



Megiddo Message

The Lord of the Harvest Is Coming!...
(are you ready to meet Him?)

God, give me in my life today the fruit of goodness.

Keep my words honest and pure,
Keep my actions fit for You to see.

Help me not to do anything today that I would wish to keep from You,
Or that I would be afraid to have others know about.
Keep all my thoughts clean, so that even the most secret of them can
bear the full light of day.

Lord, keep me humble.

Help me to think not of how much I know, but of how much I need to learn;
Not of what I have done, but what I have yet to do;
Not of what I am, but of what I must become.

Whatever happens today, help me keep cheerful,
A beam of sunlight to those near me.

Help me

Never to grumble when things go wrong;
Never to be discouraged when things are hard;
Never to be annoyed when I cannot have my way;

Help me today, O God,

To keep my temper and control my tongue;
To keep my thoughts from wandering and my mind from straying;
Come hail, rain, or shine, help me to look up in faith,
To know that You are watching,
And that if I stay with You I cannot be lost.

Amen.

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 life, all men, and all things.

We believe

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

We believe

—in Jesus 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 humankind 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 applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God, in this way 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

NASB—New American Standard Bible

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

Goodspeed—The New Testament translated by
Edgar J. Goodspeed

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

About Our Cover

Our cover photo was taken at a Grape Vineyard near Geneva, New York.

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Vol. 74, No. 9

October, 1987

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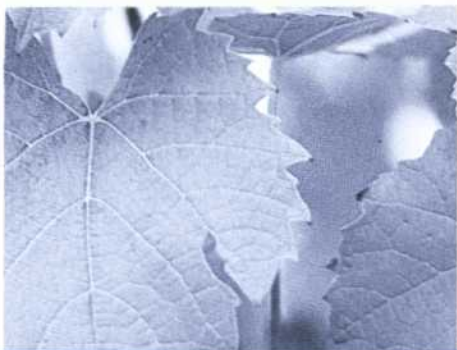
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The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, Founder; Newton H. Payne, President and Editor; Ruth E. Sisson, Executive Editor.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from University Microfilms, Inc., Serials Acquisitions, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: One year, eleven issues, \$2.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.



The Lord of the Harvest Is Coming!...

(are you ready to meet Him?)



“Thrust in your sickle and reap, for the time of the reaping has come and the harvest of the earth is fully ripe” —Rev. 14:15

*The Lord of the Harvest is coming,
We know not what day it will be
When He shall appear in His glory,
And all earth His wonders shall see.*

*The Lord of the Harvest is coming,
With myriads of angels of light;
From regions far-flung He shall call them,
To share the ecstatic delight.*

*He comes with rewards for His faithful,
His praise to the heav'ns shall resound
As peoples from all lands and nations
Submit to His Sceptre and Crown.*

*The Lord of the Harvest is coming,
“Be ready,” He bids you to wait,
For lo, in the clouds you shall see Him
If early He comes, or if late.*

*The Lord of the Harvest is coming,
With blessings for all who are true;
The Savior is coming most surely—
And what is He bringing to you?*

*The Lord of the Harvest is coming,
We know not the day nor the hour,
When He shall appear in His glory,
His might and His wonderful power.*

If you knew that Jesus was scheduled to arrive next week—next month—how would it affect your plans?

ES, Jesus *is* coming. It was the promise of the angels who watched Him ascend: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." It was His own faithful promise: "I will come again" (Acts 1:10-11; John 14:3).

What does this mean? What difference does this make in my life?

An enormous difference! In fact, nothing at all is the same.

The thought of Christ breaking suddenly into our lives is shocking. It overhauls our entire scale of values. The more we think about it, the more we realize how abruptly everything will change at the sound of the trumpet. Things we take for granted, activities that demand so heavily of our time and attention, suddenly are removed from our realm of concern. Suddenly we realize that many of the things we cling to, and want more of, don't matter at all—and some things we almost forget to think about are really important.

True belief in the Second Advent causes us to loosen our grip on the things that are seen. The bottom line of everything becomes eternity.

Just how intensely ought we to focus on Christ's return?

If we look to the apostles for our answer, we quickly realize that we cannot focus on it too much. It is the

very thing Titus 2:13 says we *ought* to do: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of...our Saviour Jesus Christ."

When is the last time you meditated on this fact? Practical people tend to reserve such thoughts for funerals or near-death experiences. Most of us are here-and-now thinkers, not then-and-there thinkers. But the Scriptures say we should be living every moment with this great expectation on our minds, "lest coming suddenly" He find us sleeping (Mark 13:35-37). We are to stimulate and encourage one another, and "so much the more" as we "see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25). We are to "comfort one another" with words about His return (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The expectation of His coming, the resurrection, and the immortal crowns He will bring are truths that should keep us on our feet, "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:50-58). If they do anything less for us, they aren't doing enough.

The Bible is literally running over with promises, encouragements and admonitions directly related to Christ's return. It doesn't just say He is coming—it emphasizes it. And re-emphasizes it. The second coming of Christ is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament alone.

Critics have denied it. Cynics have laughed at it. Scholars have ignored it. Liberal theologians have explained it away. Fanatics have perverted it. In the prophetic words of the inspired Apostle, they are saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (II Peter 3:4).

But the fact remains, unchanged and unchangeable: He *is* coming again.

What does this mean in terms of everyday life for us? How does this affect my life and yours?

First, look at what you *don't do*. Don't sit down and wait for the bugle to sound. Don't stare into the sky. Don't quit your job and move to the mountaintop to watch for His coming.

Rather, live. Live richly, fully, abundantly, circumspectly, every day your best, every day as though it were your last. Live every hour with this expectation on your mind: that He *is* coming, and that you *must* be ready.

What does it mean to be ready? It means to have our life record such that Christ can look upon us with approval. It means having a character so like His own that He will count us worthy to live and work with Him eternally. It means that He will accept us, protect us, preserve us, reward us.

What will I want to be found doing when Jesus comes? *Do that now*. What will I want to be found saying when Jesus comes? *Say that now*. Where will I want to be found going when Jesus comes? *Go there now*.

And watch. "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." If we would be ready, we must be watching. "Watching" in this context doesn't mean looking up, but looking *in*. It means looking deep into our hearts and scrutinizing every thought, every feeling, every motive. It means asking ourselves continually, Am I pleasing Christ in this? Am I by this thought, this action, this attitude, forming the character that will make my life acceptable to Him?

As true believers living in expectancy, we should be the happiest people in the
(Continued on page 24)



In Memory of Our Founder

L. T. Nichols

Born October 1, 1844

The following text was part of a pamphlet published by our founder, L. T. Nichols, near the turn of the century. Its warm, earnest appeal to sound the deepest depths of dedicated Christian living still touches our hearts today.

Mr. Nichols never claimed any divine gifts or supernatural powers from God. His only guide was the inspired Word of God, to which he devoted his entire life.

An Earnest Appeal

OVER forty years ago, when only a boy of fourteen, I started out to proclaim what I honestly believed to be the truth of God, and from that day to the present I have labored without hope of fee or reward in this life. Like Paul of old, I determined to be free from all men; for this reason, I have never received one dollar's salary during more than forty years of ministry; and I never shall.

Blessed with a strong constitution, for years I labored hard by day, and by night studied this blessed Bible, in Hebrew, Greek, and English, that I might attain to a knowledge of its more than wonderful pages. Truth was the gem for which I sought, and my soul's longing cry was: "O tell me where it can be found!"

After years of careful, earnest study, I rejoice with joy unspeakable to know that I have found the gem for which I sought, and hold in my hands the blessed Bible, knowing that between its pages there are no impossibilities, no contradictions, and no absurdities.

I started out with the determination to add courage to my faith, and, no matter what the opposition, to fearlessly proclaim whatever I believed to be the truth. My life's history will bear witness to the fact that, following Paul's example, I have not at any time used flattering words or a cloak of covetousness, and that I have not at any time shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.

God has not spoken to us or to any other man or woman since He spoke to John on the Isle of Patmos. No angelic being, commissioned by the God of heaven, has come to us with a new revelation. Nevertheless, we do not come to you in our own name. We come to you speaking the words of Jesus, the apostles and prophets. In obedience to the command found in Jer. 9:23-24, we do not come to you glorying in our own wisdom, glorying in our own strength, glorying in our own riches; but we do come, glorying that we know and understand the Mighty and Eternal One, as revealed in His Word.

A Wholly Inspired Bible

We stand ready to defend a wholly inspired Bible against the world. Its words are unlike all other words ever written. They have meaning, yes, worlds of meaning—one above or within another, while human words have all their meaning on the surface.

They have a message, whose truth is dependent upon no single time or circumstance.

This message has an authority, a power that survives the passing of earthly monuments and powers. In short, it is words that no man could have written from the intelligence belonging to his time, or from the experience of any human soul. So we can rest in the assurance that it is indeed the Word of God that abideth forever. Come and investigate its wonderful pages with us, and you can have the same blessed assurance.

People have been educated to believe that there is a conflict between science and religion. But not so, and we invite you to come and hear us on this point. We look upon the broad and lovely face of nature, with its countless beauties of land and sea; we raise our eyes to the measureless immensity of the splendid universe around us, and know that the All-glorious Being, whose power and wisdom and love have created and sustained them all, is not only the God of nature but also the God of the Bible; and its true teachings are bound to be in harmony with both nature and science. As the inspired writer tells us, we know that our life is but a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanisheth away, its joys and pleasures are so fleeting. Why should we not acquire this knowledge that will gain for us pleasures that will never end, and joys that will continue to increase through an endless eternity, even joys that are "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think"? What pleasures we now long to partake of! What scenes of rarest beauty we long to behold! Yet in that wonderland of glory will be greater joy than we would be able to ask for now. There is much to enjoy now, if earth's pleasures would only endure; but gray hairs, now silvering for the tomb, speak to us in no uncertain tones that soon, present, temporal things will end forever for us.

The azure vault of heaven, with its resplendent sun by day and the shining host at night is magnificent! But not long for us, for they fill the ages, while we flutter like the morning insect for a few moments, and are gone forever. The broad and smiling face of earth, with its countless beauties of land and water, is "a thing of beauty and a joy forever"; but soon our eyes, closed by death's slumber, will no longer behold them. You

*"You say you
don't have time
for God and
spiritual things?
What would you think
of a man in the cabin
of a sinking ship,
who would say that
affairs in the cabin
left him no time to
get into the lifeboat
that stood ready to
bear him to a place
of safety?"*

"I started with the determination to add courage to my faith, and, no matter what the opposition, to fearlessly proclaim whatever I believed to be the truth."

may say that you have no time to search for these wonderful truths, but Death will rap at the door one of these days, and he will not ask you if you have time to attend to him.

What would you think of a man in the cabin of a sinking ship, who would say that affairs in the cabin left him no time to get into the lifeboat that stood ready to bear him to a place of safety? You would think him of all men the most foolish; and so are we, if we allow the cares and fleeting pleasures of this life to consume our time to the exclusion of the one thing needful. The Words of Our Blessed Master, uttered over eighteen hundred years ago, are true; and Jesus said that we must seek *first* the Kingdom of God and His righteousness ever to have the glories of the future for our portion; that only those who *do* His commandments will have a right to the tree of life and be permitted to enter the beautiful city of God.

Having studied the Scriptures for over forty years we are fully convinced that life eternal and all its attendant blessings will be given only to those who fear God and keep His commandments, serving Him with all their mind, might and strength. We know that outside the blessed promises of the Word of God there is no hope of a hereafter. Science may make the world to wonder and applaud, but science with all its power cannot raise one man from death's slumber; with all its knowledge, it can give no hope beyond the tomb. Nothing but the mighty hand of God can perpetuate our existence beyond the grave. And yet we see the world rapidly drifting into infidelity, with less and less earnest religious zeal, less searching after light, less reading of the Scriptures.

In love of humanity, we have felt constrained to start out upon this our mission work. Everything is calling loudly for a radical change of attitude on the part of Christian men. The religion of the day has not withstood the storm and stress of modern thought; the doubt and skepticism of a critical eye has played sad havoc with time-honored creeds.

Over one thousand faiths, all teaching differently and all claiming to speak the words of an infallible God—no wonder the inquirer after truth is perplexed! Bewildered by the confusion of tongues arising from jarring sects, he is tossed helplessly to and fro as he pursues his anxious inquiry after truth. No wonder he begins to doubt the infallibility of this blessed Word of truth upon which our life depends.

Therefore, we have concluded that there is need of mission work at home. We extend a loving invitation to all lovers of truth everywhere to join heart and hand with us to lift the glorious banner of truth, upon whose folds shall appear no conflicting creeds, no impossibilities, no contradictions or absurdities; and then we shall be able to face bravely the hosts of sin, perfectly joined together in one mind and one judgment. There is a God-given command in Joel 2:1, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand."

In obedience to this command we have started out on our mission to prepare the minds of people, that they may believe and be ready to accept the Lord at His coming, which we know to be nigh at hand.

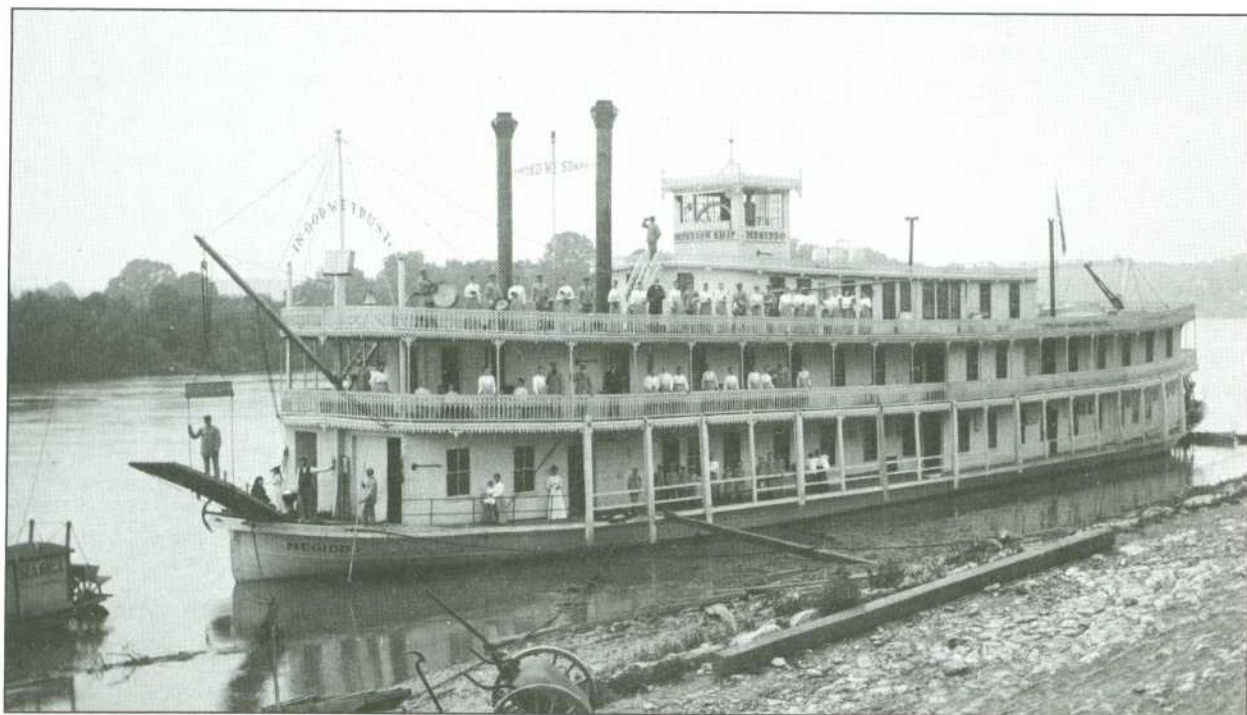
We do not claim to know the day or hour of His coming; but we do know the times and seasons, and can know that we are living in the era of our Lord's appearing to destroy all human rule, authority and power, and bring this world into subjection to divine law. Enlightened by the prophetic statement, we see ourselves on the verge of the great change; "as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26). At the dawn of the new age, a mighty tempest will roar with unabating fury until the whole world bows in submission to the King of kings and Lord of lords. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9).

The storm will abate; a new government will arise out of the universal chaos; peace will overspread the scene; armies will disband; the art of war will be suppressed; mankind will be set free to worship God under Heaven-sent guides and governors and to live in joyful harmony everywhere, surrounded with plenty and delivered from sorrow, disease, and premature death. The Lord's prayer will be fulfilled—"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," and "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," will be reality. Then "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

We want to tell you of this glad news of the Kingdom of God, of this coming King of kings and Lord of lords. What is the glory of an Edward VII, or the Czar of Russia, compared to the honor, renown and glory that will surround this glorified King when every knee will bend to Him, every tongue will join in singing His praise; and worlds on high—bright, shining worlds in all their glory—will join in ascribing: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever" (Rev. 7:12)? Before Him the glory of all earthly monarchs pales like the light of a candle before the blazing sun. A King who, in possession of universal power and universal dominion, will save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor; a King who will look after the poor and attend to the cry of the needy. Such a king the world has never known. His name shall endure forever. The earth shall at last be filled with His glory, when the institutions and pomp and pride of man have disappeared forever.

Investigate with us, and you will find that this is no fiction or fancy, no product of the imagination; but a sure and certain hope, built upon past and contemporary events as deep and solid and irrefutable as the everlasting foundations of the earth. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound" (Ps. 89:15). And to help others, we have left our homes and braved the uncertainties of river life. The beloved author of Hebrews testified: "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). We must be found looking for Him with clean hands and a pure heart (Ps. 24:3-4). We will have no acceptance at His coming apart from being arrayed in the fine linen, clean and white, which the Divine Record plainly tells us is the righteousness of saints (Rev. 19:7-8). The only way to have this righteousness that alone will save is to observe to do *all His commandments* (Deut. 6:25).

"The Bible has a message. Its truth is not dependent upon any single time or circumstance. It is a message with authority, a message from God."



The Mission Ship 'Megiddo', built in 1901, navigated the waters of the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

Our Mission Boat

As we looked at the world around us and saw how few are anxious for His coming, how few are ready to receive Him, we felt constrained to start out upon this our mission work at any cost. After considering many possibilities, we concluded that the work could best be advanced by a mission boat, which would traverse the waters of the Mississippi River and its many tributaries.

During the summer of 1901 we began constructing the boat at Lyons, Iowa. On November 16 we sailed to Memphis, Tennessee, where we completed our steamer and built a barge. After spending the winter in Memphis, we proceeded north to St. Paul, holding meetings at different points along the river, sometimes in our large and commodious tent and at other times in churches kindly offered us for the purpose.

In October, 1902, we left St. Paul, again stopping at different cities on our way down the river, holding meetings in the Methodist, Baptist, Christian, Presbyterian, Full Bible, and People's churches. From Cairo, Illinois, we proceeded up the Ohio River to Paducah, Kentucky, where we held many meetings in the Presbyterian Church. Leaving Paducah, we sailed up the Cumberland River to Nashville, Tennessee, where we have been most kindly received and welcomed to their lovely, hospitable city, and offered the use of their fine tabernacle.

And now, at the beginning of the new year (1903), we look back
(Continued on page 23)

A Letter from Mother

Glosne March 16th 1892

Beloved ones over the deep blue sea.

As Ella has been writing to you I could not (as sister states says) "let a letter go, without contributing my mite," and I think it will be a mite this time for I am nervous to day, but perhaps it will wear off as I continue to write. I have put ten a long letter to the new brethren in London giving them a welcome into our Father's family, and trying to encourage them (as best I could) to buffet the waves of persecution which are sure to roll, if they live godly in Christ Jesus, but if they keep in their life boat it will carry them safely over and aid them to enter the haven of rest. We are made perfect through trial. No trial, no development of character therefore the necessity of trial. Take Abraham, for example, and even Jesus, he was made perfect through suffering or trial, he stood the test and came off conqueror thus leaving us an example to follow in his footsteps.

Now the question that interests us most is, when will you start home? The brethren are all getting anxious. Bring all with you that you can. We are so anxious for the next letter to know what a reception you got at Swansea, and what success you are having. Write all that you can about it. May God bless, protect, and bring you safe home is the prayer of all. Unbound love to each.
Mother



Emmeline Dunbar Nichols

This letter was written and sent by Mr. Nichols' mother, affectionately known as "Gramma Nichols," to Mr. Nichols and his wife when they were visiting brethren and friends in England and Wales during the spring of 1892. "Home" at that time was Ellington, Minnesota.

How About Your INFLUENCE?

We cannot live and not influence.

INFLUENCE is to a man what flavor is to fruit, or fragrance is to a flower. It is the measure of one's interior riches and worth.

As the blossom cannot tell what becomes of the odor which is wafted from it by the wind, so no one knows the extent of that influence which constantly and imperceptibly escapes from his daily life and goes out far beyond his conscious knowledge or remotest thought.

Influence is a power we exert over others by our words, by our actions, by our lives. It works in inexplicable ways. We neither see nor hear it, yet consciously or unconsciously we exert it.

At times all of us lose sight of this, and act on the assumption that what we do or say can affect no one but ourselves. But others *are* affected. Every morning as we go forth, we lay our molding hand upon another. What is our influence: for evil? for good?

Let no act of ours be such as could lead a fellow mortal astray!

It is a terrible thought that some

careless word or act of ours may start some soul upon the downward road. Oh, let it not be!

What a mighty power we hold, this power to influence another, and how it clings to us. We cannot shake it off. Try as we may, we cannot rid ourselves of it. It is born with us. It grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength. It speaks, it walks, it moves; its power pervades every look of our eye, every word of our mouth, every act of our lives.

We cannot live to ourselves. We are

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either a light to illumine, or a tempest to destroy. And the record we write of our lives on others' hearts is a record we cannot interline. How gladly we would rewrite it at times, adding a kind word here, or a generous action there. Gladly would we erase a frown and put in a smile; strike out the harshness and add gentleness, meekness, love. But alas! The record is sealed; it cannot be redone; our words or actions, once they have gone forth into the world, cannot be recalled.

There is a woeful tale from the past century which I would like to cite to illustrate the power of influence. The consequences might have been very different if all concerned had been moved by principle and more aware of the power of influence.

The setting is a courtroom. The judge speaks:

"Prisoner of the bar, have you anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon you?"

Not a whisper was heard anywhere. The situation became painfully oppressive when the prisoner was seen to

move, his head raised, his hand clenched, and the blood rushed into his dull, careworn face.

"I have, your honor. You have asked me a question, and now I ask, as the last favor on earth, that you will not interrupt me until I'm through.

"I stand here before this court convicted of the murder of my wife. Truthful witnesses have testified to the fact that I was a loafer, a drunkard, a wretch; that I returned from one of my prolonged debauches and fired the fatal shot that killed the wife that I had sworn to love and protect.

"While I have no remembrance of committing the fatal deed, I have no right to condemn the verdict of the twelve good men who have acted as jury in this case, for the verdict is in accordance with the evidence.

"But may it please the court, I wish to show that I am not alone responsible for the murder of my wife."

The startling statement created a sensation. The judge leaned over the desk, the lawyers wheeled around to face the prisoner, while the spectators suppressed their intense anxiety.

"I repeat, your honor, that I am not the only one guilty of the murder of my wife.

"The judge on this bench, the jury in the box, the lawyers within the bar, and most of the witnesses, including the pastor of the old church, are also guilty before Almighty God.

"If it had not been for the taverns of this town, I never would have become a drunkard. Had it not been for the inhuman traps, I would have been a sober and industrious workman, a tender father and a loving husband. But today my home is destroyed, my

wife murdered, my little children—God bless and care for them—cast out upon the mercy of the world as weeds by the wayside—while I am to be hung by the strong arm of the State.

"God knows I tried to reform, but as long as the open tavern was in my pathway, my weak, diseased will-power was no match against the fearful, agonizing appetite for liquor. For one year our town was without a bar. For one year my wife and children were happy and our little home was a paradise.

"I was one of those who signed petitions *against* the re-opening of the taverns of our town. One-half of this jury, the prosecuting attorney on this case, the judge who sits on this bench, all *voted for them!* By their votes and influence the taverns were re-opened!"

The judge made a motion as if to stop further speech, when the prisoner hastily continued:

"No! No! your honor, do not close my lips. I am nearly through.

"In my drunken, irresponsible condition I have murdered one, but you have murdered thousands, and the taverns are in full operation today with your consent. May God open your blind eyes to your own individual responsibility, so that you will cease to give your support to this dreadful traffic. . . ."

None of us lives to himself. Another's efforts toward right living are either being accelerated or retarded by what they observe in us. By our consistent or careless living we either encourage or discourage our fellowmen. Influence is contagious!

If we think ourselves much too insignificant to have any effect upon another, we are greatly mistaken. We

cannot live and not influence.

It is impossible to estimate the power or the extent of our influence because we are usually unaware of it. In our own lives, consciously or unconsciously, we daily follow some pattern of conduct, and by it we are influencing others up or down. By everything we do we are making it easier for others to take the high way or the low.

Nor shall we ever know fully the impact of our influence on others until we stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Our very profession—that of Christianity—fastens the eyes of the world upon us. What do they see? radiant Christians or only smoked-up lamps? living epistles or lifeless formalities?

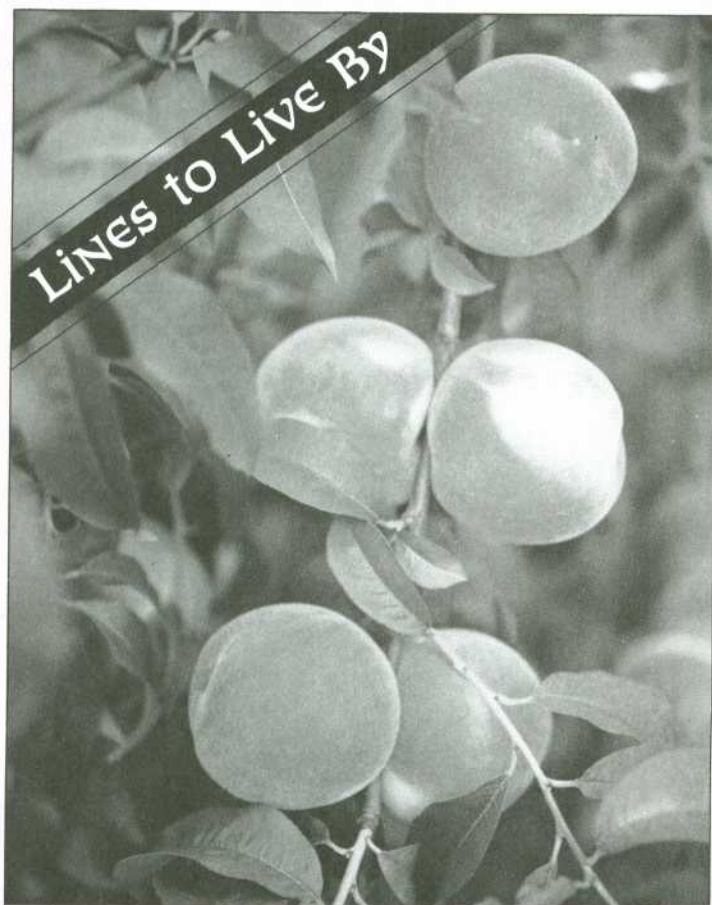
The apostle Peter reminds us that the Gentiles will, by our "good works which they shall behold"—not "may behold" but "*shall* behold"—"glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Pet. 2:12).

Within the household of faith, the sensitivity to our influence is yet greater, for brethren in the faith are even more keenly affected by what we are. Here, where the efforts of each are centered upon the developing and perfecting of a holy character before God, close attention is focused upon one's inner aims and motives, and the influence of one upon another is momentous, even critical.

In our march toward the Kingdom we mark a path. Whether we will it or not, we cannot journey without leaving footprints; and whether we will it or not, others will follow where we have marked the way. How often have

(Continued on page 24)

*Are you a blot or a blessing?
You cannot be a blank.*



Stumbling-blocks may be carved
into steppingstones.

*Remember there has never been
an overproduction of kind words.*

A sunny disposition gilds the
edges of life's blackest clouds.

*Sin may come upon thee by
surprise, but do not let it dwell
with thee as a guest.*

The true expression of Chris-
tianity is not a sigh, but a song.

*Master selfishness before it
masters you.*

B's to BE

B SILENT when anger stirs your heart,
Don't speak the word that sends the dart
Or adds a burden to some soul;
Add to your faith that self-control.

B PATIENT when everything goes wrong,
And evil thoughts would hush your song;
Let God's own peace keep mind and heart
And every needful grace impart.

B KIND when folks don't understand
And friends misjudge on every hand;
Just "let your yieldedness be known"
Remembering that you're not your own.

B READY always to extend
A helping hand to foe or friend.
And pray for those who're filled with hate,
That they will see their evil state.

B FAITHFUL, plow and sow the seed
By steady plod and loving deed;
Though others may not sense the cost,
God knows your labor, 'tis not lost.

B JOYFUL in the Lord, don't frown
Though all the world seems upside down
For neither circumstance nor place
Makes any changes in His grace.

B WATCHFUL, always watch and pray;
Be on your guard each passing day.
He's coming, coming very soon,
It may be midnight, morn or noon.

Gathered at the Last

*'Mid the losses and the gains,
'Mid the pleasures and the pains,
'Mid the hopings and the fears,
And the restlessness of years,
We repeat this passage o'er
We believe it more and more—
Bread upon the waters cast
Shall be gathered at the last.*

*Gold and silver, like the sands,
Will keep slipping through our hands;
Jewels, gleaming like a spark,
Will be hidden in the dark;
Sun and moon and stars will pale,
But these words will never fail—
Bread upon the waters cast
Shall be gathered at the last.*

*Soon like dust, to you and me,
Will our earthly treasure be;
But the loving word and deed
To a soul in bitterest need,
They will not forgotten be,
They will live eternally—
Bread upon the waters cast
Shall be gathered at the last.*

*Fast the moments slip away,
Soon our mortal pow'rs decay,
Low and lower sinks the sun,
What we do must soon be done;
Then what rapture if we hear
Thousand voices ringing clear—
Bread upon the waters cast
Shall be gathered at the last.*

Humility is the acceptance of the place appointed by God, whether it be in the front or in the rear.

You must have long-range goals to keep you from being frustrated by short-range failures.

POINTS FOR THE MONTH

- Week 1:** Wherever you are, at home or abroad, live always as under the eye of your God.
- Week 2:** We must use the candle of truth to search the inmost recesses of our hearts.
- Week 3:** We cannot go in the old way and reach the new goal.
- Week 4:** Work willingly—it works wonders.

Ambassadors for the King

Scripture Lesson: II Cor. 5:17-20 (NEB)

Ambassadorship is a position of high dignity and rank. How seriously are we taking our responsibility as ambassadors for Christ?

THE story is told of a man who lived long ago in the far lands of the East, whose only living testimony to the world is this line: "He worked for the King." Nothing remains to tell us so much as the name of the hero, or any of his deeds of valor. This only do we know: that "He worked for the King."

Could such a line be written of us, that we, whatever our place or station in life, worked for our King?

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ," writes the apostle Paul as he meditates on his own kingly assignment, "as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In these words, found in II Cor. 5:20, the apostle Paul compares the Christian's responsibility to an ambassadorship.

The Dignity of Ambassadorship

Ambassadorship is a position of high dignity and rank. It is the highest rank of diplomatic representative sent by one government to another. According to Webster's Dictionary, an ambassador is an official envoy, a diplomatic agent acting as the temporary resident representative of his own government in a foreign land, or appointed for a special diplomatic assignment.

Because of his special appointment, the ambassador's home is away from home. His is a life of service among people who speak a different language,

who honor a different tradition and who practice a different way of life. He is in every sense an alien, a stranger, a pilgrim.

An ambassador is not directly supervised, but neither is he on his own to do as he pleases. Rarely does an ambassador enjoy extensive discretion; his duty is to obey instructions, to remain true to the ideals and policies of his homeland even when the home government might never know. It is a position with honor. The ambassador's own personality and prestige, together with how well he fulfills his responsibilities, play an important part in making the view of his government understood.

We have been called to the very highest position, to be ambassadors for Christ. We have pledged our loyalty, faithfulness, service, obedience. In every spiritual sense we speak a different language, honor a different culture, and practice a different way of life than those around us. We too are aliens and pilgrims. How seriously are we taking this high appointment?

Our founder, L. T. Nichols, was an ambassador. Greater than being an ambassador of his country or of any earthly sovereign, he was an ambassador for genuine royalty. His deeds of valor we know; his achievements are on record for the ages to come. And towering above all is this memorium: that he worked for the King, yes, THE King, the King of kings.

Note: *Ambassadors for the King* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

Kingly service has many forms in this world. The service of our founder was singular. Early in life he began to take seriously his appointment: to discover, understand, teach, and apply the principles of true religion. It was not easy. Many were the strongholds of superstition and error both around and within. And many were the enemies who went to hear him with the avowed purpose of finding flaws in his argument and silencing him. But as has been said, they found they could not get at the man. He just stood there, hiding behind the Bible, and fired one Scripture after another. Again and again it was defeat for the time-honored theories of critics, whether they chose to admit it or not. And when it was not total defeat for them, it was learning for the young student, as he was incited to delve deeper and deeper to understand. It was a lifelong work for the King as slowly, laboriously, he found the hidden gems of true religion. And not until every detail of his own life had been refined to comply with the religion he found, was his work for the King complete.

Christian Ambassadors

How parallel with the official position of ambassador is the life of each dedicated Christian, in a spiritual sense. All assignments are not the same, but each true ambassador has been "handpicked" on the basis of his or her qualifications. Each has been singled out for special service of one type or another, even as were Jesus' own apostles. These were His words to them: "I have acquainted you with everything that I heard from my Father. You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed you to go out and produce fruit" (John 15:15-16, Berkeley). It was a singular appointment, a true ambassadorship. They were being sent to work for their King on foreign soil, to bear His

name, to show His example, to proclaim His message. They were even endowed with marvelous power to perform wonders in His name. What a noble calling!

Even so are we today under commission from our King, though the duties of our ambassadorship differ from theirs. We are called to live life at its best, to give ourselves to something greater than ourselves. Our lives are not our own. Having said "Yes" to the call to full surrender, many more "yeses" must follow if we are to be faithful ambassadors. So devoted must we be that our joy in the service of our King will overflow both the rights and duties of life and submerge them. But is not this the mission of an ambassador, to show the policies and patterns of his homeland? Indeed, should it not be our delight to do so, when our King has offered us infinitely more than eye has seen, or ear has heard, or the heart of man has imagined?

An ambassadorship is a temporary appointment. And is not our assignment temporary? Our present position of service is but a training for greater fields of service in the future. If men and women in this world consider it worthwhile to spend 12 to 18 years preparing for a life of perhaps 75 or 80 years, what is it worth to prepare for a life in eternity?

Never should we berate our calling, or look upon ourselves as insignificant or worthless. We are called to be successful, efficient, productive in all aspects of our service, to show by our words and actions that working for our King is just as dignified and just as creditable an occupation as working for General Electric or the U.S. government. And infinitely more rewarding! Our employer promises us "pleasures forevermore," surpassing all that eye has seen or ear has heard or heart has imagined, even "riches, and honour, and life."

**We are called
to live life at
its best, to give
ourselves to
something greater
than ourselves.
How well are
we answering
the call?**

**Inconsistency between
word and deed is the
single most disabling
aspect of high ideals.**

**Truth is an
abstraction. It
cannot be
photographed,
copied or carried.
But it can—and
must—be lived.**

**Our hands, our feet,
our faces, our tongues
must all tell the
same story.**

What greater incentive could ambassadors have!

Ministers of Light

We are called to be ministers of light in a world of darkness. It has been said that Jesus walked with an incandescent lamp in each hand. His commission: to bear light, the light of life, both in precept and in example. He came to demonstrate the divine life in action, so that all could see. Few saw. The light was too bright, or too distant, or too intense, or they simply closed their eyes. The Sadducees could not see because they were too concerned with things material; and the Pharisees could not see because they were preoccupied with things ethereal. Nevertheless, Jesus fulfilled His commission. The Light was there. The Ambassador was among them for the sake of the few Paul's and Peter's who would be impressed.

Our appointment as ambassadors of our King is no casual matter. It carries heavy responsibility. Like Jesus, we are called to exemplify what we believe, to make true religion visible in our lives. Truth is an abstraction. It cannot be photographed, copied or carried. But it can be lived. And this is our commission. As Paul wrote to his brethren, "I beg you to live lives worthy of your high calling. Accept life with humility and patience, generously making allowances for each other. . . . Make it your aim to be at one in the Spirit, and you will be bound together in peace. Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days . . . Be wise in your behaviour toward non-Christians" (Eph. 4:1, 2; 5:15; Col. 4:5, Phillips).

Do we feel that we do not belong in this world? This is as it should be.

The Christian ambassador is an alien in this world; he is a citizen of heaven, and from heaven he expects his recompense to come. Hence he is a stranger on earth, a pilgrim. Physically he cannot escape the world; yet he is no part of it. What happens matters little, except as it affects his loyalty to his King. Socially, politically, mentally and morally he has separated himself, in accordance with the command for all true ambassadors (II Cor. 6:17-18). He is in every sense a foreigner; he does not belong.

Then, too, the ambassador for Christ carries important tidings from his country. His is a distinct and singular message. He does not speak his own words or opinions or personal views; he bears a message from the King of kings.

The Christian ambassador's language is also a major point of distinction. Nothing rough, nothing coarse, nothing unbecoming to the honor of the heavenly homeland ever passes his lips. Even more than this, his words are worthy of the praise of God. Fitly spoken words are seasoned with the salt of divine wisdom and sincerity; he uses faith-building essence in all his conversation. The true ambassador's speech effaces self and glorifies God.

Perhaps the single most important aspect of our ambassadorship is our influence. Why are we here? To show the right example, to advertise and promote our homeland, to show that we are citizens of another world, to be ambassadors for the King of kings in this "crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15).

We may think our influence small and insignificant; but recall the words of the Great Apostle: "No man liveth unto himself alone." Never should we underestimate either the reach or power of our influence. Was it not for example that Christ lived among men, not to tell us how to live

acceptably before God, but to *show* us?

Showing Our Ambassadorship

How are men and women to know of our ambassadorship? How will they see and sense our high calling and perhaps be moved to honor our great King and His great country? We cannot go from village to village preaching, as did Christ. Nor can we write letters as effectively as did Paul. What can we do?

The story is told of a monk known to history as St. Francis, who said to a fellow friar, "Let us go into the town and preach." So they went, but nowhere did he stop to deliver a sermon. Returning to the monastery, the young friar asked, "But father, when shall we begin to preach?" "My son," Francis replied, "we have been preaching. We were preaching while we were walking. We have been seen and looked at; our behavior has been remarked upon; we have delivered a morning sermon. You see, my son, it is of no use that we walk anywhere to preach; we preach as we walk."

It is a matter of coordination. Our hands, our feet, our faces, our tongues must all tell the same story. A common indictment of the adult generation by the young is that we don't practice what we preach; therefore we are hypocritical. However true or false the indictment, the fact remains that inconsistency between word and deed is the single most disabling aspect of our ideals. What we do speaks so loudly that people can't hear what we say. Again, all talk and no action soon becomes like a whistling teakettle—only an annoyance.

A character in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" dramatizes this fact. The character's name is "Talkative." It is said of him: "All he hath lieth in his tongue, and his religion is to make a noise therewith. His house is as empty of religion as the white of an

egg is of taste. Men that have any dealings with him say it is better to deal with infidels than with him; for fairer dealing they shall have at their hands."

A well-known religious song has another suggestion for showing our ambassadorship. It has this ringing theme: "they will know we are Christians by our love, by our love; yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love." Translated into terms more speaking to our own personal commitment, we might rephrase this

Let Us Pray

O Thou the source of all our joy, the hope of our lives, whose power sustains and whose grace never departs from any who love Thee in sincerity and in truth: we worship Thee. Our Father, we thank Thee for the countless blessings that surround our lives, both temporal and spiritual; for seedtime and harvest, sunlight and shadow, for warmth and love. For the Truth which holds sway in our hearts we are most deeply grateful. We look with shame upon the times we have desired the tents of wickedness, forgetting that a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand outside.

Father, help us continually to deepen our dedication to Thee and Thy cause, to keep it continually on our minds. And help us to be consistent in that dedication, to follow carefully the path laid out before us, that we may bless others as we have been blessed.

Help us to be ever conscious of our influence, remembering that *we* are ambassadors for Thee. We are not our own. Our time, our talents, our interests, our affections, all are Thine. We must be and do what Thou dost intend for us, if we would be part of Thy permanent creation. Otherwise Thou takest no notice of us.

Father, help us in completing our giving of ourselves to Thee. May our sacrifice match our sincerity; increase our service to match our intentions, and all to correspond with what Thou dost say is right for us. Where we have failed, help us to double our determination, renew our goals, rechannel our energies, and taking fresh courage, try again. And may we never even for a single moment be content with anything less than our very best.

We pray Thee to be with Thy people everywhere. Bless and keep in Thy constant care all who are seeking to learn and live Thy holy precepts. Encourage the faltering, support the suffering, and give courage to each one who is making a serious effort to be like Christ. And may we walk ever more closely the High Road of Holiness, that we may reach our destination in the Kingdom of Christ and the faithful of our own age and every other, that together we may enjoy Thy boundless blessings world without end. In Jesus' name. Amen.

to say, "They'll know we are Christians by our lives, by our lives; yes, they'll know we are Christians by our lives." For what greater revealing is there of our hearts than our lives? Actually, our love and our lives are one, when properly understood. If our love to God is all that it should be, if we have surrendered to the point of "none of self and all of Thee," that love will be the foundation and framework for our lives and men will indeed know we are Christians by our love.

There are all kinds of arguments for the Christian faith; and all may be rebuffed or scoffed at—all, that is, except one: the life it can and does produce. Where, but in the annals of God, do we find such nobility of character as shone in the life of Joseph, or Daniel, or Moses? Where else do we find the longsuffering, patience and forgiving spirit of Jesus, or the farsighted faith of Abraham, or the dauntless courage of Elijah? Where else do we find the humility that never admires its own goodness; the kindness that is never marred by self-will; the gratitude that is never tainted with self-commendation; the forgiveness that is never soured by ill will?

Where else do we find the love

that never disappears, whatever comes; love that never speaks to offend or demean; that is never irritated, never selfish, never resentful; that is always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient?

Where, but among His own, is the spirit that can give and give and continue to give when none but God commend? Where else do we find the sustaining hope that can support through any trial, that can trust in the darkest night of suffering, that can take the losses or gains of life and still go trusting? Where else do we find the largeness of soul that can receive insult and injury with a silent smile that pities the accuser more than accused? Where but among the

saints of God is the faith that in every hour of trial can say, "It is God's will"? No, a godly character cannot be confuted. Few are preached into the faith; but oh, the power of those who are examples "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12).

The Power of Example

The apostle Paul recognized this mighty power of good example and its effects among the Thessalonian brethren, and rejoiced. "You know," he wrote in his First Epistle to them, "what sort of men we were when we lived among you. You set yourselves to copy us, and indeed, the Lord himself. You remember how, although accepting the message meant serious

Look at the Benefits . . . !

There are all kinds of arguments for the Christian faith; and all may be rebuffed or scoffed at—except one: the life that it produces.

Where—but in Christianity—do you find . . .

- Humility that never admires its own goodness;
- Kindness that is never marred by selfishness;
- Gratitude that is never tainted with self-commendation;
- Forgiveness that is never soured by ill will?
- Love that never disappoints;
 - that never speaks to offend or demean;
 - that is never irritated, never selfish, never resentful;
 - that is always slow to expose,
 - that is always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient?
- Generosity that gives and continues to give when none but God commends;
- Hope that holds steady through the darkest night of suffering;
- Trust that takes the losses or gains of life and still keeps trusting.

trouble, yet you experienced the joy of the Holy Spirit. You thus became an example to all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia. You have become a sort of soundingboard from which the Word of the Lord has rung out, not only in Macedonia and Achaia but every where the story of your faith in God has become known. We find we don't have to tell people about it. They tell us the story: ...how you turned from idols to serve the true living God, and how your whole lives now look forward to the coming of his Son from Heaven—the Son Jesus, whom God raised from the dead” (I Thess. 1:5-10, Phillips). Their lives were living testimonies of faith.

Even so must we show that the love of Christ is at work in us, and that such great chapters as I Corinthians 13 are not merely lessons written in a holy book, but lessons that can be translated into the lovely attractiveness of a holy life.

This holy quality grows or lives in us as we learn to live in company with God. This fact was evident in the early Christians. Through their lives the inner light shone brilliantly to the pagan world around. Even in the midst of persecution, they were joyful and radiant, and the secret of that radiance was their confident faith in the living Christ. Their minds were on Christ, His life had such an impact on their lives that they could not live without thinking of Him; and the more they thought of Him, the more they longed to be like Him.

We grow to be like those we live with.

So closely did they dwell in thought with Christ that they became like Him. And will not the same formula work for us? If we are dwelling in thought with Christ, if we have centered our thoughts on Him and are living with Him, will there be any discord among us, any jealousies, any

pettiness, any wrangling, any strife? Oh, how powerful the example for good that we may display, if only we live with Christ, our thoughts centered in Him, our lives patterned after His in each particular.

Herein lies the force of Jesus Himself: “I have given you an example.” More mighty than His words were His acts, His struggles, His joys, His triumphs. Men might disbelieve, but they could not deny the faith He lived and the joy He displayed. And so He said, in effect, to His disciples: Do as I do. Copy my obedience, my faith, my forward-looking, my complete trust in the Father, my devotion, my self-denial, my self-discipline, my love. Copy me, He said, not with any sense of bigotry or self-importance but in love that inspires to goodness and virtue.

The apostle Paul wrote the same message to his brethren in Colosse, in these words: “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without.” This is not merely a warning, nor even an exhortation, but a task to do—they should commend Christ to others. Influence is important. Their proper behavior would have a twofold benefit—they would be helping others; and before they were through they would doubtless have commended Christ to themselves as never before and would be thereby saving themselves.

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without,” says Paul. Or as rendered by another translator, “Let Christian wisdom rule your behavior before the outside world.”

The outsiders were the non-Christian population, the overwhelming majority of the people among whom they lived; more specifically they were friends, neighbors, and acquaintances in business and daily life. In the presence of these people, the unconscious attitudes and habitual practices of Christians assumed the utmost importance. The conduct they

What we do speaks so loudly that people can't hear what we say.

observed could either exalt or degrade the Christ-life in the estimation of the world. More than that, they would determine the success or failure of each individual Christian himself.

Influence and Influence

Influence may be conscious or unconscious. It might be said that for Paul the highest compliment that could be paid to him, or to any others among the Christian brethren, would be the remark, “These people belong to Christ.”

Every true believer belongs to Christ. Every true believer is meant to be, in the great metaphors of Jesus, as “salt” and “light” in the life of the world. These suggest the importance of the conscious and unconscious moral and spiritual influence of good men and women. “Light” may be taken to represent our conscious influence. It contrasts strongly with darkness; it is more obvious than “salt.” But if the light becomes dimmed to the extent that it scarcely differs from the darkness, then what value is it?

Conscious influence calls for absolute uprightness and rectitude of life. Always there is an unseen audience, like that in the jail of Philippi which was listening to the songs of praise that rang through the midnight from the innermost dungeon where Paul and Silas were bound (Acts 16:25). Unknown to us, members of that

same audience are watching *us* to see how *we* conduct ourselves amid the stresses and strains of our times. They want to know how we stand up in crises, how we handle trouble and temptation, what books we read, what attitude we take toward different types of people and what is the general tenor of our spirit as we confront the recurring circumstances of daily life. How can we know how many take their cue from us?

How those who profess the higher life conduct themselves in the day to day world is just as important now as it was in Paul's day. Too easily can we yield to the temptation to think that our personal influence and example count for little, that they will make little difference to the life of anyone. The life of each and every one of us matters to others much more than we often realize. It is just impossible to estimate how much depends on the witness of the quiet, constant, consistent life in the circumstances in which we find ourselves from day to day.

On the other hand, we need to remember also how one ill-considered word or deed may all but annihilate the conscious influence of a life-time. That tragedy has happened. It could happen to us. For this reason Paul pleads for the continuing consistency and purity of the Christian right through, from day to day, year to year, age to age. We have all one God, one Creator, one hope and one

bright future before us. Should we not watch every step very carefully?

How many the parents who have heard their children arguing, or grumbling, or using words they wish them not to use, and have asked, "Where did they ever get that?"—only to realize, with shame, that the answer lay right with themselves and in their own home. This is why the apostle Paul again counseled, "Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of each other than you do of yourselves... Let your attitude to life be that of Christ Jesus Himself... Do all you have to do without grumbling or arguing, so that you may be blameless and harmless, faultless children of God, living in a warped and diseased age, and shining like lights in a dark world" (Phil. 2:3-5, 14-15, Phillips).

No one of us can separate himself from the personal influence of his life. Wherever we go, our influence goes with us. Our conscious influence is an intermittent and spasmodic thing at best, depending upon circumstance and time and place. But our unconscious influence is continuous, and it exerts a telling effect on those with whom we come in contact. How can we guarantee that our personal influence shall constantly tell for the deepest things of our

faith? One way is, like Paul, to be filled with abounding love, to be "sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:9-11). Such lives are as "salt" working unobtrusively but effectively among the believing community.

We must be careful lest we condemn ourselves by the things we allow ourselves to do, or say, or think. We can permit nothing that will diminish the power and vigor of this influence, nothing that will in any way discourage or dishearten a brother or sister on the way. The life of the Christian community must conform to the gospel, and the standard there must be the standard set by the Master Himself. But before this is possible, each of our individual lives must conform, and that means you and that means me. You have to give, I have to give up my way both for the good of the Christian community and for the cause of God, in obedience to His law. The life of the Christian must remain unstained by any kind of compromise with evil or even with doubtful things. That is why the noble Apostle wrote yet again, "Let there be no more bitter resentment or anger, no more shouting or slander, and let there be no bad feeling of any kind among you. Be kind to each other, be compassionate. Be as ready to forgive others

*"Live together in harmony, in love, . . .
Let your attitude to life be that of Christ . . . Do all you
have to do without grumbling or arguing."*

as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31-32, Phillips).

We each, in our sober moments, know our own deep need for forgiveness. How much more should we be willing to understand, forbear, and forgive one another. This is part of our duty as ambassadors of our King. Only so will men know that we are not part of this world, that we belong to another order.

We are here to contend not with one another, our fellow ambassadors, but with our own tendencies to sin. Two soldiers on board a ship one time right in the midst of battle became all engaged in a heated argument between themselves. Another soldier, overhearing, spoke firmly. "I don't know," he said, "who's winning or losing this one, but the enemy—he's over there!" and the soldier pointed to the ship on the horizon. Just so with us. We are not here to contend with one another. We are here to contend with the enemy, which is ourselves. When we have conquered that enemy, we have conquered all.

Let us, in our allotted time, discharge our duty as ambassadors thoroughly and well, subordinating personal desire to principle, personal ambition to an exalted love of our future King and country, in all things keeping uppermost our duty to obey. If faithful, each of us will not only receive the hundredfold now, but what is far greater, we shall receive a personal endorsement from our King at His coming.

And then, what wonders of service and pleasure shall be opened to us! No more shall we be asked to serve our assignment in a foreign land. The whole earth then shall be the country of our King, and we may even be His representatives beyond its spheres!

Oh, who can know the honors that await the faithful ambassador of Our King!

MM

An Earnest Appeal

(Continued from page 10)

upon the year of our mission work, knowing from many kind assurances given and many letters received, that we have become more deeply interested in truths divine; that some have been caused to search for the knowledge of God.

So we extend to you our invitation, to help us by your presence and interest in our meetings, to make the coming year a year in which much good will be done in the glorious cause of our Master, and that we each may be caused to speak more kindly, to be more considerate, to love each other better and make our homes more happy now, while preparing for that future home in glory. Our mission boat is a three-deck steamer, 205 feet long and 40 feet wide. Driven by two 250 H.P. engines, it has proved itself to be one of the best steamers on the river. It has over fifty commodious staterooms; all but two are 9 feet by 12 feet, and these two are larger. On the second deck is a large chapel with seats to accommodate all eighty-five persons on board.

The steamer has two dining rooms, one 16 feet by 36 feet; the other, smaller. Each family has separate cupboards in the dining room and kitchen, and some families have private dining rooms.

One of the wonders of the twentieth century is the kitchen, 16 feet by 30 feet, where thirty women do their own cooking on a single oversize wood-burning stove, and peace and harmony prevail—all are taught that all wrath, anger, evil speaking and evil feelings must be put away; that they must be kind, tenderhearted, loving and forgiving.

Our Band. We have on board a band of twenty-two pieces, two organs, a piano, and a bass viol, which are used in our services, to praise the mighty and eternal God in harmony

with the divine testimony (II Chron. 5:12, 13; Psalm 150).

Our People. Living on board our mission ship are thirty families—eighty-five volunteers. All have devoted their lives to the cause of truth and are ready and willing to work at any honorable employment. To help with the problem of livelihood, our women do plain and fancy needlework, which they sell at cities along the river. The men, honest and energetic, find employment at different points where we stop to hold meetings. Among our workers are a tailor, clerks, paper hangers, painters, sign painters, machinists, carpenters, teamsters, masons, plasterers, bricklayers, a landscape gardener, and men who can do all general work. All are thankful for any work they can obtain at points where we stop.

We are now in the process of equipping a machine shop on board, where we expect to manufacture articles, the sale of which will assist in the great work.

Our public meetings are free to all, and any wishing to ask Bible questions are welcome to come to the boat at any time.

In conclusion, we would again invite you to come and hear the Word of God. Compare carefully what we say with the Divine Record. Lay aside all prejudice, all theories, all sayings of men, and deeply realize the sentiment expressed in these verses:

*Truth is the gem for which we seek;
Oh, tell us, where can it be found?
For this we search and pray and weep,
That truth may in our hearts abound.*

*We want the truth on every point;
We want it, too, to practice by.
Divine in nature, 'tis the best;
For truth will ever stand the test.*

*Seize, friends, the truth, where'er 'tis
found—
On heathen or on Christian ground.
Among your friends, among your foes,
The plant's divine, where'er it grows.*

How About Your INFLUENCE?

(Continued from page 13)

we ambled thoughtlessly through a day, unmindful of this fact!

Naturally we are unclean, spotted with the filthiness of the flesh, our own lower nature. But in our dealings with God we have to wash until we come clean. All our subterfuge, the flimsy excuses we contrive to hide our inner poverty of soul from ourselves, must come down. When we ask God to take us and make us what *He* would have us be, we must be willing to face the truth about ourselves. And when we do this, we discover how much insincerity and deceit there naturally is in us.

THERE is yet another aspect of our influence. Perhaps we have played with a temptation, even enjoyed it, and let it absorb hours, or days, or weeks, or even months of our meditation—until our better judgment gained the ascendancy and we felt heartily ashamed and turned to God with our whole heart, asking His forgiveness, determined *never* to fall into that sin again. All has ended apparently well, but what has been our influence during this time on those who looked to us for an example of better things?

Although we have righted our steps, have we done all we can to help one who may have been caused to falter *by our influence*? It is the realization of what we have done, the harm caused by our apostasy, which fills the heart with remorse and causes the spirit to sink.

But let us not waste precious time brooding over our past failures, over the time we have failed to be the example we could and should have been, but let our failures be reminders of our weaknesses. Let us continue on, building high heaps around the places where we have fallen, using them as stepping-stones to holier living.

Even in our failures we may be examples for good; for as we overcome our fault through faith in God, we encourage and help others by showing them how they, too, can master a weakness. By our conduct we say to them, "Yes, if I can do it, so can you." This is influence.

Is our love for God growing greater every day? Are we growing more and more in the knowledge that can distinguish between right and wrong?

Love is always sensitive to the mind and the heart of the one it loves. If we really love God, will not we be sensitive to His will and desire for us?

The more we love God, the tenderer our conscience will become; and the

more we will shrink from what is evil and desire that which is right and pure.

Real love is expressed in growing knowledge and obedience every day.

Real love makes us able always to see the difference between the false and true.

Real love takes great care to avoid anything which might cause another to stumble.

Only when our character has been sifted and cleansed of all evil and is altogether pure will our influence be all for good, a character that will stand any light that is turned upon it, and merit approval and eternal recognition from the great Judge in the Day of Final Account. MM

The Lord of the Harvest Is Coming

(Continued from page 5)

world. Our faces should shine with the glow of His coming. Our daily conduct should be a living witness to Him, and our whole life and outlook radiant with our hope. Whatever our circumstances, whether to our liking or otherwise, our minds will not be absorbed in the present cosmos. Our whole thought will be: Is my life pleasing God? What will the Lord of the Harvest think of me when He comes? Will He find me ready?

To those who are ready, the arrival of Christ will mean joy and happiness beyond anything we can imagine, the realization of their highest expectations and hopes. To those not ready, it will be a day of defeat, of grief, and indescribable sorrow.

Let us focus all our effort on getting ready, for He is coming. MM



*Lord I would own Thy tender care
And all Thy love to me
The food I eat, the clothes I wear
Are all bestowed by Thee.*

*'Tis Thou preservest me from death
And dangers every hour
I cannot draw another breath
Unless Thou give me power.*

*Such goodness, Lord, and constant care
I cannot e'er repay
But may it be my daily prayer
To love Thee and obey.*

The Sword of the Lord

"I have a question about the wicked being the sword of the Lord. We do agree that the wicked are to eat bread by the sweat of their brow, undoubtedly there must be work for them to do. But surely the 'Sword of the Lord,' the 'Two-edged Sword' is the 'Word of God' (Rev. 19:15), as this same sword is mentioned elsewhere (Rev. 1:16, 2:16; Heb. 4:12)."

The Bible uses many, many symbolic expressions. Some of these seem self-explanatory, while others seem more obscure. Simple phrases like "the hand of the Lord," "the eyes of the Lord," "the mouth of the Lord," could encompass much more than we would ever perceive upon surface reading. Simple references to mountains, trees, hills, roads, heavens—all may carry much more meaning than is obvious. Simple activities with which everyone is familiar are much the same, whether the subject is eating, sleeping, walking, plowing, planting, or any other activity known to the human race. In this way the Almighty can communicate many thoughts and ideas in a single phrase. He can also make eternal truth understandable to men who are limited both by a limited vocabulary (language) and by a limited understanding. Drawing lessons from parallels in their own environment, He can create deeper and more meaningful thoughts that challenge them to think.

The principal use of a sword is in fighting; thus, when we think of a sword, we immediately think of warfare. Even though we live in a time when fighting is done with implements far more sophisticated than swords, we still associate swords and fighting; the Scriptures use the term in the same context.

A sword may be used either for defensive or offensive fighting. We find both uses in Scripture. For example, we read in II Chron. 20:9, "If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine. . . ." Or the words of Jesus, "He who takes the sword shall perish with the sword." In both texts literal combat is assumed.

We also understand the sword to represent an armed, assaulting enemy. Whenever someone was said to "take the sword," it is understood that they were ready to attack another.

When the term is used as a symbol, it still is associated with

scenes of warfare and fighting, though we must always remember here to compare "spiritual things with spiritual." If the weapons are not literal, neither are the enemies being fought literal flesh-and-blood enemies; neither is the fighting literal combat, nor the victory a literal prize. All are symbolic of deeper thoughts and meanings.

In the same context, the judgments of the Lord are referred to as His sword, as in Psalm 7:12-13: "If he (the wicked) turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready; He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death."

In another application, the sword is used also as a symbol of the Word of God. For example, Eph. 6:17, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Also Heb. 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." But even in these passages, the association is still with warfare and battle, the Word of God being the weapon God has provided for His people to use in defending themselves against the onslaughts of evil. In Ephesians 6, the apostle Paul had already enumerated several other pieces of spiritual armor to be worn by the Christian. The Word of God is one more powerful weapon, useful both in offense and defense.

And when we think how frequently the Bible compares our Christian life to a conflict, a warfare, a battle to be fought, the significance of using this "Sword of the Lord" is even greater. How else could we be expected to win in this spiritual conflict, unless armed with powerful spiritual weapons? This is part of the Lord's goodness to us. Indeed, He has provided the strong defensive weapons we need to be victorious over our foes, both from within (our own evil natures) and without (false beliefs and practices).

In the book of Revelation are frequent references to conflict, war, and scenes of battle; and when we consider the highly symbolic nature of the book, it does not seem strange that we find a symbolic sword mentioned also.

The first reference to a sword in Revelation occurs in chapter 1:16, where we read that "out of his mouth went a

***"Behold the Lord
cometh . . . to
execute judgment
upon all"
(Jude 14-15).***

sharp twoedged sword." Again in chapter 2:16 we read, "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Again in Rev. 19:15 we read, "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations."

Let us give further consideration to this last reference: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations." First, what is the sword? and second, who are the nations He is smiting with that sword?

We remember first of all that Revelation is a book of prophecy. Jesus delivered it to show to His servants "things to come." The major portions of the book are picturing events that will take place after Christ's Second Advent.

The opening verses of Revelation 19 picture first the joyous occasion of the marriage supper of Christ the new King when He is eternally united with His faithful bride (vs. 1-9). Immediately following this is a depiction of the judgments of God which will descend upon the nations of the world who refuse to submit to divine authority. We read: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself" (vs. 11-12).

Then follows the text which mentions the sharp sword: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he

treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (v. 15).

The question is, What is the sword? or what does it represent? We would all agree that it cannot be a literal sword coming out of a man's mouth.

Might it be a representation of the Word of God as the weapon that will be used? If we take the sword as the "Word of God" in this context, as it is defined in Hebrews 4:12, then Christ would be destroying the wicked simply by issuing an order. There is no doubt but that this would be possible. He could destroy any amount of life He chose to in this way. But we know also that God is just, and will give each one an opportunity to submit. This has always been God's plan, and it will be the plan during the Battle of Armageddon.

Again, if we review some of the prophecies describing the judgments upon the nations at the time of Christ's return, we will notice that in many of them the setting is a battle. The scene is one of conflict, and one army is fighting another army. For example, in Rev. 19:19: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." Note the last phrase: "against his *army*." Christ will have an army. Verse 21 reads, "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Now who might compose this army? It cannot be the nations of the world, as the activities of this army are directed against them. Nor can it be the faithful, for we read in Ps. 91:7-8, that they shall only "behold and see the reward of the wicked." The only other group of people from which to choose are the unfaithful, those who agreed to serve God but proved untrue to their sacred covenant.

Several passages of Scripture suggest that the members of Christ's army will be taken from among these.

Jeremiah 51 suggests that the unfaithful will be the army of the Lord. Verse

20 reads, "Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms."

There is another text in Revelation which indicates that the unfaithful will be this sword. Revelation 3:15-16 reads: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

In this passage is a symbolic depiction of the three classes of humanity as God sees them. Those who are "cold" are those totally outside His plan, not serving Him at all, hence not amenable to judgment. Those "hot" are the faithful, who during their lifetime were all on fire with their hope of eternal existence. Those lukewarm are those who agree to serve God and prove untrue. They were half and half. When weighed before the Judgment seat of Christ in His balance, they will be found wanting, hence will hear the doleful word, "Depart from me, I never knew you." These He will "spue" out of His mouth.

So when we read that "out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword," and when we read again of the lukewarm servants that He will "spue" them out of His mouth, we seem to have a reinforcement of the symbol that the unfaithful are the sword.

Other passages of Scripture point to the same group being used by the Lord as His army. Through Moses the Lord foretold His demands upon this group, and the terms he used definitely indicate that these unfaithful ones will feel the force of divine severity. We read: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee" (Deut. 28:47-48). The picture is of the unfaith-

ful, those who did not serve as they had agreed to serve.

Isaiah 65:12-14 pictures the deprivation which these unfaithful servants will experience: "Because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

The book of Jude states briefly the Lord's purpose in requiring the rebellious and disobedient to serve in His army: "Behold, the Lord cometh . . . to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15).

The fact that the Lord will have work for the unfaithful servants is again revealed in the creation narrative in Genesis. The unfaithful Adam was sent to "till the ground from which he was taken" (Gen. 3:23) as part of his punishment.

The prophet Joel describes this same army in Joel 2:6-12. The passage reads: "Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks . . . The earth (the people) shall quake before them; the heavens (earth's rulers) shall tremble: the sun and the moon (major political powers) shall be dark, and the stars (lesser powers) shall withdraw their shining: And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it? Therefore also now,

saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning."

Joel's description, as rendered in the Living Bible, is especially vivid. The 11th verse reads, "The Lord leads them with a shout, this is his mighty army and they follow his orders."

Since it is the Lord's plan to reward every man "according to his works," to give to each according as he has done, whether "good or bad" (Rev. 22:12; Eccl. 12:13-14), it seems likely that the Lord's army will be composed of the most rebellious elements from among the unfaithful servants. Because they turned away from His entreaties, because they rejected His kind offers, because they flagrantly disregarded their sacred vow, because they turned a deaf ear when in love He pleaded with them to serve Him and work for His Kingdom, now they will have to serve under compulsion.

Isaiah 13 speaks again of the Lord's army as composed of the unfaithful: "I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, and the

weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land" (vs. 3-5).

The statement that the Lord will call His "mighty ones" for His anger (His judgments), even them that "rejoice" in His highness might raise some question. Why should the Lord's mighty ones be said to "rejoice" in His highness if they are unfaithful?

The Berkeley Version translates these words, "my proudly exultant ones." The Knox translation uses the words, "they boast of my renown." The Lamsa translation reads, "I have called the mighty ones in my anger, even them that become strong with my excellency." These unfaithful servants may find a measure of satisfaction in engaging in a work that is being backed by the God of heaven. They will have unlimited power over the nations; they will be fighting a winning battle, and will rejoice in it.

In the end these unfaithful servants will die; they will not be tortured or tormented, but will simply receive "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." These are the inspired words of the apostle Paul: "... when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (II Thess. 1: 7 - 9). MM

**Life is at its best when we give ourselves
to something greater than ourselves;
when we learn to pass the breaking point
and not break.**

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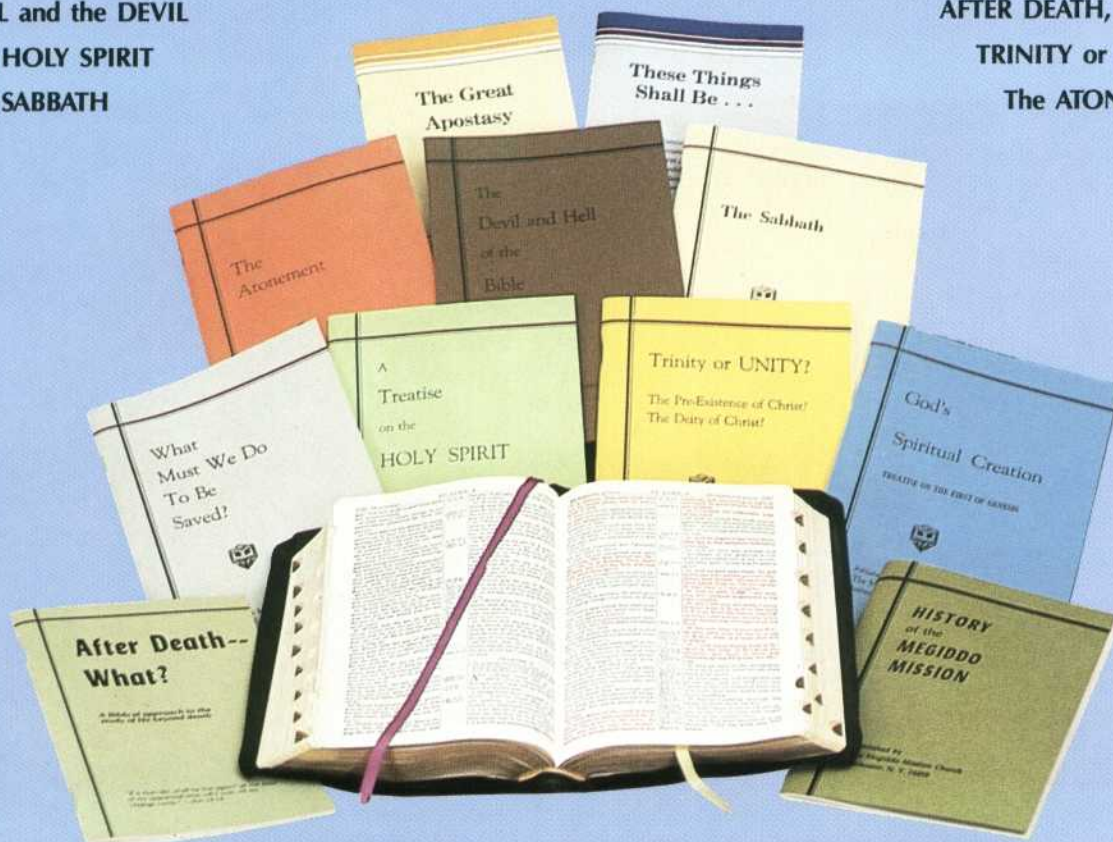
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