

Megiddo Message

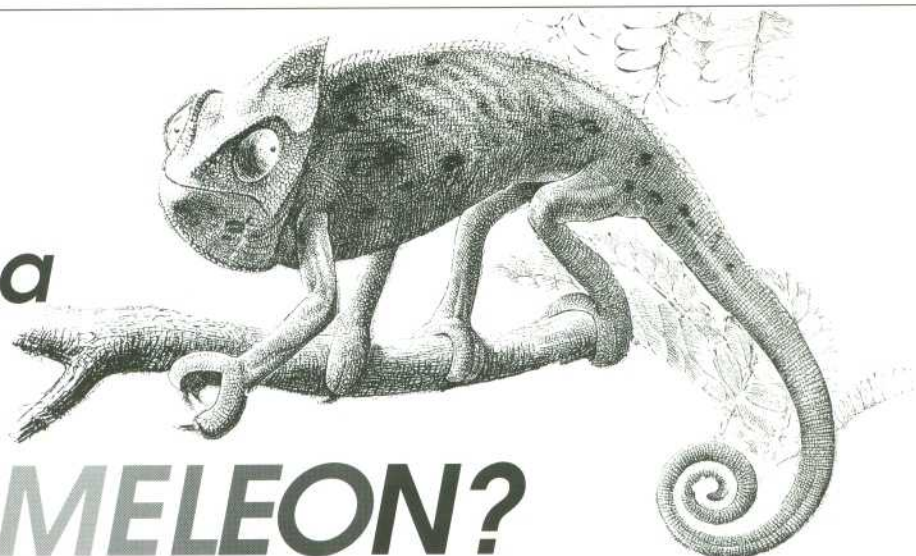
Vol. 78, No. 9
October 1991

*The Darkness
Can Never Be the Same Again*



Are You a

CHAMELEON?



Among the very interesting creatures that populate our planet is a tree-dwelling lizard of the reptile family called the chameleon (pronounced *ka-'meel-yun*). There are more than one hundred known species of chameleons, but all have one unusual ability: they can change the color of their skin. This small, spotted reptile may, in the course of a day, assume such various skin colors as to be wholly unrecognized as the same creature! He might be green, or yellow, or cream, or dark brown, with lighter or darker spots on the background color. Color change seems to be determined by such environmental factors as light and temperature, as well as by emotions of fright or those associated with victory or defeat in battle with another chameleon.

What a remarkable design, we exclaim—yet changeableness is, unfortunately, not restricted to the chameleon species. Too often—much too often—it is seen in those who profess the likeness of Christ. And shall we say that Christ's likeness *changes* from one environment to another?

Who is more blameworthy than the professing Christian who assumes the colors of his surroundings? You are accustomed to seeing him in church, but meet him in the marketplace, or on the street, and—he looks so different that at first you wonder if it is he—you can hardly distinguish him from the other shoppers! See him making a business deal, and he wears yet another color—you had never known he could be so smooth! Hear him talking with his neighbor, and—his color has changed again! From all appearances, he is a well-informed, community-minded citizen. See him again on Sunday in church, and—lo!—he has changed back to the same color you

were accustomed to! Truly, such a one is not a Christian—he's a chameleon!

The chameleon characteristic in us is the subtle trait that likes to be everybody's friend, to agree and be agreed with. Granted, there is always some evidence for both sides of a question, and this chameleon conscience has the remarkable quality of being able to argue for either side! Yes, you thought he was on your side of the question, but there he is, talking with your opponent—you can *see* his colors changing!

For such a one, there is nothing more uncomfortable or undesirable than to be unpopular. His first love is not the facts, the truth, or the right, but that which seems agreeable, non-irritating, non-distinctive, even non-distinguishable. Reputation is far more precious than principle, and if the former is threatened, he will go to great lengths to re-color it.

Oh, let us beware—do we like to be agreeable to such an extent that we will agree to almost anything?

God wants us to be genuine, straight and true, not changing with our environment. It is our duty to investigate until we know what is right, and then *stay with it*, whoever may take a contrary view. God wants us to be what we are *wherever* we are. He wants us to stand for the right regardless of who supports or opposes us. If we are among the members of His family, He wants us to be burning and shining lights for Him. If we are with strangers, He wants us *still* to be *the same* burning and shining lights. Wherever we go, whatever we do, we belong to Him, and must wear His colors, bear His image, act and speak and think and behave as one of His. We never have the right to adapt our attitudes, our opinions, or our conduct to our environment.

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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."
- **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.
- **IN 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.
- **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.
- **IN LIFE** as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

Soon-coming events ...

THE HERALD AND THE KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of Lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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Megiddo Message

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"Now the word of the prophets gives us more confidence than ever. It is with good reason that you are paying so much attention to that word; it will go on shining, like a lamp in some darkened room, until the dawn breaks, and the day-star rises."

— the Apostle Peter
(II PET. 1:19, KNOX LATIN VULGATE)

The light of Divine knowledge will go on shining until the dawn breaks, the dawn of God's new and better Day when Jesus Christ returns.

The Darkness Can Never Be

The darkness can never be the same again. Why? Because the light of divine knowledge is shining in the world, and will continue to shine until the great Day of the Lord breaks

Among the major topics of prophecy in Scripture is one which is little recognized, perhaps less understood: the prophecy of the long night of spiritual darkness, the Great Apostasy, a time of total departure from true religion.

Jesus Himself foretold it. Representing the servants of God as ten virgins, He speaks of a time when "they all slumbered and slept" (Matt. 25:5).

The apostle Paul in his Epistle to Timothy foretold this time of religious darkness and how it would come about. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:1-4); or, as phrased by J. B. Phillips, men would seek "something to tickle their own fancies, and...collect teachers who will speak what they want to hear. They will no longer listen to the truth, but will wander off after man-made myths."

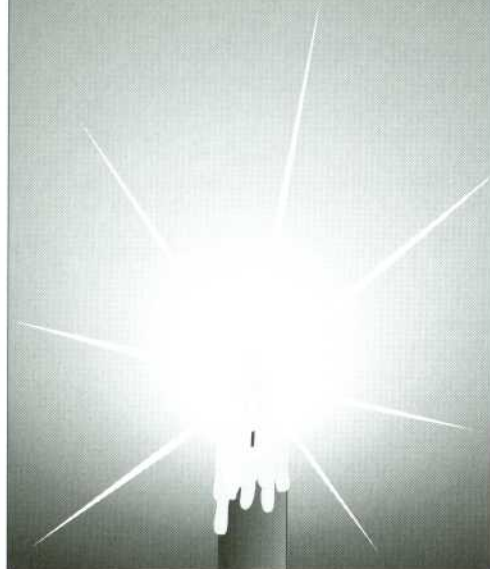
Again Paul, speaking of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, warned his brethren not to be deceived: "for it [the day of the Lord] cannot come unless the apostasy comes first" (II Thess. 2:3, Weymouth).

Years earlier the prophet Daniel had revealed to him the same event. Daniel saw in vision four "great beasts... rising out of the 'sea' (of nations). Each beast represented one of the four major world kingdoms (Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, Rome). The fourth beast was described as "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (Dan. 7:7).

But this was not all. This fourth beast had another "little horn," which represented yet another power which would arise out of the fourth beast, and would "speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.... Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced, and prospered" (Dan. 7:1-25; 8:9-12).

(For a more complete discussion of this subject, see our booklet, "The Great Apostasy.")

How were these prophecies fulfilled?



the Same Again

upon this world of darkness and His righteousness illuminates every dark corner, dispelling sin and bringing peace and happiness to all mankind.

Jesus The Light

Jesus was a light, the brightest light ever to shine in this world. His announcer John the Baptist, we are told, came to "bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He [the announcer] was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:7-9). Jesus was called the Light because the light of Divine knowledge permeated every aspect of His life and character, making His life luminous to others. He showed how the light of Divine knowledge shines, through the lives of those it enlightens.

For the same reason Jesus' disciples were called lights. "Ye are the light of the world....Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14, 16).

The apostle Paul went everywhere spreading this glorious heavenly light of Divine knowledge in a world dark with sin, superstition and ignorance, and he exhorted his brethren to walk in the light. To have the light and yet walk in darkness is to dishonor the Giver of the light. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:8-9,11).

Not only Paul but Peter and John and all the other Apostles, commissioned by our Lord, went "everywhere teaching the gospel," bearing the light of Divine knowledge to all parts of the then known world. Everywhere they went, the light went with them.

Theirs was a most brilliant age. Having the Holy Spirit sent by Jesus to guide and instruct and impart wonderful miracle-working powers, the apostles were privileged above any before them. But this was only a temporary institution. Shortly, this special power was to be withdrawn, and only "faith, hope and charity" remain (I Cor. 13:13). Henceforth God had planned that those desiring the light of Divine knowledge and the salvation God offers should obtain it through His written Word.

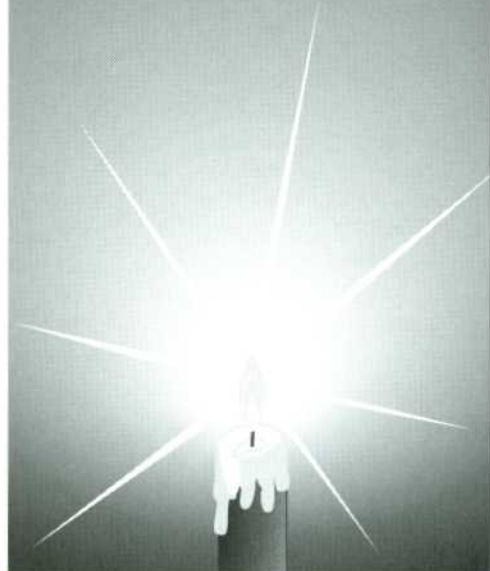
The Word would be all sufficient, a burning and shining light, but the written Word shines only as individuals give it light; and there is a vast difference between dynamic, visible power that can heal disease, or raise the dead, or make one able to speak a language he has never learned, and a written statement of knowledge which must be read, studied and applied.

The apostle Paul saw in his day that the "mystery of iniquity" was already at work (II Thess. 2:7). When the original leaders were gone, the

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

— Jesus (John 11:25-26)

Some who are "living and believing" when Jesus comes will have the special privilege of being changed into the immortal state without ever experiencing natural death.



"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

—the Apostle Paul
(I Cor. 15:51)

Not all believers will have to experience death, but all must receive the physical change to immortality.

evil work accelerated; superstitions crept in, appealing philosophies were studied by men of the Church, who set themselves up as judges of proper systems of thought, and a new religion soon emerged, one that was a little of the "old" and much "new." The lamp of true religion burned lower and lower as the simple teaching of the apostles was exchanged for the elaborate philosophies and reasonings of men. A little less than six centuries after the resurrection of Christ it flickered and went out in the blackness of the Apostasy. True religion lay silenced, in the words of a historian, "buried under a senseless mass of superstition, and was unable to raise her head."

During these weary centuries the world grew very dark. Roman civilization collapsed into a sea of misery and barbarism. Superstition grew gross and intolerance more violent as human passions and strifes filled the world with woe. Meanwhile the life of the common people was lived very near the level of the beast. At the same time, from Arabia, from Mongolia, from Tartary, barbaric tribes swept across Europe, Asia and Africa, leaving ruin and destruction in their wake. Feudalism arose to fill a gaping void, and then declined.

Parallel with these events, a closely organized system of error and superstition grew out of what had been the religion of Jesus and His apostles. The "new" faith consolidated its power in what had been the most civilized nation, craftily enslaving the minds of the masses, punishing dissenters, exalting itself as the kingdom of Christ on earth and exercising total civil power. By the early years of the Seventh Century its triumph was complete, and in a few more centuries, except for what it had lost to its twin delusion Islam, the

power of Rome seemed impregnable. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Isa. 60:2).

Breaks in the Darkness

Then slowly, ever so slowly, the situation began to change. Trade began to develop with other parts of the world, bringing new ideas and fresh products. About the same time men slowly began to think for themselves, and to demand social rights which they had long ago relinquished. About the same time, they began to look at the world around them and the stars above them and to wonder what it all meant. About the same time, too, men began to challenge the authority of the Church, which had been accepted almost without question for centuries. There was disaffection, and dissatisfaction,...and the first signs of cracks in the darkness. There was the Magna Carta (1215), the Renaissance, and the beginnings of the Reformation.

About the same time, brave and adventuresome people in different places—in Germany and in England—began to want to read the Bible for themselves, and some risked their lives to translate the Bible into the language of the common people.

Then came the discovery of the Western Hemisphere, quite by accident, by a Genoese sea captain, and the settling of a "new" part of the globe. It was fresh ground for the growth of free and independent thought, and some three centuries later a new nation took form, "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Most revolutionary of all was the complete separation of church and state, although its founders were by no means atheistic. Before this new law all creeds,

like all men, were to be equal. As a result of this unprecedented liberty, the various outgrowths of Christianity in all their myriad divisions, confused and confusing, flourished luxuriantly for another century before their influence began to wane against the advance of atheism, agnosticism and general indifference.

And through it all, the unseen hand of the Eternal was guiding events toward a definite end. The steps toward political and religious liberty, the preparation of a new soil in the land of the free, even the decline of religion with the accompanying attitude of tolerance, were all Divinely ordained in anticipation of the Day when the true Light would again shine in the world—and the darkness would never be the same again.

Through Human Instruments

In all ages the plan of the Almighty has operated through human instruments. And when He saw one who would be a fit instrument for the task of ending the long night of darkness and rediscovering the light of Divine knowledge contained in the Bible—such a one belongs to the ages.

At long last, in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, this instrument appeared, one through whose efforts the light of Divine knowledge would again shine. And so, in the year 1844, in the frontier State of Indiana, this child was born and named, L. T. Nichols.

Deeply religious by nature, he was by no means a neurotic or eccentric child. His boyhood was normal, healthy, full of life and action, yet rich with a constantly growing reverence for the Creator and His revealed Word. Before he reached his teens he became aware that religion, to be successful, must

be something more than academic, and solemnly vowed to God that he would never touch liquor or tobacco, never would commit an immoral or dishonest act, and never would allow profanity or obscenity to defile his lips. To his dying day that boyhood compact remained unbroken.

His disenchantment with established religion grew rapidly as he approached teen-age. For he was reasoning, not just swallowing what he heard, and he could not believe that what he was being taught was reasonable.

When he was still very young, his eldest brother died—an event that aroused in him a dread of the tomb which he never lost, and a strong desire for future life. More and more questions concerning the Divine plan arose in his expanding mind; more and more the established creeds failed to satisfy; more and more he turned to the Bible for the answers. The Bible was his constant, familiar friend and companion.

At length as he became fully convinced that the Bible was indeed the Word of God, and that the Bible alone held the key to life now and in the future, he began a serious, in-depth, lifelong study of its contents. The result: Light! Glorious, Divine, resplendent, shining light!

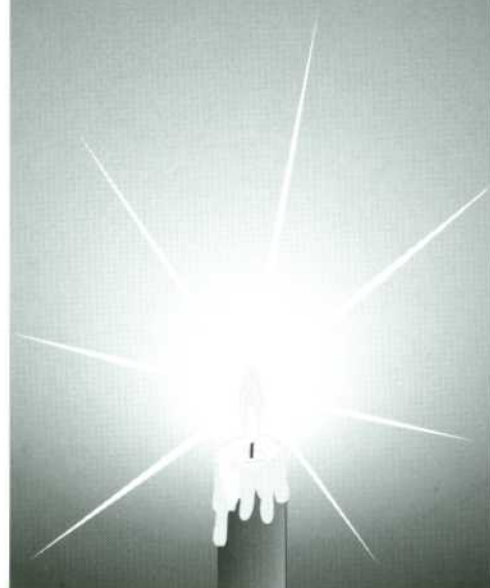
And now that the Light is shining, *the darkness can never be the same again*—because never again will the darkness prevail. Never again will the darkness overpower the light—because God has decreed it. He has planned that there will be living believers to welcome Christ when He returns. It is a forecast in Jesus' parable: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom

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"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

— Jesus (Luke 12:35-37)

Some believers will be watching and ready to receive Jesus when He returns, and He will serve them the finest delicacies ever spread—morsels that give everlasting life.



"And They Went to Another Village"



(How to Handle Insult)

Jesus' last days upon the earth were drawing to a close and He with His disciples resolved to go once more to Jerusalem. Together they trudged on foot the hot, dusty miles through Galilee, their faces set toward the holy city, Jerusalem. As the day drew to a close, they must find needful lodging. Before them lay a Samaritan village.

Jesus halted. Here they could rest while He sent messengers ahead into the town to make arrangements for the night. In the morning they could continue their journey refreshed. No doubt they halted beside a cooling well and quenched their thirst as they waited for the return of the advance scouts.

What? Were their messengers returning so soon? Fortunate indeed to find lodging so quickly for their tired and hungry companions. Of course, the villagers were without a doubt anxiously waiting just such an opportunity to welcome them with open arms! Everywhere, there were sick to be healed and the poor to be comforted with the glad news of the coming kingdom. So much their Master could give in return for kindness shown Him!

But—but—what means the muttering and downcast faces of the returning messengers?

"Lord, Lord!" they burst out, "those villagers down there refuse to welcome us! They despise us

because we are traveling on to Jerusalem. They deserve to be punished!"

"Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them," cried James and John, "even as Elias did?"

"Lord, let the judgments of Jehovah consume them!"

What did Jesus do? He turned and reproved them for their rashness. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," He answered calmly.

The rest of the story is told simply, quietly: "And they went to another village."

Another lesson of His greatness was forced home on their minds. Humbled and ashamed they walked along, silently reflecting on the greatness of His soul; too large to be annoyed by slights, injuries, disappointments and rebuffs; too busy in the service of His heavenly Father to waste time brooding and haranguing over ill-treatment from His enemies. A lesser soul would fret and fume with resentment. His day would be, in fact, spoiled because of what he considered an unjust insult.

But the example of Jesus still remains: "And they went to another village." No bitterness, no arguing. He had risen above such childish behavior. True, He needed the rest which those villagers could have given Him. No doubt He was sad-

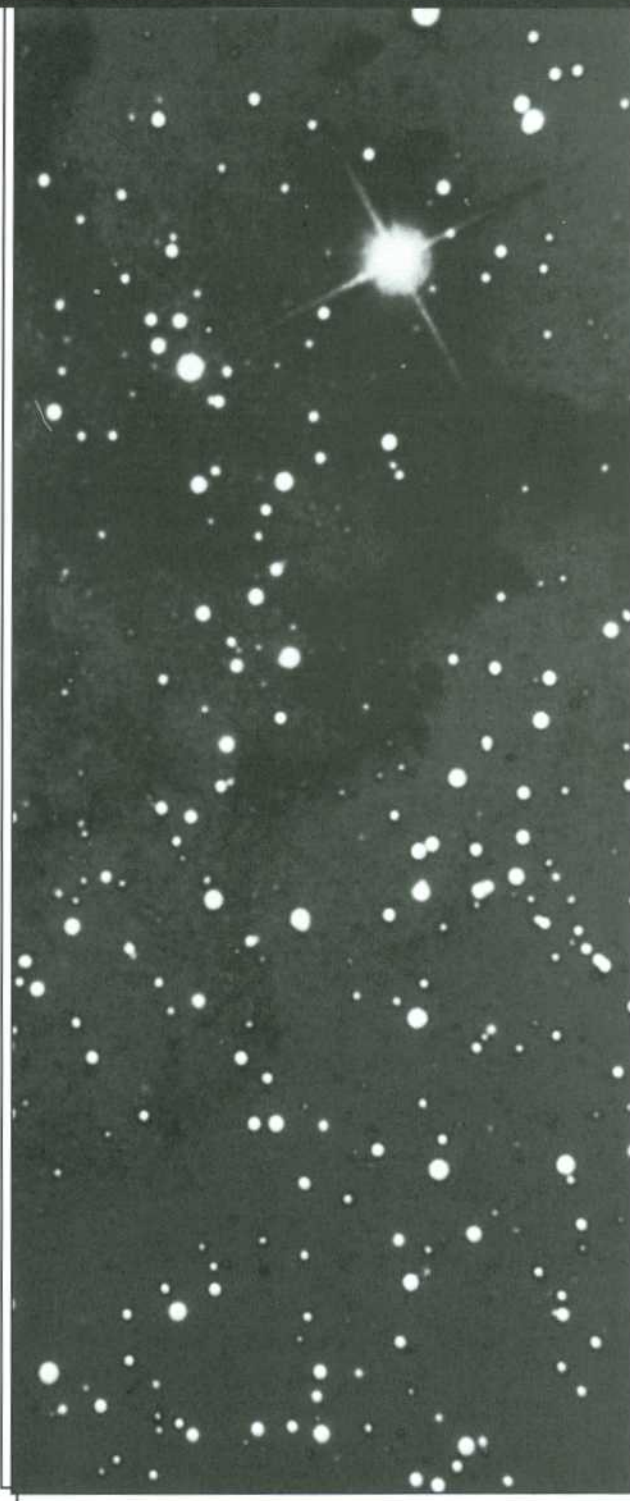
dened that they did not want to receive what He had to offer, but His mind was at peace; they could not take that from Him. And so they went to another village.

How do we react to the petty annoyances and grievances that so often cross our pathway? Do we grumble and smolder away at what we consider slights and thoughtless actions of others? Perhaps if we closely examine ourselves we may find we are guilty of such thoughts more often than we may like to admit. Do we dismiss a careless word and remark as too insignificant to take notice of? Are we prone to imagine someone is talking about us and allow our feelings to be hurt over it?

The command is to return good for evil. And, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

No leeway is allowed for bitter words or even bitter thoughts. Arguing, or giving back as good as was sent, only brings us down to the level of those with whom we argue. The soul grows when it learns to return love for hate and peace for insult. We grow to what we give in return. There is one course always open and that is the joyful, happy, peaceful, upper road to another village. And we shall find to our delight that each village is located on higher ground! MM

Thou Art Coming!

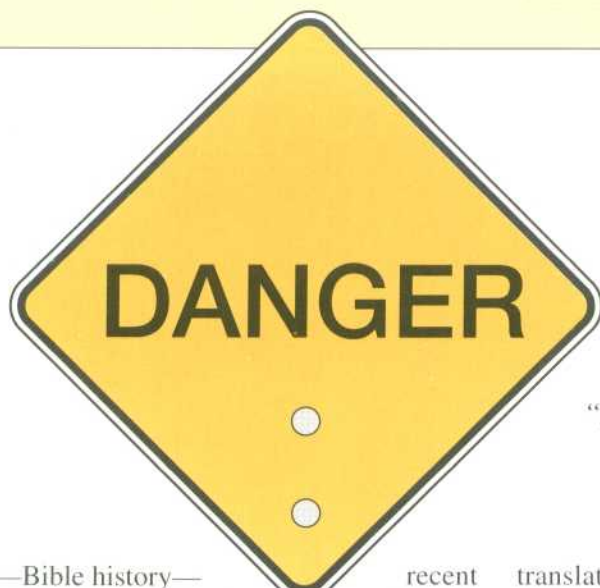


*Thou art coming, O my Savior!
Thou art coming soon some day,
In Thy beauty all resplendent,
In Thy glory all transcendent,
Well may we rejoice and say,
"Come and bring the jubilee!"
How our hearts with joy will swell,
When Thy glory we shall see
In the coming Day of peace!*

*Thou art coming, surely coming!
We shall meet Thee on Thy way;
We shall see Thee, bow before Thee,
And we'll bless Thee when we show Thee
All our hearts could never say!
What an anthem that will be,
Ringing out our love to Thee,
Pouring out our rapture sweet
At Thine own all-glorious feet!*

*Not a cloud and not a shadow,
Not a mist and not a tear,
Not a sin and not a sorrow,
Not a dim and veiled tomorrow,
For that sunshine grand and clear!
Jesus, Savior, once with Thee,
Nothing here seems worth a thought!
Oh, how marvelous will be
All the bliss our work hath wrought!*

*O the joy to see Thee reigning,
Thee my own beloved Lord!
Ev'ry tongue Thy name confessing,
Worship, honor, glory, blessing
Brought to Thee with glad accord!
Thee my Master and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned!
Unto earth's remotest end
Glorified, adored and owned!*



"Now all these things...were recorded for our benefit as a warning"—II Cor. 10:11, NEB

History—Bible history—has its place, because it is the record of the blunders and successes of people who went before us, people who were in many respects like ourselves. The written record of their lives helps us to understand our own so that we can, with the help of God, avoid their downfall—or multiply their success.

But alas! how many have failed to heed the lessons that were written before them. Can we do better?

There is no need for us to start from the beginning, as it were, and make the same mistakes, commit the same sins, that others have—not when God has carefully preserved for us the record of their sins and the dire consequences sin brought upon them. Even more than that, we have Paul's writings to remind us of these lessons. "Now these things happened unto them for our examples."

In First Corinthians 10, Paul reminds his brethren of the lessons they should be learning from history. Most interesting of all, he directs these lessons "to us"—even *us* in this present time, for "they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Cor. 10:11). Or as it has been phrased by some of the more

recent translators, these things "were recorded for our benefit as a warning, for upon us the fulfillment of the ages has come" (NEB); or "these things happened to them to make them a lesson to others and were written down to warn us who are living when the world [the present cosmos] is coming to an end" (Williams); they were "recorded to serve as a caution to us... in whose lives the climax of the ages has been reached" (TCNT and Williams).

What are these examples?

Paul is very specific. He draws his lessons from the children of Israel in the wilderness, with many of whom "God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (I Cor. 10:5). As a nation the Israelites had been highly favored; but also as a nation, they had failed miserably.

Psychologists often object to lessons stated in the negative, but perhaps they are needful—at least Paul thought so, and he was writing by Divine inspiration.

DANGER Against Lusting for Evil

His first example is the danger of wrong desire, "that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted" (v. 6). No small order is wrapped in these words. As

seekers after God's favor, we must change our desires, change our tastes, until we love what He loves and despise what He despises. We must cut our desire for anything God forbids, for we must not "lust after evil things," whatever they be, or however near and dear. Any and every desire of our lower nature must be completely severed.

DANGER Against Idolatry

Paul's next point of warning is against the danger of relapsing into idolatry (v. 7)—a danger which could easily arise in their concourse with nonbelievers. It was the danger of being influenced by their surroundings, to whatever degree; of giving in to the temptation to seek pleasure now instead of biding God's time in faithful, loyal obedience, and so securing the far greater pleasures He offers. The Jewish people, he reminds them, had been highly favored, and solemnly consecrated to God. They had lived under Divine protection and guidance (I Cor. 10:1-4); yet this had not kept them from the displeasure of God when they sinned, when they allowed themselves to be led away by foreign worshippers.

Paul strongly and decisively commands them *not* to mix with unbelievers in any way, not to enter their temples of worship, not to partake of their feasts, not to unite with

them in their celebrations, not to endanger their piety by these temptations (I Cor. 10:19–24). The danger was—and is—ever present. That is why the law stated, “I...have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine” (Lev. 20:26).

Our temptation to idolatry may look quite different from theirs, but it is still with us. Whatever takes the place of God in our affections is our idol, and we continue to be tempted by it to idol worship. We might even be in danger of putting some very good things in our lives ahead of the seeking of God’s kingdom and the righteousness that will prepare us for it, which Jesus said *must come first* (Matt. 6:33). Our idol today might be our work, our family, our body, our house, our hobby. If anything besides God and His interests gets our best thoughts, our deepest feelings, our greatest energy—are we not just as much idolaters?

With reference to idolatry, Paul does not advise any gentle, halfway measures. He believes in drastic action. “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry” (I Cor. 10:14). Literally, “Keep on running from idolatry” (Williams). There is great danger if we even pause to take a second look. The point is, we do not have the right to give to *any* idol (earthly interest) that which belongs to God only.

DANGER Against Fornication

The next warning was against committing fornication: “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand” (v. 8).

We cannot be sure which incident in the wilderness Paul is thinking of. The probable reference is to Num. 25:9, in which it is said that twenty-four thousand were

destroyed. Either the number Paul used or the number in Numbers 25 may have been rounded, their number being between twenty-three and twenty-four thousand. In any case, Paul has not exceeded the facts. But the number is not the point. Paul’s purpose was to mention the proofs of immediate Divine displeasure, shown in the fact that thousands died in the transgression.

For the Israelites it was immediate judgment; but Paul is saying that even though God was not in his day administering judgment did not mean that they might not be just as sinful, and just as subject to condemnation.

The vice of fornication was common at Corinth. It is said that a single temple in Corinth supported no less than a thousand prostitutes, and the city was visited by vast multitudes of foreigners, all of whom were outside the Christian faith. Christians there were in constant danger.

But Paul’s warning might have significance much broader than the pagan temples. Paul’s command to “not commit fornication” might be stated as a positive call to redirect our passions and desires to the highest levels of love and commitment in God. Fornication may refer to any kind of immorality. The call of God has always been a call to the very highest standard of morality. Our being part of the family of God must change the way we live with one another right here and now. However low the standards around us, we belong to a different culture; we have no part in what is around us, and we must avoid contamination at all costs.

DANGER Against Tempting God

“Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents” (I Cor. 10:9).

These things “were recorded for our benefit as a warning, for upon us the fulfillment of the ages has come”

—I Cor 10:11, NEB

Here is another example by which we can be warned.

Is there a reason for the phrase reading “tempt Christ”? Most manuscripts read “tempt *Kurios*,” the Greek word for “Lord,” and it is translated “Lord” in most of the newer translations. It might as easily have been translated “tempt God.” We know that the Israelites tempted God, not Christ, because they lived more than a thousand years before Christ was born. The main idea is that of the human spirit of rebellion, of “testing” the divine Provider to see how much He will bear or endure of our wickedness or perversity, instead of submitting humbly to His guidance. The text has been variously translated, “Let us stop trying the Lord’s patience” (Williams); or “Neither let us make trial of the Lord” (ASB), or “presume on the Lord” (Moffatt).

The Israelites tempted God by their rebellion, by murmuring, by their dissatisfaction with His bountiful provisions for them.

In what way were the Corinthians in danger of tempting God? We are not told, but we can look to ourselves and take the lesson to heart. How many times do we tempt God, or try His patience, we who are living in the closing hours of the day?

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ac·count'a·bil'i·ty

(a-kount'ta-bil'-i-te) n., s. 1. *Subject to giving an account.* 2. *Answerable.*
3. My position before God, because I have agreed to render a total obedience to His law. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (II Cor. 5:10)

As a mature, responsible individual living in a free and independent nation, I am free to do as I please, so long as I do not interfere with the right of others to do the same.

But as a committed disciple of Jesus Christ, I am not my own boss. I am under orders, and *I am accountable.*

I am accountable to God for what I thought about as I was driving to work this morning. Where was my mind—on the traffic, on the job that was waiting for me, on the project I was hoping to do this evening, or some petty bit of news I picked up at work yesterday—or was it on God and the future?

I am accountable to God for how I spoke to my fellow worker on the job, when he made what seemed to me a careless mistake. Was I critical, or was I kind?

I am accountable to God for allowing my eyes to linger on that billboard as I was driving home this evening. It was one more picture of corruption my mind did not need....

I am accountable to God for the answer I gave my wife last evening when she asked me for a helping hand. I was tired, but I did not need to complain.

I am accountable to God for what I chose to read when I was relaxing last evening. It was nothing bad, but was it the best choice I could have made?

I am accountable to God for how I reacted when my boss criticized my work. Was I even a little bit ruffled, defensive or peeved?

I am accountable to God for what I said to my four-year-old when I found that he had opened my toolbox and had been playing with my tools.

I am accountable to God for my influence upon my children, and what I allowed my children to talk about at dinner tonight. They were quarrelsome and nagging, but...where did they learn it?

I am accountable to God for how I feel—toward the members of my family, the individuals in the community, the government of my country, and any and all I chance to meet.

I am accountable to God for my attitudes. The things I love, the things I hate; the things I relish, the things I despise—all are an open book to God, all are part of what I have given to God, and I am accountable.

I am accountable to God for how I spend my money. It, too, belongs to God—it is only *loaned* to me.

How I do need the help of God in shouldering this great responsibility.

What will I gain if I am faithful to my Master, if I can give a good account of how I have discharged my responsibilities? I recall Jesus' answer: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21).

If only I can hear those words, "Well done!"—what a rare and rich privilege is mine, to be accountable!

MM

Eat Every Day

I do a lot of reading. I read everyday from the *Message*. But as far as work is concerned I can do very little, because I am not able to get around.

But I am a bird watcher, and I enjoy it. I have a couple of bird feeders with which I feed birds. Sparrows, finches, woodpeckers, robins, chickadees, and a lot more come to my feeders every day, as I feed them nearly every day.

Now take a lesson from my birds. They don't miss a day to come to the feeders. Do we come to our "feeder" every day for food? Our feeders are the Bible, the things which God has caused to be written for our learning, and all that is "true, honest, just, pure and lovely."



My birds like all kinds of good seed. So should we like the seed we get from our feeders.

Yes, we shouldn't miss a day that we do not eat the good seed.

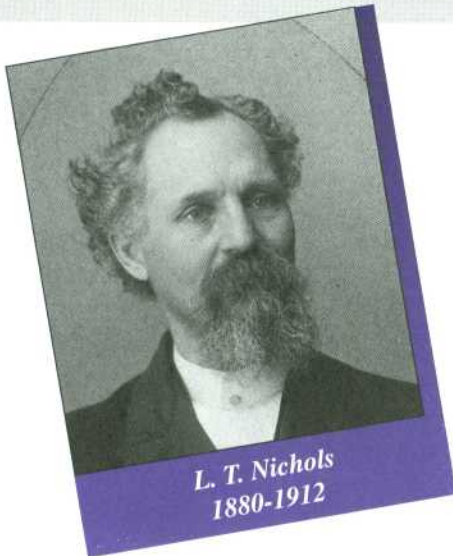
Let us eat nothing but the good seed. Let us learn a lesson from the birds.

—Signed, *Clarence Boyer*
A "good seed" eater

Remember Your Former Leaders—

it was they who brought you the Word of God. Bear in mind how they ended their lives, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today—yes, and for ever.”

—Hebrews 13:7–8, Weymouth



Great Is Thy Goodness, O Lord!

by L. T. Nichols

I am glad to see such an increase of interest in the things of eternity, things that are revealed only in the Bible. We may canvass the universe, explore land and sea, search out all nature, sift all science, all philosophy and all knowledge, and when all is weighed in the light of reason we are driven to conclude as did Mr. Herbert Spencer, the great philosopher of the age, that he had no knowledge beyond the narrow confines of the tomb. Although others might indulge in a hope of a future, yet he could not go beyond the present. So also we, if we had not the Bible, would be forced to acknowledge that death ends all; and unless there is an all-powerful, intelligent Being, this must inevitably be the facts in the case. However repugnant it may be to us, it must be the stern reality.

Therefore the very idea that we are here to learn of future things, to learn that we may have a future, an eternal existence, carries upon the

face of it that we believe the Bible is the authenticated Word of Jehovah, the word of an intelligent Being. This we firmly (without a lingering doubt) believe, although I am sorry to say that there are in reality but few that do thus believe. Many indeed assent that there is such a Being, and that the Bible is His Word, but in reality their faith is only a dead one; as good as no faith at all. I have in times past had somewhat of a wavering faith, or only about half believed that the Bible was true; but thanks be to its Author, I now have not a lingering doubt.

And I verily believe that if you will but come and investigate long

enough we can drive away every doubt from your minds, leaving a calm, serene and peaceful assurance that there is not only a future but that there is a glorious, joyful and happy future for all who will go to work and become acquainted with the truth and facts in the case, and live in obedience to Divine law.

I am aware that you cannot jump into this faith, or obtain it in a moment of time; but come, and let the Bible be its own expositor.

Peter tells us that a thousand years is as but one day with the Lord (II Pet. 3:8). Now time is nothing to Him who has all eternity before Him. The Bible teaches that God purposes to fill this earth with pure, holy and just persons. Suppose He takes sixty thousand years, instead of seven, would this deduct any from His glory, mercy, goodness or justice? Not in the least.

God never purposed to make a machine of a man and force him to

*The fool says in
his heart, "There is
no God."*

become holy and pure. If He should, there would be neither glory to God nor virtue to man. And therefore God has allotted time enough to select those who would first go to work in this life and become holy, just and pure, thus becoming fit instruments to rule the world in righteousness.

The true idea of the death state also helps to show that God's plan is verily one without fault. It is only a lack of understanding of the Scriptures that causes any to think that God's plan has anything about it that is unjust or that militates against His goodness in the least.

The Word of the Lord declares that man's "breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (Ps. 146:4). Man, then, in death is unconscious and knows not anything. He is in a profound and deep sleep. Last night when we were sound asleep we knew nothing, and unless we awoke out of that sleep we never would have known anything again.

Man in death is just the same as we were last night; with this difference: that he has no life and therefore cannot, by himself, wake up and start thinking. It will take as great a power to awake him as it did to cause him to think in the first place. I am aware that some deny that there can be any such thing as resurrection; but who
(Continued on page 20)



All for God's Glory

by Maud Hembree

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). These words have come millions of times from heartless lips, on which they die for want of sincerity. At other times they have fallen from the lips of the votaries of superstition, wrought into mesmeric excitement at revival meetings until they have no real meaning to the majority of mankind. Nevertheless, they represent a great reality, a reality which is the very heart and glory of the whole system of Divine truth: that God may be exalted; that He may be glorified in highest reverence; that His unsearchable greatness may be recognized; that His great power and goodness may be apparent to the sons of men in their deepest affections and most profound adoration.

No wonder Paul declares that the wise of this world, the great men and princes of earth, know not this wisdom of God (I Cor. 1, 2). They ignore its first principle—the honor of God. They tacitly assume that creation exists for man alone and that all things are to be judged good or bad as they affect him. This false philosophy stands between them and the Bible as a veil, for the Bible exhibits a system of knowledge at variance with this philosophy from beginning to end. The Bible shows us all things for God, and for man only in as far as man fulfills his part toward God and becomes worthy of His loving favor.

As He looks over the silent dead, whom does the Lord Jesus Christ count worthy of being raised to life immortal?

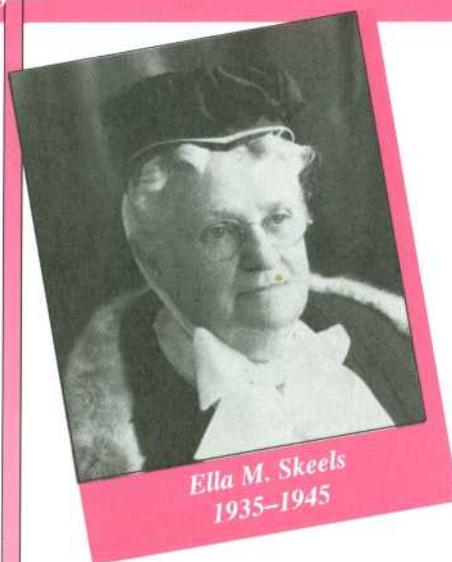
The idea current in Christendom is that the great purpose of the Gospel

is the salvation of men without regard to character or quality. Men are taught that each single soul is of priceless worth, and that its rescue is the height of the Divine operations. However, the thoughts of God are directly opposite to this theory. God says all flesh is comparable to grass, springs forth today and perishes tomorrow (Isa. 40:6, 15, 17; Ps. 90:5; I Pet. 1:24). Nations before Him are as nothing and less than nothing; and only "to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2).

God in His wisdom and kindness invites men to turn to Him with all their heart, to humble themselves, exalt His Word, and do His commandments in reverence and fear. All who do this are precious in His sight. Whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they do all to the glory of God. All others are preoccupied with interests, schemes and associations which choke out the Word and render it unfruitful. They give no heed to the exhortation of Paul to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," but drift along in the current of creature qualifications, the thousand matters that constitute "the present evil world."

The current of the natural mind pulls in the opposite direction to that of the mind of the Spirit, and that current is strengthened by all the circumstances to which we are related in life, whether in business or at home. We cannot hope to make headway against this current apart from a daily reading of the Word of God. If we become lax in this, we shall as surely drift in the wrong direction as a boat loosed from its moorings will drift down-

(Continued on page 22)



Weaving, Weaving

by Ella M. Skeels

*There's a garment we are weaving,
Every morn and all day through;
'Tis the garment of our conduct,
Actions, thoughts and feelings, too.*

*Brother, sister, are you listening
To the Master's gracious words?
As the clarion note is sounding,
Is your being fully stirred?*

*Can you say you're growing better?
Are the weights all dropping off?
Are you weaving in your garment
Threads of righteousness so soft?*

*It is true we're weaving daily
Threads of right or threads of wrong,
Which will make a garment holy,
Or a cov'ring filthy, strong.*

*There cannot be any mixture,
In the garment of the Lord;
It is made of finest texture,
From the Pattern in His Word.*

*All is pure and of white linen,
Not one spot of filth or dirt;
It is like the shaft that's polished,
Glittering, glistening here on earth.*

*We must weave in threads of kindness,
Gentleness, longsuff'ring, too;
Weave the threads all from the spirit,
Then our garment will be new.*

*As we make our holy garment,
We must keep the tension tight,
Or our stitches will be looping,
And our sewing won't be right.*

*Stitch by stitch we do the making,
And each thread is filled with love,
Not one thread of wrath or anger
In that garment from above.*

*We must do the work with patience,
Though the labor may seem hard;
We must cast away the burden,
Then the work we'll not regard.*

*When our garment is all woven,
And our heart is purified,
We shall stand close by our Savior,
Stand rejoicing at His side.*

*Oh, that glorious day is nearing
When we'll grasp each other's hand,
We shall see the King in glory
As we pass to Beulah Land.*

*Up! be ready! do not falter;
Send the message through the land;
Tell to all that one Elijah
Soon is coming as God's man.*

*Oh, what joy will fill our being
When that strain is sounded forth;
Long we've looked, and watched
and waited
For His coming to the earth.*

*But what sorrow and what anguish,
Will fill ev'ry careless one
Who has not his garment ready,
Who has not his sewing done.*

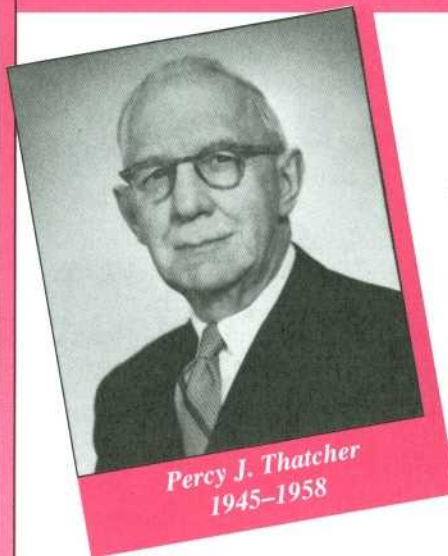
*He'll be like the one our Master
Asked, "How camest thou in here?
You've not on the wedding garment.
Cast him out; he would not fear."*

*He had still the thread-worn
cov'ring
Of the flesh, dark and corrupt,
Yes, he loved the old the better,
For he thought it good enough.*

*What a lesson, what a warning
That we keep the tension tight,
And complete that wedding garment
Which is priceless in God's sight!*

*See what lasting joy and pleasure,
And what riches, too, combined,
Will be ours for simply doing
All that in God's law we find.*

*Wake! arouse! oh, be not drowsy!
There's no time to sleep, but pray;
Watch, and get your weaving
finished
And BE READY for that Day!*



A Time To Praise

by Percy J. Thatcher

*T*he life of a true Christian begins with a song and ends with the glorious anthem of praise which only the redeemed can sing.

Among the many associations connected with the time between, none are more vivid or delightful than those attached to Christian fellowship, drawing closer the ties that bind. Such occasions exert a most beneficial effect upon character and, indeed, are absolutely necessary to counteract the chill of a cold world. Away from the unthankful and giddy throng full of doubt and skepticism, we seek our own altars and find delight in a banquet of which they have no right to eat.

If there is one danger more than another which threatens our peace and hope, it is that indifference to our mercies might cause our heavenly Father to withdraw them. If our lot has been cast in pleasant places and we are being nurtured under the blessings of His providential care, we should not let a single day pass without recounting our sacred obligations for this enormous privilege. Among the richest palaces of earth none offer more pleasure than is found in the house of God, where the wisdom of God sits enthroned. There "her children rise up and call her blessed." Her "sons are as plants grown up in their youth"; her daughters are "corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace....She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness....Her candle goeth not out by night." Within her walls the bread of idleness is never eaten. Her garners are full, affording all manner of store, for there is no breaking in nor going out; and around her fireside there is no complaining. Can we not join in the exclamation, Happy, yes, "happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord" (Proverbs 31, Psalm 144).

We need not look through a telescope to behold the constellations of God's goodness. Let us look at objects nearer us, assured that the greatest marvels of the universe are those that fail to strike us as marvels because of their commonness. How many things, if we would add them up, must conspire together to put us in a state of comfort, the many essentials to our daily existence. How many things must go right to keep our bodies and minds in good working order. Let what we call a misfortune, an accident, befall us, and it at once becomes the topic of our conversation, for it is an extraordinary thing, reminding us that it is an exception to that common course of providential dealing to

Remember Your Former Leaders—

which we are accustomed.

Instead of beginning at the top of the pinnacle of success and prosperity and appreciating our blessings only when they are taken away, let us begin at the opposite extreme and count each item of His goodness a steppingstone by which we rise in joyful gratitude. Let us say, "I am without many things which I could desire, but I have a thousand mercies beyond what I deserve." Many things may not have come to us as we wished, but remember, God "hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." If we are not rich in this world's goods and if we see from day to day the wicked flourishing as a "green bay tree," let us remember that though they gather, "the just shall put it on" (Job 27:17).

Have you lost old friends and associates? Remember you have

"I am without many things which I could desire, but I have a thousand mercies beyond what I deserve."

been joined to a family with a tie nearer than the earthly, a relationship closer than the flesh. Are you an orphan? God is your Father. A widow? Christ is your husband. Childless? Remember that you have been promised a name better than of sons and of daughters, even an everlasting name which shall not be cut off" (Isa. 56:5).

Say to yourself, the pleasures of this world may have been denied me, but, praise God, while the temporal is swiftly passing away, the eternal with its green fields lies before me. While he who rejects the

mercies of God is stumbling on the dark mountains of death, I can sit down in perfect peace and think of Christ, and the saints, and the glorious coming Resurrection Morn in all its splendor.

Let not a day pass without a prayer of grateful thanks to the Giver of all good gifts. Upon our table lies a Book haloed within and without, inscribed all over with lessons of celestial import; a Book which the despot has tried to extinguish by tearing, burning, and burying; but which, because of angelic care, has come through blood, fire, and battle unscathed, carrying with it the only light, hope and liberty for a dying world. It inspires hope, comforts sorrow, diffuses light, invigorates toil, illuminates death, and points to immortality. This one incomprehensible gift of God, wondrous as if it were given just for today, fresh and sparkling with the dew and fragrance of heaven, precious beyond any measure of gold or silver, is rich and costly enough to awaken the thanksgiving of all creation.

It would be well for us to ask ourselves how much we really love it. Do we read it, ponder over it, and discuss its great teachings with one another? Does it put cheer into our hearts and invigorate our courage with its promises? Are the truths found on its pages feeding our souls so that we can attain new heights of spiritual health and robustness? At this great Fountain which God has opened, are we daily quenching our thirst? What praise would burst from our hearts today if we could but believe that all our trials are enhancing the glory to which, according to the Word of the Almighty, we are destined to come, we upon whom the "ends of the world" are fallen. The God we serve is filled with blessedness, because He is filled with activity. A deity asleep above the clouds is a heathen concept; ours is the living God.

It is not enough to know the will of God; we must do it. "My meat," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." We must realize as never before that no achievement is of such consequence as character; no loss so great as losses in moral standing; nothing so humiliating as lapses in virtue; that our greatest ideal must be a pure heart and clean hands; that our faith must be strong enough to believe that God is not a God afar off but a God as close to our needs as He was to those of Abraham, Moses, Daniel, Joseph, and Paul. What a tragedy if we fail to call upon Him, our Father, our ever present help in time of need (Ps. 46:1).

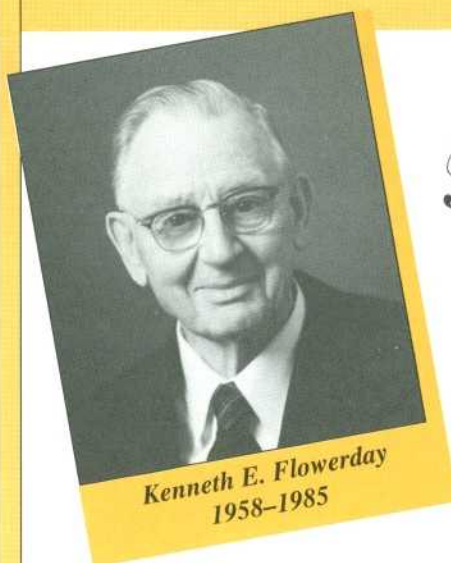
We have stern and solemn duties to perform, great and anxious tasks to achieve. We must not, after plowing the fields and planting the precious seed of the Word of God, lose the great harvest by wasting the short season of ingathering. God has often startled His people by signs—which at this very hour, with brilliantly raised letters stand before us, arousing us to our peril, warning us of our slackness, cautioning us not to abuse His confidence and trust in ourselves. Enough has been given us to know the day is not far distant when, after Armageddon's mighty struggle, the earth shall go forth from the hand of its Maker, filled with universal love and peace, a finished product, never again to be blighted by sin or iniquity. Nor is this a blind confidence, for God has promised it, and His Word is sure.

We are now in the midst of scenes never before experienced in the history of mankind. The sea of nations is rough and tempestuous. Thoughtful persons fear even more than they utter. But trusting God, we find no possibility for despondency. Possessing such a heritage as is ours, there can be no thought of throwing it away or allowing it to be torn from

us, nor of pausing to question its value. This is no time to take to pieces the old ship of Zion and rebuild her on another model. Now is the time to prove the strength of her metal, her timbers and rivets, and by our deportment to show our confidence in God; to gird up the loins of our mind and be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ (I Pet. 1:13). The floods may lift high their waves, but let us not fear, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. His Word is ever present to disclose His will, to guide our feet, and confirm our faith. It is time, high time for each of us to stand firmly in the strength of God and help with the cares, the burdens, and anxieties which fall on those who must carry on through the storm. Let us remember that no human counsel has devised nor has any mortal hand worked out the great plan that God is enacting, or the great reward that He has prepared for those who love Him.

And let us never forget to ascribe to Him the praise and honor that He is due for our singular deliverance and blessings. It may seem today that we meet around the Lord's table only to go out and plunge anew into life's dangers and cares; but this is only for a moment. Let us look forward to the day when we shall meet around our Father's board, with every saint gathered home in that bright new world, the earth made new, with welcomes and rejoicings that shall never cease; the crowning apex of existence, the true fullness of our joy, and rivers of pleasures at the right hand of God for evermore.

Who of us cannot be thankful with such a prospect before us, brightening up our path to the perfect Day just ahead of us? MM



The Power of Example

by K. E. Flowerday

I feel it a privilege to be able to impart to you some of the hope and encouragement which is my own heart's wealth, to stir up your minds on the things that hold a great future for each life-seeker.

I trust that you are well, but I especially desire that your hope of a future life is a joy to you, and that your prospect of winning the prize that God offers seems as certain to you as the weekly pay check of the wage earner.

Indeed, God's promises are the most assured assurances that we could contemplate; they are guaranteed rewards. God exists. He always has existed. He has never failed to fulfill His contract, and never can fail. God is not a man that He should lie, or the son of man that He should change His mind (Num. 23:19). He has promised to fill the earth with His glory (Num. 14:21), and that promise will be fulfilled. He has promised the earth to the children of men (Ps. 115:16), and the worthy among us shall surely receive this promise. "A King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. 23:5). One day "officers of peace and exactors of righteousness" shall administer human affairs (Isa. 60:17), and God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven above (Matt. 6:10). One day the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:43), and this bright prospect is open to you and to me, and to every one who will make the effort to fit himself for it.

We should always be conscious of the impact that our lives have on other lives. Each of us must be a brother's keeper. "None of us liveth to himself" (Rom. 14:7), therefore we should be exceedingly careful of the life that we lead. It has been said that our Christian example is the only Bible that some people ever read; hence we should be very careful about what we write upon our pages.

In the words of the familiar poem:

*Thou must thyself be true,
If thou the truth would teach.
Thine own soul must overflow,
If thou another soul would reach.*

(continued next page)

Remember Your Former Leaders—

In this sense we are all Christian teachers, by our own lives teaching others how to live. But to be qualified to do this we must first teach ourselves. The apostle Paul framed this thought into meaningful words in Rom. 2:21, "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" Religious instruction to be forceful, must be endorsed by the living experience of the instructor.

Let us consider the power of a godly example. The common law of influence rarely fails to operate. We are imitative creatures, and in nothing so much as in the practice of our

There can be no accomplishment in the spiritual life unless Christ's life pattern is re-created in our lives.

religion. Moreover, we insist upon identifying a moral teacher with what he teaches, that Christians shall incarnate the truth which they urge upon others, and shall become the personal embodiment of it. They will not suffer a limping man to propose an effective cure for lameness.

Jesus expressly taught that His followers should exemplify the Gospel. The force of one sentence of the Sermon on the Mount turns upon the insignificant word, "so." "Let your light *so* shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" In like manner the apostles taught, "Ye are living epistles, known and read of all men."

Hence, there can be no inconsistency so utter as an inconsistent Christian teacher presents. There can be no failure more ridiculous in the eyes of a corrupt world than that of a man who urges the truth and lives a lie. But, on the other hand, whenever fully possessed of the power of the Gospel, pervaded with its spirit and radiant with its light a grand life goes about doing good, that life has a majestic driving force almost unlimited.

Men bend subdued to an influence which they cannot comprehend but which they know is safe, and which they feel they can trust implicitly. In the whole Bible there is not a finer picture of human greatness than that of Simon Peter when the multitude brought out the sick on couches, that they might lay them where at least his shadow could fall on them. There is no one thing that the better element among men loves more than to abide under a good man's shadow. And the only shadow on this planet that renders it luminous is the shadow of the Almighty wing.

Then consider the means by which God's truth is distributed from heart to heart. It is propagated, not by transmission through mere symbols but by radiation through actual contact.

The lens of a burning-glass will not only allow the free passage of the sun's rays but will concentrate them, until the surface they fall upon bursts into flame; meanwhile the lens itself will remain perfectly cool. Experiments of this sort have been performed with even a lens of ice, which kindled a fire and remained unmelted. You can find nothing in righteous living to correspond to this phenomenon. The torch, not the burning-glass, is the emblem of the spiritual life; it flames while it illumines, and is warmed as it sets on fire. He influ-

ences others most who has been nearest in contact with Christ. Let us be torches, not burning-glasses.

Thus God's saving truth becomes an indweller. This is the meaning of the word spirituality; it signifies the presence of the spirit of Christ. And there can be no accomplishment in the spiritual life unless His life pattern is re-created in our lives. "Without me ye can do nothing," said Jesus. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Let us re-double our effort to show a pattern of good works for others to emulate, that we may diffuse the sweet fragrance of the Christ-life wherever we are. MM

*Great Is Thy Goodness,
O Lord!*

(Continued from page 15)

would think of saying that He who first caused man to live, move and have a being, cannot remake him and cause him to live, move and have a being again? Will it take any more power to remake him than it did to produce him in the first place? Certainly not. And it is an indisputable fact that there was power enough to produce man in the first place. He who denies that that same power cannot remake that which it has made once before is indeed as big a novice as one who would deny that there ever was any power that produced man in the first place. With reason before us we are driven back to a great First Cause, an all-powerful and intelligent Being. And we are driven to conclude also that this first great Cause is not only all-powerful and intelligent but also that this Being's intelligence must far surpass the intelligence of the thing created.

Suppose we were just seeing a locomotive, a steam engine, for the first time. Someone comes along

and begins to explain to us what it is, how it works, its power, etc. The engineer turns on the steam and it begins to move off, drawing a long train of cars after it. We look on with amazement at its machinery. You ask me, Who made that wonderful engine? And I reply, Why! no one. Would you not at once brand me a fool? You certainly would. You would say, Sir, that mechanism tells us that someone with intelligence was the inventor of that engine, and that that one, whoever it was, had intelligence far ahead of the mechanism produced. You would remark that that man must have had a wonderful mind to have ever put material together so that it could accomplish what we had just witnessed, one who could reason from cause to effect.

And yet you say that the whole creation came about by evolution, through a series of steps, without any direction or design? What sense would there be to such talk as this? Just one kind of sense: nonsense.

Take man, for example. All must admit that he is by far the greatest mechanism that has ever come under our knowledge. The statement that man produced this engine and that it took a greater intelligence to produce it than dwells in the engine is evident. The engine can move off, but it takes an intelligence outside itself to cause it to move, or to keep it moving.

Now look at man, with an eye that can see, an ear that can hear, a brain that can think. If we will only be as reasonable as we are with the engine, we will be driven to conclude that it took a higher power and a being which possessed far greater power and intelligence than man to produce man.

You may know what I, together with all reasonable persons, think of anyone who says man was produced

without a higher cause or being of intelligence to produce him, or that he by evolution or by a chance series of growths was produced from a tadpole, a monkey, etc. I think of that man the same as you would think of me if I would say that a steam engine was produced without any higher being of intelligence than existed in the engine, or that it had no planner, creator or producer. How true the Bible is when it says, "The fool says in his heart there is no God."

I am aware of the argument that if man had to have a higher Being of intelligence to produce him, then that higher Being had to have a still higher being to produce him, and so on *ad infinitum*. But they forget that their argument militates against their own position with equal force. If man sprung from the monkey, what did the monkey spring from? and so on *ad infinitum*. Therefore the only reasonable solution to the matter is that contained in the Bible, that there is one self-existent Being with all power, wisdom and intelligence.

With this only rational view before our minds we will proceed to show the goodness of this all-wise Being.

At first sight one might think that if God saved only 144,000 in 6,000 years, His goodness was very limited, seeing He is all-powerful. But upon mature thought, the plan is far superior to any that man could design. It is God's great plan, I say, God's *great* plan, for I would not have you think for one moment that I thought that the dealing of God with man and this planet upon which we live is all the plan that this all-powerful, all-wise Being has ever had, has now, and ever will have. No, no. This planet with its inhabitants is only a very minute speck of the great, grand and wonderful plan of Jehovah. We do not

believe that this all-powerful and wise Being has been sitting with folded hands doing nothing through all eternity past or will continue to do so through the eternity future. No, no. He has been, is now, and ever will continue to prepare peoples for eternal life, joy and happiness. I have not a doubt but that thousands of planets are now inhabited by immortal, incorruptible, joyous and happy beings, and that

God has ever been preparing peoples for eternal life. I have not a doubt but that thousands of planets are now inhabited by immortal beings.

thousands more will become thus inhabited in the endless future.

With this hint, you can begin to see some faint speck of the great goodness, beneficence and magnanimity of the Author of the Bible.

God's purpose with reference to our own planet was and is to fill it with immortal beings; fill it with those who would, under trial, develop a pure and holy character, a perfect character; and thus glory redounds to God, and virtue to man. Let me ask, so long as God fills this earth with such noble beings, all glorified and happy, what does it matter if He should take ten thousand years to do it? It would be only a speck, a moment of time. And indeed, after ten thousand years are past, eternity is not shortened in the least. We have no reason whatever to complain because God takes 7,000 years to fill this earth with immortal, glorified and happy

Remember Your Former Leaders—

beings. But on the other hand, we have the greatest of reasons to be exceedingly glad that God has arranged His plan just as He has; for had He forced every man to obey Him and saved all from Adam down, the earth would have been filled long ago and we would have had no existence whatever.

Besides, see how much more beneficent His plan is as He takes out 144,000 to rule the world in righteousness, and allots nearly 6,000 years to accomplish this work. He only purposed to have 144,000 kings to rule, but while selecting these He has permitted thousands upon thousands to have the present life, who will get no more simply because they will not obey God's will. How much more goodness there is in giving all these thousands this present life, who otherwise would have had no existence at all. All must see that the plan of God, instead of deducting any from His goodness is only a wonderful manifestation of His goodness.

We would have no reason to find any fault if God never offered us anything more than this life. But seeing God has given and will continue to give thousands the present life, and besides this will give a vast multitude an eternal life with endless joy and gladness, who can lift their voice and say that the God of the Bible is not infinite in goodness?

The Author of the Bible not only has a plan, but He has made known His plan, and the only wonderment to those who understand and thoroughly comprehend this plan is, How can it be possible that a Being can be so good as to give such a multitude eternal life, endless joy and gladness with the highest degree of happiness? And the number of this vast multitude will far exceed what could subsist upon the earth at the present time. I say, take this great and wonderful plan of Jehovah into consideration, and you will be caused to cry out, *Great is Thy goodness, O Lord!* And how much more so when we consider that this endless glory will be given us for doing *so little*. How far it should drive from our hearts every thought of charging God with anything but the greatest of goodness, mercy and justice! MM

All for God's Glory

(Continued from page 16)

stream; we shall surely come under the dominion of the carnal in all our sentiments, and "to be carnally minded is death" (Rom. 8:6). "Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself" (Ps. 49:18), but all their praise will not deliver you from the King of Terrors or enable you to gain the victory over the grave. The praises of God can be won only by doing all we do with an eye single to His glory, and then, as He has promised, that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17) shall be our portion.

How reasonable this seems when we realize all the surrounding facts and the end of every human being! Walk through a cemetery, for instance, and read the names of the silent dead. There reposes a congregation of people who are done with life.

There are all kinds, from the millionaire who heaped up treasures to the beggar who spent his last days in the poorhouse. There are merchants under the sod who in their day had risen to the top of the social scale by their industry and by talents which were highly applauded as their own. There are beautiful daughters of rich men who pined away in luxury, when a fair battle with the responsibilities of life might have saved them from an early grave.

Most of these sleeping ones were satisfied with the eating and drinking, the buying and selling and pleasure-seeking of this animal existence which has occupied our race for thousands of years. The votaries of fashion, once resplendent in the varied beauties that wealth had lavished, under the grassy mounds; the successful lawyer who pleaded the cause of the unjust as well as that of the just; the conscientious doctor, and also the medicine-man who dosed out poisonous drugs; the benefactor or the thief; all are sleeping in that congregation of the dead. The church members who went to church on Sunday and spent the six days of the week doing as they pleased: card playing, dancing, gossiping, reading novels, attending theaters and picture shows, and worse than all, engaging many times in dishonest dealings, are in that city of the dead. Some sowed to the flesh in the slums and among lewd fellows; others, in gilded parlors and conservatories in polite society. In God's sight both rank the same. There they lie, a common mass of corruption, almost forgotten in the land of the living.

In contrast to them, think of God's sleeping dead who walked in the way of His commandments: Abel, obedient with childlike simplicity to all God commanded, "by which he obtained witness that he was righteous"; Noah, faithful in the midst of a population abandoned to sin, who himself condemned the world and became heir of the future, glorious kingdom of God; Abraham, worthy of being called the father of the faithful, who was willingly obedient under sore trials; Isaac and Jacob, who walked faithfully in the steps of Abraham, heirs with him of the same promise; Moses, who chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than

to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season"; Joshua, who was strong and courageous to carry out what God commanded, wholly following the Lord; faithful Samuel, who not only taught but practiced the Divine admonition that "to obey is better than sacrifice"; a brave Daniel, who, not afraid of the king's commandment, determined to serve God in the midst of a world wholly given to idolatry; a devoted Sarah; a faithful Hannah; a loving Mary, clothed with "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit" and adorned with good works; a brave and true Deborah, who judged Israel forty years. Time would fail me to recite the names mentioned in God's Word of those who have followed in their footsteps; a zealous Paul, Anna, Peter, Phoebe, James, Stephen—all examples of the type of men and women chosen by the Almighty as a pattern for us to follow.

It is a blessed fact that Christ is coming back to earth to take the reins of government into His own hands, that "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). Suppose He should come tomorrow and send His angels to gather His elect. Whom, of all the congregation of the dead, would He select to be His co-laborers in this mighty work upon earth, to sit with Him on His throne and rule over the nations (Rev. 2:26; 3:21)? On *this* side of the resurrection line there is the past, the human past, with its dropped burden of human anxieties and human business, and on the *other* side what is there? God's business; God's business on a large scale, with Christ at its head.

As He looks over the silent dead, *whom* does the Lord Jesus Christ count worthy of being raised to life

immortal? whom does He count worthy of being made equal to the angels, to die no more but to live through a blissful eternity?

Jesus, in words unmistakable, states just whom He will choose: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein. . . . To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 1:3; 3:21). Only those who read, understand and keep His sayings, only those who overcome all evil with good have the promise of reigning with Him.

Would you think it a large price to ask of that dead congregation, for the privilege of immortal partnership in the King's work, that they should have devoted their mortal affections, their mortal energies, their mortal opportunities, to holding up the banner of their King, that whether they ate or drank, or whatsoever they did, to have done it to His honor and glory? to have lived to serve Him, and not to please themselves?

The two classes are sharply contrasted by Paul in I Cor. 9:24, the one working for this life, which James says is but a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away; the other class working for the life that will be eternal in its duration. Those who work for the things of this life receive their reward as they go along, while those working for a home eternal will be as Jesus says (Luke 20:35-36), "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Quite a contrast, is it not? One to pass away as a vapor, and the other to last through eternity.

How wise to choose the wisdom of God! Mr. Rockefeller might give us riches and worldly honor, might lay some of his millions at our feet, but how powerless is he to give us length of days and drive the King of Terrors from our pathway! And soon with him we would go to the congregation of the dead, nevermore to see light (Ps. 49:19-20).

Meanwhile, wisdom stands at the door, saying: "Receive my

**Only the wisdom
of God can give
us an eternity of days
with riches and honor
on this earth beautified
and adorned for our
eternal home.**

instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it" (Prov. 8:10-11). How wise to listen to her voice, considering what she is able to give us! "Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. 3:16-17). She can give us an eternity of days; a life that will never end, with riches and honor; this earth beautified and adorned for our eternal home, when peace shall flow as a river and righteousness as the waves of the sea.

MM



Visit Other “Worlds”?

“How do we know that we, if inheritors of God’s ultimate Kingdom upon earth, shall visit other worlds?”

The Scriptures record a substantial number of case histories where angels visited our earth. It is inconceivable that this should be a case of one-way traffic, in which earth’s inhabitants never can participate. One of these heavenly visitants, Gabriel, revealed his name and made at least three visits to earth.

Angels appeared to Abraham and Sarah his wife. They appeared to Lot, to Moses, to Joshua, to Manoah and his wife, to Gideon, to King David, and others. Our reason tells us they must have come from somewhere. It would be wild speculation to postulate that these supermen lived or are living on earth and are keeping themselves perpetually hidden from view or from making contact with others of earth’s inhabitants.

Gabriel himself indicated the fact of his transit from a distant world. Daniel among the Hebrew captives at Babylon relates how that he was praying, confessing his sins and the sins of his people, and supplicating God for His holy city, when “the man Gabriel,...being caused to fly swiftly” touched him, and said, “O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding” (Dan. 9:21–22).

About five hundred years later this same Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, a priest of the order of Abia, this time revealing in a general way his homeland: “I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God” (Luke 1:19). God’s abode is in heaven (Eccl. 5:2). Hence, combining the two reports, we ascertain that angels travel long distances and visit our earth from their heavenly abode, and can only conclude that when Jesus’ promise of Luke 20:36 is fulfilled, and worthy mortals are made “equal to the angels,” they too can visit other parts of the universe.

Gabriel’s third and last recorded visit to earth was to

Mary to inform her that she would be the mother of Christ.

When Jesus was born the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds as they kept their flocks by night to apprise them of His birth. After he had finished his announcement “suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:9–14).

Jesus foretold that at the time of His second coming He will “send his angels, and [they] shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven” (Mark 13:27).

The preview of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, (Revelation 19) presupposes the presence of a multitude of attending angels. Verse 6 reads: “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

Obviously inter-planetary travel is part of the plan of the universe, and when the earth’s inhabitants become a part of God’s heavenly family that privilege will be extended to them.

◆ Did Paul Want Separation from Christ?

“Why would Paul want to be ‘accursed from Christ’ for the sake of his ‘kinsmen according to the flesh’?”

You apparently refer to Romans 9, where Paul is discussing the advantages God had given to the Israelite nation, and which they had spurned. He says: “That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites” (Rom. 9:2–4).

Paul was not passive, bland, or unfeeling. He had a

passionate love for his nation, and realized deeply the singular glory of their position. How could they, to whom God had given such tremendous advantages, turn coldly against God's goodness? To Paul it was inconceivable.

We cannot think for a moment that Paul truly wished himself accursed from Christ, His Gospel, His service, and the great hope of eternal life which he cherished. The phrase is merely a figure of speech to emphasize his deep concern for his brethren. Notice that he does not say that he wished himself accursed from Christ but "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ"—an expression of his deep feeling.

A footnote in the New Catholic Bible points this out: "So great was Saint Paul's longing for the salvation of his own kinsmen that he would make any possible sacrifice to that end, even to the extent of being separated from Christ, if it were permissible to entertain such a desire. That these words are merely an emphatic way of declaring his great devotion to his people, and that they are not to be taken literally, is evident from what Saint Paul has just said" in the closing verses of chapter 8. He was "persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate [him] from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

◆ Why Jesus Died

"It seems to me that Paul says Christ had to die on the cross for our sins. He, Jesus, was given over to die for us."

We cannot believe that Paul meant his statements about Jesus' death in the way they are commonly interpreted. In Romans 6 Paul explained clearly his position on Christ's death, that the important death was Jesus' own death to sin, a death which every follower of His must copy. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:10-12).

Christ died to His own will and every believer must likewise "reckon himself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." Jesus' death to His own will included His death on the Roman cross; this was His final act of obedience. But the giving up of His physical life benefited us in no way except as an example of a total surrender. The apostle Peter makes this very point: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also

suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). And this verse is in a passage which deals directly with the believer's own responsibilities in taking suffering with the right spirit, following the flawless example of Christ. Christ's was not a death in our stead but *in our behalf*, to show us the way to the same total surrender of ourselves. His death in no way relieved us from any responsibility for our own record before God. The important death which Jesus died is a death which every believer must copy. "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us" (II Tim. 2:11-12).

God wants our total obedience, just as much as He demanded the obedience of His Son. And obedience is an individual matter. Nothing Christ did can remove the stains from our record. We ourselves must remove them by doing right. The prophet Isaiah stated God's formula clearly, that we must "Cease to do evil; learn to do well"; then, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient" (Isa. 1:16-19).

There is no easy, painless way to follow Christ in His death.

◆ Concerning Membership

"How does one become a member of the Megiddo Church?"

Membership is reserved for those who have made a serious study of all the principles taught by the Church and are making a sincere effort to live by the Bible. If you are interested in specific details, please write for the publication, *Synopsis of the Principal Beliefs and Practices of the Megiddo Church*.

To become a member of the Megiddo Church, one must agree to abide by the principles set forth in the Synopsis published by the Church. He or she must agree to endeavor in every way to glorify God by a humble walk, godly conversation, and a life of holy service, at the same time making a sincere effort to abstain from all evil. He or she must be convinced of what the Bible requires and seek earnestly to perfect holiness of heart and life in the fear of God.

MM

*Make every little bit
of time count for something eternal.*

DANGER

(Continued from page 11)

Any time we take any liberty to gratify the flesh, are we not tempting God? Any time we allow ourselves to disbelieve what has been so clearly written, what is confirmed by prophecy, what is demonstrated all around us to be true and veritable, are we not tempting God?

Another aspect of tempting God might be to expose ourselves to temptation needlessly, to destructive influences we could avoid.

Against Murmuring

"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer" (I Cor. 10:10).

Unfortunately, the Israelite people went down in history as chronic complainers. They who had been brought out of the land where they were persecuted, and were being conducted to a land of promise, complained repeatedly about their food, their water, their leaders, even their God. As a result, many died in the wilderness—who might have lived to enter the Promised Land, had they changed their attitudes.

Are we any less in danger of this subtle—deadly—monster of com-

plaining, we who are so abundantly blessed? Let us beware!

Now comes the application to us: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (v. 11). The sense is not that these things took place simply to be examples to us, but that their occurrence illustrates great principles of human nature and of Divine justice; they showed the weakness of men, and their strong inclination to sin; and their need for God's help and blessing.

"They are written for our admonition." Yes, they are written for us—for any who will hear and take heed.

What are "the ends of the world" to which Paul refers? This expression is often used in the Scriptures as "the last time," "the latter day." Paul had no idea that the world would come to an end, but his phrase translated literally could be "the completion of the ages," the time allotted for the development of the people God is seeking for His future Kingdom.

We are still in that time, though it is almost expired. Let us hear these examples from history and take heed, lest we be overthrown by the same evils which proved their ruin. MM

The Darkness Can Never Be the Same Again

(Continued from page 7)

cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps" (Matt. 25:6-7).

The darkness can never be the same again because Jesus told in His parable of the servants that He would come and find some watching! "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants" (Luke 12:37-38).

In our world today, evil runs rampant and unrestrained, but only for a time. Now, at the present time, the Word of God is as a light shining in a dark place, but this condition, too, is only for a time, only "until the day dawns and the daystar," Christ the Sun of righteousness, arises (II Pet. 1:19). For He is the great coming Light of the world, and when He arrives—oh, blessed Day!—the darkness will never be the same again, for it will be gone. Forever! MM

Are You a CHAMELEON?

(Continued from page 2)

Let us look well to ourselves: Have I any chameleon characteristics in my life?

Do I ever change my skin color (modify my viewpoint) to resemble (or be less objectionable to) those around me?

Do I ever like to appear more sociable, more knowledgeable, more benevolent than I really am?

Do I take more pleasure and comfort in agreeing with another person than in being *right* before God?

Do I ever wish to be less different, less distinctive, more a part of that which I have vowed to leave?

The chameleon nature was designed for the crea-

ture's defense in the wilds of the forest or the bleak expanses of the desert. The chameleon nature is *not* for Christians. We must be just as loyal, just as true, just as guarded, just as reserved, just as fearless in our defense of truth and right wherever we are, whatever we are doing, whomever we are with; whether we are with those who are strong in the faith, or with those who are weak; with strangers to the faith, or those who are its staunchest defenders.

Leave all changeableness to the chameleon, in the forests or the desert.

Watch out for this strange—and not so unusual—trait. God will have no chameleons in His Kingdom. MM

Omissions

*It is not so much the thing I do
That causes me regret:
It's the little things I leave undone,
The things that I forget.*

*It's the words I fail to utter,
The songs I fail to sing,
The letters I forget to write
That might great comfort bring.*

*It's the little acts of kindness,
The joy I fail to give,
The smiles I fail to scatter
As day by day I live.*

*It's the sick I fail to visit,
Flowers I fail to send;
It's the hand I fail to offer
Unto a fallen friend.*

*It's not so much the thing I do
That causes me regret;
It's the little things I leave undone,
The things that I forget.*



Don't compare your goodness with the goodness of other men, but with that of the Man of Galilee.

The Bible, as no other book, will lift our vision from the murky flats of life's low levels to the sunlit summits of faith and prayer.

The Art of Forgiveness

John Wesley was traveling with a general and the general's servant when the servant greatly offended the general.

After being soundly reprimanded, the servant implored the general's forgiveness. The general snorted, "Forgive you? I never forgive anyone!"

Wesley said softly, "Then I hope, sir, that you never sin."

It is surprising how practical duty enriches the heart, how action clears and deepens the affections. Does anyone complain that the highest aspirations are transient visitors with Him, that the heavenly Spirit is a stranger to His heart? Oh, let not such a one go forth in quest of them; but rather stay at home, and set himself to honor and worship God; to read and study and obey His Word; and of their own accord the Divine guests will enter.

KEEP RIGHT

Keep to the right, as the law directs,
For such is the rule of the road.
Keep to the right, whoever expects
Safely to carry life's load.

Keep to the right with God and His Word,
Nor wander, though folly allure;
Keep to the right, nor ever be turned
From all that is holy and pure.

Keep to the right within and without,
With stranger, or kindred, or friend;
Keep to the right and you need have no doubt
That all will be well in the end.

Keep to the right in whatever you do,
Or whomever you meet on the way;
Keep to the right, and hold to the true,
From the morn till the close of the day.