

# Megiddo Message

*If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.*

*—Proverbs 2:3-5, NIV*





# The Sin of SHOULD

**W**hen we think of sin, we usually think of big things—killing, stealing, hating. We quickly console ourselves with the thought, “I haven’t done anything like that—I’m pretty good.”

But sin is trickier than that. Do we recall the serpent in Genesis, that creature described as “more subtle than any beast of the field”? That serpent is nothing more or less than the sinful nature in your heart and mine. Wily, cunning, crafty, that old serpent is still alive, ready to strike its ugly fangs when and where you least expect.

Since sin is usually thought of as something we *shouldn't* do, it might surprise us that very often the Bible points to the sin of “not doing,” in other words, the sin of *should*. James writes of it in the fourth chapter of his book, that whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it has sinned (James 4:17).

Now that covers a lot of territory. But basically it tells us that besides doing the things we know enough not to do, there are things we *should* do, and if we don't, we sin.

What are some of these sins of “should,” these situations where we sin if we don't do something we know it is our duty to do? The Bible offers many guidelines, but we have to have our senses keenly exercised to sense each opportunity as it comes.

Suppose your family is sitting together around the dinner table. The conversation becomes heavily involved in some political scandal, or a recent calamity, or an airplane crash, or even an unkind remark that

was overheard. You sit and listen, wondering if you should intervene. You don't say a word. It is the sin of should.

Or it might be a friend who is struggling with a problem, who needs encouragement. You know about it, you realize someone should help them, and... just maybe that “someone” is you. Maybe you should go and offer to help. You think about it some more, and really believe it's your duty. But you don't go. It's the sin of should.

Or it might be your children. They are making friends, and from the bits of information you pick up here and there you realize they are not choosing wisely. You are worried. You don't know just what to do. You don't like to upset them, but neither do you want them keeping company with the wrong people. You think about it, even pray about it. But you don't *do* anything. It is the sin of should.

Or it might be an advertisement that comes in the morning mail. By force of habit you open it and begin to read. Something tells you that it isn't the best reading, but you keep on until you reach the end of it, all the while realizing that you *should* toss it quickly. Again, it is the sin of should.

Just “little things,” we say. But it doesn't matter that some things appear to us more serious than others. God sees them all the same: a condition that should not be tolerated. Sin is like a disease: if not checked it gets worse. There is only one remedy: to seek help, and take the prescribed action. Immediately. Or sooner.

Don't parley with the sin of should.



# Megiddo Message

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## 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 and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."

## We believe

— in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.

## We believe

— Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

## We believe

— in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.

## 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 raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.

## We believe

— in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

## We believe

— in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's 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

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

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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*.

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**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.

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*Until the Lord Arrives—*

## ***Be Patient***

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***The hope of the personal return of Christ to earth, the hope of the final triumph of righteousness over evil, of justice over injustice, of truth over error, is the silver lining to the world's dark clouds today.***

**A**s we look over the world today, we see great changes taking place. Geographic, social, political and economic changes clutter the history of this century. But we are shortly to witness an even greater change, an event which will affect the life of every living person. Almighty God is going to take a hand in human affairs. He has done so before, but never on such a scale as will soon be seen. "And he shall send Jesus Christ ... whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution" (Acts 3:20-21). When that time comes, He will arise to "shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19). "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake" (Joel 3:16). For "the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isa. 26:21).

To some, Christ's coming will be "as a thief in the night" (II Pet. 3:10). To others it will be the culmination of every hope, the realization of their highest desire. But to all, the expecting

and the unexpected, it will be sudden.

This has long been God's method in dealing with mankind. The inhabitants of the antediluvian world "knew not until the flood came and took them all away." The unsuspecting and unbelieving dwellers in Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain remained totally unaware until suddenly "fire came down from heaven and destroyed them all." And, said Jesus, "even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Matt. 24:39; Luke 17:26-30). Swift on the news of His messenger, the heavens will open, and down the parted skies the King will travel in the greatness of His strength. His face shining as the sun in its splendor, His eyes like a flame of fire, His voice like the sound of many waters, and attended by a splendid retinue of shining seraphim, brilliant bands of celestial hosts filling the skies from end to end, shall come the immortal Conqueror, the eternal King, the Prince of Peace to take His throne.



How magnificent beyond all mortal comprehension! How glorious, how sublime will be the moment when He "shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

"And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" These are the searching questions of the prophet Malachi (3:1-2), for that Day will strike terror to the unprepared. "But unto you that fear my name" it shall be as the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, "with healing in his wings" (4:2).

That day, that hour, that moment is certain to arrive. It is one of the most clearly stated prophecies of Scripture. The New Testament alone contains more than three hundred positive statements regarding the second coming of Christ. And Jesus' own words attest its verity. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27). When Jesus told His disciples of His going away, He also assured them that He would come again (John 14:3). In His parable of the Ten Pounds He compared Himself to a nobleman going "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke 19:12). "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). "Behold, I come as a thief" (Rev. 16:15). His entire post-ascension message is a revelation of His second mission to this

earth. "Behold, I come quickly [suddenly]; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

#### **A Message on Preparation**

Jesus did not fail to impress each of His apostles with the urgency of proclaiming the message of His return, and the necessity of preparing for that Day. They, in turn, sought to impress the same on their brethren.

For an example, let us consider the book of James. This servant of God has left in the Divine Record only one short letter, but its entire message of five chapters is focused to one central point: "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8). That one great event climaxes the whole. And his first concern is the readiness of his brethren for that Day; thus, he fills his first four chapters with admonitions concerning nearly every aspect of Christian living.

*A shout!  
A trumpet note!  
A glorious Presence in the azure sky!  
A gasp,  
A thrill of joy,  
And we are with Him in the twinkling of an eye!*

*A glance,  
An upward look,  
Caught up to meet our Lord, our glorious King;  
The graves convulsed,  
Their dead cast forth alive!  
The call to Judgment from the heavens ring.*

*His face!  
Oh, joy supreme!  
The saints find rapture standing at His side;  
Blameless!  
Without a spot!  
Oh, glorious marriage as He takes His Bride.*

*Strike harps,  
Oh, sound His praise,  
We know Him as we never knew before!  
God's love!  
God's matchless grace!  
'Twill take eternity to tell while we adore!*



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***A***n apparent delay, a forced period of waiting is no time for character to wear thin; rather, it is a time for steady endurance, patient steadfastness, and growth.

The first chapter of James opens with a word of encouragement to endure "any sort of trial," knowing that trials are the only means of perfecting the high quality of patience so vital to the aspiring Christian (Jas. 1:2-4, Moffatt). Then follow admonitions on faith, on humility, on the virtue of enduring temptation, on thankfulness, on speech control. He warns against impurity, against self-deception, against hearing and not doing. He would have each of his brethren examine himself by the perfect law of liberty and go away, not with a deceived heart but with a determination to be a "doer" of the law, to bridle his tongue, to make his life pure and undefiled before God.

The next subject James takes up is the inborn tendency to respect persons—a tendency not unknown among his brethren. He warns them that God selects not those rich in worldly goods but "the poor of this world rich in faith." These are "heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love

him" (2:5). All those respecting persons must change if they would not be found guilty of transgression when judged by the law of liberty, for "remember that a man who keeps the whole Law but for a single exception is none the less a law-breaker" (2:10, Phillips). Each will be rewarded according to what he himself has done.

James proceeds to warn against a dead faith. Faith to be effectual must be living, working, and impelling; "bare faith without a corresponding life is... useless and dead" (Jas. 2:17, Phillips).

The author then directs his whole attention to the smallest member and greatest defiler of human character—the tongue. It can boast; it can lie; it can deceive; it can set ablaze the round circle of existence, defiling many others. It has vast potential for evil; it can poison the whole body. It can send forth sweet words, and bitter. How inconsistent! "My brethren, these things ought not so to be." Wise is the one, says James, who through the power of the law of liberty conquers this little member and shows his life to be "an example of the humility that is born of true wisdom" (3:13, Phillips).

James then accurately points out more human weaknesses; strife, sensuality, selfishness, rivalry, jealousy, lust and envy; "The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy" (4:5). If any would secure God's friendship, he must put away all envy, all lust of evil, all "friendship of the world." He must stand firm against temptation, against pride, and never resist God. He must "draw nigh to God" (4:8), cleanse, purify, and humble himself.

After all, James reasons, of what value is the pride and vanity and ambition and self-gratification of the world? He wants his brethren to look seriously at life. "Just a moment, now, you who say: 'We are going to such-and-such a city today or tomorrow. We shall stay there a year doing business and make a profit'! How do you know what will happen even tomorrow? What, after all, is your life? It is like a puff of smoke visible for a little while and then dissolving into thin air" (4:13-14, Phillips). Or, as translated in the King James Version, "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Transitory, indeed! Even as smoke, fog or breath!

#### Looking into the Future

James then looks far ahead to the last days of Gentile times and sees the selfishness and vanity of the human race climaxing in misery: "Come now, you rich men, weep and shriek over your impending miseries! You have been storing up treasure in the very last days" (5:1-3, Moffatt). Here is prophecy directed to our age, when millionaires and billionaires are heaping treasures together.

"Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth" (5:4). James was looking ahead to an age torn by economic problems.

Money is a much-coveted commodity; and money has a strangle hold on many. The love of money is still the root of all evil (I Tim. 6:10), and since more money is in the hands of



more people, evil increases. This is the condition James foresaw.

### Be Patient

Now James reaches the point and purpose of all his admonition and exhortation, the event which will climax the prophecy for the last days which he has just related. This next topic, his final word, embodies the hope of the ages and adds promise to the incessant preparedness he has been preaching, especially to those who would experience the trying last days of the age. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord"

(Jas. 5:7). For Christians at a time when history's climax is at hand, an age which will suddenly be cut short by the arrival of the Lord, but an age which will know a strangely long period of waiting, James has this word of encouragement: "Be patient." Because you do not know the day or the year of His arrival, he says, do not be disheartened. Absorb yourself in preparation.

James' exhortation to endure might be compared to a Chinese expression descriptive of one who turns back after he has put his hand to the plow. It may be translated, "Before half the road is traveled he runs away." The temptation to give up

***Because you do not know the day or year of your Lord's arrival, he says, do not be disheartened. Absorb yourself in preparation.***

before the goal is attained is all too common among followers of Christ.

## Let Us Pray

Our loving Father, Thou Giver of every good and perfect gift, Thou Giver of our present existence, Thou Provider of all things necessary to sustain our bodies and feed our souls: we come with a realization that it is good to worship and bow down before Thee, to humble ourselves in Thy Presence, conscious of Thy greatness and our own littleness.

We come to Thee confessing our faults: our stubbornness, our rebellion against law, our self-importance, our hardheartedness, our indifference. Grant that the time past of our lives may suffice us to have walked in a way that is not good and from henceforth may we yield wholly to Thee.

Help us always to remember Thy great and precious promises, the great things we are working for. Thou art willing and able to do for us exceeding, abundantly above all that we can ask or think if only we transform ourselves into a creature worthy of perpetuation. Help us to be more concerned with securing for ourselves such an endless future, and throw every energy of our entire being into getting ready to share

it. We know it will not be Thy good pleasure to give Thine eternal Kingdom to one who does not value a home in glory more than the fleeting present.

Help us to be alert, watchful, filled with enthusiasm over our chance for an eternal existence. And may our enthusiasm overflow to others that seeing our good works they may be strengthened to render Thee a more perfect life, and prepare the more diligently for a place in that world to come. Help us to look up, to realize Thou art higher than we are. Grant that we may never be so puffed up and high in our own estimation as to think that to see Thee we must look down. Thy ways and thoughts are as much higher than ours as the heaven is higher than the earth, and however hard we try we can not improve on Thy plan.

May this be an hour of heart searching, of comparing our lives with Thy unerring Word. May we not come with a hand over the deformity but may we be strictly honest with ourselves. And may our deformities appear as blemishing to us as they do to Thee that we may be willing and anxious to correct them before everlastingly too late.

We ask all in the name of Thy dear Son. Amen.



***Ours can be a peace that passes understanding, a confidence that the present distresses add up to one vitally important event: "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."***

The counsel of James is not to expect the harvest of the earth to mature overnight any more than the farmer does his harvest. "Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and the late rain. You also be patient" (Jas. 5:7-8, RSV).

How appropriate is the simile he employs—the farmer must wait for the maturing of his crop; he cannot plant one day and expect to harvest the next. He must wait many months. Much may happen while he waits, and much must happen: there is work to be done before the day of harvest. The intervening days are days of continual toil and labor—cultivating, spraying, watering—until the strenuous days of harvest.

So it is with Christians waiting for the coming of the Lord. There is no idleness during the time of waiting; it is a time of continual effort. It is a time to hold on, to persist, to keep on working. It is no time to surrender our hope.

James foresaw that the time of waiting would coincide with a troubled world. He foresaw an age when wrong would seem triumphant, when the forces of evil would seem ever more potent than the powers of good,

a time when waiting would be necessary.

Yet through all the days or years of waiting runs the steady patience of the saints. James would warn against the human tendency to hurry the workings of the Divine hand. Rather, each must wait in steady and patient loyalty. Whatever happens, there must be no surrender to evil, for the vindication and ultimate triumph of the Lord is at hand. "Steady patience," wrote the author of Hebrews (10:36-37, Moffatt), "is what you need if, after doing God's will, you are to receive what he has promised. For yet a very little while, he that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry."

God also waits. He is now waiting for His fruit to ripen as the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth. But His waiting will end; His long silence will be broken; His great work on earth will be resumed—and publicly, for all the earth shall see His glory.

The Lord's long silence is no sign of failure. It is merely our test of faith. "Steady patience," "patient endurance" is what we need. What He has promised He will accomplish. He will yet set His King on His holy hill in Zion.

It is this hope which nerves

us for the fight. We are not engaged in a losing cause but one which is destined to succeed. Christ is coming, and that hope is just as real, as sure, and as certain as that tomorrow morning will dawn.

Now is the time when we must live in hope. For "we are saved by this hope, but in our moments of impatience let us remember that hope always means waiting for something that we haven't yet got. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience" (Rom. 8:24-25, Phillips).

#### **The Day Is Imminent**

Still talking about this great event, James voices once again his concern for his brethren: that Day will determine the destiny of every avowed servant of Christ. "Lest ye be condemned," he writes, "grudge not one against another"; or as translated in the New English Bible, "do not blame your troubles on one another" (Jas. 5:9). His reason for such carefulness of conduct is very meaningful, especially to us at the close of the day: "Behold, the judge standeth before the door."

James is striving to impress all his readers—including us—not



only with the certainty of the return of Christ (this is assumed) but with its imminence and finality. The time for preparation and improvement for each of Christ's followers is limited to his lifetime; and our time in this age may be yet shorter.

To James the arrival of that Day of the revelation of Christ was of first concern; he was confident; he was steadfast. The hope of the early church was all bound up in this great event. Shall our hope be less absorbing, less compelling, we who are privileged to live over nineteen hundred years nearer to that great event than they; we who stand on the threshold, as it were, of a new era?

Even as the disciples watched their Lord ascending into heaven they heard this message from the angels that stood by: "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" (Acts 1:11). And His own personal—and final—message to us was, "Even so: I am coming very soon" (Rev. 22:20, Moffatt).

What do those words mean to us? Do they stir our hearts and quicken our feet? As earth-borns, we are not accustomed to such drastic and dramatic changes. Human enlightenment and advancements have always been slow processes. However, the next great event will not be so. Decades will not pass into centuries and centuries into millenniums before we witness the splendor of the great and wonderful Day of the Lord.

Jesus is coming. Not merely sometime, but soon! He is at  
*(Continued on page 10)*



Can you march without music? It is said that Benedict Arnold was a better general than George Washington. But he had one conspicuous weakness—he was unwilling to "march without music." Whenever General Arnold performed a task in a competent manner, he expected praise and acclaim; if these were not forthcoming, he sulked and became morose.

In the hurry and scurry of war there were times when the feats of General Arnold went unnoticed. This hurt in his most vital spot—his vanity. So he committed the act unpardonable—he quit his job and placed the secrets of his employer in the hands of the competition.

Human nature likes to march to the sweet music of applause, which they feel should be compensation for the noble work they have been doing; but when applause does not come promptly, the real man marches on—without music.

This piece of little-known history contains a good moral for us, since we are all subject to human weaknesses. We must guard with care our calling in the army of the King and each day give our best service—whether there be music or not.

The young Joseph proved himself a real man; he marched on to nobility of character when the music was missing in his life; nor was there any sulking or moroseness when, if ever there was an excuse for it, Joseph had it. His father furnished the music in his early years because of his virtuous life; but his jealous brothers soon put an end to that music because they did not get it; nevertheless for many long years he marched manfully on, true to his God. Then one day the drums began to beat and the music returned, but he was the same upright man whether there was music or not—whether he was in prison or in power. He had a purpose in life, and it mattered



not whether others praised or censured, his duty to God kept him on the march; the music was secondary.

The apostle Paul was one of the best marchers on record. We hear little of music to his marching, much of contempt; but he kept ever pressing on more firmly for his purpose. His marching carried him into courts, to prison and to stoning. There was not much music there. But he kept steadily on the march until the war was over and he triumphantly exclaimed: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (II Tim. 4:7-8). When he receives that hard-won crown, the music in thundering applause will come from the throne of God and the angels of worlds on high.

King Saul was a good marcher when he had music, when the multitudes sang his praises. But when the music was for David because he had excelled him, Saul's marching was over. He, like Benedict Arnold, became morose, jealous, and sold out to the competition; forsook the high, noble banner he had been following and, as far as he was concerned, let the glorious banner of the Almighty God fall to the ground.

The purpose for which he was marching was not his highest ideal. The music was highly important. If the core of his life had been to live for God and further His cause here on earth, he would have continued marching at his best even though David received more music. Yes, he would even have helped furnish music to make marching easier for his younger rival; and more could have been accomplished for the cause of right.

When music is absent we prove our loyalty to the cause of God, whether we are moved by noble principles that will carry us above difficulties, or whether our marching is only good on the level and to the music of appreciation.

When once we are convinced of a lofty ideal, let us carry the banner on and on to the heights. The progress we are making will be so all-absorbing, we will scarcely miss the music.

We might help further many a good cause but have a wrong or selfish object. Only as our interests and character are grounded in a true principle will we keep marching when there is no music.

Many are the needful though often unsung duties of a Christian, of which we should never tire. Whether noticed or unnoticed, all is recorded in the "Book of remembrance" and increases our credit balance. God will not forget our labor of love. Work well done will receive the award of merit in the future. Some of our hardest marching may be unseen and unaccompanied by music; but if we carry our banner on to the heights of perfection, the music of welcome into God's heavenly family will be surpassingly sweet. MM

## Until the Lord Arrives— Be Patient

*(Continued from page 9)*

the door. His feet are on the threshold; His hand is on the latch. Men may, in their thoughts, put far off the day of His return. They may go on from day to day as unconcerned as were the Sodomites of long ago. But before long, and suddenly, the change will come. The herald of the mighty King of kings, the prophet Elijah (Mal. 4:5), will be here. And then, it will not be long until all shall hear the voice of the Son of God as it rolls over the earth.

That day, that hour, that moment, will come—and soon! That moment will be different from all the other countless millions of moments in human history—startling to an unbelieving world, glorious for all them who love His appearing.

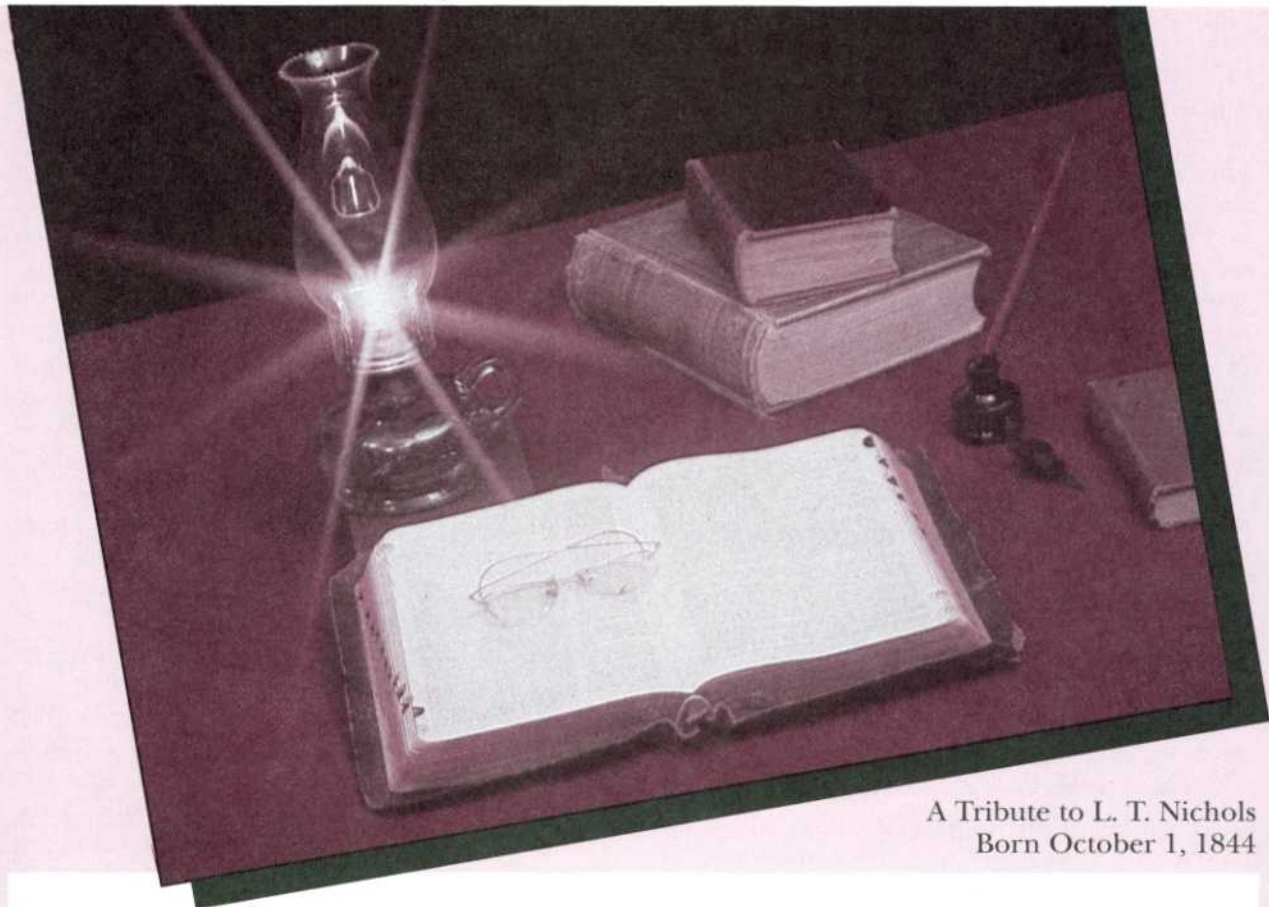
Behold the Conqueror! Behold the Judge! Behold your King, the King of saints, the King of nations, the King of the whole world, the King of the ages!

In the words of Jesus, "Therefore be ye also ready, ...lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH." MM

**G**od never  
alters the robe  
of righteousness  
to fit the man,  
but always the man to  
fit the robe.



# Seeking the Best



A Tribute to L. T. Nichols  
Born October 1, 1844

*"I looked over the field of human thought to see by what means I could accomplish the greatest good, and I decided that of all the literature of earth the Bible contained the most knowledge that would benefit humanity for both this life and the one to come.*

*"Either the Bible was divine, the work of an infallible God, or it was the work of fallible man; there was no halfway ground upon which to stand.*

*"Thus passed days and weeks of anxious study, when often upon bended knees and with falling tears I prayed to God for light." — L. T. Nichols*



## *Seeking the Best*

*Excerpts from the talks and writings of Rev. L. T. Nichols, founder of the Megiddo Church.*

### **Something Better**

We look all around us in our present life, and are met on every hand with labor, sorrow, trouble, sickness and death. A pretty poor outlook, is it not? It seems we would want to raise our eyes to something higher and greater. We have all passed through it with some loved one, a father or mother, a son or a daughter; their eyes have closed in death and we have laid them away in the grave. We see their labor and their end. Their work is done. Shall we travel along and seek for nothing greater than this? It seems as though we, as intelligent beings, would ask, Is there anything better for us? Is there nothing better than simply eating and drinking and being merry for a moment and then ceasing forever?

I want something better than to eat, drink, and sleep and then pass into the cold, narrow, silent confines of the tomb, to be locked in slumber forever. We know it is the way of all living, for the Bible tells us so; and unless our hearts have a longing desire for something better, we shall never get it.

### **Providential Care**

This life would be good enough if not for death. Life has been a pleasure to me, we have had something to give us joy. Although subjected to severe trials, when deliverance came it overbalanced the grief. Because I was not like other people (during the Civil War), to shoot my fellow men down, they threatened to kill me. It is no pleasant feeling to have a gun pointed at you and look down a shining piece of steel with a little hole in it, knowing what it contains.

I remember saying to one individual, "No, I don't believe you will shoot me." I can now take joy and comfort in these trials, because I can see a higher Hand was guiding and protecting me. That testimony in Psalm 34:7 was always a

wonderful comfort. There was no doubt about this in my mind; the only thing that bothered me was, Am I fearing the Lord so I am worthy of that encampment? That has been the only thing that bothered me through life.

Our life from that time on has been one continual work for the Lord, and we are sure that God will preserve and we will still live on to finish our work.

### **The Outlook Is Grand**

The Book is true. God tells us His mercy is from eternity past to eternity future. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children" (Ps. 103:17). Could He have had mercy if there had been no one upon whom He could show mercy? There have always been people to whom God could show mercy, and there always will be. The wheel will never stop; it will always roll on and on and on. There will be millions and billions and trillions of people created yet. Would you not like to live in that time? Would you not like to mount up and view Gabriel's home?

If I could be sure of living one thousand years, I would build the greatest palace; I would arch over more than six acres, and cover it all with glass, and raise all kinds of fruit—Semiramis' hanging gardens could not compare. But God is offering us not a mere thousand years. Think of what lies beyond! What can we not accomplish in the endless ages beyond! It will be exceeding, abundantly above all we can ask or think.

### **The Final Verdict**

Brethren, let each one ask: Where am I? How much farther have I to go? How much have I to do before I am ready for this soon-coming event which shall determine my destiny? Remember, when that Day comes there will be no appeal, the decision will be final. It is now within our power so to live that the



unalterable decision of the Judge will be an everlasting source of joy and comfort to us. Why, then, will any be so foolish as to spend time or means in any way or for anything that will not increase the chance of having the final decision rendered in our favor?

### No Leeway

Ever since I was a boy and was at a meeting where twenty-seven ministers were congregated together, I have said we must stick to the Bible and believe just what we can read; and if we cannot read it, just let it alone. I well remember away back when we had that meeting. I was but a boy then, but I said, "The Lord means just what He says, and unless we keep all of His commandments He will never save us." One man thought we had a little more latitude and longitude than that. He said, "I don't think the Lord meant it as close as all that; God did not mean that we could have *no* thoughts of our own; there is *some* leeway for us."

"Well," I said, "the very moment you let down the bar and say you need not keep every commandment, you need not keep any. Take ten men: if one can violate one commandment, another can break another, and a third another, and so on, until among them all they are all broken, and we would make null and void every commandment. Thus if you open the way for one evil, you have let the whole train of evils in."

### Never Tired

Now we get tired, but then we shall never be weary. If we do not work now we shall never be permitted to work then. If any one should get tired, it is I, for I work night and day. And it seems if any one should be sleepy, it is I; but I cannot get my mind off these wonderful things. I lie awake and wonder how many of our band will be ready? how many are working with all their mind, might, and strength?—not *think* they are working, but are really working. They are deceived if they expect to enter the portals of everlasting rest without performing the work.

### Temptation

We have been tried in every way, but we said, "No." I was offered \$1500 long before I was married—and that was a big salary for that day. Father was mowing in the long hot days of summer for fifty cents a day and had a family of five children to feed, and he was sick



most of the time. Mother had to work to help earn the living for the family, and she sewed for all the neighbors around. She worked late at night sewing and never imagined having a sewing machine. She was up early in the morning and working sometimes till three o'clock in the morning, when there was to be a funeral. In those days they used shrouds for burials, and Mother made shrouds, so she had to sit up until the shroud was done, whatever the hour. Some think it dreadful if they have to be up all night for one night. But Father was sick, and all these little prattlers had to be fed. At the same time she was always trying to instill into our minds the doctrines she believed, that we might be in a saved condition. She took such pleasure to think she was bringing us up in the right way; and she was the main spokeswoman in the church. I am glad she was of that mind, looking on the bright side of the matter.

At that time, when wages were low and Father was getting fifty cents a day, \$1500 was a big salary. A Mr. B— came to me and made me this offer. I was five miles from home at the time, helping him; and, of course, I was talking Bible all the time, morning, noon, and night. He saw I was zealous, and so this man wanted me to preach in his church. He said, "Oh, you will make such a powerful preacher!" and tried to catch me with money; but, no; it had no charm for me. My only ambition was to save myself and those that heard me; so I tugged along, and here we are.



## Seeking the Best

### Evil or Good?



Our heart (mind) is not an empty place, not a vacuum; it is full either of evil or good. If good does not occupy our hearts, evil will come in. If Jesus is not there, then evil is there.

Our heart is like a rope in a well with a bucket at both ends; pull one end down and the other will be up; if you pull the good down the evil will be up. Great care should be taken to pull the right end of the rope. Then the evil will go to the bottom.

### To Save or To Spend?

When I was young, do you think I was spending my time and money for the pleasures of this world? Do you suppose I was spending it for cigars? No. But suppose when I was a boy I had gone around with a cigar in my mouth and thought I was a man (there is no man who attaches himself to a cigar; he lacks just that much of being a man), I would not have had this money with which to help others. Am I not glad that I saved! And what is more, all this time I had been preaching this blessed Word and spent the money I had accumulated, the Lord blessed me and I had more to spend. Why? Because I did not spend money for flummiddles and frills and such things.

### God Has A Plan

God's plan on this earth is not His eternal purpose, but only *according to* His eternal purpose; merely a sample of the glorious plan of salvation which He has been working out through untold ages in the past on other planets—God's happy family on glorified worlds above. With his mind expanded to grasp the magnitude of this plan, it is no wonder that Paul exclaimed in Eph. 3:14, 15, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The whole family in heaven as well as on earth are all named of God, a family saved through the eternity past.

### Stirred

It would seem that it would cause us to be stirred to the very center of our heart, to realize this way leads to everlasting life in glory; it leads to a sweet blissful home of rest; it leads to a peaceful summer land of love; to the wonderland of beauty, where our eyes can see, and we can grasp the wonders of eternity, far beyond what we can even ask or think; for in the summer land of glory there will be everything that our heart can desire, furnished by the Lord as a reward for welldoing. As inducements they are held out, simply to get us to do what we ought, to do the good and put away every evil, everything that will cause unhappiness, and do only those things that will cause us to be happy even now, happier than anything else in the world could make us.

### Drink, Drink

You are like tender plants just set out, and you need lots of water. If you will not drink, I am not to blame. And it will do you no good to drink if you are not thirsty. God will never open your mouth and thrust it down your throat. There will be plenty of water, but you must be thirsty.

If the grand eternity to come is not worth enough to cause us to drink this water, it is sure we will never get it.

### All Warmed Up

We should be all warmed up and every heart beat together as one, anxiously longing to do just what the Lord commands, to unite in thought and put away our own mind. There is a class we are told something about: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of



the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1-2). Notice it reads "whose DELIGHT." If we truly delight in the law of God, we will keep it near.

### Dilatory or Energetic?

Are we going to be dilatory? or will we give up our own ways and be energetic in this work? Are we in reality going to serve the Lord with all our energy and strength? or are we going to be like Ananias and Sapphira? While it is our own we are not accountable. But we have sold out, we have agreed to bring all and lay it at the apostles' feet. Are we going to do it? Or are we going to reserve part of our energy, strength and means to please ourselves?



Nothing short of serving the Lord with all our mind, might and strength will suffice; nothing short of being pure in heart will answer in that great Day to come.

We are about to enter that summer land, and let us show we are in the way that leads to it. The end of the road is sweet rest, where no sorrow will ever come.

### The Beauty of Old Age

There is a testimony that tells something about beauty, about old age: "The beauty of old men is the grey head." But somehow or other it does not seem as if grey hairs have much beauty; but "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if"—IF "it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. 16:31). The hoary head or the grey hairs do not look nice, they have a deathly look. When we look into the glass, they tell us that life is ebbing away and we are growing old in spite of all we can do. They tell us old age is

creeping on and we can't last for ever. Why not spend the little time—oh, it is SO SHORT, only a little while until Elijah will come—why can't we serve the Lord with all our heart? Why will we let temporal things come in and bar the gate to that city of gold, that summer land where there will be no death nor any grey hairs?

### Longing, Longing

I long so much, but oh, shall I have that longing satisfied? I long first to get there myself, and then I would love so much to see the rest of you there. I would not like to go alone, but I will go alone if I can't get there any other way. But somehow we have become united together. There seems to be a glow and flow as we meet one of our own band; there is a love, a unity, a sympathetic cord that does not exist anywhere else; but the question is: Shall we have that cord severed?

### Temporal or Spiritual?

I was thinking last night about Elijah's coming; he is coming, by and by, and he will see the slow progress we are making. We have made a vow, but oh, how we let the temporal come in, and we don't have time. We get up so tired that if we do sit down to read the Bible, we drop to sleep; and thus our mind is running out after the present.

You remember there were two sisters who lived some time ago; one was always engaged in washing pots and kettles; but the other one—what was she doing? She was engaged in the better work; she was sitting at Jesus' feet, listening to every word.

### Coming Prosperity!

Someday there will be prosperity, prosperity, nothing but prosperity. There will be no adverse circumstances surrounding us then; nothing to conflict; our warfare is over, all over, and we shall be clothed with vigor and strength; a constitution that will never give



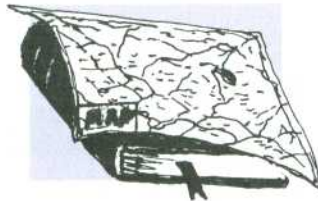
## Seeking the Best

way, never break down. Yes, and that constitution will glow with beauty that will never fade away but will continue to glow, each day growing brighter and brighter; and as we look into one another's faces, we will hardly know each other—such love will flow and every look will be so sweet that it will fill our hearts with such unbounded joy that we cannot even conceive of now. One throb of comfort then will be more than we ever experienced in this life; we shall have more than we can ever think or ask; and it shall be ours forever.

Why can't we give up all for such a prize? Why won't we bring our all and make it subservient to Him who has been so good to us?

### Follow God's Map

God is so good. He has mapped out the way so plainly, and sent His prophets to teach us, rising up early and sending them, to guide and direct, and now it all lies with us.



### "I Forgot, I Didn't Think"

I often hear it said, "I forgot; I didn't think;" but there is no one to blame but yourself. These things don't make an impression as they should, or you would remember.

If we were meditating as we should, our minds would be running in the right channel and the impressions would be deep and lasting. We would begin to meditate.

### Read, Read, Read

Some can read their Bible, they can read and read, and read, but it does no good; it has no influence on them. To truly read is to have the words influence our heart, influence our every day conduct and cause us to meditate on those things for the one purpose of obtaining something that will benefit us.

If we are doing it just for the outward show, it is of no use; we must do it with ALL our heart, so we can accomplish the end in view; to make over one man; make him over into the image of Christ, make over the old man into a new creature. Nothing else will avail to our salvation but "A faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). Such a faith will cause us to become like our blessed Lord.

These things must make an impression, so we will remember, be among those who "keep his covenant, and... remember his commandments to do them."

### Mary or Martha?

Be a Mary, the one who was approved of by our Lord. Mary was all taken up with divine things, and she let the temporal go. The dishes were not of so much account, but her sister troubled herself with getting the dinner, and bringing in the wood and coal, making mince pies, etc; and she came and complained to her Master because her sister did not help her. Ah! said Jesus, "Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." Temporal things should only be used for the purpose of accomplishing the spiritual, and when we have gone that far, it is far enough. We should be more interested in the spiritual, and if we cannot do otherwise, let the temporal go, even if the house is all in a hubbub, and the carpets do not get cleaned. If you can't do it without neglecting the spiritual, let it go.

### No Debt

I always wanted to keep clear of debt. I said to Father, "I am not going to be like some, have a fine span of horses and a fine carriage, and some one else own them. I am going to save, little by little, and soon it will count up, and then I can have a fine span of horses and a carriage, and they will be my own. Until then my wife and I are willing to ride on a stone boat pulled by our ox team." We never went in debt; we always saved, and we have always had sufficient.



# And Then—?

*A YOUTH told proudly his hopes and plans,  
As with strong hand his future he drew,  
To an elderly man, earth-tired, Zion-bound,  
Who answered, from all that his great heart knew  
Only these two words:  
"And then—?"*

*"With a strong steady foot and a willing hand,  
I will climb to the heights of Earth's treasurehold,  
And claim my share of the wealth that she hoards  
For her favored, the brave and the bold."  
"And then—?"*

*"And then, with this wand in my happy hand,  
I'll gather her sparkling bright gems at will;  
I'll summon each draught of her pleasure fount  
Till it fail, or my goblet I fill."  
"And then—?"*

*"Oh! then I'll try Fame, and I'll coax till I win  
From the noble old laurel a wreath;  
This I'll cherish and keep—'tis Earth's choicest gift—  
And its life-dew her balmiest breath."  
"And then—?"*

*"I'll be kindly, and share of my wealth and my joy;  
So I'll bind many souls to my own:  
For I'd sooner be prince of a dozen warm hearts  
Than a monarch alone on a throne."  
"And then—?"*

*"Why, then I'll be getting to staid middle age,  
And the world will be Eden no more;  
But I'll take of my wealth and I'll build me a home,  
And be found at my own open door."  
"And then—?"*

*"Then... then I will grow to a quaint golden age  
In the midst of my pleasure and peace;  
So muffled in treasure, and comfort, and love  
That to my ear Earth's discord shall cease."  
"And then—?"*

*"I'll grow older and older; and then, I suppose,  
Life and I will grow weary—and—why—  
As my fathers have done, as my children must do,  
So I, in my ripeness, shall—die!"  
"And then—?"*

*"Oh, then! That's a question I've not thought about.  
What now is your lesson for me?"  
"My boy, spend this short, fleeting hour you call life  
To prepare for Eternity.  
And then—"*

*"When the wealth and the fame and the glories and joys  
Of this world have all passed away,  
The joys of eternity will just have begun,  
You'll have all you can ask for  
And MORE!"*



# BOLT That Door!



## A Fantasy

As the twilight deepens casting weird shadows along the path, two strange appearing men are seen approaching a brightly lighted home. Each carries a satchel inscribed with his name. The elder of the two is **WORRY**, his younger brother is **FRET**.

Upon knocking at the door they are greeted by an elderly gentleman who asks them their business. With eloquence born of much experience, Worry pleads for a place to spend the night, saying that they have journeyed a long distance and are too weary to go any farther. He also promises to leave with the morning light.

Morning comes bright and clear and the host bids farewell to his guests. Much to his sur-

prise and dismay Worry and Fret decline to leave; they are content to remain. Much does their unhappy host urge them to depart, but deaf to entreaty and callous to threats these rude guests persist in staying.

In a certain sense we are all the doorkeepers of our minds. Every waking moment of our lives it is our duty to guard that door. If the thought that seeks entrance to your mind is one that will be to your spiritual good, allow it to enter; if not, bolt that door!

Throughout the day these vagabond thoughts beat a path to our mind's door. They come along the path of some memory, or some longing; and we must have strength and courage to bolt the door, and not allow them to enter to destroy our peace of mind.

**DOUBT** and **DISCOURAGEMENT** are two miserable intruders which knock at our door again and again. They are inseparable companions, and always work



together. Doubt, the more wily of the two, knocks first; and if allowed to enter, Discouragement follows on his heels, spreading a blanket of gloom in his wake. Perchance we have stumbled over the same point again and again, and we begin to doubt our ability to conquer. In looking ahead we see greater trials and temptations, and we



quail before them; Discouragement seizes upon our mind and we become despondent and helpless. Instead of going forward, we slip swiftly back to the low and groveling. Oh, bolt that door, and pin it fast with prayer! Remember, Doubt will cower before the heart's door that is filled brimful with the evidence from the Living Word. A heart overflowing with Faith will never be tempted to unbolt the door to entertain such unwanted intruders.

Another caller we are apt to entertain unless we exercise the utmost caution is **HURT FEELINGS**. This is a crafty old character,



always calling things by another name. Perhaps someone calls to our attention something we have said or done that was not quite right; we should watch that door carefully lest Hurt

Feelings crowd in and deceive us into thinking we were unjustly criticized.

Or an associate speaks sharply to us, or makes some remark which we do not fully understand. Almost immediately we begin to surmise, until a molehill becomes a mountain. Our peace of mind is ruined because we failed to bolt that door in time. Do not think you can thwart Hurt Feelings' attempts to enter without keeping that door tightly bolted. Do not leave the door standing ajar; do not give him any opening; the smallest crack is sufficient to admit him. Bolt that door by putting the best conceivable construc-

tion on the incident which might arouse Hurt Feelings.

Then there is another caller who creates havoc in the mind;

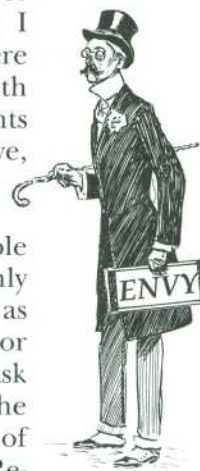


his name is **ANGER**. True, there are days when it seems everything goes wrong, but that does not excuse us for unbolting

the door and allowing Anger to sit as king. Anger may steal into the heart of a wise man, but is welcomed only into the heart of fools. Did we ever do or say one good thing when in anger stirred? Why, then, entertain impatient and angry thoughts? They only corrupt the mind and breed revenge. If impatient or wrathful thoughts steal into our minds, force them out; allow Anger no quarter; bolt that door against him forever.

Another wily creature that comes to us in sheep's clothing is **ENVY**. Our close associates can do everything better than we, and we unbar the door and permit Envy to enter our mind. But I wonder, if we were endowed with some of the talents that others have, would we use them properly?

Would we be able to use them only to God's glory as they have, or would we bask contentedly in the fleeting praise of our comrades? Remember that to whom much is given of him will much be required. Oh, bolt that door



against such a miserable vagrant! Instead of harboring Envy, transfer the energy expended on jealousy of others' talents to the developing of your own. This will be such an absorbing work that the unwanted intruders will find no welcome.

**PRIDE** is another cunning visitor who knocks at our door again and again. No thief steals into the heart so imperceptibly and none covers itself under



more disguises than does Pride. It is manifested in the heart of man by

self-praise, adorning our persons, attempting to

appear better than we really are; by contempt and slander of others, and hating to

be told of our faults. Are we bolting the door against Pride? Or are we sheltering this vagabond in some secret corner of our heart? Oh, banish it from sight! Instead, welcome into your heart a tried and true companion by the name of Humility, who alone has power to conquer the intruder. For when Humility enters and holds complete sway over our being we shall see Pride disappear as the dew before the rising sun.

There is another visitor who greatly loves to create mischief; his name is **FOOLISHNESS**. To bolt the door securely against this intruder requires unceasing vigilance, as he knocks at the least provocation. If we have to deal with the light and giddy, we must be careful lest in witness-



ing their foolishness we become contaminated by it. But what of our conduct before those of like precious faith? Is our exam-



ple aiding them along the narrow way to the prize? Or are we guilty of reciting foolish stories, of saying and doing foolish things just for a laugh, so to speak? Bolt the door against such folly; we are

not only soiling our own character but are putting a blot upon someone else's. May we cry with the Psalmist, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Ps. 141:3).

Though we have entertained these impudent guests until some perhaps consider themselves permanent residents, it still lies within our power to banish them from our minds forever. But remember, a God-like character is not a matter of chance; it will never be attained by halfhearted effort. We cannot console ourselves with the idea that the next time we will do better; a next time may never come.

Consider for a moment the glorious triumphs of those who have gone before us. Many were the bitter struggles they encountered, but they succeeded because they bolted the door against the sin that beset them. They filled their minds so full of good that the unworthy callers could find no room to enter.

Act as they did, and in their victory we can behold the certainty of our own. MM

## New Testament Queries

1. Who was reigning in Judah when Joseph returned from Egypt with the child Jesus?
2. Who were the first called of the disciples?
3. Whose birthday was celebrated by dancing?
4. With whom did Jesus partake of the Last Supper?
5. Who was the only person who raised a voice in behalf of Jesus during the trial?
6. Who rose from the dead without the interposition of the prophets, Jesus, or the apostles?
7. What leader was seen in vision 1500 years after his death?
8. Of whom was it said, "She hath done what she could"?
9. To what king did Christ refer when he said, "Go ye, and tell that fox"?
10. Who asked Jesus, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem?"
11. By whom are we told to "Search the Scriptures"?
12. What is the test of discipleship (John 13:35)?
13. Who was pronounced a doctor of the law?
14. Who was reading the writings of a prophet while riding in a chariot?
15. What were Paul's first words after conversion?
16. Who was the first apostle to raise a dead person to life?
17. Which of the disciples was a tanner?
18. Who, in speaking of Christ, said, "He went about doing good"?
19. What Athenian judge was converted under Paul's preaching?
20. What emperor banished all Jews from Rome?

### Answers:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Archelaus.—Matt. 2:22.  | 9. Herod.—Luke 13:31-32.                            |
| 2. John and Andrew.—John 1:37-41.                                  | 10. Cleopas.—Luke 24:18.                            |
| 3. Herod's.—Matt. 14:6.  | 11. Jesus.—John 5:39.                               |
| 4. The Twelve.   | 12. "If ye have love one to another."—John 13:35.   |
| 5. The wife of Pontius Pilate.—Matt. 27:19.                        | 13. Gamaliel.—Acts 5:34.                            |
| 6. "The Saints that slept arose."—Matt. 27:52.                     | 14. The eunuch.—Acts 8:30.                          |
| 7. Moses, by Peter, James, and John.—Mark 9:2, 4-5.                | 15. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—Acts 9:6. |
| 8. The woman who poured the ointment on Jesus' head.—Mark 14:3, 8. | 16. Peter.—Acts 9:40.                               |
|  | 17. Simon.—Acts 10:6.                               |
|  | 18. Simon Peter.—Acts 10:38.                        |
|  | 19. Dionysius.—Acts 17:34.                          |
|  | 20. Claudius.—Acts 18:2                             |





# Staying on Top

**W**e are living in a worried world—a world distraught by the prevalence of evil on every side. The floodgates of wickedness have been opened, and evil and iniquity overflow as a torrent of mighty waters. Where there was once a ripple, now there is wave upon wave.

Above this rising, swelling tide comes the challenge of One who walked this way and won: “Follow me”! His command is unequivocal and distinct: “I have given you an example”; “I have overcome the world”; “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 13:15; 16:33; 17:4). As the apostle Peter affirmed, Jesus left us “an example that [we] should follow His steps.”

Jesus, tempted in all points even as we, provides us with an example of steadfast purpose. Though faced repeatedly by the tempter, His answer came each time with the same uncompromising firmness, “It is written.” Why? Because His goal,

and ours, lay upstream, beyond the turbid waters; and once having put His hands to the oars to pull against the current, He never cast a backward glance. His aim was to do the will of His Father, whatever the cost, even to giving up His life, if need be.

His example is a challenge to us to be likewise steady in our purpose. Ours must be a constant pull against the flood of evil without and our naturally evil desires within. spurts of zeal interspersed with ease will not do. To make headway, we must exert a constant pull against the current. If not pulling upstream, we will be drifting downstream. Victory lies upstream; defeat lies downstream. Only by using all our mental and moral muscles can we experience the encouragement of progress and the rapture of success.

There is but one force stronger than the downward trend and, by the grace of God, that force can be ours. God will help if we but call upon Him, if we but ask according to His will. We have in our possession this

power of God. We are not left helpless victims at floodtide; we have the saving Gospel upon which to rely, that Gospel which is “the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

With God to help us, we might be compared to the great buoys in the harbors. The waters enraged by the storm may dash them with spray and foam; nevertheless when once more the waters are calm, the buoys can be seen in their appointed places, steady and unmoved by the tempest, because they had within them a substance which kept them on top.

We are in possession of the power of God, a power that can also keep us on top. Couple this power with an unyielding spirit, and we will be able to make rapid progress. And though we be pressed by the wind and dashed with the spray, when the storm finally subsides and the waters again are calm, we will be on top. Yes, by the power of God *we will!*

MM



## Hope, *Sure* Hope!

*"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end"*  
—Hebrews 6:10-11

In the sixth chapter of Hebrews are several lessons on hope. The author's first words are a challenge to move on: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." This is no time to stand still. Standing still is sure to be fatal. The author then issues a stern warning against the dangers of apostasy. We *can* lose, he warns. And to these brethren who have "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," once they fall away, "it is impossible...to renew them again unto repentance" (Heb. 6:4-6).

The thought is shocking, but these words were addressed to believers who had had the privilege of partaking of "the powers of the world to come." Ours has not been the same privilege, nor is ours the accompanying obligation. We need not fear the sin that was "unpardonable" to them. But sin for us can become unpardonable if we stubbornly refuse to believe, repent and reform while time is extended us; if through negligence and delay we fail to make the change from the old crea-

ture to the new. If we lose out, it will be because we failed to respond to the warnings given.

Then, following this solemn word, the author turns to talking about hope. It is as if he were saying, Yes, there is always danger of losing out, danger in apostasy. But don't stop there. There is no need to be discouraged; you above all people have every reason to hope. Why? Because the whole foundation of your faith is so solid, so sure, so unshakable. No one in all the world has greater grounds for hope than you.

What is this hope? Is it a mere dogged refusal to admit defeat in the face of impossible odds? No! A thousand times NO! It is hope grounded in the promises of God, and those promises are sure; there is just no possibility that they will fail. Our hope is the hope of salvation, and it is real and sure, as sure as God Himself. Every good work will be amply rewarded. A faithful God will faithfully recompense all faithful service. These are his inspired words:

"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed

toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (vs. 10-11).

The message is rich with meaning for us today. When we are tempted to make terms with ourselves as we are; when we are tempted to accept our bad temper, our little dishonesties, our faltering courage, our wavering faith, our bouts with discouragement, our shortsighted vision, as inevitable and final, we are really tempted to quit the faith. But who ever told us that those failures must be final?

Have we measured the stature of the person we *could* be if Christ had all of our devotion, all our love, all our dedication? Would it not give us that real and "full assurance of hope" that we long for, the "full assurance of hope unto the end"? And haven't we already taken steps toward certifying that "full assurance"?

But we must not rest on the hope gendered by what we have already done. There is need—urgent need—to continue in



the way of right. Keep moving! Don't be weary now, he writes; don't content yourself on good already done or victories already won. "We long for every one of you to show the same eager concern, until your hope is finally realized. We want you not to become lazy, but to imitate those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises" (Heb. 6:11-12, NEB). The reward is not for good "starters" but for those who go on "with the same eager concern" all the way to the end. And whom are we to follow? Those who have pursued the promises "through faith and patience."

Then, to assure us that we are not chasing a specter of the night, that we are not traveling down a blind alley that will end in nowhere; to affirm that each and every promise of God is absolutely sure, he reminds us how God confirmed the promises to Abraham. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he [Abraham] had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb. 6:13-15). Not that Abraham received the actual fruition of the promise but he received a Divine guarantee that the promise would be his in due time because his life service had been accepted by God. Abraham, along with all of God's heroes of faith, died "not having received the promises,...God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Heb. 11:13, 40).

The sure affirmation to Abra-

ham adds confidence to us who perpetuate the faith of Abraham today, for God's sphere of concern reaches even to distant "heirs of promise" who have the faith and foresight to take God at His word. In fact, the whole nature of God is involved in this assurance reinforced by His oath. It is as though God were to say, "If I should break my pledged word, then the universe has no Creator." We read:

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast" (Heb. 6:17-19).

I like that confidence: "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast." Nothing wavering, nothing to fear, only stedfast confidence in hope—this central note of faith must be sounded again and again. We need God. We need His promises. We need His strong consolation and the refuge of His hope. We need His anchor to our souls, both sure and stedfast. All true faith rests in God. And we know we can rely on Him for the fulfillment of His Word. Whenever we draw back from that confidence, whenever we lose our grasp on His promises, we are in danger.

And so we rest on our "strong consolation," we "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within

**H**ave we measured the stature of the person we could be if Christ had all of our devotion, all our love? Would it not give us that real and "full assurance of hope" we long for?

the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Heb. 6:18-20).

Our high priest Christ has now entered beyond the veil into the most Holy place, even heaven itself, where He has obtained salvation for Himself and from whence He will someday come with blessing for every faithful one. What heavenly prospects are ours, what sure and solid hope!

Let us keep moving, so that our sure hope may one day be changed into sure reality! MM

**W**e need God. We need His promises, and the strong consolation of His refuge of hope.





# How Inclusive Is the Word ALL?

## Part 2

**W**hat does “all” mean in the Bible? How much or how many does God mean when He says “all”? In the following article we continue our discussion of a few key passages.

### “All Kindreds of the Earth Shall Wail Because of Him”

Who are the “all kindreds of the earth” who will “wail because of” Christ when He returns? (Rev. 1:7).

This passage is part of Jesus’ last message to humankind, a message that was of such great importance that after He had ascended to heaven and been at the Father’s right hand for a number of years, He sent it back to John on the Isle of Patmos, to be preserved for us. The passage reads: “Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Rev. 1:7).

Are we to take the term “all” in this passage as literally all people on the earth?

Jesus Himself answers this question for us. Speaking of the events leading up to His second coming, He said, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28). Here is a group who will not be wailing at His return, but will be looking forward to it with hopeful hearts and vibrant expectation. These will be among those who say, “This is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation” (Isa. 25:9).

To the servants of God who are ready, Jesus’ coming will be a time of great joy. But to the world at large it will be a time of wailing. Why should this be? One reason is given in Rev. 14:7. With Christ will come the hour of His judgment, when all will be called upon to “fear God and give glory to him” (Rev. 14:7).

The coming of Christ will also mean the end of the powers of darkness and all parts of the present economic system that are built upon greed, fraud and the abuse of human resources. It will be the end of gambling, illicit drug sales, the production of weapons of war, and all articles to hurt and destroy; it will be the end of all foolish and nonessential manufacturing, all tobacco and liquor production, and all revenues unjustly collected. As a result, Babylon—representing the entire structure of man’s rule—will fall (see Revelation, chapters 17 and 18).

The Revelator saw this unprecedented hue and cry, which he described in these words: “And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more” (Rev. 18:9-11).

“All kindreds of the earth shall wail” when they see their armies shattered, their mighty armaments neutralized, their fleets destroyed, their illegal games suppressed, profiteering ended, all drinking, gambling, immorality and immoral amusements barred. The wailing shall be worldwide.

By way of contrast, the prophet Isaiah pictured



the redirecting of earth's resources once the purifying work of God's judgments is complete. We read: "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing" (Isa. 23:18).

Everyone worldwide will benefit. No more shall millions exist in a state of semistarvation while others revel in affluence, but, the prophet Isaiah, speaking for God, says, "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21).

### **All in Christ... all in Adam**

What did Paul mean when he wrote, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). Who are the "all" in Adam?

The Bible speaks of humankind as being in two basic categories: 1) those who come under the law of God and agree to be subject to it, and 2) those who do not know God or His law. The apostle Paul makes this division clear in Rom. 2:12, which reads: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."

It then subdivides the first group into two groups, which we might call A, those who are faithful to their covenant with God, and B, those who are not faithful to their covenant. Those who come under the law of God by entering into covenant with

God are amenable to judgment; of these, a portion are judged faithful, and another portion are unfaithful.

We read of the unfaithful group in Hos. 6:6-7: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me."

In the Genesis allegory, Adam transgressed. The name "Adam" means literally "a human being, mankind, man, person" (Strong's Concordance). This same "Adam" is used in Hos. 6:7, where we read "they like men," literally, "like Adam."

In Jesus' parable of the marriage of the king's son, He pictures one who enters the guest chamber who is not clothed in the wedding garment (Matt. 22:2-11). Here again is this man representative of the unfaithful servants of God, not an individual man but one representing a class of people, i.e., all who agree to serve God and are unfaithful to their covenant. These will be "cast out," like the man not clothed in the wedding garment.

In Romans 5, Paul speaks again of this one unfaithful man. We read: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, *for that all have sinned*" (v. 12). Here again is this "one man," i.e., Adam, representing all who agree to serve God and disobey; he (they) is condemned not for anyone else's sin but for his own: "So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Here is the qualifying term, that "all have sinned." God does not condemn any but those who sin.

And because all of this one unfaithful man sinned, all in this group are condemned.

In I Cor. 15:22, the apostle Paul pictures this same group as all "in Adam." They are not all humankind, but all who agree to serve God and prove unfaithful. They are the all who, *like Adam*, transgress their sacred covenant and are amenable to judgment and the second (penal) death.

By their disobedience they bring judgment and death upon themselves.

Who, then, are the "all in Christ" who receive eternal life? They are the other group, i.e., all who enter into covenant with God and keep their covenant faithfully. They are those of whom it is written in Rev. 1:3, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein."

All who are truly "in Christ" are they who keep the law of God and all of these "shall be made alive," i.e., granted to live eternally.

It is absolutely impossible that the "all in Adam" should apply to the same group as the "all in Christ," one being "in Adam," the other being "in Christ." They are two distinct groups, with two distinct ends, i.e., death and life.

Romans 5:13 speaks of the second large group of humanity, those who do not agree to serve God, and die without law or judgment upon them. "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." Before the law was given to Adam, before he (representing all who enter into covenant with God) agreed to serve God, there were



many sinners, for there were many people on the earth at the time. To all of these the statement in Rom. 2:12 applies: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." Before the law was given and accepted by people, they sinned without coming under the law and perished; they will never be called to appear at judgment.

Romans 5:14 clarifies this with yet another thought: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Death, that is, natural death, was the final end of all these who died without being under covenant to serve God, even though they could not sin knowingly like Adam (the covenant-makers). Hence "death reigned from Adam to Moses," even over those who were not under covenant with God. Paul wanted to make clear that natural death comes to all, even to those who are not subject to the law of God; while death because of sin comes only to those who sin being under law.

Then the Apostle makes a grand comparison: just as surely as disobedience brings death, so those who are under the law of God and obey shall be the means of blessing to many more. Paul puts the weight on the victory, on that which blesses and gives life. We read: "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Here is a tremendous revealing of God's way of working: While the members of the one unfaithful man shall perish

## When Life Hangs in the Balance

A short distance from the three great pyramids, just outside of Cairo, Egypt, in the Institute for Papyrus Studies, is a large papyrus which has been recovered from an ancient Egyptian pyramid tomb. On the papyrus is a picture of god figures with balance scales in their hands. On one side of the scales is a giant ostrich feather and on the other side the heart of a man. The intended symbolism is that God weighs the heart to determine one's eligibility for eternal reward.

The picture is more than Egyptian folklore. It is a true representation of God's methods of judging. Recall the account in Daniel, where the feasting of one Belshazzar, son of the Chaldean ruler Nebuchadnezzar, was rudely interrupted one night by a strange hand writing on the wall of his palace. None of his seers could interpret the writing, so Daniel was brought in before the king. Daniel read the writing in its full significance: "You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting."

In this age of self-analysis it is important to note that the final judgment upon each of us will be *God's* judgment, not ours. We can—and should—weigh ourselves, but the final verdict upon our lives will be from above. Ultimately we shall be weighed on God's scales.

This thought is clearly revealed in two proverbs, "All the ways of men are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits"; and "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts" (Prov. 21:2; 16:2).

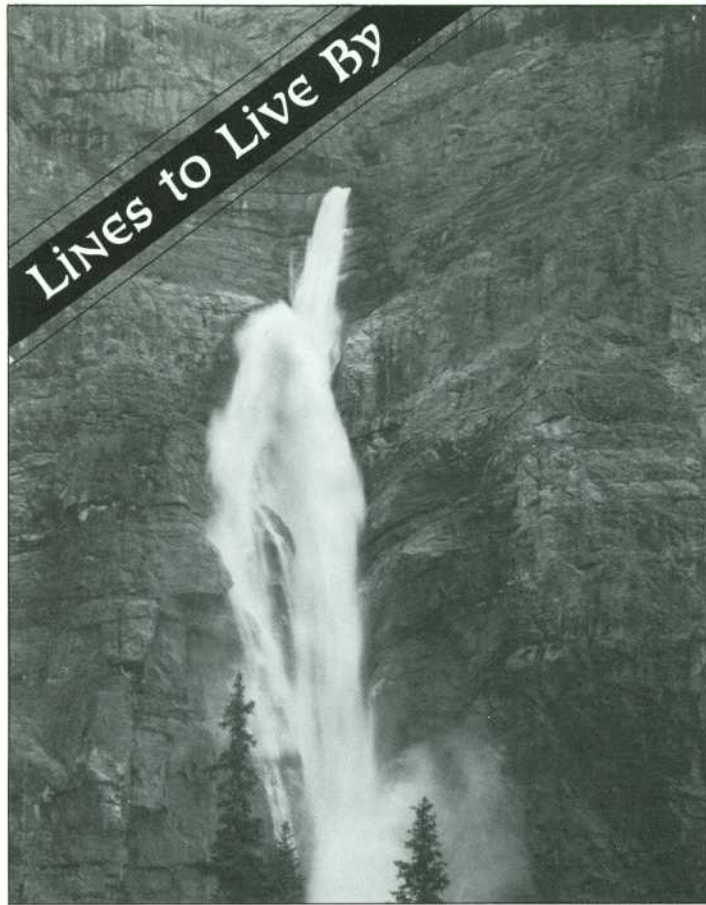
We may deceive ourselves as far as our ways and the purity of our motives, but our measure will have no weight with God, for "the Lord weighs the heart."

Let us so conduct our lives that we may be found of perfect weight, worthy of the approval and eternal blessings of our Judge.

for ever, those who belong to the "all in Christ," the members of the one faithful man of whom Christ is the head (Eph. 1:20-23), shall not only receive eternal life for themselves but shall also be the means of blessing all of the nations of earth who turn to the Lord; and during the Millennial Reign they shall be the means of

saving multitudes who will become the happy, immortal populace of God's eternal Kingdom on earth. And even this is not all, for when their work on earth is complete, they shall go on and be the instruments of God to bless more and more of the members of His family on other worlds, world without end. MM





## May We Not...

*LOOK* into the mirror of God's law and then go away and forget what manner of persons we were (Jas. 1:23-24).

*SIT* down to eat and drink and rise up to play (Ex. 32:6).

*PUT* our hands to the plow and look backward (Luke 9:62).

*HONOR* God with our lips and deny Him by our actions (Matt. 15:8).

*ATTEMPT* to remove the mote out of our brother's eye while a beam is in our own eye (Matt. 7:3-4).

*BE* zealously affected in a good thing only when a superior is present with us (Gal. 4:18).

*THINK* of ourselves more highly than we ought to think (Rom. 12:3).

*PRAY* to God for forgiveness for our sins and then fail to forgive others for their sins against us (Matt. 6:12).

*SPEND* a lifetime developing a reputable character and then spoil it by a little folly (Eccl. 10:1).

We say we love the Word of God,  
We say we know 'tis true,  
We quote a passage here and there.  
But seldom think it through.

*Sometimes the clouds in our lives  
bring the richest showers of  
blessings.*

Christ never sends any away empty  
except those who are too full of  
themselves.

*In the Christian life we lose to gain;  
we give to obtain; we are humbled to  
be exalted; we are the least to  
become the greatest; we die to live.*

Christ is not valued at all unless He is  
valued *above* all.



**O** that mine eyes might closed be  
To what concerns me not to see;  
That deafness might possess mine ear  
To what concerns me not to hear;  
That truth my tongue might always tie  
From ever speaking foolishly;  
That no vain thought might ever rest  
Or be conceived within my breast;  
That by each deed and word and thought  
Glory may to my God be brought.

**B**ut what are wishes! Lord, mine eye  
On these is fixed; to Thee I cry!  
Wash, Lord, and purify my heart,  
And make it clean in every part;  
And when'tis clean, Lord, keep it, too,  
For that is all I seek to do.