind the aforementioned principle that anything worth having was worth asking for. So at the gathering that evening he took occasion to mention the matter publicly. In the course of the talk that followed, someone suggested that I should pay Brother Nichols for the lumber. When I asked him the price, he answered, “A cent and a quarter.” I had a ten-cent piece with me at the time, and while I hesitated, a little puzzled about how to make the change for the quarter of a cent, he spoke up and said that all he wanted was for the sister for whom the lumber had been taken to put the “right scent on the last quarter of her life.”

He never failed to encourage a willing worker. One summer, feeling I wanted to do my bit in the Lord's work, I took it upon myself to mow the lawns in front of the Mission buildings before and after work. One morning, as I was finishing the mowing outside his window, Brother Nichols came out and handed me a ten-dollar bill.

Brother Nichols believed in starting the day out right, and it was not uncommon on warm summer mornings—as he would step outside to get the first breath of fresh morning air—to hear him chant aloud,

“Better today than ever before,
Let us sing this new song
As we turn the leaf o'er.”

He was a noble man and a great leader, and soon the voice of the Prophet Elijah as Christ's forerunner will awaken him from the sleep of death; and to now emulate his noble example so as to be worthy of standing in his presence then, should be the chief concern of every one of us.

MM

With Summer Past . . .

(Continued from page 5)

will constantly press toward greater heights, and will ever long to do more in the work of the Lord. Progression is life, stagnation is death. Someone once remarked to a skilled artisan, admiring a fine piece of work he had just finished, "There, that is your best piece of work!" The artisan quickly answered, "No, sir; tomorrow's must be still better." The life of a true Christian must be a life of progression. The very moment we become satisfied with ourselves we will stop working and the death of the new man will be the result. The great Apostle was assured of this when he said, "Furthermore, then we beseech you, brethren, . . . that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more."

What a blessing we who have had the eyes of our understanding enlightened enjoy. There are no other people on earth who have the knowledge we have, that know what is so soon to come to pass on earth. To the average man who is inclined to do some serious thinking, the war, trouble and turmoil in the world at present must be a source of discouragement, especially if viewed against the background of man's accomplishments in the past. But we who know God's plan know what the final outcome of it all is to be, that man's hopelessly tangled order of things is, very soon, to be replaced by a new and better order, with Christ and His bride, the Church, or the 144,000 faithful, at the head of that new Government.

Should we not be glad to know there is such a better time coming, and how we should make every step count in the direction of preparing for it when it comes! Every temporal thing, our business, our profession, our job, our farming project, our investments, or our temporal interests of whatever kind or nature, must be secondary to our greater interest of preparing to live in God's eternal Kingdom when set up on earth. We must use the things of this world as a means to an end, and not as an end in themselves. I recall that Sister Hembree once said, "Instead of being all wrapped up in our temporal interests, we should feel we would be only too glad to drop them at a moment's notice if Elijah should come, to take part in that greater work with Christ on earth."

Jesus gave us quite a lesson on not being too wrapped up in earthly things in the parable of the Sower. You remember some seed fell by the wayside, and was plucked up by the fowls. That which fell on stony ground having no depth of soil was symbolic of the class who do not possess the mental stamina and endurance to make the necessary effort to carry the work to its successful finish. Of either of these two classes not much could be expected. But the third class, represented by the seed that fell among thorns, could have done better. They could have pulled out the thorns and

given the grain a chance to grow. But what did they do? Let Jesus answer: "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." We are tempted in many different ways. One is allured by the pleasures of this world, another by the love of riches, while still another—and how many of us will have to watch on this point—allows the cares of this life to come in and choke out the Word, and so becomes unfruitful; and the endless reward that might have been theirs will be lost to them because they did not "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

In one of his sermons, Brother Nichols has this to say about seeking first the Kingdom of God: "There is something that must be first; something that must come ahead of everything else; that must be the leading ideal and theme of our life. Are we really seeking the Kingdom of God? Is every thought, motive and act impelled in that direction? or does our seeking signify we are seeking for the things of this life? . . . We have a trial every day, to see whether we are seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and considering it more than our necessary food, more than thousands of gold and silver."

It is a big work to always put *first things first*. Brother Nichols was a very great example in this respect. We, who had the rare privilege of being intimately acquainted with him through many years of his life, know his love for truth was so great and so constant that even the most pressing temporal affairs could not dim its radiance. A sermon of his was read recently that was preached on board "Megiddo" during the first summer of that missionary endeavor, on the Mississippi River at St. Paul, Minnesota. At that time the holding of public meetings, beside the many pressing details in connection with the management of the Mission Boat and its family of 90 persons, was bearing down upon him, but his paramount thought was his love for truth, to render his body a living sacrifice, and try to help others prepare for that great Day.

We have a hope that is real, Brother, a truth that leaves no room for doubt or defeat, and if we will not now let this truth work effectually in our lives, with what shame we will face the fact when we stand before the great Judge. At the time of World War I, when the American army to send to France was being raised, and war sentiment was running high, Theodore Roosevelt made the statement that "When the war is over it will be much easier for a man to explain why he was in the army than why he was not." So in the final Day of Account it will be much easier to explain why we performed the work and got ready, than why we did not. Let us all make haste.

Your brother in the Faith,

Kenneth E. Flowerday



I Am Committed

Decided to Prepare

The question proposed, "Have you decided to prepare for the world to come?" is the gravest of all time. Important decisions are made during a lifetime, but none to compare with "Which road shall I take, the broad and easy way or the straight and narrow?"

To this question I am finally able to give a resounding Yes! God's new World beckoned for many years. But not until after many sleepless hours, many days spent in agonizing soul-searching and copious amounts of tears shed during some of those long, dreary days, not until the burden became so heavy it seemed as though it would crush the very life from me, not until then could I finally say, "Yes, I want to begin my preparation."

But where could I go?...but to the Lord. When Jesus asked His disciples, "Will ye also go away?" Peter spoke up and answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:67-68). I had to turn my affections from this present world to those things which are more enduring. Oh, how great is that gravitational pull back to this world, though. Our break must be absolute! We cannot hold on to the world with one hand and to God with the other. We must simply change our minds, change our way of thinking: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

No one likes to be "different," to be stared at, made fun of, mocked and jeered at. It is part of human nature to want to be with the "in crowd." Everyone likes to have a lot of friends and be liked by everyone. To dare to

be different takes a lot of courage. We simply cannot be part of the "in crowd." We must come out and be separate. Our days here in the present order of things are but a vapor that vanisheth away. What we are a part of now is only temporal and shall pass away.

The desire for citizenship of a better country should overwhelm us. Then and only then will the cares of this world have less pull. When I begin to search the Word of God, to learn of His precious promises, of just what is in store for those who have "sold out" for that world to come, then I find the pull is onward and upward.

How strange...now I look with sadness on the masses who are rushing headlong in their pursuit of happiness and yet stumbling over the true way to obtain it. They are gripped with an insatiable hunger for "things" of this present life, thinking at the end of the struggle they will have found their "pot of gold." If only they knew that their everlasting inheritance will be only that little 2' x 6' plot of earth, there to decay and be as though they never were!

Why not latch on to that which is eternal, enduring, sure and steadfast, as opposed to this sinking sand of eternal decadence?

Yes, my mind is made up. Now the way looms before me as one with a lot of hardships, trials and troubles; but I know I'm not alone in my struggle to enter in at that strait gate! Jesus said that He would never leave or forsake us.

—B.P., Georgia

Trusting

I am thankful that God has His people, a few here, a few there. Our task is not to

compromise the Gospel for the sake of getting large numbers, but to live according to the Word the best we know.

It is a shame how the masses are being so misled by taking someone's word for what the Bible says when they should be studying it themselves. Some people refuse to change, even when they are presented with the truth.

I just simply need to trust in God that I may keep learning the Truth. I look forward to the day when this mortal shall put on immortality. I want to keep on keeping on, as the time is short.

—R.C., Virginia

Storming

With all these divine thoughts to feast on, the MESSAGE, and the tapes, it will be my own fault if I miss out on the Kingdom. But I am determined, I can storm my way into the Kingdom and overcome those things that are not pleasing to God.

The world is clamoring for success but do not know how to attain it. Some have succeeded in becoming great by their hard efforts but in the end all meet the same fate—death and the end of all things.

Forgotten are their great deeds and noble works. But the one who does the will of God succeeds in this world and in the world to come; he will have riches, honor, and eternal life.

The time is soon approaching for Christ's return. There are only a few seconds left to eternity. Let us be up and doing and shut the world with all its sin out of our lives and become one of God's "precious jewels."

—M.W., Ohio

WE RECEIVE many letters. Among them are some reflecting honest, sincere commitment, a serious effort toward Christ-like living and the standard God requires. For the benefit of our readers, we are sharing these letters of personal commitment. Unfortunately, space does not allow us to print as many as we would like to publish.

Reminiscing

Reading and studying the Word of God gives us more and more to think about, and a closer, closer walk with God. When I think about it, I feel guilty that I have been very slow in making progress. But I am thankful to God that I have no desire to turn from the road that leads to life.

As I continue to read, it makes me think of my past. I knew there was a God, but how to do the right thing was the problem. And for a long time I was coming and going, listening to this one and to that one; and nobody much better than myself. I realized I was in darkness, spiritually speaking. I couldn't see any examples. I wanted proof. I was like a seed potato, sown in very poor soil with no fertilizer and no rain to enrich and soften the soil.

But God was merciful to me and my eyes have been opened. I have proof and faith and a living hope through God and through those who are sending out the Gospel to a sin-sick world. And to Jesus, our Perfect Example and soon-coming King, we are thankful.

—D.T., Newfoundland

Loving, Longing

I have been listening to a cassette tape with Brother Flowerday reading Psalm 116 and giving a prayer. He has such a pleasing tone, fatherly, confident of what he is reading, assuring those who listen that he is sincere. It gives me courage to hear him. It's all so strengthening in days of suspension.

I love the Lord; I mean to press on, to do

His will and to overcome. I know it's possible; we can if we will.

What a feast of cassette tapes I have and what joy I've experienced listening to words of wisdom. I thank God for the Truth; it encourages me more each day.

"Recalcitrant" is a good word. I like words which emphasize the degrees of sin which I still cling to. It is ever with me, for I long to be free from self, not free from striving but from every evil propensity of the flesh. We see it so many times: Demas, Judas, Solomon. How careful we must be lest we too fall from our own steadfastness.

You have stirred me to take bigger, quicker strides towards the Kingdom. The many citations, the wonderful discourses, all the aspects of your services are so beneficial in hastening the straight walk to Life. But being put in the Way, the desire to qualify has grown until it is a consuming desire above all else. Life is empty without the faith. The finest mansion in the world would mean nothing without it.

Let us remember Demas; then think of our Lord. He did not hanker after this world's treasures. His was stored in heaven, and His heart was there. It's a noble work we are called to perform.

"Do not then let earth engross us,...For its riches fade and fly,...In the realms where nought can steal them,...Lay your life's best treasures by."

—N.T., England

Happy

My day began early and I was running late, but I had to take time to ask God for extra strength and thank Him for the

blessing of another day of life, for a comfortable home and employment, which so many do not have.

There were many trials in my day; but instead of getting angry, impatient or worried, I could only think to give praise and thanks to God for carefully watching over me. I was even happy; I felt as though I had made a great triumph over my "old man" and, therefore, had made progress toward becoming a new creature. I felt God was giving me an opportunity to make spiritual growth and, fortunately, I had recognized it as such and worked at overcoming some of the cumbersome faults still clinging to me. How little they seem sometimes, but very hard to shake off sometimes.

Evil or unworthy thoughts rob us of much precious time when we need so desperately to be redeeming it, for only the perfect shall enter God's Kingdom.

I want to put forth all possible effort daily to accomplish this end.

—F.B., Iowa

All New

We know our time is running out and we have to hurry to finish our work before the Lord comes. How thankful I am to be in a peaceable place to work out my salvation.

"Do something!" is Paul's advice. Put off and put on. Stop the wrong, start the right. Then again he says it is a matter of doing. It takes action. One of my greatest problems is love of ease. Maybe I don't do anything too bad, but do I do the things that make me completely new?

To put to death this old carnal nature, we need God's help. It takes prayer, without

ceasing. We must not forget God is with us if we're doing on our part. If we can only be together in the "Millennial Superworld!" I'm striving to be there. I must work harder to get my mind purified.

—W.P., Iowa

Awake, Watching

The Good Father has blessed us with such good help in a big time of need in these last days when most around us are doing sin with both hands earnestly. It should wake us all as we see the Bible prophecy being fulfilled so rapidly.

Indeed, these are growing days, or they should be, for all of us who have heard the midnight cry: Awake, awake and get ready.

It will take much watching on our part of our thoughts and actions, as well as to clean out all unnecessary thoughts.

I find the more I read, the more I see where I should learn more and more of God's truths and obey them as well. I am striving to throw all of the old man away and become a clean new man.

—H.C., South Carolina

Grateful

We really have much to be thankful for. We keep busy and make plans for the future. But we know that if things don't work out, it doesn't really matter. God is guiding us and He knows what is best for us. When one way closes, another opens.

The condition of the world is not good, but it doesn't depress me because I know that's the way it has to be before it can get better.

What I am most concerned about is getting myself "better" so I don't have to be afraid when our Lord returns to reward His servants. That time can't be far off.

—P. F., Texas

Encouraged

One great help to me has been the encouragement from everyone. I need to be reminded so often that I am never without help, both human and divine. This is what makes life worthwhile, because alone we would fail.

Now is the time to make preparations for our Lord's return. This is our blessed hope. How we should thank God for giving us more time to overcome all evil with good.

I know I have a long way to go and each moment is for my benefit. The old man is not easy to conquer. We know only a good character will count with the Lord (Matt.

5:48). We need to keep our minds filled with good and lovely thoughts, and that takes work. If we keep at it, it can be done. It has been done. There is always someone to help us.

—E.M., Indiana

Forearmed

However small our numbers, when armed with the Sword of the Spirit, protected by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, in the cause of liberty from the flesh and a hope such as we have of living in a better Country, we shall not fight our battles alone. God is with us for our Captain. We have agreed to serve our God and shall one day stand and be judged for what we have done. I know not what course others will take; but as for me, I will fight on. Great is the combat; divine is the work.

—S.J., Georgia

Blessed

With all the wisdom and knowledge that Solomon had, he died "an old and foolish king who would no more be admonished" (Eccl. 4:13). We will fare no better than King Solomon, if we do not keep our vow to God. Oh, there are so many warnings of the pitfalls; it is no wonder that we are commanded to tremble at His Word.

John the Baptist was such a wonderful example. What a wonderful day it will be to meet those worthy men and women of old, and to share with them the blessings of eternity.

I feel wonderfully blessed to be part of such a family.

—G.W., Newfoundland

Outgoing

I could not be happy with the knowledge that I had, and for me it left more questions unanswered than answered. Thank God for this, for in my groping He led me to the fountain of true knowledge that I might learn His Truth. I am always ready to tell anyone about it, if they express a desire to know how and what I believe.

I try to "come out from the world and be separate" and apart as much as possible. I certainly don't want to waste time when I know I have much work yet to do. I am oh, so thankful to God that I have been lead to His life-giving, life-saving knowledge, and that all things are as well with me as they are. God knows what is best for each of us and if this is to be my lot, I am content, knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God.

—J.B., Maryland

I Want to Be There

I have my ups and I have my downs, but thank God, I can now work to get everything in its proper perspective.

It seems that whatever I pick up and choose to read from the *Message* was written just for me. So much to feast the mind on. The tapes are wonderful, but there are times when reading is the best way to absorb information and inspiration.

Lately I've been succumbing to a vice I always thought I didn't have—worry. It's foolish and I'm going to do something about it by switching that part of my mind over to healthier, more uplifting thoughts. The Bible has the antidote for whatever ails us. If we (if I) truly believe God's Word, His promises and principles, I will take each day one at a time, looking to the future only as it concerns Eternity. What a wonderful, grand, glorious Prize that will be—to *live!* I want to be there, you want to be there, we all want to be there. Let us renew, renew and renew our determination to do the right, to keep pressing on in hope of the Better Tomorrow. It is coming very soon.

D.J., Michigan

A Mighty Effort

I want to share the joy I feel in having made the firm decision to be a Christian day in and day out during the good and the hard times as well. I am making a mighty effort to overcome, to rise above the pettiness around me, to control my speech, and to keep my inner eyes sharply focused on the ultimate purpose of life, that of living forever and ever in the Kingdom of God.

I knew what was right years ago, yet it has taken me the better part of a lifetime to recognize this fact and turn around. Doing what is right is like learning a new physical activity. At first it feels awkward and you're clumsy, but with practice and time, it replaces the bad habits. I am working on my tongue. I am not saying all the things I said before. I stop and give thought before uttering a single word.

I see those around me saying immediately whatever enters their mind, be it serious or just idle words. And idle words are the hardest ones to control and restrain. But controlling my tongue and the words I speak is a major new direction for me.

Always, I find an article in the *Message* that is hard hitting and gives me a new measure of insight and points out another wrinkle or blemish on my character.

The gift of eternal life in the Kingdom will be a fantastic experience that will never end and all of the petty troubles we are going through currently will be as nothing compared to the joys of being in the

Kingdom. And eventually one day we will be admitted into the very presence of the Great Creator God, the God of Lights in whom there is no shadow or variability or turning. We can be extremely happy that He is the same God of yesterday, today and forever and that He doesn't change.

My resolve is firm, and I know that it will be tested and retested sorely over and over again. But I know that with the steadfast determination and my mind set on being in the Kingdom, that nothing in this world will ever again deter me from this goal. My life is likewise dedicated to those principles which Christ lived so successfully. It means personal beheading and a crushing of my will, but it can be done and I have no excuse for not doing it.

How extremely fortunate we are of all the peoples that have ever lived to have been given the Truth of God through Rev. L. T. Nichols, certainly a giant among men, a man that patterned his entire life after Christ in thought and action. I am burning with zeal to do the same in my life and to stand with the others before Christ with an unspotted robe of righteousness, unshamed and filled with joy at His arrival.

—D.K., Louisiana

Needing the Crumbs

I am always grateful for the crumbs from the Lord's table. In these closing hours of our probationary period, the exhortations to more and more watchfulness lest we become lax and at ease, can never be stressed too much. Human nature is weak and needs constant stimulation. Every bit of warning is never too much; it is vital and necessary. Future life is at stake and we must guard well our thoughts, our actions, feelings and motives. I want all my motives to be right, stemming from a pure and sincere heart.

—L. K., New Jersey

Pressing On

In the meantime, whatever else I have to do, I must press on, store my mind with the heavenly so that I may be prepared for what is coming. If the time should come that I cannot read, I will have all these commandments stored away in my heart, then I can remember.

I get much benefit from the tapes and other correspondence we receive. Thank you all so much.

—R. S., Charleston, Mississippi

Decided

I've been thinking about you, and how you've devoted your lives to the Lord. I have decided to devote my life to the Lord also. What's the point in getting married with the world like this?

After I finish my schooling, I'm planning to get a job right in New York so I can go to the Mission and become a part of you. I feel that the way you are going is the right way and I want to go the right way in life. There are so many people who look for the way out fast and easy, so to speak. I'm glad to say I am not that kind, thank the Lord.

What I've decided I feel is a step in the right direction and nobody can turn me around. See you in a few years—maybe sooner

—S. B., Newfoundland

Self-Control

I think progress can only be gained and measured on a daily basis, for only by daily effort do we grow from strength to strength.

If not willing to put forth every effort to reach the top, we will never be there in the day to come.

A person that has no control over himself is disliked by most people because he is uncontrollable. To have freedom is only to have that which is absolutely necessary to enable us to be what we ought to be.

We may know how important it is for a man to control himself. I hope that Almighty God who is above all things shall be with us all and give us the strength to do what is right for us to do. I believe that this will bring us under one umbrella to live a Christian life through Christ Jesus.

—H.D.K., Liberia

What If It Were Today?

We must live today as if we knew for sure that Elijah would be here in the morning, do only that which we would want to be found doing and speak only the way we would speak if Christ were standing near.

Oh, to be worthy to stand on that great day when Christ is here, to meet people like Abraham, Mary, Joseph and even the ones dear to us who have given their all for God's true way.

This is my one prayer, that I may be worthy of one small place in that soon coming Kingdom.

—M.G., Ontario, Canada

Keeping At It

THERE is no denying our working days are getting shorter with every passing hour and minute. Every precious moment must be jealously guarded lest we misuse it for some propensity of the flesh.

Without a strong determined will to stick with it, we will never fit ourselves for a place in God's eternal future.

Salvation is not hereditary nor a present possession in our hands already because we have acknowledged Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. It is a boon to be worked for and obtained through many self-denying efforts. Every time we meet our daily, momentary attacks of temptation, frustration and the like in the spirit of true self-denial, we are redeeming the time and are building up our resistance against the things that try us.

The prize at the end of life's long road is there waiting for us. The Lord requires the same steady dedication to duty from his servants, the same keeping at it. For only they that endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

As a part of our training program the Lord will and does permit His people to go through some flood tides of testing. Rejoicing in times of plenty is not hard but to rejoice when things are against us takes a person of real character. Since character is what God wants most, let us be preparing ourselves now, today and every day, to meet the inevitable and be strong.

"Rejoice in the Lord," said Brother Paul, "and again I say, rejoice." If he could do it in his day of much persecution why can't we do it in our day when those things are removed from us?

We must overcome self. And how shall we do it? By KEEPING AT IT, that's how!

—Contributed

Captive Heroes

TRAVEL back into history, back to the time about five centuries before Christ, the time when Babylon ruled the world.

One, two, three—the early hours of the rising empire sparkle like jewels in the crown of her glory. These are hours of conquest and victory. Babylon the Great! Babylon the master of the world!

Four, five, six. Every passing hour adds to the brilliance of her career. Yet, her record is long and inglorious, a chronicle of strife and war and bloodshed and suffering. Babylon's domain, under the leadership of the powerful Nebuchadnezzar, reaches further and further, now to include the region of Palestine, as well as Egypt and Assyria. God is permitting the apostate kingdoms of Israel and Judah to fall captive to her broad and devastating sweep; it is punishment justly deserved by years of backsliding, rebellion and disobedience.

And so falls the proud city of Jerusalem. And the temple. The gold from its walls, the sacred appurtenances, even the holy vessels are now the property of Babylon. To Babylon they go, and the city is leveled and burned with fire.

But inanimate objects were not Babylon's only acquisitions. There are also human victims, among whom are some familiar names: Jeremiah, Daniel, and his three companions; also the prophet Ezekiel. All became the property of Babylon the Great! Babylon the Terrible!

Our drama focuses upon Daniel the prophet.

"One may lead a good life," said the philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius, "even in a palace." He might have added that men who can do it are hard to find. Such a man was the prophet Daniel. His whole life, so far as the record reveals, was spent in palaces, yet like Joseph of old he maintained his integrity. Prosperity could not spoil him, nor could power corrupt him. No man ever had a fuller life than Daniel, and no Prophet ever uttered words

more intimately connected with our day and our problems.

The later years of the prophet Jeremiah's ministry overlap the earlier years of Daniel's, and we feel safe in assuming that in the king's house in Jerusalem a warm, close friendship must have existed between these two great souls. In the opening scene, we witness their sorrowful farewell on the night before Daniel's deportation to Babylon, a deportation from which he never returned.

Scene 1

Farewell to Jerusalem

This scene takes place in ancient Jerusalem. The year is approximately 605 BC, the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim, the time when Nebuchadnezzar took captive those Israelites of high social standing.

*Characters: Jeremiah Aged Prophet
Daniel Young Prince*

Jeremiah the Prophet, now a man of mature years, is bidding farewell to the young prince Daniel, a youth with light beard and rich robes. Daniel is leaving the next day for Babylon as a hostage. Both speak with emotion.

Jeremiah:

And so it is, my son, that you must go
With morning's light to Babylon afar.
Ah, dark the day! Yet still we must be strong.
More unto me, O Daniel, have you been,
Than sons or daughters. As I've watched you grow,
Have seen your thirst for wisdom, seen your life
Of holiness in a world grown all corrupt,
Many and fond have been my dreams
Of your bright future as Jehovah's man;
As prophet in the court to cry aloud

'Gainst Israel's sins; to bring them back to God
Where I have failed. Yea, even it could be
Upon the throne as king the Lord might place
You, and a better day should dawn.
And now—and now—
My dreams must end. It was not so to be.

Daniel:

My father, what can I say? Your help,
Your loving guidance, and your wisdom great,
Your patience and the pattern of your life
Have long been my ideal, though unworthy
Of the love of Jeremiah I may be.
Ah, surely this can never be the end!
It cannot be that we must part for aye!

Jeremiah:

For aye or for a season, I know not,
For we are slaves, and I am old, and you
Are young. Our fate is in Jehovah's hands.
Oh, Daniel, servant of the living God,
Be true, be true where'er you go.
Babylon, the center of all vice and sin,
The home of idols foul, of darkness gross,
Will tempt thee; and the palace of the king
Has many pitfalls. Would that it were I
Could take your place.

Daniel:

Nay, father, fear not. Though I am weak
Your words have made me strong—strong to resist
Whatever Babylon may offer. I love it not,
Nor shall I.

Jeremiah:

Forget not, Daniel, why this trial has come.
Our nation's sins have brought us low, and now
To exile we must go. If we submit
We may be spared to dwell within our land
For many years, while you and your companions,
Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, princes all
Of Judah's royal house, and kinsmen yours,
Languish as hostages in Babylon.

Daniel:

Then, my father, I shall think of us
As sacrifices for our nation's good.
Yea, rather, ambassadors are we all,
For we are but the first to go; the rest
Will come in time, for they will not submit.
The lesson must be taught in fire and blood
And long captivity. What I shall be
Or do, I know not, but Jehovah will protect

And still provide. It may be we shall meet
Upon Euphrates' banks, as captives all.
But you will write me
Words of counsel and of courage,
Will you not?

Jeremiah:

Yea, no caravan or post
Shall go from Zion unto Babylon
Without my letter. And you must write.

Daniel:

The time grows short, my father; tell me more.
Give me thy counsel wise, that I may keep
True to the faith of Abraham of old,
The faith that keeps thee stedfast as a rock
'Mid all the storms which shake our world. If only
I may be like thee, my cup will be full.

Jeremiah:

Your talents, Daniel, and your training long
Lay on you great responsibility,
A duty to your God and to your friends
Who look to you as leader. Fail them not.
Beware of Babylon's impurity;
Let not the glitter of her costly show
Or outward honors which may come to you
Cause you to compromise with evil.
A perfect life knows no compromise. Never once
Yield to ungoverned curiosity,
For Babylon's depraved and doomed; let her alone.



"Forget not, Daniel..."

*Touch not, taste not, handle not of hers.
Decay comes slowly and insidiously,
And man is self-deceived; what he thinks right
May be the blackest wrong. Only the Law
Of God can be the standard. Cling to that;
Read it daily, and never fail to pray
For thine own self, and for thy nation, too,
That Israel may repent and turn to God.
And if the spirit of Jehovah speaks to thee
By vision or by angel's voice or hand—
Ah, Daniel, how I've longed for thee to be
A prophet, to take up the work that I
Must soon lay down—then listen and obey.*

Daniel:

Tonight I feel thy strength within me burn,
And strong I feel to stand against all sin,
Even in Babylon. Yet well I know
That time can wear me down, and things at hand
Seem greater than the things which really count;
So I must watch.

Jeremiah:

This, Daniel, is thy opportunity
To witness for Jehovah. Think! the eyes
Of Israel are upon thee, as the envoy
And representative of our most holy faith.
And Babylon, too, will watch thee narrowly,
And judge our God by what they see in thee.

Daniel:

I know, Father, I know.

Jeremiah:

In a dry and thirsty land, you and your fellows
Are springs of living water. Keep it pure.

Daniel:

*(embracing Jeremiah) Give me thy blessing father,
ere I go. (He kneels before Jeremiah, who places both
hands on Daniel's head)*

Jeremiah:

O God, the living God of Abraham,
Of Isaac and of Israel our sires,
Bless with Thy richest blessing this Thy man,
Thy messenger and Thy ambassador.
Keep him in time of danger safe from harm,
Keep him in all temptations pure from sin.
Give him, if such shall be Thy gracious will,
A double portion of Thy wisdom great,
That he may be a light in Babylon,

And down the years untracked his words may shine
A light of prophecy to guide the steps
Of generations that are yet unborn.
Give him Thy spirit and Thy peace divine,
And holiness, that when Messiah comes,
He may, with all Thy faithful ones, arise
To share Thy Kingdom through eternal years.

(Continued Next Issue)

Talk or DO?

WHAT would we do without our Christian brothers and sisters! If only we remember that not only should we delight in reading, but most importantly, we should take heed to all our exhortations.

Emerson said, "What you are thunders so loud I can't hear what you say." It is so easy to "talk religion." There are many people we meet in our daily discourses who like to tell how miraculously they have been "saved." To hear them tell it, they have the "spirit" and want others to experience this wonderful feeling. But almost in the same breath, they are engaging in a filthy conversation, an argument, a temper tantrum and many, many more worldly activities. Is this salvation? NO! Sadly, these people have believed lies, the lies being: Nobody's perfect. . . . Jesus paid it all. . . . Your body may sin, but not your soul; it's pure and white.

What does God's Word say, however? "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). It is oh! so plain. God will not tolerate our sins. If we live after the flesh, we shall die. We are commanded to come out from the world and be separate. Our lives should not resemble the world whatsoever.

These people have established their own righteousness, but it is not according to God's law.

Over and over again we are warned to flee from the wrath to come. The Day is drawing closer. In fact, this could be the dawning of that Day. The shadows are lengthening fast. Soon Christ shall split the eastern sky. The sounds of the time of His appearing are growing louder and louder until we shall actually hear that trumpet sound.

We must make haste to rid our lives of anything that would defile and cause shame when we stand before the Judgment seat.

May we not be found sleeping but awake, alert, working and watching, . . . listening for that trumpet to sound.

—Contributed

About Your Thought - Factory...

SUPPOSE you owned a factory. Would you manufacture only products that you do not want, do not need, and cannot use to advantage? Would you deliberately operate your factory in such a way as to make it definitely harmful to you, the owner?

Well, then, consider that you do own a factory, a *thought* factory. It is inside you, and you are both owner and superintendent. Also night watchman, and everything else. Nothing can happen in that factory without your approval. Nothing can go into it, neither raw materials nor partly manufactured goods, except the products that you yourself authorize.

A thought factory! That's what you have...and what are you turning out? Take a look at your products. Are you a producer of junk? Fear, worry, impatience, anger, doubt; are you proud of them? When putting out such products, isn't your factory a menace to yourself and a nuisance to others? Can you expect other people to welcome such goods as you are manufacturing?

Yes, what is our thought factory producing, yours and mine? We as Christians, professing to follow Jesus, must not produce even one of these undesirable products; for if we do, it will prove fatal, for we read in II Corinthians 10 that we must cast down imaginations and bring our minds into captivity—not a part but “every thought to the obedience of Christ” (vs. 4-5).

Jesus listed 13 products which the heart or mind of man produces, and He said they are what defile. The first one He lists is *evil* thoughts. As a thought precedes every act, how carefully we must watch our thoughts. If our thoughts are always right, then our actions will be good, too. Why are not our thoughts all right without all this effort and watching? God gives us the answer in Isa. 55:8-9: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

How may this wide gap be bridged? We read in the 7th verse, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” This shows why so much work is needed to forsake our own thoughts and center our

thoughts on the high, noble things acceptable to the Lord.

If we were going to operate a factory and wanted it to be a profitable business, we would listen to advice and follow it. We would be anxious for any help from anyone who had made a success in that particular line before us. When they pointed out the pitfalls or any dangerous methods that might spell ruin to *our* undertaking, we would take heed. Nor would we want to manufacture junk or worthless products for which there would be no sale. What a miserable failure our business would be without any advice or help from others!

But when it comes to our thought factory, we pay no attention to the products we are putting out and forget that “upon our thoughts depend the victory.”

To operate our thought factory successfully is a greater work than operating a literal factory, hence our need to be on the watch for all the help we can obtain so that we may be successful in the business of our King. For the returns from this undertaking are great, even beyond what eye hath seen or ear hath heard (I Cor. 2:9).

Our founder has left us these thoughts on the operating of a successful thought factory: “If you will turn away from all evil thoughts and ways, He will wash your sins away, every one of them....You know we are commanded to meditate all the time. We must meditate day and night and inquire of the Lord....We are the biggest fools in the world if we do not meditate constantly....Our every thought should be ‘What can I do to be ready?’...If this law is our meditation, if it is on our minds continually, we will watch to see that we are speaking as the law directs. There are a few who will meditate; there are a few who will be saved.... At the judgment, every thought, word and act will be brought out.”

MM

The man who deals in sunshine
Is the man who gets the crowds;
He does a lot more business
Than the man who peddles clouds.



What About Those Shoes?

**“Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be”
—Deuteronomy 33:25**

IRON SHOES. They would be very heavy to wear, and difficult to walk in—and impossible to run in. But inasmuch as they are coupled with the promise of daylong strength, there must be some real advantage in them.

In the hill country of Palestine, we are told, the people had to climb great ascents and the stones were rough and jagged. It was necessary for them to wear “greaves”—sandals to the soles of which had been fastened plates of iron or brass to keep the sharp stones from cutting through and injuring their feet. Extra strength was needed also for the carrying of burdens across the hills.

What might iron shoes do for us? To be sure, we wouldn’t mind treading on thorns; and sharp, jagged rocks would not cut our feet if wearing such shoes. Nor could anyone even so much as irk us by stepping on our toes!

But all this is only a small part of what iron shoes can do.

The Israelites were wearing shoes when they left Egypt, and the Scriptures tell us that these shoes lasted all the way through the wilderness, beyond Kadesh-barnea, and all the way to Moab, for Moses reminded them that their clothes and shoes during all this time had not waxed old (Deut. 29:5). Did not these shoes acquire an iron-like quality?

When we think of iron, we think of strength, a strong quality of unyieldingness, a quality of endurance. Would they not be shoes that would keep us shod over the whole of our journey? Would they not be shoes to save us from sharp, piercing barbs of evil and keep us treading in the way of righteousness?

Then, too, iron shoes are *victory shoes*. Canaan was a land of conquest and victory, and the figure is as much for us today as it was for Israel just before Jericho. “Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deut. 33:25). Shod with these shoes, we can do exploits! We will be able again and again to claim victory.

What about the brass? Brass is sometimes used as a symbol of holiness; it has something of an adorning quality. The vessels in the Tabernacle that were used for cleansing purposes were made of brass. The altar of burnt sacrifice was made of brass. The serpent that the Lord directed Moses to make in the wilderness to stay the plague was of brass.

When Solomon sang of the Church, the bride, he exclaimed, “How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince’s daughter” (Song of Solomon 7:1). Did this mean that they were shoes of brass?

Iron shoes—shoes of strength, this is the promise of the Lord: “Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Shoes equal to the road! Strength equal to the climb! What a glorious promise. I do not know the way before me. It may be rough, it may be steep; but I know God’s provision is equal to my need, whatever it may be. Therefore I travel on in perfect confidence that “in the home and by the way, He will keep me day by day.”

Feet shod with the mighty strength of God and the shining beauty of holiness will witness that we seek something lasting, an eternal inheritance. And they will demonstrate to God that we want above all else to walk, and walk, and keep on walking in His strength—all the way into eternity!

MM

Standing on Holy Ground

(Continued from page 10)

it contains? And are we not living very close to one who fulfilled a prophecy of its pages right in our own age, the wonder on this side of the river of life who uncovered its revelations that we might share its glorious prospects of salvation? Do not these facts make our ground holy?

We...in the Divine Presence

In addition to this, does not the presence of God over us, around us, about us, hallow our lives, both in things secular and things divine? How can we separate the two, when we are called to be *His* people? Do we not feel ourselves under the eye of His watching angels? And are they not watching our steps, recording, observing, judging every hour? Oh, let such knowledge hallow our steps every moment, every day, for are they not all "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:14).

Making Our Lives Holy

We, too, in view of our high calling, are obligated to make all the precincts of our lives holy. For "ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." Again, "ye are the temple of the living God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." Can we wonder that "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" when we know that "the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are?" (I Cor. 3:16-17).

Should we not feel that God is in the midst of us? This is how Moses felt when God's angel had made Himself known at Horeb (Ex. 3:6).

Ground is not sacred for us in the sense that it would be if an angel were standing before us talking to us; but there is no such thing as escaping the Divine Presence. Whither can we flee from it? As wrote the Psalmist long ago, "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Ps. 139:7-12).

Are we not called to make every aspect of our lives holy? Is not every moment charged with holy opportunity to be and do for God and holiness? Is not this enough to make all our ground holy?

Recognizing Holy Ground

But holy ground is something we do not automatically recognize. We have no angel before us saying, "You are standing on holy ground." We have to be spiritually alert, sensitive to our opportunities and obligations; or we shall be like Pharaoh of old, who found himself suddenly in the presence of God and unwilling to recognize it—to our own doom.

In a very real and literal sense, are not we every moment of every day standing on holy ground? For "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 24:1).

It is the same earth which ultimately shall belong to the saints. The ground which men now divide and deed to one another and call after their own names is the very ground upon which the feet of angels soon shall tread. Who can say how much holy activity is right around us all the time, which we have not the ability to perceive? Everything we touch, taste or handle, is of heavenly design. "We are his people," dependent upon His pasture for our sustenance. Surely God is in this place, and shall we be like Jacob of old and know it not?

Especially is this true when we consider the spiritual aspects of our lives. We eat holy food, the words of the

We must spend all our time within the will of God.

prophets, apostles and Jesus, preserved for us by the work of God's servants in other ages. And do we not at this season remember the birth of our benefactor, one whose lifework was foretold in Scripture? Our founder performed a divinely appointed task, a holy task, to take forth the precious from the vile and hand it to us in its pure and unadulterated form. Did he not show us the divine principles which must influence every moment and aspect of our lives, making us holy before God? As we dedicate ourselves anew to uphold and defend the faith to which he gave his life, do we not tread on holy ground?

Our Responsibility

What then is our responsibility?

Treading on holy ground means holy conduct, just as Moses and Joshua had to put off their shoes in the Presence of God's angel. God always desired to hold His people in awe of Himself. Nothing about Him or His Presence or His activities should be counted common,

nor can any unholiness be tolerated in His Presence. It is not a matter of choice; it is God's decree, for holiness and unholiness are like oil and water; they do not mix.

God calls us to be a holy people, to hallow our daily lives by living as His sons and daughters even now. For this reason, we are to keep every day as a sabbath not to be polluted by anything God calls wrong. Even the most ordinary tasks of our lives must be done as to the Lord. "Who sweeps the floor as to the Lord makes that and the action fine." We can also hallow every ordinary activity of every day by obeying Paul's injunction, "Pray without ceasing."

This has always been the command, to sanctify ourselves, to dedicate everything we have and are to God.

We are creatures of time. To be holy means that our time belongs to God. This does not mean that every conscious moment must be spent doing something religious. But it does mean that we must spend all our time within the will of God, doing every task as unto Him, governed by His law, motivated by our desire to please Him above all else.

Holy...Wherever...Whatever

To be holy means that our jobs and our money belong to God. How we make money and how we spend it must be brought under the lordship of the Holy One. We must be ready to do what He wants us to do. To be holy means to devote our time, our work, our affection, our energy, our life—and all else—to Him.

But the trouble is, we so easily overlook the best. In the words of the poet,

*Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
And only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*

How unthinkable that we might, in the words of the poem, be sitting round, content to be idly "plucking blackberries," all unaware of the fact that "earth is crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God"!

God is working all around; active, though silent; but how few recognize it. How much the majority miss. How much do we miss! We consistently pass up a "burning bush" experience because we see only the commonplace? And thus, when we should be taking off our shoes to acknowledge the presence of God, we are sitting down and eating blackberries—oblivious to all but our own physical and emotional momentary needs. I have done it; you have done it; many times have all of us overlooked that which was keenly to our spiritual advantage, blind, as it were, in our preoccupation with things at hand.

Holy Opportunities

If so great a personage as Moses needed to be told "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground," what of us? If such a man as Jacob failed to perceive that "the Lord is in this place," what of us? How much do we miss of the opportunities of life—the disappointments as well as the joys, the sorrows as well as the delights? Opportunities are countless, but how often do we see them and take off our shoes? Aren't we much more prone to sit and pick the berries, to absorb ourselves with the petty problems or pleasures of daily life and so lose sight of our vision of the future?

Our relationship with our brothers and sisters in the faith, too, must become holy ground; how we handle these relationships is a holy responsibility. If we belong to God, and they belong to God, how can it be otherwise?

It goes without saying that our work for the church is holy ground. But here we must take special care that we handle sacred things with appropriate reverence and godly fear, whatever our activity. How disreputable we prove ourselves if we hold the truth in unrighteousness, as though we knew not God or His law, if we handle the word of God deceitfully (Rom. 1:18; II Cor. 4:2), using it for a cloak of maliciousness rather than as the pure word of the Lord. Let us remember that only holiness becometh our holy God.

Is there any area of your life or mine that is *not* holy ground? Then let us at once search it out and go about making it holy, consecrating it to God. Soon, perhaps very, very soon, we shall find ourselves face to face with holy messengers of God, to whom the thoughts of our hearts will be as evident as the expressions on our faces. How shall we feel then—as we find ourselves standing on holy ground? MM

Be In Time

*LIFE at best is very brief,
Like the falling of a leaf,
Like the binding of a sheaf.
Be in time!*

*Fleeting days are telling fast
That the die will soon be cast,
And the fatal line be past,
Be in time!*

*If in sin you longer wait,
You may find no open gate,
And your cry be "Just too late!"
Be in time!*

Inquiries and Answers

• The Tribulation Period

"What do you know about the seven-year tribulation period?"

We find no mention of a seven-year tribulation period in the Bible. It is possible to add two three-and-one-half-year periods in Revelation 11 and have a seven-year period, and to assign to it the name "tribulation," but the Bible does not do this. And we do not believe this is the intended application of the time periods mentioned in Revelation 11. The chapter speaks of three measures of time: "forty and two months" (v. 2), "a thousand two hundred and three score days" (v. 3), and "three days and an half" (vs. 9, 11). It is possible that all three refer to the same period of time, the 1260 years of total apostasy from true religion, a period which commenced soon after the days of the apostles. The apostle Paul saw the "mystery of iniquity" already at work in his day (II Thess. 2:7). (For further discussion of this subject, see our booklet *The Great Apostasy*.)

There will be a "time of trouble" when Christ returns to earth and calls upon the nations to submit to His new government. They will refuse and will be ready to fight to preserve their old systems. The result will be the battle of Armageddon. This time could be called a time of "tribulation," and it is yet future; but we do not believe that it is called this in the Bible. It is not the "great tribulation" Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:21 or in Revelation 11. Jesus' reference to "great tribulation" in Matthew 24:21 is not of any "seven-year" length; in fact, if we follow the sequence of Jesus' thought in the chapter, we find that it applies to a time between the destruction of Jerusalem (vs. 15-21) and the time of the second coming of Christ (vs. 24-27). Here again an application to the great apostasy from true religion would seem to be the more logical and harmonious with reason and understanding.

• "One like the Son of Man"

"I see in the seventh chapter of Daniel much symbolism which can be applied to the Father and the Son (Christ), but who is the 'one like the Son of man' in verse

13? As I see it, the context clearly shows that 'one like the Son' comes to present himself before the Ancient of days and receives a kingdom, hence the 'one like the Son of man' cannot be Christ. Would you please comment."

The phrase "one like the Son of man" cannot refer to Christ, as you observe; it must refer to His saints. It refers to the "body of Christ," not "the head." Most of the newer translations do not capitalize the word "son." These include the NIV, Moffatt, Jerusalem Bible, the American Translation, and the Revised Standard Version. The New English Bible reads, "I saw one like a man coming with the clouds of heaven (angels); he approached the Ancient in years and was presented to him." This is an excellent description of the Bride of Christ being presented to her husband, the saints meeting the Head of the body. The 14th verse continues, "Sovereignty and glory and kingly power were given to him."

We know from Daniel 7:27, Revelation 14:1, and other texts that Christ and His saints will be the rulers in the world to come. If we look closely at the wording even in the King James Version, we see that it is not Christ, the Son of man, who is spoken of, but "one like the Son of man." All who will be co-rulers with Christ must now become like Him, purifying themselves as He is pure (I John 3:3); then when Christ returns they shall be made like Him physically, changed to immortality (Phil. 3:20-21; I John 3:2).

• Christ in the Wilderness?

"What did Paul mean by 'baptism' in I Cor. 10:1-4, 'Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea?'"

In this passage Paul was addressing the overconfident Corinthians. They had been baptized into Christ and felt that they were quite secure and in no danger. Paul is pointing out to them that partaking of the Lord's Supper alone will not itself save anyone. He illustrates His point by reminding them of a little of Israel's history.

The children of Israel had witnessed and experienced most wonderful manifestations of the power of God.

They had seen daily the cloud representing the presence of God over them to guide and protect them. They had miraculously passed through the Red Sea on dry ground. By these experiences they were definitely committed to Moses, that is, "they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

The Israelites by passing under the cloud and through the sea made a break with their old life in Egypt and were united with Moses, acknowledging him as their leader, all drinking the same spiritual drink and eating the same spiritual meat. In like manner, the real meaning of the Christian baptism is a definite act of attachment to Christ and of detachment from the sinful world.

But Paul makes yet another point. While the Israelites had these wonderful experiences, were eyewitnesses of the power of God, were baptized unto Moses, most of them failed miserably. Again a parallel might be drawn between the experience of the Israelites and the experience of every Christian. Despite their initiation and despite their strong present commitment, they should not be too self-confident; they, too, could fall and perish. Literal baptism was for them no guarantee of security against temptation. Paul makes this very clear. There is danger—even to the strongest—from the heathen influences about them. Literal baptism alone would not save.

• Original Sin in the Old Testament?

"In the Megiddo Message Bible Study on 'Death—According to the Bible' (June, 1978), the statement is made, 'The penalty for a transgression falls upon the transgressor, not upon his posterity.' How can we harmonize this statement with Exodus 20:5 where we are told, 'Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me'? Please explain."

If you note the end of Exodus 20:5—"of them that hate me"—you will have your answer. He would not "visit iniquity upon successive generations "of them that love me," whatever the fathers had been. God is just. The succeeding generations must hate the Lord, or He will not punish them. It is "to every man according to his works" (Rev. 22:14). This is His eternal principle.

• The Judgment—When?

"Regarding the Resurrection and Judgment: Christ shall return in the air and the dead in Christ shall rise, living saints shall meet Him in the air. At the start of the Millennial reign, which is after the wedding supper, Christ will as King judge the nations, not individuals (Continued on page 27)

So What Do You Know?

Here Am I

Many of the worthies of old answered "Here am I" when God spoke to them. Some showed a willing and obedient spirit when asked to help or serve. We would do well to be of that same spirit and be ready to say "Here am I" when called upon.

Below are 10 Bible quotes where someone answered "Here am I". Fill in the blanks.

1. "God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, _____, _____. And he said, *Here am I.*"
2. "And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, _____: And I said, *Here am I.* And he said, ...I have seen all that _____ doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel where thou anointedst the pillar...."
3. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, *Here am I; send me.*" Who said this? _____.
4. "And _____ said unto _____, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in _____? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, *Here am I.*"
5. "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named _____; and to him said the Lord in a vision, _____. And he said, *Behold, I am here, Lord.*"
6. "And the Lord called _____ again the third time. And he arose and went to _____, and said, *Here am I; for thou didst call me.*"
7. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, _____, _____. and he said, *Here am I.* And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad...."
8. "Then shalt thou call, and the _____ shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, *Here I am.*" Which prophet wrote this? _____
9. "Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, ...But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold *here am I*, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." Who said this? _____
10. "And God spake unto _____ in the visions of the night, and said, _____, _____. And he said, *Here am I.* And he said, I am God, ...fear not to go down into _____."

Answers:

1. Moses, Moses; Ex. 3:4
2. Jacob, Laban; Gen. 31:11, 13
3. Isaiah; Isa. 6:8
4. Israel, Joseph, Shechem; Gen. 37:13
5. Ananias, Ananias; Acts 9:10
6. Samuel, Eli; I Sam. 3:8
7. Abraham, Abraham; Gen. 22:11-12
8. Lord, Isaiah 58:9
9. David; II Sam. 15:25, 26
10. Israel, Jacob, Jacob, Egypt; Gen 46:2-3

because they (the individuals) will be judged at the white throne judgment. Am I right?"

You are correct in stating that Christ shall return and the saints shall rise to meet Him in the air (see I Thess. 4:17). However, you are confused as to the order of events you describe following this.

You say that at the start of the Millennial reign, which is after the wedding supper, Christ as King will judge the nations, not individuals; that the saints meet Christ and then attend the wedding feast before the Judgment. This is impossible, because the purpose of the Judgment is to determine who are the saints who will reign with Christ and who the Bride is who will attend the wedding feast. According to Scripture, both the Bride and the "saints" are the same. Revelation 22:12 says, "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." In order to give every man "according as his work shall be," Christ must judge them. As He said in Matthew 7:22-23, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Does not this sound like a judgment upon individuals?

• Sunday versus the Sabbath

"There is one thing I cannot reconcile myself to. That is the matter of the observance of Sunday instead of the Sabbath. I may be completely wrong, but I still feel that God's Commandments were known to those before the time of Moses. There is a lot in the Holy Bible that tells us of the patriarchs telling their people to put away the strange gods from them, etc., and many other points which indicate that they must have known God's Commandments. Anyhow, I am still studying this very carefully. I am aware of a far superior law than the law of Moses, but the Ten Commandments do help us."

We agree with you that the Sabbath observance was a God-given ordinance, but there is no indication that it was commanded before the time of the Israelites (Exodus 16). You are surely aware of the fact that Sunday was not the title given to any day during Bible times, nor was what we call "Saturday" the Sabbath then. "Sabbath" means "seventh day," or "day of rest," and because the Hebrew people followed a lunar calendar that began with the first new moon after the equinox, the Sabbath would fall on different days in different years, because the first day of the year (the day of the new moon) would fall at different times in our seven-day cycle. It appears that the Hebrews broke the seven-day

cycle every year to begin fresh with the first day of the week on the first day of the year. (See Leviticus 23, where the 14th day of the year is said to be the "second" Sabbath. This would be impossible without the first day of the week being the first day of the year because the number of days in the Hebrew year (354) was not divisible by 7).

As far as God's commands being known in the time of the patriarchs, we know that certain commands were known; at least they knew they had to obey; but we do not have any record of the "Ten" being given prior to Sinai; nor were they (the Ten) ever the whole law of God for His people.

There are surely many, *many* commands which Jesus and Paul mention again and again, and *nowhere* do they say, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." This does not mean that we should go week after week without any thought of God—absolutely not! But the same God who gives us what we call Saturday gives us also what we call Sunday, and Monday, and Tuesday, and so on, and each day is a day we must use aright. The pattern of giving one day in seven to set aside secular duties and have special devotions is surely God-honoring and a genuine help toward right living that will please God. But nowhere do we have any command to observe Saturday above any other day in the week.

• Condemned for Adam's Sin?

"In this same booklet on p. 61 under 'Transgression—Its Consequences,' it reads of the first transgression: 'but a transgression of such far-reaching effects that it defiled the formerly pure and sinless progenitors of a race and stained the natures of all their posterity.' In History of the Megiddo Mission, p. 67, it reads that Adam's sin condemned only himself. How does this harmonize with p. 61 of God's Spiritual Creation?"

What is stated on page 61 of our Spiritual Creation booklet is the nominally accepted theological doctrine of the "fall." We do not believe the Bible supports or teaches any such doctrine. God never condemned one individual for the sins of another. Adam's sin condemned only himself. *We condemn ourselves when we sin.* It is entirely an individual matter. God judges and will reward every man according to his works (Rev. 22:12).

LORD, speak to me that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou hast sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone.

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