

Megiddo Message

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From the rising of the sun

to its setting,

The name of the LORD be praised!

—Psalm 113:3, NAS

Taking Charge of Ourselves

The author of the book of James described the undisciplined man as being like a “wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed.” His underlying problem: he hasn’t learned to take charge of himself.

Am I in charge of me and my life? Of course, I am. But am I?

Am I able to dictate to myself just what I will or will not do, and stick to it?

Do I ever feel disorganized and behind schedule?

Do I ever feel at the mercy of those I am trying to please, frustrated and defeated by the opinions and dissatisfactions of others?

Am I able to dictate to myself what I will think about—or will *not* think about—and make it happen?

Do I often act on the spur of the moment? Does my interest shift quickly, almost subconsciously, from one subject to another when I am pressed by a number of things to do?

Yes, who is in charge of this area of the world called MY LIFE?

Perhaps our most challenging task as Christians is that of self-mastery. For as Christian believers we are called to be framers not only of our actions but also of our thoughts, our motives, our feelings—our entire inner world. We are not responsible for what is around us, but we are responsible for what we are on the inside. As children of God, we must take charge of ourselves, not be subject to the impulse of every passing whim or notion, not be like “the wave of the sea, and driven with the wind and tossed.”

How well do we take charge of ourselves? Are we satisfied with our level of self-discipline? Hopefully not, for if we are, we have reached a spiritual dead-end; we will never improve if we do not see the need.

But suppose we are not satisfied. This is not a problem to which we are condemned for the remainder of our lives. The call of Christ has given us a direction in life that affects everything we do, for this world and for the world to come. If we are

lacking in self-discipline, we can—we must—improve if we would be true to our calling. The following have been recommended as good attacks on the problem of low self-discipline:

1. *Avoid fatigue.* Check your sleeping habits to discover what patterns make you feel at your best. Being overtired and overstressed will inevitably detract from the effectiveness of our effort at self-mastery. Proper rest tunes up the body and makes self-mastery easier.

2. *Focus on your duties and obligations, not on your feelings.* By instinct, we think about how we feel and accommodate ourselves—perhaps more than necessary—to our feelings. We will be far more effective if we focus on what needs to be done, then plan realistically how we can accomplish it—in spite of our feelings. Often, dedication to duty can overpower negative feelings.

3. *Give needful attention to your health.* Lack of mental direction or discipline may have a physical cause. Our bodies are complex, and even a very small problem may incline us toward nervousness, irritability, insomnia, or sluggishness—something which might be easily diagnosed and corrected.

4. *Think before you act.* When making a decision, try to project a series of logical steps and consequences. Practice thinking things through to a logical conclusion. Where will this decision take me, or what will be its long-term consequences to my inner life? Will that route make me more involved with the world and leave me with less time for spiritual thought and devotion? It is often helpful to write out the pros and cons of any issue requiring a decision. If you tend to make snap decisions, wherever possible take at least 24 hours before making a decision. If at all possible, sleep on it.

5. *Judge situations and events by THINKING about them, not just FEELING about them.* Sometimes decisions have to be made quickly, but never irrationally. When others are “losing their heads,” relax and breathe deeply. Keep your thought process

(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."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Soon-coming events

The Herald and the KING

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

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

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

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Seeking, Serving, Knowing

- ◆ **WHY** should we seek the Lord?
- ◆ **WHEN** is the proper time to seek the Lord?
- ◆ **HOW** should we seek the Lord that we may know our effort is not in vain?

The answer to these questions is a matter of life and death. For if we do not seek the Lord in the way He has appointed and at the time He has appointed, how can we hope to obtain His eternal favor?

Why should we seek the Lord? With much of the world in a condition of political chaos and all but universal moral destitution—and no solution in sight—the minds of many serious thinkers turn to the Higher Power. What can we realistically do to preserve the health and safety of future generations?

But even if the present world picture were perfect, if the international dilemma did not exist, if a state of universal peace and brotherhood among nations could be attained, what is our life at best? It is even as a vapor or a flower that appears for a little time and then vanishes away (James 4:14; Ps. 103:15). Every life, no matter if its every hour be rich with love and

every moment jeweled with joy, comes to an end. However brilliant one's career, death is inevitable. In the words of the poet, those who enjoy rare opportunities and sway vast numbers by their ability, and are "borne on the shoulders of shouting multitudes," are at last laid away in the grave to molder and be forgotten.

Meanwhile, the promises of God for the future are radiant. The Psalmist invites: "O taste and see that the Lord is good," and then adds, "blessed is the man that trusteth in him" (Ps. 34:8). God does not demand of us a blind ser-

vice. He wants us to consider and inquire about what He has offered. At one time during the ministry of Christ, the Twelve who followed Him were anxious about their future. Peter, as spokesman for the group, said: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (Matt. 19:27). In the next

two verses Jesus told them about the benefits of their choice. Those who would leave all and follow Him would receive a hundredfold in this life. Well, this sounded good—far better than they could secure otherwise. And this promise is still part of the contract, for all who faithfully serve God now can testify to the superior happiness of a devoted life of service as compared to anything they may have attained otherwise. There is a peace of mind and contentment in truly seeking God.

But a good life now is not enough. Jesus offered more. He

***W**e should learn and feel that every day is the best day of the year for serving God.*

said that in addition to the promised hundredfold His loyal followers could look forward to inheriting "everlasting life" in the world to come. Now here is something far beyond any expectation of this world. As the Wise Man said, this way offers riches and honor in one hand and length of days in the other (Prov. 3:16).

When should we seek the Lord?

There is only one time allotted: NOW. The familiar words of the Prophet come to mind: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa. 55:6). Why should we be seeking the Lord now? Because a time is coming when we will not be able to seek the Lord. We read from another Prophet: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness...Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:16,23). One who spends his life in the pursuit of his own wishes and desires will find it impossible to turn to God and obtain His favor at the last.

Under the law of Moses, when animal sacrifices were offered, God always demanded the best of the flock. Through the ages, the most brilliant characters who served God were men who gave their best to Him. Of such the testimony reads that they "pleased God." A gift of a short time of apparent sincerity at the end of a wasted life will lack much of being precious in God's sight. It would be like selecting the poorest of the flock for sacrifice. The advice of the prophet Jeremiah is especially worthy of recognition: "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lam. 3:27).

No one ever served God by what he intended to do tomorrow. We should learn and feel that every day is the best day of the year for serving God, and the only way we can honor Him and be blessed is by what we do today. The apostle Paul wrote: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). Jesus used His Parable of the Ten Virgins to illustrate a class who were forbidden entrance to the marriage of the bridegroom because they tarried too long. No amount of pleading will avail when our day of probation is over. So it was at the time of

the flood. When the ark was completed and Noah and his family entered in and the rains began, it was too late for those outside. The door was shut.

How should we seek the Lord?

The first requisite in approaching the Eternal is humility. A humble and a contrite heart always has been one of the chief requirements. Fleshly pride is sin and hides the face of God (Isa. 59:1-2); but humble-mindedness is the genuine fruit of Christian virtue, for from it spring all other attributes which make up godly character. True humility should not be confused with an inferiority complex, but is the result of a right estimate of ourselves and of seeing ourselves as God sees us.

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:5). Thus spoke Moses, the man of God, to the children of Israel; and Jesus who came into the world according to Moses' prophecy (Deut. 18:15) quoted Moses' words (Mark 12:30). There is no way to evade this statement or to get a wrong meaning from the words. Jeremiah added his confirmation when he said, speaking for God, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (29:13).

To be sure, we are slow to take in the meaning of these words. The human heart being deceitful (Jer. 17:9), we naturally hold back part of the service we should be rendering to God. We seek God, but with a divided heart. We want the eternal blessings, but are slow in surrendering the things we naturally crave.

God has given us His plan for salvation in the Bible. The Bible sets forth rules which must be complied with, and any who attempt to disregard, misinterpret, or impose other regulations only reveal their own ignorance of its precepts. Should we cast aside the Bible, we would have no guide or lamp for our path through this wilderness of life. To use another simile, we would be as mariners on a stormy sea without chart or compass.

The only way we can honor God and be blessed by God is by what we do today.

No one ever served God by what he intended to do tomorrow.

*In the service of
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*The promises
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radiant.*

If we desire the favor of the Lord through eternity, then we must seek Him as He has directed. We must seek Him now while the opportunity is ours, and not grow weary in our seeking. The great reward He has promised must be our stimulant through these trying times, impelling us to work, giving us the assurance that our efforts will not be in vain.

Seeking With a Perfect Heart

Surely no wiser counsel was ever given by a father to his son, and the advice is for us no less than for Solomon, for the things written aforetime have been written for our learning (Rom. 15:4). The passage reads, "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever" (I Chron. 28:9).

King David, stricken in years and feeble in body, had abdicated in favor of Solomon, his favorite son, in a hasty move to crush rebellion headed by another son Adonijah, who was aspiring to the throne. Upon the ascension of Solomon to the throne, the revolution collapsed, for the time, and the aged ex-monarch assembled his officers to bid them farewell. In the midst of the nation's disorder, the desire still nearest his heart was his cherished ambition of many years: to build a fitting temple for Jehovah, and he took this opportunity to charge Solomon with the task, ending with the fatherly advice quoted above.

To know the God of our fathers is to understand His law and His will for us. Solomon had great advantages we have not had. He was instructed by angels, he was given visions, and heard the direct word of the Lord's prophets. We today can know our Creator only through His revealed Word. As the apostle Paul wrote, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mys-

tery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). And this knowledge is by no means universal, nor is it popular. Only a very small remnant are in the "way of understanding."

To know in the fullest sense of the word is to do what we have learned, for knowledge without practice is like flower without fruit. Nor will a desultory practice be effective if salvation is our goal. In the service of God, it is all or nothing, hence the command to seek God "with a perfect heart." Perfection of character is the Divine standard yesterday, today and forever. Those who deny the possibility of perfection of character will argue that our actions do not so much matter so long as our heart is right. The fact of the matter is, if our heart is right, our actions will as a matter of course be the same, so that a perfect heart is synonymous with a perfect life.

Perfection is not an impossible task; it simply means the perfect keeping of all the commandments of God. If one precept can be kept, then two can; and so on to the end of the analogy, which brings us to perfection. Inversely, if one breach of the law can be tolerated, the way is open for the violation of any commandment, rendering the entire law null and void.

Perfecting a character in the sight of God is no easy task, nor will it ever be attained without the next adjunct, "a willing mind." A grudging, reluctant, backward looking service is worse than useless. Unless we work willingly and with joy, we will never go far toward attaining "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." And what was the example of Christ? "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8). Delight is a strong word. Another related term is used by the apostle Paul: "Glorying." Said this noble Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). That in which we glory will be our all in all, our meat and drink, our dominant theme, the undertone and

overtone of our whole lives. "Glorying in the cross" implies not only our personal, individual relationship with our God but a certain ardent loyalty to our Captain and all that He represents—the unity of the body of Christ.

We may make up our minds to give our Creator the kind of service He requires, or we can take the broad way with the masses—either get in step or get out. For we cannot fool God, no matter how hard we try. We may deceive ourselves, we may deceive our fellow men, but we cannot deceive the Almighty, for "The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." He understands us far better than we know ourselves, for we are His workmanship. Being our Creator, He knows what restraint and guidance we need, and has provided laws especially suited to our needs. To doubt or to break one of the least of His commandments is to question the wisdom of the Lawgiver, a presumptuous and fatal thing to do. King David spoke these words from the depths of bitter experience, for more than once he had tried to "climb up some other way," and had found in every case that it did not pay. Again and yet again he had been pulled back to sanity by friends who could see him better than he could see himself (these are the eyes of the Lord), whether a righteous Nathan or an unscrupulous Joab. And let it be said to his eternal credit that David was man enough to take the rebukes with humility and good grace and profit by them.

David's advice closes with two alternatives, and two results. "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." God means just that, no more and no less. He will meet us more than half way, but the first move must be ours. There is no compulsion. He will never save men or women against their will; but if we seek Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind, we shall find at the end of the way every blessing which our limited mental powers can imagine. Riches and honor are in the

left hand of the wisdom of God, and in her right hand length of days, even eternal life, free from disease, decay, pain or sorrow. But if at the great assize we find ourselves on the wrong side, cast off forever, there will be no sorrow like our sorrow, and only ourselves to blame.

We know from our vantage point today that all this excellent advice was lost upon Solomon. After a most promising beginning, his weaknesses soon came to light. This would have been good, had he been willing to address and correct them, but he was not. His great prosperity turned his head, and more and more he trusted in himself and forgot God, until from a wise and humble child he came to be an "old and foolish king, who [would] no more be admonished" (Eccl. 4:13).

Did Solomon realize he was describing himself? Perhaps. But there is no excuse for Solomon, who with all his wisdom so blindly and stupidly threw away his own potential for eternal life. One of the most tragic and sorrowful figures at the Judgment will be this once magnificent king of Israel who had all and lost all.

The fate of Solomon need not be ours. We still have the opportunity to heed the advice he was given, to seek, serve, know and find God, and know that in return He will be found of us. If we seek in earnest and continue seeking, we shall arrive. We shall find that for which we seek, even eternal life in His everlasting kingdom. □

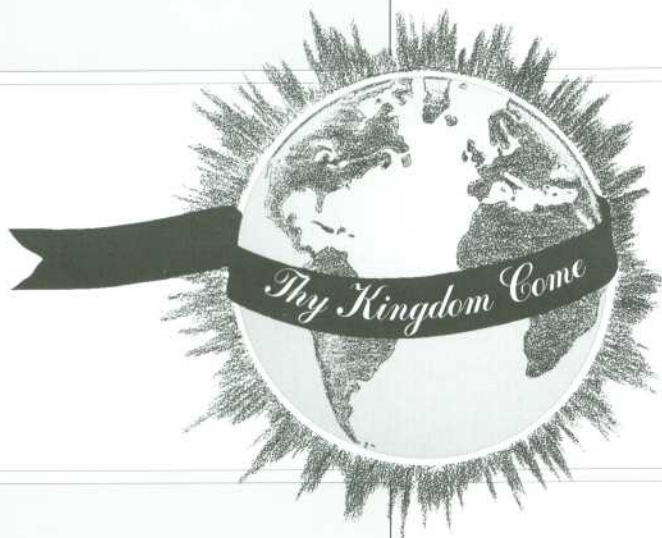
One Moment, Please...

What are you doing with the valuable time God has loaned you?

Every moment of your life is borrowed from God's vast reservoir of life. It does not belong to you. What are you doing in return? Think of this while at your daily toil, as well as when you retire to your couch at night, as your soul may be required of you before the dawn of another day.

A kind word here, a kind act there is a small portion of your duty. You travel this way but once. Get acquainted with your Creator and learn to reverence a just and merciful God, which is your duty—and don't delay!

*My pulpit is not a castle
Nor a marble hall indeed,
But the highways and the hedges
Is where I sow the seed.*



Conquest, Conversion, Redemption

Part Three

These things shall be. God's matchless plan for the world WILL be consummated. Christ WILL return to earth; the great battle of Armageddon WILL be fought; a new and better order WILL replace today's faulty political structures.

For millenniums earth has been strewn with the wreckage of defeated civilizations. Why? Why has the conqueror proved inadequate as a ruler? Conquerors have exerted physical force to subdue their enemies, but to convert those enemies, to control, to govern them wisely, they have lacked the capacity. To the physical challenge leaders respond valiantly, and civilizations are born. But in response to the moral challenge they too often betray their selfish interest and begin to decline.

How long must earth be victim of this immemorial tragedy, this endless, vicious cycle?

Barriers of nationalism, of race, of creed have made the members of the human race enemies instead of brothers. From where shall come the necessary unifying force? How can be achieved that ideal civilization which is secure from external aggression and internal uprising?

Jesus Christ, "the desire of all nations," "King of kings and Lord of lords," is coming to answer this need. Unlike any of His predecessors, He and His associate rulers are completely qualified for the position. Why? Because they have learned, down to the finest detail of thought, to rule themselves. History teaches that it is difficult rather than easy circumstances that produce character. These chosen ones—kings and priests of God—and Christ, "prince of the kings," have for nearly six millenniums faced a hostile world and stood rigidly for truth and right though it drove them to

prison, to the rack, to Golgotha, and to the arena. Through much tribulation they secured their honors. Victory cannot intoxicate them, nor can power make them indiscreet, for they are champions in self-mastery. They will employ the power at their command to improve the lot of their subjects, to lead them onward and upward, to teach them to be brothers, to observe the Golden Rule. With the right rulers, those whose lives inspire imitation, at the top, civilization can progress eternally. And these are the right ones, trained by God and by Him crowned.

After earth is startled by the proclamation of Christ's proximity, shaken by the resurrection of His servants, perplexed by the absence of His people who meet the Lord in the air then

✧ *Earth Beholds Her King*

It is the event for which all creation has unwittingly groaned from the dawn of civilization.

And it shall be an event visible worldwide. In the words of Jesus: "As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27). Also the words of Zechariah the prophet: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, ...and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (Zech. 14:4-5).

Here we see the mystical body, composed of Christ and His associate rulers or

joint-heirs: "The Lord...and all the saints." Or, as envisioned by the Revelator, "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (14:1).

The marriage of the Lamb takes place, with the accompanying ecstasy. Then Christ, the rightful heir, proceeds to claim His throne.

★ *Worldwide Summons*

Upon His arrival, the new King sends forth a warning and a summons to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (v. 7).

The new Ruler's first step toward creating an ideal universal society is by an appeal to glorify one God. Well He knows that when creedal barriers are destroyed, when rival gods are broken and banished, then racial and national barriers will cease to exist. In the true Church, racial and national barriers never did exist. Jesus talked at the well with the Samaritan woman. A foreigner was the hero in His parable of The Good Samaritan. A Syrian and a Sidonian were cited as worthy examples to the stiff-necked town of Nazareth. "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). In the Church of God "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11).

Christ's ultimate goal at His return is "one nation" (Ezek. 37:22), and His first step toward that end is a demand for humankind to worship and glorify one God.

Earth will be faced with the ultimatum: submit or perish. It will be the hour of decision (Joel 3:14). As following Israel's idolatry when Moses cried, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me" (Ex. 32:26). so all must come over on the

Lord's side or suffer the consequences.

The summons to "fear God, and give glory to him" will be the opportunity for which one particular group of people have waited. This announcement will mean an end to the famine for those who felt the pangs of spiritual hunger at the time of the resurrection and Judgment, those who scoured land and sea in the futile quest for the word of the Lord, their longings then unsatisfied because the saints—those who had knowledge of future events—were away at Judgment. Now by submission to the Lord they can secure food and protection. The Lord's kind compassion and care for them is described in beautiful language in Joel 2:32. "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

Another class, "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies," shall gather together to make war against Christ (Rev. 19:19). In the prophetic language of the Psalmist, "Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us.' He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 'I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.' I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, with

trembling kiss his feet, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him" (Ps. 2, RSV). There will be blessing and protection for the suppliants, destruction for the rebels.

The Bible refers to Christ as earth's "Redeemer." How acute our need is! But by two apt illustrations Jesus implies that that redemption for which earth has blindly groped for centuries, that peace and good will which she assumes as innate desire, must be literally forced upon her. "As it was in the days of Noah...and Lot...even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26-30). In both cases the only means of coping with wickedness was by eliminating the incorrigibles. So now—

★ *Armageddon*

This term has long been the subject of speculation among scholars. Armageddon has been identified as everything from the conflict between Christianity and early persecutors to the age-old clash between good and evil. However, there need be no confounding of the term if we look candidly at the Word. Revelation 16 specifies Armageddon to be the site of the last great conflict between the forces of good and the forces of evil. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (Rev. 16:13-14, 16).

This passage follows consecutively in the grand crescendo of events which begins (Rev. 14) when Christ and the saints stand on Mount Zion and issue a warning to all nations to "fear God, and give glory to him." Chapters 15 and 16 picture these judgments in action. The results of the battle are revealed in the next chapter. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (17:14).

Chapter 18 is an exultation over



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enemies instead
of brothers.*

the fall of the evil system, Babylon with her costly but accursed system of commercialized superstition; chapter 19, the triumph of the Church. So it is clear that Armageddon is simply one in a specified chain of events which follows our Lord's return.

Armageddon, the Hellenized form of Har-Megiddo or the Mount of Megiddo, is some sixty miles north of Jerusalem. The broad plain of Megiddo stretches before this mountain, which for thousands of years had been an imposing stronghold. Armageddon has been the gateway between two continents, and for its possession the emperors and kings of Asia and Africa have struggled. Through the pass which it commands, the armies of Egypt marched for a thousand years, and fought many battles in these hills overlooking the Valley of Esdraclon. The Crusaders of the Middle Ages also fought many battles there.

Being the crossroad between the Orient and the Middle East, the location is a logical place for battle and the gathering of armies. This is the place, then, where the Battle of God Almighty will be fought, or at least where it will begin, and will spread until the forces of evil are brought under complete control of Christ and the saints. Zechariah 14:2 is specific: "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle."

It is hard for us to believe that the ecclesiastical and civil powers of earth will have the audacity to fight against Christ at His return. If today we should secure an audience with the Pope and should ask him if he would not welcome the return of Christ to earth to head the Church and to unite all the segments of humanity into one ideal society, we can imagine that he would hail such a prospect with delight, and that he would be indignant if told that he would head the aggressive forces against Christ.

Let us assume in generosity to our fellow humans that the powers of earth who resist Christ's decree to "fear God, and give glory to him" do not actually recognize Him as the Son of God. How could they fight if they knew! Perhaps they will think Him to be another Usurper, a Dictator, against whose invasion their only

defense is united aggression. When they confront His army—men whom the sword cannot wound (Joel 2:7-8), who are themselves perfected flying machines (Isa. 60:8), an army upon which all their implements of war, their missiles, hydrogen bombs, nuclear weapons, have no effect—they will believe them to be superbeings from another planet. Surely, if they were acquainted with the King of kings and His mission, if they comprehended His plan, they would not, they could not, resist Him!

But when He challenges all their established institutions, everything that they have known and loved and cherished, they will fight to the bitter end to save their system, their thrones and power.

The prophets, Jesus and the apostles all testify that it will take nothing less than the judgments of God to bring the world into a state of peace and obedience to Divine law. Does the thought of another world war bring dismay to the heart? Remember, this war will be different. It will be a contest between right and wrong, truth and error; and for the first time in history right will not be on the scaffold, wrong upon the throne. The use of force will be employed as an instrument of justice; none shall be cut off except the sinners who refuse to reform. Before Christ can reign in righteousness, before peace can bathe the earth with the healing dew of morning, Christ must wrest the scepter of empire from its present holders.

Many passages in the Book describe Armageddon. According to the Psalmist, "Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written: this honor have all his saints" (149:5-9).

According to Isaiah, "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sin-



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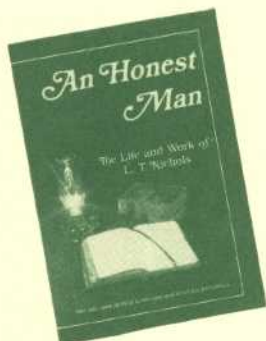
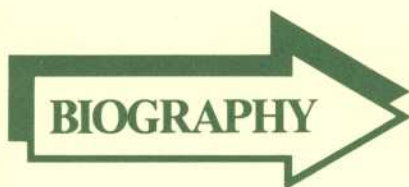
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The story of an honest heart seeking...searching...finding.

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

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

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

—L. T. Nichols

ners thereof out of it. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible" (Isa. 13:6, 9, 11). "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isa. 66:15-16).

According to Malachi, "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (4:1). When shall we look for that day? Malachi specifies that it will follow the advent of Elijah the prophet who comes to announce the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" (v. 5), His *second* advent, for His first advent was in no sense a dreadful day.

According to Jesus, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom" that He reckoned with His servants, rewarding them according to their works. Then He issues the decree, "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:12, 13, 15, 27). This is Armageddon.

The immense destruction of human life that results from the conquest of the earth by its rightful King is described in Zechariah. "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein" (13:8). In the face of this newly arrived and

authoritative Power, the surrender of the "third part" is more than might be expected. But why will so large a proportion be so stubborn as to resist the change even to their own death? One might expect people to be more sensible, but this proves how foolish they can be; and God, who can read the heart and the future of every individual, proposes to make a clean sweep of all who have no possibilities for His Kingdom. To leave the overtly rebellious would be to invite a return of present conditions. The survivors of the cleansing judgments are a class who are at least controllable by law, and will form the nucleus of a new world, from which will develop the subjects of the Kingdom of God.

The fall of Babylon—often described in the Book—expresses figuratively the results of God's judgments. Revelation 18 is the most familiar passage. There we read of the fall of spiritual Babylon with her costliness, her pride and superfluities. When the present order, this rule and exploitation, crashes before the judgments of the Eternal, when there ceases to be profit in war and its kindred iniquities, when the teaching of fables is sternly suppressed, when "no man buyeth her merchandise any more," great will be the ruin thereof, and loud the wailing (Rev. 1:7). Stripped of her jewels, her purple and scarlet raiment, Babylon the Great shall lie, broken and humbled in the dust, her power for evil destroyed.

With all evil suppressed, the road

*Nothing less than
the judgments of God
will bring the world
into a state of peace
and obedience to
Divine law.*

to true progress is thrown wide open for all mankind.

Hushed is the din of war: "The best is yet to be." "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). Righteousness! Beautiful, inspiring, thrilling word! It was the intent and purpose of the war and now its fruit is beginning to ripen. Then, as recorded in Jer. 16:19, "The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit" (an admission which reveals the futility of "religion" today).

Simultaneous with the battle, and extending beyond, a vast educational program will be instituted. All who live must "learn righteousness." Who are to be the teachers? We consult Isa. 66:18-19 (RSV): "I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not heard my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations" (RSV). The first to escape of the nations, the "survivors" will be selected as missionaries to instruct the uninstructed. As men submit to the new order they are spared. Onward conversion spreads until "there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord" (Zech. 8:20-22).

How transcendently beautiful the picture of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues turned toward Jerusalem for light and understanding and healing! □

What about Rendering to Caesar?

"When we see our government openly embracing practices which God abhors, I wonder if this is a time not to 'render unto Caesar'? I do not feel right about paying taxes to a government that endorses some of the godless policies which our present administration is adopting. I would appreciate your comments."

You raise an excellent point. Are we obligated to pay taxes even when our moral and spiritual beliefs and values clash with those in authority? And are we by paying taxes endorsing the views of those in authority?

In Luke 20, Jesus was asked, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no?" Or as the passage is translated in the New English Bible, "Are we or are we not permitted to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor?" The people were asking Jesus directly about their obligation to political authorities. And Jesus answered directly. He asked them to show Him "a penny" and asked, "Whose inscription and superscription hath it?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then Jesus replied, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke 20:20-25). Our money is "Caesar's," a product of our present government, and we must handle it according to Caesar's dictates. To do otherwise is to defy authority, to disobey the government that is over us, and so to dishonor God, which we must not do for, in the words of the apostle Paul, "The powers that be are ordained of God....Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.... Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" (Rom. 13:1-2).

Paul also spoke directly about the matter of paying taxes. He said, "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to

whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. 13:7). Or as it is translated in the New International Version, "Give everyone what you owe him: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour."

Actually, if we were to compare our "Caesar" today with the "Caesar" in Paul's day, we might feel more comfortable rendering to our Caesar than to Paul's. Caesar's government today is corrupt; it was worse in Paul's day. Besides being corrupt, Caesar's government in Paul's day was totalitarian, not democratic. We can thank God that our Caesar does not oppress us, that we are not mistreated because of our religious convictions, that we are allowed the free exercise of our religion. We can also be thankful that we are not forced to support our Caesar politically. And we do not have to be entangled in its operations. The extent of our duty lies in obeying the laws of our government, which includes paying the taxes that our government assesses.

This brings us to the second issue in question: By paying taxes are we supporting the godless practices and unchristian values of the present system?

While large portions of our tax dollars do go to causes that we as Christians cannot espouse, we are not accountable for the actions of Caesar. And Caesar is not under covenant to Divine law. God never condones wrong, but He does not judge Caesar by the laws that govern God's servants.

When we think about how our government spends our tax dollars, we should realize the benefits we derive, as well as our government's misappropriations. In fact, the less we concern our-

selves with our government's mispending (which we are powerless to change) and instead appreciate the good that it accomplishes, the more mental peace we will have and the freer we will be to spend our time, energy and thought in service to God. For example, think how different our lives would be if we did not have the road systems, the bridges, the waterways, and the utilities which benefit us continually. And even though we do not participate in the military organizations of our government, we would not want to live in a country that did not have any military or police forces to protect or defend us.

As committed servants of God, we are under obligation to be good stewards of all that has been entrusted to us, whether it be our life, our strength, our money, or our temporal resources. Stewardship is part of our Christian duty, and an opportunity for us to prove that we are able to handle wisely the little that we have now so that we may

be trusted with more in the future. If we show ourselves able to administer what we have in a wise and God-fearing manner, not selfishly hoarding it, not setting our affections upon it, not using it in any selfish way but meeting our needs and furthering the cause of God, then we are setting an example that will bring honor to God and will be letting our light shine before others, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

God does not ask us to endorse the actions of our present government, and were we to try to change it we would be entangling ourselves in its affairs, which we are commanded not to do (II Tim. 2:4-5). We belong to "another country"; our "citizenship is in heaven," therefore we are no part of the present arrangement (Phil. 3:20-21).

The present arrangement, its best and its worst, is only temporary; and nothing will hinder God's cause or future work on earth.

When the time is right He will act.

But even though we cannot endorse all the actions and institutions of our present government, we should thank God for it and pray, as did the apostle Paul, that those in authority may so legislate and govern that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty (I Tim. 2:2).

We cannot expect the situation to improve until Christ returns, but it is a shelter within which we can live and serve God acceptably, "rendering unto Caesar" according to the dictates of Caesar so long as Caesar's demands do not conflict with the law of God. We are not accountable for how Caesar uses or misuses what we render, nor do we need to concern ourselves with such issues. Our duty is to render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, then involve ourselves in our greater duty of *rendering to God the things which are God's*—which includes the proper and God-fearing use of everything we have and are. □

Things Left Undone

*It isn't the thing you do, my friend,
It's the thing you leave undone
That gives you the bitter heartache
At the setting of the sun;
The tender word forgotten,
The letter you did not write,
The flower you might have sent, friend,
Are your haunting ghosts at night.*

*The stone you might have lifted
Out of your brother's way,
The bit of heartsome counsel
You were hurried too much to say;
The loving touch of the hand, friend,
The gentle and winsome tone,
That you had no time or thought for,
With troubles enough of your own.*

*These little acts of kindness,
So easily out of mind,
These chances to be angels,
Which even mortals find—
They come in the night and silence,
Each chill a reproachful wraith,
When hope is faint and flagging,
And a blight has dropped on faith.*

*For life is too fleeting and short, friend,
And sorrow is all too great,
To suffer our slow compassion
That tarries until too late.
And it's not the thing you do, friend,
It's the thing you leave undone,
That gives you the bitter heartache,
At the setting of the sun.*

—Selected.

Tuned to Praise!

The Psalms are filled with "Hallelujah!" Over and above the call to worship is the sincere desire to offer praise to God. Worship is the ascription of

*God deserves our best.
What earthly interest could
compare in importance with
offering praise for what
God has done for us?*

worthiness to God, giving God the glory and praise which His work is worth.

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein" (Ps. 111:2).

Worship is the rational, sensible response of the creature to the Creator.

The Psalmist was ever tuning up his soul for the triumphant anthems of praise with which the saints shall one day make the courts of heaven ring. "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart," he said. He resolved to put his all into it, to summon all the resources of his intellect, all the dynamic of his will, all the passions of his heart, all the energy of his strength—to pull out all the stops, so to speak.

This is as our worship should be. God deserves our best. What earthly interest could compare in importance with offering praise for what God has done for us?

It is said that Michelangelo, when carving a statue of David out of stone, was so devoted to the task that food, sleep, recreation were all ignored in his artistic passion to succeed. Almost violently he hurled himself at his marble. When his right hand was limp with weariness, he changed hands and drove on with his left, so possessed was he with a

fever to set free the David he could see held captive in the piece of stone.

We should bring this same commitment to our inner development of character. Having disciplined ourselves to work with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we should worship with the same earnest zeal. In the words of the Psalmist, "I will praise the Lord with my whole heart."

Everywhere is the might of God displayed in His creation. Everywhere we see the fingerprints of an omniscient, omnipotent Creator. Consider the mysteries of the atom. Reach out to the star empires and see the evidence of inconceivable might which can orbit a galaxy, or guide a universe.

What is any earthly glory beside the spectacle of God's creation? Our best is but a touch of borrowed splendor, a shadow of the magnificence of the presence of God. Our realm is ablaze with glory only as it reflects that glory from God.

Let us think thankful. Let us never forget the God to whom we owe our life, our breath, and everything we have and are.

*Oh, worship the King all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His power and His love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.*

*Everywhere is the
might of God displayed in His
creation. Everywhere we see the
fingerprints of our omniscient,
omnipotent Creator.*

Harvest Thanks

*Praise be Thine, eternal King;
Young and old Hosanna sing.
Thou hast blest us far and wide
At the bounteous harvest-tide.
Angel voices high and blending
In the anthem never ending;
Hear us, while we fain would render
Praise for mercies kind and tender.*

*Lord, 'tis Thine almighty hand
That upholds this noble land;
That the pastures doth enfold
In a royal robe of gold;*

*Shining vineyards, hill-tops hoary,
Woods aflame declare Thy glory;
Thou hast hung the fruitage glowing
Where the orchard boughs are bowing.*

*Praise for sun, and praise for dew,
Praise for love forever new!
Praise for bounties richly shed,
That Thy children may be fed;
Bread of Life, for all availing,
Vine the true, the never-failing!
Feed our souls, in Thee confiding,
Keep our lives in Thine abiding.*

*Old and young their voices raise,
All Thy children chant Thy praise;
Every season, every year,
Are Thy tender mercies near;
Thou, our Hope, our Help forever,
God of harvest, leave us never,
Till we reach the bliss eternal,
Bringing homeward sheaves supernal.*

—Selected

I Asked . . . God Sent

*I asked for grace to lift me high
Above the world's depressing cares;
God sent me trials—and with a sigh
I said He had not heard my prayers.*

*I asked for light, that I might see
My path along life's thorny road;
But clouds in darkness shadowed me
While I awaited light from God.*

*I asked for peace that I might rest
To think my sacred duties o'er,
When lo! such troubles filled my breast
As I had never felt before.*

*But soon I found that trouble, worn
As duty's garment, strength supplies;
And out of darkness meekly born
Unto the righteous light doth rise.*

*So Lord, in Thy mysterious ways
Lead my dependent spirit on,
And when so ere it kneels and prays,
Teach it to say, "Thy will be done!"*

*Let my one thought, one prayer be,
To be obedient unto Thee;
Let every other wish or care
Be left confidingly to Thee.*

—Selected

Light of the World

They Shall Not Pass

Our next scene takes us to the beginning of the Fifth Century, and the time when the Roman Empire was no longer a power but only a disintegrated maze of independent cities. But not for long, because wave after wave of barbarians were sweeping down from the north, removing every vestige of the civilization that had been.

Some one hundred years earlier, the Empire had divided into east and west, and now, though the civil government was gone, the ecclesiastical power of the Church, both in the east and in the west, was growing. It was Christian in name, but the ruling Church was no longer the Church of Christ either in doctrine or practice. Meanwhile, everyday life became so destitute of comfort, knowledge, or hope, as to be nearly unbearable. As a result, thousands upon thousands of men and women escaped to the monasteries. It was the Dark Ages.

Under such stresses a Roman church official named Augustine, erroneously called "saint," conceived what he called the "City of God," a universal spiritual community which he pictured as an ideal, a kingdom within kingdoms, having its own laws, rulers, culture, and language. Such was the position the Roman church assumed as guardian of learning and culture through the Dark Ages. And, strange though it be, this is how it fulfilled the duty God had assigned to it, as the custodian of the Word of God.

About this time a new question arose:

in what language should the Bible be preserved? The New Testament had been conceived in Greek, and the Old Testament had long been translated into Greek. But in the West, where the remnants of civilization still remained, the language was Latin. An old Latin Bible had long been in existence, but it had been ruined by copyists. The Pope saw the need of a new and better version—for the Church's purposes, not the public's, of course—and Pope Damascus the First, shortly before his death in 384, commissioned his secretary Jerome, a leading scholar of his day, to perform the monumental work of translating the Greek Scriptures into Latin.

Damascus the First soon died, and his successor was not friendly to the idea. For this reason, Jerome left Rome and established himself in a cave near Bethlehem, where he pursued his task unmolested. The result was the Latin Vulgate, which became the standard Bible of Roman Catholicism for the next thousand years.

Jerome was no saint by God's standards. He believed every false doctrine being taught at the time, and for the violence of his temper and language he has been termed the "great name caller." Yet here was a man the Eternal was using, one who had been given a task and was stubbornly determined to fulfill it. It is curious to note how many of those who played important but unwitting parts in the career of the Bible through the Middle Ages were men of violent expres-

sion. Perhaps only this type could successfully work under the dominance of the ruling system.

In our next scene we see Jerome at work. The incident is basically historical. Jerome is being visited by a bishop from Alexandria, who has come to protest Jerome's omission of certain Apocryphal stories. The bishop receives scant courtesy and no consideration, thanks to the presence and pressure of the unseen messenger of God, who is guarding the water of life from pollution.

SCENE TWO They Shall Not Pass

Characters:

Jerome
Arcadius, Bishop of Alexandria
Angel

Year: 400 A. D.

Setting: Jerome is seated at a table, writing. Bishop enters. Greeting, very effusive on the part of the Bishop, short and impatient from Jerome.

ARCADIUS: And how is the translation proceeding, Father?

JEROME: Slowly. Too slowly. Too many interruptions. Visitors running in and out all day—it's hard for a man to find time to work.

ARCADIUS: Just how far along are you now?

JEROME: I am just beginning the Prophet Zechariah. I'm handicapped by a miserable Greek copy. The text isn't bad, but the handwriting is terrible. If I couldn't write better Greek, I'd go back to the plow. And the old Latin texts are so corrupt, they are no help at all. The Pope admitted *that* when he commissioned me to do this job. If only there were some way of producing copies without all this hand work! Perhaps some day it will come.

ARCADIUS: You know, Father Jerome, I've been a little curious as to the *purpose* of your translation. It is a noble work, of course, but why Latin? The whole Eastern world speaks *Greek*.

JEROME: If we are to be a universal Church, we must have a universal language. We are the Holy Roman Apostolic Church, and the language of Rome is Latin. For another thing, Latin has a purer literary form. It has never been so widely spoken, but it is the language of learning. If it becomes a dead language, so much the better, for then its present meanings can be carried forward without change. Furthermore, we can afford to be arbitrary. If the Church says Latin, then Latin it shall be.

The advantages are many: Put the Scriptures, the prayer book, the litany, all the sacred books in Latin, and keep them there; educate the priesthood in Latin, and you have a universal medium. Anywhere in the world, any priest of any nation can say Mass. The ritual is made permanent, and the discipline much easier to enforce. See what I mean?

ARCADIUS: But what about the common people—will they understand?

Jerome: The common people don't *need* to understand. They are supposed to *worship* and *obey*, not understand. If the *priest* understands, he can tell them what they need to know in the sermon. Most of the people haven't any education, and wouldn't know how to use it if they did. For that matter, half the clergy are educated fools!

ARCADIUS: Now—ah-h— Father Jerome, I don't want to take up your time, but the purpose of my visit is this: About the little matter we discussed at our last visit. I still feel, and the majority of my fellow-bishops agree with me, that your Latin translation has an unfortunate tendency to ignore and omit some of the most sacred traditions of the Church. To be explicit, your version of the Book of Daniel leaves out the story of Susannah, of Bel and the Dragon, the song of the three Hebrew children, and other things. Now these stories are part and parcel of our tradition, and we feel very strongly that they should be retained.

JEROME: (*angrily*) I've told you before, and I tell you again—*no! no! no!* These tales are not found in the Hebrew, and I positively will not include them.

ARCADIUS: They are in the Greek —

JEROME: Yes, but behind the Greek is the Hebrew, and I cannot find a trace of these fables in the Hebrew manuscripts. You are wasting your time, Sir.

ARCADIUS: But don't you find these stories edifying yourself?

JEROME: (*angrily*) That has nothing to do with it. My opinions have no bearing on the Word of God. I am only God's *humble* servant.

ARCADIUS: (*aside*) God's *angry* servant, I should say. (*pause*) I have here, brother, a note from the Patriarch of Constantinople, expressing his concern and urging that you reconsider.

JEROME: (*still more angry*) Let him take back his letter and mind his own business! If the Bishop of Rome himself told me to violate my conscience in this matter, I would have to refuse.

Light of the World

ARCADIUS: Don't you think your position is a little extreme?

JEROME: Extreme? Can truth be extreme? If our Church is the custodian of the truth, as we claim to be, and if, as our Lord said, His Word is the truth, then woe to the church if she allows the Word to be corrupted.

ARCADIUS: But let me say —

JEROME: (*very gruff*) Enough! I've lost enough time already. You have delivered your message and had your answer. Kindly do me the kindness to *get out!* (*Turns to his writing; bishop looks harshly at Jerome and exits slowly*)

SCENE THREE Guarding the Waters

Narrator:

It may seem strange that the Almighty can use such men for His purposes. Yet what about Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and Cyrus of Persia, who had been His unwitting servants in ancient times?

Our next scene takes us to the year 1200, when the Scriptures lay in the complete possession of the powers of darkness. Yet they were not at its mercy, for protecting them was the angel of God.

To those monks who so patiently copied the Divine Word in their cheerless cells, often illuminating the letters with loving care, we are debtors. For a thousand years the Bible was copied and re-copied in the monasteries of Europe, copied by men who believed the exact opposite of its teachings. Had they understood what it said, they certainly would have destroyed it. But in their ignorance they guarded its purity with utmost care.

The Scriptures could have been utterly ruined by the errors of copyists, but the fact remains that they were not. While there are some variations in manuscripts, in most cases the meaning of the text is not affected. Here is a stupendous miracle. Only the direct care of God could have brought this about.

The next scene reveals this important working of the plan of God for our benefit. In this scene we see Anselm fiercely berating a copyist, Brother Cuthbert, for a small error in his work. Bad as he is, the abbot is influenced by the angel, and takes seriously the Church's responsibility to the world and the future for its careful handling of the Scriptures. Brother

Cuthbert mildly suggests that his error is a minor one, but learns that "there are no minor matters when we are dealing with the Word of God." The accuracy of the Bible which we have today is due in large part to this firm attitude adopted by the Roman Church.

Time: About 1200 A.D.

Setting: The same monastery. A monk's cell, where Brother Cuthbert sits copying, occasionally yawning. Abbot enters, carrying two large books.

Characters:

Abbot
Brother Cuthbert
Angel

ABBOT: Brother Cuthbert!

CUTHBERT: Yes, my lord.

ABBOT: I have a very serious matter to discuss with you. Your work as a copyist has been passable, but you are getting careless. *Four mistakes* so far this year we have found in your work, and it has got to stop!

CUTHBERT: Mistakes, my lord? What have I done now?

ABBOT: What have I done now! How innocent you act. Here is your latest, and I hope your last. I am quite sure it will be the *next to the last*, at least. This is your copy of the Gospel According to St. John, and this is your original. Compare these two lines, and you will see what you have done.

CUTHBERT: (*comparing*) I see....I see I put "*this*" instead of "*that*".

ABBOT: That is plain enough to be seen. The question is, *why* did you do it? Was it plain stupidity?

CUTHBERT: As I recall—it has been some time—he way I put it seemed to mean a little more, and I thought—

ABBOT: YOU thought! That is worse than stupidity—it is presumption. You are a *copyist*, not a *theologian*. Leave the thinking to them. It is not supposed to mean anything to you. The meaning is in the text, not in your thick head, and you have given it a different sense.

CUTHBERT: It seems a *minor* difference, my lord.

ABBOT: (*sternly*) Brother Cuthbert, there are no minor matters when we are dealing with the Word of God. It is the immediate treasure of the Church, too holy for common hands and eyes, and when we undertake to copy it, we undertake a fearful responsibility. If it is to be preserved in its purity, it will be by our carefulness; if it is corrupted, it will

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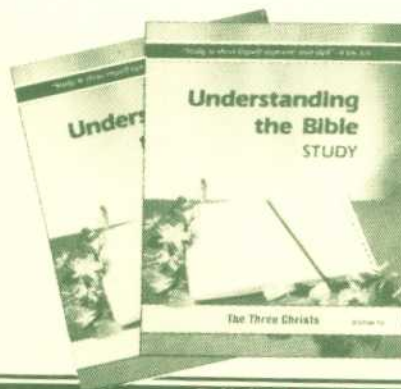
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—Psalm 85:9-13, A Paraphrase*

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be by our carelessness. Suppose this Gospel is copied a hundred times—a *thousand* times—and each copyist makes *one minor error*. What have we got at the end? Can you begin to see the point?

CUTHBERT: I see. I'm very, very sorry.

ABBOT: You're sorry, but sorrow puts no porridge on the table. If you should die tonight, I'm afraid you would have a lonnnnnnnng stay in purgatory, sorrow or no sorrow. To avoid future errors of this sort, you will have a complete fast this evening, and twenty extra Hail Mary's daily for two weeks. And a little flagellation might do your soul good. Your error is, as I have said, a serious matter, and I intend that you shall take it seriously. I advise you to tread carefully in the future, or you will find yourself herding swine in the forest. That is all.

CUTHBERT: (*trembling*) The penance is light, my lord; I shall do better.

SCENE FOUR
In the Darkest of the Night

Time: About 1200 A.D.

Setting: A medieval monastery. The Abbot, a portly character in rich robes is seated with his clerk, a monk in simple cowl and tonsure.

Characters:

Abbot
Clerk
Baldur
Einhard

CLERK: By the way, my lord, what are we going to do about Father Albertus. He's still after the vacant parish of St. Mary's, and he gives me no peace day nor night. What shall I tell him?

ABBOT: He should know by this time that it depends entirely upon how much he is prepared to pay. How much has he bid?

CLERK: He was up to four hundred and twenty pounds last time.

ABBOT: Coming up! Well, don't be in a hurry. He really wants it, and that parish is a good fat plum. Give him to understand that somebody else is bidding against him. I think we can squeeze at least five hundred out of it My position here cost me several times that much.

CLERK: They like money even in Rome, yes?

ABBOT: You don't know the half of it. After all, it's done everywhere, and we might as well get ours.

(*Bell rings*) Come in! (*Enter Baldur, a bard-looking young man who keeps looking back over his shoulder as if afraid to be caught off guard*)

BALDUR: My name is Baldur. I came to inquire about a new indulgence which I have heard about.

ABBOT: Ah, yes; it arrived from Rome only last week, and it is already very popular. It gives you a full year's indulgence, regardless of what you do; there are no prayers or other duties involved—a straight cash consideration, and the price is very modest, considering.

BALDUR: The price is the same, regardless of the sin?

ABBOT: I didn't say that. What have you in mind?

BALDUR: I'm not telling what I have in mind. I just want an indulgence that is strong enough to take care of something serious, just in case.

ABBOT: Then this is just what you want. But, of course, if you are deliberately mortgaging your future, you must expect to pay accordingly.

BALDUR: How much?

ABBOT: Oh, say ten pounds.

BALDUR: For a year? Do you think I'm crazy?

ABBOT: Suit yourself. Hell is a pretty hot place, and purgatory isn't exactly comfortable, and our clergy can devise some rather strenuous penances in this life.

BALDUR: All right. It's too much, but I'll take it.

ABBOT: (*rising*) Take care of him, William. I'll be back in a minute.

CLERK: (*after writing paper and taking money*) What's up, Baldur?

BALDUR: Not telling, even you. You'll probably hear about it after it's over.

(*Exit Baldur; enter Abbot*)

CLERK: Well, I don't know, but I wouldn't want to be his father-in-law. I understand there is very bad blood between them, and that Baldur is a bad actor.

ABBOT: Don't tell me anything. I don't want to know....

(*Bell rings; enter Einhard, a stalwart young man in peasant dress*)

EINHART: Einhard is my name. I have joined the Crusade leaving tomorrow. I understood from the priest who enlisted us that all my sins are forgiven if I go on Crusade. Is that so?

ABBOT: That's right. Past, present and future. It is a glorious cause to die for, Einhard.

Light of the World

EINHART: But that's just the point—suppose I don't want to die for it? Suppose I want to come back alive? Haven't you got a charm or something that will take care of me?

CLERK: Yes, indeed we have. (*Produces box and takes out ring*) Here is a ring set with a piece of wood from the true cross. It will keep you safe in battle, and also protect you from fevers and shipwrecks. Beautiful, isn't it? The price is only five crowns.

EINHART: I can't do it. Haven't got that much money, and never expect to have. Haven't you got something for about half a crown?

CLERK: Well, let me see.... Here is a scapular containing a genuine relic

of Saint Felix, a part of a hair from his beard. It is not as ornamental nor quite as powerful as the other, but it will help. It will help a lot.

EINHART: I'll take that one. (*Crosses himself as it is hung about his neck*) Beyond half a crown I have to take my own chances, but maybe Saint Felix won't be too busy to help me out. Goodbye.

ABBOT: Goodbye, and good luck, my son. Kill us a lot of Saracens, and free the Holy City, and our blessing will be upon you. (*exit Einhart*)

ABBOT: (*patting Clerk on shoulder*) Well done, William. You are learning. It's a shame to take their money, but business is business. After all, it all belongs to the Lord, and we are His representatives.

(To be continued next issue)

I Must Go Shopping Today

I am completely out of GENEROSITY, and must get some more.

I also want to exchange the SELF-SATISFACTION I picked up the other day for some real HUMILITY. They say that it wears better.

And while I'm out, I want to look at some TOLERANCE, which is sometimes suitable as a wrap.

I saw samples of KINDNESS the other day...I'm sure I still have some, but one can never have too much on hand.

And I must try to match some PATIENCE. I saw it on a friend,...it was so becoming, I think it will look equally well on me.

I must remember to get my sense of DISCERNMENT mended, and keep my eyes open for some inexpensive GOODNESS.

It is surprising how quickly one's stock of goods gets depleted when it is being used everyday. And—I must not forget—I desperately need to buy more FAITH. I like to keep a really big supply on hand.

Yes! I *must* go shopping today. □



That Little Member

by Billy Graham

The Bible has much to say about the sins of the tongue. James writes: "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3:6). And he warns, "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:7-8).

When we give way to anger and lose control of our tongue, we are committing sin.

Anger has many varieties—indignation, irritation, impatience, vexation, bitterness, exasperation, resentment, passion, temper, wrath, rage, pouting, carrying a grudge—and these are expressed in all sorts of ill-tempered words ranging from the cold acid of sarcasm to the hot flame of fury. God condemns them all, and says they are sin in His sight. Every expression of anger, even the most noble form of indignation, is fraught with danger.

Someone has said that if you are in the right, you need not lose your temper; and if you are in the wrong, you can't afford to.

Angry words never improved any situation. Solomon, called the world's wisest man, declared that one slow to wrath demonstrates great understanding, but a quick-tempered man displays foolishness (Prov. 14:29). And in Proverbs 27:4 we read, "Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous." Jesus said, "Whosoever is angry with his

brother*...shall be in danger of the judgment:...and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire" (Matt. 5:22).

FACE THE FACTS

People may excuse their bad temper in various ways. Some among the more carnal are actually somewhat proud of their uncontrolled spirit. Others attribute bad temper to nerves, making an infirmity out of a sin. It is far better to admit the sin, to repent and confess and forsake it, and to make humble apology for it.

Another common sin of the tongue is profanity. The Third Commandment states, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). One of the nauseating things throughout America today is the swearing, cursing, and taking the name of God in vain. Many political leaders and people in high positions are given to cursing and swearing. In college and university classrooms many professors are guilty of taking the name of God in vain, setting a poor example to their students.

People may swear to shock others, or to be mean, or to hide an inferiority complex, or just to show off. But the Scripture says, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:29, RSV).

The Bible teaches that a man who can control his tongue can control his whole personality. If you cannot control your tongue in this matter of

The Bible teaches that a man who can control his tongue can control his whole personality.

This verse is rendered in the KJV, "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be," etc., but the phrase "without a cause" has been added; it is not part of the original manuscripts and is omitted in most of the newer versions. Jesus was not justifying anger that had a cause; He was saying that anger, from any cause whatsoever, is wrong.

If you are in the right, you need not lose your temper; and if you are in the wrong, you can't afford to.

swearing, the Bible teaches that you are in bondage, and it is a sin for which God will hold you accountable. The English language has the richest vocabulary in the world; there is no need for anyone to be verbally crippled and to hobble along with questionable crutch-words that show disdain for God.

OTHER TYPES OF PROFANITY

Many professing Christians are guilty of a subtle form of profanity. A number of common slang expressions are actually disguised swearing.

And taking the use of words one step further, if we sing hymns of praise to God thoughtlessly or mechanically, we are really taking His name in vain.

Another sin of the tongue that is prevalent throughout the world, and which is the root of many of our troubles, is the sin of lying. The law of Moses condemned false witness. "Put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness" (Ex. 23:1); "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Ex. 20:16). The Lord told Moses and the children of Israel directly not to lie to one another (Lev. 19:11). The apostle Paul echoes the same words: "Do not lie to one another" (Col. 3:9, RSV). The entire Bible condemns lying as one of the worst sins. It puts lying alongside murder and adultery.

Lying is found in the realms of business and politics and social intercourse. How many people speak without a blush of the lies they have told for their own advantage. Many professing Christians are guilty of lying. Some people will make a sincere effort not to tell a lie; but if circumstances prove embarrassing, many will not hesitate to lie their way out of a difficulty and consider it the lesser of two evils—the other evil, in their opinion, being the consequences of admitting the truth. The Christian must avoid lying at all cost and distrust those who practice it.

DESIGNED DECEPTION

Many people have asked me what a lie really is. Someone has well said that a

lie is any species of designed deception. If the deception be not designed, it is not lying; but if you design to make an impression contrary to the naked truth, you lie. How innumerable are the falsehoods perpetrated every day in business and in social relationships. By words, looks and actions we design to make an impression that is contrary to the truth.

If you are guilty of lying, I pray to God that you will confess it and turn from it today. The Bible warns that "a false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape" (Prov. 19:5). Jesus said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man" (Matt. 15:19-20). In other words, Jesus put lying alongside all these other terrible sins.

BEFORE YOU CRITICIZE

Another sin of the tongue that is prevalent among Christians is the sin of criticism—going around and trying to take a speck out of our brother's eye when we have a log in our own. Jesus said, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get" (Matt. 7:1-2, RSV). And in the same chapter we read, "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5, RSV). This advice from Christ does not mean that we should condone evil, but that we should deal with wrongdoing in our own lives first.

There are many people who would not dare do certain worldly things, and yet they are filled with pride, gossiping, malice, and sins of the spirit that are just as worldly and evil in God's sight as some of these outward things. Worldliness is anything that comes between the Christian and God.

GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE...

Another sin of the tongue is grumbling.

The Bible says, "Do all things without grumbling or questioning" (Phil. 2:14, RSV). The only cure I have ever found for grumbling is prayer and praise.

Consider our Lord. If anyone ever had a right to grumble it was He. But instead, He prayed for those who crucified Him, saying: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Peter writes: "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23).

The apostle Paul wrote Philippians, the "joy epistle," from a Roman dungeon. He lived what he preached in the exhortation, "Do all things without grumbling or questioning" (Phil. 2:14, RSV).

Another sin of the tongue is foul talking. The Bible says, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths" (Eph. 4:29, RSV). In other words, let there be no filthiness in your talk. The Christian should avoid like a plague the dirty stories and off-color jokes that are so frequently heard.

The Psalmist said, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth" (Ps. 141:3). Thousands of persons are committing immorality by the way they talk. There are many ways that this can be done, and all through the Bible it is condemned as a heinous and grievous sin before God. Yet millions of persons

deliberately disregard the law of God.

The problems of the world could be solved overnight if all of us could win the victory over our tongues. Suppose there were no anger, no profanity, no lying, no grumbling or complaining; suppose there were no dirty stories told, no unjust criticism—what a different world this would be! The Bible says, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:16-18).

THREE QUESTIONS

We should ask ourselves three questions before we speak: is it true? is it kind? does it glorify Christ?

If we would always ask ourselves these three questions before we speak, there would be much less evil speaking and there would soon be a spiritual awakening and a revival that would sweep the church.

For this thought-provoking article we are indebted to Billy Graham, "The Sins of the Tongue." Copyright 1968 by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Used by permission.

Watch Out For Little Things!

Who of us does not know the miseries that can be caused by a virus!

Yet the virus, we are told, is so small that it would take 500,000 of them laid end to end to make a line as long as the word "virus."

Three thousand million billion of them (3,000,000,000,000,000,000) would weigh an ounce. The illnesses the virus can cause range from the common cold to exotic diseases like tropical fevers.

Have we ever considered that a very small sin is like a virus? Almost too tiny to detect—except by the keen, discerning, all-powerful microscope of God's Word—it will, if left alone, multiply and multiply itself until it becomes a deadly spiritual infection.

Take sin seriously! It is the virus of the human spirit.



Winging Navigators

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ...that there are more than 100 billion birds in our world today.
- ✓ ...that there are 8600 different known species of birds.
- ✓ ... that the Rufous hummingbirds are fantastic navigators. This little bird, with only a little more than 1/10,000 of our brain capacity, and no bigger than your thumb, successfully navigates from Alaska to Mexico each fall, flies north in the spring by an entirely different route, then loops back to the exact place the next year.
- ✓ ... that the greatest traveler in the world is the Arctic tern. This small bird travels from the North Pole to the South Pole and back again every year, a trip of about 22,000 miles, without pilot or compass.
- ✓ ... that the bar-headed geese of Asia are probably the highest of high fliers, migrating every year between southeast Russia, western China and northern India—over Mount Everest and the Himalaya Mountains, which have peaks cresting 29,000 feet.
- ✓ ... that the American golden plover fattens itself up in the autumn and then sets out on a nonstop flight of 2400 miles to South America—and arrives weighing about 2 ounces less than it did when it started the trek. Compare this level of efficiency to that of a small airplane, which normally would require a gallon of gasoline for every 20 miles.
- ✓ ... that the monarch butterfly migrates a total of about 4,000 miles each year, between the central United States and Mexico. What is its source of fuel for the flight? The monarch gets enough energy from a single meal of nectar to fly about 600 miles without stopping.

Scientific data in this article is from *The Lives of Birds, Birds of the World and Their Behavior*, by Lester L. Short, published by Henry Holt & Company, New York, 1993; from *Zoobooks - Animal Champions*, published by Wildlife Education, Ltd., 1990; also from *WildBird* magazine, November 1992, pages 31-33.

Every autumn an estimated 5 billion land birds representing more than 180 species leave North America for the American Tropics, while a similar number fly from Asia and Europe to the warm climate of Africa.

It seems that some birds are predisposed to migrate, but nobody really knows why. How does the bird know when it is time to start preparing for the flight? We can only say in the words of Jeremiah, that "the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their comings but my people know not the judgment of the Lord" (Jer. 8:7). Even nestlings, which have had no previous migratory experience, have something within them to know just when the time is right, what they need, and where they should go. Do they sense changes in the length of the daylight hours? or changes in the temperature and the seasons? No one knows how, but they do it.

The migrating bird travels the skies and "knows" where it is. How? In some marvelous—almost miraculous—way it fixes upon the direction where its goal lies. It stays on course toward that goal, and it flies at the altitude that enables it to use the least energy. Finally, by some instinct that still baffles our 20th century's capacity to comprehend, it knows when to stop flying and descends at the right location.

Every year in what has to be one of the migratory wonders of bird world, the young New Zealand Cuckoo takes off one month after its parents have left. The young bird flies more than a 1,000 miles across the ocean to Australia, then changes its course northward for another 900 miles until it reaches the Solomon and Bismarck Islands. There it finds its parents, which have already settled in.

Consider the factors against migrating birds. Most travel at night, when visible help of direction is most limited. Even when their visibility isn't obscured, there may well be little to see but long stretches of water or sand. Yet every year millions upon millions of birds travel hundreds, even thousands of miles, sometimes settling down among the same trees they frequented the previous year.

Even more amazing are the homing abilities of birds that have purposely been displaced from their

homes. Try to imagine what it would be like to be blindfolded, then carried for several days in an airplane, then released somewhere in an open field in the middle of nowhere, without a clue as to where you are. How would you find your way home? Yet a Manx shearwater did, flying back to its home in Wales in the British Isles in only 12-1/2 days after being released in Boston, Massachusetts. So did marked white-crowned sparrows that were shipped to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The birds returned the following winter to their wintering grounds in San Jose, California. Once again they were caught, this time shipped to Maryland, and once again they made their way back to California at the appropriate time for their usual return.

How does a bird know the time of day? Does a bird read the position of the sun? Or does it look at the stars to know which direction to go? Or does a bird feel a pull of magnetism which tells it which direction the compass points? We can only guess. But what evi-

dence of our Creator's genius are these lowly creatures!

A researcher tells of a valiant attempt they made a few years ago to investigate the navigational skills of the gray-cheeked thrush migrating through central Illinois. The team captured a thrush one afternoon and attached a tiny radio transmitter to it. The bird flew off at dusk on the next stage of its northern journey, followed by the ornithologists in a small airplane. During the night, a severe thunderstorm and a rapidly emptying fuel tank forced the plane down. Yet onward flew the thrush.

After the plane refueled and the weather had improved, the ornithologists continued their journey. The scientific team regained contact with the bird in Wisconsin, where it had landed at dawn, having flown right through the storm, without stopping once.

What can we say? Only this: "the Hand that made us is Divine." □

There is no question but that our Creator designed birds to fly. First of all, birds are extremely lightweight. Many of the bones in a bird's body are hollow. And the wings and tail—extremities critical for flight—are mainly formed by feathers, one of the lightest yet strongest materials known.

How does a bird fly? Watch a jetliner taxi onto the runway, suddenly pick up speed, then within seconds lift itself into the air, and you have seen just how a bird flies. The bird is built with the power needed to lift itself off the ground. The bird's heart weighs several times more in proportion to the size of the animal than does the human's, and beats much faster (the eagle's heart, for example, beats between 170 and 230 per minute, compared with the human heartbeat of 60 to 80 per minute). With this rapid heart beat and a high metabolism rate, the bird's engine is always "revved up" and ready for takeoff. To meet its high oxygen demands, the bird's lungs are connected with air sacs that extend over much of the body and even into spaces inside the bones. To maximize the bird's oxygen intake, its lungs are so designed that oxygen is absorbed continuously, whether the bird is inhaling or exhaling.

Also aiding the bird in flight is the fact that the bird is built with its center of gravity between and below the wings. To help center the weight, the head size has been reduced by eliminating teeth and jaws. To aid



in the breakdown of food, the bird has a gizzard rather than teeth, and the large gizzard is located near the bird's center of gravity.

Efficiency is the hallmark of birds, because birds were built to fly.

Perhaps the bird's greatest and most distinctive asset is its feathers. A bird's feathers serve to keep it airborne, to insulate against cold temperatures, to make the body streamlined, and incidentally, to keep its weight down. And—most conveniently—feathers are replaceable. Because of feathers, a bird cannot only live but thrive in parts of the world too cold for any other animal—provided there is food available. (If feathers came about by chance, one wonders how the birds survived until this wonderful mechanism was perfected!)

And a bird has *many* feathers—an eagle, for example, has about 20,000.

Birds have about ten "flight feathers" in the "hand" of their wing. These "fingers," called primaries, have great resilience, great flexibility and a high strength-to-weight ratio. Flight feathers help to generate lift and control how air moves over the wings. They also are important for changing direction and braking maneuvers. Man has been able to exceed the bird in lift power and flight distancing, but he is far from excelling in maneuverability. □

Taking Charge of Ourselves

(Continued from page 2)

and your decision making as deliberate and as directed as possible. Although it is necessary to understand the feelings of others, concentrate on the facts. Feelings may change quickly; facts are stable.

6. *Plan each day in advance.* Write down all your "need to do" and "want to do" items, and indicate priorities. And when prioritizing, plan if possible to do the most difficult or the most unwanted first, leaving the remainder of the day for "easier" tasks. In this way, items put off until "tomorrow" will not all be those requiring urgent attention.

7. *Establish goals, both long and short-range.* Long-range goals have to do with your ultimate objective. Short-range goals have to do with the steps in accomplishing the long-term. Set goals. Especially, set moral and spiritual goals. What type of person do you want to be one year from now? Begin taking steps today to become that type of person. If it means talking less and thinking more, begin now. If it means spending less and saving more, begin right now. If it means changing your attitude toward a certain person or a certain type of life or work, plan what steps you can take right now to initiate that change.

8. *Look at failure not as a loss of time and resources but as a learning experience.* Those who try and fail are wiser than those who never try. Failure does not mean that our goal is out of reach, it means only that we know something we did not know before. Persistence can often turn defeat into success.

9. *Don't expect everything to work out just as you plan.* And don't expect everyone to act or respond just as you think they should. As has been

said, There is always more than one right way of doing anything. If someone else made a mistake, recall the many times you have needed mercy, and thank God.

10. *Maintain a spirit of cooperation, not opposition.* Some of us have an instinct to be different, if for no better reason than to be noticed. Such a spirit is not virtuous, or even advantageous. We would be wiser to cooperate, if for no better reason than to practice giving up our own way and the right to our own opinion.

11. *Try to work efficiently.* Don't drive tacks with a sledge hammer. Finding the easiest, simplest, less fatiguing way of doing a job saves time, effort, and perhaps even the possibility of an injury. And time saved is time gained, which we can spend on something which needs our attention.

12. *"Make the very most of your time."* This command, while written for its spiritual implications, has large dividends to yield, both temporal and spiritual. Lazy people often say, "I didn't feel like doing it." They probably didn't, yet by giving in to their feelings they failed. And time lost can never be recalled.

13. *Plan your activities according to your resources.* "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be" is the Divine promise. But this does not mean that we can always do everything we would like to do. Often we must choose, and choosing means omitting as well as selecting. When we choose to pursue one activity, we choose not to pursue another. The issue then becomes one of choosing the best, that which is most needful and most spiritually beneficial.

14. *Avoid situations that appeal to your impulsiveness.* We should learn from our own experience that some situations are more likely to call forth impulsiveness than self-discipline. In the words of the apostle Paul, "Flee youthful lusts"! Better a temptation avoided than a sin indulged in and then repented of.

The price of self-discipline is momentary; the benefits are eternal. □

Job, the servant of God said, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle and are spent without hope." No sooner the day arises, fresh with sparkling possibilities, than it is spent, the shades of evening coming down to snap it shut from view. It is great wisdom on our part to keep this in mind. As practical and sensible Christians, we must press into each flying day all the good we possibly can. Tomorrow may be too late.

The smallest deed is better than the grandest intention.

The most manifest sign of wisdom is continued cheerfulness.

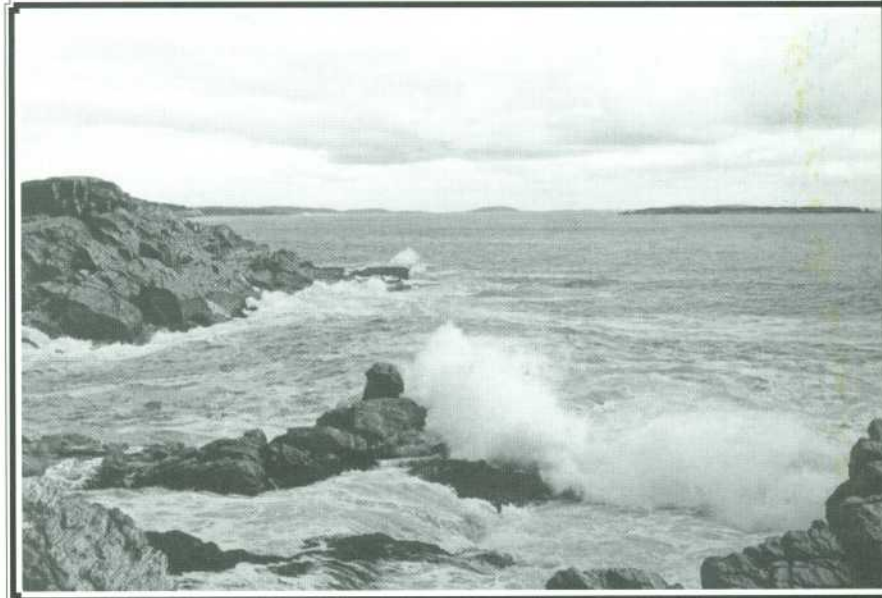
Character is right action become habitual through voluntary exercise of the will.

The best way to cheer yourself is to try to cheer somebody else.

Not our words but our works build our future.

Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important.

Remember, there is never a reason to disobey God.



Creator God, serene, majestic, and righteous in all Your ways, unerring in judgment, and unfaltering in mercy: I desire Your holiness. My heart clamors after Your courts; Your dwelling place is my peace. Your law is my delight. Day and night I praise You, and my voice rises to magnify Your name.

*Bestow vision to my weary eyes.
Give purpose to my seeking heart.
Set my feet in paths of righteousness.
Enable my hands to do your work.
Direct my mind to think Your thoughts.
Let my soul rejoice in You.*

*In strength may I not falter.
In faith may I not weaken.
In hope may I never despair.
In love may I grow more and
more like You. AMEN.*

*Take up the torch of truth, my friend;
Remove the stumbling stone;
Clear the path for other feet,
Though you must walk alone.*

*Guard the flame of faith and keep
It burning through the night;
Some wanderer upon the hills
May see your guiding light.*

*Hold high the lantern of pure love;
Let song and joyous laughter
Lend courage, joy and heavenly hope
To all who follow after!*

FRAME OF MIND

Disposition or temperament is an integral part of every person and reflects both his thinking and his general attitude toward life. Someone with a steady, pleasant disposition is refreshing. He has a smile for everyone. He takes the difficult situation graciously.

People with good dispositions are a joy to know. They bring sunshine into every day and brighten every experience. They give courage to those around them. Their hearts are bound with those of their friends by the golden thread of a good disposition.

Small Enough?

A great naturalist and his friend, after an evening's talk, would often go outside, look up at the sky, and see who could first detect the faint spot of light-mist coming from the great galaxy Andromeda. Then one of them would recite:

"That is the spiral galaxy of Andromeda. It is as large as our Milky Way. It is one of a hundred million galaxies. It is two million light years away. It consists of one hundred billion suns, each larger than our sun." Whereupon the other would respond, "Now I think we are small enough. Let's go to bed."