



Megiddo Message

*Make me Thy mountaineer;
I would not linger on the lower slope;
Fill me afresh with joy, O God of hope,
That undefeated I may climb the hill
As seeing Him who is invisible!*

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Beyond the Possible – with GOD

It's always dangerous to say what can't be done

In an effort to increase employee motivation, a plant manager of a large manufacturing facility distributed an editorial titled "Beyond the Possible."

The article detailed many seeming "impossibles" that soon became possible, common inventions such as the automobile, the airplane, the telephone, the radio, the computer, and the list could go on and on.

"It's always intriguing," said the editorial, "to speculate about the future and what we may be able to do with technology. *And it's always dangerous to say what can't be done.*" For example:

In 1899 the director of the U. S. Patent Office urged President McKinley to abolish the office, and even the position of Director, since "everything that can be invented has been invented." He wasn't the only one whom time has proved wrong.

Thomas Edison thought his phonograph had no commercial value, and that alternating currents were unreliable and unsuitable "for any general system of distribution." Today alternating currents are the most common means of using electrical power in the world.

In 1913 Lee de Forest, inventor of the vacuum tube, was brought to trial and charged with fraudulent use of the U. S. mail to sell stock. In the words of the district attorney: "de Forest has said in many newspapers and over his signature that it would be possible to transmit the human voice across the Atlantic before many years. Based on these absurd and deliberately misleading statements, the misguided public...has been persuaded to purchase stock in his company."

Ransom E. Olds, an auto industry pioneer, sold his company in 1925, saying that "the field holds no more interest for me because the motor car has reached the ultimate in design and technology."

A *New York Times* editorial once questioned the wisdom of certain people trying to fly. For would-be

inventors of heavier-than-air-machines, "there are more useful employments with fewer disappointments and mortifications than have been the portion of aerial navigators since the days of Icarus," said the editorial, published on December 10, 1903. Seven days later the Wright brothers made their famous flight at Kitty Hawk.

Today we can sit back and smile as we read such things. But one lesson stands out bright and clear: that it is always dangerous to say *what can't be done*, because you are likely to turn around just in time to see someone *doing* it!

As Christians, each one of us is indeed looking "Beyond the Possible" at least, beyond what is *commonly believed* possible. The human race has striven for mastery in just about every field of science, technology, theology, and the arts. But few, very few, have sought the greatest mastery of all—mastery over self. The evidence is everywhere. We have brilliant lawyers, scientists, doctors and statesmen who are moral pigmies. We have educated persons thoroughly disciplined by many years of study to earn high positions, yet who still pitch temper tantrums like two-year-olds.

Most would quickly excuse the deficiency saying confidently that it can't be helped. But *we should never frame our possibilities by what others believe possible*. In fact, if we want to discover the limits of the possible we need to *begin* by attempting what others have judged impossible.

In no area of life is this advice more apropos than in the field of self-conquest. And where could the possibilities ever be greater! Yes, one after another has said that it couldn't be done. Others who have not put it into words have said it by action. But right behind them have come those *doing* it!

(Continued on page 26)

Megiddo means ...

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

We believe

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

Bible Quotations

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

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NASB—New American Standard Bible

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

Megiddo Message

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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.

A Moment of *Sorrow* on the Path to *Glory*

Scriptural Insights from the Transfiguration

A religious magazine has published an article, "A Moment of Glory on the Path of Sorrow," in which the author focuses upon what was perhaps the most glorious moment in our Lord's earthly career, the Transfiguration. He explains what it meant to Jesus, to His disciples, and to us. "Come watch now," he invites, "as the Christ, so misunderstood and lonely on earth enters this glorious, heavenly pause in His steadfast journey toward Jerusalem and death."

Much as we also view Jesus' life with reverent awe, can we believe that it was a "steadfast journey toward Jerusalem and death"? Was His whole career a preparation to die? Must we look upon the Transfiguration as an interruption in a life filled with loneliness and gloom, "a brief refreshment for His weary, saddened, solitary soul"?

We are touched by the writer's heartfelt yet misinformed judgment of Jesus' life. Far from being a march toward death, His was a steadfast, glorious journey toward life. He was living to *live*! Why should He be sullen and downcast? Even on the eve of His crucifixion, when alone with His disciples, He spoke not of fear and foreboding but of peace, joy and hope. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full..." (John 14:27; 15:10-11). One with lesser inner strength would have been frightened; almost anyone would have been fearful. But Jesus was on the way to glory, and even the severest earthly trial was but a moment of suffering on the way. Jesus was putting the weight on the *glory* side; and indeed, how could He do otherwise? What mattered a few hours of the very worst mistreatment in Jerusalem at the hands of sinful men, when ages upon ages of happiness and joy lay ahead? In just a little while He would be speeding across oceans of space in the delightful company of angels, on the way to visiting His Father.

Imagine the thrill in His heart as His angel charioteers would tell highlights of events here and there in the universe, as they passed by one galaxy and another.

Then think of the joy indescribable when His company arrived at that sublime pinnacle in the heavens, His Father's throne. Even as He walked the dusty Judean roads He could already hear in His mind, it seemed, the distant heavenly choirs as they rehearsed for the occasion. Angels had come to announce His lowly birth—would they not much more celebrate His high moment of achievement! Yes, in just a little while He would be looking upon the face of His Father and enjoying the welcome prepared for Him. What would it be like, to stand in His Father's presence, be judged faithful, and crowned with immortality? For His work was finished and accepted, that He knew. Think of the honor of being seated at the right hand of His Majesty, a position of honor He would enjoy for some twenty centuries, receiving instruction and enjoying splendors beyond the most magnificent of mortal conceptions. Then, at length, there would be the return trip to earth—again in the glorious company of angels, only this time it would be different. This time He would be “on His own,” so to speak, an immortal being in His own right. This time He would not be carried—the myriads of angels would be His angels. And think of the endless ages He would enjoy as monarch on the throne of earth.

Yes, in the midst of all this glory *where* was the sorrow?

The book of Hebrews points up this forward looking, radiant spirit of Jesus as an example for us to follow: “Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he

endured the cross, disregarding the shamefulness of it, and...has taken his place at the right of God's throne. Think of the way he stood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of courage” (Heb. 12:2–3, JB).

The “joy ahead” was for Jesus a source of special power. And His life being an example to us, should it not be the same for us? Jesus endured “for the sake of the joy which was still in the future.” Yes, He was face to face with an angry, cruel mob in Jerusalem, but His mind was far, far away, fixed on the glory, the honor, the exaltation at His Father's right hand.

But there was glory for Jesus before He reached the Father's throne. Even during His mortal career there was glory. The Transfiguration was a high moment of glory, unforgettable to all who witnessed it. Years later the apostle Peter was still reliving its wonderments, a shining tower of certainty to his faith. “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables,” he writes, “when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount” (II Pet. 1:16–18). There was no question in his mind. “This voice which came from heaven we heard.”

What can we learn about this Transfiguration experience?

The Transfiguration may be far from the Father's throne, but it is a passage from our Savior's life which leaves us breathless, silent, speechless, awed in the presence of the Divine. Even Peter, we read, “did not know what to say” (Mark 9:6,

Far from being a march toward death, Jesus' was a steadfast, glorious journey toward life. He was living to live!

Jesus was on the way to glory, and even the severest earthly trial was but a moment of suffering on the way.

What mattered a few hours of the very worst mistreatment when ages upon ages of happiness and joy lay ahead?

"Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross, disregarding the shamefulness of it, and... has taken his place at the right of God's throne." —Heb. 12:2-3, JB

Phillips Trans.). Who of us would know more? What would be our response? How would we describe that wondrous scene among the mountains, when heaven was for a few brief moments let down to earth, and the transfigured body of Jesus shone with celestial brightness, and the likenesses of Moses and Elijah were seen with Him, and a voice came forth from the excellent glory pronouncing Him to be God's well-beloved Son! It is too high for us, this august spectacle; its light is too dazzling for our mortal eyes, its splendor too transcendent.

What did it mean to those who witnessed it? What does it mean to us?

Background

Let us think first of the events that led up to this august experience. Jesus and His disciples had been in the coast of Cesarea Philippi, where Jesus had asked them the intriguing question: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" It was a simple question, and they replied with the usual round of ideas they had heard: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets" (Matt. 16:13-14). This, apparently, did not matter. The thrust of Jesus' point was in His next question: "But

whom say ye that I am?" To this question Peter responded with a powerful personal testimony to his own faith: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (v. 16).

Jesus commended Peter's faith and conviction, and took the opportunity to teach another powerful lesson. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [*petros*, a stone] and upon this rock [*petra*, the mighty rock of which you are a stone] I will build my church; and the gates of hell [powers of death] shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:17-19).

What a sermon! And what a responsibility upon Peter and each of his successors, who aspire to be part of the Church eternal! Built on the solid rock of Divine wisdom, this structure *shall stand*, come whatever. And, said Jesus, the same high standard of holiness must be maintained in the true church as is maintained in "heaven," i.e., in the finished Kingdom of God.

With these challenging words still ringing in their ears, Jesus proceed-

ed to tell His disciples about a few events which must intervene before that Kingdom should come. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:21). Jesus was prophesying. Did they realize it? Were they hearing right? Could it be possible? Yes, the immediate future for Jesus would not be easy. He would suffer cruelty, injustice, and punishment He did not deserve. Jesus would die.

For the apostle Peter, all this seemed totally beyond the realm of possibility. (He seems to have missed completely the fact that Jesus said also that He would be "raised again the third day.") Shocked by the thought of such cruel suffering, Peter responded, "This can't happen to you, Lord." What? The one he loved being mistreated to the point of death? Jesus took the opportunity to teach Peter—and us—a lesson: that every one of us must be ready to submit to the will of God, whatever is in that will. Peter had no right to protest, even in defense of his Lord and Master. Jesus rebuked him sharply: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" (Matt. 16:23). It was as if He said, Peter, I must bend to the will of God and you are holding Me back; you are holding to your own thoughts, your own ideas of what should be. I must submit to the will of My Father—and that is a lesson you must learn someday. If giving My all means giving up My life, this I must do.

Then Jesus continued with another nutshell sermon, in which He further defined the lofty standard to which each disciple of His must attain. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take

up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:24-26).

The Master was speaking from the depths of His own whole-souled dedication, His own personal struggles and approaching trial. For Jesus, too, was tempted; He, too, had to suffer, that He might "learn obedience" (Heb. 5:8).

The lesson is for all Christians in all ages and stages of life. The law of cross-bearing is binding upon *all* would-be children of the Kingdom, *all* who would live godly in Christ Jesus. "If *any* man will come after me"—*any*, none excluded. It is as if above the door to the school of Christ this legend were inscribed: "Let no one enter here who is

unwilling to take up his cross."

Does this seem too high and exacting a view of the Christian life? It is the teaching of our Lord Himself. And immediately Jesus annexes three reasons designed to bring about this obedience. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." In this startling paradox is the deepest of meaning. It is as if our Lord had said, Whosoever makes it his first business to preserve his natural life and worldly well-being, shall lose the higher life; and whosoever will relinquish his goals in this life for My sake shall attain to real life, *eternal* life.

Something must be given up; it is not possible to live without sacrifice; the only question is *what* shall be sacrificed, the lower or the higher? If we choose the lower, we must inevitably lose the higher. If we choose the higher, we must sacrifice the lower. There is no other alternative.

If we choose the lower, we must inevitably lose the higher. If we choose the higher, we must sacrifice the lower.

The price is great, but how can it ever be too great? For "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). If the greatest value in all the world is life—and we know that it is—then what price can be too dear to pay for it? How much more costly to hold to the "whole world"—or, more likely, only the small portion

Let Us Pray

Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who hold-est our soul in life, and sufferest not our feet to be moved; who triest us as silver is tried, and bringest us through water and through fire: we come before Thee this morning in humble gratitude for all Thy tender mercies toward us.

We thank Thee that our souls are still held in the bundle of life. We are grateful for our pleasant surroundings, and for Christian friends with whom we may share the real values of life. We are grateful for the degree of health and strength Thou dost permit us to enjoy; for reasoning minds, for willpower to choose between right and wrong, and for memories that can retain the lessons we learn.

We thank Thee especially, our Father, for the blessing of hope, for the unspeakable joy and glory Thou hast set before us.

May our hearts rejoice, as we look ahead to the

time when we can renew our strength, when we can mount up with power as do the angels, when we can run and not be weary, walk and not faint. Thou hast promised that for us one day mortality can be swallowed up of life, that we may be made equal to the angels never to die. With Thy promises we can look ahead to receiving an inheritance which will be incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. May these bright prospects buoy us over every trying situation of our lives, may we follow the example of Thy Son and look *beyond* the trial to the glory that is sure to come, and see our present trials as Christ saw His—but a moment of sorrow on the path to glory.

We pray Thee to be very near to us in our devotions this morning. Be near Thy people everywhere whose hearts are one with Thee, who are seeking earnestly Thy Kingdom. Forgive us each one for the sins we confess and forsake, and keep us all steadfastly pressing toward the goal Thou hast set before us, that we may someday share the delights of full salvation with Thy Son and the good and faithful of all ages world without end. In His name we pray. Amen.

Jesus took the long-range view of life; His heart was set on the glory toward which His physical death was but a step.

of it which may fall to the lot of an individual—and lose one's possibility of obtaining life eternal!

The appeal in these solemn questions comes home to each of us with force. For *we*, too, must experience the pain of giving up that which is near and dear to us. We, too, must suffer loss. But if there is something to give up, there is something incomparably greater to be gained. Ahead is glory, glory, glory! "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

We, like Jesus, must suffer loss. But if there is something to give up, there is something incomparably greater to be gained. Ahead is glory, glory, glory!

The Transfiguration Experience

Immediately Jesus follows with a prophecy which has often been misunderstood, as though He did not know the proper time for His coming Kingdom. The context shows clearly that His words are a prophecy of the Transfiguration itself: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (v. 28). Who were the "some standing here"? And how would they see the "Son of man coming in his kingdom"?

Only a few days, and all was clear. The "some standing here" were Peter, James and John. The "coming" was that of the "Son of man" transfigured before them, appearing as in the glory of His coming Kingdom.

Let us read the account from Matthew's Gospel: "After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 17:1-2). They had never seen anything like it, their Master's countenance "shining as the sun, and his raiment...white as the light." It was a spectacle beyond description. Mark adds this comment: "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them" (Mark 9:3). Luke records that the Transfiguration followed a time of prayer, that Jesus took "Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening" (Luke 9:28-29). What a spectacular accompaniment to prayer!

Then two more grand personages appeared in this sacred drama. "And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him" (Matt. 17:3).

What was the meaning of Jesus being transfigured before them? As Jesus had said only a few days earlier, it was a vision of His return in glory, the dazzling light representing the myriads of attending angels (Matt. 16:27). The disciples were being given this magnificent preview of Jesus' second coming. Can we realize what a strong buttress to faith was this glimpse of heavenly glory, what reality it gave to hope, what surety to expectation? For the apostles had yet many years of service ahead. They needed this long-range view of the glory to be revealed, of the triumph and splendor that would crown their Master's career. It was a vision of the great purpose for which He was born—to be King of the whole earth (John 18:36-37). This vision helped them to see His death in its true perspective—only a brief interlude, a moment of sorrow on the path to glory.

Why were Moses and Elijah in the vision of Transfiguration? Whom might they represent, in relation to Jesus' second advent? Though we are not directly told, it seems fitting to take Moses as a representative of the saints who will be sleeping in death at the time of Christ's coming, and who will need to be resurrected. In like manner, Elijah, having been translated never to see death, could represent the believers who will be living when Christ returns. Both will be present, both will see Jesus arrive in all His splendor and glory.

Conversation on the Mountain

What were Jesus, Moses and Elijah talking about as they met in glory on the mountain? Luke tells us: "Behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:30-31).

From this statement the author

***Our Lord's ascended up on high!
Ye angels, chant your solemn lay;
Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates:
Ye everlasting doors, give way!***

***Who is this King of Glory? Who?
The Lord, that all His foes o'ercame,
Who all the pangs of death o'erthrew,
Christ Jesus is the conqueror's name.***

***Lo! His triumphal chariot waits
And angels chant the solemn lay;
Lift up your heads, ye heavenly gates;
Ye everlasting doors, give way!***

***Who is this King of Glory? Who?
The Lord of glorious power possessed,
The King of saints, and angels too,
Forever King, forever blest!***

quoted at the beginning of this article draws his conclusion that Jesus was indeed on the way to death, that His approaching demise was on His mind, the central purpose of His career being to die for the sins of the world.

This might seem a logical conclusion, if we take the wording in Luke as it is rendered in our King James Version. However, the word translated *decease* is *exodus*, a combination of *ex* plus *hodos*, and is literally "the completion of a progress (the route, act or distance); figuratively, a mode or means:—journey." It may also mean "an exit, i.e., (figuratively) death: *decease*, departing;...the close of one's career, one's final fate." Still another definition is "a going out, a marching out, as a military expedition, a solemn procession, a bridal procession to the bridegroom's house; an end, closed." (Definitions from *Thayer's Greek English Lexicon*, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, and *Liddell and Scott's Greek English Lexicon*.) The word is used only three times in the New Testament, in Luke 9:31, II Pet. 1:15 where Peter speaks of his own death, and Heb. 11:22: "By faith Joseph...made mention of the departing of the children of Israel."

From this combination of definitions, what might we conclude? Truly the word is used to describe the closing of one's career, which

normally is one's death. But what was the closing of Christ's career? For Him, death was not the end—far from it! For Him, death was only a very brief interlude, only a moment of sorrow on the path to glory. Far from the defeat experienced universally, Jesus' career was only beginning when He reached Jerusalem and death, for only a few hours and He would be alive again!

In the context of the Transfiguration, with Jesus appearing in glory and Moses and Elijah representing the mortals who will be part of the glorious reality and the disciples the mortal onlookers, was it not fitting that they should discuss the next steps in His career, the closing of the mortal phase—which was the entering upon the eternal phase, the glory and honor which would go on forever!

Jesus did not live merely to exist and then die. He lived in the long-range view of things.

The writer of Hebrews, picturing this aspect of Jesus' life, spoke of His living in the "power of an endless life" (Heb. 7:16). His service was no mere mortal span. Of Him it was said, "Thou art a priest for ever" (Heb. 7:17). His career was not limited to the normal mortal span. Far from it! Jesus took the long-range view of life; His heart was set on the glory toward which His physical death was but a step.

What, then, of the topic upon

which they conversed in the account of the Transfiguration? Let us read Luke 9:30–31, incorporating the thoughts we have gleaned from the lexicons above: "And, behold, there appeared with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah: Who [Jesus] appeared in glory, and spake of [the completion of his mortal career, the glorious climax for which he was born, which his death at Jerusalem should initiate]." Jesus did not want them downcast at the thought of His approaching suffering. He wanted them to see it in its true light, in the long-range perspective of His destiny. And truly the Transfiguration accomplished this. Seeing their Lord in glory was an unforgettable event, a moment on the mountaintop never to be forgotten. What was the hour of trial compared with a future filled with glory—the glory of the resurrection, the glory of the ascension, the glory of being welcomed into His Father's presence, the glory of being exalted at His Father's right hand, the glory of His second coming with myriads of shining angels, and the glory of His coronation as King of the whole earth. Was it not indeed a path of glory!

Returning to the account of the Transfiguration in Luke, we read of Peter, James and John that their eyes were "heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory,

(Continued on page 22)

When I'M the Problem

**What sense
does it
make to go
through life
hurting yourself?**

I don't believe you know what it's like to try to work with anyone so cantankerous. Rachel just makes my blood boil! She just seems to go out of her way to be disagreeable. It's a fact. For my sake the whole family has tried to get along with her—without success.

I try to forget about her, or pretend she isn't there. But she is. I close my ears to her words, but they still find their way in and grind me to the bone. I even find myself thinking about her when she isn't anywhere around. I try pushing such thoughts into the background and forgetting them. But they just won't stay there.

This is the way it used to be, until one day I happened upon a verse in Psalms. "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (118:6). I found myself repeating those last words over and over again. "What can man do unto me?" Yet, Rachel was surely doing something to me.

Or was she? The more I thought about it, the more I realized Rachel wasn't doing anything to hurt me—I was hurting myself by the way I was reacting to her. Isn't that really what you are saying when you describe how someone else affects you? When you think somebody is a "pain in the neck," whose neck hurts? Or when someone gets "under your skin," whose skin is affected? Maybe someone makes you turn green with envy, or red with anger—who suffers the color change? Somebody makes

your blood boil—whose misery is it? In all cases, the person who causes the trouble is not affected; it is those who allow themselves to be affected by it who suffer. We don't injure the person who disturbs us; we harm ourselves.

Did this mean, then, that I was to blame for the trouble with Rachel? I'm afraid that's right. I was to blame because I was allowing her to determine my feelings. I was allowing her to impose her ugly or mean feelings and frustrations on me.

I know Rachel was wrong. I know she had a disposition she could not (or did not) control. But my disturbed feelings are just as wrong in God's sight as her meanness.

There is a Bible verse which says all this: "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them" (Ps. 119:165). That's right—nothing. Other people don't do anything to you. It is you who allow other people to cause you to do something to yourself. You hold the controls.

If Rachel wants to be cantankerous, that doesn't have to disturb my peace of mind. Not in the least. It's a fact. If my mind is stayed on God, nothing and no one can disturb my inner peace.

I'm talking to myself, but you've overheard something that will help you sometime—if you should ever encounter a cantankerous Rachel. What sense does it make to go through life hurting yourself?

MM



Lift Me, O God!

*Lift me, O God, above myself—
Above my highest spheres,
Above the thralling things of sense
To clearer atmospheres.*

*Lift me above the petty things,
My poor sufficiencies,
My perverse will, my lack of zeal,
My inefficiencies;*

*Above the earth-born need that gropes,
With foolish hankerings,
About earth's cumbered lower slopes
For earthly garnerings.*

*Lift me, O God, above myself,
Above these lesser things,
Above my little gods of clay,
And all their capturings.*

*And grant my soul a grand new birth,
And sledge it strong new wings
That I may soar above the earth
To nobler prosperings.*

*Lift me, O God, above myself
That in Thy time and day
I somehow grace Thy prosperings
And climb Thy loftier way.*

Stirring Admonitions...

by Rev. L. T. Nichols

**What zeal
and energy
we should have to
save one soul
from death, and
that one our own!**

To think of the grand, wonderful blessings in store for the faithful! It seems that with such a prize before us we could work with alacrity. It is lack of faith which causes us to have a lack of zeal and alacrity.

The Psalmist declared, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Ps. 84:2). Here is where the great difficulty lies: we are not longing for it. Days come and go, and we do not store away in our minds the things which will make us grow stronger and stronger. Take the time. Do not let a day go by without studying your Bible. Have something to meditate on. Eat the bread of heaven and drink the water of life, or you will grow faint and weak.

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." If we long and thirst for it, we will find it, for Jesus says: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt 5:6).

By and by the high court of the Lord will sit, and we shall want to have righteousness then. Let us be hungering and thirsting for it now.

When we see people working with such zeal and energy for their goals in this world, how it should cause us to work with greater zeal for the Lord. Why can't we get to work with all our mind, might and strength, and accomplish it before it is too late! Why can't we, when our hope is built upon a sure foundation!

Jesus said, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36). It is astonishing how those instructed in the way to life can show such negligence in this work. Soon we will be locked up in the

tomb; only a few years at best until all of us will be followed to the grave if Christ does not come. And then, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Of what advantage will it be to you, even if you had all the wealth of the Queen of England? You will soon have to go and leave it all.

How we should labor, what zeal and energy we should have, to save one soul from death, and that one our own.

We all need more exercise unto godliness; if we do not exercise in this way, we have no promise of what is ahead. "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8).

To exercise unto godliness, to prepare for the life to come is the greatest opportunity in the world. Think of Babylon with her immense walls and towers, yet on that memorable night when they were feasting and reveling, the handwriting appeared on the wall. The revelers viewed it with consternation. But what would it be to see the angel that did the writing! That angel may have been Gabriel.

The feasting Babylonians had no idea of any danger nearing; they had no idea of anyone doing them harm. Yet when they saw that handwriting on the wall, they knew something was amiss. But they could not read it. Their wise men were called in, but neither could they make it out. Then the king was told of a man named Daniel who could interpret it. The king called for Daniel, and Daniel gave an interpretation of the handwriting on the wall. "*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*. This is the interpretation of the thing: *Mene*; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. *Tekel*; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. *Peres*; Thy kingdom is

divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Dan. 5:25-28).

Still they thought nothing of it. They were secure; their walls were so high and wide that they could not be taken. In the same way we go on in confidence and do not read the handwriting on the wall. But the city *was* taken that night, and it fell. So with us. If we go on in our own ways and do not turn to the Lord, He will not continue to bless us, and we will not obtain the life that has been promised.

Think of seeing the angel that did that handwriting on the wall, speaking with him face to face, as I do to you. He will come and say, "I am the one that did the writing on the wall." How would you like to see such a personage as that? To think of the grand knowledge we could obtain from such a one.

What did Paul tell us about what we must be doing? "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity...Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself"—to whom? "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:12, 15-16). First take heed to thyself, and then be an example to others; others will see your faith and follow; then you will save both yourself and those who hear you. That is the way we are to be examples of believers.

Well, for one, I would rather have that blessed Kingdom than ten thousand worlds like this. How much do *you* want it? I want it enough to work for it. How much will you give for it? Will you give your work, your zeal, your righteousness to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20)? Will you be an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity?

Let us show by our works that we really believe. If we work with zeal, God will bless us.

I'd like to take a good visit now. Nothing would please me better than

to discover a gold mine so that all the brethren would have plenty and not have to work so hard but could go off with me on a trip around this world of ours. We would go through this country, view Niagara Falls and all the places of interest, then go on to England; visit the British Museum, see Cleopatra and others, all lying in their old coffins. I said to my wife when we were there, "Who knows if one of these old mummies isn't a brother?" Suppose one should rise to life while we were there on a visit, looking at them; wouldn't our hair stand up?

Then we would go on, see the Alps, and finally get to Rome. What a solemnity would fall upon us there. We would see the place where Paul and Silas were in prison, then go to Jerusalem and view the place where our Master was crucified. From there we would go on around the world. What a trip! And yet it is nothing compared to traveling across the Milky Way, and meeting that angel that wrote the handwriting on the wall! Our earth is only a little speck compared to some of the planets, and still it would be a great joy to go around it.

But this is nothing compared to the journey you and I can take by and by, if we will only be examples of the believers in "word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." We can take a trip to Orion then, and stay for 5 years, or 500 years. If we went and stayed 500 thousand years it would still be only a tick of time in the grand eternity! We would still have plenty of time. We can then take another trip for 450 million years, and still we would have just as much time left.

There is no doubt about our taking these trips; these things are going to be reality.

We see these planets, the stars, and so many wonderful parts of God's creation. Then to think of being an infidel, or believing that man evolved from an infinitesimal bit of nothing and gradually developed into the grand mechanism we are, each a perpetual motion machine in himself! It

is a wonder to me that anyone can be an infidel.

I read an article the other day in which the author said we all evolved from some little bits of life. It is just as sensible as saying that a crowbar laid around for 40, 50, or 60 billion years and finally became a nice grand piano; or that a polliwog turned to a frog, a horse, a monkey, a man. It was

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—L. T. Nichols

a long article; it said we had no Creator, that all the works of nature came about by chance.

To think of people reasoning that way! God has a grand plan and plenty of time. His purpose is to fill the earth with happy, immortal beings. If it takes 6000 years, that is only one little tick on the grand clock of eternity; only one millionth of a tick.

We know the Day of the Lord is drawing nearer, not many more years for us to labor. Get down into the work with all your mind, might and strength. Meditate. You are all engaged with the things of this life; don't think of the things that decrease your faith. Instead, think of the evidence that will cause your faith to grow.

Why does my faith increase? Because every day I am thinking of things that will increase it. If we meditate in this way, we will grow stronger and stronger. As we read in the book of Job (17:9):

"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." MM



Thank You, God!

Even Now!

I thank You, God, that You have not diminished the beauties of Your world—of springtime, summer, and harvest—for lack of praise from me.

I am grateful that You have not withdrawn the hundred expressions of Your loving-kindness and tender mercy, because of my negligent gratitude.

I thank You, God, that You have not left unfinished one golden leaf, one sparkling raindrop, one radiant sunbeam, because of my sleeping thankfulness.

I thank You, Lord, that—even though I am so undeserving—You still permit me to know the delights of fellowship, the joy of sharing, the thrill of understanding, the peace of knowing that You are in control and are working all things together for my good.

I could not blame You, Lord, if You were to cancel some of Your benefits toward me, when I have been so thoughtless. You realize, more than I, how much I need them all—what would I be without You!

Now, God, as I pause in this moment of thanksgiving that is so long overdue, I praise You. I praise You, God, that in spite of how unworthy I have been, You still let me taste some of Your richest, most special blessings. The loving bonds of friendship I know—how is it possible, Lord, in this harsh world? Is it that You want me to have a foretaste of Your real delights? Is it to make me hungry for more?

I thank You for letting me know the beauties of Truth, the surety of Your Word, the fullness of Your promises, and the bright expectations You have in store for all who truly love and obey You.

Accept my overflowing gratitude, God, for all the things I have taken for granted far too long. Accept my gratitude for a knowledge of You and Your great purpose; for a work to do and a place to serve; for a challenge to meet, a hope to live for, and a goal to pursue with all my might and strength.

God, thank You for taking time from engineering Your planets, Your moons, Your suns, Your stars, to look upon Your earthly children, to hear their cry, and offer them Your salvation. Thank You, that even though I have been ungrateful and unworthy, You still are giving me life. Accept my earnest gratitude! Though belated and long overdue, God, I thank You! MM

COME—Find Rest

An Invitation by Jesus

Have we ever given serious thought to the heartwarming invitation extended by Jesus? Have we tried to take in the scope of what accepting this invitation could mean in our lives, yours and mine? Listen again, and revel anew in its possibilities. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

How far-reaching is this invitation? May it not have both a literal and a spiritual application?

Our acceptance of this invitation from our Master could very well affect every aspect of our lives, if we allow it.

But notice there are two conditions upfront, two preliminaries to our enjoying the ample benefits of our Master's invitation. We must be ready and willing *first* to take upon us His yoke, and *second* to learn of Him, i.e., acquire His meek and lowly spirit.

This invitation is not for the faint-hearted, or those prone to procrastination—not when there is a yoke to be worn. A yoke means restraint. It means we are not free to do as we please. We are not free to choose our

own course in life. We are not even free to form our own opinions!

Do we still want the rest Jesus offers? If we do, then let us go on to consider the second condition: "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Here is another invitation to daring souls who are eager and willing no matter what the cost, confident that the benefits will be worth it. They know that learning of Him will necessitate sacrifice, stern self-discipline, rigid self-control. They know that it will mean giving up their self-oriented way of thinking, all self-seeking, all self-gratification, all delighting in the "I," "me," and "my" issues of life. It will mean acknowledging that they do not know how to direct themselves, that they must seek guidance, they must be taught, that of themselves they do not know anything.

Now this would be too much for just about anyone. After all, if one cannot seek any self-satisfactions, if there is no room for pride in one's ambition and natural prowess, what is there to make life worth living?

Those who respond to Jesus' invitation are far-sighted. They are looking to the end of the matter. Yes, they say, the end will be worth it — and much more!

If we, like them, are not daunted by the conditions, then let us go on

to consider other aspects of this special "rest" Jesus is offering.

First of all, why are we weary? What is the reason for the enormous loads we have been carrying? If honest with ourselves, we will have to admit that many are the times we have complained bitterly—when the load we were carrying was one we had *chosen* to carry. Our old habits, our besetting sins, our tenacious determination to have our own way—these comprise the burden; these are responsible for our weariness.

Will we find rest from the burden of *jealousy*, which King Solomon graphically describes as being "cruel as the grave"? What mental havoc and heartache it can cause! It is so easy to become jealous and resentful, just because another possesses qualities we do not. Perhaps they are more talented, or enjoy that rare gift of being able to adjust well in whatever environment they may be placed. So we sit on the sidelines, jealous of their abilities, feeling awfully sorry for ourselves. We are burdened. But who is to blame? Yes, we know the fault is entirely our own.

This ought not—need not—be! Here is where we can lay aside our heavy burden and learn from the meek and lowly Jesus. With His spirit we will be able to thank God for the talents we do possess.

Do we want the rest Jesus offers? Then let us be ready to submit to His yoke and learn.

Remember, Jesus did not condemn the one-talent individual; He only required that the one talent be used to its full potential. If we seriously follow this line of reasoning, we will discover many areas of our lives that can be happily filled. The end result: one distressing burden dropped by the way, and far more rest than we have ever realized before.

There is yet another burden which many of us foolishly carry around, and that is *sensitiveness*. Like jealousy it, too, has the capacity to make us miserable. To the one who habitually wears his feelings on his sleeve, so to speak, the possibilities for getting "bumped" are numerous. Granted, some people seem to possess a certain knack for rubbing us the wrong way, but whose fault is it? Perhaps they are carelessly or rudely outspoken, or seem to take pleasure in hurting us. Or possibly they meant no offense whatever; it was just our oversensitive nature getting in the way.

Now what are we to do about it? How are we going to find rest from this burden? The answer is relatively simple, but to enjoy the benefits we must learn to be watchful. Vital to our success will be our ability to honestly and prayerfully weigh the words which have stung us. Are they true? If not, we can discard them quickly. And if they are true, what can we learn from them? What can we ignore and forget? Do we

remember what Peter said about Jesus, that "when he was insulted he offered no insult in return. When he suffered he made no threats of revenge. He simply committed his cause to the One who judges fairly" (I Pet. 2:23, Phillips). If it is our determination to lay aside the burden of sensitiveness and find Jesus' promised rest, why not do it?

Then there are other burdens. Over and again we declare that we want peace and rest from these millstones which bring us nothing but grief. But how slow we are to rid ourselves of them. Time and again doubt weighs us down, but do we expend the effort to counter it by feeding an unquenchable living, vibrant faith? Then there is pride. Jesus invites us to find rest from this ugly encroachment; however, we seem to *want* to carry this load—at least we are too stubborn and too proud to admit that we can make mistakes, or that we are not all that we made ourselves out to be.

Again our shoulders ache under the burden of anger and impatience; yet still we ignore the entreaty to "Let patience have her perfect work" (James 1:4).

Why are we so slow to come to Jesus? We know from our own experience that every weight laid

aside gives added rest, and our love of life increases immeasurably.

No wonder Jesus says "Come," but what are we doing about it? This is our life! It is our only chance. We choose our own destiny. We are free to wander aimlessly, burdened with our heavy loads, buried under a mass of sin unacknowledged and unrepented of, or we can find our rest in Jesus and enjoy the hundredfold He has so lovingly held out to us.

And that is not all. After the weights are laid aside, after we have received the benefits of the hundredfold in this life, there is more, much more beyond. Lest there be any doubt as to the verity of His promise of a brand new world, Jesus made sure that these words were in the Record for us. They are John's notes on the glorious preview he was given of that coming new world:

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:4-5).

Shall we be there, you and I? MM



Did you ever notice how the oak trees hang onto their old brown leaves long after other deciduous trees become bare? When spring comes, they still hold the foliage of the previous year. Even winter winds and snows fail to strip them of their dead leaves. But the warmth of springtime changes that. New buds at the tip of each little twig force off the old leaves; what couldn't be done from without is done from within.

The same is true in the Christian's life. Our old ways and habits persist in clinging to us. But start growing from within, begin nurturing new growth by reading, studying and meditating on the Word of God, and before long the old leaves of sin will begin dropping off.

Those Cookies!



The setting is the kitchen of the Fuller home, where Mother is baking cookies. Laura (age 4) and Leland (age 6) enter.

Laura: Mmmm...I smell cookies!

Leland: Can we have some, Mother?...Please?

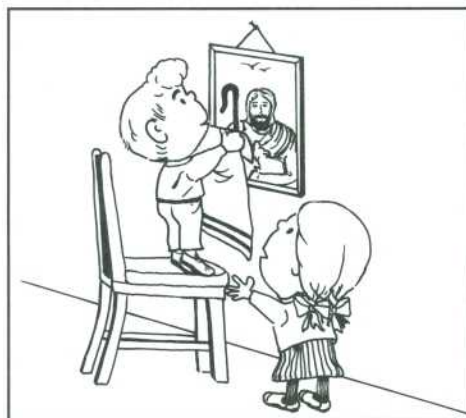
Laura: Please, please!

Mother: You may have these broken pieces.

Children: Thank you! Thank you!

Mother: You are welcome. And now, children, run along and play while I rest awhile. You can't have any more cookies now.

(Mother and children exit. After a few minutes, Leland comes to doorway, peeks in carefully, looks around, quietly tiptoes over to the cookie jar and lifts the cover. Laura enters quickly behind him, looking worried, pulls on his sleeve and points to picture of Jesus on wall).



Laura: (in hushed, anxious tone) Wait, Leland. Look!

Leland: Oh! Jesus is watching. (replaces lid on cookie jar and turns to Laura). Laura, I have an idea! Let's cover the picture up, then He won't see us.

Laura: Here's the towel!

(Leland climbs up on chair, drapes towel over picture, then both help themselves to the cookies and scamper out just as Mother enters.)

(Mother looks around, calls children; children enter.)

Mother: I can see that you have been naughty.

Laura: What do you mean?

Leland: How did you know?

Mother: You didn't dare to steal cookies while that picture of Jesus was looking at you, did you?

Both: No-o-o-o.

Mother: What does the Bible say in Proverbs 15:3, Laura?

Laura: I don't know.

Mother: Yes, you do. Think about it.

Laura: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

Leland: We can't hide from Jesus. He sees everything we do.

Mother: That's right, Leland. Shall we go into the living room and talk about this some more? Come along!

MM



LOST

Blessings

"How often would I ... and you would not"

If God in heaven could weep," said a modern-day theologian, "I think His tears should certainly flow because of our failure to receive the blessings He longs to bestow on us."

The thought of God in heaven weeping seems far removed from the realm of the infinite Creator, but the minister was pointing up a very common deficiency on our side. We do not have all that we *could* have, or all that God *wants* us to have—because we refuse. We are the ones who should weep for our own lost blessings.

Can blessings actually be "lost"? If we look at what has been written for our learning, we see many examples of blessings lost—lost not because of any failure on God's part to bestow but because of failure on the human side to properly receive.

We of all people on earth are most highly blessed. Our hearts thrill as we think of the beneficent Giver who, to quote from the familiar hymn, "out of His infinite riches of truth, He giveth to all and He giveth again," and again, and again, far beyond anything we can imagine. Blessings of life and breath, mind and body, strength and vitality; blessings of food, comfort and shelter; blessings of love, compassion, and friendship; blessings of hope and the prospect of salvation. In the words of another hymn, "I can never count the blessings I receive from day to day."

But is it possible that we are not receiving all the blessings we *could* have, or that God has planned we *should* have?

This may seem a strange question, especially to those so highly favored. But beyond our temporal blessings are the *special* blessings which God has offered. These include the "hundredfold" that comes with full surrender—a hundredfold of faith, love, hope, joy, peace, and surety in God knowing our life is in His hand. Is it possible that we have lost out on some of these blessings —because we were not ready or able to receive them?

Our Lord made this very point when expressing sorrow for His hard-hearted brethren: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37). Hear the note of sadness in those words. A blessing that could have been theirs had been lost by their own stubborn refusal: "How often would I," He said, "... and ye would not!"

"Ye would not"—we would not.

Blessings Lost By Disobedience

Our founder Rev. L. T. Nichols said once that it was easier to get into the Kingdom than to get into the tomb, if we just give up our own way. If...! But next to life itself, there is nothing we cherish more than our own way.

One of the principal ways we may lose blessings is through disobedience. This is one primary lesson of the Genesis allegory, where Adam disobeyed and so lost what he could have had. Because of his willful disobedience in partaking of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was cursed and driven out of the garden. Adam being representative of all believers in all time, it is a striking lesson for us, of the danger we face. We, too, will lose by disobedience. God is anxious to bless us. The blessings are already in His garden, and He wants us to share them. He wants to give us a right to the tree of life, of which we may "eat and live for ever." But through our disobedience we say "No thank you, Lord. I'm satisfied with what I have."

Again and again the nation of Israel lost blessings by disobedience. God had promised them honor, security and peace as a nation, upon one condition: that they obey. But the sin of idolatry held so much attraction that they could hardly resist. It was not that they had not seen—the true God had manifested Himself in countless ways. But by their own stubbornness and hard-heartedness they refused to believe. By their own willful disobedience they, in effect, wrote the word "REFUSED" on the package of blessings God was trying to deliver to them.

When they were about to cross over Jordan, God promised to be with them and give them victory in conquering the land—upon the same condition: that they obey. But again they disobeyed, and the result was years of struggle with the unsubdued inhabitants. The prophecy came true: "They [the unconquered inhabitants of the land]...shall be scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes" (Josh. 23:13).

Moses was another who lost blessings by disobedience. On this occasion the Lord had told him to speak to the rock, instead of smiting it. Unheeding and preoccupied with his vehemence at the rebellious people, he smote the rock. A small offense, perhaps, but it was disobedience, and a costly lesson to Moses. Because of this sin, the joyous entry into

the promised land was denied him. Again and again he asked God for reprieve, but the lost blessing could not be recovered. However, it did not interfere with his future, eternal inheritance.

Blessings Lost By Neglect

Many are those who lost blessings through neglect, indifference and delay; who for one reason or another did not act when the time was right, when the door of mercy was open.

The people in Noah's day made this fatal mistake. For a full 120 years the door of mercy was open. Day after day a righteous Noah preached righteousness and mercy, but the multitudes were unheeding. When the door closed and the rain began to fall, they could have been safe inside, enjoying the blessings of the ark of safety. But it was too late; when finally they awoke and cried in grief, it was too late. The lost blessings could not be recovered.

The same plight overtook the nation of Israel at the captivity. They had been warned, and warned, and warned. Yet they refused to change. Again and again the Lord sent His prophets, "rising up early and sending them," warning them of what they would lose, and what they would have to suffer, but they paid no heed. They "hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward....they did worse than their fathers" (Jer. 7:24, 26).

Even more dreadful was the final destruction of their nation and city, when thousands perished at the hands of the invading Romans. Jesus, prophesying the destruction of their city, had given them clear warning to flee "when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies." But they *would not*, through their own foolish neglect or unbelief—and soon they *could not*, and so they suffered the dreadful consequences.

Blessings Lost By Willful Blindness

Some blessings have gone unclaimed because those to whom they were offered closed their eyes. Not that they were blind beyond hope or help and *could not* see, but they *refused* to see. Jeremiah described this class as having "eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not" (Jer. 5:21).

Blessings can actually be "lost"—not because God fails to give but because we are not ready to receive.

The blessing of faith is in this category. God offers us knowledge, insight, and enlightenment through His Word, and all we need is to avail ourselves of it. But we must open our minds to receive it, believe it, and act upon it. Great faith is a blessing we can have, but it does not come by mere wishing. Faith comes by going over and over the evidence God has given us, until it becomes a part of us. How tragic if we lose the blessing by our own willful blindness, because we closed our eyes to the evidence all around us.

Let us open our eyes and see what God is doing all around us; let us open our eyes and see Him working with the nations, preparing them for the great Day to come; let us open our eyes to see Him working with His people, preparing a humble few who will be ready to welcome Him at His return. Let us look still closer to see Him working in our individual lives, allowing the opportunities we need for our own growth and perfecting, so that we will not be lost through willful blindness.

Angels are here right now, working in behalf of those who will be heirs of salvation. They are working right around us. We cannot see *them*, much as we would like to. But by faith we can see *their work*. We can watch the fulfilling of prophecy upon prophecy for our time; we can see sign upon sign that portends the end of the age. And we can have hope, knowing that God is in full control and that all is working together for the good of His purpose. These blessings need not be lost.

Blessings Lost By Impatience

Someone has observed that the Lord never minded keeping people waiting. The reason is that while they are waiting, they are learning—valuable lessons which He wants to teach them, lessons of obedience, lessons of faith, lessons of patience, and long-suffering, and love. Moses had to wait, David had to wait, Daniel had to wait, Jesus had to wait. Are we not in good company if we, too, must wait?

We may lose out on blessings we could have because we are not willing to bide God's time. God has planned that we must grow, and there are blessings that come to us *as* we grow. But growth takes time. In our eagerness for blessings, we reach out our hand as if to pluck our blessings green—instead of trusting God to ripen them as He has promised in His own time. For example, we want honor. God does not condemn this, but He wants us to wait for the honor He has promised to bestow, and which

God is anxious to bless us. But by our disobedience we say "No thank you, Lord. I'm satisfied with what I have."

He has promised will be magnificent. But we do not want to wait; we want our honor now; and so we go after honor God has forbidden, honor from our friends, our associates, and those around us. In this way we cut ourselves off from the lasting honor God has promised us. We forget that the honor *He* is waiting to bestow is

infinitely greater and infinitely more lasting than any we might gather now. The same is true of any of our cherished desires—for happiness, wealth, prosperity, achievement, fulfillment, or whatever we want from life. God has promised to give us *all we can ask* and abundantly *more*. But we must wait for Him to give it.

There is a story from frontier days of a farmer and his wife who went each month to the general store for supplies. This particular day the weather was extremely cold, and the wife asked the storekeeper if their young daughter might stay inside with him while they loaded the wagon. "Much obliged," was the pleasant reply.

Little Carrie was happy to wait in the store, there were so many interesting things to look at. But what caught her eye most was an enormous glass jar of colorful hard candies that was sitting on the floor by the counter.

"Would you like some?" asked the storekeeper.

The little girl smiled brightly, but shook her head and held up an empty hand.

"Just reach in," said the kindly storekeeper, "you can have one handful for free."

The little blonde continued to smile but did not move.

After awhile, the parents came in. "How did we get along?" asked the father. Little Carrie smiled, but said nothing, her eyes still glued to the huge jar of candies. "I told her she could have one handful for free," explained the storekeeper, "but she wouldn't take it."

"Go ahead, little one," said the child's father affectionately. "It's all right." The little girl still smiled but did not move. Finally, the storekeeper reached into the jar and pulled out a giant handful, so big that both her hands together could hardly receive it. "Thank you!" was the instant reply.

On the way home the parents questioned their young daughter. "Why, Carrie, why didn't you reach into the jar? You're not that shy." With that same delightful smile, the child replied, "Because his hand was bigger!"

Isn't it true for us, too? If we let God do the giving, we shall get far more than if we go grasping for ourselves. This was Jesus' lesson in His parable of the servants: "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he

(Continued on page 26)

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HIGH YIELD KINGDOM BONDS

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10,000%*

* Or 100 fold – see Mark 10:30

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But these special interest rates are available only to certain qualified investors. The first qualification, to give up all. "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions" (Mark 10:29-30)—and what does "an hundredfold now in this time" translate into, in modern banking terms? You're right, it's interest at the rate of 10,000 percent!

But that is not all. Jesus promised even more than this to farsighted, willing investors. He says that in addition to the 10,000 percent of present interest, there will be full payment in the future: "In the world to come eternal life."

What kind of response did Jesus receive to this almost unbelievable offer? The answer: Almost none. To the majority, it was too much to believe. They would rather stake their claims in this world, for a petty 1, or 2, or at the most 50 percent interest—with no future benefit.

But a few farsighted individuals took up Jesus' offer and believed it. The 10,000 percent interest they received, as agreed—as everyone of them will testify. And the future benefit is waiting.

Who can afford not to take up with such an offer, with "eternal life...in the world to come"!

Invest today! It's more than worth it!

MM

A Moment of *Sorrow* on the Path to *Glory*

(Continued from page 9)

and the two men that stood with him" (Luke 9:32). We do not know whether the sleeping of the disciples was part of the experience of the vision or whether it was indeed natural sleep. Only Luke mentions it. But whichever it was, they seemed not to have missed the experience, for we read that "when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him." The Bible records visions given both to those who were asleep or awake. In any event, the disciples saw what they were meant to see, and what a thrilling sight it must have been, one which Peter wished to perpetuate. "Master," he requested, "it is good for us to be here: and let us make

Would not
the wonderment
of seeing Jesus in His
glory leave anyone
speechless!

three tabernacles: one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Luke 9:33). Mark suggests that Peter made this statement because he did not know what to say—but can we blame him? Can't we imagine that the spectacle of Jesus in glory would leave anyone speechless!

Then came another spectacular moment, for "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). What blessed assurance for Jesus, that the Father was indeed pleased with Him. And notice, too, that this was spoken *before* the crucifixion.

The disciples hearing the heavenly voice "fell on their face, and were sore afraid." What mortal has not been afraid in the awesome presence of Divine splendor! It was a moment they did not forget. "And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid." He understood, and comforted them. Yes, they needed that touch.

And suddenly it was all over. "And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man" (Matt. 17:9).

Many people have claimed that the Transfiguration was an actual experience, that Moses and Elijah, their "souls" being alive in heaven (they believe that the dead are conscious) were visibly appearing to the disciples. But Jesus' own words remove any idea of this, for He says clearly that it was a vision: "Tell the vision to no man." Here is proof positive that it was not a live conversation between Jesus, Moses and Elijah.

More Conversation

Let us think now about the conversation between Jesus and His disciples that followed the Transfiguration, as they came down from the mountain. The discussion was a natural continuation of what had been seen and talked about on the mountain, and even before the mountaintop experience. It all centered around His second advent. Still thinking about it, they were, according to Mark's Gospel, talking about the Resurrection, for Jesus had told them not to say anything about the vision until after He was resurrected. Was not the Resurrection a natural topic of con-

versation, when they had just seen the resurrected Moses in vision? What did it mean? What would it be like?

In the context of the vision, the Resurrection of the last day would have been a natural topic. Thinking further, they realized that they themselves would need to be resurrected when the Son of man should return, for they, too, were mortal and their lives would soon end. All hope of future life for them—even for us—depends upon the power of God to restore and perpetuate life.

The next matter to engage them in conversation was equally logical, for discussion of the Resurrection at the last day could easily bring up the topic of Christ's forerunner at His second advent. The question was raised also by their having seen Elijah in the vision. In this context, one of the disciples asked Jesus, "Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?" (v. 10). In other words, they asked, if this is the way You are to come and appear in Your glory, why the need for a messenger? Why the teaching about Elijah the prophet?

What was Jesus' reply? "Jesus answered and said unto them, Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things." There would be a special work for Elijah to do. In these words Jesus positively confirmed their previously held belief, that Elijah would precede His second advent, which they had just seen in vision.

Then Jesus went on to say, "But I say unto you, That Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them" (v. 12). Who is *this* "Elijah" Jesus was mentioning, this forerunner who had "come already," to whom the wicked Jews had "done...whatsoever they listed"? Who was he about whom Jesus could say, "Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them"? It was

none other than John the Baptist, who had already served as the forerunner of Christ's first coming, who had come "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17). John the Baptist had been the "Elijah" at that time, and "they" (the hateful Jews) had "done unto him whatsoever they listed"—they had beheaded him. In like manner, said Jesus, He Himself would have to suffer a cruel death, just as John had.

The disciples understood. Shall we fail to understand? "Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist" (Matt. 17:13). The disciples understood that Jesus was speaking of John the Baptist, the "Elijah" of His first coming, who had already been executed. But they also understood Jesus' plain statement about the prophet Elijah who was yet to come, before His glorious second advent which they had seen in vision, who should "restore all things" (Matt. 17:11).

Jesus, far from living all His life in the shadow of the cross, lived in the hope of coming glory. There were moments of trial, but how insignificant they were compared with the glory ahead. In the Garden of Gethsemane, when His work was complete, He prayed to His Father that He might be glorified in His presence, a glory far outweighing any shame or suffering on earth. "I have glorified thee on the earth," He could say; "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self"—what glory could compare with that!

Jesus' whole career was one of glory. There was the glory of a perfect life, the glory of being the Father's only begotten Son; the glory of patiently enduring the cruel treatment He had to receive; the glory of finishing the work He had been given to do, the glory of exaltation at His Father's right hand; and

finally, the glory when He should come with myriads of holy angels and all on the earth should ascribe praise and honor to Him.

How brief was the moment of sorrow on the path to glory!

Lessons for Us

What is the lesson that comes to us from the Transfiguration, from Jesus and His matchless example left on record for us?

For all of us it is a lesson in how to take the trials and testings of life, these moments of sorrow on the path to glory, to see them for what they are: moments of testing, important only for the fact that they are our opportunities to prove ourselves worthy of the coming glory. In this aspect they are critical; not for the suffering but for the glory they are working for us. As Paul expressed it, the "light afflictions" which "*work for us*" a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Oh, let them work! Welcome them—they are our means to glory!

This life is not all that God can give, it is but a taste, a means to a far greater and glorious end. We were not born to prosper in the things of this world; we have set our sights on the future; we have heard a higher call, a call to glory and eternal destiny.

It is the lesson Christ would have us learn, to view our testings as mere moments of sorrow on the path to glory. For indeed, we are destined for glory, as surely as was Christ, if we but prove ourselves His worthy followers. If we can follow Him fully, ours shall be glory full measure, far beyond anything which eye has seen or ear heard or the heart of man can imagine.

Why not take up our cross eagerly, however humbling it may be, however severe, however confining, however contrary to our liking, realizing it is but a moment of sorrow on the same path our Master trod... the path to eternal glory! MM

Glory All the Way!

Look at the glory in Jesus' career. There was:

- the glory of hearing, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!"
- the glory of a perfect life,
- the glory of being the Father's only begotten Son;
- the glory of patiently enduring cruel treatment;
- the glory of finishing the work He had been given to do,
- the glory of being the firstborn from the dead;
- the glory of ascending to heaven in the company of angels;
- the glory of being exalted at His Father's right hand;
- and—someday—the glory of returning to earth accompanied by myriads of holy angels, and reigning forever and ever.



New Heavens and Earth

"I was a little shaken by a sentence in your magazine, 'A new heavens and a new earth, figurative terms for new rulers and a new populace, shall replace the old....' Do you not believe in a literal, physical new heavens and new earth? I would appreciate your answers to these very important questions."

The Bible uses the terms heaven and earth in both a physical and symbolic sense. There are simple statements of the existence of the physical heaven and earth, such as in Deut. 10:14: "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is." Heaven is spoken of as the dwelling place of God (II Chron. 6:33). The prophet Nehemiah extolled God as the great Creator of the heavens and earth: "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein" (Neh. 9:6). The Psalmist was of the same mind: "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Ps. 115:16). Isaiah spoke often of God as the great Creator. "He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it" (Isa. 42:5). "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (Isa. 45:12).

The Bible speaks clearly of the enduring nature of these physical entities. The heavens being vast beyond even the remotest human conception, we can understand that they are the exclusive property of God. "The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's" (Ps. 115:16), and as such are everlasting. The Psalmist, speaking of God's firstborn, said that God will make His seed "to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven" (Ps. 89:29). Even the "sun" and "moon" are said to be eternal (Ps. 72:5).

The same duration is assigned to the earth. "One gener-

ation passeth away," wrote Solomon, "and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4). The Psalmist wrote of "the earth which he hath established for ever" (Ps. 78:69), also that "the foundations of the earth...should not be removed for ever" (Ps. 104:5).

The terms heaven and earth are also used in the Bible with a symbolic or representative meaning, referring to the rulers and those ruled over. We can be sure of this from the context in which the words are used, for example Deut. 32:1: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." Literal heavens and earth would not have ears to hear. Again we read of the heavens being glad and the earth rejoicing (I Chron. 16:31). The prophet Isaiah addressed the heavens and earth: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken...." Then immediately he repeated the message defining his targeted audience in the unmistakable terms of "rulers" and "people": "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah" (Isa. 1:2, 10). In a statement describing a time of great rejoicing for the inhabitants of earth, the Prophet wrote again prophetically, "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel" (Isa. 44:23). No one reading this passage would expect to see mountains, forests, and every tree "singing"; much less the earth or the heavens shouting. It is symbolic language, a beautiful description of the time when the earth will be glorified and made new. The prophet Jeremiah described the heavens (the political rulers of Judah) as being "astonished"—a reaction which the physical earth could not show (Jer. 2:12).

The prophet Isaiah also speaks of the creation of "new" heavens and earth in a symbolic sense, i.e., "new" rulers and populace, as the context of the prophecy shows clearly. We read: "For, behold, I create new

heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17). The next verse is a re-statement of the same fact, identifying what constitutes the "new heavens" and "new earth": "But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (v. 18). The new creation of God in this passage is His people. And this new heavens and earth, once complete, will be eternal. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain" (Isa. 66:22).

The most extensive discussion of these figurative new heavens and new earth is by the apostle Peter in the third chapter of his Second Epistle. In this chapter he speaks of three different "heavens," none of them being the physical bodies beyond the earth. Of the antediluvian world he says that "by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (vs. 5-6). We can be sure that Peter was not speaking of the physical earth, because the physical earth did not perish at that time. The heavens and earth in this passage are representative terms for those who died in the flood.

Then Peter goes on to talk about another heavens and earth (again he is referring to rulers and those ruled over) that "are now" and which are destined to be destroyed in the future: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (II Pet. 3:7). He then goes on to tell just when these "heavens and earth" will be removed: in the coming "day of the Lord." "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (v. 10). Have we any reason to think that Peter is speaking of the literal earth, when he has just previously spoken of the inhabitants of the earth as the earth? Have we any reason to array these words against the other Biblical writers who said plainly that "the earth abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4)?

Do we question this destruction of the present heavens and earth, the present ruling authorities and those ruled over who will not submit to the new regime of Christ? It was the teaching of many of God's prophets. Isaiah describes it in these words: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (Isa. 60:12). David, speaking for God, described the same destruction of the "earth" in Psalm 101: "I will early destroy all the wicked of the

Heavens and Earth in Scripture

The Physical Heavens and Earth

"Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein" (Neh. 9:6). "He that created the heavens, and...spread forth the earth" (Isa. 42:5).

Symbolic/Figurative Heavens and Earth

—*Heaven = rulers, Earth = populace*

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth... Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah" (Isa. 1:2, 10).

—*New heavens = new rulers, new earth = new populace.*

"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth:" (Isa. 65:17). "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Pet. 3:13).

land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord" (v. 8). Prov. 2:22 pictures it again: "The wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it." Jesus described this same destruction of the wicked earth when in the Parable of the Pounds He pronounced doom upon the unfaithful servants: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27). This is another description of the same passing away of the old earth to make room for the new. He pictures it again using the simile of the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," which He clearly defines as "the second death." We read: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). This is another picture of the removal of the present wicked earth.

The passing away of the present heavens and earth, however, will not leave an unfillable void, for God will have a new authority ready to take the place of the old. In

Second Peter 3 he speaks of the third heavens and earth, and he calls it "new"; and once again his description rules out any possibility that he is speaking of the physical heavens and earth. Notice especially the outstanding quality of this new creation: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (v. 13). Both "new heavens" and "new earth" will be composed of righteous individuals: "wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The universal standard in God's new creation will be righteousness, with all sin and evil eliminated. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17). When this promise is fulfilled, the new earth will be here.

In Revelation 21 the apostle John was given a vision of this same "new heaven and earth." We read: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (v. 1). He goes on to describe this new heaven and earth as the "holy city, new Jerusalem," which he later says is "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (vs. 2, 9-10). This bride, the Lamb's wife, is composed of all who are accepted to rule with Christ; these select individuals, who have made themselves ready by putting on the "fine linen clean and white...which is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:7-8) will, as Christ's associate rulers, become the new heavens in that new arrangement. These are the overcomers to whom Jesus promised the privilege of sitting with Him on His throne. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). These are the new heavens, the "kings and priests," who "shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10).

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Lost Blessings

(Continued from page 20)

cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37). Can we even imagine what it will be like, when *He* does the serving!

We need not lose out on any blessing from God, now or future. They can all be ours—a hundredfold of contentment, happiness, peace and joy in obedience now, and eternal

life in the future—if we just do the things that will qualify us for them. God has blessings to bestow beyond anything we can imagine.

It need not be said of us, "How often would I...and ye would not." *All* of the hundredfold—of peace and joy and happiness that God has promised—*can be ours*, if we just give up, if we just surrender our will to His, our way to His, our thoughts to His. And then, *all* of the future joys and glories can be ours. *There need be no lost blessings.*

MM

Beyond the Possible— with God

(Continued from page 2)

Yes, "it is always dangerous to say what can't be done." This is certainly true in spiritual matters, where the Bible clearly spells out the possibilities by stating not only what can and must be done but what has been done. Shall we challenge it—only to show our moral weakness? Shall we read, for example, about two individuals who were "both righteous before God"—and then say that we can't do it? Shall we believe the testimony of him who said, "I have fought a good fight,...I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:7), and then tell God we cannot stand up against the test He allows us? Shall we read of those who made their robes of character clean and white and then say that ours simply won't come clean?

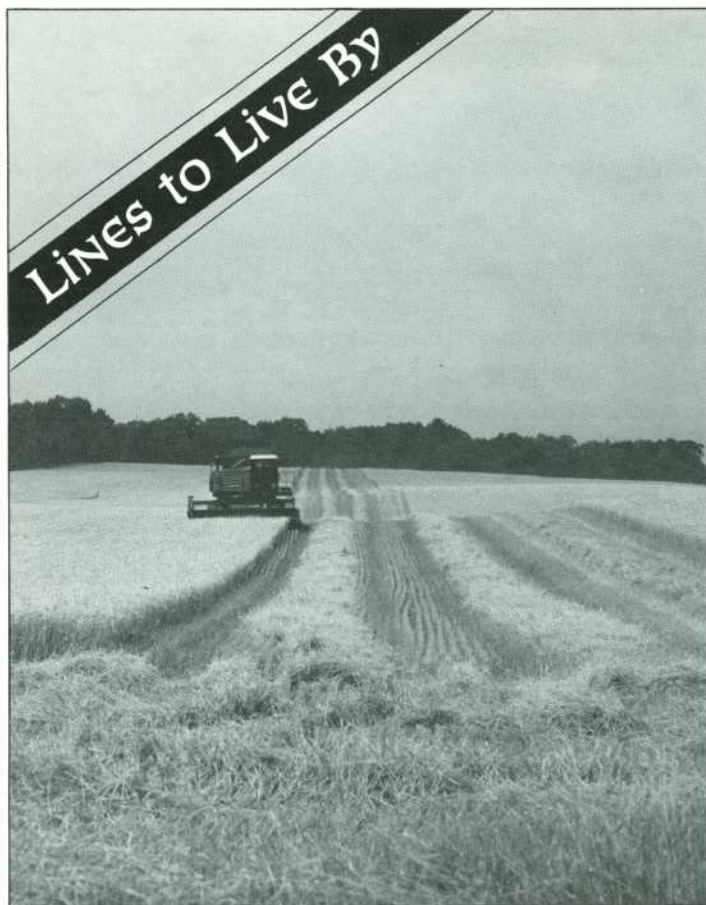
Just about everything we hope for, live for, and long for is, from a human point of view, beyond the possible—without God. Of ourselves we could not even know how to go, for "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). The protection God gives us is "beyond the possible"—without God! The perfect beauty of character God requires is "beyond the possible"—without God. And the abundant life He offers, embellished with every conceivable and inconceivable pleasure and happiness is surely "beyond the possible"—without God!

But with Him all things are possible—with God.

That is the key: "with God." If we stay with Him, we shall be able to go beyond all possibles, to enjoy the limitless reaches of the universe with all His heavenly family world without end.

MM

*A gracious word may soothe the way;
A joyous word lights up the day;
A peaceful word will lessen stress;
A loving word will heal and bless.*



*Be not always wanting
Some other work to do,
But cheerfully perform the task
That God marked out for you.*

No one will know you are honest
unless you give out samples.

*Contentment is found not in having
everything, but in being satisfied
with everything you have.*

When we bend our knees and pray
according to God's will, God bends
His ear to listen.

*Do what you can, where you are,
with what you have.*

If you have it, use it.

*In God's design of life for us that He Himself has planned
There are so many hidden things we do not understand;
But He would have us know His plan is such a wondrous one
That when we do not understand, we'll say: "Thy will be done."*

As you travel along life's highway, try making a habit of "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." The truest expression of Christianity is not a sigh but a song.

Examine your attitude toward work. Remember, a determined and wholehearted approach to any task is most important. Don't be a clock-watcher. Display an enthusiasm that indicates you have "a mind to work"!

Character is pretty much like window glass—when it is cracked, it is cracked inside and outside.

Thank You Again!

Dear Heavenly Father,
I know what You think
Of all my good intentions
Without action.

I know what You think
Of all my planning, and praying,
And feeling, and saying—
Without doing.

I know, too, what You think of me
When I try to look big,
And appear what I am not.

I know also what You think of me
When I act like a spoiled child
That could not have his way;
When I get “out of sorts”
And spunky.

You want—You must have
Better than I have given You.
Yet sometimes when I know better,
I do the worse.

Thank You, Lord,
For another chance
To try again.
Tomorrow.

No, Lord, TODAY!