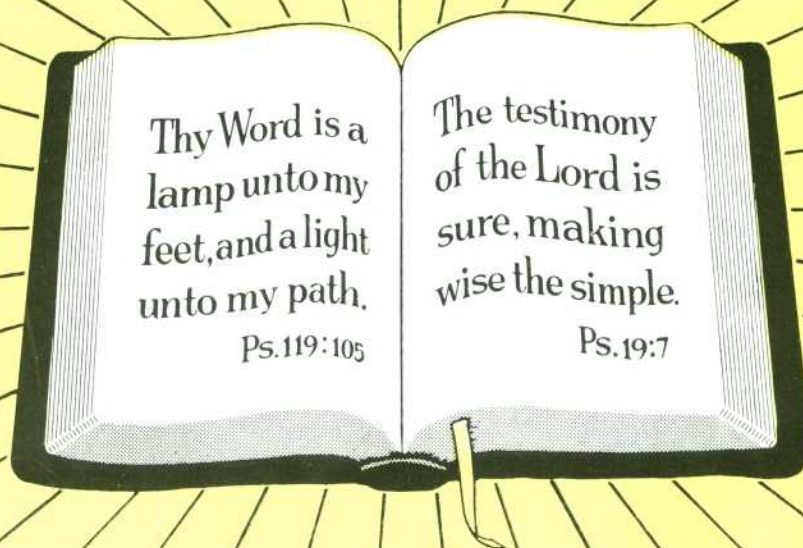


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



Love that God Loves

"Ye Are the Salt of the Earth"

"I Am Persuaded"

Captive Heroes

Editorial



Faith Is Power!

WE DO NOT have to look far into the Holy Record to sense the power of faith. All those names on God's honor roll were men and women of great faith. "By faith Abel,..." "by faith Enoch,..." "by faith Noah,..." "by faith Abraham,..." "by faith Isaac,..." "by faith Jacob,..." "by faith Joseph,..." "by faith Moses,..." So reads the brief record in Hebrews 11. Why faith? Because "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

Faith is staying power. It is faith that keeps us plodding, pushing, pressing; it is faith that will keep us steadily building, thought by thought, deed by deed, word by word, day after day after day. It is faith which opens our ears to listen when God speaks, and opens our eyes to watch and consider our ways, knowing that what God has forecast will most certainly come to pass.

Recall the words of the Psalmist: "I had fainted, unless I had believed" (Ps. 27:13). How often would we faint also, but for our belief, our faith, our confidence in Him who is behind us and above us working out His plan. Our life would fold up, go flat and fall apart were it not for our faith in God. But with faith in God and His purposes, nothing, absolutely nothing that comes into our lives can disturb us or cause us to worry, for we can know of a certainty that God is with us as we are with Him and will bring us through to a glorious finale.

Faith is the turning of ourselves over to the care of God, giving Him absolute command of our lives. This gives us an entirely new relation to the world, to our friends and associates, and even to ourselves and the events in our own lives. The average man may take

adversity with an iron will and stoic resignation. The man of faith can take the same course of events with rejoicing, realizing the potential of such experience. What is adverse about anything that helps him toward his goal? Whatever happens, he can trust God, knowing that out of a thousand trials, not 500 will work for his good, but 999—and one beside. Do not "*all* things work together for good to them that love God"?

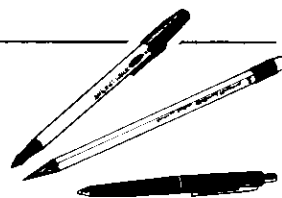
Faith, then, is freedom from the little apprehensions which threaten to crush and defeat those who live without hope, or God in the world. This faith was Paul's sustaining support. Can we imagine a more disheartening situation than to be a captive below a throne with Nero on it? An inhuman power, with a diabolic outreach, this was what Paul was up against. But even Nero's brainsick rule could not alarm Paul. Why? Because that stalwart man of God had faith unshakable, and so he labored on—beaten, ridiculed, persecuted, but triumphant.

Difficulties are not calamities if we maintain our faith in God. In fact, with God in complete command of our lives, with every sinew of our body and every brain cell of our minds placed under God's direction, God will be our strength and His saving gospel our power. Against such might no self-seeking, no pride, no selfishness, no hatred, no sin can ever stand.

Of ourselves, we are totally powerless creatures. But when we become men and women of faith, we are tapping the source of infinite power and shall someday have all the voltage of the universe at our disposal. Such faith is power!

MM

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MM

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.

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December 1982

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Love that God Loves

Part Two in a Series of Two

IN OUR LAST issue we discussed God's love and what He does with it. Now we want to consider our love, and what we should do with it.

We are rapidly approaching a crisis junction. It is the turning point of the centuries. The end of this age is near and speeding apace; it is almost upon us. Soon, very soon, we shall find ourselves face to face with immortal beings. Elijah will be here. Christ will be here, and the whole course of human history will be changed.

When that time arrives, what will we be thinking about, you and me? What will we be concerned about? The little pleasures we enjoyed, or our successes or failures in this world? How small they will seem! We may not even be able to recall the goals we were pursuing. Even the severest trials we have had will seem like nothing at all. The one concern on our minds will be, What does God think of me? Am I worthy to be spared, delivered, blessed and given eternal life? Above anything and everything else we shall long for the love and favor of God. Shall we have it?

For God to delight in us then, to have Him recognize us, protect us, deliver us, save us when He sends His Son to shake terribly the earth and destroy the sinners thereof out of it, we shall have to have proven ourselves worthy. It will be too late then to choose our side, if we have had opportunity now. Right now is the time to get ourselves on God's side, to prove ourselves worthy of His love. This should be the thought continually on our minds. What can I do so that God will recognize me then?

Thanks be to God, we are not left to wonder. His Book of instructions is complete. And perhaps the most wonderful requirement in the whole law, the one which is the key to the fulfilling of all the others, is found in what Jesus called the first and greatest commandment in the law:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30).

Deep in every human heart is a certain impulse called

love. It is a natural passion God has provided to soften the impact of life's hard facts and warm the cold chill of reality. But it is more than this.

This term love, so abused today by those who know nothing of its real meaning, is something deep, something grand, something wonderful. It is a quality that finds its source and highest expression in the heavenlies. "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John 4:7). Not until we are made immortal will we be able to enjoy its fullest meaning. Imagine, if you can, the love that must draw one angel to another, and all the angels to the great God who has blessed them with so wonderful an existence, a glorious immortal life!

But even in our mortal world, love is vital. Love mellows. Love soothes. Love strengthens. Love warms. Love cheers. Love draws. God does not want us to be creatures with no love. The word is used more than five hundred times in Scripture, hence should certainly be worthy of our consideration.

What would God have us do with this passion within us? Here is where the first and greatest commandment touches each of us personally: "Thou shalt love." "Thou." It is a command aimed at each of us directly. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30).

More Than Love

What does this mean? It means that the great God who has given us this life, and who is offering us more life—even life that will never, never, never, never end—is asking something of us. He is asking of us all that we have, even to our love. There must be a total commitment. Give me your whole life, He says, all your time, all your talent, all your mind, all your strength, all your interest, even all your affection. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all." You cannot reserve anything with which to satisfy your natural earthly cravings.

Is this too much to ask, when we consider what God has already done for us? When we consider that we, the least even among earthborns, who exist on one of the smallest planets in one small solar system among the hundred million

Note: *Love that God Loves* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

stars in our own small galaxy, which is only one among many in this universe—which, in turn, is only one universe among many in God's vast creation!—can we even fathom the love He has shown us, to arrange that we may become eternal members of His heavenly family? Should not the mere thought of it draw from the depths of our hearts an unbounded love, a desire to give Him all He asks of us—and more?

Love by Obedience

But this love is not a mere feeling. It must have practical expression. Perhaps the simplest practical description of how we may show Him the love He requires is found in the Epistle of First John. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." Here is a plain statement of fact. Then John adds an inspired opinion from his own experience: "and his commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). Nothing impossible, not even anything grievous; for it is all a matter of love. "And this is love," he says, "that we walk after his commandments" (II John 6).

Here is not love by instinct. This is love that means the outgoing of the whole nature in reverent devotion to God. It is a love which must be learned, summoned, directed. But it must be felt as deeply and earnestly as any passion that ever gripped the heart of man. "For this is the love of God." It is love that issues in obedience, in submitting our wills to His almighty will. It is what moves us to do the things that please Him, to love what He loves, to be interested in His interests. Indeed, if we love God our whole lives will become an expression of this love to Him. Our love for Him will be primary, all our other loves and interests being directed by it.

How shall we love God with all our heart? Along with our conviction must be a fine rapture of devotion, a keen spiritual vision, a zealous courage that is ready to do and dare; this is love.

If we are to succeed in our Christian enterprise, we must love it. And that love must be a steadily growing thing. No level of present love is sufficient. Love that is alive must grow!

Disaster threatens as soon as we allow ourselves to be satisfied with what we are. When we first heard the promises of God, we were captured by them. So much for so little! we responded. But as time goes by, love demands that that response deepen, else it will wane. These heavenly things must mean more and more to us, and all other things mean less and less. This is the love of God.

To love God is to change our desires to His; our tastes to His; our whole life interest to His. Even our private individual loves must change. Here is the real proof of genuine love. We can direct our hands to obey; but if there is no love behind that obedience, that obedience is not completely the

Right now is the time to prove ourselves worthy of God's Love.

fulfilling of our duty to love God. We must obey "from the heart" (Rom. 6:17).

We may train ourselves to do anything within our capability. We can teach ourselves the motions of serving God. But this alone is not enough. To have our service acceptable to God, we must love to serve. We can learn what is right, and learn to do it. But to please God, we must learn to love to do it, because we know it is pleasing to God. Only in this way can we learn to love the Lord our God with all our heart.

When we love God so completely that we are keeping all His commandments, then all our other loves are directed by it. We love God; then it follows that we love the things of this world and the creatures of this world only within the circle of our love to God.

We must learn to love God before we can hope to love men as we should. Just as the mariner takes his bearings by the sky and finds the harbor only as he journeys, so our relationships with others are possible only after we first establish our love to God. Other men are mortal like ourselves; they have no final wisdom to give us; we cannot travel safely by the lights of other ships. Our one steadying bond is with our Creator. Only in Him can we learn the real purpose of life, or find the power to fulfill it. Only when we have learned to love God can we hope to properly direct our loves on earth. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

Loving Our Brother

Our love for God finds further expression in the love we show our brother in the faith. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." (I John 4:20-21).

The whole New Testament is an appeal for the need of love and fellowship in the bonds of Christ. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35). "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another"; "that ye might know the love which I have more

abundantly unto you"; "this I pray, that your love may abound"; "having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind"; "Let brotherly love continue"; "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." The Christian faith is a "faith which worketh by love." (Rom. 12:10; II Cor. 2:4; Phil. 1:9; Phil. 2:2; Heb. 13:1; I John 4:7; Gal. 5:6).

Listen to this warm, brotherly appeal to the Philippian brethren: "If then our common life in Christ yields anything to stir the heart, any loving consolation, any sharing of the Spirit, any warmth of affection or compassion, fill up my cup of happiness by thinking and feeling alike, with the same love for one another, the same turn of mind, and a common care for unity" (Phil. 2:1-2, NEB). No rivalry, no bitterness, no prejudice, no sarcasm, no desire to put another down and exalt ourselves, no hasty judgments of others, no grudges new or old; but love, pure and unadulterated. This is brotherly kindness.

We cannot read the epistles of Paul without feeling the love which he felt toward his brethren in the faith. It is warm, glowing, affectionate. See the devoted Onesiphorus making his way to visit Paul, when he was in prison, and "oft

refreshing" him. Hear Paul's greetings of love to faithful brothers and sisters. Read of their eagerness to meet him, and his keen yearning for fellowship with them. Here were bonds of love stronger than the strongest ties of earth. Feel the longing in the heart of the earnest Apostle that he might come once again and visit them (I Cor. 16:4-7).

Again, hear him sending his "beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord, Tychicus," to comfort them. See those faithful elders on the shore near Ephesus, their hearts knit together in love, bidding farewell to their beloved brother, "sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more" (Acts 20:36-38). Hear the Apostle beseeching his son-in-the-faith Timothy to make one last attempt to visit him and "Come before winter" (II Tim. 4:21)—that winter which perhaps he knew would be his last. How rich was the life of the Great Apostle, how full and overflowing with the love of Christ. Here was love that was pure and noble, warm and glowing, and full of fond brotherly affection.

This love of Christian brethren is a vital part of the divine plan for our development. The perfecting of holiness in the fear of God is a difficult undertaking at best, and willful

Let Us Pray...

Almighty God and Source of all mercies, we thank Thee for all Thou hast given us, and for all Thou hast forgiven us. We thank Thee for all the mercies which in our blindness we have passed over, for the blessings hidden from our minds when we are dull; for the marvel of beauty in which Thou hast set our lives. We thank Thee for Thy love which is new every morning, shedding upon us the life-giving power of Thy grace.

We thank Thee for all who have helped us with our problems when temptations were strong, when we needed encouragement. We thank Thee for those to whom we may go at any time, with whom we can talk and keep nothing back, knowing they will understand—and help us. We thank Thee for the desire to help others, and for the power to help them, and for the desire to be helped ourselves.

We thank Thee for protecting us in weakness; for renewing our strength; for guiding us into opportunities to help others and to set forward Christ's Cause in our community and in our time. Above all we thank Thee for opening the eyes of our understanding to comprehend Thy magnificent plan for the earth and the human family; for Thy Word which is as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path,

that we may be guided in the way that leads to Thee.

We appreciate Thy care in blocking us when we are traveling the wrong road, and pray that we may always be sensitive to the restraints of Thy divine precepts. And once we know a thing is a divine command may we fly to obey it.

Father, help us to love Thee with all our might, mind and strength, and may we demonstrate that love in the only way acceptable to Thee—by keeping Thy holy commandments. Thou art a God of knowledge and by Thee actions, and actions alone are weighed. As said Jesus, Thou art glorified only when we bear much fruit. Help us to do just this.

Empty professions are only an abomination to Thee with Thy righteous way of evaluating character. Thou desirest that we show our faith by our works. The only love that Thou lovest is that love which is demonstrated by holy living.

Give us within our own hearts the peace that passeth understanding. Take from us anxieties which detract and weaken us; take from us doubts which have no foundation, and weaken our faith and endurance. Take from us wrong desires, false ambitions; above all take from us any estrangement from Thee, and grant us the peace and joy of sins forgiven, of accomplishment in the divine life, of visible growth into holiness.

And may Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven, until every knee shall bend to Thee, every tongue sing Thy praise, and Thy glory fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. All this we ask through our Mediator whom we would honor and obey. Amen.

isolation only adds to the difficulty. If the possibility of success is increased—and we know that it is—when one life is linked with others in kindred fellowship, why not do all we can to promote that fellowship, so that we can all be workers together with God and seek our spiritual goals in Christ together! This is the plan Christ taught, and followed. And it was the plan of His disciples, also. “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

Just what is this love that Jesus and His apostles talked so much about? We can understand better if we look briefly at the Greek words for love, for that was the language in which these men of God wrote.

Three Words for “Love”

The Greeks had three principle words for “love.” The most commonly used among the Greek-speaking world of that day was *eros*. Now, *eros* describes the love that is natural human emotion or passion, natural affection, human love. It is interesting to note that this word was used almost exclusively in the Greek-speaking world to tell of love, but it is not used even once in the New Testament. The New Testament writers used two other words. One is *phileo*, which is a special word to convey warmth, closeness, and pleasure in brotherly affection. It is properly used of that which is near and dear. It is used of the Father’s love for His Son (John 5:20), and of the devotion men ought to bear to Jesus (I Cor. 16:22). But even this word is used relatively few times.

The most common word for love in the New Testament is *agape*, and this is a word with far-reaching meaning. *Agape* describes love that seeks always the best interests of the one loved. *Agape* love is not an instinct or a natural emotion; it is deliberate, directed, controlled. It is a deliberate conviction of the mind that issues in a deliberate policy of life. It is not simply a wave of emotion; it is the result of achievement, conquest and victory of the will. It takes all a man has to show *agape* love; it takes his heart, his mind, his will, his whole being. How far removed is this from *eros* love!

Even between the two words which the New Testament does use for “love” is a vast difference. It is seen distinctly in the conversation of Jesus with Peter alongside the sea of Galilee after the resurrection. John 21:15-17 records this conversation. The word “love” occurs seven times in this passage, but two different words are used in the original. Let us read the passage and use the word “fondness” in place of one type of love, and “deep devotion” in place of the other.

“Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you have a deep devotion for me, a devotion more than you have for these things? Peter said to him, Yes, Lord; you know that I have a fondness for you. Jesus said to him again the second time, Simon, son of John, do you have a deep

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL...”

devotion for me? Peter said to him, Yes, Lord, you know that I have a fondness for you. Jesus said to him a third time, Simon, son of John, do you have a fondness for me? Peter was grieved because Jesus said to him the third time, Do you have a fondness for me, and he said to him, Lord, you know all things. You know that I have a fondness for you.”

Why was Peter grieved at the third question? Because Jesus changed the question from the deep devotion emphasis to that of fondness. Peter was hurt by the changing of the wording, not because Jesus had asked him the question three times. Jesus was using the very word Peter had used in answering the first two questions, and with it he probed deep into the heart of Peter. How much do you really love me, Peter? He was asking. You have not yet made the full surrender; you have not yet given me your all. You have fondness for me, true enough; but you have not yet committed yourself to that love which demands a full surrender of all you have and are.

Again and again this fully devoted love, *agape*, is used in the New Testament. It is used more than 250 times. It is the love which Paul had toward his brethren, and Peter toward his, and Jesus toward His. It is the love that Christ showed “the church,” when He “gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27).

Oh, who can know the length and breadth and depth of this genuine devoted love which Christ showed His brethren, and which we can show one another in Christ! It is a love that renews faith, corrects sin, exhorts to good works and provokes more and more unto love. It is a love that purifies the heart, stifles selfishness, discourages evil desire, and silences acrimony (sharpness, or bitterness of expression). It is love that stimulates and encourages every high and holy desire. It is a love which we can enjoy even now, and which will extend into the ages of eternity.

Fruits of Genuine Love

This love shows itself in many ways. It shows itself in loving concern for one another’s temporal good. It shows itself in sympathetic understanding, in patience, in consideration in the everydayness of our lives. It shows itself even more in watchfulness for each other’s spiritual welfare. Can we say we love our brother, if we see him do something that

Disaster threatens as soon as we become satisfied with what we are.

we know will bring God's disapproval upon him, and fail to tell him? Suppose a young man was preparing to compete in a national music contest. Suppose he had spent many hours under the guidance of a professional instructor, but that his instructor—thinking to be “kind”—had not pointed out a basic deficiency in the young man's playing, a deficiency which would surely result in his failure. Would the young man feel that his instructor was doing him a kindness by not pointing it out to him while he could correct it?

Let us look to Jesus for the perfect pattern. The apostle John says He “loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” (John 13:1). With deep desire did He desire to eat the passover with them before He suffered—it was their parting commitment to one another, and to God (Luke 22:15). And hear how lovingly He addressed His disciples at that Last Supper. “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends....Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:14-16, 10).

Again He said further, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21). And even more: there is promise of eternal fellowship.

Just so do we need each other to see our weaknesses and failings, so that we may overcome these sins which so easily beset us. We cannot see ourselves as we are; we must have help. And is not that help the finest expression of true brotherly love? This is what the author of Hebrews says: “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Heb. 12:6-7).

Another secret of brotherly love is found in the book of Malachi, (3:16) “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” They spoke often of the things nearest and dearest to their hearts—some word of faith, some thought of hope, some fear of wrong, some rebuke of evil. Are not

these the things that draw us together? Are not these the interests that make us brothers and sisters in Christ? Are not those the things that bind our hearts together in love, that nurture our fellowship and love within the body of Christ? Words not artificial but sincere and loving, as we stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel—these are the words of Christian love (Phil. 1:27).

There is a strain of religious thought that teaches we should love everyone. In fact, this is thought to be the heart of all Christian living, to show love to one and all. It is our duty, they say. All are children of God, and all should be loved as such.

Now we know that this is far from the facts. We know that God does not love everyone. And if we would have Him love us, how can we love those whom He does not love? “They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God” (Rom. 9:8). “The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:7-8). However, “there is...no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1). Here is a sharp distinction between those who walk “after the flesh” and those who walk “after the Spirit.”

We know that our first love must be to God. And if we love God above all, how can we possibly love, at the same time, those who do not possess, or are not trying to possess the qualities that He desires and loves? We know we cannot.

The apostle Peter describes the proper attitude that we should maintain in these words: “Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king” (I Pet. 2:17). Notice he did not say, Love all men....love the king, but “Honour all men, love the brotherhood.” The word “honour” used here means to treat respectfully, honorably, as having worth. This is the way God wants us to treat men generally. “Honour all men,” be courteous, respectful to them as individuals in their own right. Our “love” is to be reserved for the brotherhood, and for God. Peter said it again in I Peter 3:8, “...be all of one mind, loving the brethren, tenderhearted, friendly” (Green's Interlinear New Testament).

Paul did not have a let's-love-everybody philosophy. When he found the Athenians worshiping “The Unknown God,” he did not stand up before them and say, “God loves you, He loves all of you.” He did not even say, “I love you.” He stated the facts and called them to the knowledge of the true God.

In writing his Epistles, Paul commended his brethren for their “faith in Christ Jesus, and...the love which ye have to all the saints” (Col. 1:4). Again to the Ephesians, he wrote, “I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints” (Eph. 1:15), or “towards your fellow-Christians”

(Phillips). Again he wrote, "by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). He admonished the Thessalonians to esteem with special love "those who are working so hard among you, and in the Lord's fellowship are your leaders and counsellors. Hold them in the highest possible esteem and affection for the work they do" (I Thess. 5:12-13, NEB).

"Love in all sincerity," he wrote to the Romans, "loathing evil and clinging to the good. Let love for our brotherhood breed warmth of mutual affection" (Rom. 12:9-10, NEB). Again, the love is "for our brotherhood."

Peter definitely addresses himself and his love to those who are in the brotherhood of Christ. "Seeing ye have been obedient to the truth and purified your souls until you can love like brothers, in sincerity; let your love for each other be real and from the heart" (I Pet. 1:22-23, JB).

The apostle John addressed his Second Epistle to "those whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever" (vs. 1-2). His love was clearly for them "for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us." Love in the "truth" is stronger than love without it could ever be because it is interest for one's well being both in this world and in the everlasting world to come. John's love for Gaius was on the same basis, "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth" (III John 1). Ordinary love is circumscribed by the limitations of this life.

Jesus' Love—for Whom?

Jesus went about doing miracles to persuade men of His divine authority, to convince them that He was sent of God; but His love was for those who loved His Father, and were serving Him. He "loved his own" (John 13:1). It is stated that He loved Lazarus, and Lazarus was a man who had been serving God, for he was worthy of a resurrection "at the last day" (John 11:24, 36).

In a parable Jesus pointed out those that we should love and help. After telling of the separating time that is coming, when sheep shall be separated from the goats, He tells one reason for the separation. Those who hear "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," are credited with showing love to Christ. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in." The righteous say, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?...or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:34-40). Notice He says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren"—He is not concerned with all mankind who pay no attention to Him or His laws.

Why, then, did Jesus give as the second great com-

Love God...love thy brother.

mandment in the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"? (Mark 12:31). This is but another statement of the same principle. Who is our neighbor? In Moses' time, the command assumed "fellow-Israelite." When Jesus restates it, He means our fellow-believer, our brother in the faith. Could we possibly be justified in loving the person who happened to live next door with the same love we would give to one who was helping us win God's favor? Moses' law also stated, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him" (Lev. 19:17-18). This would surely not be considered a neighborly act to one not of the household of faith.

No. God's love is for those who love Him, and if we would have His love upon us, we must love what He loves.

But how deep, boundless and inexhaustible is this love of God? So is the love that flows between kindred hearts within the bounds of Christian fellowship. Why not!—are not these the people we hope to live with and love and enjoy forever, as we go from glory to glory? Are not they our kindred now and through all eternity, if we can prove faithful together? Are not these the people we expect to accompany us as we set out to explore the far reaches of God's universe?

In Closing...

And now I would like to close with this loving appeal from the great Apostle to us (Phil. 1:9-10, KJV; I Thess. 3:12-13, NEB): "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment: that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;...and may the Lord make your love mount and overflow towards one another and towards all, as our love does toward you. May he make your hearts firm, so that you may stand before our God and Father holy and faultless when our Lord Jesus comes with all those who are his own."

Is not the kingdom promised to "them that love him"? (Jas. 2:5). Is not the crown laid up for them that "love his appearing"? (II Tim. 4:8). Is not he who stands the test assured of the "crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him"? (Jas. 1:12). Is not the promise of more than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man hath imagined prepared for "them that love him"? (I Cor. 2:9).

Then let us heed those words of Joshua spoken more than three millenniums ago: "Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God." MM



DID YOU ever see the child who, at the table, always had the ready request: "Please pass the dessert"? Mother would give him lesson after lesson on what is good nutrition. Yes, he knew that you need spinach for iron, carrots for good eyes, liver for good blood, and milk to have good teeth and strong bones—after which, at the next meal, he would again ask, if a bit sheepishly, "Please pass the dessert."

But there is a deeper lesson. If a mother is concerned about her child's physical diet, how much more important for Christians to feel concern for their spiritual sustenance.

How about myself? Am I among those who come to church with the feeling, "Here am I—please pass the dessert"?

Of course I enjoy sermons about that wonderful kingdom where there will be no sorrow, no pain, no suffering, no toil. It is obvious when I am enjoying the spiritual meal. And I seldom forget to say, "Isn't this wonderful!"

But how do I react when the sermon is on heart-searching, when it condemns me for my harsh criticisms, my carnality, my worldliness, my nit-picking, my little dishonesties? How do I feel when it tells me I must watch those deep sensitive feelings, those wandering thoughts, those unsanctified motives? Can I still rejoice knowing that it is all for my best spiritual sustenance, that this is the meal *I need* and that I must assimilate every word in the prospect of the better life to come? Or do I feel a little uncomfortable, and an inner relief when this part of the meal is over?

I was reminded of this fact one evening while greeting a little lady and her husband whom I had not seen for many months. She whispered to me, "We wouldn't miss these special occasions." Is holiness and heart-searching and godliness a "special occasions" feature only? Isn't there something more to be said for the daily bread that is the staff of life, plain bread without anything to decorate or sweeten it?

We all like dessert. We enjoy that part of the spiritual meal that leaves a sweet taste in our mouth. But man does not live on dessert alone. Nor can that church be serving Christ which serves only dessert.

We need to feel as much eagerness and zest for the "meat and vegetable course," the plain foods, and even the "bitter herbs" of reproof and spiritual warning, as we do for the "special occasions" dressings. We need it all to build strong, healthy characters for God.

Let's not be dessert-only Christians. Let us be so desirous of *whatever* may be on the table of the Lord for us to eat that we will say, "Anything, Lord, so long as it comes from Thee," not "Here am I—please pass the dessert." MM

Thy Will Be Done

*MY God and Father, while I stray,
Far from my home, on life's rough way
O teach me from my heart to say,
Thy will be done!*

*Though dark my path and sad my lot,
Let me be still and murmur not;
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,
Thy will be done!*

*What though in lonely grief I sigh
With friends belov'd no longer nigh,
Submissive still would I reply,
Thy will be done!*

*If Thou shouldst call me to resign
What most I prize, it ne'er was mine;
I only yield Thee what is Thine;
Thy will be done!*

*Should grief or sickness waste away
My life in premature decay,
My Father, still I'll strive to say—
Thy will be done!*

*Let but my fainting heart be blest
With Thy sweet Spirit for its Guest,
My God, to Thee I leave the rest—
Thy will be done!*

*Renew my will from day to day,
Blend it with Thine, and take away
All that now makes it hard to say,
Thy will be done!*

*Then, when my strivings all are o'er
And I shall stand; Thy throne before,
I'll sing upon that happier shore,
Thy will be done!*

—Selected.

Emotional disturbances (worry, anxiety and unsettled problems) cause serious mental distress. The cure: will power, force of character and common sense.

— And Still She Speaks —

Part ELEVEN

The following lines are extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).

There are many who say, *Do the best you can, go to church, be sure to put your money in the contribution box and you will be all right. But are they teaching the Word of God? Did I have any one tell me to put that anger away when I was young? I boarded at a deacon's house, but I never had them tell me I must not get impatient, that I must read, understand, and keep the sayings of this Book. I had them tell me I must go to church. But I was proud. I liked to dress and conform to the world. Did they ever call my attention to Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall"? Why no. I never had such a thing said to me. I had envy. We were jealous of each other in school. Did they ever tell me that "jealousy was as cruel as the grave," that it was wrong? Why no. They never told me such a thing. But here it is in the Bible, that the broad road leads to destruction, that you must put away that pride, whatever you wear that is for outward adorning, that you must be always patient and never let anger rule you. Of course when I first heard that, it sounded strange; I had been told the very opposite all my life. It was like a revelation to me.*

It is sad to see anybody turn to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. It is sad, but all of God's people have seen it. I cannot conceive of leaving this narrow way. I want to follow it to the end.

What is going to happen when the Lord comes to strengthen us? "And the ransomed of the Lord shall...come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Did you ever have everlasting joy? No, never. "They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Oh, we cannot help being in sorrow when we see people choose the broad way in place of the narrow way that leads to life. But someday all sin, sorrow, pain and disease will forever pass away.

People get a wild craze to travel, some in the air and some in autos; but where are they going? We must see when we travel that we have a right object. And we must travel with care so that we may be assured the angel of the Lord will go with us and protect us.

Someone said to me today, "I want you to take a message to the brethren: 'The happiest and best years of my life were the last ten.' " Well, we ought to make every year the best. If we let God's Truth work in our lives, every year of our life will become more happy, and we will be more blest.

The Lord says, "My eyes are not blind, My ears are not deaf, I have means of communication; I know what is going on in My universe." He has such wonderful stores of wisdom and knowledge!

What does not the great and mighty God know! What do not the angels know that have been living through millions and millions of years! What does not Gabriel know! He said, "I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). Oh, what impressions must have been made upon his mind! What a brain he must have. Think of the minds of immortal beings! We can have great minds in that wonderful Day, if we will rightly use the small ones we now have. What must be the mind of an immortal being? Bodily sickness more or less affects the mind now; but think of living an immortal life, how much the mind can grasp!

People talk of God being lonely! Oh, they are so blind, they do not realize the heavenly hosts that inhabit the wonderful worlds on high! If there were no inhabitants there, how could bands of angels come to rejoice at the birth of Jesus?

God has a wonderful family—no possibility of being lonely. The dead are not lonely, for they are not conscious, they are sleeping in the grave; and the angels are not lonely, for they have worlds upon worlds of happy immortal beings for their associates; and Jesus is not lonely, because the angels took Him to some wonderful planet where He is being more fully instructed in the wonderful knowledge of God.

"Ye Are the



of the Earth"

SALT IS so common, and so ordinary. Even with our inflated price scale today, fifteen cents will buy enough salt to season several bushels of potatoes. It was not so in the ancient world; salt was among the most precious of commodities.

When Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth," He was giving them one of the finest compliments He could have paid them, for in Palestine, as elsewhere in the ancient world, salt was a necessity of life. The Greeks called salt *divine*. The Romans had a jingle, "Nil Utilius sole et sale," which says, translated to English, "There is nothing more useful than sun and salt." We have all heard of being "worth our salt." It comes from the ancient Roman soldiers who were frequently paid in salt. As a result of this, salt became a symbol of loyalty; more loyalty, more worth—and more salt. And salt was as good as money. You could always pay your taxes in salt and know that they would be gratefully accepted. Salt was used to preserve fish and meat; it was used as a condiment, to cure a toothache, and for cleansing. Good salt has taste. Very early it came to be associated with pleasantness and friendship in common expressions, so that to "eat salt" in company meant to be bound by ties

of hospitality. To "eat a bushel of salt together" meant to be old friends. To "take salt" meant to enjoy a meal together. This expression is used in Acts 1:4 where Jesus sat "at table" (Literally, "taking salt") with His apostles (Knox translation). To "salt" also meant to "bring together, to collect, to assemble, as military forces."

In the Old Testament times, salt was also valuable, and was an essential part of every sacrifice that was offered under the law. Every meat offering had to be seasoned with salt to be acceptable (Lev. 2:13). Salt thus became a symbol of the covenant relation with God and its irrevocable nature.

What did Jesus mean when He said to His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth"?

Let us think about the qualities of salt. Its primary use in the time of Jesus was as a preserver. It was used to keep things from going bad, to hold back decay and putrefaction. Plutarch said it in a strange way. He said that meat is a dead body and will, if left to itself, go bad; but salt preserves it and keeps it fresh; therefore salt is like new life inserted into a dead body. Salt preserves from corruption. If we are the salt of the earth, as Christians, we are to have a certain antiseptic influence on life. We all know there are certain

people in whose company it is easy to be good, and there are people in whose company it is easy for standards to be relaxed. The Christian is committed to being preserving salt, to keep himself pure and fresh in a contaminated society, and to do what he can to keep others from going bad. He must be the person who by his presence influences for good.

Faithful disciples are a preserving salt in another sense also. How long ago would God have tired of the wickedness of men and destroyed them all, but for the few who were honestly working to please Him? How long would He have stretched out the evening shadows in our day but for the few who were striving with all their heart to be like Him?

When Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," He might have been thinking also about its potency. If salt is there you know it. Just as light on a hill cannot be hidden at night, so salt in food cannot be kept from the knowledge of the eater. And what a difference it makes! After all, what are potatoes worth if they have no salt?

Isn't this potent, penetrating quality of salt a characteristic of Christians? Let there be no despairing, then, if God's people are few—if only they are "salty," if only they have the real,

genuine substance of faith in them. A pinch of salt is effective out of all proportion to its amount.

Then, too, there is a quality about salt that it is tasted and known, though seldom seen. "You can do anything in this world that you want to do and that needs doing," says one, "if you don't care who gets the credit for it." That is the way salt works; and that is the way Christians work. I've never yet heard of anyone who, upon forking in a mouthful of mashed potatoes, said, "My, this salt tastes so good!" Yet that is the kind of comment we seem to try to do our best to draw sometimes. Jesus says we are to be *salt*, and this is not the behavior of salt. Salt has the rare—and beautiful quality—of spending itself to enhance the flavor and value of something else without trying to be noticed. Christians can show this special quality by working to enhance the glory of God, rather than working to glorify themselves.

And have you ever thought about it, that the only time you notice the salt in food is when you have too much of it in something? This is what happens when we try to promote ourselves instead of God; we spoil the flavor of the whole.

Then, too, salt gives a flavor to life. So does the salt of faith, of love, of trust; the zest of serenity and the sparkle of hope. Food without salt is sadly insipid; so is the life without faith.

After Constantine had made Christianity (so-called, in name only) the religion of the Roman Empire, there came to the throne another Emperor called Julian, who wished to turn the clock back and reinstate the old gods. His complaint on the new was this:

"Have you looked at these Christians closely? Hollow-eyed, pale-cheeked are they all; they brood their lives away, unspurred by ambition; the sun shines for them, but they do not see it: the earth offers them its fulness, but they desire it not; all their desire is to renounce and to suffer that they may come to die."

How far is this from the description of those people to whom Jesus said,

"Ye are the salt of the earth"! Real Christians are salt, the source of that which makes life a joy and a delight. God does not mean us to be flat and lifeless. We are to be radiant! In a worried world, the Christian should be able to remain serene; he has no need to fear, if only he is serving God. In a depressed world, the Christian should be one who remains full of joy, abundant joy. There should be a sheer sparkle about his life that nothing else can imitate—a sincere joy in the prospect of obtaining a better life in the world to come, a life that will know no sorrow, no suffering, and no end. Wherever that hope is, there is joy, and the Christian must be the diffuser of that joy.

There are other qualities about salt too that we must not forget. The apostle Paul wrote, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." Of course he did not mean *literal* salt should season our words but that our words should be tasty and appealing. Christ never intended that His witnesses be crudely aggressive. "Let your speech be always gracious." Do not try taking any shortcuts that would attempt to make a Christian without putting in this special seasoning. Behind the salty, tasty graciousness of a Christian's bearing is the real potency, the divine grace which enhances spiritual life and endures forever.

What is this salt that seasons speech? The idea goes deeper than mere brilliance and liveliness in conversation. By salt Paul meant the elevating influence of a life rooted in Christ and devoted to His purposes, a life firmly established in an honest Christian loyalty that can speak convincingly from personal conviction. And the words that issue from such a heart will not sound like religious humbug; they will have the solid ring of reality.

But Jesus did more than say His disciples were salt. He gave a warning: they must be *salty* salt; they must *stay* salty. If salt loses its saltiness for any cause whatever, it is worthless, fit only to be cast out and trodden under foot.

These words also contain a meaningful lesson.

Let us first look at salt itself. Salt as we know it is pure. It is sodium chloride, or potassium chloride, or calcium chloride, or some other combination of molecules, and is a highly soluble substance. Put it in the rain, and shortly there is nothing whatever left of the cake of salt.

The salt that was used in Palestine in the time of Jesus was actually a natural material *containing* salt; it was not pure salt. It was brought from the marshes along the seashore, as in Cyprus, or from salt lakes in the interior which dry up in summer. And this substance, when exposed to the elements, did lose its saltiness (the salt would be dissolved and run out) and still a substance would remain (that was not actually salt). It was this remaining substance which was "good for nothing," so far as salt was concerned, and was very often used as we use gravel—it was broken up and spread on paths, walks, roads, where it was literally "trodden under foot of men." It was also used to cover the soil on the roofs of houses where it would form a hard surface that would prevent leaks.

Whenever salt was mined, there was usually a large portion that was not salty because it lay too near the surface of the ground and, having been exposed to the elements for many years, had lost all its salt content. Thus it was salt without savor. Sun and rain would have removed all the actual "salt" leaving only the carrier material. This outer layer had to be scraped off and discarded by the miners. But since salt was something like gold in Palestine, it is not difficult to imagine that some salt was carried to the market place that still *looked* like salt but that had lost all its saltiness; for who wanted to spend any more time and effort than necessary to remove the outer layer? A keen buyer, then, did well to test his salt for savor before making a purchase to be sure that what he was buying was worth the price.

What is Jesus' warning by this illustration? We are to be salt; but we can lose our saltiness. We may still have all the *appearances* of real faith, real salt, but be *non-salty* and so be worthless, good only to be trodden under foot. And this is actually what happened with the literal salt. A certain Dr. Thomson wrote years ago of a merchant of Sidon who imported twenty years' supply of salt and—not wishing to pay the tax which the government levied on salt—secretly transferred it to the mountains where he rented sixty-five houses to store it. The plan failed utterly; the houses had mere earthen floors, and the salt was placed directly on the ground. In just a short while it was entirely spoiled; it was removed from the houses and used to build roads.

Jesus said it again in Mark 9: "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its savour"—it *may happen*. The Christian faith may lose its distinguishing force. We must beware. We may use Christian forms of speech in our teaching, may appear to be Christians from all outward appearance, and yet be carrying a doctrine from which the real, redeeming, transforming power has been extracted. It has become salt without savour; faith without obedience. It is the life not animated by Christ, not governed by His principles; not blamable, but not beautiful with holiness; not all-out wicked, but not righteous either; not criminal, but not Christian; the salt has lost its savor.

What can be done with salt that loses its savor? Nothing, except to walk on it. But here is where we do have another possibility, as long as God extends our day of opportunity. The recovery of lost spiritual feeling is so difficult that only the bravest few will attempt it, but it *can* be done. But the best plan is to keep our saltiness by avoiding the influences that would dilute it. The best cure is *prevention*. Indolence, negligence, indifference all invite disaster. Christ has called us to be the salt of the earth; let's be sure we *stay salty*!

MM



"I Am Persuaded"

*Advice from
a Christian Senior*

When an individual is successful in any great undertaking, his advice is eagerly sought by aspirants to the same goal.

So what was it, Brother Paul, of which you were persuaded after some twenty-five years as a Christian pioneer in the Gentile forests of paganism?

We find his answer in a letter written from Corinth many years ago to the Church at Rome. Yet so fresh and applicable are his words that the ink seems barely dry. They were no mere babes in Christ, those Roman brethren, to draw from Paul so great a letter; and we are thankful. But listen!

"I am persuaded," writes the greatest of the Apostles, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

Oh, to be so fully persuaded! What mountain of self or sin could stand before such a conviction? There is much more to his words than that which first meets the eye.

"Neither Death..."

Christians of the first century faced death every hour of their life. Persecution raged. With the pagan world at its zenith, and with Jewry grown corrupt and fanatical, intent upon extinguishing the last spark of the "Christian heresy," living the Christ-life was dangerous indeed! It exposed them to all the fury of the temple priesthood who, backed by an incensed mob, took far more pleasure in a dead Christian than a live heretic.

Few men will remain steadfast under torture, pain, or threat of death. But even that prospect—painful, horrible, excruciating—could not separate Paul from the love of God.

"Nor Life..."

As a man of superior ability and possessing a dynamic personality, Paul might have held the world at his feet. All the fame, glory, and applause that men would have delighted to lavish upon him, might have been his for the taking. But, "I am

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persuaded," said he, "that the best that this world can offer is not the hundredth part of a feather's weight by comparison to the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory which I seek." So calculating, he spurned things which lesser men would have given their right arm to secure. Life in its most attractive guise could not entice. The earthly could not separate from the heavenly.

"Nor Angels..."

Paul's next persuasion was concerning angels, not those glorious immortal beings who inhabit eternity, but men and women who did not walk worthy of their noble calling and fell from their high estate. Paul encountered these angels—"false brethren"—in the form of such personalities as Alexander the coppersmith who did him much evil by greatly withstanding his words. Paul was persuaded that even they were powerless to do him any eternal harm.

"Nor Principalities, Nor Powers..."

No prince of this world nor the whole Roman army could close the pearly gates to Paul. Here was a man who looked forward to a brilliant career among his Jewish countrymen, until his conversion on the Damascan Way; whereupon immediately he went in the opposite direction, this time seeking a more glorious future as Christ's special ambassador among the Gentiles. In his new career he stood before kings, emperors, rulers, and high priests. However, neither their favor nor their fury could make him swerve from his purpose, because he was persuaded that no eternal help or hindrance lay in their hands.

"Nor Things Present..."

This next persuasion of Paul's is the acid test. "Things present" cannot separate from the love of God if our faith in the future is strong and abiding. The trouble lies in the fact that our faith is weak, and we feel we must grasp every fleeting pleasure that we may satisfy our flesh while we still have opportunity. Many are not willing to work and wait until God in His good time opens the windows of heaven and pours down everlasting blessings. They cannot wait for the fruit to ripen, but insist upon plucking it while it is still green; thus they get only what this short life offers.

Paul could wait, and not be tired with the waiting.

"Nor Things To Come..."

What a remarkable persuasion to entertain! Here lies a magnificent statement of the Great Apostle's implicit trust in the Heavenly Father. In absolute confidence he declared that nothing which the future might hold could separate him from the love of God.

The future is impenetrable to mortal vision. For this reason many fret away their whole existence, plagued with fear,

harassed by apprehension of what tomorrow may hold.

Not Paul. He wasted no energy in such purposeless extravagance. Instead, he concentrated upon whole-souled living from day to day. And, so living, the future for him was robbed of its terrors. In fullest assurance he said, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). As the conscientious student who is doing his best work from day to day has no fear of examinations, so Paul feared neither the morrow nor the Judgment. "Perfect love casteth out fear."

Paul mentioned "things present" and "things to come"; but notice, he did not mention things past. For him old things had passed away and all things had become new. If we live today as we should, we need not fear either the morrow or the past.

Though he called himself the least of the Apostles because he had persecuted the Church, Paul had in reality become the last word of authority in the Church. He spoke with authority but with no trace of arrogance. We can see, then, how he could have the next persuasion.

"Nor Height..."

How often we have seen people become dizzy with a little authority and lose their balance.

Everyone has some little niche where he is the authority, though probably in lesser measure than the Great Apostle. Nevertheless, in some small sphere our decision is the last word. Yours is. Mine is. We can assume this "height" of authority with grace that will not separate from the love of God if, like the apostle Paul, we divest ourselves of all arrogance and nurture continually that low, sweet root of humility which grows in the soil of a modest heart.

The "heights" hold special dangers. Beware!

"Nor Depth..."

Paul passed through many things that would have sunk an ordinary man to the depths of despair and depression, or would have sent him into the still deeper depths of sin and vice. "Depth" could have separated Paul, but he would not let it. He said that he knew how to be exalted and how to be abased. Put in the inner prison, he rose above it, even singing praises to God at midnight. Stoned, he walked back into the city. He went on board a ship as prisoner; before he left it, he was virtually its captain. During the thousands of miles he traveled, we do not hear him once mention the rainy days and freezing nights which must often have been his portion. "Persecuted," he said, "but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." No depth of circumstance could separate Paul from the love of Christ. His was indeed an unquenchable spirit.

A young man who had endured untellable tortures of
(Continued on page 21)

Captive Heroes

Scene Three

A Dream and Its Interpretation

THE GREAT King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. The dream deeply impressed and troubled the king, but he could not remember what it was. The court magicians and "wise men" were summoned, but failed miserably. For the background of this scene, read Daniel, chapter 2.

*Characters: Daniel Hebrew Captive
Melech . . King's Court Attendant
Haknaz Chief Soothsayer
Naram-Sin . Associate Soothsayer
Ibbi-Sin . . . Associate Soothsayer
Arioch Captain of the King's Guard
Other characters: . . Two Soldiers,
Pages, Courtiers, Herald*

Setting:

An antechamber of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, elaborately decorated. A door at rear left, guarded by two soldiers. At center of stage, Melech, visibly worried, converses with Arioch.

Melech:

What a morning! If I live through this one, I can survive anything.

Arioch:

What's the trouble, Melech? There seems to be a sort of feeling in the air, if you know what I mean.

Melech:

It's the king. He's very upset. Wouldn't eat any breakfast. Says he didn't sleep a wink since midnight. He's really in a state. It wouldn't take much to

send him into one of his famous tantrums....Me... I don't want to get in his way *this* morning.

Arioch:

Nor I. What's the cause?

Melech:

A dream. Must have been a dream to end all dreams, the fuss he's making over it.

Arioch:

Did he tell you about it?

Melech:

Yes, but he didn't tell me a thing. I'm no soothsayer.

Arioch:

Nor, I, praise the gods! Soothsaying is risky business.

Melech:

Too risky for me. They can have it. The rewards are tremendous—but if you happen to give the wrong answer...

Arioch:

Somebody ought to send for Haknaz. If anyone can help the king, he can.

Melech:

He's already been sent for. Ought to be here any minute. But he's got a heavy handicap...the king has suddenly begun to suspect that he's a fraud.

Arioch:

Suspect, did you say? That fellow!

(Enter Haknaz, Naram-Sin and Ibbi-Sin. Melech greets them courteously)

Melech:

Right this way, sirs. The king is expecting you. He has a very difficult assignment for you today. I hope you are in good form today.

Haknaz:

(Pompously) We? My man, do not speak lightly to us. We are the wise men of Chaldea, the Magi. *We* read the message of the stars. We commune with the ghosts of the dead, and with the spirits of all nature. We foretell the future. All things are open to us! Lead on.

(Melech leads them out through rear door and returns)

Melech:

Well, I hope, I *hope*, —both for their sake and for ours—that they can outguess the king this time. Haknaz is quick-witted, but something tells me he's due for a surprise.

Arioch:

(taking out sword and feeling its edge absent-mindedly) He might be due for more than that, if he doesn't tell the king what he wants to hear.

(Brief Curtain)

(Setting: Nebuchadnezzar's antechamber. Arioch and two guards present. The astrologers enter through the door, preceded by Melech. They are talking loudly and excitedly.)

Haknaz:

Why, I never heard of such a thing in all my life!

Naram:

Neither did I. Why, it is fantastic!

Ibbi:

Utterly fantastic. Unreasonable. Crazy. The very idea!

Naram:

Imagine! Expecting us to tell him his dream! Who ever heard the like? What does he think we are, anyway?

Haknaz:

Our business is to *interpret*, not to guess what his dream was. How are *we* to know what he dreamed?

Ibbi:

Yes, how are we to know? Does he think we're gods?

Naram:

Let *him* tell us the *dream*, and we'll interpret it quick enough. We told him so, too.

Melech:

(Dryly) But didn't you men say that all things...? Oh, never mind. Forget it.

Ibbi:

Accusing us of fraud, too. That's an insult.

Naram:

You didn't miss those threats....did you? He could not have meant them seriously, do you think?

Haknaz:

Well, come on, friends, let's go where the atmosphere is a little more reasonable.

(Messenger brings in large clay tablet and hands it to Arioch. The Chaldeans start to leave, but are halted by Melech.)

Melech:

Just a moment, young men. You are not going anywhere. My orders were to place you under arrest if you failed. And you failed.

Haknaz:

We didn't fail. We just weren't given a fair chance!

Melech:

All right, you can tell that to the king. In the meantime, you sit down in that corner. I'm just afraid those threats *were* serious. Captain, read us the decision *(offers clay tablet to Arioch)*.

Arioch:

You read it. You know I can't read.

Melech:

(reads) "Nebuchadnezzar the king to the citizens of Babylon and to all the nations of the world. Whereas

the wise men, magicians, astrologers, soothsayers, diviners, sorcerers and Chaldeans of my realm have failed to tell me my dream, and have thus proved themselves to be deceivers, I hereby decree that all members of these classes in the city of Babylon shall be slain by the sword, their houses destroyed, and their goods confiscated. This decree is effective immediately."

And here's the list of the unlucky ones. The first name is...Haknaz. Then Naram-Sin, Ibbi-Sin, mmmm...quite a long list . . . ends with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, otherwise known as Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Arioch:

Hmmm. Sorry to hear those last names. They're rather nice lads, friends of mine, not much like the rest of the group. Well, so it goes. The order says immediately, so I might as well call out the guard and start rounding them up. I think I'll break the news to these Hebrew boys personally, as a last token of friendship, or something. These three we already have. *(to Melech)* Hold them here for an hour or so. *(Exit)*

Haknaz:

Why do these things happen to me? I've always tried to do the right thing. We've always tried to tell the king *just what he wants to hear*. And now look what happens.

Ibbi:

It isn't fair! It isn't fair!

Haknaz:

No, it isn't fair. There isn't any justice. I tell you what I think. It's the foreign influences coming in here. It was a bad day, if you ask me, when the king brought in all these bright young hostages and gave them an education. Education should be confined to our caste and profession. Here we serve him faithfully for years and years, and then some upstart like this Daniel comes along, and out we go. No pity for our gray hairs and faithful service. No gratitude, no security. I blame this Daniel more than any one else. He's--

Melech:

Be quiet. Talk sense if you must talk. Didn't you hear his name on the list?

Naram:

Yes, and that's some consolation. But Arioch will save him if he can—*(scornfully)* he's the pet of the palace.

(Brief Curtain)

(Same setting, same group. Enter Arioch and Daniel)

Melech:

Oh, Daniel, we shall never forget your kindness, your courage and level-headedness. This thing is really terrible. I'm sure you can do it. I'm sure you can tell the king his dream and the interpretation, and stop this bloodshed before it starts.

Arioch:

I hope he can. I don't like the job at all. Not only that, but once the slaughter starts, who knows where it will stop? Even we—

Melech:

Too true, captain, too true. The highest trees are the first to feel the axe. Why did I ever leave the farm?

Daniel:

Now, men, be calm. There's no need to lose our heads—at least before the time. I have faith that the situation can be saved.

Melech:

What do you propose to do?

Daniel:

I shall place it all in the hands of my God, who can reveal the secrets of every heart. The gods of the Chaldeans have failed, because they do not exist. Jehovah, who made heaven and earth, is a living God, the only true God, and in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. This is a small thing to Him, and if He chooses, all Babylon shall know His power.

Haknaz:

If! Notice that *if*! That gives you a way out, too, but it won't do you any good. Let me tell you, you Hebrew upstart, you are responsible for all this trouble. You—you and your friends. Who has the king's ear? Who puts ideas into his head? Who's against all the other gods? You! For all we know, this whole deal may be an understanding between you and the king, to get rid of us. *(Others agree)*

Arioch:

Don't pay any attention to him, sir. He's quite upset, naturally, and he doesn't realize how dangerously he's talking. He's supposed to know all things, but there seem to be some blank spots this morning.

(They pass through door, Melech leading, followed by Daniel, then Arioch. The Chaldeans scoff and sneer.)

Haknaz:

The little god!

Naram:

Wonder boy!

Ibbi:

Ba-a-a-h!

(A moment of tense silence, as they watch the door)

Naram:

What do you suppose he's up to?

Haknaz:

I wish I knew. The stars—you know that happens sometimes—the stars fail to reveal all the details.

Ibbi:

What can he do? I know he's got a lot of influence, but he's taking a big chance to go before the king after *that* decree. After all, he's just a freshman here, barely out of school.

Naram:

What does he have that we don't have, anyway?

Haknaz:

Nothing. Not a thing. At least I don't think he has. I confess that in this particular situation I'd like to think he has. After all, I don't want to die just yet.

Ibbi:

Neither do I.

(Enter Daniel, Arioch)

Arioch:

Well, thanks to Daniel, you fellows have been granted another day of life. The king has extended the time until tomorrow at this hour.

Naram:

Is that all? Why prolong the suspense? Why not get it over with?

Haknaz:

Daniel, or Belteshazzar, or whatever your name is, you're a fraud and you know it. You're just stalling for time.

If we lose our heads, I hope you get burned *very* slowly!

Arioch:

(sternly) Quiet!

(Curtain Briefly)

Setting: Same. Arioch, Soldiers and Magicians are visibly nervous.

Haknaz:

It's our last chance. I don't care how he does it, but I just hope he can get us out of this jam. If he does, I'm going back to the farm and *stay* there.

Naram:

If he does win, you don't suppose he might persuade the king to save him and kill the rest of us, do you?

Arioch:

That's a good question. What would you do if you were in his place and he in yours? I think *I* know the answer.

Haknaz:

(whining) Oh, I don't think he's that sort of man. He's always been very decent to me—although I never liked him.

Arioch:

That's not what I asked you. I asked what he could expect from you if you could reveal the dream and interpret it. Examine your conscience—if you have one.

Haknaz:

Why, Captain, you misjudge me. You know I'm a kind-hearted man just trying to make an honest living.

Arioch:

(scornfully) Ha! Ha!

(Enter Melech, returning from the king's presence)

Melech:

Well, it's all over. *(All stand, magicians are alarmed)*

Arioch:

All over?

Melech:

Yes, all over but the celebrating. Daniel *had* the answers.

Naram:

Tell us about it, quick!

Melech:

Quite a man this Daniel, quite a man. Just about the smartest we ever had around here. He was master of the situation from the time he went in, and the king listened like a schoolboy. The dream was a picture for anyone's imagination—it was something about a great image. Its head was of gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron, and its feet of iron and clay. At the end of the dream a little stone struck the image on the feet and destroyed it. Then the stone grew into a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

Arioch:

A remarkable dream. No wonder it worried him. What does it mean?

Melech:

(to Haknaz) Well, suppose *you* take it from there, wise man. What *does* it mean?

Haknaz:

(a moment's silence and cough) For the masters of the stars, it is most clear. But it is beyond your understanding, friends.

Melech:

Let's hear it anyway. We'll be the judge.

Haknaz:

(silence)

Arioch:

The stars seem to be silent. What details can *you* give us, Melech, from Daniel's God?

Melech:

Well, it seems the dream is a prophecy of the future, the rise and fall of kingdoms. After Babylon will come another kingdom.

Arioch:

After Babylon? I thought Babylon was supposed to last till the end of the world. That must have been quite a blow to the king. *(mockingly)* O king, live for ever!

Melech:

Then a third kingdom, and a fourth, strong as iron, but later becomes divided and weak.

Ibbi:

But what about the stone? *(Haknaz gives him a black look)*

Melech:

That is the Kingdom of God—Daniel's God—which shall someday destroy all other kingdoms and fill the whole earth, and *it* shall stand for ever.

Haknaz:

And the king *believed* all that?

Melech:

Careful, my friend, *careful*. Yes, *he believed it*, to the extent of sparing Daniel's life, and the lives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. *(A tense silence)*

Ibbi:

(timidly) Is that all?

Melech:

All? What do you expect? *(Silence; then very slowly and deliberately)* The King's pleasure is this...the decree as regards the rest of the wise men of Babylon stands...cancelled. You are free. *(They almost collapse with relief.)* I might say that the credit for your freedom goes to Daniel. It was he who requested that your lives be spared. You wise men should be heartily ashamed of yourselves for the things you have said about Daniel. But for *him*, we'd be getting your necks ready for the sword right now.

Haknaz:

Faith, my friend. The stars have so decreed. It had

to turn out this way. And I am glad it did. Now let us be going.

Melech:

No, not yet. We are all remaining for the elevation. All Babylon must bow before him, and this is a good place for you to begin. For myself, I'll be glad to do it. (*Haknaz makes a wry face*)

(Enter Herald)

Herald:

Hear ye! hear ye! Nebuchadnezzar the great king to all peoples of the world. Our servant Daniel having told and interpreted our dream, through the spirit of God which dwells in him, we hereby decree that he shall be exalted to sit at our right hand and be near our royal person, to give counsel and advice in peace and war. We grant to him lands and estates in

the province of Babylon, and the slaves and vassals and revenues attached thereto. He shall have an income from the royal treasury befitting his rank, and he shall be chief ruler over all the wise men of Babylon. Wherever he goes men shall bow the knee to him, and none shall show disrespect to his God, who is a God of gods and who has revealed our secret.

(Trumpets sound. Daniel enters, richly robed and preceded by two pages with trumpets, followed by four courtiers in fine robes.)

Herald:

Bow the knee!

(all bow except guards)

Curtain

(Continued next issue)

"I Am Persuaded"

(Continued from page 15)

mind and body in a prison camp revealed his secret. He said he found that the body could stand only so much but that the spirit could stand anything. If a person is plenteously provided for from within, he needs little from without. If your happiness depends on what you have, you never know how long it will last, nor how soon it will end. If it depends on what you *are*, nothing can touch it.

"Nor Any Other Creature..."

Paul's last persuasion covers everything that could possibly come in to separate. He was persuaded that nothing, nothing in the whole wide world, nor in that vaster universe of the mind, no gods that might come newly up, nothing whatever could separate him.

"Shall Be Able to Separate Us From the Love of God. Which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord."

Paul followed Christ, and Christ did only those things which pleased His Father. The deeds of these great men make a golden chain reaching even to the goal which we seek. And if we follow their example, nothing will separate us from the love of God which is the keeping of His commandments.

Of this, I am persuaded.

MM

The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.

Take Heed

THERE IS a maxim in the Bible that deserves our deepest and most serious consideration. It is this: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12).

Great care must be given to the awareness of our commitment to God in the everydayness of life. It is so easy, so very easy, in the midst of daily cares and responsibilities, to be unmindful of our duty to God and to one another, to forget our high and holy calling and live casually as if there were no great future and no obligation on our part.

"Take heed lest ye fall." As surely as we forget, we will fall. It is only a matter of course—and gravity. Falling objects do not fall upward. As surely as we relax, we will go down.

Oh, let us take heed. Life is at stake. Glory is at stake, and beauty and all the happiness we can conceive of. It is much too much to afford any risks. Just when we think we are doing well—beware. It is not the falterers that Paul is addressing but those who think themselves standing surefooted and secure. There is always danger. Never is there place for self-confidence, because as long as we are mortal we can never get completely beyond the possibility of falling.

"Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth TAKE HEED."

MM

The Christian's distress is never without divine meaning and blessing.



The Muscles That Matter Most

"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"

—I Timothy 4:8.

THE United States is rapidly becoming exercise conscious. An article in the U.S. News and World Report described it as "The Fitness Mania." The trend is in many ways wholesome, though overdone. Exercise is needful to the maintaining of good physical health.

But exercise is not the universal cure for all the body's ills and needs. There are other dimensions of life urgently needing attention. Many of these dimensions are not physical but spiritual.

A certain prayer asks God to impart a "sense of proportion" so that the "small may appear small," not exaggerated in importance, and so that "the great may appear greatest of all." In other words, Let my values correspond to those of God. Let me be sure that what is important to me is important to God. It is a matter of priorities.

In our text the apostle Paul related the issue of priorities to physical and spiritual exercise. Physical training, he said, is of value. "Bodily exercise profiteth for a little while." But the real value is in godliness, for "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8).

While Paul did not groom his body as though its performance were his chief glory, he did understand its values. As one who had enjoyed the advantages of a well-trained, well-educated youth, Paul doubtless knew personally the benefits of physical fitness. In his view, physical training had value; it enabled him to maintain the pace in his arduous travels. He could take a beating and survive. But keeping in tiptop physical shape was a poor second to maintaining optimum spiritual values.

This is true for more than one reason. In the first place, physical strength is only temporary. Most athletes are old men at thirty; their bodies no longer perform as they did at twenty-five or younger. Then too, physical achievements are not to be compared with spiritual accomplishments. Suppose you run the four-minute mile. So what? A cheetah

can do it in less than one minute, and an ordinary unpedigreed mutt in perhaps two minutes.

Spiritual accomplishments are in a very different category and are evaluated on a very different level. As Paul says, they offer special promise for this present life. The man or woman who is exercising to godliness on a regular, daily basis, has assurance from God of sufficient life and health by which to attain the goal. And, in addition to this is the promise of the life which is to come, the full reward, immortality.

Godliness enriches life not only for the present but for eternity. And the one who enriches his own life helps other lives also. A star athlete may succeed in entertaining the fans, but what is the value of that? When the cheering is over and the game is done, what is there of lasting value?

"Train yourself to be godly," Paul says. That is the regime of training to which an aspiring man of God must devote himself. Such training covers the whole course of one's daily life. It includes one's speech, attitudes, motives, virtue, faith, and purity in all its aspects. The training is tough and unrelenting; it takes all a man has. That is why Paul says, Be diligent in these matters, give yourself wholly to them. There is no other way to succeed.

The rewards are more than compensating for the arduous training.

What does a long-distance runner get for his pains? A little personal satisfaction; he has beaten the pack. But sooner or later somebody raised on richer milk or with stronger natural endowments will break his record. A competent Christian long-distance runner, on the other hand, gets far more. His reward is salvation—"glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life." What good reason to follow Paul's advice: "Watch your life and doctrine closely, persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

MM

Inquiries and Answers

• Concerning "Christmas"

"As simply a student of the Scriptures and conforming to no particular denomination, I find your books enlightening and educational. However, since you claim to get all your thoughts from the Bible, I would appreciate some answers to some puzzling questions. It is no question that your research for the truth is deep, and it is in this knowledge that I inquire.

"On page 51 of 'History of the Megiddo Church,' you mention Abib First and True Christmas. I will concede that your deep knowledge of the Scriptures rule out any adherence to celebrating pagan "Christmas." Could you answer me as to your reasoning in even using the very word "Christmas" in your teachings? No mention is made anywhere in Scriptures even hinting that Jesus would request any day set aside for remembering His birth. It seems to me that the very word 'Christmas' denotes falling victim to the Catholicism and pagan thinking of the world. What are your thoughts? As to Abib, yes, that is Scriptural; but how it is reconciled to Christmas puzzles me."

You are correct in believing that the word "Christmas" is of Catholic origin, and many of the customs connected with its traditional observance are drawn from pagan sources. While it is true that at one time our church group did use the term "True Christmas" to distinguish our spring observance from the traditional observance, we have since discontinued any use of the term to avoid confusion. If you will notice in our more recent edition of our History publication, the term has been omitted.

We do feel, however, that the manner in which the event is celebrated is of more importance than the exact word or words used to refer to it. Even when we called the day "true Christmas," every effort was made to celebrate it in a manner pleasing to God and completely free from any pagan practices or influences. Our church has been observing the combined festival of the New Year (Abib 1st) and the birth of Christ in the spring since 1904.

We are aware of the stand taken by some, that Christ's birthday or any birthday should not be celebrated, in the

absence of any direct Biblical command to do so. But we are told also to "render honor to whom honor is due" (Rom. 13:7). And who could be more worthy of our honor than our coming King?

We know that the observance of the sacred New Year was a command in ancient Israel (Deut. 16:1). Though we are not specifically told, we feel that available evidence points to the birth of Jesus on the first day of the New Year as it was calculated according to the law given by God to Moses. Therefore, in honor of Christ our coming King and in remembrance of the tremendous work He accomplished in our behalf in setting us a perfect example of the life God desires, we both remember our King and celebrate the sacred New Year on the first new moon after the spring equinox.

• Who Are the "Jews"?

"Next thought and question: Something in your booklet 'The Sabbath' puzzles me. I can understand your rejecting Saturday as the Sabbath and such, but I wish to question you on one point. Reading over and over the Scriptures about the tribes of Israel, I cannot believe that the written Word classifies the whole 12 tribes as Jews. On page 6 of your book (The Sabbath) you state from the Bible that 'the Sabbath was a sign to Israel.' Then in the very same paragraph you state that it was a sign or remembrance to the Jews. As I see it, the Jews were only 1/12 of Israel."

In regard to calling all the natural Israelites Jews, this is, technically speaking, an error. We think of the twelve tribes of Israel as spiritual tribes or spiritual Jews. In Rom. 2:28-29, Paul speaks of the "Jew which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God."

In the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, where the word Israelite or Jew is used, many times it refers to the spiritual Israelite or Jew rather than the natural. It is the spiritual descendants of Abraham that the Lord is interested in, not his natural descendants. In the context of the passage you mentioned, the term "Jew" should

(Continued on page 24)

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IS THIS (FOOLISHNESS)



for
CHRISTIANS?

not have been used. As far as we know, the term "Jew" was not used until after the time of the Captivity.

• Christ the "End"?

"On Page 24 of your book (*The Sabbath*), you use Romans 10:4, 'Christ is the end of the law,' signifying that it was the end of the law. Well, what do we do with James 5:11, where James says that we have seen the end of the Lord? Surely this cannot mean that the Lord is at an end. Does it? Thank you for your answers."

In comparing Rom. 10:4 with James 5:11, it would seem that the New English Bible makes the thought clearer than does the KJV. Romans 10:4 reads: "For Christ ends the law and brings righteousness for everyone who has faith." And in James 5:11, instead of the phrase, "the end of the Lord," the NEB translates the verse, "You have all heard how Job stood firm, and you have seen how the Lord treated him in the end." This rendering seems to remove any confusion regarding the "end of the Lord." James is not talking about the "end of the Lord, as though the Lord was coming to an end; it is time that has an end, with reference to a man's life. The Lord judges us by our position at the end (see Matt. 10:22; 24:13). To be faithful we must endure to the "end," i.e., our final opportunity.

• Foods Clean and Unclean

"Is the law of the clean and unclean foods still in force? Since God is the Creator of all animals, and He has told us the meats that are good for food, likewise those that are not fit for man to eat, who are we to question the Creator? Isn't it God that we should obey and not man, regardless of how man likes to interpret things?"

To your last statement we must answer emphatically, YES. But there is always the question of identifying the law to which we are subject. Nothing in the Bible indicates that we are to be subject to all the laws that were made to govern the nation of Israel. Many were made specifically for their situation and have no application to us. Some (such as not building a fire on the Sabbath, not gathering manna on the Sabbath, etc.) have no practical force today.

In the book of Hebrews is a definite statement that the law was withdrawn "for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof" (Heb. 7:18-19). This does not mean that it was not a good law. It was of God, and it was good for the specific purpose for which it was designed. But when that purpose was complete, it was no longer needed. Many times in history God made a law that was temporary in its application. Only Abraham was asked to sacrifice his

So What Do You Know?

When the Angels Came

Immortal beings often made their appearance on earth very suddenly. They were not seen, then they were seen, then again they were not seen. It would appear that the invisibility of angels is largely due to the inability of the beholder to perceive them. Through some working of divine power mortal eyes are withholden from seeing the "ministering angels" except in certain special situations and for short periods of time. Their voices were heard only when there was a particular message to be spoken.

Below are a few names and incidents. See if you can identify the mortal beholder or hearer with the incident.

1. Who, when his eyes were opened, saw an angel standing in the way with a drawn sword in his hand? (Do you suppose his two servants saw the angel?)
2. Who watched an angel put forth his staff and fire came forth from the rock and consumed the food offering?
3. Who was commanded by an angel to arise and go south to the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza?
4. To whom did an angel call from heaven saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad"?
5. "The angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it" because of whose sin?
6. To whom did an angel of the Lord come and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid?
7. Who heard an angel of God say, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God"?
8. Unto whom did the angel of the Lord appear in a flame as he watched the flock?
9. God sent an angel to save three faithful servants from certain death. Who were they?
10. To whom was this said, and by whom: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."
11. Who fell down to worship before the feet of the angel after being shown wondrous things in vision and was told, "See thou do it not"?
12. To whom did an angel of the Lord appear because they had not obeyed God's voice and had made illegal leagues?
13. Who was the Prophet who was shown by an angel many visions and their meaning?
14. To whom did an angel appear in a dream with the urgent

warning to flee into Egypt, then again was told to return to Israel with his family?

15. Who prayed and said, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see," and behold he saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire"?
16. Who had two angels as guests in his home one night?
17. Who was smitten by an angel of the Lord "because he gave not God the glory"?
18. To whom did two men in white apparel promise that Jesus would return in like manner as he had gone into heaven?
19. To whom did the angel of the Lord say, "Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me"?
20. Who was touched by an angel and told, "I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding"?
21. To whom did an angel from heaven come giving strength during a great trial, when his "sweat was as it were great drops of blood"?
22. Which ruler of God's people was suddenly confronted by "the captain of the host of the Lord"?
23. Who was touched by an angel two different times and each time told to arise and eat?
24. An angel of the Lord gave to whom this message, "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?"
25. Who was officiating in the temple when there appeared an angel of the Lord on the right side of the altar of incense, with good news?
26. An angel said to whom, "Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands"?
27. The angel of God stood by whom one night and told him to fear not for he was to be brought before Caesar?
28. To whom did the angel of the Lord say, "Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord"?
29. Who was one of the women who was told by a shining angel to "fear not...he is not here: for he is risen"?

Note: For real spiritual uplift, read these special incidents from the Bible. It is surprising how much we can learn about the angels. Wouldn't you like to be one of them?

Answers:

1. Balaam, Num. 22:21-23, 31
2. Gideon, Judges 6:21
3. Philip, Acts 8:26
4. Abraham, Gen. 22:11-12
5. David, II Sam. 24:16
6. The Shepherds, Luke 2:9-15
7. Cornelius, Acts 10:4
8. Moses, Ex. 3:1-2
9. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Dan. 3:24-28
10. Mary, Gabriel, Luke 1:26-38
11. John, Rev. 22:8-9
12. All Israel, Judges 2:1-5
13. Zechariah, Zech. 1:7; 2:1, 3
14. Joseph, Matt. 2:13, 23
15. Elisha, II Kings 6:15-23
16. Lot, Gen. 19:1-3
17. Herod, Acts 12:23
18. The Eleven, Acts 1:10-11
19. Peter, Acts 12:7-8
20. Daniel, Dan. 9:21-22
21. Jesus, Luke 22:43
22. Joshua, Josh. 5:13-15
23. Elijah, I Kings 19:5, 7
24. Elijah, II Kings 1:3
25. Zecharias, Luke 1:11-20
26. Hagar, Gen. 16:7-12
27. Paul, Acts 27:23-24
28. Manoah, Judges 13:16
29. Mary Magdalene, Matt. 28:5

son; only Noah was asked to build an ark. Baptism was a definite command to some, but not to others. Those who had Holy Spirit power had definite commands relating to the use of that power.

The same is true with respect to the laws of Moses. Jesus showed that the Sabbath law was not part of God's abiding laws by Himself plucking corn on the Sab-

bath, healing, etc., against the strong objections of the Jews.

The specifying of clean and unclean animals seems to have another angle, however. If certain animals were judged "unclean" then, they are still unclean, though modern methods and refrigeration may make some difference.

MM



Letters

Only One Fear

The hymn says, "I can never count my blessings, they are numberless to me." How very true that is. The Lord has blessed us in so many ways. We think of the many people in other lands which are deprived of the freedom that we enjoy. Take, for example, our Brother in Poland, as mentioned in the July *Message*, who can't get the things he needs even with the money to buy them. How thankful we should be to be living in countries like Canada and the U. S. A.

There is no surety that we will always have it as good as we have it now. But if we are "trusting in the Lord with all our heart and leaning not on our own understanding," we have nothing to fear. The only fear we have is the fear of doing wrong, as mentioned in Hebrews 4:1, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

We have the same assurance that David had (Ps. 37:25): "I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." If we do on our part we can be sure God will do on His. Oh how wonderful is the God we serve. May the good Lord help us to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding" in His love.

Port Au Port, Newfoundland

G. W.

Faith that Works

"Belief" alone is not enough, for God says through the apostle James in chapter 2:17, 20, 26, "...faith if it hath not works, is dead being alone." This proves beyond a doubt that we must also have to put forth some effort on our part, as recipients of the Word, otherwise we can never be saved.

Knowing how vital works are (good works) to our eternal salvation, we cannot afford to waste the precious moments so mercifully allotted to us by our kind Creator. Rather we must awake to righteousness and cease sinning, otherwise the future for us will be dark and empty. We must "keep right on working"; then when that great Day arrives we won't be found wanting.

Kooskia, Idaho

R. B.

Appreciation

I am certain you are well orientated to the situation in our country.

From this whole experience we have derived a great lesson which has all the more acquainted me with the old but oft repeated truth of God, not to put faith in human princes, who plot fraud and treachery.

We thank you for your prayers. We believe with God's help we will be able to bear all trials. The greatest thing with us is hope, by which we live, that soon after this short crisis, the grand and glorious 1000-years of God's Kingdom will come, when at last Christ's reign will begin. May the Lord cause it to come as soon as possible.

We wish to thank you for all your material help (food, clothing, shaving razor and soap powder for laundry and other things) which all of you have rendered. It is a blessed help to us in these hard times when actually nothing can be bought here. In the name of our Lord Jesus, our most sincere thanks to all.

The lines for shoes are so long, when they come, we have to wait sometimes 2 days and all my month's pay goes for 2 pairs of women's snow shoes. Such is the high cost.

As always, our accent is on perfection of character, walking in the footsteps of our Master, if we wish to find ourselves with Him in His Kingdom. For my part, am grateful to God that He let me understand this Truth, how that we must crucify our old man with all his fleshly desires, if we wish to enter the Kingdom. It is a difficult road, therefore the nominal Christianity rejects it, but it is the only true road which gives great spiritual satisfaction, peace and happiness to our souls.

With much pleasure am reading different Megiddo articles, especially the older ones received when I did not understand English. Presently the *Messages* when they arrive are to us grand spiritual food.

It is miraculous how Christ has united us with the spiritual family of God. We long for knowledge for the truths of God's Word prepared for our times.

In closing we wish much happiness in the path of the Lord.

Warsaw, Poland

E. K.

Continuing the Battle

This earth is a beautiful place to live in; but it will be much better when Christ comes and rules this sin-sick world in righteousness.

Let us work with all our mind, might, and strength to grow so we will be able to live then, where no sickness, sorrow, pain or death will be. Let us do our very best to continue the battle for righteousness.

Selma, Iowa

B. M.

Heeding the Signs

We should always be living like men who are expecting their Lord's return.

In the hot-hazy days of summer when we see the dark clouds begin to gather in the sky, we most assuredly know a storm is brewing and the copious showers will soon fall to earth quenching the thirst of the growing vegetation and cooling the air, if but for a brief time. Oh, we can read the signs of the weather, but can we read the signs of the time?

Christ's return is surely imminent and we must ever be working to get rid of all our evil inclinations. The common belief today is that we must simply accept Christ's death (on the cross) to atone for our sins...there is no work for us to do. How utterly deceived are these people!

Time is a precious commodity and we must not—indeed *cannot*—waste it. We cannot halt between two opinions, but must choose this day whom we will serve, for today is the day of salvation. Will we be servants of darkness, enslaved in our own chains of besetting sins? Or, will we choose to be set free by the wonderful words of Truth?

Yes, God does give us a choice: Obey and live; disobey and die. This decision to follow the steps of our Saviour is the greatest ever made in one's lifetime and it is one which cannot be made upon our deathbed, see Jer. 13:15-16. It is a very serious decision, one not to be taken lightly. For when we place ourselves under the laws of God, we are saying we will follow Him in all His ways, or suffer the consequences if we fail.

But when we choose the narrow way, life takes on a much richer and deeper meaning. We are no longer able to do "our own thing." Our ways must be His ways and our thoughts must be His thoughts. There are many sacrifices we must make. No longer are we able to enjoy the so-called pleasures of this world. But is the sacrifice too great? A thousand times, NO! What can this life have to compare with the glory of that which is to come!

The decision made, let us not look back toward Sodom. There is great danger in looking where you've been instead of where you're going. For, if we're not very careful, we'll get turned around and headed in the wrong direction. Jesus said in Luke 9:62: "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

***How long between two opinions will you halt?
Remember Lot's wife—she was turned to a pillar of salt!***

***Don't look back, for only sorrow awaits.
Soon, very soon, we'll see those pearly gates.***

***When once inside and the life crown is won,
How thankful we'll be that the race we did run.***

May we keep our eye on the prize and strive steadfastly to enter in at the strait gate.

Conyers, Georgia

B. P.

Grateful

Looking forward to Life, real life, makes one walk circumspectly. I give this much thought. It is ever before me, for what is there without it? This mortal existence is so fleeting. We have much more, the Bread of Life, the water of Truth—gems no earthly money can afford. I have no need to look for anything else; I have the real Gem of Truth.

Some have said, God Is Nowhere, but I say, God Is *Now Here*. It is spelled the same, but oh! the difference.

I am most grateful for the comfort and learning from the cassette tapes and literature. Daily association via the cassettes keeps me pressing ahead.

Crewe, England

N. T.

Snow and Backsliding

Snow is like a backslidden Christian, so nice on the surface to look at but so cold underneath. Don't we make a wreck of things when we try in our own strength instead of trusting all to Christ?

The trouble with snow is that it makes it so hard for everyone to walk and get about. Isn't it true that to be in the company of a cold Christian makes problems for the one who would lead an active Christian life? How often have you heard those who are not interested in following closely the example of Christ saying, "It's not necessary to be so straight-laced." Well, it's not necessary if you just want to play at being a Christian; if you're not concerned for the reward which God will give all those who prove themselves worthy.

Let us who know the true way and the joy there is in serving God determine in our hearts to make harder and fresh efforts to serve and follow more closely than ever, not for our own salvation only but for those who are watching us, that they may be encouraged to dedicate even their own lives more deeply.

Worksop, England

H. L.

Feeling the "Pull"

Just as the planets in our solar system revolve around the sun and are held steady by its gravitational pull, so the life that adopts Jesus Christ, God's Son, as its "Sun" will be held together, held "in orbit" and will find meaning and fulfillment in Christ. There is no other better way.

Davenport, Iowa

W. P.

Appreciation

I received your booklet about the coming of Elijah. I think it is really a very good booklet.

Wheeling, West Virginia

V. N.

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