

Megiddo Message

Gratefully Yours

My Vocabulary of Praise

- Faith** my implicit confidence in things unseen because they are under the knowledge and control of God
- Truth** any precept or principle decreed by God
- Peace** the inner calm I experience when my conscience is clear and my heart is right toward God and toward my fellowmen
- Trust** the silent confidence that can accept whatever is as the will of God, believing that God is working all things together for my eternal good
- Obedience** a compelling eagerness to make any sacrifice or perform any service for God with love
- Love** (for God) the willing consecration of my entire self—life, will, energy and affections—to God, in return for all that He has done and has promised to do for me
- Love** (for my brother) a reflection of God's attitude toward me; a consistent, Christlike concern for my brother and his best spiritual interest that governs all my actions toward him
- Hope** my vibrant expectation that the promises of God can actually become my own personal experience
- Gratitude** the pleasure and appreciation I feel toward God in response to all that He has done for me, recognizing my total dependence upon Him
- Blessing** anything that God allows to come into my life for my spiritual development
- Praise** my heartfelt expression of gratitude to God for measureless blessings I do not deserve
- Mercy** an attitude of forbearance, compassion and understanding toward my brother, which I would like to have Him show toward me
- Righteousness** any act, motive, feeling, thought or intent that God calls right
- Grace** God's favor to me in giving me life, acquainting me with His divine purpose, and calling me into His service.

Megiddo means . . .

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

—in God, the Creator of all life, all men, and all things.

We believe

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

We believe

—in Jesus Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in humankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible Quotations

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—*New English Bible*

NIV—*New International Version*

NASB—*New American Standard Bible*

RSV—*Revised Standard Version*

TLB—*The Living Bible*

TEV—*Today's English Version*

JB—*The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition*

Phillips—*The New Testament in Modern English*

Berkeley—*The Modern Language New Testament*

Weymouth—*The New Testament in Modern Speech*

Goodspeed—*The New Testament translated by*

Edgar J. Goodspeed

Moffatt—*The Bible, A New Translation*

About Our Cover

Our cover photo was taken at Independence River near Lowville, New York.

Megiddo Message

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| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Special Feature</i> | |
| MY VOCABULARY OF PRAISE | 2 |
| <i>Articles</i> | |
| INSIDE . . . OUTSIDE | 4 |
| The Kingdom of God has an inside and an outside | |
| THE DESOLATE WILDERNESS | 7 |
| A Chronicle from 1620 | |
| WHAT YOU SOW . . . YOU REAP | 8 |
| An eternal truth we dare not forget | |
| <i>Questions and Answers</i> | |
| Concerning: | |
| A New King for the Earth | 10 |
| Sinners in Need of Salvation | |
| Nuclear Power | |
| Eternal Punishment for the Wicked? | |
| <i>Article</i> | |
| "MY HEAD IS IN THE DIRT" | 12 |
| A Thanksgiving Reminder | |
| <i>Lines to Live By</i> | 14 |
| <i>Sermon</i> | |
| WE ARE NOT ALONE | 16 |
| <i>Article</i> | |
| THE GOD WHO REMEMBERS | 20 |
| What are we providing for Him to remember? | |
| <i>Meditating on the Word</i> | |
| BEWARE OF YOURSELF | 23 |
| On II Corinthians 13:5 | |
| <i>Article</i> | |
| GOD MEANS WHAT HE SAYS | 26 |

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

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

INSIDE...

**"Blessed are those who wash their robes
life and may go through the gates into the**

AFTER Jesus had ascended to heaven, He sent back a message by "his angel to his servant John," who testified "to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:1-2, NIV). The message is an epilogue to all that had been written before, intended especially for the strengthening and encouraging of believers who would be living at the time when He should return.

The message pictures in vivid symbolism the scenes that will take place when He shall come again, combined with stirring admonitions of warning and instruction. It is to be a critical time, the greatest in the entire history of the planet, when Christ shall return and He and the saints take over the rulership of the earth and transform it into a heavenly paradise.

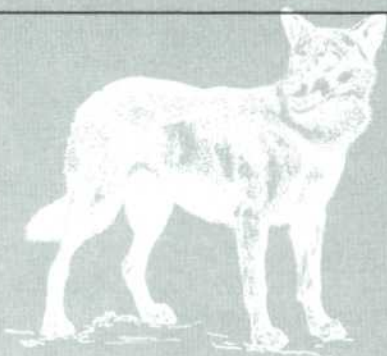
Near the close of the message, Jesus gives this special warning, as He pictures the condition in which believers will suddenly find themselves at the moment of His coming: "Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy." In these shocking words He pictures a people for whom the day of opportunity is ended, and whose destiny—for good or for ill—is sealed. The hour of mercy and pleading is passed, the long days of toiling and praying, watching and waiting are gone. It is the time of the end.

Jesus continues: "Behold, I am coming [suddenly]*! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:10-14, NIV).



OUTSIDE



hat they may have the right to the tree of
city. Outside are the dogs..." –Rev. 22:14-15, NIV

What more beautiful and encouraging message could Jesus give to faithful believers at the time of the end: to have "the right to the tree of life," and to be granted the privilege to "go through the gates into the city"! To be *inside* that glorious, eternal city! What a right!

But there is more to Jesus' message. It is this revealing fact: that the kingdom has an *IN*side, also an *OUT*side. "Blessed are those who . . . go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs. . . ." (22 :14 -15). When that day arrives, each one will be either *inside* with the blest, or *outside*, with the dogs.

Who are the dogs? Surely we do not anticipate literal dogs, but dogs are used often in Scripture to represent workers of iniquity, those who have not become pure and holy. The Revelator defines them as the "sorcerers, the impure, murderers and idolaters, and all who love and practise deceit" (Rev. 22 :15, NEB).

The warning is intended to stir us to faithfulness, loyalty, and obedience. "Outside are the dogs . . . and all who love and practise deceit."

These are no words from men, this is a message from the Eternal Realm, intended to quicken and move hearts of believers at the end of the age. This is no time for taking things easy, no time for relaxing the vigil, no time for idleness or drifting. Here is a warning that should alter the way we live every day, every hour. It moves the returning Christ to the position of center stage.



* The original word translated "soon" or "quickly" in Rev. 22 :12 is *tachu*, and means "suddenly" as well as "soon". "Suddenly" seems to describe more accurately the thought Jesus intended—it is a statement of *how* He will come rather than *when*; not "soon" in time but "by surprise, suddenly, without warning, swiftly." As one commentator has written, "by 'quickly' is not meant that the second Advent would occur soon after John completed the writing of this book. Rather, it means that the events of the second coming will occur so fast, one event quickly following another, that many will be taken completely by surprise" (Wycliffe Commentary, p. 1105).

It does more. It shows Jesus' concern for His human family. Enjoying the glory of His immortal crown and seated at the right hand of His Father, He could have been forgetful of all else; He could have been wholly unmindful of His struggling brothers and sisters on earth, but He was not. He was concerned, and made a special petition to the Father to send one more message for their guidance, one final revelation that would keep them awake and watching right up to the time when He should return. He wanted them to realize that they must use their time, their own lifetime, in whatever age it might be, to get ready for His return for, as He said, "Behold I am coming [suddenly]."

Jesus knew how easily we could forget, in the bustle of everyday, the really important things. He knew how easily we could be distracted from the things which should concern us most, hence His serious warning.

Notice also that His warning does not read simply "I am coming" but "*Behold*, I am coming..." He calls sharp attention to the fact by this abrupt interjection, suggesting that this announcement may be competing with other preoccupations in our lives, and should capture our attention. It is as if He shouted, "Look! Look! Look, I have something of importance to tell you." Forget about your goals in this world, forget about the things that annoy you, forget about the little things that trouble you, and concentrate on what really matters. Here is the most

Christ itemizes sin. Any sin not cleansed from our hearts will stand against us in that day of final accounting.

important news of all: "I AM COMING."

Does it bother any that Jesus puts so much emphasis on Himself and what He is doing and going to do, and gives so little recognition to us and the things that our race has accomplished? If so, we miss His perspective entirely. All that the human race has accomplished in the time intervening is incidental, or it is for the furtherance of His cause, His work, past and present. The future is in His hands, and under His control.

Whatever the accomplishments of the human race, we must remember that human giants fade. We see it even in our own time. Look at the great men of our own era: where are they now? Churchill is gone, Kennedy is gone, Eisenhower is gone. And the stars that glitter at the present moment will soon be gone. But not so the Coming One, He who "was and is and is to come." Says the Messiah, "Behold, I am coming," and if we recall the words of the ancient Prophet, His coming is to fill a great purpose in the plan of God: "the government shall be upon his shoulder" (Isa. 9:6). It is as if He said, "Look! I am on My way."

Jesus tells us also in this passage *why* He is coming: "Behold, I am coming [suddenly], bringing my recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done." He is coming with recompense for all His servants, rewards for the faithful, punishments for the unfaithful. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs..." (Rev. 22:14, NIV).

We should never lose sight of this fact, that there is an *inside* and an *outside* to the Kingdom. Those inside are "recompensed" abundantly. "Outside are the dogs."

Christ itemizes sin. Any sin not cleansed from our hearts and lives

will stand against us in that day of final accounting, and will place us on the *outside* with "the dogs." What a demeaning classification! It offends our sense of dignity. The very simple fact that we belong to the human race, apart from the fact of belonging to Christ, places us above the level of the dogs. What could Christ have been thinking of, to put us in such a category whatever we might do?

But God sees not as man. His thoughts are not ours, and His judgments not ours. His ways are higher, nobler—and infinitely more valid—than anything we can imagine. We talk about our "rights"—our "right" to self-determination, to our own opinion, to our own judgment. But we forget that Christ keeps His *own* standard of judgment. To Him, *right* includes all and only what God calls right. *Holy* excludes *all* wrong, everybody's wrong, even yours and mine. And whoever is not *holy* is in the category with the dogs.

The one right Christ calls important is "the right to the tree of life." Can we imagine everything that "right" will include—the right to life through countless ages to come, the right to participate in all the activities and adventures of the angels, the right to every pleasure, every joy, every happiness an immortal being can experience; the right to belong to God as His own sons and daughters, the right to share His infinite wealth of wisdom and riches! What a right!

But it is not a dream. It is a right that shall be granted to all who "wash their robes." Indeed, "Blessed are they" who have this right, for they shall "go through the gates into the city," while the dogs are left outside.

Carry on, says the Coming One. Work hard. Spend every day and hour in serious preparation, so that you can be granted that right to be *inside* the glorious city. Don't delay. "I am on My way."

MM

The Desolate Wilderness

Here beginneth the chronicle of those memorable circumstances of the year 1620, as recorded by Nathaniel Morton, keeper of the records of Plymouth Colony, based on the account of William Bradford, sometime governor thereof:

So they left that goodly and pleasant city of Leyden, which had been their resting-place for above eleven years, but they knew that they were pilgrims and strangers here below, and looked not much on these things, but lifted up their eyes to Heaven, their dearest country, where [they believed] God hath prepared for them a city (Heb. xi, 16), and therein quieted their spirits.

When they came to Delfs-Haven they found the ship and all things ready, and such of their friends as could not come with them followed after them, and sundry came from Amsterdam to see them shipt, and to take their leaves of them. One night was spent with little sleep with the most, but with friendly entertainment and Christian discourse, and other real expressions of true Christian love.

The next day they went on board, and their friends with them, where truly doleful was the sight of that sad and mournful parting, to hear what sighs and sobs and prayers did sound amongst them; what tears did gush from every eye, and pithy speeches pierced each other's heart, that sundry of the Dutch strangers that stood on the Key as spectators could not refrain from tears. But the tide (which stays for no man) calling them away, that were thus loath to depart, their Reverend Pastor, falling down on his knees, and they all with him, with watery cheeks commended them with the most fervent prayers unto the Lord and His blessing; and then with mutual embraces and many tears they took their leaves one of another, which proved to be the last leave to many of them.

Being now passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before them in expectations, they had now no friends to welcome them, no inns to entertain or refresh them, no houses, or much less towns, to repair unto to seek for succour; and for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of the country know them to be sharp and violent, subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search unknown coasts.

Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wilde beasts and wilde men? and what multitudes of them there were, they then knew not: for which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to Heaven) they could have but little solace or content in respect of any outward object; for summer being ended, all things stand in appearance with a weatherbeaten face, and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wilde and savage hew.

If they looked behind them, there was a mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a main bar or gulph to separate them from all the civil parts of the world.



What You Sow... You Reap

Each of us has a field to plow, to sow, to cultivate, and finally to reap.

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Gal. 6:7-8, NIV).

WE may as well attempt to remove the sun from the heavens as to attempt to blot out this great truth from the Word of God. It comes as Heaven's eternal decree. This law of God has been in force through the ages; it is fixed, unchangeable, unalterable, whether it be in the case of David, a king on the throne, or a priest behind the altar, as Levi. This great truth applies to the sinner, the saint, and the hypocrite who thinks he is a saint. It applies to the family; it applies to society; it applies to nations. What has become of proud Babylon, with all her glory? Where is Greece, with all her power? Where is Rome with all her majesty and greatness? When her cup of iniquity was full, she was dashed to the ground. What became of the Jewish nation and the people who rejected the holy messengers God sent? Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, they arose and slew the Lord of glory. They did not perceive a reaping time was coming. But it came. In due time their house was left unto them desolate and they bowed down to reap bitterly what they had sown.

The ancient Prophet said it another way: “they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same.” Again in the Divine Record we read these words, which lay equal emphasis on both sides of the issue: “The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward; and he that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity.”

Fellow Christians, let us not forget that our life is our seedtime. Each of us has a field to plow, to sow, to cultivate, and finally to reap. “It shall be well with the righteous,” saith the Eternal God; but unto the wicked, “it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.” If you sow to the wind you shall reap a whirlwind. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, and you shall reap in mercy.

By our daily life and conduct we are cultivating the seed for the soon coming harvest, and that Day will reveal what kind of seed we have been sowing. Weeds are easy to grow. They spring forth and flourish

without the least cultivation. What fertile soil is the heart of man. But everything that springs from the flesh, uncultivated, is weeds. "I know," says the Apostle, "that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing."

Oh, my friends, are you hoping to reap life eternal? Then cease, cease at once to sow to the flesh, or you will reap a harvest of corruption.

A great painter was once asked why he was taking so much pains with his work. His answer was, "I am painting for eternity." It is indeed a solemn thought that the future will be the harvest of the present. Some say that the mills of God grind slowly. True, but they grind exceeding small. And our Master said, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

What kind of seed are you sowing? What will the harvest be? Will it be black and blighted; or are you going to have a joyful harvest, coming forth singing and rejoicing bringing your sheaves with you?

Do not think for a moment that when you sow tares, wheat will come up. Do not deceive yourselves and think you can give a loose rein to your ungodly lusts and make provisions for the flesh to fulfill its groveling desires, and then expect a bountiful harvest of joy from the Eternal. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked." Whatever you sow, you will reap, and all sowing to the flesh is sure to bring a harvest of corruption.

Fellow Christians, the seed of God has been placed in our hands to yield a bountiful harvest, or we can do as the Sioux Indians who, when the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent them a supply of grain for sowing, ate it up! Men on every side are sacrificing their eternal future to enjoy the present moment. But we only deceive ourselves if we think we can sow to the flesh and reap a harvest of the Spirit. There is no bridge or connection between the two; on one hand

corruption, on the other, life without end.

A teacher had been relating to her class the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Now came the question, "Which one would you rather be, the rich man or Lazarus?" A boy quickly answered, "I would rather be the rich man while I live, and Lazarus when I die." But that cannot be; it is either flesh and corruption, or the Spirit and life everlasting. God does not pay every week, but He pays at last. And when He pays, if there is sin, "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

I read in this blessed Book, that "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Ps. 126:5). There have not been enough tears, tears of the right kind. God does not want crocodile tears, or tears that trickle down when the old man of sin cannot have his own way. They must be tears of deep contrition; tears that come from deep searchings of heart, a mourning for our sins that will bring a godly sorrow; a true repentance not to be repented of.

We will never roll in a great and bountiful harvest until we stop sowing to the flesh and sow only to the Spirit. Then God will cast our past sins behind His back. It is a good place to have them. They will be forgotten, they will never be so much as mentioned against us. He will put them away "as far as the east is from the west"—if we repent and turn from them. On the other hand, if we try to conceal and bury them, our neighbor some day will dig them up and there will be a resurrection which had not been anticipated.

Men and women are so shortsighted; because they cannot immediately cut the coupon from the bonds of self-denial they think there is no interest coming. They want the harvest before it matures. They become weary in well doing. They have no patience to wait for the reaping time. "O fools, and slow of heart," said Jesus, "to believe

all that has been written" (Luke 24:25). Again He said, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14)—not only with the interest coming but exceedingly above all we can ask or think (Eph. 3:20).

Do not think that we will ever roll in a bountiful harvest by planting a seed here and there. In the physical realm, men do not reason that way. They say it will take so much grain to plant an acre; but some think that God is going to roll in a big harvest and fill their barns after they have been stingily and sparingly sowing.

The apostle Paul should be a wonderful authority on spiritual planting and watering, and he says, "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (II Cor. 9:6). Men deceive themselves thinking that because the Eternal does not declare a dividend every year on investments of wrong doing, there is nothing accruing. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). God is slow to anger (Ps. 103:8), He is slow to execute His judgments, but He will never acquit the wicked. You can be sure and certain that when the work of sin is done, the wages of sin will be paid. And those wages are guaranteed: they are nothing more or less than death (Rom. 6:23).

There is a time to plant, but let us not forget there is also a time to pluck up. Everything but the wheat will be rooted up. The tares shall flourish no longer. If we have planted strange slips, they will be plucked up, too. You may think these strange plants of a degenerate nature look pretty as they flourish and grow, but "the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow" (Jer. 2:21; Isa. 17:11). "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). *(Continued on page 25)*

A New King for the Earth

"When Jesus returns to be King, will He be King of heaven, too?"

No, Christ is coming back to be king of the earth. Numerous statements in Scripture support this. For example, the words of the prophet Zechariah: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9). Also the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 72, "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:7-8).

The prophecy of Daniel speaks of the "kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" being "given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:27). And the same Prophet identifies who is to be the Ruler of that Kingdom, and of what His kingdom will consist: it will include "all people, nations, and languages." We read (Dan. 7:13-14): "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

The dominion of the earth was the promise of the angel concerning Jesus made to Mary before Jesus was born: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). The "throne of his father David," while not intended to be taken literally, does not in any way indicate a kingdom in heaven.

The Bible pictures a literal kingdom on earth, with its

metropolis at Jerusalem, the "City of the great King" (Ps. 48:1-2; Matt. 5:35).

The prophet Zechariah also pictured the earth as the dominion of Christ, with headquarters at Jerusalem. We read: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zech. 2:10-12).

The prophet Micah saw the arrangement as including only the earth, with the "law" going forth from "Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2-4); see also Isaiah 2:2-4—definitely a kingdom on earth.

The prophet Isaiah also pictures the earth as Christ's dominion: "The Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" (Isa. 24:23).

The prophet Isaiah again pictures Christ, speaking prophetically, as coming from the "stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:...with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." The glorious result will be that the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:1-9)—a clear statement of a government prevailing on the earth.

The very name of Christ is "Emmanuel," which means, "God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

The earth—not heaven—has been designated to be the eternal abode of our race. The divine plan was stated plainly by the Psalmist in chapter 115: "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men."

In the book of Revelation, Christ is pictured as the

supreme King, with His co-rulers, the saints. His promise to the faithful is that they will share His throne on earth, just as He overcame and at that time was seated with His Father on His throne in heaven (Rev. 3:21).

The saints are "kings and priests" who shall "reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10), and Christ is the supreme "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16; 17:14).

The apostle Paul had the same picture of Christ reigning on the earth, sharing the kingdom with His saints on earth: the faithful will be "joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). And, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Tim. 2:12). If the saints "reign with Christ," and "reign on the earth," Christ will surely be King of earth, not heaven.

• Sinners in Need of Salvation

"Do you view men as sinners in need of salvation from birth? What do you mean by superior, chosen?"

For a more complete answer to your question, I would refer you to our booklet, "What Must I Do To Be Saved?" But briefly let me try to summarize:

Yes, we do believe that mankind are sinners from birth, but not because of what is commonly termed the "Fall." Our sinful tendency has nothing at all to do with the transgression of Adam. We are "sinners" because our natural inclinations tend to evil. As the apostle Paul said, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). We are naturally sinful by nature ("In sin did my mother conceive me"—Ps. 51:5). We become righteous only as we make a conscious effort to develop our character according to the likeness of Christ our perfect Pattern, as we "cease to do evil," and "learn to do well"; as we "put off the old nature, which is corrupt," and "put on the new" (Eph. 4:22-29).

All men are by nature sinful; however, not having placed themselves under covenant to obey the law of God, they are not accountable for their sin. This policy is an example of God's fairness, in that He does not hold one accountable for a law he does not know or has not agreed to abide by. The apostle Paul was aware of this superior arrangement when he wrote in Romans 2: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.)" We are not accountable to any law until we pledge ourselves to obey that law.

But those who place themselves under that law are responsible to obey it. By placing themselves under the law, they become eligible for the benefits of obedience,

also for the penalties for disobedience. This is the purpose of the judgment, to separate those who have been obedient and are therefore eligible for the benefits of the law, from those who disobey and are thus ineligible (See II Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:31-46; Matt. 7:21-22; Matt. 7:13-14).

The Bible does not uphold any "natural superiority." The only superiority God recognizes is that which comes from a proven quality of obedience. The prophet Isaiah describes the superiority that draws God's attention: "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:2, NIV). We are not saved or damned according to any predestined plan or unpredictable caprice of divinity. It is said of the saints who reign with Christ that they are "called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). They are specially selected according to their qualifications as individuals, according to their obedience (Rom. 2:6-8).

• Nuclear Power

"Did God direct scientists to make nuclear weapons to destroy us?"

No, we do not believe that He did. And we are not concerned about the possibility of an all-out nuclear war before the return of Christ. The Bible states that God created the earth "to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:17-18), and destroying all life on the earth could not be harmonized with this purpose.

God is overseeing the affairs of humankind, and when the time is right He will intervene and send His Son to establish His worldwide kingdom of righteousness and peace (see Matt. 6:10; Acts 3:19; Dan. 7:27; 2:44).

Furthermore, those who are serving God are promised protection: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7).

• Eternal Punishment for the Wicked?

"What about eternal punishment for those who reject Jesus? What happens to them?"

Almost everyone agrees that the wicked receive eternal punishment, but what is to be the nature of that punishment?

In Jesus' first sermon, He described two roads, one leading to life, and the other to death or destruction. We do not believe that any torment or state of torture awaits the wicked or unfaithful. They simply die, and are thus excluded eternally from the blessings of the righteous and

the glory of Christ's kingdom (see II Thess. 1: 7 - 9, Rom. 6: 23; Prov. 2: 21- 22). It is said to be "eternal punishment" because it is eternal in its duration, not because they must suffer eternally. Even in the symbolic book of Revelation, the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" is clearly stated to be "the second death" (Rev. 21: 8). The state of death is a state of total unconsciousness, not a state in which one suffers physical pain.

The punishment of the unfaithful will be in their having to witness the glory and joy that could have been their own but of which they cannot partake because of their own negligence and disobedience. In the words of Jesus, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13: 28). MM

Our Goliaths

As we look at the courage of David when challenged by this Goliath, let us look at our own lives and judge our courage and faith when we are faced by our Goliaths. Our Goliath may not carry a sword or hurl a verbal challenge of insult that all may hear and force us to decision. He may not be ten feet tall, but his silent challenge may spur us to action.

One person's Goliath may be envy, another's may be pride, another's selfishness. One may have an unruly tongue, another may not have mastered his anger.

But whatever the Goliath is in our lives, the battle is no less important than the battle fought by David. Our giant, our Goliath must be conquered. We must draw upon prayer and seek God's help, remembering that we need not go forth alone to battle. We can find assistance and receive help from Him of whom David wrote in his inspired Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want."
—Contributed

A Thanksgiving Reminder

"My Head Is In the Dirt"

FROM the tribesmen of French West Africa comes a singular expression of gratitude. When they say "Thank you," in their language, they are saying literally, "My head is in the dirt." The expression comes apparently from the tribal custom of showing thanks by bowing low before another and actually pressing one's head into the dirt. For these Africans, thanksgiving dictates a humble spirit before the one to whom one is indebted.

In another African dialect, the expression for thankfulness is "To sit down on the ground before." The thankful one will go to the home of his benefactor and sit on the ground in front of his hut. No word needs to be spoken, his silent sitting signifies his gratitude.

The one who is truly thankful to God has a similar feeling, one of humility, one of willingness to sit and enjoy God's presence. He is not content merely to go his way and forget; gratitude demands that he seek God's presence and fellowship.

Gratitude is close to the heart of the Christian's affections. We have no way to repay God for what He has done for us. Try as we may, there is nothing we can do that can approximate even a thousandth part of what He has done for us. How appropriate the expression: "My head is in the dirt." The best we can do is so little compared with His munificence.

What an ugly blot, then, is any feeling of ingratitude on our part.

Sir Winston Churchill once told a little story which illustrates the ugliness of ingratitude.
(Continued next page)

A sailor had plunged into the waters of Plymouth Harbor to rescue a small boy from drowning. A few days later the gallant hero met the boy with his mother on the streets of Plymouth. The youngster nudged his mother, who remembered at once having seen the seaman somewhere. But she couldn't be positive about it, so she asked, "Are you the man who pulled my little boy out of the water the other day?"

The sailor grinned, saluted, and answered briskly, "Yes, Ma'am." Already in the back of his mind he was figuring how best to respond to her thanks.

But the woman saved him the trouble. Her face set in stern lines and her lips unsmiling, she snapped back: "Then where's his cap?"

We can hope that most people will not be so thoughtless and thankless in the presence of a benefactor. But how does any ingratitude in us appear to the God to whom we owe everything we have and are, our life, our breath, our powers of speech and thought, our powers of reason, and every good that we enjoy and have enjoyed through each and every hour of our lives to this moment?

How vivid is our sense of gratitude to the God whose finger is present in everything, and who deals so generously with us who have often been so undeserving of His goodness?

Do we take our blessings for granted? Or do we take them with gratitude, realizing just where they come from and tracing all to their Divine starting point.

True gratitude is closely associated with giving of ourselves. It says, with the Psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?" (Ps. 116:12). There is no adequate answer to this question, for the Psalmist or for us—except our humble expression of gratitude.

Expressing praise and thanksgiving to God for blessings we receive is the only right thing to do. Gratitude demands expression, however, other than just words. Sincere words mean

much, but they are not enough.

Thanksgiving Day comes each year to remind us of the gratitude we owe to God. The apostle Paul said, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20). "Giving thanks always for all things" — have you tried it? Have you tried it for even a single day?

The writer to the Hebrews says it in other words: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15). *All things* in our lives should *always* (note the word "continually") draw from us a heartfelt expression of praise to our heavenly Father. It is not enough to know that "His way is perfect"; our *life* must be a "sacrifice of praise" offered to God "continually." Praise to God should be our meat and drink, our breath, our very life.

We who have been called to be "partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4), partakers in Christ (Heb. 3:14) and of the heavenly calling (v. 1); we who have been called to be sons and daughters of God Almighty (John 1:12, II Cor. 6:17-18)—who has greater reason than we for praise!

Are there times when we feel cold and distant? Do disappointment and discouragement seem all too real to us? Then listen to the words of the Psalmist as he woos us into the presence of the King: "Come before his presence with singing....Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Ps. 100).

The Psalmist in trying to tell what God had done for him said that the

Lord had changed his outlook so completely that it had transformed the whole tenor of his personality. "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God" (Ps. 40:3).

The new song was a song of praise. This sets us to thinking: What was the old song like? It must have been one of lament and complaint. What, we wonder, brought about the change from lament to praise?

The Psalmist himself tells us: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Ps. 40:1-2).

True praise seeks to glorify God, never to draw attention to one's self. True praise realizes that "My head is in the dirt." True praise forces us to recognize our lowly condition, to realize that "My head is in the dirt," in relation to our heavenly Father. True praise is the heart overflowing with gratitude in the quiet, commonplace things of life.

The strongest can praise; the feeblest can praise. Each single moment we can continue into His courts with praise. We can all begin, now, this very moment, to "come before his presence with singing....enter into his gates of thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise." We can all, as it were, say, "My head is in the dirt" as we look up gratefully to the Father who alone has designed a way to rescue us from our lowly mortal state and exalt us to the level of the immortals, when "death is swallowed up in victory."

What more could we ask!

MM

"What do you say—?" isn't just for children.
Our whole life should be a "Thank You" to
our Heavenly Father, or we show ourselves
most unworthy children.



Father:

For grief unsuffered, tears unshed;
For clouds that scattered overhead;
For pestilence that came not nigh;
For dangers great that passed me by;
For sharp suspicion soothed, allayed;
For doubt dispelled that made afraid;
For fierce temptation well withstood;
For evil plot which brought forth good;
For weakened links in friendship's chain
That, sorely tested, stood the strain;
For harmless blows with malice dealt;
For base ingratitude unfelt;
For hatred's keen unuttered word;
For bitter thoughts, unvoiced, unheard:
For blessings I will never know,
That gave me strength, and helped me grow,
I am

Gratefully Yours

Watch Your Words

Keep a watch on your words, my children,
For words are wonderful things;
They are sweet, like the bees' fresh honey;
Or like bees, they have terrible stings;
They can bless like the warm glad sunshine
And brighten the lonely life;
They can cut in the strife of anger
Like the blade of a two-edged knife.

Let them pass through your lips unchallenged,
If their errand be true and kind—
If they come to support the weary,
To comfort and help the blind.
If a bitter, revengeful spirit
Prompt the words, let them be unsaid;
They may flash through the brain like lightning,
Or fall on the heart like lead.

Keep them back, if they're cold and cruel,
Under bar, and lock, and seal;
The wounds they make, my children,
Are always slow to heal.
May Christ guard your lips, and ever,
From the time of your early youth,
May the words you daily utter
Be the beautiful words of truth.

Not what we get, but what we give,
measures the worth of the life we live.

*You can give without loving, but you
can't love without giving.*

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver—until
he brags about it.

*Charity gives itself rich; covetousness
hoards itself poor.*

If you feel you're "taking a beating,"
cheer up; maybe God is just stirring the
batter to make you a blessing.

*Not what we have but what we enjoy
constitutes our abundance.*

Praise God for all that is past, and trust
Him for all that is to come.

*God always gives us strength to bear our troubles day by day, but He never calculated on
our piling our troubles from yesterday and those coming tomorrow on top of those of today.*

POINTS for the MONTH

Week 1: We cannot go in the old way and reach the new goal.

Week 2: Work willingly—it works wonders.

Week 3: For God to use us to the full we must walk close to Him.

Week 4: When trouble comes, we have the power to decide whether we will be bitter or
better.

We Are Not Alone

Scripture Lesson: Psalm 91:1-4

**If we are cooperating with God's will for us,
if we are exchanging our ways for His, we are not alone.**

**As we give up
our way for God's,
He goes with us.
"Never will I leave
you, Never will I forsake
you" (Heb. 13:5, NIV).**

TO BE alone is one of the most fearsome of human plights. To be forced to face life alone through times of pain or suffering or loss, or even joy and success, with no one to care or share, is something everyone seeks to avoid.

But to be lacking *human* help is one thing; to be without God or hope in the world is another, and incomparably worse plight.

And God be praised, this latter is a situation we can avoid.

Thank God for the companions and friendships He has provided to soften the hard places of life. Thank Him that we are able to care and share with one another. Thank Him for all that He has done to make our lives pleasant and our loads bearable.

But try as we may, we soon realize that we are up against forces, and circumstances beyond our control. Try as we may, we cannot assure that our pleasant associations will continue right through to the end of our lives; the best, as well as the worst in this world, is temporary.

However, if we look deeper, if we are able to see our lives in an eternal perspective, these very unwanted circumstances may be the hand of God drawing us to Him, compelling us to

trust Him above all, teaching us in very real terms that "the things which are seen are temporal"; that only "the things that are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:18).

Even if we find ourselves without human support, we can still know that there is no circumstance of life that can separate us from God unless we allow it. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide"—no question about it, such a one "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 91:1). And how can we fear if we are within His protecting shadow?

There is no power in the whole universe that can separate what God has joined—the one who is truly determined to be His, who is seeking His Kingdom, His approval, His righteousness, His rewards above all else.

What does this mean? It means that if we truly love God, if we surrender our natural right to trust ourselves, if we give up our lives to do His will, to speak His words, to think His thoughts, to adopt His pattern of life for us, we are not alone, and no power in the whole universe can ever separate us from Him.

This was the persuasion voiced by the apostle Paul in that memorable passage in his letter to the Romans. We

Note: *We Are Not Alone* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

We are not the first to struggle with feelings of worthlessness, of seemingly futile longings to be and to do.

read: "For I am absolutely convinced that neither death nor life, neither messenger of Heaven nor monarch of earth, neither what happens today nor what may happen tomorrow, neither a power from on high nor a power from below, nor anything else in God's whole world has any power to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39, Phillips).

This mighty confidence has been the strength and support of God's people in all ages. Circumstances may have seemed against them, but what did it matter, if God was working all things together for their eternal good! Whatever else they might lose, whatever the suffering, whatever the trial they might have to face, it was only for a moment and then all the measureless blessings of eternity would be theirs. With God on their side, they could not be defeated.

This was the spirit in which the prophets of old lived, and which they did their best to infuse into those who heard them.

There is another cause for a feeling of aloneness which some people today are experiencing. It is a feeling of futility that comes from a realization of the vastness of the creation—of which we are an infinitesimal part.

As scientists are able to peer further and further into the depths of space, the creation seems to expand, and our part in it becomes smaller and smaller.

We go outside on a starry night and realize that we are gazing into a vastness beyond fathoming; scientists tell us that there are billions of universes—and each universe contains

billions of galaxies, and each galaxy contains billions of stars. And around some of these stars, they believe, are little dark, orbiting planets like ours.

As time goes on, scientists using more and more powerful telescopes are able to see deeper and deeper into the heavenly wonders. Just recently an astronomer at Michigan State University reported the discovery of what is believed to be the largest galaxy in our universe, a galaxy which they estimate to be 13 times larger than our massive Milky Way, with its hundred billion suns. So distant is the galaxy that its dazzling light is all but lost as it travels for billions of years across the countless trillions of miles of space that separate it from us.

Are we, too, tempted to feel alone and worthless as we contemplate this immensity?

Let it rather speak to us of the greatness of the God we serve, and of the surety of His power to do for us what He has already done for countless beings before us. Yes, "this God is our God forever and ever." Even in all this vastness our little lives *can* count—when we place ourselves on His side.

Yes, God has promised, if we are His faithful children, to acknowledge us, to work with us, to preserve us, to remember us, to keep us, and ultimately to reward us with the richest of His blessings, "even life forevermore." He has promised to do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20)—if we will just cooperate with Him, if we will trust our lives to His directing, if we will exchange our

ways for His, and our thoughts for His. If we are doing all this, if we are His, *we are not alone*. Is it not a most gracious promise?

Heavenly Help

We come together because we have caught a glimpse of this worthfulness. We have become convinced that there is something beyond, something greater than ourselves. We have been granted an insight into wonders too marvelous to comprehend. We serve a great King; we honor a great Creator; we belong to a great God.

Yet we fear. We are so small, so weak, so powerless to help ourselves. We believe with all our heart that the great things God has promised *will* come to pass; yet, with all the disillusionment and despair and disbelief around us, it is not easy to be strong in faith. It is not easy to see the real worth and magnitude of our cause. We need some reassurance, as it were, some message from God, some telegram from heaven to say to us, "Hold on a little longer—help is on the way!"

We are not the first to experience this struggle with feelings of worthlessness, of seemingly futile longings to be and to do, the desire for something great, something open. Years ago a certain people had a similar problem. To strengthen them, the prophet Isaiah addressed some heartening words from which we today can take courage. In fact, they are directed even more precisely to us than to them. They are recorded in the 51st chapter of Isaiah. Let us read the passage (TLB):

"Listen to me, all who hope for deliverance, who seek the Lord! Consider the quarry from which you were mined, the rock from which you were cut! Yes, think about your ancestors Abraham and Sarah, from whom you came. You worry at being so small and few, but Abraham was only one when I called him. But when I blessed him, he became a great nation. And the Lord will bless Israel again, and make her deserts blossom; her barren wilderness will become as beautiful as the Garden of Eden. Joy and gladness will be found there, thanksgiving and lovely songs" (Isa. 51:1-3, TLB).

"Listen," says the Prophet, "all who hope for deliverance, who seek the Lord." To whom does he speak?

**To David, the
most dreadful of
all thoughts was
that God might
forsake him.
To lose God was
to lose everything.**

Is it possible that *we* may qualify as part of the Israel God will bless? The natural Israelites, of themselves, were few and weak; but they enjoyed a rich heritage in God. They had been cut from a noble quarry. Behind them were great names of faith: Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob. "And the Lord will bless Israel again."

May we not be among them, the greater "Israel" whom He has promised to bless in His own good time? Can we not claim this promise, too—if we are His people?

Looking still deeper into this passage, is it not a lesson that God regards quality above quantity? "Abra-

ham was only one," but he was one God chose. And when God chooses one, it tells us something about the *quality* of that one. Is not God willing and able to bless and glorify *any* remnant He chooses?

And so the Prophet says: "Look at the Rock from which you have been carved, look at the One to whom you belong, the One who is behind you, supporting you, upholding you, and making you what you are.... Don't worry at being so small and few... You look up to Abraham, and Abraham was only one when I called him, one just like you. It was I who made Abraham great." If we are weak and small, that is God's problem, not ours.

God Supports His Own

Many are the people of God through the ages who would have been overwhelmed but for this steadying, heavenly support.

Look at the life of David. Very early in life, David learned to trust God. Scarcely out of his teens, he had to flee for his life from the jealous Saul. Again and again he was forced to flee, even though he knew he was innocent; even though he was the anointed king-to-be. Again and again he found himself alone, with only the presence of God for company. He was alone, and yet he was not; for the God he served and revered was with him.

Many are the Psalms that David wrote during this time, before he was thirty years of age; and through them all shines his confident trust in the presence of God with him. During those early years he was building the reverence and faith he would need to carry him through the strenuous days of kingship. During those early years he was building the close fellowship with God which he would need to steady him upon the throne.

Read the Psalms and notice how all sufficient the Lord was to David.

The Lord was David's buckler, his staff, his stay, his strong arm, his shield, and him that "girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect." God was his salvation, and "thy right hand holdeth me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great" (Ps. 18:32-35). God was his rock, his fortress, his deliverer, and the horn of his salvation. He was not alone. Hear the prayer he voices: "I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Show thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee.... Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings" (Ps. 17:6-8).

To David, the most dreadful of all thoughts was the thought that God might forsake him. To lose God would be to lose everything. "Forsake me not utterly," he pleaded (Ps. 119:8). Even in the most humiliating moments of deepest sin and repentance, his greatest fear was not that of punishment but of being cast aside by God. "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure... Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation" (38:1, 21-22). When given his choice of a punishment for his sin in numbering Israel, his only answer was, "let me fall now into the hand of the Lord, for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man" (I Chron. 21:13).

Look at the prophet Samuel. When he was scarcely grown up, Eli the high priest, who had guided him through childhood, died, and Samuel found himself without any strong support, save his God. We wonder why, yet can we say that God did not know? Was this perhaps God's unique and special way of drawing Samuel to Himself?

A young prophet in Israel, Samuel faced an all but impossible task. Of the first twenty years of his adult career we know nothing, save that he was judging Israel, for we read that Samuel judged Israel "all the days of his life." Through much of it, there seemed to be nothing eventful enough to even make the record. But during this time, Samuel was building a favorable record before God. He was seeking God, serving God, praying, and growing stronger and stronger in the faith of his fathers; we know, because when crisis hour arrived and Israel demanded a king—and rejected Samuel—these are the noble qualities of character that shine in Samuel.

It was a dramatic hour. The forces of the Philistines were coming against Israel. The people had gathered not for battle but for revival. But Samuel did not panic. Instead, as was obviously his habit, he turned for help to God, and God responded in a most wonderful way, sending terrifying thunder upon the Philistines so that they turned and ran—and all the Israelites had to do was pursue them. It was a moment of high courage and triumph for Samuel's faith. Samuel was not alone.

Think also of the three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, refusing to bow down to the golden image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up. Honorable mention is given them in Hebrews 11: they "quenched the violence of fire." And so they did. There is a popular song which runs to their credit: "Wouldn't bow, wouldn't budge, wouldn't burn." And it is

true. Tough men were they, these men of God, so tough that no power in earth could make them compromise their conviction. If they had to stand alone, they would still stand, not bow.

Even in the presence of the furious Nebuchadnezzar their determination was unmoved: "*We will not bow down, or worship your gods.*" There was no evidence of any watching Divine presence as they continued to

Let Us Pray...

LORD, thou who hast been our dwelling place in all generations; who knowest our hearts and our minds every one, and art acquainted with all our ways: we come before Thee this morning with the reverence due Thy Name.

Thou who art from everlasting to everlasting, we come to Thee with hearts filled with gratitude for Thy overflowing goodness to us; every good and perfect gift comes from Thee. We thank Thee for blessings of life and health, for food and sustenance, for family and friends, and all the helpful circumstances Thou hast arranged that our lives may be meaningful and rich.

During this season of prayer, may we think solely upon Thee and the great purpose Thou hast brought into our lives, the unspeakable opportunity Thou hast set before us, that of preparing ourselves for real life. Help us never to lose sight of it for a moment, even during the most ordinary or most trying day.

In all the struggles and testings of life, help us to learn patience, humility and trust. When we must give up our will, teach us Thine, and that Thy will is as far above ours as the heavens are above the earth. When we cannot see, teach us to trust; We know that Thou wilt be true; may we be true to Thee.

Father, help us to stand on Thy promises, to know that Thou wilt allow nothing to come into our lives that will hinder Thy purposes for us; no trial we cannot surmount, no temptation we cannot meet, no inclination of the flesh that we cannot overcome. If we fail, it is our own fault.

We thank Thee for the promise of Thyself, that if we are truly Thine, Thou wilt never leave us alone; Thou wilt never forsake one who is seeking Thee in sincerity and in truth.

Wise Father, grace us with wisdom in speech. And as we speak often to one another, may our one topic be Thy Name, and may our words be such as will delight Thy ears, and such as we will rejoice to have repeated back to us at the day when the judgment is set and the books are opened.

Father, we pray Thee to be with Thy people in every circumstance of life. Uphold the suffering, steady the faltering, strengthen the weak, and assure each of us anew that we do not fight our battles alone; that if we are with Thee, Thou art with us and wilt assure our final victory. With Thee we cannot fail.

Father, hear us as we draw near to Thee, yielded and still. Amen.

**If we truly love God, and adopt His pattern
of life for us, we are not alone, and no power in the
universe can separate us from Him.**

stand, nor was there as the soldiers seized them, roughly bound them with cords, and slung them into the midst of the fiery furnace. The men who threw them into the furnace perished from the intense heat, but the three Hebrew children *in the midst* of the fiery flames suffered not at all. Here was *visible* evidence that they were *not* alone. Suddenly the unseen guardian became visible as a fourth person in the flames. The angel had doubtless been standing with them all the time, but unseen. Now they—and everyone else—*knew* that they were not alone.

Think of Jesus in the garden. There was no evidence of any helping hand, or sustaining Divine pres-

ence at this most critical hour. Yet, when Jesus had stood the test, when He had relinquished the last hold on His own will and could say, "Father, not as I wilt, but as Thou wilt," there appeared suddenly "an angel of the Lord, strengthening Him." He was not alone.

When the sea was raging angrily, mercilessly tossing a tiny craft, and its precious cargo included the apostle Paul, the beloved Luke, and all who were with them, it was a lonely hour. After two days, their strength was spent. After three days, they lightened the ship, hoping to improve their chances of survival. But for another 11 days the angry sea continued to rage. Nothing but a few

thin and cracking boards separated them from an immense, watery grave. All hope that they would be saved was gone. They were alone. Yet they were not alone, for one night the angel of the Lord stood by his beloved Paul, and assured him of His protecting presence. They were not alone.

Years later when this same Apostle stood at last before the heartless Nero to receive his sentence of death, and knew that his hours of mortal life were numbered, what more lonely experience could a mortal face. There was no visible sign of the Divine presence. But the noble, victorious Apostle did not fear. Well he knew that the same angel who had stood

The God Who Remembers

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him"

(Mal. 3:16-17).

IN this magnificent passage the prophet Malachi presents God's "NeverAlone Insurance Plan." It is a promise with a guarantee: "They shall be mine,... and I will spare them."

We can see at once that the plan is attractive. What are its terms and conditions?

First, the people who can claim this promise are all *God-fearing*—they *fear* the Lord and reverence His name. There is a holy awe and regard for His majesty in their hearts and in their lives. It is a wholly dominating attitude of mind. Not for a moment do they forget Him. There are no dark corners in their lives which His light does not discern, illuminate, and purify.

Then, they are *God-thinking*—they *think* upon His name. And when we realize that His name is called the Word of God (Rev. 19:17), is it not a most wonderful realm in which they roam? They do not leave their minds open to whatever vagrant thoughts may come or go. Consciously they exert the effort and

confine their thinking to "His name": they think "upon his name." Whatever they are doing, their minds are dominated by this: that they hold God and His law in highest esteem. Here is all their concern, all their desire, and all their thought. They prize it so highly and set such value upon it that it is constantly on their minds. Nothing in life is too compelling or too important to distract them. Everything else is viewed or thought about as through this one holy looking glass.

As a natural result, they are *God-speaking*—they *speak often one to another* about the things that mean the most to them—their God, their glorious hope, and all that pertains to it. The reality of this rich fellowship is constantly with them. Their whole lives are bound up in God, and as a result—and quite naturally—He is the central topic of their conversation. They live and work very much as other men and women, but all the while their minds are drawn to God. All of life is pervaded by their sense of duty to God; all of life

by him on the sea was with him now, and nothing the mighty Emperor might do could change it. And even as he heard the fatal sentence, he saw more dazzling than all, the glory of the immortal crown awaiting him—now only a few conscious moments away (in death he would know nothing). He was not alone.

When the apostle John was banished to lonely Patmos, with only the hostile winds and barren rocks for company, with no human voice to cheer or human hand to comfort, he was indeed alone. Yet we know that God was watching. He was not alone. All unknown to John, the script for the great revelation was even then being prepared for the glo-

rious drama he would soon behold, in which John himself was to be the principal actor, along with Christ and the angels. What glorious company! Truly, he was not alone!

God Still Supports

Let us never feel that we are alone as we fight our battles against sin. Nor are we the first to encounter the trials that are ours; the road that we are traveling is nothing new and untried. Thousands, millions, and billions have traveled it before us—is not God the “Lord God of hosts”? And are they not every one a victor? They, too, had to battle with sin; they, too, had to win.

We are not alone, for *God is with*

**When we have done
all that we can do,
and our strength
fails, God will help.**

us. However high the waves, however raging the storm; however difficult the test, if we are doing on our part, God is with us. And now, in this late hour, we need Him as never before. We need His strong, loving arm to help us.

A man once told how as a young lad he lived with his family on a rocky point that jutted out like a long arm into a deep ocean bay. To

becomes a worship and a prayer. Their work is to the Lord; and whatever they do, they use their minds, their bodies, their wills not as *their* property, for *their* gratification or satisfaction, but as God's. In God is their highest love, their purest joy, their deepest delight.

As a result, they can live *in* the world while being no part of it. In the midst of the grossest spiritual ignorance, they maintain an active, vibrant spiritual life. Wherever they are, whatever they are doing, they are conscious of God and their duty to Him. When alone, they meditate. When together, they converse. Their whole life is flooded with God, rich in faith and glowing with hope.

So exemplary is their conduct, so fruitful is their rich, disciplined thought-life, and so well-chosen and so distinctive are their speakings one to another that they draw the attention of the great God of heaven: “the Lord hearkened and heard.” When they speak, He takes notice; He stops to listen!

Still more, He directs His angel to write down those words that He has heard in a “book of remembrance,” to testify to their credit in the Day when they shall be singled out for high honors.

Do *our* words qualify for this distinguished recognition of the great God?

Are our words such that we want the Lord to hear?

What are their words that meet with such ecstatic approval on high?

They are words that reflect the honor and glory we owe to our great God. They are words expressing to God our heartfelt gratitude and supreme delight for the opportunities He has extended to us, for inviting us to be part of His eternal family.

They are words that strengthen faith and build confidence in God. They are words that feel and say firmly, “I believe... I know... this is of God.”

When we have erred, they are words of humble penitence and regret: “I am sorry, I was wrong.” Again, they are words of firm determination and resolve: “I will *never* stoop to that again.”

They are words by which we seek God's forgiveness and restoration: “Lord, I pray, forgive my foolish ways.”

They are words that acknowledge our need for God and our total dependence upon God, that say: “Lord, I need You, more than I can ever realize. I need You every moment, every hour.”

They are words of humble submission, by which we give up our will and accept His. They are the heart saying, in the midst of painful testing, “Lord, if it be possible, deliver me from this; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

They are words by which we encourage and strengthen one another in the Lord. They are words which say, “I can, I must, and I will...”

They are words by which we stimulate ourselves

get to that point from the mainland, he says, "you had a choice. You could row a boat three miles across the deep ocean bay, or you could walk seven miles by land. Of course, I rowed the boat."

One night as he was on his way home, a fierce storm blew up, and the quiet bay became an angry, raging sea. "The wind was against me," he said. "I was within sight of that point, but my strength was going fast. I was pulling for all I was worth, but I couldn't seem to make any headway. I was losing out, and I knew it. The wind was just too

strong. I turned around once more to be sure I could still see the point. And when I turned I saw it. And standing there at the point was my Dad. I pulled harder than ever, to get as close to the point as I could, and when it seemed I could do no more, there was my Dad, wading out into the ocean. With his strong muscular arm he grabbed hold of my boat so it wouldn't be swamped by the waves or dashed against the rocks, and pulled me to safety. I had always believed my Dad loved me, but that night I knew it."

Now that is what God does for us.

When we have done all that we can do, and our strength fails, He is there to help us. We can *depend* on it—He is there, and He will not let one sincere, believing heart be lost. When human hands fail and human hopes are dashed and the waves would almost overwhelm us, He will be there, and will bring us safe to shore.

This God is our God forever and ever. Even now He is watching. Standing at the rocky points of our lives, He is there. Won't you give Him your hand—now, before it's too late?

MM

and others to greater and still greater efforts in the divine life.

They are words that speak of His honor, His praise, His glory, His justice.

They are words that put iron into the blood and steel into the heart.

And they are not words spoken just because they have the "right tune" or "right sound," or because we know they will bring the commendation of our friends. They are words spoken from the heart, to build not our own honor but God's; to defend *His* cause, *His* honor, *His* greatness, *His* good; that speak *His* truth without fear of what others may think.

"And the Lord hearkened and heard." Think of it!—the Lord stopped to listen. And He approved.

Have we judged *our* words by this standard?

"And a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name."

What a credit if they are good. But oh, how many words we would never say if we remembered that they were all being written down, one by one, to be read back to us at the Day of Judgment!

Then comes the richest heavenly promise: "*they shall be mine, says the Lord.*" Wonder surpassing wonders, the God of heaven promises to claim these select individuals for His very own, a prized possession, part of His choice spiritual treasure, His *jewels*! We read, "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him" (Mal. 3:17).

The Day has not yet arrived when the Lord shall

gather up these "jewels," but we already know some of them by name...names like Noah, Nehemiah, Elijah, and Malachi from the Old Testament times; names like Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, from the New. Shall our name be among them?

It can be; yes, such ordinary persons as we ourselves can be among His shining jewels. All that is necessary is that we meet the qualifications, that we become so enwrapped in our sublime hope and purpose that we fear the Lord, that we think upon His name, and speak often one to another of these things that are closest to our hearts. We, too, can be classified among those men and women "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:38). We, too, can be "jewels."

Is it not a glorious company to which to belong? How can we think for a moment that, in such company, we are ever *alone*?

Now in this late hour, we need to be living every moment in the awareness that we are not alone; that God has especially appointed angels to minister to our needs, to watch over us as we work and record our lives, so that we may have something to witness for us in the Day to come. They are writing the text that *we* provide. Every word, every thought is our own.

And at this late hour, when writing time is so limited, should we not be extremely selective of the words we speak, and the thoughts we think?

Soon shall arrive the hour when we shall not longer be able to modify, or edit, or delete from the script. What is written shall be written, and its testimony will witness for or against us at that great and final Day.

MM

Beware of Yourself!

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

II Cor. 13:5

DECEPTION seems to be one of the most common weaknesses of human nature. This weakness shows itself primarily in our attempt to deceive others. Being so much easier to assume a virtue than to discipline ourselves until we actually possess that virtue, the practice of two-facedness is readily developed. Continued long and persistently enough, self-deception naturally follows. The picture of ourselves which we have attempted to paint for others is so appealing that in the course of time it is the only image of ourselves that we can see. Our sight becomes so perverted that whenever we turn our gaze inward we see a fine looking fellow without a single deformity or blemish of any consequence—surely we are as good as anybody, we say.

This line of reasoning may satisfy the man in the street, who has no ambition for anything beyond this life. He finds it unnecessary to recognize a Supreme Being. He is a "law unto himself," and need take orders from no one. He is confident that when his short career of life terminates, that will end all for him anyway; so why not make the traveling as easy as possible?

But the man who cherishes the hope of obtaining something more than this short life sees things from a vastly different angle. He knows that self-deception and self-destruction are

synonymous. He may succeed in deceiving others by appearing to be what he is not, may even deceive himself into believing he is better than he is; but he cannot fool God, "for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighted"; and "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (I Sam. 2:3; Gal. 6:7).

Laxity and the tendency to lay down the oars and drift with the current, are trends against which the successful Christian must battle constantly. God never sleeps. The ear of the recording angel is always attuned to hear the words we utter, and our record is written accordingly. "Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether" (Ps. 139:3-4).

A thought seems a very small thing, and what sin could we more easily condone in self than an occasional wandering thought? But remember, even one such thought can be fatal. All our thoughts are known to Him "with whom we have to do." He warns through the prophet Ezekiel (11:5), "I know the things that come into your mind, every one of them." How foolish then to try to deceive Him! King David's touching prayer of thanksgiving after the people had so willingly dedicated them-

selves and offered their treasure for the building of the house of God, as recorded in I Chron. 28:9, voices the same idea: "...for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts..."

With these observations in mind, let us consider the lessons in applied Christianity contained in this text: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." It is perfectly possible for our perverted heart to lead us to believe we are in the faith when we are not. It is one thing to *think* we are in the faith, and quite another to be able to "prove" our own selves by submitting the record of our daily deportment to the acid test of comparison with the demands of the Word. We may *think* we are living the Christian life, when the truth is that we are merely taking the line of least resistance, living on our reputation.

Constant checking up and comparison are essential to spiritual progress. It was the practical James who said (1:25), "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Yes, he who looks into the law of faith or written Word, and looks for the purpose of seeing his deformities so he can correct them, has taken a step in the right direc-

tion, but he will not succeed if he stops at the first look. "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein"—he not only looks, but continues to look. A realty company selling off building lots in a newly opened tract once employed as their slogan the words, "A look means a lot." So one honest look into our heart may mean a lot, but a *continual* looking means a lot *more*. He that looks and continues to look lest some unsuspected evil appears, or some perverse habit fasten itself upon him, is the man that shall be blest in his deeds.

In the closing sentence of our text the Apostle suggests the presence of a condition we rarely care to admit. If unable to judge ourselves by the fruits we bear, that inability reflects upon our character. "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobrates?" A reprobate is defined as one "abandoned to sin; lost to all sense of duty; utterly depraved; profligate."

One does not have to be a superman to be able to judge and evaluate his standing in the divine life, but he does have to be an honest man. If we would be strictly honest with God, and look at our own shortcomings with the same critical eye as we would look at the sins of others, the

process of arriving at the right answer would be simple. For example, the Word says: "Let all bitterness, and wrath and anger,... be put away from you" (Eph. 4:31); and, "great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Ps. 119:165). Now if during a trying, busy day, when duties are pressing and most temperaments are short we are able to keep patient and serene, allowing nothing to ruffle us, and if we are able to keep it up day after day through storm or calm, we have proved ourselves on that point.

Again we read, "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge" (Prov. 14:7). Should we find ourselves in the company of a group of people who do not recognize this command but are indulging freely in jesting and foolish talking—or worse still, in filthy and corrupt communication—and we have the courage to show our disapproval by walking right away from such a group, we have another evidence that Christ, or His law of truth, is dwelling in us.

Tests such as these could be made with every commandment affecting our daily walk, and such self-examination will show us our true standing in the spiritual life. MM

Watch the little things! It takes only a sting of pride to corrupt our love . . . a twinge of jealousy to mar our joy . . . a whisper of unbelief to ruffle our peace.

A Prayer for Everyday

*God give me eyes that I might see
The work that can be done by me.*

*God give me ears that I may hear
The cries of those who need me near.*

*God give me lips that I might speak
Comfort and peace to all who seek.*

*God give me hands that I might do
Some large or simple task for You.*

*God give me prayer that I may pray
Thy help and guidance every day.*

Test Your Religion

Is your religion Christlike? Are you

- Silent under chastisement?
- Patient in tribulation?
- Strong through disappointment?

Is your religion dynamic? Does it urge you upward above the world? Is it impelling you onward toward the prize?

Is your religion a purifying fire consuming the dross, beautifying the gold?

Is your religion an abiding faith, allaying doubts and fears?

Is your religion a constraining influence, keeping you from evil, supporting you in discouragement, holding you to the strait and narrow path?

Is your religion an animating hope, expecting victory, looking for the coming of the Lord?

If your religion is less than this, it should be a matter of concern, calling for deep heart searching, increased study of the Word, and earnest prayer.

If your religion is all this, there is yet no room for boasting. There is never place for self-exaltation, only an opportunity to "praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men."

What You Sow... You Reap

(Continued from page 9)

How kind God has been not only to give us the good seed to cast in open field, but also to tell us how it must be watered, cultivated and cared for. And what beautiful fruits it yields—"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-24).

But what does God think of one who comes along with a big head, thinking he knows more than God, and sows his own seed, seed from a degenerate plant, seed of discord, malice, jealousy, pride, envy, hatred? What bitter and ugly fruits spring from the ground! They that sow this kind of seed are "froward" or "perverse" in heart (Prov. 11:20). These are "spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds, trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (Jude 12).

Remember, men do not "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles" (Matt. 7:16). Every deed carries with it its own legitimate consequences and has bound up with it its own inevitable issues. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Ps. 1:1). There is no use appealing to God to secure a blessing for such a man.

Let me implore of you to hasten for the evening shades are falling fast. The laborers of the vineyard will soon be called to account. Then a sad and bitter wailing will be heard rending the air. Its dreadful notes fall upon the ear as the cry rings out, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. 8:20).

It is a disaster we *can* avoid, if we will just sow to the Spirit. MM



Preparing for Service— in the Kitchen



IN English we say, "Time flies." In Latin, "Tempus fugit." In Polish, "Czas ptynie." Some say, "Time flows like a river." Whether this way or that, it still makes one point, that time must be wisely managed, "redeemed," as the apostle Paul wrote.

Frequently I am disquieted when I think how much time I have to spend on home cares—cooking, cleaning, etc. Gladly would I be learning all the time. I have a great desire and need for knowledge. So when preparing food, or washing dishes, I listen to cassettes; and it is just then—when my hands are wet—that I need to look into the dictionary, and cannot.

A certain story comes to mind:

A young member of a church turned to his pastor with the request for forgiveness and counsel on how he might prepare himself for the service of the Lord. The pastor advised him to go to his friend, who at that time was managing a not too large restaurant. The man obeyed, and spent several weeks at the restaurant, carefully observing the friend. Watching ever so closely, the man could not detect a trace of what he thought was "holiness." From morning till night, the friend was occupied with the cares of the place. Finally, the man asked him outright, "How do you serve the Lord the whole day?"

"My job is very important in my service," the man replied. "I must oversee the utensils, making sure they are so clean that not even a tiny trace of anything is left on them. I also must make sure the pots are clean and dry, and ward off even a trace of rust." (At that time, stainless steel pots were not known.)

Did this young man really receive the lesson he was seeking, on how he could prepare himself for the service of God? I believe he did.

There are two lessons we can learn

from this story. First, let us look at it spiritually. The dishes and pots which we are to be very concerned about are ourselves. How many old tastes and habits do we still need to remove? When we look closely, we find some are stuck on. They have not been washed off for so long a time that they are firmly affixed. The pots need to be soaked; then the caked-up food can be removed with less effort. Likewise some particles of sin are hard to get rid of, because they are stuck to us. We must soak them in a large amount of the water of life and then apply vigorous effort before the undesirable surplus can be removed.

We, too, must be on the lookout for rust. We need to be concerned about washing our vessels, and seeing that not even the slightest trace of rust appears. Rust not only spoils the taste and value of the food kept in the utensil, but it also causes the utensil to become useless, until it must be discarded, no longer suitable for its designed purpose.

The other lesson in this story is: All that we do in our life ought to be done well, conscientiously, as "unto the Lord."

So as I wash the dishes daily and prepare food, I think of how I must work on that special vessel which the Lord has given me to cleanse, myself. There is something which I must be cleansing each day in my character. I must not postpone until tomorrow. Today's unwashed dishes only have to be washed tomorrow, and the task is only that much harder.

The words of the apostle Paul in Col. 1:10 (TLB) are fitting: "I ask that the way you live will always please the Lord and honor him, so that you will always be doing good, kind things for others, while all the time you are learning to know God better and better." —E.K.

God Means What He Says

**We naturally place a
very high value on
our own opinion,
but . . .**

VERY few would be likely to say anything to the contrary, yet it is very easy to take God's words casually, as though *our* opinion of them was all that mattered.

But when we look into the sacred Record, we realize—seriously—that God *does* indeed mean what He says.

And because He does, our Christian business is urgent! There is no time to waste. Not only is the time for Christ's return upon us, but life quickly slips into the eternal past, it seems, before we realize it has hardly begun. "It is like a puff of smoke visible for a little while and then dissolving into thin air" (James 4:14, Phillips).

Since life is so short we must be doing all within our power to be ready for Christ's return. Like Paul, we have to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14), or we will be found wanting when we stand before the Judgment seat of Christ. We won't have a second chance. There will be no "Go and work some more and come back when you're ready." We will have to meet God's timetable, whether it is to our liking or not.

Unlike the God of popular theology, the Lord is a serious God. He means just what He says. It is up to us to pay attention and obey.

There is a good lesson illustrating this fact in II Samuel. It was to be a great occasion. David gathered some thirty thousand chosen men of Israel to go to the house of Abinadab to bring up the ark of God. They set it upon a new cart and started on their journey. This wasn't the way God commanded them to carry the ark. The law was explicit: Put staves through the rings provided that the ark may be born upon the shoulders (Ex. 25:14, I Chron. 15:15).

Did God notice? He certainly did!

When we disobey God we should not expect it to go unnoticed. We should never take anything lightly that God says. The children of Israel needed a lesson: they needed the discipline. Here were thirty thousand of the chief men of Israel bearing the ark on a cart, when God had commanded that it be carried with staves upon the shoulders. Could He let this go unnoticed? No; one little act of disobedience leads to another, and soon there is hardly a resemblance of reverence at all.

The people bringing up the ark were half asleep, as far as their awareness of the law was concerned. True, they were playing on all manner of instruments—they *seemed* awake, but they needed arousing to the obedience of God's exacting words. They needed a shaking; and before long they got one, all thirty thousand of them.

The oxen shook the cart and Uzzah put forth his hand and took hold of the ark to steady it. This may seem like a very small thing to us, but God means what He says. "God smote him there for his error" (II Sam. 6:1-7). The Lord did not hesitate, but acted immediately. The Lord is swift to pay, whether the pay is good or bad.

What about us? Are we half asleep, half awake? And do we justify our actions, as right in our own eyes? We must be careful, lest we stretch forth our hand to the sacred things of God unqualified, as did Uzzah, and fail to grasp eternal life.

Some would argue that God had no right to smite Uzzah, that a little sin is all right; that "a fellow needs to sow his wild oats." They would say that God didn't really mean it when He said through Jesus, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). But who are we to dictate God's standards? Who are we to make judgments for Him? If we would only believe the word of God we could never say that He doesn't mean something He says.

Did David and the thirty thousand chief men of Israel learn their lesson? It seems they did (though many probably forgot soon thereafter). David was indeed shaken by the experience, for the account reads that David turned aside and took the ark into the house of Obededom where it remained for three months. And when, after three months, David returned to the house of Obededom

to bring up the ark of God, he planned quite differently, paying strict attention to the ordinances of God: "...None ought to carry the ark of God," said David, "but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever" (I Chron. 15:2).

David also convened all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the ark. "Summoning Zadok and Abiathar the priests along with Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab the Levites, David said to them, 'You are the heads of the Levitical families; purify yourselves, you and your fellows, for bringing the ark of the Eternal, the God of Israel, up to the site I have prepared for it. It was because you did not carry it at first, that the Eternal our God broke out upon us, because we did not go about it in the proper way'" (I Chron. 15:11-13, Moffatt). The Lord does indeed mean what He says: "God broke out upon us, because we did not go about it in the proper way."

David had learned his lesson very well.

And no doubt about it, God does mean what He says.

How about us? Are we being careful to follow God's words *exactly*? Are we imploring Him for guidance, or do we think that sometimes *we* know best? Think back: What about that last time I put in a few "choice" words of my own? Was I kind and forbearing, in keeping with the Lord's

requirements? What about the time I lost my temper the other day—can I think that God overlooked it, when He has commanded me to "cease from anger" (Ps. 37:8)?

The rule is: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another..." (Eph. 4:32). God knows best, and He does mean what He says. No doubt about it. Let us, then, be careful to hear His every word that we may, in the end, meet His approval. MM

What Are You Broadcasting?

We are apt to underestimate the influence of our words and attitudes upon others. It might help us to think of ourselves as miniature broadcasting stations. Those around us are affected by the quality of the programs we transmit from these stations YOU and ME. And, unfortunately, pessimism and fault-finding broadcast just as effectively as optimism and faith.

Unworthy attitudes towards others and toward life in our speech or deportment create noisy disturbances in the lives of others and make it hard for others to tune in to better things.

No matter how hard we try, we never reach a stage where we are not transmitting, either good or ill.

And someone—we know not who—is tuned in on our program.

What are they hearing?

Do not think that because the wages of sin are not paid every week, there is no balance accruing: In due time, they will be paid—with interest.

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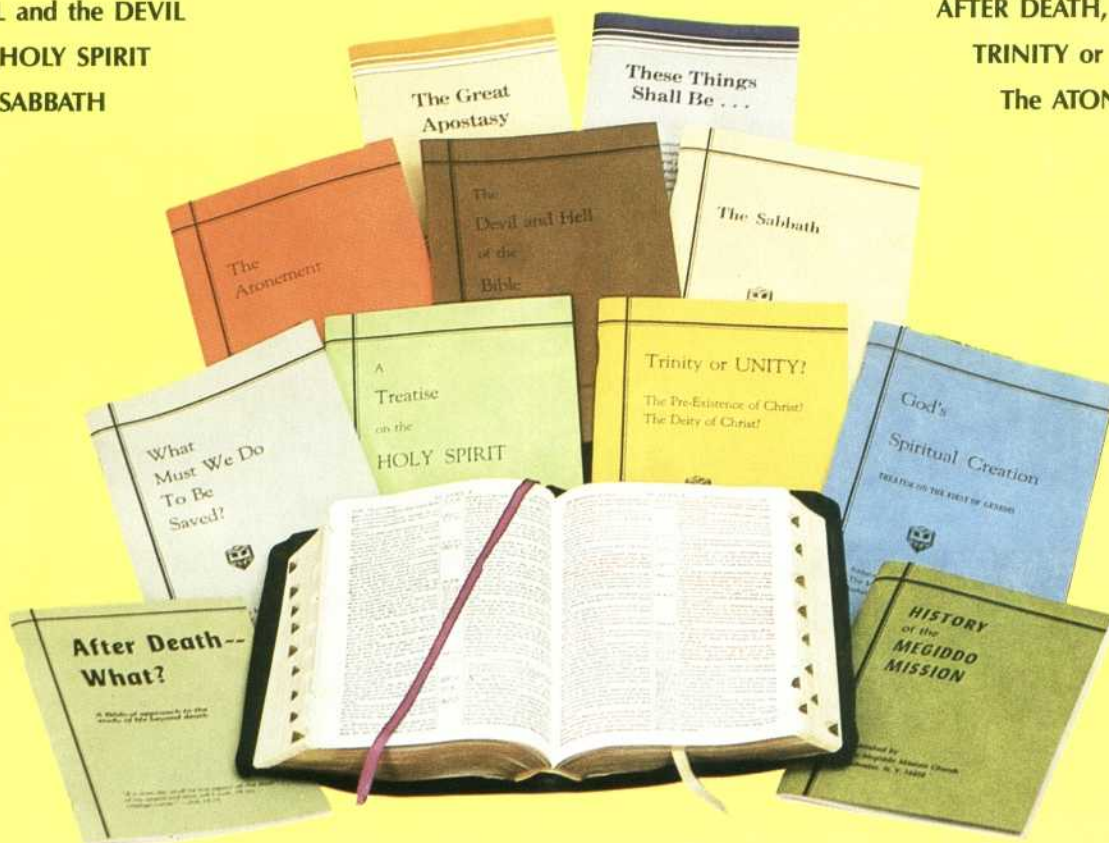
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