

Megiddo Message

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by
Jesus
Christ

In This Issue:

"CAPTURED BY JESUS CHRIST"

**THE THIRD AND FOURTH MISSIONARY
JOURNEYS OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"COPY ME, AS I COPY CHRIST"

BIBLE A B C'S

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**MEDITATIONS ON THE
WORD**

INDEX FOR 1973



Megiddo Message

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Editorially Speaking...

Victory Through Surrender

PARADOXICAL? Yes, but before there can be any real victory in the Christian life, there must be surrender. And that surrender which leads to victory is not a once-and-for-all act of submission—it is a daily surrender of heart and soul and mind and strength to the lordship of Christ.

What does this mean? It is one of the hardest of all lessons, for when we think of victorious Christian living we do not naturally think of surrender. But even in the most trivial matters, surrender must precede victory—we have wills to be broken, plans to be sacrificed, natural appetites to be curbed, desires to be restrained, emotions to be controlled. And all this means surrender. It means placing ourselves under the dominion of One whom we have agreed to acknowledge as superior to us in all things. Only when we have submitted to this process of surrender can we know the joy of Christian victory.

From the time we commence to live the Christlike life, we are in a continual warfare with the devil, our own lower nature. And we must fight daily battles against his wiles. It is a conflict from which there is no escape. However much we may attempt to hide the unpleasant fact, it still exists. There is but one way to overcome—a God-provided way: "Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13). We have only ourselves to blame if we reject this armor of righteousness our God has provided. As surely as we reject it and strike out on our own, we shall meet the defeat we deserve.

The battles are so varied and so continuous that nothing less than the "whole armour of God" is sufficient for our protection—"above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

But even taking the armor, beware! The carnal nature is crafty, and his devices are as varied as the persons he seeks to destroy.

Is victory possible against such odds?

Certainly! The fatal mistake of too many would-be-victorious Christians is that they forget the nature of the enemy and treat him as a friend instead of the wily enemy he has proved himself to be. "The truth is that, although of course we lead normal human lives, the battle we are fighting is on the spiritual level. The very weapons we use are not those of human warfare but powerful in God's warfare for the destruction of the enemy's strongholds. Our battle is to bring down every deceptive fantasy and every imposing defense that men erect against the true knowledge of God. We even fight to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5, Phillips).

The flesh, our own human nature, with its tendency to sin, will persist—none of us can become entirely free this side of eternity and the glorified state. But we can grow stronger to resist the attacks. And this strength for victory comes only through one avenue: surrender. There is no other way. ●●

Because I Have Been

CAPTURED

by Jesus Christ

“NOT that I have secured it yet, or already reached perfection, but I am pressing on to see if I can capture it, because I have been captured by Jesus Christ. Brothers, I do not consider that I have captured it yet, only, forgetting what is behind me, and straining toward what lies ahead, I am pressing toward the goal, for the prize to which God through Christ Jesus calls us upward” (Phil. 3:12-14, Goodspeed’s Translation).

What a noble epistle of aspiration is this third chapter of Philippians! The great apostle Paul had much that he could glory in from natural standards. He was a descendant of Israel, belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. As to the law, he was of the strictest sect, a Pharisee. His zeal was undying. In fact, he was a persecutor of the church of Jesus Christ. Judging by the law of Moses, no fault could be found in him. However, after enumerating all this, with one stroke he obliterates these false advantages. “For the sake of Christ I have come to count my former gains as loss. Why, I count everything as loss compared with the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (verses 7-8).

....I Have Lost Everything

“I count everything loss” was the dramatic statement. He gave up all his temporal advantages, his home ties, his business prestige, social station and religious rank, all that a man of fire and ambition would work to attain, for—. What was it, Paul, that caused you to “count everything as loss”? “Why, I count everything as loss compared with the supreme advantage of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have lost everything, and think it rubbish, in order to gain Christ and be known to be united to him.”

Paul knew the Scriptures. He had read the solemn truth written in the Psalms that the end of natural man is to go to the generation of his fathers, where never, never through all eternity, shall they see light. Moreover, “Man that is in

honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish” (Ps. 49:20). Having learned of Jesus Christ, his desire for something better was awakened; knowing Jesus Christ made him acquainted with a higher family—the royal family of God.

This action had the rare quality of consistency. He aspired to the highest goal. When he found it was not the Pharisaic perfection he had once aimed for, he changed and accepted the higher call. Paul renounced his once-considered-noteworthy ancestry as rubbish! Why? To attach himself to the Son of God and His royal, living family! All of Paul’s ancestors were dead, and his contemporaries would shortly be as dead, with no assurance of ever escaping that dread condition. But here was Jesus Christ—raised victorious forever over the human race’s most formidable enemy—Death.

...I Want to Know Him—His Power

He declared, “I want to know him in the power of resurrection, and to share his sufferings and even his death, in the hope of attaining resurrection from the dead.” *This was the supreme advantage of knowing Christ!* It was this fact that caused that dynamic man, charging full speed ahead in his course, to halt, stop short, and re-direct his path with unabated force and energy. Because he was even surer of his way now, he was stimulated to even greater energy than he had formerly exerted.

The hope of a resurrection from the dead! This grand promise envisioned in the scrolls of the prophets was now a living hope, for Jesus Christ was a living testimony! This was not tradition, fantasy or hearsay. He had *seen* and *heard* a Being who had been mortal as he himself was; who had died a publicly-witnessed death and had now become gifted with the unmistakable powers of immortality—incorruptibility. How? By a resurrection from the dead. Why? Because He, by absolute subjection of all His faculties to the Divine

Paul was pressing on to capture perfection--and its crowning reward, everlasting life.

Will, had perfected holiness by the standard of God Almighty.

...I Want to Share His Suffering

To know Christ "in the power of resurrection," Paul was ready to endure the same suffering and death, even to die the same death to sin (Rom. 6:10-11). "If by *any means* I might attain to the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11, KJV). "If by *any means*"—said he, and he meant it. What mattered it that beatings, peril and dire affliction awaited on the way? Beyond it lay the goal! What mattered it that he should suffer disgrace, ignominy, shame, be ostracized as "the filth of the world, . . . the offscouring of all things"? (I Cor. 4:13). He was ready to *suffer the loss of all things* for the supreme advantage of knowing Jesus Christ.

This captured dynamo determined that his would be the unshakable confidence of Job, who exulted: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (19:25-26). He resolved that he would triumph with the Psalmist (49:15), "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me." Moreover, musing upon the prophecy of Daniel (12:2), "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," he set his heart to lie down at life's end with the same comfort and assurance, "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (12:13).

The Resurrection was the victorious message of the Apostolic Church; that was what made it radiant, dynamic, powerful. And Paul became its chief speaker. He wrote to the Corinthian brethren: "Now if what we preach about Christ is that he was raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ was not raised, and if Christ was not raised, there is nothing in our message; there is nothing in our faith either, . . . But the truth is,

Christ *was* raised from the dead" (I Cor. 15:12-14, 20, Goodspeed).

This, then, was Paul's quenchless hope, "the hope of attaining resurrection from the dead." The means? By attaining moral perfection. "Not that I have secured it yet, or already reached perfection. . . ." The Lord Jesus had created an ideal of character; He was a symbol of perfection. With this ideal before him, Paul said, "I am pressing on to see if I can capture it." Here was an honest man who was convinced by the evidence. Therefore he was pressing forward to attain, to capture perfection and thus its crowning reward—a resurrection from the dead and everlasting life.

"*Because I have been captured by Jesus Christ.*" Paul had been captured by the convincing truth which his Lord had uttered, taught and demonstrated. The goal of perfection and its reward of life forevermore, this had captured his will, his inspiration, his determination. Paul was not only captured, but found himself a servant (Rom. 1:1; Philemon 1), not only a servant but a slave, a prisoner (Eph. 3:1). He was completely subjected by his Lord. As the bondman of Jesus, he writes, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1). Paul's strong appeal to us to walk worthy of our vocation reflects his own capacity, his own confidence in reaping a reward.

...This One Thing I Do!

Paul's mind was not divided in ten different directions. Because he was wholly captured by Jesus Christ, it was impossible to retain all of the world or even *some* of the world and its follies. He deemed *everything* futile that did not serve this hope which had captured him. Choice Christians are genuine; they are not Christians plus something else. Moreover, true Christians are single-minded, single-eyed. To capture life eternal, we must embrace *one* objective, have but *one* purpose but *one* desire.

...I Am Forgetting What is Behind Me

"Not that I have . . . already reached perfection, . . . only, forgetting what is behind me, and straining toward what lies ahead, I am pressing toward the goal." This captured man not only put his past behind him, but what is of utmost importance—he *left it there, to FORGET IT!*

Even as Paul, our duty is to forget the things that are behind, the things we did before we were captured by this hope. There is always some vagabond of memory seeking to find a more permanent lodging. Paul did not harbor these thoughts that

would have impeded his progress. Instead, he set them behind him, out of his way!

Together with forgetting the foolish, unchristian-like things we did in days of darkness, there is also the need to forget our mistakes. Instead, organize victory out of mistakes. Paul could have impaired his spiritual life by forever regretting his mistakes. The stoning of Stephen was undoubtedly vivid in his mind, for he said, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (I Cor. 15:9). We find, however, that it is not by regretting what is irreparable that true work is done, but by doing our best today in what we are called upon to do.

Life, like war, is a series of mistakes, and he is not the best Christian nor the best general who makes the fewest false steps. He is the best who wins the most splendid victories by the retrieval of mistakes. The past is irreparable; the present only is available.

...I Am Straining Toward What Lies Ahead

Because he was captured by Jesus Christ, Paul had his eyes fixed—forward—on the prize. And so also will all who are Paul-like. Let us see how often this is the case. If we should set before the average man some transient reward which really captivates his heart—whether a fine home, the assurance of financial security, or the prospect of renown—he would work untiringly to obtain the end in view. However, set before a Christian the hope of eternal life, and how often he becomes mired in a complexity of minor interests. The reason? The man sees his reward, while the Christian must employ the exercise of faith to see his goal; and though it is a million times more certain than the paltry rewards of the present, still if his eye of faith is weak, his future outlook is certain to be dim.

However, there *are* Christians with eyes of faith so strong as to penetrate the misty veil of time and see clearly the rewards of eternity. Such a one was the apostle Paul; for to his sight the invisible future was clearer than the visible present. The beatings, the stonings, the imprisonments, all forms of torture inflicted by his persecutors, lost half their effect upon him, so completely captivated was he by his vision of the eternal reward. In triumph he exclaimed, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:17-18). Here is the

To Paul, the "unseen" future was more real than the visible present -- thus he strained forward.

same striking paradox: "The things which are not seen" were more vivid to his mental vision than were "the things which are seen." Thus he strained toward what lay ahead—in the future—for his eye of faith was keen and well focused. Paul's distant vision was marvelous, for he could see beyond the mists of mortality to the invisible prize.

As we acquire "this heavenly perspective" our every thought and action will become motivated by this hope. Paul left for us the admonition that our weapons are not carnal, but mighty through God, and can cast down every imagination and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:4-5). This is a noble captivity, one that will control not only our words but will enter into the very fiber of our will and *capture our every thought*.

...I Am Pressing Toward the Goal

Paul was a man of pressure. That was his nature. He says of himself, "As to my zeal, I was a persecutor of the church." Until he became captured by Jesus Christ, it had been zeal without knowledge. Men sometimes are like that—spending vast amounts of energy, all they can muster, pushing, pressing, sometimes in circles, often to some unknown destination, or to a phantom goal. But because Paul had been captured by the living Son of God and His ideals, His superior award—even eternal life—he now was pressing ahead, "straight for the goal" (Phillips).

A runner in a race presses into action every ounce of strength in his being, to reach his goal. He has attained by practice that hardness of muscle that displays no flabbiness, no softness of limb. And, he runs, he presses, he strains every nerve to win.

Is not that a suitable simile for our quest for eternal life? Captives of Jesus Christ must have hard moral muscles, iron-hard, as hard as nails, that will not yield to an easy threat or even to a formidable threat. In fact, they cannot be broken by any temptations which may assail them. That is the character that must set apart everyone who has been captured by Jesus Christ—rock character. With such a character, with hard moral muscles, strong as the Rock of Gibraltar, the

(Continued on page 21)

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY of Paul the Apostle

Date: 53—57 A. D.

Reference: Acts 18:23—21:15

AS the shepherd tends and loves his flock, so Paul nurtured and loved the little churches along the route of his former journeys.

But there were many enemies to ravish the young churches. The ancient pagan gods beckoned to the new converts to leave their new-found joy in Christ and return to the bondage of a thousand evil superstitions. The vile sins of the flesh tempted the young Christians away from the noble life in Christ to which Paul had introduced them. Prospects of present pleasure and fame, worldly knowledge and nobility might distract them from the vision of the far-distant Kingdom which Paul had preached to them. And emperor worship was for many a popular and satisfying way of expressing their religious feelings.

Sensing the danger to the young churches, Paul set out on his third journey (Acts 18:23—21:15). Again he started from Antioch. It was probably about the year 53 A. D., and he spent three years on this journey.

Luke does not indicate if anyone started out with Paul. Presumably he went alone: "he . . . went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia."

For Paul it was a long, slow journey. A day of travel on foot took him through green woods and along streams, over hills and across rivers. His only companions the wildlife and birds along the trail, Paul kept his mind busy with the things of

God. He planned what he would say to the churches he was going to visit, and how he would say it for the best effect on the seekers. He recalled the names and faces of the people whom he would likely meet again at the various stopping places. He reviewed in his mind the wealth of knowledge he had stored up during his youth—of people who lived and served God one, two and three thousand years before; also the law and the prophets.

As usual, Paul was independent—both of protection and support. He depended on the hospitality of friends to furnish him food, shelter and other necessities. Some nights he spent in an obscure inn; other nights he slept alone in the woods. When necessary he paused for a while to earn a few coins at his trade of tentmaking.

Starting from Antioch, Paul traveled north, "and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (Acts 18:23). His first long stopover was Ephesus.

In Ephesus

The city of Ephesus was a great center of life in Asia during the first century. The largest and most flourishing city, it was the principal port of Asia, one of the richest provinces of the empire. It had suffered from an earthquake in A. D. 21, but had been splendidly restored with the aid of the Emperor Tiberius.

Among the cities of the empire, Ephesus ranked after Rome, Alexander and Antioch. Its magnificent open-air theater seated 24,500 spectators, and its great temple of the Asian goddess Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Worldwide interest in the worship of Diana and gifts to her famous shrine made her temple a considerable banking and safe-deposit center, as well as a religious center. If not actually the capital of Asia, Ephesus was the center of emperor worship in the province.

At Ephesus, Paul commenced a fruitful ministry which lasted nearly two years and three months. A church established at Ephesus meant something real in accomplishment, for a place in this most influential city of the East placed him at the heart of the Greco-Roman civilization.

In the city, Paul found certain disciples who were baptized unto John's baptism. To them Paul expounded the baptism of repentance that they might believe in Christ Jesus, to which they responded. By laying his hands on them, Paul imparted to them the Holy Spirit—a power which they had not so much as heard of.

The lack of information among these brethren was very likely the result of their insufficiently instructed teacher, Apollos.

On his previous journey, Paul had stopped briefly at Ephesus to tell of the Messiah's coming and to impart to them his faith. Aquila and Priscilla had come with Paul at that time and when Paul had departed, they remained to keep alive the church Paul had planted.

One day a young man turned up at the Ephesus synagogue. His name was Apollos. He began to speak eloquently and fervently about Jesus. Trained in the excellent schools of rhetoric in his home town of Alexandria, Egypt, Apollos was a forceful orator and skilled debater who made a powerful impression.

Aquila and Priscilla listened. But they were disquieted—in all of Apollos' talk about Jesus there were glaring gaps in his understanding of the gospel.

Luke the historian describes Apollos as "fervent in spirit" in teaching the things of God. He was "boiling hot" in earnest spirituality. But his knowledge of the Christian gospel was incomplete.

Luke tells us that Apollos "had been instructed in the way of the Lord . . . though he knew only the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25). "Instructed" can mean "catechized" in the Greek language. This suggests that Apollos had had a formal course on the life of Jesus in his studies in Alexandria, possibly having heard about Jesus from one of the catechists or traveling teachers sent from Jerusalem to Egypt. He may even have had a brief piece of some Christian writing, since the earliest written materials were beginning to circulate about this time.

All this was fine, but it was not enough. Apollos had a few facts, and he took them seriously and argued for them persuasively.

Aquila and Priscilla were grateful for such a promising

Apollos-

Noble Young Christian

young leader. But at the same time, they were disturbed. What should they say or do? What was the right thing to do? Was there danger of offending the young enthusiast and having no preacher at all for the cause?

We read that Aquila and Priscilla "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). Imagine those modest, quiet tentmakers giving instruction to a learned Jew from Alexandria. We admire them for their wisdom and tact and courage and love in this matter. And Apollos was not offended. He listened eagerly to his friends, counting them his superiors in the gospel. We far more admire the humble mind and quiet heart that Apollos had at this moment than all the first-class certificates or gold medals which he may have had. A noble young Christian gentleman he proved himself to be.

What would the church be without godly laymen such as this pair of quiet cloth weavers! Though no speakers themselves, Aquila and Priscilla knew when and how to speak to a would-be spokesman.

Shortly afterwards, Apollos sailed from Ephesus to Corinth, carrying with him letters of introduction to the young congregation in Greece that he might be favorably received. And indeed he was—his talent for preaching, his quick answers

to critics, and his artful manner of discourse soon bound to him a strong following in the Corinthian congregation.

As far as we can learn from the record, Paul at this time had not yet met Apollos—Apollos had already left Ephesus when Paul arrived there. But in due time they met—perhaps Apollos returned to Ephesus during Paul's extended stay in that city. We are not told.

Apollos became one of Paul's trusted friends and companions. The hearts of these two workers were knit together in a bond nothing could break. And their friendship withstood one of the greatest temptations among preachers—envy. There was strife among the Corinthians, whether they were followers of Paul or Apollos, but never do we hear a word about such a strife between the two brothers themselves. Paul heard of the crowds in Corinth flocking to hear the eloquent Bible lectures delivered by Apollos, and Paul rejoiced.

There must have been something refreshing about the youthful ministry and fervent spirit of Apollos. Paul, the great missionary-statesman, spoke of Apollos' words as cool streams upon a burnt-up garden: "Apollos watered." The drooping converts of Corinth, so spiritually parched, revived under the courageous and positive preaching of Apollos, and Paul rejoiced to have so capable a partner. ●●

Results in Ephesus

The Ephesian ministry was marked by extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, among them the healing of disease and mental illness. And the results were spectacular.

The seven sons of Sceva, chief of the priests, attempted to cast out a demon in the name of the Lord, as Paul did—and failed. And the result was a real demonstration of faith.

A CLEAN BREAK°

When you're trying to break away from something that is wrong, you can tug a bit and then go back to it and tug half-heartedly again and go back "just one more time." But there is just one thing wrong with this method. It doesn't work.

The story of the demon-possessed man and the "imitators" (the sons of Sceva) had a deep effect on all who heard it in Ephesus. But on the other "imitators," it had the most astonishing effect of all. They listened to the story. Then looked at themselves. And they looked at the "black magic" they had been practicing. And they dragged out all their "magic" books and charms—and dumped them in a pile—and set fire to them—and, yes, they had an enormous public bonfire for all to see!

Talk about confession! Talk about meaning business! And talk about a clean break-away from sin! Why they were burning up their very livelihood!

If you want to break away from something that is wrong, there is only one way to do it.

A clean break is the only way.

Paul's work in Ephesus was making devastating inroads on the worship of the great goddess of the Ephesians, Diana, as the following story illustrates.

WHY FOLLOW THE CROWD?°

"Where's everybody going?"

"Toward the amphitheater!"

"What's going on?"

"Don't know. What are they shouting?"

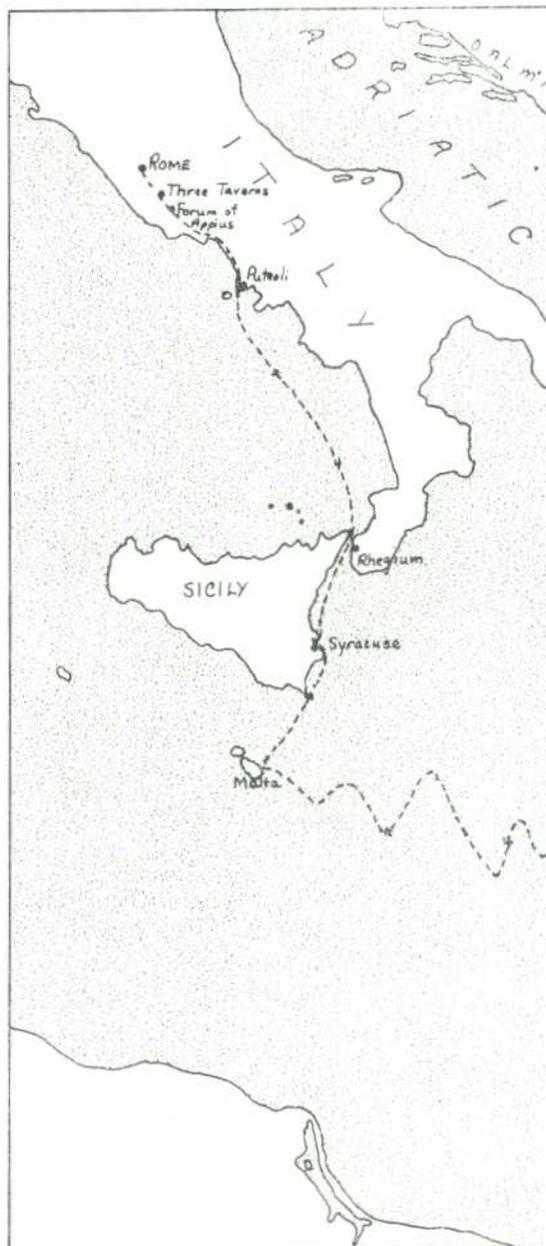
"Sounds like 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' "

"That's what they are shouting. And they sound angry!"

"It's some sort of a blowup. Let's go!"

The crowd surged through the streets, jostling,

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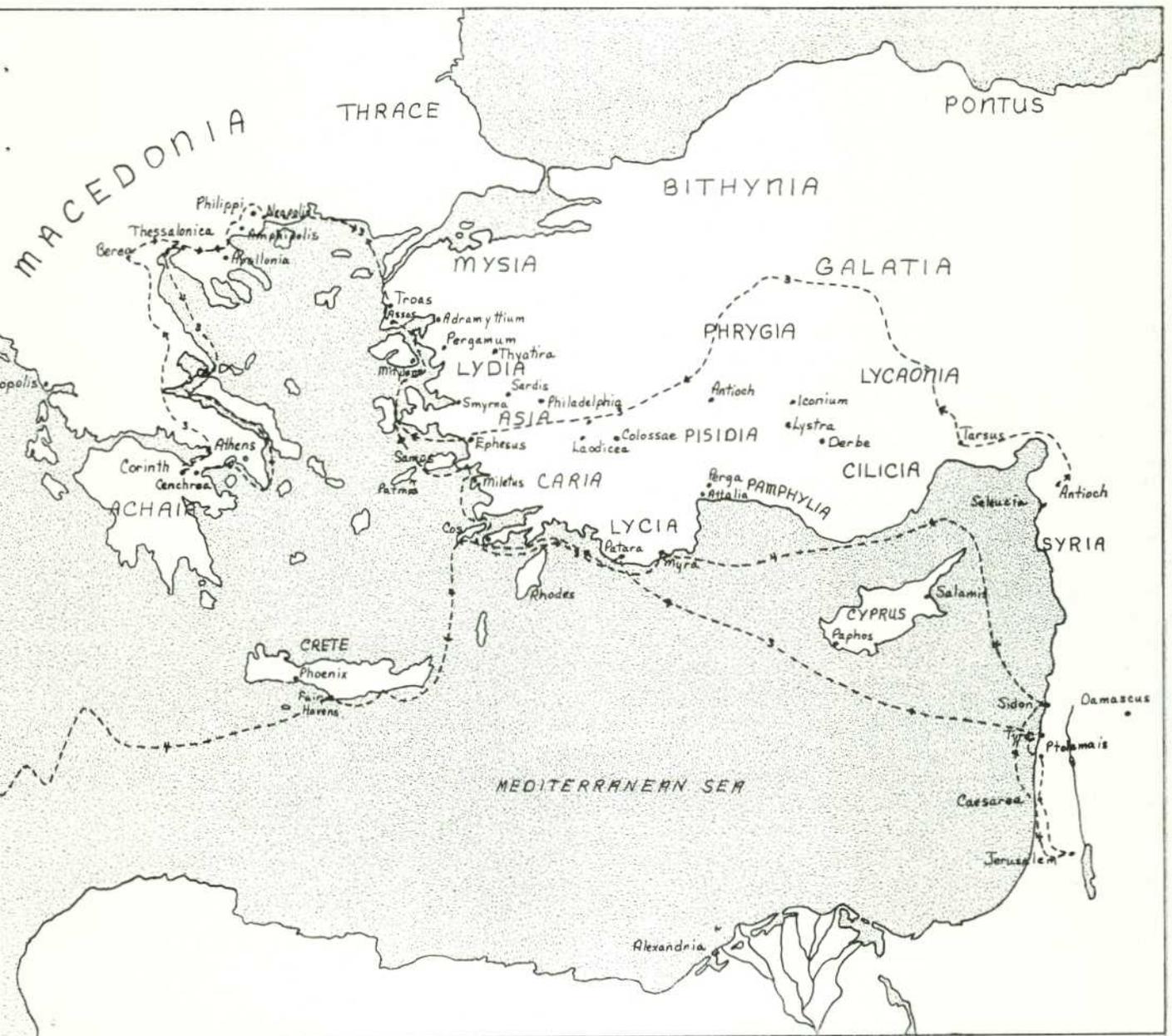


pushing, shouting. The great amphitheater seated 25 thousand, and in no time at all, there was standing room only.

It was a blowup, for sure. A bad one.

It happened shortly after the big bonfire. And it began with a man named Demetrius.

The situation? Ephesus was the center for the worship of the goddess Diana. Her temple was there, and tourists poured in from all the provinces to worship—and to shop for souvenirs. And the biggest souvenir business? Little silver shrines and statues of Diana. It was a mighty poor tourist who didn't take one or the other home.



Paul's Third and Fourth Missionary Journeys

Now these Christians had invaded Ephesus, and under Paul's ministry, more believers were added daily until they were numbering in the thousands. And the tourists who were pouring in were becoming Christians, too.

The problem? Hardly anyone was buying statues of Diana any more. And Demetrius was a silversmith—he manufactured them!

The solution? Well, Demetrius tried to find one in the only way he knew how. The logical thing to do was to call all the silversmiths together and try to get some action, and Demetrius was a very logical man.

"Gentlemen," he began, "this business is our income. Our sales volume is going nowhere but down. And this trend is spreading throughout the entire province."

They stirred and mumbled, angry.

"Of course," he added piously, "I'm not thinking only of business. I'm thinking of the temple, too. And the goddess Diana. If this keeps up, our magnificent goddess will be forgotten!"

They *boiled*. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" they shouted. And a crowd began to gather. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" they howled. And the crowd surged into the street toward the amphi-

theater. "GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS!" they shrieked. And somewhere along the way they picked up two of Paul's companions and dragged them along (Acts 19:29).

Demetrius got action all right!

Inside the great amphitheater there was utter confusion—some shouting one thing and some another. In the midst of all this bedlam, some Jews spotted a man named Alexander and dragged him forward to speak. He raised his hands for silence, and gave it a try. But someone in the crowd shouted, "He is a Jew!" And others picked it up. "He's a Jew!" And the crowd went wild, "HE'S A JEW!" But soon this phrase wore out.

So they went back to their original cry. "Great is Diana of the Ephesians! GREAT IS DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS." They kept it up for two hours!

Then finally someone was able to quiet them down enough to speak. It was the town clerk.

"Men of Ephesus!" he cried. "Everyone knows that Ephesus is the home of the great Diana—her temple is here! So don't be disturbed. And don't do anything rash!"

The crowd listened.

"Now," he went on, "these men (Paul's traveling companions) you've dragged here have stolen nothing from her temple. If Demetrius and the other silversmiths have a case against these men, let them take it to our courts."

The crowd murmured and settled down again to listen. The town clerk was making sense.

"If the Roman government calls us to account for today's riot—we have no case. I wouldn't know how to explain it!"

Made sense, made sense. They listened on.

"So you are dismissed," he finished. "Now go quietly. No more hysterics."

And they did. And there weren't. The riot was over.

But the most amazing thing about the whole affair was: Most of the people who followed the crowd into the amphitheater and shouted themselves hoarse *didn't know what it was all about and didn't even know why they were there!*

The trouble with following the crowd is—more often than not, you don't even know what it is all about, *and you don't even know why you are there.*

What about ourselves? Are we inclined to "follow the crowd"? It might pay to do some serious thinking, for said Jesus, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." Why should we want to go along with them? The answer should bring us up with a jolt.

Leaving Ephesus . . .

The tumult led by Demetrius brought the work of Paul at Ephesus to a close and, bidding farewell to his disciples, he proceeded to Macedonia and Corinth and Greece, two or three days sail from Ephesus, where he spent three months and wrote the Epistle to the Romans.

Paul planned to return to Asia by sailing; but because of a plot of the Jews which was uncovered suddenly, he changed his route and returned to Asia as he had come—by land. No longer was he journeying alone—with him were three brethren from Macedonia and three from Asia, besides his son-in-the-faith Timothy (Acts 20:4).

On to Jerusalem

At Troas they tarried five days.

Hoping to reach Jerusalem for Pentecost, Paul decided not to stop at Ephesus but sent a message for the leaders of the Ephesian church to come down to the boat to meet him at Miletus.

And what a meeting it was!

"You know how, from the day that I first set foot in the province of Asia, . . . I served the Lord in all humility amid the sorrows and trials that came upon me through the machinations of the Jews. You know that I kept back nothing that was for your good: I delivered the message to you; . . . I have kept back nothing; I have disclosed to you the whole purpose of God."

Yes, they knew.

"And now, as you see, I am on my way to Jerusalem. . . . Of what will befall me there I know nothing, except that in city after city the Holy Spirit assures me that imprisonment and hardships await me."

They stared at him in dead silence, speechless.

Paul spoke again. Something worthy of their remembering:

"For myself, I set no store by life; I only want to finish the race, and complete the task which the Lord Jesus assigned to me, of bearing my testimony to the gospel of God's grace."

They nodded their agreement.

"And now I commend you to God and to his gracious word, which has power to build you up and give you your heritage among all who are dedicated to him."

And then he knelt and prayed with them. And they embraced him and said good-bye. And wept—for they knew, they knew that they would not be seeing his face again.

And then they went down to the ship to see him off.

So Paul was off—to Cos, and Rhodes, and Patara and Cyprus and Tyre. At Tyre he again met with the brethren, tarrying seven days. And on to Caesarea, and Jerusalem, where Paul knew that bonds and imprisonments awaited. But whatever it meant, Paul went on.

At Jerusalem the travelers were cordially received by James and the elders.

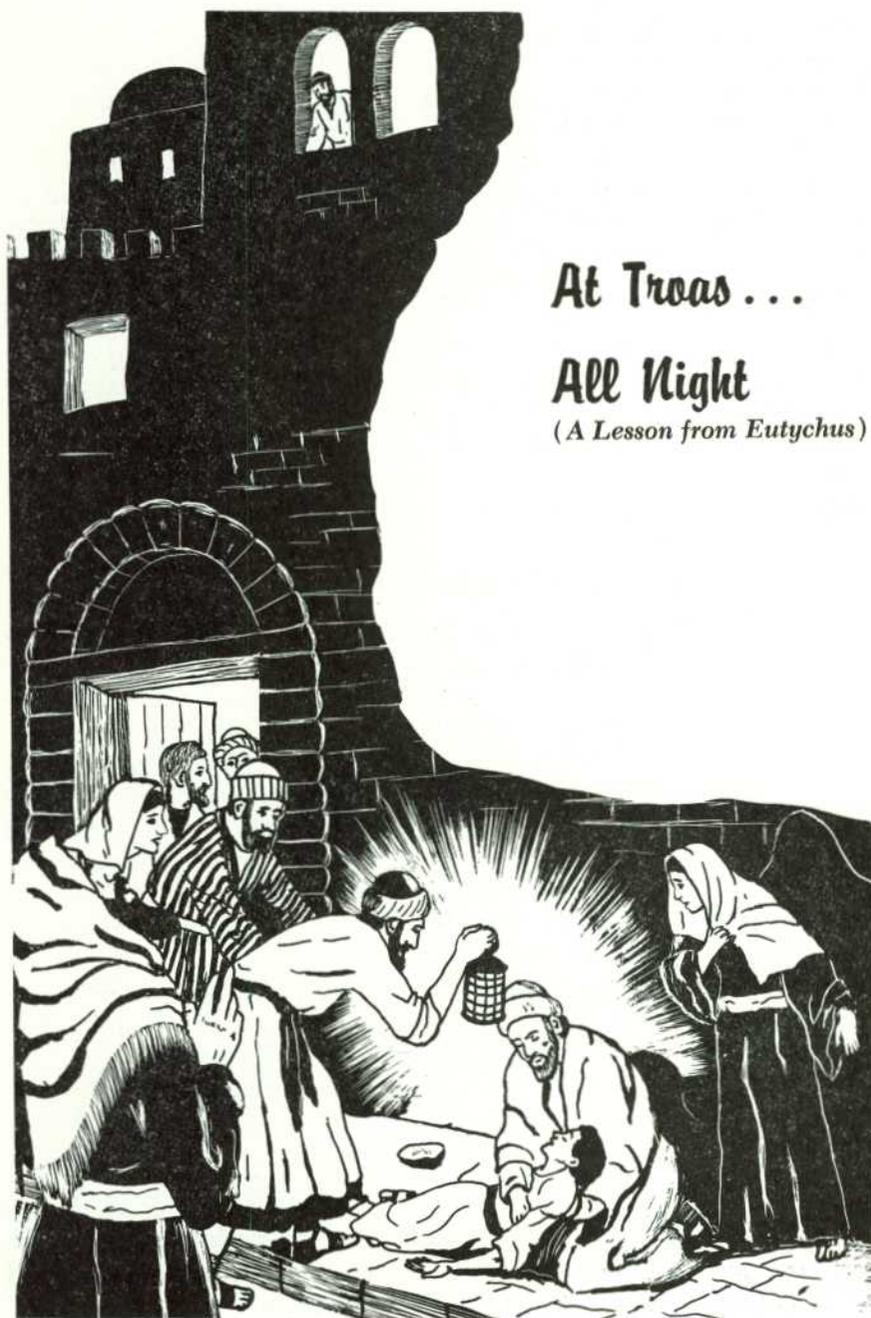
In Summary

The influence of Paul's three great missionary expeditions upon the history of mankind cannot be overestimated. The time covered in these tours was about ten years, and the distance covered about 8,100 miles—insignificant in these days when jet planes unite continents, but remarkable in those days when they had no planes, or cars, or trains, or fast-going sea vessels. ●●

At Troas . . .

All Night

(A Lesson from Eutychus)



It was Paul's last night in Troas, and the disciples had gathered to break bread together. Their meeting place was a large upstairs room and because he would have to leave in the morning, Paul took the opportunity to speak to them. There was so much to say, and there was so much they were eager to hear, that nobody wanted to break up the meeting. So it continued far into the night.

Now a young man named Eutychus sat in the open window. It would be interesting to know why Eutychus chose that place—perhaps the room was overcrowded with people and every available space was occupied—including the windowsills. Or perhaps his attention was not entirely undivided, and the seat in the window gave him opportunity to divert himself if the talk failed to interest him.

Paul talked on and on into the night, and as he talked, Eutychus began to nod.

Paul talked on.

The old lamps flickered away. The room became stuffier. Eutychus nodded more and more.

And Paul talked on.

The oil lamps flickered, and Eutychus fell sound asleep. Paul continued to preach, and suddenly—

There was a swish of garments and a sound of toppling—and then—

A dull thud in the yard three stories below!

All faces turned toward the window. Eutychus was gone!

Everyone tried to get through the doorway and down the stairs at once. Surely he would be dead.

And he was.

But Paul was there first. And he looked up into their frightened faces and said, "Don't be alarmed. He is not dead now. He is alive."

And he was.

Some critics have tried to prove that Eutychus was not really dead. But Luke the physician was there, and he clearly gives the verdict that the man was dead. Paul wrought a miracle in restoring Eutychus to life.

What a convincing interruption in the sermon that night! An illustration that no one forgot!

They all went upstairs again, and Paul continued to talk. It was dawn when he finally left them.

Because of this experience, the young man Eutychus has acquired a reputation as the father of all such as fall asleep in meetings.

Perhaps he well deserves this fame, for he fell sound asleep under the stimulating, dynamic preaching of the apostle Paul. He may have been very tired, having worked long hours, and perhaps he had hurried to be at this special meeting. He may have been a slave, and night was his only opportunity to hear a preacher like Paul. Or he may have been disinterested in what Paul was say-

ing. Certainly the sermon was long, but the sacred writer does not take it upon himself to blame the Apostle for his long sermon. The like of it has not been recorded again, when the hearers were kept from the time of the lighting of the candles till the sun rose the next morning! (But how we would like to have a copy of all that Paul said that night!)

Even after the accident of Eutychus, Paul continued on and on, so full of the spirit and of faith was he. He was a man of God speaking from the heart, and he did not know when to stop. Also, Paul knew that this was his last opportunity to address these people—he would not be seeing them again. Perhaps Paul hesitated to keep them so long, but so eager were the disciples for more of his message that they urged him to continue on—and on. Who could blame them for forgetting the sands in the hour-glass?

It is easy to condemn Eutychus, but how would we have felt about Paul's preaching that night at Troas? Of course, *we* would have listened eagerly, *wide-awake*, all night long—or would we? How deep and lively is our interest in the things of God? Our enthusiasm along many lines may burn long and late, but when it comes to our religion, how often are we like so many Laodiceans, lukewarm?

There is a valuable lesson in the story from Troas that night. Is our intensity and zeal one which will burn and burn and burn—all through the night?●●

From A Reader—

Eternal Life--

What Does It Mean?

The more I reflect and consider the prize of eternal life, the more I realize what an unfathomable prize it is! We often glibly talk about salvation and standing before the Grand Assize with an "Everything is just going to turn out all right" attitude. I have been guilty of this in the past, putting aside the really important affairs of life and chasing after shadows. But to really sit down and think through all the aspects of *eternal life* throws everything into sharp focus. I know for a fact that I have been forced to consider only those things which will lead me to achieving this wonderful objective. If you don't have eternal life, then you have *absolutely nothing*. This life will pass eventually, and there will come an end to

all of my ways. But it is the greatest news to know that it can resume later and never end.

Every thought, action, and word I speak is now monitored to determine if it is consistent with the overall goal of being perfected with the other saints and not having any stain or blemish on my character. Not the easiest of tasks, but one that can be tackled every day and tangible progress recognized. Christ had the same problems and troubles we have, and He was able to overcome them. So can we do any less?

We must lay aside every weight that would interfere with the achievement of this goal of eternal life in the Kingdom.

Mr. K., Louisiana

There are only three ways to teach a child: the first is by example; the second is by example, and the third is by example.

—Albert Schweitzer

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Ministration of the Spirit

ALL power on earth and in heaven belongs to God. When God had an earthly kingdom, He was the sovereign Ruler. All other rulers in that kingdom were subordinate to Him. The first of the kings of His earthly kingdom were actually chosen by God Himself, and although later kings came to rule by succession, they were still considered to be under His command.

God's power, or His Spirit, has not been limited to the control of His earthly kingdom. It was "God that made the world and all things therein," and He is "Lord of heaven and earth," and "he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; . . . in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17: 24-25, 28). And not only does all humanity have breath through His power, but the whole animal creation as well. Some would attribute the creation of all things to evolution, but elements do not naturally combine to create other elements without a higher power to assist. All creation shows evidence of a Creator, a divine Hand governing. What men call "nature" is but one facet of God's power or Spirit in action.

We have learned from previous lessons that God used human instruments, as well as natural forces, in the manifestations of this power on earth. Through the means of angels, by dreams and visions, He made known His will to men. The Israelites came to know God as a God of action. He had made a covenant with their father, Abraham. He had revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush and had rescued them from Egyptian slavery; He had seen them safely established as a nation in the Promised Land; He had been with them in battle against their enemies; He had furnished them water when they were thirsty and food when they were hungry.

Israel was also acquainted with His wrath or displeasure. It has been suggested that God's wrath might be better interpreted as His "love in reverse." When God allowed their enemies to overrun the land and to deal harshly with them, it was not because He no longer loved them, but be-

cause He would not tolerate anything that worked against the plan He had worked out for them. When He allowed their enemies to come upon them, or when He turned His weapons of leprosy, or serpents, or the plague against them, He was demonstrating that He hated their evil deeds that would work them harm. He was administering punishment justly deserved. He had chosen Israel to be His people, and through His power or Spirit He was refining them, fitting them for His service and making them to understand that He alone was God, that He was supreme.

In our previous lessons on this subject we have learned something of the scope of God's power or Spirit. God controls the entire universe, counting the nations of earth as but "a drop of a bucket, and . . . as the small dust of the balance." This statement from the prophet Isaiah shows the magnitude of God's Creation; the nations of our earth are minute compared to the multitude of other universes under His control. Not only does God use His power to keep His many universes in their proper orbits, but He also uses it to control the orbit of our earth, giving us the changing seasons.

We have learned that the power of His Spirit has been used to cause famine, to cause it to rain, to bring kings to power and to dethrone them as well, to take life and to restore life as well as to cause many other miracles. Through His prophets He caused His Words to be recorded for our learning, at the same time instructing His people in that age.

In this issue we will continue our study of the work of the Spirit, following our outline:

- IV. The Ministration of the Spirit—Old Testament
 - F. The Spirit Working Through the Prophets
- V. The Ministration of the Spirit—New Testament
 - A. Jesus and the Holy Spirit

In every instance which we have studied, the Spirit of God or the power of God was sent at God's discretion. It is a power that is God-con-

trolled and God-directed and was never given indiscriminately. It was not a power to be had simply for the asking in olden days, nor is it today. Those who invoke the Holy Spirit to come into their lives today are not praying according to God's will. There is nothing in Scripture to support the common belief that the Holy Spirit comes to those who desire it.

IV. THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT— OLD TESTAMENT

F. The Spirit Working Through the Prophets

In our previous lesson we studied some of the prophets God used during the reign of the kings. Many times a prophet was raised up for some specific purpose. As far as we may know from the record, Ahijah was sent only to Jeroboam; Micaiah prophesied only in the matter of Ahab and was condemned to prison for his prophecy; Huldah, a prophetess, is referred to but once, in the time of Josiah; and Azariah went to King Asa when "the Spirit of God" came upon him.

Elijah and Elisha were used by God in many different instances and performed many miracles in fulfilling their prophetic duty. The Spirit worked mightily through them over a period of more than forty years.

The miraculous figured prominently in the working of the Spirit of God in the Old Testament, but other works were of equal importance. Not all the work of the Spirit was in miracles; sometimes God did His work in silence. Whether His work was done openly or silently was determined by the need at that particular time. When miracles were needed to convince the people of His authority, He provided miracles; but when the need was for the spoken or written word, a prophet was required. Through the power of the Spirit, God inspired the writers we know as the prophets to speak His words to the people and to record them for our learning.

As previously mentioned, these prophets were often commanded to speak out; often their words are forthright and vigorous. Evil in whatever form it existed, whether in a king or a commoner, was openly condemned. That these words have been preserved over a period of thousands of years to our day can also be attributed to the Spirit of God. Without divine protection the books and scrolls of the written Word would have long since disappeared.

Prophecy, both short and long range, was also the work of the Spirit in this period. Many of the books of the major and minor prophets are prophetic, as the word "prophet" would indicate (al-

though the primary meaning of the word is "one who delivers divine messages"). We will review some of these prophets and their important messages.

1. Isaiah's prophecies. Isaiah's prophecies came during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Isaiah has been termed the "Messianic Prophet" because of his many prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. Of his prophecies, **Unger's Bible Dictionary** says, "He struck at the root of the nation's trouble in its apostasy and idolatry and sought to save Judah from its moral and political and social corruption. However, he failed to turn the nation Godward. His divine commission carried the warning that this would be the case...he boldly declares the inevitable crash of Judah and the preservation of a small Godly remnant."

Isaiah's prophecy of the forerunner of Christ, (Isa. 40:3), and of the birth of the Messiah (Isa. 7:14-15; 9:6-7), were fulfilled in John the Baptist and Jesus. Many other prophecies concerning Christ were likewise fulfilled, and we can be assured that prophecies concerning the Second Advent will likewise be fulfilled. **Fulfillment of his prophecies marks Isaiah as a true prophet, proving that his words were not his own, but received by divine inspiration, by the Spirit of God.**

2. Jeremiah's prophecies. Jeremiah is considered to be second only to Isaiah of the great prophets of the Old Testament. His prophecies came at a later date than those of Isaiah, but were equally important. His ministry lasted over the last forty years of the kingdom of Judah, through the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the captivity.

Jeremiah's prophecies are too numerous to cover here, but **they proved remarkably accurate, and he was likewise proven to be a true prophet, one that spoke not his own words, but the words of God, received by inspiration through God's Spirit working on earth. Had Israel believed the words of the Prophet and heeded them, they would have fared better under their captors; but in not taking heed, they were fulfilling the word of the Lord.**

3. Other prophets. Micah, Hosea, Joel and Amos were all contemporaries of the prophet Isaiah, all having lived in the 8th and 7th centuries before Christ. In their writings we find many important prophecies, but we will review only a few of the major ones.

a. Micah is probably best known for his prophecy that the Messiah would come from the town of Bethlehem in Judea (Mic. 5:2). **Like all true prophecies, these words were spoken from divine inspiration received through the Spirit of God.**

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CSE	Children's Sermon
DR	Drama
F	Filler
L	Letter
M	Maranatha Paper
P	Progressive Paper
PO	Poem
PR	Prayer
Q	Questions and Answers column
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Qu	Quiz Questions
R	From A Reader
S	Sermon
ST	Story
TT	Timely Topics
UB	Understanding the Bible

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The book of Micah begins with the words, "The word of the Lord that came to Micah . . ." He also prophesied concerning "the last days" when the Kingdom of God will be established on earth (Mic. 4:1-5). We are confident this prophecy will be fulfilled in due time since it is also "the word of the Lord."

b. Joel, speaking the word of the Lord, prophesied of the power of God or the Spirit that would be sent as the "former rain," or a sprinkling rain, and the "latter rain," a pouring rain, that would follow later. The "former rain" was received at Pentecost, but that which was to come afterward, the "latter rain," the time when the Spirit would come upon all, is yet future. Joel's prophecy concerning the Spirit was received by inspiration of the Spirit of God and its fulfillment was likewise the work of the Spirit. (This subject will be studied in greater detail in the New Testament section of this lesson.)

c. Other prophets of the Old Testament include Ezekiel, known as the Prophet of the captivity; Daniel, also one of the captives in Babylon; Ezra, who was prominent in instituting reforms which rehabilitated the spiritual and political life of the returned captives in Jerusalem; Nehemiah, who followed Ezra and engineered the rebuilding of the wall of the city; and Malachi, the last of the literary prophets.

Daniel was shown visions of things to come and had these visions interpreted for him by the angel Gabriel who was sent to him personally (Dan. 8:16; 9:21). God gave Daniel the power to interpret dreams, also the work of His Spirit (Dan. 2:28).

Ezra records the fulfillment of the prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the end of the captivity (Jer. 25:12), and also the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Cyrus, God's instrument in the return (Isa. 44:28).

Malachi was the last, but not the least of the prophets. The last two verses of the book bearing his name, and the last two verses of the Old Testament (4:5-6), hold the promise of the next great event this earth is to witness: The coming of the prophet Elijah to herald the second coming of Christ. The same power of the Spirit of God that removed Elijah bodily from this earth and preserved his life on some other heavenly planet will return this great Prophet to this earth to perform another great work, that of preparing a people to meet the Lord at His second coming.

V. THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT— NEW TESTAMENT

A study of the Spirit of God in the New Testament reveals that it is but a continuation of the action of the Spirit in the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit as seen in the New Testament is still God at work among men. It is God exerting power through His angels, through knowledge, through influence on the lives of men.

The Holy Spirit, as it came to Jesus and later to the assembled disciples at Pentecost, contains no trace of the popular conception that it is a person. The Spirit appears simply as a power from on high manifesting itself in superhuman actions, knowledge of the future and right decisions in moments of crisis. It came upon Zacharias and Elizabeth and later upon their son, John the Baptist, as was prophesied: "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, . . . and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:15), in preparation for his task of announcing the approaching Messiah.

The Spirit came on Simeon to reveal that he should see the child Jesus before his death; it came upon Anna, a prophetess in the temple, and caused her to prophesy concerning Jesus.

It had been the work of the Spirit in the Old Testament to teach and to convince, to establish Israel as a nation prepared to receive the prophesied Messiah. In the New Testament this same Spirit was to be the means of the coming of the Messiah, enabling Him to lead a life of perfect obedience, fitting Himself for His yet future kingship of the whole earth. It was also the means of establishing the New Testament Church and providing for us a "divine library" as it were of the words of Jesus and His followers, words that if used as a guide to daily living will gain for us a place in His kingdom.

A. Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Jesus shared a special relationship with His Heavenly Father. It was the power of the Spirit that was the means of communication between them. Twice during Jesus' earthly career a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son," (Matt. 3:17; Luke 9:35), and in answer to Jesus' appeal, "Father, glorify thy name," there "came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:28).

The life of Christ began with a special act of the Spirit of God. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20), by a miracle, through the power of God. We read that the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin named Mary "and said unto

her, the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

Only six months previous had the same Gabriel appeared to Mary's cousin Elizabeth to inform her that she should bear a son in her old age to go before the Messiah, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

These were the first open manifestations of the Spirit of which we have record in more than four hundred years. There may have been others in the time intervening, but we are not told.

The power of the Spirit was the energizing source of Christ's life; He did all "in the power of the Spirit." It was the power of the Spirit that was behind His teaching, His miracles, His victory over temptation and finally death. We will review some of the instances where this Power was evident.

1. Jesus' baptism. According to Matthew, when Jesus was baptized "the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him" (3:16). Jesus' baptism marked His anointing by His Father, His consecration to His high calling and His endowment with the Spirit. By receiving the Spirit, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled: "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:2). It was necessary that He receive this power to accomplish His work. **The description of the Spirit descending "like a dove" is no doubt poetic, simply indicating that the power came upon Him at this time. In any case, it was not a human form that descended upon Him; there is nothing here to support the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as a person.**

2. Jesus' teachings. Jesus made it clear that He taught only what He received of His heavenly Father, and whatever He received from the Father was necessarily by the power of the Spirit. His teachings also lend credence to the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament. Jesus often raised His voice in protest against the false traditions and doctrines of the scribes and Pharisees, but He sanctioned the Old Testament commands (Mark 7:6-9). "It is written" was often the justification for His course of action, the foundation of His principles.

Of His teachings He said, "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things... I do always those things that please him" (John 8:28-29). **Only through the power of the Spirit could He learn what the Father wanted Him to speak.**

3. Jesus' miracles. Using His God-given power, Jesus did many miracles during the course of His three-year ministry. He healed the sick, fed the multitude, raised the dead and cast out devils. To "cast out devils" or "demons" was actually another way of healing, adapted to a belief that was extant at that time. Often those who were insane or otherwise ill believed themselves to be possessed by demons. Jesus countered this belief by using the power of the Holy Spirit to heal the person, proving that the Spirit of God was more powerful than the supposed evil spirits that caused the illness.

All of Jesus' miracles were done through the power of the Spirit which He had received from the Father. In Matthew 12:28 He said it was by "the Spirit of God" that He was able to "cast out devils," and in Luke 11:20 He used the phrase "the finger of God," showing that the "finger of God" was equal to the power of the Spirit.

4. Jesus imparts the power to others. Jesus was able to impart a certain measure of power to His disciples. When He sent out the seventy, He instructed them to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils" (Matt. 10:8). **Only with the power of the Spirit could they have accomplished their task.**

Jesus was also privileged to have angels come to earth to minister to Him. Following His temptation in the wilderness we read that "angels came and ministered unto him," and after His prayer in the garden the night of His betrayal, Luke records that "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43). **Angels are God's messengers sent to earth to minister at God's direction (Heb. 1:14). Their power is that of the Spirit of God.**

5. Jesus promised the Spirit. In the course of His after-supper discourse to the disciples, Jesus promised the disciples the same power He had enjoyed and which they had already possessed to some extent (John 14: 26); and after His resurrection He commanded them to "tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). **This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost and will be covered in our next lesson.**

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

"Copy Me, as I Copy Christ"

NO ordinary man penned these words. Many a preacher has proclaimed loudly a gospel of "Do as I say," but few—very few—have been the heroes of faith who could stand and say "Do as I do."

Do we hear in these words a ring of smug self-righteousness? Never! Not from such a one as Paul. He is striving, he is fighting with all that is in him. But he is not yet perfect. Had you asked him at that time if he were satisfied with himself, he might have replied, "Not good enough. Not *half* good enough." Yet his zeal and his effort were unbounded. He was copying the life of Christ so accurately in its every moral detail that he could say in all honesty and humility, "If you copy me, my brothers, you will be copying Christ."

Here is argument irrefutable for the greatness of the Faith. For one may dispute the authority of words; one cannot refute a life.

Paul's whole life-purpose had one sharp focus: to copy Christ. And here is a special benefit to us. Are we inclined to think of Christ as a moral giant whose goodness and greatness surpasses us? His holiness, His humility, His dedication and lifelong self-sacrifice inspire in us a desire to attain the towering heights of a Christlike character. Yet does His goodness seem to elude our faltering steps? Do we, who too often stumble and rise only to stumble again, ever feel that He who never transgressed once He knew the law, though "tempted in all points like as we," must have been more than ordinary flesh and blood?

Along comes one who bears a ringing challenge to lift us from our despair and failure. Here is a man of like passions with ourselves, a man who experienced the struggle between flesh and spirit in all the intensity that ever raged in a human breast. So desperate was the struggle within and without that at times, he writes, "we despaired even of life" (II Cor. 1:8). Through the record of his life come lessons from the Christ to us. Christ is our perfect pattern, but in Paul is our opportunity to see in living testimony *how* the life of Christ may be copied.

Were we to confine our attention to the disciple and forget the Master, we should err. But here are

the two inseparable, and there are times when we need the encouragement that comes from a fellow-imitator, as well as that of the Lord. Paul is not a character detached from the story of Christ; the story of the Gospels would be incomplete without the forward thrust of the spiritual dynamo Paul.

"Copy me, as I copy Christ." In Christ we have the finished statue, exquisite in proportion and beauty; in Paul we have the sculptor vigorously hewing at the rude block of his daily life in a noble effort to reproduce its excellence. In Christ we have the finished perfection; in Paul we have the daily struggles which he masterfully used to duplicate that perfection. In Christ we see the King in His beauty; in Paul we have an earnest, eager soul storming his way into the Kingdom.

Paul was a great man. He was a man of action, of persuasion, of determination, of destiny. He was keenly intellectual. He was a theologian and a man of affairs; he was a man of vision, who lived and died with his gaze fixed on the goal which Christ had set before him—even the "crown of life" which the Lord has promised to them that love Him.

Paul was a scholar, a sage, a statesman, a seer, a saint. He was a man of heart, of passion, of imagination, of will, of sincerity, of vivacity. A preacher, a thinker, a writer, he was through it all a friend. His heart throbs through his epistles; and he loved his converts as a father. He had a genius for friendship, and bound men to him with hooks of steel—men like Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Luke, Titus. Why shouldn't we be thrilled to copy such a man as he!

A Man of Conviction

Paul was not the kind of man to sit on the fence with a leg on each side. He was on either one side or the other. A strong loyalty to conviction went with him through all his years. Convince him that he *ought* to do a thing, and he did it. It was as simple and straightforward as that. When he "persecuted the church of God and wasted it," he did it believing that he was doing God service (Acts 26:9-11). Convince him on the Damascus road that he is fighting against God, and in a mo-

ment he lets go his commission from the chief priests and transfers his allegiance to Christ. All through his Christian career, he acts invariably on this same principle. "Men and brethren," he could declare to the members of the Jewish council, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." And again to Felix, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." In the same spirit he wrote to the Corinthians, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation, . . . more abundantly to you-ward."

In his latest letter, he says, "I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers, with a pure conscience" (II Tim. 1:3). If you wanted to enlist him in any cause, all you had to do was to convince him that it was right, and his disciplined will took over. No matter what the cost, he would hold a good conscience.

Would we copy Paul? Here is a worthy trait. To act from motives of self-interest or self-indulgence or the momentary impulse of emotion is much easier than to act only from moral conviction. But our deciding question must always be not will it pay? or will it please? or will it be safe? or will it bring honor? but, *Is it right?*

A Man of Courage

Not physical courage. Any ordinary man can be brave in the face of danger. Paul's bravery was of a nobler sort—his was a *moral* heroism. See him immediately after his conversion entering a Jewish synagogue to preach. And after a brief interval in Arabia, he returned from Damascus to Jerusalem, the very hotbed of persecution of which he himself had been agent. Did it not take courage?

When the Lord issued a command, Paul never stopped to think, "How will this affect me?" Exposed to violent assault at Lycaonia, or to imprisonment in Philippi, or to the fury of the mob at Ephesus, he never attempted to purchase safety by compromise. Whether he stood before the Jewish council or the Roman governor, the vain Agrippa or the brutal Nero, he was always valiant for the truth. What mattered the consequences, if only he was *right*?

Listen to his fervent words to the Ephesian elders: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord" (Acts 20:24). To him, the cause of Christ, with all its reproach, was infinitely more important than his personal safety.

A Man of Energy

One steady, clear aim before him; one absorbing ambition within him, Paul kept a straight course "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In his public life his one desire was to finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord (Acts 20:24).

"This one thing I do" was the motto of his life. From the moment of his conversion until his death, one increasing purpose animated every day: that he might serve Christ, know Christ, and become like Christ. For this hope he gladly gave up his Jewish preferences and privileges. Christ burned at the glowing center of his heart, and the radiance illumined every aspect of his life.

If ever man was in earnest, it was he. Everything about him was intense. Festus might sneer and call him "mad." His Corinthian antagonists might despise him as one "beside himself"; but his was the madness of a holy and intelligent zeal, and the insanity of a benevolent and healthy enthusiasm.

A Man of Affection

Paul was no cold, stiff robot. His letters glow with warmth and personal interest. He never forgot a kindness. Was there ever a more touching devotion shown by one man to another than that of Luke to Paul? And what a tribute to the apostle's gentleness that a man like Luke should have given up his earthly ambitions for the one purpose of helping him and serving Christ! Or consider Timothy—only such a man as Paul could inspire and maintain such an unbreakable bond of friendship as existed between Paul and Timothy. Paul was a friend and a brother to all who shared his faith and hope, as concerned in the little things of daily life as in the more important matters of the Christian Church.

"Copy Me!"

Are we his imitators? Have we this same earnestness, this concentrated enthusiasm, this warm glowing affection for all the brotherhood of Christ? Are our interests divided, or are we Christ's man from head to foot? Have we scattered ourselves in the pursuit of many small goals, or are we gathering all we have and are into one rushing river of energy to follow Christ?

If you wish to kindle anything by the rays of the sun, you must first collect those rays and focus them to a fiery point. If you would have a Christian character glowing with an ardor that will

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THE FOURTH MISSIONARY JOURNEY of Paul the Apostle

Date: 60—64 A. D.

Reference: Acts 21:17—28:31

From Jerusalem to Rome

PAUL'S welcome in Jerusalem was cordial. But no sooner had he finished telling about the success of his work with the Gentiles when the old subject came up again. Were Jews and Gentiles to be considered on an equal basis? Paul was censured severely; it was hard for the Jews to give up the ceremonies of the old law.

Making one last effort to save the situation, the leaders of the Church devised a plan whereby Paul could publicly affirm his loyalty to the law and convince his critics of his essential Judaism. He could join in the temple purification ceremonies.

Paul agreed to the proposal. He longed to see Jewish and Gentile Christians go forward as a united people, and he was willing to do anything to win their confidence—anything that would not violate the essential principles of the new faith in Christ. Anything he could do to heal the breach between Jew and Gentile would be more than justified.

So Paul went into the temple to make peace; but instead, he started a riot. Jews who were deeply prejudiced against him stirred up the people, and they were about to kill him, when the commander of the Roman garrison ordered his arrest. Upon Paul's request, he was allowed to speak for himself before the mob. Then he was taken to the castle prison.

Later he was tried by the Jewish Sanhedrin. After that, he was taken to Herod's prison in Caesarea—this removed him from the threat of another plot of the Jews to take his life. Here he waited—in prison—for about two years. While in Caesarea he was given several hearings before Felix the governor.

When Festus replaced Felix as governor, the Jews laid before him their many complaints against Paul. Again Paul was given opportunity to defend himself, and this time he appealed to Caesar, to be judged by him. Festus accepted the appeal: "Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go."

It happened that King Agrippa and his sister Bernice visited the new governor at this time. Festus decided to call for Paul and have him speak before the king so that the king might help evaluate the evidence. Paul spoke, describing his manner of life from youth, his miraculous conversion, his calling and his persuasions. King Agrippa was touched: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The king judged Paul innocent. "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. . . . This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

Paul had appealed to Caesar—this was his opportunity to see Rome and the brethren to whom he had written. But it was already autumn, and sailing was dangerous.

Skipwreck

Arrangements were made for a band of prisoners—including Paul—under the supervision of the centurion Julius to board an Alexandrian grain ship bound for Italy. It was part of a famous fleet of ships that sailed from Egypt to Rome with all kinds of grain.

It was a proud ship—180 feet long—with huge mast and a great square sail.

The company of soldiers and prisoners boarded the ship. Julius counted heads, and the prisoners were taken below. And so the vessel set sail toward Rome, with a cargo of wheat and 276 passengers and sailors. This was to be one of the most memorable voyages ever made.

The winds were against them from the start. The ship tacked and turned and bobbed and weaved and ducked—it was slow going.

After many days they reached Fair Havens on the island of Crete—there was no hope of making Rome. But the commanders of the ship were not interested in wintering at Fair Havens—they preferred Phoenix, which had a much better harbor. Paul warned the captain, "It is not safe to leave

here now"—Paul had done some sailing before. But the captain rejected the warning. "Nonsense," he cried. "We don't plan to try to get to Italy. Phoenix is only a few hours away."

They put out sail, and all was well; for a time it looked as though Paul's alarm had been for nought.

But ugly weather was brewing in the north. It struck without warning. The wind came swooping down like a living thing diving at its prey. The placid waters were whipped to a froth. The wind like a great giant tore at the sails.

The vessel groaned and creaked and shivered in every timber.

Orders flew.

"Furl the sail."

"Furl the sail."

"Let her ride."

Frantic sailors climbed the rigging, loosened the ropes and let down the huge sail. The men at the rudder gave up trying to steer. The vessel tore loose like a frightened animal being chased and having nowhere to go. The crew worked desperately—they swung the lifeboat afloat, wrapped huge cables around the hull and across the deck, and hove them tight to hold the ship together.

Then, to lighten the boat, they threw overboard everything they could get along without—cargo, equipment, even tackling.

Day after day the storm raged. They gave up hope. They were all lost.

All but Paul. "Cheer up," he shouted above the noise of the wind. "Not one of us is going to perish, though the ship will go down. An angel of God stood by my side last night and assured me that everyone here would be safe. And I am sure it will be just as he has said. So take courage!"

It was the fourteenth day. A few sailors sighted land.

They took soundings. Soon they would be driven to land—and what about rocks? They were afraid. They threw out four anchors and prayed for daylight.

Then Paul asked them all to eat something. He broke bread, gave thanks and ate. Suddenly they all felt better and began to eat.

At daybreak they headed for shore, but the ship ran aground. The stern, exposed to the violence of the waves, began to break apart.

The commanding officer ordered all who could swim to jump overboard and make for land. "The rest of you," he said, "make a try for it. Cling to whatever you can find."

There was an incredible tangle of men and splintering timber as the ship sighed and groaned and collapsed in one great mass of debris. Sailors, soldiers, prisoners—jumped, slid, clawed and fell

until one after another they were pitched into the raging sea. They disappeared and came up again, the breakers pitching them into the air only to plow them under again, until—one by one—they were hurled up onto the beach.

When they collected themselves and counted noses, *not a man was lost!* God had kept His promise!

They were all safe on the Isle of Malta.

The friendly natives lighted fires to warm the passengers and crew. A viper fastened itself to Paul's arm, and Paul shook it off, suffering no ill effect. The natives looked and wondered in amazement. As usual, Paul left his mark. He preached the gospel to them, even to the governor and the high officials of the palace, and performed many miracles of healing.

In the spring, when Paul and his company sailed for Rome, the grateful believers on the island came to see them on their way, loading them with many gifts.

And so, it was

On to Rome!

Sometimes the nicest things happen along the way.

The nicest thing happened to Paul at the Market of Appius—a stopping place along the great Appian Way about forty-three miles from Rome. Paul trudged into the market place, in chains and weary. And who should be there waiting for him but a group of representatives—representatives of the believers in Rome! They had heard that he was coming and had come this far to welcome him! How refreshing! They talked with him as he rested there, and they walked with him as he went on along the way.

When they came to the next stopping place, the "Three Taverns," what joy!—there were more friends waiting to greet him! Paul the prisoner seemed rather as a VIP—a very important person.

Luke the physician, who had accompanied Paul all the way, noticed the change in him as he met these friends. His stride became firm and strong. His eyes brightened, his face glowed. Luke wrote it down—"He thanked God and took courage."

At last great Rome was reached. Julius, the kindhearted centurion under whose charge Paul had been since they left Caesarea, may have spoken a good word for Paul when he was turned over to the captain of the guard. Paul was allowed to live in his own hired house, though a prisoner in chains and under constant guard.

And Paul made the most of this opportunity. He carried on a dynamic revival in his prison home.

His name went throughout the city. He preached and gave counsel to many. Men and women came to him, even from the house of Caesar himself. Paul showed his ability to turn a prison into a holy place. During this time he wrote many valuable letters and sent them to the young churches in Greece and Asia.

His Honors Wait . . .

The sacred historian Luke is silent about the end of Paul's life. But through this silence rings the valiant voice:

**"I have fought a good fight,
I have finished my course,
I have kept the faith.**

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"

—II Tim. 4:7-8



The person who really wants to accomplish something usually finds a way—the person who doesn't want to finds an excuse.

Knowledge cannot make us all leaders, but it can help us decide which leader to follow.

God never alters the robe of righteousness to fit the individual; He alters the individual to fit the robe.

If you feel that you must be unkind to someone, why not put it off so long that you forget it?

If you try to improve another person by setting a good example, then you are really improving two people.

Captured by Jesus Christ

(Continued from page 5)

Christian captive presses toward the goal with eagerness, with vigor and constancy. It matters not how hard the road, his whole being is dominated by, "If by any means I might attain a resurrection from the dead"!

God Calls Me Upward—to the Prize

Because he had been captured by the resurrected Christ, Paul relentlessly forced himself upward above the apex of his natural thinkings, reasonings, and ambitions. He put his past behind him and, with characteristic thoroughness, went about the business of forgetting it.

These higher levels of thought and aspiration beckon the aspiring Christian.

When the captives of Christ have been emancipated from the bondage of sin, and have been led to occupy some radiant summit in the realm of piety and virtue, even in the midst of their highest attainment they have an overwhelming sense of inexhaustible glories beyond.

The Lord Jesus has created an ideal of character, and has opened up dim and enticing vistas of possibility which leave us, after every conquest, with new dominions yet to be won. Every summit brings a new revelation, the reward of every attainment is a vision of further glory. "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect, but I press on . . ."

This "aboveness" distinguishes those who, like Paul, are captured by Christ. "Seek the things that are above"; "set your mind on things above." His captives dwell "with Christ in heavenly places." Sin is earthy, as Sodom and Gomorrah which grew on the ground.

Have we been captured? Is our ear attuned to the high calling of Christ Jesus? Is "the hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began," *our* inspiration? Is the glorious resurrection to endless life our shining goal?

Christ Jesus can dictate only to those whom He has captured. All other ears are turned downward to earth sounds. Upturned ears are on upturned heads whose gaze is fixed *forward!* Are we one of these, with mind and body straining forward toward the goal of eternal life, because *WE have been captured by Jesus Christ?* ●●

Bible A B C's



X is for a Bible character whose name we are not told—the widow of Zarephath. In the days when Elijah the prophet lived here on earth, there was a famine when no rain fell for three and one-half years. Nothing grew and food was very scarce.

The Lord commanded Elijah to go to a certain widow in Zarephath. When he reached the gate of the city, the widow was gathering sticks. Elijah asked her for a drink of water. As she was going to get it, he called, "Bring me a bit of bread, too." This widow then explained that she had only a handful of meal and a little oil left. She said, "I was just gathering a few sticks to make a bit of bread for my son and myself, and then we will die of starvation."

Elijah said, "Don't be afraid. Make me a little bread first and afterwards there will still be enough food for you and your son. For the Lord God of Israel says that there will always be plenty of meal and oil left in your containers until the time when the Lord sends rain, and the crops grow again!"

So the widow did as she was

x

y

z

x --

Young ruler

Zacchaeus

commanded and baked a bit of bread for Elijah first. Afterwards when she went to bake for herself and her son there was still meal in the bin and oil in the vessel. And there was always plenty for the widow and her son and Elijah to eat as long as the famine lasted. The Lord worked a miracle—He kept increasing the supply each time it was used.

Don't you think it took a great deal of faith in God's promise, and courage for this widow to give the last food she had to Elijah? This widow showed hospitality, too, because she was willing to share with others—even to the very last that she had. ••

Y is for young ruler. In the days of Jesus there was a rich young ruler who heard Jesus preach. He asked Jesus what he must do to have eternal life. Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The young man asked which commandments, and Jesus told him, "You shall

not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness." This young man was very self-righteous and said he had kept all these commandments since his youth.

Jesus then answered him, "If you would be perfect, go and sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; and come and be My disciple. But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had great possessions" (Matt. 19:21-22, *Amplified Bible*).

This young man loved his riches more than the Kingdom of God. He had treasures on earth, but he did not want to lay up treasures of righteousness. His possessions, his worldly ambitions and his position among the people all meant more to him than the eternal riches of God. Do we love anything in this world more than we love God? If we do, we are like that rich young ruler. ●●

Z is for Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a tax collector who lived in Jericho. One day Jesus came to that city. Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus, and he decided to go and see Him. But when Zacchaeus came to the place where Jesus was passing through, he found that there was such a crowd that he could not see Jesus at all. Zacchaeus was very disappointed, because he was a very short man. Then Zacchaeus saw a tree near the road where Jesus was going to pass. He ran and climbed the tree. There, seated comfortably on a branch, he could see Jesus as He passed by.

When Jesus reached the tree where Zacchaeus was, He looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." How happy Zacchaeus was! Jesus befriended him because he could read Zacchaeus' heart. He knew that Zacchaeus wanted to do what was right. Zacchaeus proved he wanted to do what was right because he said, "Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have cheated any one out of anything, I restore four times as much."

Zacchaeus was happy that Jesus came to his house that day, and Jesus was happy to see Zacchaeus so anxious to learn about the good and right way. ●●

THY WILL

Dispose my will to will Thy will,
And then to will is well,
The willing soul who wills God's will
Within that will will dwell!

December, 1973

Meditations On the Word

(Continued from page 27)

got what you said to me on such an occasion." Do we hear these words with pleasure or with shame?

"I shot an arrow into the air,

It fell to the earth, I knew not where."

Nor shall we ever know fully the good or evil our words and acts have done to others until the Day of Judgment. It behooves us, then, to be strictly careful about the lives we lead (Eph. 5:15, Moffatt), to watch ever more closely the words which will either justify or condemn us.

We cannot live to ourselves, nor do we die to ourselves. We are One World. If we die the death of the righteous, slaying the "old man," dying to sin, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts (Num. 23:10; Rom. 6:6, 10; Gal. 5:24), our brethren are bound to be ennobled and inspired to holier living.

And on the other hand, if we grow weary in well doing, if we become "twice dead" in trespasses and sins, our backsliding is certain to injure and discourage our weaker brother. We cannot evade or escape our responsibility; let us then accept it joyfully as good stewards of the grace of God. ●●

"Copy Me as I Copy Christ"

(Continued from page 18)

burn its way in the face of all resistance, you must first focus your whole soul on following Christ.

The story is told of a Scottish steam-driven train engine unable to reach the top of a mountain. The engine ran slower and slower and slower until finally it stopped. "What's the matter?" came the query from the distressed passengers. "Haven't you any water?" "Oh, yes," was the reply, "we have plenty of water. But it's not boiling." Is that a description of our spiritual power today? Does our fire of faith need rekindling? We may have all the apparatus necessary for moving at top speed, but if we lack this intense, animated, boiling earnestness which animated the apostle Paul, we will make no progress.

We must remember that Paul had his faults—he was quick, impetuous, strenuous. A Pharisee by training and by birth, his character was beset with all the failings common to erring man. But these are the things he fought daily to overcome. And—he did it. Why not perpetuate the challenge he left to us that someday we may be able to say to others, "Copy me, as I copy Paul"? ●●



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

“Why did Jesus say that the ‘children of the kingdom’ would be ‘cast out into outer darkness’ (Matt. 8:11-12), and in another place He compared the ‘good seed’ to the ‘children of the kingdom’ (Matt. 13:38)? Wouldn’t one expect that the ‘children of the kingdom’ should be *saved* and not cast out?”

The Bible applies the term “children of the kingdom” to more than one group of persons, else it would contradict itself. Usually the term is used of those who have been adopted into God’s family. Occasionally it is used of those who only *think* they are God’s special children.

When Jesus called the “good seed” the “children of the kingdom,” He was explaining to His disciples the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. “The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one” (Matt. 13:38). And as Jesus further explains, the “children of the kingdom” are the “righteous” who shall “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (v. 43). These are God’s faithful children who shall be given salvation.

The “children of the kingdom” to which Jesus makes reference in Matthew 8:12 are an unworthy, unfaithful group. The context of the verse shows that Jesus was making occasion to teach that the God of heaven was not the originator of the multitude of petty laws which placed a barrier between the Jews and other people; nor did He recognize the Jews as being by right of birth His special people. Jesus (a Jew) had just healed the servant of a centurion (a Roman army officer)—an obvious violation of Jewish law and precedent. The centurion had made ample apology for his unworthiness and humble state, realizing that he was a Gentile: “Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof”—according to Jewish law, a Jew was not to enter a Gentile home. So the centurion asked, “Only speak the word, and my servant shall be healed.”

Jesus’ reply to the centurion shows His pleasure in finding such great faith in one who was not even an Israelite: “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” And then Jesus continued to show that God was no respecter of persons, that the inheritors of the Kingdom would not be all natural-born Jews. “I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west [from other nations], and shall

A Shining Light

By searching the Scriptures and studying the blessed Word of God as we would seek for hidden treasures of gold and silver, we will find a treasure greater than gold or silver. God’s Word is full of treasures, and if we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves cannot break through and steal, then we will have the greatest treasure.

I see the masses all struggling for worldly riches and to satisfy their own desires. I am so thankful to have a greater, surer treasure. I am pressing forward with determination to be an overcomer.

Rome, Georgia

S. J.

Remember Old Self

We need to remind ourselves of our weaknesses and the slippery places on life’s road. There is so much evil these days, but old self can be the most evil of all if we aren’t striving hard to rid ourselves of him. We have learned that we must keep all of God’s commandments, yes, one hundred percent of them. We can be very thankful we have the Bible, that God has given us reason and reflection whereby we can read, study, reason and meditate on His holy truths.

God has given us such wonderful blessings; therefore we should be very thankful and make the most, the best use of them all. I want to take up my cross and follow Jesus every day.

Kinards, South Carolina

H. C.

No Spots or Wrinkles

Every one of Jesus’ commandments must be kept; every sin forsaken; we must be watching every possible moment, lest we get a spot on our garment. Little by little we must robe ourselves in the garments of right-doing, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Ours must be a holy character, for that is the only thing that will prove acceptable to God.

This can be accomplished only by patient continuance in well-doing. But if we get rid of the spots and wrinkles, we shall shine forth as resplendent stars in the Kingdom of God.

Charleston, Mississippi

R. S.

Keep Striving

As we think of the worlds already glorified, we realize that there are people without number who have mastered the old nature and are now enjoying a life that will never end. If we do not get our name in the book of life, there will be no one to blame but self. So let us strive to keep every commandment that we too may enjoy life without end.

Selma, Iowa

G. M.

sit down with Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Others who should qualify for the inheritance should share equally with the promised seed. "But the children of the kingdom"—those for whom the promise was originally reserved, the seed of Abraham, who were given first opportunity to receive the inheritance but by their disobedience rejected it—"shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Jesus was saying that those who trusted in their own advantages and natural privileges and thought themselves the natural heirs of these blessings would be disinherited for their unbelief; as a nation, God had rejected them. It was a declaration that faithful Gentiles from all nations would be admitted to the Kingdom, and self-satisfied, self-righteous Jews—who *assumed* that they were the "children of the kingdom"—would be excluded.

"Can you throw some light on the account of Nimrod, the city, the tower of Babel and the confusion of tongues? There has to be more than just a recounting of this epic."

We believe these accounts in Genesis to have been literal occurrences, but they certainly contain spiritual lessons for our time, our surroundings and ourselves.

An overall view of this period of time reveals God at work preparing the way for those who would be His chosen people in years to come. Thus we have numerous events contributing to the settlement of the land of Israel and the selecting of the forebears of the Israelite people.

In Genesis 10:8 we read of the great-grandson of Noah named Nimrod, who "began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. . . . And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar" (vs. 8-11). Shinar is very likely the Hebrew form of Sumer, and denotes the land commonly known as Babylonia. Historically, this refers to the founding of the Assyrian Empire (cf. Mic. 5:5-6) and its founder who built Nineveh and three other cities (Gen. 10:11-12).

In Genesis 11 is the account of the building of a "tower, whose top may reach unto heaven." We read also that "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." This "whole earth" might easily refer to all the people of a certain area in their combined and concerted effort to make for themselves a name—a very human trait. The original Hebrew word translated "language" in this verse is *saphath*, which means in its root form, "a lip, . . . used in a bad sense of a loquacious, gar-

rulous person, Job 11:2; futile words, II Kings 18:20; . . . speech, words; as fraudulent lips; burning lips, i. e. words feigning most ardent love" (*Gesenius' Hebrew-English Lexicon*). This thought is consistent with the people's determination to make themselves great.

It is said that these people were able to manufacture a durable type of brick, and using slime for adhesive they were able to construct buildings that would last. Thus they said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name."

The tower "whose top may reach unto heaven" has been interpreted as a Babylonian figure of speech in the sense of a very high tower, similar to the description of the Canaanite cities which were "great and fortified to the heavens" (Deut. 1:28). According to the comment of a Jewish scholar, "it is probable that they were neither so foolish as to believe that they could ascend to heaven, nor were they afraid of another flood. They merely wanted a central and conspicuous city which would ensure them fame." Very possibly it was a Babylonian temple tower, a step temple or ziggurat, a seven-story building in which each of the lower stories formed a platform on which the next was built. Hammurabi began to build such a temple in the second millennium before Christ, and it was finished by Nebuchadnezzar. It had eight stories and was referred to as "the house of the foundation stone of heaven and earth." It was like a step pyramid, about 300 feet high above the foundation. The top was reached by a stairway leading from terrace to terrace.

The Biblical account, though, cannot mean that the erecting of the tower was the only cause of the diversity of languages. It shows rather the futility of human attempts to maintain unity by material means alone, excluding God. From the earliest times the buildings of Babylonia were among the most remarkable achievements of human power and pride. Hence Babylon was the emblem of grandiose ambition and despotic arrogance.

They went to work and built with the ambition to make a name for themselves. But God intervened and overthrew their ambition and their pride and their building. He confounded, or confused their united effort toward earthly fame. Apparently he made them so that they could not understand one another. The God who can create a mouth capable of speech and a mind to understand can easily withhold those capabilities when they are misused. Hence the lesson to us, a truth of permanent validity: He who would seek greatness divorced from the service of God finds only confusion. Humility is a rare—and godly—virtue. ●



Meditations

On the Word

IT IS well for Christians to understand the weakness which is inherent in their very strength. While the narrow way to salvation may and does attract many who prove to be double-minded and unstable—"the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, which gathered of every kind"—those who survive the winnowing of the years and the stern discipline of the high calling are certain to be men and women of strong character.

Human nature has changed little over the centuries, and the letters of St. Paul reveal that some of our familiar problems existed in his day. Food restrictions have been a feature of nearly all religions from the earliest times, and there have always been those who would make the Kingdom of God a matter of meat and drink (v. 17). In Paul's day there was constant pressure from the Judaizers who would enforce the dietary rules of the obsolete Mosaic law, but there were also the out-and-out diet faddists who insisted on prescribing for their neighbors. The vegetarian question, that hardy perennial, had reared its head, and in regard to this, together with other points of contention, the Apostle was writing.

This intolerance, this judging and despising over non-essentials, he tells them, is not brotherly, nor is it Christian. There are more important things to concern ourselves with. For this matter of eating and drinking, there is a broad but definite rule in I Cor. 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This leaves the responsibility with every man's individual conscience.

But this liberty, he warns, is not always to be used; there is something still higher which curbs and controls it. The weak brother's scruples are not to be ignored or ridiculed, but treated with

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"
—Romans 14:7.

understanding and consideration while he is struggling with his own problems. "All things are lawful for me," said the same

Apostle, "but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (I Cor. 10:23). That is the test—does it edify? To practice this form of self-denial for the sake of example and influence is the highest form of unselfishness; this is laying down our lives for the brethren (John 15:13). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

It was upon this principle that Paul admonished his Roman brethren in this matter: "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. . . . It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. . . . Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (ch. 14:13, 21, 19).

This thought must govern every act of the Christian's life, every word he speaks, even the thoughts which underlie his speech and conduct. It goes far beyond the matter of food and drink and clothing, of taste and mannerisms; it is a serious business upon which depends our own salvation and that of our brother. We are One World, "one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:5).

Everything in life has its price. The benefits of civilization, the rule of law and order, all require some measure of sacrifice, of self-denial, of restriction of our individuality. The services and conveniences of community life cannot be had without the taxes which make them possible. So

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also the blessings of the Christian community, the highest form of civilization ever known on earth, have their price—a price which few are willing to pay.

The price of this divine unity and fellowship is a constant self-denial; not only a denial of all ungodliness and every worldly lust (Titus 2:12), but at times a giving up for the sake of example of things which in themselves might be lawful. Love "never insists upon her rights" (I Cor. 13:5, Goodspeed). The rugged individualist who insists upon his "rights," regardless of the feelings or opinions or the effect upon others, is no part of the body of Christ, which is so exquisitely and sensitively fashioned that when one member suffers, all suffer with it, and the rejoicing of each is likewise shared (I Cor. 12:14-27). To one who has experienced the fullness of this fellowship, the price is small in-

deed. It is a way of life which every right-thinking man or woman should find satisfying; it is true civilization.

It is impossible to overestimate the power of our example or the extent of our influence, because we are usually unaware of its workings. In our own lives, consciously or unconsciously, we daily follow some pattern of conduct, and we are likewise setting a pattern for others. "None of us liveth to himself"—not one. Beyond question there are individuals in this world whose lives are utterly without significance, to themselves or anyone else; but they are not the people who have conformed their lives to the pattern Christ left. But each of *us counts* for something; may it be for good.

How many times a long-forgotten remark has come back to us when a friend says, "I never for-

(Continued on page 23)

Look High--Aim High--Be High!

*Look high, O soul! for what is earth but dust,
The fleeting shadow of the better things?
The heavens are thine, if thou wilt use thy wings,
And sighs are songs, if thou wilt only trust.*

*Aim high, O soul! for on the higher forms
Is always room, while lower ranks are filled;
Who climbs the heights finds all earth's noises stilled,
And a sweet calm and light above the storms.*

*Be high, O soul! scorn what is low and base;
"Child of a King" God calls thee; be a king,
And Christ shall endless blessings to thee bring,
To crown thee heir of glory, child of grace.*

--Selected