

Megiddo Message

*FORGET THE THINGS YOU MISSED—AND didn'T NEED,
FOREGO THE selfish spirit, EMPTY GREED,
AND START TO COUNT THE blessings GREAT AND small
THAT COME WITH EV'RY WINTER, SUMMER, fall—
BOUNTIES of field AND plain you did NOT EARN,
Of beauty, peace AND joy you don'T DESERVE,
THE WONDERS of YOUR GREAT CREATOR'S LOVE—
AND bow in GRATEFUL THANKS TO GOD ABOVE.*



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That which
I should
have done I
didn't do

Before The Door Shuts

In the Chicago Art Institute hangs a painting by Ivan Albright of an 8-foot door shaped like the lid of an old casket. A funeral wreath of wilted flowers hangs on the door, which is marked and scarred, supposedly by the difficult experiences of life. The colors are somber and dark. The painting is titled, "That which I should have done I didn't do."

More than one tale has been told of those who waited until too late. In the parable of the ten virgins, five were wise, and five were foolish. The five foolish ones were not totally unprepared for the event. Their fault was their lack of foresight. What they had done would, under normal circumstances, have been sufficient. But this occasion was different. They were not prepared to endure *long enough*. And "while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut" (Matt. 25:10, NIV).

Opportunities do not last forever.

This same eventuality overtook the people of Noah's time. After all those years of preaching and building, one might have assumed that the time for the flood was indefinitely postponed. But the day came when God told Noah and his family to enter the ark. "And those that entered...entered as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed [the door] behind him" (Gen. 7:16, NIV). God shut the door, and those inside were shut *in*, all others were shut *out*.

Jesus told a parable of a man who hid his talent in a napkin. He committed no heinous crime. He was not openly defiant, or rebellious, or dishonest. He did not mean any ill. His sin was that he did nothing with his opportunity. When the Lord of that servant returned, all he could show was his unused talent, and how carefully he had kept it. But by doing nothing with his opportunity, he sinned. And James tells us that "Anyone...who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17, NIV).

Neglect is serious. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation....?" (Heb. 2:3). Continued neglect closes doors.

It is just as serious to neglect what we should do as to do what we should not.

God calls us to act with each decision today. "Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3:15). *Today* is not tomorrow. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). God does not give us the promise of tomorrow; only now. Now is the only sure moment. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20).

Unused muscles atrophy. Undisturbed water evaporates. Unwound clocks stop. Unentered doors close.

Whatever you would do, do it *now*—before the door shuts. □

God does not give us the promise of tomorrow; only now.

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 who live will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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Megiddo Message

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The End of the Old System, the Beginning of the New

Rushing Toward the End

Let the present
fulfillments
be a warning
that the climax
of history is
upon us, the
apocalypse of the
Son of Man.

We are living in momentous times. We are living in prophetic times.

Never has any people been privileged to see the plan of God unfolding more vividly than we at this present moment. Never has anyone been able to look back over so nearly the full scope of 6,000 years and see in clearest black and white the steady advancing of the plan of God. Never has any generation seen so many prophecies fulfilled at the same time as *we* are seeing this very hour.

After Jesus' resurrection, when He suddenly made Himself known to the disciples on the Emmaus Road, we read that *"beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself"* (Luke 24:27). We today can open the Scriptures, begin at Moses and all the prophets, and continue through Jesus and His Apostles, and see in their prophetic words a veritable picture of our own day and of the age that is just ahead of us. Its accuracy is stunning; overwhelming.

How swiftly events in the world are building toward the great culmination so long foretold. Sign upon sign portends the end of the age. The masses are unheeding and unbelieving, but that only certifies to us the more surely that *the Word of the Lord is right*. Soon, very soon it will be God's turn to act, and Scripture promises that His acting will be dramatic, even cataclysmic. *"The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall*

shake" (Joel 3:16). No one on earth will be unaware of what is happening, *"for 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). *"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him"* (Ps. 50:3).

"And he shall send Jesus Christ" (Acts 3:20), He to whom the kingship belongs, He whose right it is to reign upon earth's throne (Ezek. 21:27); *"and he shall reign for ever and ever"* (Rev. 11:15).

Events in the world today are rushing toward this great climax of history, the apocalypse of the Son of Man. We are surprised at the rapidity with which the picture is changing, but God is not surprised. It was all foreseen and foreknown by Him—and written down for us—ages ago.

Our Place in Time

It has not been our privilege to hear the mountain thunder and quake, and ten thousands of God's angels descending upon it. It has not been our privilege to have hovering above us the visible pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day. We have no Urim and Thummim to guide us in our decisions, nor any voice from heaven to speak to us in a dream or give us courage in the night. Nor has it been ours to sit down with the Master upon the Mount and hear Him expound the wisdom of His Father. We have never felt the Spirit of God upon us, nor known what it was to administer His power. We have never seen

a handful of loaves and fishes divided to feed 5,000.

Nevertheless, we are a people highly favored, highly blessed. Were Jesus here today, He might say to us privately as He did to His disciples, *"Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them"* (Luke 10:23-24).

We, upon whom the ends of the world are come—both the end of this age and the end of this full 6,000-year period; we, who see history rushing toward its climax: do we comprehend the import of what we see? Do we realize that many of the events we are seeing in the world about us this very moment are signs provided by God to give us faith, to tell us in terms unmistakable that we are indeed on the verge of the New Age? They are His way of warning us that time for us is getting very, very short.

We believe; but do we *fully* believe? Does its reality awaken in our hearts a longing desire that cannot be satisfied, a concern that never leaves us day or night, a compelling desire to be ready *whatever the cost*?

The very things we have looked for, prayed for, hoped for, and worked for these many years are right upon us. We know the facts, but they are not cold, lifeless facts. Bad as the events are in themselves, they are echoes of promises from heaven, promises vibrant with meaning and alive with expectancy. The New Age is upon us!

Just before the captivity, the prophet Habakkuk received a message from God prophetic of our time, the time just before Christ's second advent. That message has been preserved for us. *"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will*

surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:3). Along with the message came this unusual bit of instruction: *"Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it"* (v. 2). Here is God's directive for us: read—and run!

Jesus sounded the same warning against missing—or misinterpreting—God-given signs. When the Pharisees and Sadducees tempted Him, desiring *"that he would show them a sign from heaven,"* Jesus replied, *"When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"* (Matt. 16:1-3).

Can we not discern the signs of the times, vivid signs that announce the unfolding plan of God in our day? To the keen observer, Jesus said, these signs would be just as clear, just as visible as a red sky in the morning! Can we not *"discern the signs of the times"*?

We are fast nearing the end of the 6,000 years God has allotted for the age of human misrule. How do we know? Even without calculating the plus and minus factors caused by changes in the calendar, we can add an approximate 4,000 years before Christ to 1995 and come *very* close to 6,000. The end *cannot* be far away.

But do we have evidence for the period of 6,000 years?

Thank God, we have! God has not left us to wonder and surmise. The apostle Paul said that we would know the times. *"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for*

now is our salvation nearer than when we [first] believed" (Rom. 13:11). The Apostle said again that we would not be left in darkness as to when the day of the Lord would come; the *"times and seasons"* we would know. And how could we know, except

*The world is very evil,
The hour is very late;
Be sober and keep vigil,
The Judge is at the gate;
The Judge who comes in mercy,
The Judge who comes with might,
To terminate the evil
And diadem the right.*

*We have no
time to dally with
sin, or to be
satisfied with
anything less
than the very
best of which we
are capable.*

At this very moment, numerous specific prophecies for our time are being fulfilled, visibly, unmistakably, giving us evidence sure and certain that the New Age is right upon us.

through some tangible method of counting time, and through God-given signs and fulfillments? God has provided all this as visible evidence for us!

God has revealed the era, the season, though the day and hour is not revealed. How different we would feel today if we thought that the coming of the Messiah might still be two thousand or more years future!

Many people today *feel* that we are nearing an end, but our founder would not settle for this. He wanted evidence, solid God-given evidence to underlie each point of faith; and the fact that there would be just 6,000 years from Adam to the beginning of the Millennium was one of these points. Where did he find evidence? The following is distilled from his writings.

How Much Time?

Paul has declared that the things *"written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope"* (Rom. 15:4). God wants us to study the things written aforetime, to learn more about the hope which He has set before us.

God has provided two sources of evidence for the period of time during which He is bringing to perfection His plan for this earth. One is found in the first two chapters of Genesis, where there are just six days or epochs of creation, followed by a seventh day in which God rested. The other is the seven-day week which God appointed in the law of Moses, in which six days were for labor, followed by a seventh day of rest in which no one was to labor.

We will find that both are symbolic of the six thousand years of toil that precede the seventh thousand-year Day of our Lord, the Millennium or great Sabbatic day of rest. Together they form the symbolic framework for the period of time God has set aside to complete His spiritual "heavens and earth."

In Exodus 20, the two symbolic illustrations are linked, a fact which suggests to us that they are related in their significance. We read (verses 9-10), *"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any*

work." Then verse 11 continues with the second illustration: *"For in six days [or a great day divided up into six epochs] the Lord made heaven and earth...and rested, the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."*

Now let us set up two stakes. Let us take Adam, when he was placed upon the earth, as one stake, and the beginning of the Millennium as the other stake. We want to find out how far it is from one stake to the other. Now *we* do not wish to do the measuring between these two stakes, but to see what God has measured out. We shall find that it is just six thousand years between these two stakes.

We speak of the six days as one epoch because this is what God does in Gen. 2:4. He says, speaking of the six days of creation, *"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens."* Here the six days of creation are grouped and referred to as a single "day," or epoch of time.

These six days typify the epoch of man's rule, the six thousand years of toil and sorrow. This period of time is also called the day of darkness, of gloom, of sorrow and toil. There is great beauty in this type of one great epoch containing six smaller epochs of time. God has allotted just six thousand years to the "day" of man's rule, when men hold sway over the governments of the earth.

The same period of time was typified in Moses' law by the six days during which the Israelites were to perform all their labor, to be followed by the seventh day of rest.

How do we know that this six-days-plus-one pattern was a type of something greater? The law, we are told in Hebrews, was *"a shadow of good things to come"* (Heb. 10:1), hence we can know that each aspect of that law was intended to instruct in some eternal principle of the wisdom of God. We read also in Hebrews 8:5 that the law was an *"example and shadow of heavenly things,"* and again that it contained *"patterns of things in the heavens"* (Heb. 9:23). Paul wrote specifically of the Sabbath that it was *"a shadow of things to come"* (Col. 2:17).

Now if the Sabbath was a "shadow," then there must be a "real" substance casting the shadow backward. If the literal Sabbath was a type, then it must typify some important aspect of God's plan for the earth and mankind.

With these thoughts in mind let us see how the Sabbath was a type of the future Sabbath rest which God has promised to all His faithful children.

We will go to Hebrews 4, where we read both about the figure and the reality. *"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it"* (v. 1). Here is a "rest" which is "a promise...left us," and one of such importance that we are warned lest we "come short of it." Such importance could never be attached to a sabbath day which comes once every week as a matter of course.

Verse 3 reads: *"For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."* The first group who were

promised this special "rest" did not enter it, God being displeased with them because of their unbelief and disobedience. *"For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest"* (vs. 4-5). Here is a rest which, to enter, one had to meet certain conditions: "If..." They failed because they did not meet the conditions.

Still, this special rest "remains." We continue reading, *"Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, barden not your hearts. For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God"* (vs. 6-9).

There are several points here which we should notice about this "rest."

1) As in Exodus, it is a symbol drawn both from the seventh day rest under the

We should be doing our utmost to make every day show a full measure of growth in character.

Merciful Father, Thou before whom a thousand ages are as yesterday, who in the endless ages past and gone didst form and shape the earth; Thou in whom eternity had its foundation, Thou origin of life: we worship Thee.

We thank Thee for every evidence of Thy creative genius, for the world in which we live, and the wonders of sea and sky, mountain and plain. We thank Thee for the gift of life itself; none but Thou canst bestow it; and none but Thou canst offer us anything beyond the life we now have.

Father, we thank Thee for taking notice of us, lowly creatures of dust. And we thank Thee for the special privilege Thou hast granted us, that we are permitted to live so near the great climax of Thy work upon earth, when Thou wilt revive Thy work in the midst of the years and bring to pass the great and wonderful things Thou didst foretell through Thy holy prophets. We thank Thee that we are able to see, even now, the beginnings of these fulfillments; and we know that when all is finally complete, this earth—our earth—

shall be filled with Thy glory from sea to sea, a righteous, happy people glorifying Thy name, and shall join the myriad of other worlds in Thy infinite universe where Thy will is already done.

Father, alert us to the responsibility that this privilege places upon us; being children of light, may we live as Thy children. May every aspect of our lives be pervaded with Thy light, with a sense of the high and holy purpose to which Thou hast called us. May we not live even a single moment as though Thou wert not, but constantly think and plan and move as belonging to Thee, gladly relinquishing anything that might distract us from the things upon which we have set our hearts.

Wilt Thou bless the reading of Thy Word. And may we be alerted, warned, stimulated, strengthened to do Thy work in whatever form it may come to us, confident that for all work done in Thy name we shall be amply rewarded in the world to come; for Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Bad as the events may be in themselves, they are echoing promises from heaven, promises vibrant with meaning and alive with expectancy. The New Age is upon us!

law of Moses *and* from the seventh day upon which God was said to rest in the creation account in Genesis. Both are symbols and both are looking forward to the same future thousand-year sabbatic "rest."

2) It is a rest which some shall definitely inherit: *"Some must enter therein"* (Heb. 4:6).

3) It was still future when Hebrews was being written ("another day"), since the fulfillment of the promises to Israel did not satisfy the promises given (Heb. 4: 8).

4) It is reserved for *"the people of God"* (Heb. 4: 9).

Both the seventh day on which God was said to rest in the creation narrative and the seventh day of rest decreed under the law of Moses were types or symbols of a future promised "rest." God "sanctified" or set apart this Sabbath for a specific purpose: that those who believe may enter in.

Since both the seventh day of creation and the seventh day Sabbath in Israel were types of the rest day remaining for the people of God, we now must establish *how long* is this future rest day which the people of God will be permitted to enter. If we can determine the exact length of the six preceding days, we can know the length of the seventh, for all are days of equal length. Or if we can determine the length of the seventh day, we can know the duration of the six.

We find John on the Isle of Patmos saying as he began to receive the revelation from Christ, *"I was in the Spirit [in vision] on the Lord's day"* (Rev. 1:10). John being in vision was carried down to the beginning of the Lord's day of rest, hence should at some point reveal just how long that day will be. As the revelation unfolded, John learned more about this day of rest which the saints will enter: It will be a day when the old devil will be chained up, or (bound), a condition which is necessary to allow the day to be one of "rest."

In Revelation 20:2 we are told that the length of time this devil will be bound is just one thousand years long. If this be indeed the length of the seventh day, then there must have been just six thousand year days preceding the seventh or great Sabbatic day of rest.

The apostle Peter brings up the subject in the last chapter of his Second Epistle. Very early in the chapter he shows that his subject is the coming of the Day of the Lord. First he talks about the time preceding this Day. He says, *"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"* (vs. 3-4).

Peter says that at the time of the end, just prior to our Lord's return, many would be scoffing, doubting the promises given, thinking that *"all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."* *"From the beginning of creation"*—here is our first stake again, the point from which this period of time is measured, the beginning of the making of these spiritual heavens and earth. He goes on to speak of those who are *"willingly ignorant,"* and mentions the great destruction of the flood in Noah's day, in which *"the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished"* (v. 6). Then he comes down to our second stake, the end of the present arrangement, at the second advent of Christ, marking this as the great termination of the present epoch: *"But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men"* (v. 7).

Then Peter puts it all together, giving us the key that unlocks the mystery of the prophetic time he has been discussing. *"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"* (v. 8). If one day is equal to one thousand years of prophetic time, and the time from the beginning of the creation [the spiritual creation] to the Millennium, the day of the Lord, is an epoch composed of six days, then we can know that this period is six thousand years in length. This means that the one day (Day Seven) is one thousand years in length, prophetic time.

The apostle Peter continues in verse 9: *"The Lord is not slack concerning his*

promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The time near the end of the first period, the time of man's misrule, is the time of God's longsuffering, the time for repentance. The day of the Lord, the grand seventh day, may seem to be delayed, but it is only God's mercy and longsuffering giving His human family opportunity to escape punishment by repenting; for He will not be "slack concerning his promise," but "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (v. 10). The arrival of this day of the Lord, this day when Jesus—not man—is Lord, will mark the end of the six thousand years.

As there were just six days before the seventh in the law of Moses, there can be just six thousand years before the beginning of the seventh day in God's plan for this earth. And as the six days of creation and the six days under the law reached to the beginning of the seventh, so the six thousand years must reach to the beginning of the seventh thousand-year day of rest. For this reason we believe that the period allotted to man's rule will be just six thousand years, from Adam to the commencement of the seventh day or Millennial rest.

At the very moment, numerous specific prophecies for our time that are being fulfilled give sure evidence that we are near the end of the age, the end of the six thousand years God has allotted for man's rule, that the New Age is right upon us.

Let us be alerted; let us be warned. Let us "act like sensible men, not like thoughtless, making the very most of our time" (Eph. 5:15-16, Moffatt). Never has God intervened without warning His people. Let the present evidence be our warning that our time is limited, and that we should be doing our utmost, making every day show a full measure of spiritual growth. We have *no* moments to waste, *no* time to dally with sin, or to be satisfied with anything less than the very best service and obedience of which we are capable. We have not long to serve at best.

The question is, Am I so living that the Lord will accept me in that great Day? Am I so conducting myself that I will be spared by the great King, that I can be one of His jewels? Let us take these things seriously to heart, lest the day of the Lord come upon us unawares! □

SO LITTLE AND SO MUCH

*Mother, Mother! You recall
The lunch I took today?
Five little loaves and two dried fish?
I gave it all away!*

*And yet I had enough to eat
Along with all the rest,
Yes, Mother, all five thousand there
Ate all that they could wish!*

*And when they all were finished,
The mothers, children, too,
I gathered up this basketful
To bring it back to you!*

*Yes, there were many baskets full
Left over from the spread—
I wish you could have seen them all,
Those lovely loaves of bread.*

*No, Mother, I do speak the truth,
The crowd had naught to eat
Until I gave my little lunch,
My little bread and meat.*

*A man named Andrew asked my lunch
To give his Master great,
As though to favor Him with food;
The others, they could wait.*

*The Master straightway blessed my bread,
The little fishes too,
And then He started to divide
With all who wanted food.*

*I watched His strong hands break the bread,
And how His face did shine!
He blessed, and broke, and fed them all
With MY food, Mother, MINE!*

*I was amazed!—that huge, huge crowd
All shared MY little bit!
Yet Mother, Mother, just suppose
I HAD NOT GIVEN IT!*

Are You Listening?



When Jesus said, "*Whosoever beareth,*" He was classifying His audience according to their listening ability. Some would hear, others would not.

Good listening requires practice. It is said that we talk between 120 and 155 words per minute, but our minds process between 420 and 1000 words per minute. This means that between the speaker's words and the listener's hearing is a large mental gap which gives our minds time to dart off in a hundred directions right *while we are listening!*

The result: we do not retain much of what we hear. What is the solution? Concentration. By concentrating on what we are hearing, we reduce the amount of unrelated in-between thoughts that race through our mind, and so give more attention to the words we hear. Here is the reason behind the common directive: "Pay attention!" That is the only way we will ever *retain* what we hear.

Many are the warnings God has given us through the prophets, apostles and Jesus, to which we must listen. "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear...*" recurs so frequently in Jesus' letters to the seven Churches that one wonders if they were dull of comprehension. Quite likely, they were not too different from most of us. They just needed to be reminded how important was the message.

*How many times
have we heard—
and failed to listen?*

How many times have we heard—and failed to listen?

Had Lot's wife *listened* to the warning words of the angel, she would not have looked back and lost her life.

Failure to act on the Word is, in reality, failure to listen to it.

Through the din of the confusion of this world, do we still hear the clear commanding voice of Jesus, "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God*"? Our lives are not so different from those of the early Christians. They, too, were surrounded by care, responsibility, and everyday business.

The more we focus our minds on the law of God, its precepts, its promises, and all that it means to us the more we will hear of its message to us. And the more we hear, the more we will act upon it. And the more we act upon it, the more we will hear.

This is what James meant when he said, "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only*" (James 1:22). Hearing is hard enough, but if we fail to act upon what we hear, we haven't really heard.

Let's try to improve our listening level, by concentrating on the things that are "*true, righteous, lovable, virtuous, and praiseworthy*" (Phil. 4:8). For "*this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*" (1 John 2:25). □

Our First Priority

We live in a world that is continually sending out confusing signals, and the confusion has clouded the clear values of right and wrong which are taught in Scripture.

This flip-flop society can change ethics at will. But the standard of Christ remains unchanged.

"Too often professing Christians are chameleons," says a current observer, "taking on the color of their environment rather than coloring it. Too often we are thermometers registering the temperature of our

environment rather than thermostats determining the temperature. Too often we are the anvils upon which the world shapes itself rather than the hammers shaping the world" (Thomas Wilson, *Living Out of the Mold*).

God calls us to a spiritual warfare. We are here to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Let this be our first priority.

—Contributed

When Lincoln was on his way to Washington, DC, to be inaugurated President of the United States, he stopped over in New York for a visit with Horace Greeley, founder of the *New York Tribune*. The pressing question everyone was asking in those tense days was: "Are we going to have civil war?" Mr. Greeley asked Mr. Lincoln this same question, and Mr. Lincoln told the following story.

In his circuit riding days, he and his companions, riding to the next session of court, had crossed many swollen rivers. The Fox River was known to everyone as the most formidable, and it was still ahead. His companions were worrying. If these smaller streams were giving them so much trouble what would they ever do at the Fox River?

Evening came on, and they stopped for the night at a log inn where they were provided lodging and meals. A Methodist presiding elder of the district who rode through that country in all kinds of weather chanced to be at the same inn that night. The conversation about the swollen rivers continued. And quite naturally, the question was put to the traveling elder. "What will *you* do about it?"

The man replied, "Oh yes, the Fox River. I have crossed it many times and understand it well. But I have a fixed rule with regard to that river: I never cross it till I reach it."

We are all prone to cross our rivers, bridges, and hazardous places before we reach them. And many times, we anticipate difficulties that never come.

Nothing is changed by worry but the worrier. In its train, worry brings illness, misery, and an unknown list of troubles. Worry brings on mental confusion, so that we cannot think clearly about the problem at hand. Worry saps spiritual strength and robs us

Worry keeps our lives from being fruitful.

***I Never Cross It
Till I Reach It***

of our ability to trust God.

How can we deal with worry? Someone has suggested the following plan:

Make a list of your worries. Be honest. Write down each one, those facing you right now and those you fear may happen tomorrow, or next week, or next year. Include the big problems and the small ones. And don't forget to date your list. Then pray, and put all your concerns in the hand of God. Trust Him to do what you cannot do. And seek His strength to bear each trial as it comes.

Let God take charge of your "worry list," and you take charge of the present moment.

A famous bassoon player came to the great conductor Toscani with a furrowed brow and offered his apologies that he would not be able to perform that evening.

"What is your problem?" queried Toscani.

"My instrument will not sound the high E flat."

"Don't worry," was Toscani's reply, "there is no high E flat in your music tonight."

It is easy to say that as Christians we should not worry, but not so easy to put this statement into practice. How can we actually avoid worry and possess ourselves in calm and confidence? Only as we follow the advice of the Psalmist, "*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not....*" (Ps. 37:7). By worrying we indicate we do not believe God is big enough to handle our problems without help. Worry dishonors God, belittles His power, and doubts His word.

Worry keeps our lives from being fruitful. By worrying we neglect the concern we should be giving to the present moment. We read in Jesus' parable of the four soils, "*and some [seed] fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them....He also that received seed among the thorns is he that beareth the word; and the care of this world ...choke the word and he becometh unfruitful*" (Matt. 13:7, 22).

Thinking Christians cannot afford worry. Worry quenches the spirit. Worry despises the Word. Worry neglects God.

When you are tempted to worry, do what you can to solve the problem, then put the remainder in God's hands. He is able, abundantly able to help. □

“Study...Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth”

Answering Objections to Inerrancy

► *A belief in partial inerrancy is not adequate to support us in the hope of eternal life.*

When anyone in government, education or science takes a firm stand on any issue, he or she must be prepared to face objections. Just so with the Word of God, especially a subject such as inerrancy, when the claim is being made that the Bible is wholly without error. Here we must be sure to qualify our statement, adding that it is without error *in the original form in which God caused it to be written*. (This point will be discussed later in detail.)

Prior to the twentieth century, some schools of thought proposed a view of partial inerrancy. This view suggested that on unimportant issues the Holy Spirit left the inspired writers to their own devices, including their own faulty memories; while in matters of faith and doctrine they were inspired. Why, they reasoned, should a sacred writer be guided by the Holy Spirit when he was merely mentioning some detail in passing, or something incidental to his primary purpose?

While the sacred writers did not need Holy Spirit power to narrate events from their own experience, still they were writing under the guidance of God, and we cannot believe that God would allow them to include any kind of error in their writing; otherwise how could we depend on anything they wrote?

Belief in partial inerrancy raises another problem: that of defining what is primary and what is not, what pertains to faith and doctrine and what does not.

And the further conclusion: if the Bible is wrong in one area, how can we be sure it is right in another?

No, partial inerrancy is not adequate to support a book on which we are staking our future hope and destiny. Nothing less than a belief in total inerrancy, that the Bible is the Word of God without error or contradiction in the language and form in which God caused it to be written, can provide a sure foundation of faith.

But...

What about objections and questions?

We accept the Bible as the inerrant Word of God not because there are no questions or objections but because our confidence is grounded in such unassailable and compelling evidence that *we can believe in spite of the questions*. Objectors will challenge, but any challenge they can offer does not shake the foundation upon which we stand because the evidence that convinces us is, from our point of view, irrefutable. God has not left us to *wonder* if His Book is true. He has given us ample evidence upon which to build our belief, and nothing that anyone may say can alter the facts one iota.

We do not address objections to satisfy the higher critics, or to change them in their positions, but to help those who are honestly seeking the facts. We also want to answer the questions which we encounter in our own study of the Bible (v. 20) so that, in the words of Jude, we

may keep building ourselves up in our most holy faith. Even though we do not view objections as a threat to our faith in God or His written Word, we do not want to imply in any way that objections do not matter, or to address them with indifference or complacency. We face—even welcome—objections as an opportunity to prove our faith and to convince others of its solidity.

Even if we do not know every answer immediately, our solid foundation remains unshaken and we are able to go on believing. Would we stop eating just because we heard of someone who became very ill from a certain food? No more will we stop believing just because someone poses a problem or question about a certain passage of Scripture.

We also answer objections to fulfill the command given in Scripture, to *"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh...a reason of the hope that is in [us] with meekness and fear"* (1 Pet. 3:15).

If we waited until all possible or imaginable questions had been resolved to everyone's satisfaction, we would never believe anything, and would lose hold of the hope which God has set before us in the Bible.

Viewing Objections Objectively

We should recognize a few facts about objections often brought against the Bible:

1) *That the majority are not new, and have already been answered,*

2) *That the one stating the objection is often a critic who has neither faith in God nor reverence for His Word, who is viewing the Bible as a humanly authored Book and is therefore missing a large part of its message;*

3) *That the evidence is still accumulating, i.e., new manuscripts are continually being unearthed, studied, and documented. For this reason it is unfair to regard any point in Scripture as being an error when inadequate evidence is available;*

4) *That critics are seriously divided among themselves, even on very basic and commonly alleged errors. There is no such thing as agreement among the*

critics. Scholars have cast doubt on every tenet of Christian faith, yet the Bible stands and will continue to stand.

Evaluating Objections

Before answering any objection, we should consider:

1) *The source of the objection*—is it a serious Bible student, an anxious believer, or a higher critic?

2) *The validity of the criticism*: Is it a difficulty or a proven error? We must be careful to distinguish between the two.

3) *The benefit to be obtained by answering the objection*. Many points brought against the Bible are questionable discrepancies in genealogies, or details which may consume many hours and yield no benefit.

Discrepancies: Proven or Alleged?

We cannot expect to be free from the need to study the text of Scripture in order to defend it against the assaults of unbelievers. As someone has said, it would be a miraculously perfect text with which imperfectly informed men could not find fault!

But an apparent discrepancy is not a proven error. An error is not proven until the evidence stands clearly against it and cannot be answered. It is not a proven error if there is simply no information available to defend the Biblical side. In other words, we must let the Bible stand until proven false. And up to the present time, no conclusive evidence has been produced that proves the Bible false on any point. Of all the discoveries of archaeology, none has ever produced evidence proving that the Bible is in error.

What does *not* constitute a violation of belief in inerrancy?

1) *Belief in inerrancy is not violated by improper grammar, grammatical structures, or by the literary style of the author.* All Bible writers do not use the same style, nor were they required to meet any human-set standard of grammar or composition. The purpose of the authors was to communicate what God wanted to be written, and God chose His instruments by what He wished them to contribute, not by any human standards.

(Continued on page 16)

► *We must never classify apparent discrepancies as proven errors.*

Lord, for the erring thoughts
Not into evil wrought;
Lord, for the wicked will
Restrained still;
For the heart from itself kept,
Our thanksgiving accept.

For the ignorant hopes that were
Broken to our blind prayer;
For pain, death, sorrow, sent
Unto our betterment;
For all loss of seeming good,
Quicken our gratitude.

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sov'reign will denies,
Accepted at Thy throne of grace
Let this petition rise:

Give me a calm and thankful heart,
From ev'ry murmur free;
The blessings of Thy grace impart,
And make me live to Thee.

Let the firm hope that Thou art mine
My path of life attend:
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end.



Praise, O praise, our God and King,
Hymns of adoration sing;
For His mercies still endure
Ever faithful, ever sure;

Praise Him that He made the sun
Day by day its course to run:
For His mercies still endure
Ever faithful, ever sure;

And the silver moon by night,
Shining with her gentle light;
For His mercies still endure
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Praise Him that He gave the rain
To mature the swelling grain;
For His mercies still endure
Ever faithful, ever sure;

And hath bid the fruitful field
Crops of precious increase yield;
For His mercies still endure
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Praise Him for our harvest-store,
He hath filled the garner-floor;
For His mercies still endure
Ever faithful, ever sure;

And for richer food than this,
Hope of everlasting bliss;
For His mercies still endure
Ever faithful, ever sure.

Glory to our Bounteous King;
Glory let creation sing;
Glory to the Father be
Now and through Eternity!

Thank You, God!



Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work and forced to do your best will breed in you temperance and self-control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and content and a hundred virtues which the idle never know.



*How blest Thy saints! how safely led,
How surely kept, how richly fed!
Saviour of all in earth and sea,
How happy they who rest in Thee.*

*Thy hand sets fast the mighty hills,
Thy voice the troubled ocean stills;
Evening and morning hymn Thy praise,
And earth Thy bounty wide displays.*

*The year is with Thy goodness crowned;
The clouds drop wealth the world around;
Through Thee the deserts laugh and sing,
And Nature smiles and owns her King.*

*Lord, on our souls Thy Spirit pour;
The moral waste within restore;
O let Thy love our spring-tide be,
And make us all bear fruit to Thee.*

—Selected



O Lord of heaven and earth and sea,
To Thee all praise and glory be:
How shall we show our love to Thee,
Giver of all?

The golden sunshine, vernal air,
Sweet flowers and fruits Thy love declare;
Where harvests ripen, Thou art there,
Giver of all.

*F*or peaceful homes and healthful days,
For all the blessings earth displays,
We owe Thee thankfulness and praise,
Giver of all.

We lose what on ourselves we spend;
We have as treasure without end
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend,
Who givest all.

*Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,
Repaid a thousandfold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee,
Giver of all.*

To Thee, from whom we all derive
Our life, our gifts, our power to give,
O may we ever with Thee live,
Giver of all!



*The little worries which we meet each day
May lie as stumbling-blocks across our way;
Or we may make them steppingstones to be
Of service, God, to Thee.*

► Our belief in
the inerrancy
of Scripture is
not violated by
the use of
figuration
and symbolic
language.

2) *Belief in inerrancy is not violated by the use of figurative or symbolic speech, hyperbole, allegory, parable or any other form of figurative language.* Almost any literature contains statements not to be taken literally, and the Bible is no exception.

3) *Belief in inerrancy is not violated because different authors narrating the same events include different details or emphasize different points.*

It is accepted in any court that two individuals may narrate the same set of events in different words, from different points of view, and with different points of emphases, and neither be accused of falsifying the facts. Parallel accounts may even appear to contradict one another, and both be correct.

We should keep this point in mind when observing differences in parallel accounts, e.g., between the narratives of Jesus' Resurrection in the Gospels, or the details of Jesus' baptism. Mark reports that the voice from heaven said, "Thou art my beloved Son." Matthew puts it in a third person, "This is my beloved Son." Does this mean that one of the recorders is in error? Not at all, but simply that one reporter narrated the voice in the first person, the other in the third. Variations in narration are not contradictions when they arise either from recording different parts of some common event, or from assigning different emphases or degrees of importance to the same event.

4) *Belief in inerrancy is not violated by a lack of verbal exactness in a citation.* There are many reasons why the lack of verbal exactness must be allowed. First of all, a statement may be correct and not be quoted verbatim. How many times have we told what someone else said, yet not in their exact words? But our words carried the sense and intent of what we were relaying.

Then too, we must remember that these people were quoting from memory. They did not have printed Bibles as we have. What they knew of the law and Gospel was what they had stored in memory, and one might easily quote a thought or an idea without distorting it

and without being exact as to the words.

Very often the Scripture writers were citing a statement or an event to get the general idea of what was said or done. Their purpose was not to quote verbatim.

Another objection has been raised by the New Testament writers' quoting of the Septuagint. The Septuagint was the popular version of the Bible (Old Testament) in Jesus' day. And even though we cannot say the Septuagint translation was in itself inspired, those citing it were being directed by the Holy Spirit, and we can be sure that they did not quote anything erroneous from it. Being under Divine guidance, they were able to quote passages that conveyed the proper thought or teaching.

5) *Belief in inerrancy is not violated by our misinterpretations or misapplications.* For example, we may make the mistake of assuming that two similar incidents are one and the same, when in reality they are not. The cause of the problem may be our lack of knowledge, or an incomplete record. But incompleteness is not error.

The Bible is a complete revelation of all that we need for faith and practice to obtain the salvation God has offered us. But that is not to say that it gives every detail we may want to know, or every record that might be of interest. Nor does it reveal what God has not seen fit to tell us. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God" (Deut. 29:29). This is particularly important to remember in studying the Gospels. No narrator was required to give an exhaustive account. Each recorded what he felt important, in the light of his own situation. Even the four Gospel writers together do not exhaust the detail of any event mentioned. There are many elements unknown, which would probably resolve many seeming conflicts. But this was not the purpose. All that is required is that the writers' statements be true.

6) *Belief in inerrancy is not violated by Biblical writers quoting non-inspired sources.* Sources cited may have historical or descriptive accuracy, but these do not add to or subtract from authority for any point of doctrine.

7) *Belief in inerrancy is not violated by the use of nontechnical language.* We cannot expect the writers of Scripture to use our modern terms, or those associated with modern science. First, it was not their intention to teach science. And second, language is only a tool to convey an idea. For example, we say that the sun "rises" and "sets." We all know that the sun is actually doing neither, it only *appears* to rise and set. In the same way we must understand statements in Scripture which sound as though the authors did not comprehend basic scientific facts when, in reality, they were using terms generally understood.

Again many alleged scientific problems in Scripture may be resolved by a proper distinction between literal and spiritual applications.

8) *Belief in inerrancy is not violated by lack of historical precision.* The term *precision* may seem ambiguous. To some, lack of precision is error. This need not be so. All that is necessary in stating a fact is that the statement be adequate.

For example, we may say that a certain event happened in 1900. To be more precise we could research the data, to learn that it was in 1898, or 1902. But our statement may be adequately true for the point that we are making. Our purpose is not to pinpoint the date but to show an approximate time. If we wanted to be very specific we could say that it happened on the 15th of July, at 2:00 P.M. in the year 1901. But this much detail may not be useful in our context.

This point is vital in studying the Bible. We may judge a statement not true because we are requiring more precision than the Scripture writer felt needful. Are we saying, then, that the writer is wrong, or that the Scripture errs? Not at all.

Against Partial Inerrancy

If the Bible is correct in its statements about doctrine and teaching, and if it is otherwise open to error, how can we depend on it in anything that it teaches?

Suppose I have an Amtrak Railroad Schedule. I tell you that it is filled with numerous errors but that it is absolutely

authoritative and trustworthy in every *important* detail. Does this seem strange? This is precisely the situation we would have if the Bible could be wrong in its details and still profess to be the authoritative Word of God.

Says Bible scholar F. F. Bruce in a general comment about the Bible, "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. If the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt. It is a curious fact that historians have often been much readier to trust the New Testament records than have many theologians. However, there are people who regard a 'sacred book' as automatically under suspicion, and demand much more evidence for the New Testament than for other writings; firstly, because the universal claims which the New Testament makes upon mankind are so absolute, and the character and works of its chief Figure so unparalleled, that we want to be as sure of its truth as we possibly can; and secondly, because in point of fact there is much more evidence for the New Testament than for other ancient writings of comparable date."

How abundantly God has provided for our needs—shouldn't we be grateful!

(To Be Continued Next Issue)

"I do not wish to dismiss the questions that critics have raised about errors in Scripture with a casual wave of my hand. However, I do not think...that there are any unsolvable difficulties....A multitude of what formerly were difficulties have been solved, so that the detractors have had to backwater again and again. But as each apparent discrepancy is resolved, another objection is raised.... Those who refuse to believe in inerrancy never seem to be satisfied. Why is this so? Does it not constitute a frame of mind that wants to disbelieve? Does it not reflect a viewpoint that says in effect, 'I will not believe what the Scripture teaches about itself until every objection has been answered to my satisfaction'?...May not the real difficulty be a want of Biblical faith rather than a want of evidence?"

—Harold Lindsell, in
The Battle for the Bible.



Thoughts that Burn

*"My heart was
hot within me, while
I was musing the fire
burned: then spake I
with my tongue, Lord,
make me to know mine
end, and the measure of
my days, what it is;
that I may know
how frail I am."*

—Psalm 39:3-4

Not a faint flash in that moment of reflection. Not a spasmodic burst of light. Not a weak, flickering ray from the Infinite. This fire burned.

Fire suggests something hot and devouring, something that claims total attention. There is nothing indifferent, neutral, or secondary about fire. Where there is fire there is heat and burning.

We do not know where David was when he felt this consuming zeal. It may have been while he was being pursued by the angry Saul and had to flee in terror for his life. It may have been while he was hiding in exile. It may have been while he enjoyed the peace of the Judean hillsides. But wherever he was, David was consciously creating his own inner environment, and it was warm, stirring, and spiritually enlivening. Why? Because the inner fire of spiritual devotion was blazing. What was causing this fire to blaze? The cause was David's own thoughts. He was meditating upon the meaning of life, his own frailty in comparison to Divine Omnipotence. And while he was "musing," meditating, reflecting, "the fire burned." Higher and higher it blazed until it broke out in such intensity as to claim his complete attention.

This was David's experience. Has it been ours? Have we felt Divine zeal in our hearts like a burning fire, generating spiritual warmth and the very glow of heaven in our lives? If not, why not? Perhaps it is because we are yet captives in our minds. Perhaps we have not yet learned that special type of thinking that David did: meditating.

All of life is a learning experience. It begins the day we are born, and every day thereafter we add to our knowledge in some small way. Whatever our point in life, we can look back upon things we have learned. We have learned to walk, to talk, to coordinate mind and muscle to be useful to ourselves and others. We have learned to read, to write, to study, to reason. We have learned to perform probably thousands of small operations that are part of everyday life. But have we learned to muse—to meditate?

David found meditation to be like a fire, glowing, consuming, penetrating every area of his life. It was not just a spontaneous, emotional experience that died in a moment. It was a fire that affected his whole life, dominated his actions, and tempered his spirit. It was a fire of holy purpose and deep inner impression. *"Make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days,"* he implored.

Through meditation we are able to see a ray of purpose gleaming through the confusion of our world. Through meditation we are able to see all things working together for good, to them that love God. Through meditation we are able to see all things working together as God wills.

David found life a thrilling experience when it was set aglow by the fire of holy purpose.

The fire that burned in David's soul was also a fire of self-recognition. It caused him to implore, *"Deliver me from all my transgressions"* (Ps. 39:8). The heat of this fire caused him to see himself as he had not otherwise done.

To live life on the highest level, we must face ourselves as we are, see wherein we lack, and go to work to change. It was when Isaiah was in the

presence of God that he saw himself as he really was. *"Woe is me!"* he cried, *"for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips"* (Isa. 6:5). In the awesome presence of the Divine he saw his sin.

Most of us put up a facade of goodness. We profess what we do not possess, perhaps hoping someday to possess more. In the meanwhile we live on a form of pride, a pride that keeps us from being honest with ourselves and with God, a pride that keeps us from confessing our sins and going to work to eradicate them. This type of pride shrinks from the heavenly fire that can cleanse and purge the evil from our lives.

Let us stop, think, meditate. *"While I was meditating,"* said David, *"the fire burned,"* fire that can consume the evil, and stir the good.

The fire that burned in David was the fire of hope. In David's heart hope was alive and burning. *"And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee"* (Ps. 39:7).

We need to feel this fire in our hearts, the fire that can consume the evil and kindle hope, the fire that can cause us to see ourselves as God sees us and turn humbly to Him as we offer ourselves in wholehearted obedience. We need to realize the brevity of our days and our total dependence upon the God who gives us breath, for *"every man at his best state is altogether vanity"* (Ps. 39:5).

We need to realize it. Now, before it is too late. □

*O God, teach us
to meditate. Kindle
such a fire in our hearts
now; for we are strangers
with Thee, and sojourners,
as all our fathers were. O
spare us, that we may
recover strength, before
we go hence to be
no more.*

What About the Sabbath?

Q “What do you think of the Seventh Day Adventists and their thinking that Saturday is the God-ordained day of worship?”

A We have only the kindest feelings toward the Seventh Day Adventists. They certainly deserve much credit for their courage and their sincerity in holding to a command which they feel is crucial to their salvation.

We are equally sincere in our belief that today it makes no difference which day is kept as long as one day each week is observed in the proper and reverential manner. But sincerity about any matter affecting a mandate of God and our future life is not in itself sufficient. Any one *can be* sincerely wrong.

Our booklet, *The Sabbath*, covers most aspects of the subject. But I would like to mention one other point.

In the Seventh Day Adventist literature there is repeated reference to Saturday being the Sabbath. Let us comment.

First: no one living today has complete information on the stages of development through which our calendar of days, weeks, months and years evolved from the Hebrew and Babylonian calendars to the Gregorian calendar in use today. Nor have we any God-inspired record. For all this information we are totally dependent upon historical accounts which are, at best, incomplete and contradictory.

Sabbatarians claim that there has been a continuous and unbroken succession of seven days from the creation of the literal earth, resulting in a period of six days corresponding to our Sunday through Friday and terminating with our Saturday or the Sabbath. After discussions with Sabbatarians and their ministers and trying

to find evidence in history, we cannot uncover anything which even approximates “evidence” for this. Over the centuries there have been many modifications to the calendar, adding and subtracting days. One in particular occurred in 45-46 B.C. when 90 intercalary days had to be added to 46 B.C. Ninety is not evenly divisible by 7. Again in 1582, ten days were skipped (one week and three days). How the succession of days of the week fared in these changes I do not believe we can be sure.

As far as we are able to determine, about the time of Christ the days of the week were called first day, second day, third day, etc. Names were added by the Emperor Constantine about the year A.D. 321. “The days assigned by the Romans to the Sun, Moon and Saturn were retained for the corresponding days of the week in English and several related languages. The other week day names in English are derived from Anglo-Saxon words for the gods of Teutonic mythology” (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

The Adventists repeatedly make the statement that Saturday is the Lord’s Sabbath day. How is it possible to make this statement when the name Saturday, Sunday or any other day of our week as we know it does not appear in the Bible? We are not able to find any conclusive evidence that there is any connection between the seventh day of the Hebrew calendar kept by God’s people in Bible times and the Saturday of our week.

It is important to consider that the Hebrew calendar being a lunar calendar, the first of the year varied widely vis-a-vis the solar Gregorian calendar. Some years consisted of twelve months, some of thirteen months. Following the Hebrew Calendar, the first Sabbath of

the year was observed on the seventh of Abib or Nisan and the second Sabbath was observed on the fourteenth. This day also was the first day of the Passover. (This means that the first day of the year was also the first day of the week—see Lev. 23:3-8). The first and last days of the Passover were Sabbaths (see also Luke 23:54-56). The Sabbaths under the Mosaic law were counted from the first of the month Abib, the first month of the year (Ex. 13:4, Deut. 16:1), being determined by the occurrence of the first new moon in the spring. The seventh day of the month (the first Sabbath of the year) as given by Moses under the Hebrew calendar only occasionally coincides with Saturday of the Gregorian calendar. For example, the new moon of Abib in 1989 occurred on April 7. This means that April 7 was the first day of the week and April 13 (Monday) was the first "Sabbath". Thereafter all Mondays were Sabbaths until the next new year moon in the spring of 1990. During many years the Sabbatarians who so religiously keep Saturday as the Sabbath are no nearer the correct date than are those who make no attempt to keep it.

We do not believe that there is any way humanly possible to know absolutely what day of our calendar would match the Sabbath as given to the children of Israel. And we do not believe that it is necessary to know. We do not believe God is concerned with *when* we worship, only that we worship, and *that* we worship properly and place Him first *every day*. Paul admonished: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col. 2:16-17). He also warned against an overemphasis on observing "days, and months,

and times, and years" (Gal. 4:10). God is looking for worship every day, love with "all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength:" (Mark 12:30).

If the Lord had intended that we observe a specific day each week, we feel He would have made it plain how to arrive at the exact date and would have commanded us to keep it. In the absence of that knowledge we continue to observe one day out of seven, and we observe that day not as the holy Sabbath but as a day of worship to the Lord.

On the Nature of Christ

Q "You have answered questions for me before and I need your help again. I have been reading and studying your works on Christ. I can follow your comments on His deity or manhood, and the thoughts on His pre-existing. Would you please clear up some other verses on the subject. Let me list these verses for you: Deut. 18:18; Deut. 30:11-15; John 3:17; John 6:62. Let me thank you in advance for your help."

A We will address the texts in question one by one.

◆ Deuteronomy 18:18 reads, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." This passage is a prophecy of Jesus spoken by the prophet Moses. Verse 15 is part of the passage, stating clearly Christ's nature: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Jesus was to be 1) raised up, (not sent down from heaven); 2) He was to be "a prophet" like

Moses himself; 3) He was to come "from the midst of thee, of thy brethren," i.e., He was to share the same lineage as Moses; and 4) He was to be "like unto me [Moses]," a man and not God. Verse 18 adds to these thoughts that Christ was to receive His knowledge directly from God: I "will put my words in his mouth," a prophecy which was literally fulfilled, as Jesus Himself testified, "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things" (John 8:28). And, "whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:50).

Deut. 18:18 repeats two points for emphasis: 1) that Jesus was to be "from among their brethren," and 2) that He was to be "like unto me [Moses]," i.e., a man, human, flesh and blood.

We need have no doubt that this prophecy actually applies to Christ because the apostle Peter quoted it on the day of Pentecost, saying that it had clearly been fulfilled in Jesus (see Acts 3:19-23).

◆ Deut. 30:11-15 does not seem relevant to a question about Jesus. The subject of the passage is clearly stated to be "this commandment," or "the word" of God, His law, His statutes. Moses was emphasizing how close to the people was the law of God at all times, hence they had no excuse for disobeying it. They did not have to go anywhere to seek it but it was "very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart," with this one purpose: "that thou mayest do it."

Verse 15 states God's proposal: "See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments,...and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to

possess it" (v. 16). And there is the other half of the proposition: "Death and evil" if "thine heart turn away; so that thou wilt not hear; but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them" (v. 17). God leaves His human children free to choose for themselves whether or not they will obey, and whether they will obtain "life and good" or "death and evil."

◆ John 3:17 is a statement about God's purpose in sending Jesus: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." It is difficult to imagine what question this statement could raise. God sent Jesus as a means of bringing men to Him, teaching them, showing them the perfect example, pointing out the way of salvation. His purpose was not to "condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." But this does not say that all the world will be saved, for Jesus Himself said clearly that "ye will not come to me that ye might have life" (John 5:40). God would, Jesus would, but the people would not. Jesus defined clearly the means of coming to Him: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). Jesus came teaching the way of salvation, but men had to respond on their own by hearing and learning of the Father before they could be saved.

◆ John 6:62 reads, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?"

A close scrutiny of John 6 reveals that Jesus from verse 50 forward was referring not to Himself literally but to the Divine wisdom which He represented, and of which He was the perfect personification because in His own life He exemplified it completely. He says in verse 50, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven,

that a man may eat thereof, and not die." Jesus was not speaking of Himself as literal bread. He is using Himself in a symbolic sense, symbolic of the knowledge of God, the true bread from heaven which "a man may eat thereof, and not die" (v. 50). In the next verse He says more about this spiritual bread which He personified: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." He was giving His life as an example, a pattern for others to follow. By eating of this spiritual bread which He was giving, the world could indeed have "life."

The Jews did not understand Jesus and objected to His statement. Jesus confounded their question by a more profound statement: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (v. 53). He was speaking of Himself in a symbolic sense, a personification of the wisdom or knowledge of God, which He Himself explained in verse 63 when He said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Had He been speaking of Himself physically, there would be profit in His literal flesh, but Jesus said there was none.

In verse 57 Jesus explained His point clearly, that He "lived" by the Father in the same sense that He expected His followers to live by Him. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."

With these thoughts, Jesus made the shocking proposition: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62) In other words, what if this whole system of Divine knowledge should be taken from you? You would be left to perish, with no hope of future life. What a cataclysm that would be! But Jesus did not refer to Himself going to heaven, because He had not physically come from heaven. □

Growing In 'Grace'



"Do you say grace before you eat?" asked an acquaintance of mine after her little boy had spent a day at our home. She told how that evening when they had sat down to supper her son said, "We have to say a prayer before we eat." "So," she said, "we did."

How wonderful, I thought, if more families would make a practice of saying grace before meals!

We didn't always. Having grown up in homes where grace was never said, my husband and I found it a bit difficult to know just how to begin in our own home. But we decided the important thing was *to begin*—so we did. Over the years we have found the practice to be a great blessing to us. It has strengthened both our family relationship and our relationship to God.

Saying grace was a principle practiced by Jesus when He was living among men. Wherever He went, it was His habit to bless the food and give thanks for it.

What better way to show thankfulness to God for His many, many blessings than to offer a prayer of gratitude at mealtime? For a brief time the day's busy activities have been set aside, and the family is together. It is a time to thank God not only for our food but also for each other, our friends, Christian fellowship, and the opportunity to work for eternal life—we have so much to thank God for!

It is so important to develop in our children the habit of saying grace and being thankful. The younger they begin, the deeper will be the impression. When very young, children are usually agreeable to the lifestyle their parents set. Little ones love to imitate Mommy and Daddy. As they grow, the established pattern of saying grace will help

them to realize their dependency on God.

We are trying not to let saying grace become mere routine in our home. One way we do this is by variety. Sometimes Dad says grace, sometimes Mother, sometimes one of the children. Sometimes we all quote something together, such as the Lord's Prayer. Or we sing a song of prayer. Once in a while, for a change, we let each one take a turn around the table telling something for which he or she is particularly thankful.

A little thinking and a lot of sincerity are all that are needed to make the table grace a rich and fruitful moment with God.

Do you say grace before you eat? If not, won't you begin today? And if so, won't you join us in keeping it a time of special family unity and fresh inspiration as you thank and serve God? □

How to Spoil Your Thanksgiving

- ◆ *Forget the many good things in life you have and concentrate on what you lack.*
- ◆ *Believe that money makes happiness.*
- ◆ *Forget the deep debt of gratitude you owe to God.*
- ◆ *Tell yourself that you are mistreated and overworked.*
- ◆ *Think yourself exceptional—you are entitled to special privileges.*
- ◆ *Cultivate a pessimistic outlook.*
- ◆ *Forget others and look out for yourself—who will if you don't?*
- ◆ *Picture yourself as indispensable.*
- ◆ *Feel sorry for yourself—your problems are so much worse than anyone else's ever were. You have a right to be unhappy.*



The High-Tech Dromedary:

Designed for the Desert

Did You Know...?

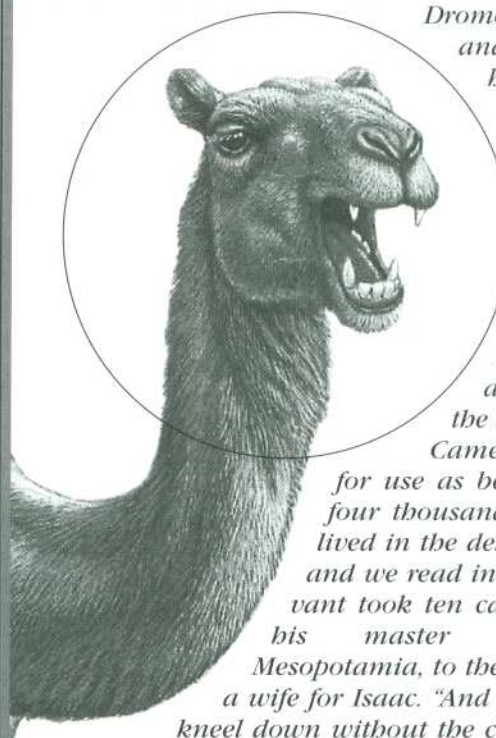
- ✓ ...that the camel's eyes are protected by a "windshield"—an extra (and transparent) membrane which they are able to draw across the eye to keep out particles of sand.
- ✓ ...that camels have been known to go as long as 8 or 10 days without drinking.
- ✓ ...that the camels have the ability to close their nostrils during dust storms in order to keep out blowing sand.
- ✓ ...that camels will refuse to drink dirty water even if they are thirsty.
- ✓ ...that camels are so valuable to Bedouins and other nomads that they are used as a medium of exchange, in place of money.
- ✓ ...that it rains so seldom in the desert that when it does rain, camels are often frightened and try to run away.
- ✓ ...that a camel's temperature can rise as much as six degrees without hurting it. Such a temperature rise would likely be fatal to a human.
- ✓ ...that because the camel's body temperature rises with the temperature of the air, it does not perspire and so does not lose moisture.
- ✓ ...that camels are noted for their bad tempers. If they take a dislike to someone, they may carry a grudge for years.
- ✓ ...that a newborn camel takes 16 to 17 years to mature, and lives between 40 and 50 years.

For scientific data in this article we are indebted to *The Book of Popular Science*, volume 7, pp. 328ff; *Marvels and Mysteries of Our Animal World*, "Creatures of the Extreme," by Arthur Weigall, published by the Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, New York, pp. 85ff.; *Zoobooks*, "Camels," published by Wildlife Education, Ltd., October, 1989; and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Fifteenth Edition, 2:764ff., 17:1027ff., and 23:490ff.

Introduction:

Camels have roamed the desert areas of the world as wild animals for centuries. They are not found worldwide, but only in areas of India, Arabia, Eastern Africa, Asia and some in Spain. The family is large, consisting of many varieties of camels as well as the llama which inhabits the mountain areas of South America. The best known desert camel is the

Dromedary with one hump, and short, light-colored hair, but the camels of colder climates, known as Bactrian camels, have two humps and very long dark brown hair. With their warm coat they are as comfortable in the snow of the mountains as the Dromedary is in the hot desert.



Camels were domesticated for use as beasts of burdens some four thousand years ago. Abraham lived in the desert country of Arabia, and we read in the Bible that his "servant took ten camels of the camels of his master and departed...for Mesopotamia, to the city of Nabor" to seek a wife for Isaac. "And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water."

Cruden's Concordance confirms the use of camels in Bible times: "Camels were the usual riding animals in the East, as they were stronger than horses, and had much more endurance. As so much of the Bible world was either desert, or dry at certain seasons of the year; the peculiar adaptation of the camel to deserts was of unusual importance. Very frequently a man's wealth was estimated in camels. They were bred for work or for swift riding, and their hair was used for clothing."

Meet the Dromedary

I am sure you're thinking that I'm not much to look at—with yellow teeth, a harelip, a hump, lots of calluses and corns, and sorrowful eyes fringed with long, languishing lashes. If ever there was an ungraceful looking creature, it is I, the Dromedary. I've heard some unkind human say that maybe I was made out of spare parts left over from some other animals.

Well, I can't help what they say. I'm not looking for love or pity. My Creator designed me to carry heavy loads across hot desert sand, and that is something I do very well.

Actually, I'm a strong runner. I'm able to keep up a gait of 10 miles per hour for a straight 10 hours—with a 500-pound pack on my back. Can you match



that?
Well,
that is

pushing it a little. More comfortably, I like to trot at 8 to 10 miles an hour for 6 to 8 hours, and I can do that for 3 or 4 days in succession, right across hot desert sands. Yes, I was made for the desert!

I have many features in my favor, which make me really believe I was *designed* (creatures like me just don't *happen*!) Did you ever wonder about the hump on my back? It's not just a load to carry around, and it isn't full of water. My hump—all 80 pounds of it—is my emergency food supply. When I am well fed, the hump is hard and big. When I've been many days without food, it begins to sag and look empty—it's my Designer's special way of keeping me going strong when food and water are scarce. And it has an added advantage—instead of my fat being distributed over my entire body, like yours is, it's all concentrated in one place, which means that my body can cool much more rapidly than yours can.

Food is often problematic in the desert. And even when available,

it's often scrubby, hard and harsh. But I've been designed for that, too—just about nothing can hurt the hard, horny inside of my mouth. I can crunch down dry, prickly cacti just as easily as soft, tender grass. And when the dry scrub is missing—well, I just trot on to the next oasis. And speaking of oases, I have phenomenal vision for spotting them. I can see an oasis many, many miles in advance—partly because my eyes are keen, and partly because I ride high.

Perhaps the factor that makes me best in the desert is my tolerance of dehydration. My blood, like yours, is normally 94 percent water. If you lose 5 percent of that moisture, you lose your eyesight. Lose 10 percent, and you lose your mind. Lose 12 percent, and you die. That's not true with me. I can lose up to 40 percent of the water in my blood, and I'm still strong and feeling fine! Do you wonder that I think I'm designed for the desert (or the desert was designed for me)? Scientists say it's something about my red blood cells being elongated, while yours are round. I don't pretend to understand, I just know it works. I've been known to go 8 to 10 days without a drink, but then I look like a wreck. I lose more than 200 pounds, and my ribs show through my skin. I feel great; I look thin just because the billions of cells in my body have lost their water. They're no longer *fat*, they're *flat*.

But let me get to a water hole and drink, and my skinny body starts to change almost immediately. (I can guzzle as much as 20 gallons in 10 minutes!) Soon I've regained the 200 pounds I had lost and am ready to go again.

When it comes to conserving water, I've heard that I rank *tops*. Again I have to thank my mighty Designer. What are the secrets? Actually, I'm proud to say they're built in. My Creator designed a special moisture-saving nose just for

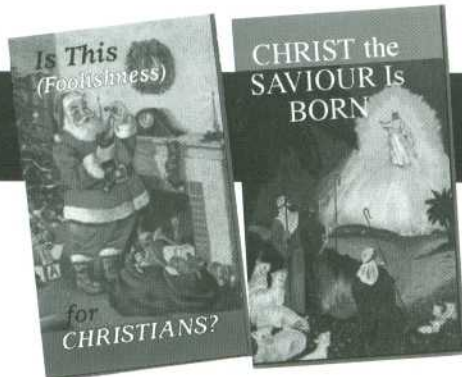
me. When I exhale, I don't lose much moisture because my nose traps that warm, moist air from my lungs and tiny blood vessels in my nasal membranes absorb the moisture and take it right back into my blood stream. How's that for recycling?

The process works because my nose is always cool. My nose may stay as much as 18 degrees cooler than the rest of my body. Even though I must breathe hot, desert air, the air is cooled as it goes through my wet nasal passages.

I save moisture, too, in another way—I do not perspire. When the air temperature rises, my body temperature rises too. And when it drops, *my* temperature drops. And all the while, I feel just fine, thanks to my great Creator.

And that isn't all that's special about my nose. My Designer knew I'd have to trot right through blowing sandstorms—they can strike the desert anytime. So He equipped me with special muscles in my nostrils that allow me to close the opening. This way I can keep blowing sand out of my nose but still get enough air to breathe. When the sand stops blowing, I can open my nostrils again and breathe freely.

You've probably wondered why I always walk around with my nose in the air. That's because of the way my Creator made me, too. Not only do I have broad ridges of bone above my eyes that act as a sun visor, but I also have been given thick bushy eyebrows—so bushy that I have to hold my head high to peek out from under them. But I'm glad, because they shade my eyes even more from the bright desert sun—in addition to keeping out the sand. And if a grain of sand does get in my eye, my Designer has provided me with an extra eyelid that moves across my eye from side to side, something like a windshield wiper, to remove the sand. When I must travel in extremely bad blowing sand, I can keep this special



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The High-Tech Dromedary

(Continued)

protective lid completely closed—because it’s transparent! (Who could have thought up a better plan than that!)

My ears, too, are designed for the desert—they are filled with small hairs, which keep out most of the sand.

Most remarkable among my Creator’s inventions for me are my sand shoes (I mean my feet). Each foot has two long, bony toes with tough, leathery skin between. These webbed feet—some 10 inches across—are just what I need to keep me surefooted in soft, drifting sand.

What about getting down so my rider can load/unload me? mount/dismount? (At full height, I stand about 6 feet tall.) I simply kneel down. And here again, I’m all prepared, thanks to my great Designer. Now sand is abrasive, and without protection my joints would soon be worn thin. But my Creator has provided me with special knee pads to protect my front knee joints, and also the other parts of my body that contact the sand. When I was about 6 months old, these special horny pads started to grow. They don’t make me any more graceful, but I can fall on my knees time after time and not be hurt. More credit to my great Creator!

You probably have heard us camels called the “ships of the desert.” That’s because of the way we walk. Both legs on one side of my body move forward at the same time, elevating that side, then both legs on the other side move forward. This left-up right-up left-up motion makes my rider feel like he is in a rocking

chair going sideways—it’s a little like a rough boat ride, and many a rider has been seasick until he gets used to it. Actually, it’s better when I trot. Then it’s simply a gentle jolt, first left, then right, which my riders usually like.

When I don’t like my rider, I know how to be very uncooperative. If he makes me nervous, I can turn my head around and look him square in the eye—even if he has ridden me many times, it makes him shudder.

I’m usually docile, but I have to admit that my disposition isn’t the best. I guess I enjoy being ornery, full of grunts and groans. If an insult becomes overwhelming, I’ll bite or kick. If I’m really irked or attacked, I have another defense—I can draw out the contents of my stomach and spew it on my enemy. But I don’t do that very often.

The desert people depend on me for just about everything. I’m not only their best form of transportation, I’m also their grocery store. Mrs. Dromedary gives very rich milk, perfect for making butter and cheese. I’ve seen them make butter many times: They simply put separated cream into a skin bag and hang it on my saddle at the beginning of a journey. After a day of jostling, the cream has become butter! I shed my thick fur coat once a year, and the nomads weave it into cloth. Sometimes young camels are used for beef, but I don’t like to talk about that.

Well, there’s lots more I could talk about, but I think I’ve said enough to convince you that I’m high-tech, and I’m designed for the desert. And I mean *designed*. Animals like me just don’t happen. They’re designed by Somebody who knows far, far more than I can imagine. □

*The best reformers are the ones whose eyes
Are quick to see all beauty and all worth,
And by their own discreet, well-ordered life
Reprove the erring. When the gaze
Turns in on thine own soul, be most severe;
But when it falls upon a fellow man
Let kindness rule it; and refrain
From the belittling censure that springs
From common lips, like weeds from marshy soil.*



The most precious possession of life is the twenty-four hours which the Creator allots to us each day.

*We may hope, and resolve, and aspire, and pray;
but we must rise, or we will fall again.*

Happiness is not so much a matter of position as of disposition.

It is much easier to be critical than to be correct.

There is no right way to do a wrong thing.

We cannot avoid growing old, but we can avoid growing cold.

Set a goal for yourself each day, and you can make real progress.

The Harvest

*There is always a harvest for those who work,
There is always a time for reaping.
There is never a harvest for those who shirk,
But often a time for weeping.*

*Endeavor and earnings go hand in hand,
The prize is for him who earns it,
But nothing accrues to the man who sees
There is work—and willingly spurns it.*

*There is always a harvest for those who work;
There is always a storehouse filling
With sheaves of gold as the years unfold
For the hands that are always willing.*

—Selected



The best vitamin for making friends is B-1.

The hardest thing about business is minding your own.

He who forgives ends the quarrel.

If you don't care where you're going, any road will get you there.

A formula for contentment: the Bible for your textbook; a deep love for God; an all-consuming passion for His plan, His promises, and His Word; countless hours of hard work, and no pride.

We must never think our own little plot insignificant. Each new day is a new field of opportunity, a new chance to do something for God we have never done before. Do not be discouraged if your efforts seem to fail, but keep right on keeping on. If we have a longing desire to do good and do it at every turn, the Lord will have greater things for us to do when He comes.



*Four things one must learn to do,
If he would make his record true:
To **think** without confusion clearly,
To **love** his fellowman sincerely,
To **act** from honest motives purely,
To **trust** in God and Truth securely.*

The Good Path

O Thou Divinest Wisdom, Thou hast said
Thy ways are ways of pleasantness, and all
Thy paths are peace; and that the path of him
Who wears thy perfect robe of righteousness
Is as the light that shineth more and more
Unto the perfect Day.

And thou hast given
An olden promise—yet as precious now
Because it will add vigor to our faith—
“If they obey and serve him, they shall spend
Days in prosperity, and they shall spend
Their years in pleasures....”

“Master, I set my seal that Thou art true,
Of Thy good promise not one thing hath failed!
And I would send a ringing challenge forth
To all who know Thy name to tell it out,
Thy faithfulness to every living word,
Thy loving-kindness crowning all our days,
To say and sing with me: “The Lord is good,
His mercy is forever, and His truth
Is written on each page of all my life!”

Yes! there is tribulation, but Thy power
Can blend it with rejoicing. There are thorns,
But they have kept us in the narrow way,
The King’s highway of holiness and peace.

And there is chastening, but the Father’s love
Flows through it; and would any trusting heart
Forego the chastening—and forego the love?
And every step leads on to “more and more”;
From strength to strength Thy pilgrims pass and sing
The praise of Him who leads them on and on,
From glory unto glory, even here!

Selected.