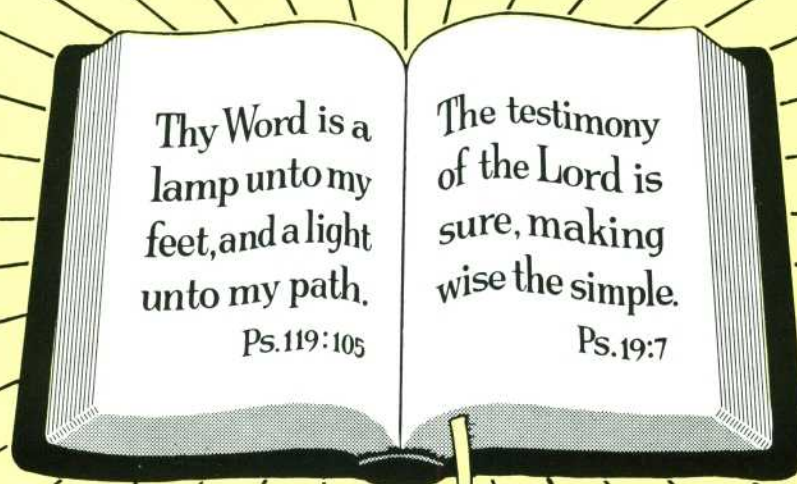


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

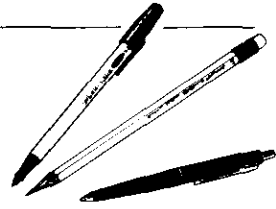


Who Closed Their Eyes?

I Am Counting On You!

Do Fossil Records in the Rocks Prove Evolution?

This Too Shall Pass Away



## God Is Under Obligation to Me!

**WHAT?** The very thought seems preposterous, that the infinite God could be indebted to a lowly mortal being! He who is so mighty, all-powerful and everlasting!

And yet, it is true—if I am living as He has charged me to live; if I am availing myself of the opportunities He has laid in my lap, He is under obligation to me.

How can I know? The basic idea of a covenant is the plan upon which the whole scheme of salvation has operated from the beginning. When a man makes a covenant with God, God in turn makes a covenant with man—that if man does on his part, God will then do on His. This places the first responsibility upon man, and the second—and greater—responsibility upon God to discharge His part of the obligation. This means that if I do on my part and render the obedience I have promised, God is obligated to do on His part and fulfill to me the blessings *He* has promised. God, therefore, is obligated to me.

But the obligation is a contingent one. Its binding power arises from my meeting the prerequisite conditions on which God established His obligation. God devised this system Himself; He created His own obligation and also announced the conditions on which it would be binding.

The Word of God is replete with such contingent divine obligations. One is found in Isaiah 26:3, where God has promised to “keep him in perfect peace”; but who is it to whom God must fulfill this obligation? There is a condition on both sides. God promises to “keep” him “whose mind is stayed on”

God “because he trusteth” in God (Isa. 26:3). Here are both sides of the contract. If man keeps, God will keep. When the mind loses its focus the heart loses its peace.

There are promises for now; there are promises for the future; but all are contingent on *my* life now. His promises are made on clearly stated conditions and can be realized only if I meet the stated conditions. For this reason we need to learn the prayer of the Psalmist, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23-24). And if I fail to see some of the blessings promised, can I blame God? Should I not look first to my own deficiencies?

God’s obligation to me is conditional; however, the promises He has made are true and sure if I do on my part. It is also clear that I am able to meet those conditions, or God would not have signed this compact with me; for He knows my frame, my abilities and possibilities. I cannot back off and say, when the going is rough, “I can’t do it,” and say it truthfully. I might say it, but it is only a flimsy attempt to cover my lack of concentrated effort.

To more fully understand the enormity of God’s obligation to me, I want to think about what He has promised. He is ready to do on His part; He is able, abundantly able; and He has set the terms. My task is to *meet* them.

If I do, I am sure God will be more than willing to fulfill His part; He will never go back on His word.

## Megiddo means

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

### We believe

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

### We believe

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

### We believe

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

### We believe

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

### We believe

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

### We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

### We believe

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

## Bible quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NAS—New American Standard

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People

Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

# Megiddo Message

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December 1981

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# Who Closed Their Eyes?

**I**T HAPPENED during the last year of the reign of King Uzziah, and very early in the career of the young prophet Isaiah, very likely while Isaiah was attending one of Israel's religious festivals that year. As the Prophet recalls the vision to write it, his heart pounds anew with the thrill of that supreme moment when he had stood bathed, as it were, in the holiness of God. His words reflect the reverence and awe of one who had already learned to walk with God and to feel deeply the spiritual and eternal values of life. With an exceptional amount of detail he describes the shining seraphim he saw, each having "six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." But words are inadequate to frame the glory of the Lord, He whom the Prophet saw "sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up"; we are told only that "his train filled the temple" (Isaiah 6).

As the Prophet writes, the vision is still vivid in his mind—how could he forget it! Its glory is still shining in his mind's eye, and the call of the Lord is still ringing in his ears: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" His whole being is still animated with a dynamism surpassing anything he had felt before. But even as the call came, there had been no pausing to debate the obligations, no vacillating between alternatives, no feeling of maybe-yes, maybe-no; only an impelling urge to answer immediately and to go. Hear his immortal response: "Here am I; send me!"

Then, almost immediately, there followed a message from the Lord. It was a message which the Lord was commissioning His prophet to deliver to the people. "Go," said the voice of the Lord. This was just what Isaiah wanted to hear! "Go, and tell this people...." What should he tell them? Was it a message of revival and repentance, a message to turn them back to the faith of their fathers of old, the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Or might it be a message of doom such as Amos used to preach in the streets of Samaria? Or—?

"Go," said the voice of the Lord, "and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see

with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed" (Isa. 6:9-10).

At this word, the spirit of any ordinary man would have collapsed. What task could be more thankless than that of preaching to a people who were *blind*, and *deaf*, and wholly *insensitive*? Was *this* to be Isaiah's glorious life-long work for God? Was *this* his call to service? The message that kindled his whole being with enthusiasm would leave his hearers stone cold! How then could he teach them? How could he reach them, people who were deaf, and blind, their hearts closed to the word of the Lord?

We know that Isaiah was no ordinary man to be dismayed; still we can imagine some of the disappointment that must have swept over the young, eager, and vivacious prophet like a wave of ice water.

But the question that concerns us today: What was the cause of the problem? Why should they have been so blind? Who closed their eyes?

## The Meaning of the Message

Very likely Isaiah understood; but do we? There are many people today who question the God who seemingly wanted the people *not* to be converted, as though He Himself were responsible for making them unable to hear, and unable to see, and unable to comprehend His message. Unthinkable as it might seem, this deduction is a very natural result of a literal word-for-word application of the text as it reads in our Common Version, for does it not say that He *makes* their "ears heavy" and shuts their eyes, "lest they see,...and hear,...and understand,...and convert, and be healed"?

Now we know that obtaining the knowledge of God is a vital first step toward salvation, according to God's plan. Every potential child of God must be "taught of the Lord" (Isa. 54:13). "All things"—not some but *all* things—"that pertain unto life and godliness" come "through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue." And, "Whereby"—by this same means, by the knowledge of God—"are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Pet. 1:3-4). Knowledge of God—what He offers and the terms upon which He is offering it—is the key to escaping the corruption of this

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Note: *Who Closed Their Eyes?* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

world and its final oblivion. If God did not make this knowledge known, there would be no way possible for us to secure it.

### **God's Part: Making His Knowledge Known**

But God has not hindered men and women from learning His knowledge; on the contrary, He has expended great effort to make it known. By visions, by dreams, by direct revelations, by angels, by messages conveyed through His prophets, "rising up early and sending them" (Jer. 25:4), through Jesus and His apostles, He has made Himself known. For those who would not have direct access to direct communications from heaven, He provided a *written* communication, "whereby, when ye read, ye may understand" (Eph. 3:4). The writer of the book of Hebrews summarized God's effort in these words: "At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, He has spoken to us through His Son" (Heb. 1:1-2, JB), and to us today through the writings of those holy men of old.

In addition to making His knowledge available, He has provided us with minds capable of grasping that knowledge. We can reason, relate, remember, and reflect on what we hear. Can we think for a moment that the God who has done so much to enlighten His human family during nearly six thousand years would deliberately *make* men and women unable to hear or understand?

### **Our Part: Grasping His Knowledge**

There is another aspect of this enlightenment, though, which we should consider. Acquiring God's knowledge is a form of communication with God, whatever the means; and communication is always a two-way street. One way is the Divine side, which we have surveyed, God's efforts in making His knowledge known. The other is the *human* side, man's efforts in grasping that knowledge. There is some specific effort necessary on *both* sides if the communication is to be complete. Knowledge contained in a book does not automatically leap into the mind, however capable the author of that book. Words spoken in our hearing do not automatically impress themselves on our minds and hearts, however keen the physical ears or however sharp the mind. Even living, visual examples do not always penetrate as they should.

If we would hear, see, or perceive, we must do something ourselves. There is no magic involved, only simple, down-to-earth effort.

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand" (Eph. 3:4).

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed" (II Tim. 2:15).

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**With Isaiah there was no vacillating between alternatives, no feeling of maybe-yes, maybe-no; only an immediate answer, "Here am I; send me"!**

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"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1:3).

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

"Search the scriptures" (John 5:39).

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15).

God does not fill us with His knowledge as we would pour water into an empty bucket. We must read, study, listen, think, meditate, concentrate, focus our minds, before the communication from Him can be complete and effective.

If this second part of the communication is lacking, what happens? Nothing. There is no transfer of information, no imparting of knowledge. If eyes were closed and ears were unhearing, hearts and minds would remain unimpressed and no knowledge would have been received. But whose fault would it have been? Surely not God's, for He did on His part; the problem is with the human receiver.

### **Communications that Succeeded...**

With this in mind, let us read a few passages from the Book that discuss God's communications to men and see what the results were, and how the communication succeeded or failed, and what was the cause of that success or failure.

We have already noted the response of the prophet Isaiah when the Lord spoke to him. Did Isaiah do on his part to receive the communication? Hear his ready response: "Here am I; send me."

Not so many years before another prophet of God had received a message in the same spirit, and given the same reply. His name was Samuel. When God spoke to these men, there was no lack of communication.

What was the response of the man from Tarsus who was struck blind on the Damascus Road? What was his reply to the voice of Jesus? It was simple, straightforward, and unfaltering: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Saul was ready to do his part (Acts 9:6).

What response did the word of the Lord receive when the Lord spoke to Abraham, "Get thee out of thy coun-

try, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee"? What was Abram's reply? "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him" (Gen. 12:1-4). No words necessary. He simply obeyed, and that made the communication complete.

### ...or Failed

But all people through the ages have not received the words of the Lord so responsively. During the days of Moses, the people said to Moses: "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it" (Deut. 5:27). A noble resolve, which the Lord heard and commended: "The Lord heard the voice of your words, . . . and said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, they have well said all that they have spoken" (v. 28). But what happened in reality? What did they do? Gracious blessings were conditioned upon their response—"If ye hearken"; but they did not hearken. The communication was not complete.

Years later the prophets were sent to communicate God's messages of warning and wisdom to the people, and what was the result? What kind of reception did their words get? This description from the prophet Zechariah

is typical: "They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts . . . sent in his spirit by the former prophets" (Zech. 7:11-12). When Jeremiah pleaded with his people to "hearken to the sound of the trumpet," they replied flatly, "We will not hearken." When they were so rebellious, could they blame God for their fate?

Very, very few were the eyes open to see, and the ears inclined to hear, and the hearts ready to respond. It has been true all through the ages. The communication is not complete; but what is the problem? Is God to blame?

How serious the thought that we ourselves can block a communication from heaven by our own closed, unresponsive hearts! It happened in past days; it still happens today.

### Why No Communication?

Let us look now at a few of the basic reasons *why* the communication is blocked on the *human side*, so that God's knowledge is not readily received and understood. Taken singly, any one of these can prevent an impression of divine knowledge. Taken together, they form a barrier so complete as to be utterly impenetrable, even by God.

## Let Us Pray...

Lord God of hosts, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Sustainer of all mankind, and the Saviour of all who make themselves worthy of salvation: we rejoice that Thou hast decreed that a better order shall ultimately replace the sin-sick world of man's own making, that it one day shall be replaced with Thy Kingdom of peace and good will, with Thy will done here as it is now done in Thy finished heavens where Thou dost rule supreme.

Father, we plead for Thy sanctifying presence as we join with fellow Christians worshipping Thee in the beauty of holiness. May we be prepared to say with the Psalmist: "I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honor dwelleth. How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and flesh crieth out for the courts of the living God. I had rather be

a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

O Lord our God, we pray for seeing eyes and an understanding heart that we may know what is Thy will for us; and may we never close our eyes so that we fail to see what that will is or harden our hearts against any of Thy righteous decrees. But may our hearts ever be soft and impressible, and may it be our constant prayer to be turned in whatever direction Thou dost plan for us.

We know Thou dost never harden men's hearts or close men's eyes against their will, making it impossible for them to be enlightened, converted and saved. Thou hast promised salvation to all who will hear and do, and would take no steps that would make that action on our part impossible.

In our service this day, may we listen for the word that may condemn and correct us, and eat to the limit of our capacity of the heavenly manna.

Bless the preaching of Thy Word, and may those present have ears to hear and a heart to understand. Bless all wherever they are who are making an honest effort to learn and live Thy holy precepts. And we pray Thee to make a way of escape in every time of trial, that together we may obtain a crown of life at the appearing of Christ, in whose worthy name we pray. Amen.

*The first problem is a natural, inborn lazy-mindedness that makes us most easily satisfied with whatever requires the least amount of effort.*

It is an unflattering fact that "every imagination of the thoughts of" the untrained human heart inclines to evil because this is the easiest course to follow. We are neither godly nor good by nature and—to make the matter worse—we are quite apt to be proud of ourselves as we are! To change requires a large expenditure of effort, to which we are averse. This has been the almost universal experience of humankind through the ages. The knowledge of God cannot be acquired without effort; hence, when it comes, our eyes—and minds—are closed.

This natural self-satisfaction that is averse to change leads directly to a *lack of desire for that which is higher, sometimes called the missing "want" factor.*

We learn most easily, and remember most completely, and apply most eagerly what we *want* most desperately. How fast can we learn? How much can we remember? How much can we apply? That all depends on the "want" factor, for to a great extent we see what we *want* to see, hear what we *want* to hear, understand what we *want* to understand, and have time for what we *want* to do. Of course there are exceptions, but this is the general rule. It is especially true in the negative. We are sure *not* to learn what we do not *want* to; we will not see what we do not *want* to see, or understand what we do not *want* to understand. But if we really *want* to do something, there is just about nothing that will keep us from doing it.

This is a major factor in the closed eyes and closed ears that meet the message of God. There is no desire, no *want*, no longing; hence, no perception.

There was a class of people during the first century whom the apostle Peter called "willingly ignorant." The whole problem was a lack of desire, the missing "want" factor. It was not that they *could* not see, or had no eyes to see, or that God was preventing their seeing; it was simply that they did not *want* to see.

And, as is said so often, there are none so blind as these. They apparently had something in common with the people in Ezekiel's day, who went to the services to hear the fine voice, or the sweet melody, but whose hearts remained cold and untouched, for "they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Ezek. 33:32). It was not that the prophet Ezekiel did not speak the word of the Lord; the problem was their own dull ears—his message was out of tune with what they wanted to hear.

They were much like the people of Isaiah's day, whose prime interest was not the truth of the message but only its pleasing effect. "Prophecy not unto us right things," they said, "speak unto us smooth things; prophecy deceits" (Isa. 30:10). "Sing us more of the slumber songs we love," they said in effect; "let us take our ease."

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## **Acquiring God's knowledge is a form of communication with God, and communication is always a two-way street.**

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So they did. And so the message of God did not penetrate their dull ears and closed minds. Jesus described this class using another metaphor: they love "darkness rather than light." And when one is accustomed to darkness, any amount of sudden light is blinding; hence, when the word of God is spoken, they close their eyes. It is not comfortable.

These first two problems, a built-in self-satisfaction and a lack of desire for the knowledge of God, lead to a *third problem which we may call lack of initiative.* Learning takes effort. *If only God imparted His knowledge in such a way that we might soak it up as we do sunshine! But such is not the case.* And when there is little if any desire, there will be little if any initiative to apply effort. And if little effort is applied, little knowledge will be acquired.

Again and again God warns that knowledge does not come easy. "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God" (Prov. 2:3-5). "If...then..." means that there is something for us to *do*. We must have the desire which will impel us to seek, search, study, think.

It seems altogether possible that God built in this effort-factor so that His knowledge would not be unnecessarily abused, misused, or damaged by those of malicious intent. At the same time, the eyes—and minds—of the multitude are closed to divine knowledge because they lack the desire to seek and find.

Then there is *the problem of human prejudice.* Many minds are closed because they are automatically against anyone telling them what to do or how to do it, whether it be God or man. They wish to run their own affairs, steer their own ship, chart their own course. They do not need God. So whenever God speaks He is interfering. They are quite content with their own knowledge, their own thoughts, their own goals. So when divine knowledge comes, their eyes and minds are closed.

What, then, is the *real* cause of mankind's lack of perception? Is God to blame? Is He—who makes abundant provision for the enlightening of the human family—to blame when men and women do not see and hear? Is



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## God does not fill us with His knowledge as we would pour water into an empty bucket. We must read, study, listen, think, meditate.

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He who does not "afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men" inflicting blindness and deafness upon them against their wills? Is *this* the reason why so few hearers have responded through the ages? We know it is not.

God has not made them *unable* to see and hear and perceive; the problem lies in *their own closed minds*. When men have no desire to learn, when they expend no effort to learn, when they boldly declare that they do not need or want God or His knowledge, when they love their own ways and their own thoughts and deliberately refuse His higher ways and thoughts, is it any wonder that the knowledge of God is unknown to them?

### "Hidden" Wisdom, A "Mystery"

The apostle Paul called the knowledge of God a "mystery," "hidden wisdom," probably for this very reason. As he wrote to the Corinthians: "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew" (I Cor. 2:7-8).

To Paul was revealed the fathomless depths of God's wisdom, and he counted it a great privilege. This wisdom is not generally or widely known. Why? Because the majority have no desire for it, no seeing eyes or hearing ears. God does not willfully deprive them of it, but it has no appeal; hence, the result that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (I Cor. 1:26).

### When Eyes Were Closed...

In the light of the foregoing, what shall we conclude about the texts which seem to project God as blinding eyes and dulling ears and closing minds so that men and women will not understand His knowledge? Let us review those texts and see what they may be saying in harmony with God's overall purpose.

In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew, **Isaiah 6:9-10** reads, "Go, say to this people: 'Ye shall hear indeed, but ye shall not understand; and seeing ye

shall see and not perceive. For the heart of this people has become gross, and with their ears they hear heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.'" Notice how this removes the responsibility from God and places it fairly and squarely upon the people: "they hear heavily, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see," etc.

This Septuagint translation is the translation which Jesus quoted almost verbatim in Matthew 13:14-15. So can we think for a moment that it is in error? *Who* closed their eyes? Did not *Jesus* understand it properly? "Their eyes *they* have closed."

In **Acts 28:26-27**, the apostle Paul quoted this same text again, and also from the Septuagint, just as Jesus quoted it, again placing the blame for the closed eyes on the individuals themselves. *Who* closed their eyes? Did *Paul* understand? "Their eyes have they closed." They could not see, or hear, or understand; but the cause was nothing more or less than their own stubborn resistance: "Their eyes *they* have closed."

Why does the original Hebrew of Isaiah 6 read as it does? We must remember that for the Hebrew people, God was always the First and Ultimate Cause. He was said to do anything that He allowed, or anything that happened. Nothing ever occurred outside His will. If men listened, God did it; if they refused, God did it. And this was their manner of speech. But this fact does not change the location of the responsibility. And it seems very possible that Jesus understood this, and so quoted the passage to convey the proper meaning.

What about **Isaiah 29:9-10**, where the Lord is said to have "poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes"?

Is God responsible in this case? Did *He* close their eyes, as the text might sound? Did *He* give them some powerful anesthetic to put them to sleep? We know *He* did not. The fault lay with the *unwilling* ears, and the *unwilling* eyes, not with the Lord. Instead of being energized by the rousing words of the Prophet, they were lulled to sleep. Someone has captured the thought in this comment on Isaiah 29:10:

"God pours out mercy, but heedless sinners disregard and pervert it. God threatens judgments, but habitual sin, acting like an opiate on the body, has drugged their consciences into insensibility; they refuse to awake; they love to slumber and dream. Wherefore God gives them over judicially to their own ways, and is so said to 'pour out the spirit of deep sleep' upon them. Yet he pours out the spirit not to induce them to sleep but he gives them up to it as a punishment, because they refuse to awake." This is in harmony with other passages of Scripture, which show that God does not keep pleading with man-



kind for an infinite length of time. The hour inevitably arrives when He acts (see Prov. 1:24-31; Isa. 26:9-10).

What about Jesus' words in **Mark 4:11-12**: "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."

Again, we may be sure God has done on His part; that the problem is on the human side of the communication. There is no willing receiver. Jesus did not come to hide the truth but to make it known, even to give a living, visible testimony of the life God loves. It was a sermon to be seen as well as heard, thus could not be wholly misunderstood.

Why do these words sound as if God deliberately blinded eyes and deafened ears and hardened hearts? The great determining factor, as we have seen, is the attitude of the people themselves. They *could* not see because they *chose* not to. The cause was their own disinterested hearing. Jesus spoke in parables so that the truth could be greater for those who wished to ponder it; and for those who did not care to, it was just a pleasant story; nothing lost, nothing gained. No pearls could be abused, no gems destroyed, because the real meaning lay deeper, as jewels deep in the earth that must be mined. He who would obtain them must be prepared to work.

In **II Corinthians 3:14**, Paul gives an example of people closing their own eyes to the knowledge of God. Speaking of his Jewish comrades, he says: "Their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament." The people themselves did the blinding by their own self-satisfied state of mind. They did not *want* to see anything they did not already see. The prophet Ezekiel years earlier had in a similar manner indicted his people: "The word of the Lord also came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear and hear not: for they are a rebellious house" (Ezek. 12:1-2). They were "blind" because they *would* not see; they were deaf because they *would* not hear. There is also the suggestion that blindness results from light that is too bright for unaccustomed eyes. The light would not have been blinding had they not become so accustomed to darkness. But is God to blame because men dwell in darkness and then, when His light shines on them it is blindingly bright, and they prefer their own darkness? Can we expect God to "adjust" the brightness of His light to suit unaccustomed eyes?

What is the thought of Jesus in His prayer in **Luke 10:21**, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I

---

**We ourselves can block a  
communication from heaven  
by our own closed,  
unreceptive hearts!  
It happened in past days;  
it still happens today.**

---

thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight?"

Again, we know that all are not interested in God's knowledge; all do not have "ears to hear" or "eyes to see," hence the knowledge of God is "hidden." Whether we say that God "hides" His knowledge from them by revealing wisdom so far above and beyond their earthly thinking that they have no grasp of or appreciation for it; or whether we say that they, in their disinterestedness and preoccupation with this world have eyes and ears closed to it, the result is the same. Jesus was rejoicing in the fact that the knowledge of God, though hidden from the "wise and prudent" of this world, had been "revealed ... unto babes," humble ones who were willing to listen and learn, who would complete the communication circuit with God and reap the benefit.

### **In Summary...**

What is the lesson in all of this for us? Of first concern is the responsibility that rests upon each of us, to be sure we have seeing eyes and hearing ears for all that God has to communicate to us. Our minds must be open to impressions, our wills ready to be turned, our hearts to be surrendered. God has spoken, and He will not speak on and on if we do not open our hearts to listen. If we miss what He says, the fault is our own. If we close our ears for even a moment while we pursue our own interests or think our own thoughts, who knows how vital might be the message we miss! And someday, it may be possible that these little "misses" could spell the difference between our success or our failure.

How diligent we should be to keep our hearts soft and impressible, our eyes open and our ears hearing all that He has to say to us, whether the message comes through His Word, through a trusted spiritual friend, or through an impression that circumstances may present to us.

How diligent we should be to have those upturned ears that are on upturned faces, with eyes beamed straight ahead to see where we are going and how fast we are

getting there. And if we keep those eyes and ears open, who can tell the wonders that God will open to us—now and through all eternity, as He reveals more and more of the exceeding riches of His grace, even life forevermore!

*Father Eternal, we are grateful for eyes to see and hearts to perceive and understand the things written aforetime for our learning.*

*We rejoice to know that though unholy men have closed their own eyes, Thou art too righteous a Being to close men's eyes against their wills, or to make it impossible for them to see the light and then condemn them for being in darkness.*

*Thou dost pour out mercy; Thou hast done on Thy part; the problem is on the human side. Thou hast spoken, but Thou wilt not continue to speak if we do not listen.*

*Help us, then, to keep our hearts soft and impressible, our eyes open and our ears attuned to all that Thou sayest to us through Thy Word, and always be ready to exchange our thoughts for Thine. Amen.*

---

## Outside the Ark?

**So many hundred years ago  
They ventured to remark  
That Noah had some carpenters  
To help him build the ark.  
But, sad to say, on that last day  
When Noah entered in,  
Those carpenters were left outside  
—They perished in their sin.**

**How sad to think they may have helped  
To build the Ark so great,  
Yet still they heeded not God's Word,  
And awful was their fate.  
Today the same sad fate may be  
Among the sons of men,  
Who help to build the church of God  
But are not changed within.**

**They help with work that must be done,  
They speak, they sing, they pray;  
Yet they are not committed to  
The Life, the Truth, the Way.  
The Judgment Day will soon be here,  
As sure as came the rain;  
Oh, let us cleanse our hearts from sin,  
Lest our work be in vain.**

## *I Am Counting*



**"I'M COUNTING on you!"** Simple words, but oh, what a dominating effect they are capable of producing in the person to whom they are spoken. They can be instrumental in changing negative mental attitudes; indeed, they can influence the whole course of an individual's life.

By nature most of us possess the tendency to take the easy way out, to search for the path of least resistance. Even within the scope of our daily activities, the urge is frequently present to shy away from a more dedicated commitment or give better than what we consider our "easy" best. Consequently we find ourselves frequently at war with our inner conscience. In our hearts we know our capabilities are greater than we are utilizing, but we stand on the threshold, afraid to expend the extra effort required, afraid of failure. At times like these how grateful we are to a friend or co-worker who, sensing our hesitancy or inherent mental laziness, stabilizes and heartens our efforts with an encouraging "I'm counting on you!"

Within the realm of Christian endeavor these steady and encouraging words take on an infinitely more important aspect. In fact they become a tremendous aid in the successful accomplishment of the task to which we have devoted our lives. And surely no one will deny that the task of removing every evil from our lives is one of phenomenal proportions. How welcome, then, in the grip of an exceptionally fierce struggle, when courage would almost fail, to hear someone say, "I am counting on you; you can conquer."

As we all well know, no two individuals are alike. Besetments vary widely, inner strengths differ, and human needs are rarely the same. Consequently, in the final analysis it is evident that very, very few persons can be termed completely self-sufficient. Everyone needs someone, and how fortunate indeed is the person whose heart is closely knit with another in the bond of Christian love and unity.

It is abundantly evident from events transpiring around us that we are living in momentous days. Time

as we know it is rapidly running out. We can ill afford to waste any more precious hours giving way to indecisive action or stumbling and falling into the same old mire hole of sin again and again. But oh, how easy it is to turn a deaf ear and ignore a Christian friend's counsel or encouraging "I'm counting on you"; so much easier is it to wander about in the maze of divided loyalty and halfhearted effort, when just a little more exertion on our part could result in one more victory over the old nature.

"I am counting on you!" Just five short words, yet how often we have failed to speak them to strengthen and encourage another. Life is a two-way street. If we have been revitalized and our courage renewed by the knowledge that someone cares about us, then what of our own duty? Oh, may we never fail to find the time or the opportunity to speak these encouraging words to a struggling fellow Christian. Little do we know their heartbreak, their inner turmoil or their urgent need to hear a word from us to cheer them on life's way.

But what if circumstances are such that there is no human aid available in times of desperate need, or no chance to turn to a friend who might speak an encouraging word to us? What then shall be our course of action? Over the centuries comes the answer from King David himself. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1-2).

How can this be, when we no longer hear an audible voice, when we walk by faith alone? Oh, storm-tossed child, stop and look to the wealth of advice, encouragement and admonition in God's written Word! Prayerfully peruse its pages and watch the faithful of old come alive before your mind's eye. Follow the record of their bitter defeats, their struggles with self, and their ultimate glorious victories. Feel the utter despair of Peter as he denies his Lord; but then, rise triumphantly with him as he casts aside the old nature and becomes a tower of strength to the infant Church. Can't you hear him say, "I am counting on you—if I could gain the victory so can you"? With such an abundance of help available to us at any time of need, our determination to be victorious over sin should increase a hundredfold.

We are standing on the threshold of a bright and wonderful new age, a time when life will take on new meaning and direction. Forever vanished will be the disappointments, the weariness and the constant struggle of this mortal existence. Life, real life with new hopes and new aspirations will burst upon our view. Yes, it will all be ours to enjoy—if—if—if—.

I am counting on YOU to be there. Will you help me, too?

MM

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## IS THIS (FOOLISHNESS)



## for CHRISTIANS?

# The Art of Blame-Passing

**M**OST OF US are good at it even if we think we haven't had much practice. Something in us does not naturally delight in accepting responsibility for wrong. Even if we do not express ourselves openly, we generally feel the fault was someone else's. Or we blame circumstances.

It is an old art. Did not Adam say, "The woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me the fruit and I ate it"? And not to be outdone, Eve in her turn said to God, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

Since the time of Adam and Eve, the practice has not ceased. We instinctively refuse to acknowledge personal responsibility, personal guilt, personal blame. We try to fool ourselves (and as many others as we can) into thinking that there are plausible reasons why we shouldn't be blamed for our actions. Psychologists call it rationalization. It is always possible to rationalize a wrong.

But rationalizing accomplishes nothing. It neither makes the wrong *right* nor prevents its recurrence. In fact, if anything, it makes us the more likely to repeat the wrong, for where has any lesson been learned if all can be easily explained away?

Blame-passers are not new. For centuries men have appealed to such cunning "arts" as astrology, believing that somehow the stars control their destinies, that what they think and feel and will is determined by the signs of the zodiac. Don't blame them for what they do. Blame the stars.

But these blame-passers have apparently never read God's challenge to Babylon in isa. 47:13-14: "Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up and save thee from these things which are to come. Behold, they are like stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame." Neither, I suspect, have they read God's stern warning to Israel in Jeremiah 10:2, "Learn not the ways of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven." Even Shakespeare wrote, "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings."

Yet rather than admit that the fault is in themselves as underlings and sinners, these blame-passers try to get out from under the burden of personal responsibility by blaming Mars or Jupiter.

Still other people appeal to psychology. The stars don't determine how a person acts, they argue, but the laws of chemistry and physics do. They tell us there is no God, no soul, no mind, no consciousness, no so-called psyche, no purpose, no thought, no will, no freedom, no choice. Thus there's no responsibility, no guilt, and no blame. People only *imagine* that they make decisions and carry out intentions. Human beings are like computers, machines that operate according to the way they are programmed. Thus, they reason, just as you don't kick your refrigerator when it doesn't run, don't blame yourself for your misbehavior—even if some people charge you with responsibility and guilt. But this is not God's way of thinking. Before Him we are responsible.

Still other people pass the blame onto the devil. They say that they are not responsible for the wrong they do—the "devil made me do it." An alibi, to be sure, but one that will not stand before either reason or evidence, for "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:14-15).

Still others who wish to pass the blame appeal to theology. They argue that God in His eternal power has predestinated everything that comes to pass, so we are helpless creatures of His arranging. They quote Proverbs 16:4, "The Lord has made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." They love to quote Amos 6:6: "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

Or they quote Rom. 9:15-16, "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Appealing to these texts the unbiblical blame-passers declare that God has decreed whatever we think or say or do; consequently, some are in positions to prepare for everlasting life, and hence will be saved by doing very little; others are in situations in which it is impossible to live happily or usefully for God, and so cannot help themselves toward salvation. We are no more free than an axe in the hands of a lumberjack or the scalpel in the fingers of a surgeon.



But God's sovereignty does not release us from blame when we err or cancel out human responsibility. In making "all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil," He did not decree in advance that the wicked must be wicked; they choose to be wicked of their own free will, and the Lord has prepared for them "the day of evil" or judgment—which will be "evil" for them because they are not able to face their record unashamed. And when the prophet Amos said, "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" he was speaking from another angle entirely than that which would appear on the surface. As the margin suggests, a better rendering of the thought might be: "Shall there be evil in the city, and shall not the Lord do somewhat?" Indeed He *will* do somewhat; He will take action against the willfully disobedient. Why? Because He has made every individual responsible. This has always been His method. As we read in Joshua 24:15, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve, . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Recall that great passage in Ezekiel 18: "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die." The thrust of this tremendous passage is sharp and clear: Every human being stands in a direct relationship to God, and that implies personal responsibility. Each individual who sins is personally answerable to God and will be punished for his own guilt. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom 14:12).

We must face the inescapable fact of personal responsibility. Any appeal to astrology, psychology, or theology is utterly futile. There is a text in the book of

Amos that applies (5:15): "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate." It is something we must do. We cannot ignore God's words. Someday—to our unbounded joy or everlasting dismay—they will be true, and there will be no blame to pass: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11).

Let us hold stubbornly to the position that was stated long ago in these words: that God will give "to every man according to his work" (Rev. 22:12).

### **Blamepassing: How It Works**

#### **College Professor:**

*"Such rawness in a student is a shame;  
Poor high school preparation is to blame."*

#### **High School Principal:**

*"It's plain to see the boy's a perfect fool!  
The fault lies strictly with the grammar school."*

#### **Grammar School Teacher:**

*"I would that from such dolts I might be spared;  
They send them up to me so unprepared!"*

#### **Kindergarten Teacher:**

*"Ne'er such a lack of training did I see!  
What sort of person can that mother be?"*

#### **Mother:**

*"You stupid child! But then, you're not to blame;  
Your father's folks I know are all the same!"*  
—Selected.

---

## **Spread the Light!**

One night a lighthouse keeper picked up the small candle, lighted it, and started to climb the long stairway which led to the top of the tower, "Where are you taking me?" asked the candle of the lighthouse keeper, "To the top of the tower," he replied; "we must show the big ships how to find their way across the sea."

"But I can't do that," blurted the little candle, "I'm too small. No ship could find its way by my little light."

"Don't worry about that," said the lighthouse keeper.

When they reached the top of the tower, he gently tipped the little candle and with it lighted the big lantern that hung there.


Don't underestimate the breadth of your small sphere of influence. Your small glimmer of faith may light another lantern that shall someday shine throughout the world. However small your light, spread it. MM




# *And Still She Speaks*

## Part Four


The following lines are extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935). Seen together, they convey her practical approach to life and her keen appreciation of eternal values—which we trust will be of benefit to our readers.




*It is a work to rule our thoughts. But if we rule our thoughts our feelings will be right, and our actions will be right. And when we have learned to rule self in all things we will hear the gracious words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you."*




*If you relax your effort, you will go downhill. Climbing takes more work. The world is going downstream to destruction. It is a work to go upstream; but life is upstream—always higher. Eternal life cannot be obtained by going down.*



*How much more knowledge we could have if we would always pay attention, always remember the good things we hear. Everyone ought to listen and try to keep it in mind when something good and profitable is said. We are such leaky vessels.*




*The only way to crowd out the wrong thoughts is to fill the mind with good things instead of everything that comes along—an accident that happens, a storm in California, or an airplane crash. I will not allow myself to read on and on about such things in the newspaper—if I did I would want to know all the details, how it happened, how many were killed, etc. Think instead that there will be no accidents in God's finished handiwork. How glorious! But man's works, how soon they can end!*




*We must not be set in our own ways; we must accustom ourselves to disciplining our own ways and thoughts.*


*How slow we have been to keep in memory the wonderful things God has spoken, and the wonderful fulfillment of the prophetic word! There are so many prophecies in the Word telling of Christ's coming, if we will just keep them in mind. Do you not know that faith comes as a result of evidence impressed upon the mind? If we do not keep the force of evidence in mind, our faith will weaken.*




*It is much easier to warn someone else, but we first have to take a warning ourselves. We have a warning to give to the nations—that God's judgments are coming; but the uppermost thought in our minds must be that we need to take time to be holy. The world rushes on seeking foolishness and pleasure and indulging in every iniquity.*



*We need to meditate on these thoughts of God and apply them to ourselves, fortify our powers mightily, fortify against those pitfalls that we once fell in. You know, naturally we would get stirred up over this and indignant over that, and we would speak out hastily before thinking. Then, after we have spoken, we might think more calmly and regret what we had said. But we want to think, we want to consider before we say anything. It is a lesson that we must learn: think, consider, and control this unruly tongue. How many times when we speak on the impulse of the moment and are not governed by evidence, we regret it afterward. We should see what moves us to speak, consider what is the motive behind our words.*



*We do not all have the same disease in the natural, nor do we in the spiritual; but whatever our besetments, we must put them away if we want to share in the glory of that coming Day. And we must put these besetments away now while we have time and opportunity. God is not fooling with us. He has told us and we must do it.*



*When God says to be not conformed to this world or pattern after it, we must obey.*

# MEGIDDO MESSAGE INDEX 1981

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A ..... Article  
D ..... Debate  
Ed ..... Editorial  
FB ..... Finally, Brethren  
Ill ..... Illustration  
Med ..... Meditating on the Word  
Po ..... Poem  
Q ..... Question answered (Inquiry)  
QA ..... Question answered in article  
S ..... Sermon  
SS ..... Searching the Scriptures  
St ..... Story

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Paul said this truth worked in him mightily, and I wonder if it is working in us mightily. It is an easy work, easy to do it if we only will. But oh, the danger! Are we going to allow the petty cares of life, its pleasures and the lust of other things, to choke out the word and we become unfruitful?



If something does not go just right, or if someone does not do what we think he should, that is no excuse to get upset and lose our patience. We must have "all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." When something does not go right, we must see it as such a wonderful opportunity to develop the new nature.



If we just think of this every day of our lives, that somebody is going to try us, is going to say something or do something we do not want them to, it will help us to be on our guard.



We are naturally strong in our ways and we want to do what we want to do, but we had better let go our own way. If you are accustomed to having your own way, you are not going to break it down in a minute.



If we fill our minds with something good, we will get the hundredfold in this life. I know because I have had it already—more than a hundredfold has it brought me!

I think back to some I knew when young and through middle life, and see where they have drifted and gone! and oh, I realize how much more comfort Truth brings, how much more hope and joy and present comforts. Most of the ones I knew in my younger days have passed away; some are still living, but what does life amount to for them? Yet while we enjoy the present, with all its little petty trials, and get so much comfort out of what our hope brings to us now, what is this compared to that home so sublime?

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Oh, if parents would bear this in mind and teach their children to hate evil and iniquity, how much better the world would be! To abhor deceit, lying, pride and foolishness is the beginning of the wisdom which will give life eternal. If we had been taught this all our life, what a blessing it would be!



We must not find any enjoyment in foolish talking. Foolishness is as natural to the old nature as breathing. Foolishness is one of the thirteen evils enumerated in Mark 7:21. We should rejoice and be happy, but not foolish. Guard against foolishness wherever you are.



You have to watch what you read. Some of us are natural readers. Some of us can pick up things at a glance; we have to have a double guard, a continual watch in this day of evil, because we have to redeem the time. Time is so precious; we have none to spare.



I would rather be little than to have all the honor the world can give, would not you? I would rather be something in God's sight, and being little can make us somebody in His sight. I must not be thinking what great and wonderful things I have done and get puffed up thinking I know something of this Bible. I must think what great things God has done for me.



We cannot wait until our feet stumble on the dark mountain and the shadow of death overtakes us before we serve the Lord. I would hate to have the opportunity of doing God's will and then wait till the shadow of death hovers near to begin it.



If we really go to work we can do the work of a month in a week, and the work of a week in a day, and the work of a year in a month.

# Do Fossil Records in the Rocks Prove Evolution?

By Jerry Bergman, Ph. D.

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SOME evolutionists claim that the sciences of geology and paleontology have found the strongest proof of their theory. It is true that often in the "older" layers of strata of earth scientists find fossils of comparatively "simple" life forms, and in the more "recent" strata they find the so called "higher" forms of life. Therefore, it is assumed, as new layers were deposited, and as life was evolving and more fossils were being formed, the record of the rocks would show a picture of life evolving.

There are, though, many exceptions to this generalization. Sometimes, the order found is the opposite of that expected. An examination of the whole record in the rocks does not find evidence of a slow evolution from family to family, but many families remain constant and new families often appear suddenly with no hint of having gone through long periods of gradual development.

One who has read extensively into the subject of the fossil record finds that there are many problems and many questions that are not answered. As stated in the magazine *Further Evidence* (January, 1978, p15), "The most direct evidence for human evolution consists of fossil remains of early ancestors." Yet there are numerous problems with understanding, interpreting, dating, and making use of this fossil "evidence." The main problem is the fact that actually *very few significant fossils have been found* (the vast majority and the important ones, are of modern animals). Those important finds tend to consist of teeth, parts of jaw bones, and small parts of other skeletal remains. Usually these are very fragmented, damaged, decayed and in poor condition. It has been said that all of the fossils together used to prove human evolution could be comfortably placed on a 4 x 8 foot table!

Thus, as the source quoted above concludes, "The earliest days of our past are still quite mysteriously and poorly understood, and it will undoubtedly be many years until we are capable of thoroughly unraveling our earliest origins."

The fact that there is a wide gap in the fossil record

is clearly shown in a number of statements. For example, Dr. Glen Isaac, in the June 22, 1978 *Nature* magazine stated, "At present the trail of fossil hominoids can be followed back with only minor gaps and breaks to about four million years ago. There we effectively lose the trail, since virtually no fossilised hominoids are known anywhere from the time period between 5 and 9 Myr (million years) ago. Beyond 9 Myr back to 20 Myr science has acquired from Africa and Eurasia a rich fossil record of fossil hominoids (that is, members of the superfamily that included humans and apes). Fossils classified as belonging to this time range include *Sivapithecus*, *Gigantopithecus*, *Ramapithecus* and *Dryopithecus*, and so on. However, opinion is divided as to whether any of these forms can with confidence be identified as ancestors of mankind and/or as members of the hominidae...filling the 4-9 Myr gap [is]...a clear need in the advance of paleoanthropology."

Although this discussion shows great variations in the form of dates, there are clear problems with dates, as shown from the following quote: "Problems of chronology continue to hamper discussions of correlation and phylogeny; we do not know with sufficient precision the relative age of the Transvaal and the East African sites, or any of the African sites and the Indonesian sites" (*Nature* article, quoted above). There are clear unbridgeable gaps in the fossil records—and certain groups tend to be clearly "apelike" while others tend to be clearly hominoid, or relating to man. This information, generally available only in technical and scientific journals, is common knowledge to biologists specifically studying this question, but most outsiders are simply unaware of the problems that exist. Obviously, as we have noted, the main evidence of evolution is lacking, causing serious problems for the entire hypothesis.

If evolution were true, the fossil record should show that life throughout the ages has been progressing continually from one form to another, taking millions of years to bridge each separate family. Untold mil-

lions of years should reveal strata with fossils of fish becoming four-legged amphibians, which, in time, evolved into reptiles, whose scales become feathers and front feet become wings, while other reptiles and amphibians slowly became mammals, then apes, and finally men. These changing creatures supposedly lived and died for hundreds of millions of years as geological strata were being deposited; yet no fossil has been found that clearly shows even one of the millions of necessary transitional forms, although some fossils are assumed to be transitional forms (extensive research has found that they are not clearly transitional forms, but only unusual animals).

The earth has preserved in fossil form millions of creatures from both families living today, and some extinct forms; but even these are not clearly transitional forms. Of the many fossils of extinct forms, there are no series of fossils showing the evolution of new organs; likewise, there is no fossil evidence (nor contemporary observation of) scales changing into feathers, fish fins into feet, feet into wings, amphibians developing fur, or snakes developing feet. Darwin stated that:

Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graded organic chain; and this perhaps is the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory [of evolution]. The explanation lies, however, in the extreme imperfection of the geological record. (Charles Darwin, *Origin of the Species*, p. 49)

The record, though, if we look closely, tends to suffer from "extreme imperfection" at those critical points where families are being bridged, yet tends to be perfectly adequate within each family! Man has uncovered thousands of fossils since Darwin, but the record is as imperfect as it was in Darwin's time.

The fossil record begins in rock layers which the geologists call the "Cambrian," an era estimated by scientists to have begun some half a billion years ago. In these layers life first appears, bursting into the record of the rocks suddenly and in a great diversity of forms. These sea creatures give no hint of age-long periods of gradual development from shapeless protoplasm. In the pre-Cambrian rock layers, immediately beneath the Cambrian layers (which has a large number of fossils) *almost no fossils are found*. Without fossil evidence, evolutionists still claim that life existed for a billion years before the time of the Cambrian strata. They must have that long period of time to allow non-living matter to evolve into a speck of protoplasm, and into the great variety of highly organized life forms that are found in the Cambrian rocks.

As noted above, the first well-preserved assemblage of organisms is found in the Cambrian rocks—specifically, at the beginning of the Paleozoic era. But the Cambrian period is believed to be far along in earth's history; and judging from the stage of development represented by the Cambrian animals and plants, if evolution be true, life must have already been in existence for some time.

How can some scientists be sure life existed millions of years before the Cambrian when they have no direct evidence of this? Remember that it is assumed that life began some 1½ to 4 or 5 billion years ago, but a fossil record of life for only ½ to 1 billion years is claimed. Three-quarters of the record is missing, and the first billion years is completely absent! One scientist states:

In some regions, beds of almost unaltered Proterozoic sedimentary rocks (the layer just under the Cambrian) have been preserved. Here, if anywhere, we may expect to find the evidence of pre-Cambrian life, and many able paleontologists have searched long and carefully for fossils in these rocks. The results have so far been discouraging. The supposed fossils of lime-secreting algae, which occur in abundance in some Proterozoic formations and which only a few years ago were cited as the oldest known organisms, have later proved to be of inorganic origin; and in spite of many hopeful announcements the reported discoveries of bacteria, protozoa and anthropods are without good foundation. The only fossils thus far identified with a fair degree of certainty are those of certain annelid worms, and what may be sponge spicules. Because of this scarcity of fossils, the whole of the vast period of time represented by Archeozoic and Proterozoic rocks has been called the "cryptoeon," or the age of hidden life.

Of the meager and wholly inadequate record of pre-Cambrian fossils, one scientist observed: "This is certainly not an impressive array to represent the life record of more than three-fourths of the history of the earth."

The record in the rocks indicates that life appeared suddenly and in complex form, and that new families abruptly entered existence, without apparent predecessors. The fossil record testifies that life never crosses the bounds (or boundaries) of family groups or "kinds," though it varies widely within these boundaries. Paleontology has found that the first bats were



very similar to modern bats, and the same is true of most animals. The first birds had perfectly formed feathers, and the first insects were well developed, according to those that have been found in amber (almost one-fourth of a million are preserved, some are even complete down to their smallest body hairs!).

The famous French biologists Lecomte du Nouy (1947:72, 75, 79) concluded that "Each group, order, or family *seems to be born suddenly* and we hardly ever find the forms which link them to the preceding strain. When we discover them, they are already completely differentiated. Not only do we find practically no transitional forms, but in general it is impossible to authentically connect a new group with an ancient one." He also concludes that reptiles appear suddenly, and they cannot be linked with any terrestrial ancestors. He makes the same admission regarding mammals, noting that birds have all of the characteristics of "absolute creation."

Lecomte du Nouy refers to the "characteristics of absolute creation" as unsatisfactory "because to the evolutionists, the theory of creation is heresy." They often even refuse to consider the evidence for creation. Note the following statements by two famous evolutionists. 1) Sir Arthur Keith: "Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it only because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable." 2) D. M. S. Watson: "Evolution itself is accepted by zoologists not because it has been observed to occur or...can be proved by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible."

Evolution has no clear starting point, and no living beginning for its evolutionary chain reaction. The ancients thought they had the answer in spontaneous generation of life from inanimate matter. Aristotle

believed worms, fleas, mice, and even dogs sprang to life "spontaneously" from moist "Mother Earth." This was believed for centuries, actually until the late 1800's. In 1668, Redi discovered that maggots appeared in meat *only* after flies had deposited their eggs in it. When the microscope revealed the existence of bacteria (1683), the scientists insisted that the microscopic organisms "spontaneously generated," to give evolution its start. Pasteur's discoveries, though, disproved this idea. Some evolutionists have even explored the theory that life came from another planet, via star dust, meteors, comets, or even a spaceship!

Darwin conceded: "I imagine that probably all organic beings which ever lived on this earth descended from some primitive form which was first called into life by the Creator." But to admit the possibility of *one or a few* creations is to admit the possibility of thousands! If God made one animal, could He not also make two, or three or more? Hence, the majority of evolutionists today shun the subject of how life began. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, "all biologists were convinced that spontaneous generation was definitely disproved for all forms of living organisms." Du Nouy concluded that "there is not a single hypothesis, today, which gives (a fully acceptable) explanation of the birth of life or of natural evolution."

Granting a starting point, how did the one-celled beginning evolve to humans? Many explanations have been advanced, and each discarded in the face of advancing knowledge. More than a century ago the French evolutionist Lamarck said that creatures acquired certain characteristics from their environment which in turn were passed on to their offspring, who developed them further until, in time, radical changes resulted and new species were formed. The fallacy of Lamarck's theory is that acquired characteristics are *not* inherited. *Life* magazine (March 17, 1947) reported "Until 1900 many biologists believed that characteristics plants and animals acquired from their environment were passed to their offspring. Modern genetics has proved they are not."

Darwin stated of Lamarck: "Heaven forfend [protect] me from Lamarck's nonsense." Darwin noticed that the offspring from the same parent varied in size, shape, color, disproving Lamarck. He also noted the struggle for existence, and concluded that useful variations survived while useless ones perished. While this *tends* to be true with some traits, it is a gross oversimplification and over-generalization. Even if it were true, variation of characteristics already present in the animal is one thing; to evolve an entirely new organ is

(Continued on page 24)

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# Inquiries and Answers

## Concerning Elijah and Enoch

**“What about the writing that came to King Jehoram from Elijah (II Chron. 21:12)? If that writing was a letter directly to the king, it seems strange that it would take ten years to get to him.”**

Your observation seems logical. But we have no proof that it was a letter directed to the king. Several translations say a “writing” instead of a “letter”. The Hebrew word translated “writing” in the King James Version is *miktab* and means “a thing written, the characters, a document (letter, copy, edict, poem).” When we think of a letter, we think of a writing mailed to a person delivered by the postal service in a reasonably short period of time. But this was not the meaning twenty-four hundred or more years ago.

We know from several passages in Kings that the Lord had informed Elijah of events which were to take place in the future. One such passage is found in I Kings 19:17, “And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu, shall Elisha slay.” In I Kings 21:23, the Lord informed Elijah that “the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.” These were future predictions which could only have been made by Divine knowledge. If Elijah was given that knowledge in connection with Jezebel, could he not have been given that same knowledge in regard to Jehoram? Is it not reasonable to believe that Elijah could have written down a message from the Lord regarding Jehoram and that that message did not come to the attention of the king for a number of years after it was written? The fact that the writing was by Elijah does not in any way prove that Elijah was *on earth* at the time the king read the message. To use this incident to prove that Elijah was not taken from this earth when the Bible says he was is nothing but assumption.

Let us consider the evidence that Elijah was taken from this earth. The account reads as follows in the *New English Bible*:

The time came when the Lord would take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah and

Elisha left Gilgal, and Elijah said to Elisha ‘Stay here; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘As the Lord lives, your life upon it, I will not leave you.’ So they went down country to Bethel. There a company of prophets came out to Elisha and said to him, ‘Do you know that the Lord is going to take your lord and master from you today?’ ‘I do know’, he replied; ‘say no more.’

The same was repeated at Jericho. Then at the Jordan the story continues:

Fifty of the prophets followed them and stood watching from a distance as the two of them stopped by the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to right and left, and they both crossed over on dry ground. While they were crossing, Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken from you.’ Elisha said, ‘Let me inherit a double share of your spirit.’ ‘You have asked a hard thing,’ said Elijah. ‘If you see me taken from you, may your wish be granted; if you do not, it shall not be granted.’

They went on, talking as they went, and suddenly there appeared chariots of fire and horses of fire, which separated them one from the other, and Elijah was carried up in the whirlwind to heaven. When Elisha saw it, he cried, ‘My father, my father, the chariots and the horsemen of Israel!’, and he saw him no more.

Even then, some wondered what might have happened to Elijah, so some men went to Elisha and said,

‘Your servants have fifty stalwart men, Let them go and search for your master; perhaps the spirit of the Lord has lifted him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some

valley.' But he said, 'No, you must not send them.' They pressed him, however, until he had not the heart to refuse. So they sent out the fifty men but, though they searched for three days, they did not find him. When they came back to Elisha, who had remained at Jericho, he said to them, 'Did I not tell you not to go?' (II Kings 2:1-18)

Is there any incident in the whole Bible better documented than this? It was common knowledge among the prophets of Bethel and Jericho that Elijah was to be taken away to heaven. Elisha knew it. The event was witnessed by the prophets of Jericho. Elijah promised Elisha that if he saw him taken away his wish to inherit a double share of his spirit would be granted. That Elisha did see Elijah taken up, and that Elisha did receive Elijah's power was confirmed by the prophets who were watching and said, "The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha." The fact that the fifty men searched for three days and could find no trace of him also confirms the fact that he did not die but was taken from this earth.

If we cannot believe this account, which was witnessed by so many and confirmed by the miracles subsequently performed by Elisha, what can we believe? If God was just deceiving those prophets and giving us a fantastic tale, then it follows that the whole Bible is unreliable and we should discard it.

But this is definitely not the fact. If we do not understand the Bible, we must question our understanding of it. But we must not question the Biblical account itself. The Bible is the word of God. Too much Bible exegesis is slanted toward fragmentation, not toward unification. The Bible is the written word which God in His infinite wisdom moved upon the prophets and apostles to record for us. If we array one writer against another, we create confusion and contradictions which do not exist in the Biblical writings themselves.

The writer of II Kings states that Elijah was carried up in the whirlwind into heaven. The prophets of Jericho witnessed the event. Elisha was a witness. The fifty men searched and could not find him. The prophet Malachi closes the Old Testament with this message from God: "Look, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes" (Mal. 4:5, NEB). Jesus told His disciples, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11) (and this was after John the Baptist was beheaded).

To say that Elijah died like other men, to say that God through Malachi is deceiving us; to say that the great and terrible day of the Lord refers to Christ's first coming when He was born of Mary; to say that the Lord made a mistake when He told Malachi to say, "I will send Elijah the prophet," that what He really meant was to say that

He would send some man, or group of men, or a reincarnation of Elijah, or John the Baptist; to say that Jesus was wrong when He said, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things," that He meant John the Baptist, when John had already been beheaded, is to show—at the very least—extreme presumption, a disregard of the facts, and a total lack of trust in God.

We stand one hundred per cent behind the Word of God and believe that Elijah *will* come before the return of Christ, and no man can shake our faith in this fact.

**"I believe Enoch and Elijah died because it is appointed unto all men 'once to die.' Read Hebrews 9:27."**

Hebrews 9:27 reads, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." This text is sometimes used to prove that all men must die before the judgment. However, how can this refer to physical death when Paul informs us in I Corinthians 15:51, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed"? And in I Thess. 4:17 he says, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them (those who have died and been resurrected) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." And Jesus in John 11:26 says, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." This is expressed in more modern language in the New English Bible: "If a man has faith in me, even though he die he shall come to life; and no one who is alive and has faith shall *ever* die." There will be a few who will never taste of death.

A careful reading of the New Testament shows that there is more than one kind of death spoken of. Even in our language today we speak of more than one kind of death. Any dictionary, even an abridged dictionary, lists "spiritual decay," and "loss of spiritual life" as two meanings of "death." But there are still other meanings of death as used in the Scriptures. There is a death to sin. Speaking of Christ, Paul says, "In that he died, he died unto sin once. . . . Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God" (Rom. 6:10-11). Applying this latter definition of death, we may say that it is appointed unto men, all those who will be accepted at judgment, to *die to sin and all sinful practices*; it is not necessary that they die a physical death.

If we use Hebrews 9:27 to show that either Enoch or Elijah could not have been translated but must have died a physical death, we make Elisha, the prophets of Bethel, the prophets of Jericho and the writer of Hebrews prevaricators, for all testified that Elijah was translated or "taken up" or did not see death. And what is yet more serious, we make the God who supported these men and delivered their message to us a liar.

Hebrews 11:5 seems plain enough: "By faith Enoch

was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him."

**"You state that if Enoch and Elijah actually died, Scripture would contradict itself; but actually just the opposite is true. In I Cor. 15:22 we read, 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' Since only Christ was born of the Holy Spirit and all other men are the seed of Adam, you make a contradiction when you say that Enoch and Elijah did not die but were translated."**

Your alleged contradiction seems to have no foundation. If you take the phrase in I Cor. 15:22, "For as in Adam all die," to mean that all the human race die a natural death, then by the same logic we must take the next phrase, "so in Christ shall all be made alive" to mean that all the human race will be made alive (resurrected), which the Bible does not teach.

However, in the context of the chapter, let us try to consider Paul's thought. Paul is discussing the subject of physical death and the power that can overcome it, resurrection. Hence his statement, that "in Adam all die." The human race is mortal, subject to death. But those who die "in Christ" *will* be resurrected. Did not Paul say elsewhere that the "dead in Christ shall rise" (I Thess. 4:16)? Their resurrection is just as sure as that they died. However, this is not saying that all *must* die. In fact, we are told distinctly that there will be some who *never* die (see John 11:25-26; I Thess. 4:16-18).

Also, we should note that there is no suggestion of Adamic condemnation in this verse. Nor does it tell us that Adam died physical death because he sinned. Death was in the world long before Adam. But "Adam," meaning "man," is a term used here because Adam was the first of our earthborn race called to serve God. And all "in Adam" are, like Adam, mortal, subject to death, and in need of resurrection if they die before they are called to Judgment. MM

## In Training

**T**HE DAYS are racing by, informing us that the time is short. To the serious minded Christian bent on gaining eternity, this means full speed ahead; giving the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip and be the losers.

We are not without ample evidence as to the times we are living in. Prophecy after prophecy is shouting at us from one corner of the globe to the other corner. Is our faith strong or weak? If weak and faltering, it is because we have not been as yet impressed deeply enough by the spiritual realities of what is actually required of us to really and honestly move us into our most productive action in the service of the Lord.

Training self and practicing to do is not the easiest task to face. Doing the same things over and over again can be tiresome to the natural mind. Take the developing of patience, for example. It is a virtue most needed and desired by all of us; yet how quickly it can wear out when we are confronted by some unexpected interference, when we would rather not be bothered at just that moment. But we have the unmistakable Word of the Lord reminding us, "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing." There is no getting around it or evading it. It is plain.

As patience was a part of the likeness of our great Example, so must it be a part of us; and besides this, we must give all diligence to add every other virtue listed in the oracles of God for our complete spiritual covering if we would be acceptable.

We grow in strength and divine wisdom by facing the hours of difficulty before us and doing something about them. And God who sees all and knows all comes to our rescue if we sincerely implore His help from the depths of our souls. Every test or trial will make us strong, when we have the courage to obey and do.

Prayer is the most effective weapon in the life of a true Christian. Jesus believed in it and practiced it and admonished all His followers to do the same. Prayer gives strength of courage, removes mountains otherwise unmovable; is a constant source of human contact with the Divine mind. Prayer in the early morning hours is a stabilizing factor for the events of the whole day.

Another weapon against our human weaknesses is the stimulating power of reading and meditating. The more we read and meditate, the greater will be our depth of perception. We will be settled and grounded, our minds constantly dwelling in the heavenly realms of God's most wonderful promises.

South Amboy, New Jersey

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# Meditating on the Word

## This, Too, Shall Pass Away

**"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.  
What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"  
(Ecclesiastes 1:2-3)**

**I**F YOU have ever walked along a sandy beach close to the water's edge, you may have noticed how your feet left their imprint in the soft wet sand. But only for a moment. The waves roll in, and the water quickly smooths out the indenture. Other travelers passing only moments later would never know you had walked there.

How much like our short span of life! We walk this way but once; the waves of oblivion dash with all their fury, and all traces of our existence shall be obliterated from the earth forever unless we are following in the footsteps of Him whose precepts are carved in the very Rock of Ages.

But the trouble with us is, we forget that our life is so transient. We reflect that our days are few, and then go heedlessly along as if there were no end to them.

As we look around and see a world full of doubt, fear, and uncertainty, a feeling of despair sweeps over us and we are caused to cry out, "Is there nothing in all this wide world upon which I may place my hand and say, this is forever?" But our only answer is the echo of our voice, for nothing conceived in the mind of man or fashioned by his fingers can withstand the ravages of time and decay; everything returns, soon or late, to the dust whence it came.

Nor should the thought of "all is vanity" disturb us; for if, when we find ourselves beset with trouble, sorrow, and care, we reflect, "this, too, shall pass away," how much lighter our burden would become!

Then, too, when our world seems like a vast flower garden, when the days flit by without a care, let us watch that we do not become smug and forget the Giver of all good. These are the days in which we must be careful to redeem every moment, for they were

given to cheer and encourage; days in which to store up strength for coming storms; calm days shall not always continue.

Have we prayed that some weight might be removed from our shoulders, or that the polishing wheel might cease to rub? Murmur not, for it, too, shall pass away. Although we may not realize it, we are gaining more strength by carrying the weight of the load; and though the shaping wheel may rub until we feel we cannot bear to have that spot touched again, when we cease to resist it, the abrasive feels less and less severe. Then one day we may awake to find the Potter has turned the vessel; His skilled eye has perceived that the surface is worn smooth; the abrasive will polish no more. If the vessel would become perfect, its other deformities must be exposed to the polishing process.

It is a pity we mortals are so slow to learn, but it seems it takes the things that hurt to impress us deeply enough to cause us to change our nature. We should not resist this great opportunity to become polished. One day we may long for this opportunity to again be our lot. The trouble is, opportunity looks so much like self-denial and hard work that oftentimes we fail to recognize it.

Is there someone who tries us? Remember, it is not for long; this, too, shall pass away. Are we letting their presence be the instrument to strengthen the timbers of patience and forgiveness in our souls? When circumstances change, as they always do, will we realize what we *could* have done and wish that once more that figure might enter our door? Time quite often will soften an unkind attitude, heal wounds and clear the head of petty grievances and prejudices.

If others do not always agree with our ideas and decisions in the problems of daily life, we should not become irritated. In a few days, weeks or months, we may not be so sure of things of which today we feel absolutely certain.

Thoughts are powerful influencers of our lives. Though they may start as mere cobwebs in the mind, they will grow into mighty chains to bind us in bundles to be burned; or, if our thoughts are pure and upright, they will bind our life in a bundle with the Lord.

We shall become as small as our controlling desires, and as great as our dominant aspirations. One man can fashion from a piece of wood a priceless violin; another man may use the same piece of wood to patch a pigsty. One builder will use the timber of a tree to build a casino; another builder will use the timbers to build a hospital.

So is life full of opportunities and possibilities for doing good or bad. Always there is the constant choosing. There is just one way of doing right, but many ways of doing wrong. God left us free moral agents to choose either that which will endure or that which will soon pass away. Being mortal, the needs and desires of us all are basically alike; only by the thoughts that fill our minds do we rise above the level of ordinary men.

It is not natural to be humble. We all are prone to think too highly of ourselves, to feel sure that we are a little—if not much—better than others around us. We may feel we have superior ability, are doing more for the cause of God, or have given up more for His sake; or perhaps we feel our family background is superior and more refined. Possessions and even good looks may enter in to swell our self-esteem. But what is a little of what we may consider great gifts, grace or physical beauty compared with those of a celestial being? There is no comparison. And as for possessions, a man's life consisteth not in their abundance. Remember, God can as easily take them away as give them.

Well then, we may reflect, maybe I'm not much better or even as good as my immediate friends; but surely I am far above many in the world. But let us consider a moment. There are some who profess no religion who have a very high standard of morality. They would not dream of harming their neighbor; they even try to control their temper and keep their mind free from all envy and jealousy; they try to practice the Golden Rule, doing good to all. Does our righteousness far exceed theirs? We must be extremely careful, or the line of demarcation will not be as great as we imagined it to be; the gulf between the world and us may not be as wide or as deep as we dreamed. Is it not a sobering thought that we may not even be consid-

ered a part of the house in the sight of our Lord, only a temporary filler or protection—the hay, wood and stubble that will soon pass away?

What is the gospel as we apply it to ourselves? Do others see it in us a meaningless thing, just a front; or can they perceive it to be a moving power, a mighty surging force? There is need for each of us to trim our lamps so they will give more light and less smoke. If we carry them in front of us they will lighten our pathway, causing our shadow to fall behind us, making a grave for our past mistakes and follies; then they, too, shall pass away.

If physical pain or suffering is our daily lot, it will help us to keep in mind that this, too, shall pass away, and look forward to the time when this mortal shall put on immortality.

As we go along we realize how kindly Providence has mingled the cup. No one gets all the sweet, nor does another get all the bitter. How true that "I am without many things I could desire, but I have a thousand mercies beyond what I deserve."

To stand aside and watch another receive credit may be quite difficult, especially if you were the silent, unknown worker who had borne the brunt of the task. This is the time to look steadily to the ultimate, not the immediate reward; to push down the feeling of being slighted or unappreciated. Remember, this, too, shall pass away, and that this may have happened to test you on that very point, giving you the opportunity to gain a victory over your lower nature; or that particular person may have needed encouragement far more than you. Some clay needs but the brightness of the sun, while some other must pass through a furnace of fire. The memory of those recording angels is long; all is written there; so what does it matter if man's lips fail to praise, if only the angels smile?

Is there yet someone or something that stands in our way of making a full surrender? Let us say to it in the words of our text, "vanity of vanities. . . all is vanity." What treasure is there in the land of Egypt that we would repossess the stormy waters to secure? How foolish, then, to cling to anything that will hinder our flight; for that precious treasure, too, shall soon pass away. Let us hasten to give to God our most coveted possession, our heart.

Because our talents are few or small is no reason for us to hide them in the earth. The woods would be a very silent place if no birds sang there except those which sang the best. Strength and ability, too, will pass away with age. Only that which God gives His saints will endure—glory, honor, peace, happiness and life. When we have secured these, we will be glad that we counted even the best of this world as "vanity of vanities." MM

## Do Fossil Records in the Rocks Prove Evolution?

(Continued from page 18)

something else! As Lock said: "Selection, whether natural or artificial, can have no power in creating anything new." Hugo de Vries noted: "Natural selection may explain the survival of the fittest, but it cannot explain the arrival of the fittest." Coulter added: "The most fundamental objection to the theory of natural selection is that it cannot originate characters (or traits); it only selects among characters already existing."

Today, most evolutionists have retreated from pure Darwinism, just as they previously had to

retreat from the theories of the "inheritance of acquired characteristics" (Lamarck) and spontaneous generation. Hence, recent theories try to use mega-mutations, or sudden changes to explain evolution. On examination, though, even these theories fall apart.

What can we conclude, but that trying to explain a creation without a creator is an exercise in futility. Not that man has not learned a great deal in his search, but his motives are questionable (is it that he does not *want* to acknowledge a Creator?), and his efforts often result in many blind alleys.

It would seem that a ready acknowledgment of the power and wonderment of the Great Creator would be a much more fruitful point of departure in expanding man's knowledge of the world around him. MM

## Keep On!

IT IS A great privilege and honor to be allowed to join in the race for the prize of life eternal. Which are we, a tortoise or a hare in this most important race of our life?

We are all familiar with Paul's writings likening this life of service to a race. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain" (I Cor. 9:24). The Americans, as well as the whole world, it seems, have become very health oriented. Running in marathon races is the "thing" of the day. The other day I heard a doctor say that he was running to become physically fit and that this was the most important goal in his life. He was actually "lost in the present in planning for the future (races)." He was running with the goal of perhaps prolonging, if but for a few years, his mortal life. Oh, how much more important should our race for immortal life be!

There is a great lesson to be learned in the story of the tortoise and hare. That hare was a quick, sly little fellow who started out with the greatest of speed. All the odds were in his favor. On the other hand, that slow moving tortoise, it seemed, just couldn't win. We all know the end of the story....the hare, becoming overconfident, decided to lie down and take a rest; he fell asleep and behold, the tortoise won the race!

How great is that first love we possess. We start our race with great fervor; nothing can slow us down. Overconfidence is a grave danger. When we think we stand, we should take heed lest we fall.

If only we'll keep written upon the tables of our hearts the words in Hebrews, 12th chapter, we could be sure of winning: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so

easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

The obstacles in our path at times seem insurmountable; but if we look to Jesus our Great Example, "the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,..." we will run with patience. As runners in the grandest race of all time, we should count the cost and run with determination to win that crown.

May we never ever become so weary in our race that we'll be found "wanting" when that day approaches and hear the saddest words ever spoken, "Depart from me ye that work iniquity." Falling short of winning that race will be the greatest loss of all. For, if we gain the whole world and lose our souls, what have we gained?

These words were printed on a bumper sticker I saw the other day: "Inflation has not affected the wages of sin; it still is death." This death is eternal, no going back and "re-running" the race then.

Please pray for us that we'll never give up but be like the little tortoise and keep on keeping on.

—B. P., Conyers, Georgia

## Every Day Success

WE WHO are living in the cool of the day have to be very careful, since we have no angels or prophets to speak to us and show us the right path to take, but only our faith in the written Word for our guide. We are told that "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). If not very careful we will find that we have been directing our own affairs and thoughts, doing what is right in our own eyes, instead of letting Christ lead us. This will not get us eternal life. Only if we heed the Master's voice will we take the strict measures with ourselves that are necessary in this critical hour between the closing of the night of darkness and that glorious day of Light. We must feel the need to walk in the steps of our Lord Jesus, for we are far into the night; tomorrow could be the break of the glorious New Day. Shall we be ready?

As we know that we are living in the last days of man's rule, we should strive earnestly to make every day's work a success. To think that we have the opportunity, if we avail ourselves of it, to become like Him, made into a New Person! It is a great work, the greatest work a mortal being can accomplish, to bring ourselves into subjection to God's Law in everything; but it can be done. So let us show by our actions that we intend to do it.

Christ pleased His Father in all things, yet He was tempted in all things as we are; He tells us in Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." To walk in His footsteps we must deny ourselves daily. Every time we practice self-denial we are stronger to meet other temptations as they come along; and come along they will until, spiritually speaking, we cut off our head and put on the head of Christ.

—M. S., Swansea, South Wales

## Sometime

*Sometime, when all life's lessons have been learned  
And this life's sun for evermore has set,  
The things which our weak judgment here has spurned,  
The things o'er which we grieve, with lashes wet,  
Will come before us in the Judgment's light  
And show us where we struggled hard to do;  
Then we shall see how all God's plans are right,  
And what most seemed reproof was love most true.*

*And we shall see how, while we cry and sigh,  
God's plans go on, as best for you and me,  
And how He heeded not our feeble cry,  
Because unto the end His eyes could see.  
And e'en as prudent parents disallow  
Too much of sweet to craving babyhood,  
So God perhaps is keeping from us now  
Life's sweetest things because it seemeth good.*

*And if sometime, commingled with sweet wine,  
We find life's wormwood, and rebel and shrink,  
Be sure a wiser hand than yours or mine  
Pours out the potion for our lips to drink.  
If you could push ajar the gates of life  
And stand within, and all God's workings see,  
You could interpret all this doubt and strife,  
And for each mystery could find the key.*

*But not today. Then be content, my heart;  
God's plans like lilies pure and white unfold.  
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;  
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.  
And when through patient toil we reach yon land,  
Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,  
Where we shall clearly know and understand,  
I'm sure that we will say: "God knoweth best."*

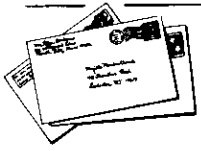
—Sel. and alt.

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*A thought from a book commenting on Peter's use of diligence in II Peter, chapter one: "Peter was of the active, motor type who must be always doing something, so it is appropriate for him to urge diligence. The Greek word rendered 'diligence' is much more colorful. It implies haste begotten by earnestness, and involves the idea of serious moral endeavor."*

*Peter wanted to see every minute crowded with earnest effort. There are many passages emphasizing this aspect of truth. "Let us labour...to enter that rest"; "not slothful in business"; "Study to show thyself approved." We are exhorted to be diligent because our ingrained tendency is to be slack... The shortness of time and the brevity of life should lead us to bend all our energies and employ all our powers in cultivating Christian character.*





# Letters

## Thrilled—in the Front Seat

I am really thrilled at all I hear on the cassettes. The sermons are so inspiring, heart searching, alerting us to pitfalls which we could overlook if our attention were not drawn to them.

We are looking forward to the time when we will not have to keep our homes locked up; when violence, robbery, and vandalism will be things of the past.

I have been listening to a program on the cassette—what a feast for me. What would life be like without this bread of heaven? It helps so much in doing the will of God, which is so necessary to win the crown of life.

It is very impressive to hear the urgency in the sermons and prayers, and I am thrilled to hear the hymns and songs. Yes, I've blessings uncountable. Seeing the beauty of right living, I feel transported to a front seat at the table of the lord.

The Kingdom series gives a glorious vista of the finished product. I imagined myself as a happy participant in its beauty, holiness and happiness. Gone are the frustrations, petty annoyances of little meaningless happenings which rub one the wrong way. Everyone is in accord, praising our God. It made me feel that I could press on.

I do love those sincere rich spiritual uplifts; they make me long to get away from self and all that would hinder me from reaching higher ground. The urgency of being ready has been forced home to me. I am working hard.

*Crewe, England*

N. T.

## In Such Abundance

The Psalmist exclaims, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." How could anyone in beholding the beauty of nature ever deny the existence of an all-wise Creator? Yet, God allows both the just and the unjust to enjoy it all. And, just think, this earth and all its beauty is nothing to compare with all the other worlds He has created.

God truly has been so good to us all. We really do have everything we need in such abundance. Surely, we have so much to be thankful for. We realize what a privilege it is to live in America where we do still have freedom of worship.

The September Message in honor of Maud Hembree was so interesting. None of us could hardly put it down until we finished reading it. Her sermons are such an inspiration—and her life! The fact that she made a missionary trip to my home town was very interesting indeed. She was right. There is "a veil of darkness over all the people."

*Conyers, Georgia*

B. P.

## Prophecies Are Fulfilling

What a lot of trouble and strife there is in the world at the present time, showing the day of Judgment is drawing very near. How we should look to ourselves and make sure we are walking in the strait and narrow path. God has been very good to us, giving us the extra time to work; may we not disappoint Him.

As we have seen the many prophecies fulfilled, we know God also will fulfill the prophecies for these last days. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

The brightest hope that is given to the faithful can be ours if we work for it with all our heart and with all our strength. Life everlasting, what a wonderful gift to receive!

I always enjoy the MESSAGE. The discussions between Rev. Nichols and Mr. Jamieson have been very interesting. It must have been very disappointing to Brother Nichols, for Mr. Jamieson didn't answer any of his questions. It was all science with Mr. Jamieson.

*Swansea, South Wales*

M. S.

## Sowing, Sowing—What?

How much we have to be thankful for here in Canada. To live next to a land gifted with the liberty of choice has had an enormous effect on Canadian life. What might our lot have been otherwise? Who can tell?

We are allowed to live peaceful lives and worship as we see fit. We are free to come and go anywhere in this vast land or abroad. We are free to gain all the worldly knowledge we can, if only one has the wherewithal to do so, and the desire.

But true freedom is not to do as one pleases, but to do as one ought to do. And this is not to go around sowing seeds and not know or care what we are sowing. Doing so would be gross negligence on our part.

A noted minister once said, "Suppose I meet a man who is sowing seeds and say: 'Greetings, stranger, what are you sowing?' 'Seeds.' 'What kind of seeds?' 'I don't know.' 'Don't you know whether it is good or bad?' 'No, I can't tell, but it is seed, that is all I want to know, and I am sowing it.' You would say that he was a first-class lunatic, wouldn't you? But he wouldn't be half so mad as the man who goes on sowing for time and eternity, and never asks himself what he is sowing or what the harvest will be."

We are told in Galatians 6:7 to not deceive ourselves, "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Today, Jesus is our Saviour, if we follow in His steps. But the day will soon come when He will be Judge of all covenant-makers. We want to sow in a manner whereby we can look forward with eager anticipation to the reaping time.

*Minnedosa, Manitoba*

E. H.

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## Really Happy

I have enjoyable hours each day, but the real happy hours for me are in serving God, even if it is just talking about Him.

I have been studying the Bible spiritually, placing each situation, historical or otherwise, in harmony with general Bible teaching to obtain Bible truths.

If my learning should end this day, I can testify that I have learned one thing, that no man-made road map, no directions, no instructions, or anything other than God's Holy Word is necessary to find the way to life. I need forgiveness every day. I'm sure, that's why I always seek Him out in all I do. And I can sure praise Him for Megiddo; for you have been such an inspiration and help.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

R. H.

## Appreciative

Words cannot express the thrill and pleasure of the September MESSAGE. Such a wonderful tribute to one of our wonderful leaders.

"And Still She Speaks"—it was as though she were standing beside me, pleading with me to hasten to shed off these old ways of nature and reach for the glorious life just ahead by living a righteous life now. Every word that she or someone else wrote was an example for us and a loving plea to choose God's way, the only way to happiness now and forever.

Be kind, be faithful, be patient, be careful in what you speak and think and do. "Our poor memories," she tells us that is just an excuse. "Get the impression deep enough in your minds and your memory will be all right."

Our secret sins known only to ourselves and God—and maybe only to God—how careful we should be. We think we are all right. Search them out and rid ourselves quickly of them. Set a good example to those about us that they may know what we are. We can be new creatures if we carve and shape now and let His Word work within us.

This issue has been a wonderful boost to me, and I thank all for the work that went into it, and for this wonderful lady God gave us.

Peru, Iowa

F. B.

## Investing All

Let us take advantage of this wonderful opportunity that has been afforded us and invest our all in the world to come that we may receive in return length of days, long life and peace, beauty, glory and wisdom and power with riches which can never decay.

Rome, Georgia

S. J.

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# Finally, Brethren

## High Risk Venturers

**BY FAITH** Noah built an ark, when there wasn't any rain in sight.

By faith Abraham set out for a land he knew nothing about, and with no return ticket.

By faith Moses led two million ex-slaves into the wilderness where there wasn't a crop growing, or a vineyard, or even a supply base for hundreds of miles.

Those epic deeds took faith, faith in things not seen. They were what we would call high risk ventures. And the Bible is full of such, of the accounts of men and women who were willing to risk everything on the Word of God. The writer of Hebrews lists several of these Old Testament high-risk venturers in his eleventh chapter; then, after 31 verses, he realizes he has only begun, so he says, "I don't have time to tell about all the others." Everyone who committed himself to serve and obey God was, in a sense, a high risk venturer.

Even in our modern times, God still calls us to exhibit extraordinary faith—even more, for we walk *entirely* by faith. We have never seen even one angel, or heard one heavenly voice. It is a special test of faith. Will we stand? Will our faith hold up for the high risk involved? Is our conviction so deep and so solidly grounded that nothing in modern-day Babylon, threatening or appealing, can unsettle it?

God doesn't want us to neglect our property, or jeopardize our friendships, or sacrifice a promising lifetime career for a seemingly "risky" decision of faith. Or does He?

It may be that He does. If His promises mean anything to us, they must mean *everything*—at whatever cost. There is absolutely *no* risk as to the certainty of God's promises; but there is risk so far as the things of this world are concerned. We may or may not be able to enjoy the so-called "normal" pleasures of life. God must be first. His righteousness must come first. We are *still* called to sacrifice and serve.

Someone has said that the Christian gets the best of two worlds. In a sense this is definitely *not* true. We cannot be working and planning with our heart set on this world and expect to secure a place in the world to come. But *we will* find that by concentrating on preparing for the world to come, venturing everything on the Word of the Lord, we shall find a hundredfold of blessing in *this* world. The change of perspective makes half the difference.

Where are the great men and women of faith today who are willing to step out on a high risk venture for God? Shall you be one of them? Shall I?

*"He touched her hand, and the fever left her."*

*He touched her hand as only He can,  
With the wondrous skill of the Great Physician,  
With the tender touch of the Son of man,  
And the fever-pain in the throbbing temples  
Died out with the flush on brow and cheek,  
And the lips that had been so parched and burning  
Trembled with thanks that she could not speak,  
And the eyes where the fever light had faded  
Looked up, by her grateful tears made dim,  
And she rose and ministered to her household;  
She rose and ministered unto Him.*

*"He touched her hand, and the fever left her."*

*O blessed touch of the Man divine!  
So beautiful to arise and serve Him  
When the fever is gone from your life and mine.  
It may be the fever of restless serving  
With heart all thirsty for love and praise,  
And eyes all aching and strained with yearning  
Toward self-set goals in the future days.  
Or it may be fever of spirit anguish,  
Some tempest of sorrow that does not down,  
Till the cross at last is in meekness lifted  
And the head stoops low for the thorny crown.  
Or it may be a fever of pain and anger,  
When the wounded spirit is hard to bear,  
And only the Lord can draw forth the arrows  
Left carelessly, cruelly rankling there.*

## The Touch

*Whatever the fever, His touch can heal it;  
Whatever the tempest, His voice can still.  
There is only a rest as we seek His pleasure,  
There is only a rest as we choose His will.  
And some day, after life's fitful fever,  
I think we shall say in that home so nigh,  
"If the hands that He touched but did His bidding,  
How little it matters what else went by!"  
Ah, Lord, Thou knowest us altogether,  
Each heart's sore sickness, whatever it be;  
Touch thou our hands! Let the fever leave us,  
And so shall we minister unto Thee!*

*—Selected.*