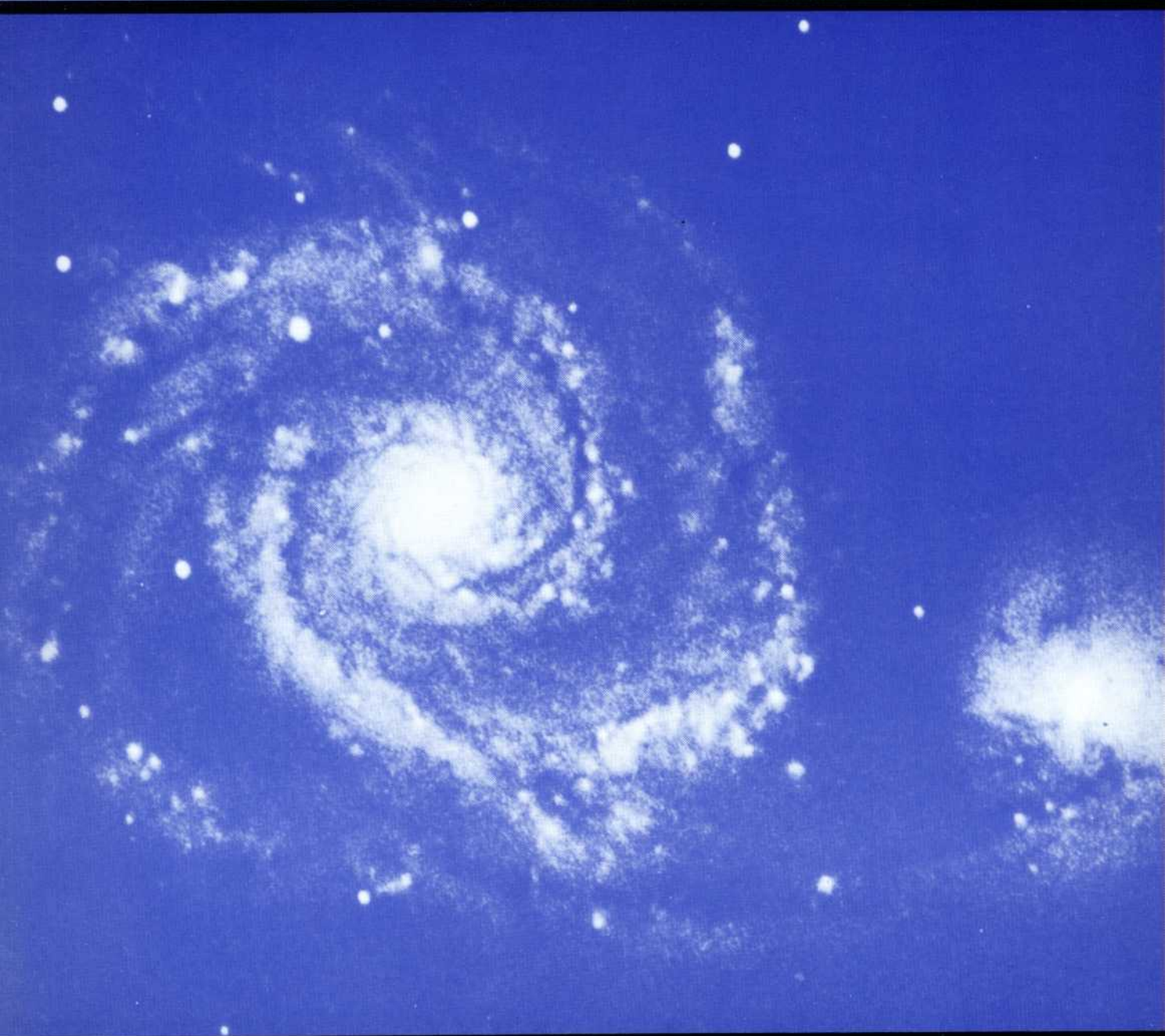


Megiddo Message



Look Up!



HOW FAR can we see? It all depends on our vantage point and where we are looking.

Set before the average man some transient reward which really captivates his heart—a fine home, the assurance of financial security, the prospect of renown, some high achievement—and he will work tirelessly to obtain it. Set before him the Christian's prospect of heirship in the world to come and he becomes mired in a million minor interests.

What is the problem? Shortsightedness.

What is the solution? Look up! In the words of the Prophet of old, "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. 40:26).

We need to stand apart from ourselves and our world and look at life and the creation as God sees it. We need to look up.

An ancient Greek astronomer declared: "There are 1,056 stars in the heavens. I have counted them." A few hundred years later, another scientist, Ptolemy by name, also counted the stars and affirmed that the earlier astronomer was right. "There are 1,056 stars." But a few years later Galileo built the first telescope and opened a window into the heavens that has been steadily enlarging ever since.

As modern science and technology advances, larger and ever more powerful telescopes are being built and used to study the stars. The world's largest radio telescope, completed in 1963, with its 1,000-foot-diameter receiving instrument, is currently picking up signals (light or radio wave) from the stars, filtering them and delivering them to a computer for recording and analysis. These signals are being received from stars and celestial objects at incomprehensible distances—as great as 10 billion light years! (This means that light from these distant universes, traveling at a speed of 6 trillion miles a year has been "on the way" here for the past 10 billion years and is just now arriving!) Renovations on this telescope are currently underway to make it 2,000 times as sensitive. The first radio telescope received information on a single channel. Next year it

will begin receiving on 128,000 channels, and construction is about 50% complete on a cluster of telescopes that will have 8 million channels. What will all these "see"!

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

Ages ago the prophet Jeremiah, inspired by God, declared that "the host of heaven cannot be numbered" any more than "the sands of the sea" can be "measured."

This statement is amply confirmed today as astronomers provide a steady flow of celestial information so astronomical as to baffle mortal minds.

And there are still other wonders in the heavens. In the 1960s, a "new" discovery which astronomers have named "quasars" were first seen. Quasars are tremendous bursts of energy coming from distant galaxies, which radiate more light than an entire galaxy. To help us appreciate the energy released by one of these quasars, someone has drawn this illustration: "Consider a big nuclear power plant producing 1,000 megawatts of electricity. Multiply those 1,000 megawatts by a billion trillion. Then multiply again by ten billion. That is roughly a quasar's power."

And to date, scientists have charted some 1500 quasars, roughly one for every piece of sky the size of the bucket of the Big Dipper.

Do we not feel to say with the Psalmist, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him"? Who are we, frail creatures inhabiting this tiny planet called Earth?

Such vastness, such immensity, such complexity is mind boggling. But then, perhaps our minds need boggling, to realize that our little world is not all there is; to realize that we are not yet all we may think we are. Frail, mortal creatures, so easily our vision becomes earthbound and our senses mark the limit of our experience. We need to look up, out and beyond, to escape in flights of lofty aspiration the limitations of mortality. We need to let God, His work, and His will, impel our thinking and move us to deeper devotion.

Indeed, how can we do enough to merit a place in His heavenly family!

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

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

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People

Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

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

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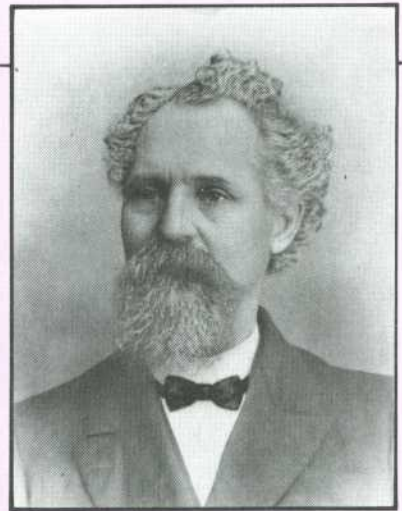
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*The Life and Work of
Rev. L. J. Nichols*

An Honest Man



"One who was faithful to his God, and loved his fellowmen."

Introduction

AN HONEST man's the noblest work of God" wrote Alexander Pope (1733) also, we may add, one of the rarest. Not from any Divine reluctance to create honest men, but God Himself cannot, or does not, make something out of nothing. All nations, we are told in Isaiah 40, are before God "less than nothing and vanity." In order to become truly honest, men and women must first love and desire this difficult honesty, then work together with God to attain it.

There are various degrees of honesty as men know it. Perhaps the lowest is that which exists through fear of detection and punishment. Such an individual is, in fact, dishonest. Barely above this is that honesty which is prompted by opportunism. "Honesty is the best policy," but he who acts on that principle is not honest.

Some of the definitions and synonyms of the noble word *honest* are: "fair, just, upright, trustworthy, virtuous, honorable, respectable, sincere, frank." Simple definitions, and not at all impossible, yet too rare in this world of selfishness and greed. But the real rarity is the man who meets these exacting specifications: *One who is honest in the highest and fullest sense is scrupulously careful to adhere to all known truth and right, even in thought.* Strait and narrow is the way that leads to this highest degree of honesty, and few there be that find it.

There is dishonesty and to spare in every branch of human endeavor; but the field most barren of honesty, it seems, is religion. There is a great deal of sincerity, even to the point of fanaticism; but sincerity is not enough. Sincerity never changed one error into a truth. Many a sincere mind is utterly closed to evidence and "known truth." Inertia, fear of change, reverence for the past, and plain mental laziness are the bars which confine the too-contented masses. Many religious leaders are inmates of the same prison house of darkness, "trusties," as it were, or keepers; some interested in their work, some in their salaries, many vain and opinionated, all slaves to a system of error and loving their chains.

It has ever been thus. Some epochs have been much better in this respect

than the present; one, at least, much worse. The story of mankind is a record of cruelty and greed and bestiality, of superstition and intolerance, of struggle and aspiration, of material progress, intellectual development and spiritual underdevelopment. The tone of the picture is grey and somber. Rare indeed is the gleam of light and color proclaiming an Honest Man, a man careful to adhere to all known truth, even in thought.

When the time was right in the Divine Plan, God created this planet—we know not when; and in due time He placed upon it living beings, homosapiens, we call them. When these primitive creatures had acquired sufficient intelligence to reason—for good or ill—the Creator found a region and a race where a few intellectually honest men might be developed, and His work of salvation on this planet began. The preceding aeons meant nothing except as preparation. Time is nothing to God, though it be everything to us. Certain laws and ordinances were placed before them and amply confirmed. A minority accepted them, the masses invariably preferring their own conclusions and superstitions, no matter how absurd.

The record of the Scriptures speaks eloquently of the rarity of intellectual and religious honesty. Throughout the pre-Christian centuries, the truly honest were but a sprinkling, a saving salt in the midst of a corrupt world. A few prophets, men whose names still shine like stars in the murk of history, stood firm for the word of Jehovah regardless of consequences. Through stormy years or quiet interludes, a few unknown heroes walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. The great Expositor of Divine honesty lived His short but incomparable

life among men doing good, speaking only the words of His Heavenly Father, until He was crucified by dishonest men who placed the security of their system above truth and right.

Within just a few years, twelve honest leaders and a handful of truth-loving followers made the civilized world conscious of their presence. Though never popular, the

the world with woe. While the life of the common people was lived very near the beast level, kingdoms rose and fell, races expanded and declined, millions lived and died like insects in the autumn sunlight. From Arabia, from Mongolia, from Tartary, tides of barbaric forces deluged Europe, Asia and Africa, only to recede, leaving ruin in their wake. The Black Death desolated a conti-

One who is honest is scrupulously careful to adhere to all known truth and right, even in thought.

Way of Honesty nevertheless gained ground for a few decades. But honesty is difficult; and soon, the original leaders gone, the "mystery of iniquity" began its wicked work; superstitions crept in, men set themselves up as theologians with a system of thought and a set of ideas to defend—and honesty perished in the street. The lamp of truth burned lower and lower as men increasingly refused to adhere to revelation. A little less than six centuries after the resurrection of Christ it flickered and went out in the blackness of the Apostasy. True religion lay silenced, buried under a senseless "mass of superstition, and was unable to raise her head." The last honest man was dead.

During these weary centuries the world grew old. Roman civilization, aptly described by Wells as a "violent and vulgar fraud," collapsed into a sea of misery and barbarism. Superstitions grew grosser and intolerance more violent as human passions, ambitions and strifes filled

and senseless crusades depleted and bankrupted the nations of Christendom; feudalism with its inequalities and absurdities flourished and declined.

Parallel with these events, a closely organized system of error and superstition was gaining and consolidating power in what had been the most civilized nations, craftily enslaving the minds of the masses, punishing dissenters in merciless fashion, exalting itself as the kingdom of Christ on earth, exercising temporal power and even dictating the policies of foreign rulers. By the early years of the Seventh Century its triumph over true religion was complete, and in a few more centuries, except for what it had lost to its twin delusion Islam, the power of Rome seemed impregnable. No man might buy or sell spiritual merchandise without the "mark of the beast." Truth was long since dead and forgotten, for the reason that there was no man worthy of it. A dark picture, indeed!

But even as the night seemed unending, there were premonitions of the dawn. The spirit of free thought had been feebly kept alive through the dark Middle Ages by the vain janglings and endless subtleties of Scholasticism. Political reform had its frail conception in the Magna Charta (1215), and the literary culture jealously confined within the monasteries had flowered in the Renaissance and culminated in the pseudo-Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, a movement which left the entire foundation and structure of error undisturbed but which nevertheless broke the Roman monopoly, freeing the intelligence to a certain extent and making the Scriptures available to the common people.

Toward the end of the Fifteenth Century something happened which marked a real turning point. A Genoese sea captain, sailing westward on a mad and suicidal expedition, rather unavoidably collided with the Western Hemisphere, or one of its outposts. The rest of this part of the story is familiar to every American. The discovery of this new world, a land without history but abounding in opportunity, was an event of tremendous spiritual significance. Nearly three centuries later a new nation took form, "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Most revolutionary of all was the complete separation of church and state, although its founders were by no means atheistic. Before the law all creeds, like all men, were equal. As a result of this unprecedented liberty, nominal Christianity in all its myriad divisions, confused and confusing, flourished luxuriantly for another century before its influence began to wane as the advance of atheism, agnosticism and general indifference to religion gathered momentum.

Throughout all this checkered scene the unseen Hand of the Eter-

nal was directing events toward a definite end. Working slowly, never infringing upon man's free moral agency, its guidance was nonetheless sure. The very power which supplanted and denied the Word of God was made its custodian through the darkest and most barbarous period. The steps toward political and religious liberty, the preparation of a new soil in the land of the free, even the decline of religion with its accom-

One word from the Eternal was worth more to him than all the words of all the men on earth.

panying tolerance, were all Divinely ordained in anticipation of the appearance of that almost forgotten rarity, a man who would be wholly honest before God.

For twelve centuries there had been no truly honest men. There had been wise men, fair men, trustworthy men, honorable men, sincere men, devoted men, unselfish men, men of gigantic minds and colossal abilities; but not a man of true intellectual honesty. Why? Because during all this time no one knew the true teachings of Jesus, the prophets and His apostles.

An honest man will admit that he knows less than God; one word of the Eternal is worth more to him than all the words of all the men on earth, be they ever so wise or highly honored by church or state. Regardless of how much the natural mind

will rebel (and it *will* rebel) against Divine law, "Let God be true, though every man a liar." This is a tremendous position to take, but the only tenable one for an honest man. Such a man has no ax to grind, no theological notions, original, borrowed or inherited, to confirm or uphold. He is bound to or by no system of human thought. He is ready and willing to face the world single-handed, if only he may find God and His truth. And finding truth, he will unhesitatingly follow where it leads, unmindful of the cost.

In all ages the plan of the Almighty has operated through human instrumentality. And only a man possessing this high degree of honesty would be a fit instrument for the tremendous task of ending the long night of darkness and rolling back the frontiers of spiritual darkness. Such a man would be more than a world figure—he would belong to the ages.

At long last, in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, as men count time, an honest man appeared. But not all at once. For this man did not have the facts handed to him, pure and simple. He first had to come to realize the darkness that surrounded him, and its density. And through it all we are grateful to see above the world's present distress and confusion the sure working out of a Divine Plan, a swift moving toward the glorious consummation which was his inspiration in life and his consolation in death. And ours.

"What shall be done unto the man whom the King delighteth to honor?" There is little enough that we can do, nor is it any gain to him that we do anything; the King's honor will be more than ample for him. But our gratitude demands an attempt at expression, however humble, and to that end this work is published.

The Megiddo Church, 1983

There IS a God!

by Rev. L. T. Nichols

The following is an abridged transcript of notes of the last sermon preached by Rev. L. T. Nichols, on February 11, 1912, only about two weeks before his death. It was an evening discourse in which he shared his personal conviction and determination with his home congregation, whom he thought of as his family, and whom he hoped to inspire to greater efforts in the field that had brought him so much comfort and promise.
—Editor.

OF ALL the welcomes that it would be possible to have extended to us, this great welcome of being permitted to enter into the golden paved street city, of passing through its pearly gates to enjoy for evermore the glories promised will be the greatest. Of all the invitations it would be possible for the human mind to conceive of, I would rather have this one. You might be invited by President Taft, or by the King of England, or the Emperor of Germany; but what would it all amount to? We might be invited to one of their feasts, or be invited to participate in their honors, but how long would it last? For one brief day and then pass away for ever.

When death comes, what good will all of the things that we have enjoyed be to us—unless we, according to the words of our lesson, have let the law of the Lord convert our souls? These words are true. They were written by the inspiration of the Almighty. We need this inspiration, for how else could we know? I would not know.

Some people tell you that you are converted by some sort of emotion, they can hardly explain how, or what, or why—they say it is a sort of feeling and they attribute it to the Power of God. They say it is the Holy Spirit coming down into your heart. It takes possession of your very being, and in some mysterious way it turns you by its mighty power from a sinner to a saint and starts you on the road to glory.

Well, from my boyhood days on I have seen a lot of such experiences, but we cannot find any such ideas set forth in the inspiration of God. But what do we

find? "The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul." And if you ever become converted it will be by learning what the law says; and then you must turn and throw away everything that is not in harmony with that law. He who has not learned the law has never been converted.

Now if this was something that I had concocted in the little hours of the night during the 53 years of my preaching, then there would be a good reason for you to throw it away; it would be only the product of man, for I am only a man, and you should not trust in what I could get up and say to you. But when it comes from the mighty God of heaven, you should believe it.

I am caused to realize more and more that I know so little. When I look out into the great expanse of the heavens, it causes me to feel my littleness. I feel that I know so little.

Our lesson says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." When we look out and see these stars with their magnitude, it is a wonderful evidence to us that there is a God. I look out and I see Neptune, two billion, eight hundred and ninety-eight million miles away from the sun.

I look up at Jupiter, there she is with her ninety-three thousand mile diameter, almost twelve times that of our earth. Then I look at the silver Moon, showing her silvery arch; it becomes evidence to me that there is a Creator.

Then I look at the stars, the countless worlds above.

I would like to meet some of those happy beings living there, and see their happy home, and take part in their pleasures.

Our earth is moving at the rate of 19 miles a second, 1,140 miles every minute. Do you know, since we opened this meeting she has traveled over one hundred thousand miles, yet so smoothly, without a jar—and she is moving at this lightning speed of nineteen miles a second!

Think you to tell me there is no Creator? Tell me these planets on high don't show His handiwork? They tell of His existence, and any man that doesn't believe can only be classified a fool.

We may go out and see the great ocean with her mighty waves dashing against the rock-bound coast; and we may view the mighty tide. We followed the tide out miles into the ocean one time until, pretty soon, we saw and heard the waves like mighty mountains rolling toward us. Tell me that this has been in motion every day, that she has been going out and coming in twice every twenty-four hours for millions of years, and there is nothing but happenstance behind it?

No, there is a Designer, there is a Creator who formed all things according to His own pleasure. And if this great Designer, the mighty God of heaven, has

seen fit to tell us that the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth sheweth his handiwork", why not believe it?

There is something in this inspiration which we can look upon with satisfaction. How grand when we can realize it is all His handiwork, that it is the work of the Almighty, All Wise, and Eternal God of heaven! Do you think that you or I could ever make a world, set it in motion, and cause it to go in its orbit at the rate of nineteen miles a second, one thousand one hundred and forty miles every minute of the day, and never stop, always moving at the same speed and velocity? Do you think all the men in the world put together could do such a thing as this? No! No wonder I feel my littleness; no wonder I feel my utter inability to grapple with the great eternity to come; therefore I am driven to something better.

I have in my investigations decided that there is a *real* God, I mean a *personal* being. I have satisfied myself that this Book is true, that it is the inspiration of the Almighty. I have looked at it with my little cranium, which is very small and holds so little. Oh, how little we know! so little when compared with the fathomless span which contains what we don't know. Our present knowledge is so minute that when we look at it, it

Looking Further . . .

OUR founder was inspired and awed by the visible heavens, realizing they were firsthand, visible evidence of the workmanship of the Great Creator. But the information available to him of the vastness of the heavens was only a dot compared to what has been discovered during the seventy years since his death.

In recent years, scientists have been stunned by the immensity of the universe. Our earth-based telescopes and spacecraft have revealed a panoply of astronomical objects pulsing with unfathomable energies and billions of galaxies sending their light through distances so vast that our minds boggle with the thought. Very little do they know of the meaning of all they see, but we can be grateful for the enormous investment that has been made in observation and discovery, all of which has resulted in an enormously enlarged concept of the scope and activity of the God we serve. And we can be sure that what has been discovered in our day is still only an infinitesimal part of the whole, so incomparably great is the power and wonderment of our God! (see Editorial, page two, this issue).

In our shortsighted view of our own greatness, we so easily forget the magnitude of the universe in which we are but a microscopic speck. Our Milky Way is only one small part of this universe, and our solar system is only a point in the Milky Way—and our earth but one part of the solar system!

To get some idea of our place in the sun, study the illustrations at the right. Shaped like a flattened disk, rotating in a clockwise direction, the Milky Way appears as a spiral. It takes a beam of light 100,000 years to travel from end to end of the galaxy (traveling at a rate of approximately six trillion (6,000,000,000,000) miles each year).

causes us to long to know more in the same way as this little has been given!

When I look out and view these mighty wonders it teaches me a lesson. There are other stars larger than these, I need not stop to say. But it tells me that there is a Creator, and it shows the handiwork of the Almighty God. It took an Almighty God to create these worlds and cause them to revolve upon their axes and in their orbits around one another in such precision that they have never a collision. That precision beats the railroads and steamboats—they are having collisions all the time. And if you could be taken for a trip to the happy land in one of those grand, wondrous worlds, you could see as many more worlds way beyond as we see from our earth.

Well, the great astronomer said, "I am satisfied that if we only knew, there are a great many suns larger than our own beyond the power of the human eye to penetrate." Herbert Spencer was one of the greatest philosophers that ever lived. He didn't believe the Bible, but he gave me a great deal of evidence to prove the Bible true when he said, "There is not a man on the earth who knows anything of the origin of life or light." It told me it was the Voice of inspiration that said, "O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowl-

edge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" This great philosopher came along and corroborated what the Bible said, thus strengthening my faith in its truthfulness.

Now throw away your old theory; you are waiting, and you will wait till you are ready to drop into the tomb and never be converted if you are waiting for God's Holy Spirit to come down and give you a changed heart; you will never get it. Why? simply because "God is not a man that he should lie," and He has told us, "The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul." If something else would convert the soul, He would be a liar. But you cannot find anything else between the two lids of the Bible.

How do we become free from sin? If you are tempted to take what does not belong to you, what can you do? Does the law say, "If any man steal" let him wait for the Holy Spirit to come in and change his heart? Well, if you could find that in the Bible I would not have any objections, but we do not find it there. What do we find in this Divine Record? What does inspiration say to us? "Let him that stole steal no more." This is the only thing that will turn you around and make you a better man, to stop stealing. He tells us, "Lie not one to another, seeing you have put off the old man with his

The Milky Way—and Us

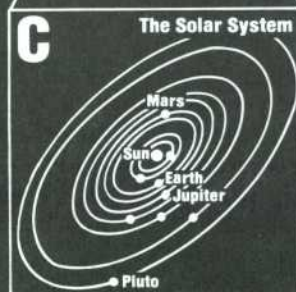
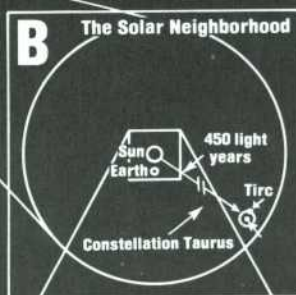
The small circle (A) toward the right of the Milky Way drawing represents all the stars we can see with the naked eye on a clear night, except for a few very bright ones.

A

This circle—enlarged in drawing B—is made up of all the constellations we can see with the naked eye.

The circle is approximately 1200 light years in diameter (7,200,000,000,000 miles).

Drawing C is an enlargement of the center square of Drawing B and shows our solar system, in which Pluto, the farthest planet from the sun, is 3,664,000,000 miles away.



deeds." And what must we do? We must "put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." We have this work to do ourselves.

I would like to have this law of the Lord convert you tonight. It is the only thing that will do you any good. But you must realize that you need converting. You are the one who has this work to do.

Paul declares, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." And after He had gone way up yonder and was seated on His Father's throne participating in His glory, He sent back a message for you and me to hear and pay attention to. It is recorded in Revelation 22:12. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." You will never get your reward as long as Jesus is upon the throne of God. He must return before you will be rewarded.

Now, you need converting. You need this law to take hold of you, convert your mind, and get you upon the right foundation. Believing right is the most important thing, and then acting in harmony with that belief. Have a living faith, and you will be a converted man. There is no other way.

Well, how does faith come? We read in this Word of inspiration: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Also, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." We read also that there is but "one faith" (Eph. 4:5). Now, sir, there is something wrong, for we find in our midst a thousand and eighty-seven different faiths, and they cannot all be right. The Methodists tell you that you must have the Holy Spirit to be converted, and the Baptists say the same; and this Holy Spirit comes, and just look at its workings! It teaches the Methodist that you can have a little water sprinkled upon you and you are baptized, and that you must sprinkle your babies or they are lost. And this same Holy Spirit tells the Baptists that this sprinkling is no good, that only if you are immersed are you truly baptized. And then the Holy Spirit comes along to the Dunkard and says, "Brother, Methodist sprinkling is no good, and Baptist plunging into the water will not amount to anything. You must go down face forward, and you must go under the water three times before you have the baptism of the Bible."

And they are all moved and guided by the same Holy Spirit? It suggests to me that not one of them has the Holy Spirit.

If I were to say, "The baptism that saves you and me is not water baptism, anyway; it is neither sprinkling, nor immersion, nor plunging into the water, nor dipped three times"; if I were to say this, my word would be

nothing more than any other man's idea: I would not want you to believe it. I would not want you to put any confidence in it. But turn with me to the word of the mighty God who says His law is "perfect converting the soul", and He says, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" The water that the Word of God tells us about is being baptized into the death of Jesus. Now, is this His death upon the cross? No, sir; not a word of it. Why? because we read in the next verse, "For in that he died, he died unto sin once." This is the death, becoming dead unto sin. And, sir, if you are not all submerged with this water of life, and do not let this law of the Lord make you dead to sin, you have not been baptized into His death.

This is the baptism which the inspiration of the mighty God gives us. And then to impress it, He goes over the argument and makes it so plain and clear that there can be no mistake. He tells us: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Yes, sir, the old man must be crucified. What is the old man? It is our old nature. These are his works, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." He says also, "Lie not one to another," seeing ye have put off the works of the old man which is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." This is God's inspiration that tells me what this old man is, and I simply repeat it. You have to put off the old man to be saved, for He says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him." Any man who has not been crucified with Christ has never been baptized.

Now I don't claim that the Holy Spirit has come down into my brain and revealed this or that to me. I never did, but I simply tell you the chapter and verse where you can read it in so many words. What more do you want? What better than that? Now look it over. Go in, through, under, and around it, and see if we have changed a single chapter, a verse, a sentence, a phrase, a word, a syllable, or even a letter. We have not changed it in the least, we have given it to you *verbatim et literatim* just as it dropped from the lips of the mighty God on high, the Creator of the Universe whose handiwork we view when we behold the heavens above.

Everywhere we go in this world, we see the handiwork of God. Start with me and go to New York, take

ship and cross over to Liverpool, travel along till we reach Belfast, go to York, cross over to Scotland and pass along till you come to Firth of Forth, pass by these cities and travel along till you come to Southampton. Cross over till you get into Germany and France. Go to Paris, and stop a little while if you please, then you may go along down leaving the coast of Africa on your left. Go down through till you pass the Arabian Sea, pass up the Red Sea to where it leads into the Mediterranean through the Suez Canal. And pass on till you have passed China and the Empire of Japan. Then sail around the great Russian Empire till you see the top of Norway coming in view. And you may stop at Christiania the Capitol of Norway; stop here a week and rest yourself on your journey; visit every hamlet, go through every edifice, every church and every chapel; every one there is in all those precincts. And go and look out at six o'clock and expect to see the sun going out of sight. Wait till 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 o'clock has passed, and the sun is in plain view yet; and, sir, you may stay there till you have waited 24 hours to see the sun disappear, but you will wait in vain, it will never go down.

And when you are ready to continue your journey you may go back to Christiania and sail along till you come to St. John, leaving Greenland on your right. Pass on through Davis Strait and Baffin Bay till you get clear around to the shores of Alaska; go on down their shore with Asia on your right till you get to old Oregon where we lived for several years. There you may cast anchor and view Mt. Hood, and behold again the handiwork of God in our trip around on the earth, viewing its beauties. Behold the "Three Sisters", Mt. Jefferson and Mt. Shasta. I well remember these mountains. I have been at the foot of them and washed in their snows many times. Why am I so much interested in all this? Why, to pick up items to prove to me that there is a God.

I never view any of the planets, or any of the heavenly bodies or any of the wonders of this earth without thinking that they are the handiwork of God. They leave an impression upon my mind, and the more I think, the more solid I become: and the more I look at these great things the more settled I become. This should be the way with every individual.

Then in our journey we may turn and go over Mt. Hood, or over Mt. Shasta. I well remember going up over Mt. Shasta one time. It was a scorching hot day; my wife and Brother and Sister Skeels were with me. And they said, "You will melt at the undertaking." I said to them, "We are neither butter nor honey, we will not melt; and I think if we carry an umbrella and some

water along with us we can climb the mountain with ease and comfort." We started, and soon we came to a stream, I jumped in all over and I felt so invigorated—I knew I could keep the sun's rays from upsetting me. And when it would begin to dry off we would either douse in, or bring out some water and douse upon ourselves; and so we climbed the mountain on that hot day without any danger whatever.

We traveled along till we got to the summit and then we began to descend; and we found there was a lot of difference between going up the mountain and coming down. I never before realized there was so much difference.

Well, we came along down Mt. Shasta, and I took so much interest in it that I was sorry when we were through.

And then we sailed along down to the "Golden Gate"—if you have not been there you have missed some of the glories of the world. We went into San Francisco through the "Golden Gate"; and it is properly named, one of the finest harbors in the world.

Well, you might pass along till you get to the great and wonderful Yellowstone Park where the geysers are spouting up three hundred feet high, and they come and go as regular as clockwork. You may stand there and listen and pretty soon you will hear a mighty rushing and she will spout out with a thundering noise, and drop back again; and then out she will go a hundred feet in the air, and recede again; then two hundred feet, and back again; and then out she goes with a mighty bellowing noise and she goes three hundred feet in the air, and recedes. By that time she has reached her zenith, and she begins to get less and less till finally she recedes altogether, and you cannot hear or see one drop of water around that wonderful geyser in the

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I never see a tree bud into leaf,
Or watch a daffodil unfold to light,
Or feel the heat of summer's noonday sun
That brings full soon the golden harvest ripe,
I never watch the seasons' rhythmic flight
Without rememb'ring in my heart of hearts
The edict from on High: **THE LORD SHALL COME!**
Creation speaks the word—and doubt departs.
If Nature fails, His promise, too, is void;
But NO! God is no man that He should lie,
Nor like frail mortals does He change His mind;
Upon His every word we can rely.

Not All Who Begin Well End Well

I USED to envy committed Christians of long standing. Gray-haired saints, I figured, were safe from backsliding, able to rest on their laurels and coast to glory. Free from temptation, they could bask in sweet communion with the Lord.

But since reading of King Asa (II Chron. 14-16), I have changed my plans for spiritual retirement. He who began so very well certainly did not end well. His life provides principles to keep us from spiritual derailment.

Asa tackled a tough challenge. Repudiating the idolatry of his father and grandfather, he removed many of Judah's "high places." These places of worship were often located on a hill with a tent or a room for sacrificial meals.

He also tore down the accompanying religious fixtures—foreign altars, sacred pillars, small pagan incense altars and the wooden images representing Asherah, the Canaanite goddess who supposedly created the other gods.

He expelled many of the pagan and immoral gods (I Kings 15:12; 22:46) and ordered reform. And as Judah's third Davidic king, he commanded his nation to seek the Lord and observe His Word. In a heart-moving speech, he called on his people to rebuild the nation because "we have sought the Lord our God" (II Chron. 14:7).

As they responded, God blessed them with prosperity. For at least 10 years, they were free from war. Asa, meanwhile, achieved a reputation as a builder, developing a well-equipped army and fortifying cities (I Kings 15:23; II Chron 14:8).

Then, an army of Cushites (probably Ethiopians), Libyans and perhaps Arabians invaded Judah's southern territory as far as Maresah (II Chron 14:9-15). Zerah, the leader, was possibly acting in the service of Osorkon I, king of Egypt, attempting to subjugate Judah again (II Chron 12:8).

Asa met this second challenge by calling to the Lord his God: "Lord, there is no one besides Thee to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O Lord our God, for we trust in Thee, and in Thy name have come against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let no man pre-

vail against Thee" (II Chron 14:11).

His prayer reveals the secrets of his success. First, in acknowledging Judah's powerlessness against the enemy, Asa admitted his need. Second, he acknowledged God as his only source of help. His army could not defeat Zerah by extraordinary human skill. God would have to help, providentially employing human means.

Asa also declared his trust in the Lord and, thus, that God is faithful and worthy of that trust. The Hebrew words for "trust in" literally mean "to lean or support oneself upon."

Finally, Asa could pray that the Cushites would not prevail against the Lord, Judah's God. Asa's cause, Judah's cause would be God's cause.

In God's strength, therefore, Judah pursued the enemy to Gerar, probably an Egyptian frontier outpost. After a 20-mile chase, they crushed the Cushite ranks beyond recovery. Judah was then able to destroy and sack the surrounding enemy villages, and Egypt did not meddle in Palestine for the next 170 years.

After this stunning victory, Azariah the prophet pointed to Asa's third great challenge—national revival (II Chron 15:1-7). Azariah reaf-

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**Our story of Asa is
far from complete, but it
points out one fact: that a good
beginning does not insure a triumphant end.**

firmed the blessing God bestows when people obey Him: "And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him."

Strengthened by the message of God's spokesman, Asa removed still more of the detestable idols, this time extending the reform into the tribe of Ephraim to the north (II Chron. 15:8-15). And he repaired the 60-year old altar of burnt offering originally built for sacrifices unto the Lord.

In the early part of his 15th year as king, Asa called a sacrificial festival in Jerusalem. Those attending included not only Judah and Benjamin but also defectors from Ephraim, Simeon and even as far north as Manasseh. They saw evidence of God's working in Asa's affairs.

The people renewed the covenant Israel had originally made with the Lord at Mount Sinai. In their zeal, they also reissued the death penalty for apostasy. Sacrificing animals from their Cushite spoil, they swore to seek the Lord with all their heart and soul. And they kept their oath.

Of what did their "seeking God" consist? It may mean that they inquired of Him or asked Him for help. Seeking God also includes a desire to establish a covenant relationship with Him, a relationship

involving trust, obedience and worship (I Chron. 28:9; Psalm 69:6; Zeph. 1:6; Extra 4:2).

When they sought God, He let them find Him, and they were blessed with peace. God is "a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

Asa believed God's message from Azariah: "The Lord is with you when you are with Him" (II Chron 15:2). Seeking God brought courageous decisions on his part.

Grandmother Maacah (mother of Asa's father, Abijah; II Chron. 11:20-22; 14:1) may have had considerable power in Asa's early reign since he probably came to the throne at a young age. Yet he knew the Lord must be honored above all family relationships. As Azariah had said, God honors those who honor Him.

Reminiscent of Moses' destruction of the golden calf, Asa crushed and burned his grandmother's idol. Moreover, he deposed Maacah from her position as queen mother.

Finally, he brought both his father's and his own sacred offerings into the temple, probably booty from Abijah's victory over Jeroboam (II Chron 13:16-17) and Asa's victory over Zerah.

After 16 years of successful rule, Asa met his fourth challenge when

Baasha invaded Judah's northern border (II Chron 16:1-6).

Baasha, of the rebel tribes of Israel, no doubt recaptured the towns Asa's father had earlier taken (II Chron 13:19). He also captured Ramah, five miles north of Jerusalem on the main road between the two rival states. By so doing, he hoped to curtail movement between them, especially defection of his best people.

In this challenge, Asa failed. Rather than call on the Lord, he bribed Ben-hadad, king Aram (Syria), with all the riches he and his father had dedicated to the Lord, and induced Aram to renege on her treaty with Israel.

Ben-hadad obliged by capturing Baasha's northern cities and plundering their produce. With Baasha distracted, Asa conscripted labor to transport materials Baasha left behind in order to strengthen his northern frontier, fortifying Geba and Mizpah.

Although Asa appeared to win the skirmish, Hanani the seer informed him that he had lost more than he had gained (II Chron 16:7-10). Because Asa had foolishly leaned on Ben-hadad instead of God, he missed his chance to conquer the Arameans who would later

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When in silent contemplation
Keep two pictures well in view;
All the coming future glory
If our Father's will we do.

And the stern, dark retribution
To be meted out to those
Who, for pleasure, wealth, or glory
Just a mess of pottage chose.

Let us strive to meet our Captain
And the characters of old—
Wonders in this world's black
darkness—
Gain with them grand things
untold.

Cast aside the heavy shackles
Sin and error round you cast;
Work with grim determination:
You shall reach the goal at last.
—Selected

One reason why some people
have so much trouble is because
they spend their time making it.

Hold Fast

HOLD FAST TO TRUTH. False gods, false men, false reasons,
Are pressing closer on us every day;
And plots, confusions, schemes, intrigues, and treasons
Would lead unwary hearts and souls away.

HOLD FAST TO FAITH. Doubts, deeply multiplying,
Would draw the clouds of darkness closer down;
And unbelief, like valley mists low lying,
Shut out the glow of heaven's starry crown.

HOLD FAST TO LOVE. The earth is filled with hating.
Fierce anger, lust, revenge, all clamor high,
While weary hearts are waiting, waiting, waiting,
For gentle tone and hand and kindly eye.

HOLD FAST TO PRAYER. When all is gone but praying,
Pray on through lonely watches of the night,
Until there come for prayers your heart is saying,
From wildness, rest, and out of darkness, light.

HOLD FAST TO GOD. The world is ebbing, gliding,
Through your frail grasp its thread of slipping sands;
But God, the One all-constant, all-abiding,
Unchanged of old, unchanging, ever stands.

The Light of Life

Time moves on relentlessly, changeless.
The seconds, minutes, hours, pass by beyond recall.
The tide moves in, and then goes out once more.
Sunset ends the daily track of vaulted orb across the sky.
Winter's frigid blast is melted by a summer's sun.
Infancy, youth, old age—and man returns to his long home.
In the never-ending stream of passing time,
Life at its most is a tiny flicker of candlelight.
So live that when the light of life again is lit,
'Twill be yours that's lighted then for all eternity.

Never dig up in unbelief what you have sown in faith.

If all that we say in a single day,
 With never a word left out
 Were printed each night in clear black and white
 'Twould make queer reading, no doubt.

And then, just suppose, ere our eyelids we close,
 We must read the whole record through!
 Oh, wouldn't we sigh, and wouldn't we try
 A great deal less talking to do?

—Author Unknown.

Small Beginnings

A traveler through a dusty road strewed acorns on the lea;
 And one took root and sprouted up, and grew into a tree.
 Here youth was pleased, in heat of noon, to bask beneath its boughs;
 Age sought its shade, at eventide, to breathe to God his vows;
 The smallest creatures loved its twigs, the birds sweet music bore;
 It stood a glory in its place, a blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way amid the grass and fern.
 A passing stranger scooped a well where weary men might turn;
 He walled it in, and hung with care a ladle at the brink;
 He thought not of the deed he did, but judged that toil might drink.
 He passed again, and lo! the well, by summers never dried,
 Had cooled ten thousand parching tongues, and saved a life beside.

A muser dropped a random thought; 'twas old, and yet 'twas new;
 A simple fancy of the brain, but strong in being true.
 It shone upon a genial mind, and lo! its light became
 A lamp of life, a beacon ray, a brightly burning flame.
 The thought was small; its issue great; a watchfire on the hill.
 It shed its radiance far adown, and cheers the valley still!

A man unknown, amid the crowd that thronged the daily mart
 Let fall a word of Hope and Love, unsullied, from the heart;
 A whisper on the tumult thrown—a transitory breath—
 It raised a brother from the dust; it saved a soul from death.
 O germ! O fount! O word of love! O thought so wisely cast!
 Ye were but little at the first, but mighty at the last!

—Sel. and alt.

When nothing seems to help, try looking at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock, perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it. Yet, at the hundred-and-first blow it will split in two.

It was not that last blow that did it, but all that had gone before.



How difficult it is to confess
 a mistake to one who acts as if
 he were always right.

A Bag of Tools

Isn't it strange
 That princes and kings
 And people who do
 Such commonplace things,
 Just common people
 Like you and me
 Can builders be
 For eternity?

Each is given
 A bag of tools,
 A shapeless mass,
 And a Book of rules;
 And each must make,
 Ere life is flown,
 A stumblingblock
 Or a steppingstone.

—Sel.

Nobody needs help so much
 as the one who does not realize
 he needs it.

Not All Who Begin Well End Well

(Continued from page 13)

attack in league with Baasha. No longer a dominant Middle East force, weakened Judah could expect hostilities.

Asa had failed to acknowledge that "the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His" (II Chron. 16:9).

"Move to and fro" can be expressed as "go eagerly or quickly." In other words, God is eager to "show himself strong" (KJV) with people "throughout the earth" (I Kings 8:43). But only with people devoted to Him.

Since further challenges would not produce growth in a man who was not trusting Him, God turned to corrective discipline. He sent Hanani to rebuke Asa, but again Asa failed.

Far from contrite, he raged at God's spokesman. In fact, he became the first king of Judah to persecute a prophet.

So God brought a second stage of chastening. Some of Asa's subjects protested his recent actions. Still refusing to admit wrong, Asa oppressed them brutally.

Although we do know he became severely diseased in his feet (II Chron 16:11-14), Scripture is silent about Asa's next 23 years.

He failed once again to trust God when he relied on physicians who may have been foreign magicians.

After two years of suffering from illness, Asa died.

Our story of Asa is far from complete, but it points out one fact: that a good beginning does not insure a triumphant end.

Anytime we deny our guilt, we have entered on a self-destructive course: "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion" (Prov. 28:13, RSV).

Why do we, like Asa, refuse to admit wrong? One obvious reason is pride. We don't want others to rebuke us. Yet this is the duty of Christian friends.

Sometimes we erroneously suppose that by admitting wrong we will lose esteem. But, in truth, a person who is transparent about his shortcomings often gains respect.

Sometimes we fail to admit wrong because we exaggerate the conse-

quences. But the God who causes all things to work together for good, in His grace, has the power to achieve His will in spite of our sin.

Another reason we refuse to call sin "sin" is because some of us do not like to admit that we sinned. We forget that sin separates us from God, and that if we would draw near to God we must forsake our sins.

We forget that God knows His people and never requires what we cannot do. Every sin can be forsaken. We have no need or reason to hide our sin.

Asa could have ended well. By God's grace, we can. MM

CAN'T

*CAN'T is a word to be used with great caution,
It seldom is used by the one who tries;
On it is many a strong spirit broken,
And with it many a good purpose dies.*

*It springs from the lips of the thoughtless each morning,
And robs them of courage they need for the day;
It rings in their ear like a timely-sent warning,
And laughs when they falter and fall by the way.*

*CAN'T is the father of feeble endeavor,
The parent of sluggish, half-hearted work;
It weakens the effort of artisans clever,
And makes the toiler an indolent shirk.*

*It poisons the mind of man with a vision,
It stifles in infancy many a plan;
It greets earnest faith with open dismay,
And ruins the bright future hopes of a man.*

*CAN'T is the word that is foe to ambition,
An enemy ambushed to scatter your will;
Its prey is forever a man with a mission
And bows but to courage, and patience, and skill.*

*Hate it, with hatred that's deep and undying,
For once it is welcomed 'twill break any man;
Whatever the goal you are seeking, keep trying,
And answer CAN'T's challenge by saying, "I CAN!"*

First Things First

(This scene takes place between Gregory and his father. As the scene opens, Mr. Courier is reading. Gregory enters the room carrying his Bible and Sunday-school lesson. He sits down with a loud sigh and opens his Bible. Mr. Courier looks up.)

Father:

Come now, Gregory, it can't be as bad as *that*!

Gregory:

It couldn't be, except that it *is*. It's my Sunday-school lesson. What could be worse than having to study your Sunday-school lesson on Saturday night!

Father:

Well now, Son, that's easy to remedy. Study your Sunday-school lesson *another* night.

Gregory:

Then *that* night would be ruined.

Father (putting aside his newspaper):

I don't quite follow your thinking, Gregory. Do you consider nights ruined or wasted when you study your lessons for school?

Gregory:

Oh, no! That's different.

Father:

In what way?

Gregory:

Well, at school we are tested on what we've learned, and then we get our report cards. Why, if I didn't study at home, I wouldn't pass the tests. And if I didn't pass the tests, think what that report card would look like! And when it came to the end of the year, I wouldn't even pass my grade!

Father:

So you just study your school work so that you pass the tests and get good grades.

Gregory:

Well, that's not all. I study because the subjects are interesting—they are things everybody needs to know more about.

Father:

Why does everybody need to know more about the things you learn in school? I'm sure there are plenty of people in Africa and South America who never learned the things you're learning.

Gregory:

Oh yes, but look how they live! They don't have hardly any of the things we have. Why, they don't even have decent houses. And they don't know what to do when they get sick, they don't know how to run their government—some of those countries are *awful* poor.

Father:

So you feel you're going to *need* the knowledge you get out of your schoolbooks.

Gregory:

Oh yes! You should see the things we're learning in math, Dad. And science. They're things that are really happening. And new discoveries. It's interesting.

Father:

But suppose you learn some things you'll never use when you grow up. I didn't think you had planned on being a scientist, or a mathematician.

Gregory:

No, but no matter what I decide to be when I grow

up, I'll need the things we're learning. Just to be a well-informed citizen, you need to know a *few* things, plus how to read and write and count. And who wants to go through life not even knowing what an atom is, or a dinosaur, or where Siberia is? Why, Dad, it would be like living in a dungeon! A person just can't get along without knowing some of these things.

Father:

But (*slowly*) you think a person can get along without knowing about the Bible.

Gregory:

Well, I wouldn't say exactly that.

Father:

Well, you think knowing about the Bible is something like—like, well it's a little less useful than knowing about the dinosaurs that lived and died maybe 30,000 years ago.

Gregory:

No, Dad, I wouldn't say that.

Father:

Well, then, you think studying the Bible is like learning a language that isn't spoken any more, maybe like Latin.

Gregory:

No, the Bible is printed all over the world.

Father:

Well, then, let's see. You think the Bible is something you won't really need when you grow up. It is something not really necessary—if we have good scientists, and good doctors, and good school teachers.

Gregory:

I don't think any of my teachers at school know very much about the Bible.

Father:

Maybe, then, you think you have everything you need without it. You have a good place to sleep, and plenty of good food to eat, and warm clothes to wear—and you can have all this without studying your Bible.

Gregory: (slowly)

Well—ah—yes—

Father:

Ever think, Gregory, where this world of ours came from? Ever figure out where the elements come from, all those elements that the scientists study?

Gregory:

They made some of them.

Father:

But what did they make them from?

Gregory:

They took the basic elements and combined them and they got some brand *new* elements.

Father:

But they started with elements they already had—and those came from where?

Gregory:

They're just *here*. They're part of the earth.

Father:

And where did the earth come from? Do the scientists have the answer to that?

Gregory:

They have some ideas, but I don't think they really know.

Father:

And if they say everything evolved, what did everything evolve *from*? Didn't it have to start from *something*?

Gregory: (silence)

Father:

Did any of your teachers ever tell you exactly what life is, or what light is, or what makes our hearts start beating? Did they ever tell you. . . .

Gregory:

No, we haven't learned any of those things yet.

Father:

Ever wonder, Gregory, what we would do if the sun

didn't rise, or the earth didn't turn, or there were no oxygen to breathe?

Gregory:

We'd die. That's what we would do.

Father:

Ever think about how we get the food we eat? Can you make your garden seeds sprout? Can you make a peach, or an apple, or even a green bean? And think about all the wonderful things our bodies can do. Did you ever figure out how you can remember what you read in your school books? Do you know how that combination of tissue and blood vessels we call our brain can actually record something your eye sees and give it back to you as a thought which you can then write on paper when you take a test?

Gregory:

That's interesting. . . .

Father:

Do you know how your eye can see, how it can take bits of light bounced off this and that and send all those bits of information to the brain, so that you know "this is a tree" and "that is a house"?

Gregory:

You know, Dad, I never really thought about all these things.

Father:

And the same God that made us, and made our world, has left us this book of instructions (picks up Gregory's Bible). This is just a Primer, Gregory. He has so much knowledge to give us that everything you learn in school probably wouldn't get you even past kindergarten in *His* school! He'll have so much to teach us in the future, about where our earth came from, and all its history, and the other stars and planets, and people who live in other parts of His great universe—

Gregory:

I'd like that!

Father:

Well then, Gregory, getting back to where we started, suppose you do a little more explaining. Just what

do you mean when you say that a night spent studying your schoolbooks is not wasted but that a night studying your Bible and your Sunday-school lesson is wasted?

(Gregory is silent for a moment, thinking.)

Gregory (after a pause):

I see what you mean, Dad. Studying the Bible is much more important than studying school textbooks—because God has so much more knowledge to *teach* us.

Father:

The Bible is our Primer. It is all we have right now from God's great reservoir of knowledge, but if we learn what it can teach us, then we can be ready for the more advanced courses when the New Age comes. I want to enroll in *those* courses myself.

Gregory:

But we have to learn *this* course first. *(holds up Bible)*

Father:

That's right, Gregory. It's all a matter of first things first. You have to complete the elementary before you can go into the advanced. You couldn't be much of a scientist without spending many hours studying science. You couldn't be a very good lawyer without spending many hours studying law. You couldn't be much of a writer without spending many hours studying grammar and great literary works. You couldn't be much of a mechanic without spending many hours studying about an engine. In the same way, no one can serve God and be a Christian without spending many hours studying the Bible and trying to learn what God wants us to do now. That is what it all boils down to, *first things first*. And when you've passed the tests for this studying, you will be ready for the really great studies that are coming. MM

My Duty . . .

Anywhere if forward. Anything if worthwhile—and in Christ.

And Still She Speaks

Extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments
by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



I wonder how many have reached the standard where they can do well and suffer for it, and take it patiently. Of course, we ought to take it patiently if guilty; "but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." That is a high standard to reach, to take everything patiently, even when the evidence does not prove us guilty.

To die to sin is not pleasant. But if we have the bright hope of future life before us, bitter things become sweet. People will suffer almost untold misery to preserve their physical life. They will submit to almost any kind of operation to save their lives. So in the spiritual realm, how grateful we ought to be for any trial, if only it will make us better.

We must become accustomed to doing good before our feet stumble on the dark mountains and the shadow of death overtakes us, not be accustomed to getting angry and doing as we please. If we have been accustomed to doing evil, accustomed to having our own way, we will not be able to change at the last minute. It takes time to change.

The Bible contains all we need to know to be saved. God has had a watchful care over His Word, and we can read every principle necessary to be believed and every commandment to be obeyed in order to be saved.

Here is something that every believer must do, a work of vital importance: We must become dead to the honor of the world and the fleeting glory it can offer and seek the honor that comes from God only, the glory that will be given for well doing, for righteous thoughts and godly actions.

Can you not see that in this age called "Christian," people are going more and more to pleasure seeking? When we came to Rochester there was not a picture show allowed open on Sunday, or any baseball played on Sunday. See how it has changed in Rochester in the last thirty years—and all over the world! How true is the prophecy, that in the last days men shall be "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."

Anyone who does not want to listen to the trumpet of the Lord does not have to.

The trumpet of the Lord is sounding. There was a time when it was silent, but it is sounding in these last days. Will we be among the few who hear it? Our conduct will show—at home. Home is the place where we must keep in mind what the trumpet says, where we must conquer and rule self. It is easy to do right in church, but we must watch at home.

Search the depths of your heart, not just the surface. Awake, and watch. How many times Jesus warned us to watch. You will watch, if you want life. Tomorrow morning you will watch how you spend your time, what you are thinking about. If you think right, you will be right. And when the shades of evening come, you will look back over a clean day. Just get your mind on God's Word and you will conquer the old thoughts.

Bible repentance means turning from every evil. Bible repentance means being doers of the law, not just repent on some things and then compare ourselves with someone whom we think is worse than we are. Bible repentance is purifying our own heart and mind; ceasing to break the law of God; ruling ourselves.

There IS a God!

(Continued from page 11)

Yellowstone Park as you stand there viewing the handiwork of God.

We may pass along down till we get to California, New Mexico, and Mexico. Pass on down till we get to South America; pass along down its western coast and around Cape Horn, sail up along the Argentine Republic till we get to Buenos Aires. And we may pass along till we get to Brazil where the Amazon River empties into the Ocean and rushes with such mighty power—she is the greatest river on the face of the earth, all others combined will not equal her. The great Amazon River goes out with such power and force that she plows into the mighty ocean and divides it in sunder, and two hundred and fifty miles from her mouth we could dip up fresh water where she has plowed through, moving part to the right hand, and part to the left.

And then will you tell me there is no Creator? Most certainly there is a Creator! The great God of heaven is the Creator. Well, how do we know He is the Creator? I know that He is a personal Creator because He says in the 1st chapter of Hebrews, 1st, 2nd and 3rd verses: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person"—well, that is it, Jesus is in the express image of His Father's person. I know He is a real, tangible, personal being.

Now, there would be a whole lot of things I would not need inspiration for, but it takes inspiration to tell me this. I don't need any inspiration to tell me about this trip around the world I have been giving you tonight, about Mt. Shasta, or about the Amazon River.

Now Moses did not need any inspiration to tell what he did down in Egypt when he called the children of Israel out of bondage, or how they put their dough troughs on their backs and marched out, any more than I would need inspiration to tell about climbing Mt. Shasta; not a bit of it. But God steps in where man fails. Here is the dividing chain. Historical accounts didn't need any inspiration; but God's inspiration comes in and makes known all that reaches beyond our knowledge and experience.

I could not relate to you that God is a person, I didn't know anything about it; I never saw Him; but when the inspiration of God comes and proves the

Bible true, and it says He is a person, I believe our God is a personal being. Why? Is it because I am such a wonderful fellow and have such a large brain? because I had so much brain power? No, but because I can prove it by the Bible. This is the reason why I believe it. I am a poor old man, gray haired, almost through. I have done the heft of my work—oh! no, I am going to do more work than I ever have done.

We have printed and distributed almost a million books since we came to Rochester. When I commenced the printing of these books I saw we were not going to get rid of them. I said to the brethren, "I am anxious to carry this truth out to the world, I see them all in darkness." I have traveled far and near, I have passed through many things. And now here I am, getting old; but still I am lively. It is not everyone that is as nimble as I am at my age.

Well, brethren, these are facts, there is no guess work about it. And I have passed through with my eyes wide open; I didn't go along snoozing away. I was wide awake and energetic, wondering where I could place my finger on something that would prove to me the truthfulness of the Bible. I have found the fundamental principles; I know I am right, I don't guess at it; I know I have the Word of Truth to back up all that I believe.

Well, we will have to bring this to a close. I could talk to you all night and then I would not be through, so I might as well stop now. Amen. MM

Look Up

JOHN Wesley was walking one day with a man who expressed his doubt of God's goodness. "I don't know what I shall do with all my worries and troubles," he said.

At that moment Wesley noticed a cow looking over a stone wall. "Do you know," asked Wesley, "why that cow is looking over the wall?"

"No," replied his troubled companion.

"I will tell you," said Wesley. "Because she can't see through it. That is what you must do with your wall of trouble—look over it and above it."

Faith enables us to look over and above every trouble to God. MM

Those Roots of Bitterness

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."

—Hebrews 12:14-15

What causes the largest proportion of our problems with one another and with ourselves?

Various answers have been given. One answer is that miserable weed that our text warns us about—roots of bitterness.

By using the illustration of a "root," the author of Hebrews teaches us a number of practical truths about bitterness and our own human hearts.

First of all, a root is sub-surface. It grows out of sight, and is often well established before anyone knows it is there. Weeds of this nature are the most difficult to deal with. So with bitterness.

Second, a root provides the support and the foundation. It holds the tree upright, secure in storm, sturdy, unshakable. Remove the root and the tree will be toppled. So with bitterness. It is the foundation for an abundance of other evils.

Third, the root is the source of nourishment to the tree. Feed it, and watch it grow. So with bitterness. How often it nourishes an elaborate supergrowth of all types of evil.

Fourth, it has to have soil to grow. In other words, it needs planting. How does bitterness get planted? Usually it is by our getting hurt or resenting something someone has said or done. Often the person who is the "cause" of the hurt doesn't even know he has hurt us. And instead of facing the matter openly and honestly, we bury it in our minds, meditate on it day and night, and the root of bitterness starts to grow.

Fifth, a root is alive. It is not a post, or a stone, or any inanimate thing. It is alive, and being alive it

grows. And the longer it grows, the bigger it gets. So with bitterness.

Sixth, a root grows best when fertilized and cultivated. The same is true of bitterness. The more we think upon it, the more we enrich it with other thoughts and wishes we harbor, the more it will grow. If only we would confess our hurt and pull up the root before it grows to monstrous size! How much pain we could save ourselves! The trouble is, we enjoy feeding our egos and cultivating the bitterness deep inside. It gives our carnal nature a feeling of satisfaction, of worthfulness, of superiority—after all, we have knowledge of something not commonly known!

But what miserable knowledge it is. And all the while this root is growing. Outwardly, we maintain a pious, compatible behavior. But inwardly, we are full of bitter poison.

Hidden sins do not stay hidden forever. Soon or late there comes a day and an hour when the root of bitterness sends up a poisonous shoot of bitter words or actions. Then everyone can see what has been growing for weeks—perhaps years—inside our hearts.

A root of bitterness causes trouble and defilement, according to the Scriptures. It never makes the bitter person better, nor does it improve the members of his family, his church, or his community. In fact, the root of bitterness troubles and defiles long before it is recognized openly. It is impossible for a bitter heart not to have its influence upon others. Because *he* is troubled and defiled, he very often

finds comfort in troubling and defiling those around him.

What is the treatment for eliminating a root of bitterness? Simply this: Dig it up. Because of the nature of the weed, the treatment must be drastic. It will do no good to lop off an occasional branch or pluck a few dead leaves—because the trouble is with the root. And the sooner this root can be dug up, the easier the task. At best it is difficult—as anyone knows who has tried digging up the root of a well established tree.

How is this digging accomplished? Probably the most effective method is a total redirecting of our thoughts. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5). There is no way we can eliminate bitter roots without this strict regimentation and control of our thoughts.

Then we should apply the approach that is found in the first verse of our text: "Follow peace." It may not always be possible to have an uninterrupted peaceable relationship with all, but we must do all in our power to promote peace. And bitter feelings, bitter words, bitter actions do not promote peace. "Aim at peace with all," is the Moffatt Bible rendering of this text.

If our minds and hearts are set on maintaining and promoting peace, there will be no place for thoughts of bitterness.

There is another admonition at the beginning of verse 15: "Looking diligently." Preliminary to removing the weeds is a recognition and hatred of those weeds. As long as we love them as tender choice plants, they will flourish and grow in us. Just as the gardener hates weeds and pulls them up to get rid of them, so must we feel toward bitterness.

As always, prevention is better than cure. Bitter roots prevented from rooting do not have to be dug up. Three words in our text show us how to keep these roots of bitterness out of the soil of our hearts: "peace," "holiness," "grace." If we are following peace with all, particularly with all the household of faith, we will obey our Lord's instructions in Matthew 18:15-20, and we will not permit hurt feelings to divide our fellowship. If we are cultivating holiness of life, the atmosphere will simply not permit roots of bitterness to thrive. All of this we do by the grace of God, according to His law, in obedience to His mandates. By nature we want to defend ourselves and get what we feel to be "our rights." But when we live by the "grace of God," all this is changed. No longer do we look upon our own things, but "every man also on the things of others." No longer do we go our own way, or find our own

pleasures, or speak our own words, but our first question is always: What will God approve?

How foolish to spend our time and our lives cultivating roots of bitterness, when they will only make us miserable and when they will ultimately have to be pulled up. How much better to put our efforts into growing plants of peace and holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord"! And the more we cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, the more we will want to cultivate it. It is next to impossible for bitter roots to grow successfully where there is an abundance of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Bitterness gets crowded out!

And what a different harvest we can anticipate when the roots of bitterness are gone and our garden of virtue is producing an abundance of spiritual fruit!

Who would trade a harvest of large, luscious fruits for an ugly bitter root!

But oh, bitterness grows so easily. We will have to watch diligently the soil of our hearts. MM

Obituary

Clarence W. Barber

On August 25, 1983, funeral services were conducted for Clarence Barber of Hilton, New York.

Brother Clarence was an active member of the Megiddo Church for many years. A gifted actor, he took many prominent parts in religious dramas. He, together with his brother Ralph, founded the young Gleaners Class to encourage young members who lived at a distance, who were unable to attend services in Rochester. Clarence, together with his brother and sister, were responsible for mimeographing the Progressive and Maranatha letters for a number of years. Brother Clarence used his talent in the musical organizations of our church, playing first trumpet in the band and singing tenor in the male chorus for many years. He sang in the church's mixed choir as recently as the spring of 1982.

Our brother led a useful, happy life, always unselfish, always helping wherever he could. He is survived by his sister, Ethel Barber, with whom he made his home, and who cared for him during his last and prolonged illness. Interment was in Mount Hope Cemetery, where rest others of our beloved dead awaiting the Day when the "Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise."

• Where Will Elijah Come?

"If the coming of Elijah the prophet (Mal. 4:5) was not fulfilled in John the Baptist, where will Elijah come? to Jerusalem?"

As for the confusion between John the Baptist and Elijah, it seems like Malachi 4:5 clearly indicates very different conditions for the "day of the Lord" than those surrounding Christ's first advent. There was nothing "great and dreadful" about Christ's first coming. In fact, when He read Isaiah 61 in the synagogue (Luke 4), He even omitted the phrase about the "day of vengeance of our God." His first coming was not a time for vengeance. Nor did anything follow the coming of His first forerunner that could be called a smiting the earth with a curse (Mal. 4:6).

But as to your question, "Where will Elijah come?" we are not told. To Jerusalem? It would seem likely that he would come to those looking for him, or to those who will assist him in his "heralding" mission. It would also seem likely that if the whole world is to be informed of the approaching Day of the Lord, some—perhaps even many—humans or angels will help. Jerusalem will certainly be an important place, for that is where Christ is going to set up His headquarters when He takes the throne.

• Concerning the Voice of the Archangel

"You are incorrect in stating that the 'voice of the archangel' is Elijah. It is none other than Christ."

The text you quote (1 Thess. 4:16-18) does not seem to clearly define who the archangel is. Literally rendered it is "the chief messenger." We have wondered if this might not be a reference to Christ's herald Elijah, especially since the "voice of the archangel" and "the trump of God" are immediately followed by this statement: "And the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Here is the arrival of the King, following the "voice of the archangel," "the

trump of God," and the resurrection of the dead in Christ.

For this reason, Elijah's raising of the dead seems to fit into the picture very well. Since those who "sleep in Christ" will be all awake and ready when He comes and will rise to "meet the Lord in the air," Christ could hardly be said to resurrect them Himself, although it is all part of the same event in one sense.

We cannot say that we know all the details, but it is interesting to think about, and however the final plan is worked out, we shall be glad if we are on the right side!

• "Be baptized, every one of you"

"I appreciated your answer in the December 1982 Message pertaining to foods clean and unclean."

"However, in your answer above, a statement was made: 'Baptism was a definite command to some, but not to others.' How are you going to get by the words of Acts 2:38-39, 'Be baptized every one of you'? Verse 39 includes as many as are called by the Lord."

Acts 2:38-39 records an instance where the rite of baptism accompanied the receiving of the Holy Spirit. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

To this Peter adds a singular prophecy: "For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." When Peter said this, could he not have been looking beyond the literal rite and the immediate blessings of the Holy Spirit which they were then receiving to the greater "gift," the promise of life eternal (1 John 2:25), which shall be the inheritance of all who serve God whole-heartedly in every age and nation?

But Peter did not say that all who should receive the "promise" would have to be literally baptized,

any more than that they should have to have experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit under the arrangement by which it was being dispensed at that time. In Acts 10, Peter clearly stated the conditions under which God would accept men and women: "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (vs. 34-35). There is no mention of baptism being required in all ages or in all nations.

• The "Political Heavens"?

"What do you mean by 'political heavens'?"

The terms "heaven" and "earth" as used in the Bible do not always refer to the literal heavens and the earth that we live on. For example, there are

passages in Revelation where these terms are used symbolically of the ruling powers and the people over whom they rule. For instance, Revelation 6, "And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell upon the earth. . . . And the heaven departed as a scroll." This passage depicts the judgments coming on the rulers of this world when Christ returns to set up His Kingdom. He will call on all nations to submit to His rule, causing the collapse of all earthly governments.

An excellent example of the symbolic use of heavens and earth is found in Isaiah 49:13, "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth." The literal heavens cannot sing or the literal earth be joyful. Isaiah is referring to the ruling powers as the heavens and the people as the earth. MM

■ SO WHAT DO YOU KNOW? ■

How Many?

Can you supply the missing numbers?

1. Joseph was ___ years old when he brought to his father an evil report of the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah.
2. There were ___ years of famine yet to come when Joseph revealed himself to his brethren in Egypt.
3. When Gideon was preparing to attack the Midianites, he divided his ___ men into ___ companies.
4. David chose ___ smooth stones out of the brook when he went to fight Goliath.
5. The prophet Ahijah rent Jereoboam's new garment into ___ pieces and gave Jeroboam ___ of these pieces.
6. Elijah prayed and it "rained not" for ___ years.
7. The widow whose pot of oil never ran out until she had filled every vessel in her house had ___ sons.
8. Hezekiah prayed fervently to God when Isaiah the prophet told him he was to die and the Lord heard him and granted him another ___ years.
9. After Job had lost all and acknowledged God's

power, God gave Job twice as much as he had had before, plus ___ sons and daughters.

10. Jesus was ___ days with His disciples after his resurrection and before His ascension.
11. There were about ___ disciples gathered in the upper room when Peter addressed them regarding a replacement for Judas.
12. Paul was ___ days without sight after his conversion.
13. Cornelius sent ___ men from Caesarea to Joppa to find Peter. ___ brethren accompanied Peter to Caesarea.
14. Paul was bound with ___ chains after the soldiers rescued him from the Jewish mob in Jerusalem.
15. At the break of day, after ___ days of storm, Paul urged the men on the ship to eat.
16. The Revelator saw a Lamb standing on Mt. Sion, with ___ who had the Father's name written in their foreheads.

Answers:

1. 17 - Gen. 37:2; 2. 5 - Gen. 45:6; 3. 300 men into 3 companies - Judges 7:16; 4. 5 stones - I Sam. 17:40; 5. 12 pieces, 10 pieces - I Kings 11:30-31; 6. 3-1/2 years - James 5:17; 7. 2 sons - II Kings 4:1; 8. 15 years - II Kings 20:6; 9. 7 sons and 3 daughters - Job 42:10, 13; 10. 40 days - Acts 1:3; 11. 120 disciples - Acts 1:15; 12. 3 days - Acts 9:9; 13. 3 men, 6 brethren - Acts 11:11-12; 14. 2 chains - Acts 21:33; 15. 14 days - Acts 27:33; 16. 144,000 faithful - Rev. 14:1

Blessed Assurance

Not only this country but the entire civilized world is facing perilous times. Surely the Lord cannot let this go on much longer. Jesus said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

If we had no knowledge that all these things had been foretold long ago, we would be left with no hope. We would not know that soon God is going to intervene and bring this corrupt system to an end. But we have been blessed with the knowledge of the truth which gives us comfort and assurance and peace of mind. Even though the world seems to be falling apart, we can rest assured that a better day is just around the corner.

It will not be just a better day, it will be a perfect, unending day for us if we have made ourselves ready.

Here we have it. If we hold fast to our hope and keep up the good work to the end, Christ will come and save us. Let us, you and I, keep up the good work, for we have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Tennessee

S.K.

Open Your Eyes

Yes, the little things indeed we must watch most carefully. For being little, they are hard to see unless our eyes are fully opened. If darkness be in us, how great is that darkness. That is why we are blind, because of darkness. But when our eyes are opened by the light of God's truth, then we can see. And the more we see, the greater becomes the light till we reach the Perfect Day.

Georgia

S. J.

Which Temple Are We?

We are temples of the Lord's building. It is up to us to use the materials the Master Architect has provided, to build a temple that will be enduring.

The apostle Paul in Eph. 2:20-21 informs us that the "whole spiritual building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord," built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone. "Through wisdom is a house builded; and by understanding it is established" (Prov. 24:3).

We cannot be thankful enough that we have such a grand way mapped out for us, a way which shows us how to walk, which course we know will give us peace and happiness in this life and in the end world without end. "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6).

An opportunity to grow presents itself today,

To leave my former self behind and walk the narrow way.

Rise far above the bitter word and evil thoughts that blight,

Seek honor only from my God and sink all self from sight.

An opportunity I have to heed God's warning voice

To flee from each besetting sin, this make our only choice,

To bear my cross always and never once complain,

Pressing forward, upward, perfection's heights to gain.

Missouri

H. W.

To Be Made Incorruptible

What a great and wonderful privilege it is for us, creatures of the dust, to be selected and given opportunity to serve God. Only a few have been chosen.

The thrilling thought of being made incorruptible, to be changed to immortality and to the resplendent glory of God should, most certainly, encourage and enthrust us to forsake all of our own ways and devote all the time we can to getting right with God, to be worthy to be among the chosen few.

Good things do not come easily but, "Tho' affliction may befall, He'll deliver from them all. And His work will soon begin, Saving all who trust in Him."

South Wales

R. B.

Better Eyesight

I feel blessed to renew my subscription to your Magazine. Over the years, its truths have been a source of great comfort to me.

Although it seemed at times there was no way to move, those cheerful words give me hope: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

My eyesight has failed but my faith has increased. Pray for and with me as I believe in the Light of the world.

North Carolina

M.S.

Not Long

We can read God's Word and see all the things coming to pass that He said would come to pass before Christ's coming. And we know it will not be long until He will come.

West Virginia

W. W.

"In" on the "Doing"

"Study to show thyself approved"; that is what I am doing daily. I have been given so much help via the cassette tapes. It's a strong statement: The truth is not popular, yet it is the only thing to bring eternal life. For me the Truth is foremost; all else secondary. Learning each day is rewarding, we use time wisely when thus engaged. We take time for literal feeding; so, too, the mind needs to be refueled daily. It's a privilege looked to with eagerness, vital for life.

If we would gain the life to come, we must take what is set on the Lord's Table, whether we like it or not, for it is not for us to say how it is to be set or even what the meal should consist of.

To be a hearer so as to be a doer, even though across the world, is really marvelous. To be in on the doing now can lead to being in at the Harvest, when our Lord will judge us, everyone according as his works shall be. May it not be said of us, "Too late." Today the Saviour calls. The many ways Truth is given us amazes me. The food comes as fast as we can eat it. And at all opportune times, a real stimulus for each moment of each day too. Truly, my cup runneth over.

The day will come! Shall we be ready? God will give us time. He will be true to His Word. Let us work as never before, putting our best into each extended day.

Crewe, England

N. T.

Joy and Peace

Being in the narrow way brings joy and peace every day of our lives. We are warned, however, not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, but be humble. So, if we acknowledge Him in all our ways, He will direct our paths.

New York

O. W.

FINALLY, BRETHREN

What Shall I Answer Him?

Shall I tell Him that I had no time to think of eternal things; that my life was a busy one, with few spare moments?

No; that would not do. He could tell me that I had just as much time in each day as anyone else, and that others did it—so why couldn't I? Moreover, how foolish it would appear to fling a whole eternity away because one did not care to take time to consider one's destination!

Shall I say that I thought there was plenty of time; that I was young, and saw no need for haste?

No; that excuse will not do. I knew of several young people who died, younger than I. One who worked very close to me died quite suddenly. Was not that a warning for me? Besides, I could not affirm before God's tribunal that I had never heard "Now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

Shall I say that I knew a lot of professing Christians who were hypocrites; that I despised hypocrisy, and did not wish to add to their number?

That will hardly do either. If others are false Christians, that is no reason why I can't be a real one. There is plenty of bad money about, but the fact never prevents my getting hold of good money. That excuse is threadbare indeed.

Shall I urge in my defense that there were so many things in the Bible that were hard to understand?

How can I do that? Was it not a result of my own unwillingness to read, to think, to study and reason for myself? Besides, He could ask me why I did not apply what I knew to my own everyday actions. One does not need to understand all the details of a subject to benefit from it. I understand little or nothing of chemistry, yet I take medicine when I am sick. I could not describe the muscles of mastication and the process of digestion, yet I enjoy many a meal.

Besides, it is not what I know so much as what I do. Salvation is not a matter of great intellect. It is a matter of applying what we learn to the improving of ourselves.

Shall I say that I was sincere in what I believed, and consistent?

No; I dare not say that. I know too well that sincerity is no savior, and that one may be consistent and self-deceived at the same time. That woman was sincere the other day when she poured out the medicine and offered the poison to the child. She really believed it was the right bottle, but her sincerity did not avert the mischief.

"When he visiteth, what shall I answer him?" (Job 31:14).

The patriarch, Job, who first asked the question, has also answered it. First he tries various pleas, only to dismiss them all as useless.

"If I justify myself," he says, "mine own mouth shall condemn me" (Job 9:20).

"If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (Verses 30-31).

At last he comes to a wise conclusion, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth . . . I know that thou canst do every-thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee" (Chap. 40:4; 42:2).

Can we not take the lesson to ourselves? For someday, we shall have to answer.

MM

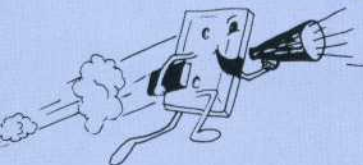


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