

Megiddo Message

*L*ift up your eyes
to the heavens!
*C*onsider Who created it all!

— Isaiah 40:26, NEB.

Vol. 76, No. 11
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Be Honest With God

It is not easy to be honest with God. By instinct we avoid at all costs the matter of facing up to actualities. But whom do we think we are fooling? Either we think God is very obtuse, or else we salve our consciences with the feeling that He does not know or care.

We may try to sweep our sins under the rug, assume a hypocritical air of innocence, and go on our own willful way. But God sees no rug, no covering, no obstruction. He sees only the unrepented sins that form a barrier between us and Him.

Failure to be honest with God is a continuing source of unhappiness. And more—it means spiritual defeat, until we learn to face our sinfulness squarely and set to eradicating it.

Psalms 139 tells us that God knows our every thought and motive. "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether" (v. 4). Think we that we can hide from God? We cannot. There is no place to which we can flee and escape God's all-seeing eye. Even "the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (v. 12).

Little wonder that David ends this psalm with the heart-rending plea, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (vs. 23-24).

Our unwillingness to be honest with God may result from our forgetting the power and scope

of His all-seeing eye. Too easily do we forget that before Him is not "any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). What folly to us to quake when we realize other *men* know of our sins, when the mighty God of heaven has known of them from the moment we conceived the thought of sin!

David knew well the difference between being honest with God and trying to hide his sins. When he prayed, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Ps. 19:12), he was admitting the tendency to think that things done in secret are unknown to God. In Psalm 32 he tells of the joy and peace that came with honest confession of his sin.

What we are inside God already knows. Why foolishly pretend that we are something else? We often deceive ourselves—occasionally, others. But we can *never* deceive God.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God wants the best from His children. There is no honesty in thinking we can hold to God with one hand while we cling to the world with the other. Honesty demands that we obey Him in every plan and part of our lives.

Our God is He who is omnipotent and omniscient, One who is altogether holy, sovereign and supreme. How presumptuous and utterly absurd to think we can hide anything from Him or evade the truth before Him, and not be convicted of our sin.

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 and Sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life; in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."

We believe

—in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.

We believe

—in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a Virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.

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 humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

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

Bible Quotations

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—*New English Bible*

NIV—*New International Version*

NASB—*New American Standard Bible*

RSV—*Revised Standard Version*

TLB—*The Living Bible*

JB—*The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition*

Phillips—*The New Testament in Modern English*

Moffatt—*The Bible, A New Translation*

About Our Cover

Our cover photo is provided by the courtesy of Fran Biddy, Director, Strasenburgh Planetarium of Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, New York.

Megiddo Message

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MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.

Living in the Light of the End

Scripture Lesson: I Peter 4:7-19

We live in the
time of the
end, the time of
fulfillment. The date
has been fixed,
though not revealed.

As the apostle Peter penned his First Epistle to his scattered brethren in the faith, he was not writing merely the thoughts which happened into his mind. His pen was moved by the Divine Mind that inspired him, the Father of the One who years earlier had called him from the fishing nets. Now Peter was himself one of those "holy men of God" who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21).

This means that Peter's message, like all the inspired Scriptures, is no ordinary human document by an ordinary human author. Though the thoughts were put into language by Peter, the true author is God.

We need to realize the weight that divine inspiration gives to words. When some man or woman voices an opinion, we can take it lightly, or forget it altogether. When the God of heaven speaks, whatever the medium He uses, even if He speaks through His most obscure servant, *we ought to listen*, humbly, eagerly, reverently, and realize that He is speaking. And let *one word* from God have more weight with us than all the words of all the men in the world combined. His words must *convince* and *convict*—convince us of His supreme authority over us, His right to command and to correct us; and *convict* us of our sin, so that we will no longer parley with it. This is the attitude we must cultivate: "I will hear what God the Lord will speak."

Oh, let us hear; let us be eager, anxious for these messages from heaven, these messages that waken and warn us, that show us what we are and what we need to become before God will recognize us. We may go along, reasonably satisfied with ourselves and the progress we have made, and *assume* that all will be well, that God will take us as we are, but someday we shall be rudely awakened from our reverie. Someday we shall have to answer for our negligence—our indifference, our stubbornness, our hard-heartedness and ugly pride; someday we shall have to explain why we let golden opportunities go by, *when we knew the time was short; when we knew we were living right at the time of the end!*

This is the focus of Peter's message, as he brings his First Epistle to a close. He writes, as if summarizing all that has gone before:

"The end of all things is at hand."

"The end." As Peter wrote these words, he may have had several thoughts in mind. First, he was writing with warmest love and affection to his own children in the faith, those whom he had guided and nurtured from spiritual infancy. These brethren were approaching a singular "end," the end of that age or dispensation, that wonderful dispensation when God was working mightily and openly through a special dispensing of Divine power. Even as Peter wrote, that "end" was perhaps less than twenty years ahead. It had

been a time of tremendous spiritual advantage—and responsibility. But it would not always last.

Again, Peter may have spoken of “the end” as the veil of mortality which hangs continually over all, whenever they chance to live. Life for each is limited. Silently, slyly it steals away. We may live and plan as though it would always continue, but it will not. The truism that “all men think all men mortal but themselves” is dangerous at best; deadly at its worst. Again and again we need to be reminded that “the end of all things is”—always—for everyone—at hand. There is never a good time to procrastinate.

It is also possible that Peter may have been peering far into the future to those who “shall believe,” to those few far-off members of the household of faith who would be holding firm at the very end of the age. They would be a family of believers separated by many centuries from direct revelation, having no direct link with the early stalwarts in the faith. Theirs would be a special test of faith, and God was, through His writing apostles, providing for them...for us!

“The End IS...”

Whatever the “end” in Peter’s mind, he raises a warning finger at any who might be tempted to settle down to a life of comfort and ease. Well he knew that side of human nature which can placidly close its eyes even in the face of crisis.

To all such complacency, Peter’s trumpet-like words sound an awakening reveille. So easily we forget. So easily we can become “spiritually domesticated.” So easily does religion become a “business as usual” affair, a set of holy habits in which there is no heart.

Peter would have us stirred to the depths of our being, living as on the edge of the new, with a sense of crisis ever upon us, gearing our whole life for the consummation. He would have us take

our lives very, very seriously, with a vigilant eye to that which is about to break into our existence with the suddenness of a thunderbolt.

...“At Hand”

Yes, the end is *at hand*! Much as “all things” *seem* to “continue as they were,” they do not! This age will NOT go on forever. One of these days “our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.” Elijah will be here, and Jesus will follow, accompanied by His mighty host of angels. That time will be both an end and a beginning. It will be the end of the old order and the beginning of all that God has planned: of deliverance, and salvation, and the making of “all things new.”

That end is indeed “at hand.” All human history since the first advent of Jesus Christ has been but an epilogue which is “now.” We live in the time of the end, the time of fulfillment. The date has been fixed, though not revealed. “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained” (Acts 17:31).

What difference does this awareness make in our lives? What should we *do* about it?

This is the subject of Peter’s Epistle. We cannot truly believe and remain the same. An awareness of “the end” must move us to a complete change *in ourselves*: in our minds, in our spirits, in our attitude toward one another, in our service, in our preaching and teaching, *in our lives*! Living in the light of the end, we have something to DO.

What is it?

What does Peter advise us to do, we who find ourselves in this very time? Should we lose ourselves in a simple enjoyment of life and the world around us? Or should we be frightened and panic? Never! How about folding our hands in pious inactivity as we wait for the coming of our Lord? No!

We cannot be too careful, we who find ourselves living in the light of the end.

Peter advises the believing Christian to maintain a level, controlled frame of mind; a strictly disciplined and governed life-style; sound judgment and clear thinking, because “The end of all things is at hand” (I Pet. 4:7).

End-Time Christian Conduct

Peter is very specific to tell us that an awareness of “the end” must affect how we live, and how we feel toward one another and toward God. It is this message, found in I Peter 4, that we want to consider this morning.

1: End-Time Sobriety

“The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober”
(I Pet. 4:7).

The word “sober” means self-controlled, disciplined. As the end approaches, we must become more

With a solemn sense of the end of all things upon us, how can we forget it for a moment, with the possibility of living for ever before us!

We cannot truly believe and remain the same. An awareness of "the end" must move us to a complete change in our thinking, in our attitude toward one another, in our service, in our lives!

and more focused in our effort, more serious about our duty to God, more intent on accomplishing our work, more eager to make any sacrifice, any denial, any offering of ourselves, if only we may be "READY"!

How are we doing? Are these critical days having a sobering effect on us? Do we realize how very final will be "the end" when it arrives, when it will suddenly become too late to change from the old creature to the new, when "he that is unjust" must forever remain unjust? If we have had what God deems sufficient opportunity to complete the task He has assigned us, that "end" will seal our record as it stands, and no power in heaven or earth will be able to change it. Here is a thought that should keep us working, sober, watchful, self-controlled.

Another definition of "sobriety" is "sound judgment." The "sober" person is one who is not affected by surrounding conditions. A "sober" person can keep sane and sound, mentally and morally balanced whatever tensions or fears or worries may come.

This special kind of balance comes only from one source: a solid, unshakable faith in God and His Word. With such sober confidence, in light of the nearness of the end, we will not panic—or fall asleep. Rather, we will live every

moment in an attitude of expectancy. The generally disintegrating conditions around us, which show themselves in a thousand ugly and disgraceful forms—like child abuse, drug abuse, AIDS, the breakdown of the family structure, and so on and on—we will take as confirmations of our faith, and grow steadily stronger and stronger, knowing that God is in control and His plan *will* be realized. The present ills are but our surety, visible reminders that these are indeed the last minutes of the age. Can't we see and feel and know that we are near the end?

2: End-Time Prayerfulness

"The end of all things is at hand...watch unto prayer"
(I Pet. 4:7).

Perhaps as Peter wrote he was remembering that night in Gethsemane, when Jesus was so strong, and he, Peter, had been so weak. He could still hear the disappointment in Jesus' reproving voice: "Could ye not watch with me one hour?...Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:40-41). He, Peter, had yet to learn to pray. It was as though Jesus had said, Peter, you are not as strong as you think you are. You need help—which My Father and I can give you—through prayer. You have been depending on My *presence* for strength, but soon you will be on your own. You must find strength as all the rest of My family find it—through prayer.

We in this end-time need this same link with God—through prayer. Indeed, we have no other connection, for God is not working openly among us. But He *is working*. Oh, let us not for a moment lose contact with our merciful,

gracious, loving God, who has promised us His strength, His guidance, His help for every trial and test.

Yes, "watch and pray." Seek out every opportunity, and respond by meeting it *with God*, in heartfelt humble prayer. Prayer is our strongest fortification against sin. We are not to face our testings alone.

The life that is securely bound with God cannot be overpowered by temptation.

"Watch unto prayer." How we need this admonition, especially at this end time. How we need to keep close to God in our inner citadel of prayer. The tensions, distractions and demands of the days may prove too much for us—unless we "watch unto prayer."

Some wordings of I Pet. 4:8 suggest that Peter is advising a proper attitude for prayer: "The end of all things is at hand; therefore keep sane and sober for your prayer" (RSV). "Lead an ordered and sober life, given to prayer" (NEB). "Be sober minded and temperate, that you may give yourselves to prayer" (Weymouth). It is as if Peter says, Make God the center of your thinking, the center of your believing, the center of your lives. This is no time for anything flippant or light. There is only time for serious dwelling with God.

Oh, let us take it to heart and get closer to God, closer to our great Source of strength, closer to the only One who can give LIFE! Let us keep ourselves on the cutting edge of our faith, through prayer. Let our constant prayer be, Lord, examine me, correct me, chasten me, cleanse me, prove me; give or withhold as Thou seest best—if only I can be right!

There is no situation in life that can prevent the true believer from praying. Without prayer there is no spiritual power—and no victory—because there is no link with God. With it, there can be no defeat.

3. End-Time Love

*"The end of all things is at hand...have fervent love"
(I Pet. 4:7-8).*

Besides our duty to God and to ourselves, we have also a special duty to one another. He says that this duty of showing love to one another comes "above all," it *can* not—*must* not—be slighted.

Earlier in this Epistle, Peter exhorted his brethren to show love to one another as brethren (I Pet. 3:8). Now he says that that love must be keen, fervent. "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover a multitude of sins" (I Pet. 4:8). The word translated "cover" is *kolucho* in the Greek, and means "to cover by procuring pardon or forgiveness, to procure pardon from God." The object of this love is the "covering" of one's sin. This is the purpose of all love, and brotherhood, and fellowship—to help one another in covering our sins with a mantle of forgiveness, so that we may secure pardon from God.

Why is this love so important? Because it is a covering which will effectively hide our sins from the view of the Great Judge before whom we all shall have to stand. "Love covers a multitude of sins," and how else can sin be covered unless it be forgiven?

What is the nature of the "fervent love" that will "cover sin"? It is that true Christ-like love that seeks one another's good, that loves righteousness and hates evil. It is a love that desires purity and cleansing above all else, and so seeks to help one another in a personal way, pointing to the source of cleansing, working together to become pure and clean.

Believers at the time of the end have a special duty to one another. More than in any other age, they

need each other, and they need to help one other. More than ever before, they need the strength of Christian association and fellowship, meeting together, working together, thinking together, praying together, pulling together in the bonds of Christian love and devotion.

This love is not a sentimental feeling or an emotion but a practical and tenderhearted interest in one another's good, as brothers and sisters who have a common goal and purpose in life, who have given up the lesser relationships of life for that which is infinitely greater. Theirs is a love which stimulates and encourages all that is good and right. It is love that says, *You can do it—go ahead!*

This special brotherly "charity" or "love" is love that puts iron in the blood and fire in the soul; it is love that heartens with a kind or encouraging word, or a stern reminder of duty. It is love that hurts when there is wrong to correct or evil to remonstrate. It is love that is eager and willing to go the second mile to support and upbuild. When we have this true brotherly love, we are so conscious of our own spotted record before God that we are slow to condemn another. It is love that can show mercy and forgive, and forgive, and forgive, even until 70 times 7, knowing how much forgiveness we ourselves have needed and yet need. It is love that draws us out of ourselves and our self-centered interests into the circle of the family of God, where His honor, His glory, His interests are all in all.

Why such concern for love? Because time is almost gone, and whatever we would do we must do quickly, for "the end of all things is at hand."

There is yet another thought in this verse. This charity, this "fervent love," will "cover a multitude of sins." How is this possible? How can my love for my brother cover *my* multitude of sins?

Now, forgiveness is the mantle that will effectively cover our sins.

Let Us Pray

O God, Thou who makest the clouds Thy chariots, yet workest with man in his labors; who coverest Thyself with honor and majesty as with a garment, yet forgettest not Thy children; lay Thy hand upon us this morning that we may be Thy faithful servants, good stewards of Thy saving knowledge.

Use us as instruments to further Thy ways—ways of pleasantness and of peace, of justice and of brotherhood. Where we find discord, may we leave unity; where we see despair, may we set up hope; where we encounter bitterness, may we sow love; where we meet the darkness of night, may we kindle the radiance of day.

In view of the end of the age which is fast coming upon us, help us to be sober, pure and upright. Help us to be fervent in our love for the brotherhood, forgiving others as we would be forgiven, eager to discover any wrong in ourselves and change our ways before it is everlastingly too late.

Help us to cease seeking illegal honor, honor from one another and honor from the world. Grant that nothing we do may be done through strife or the seeking of vainglory for ourselves. Help us to esteem the other, the person doing Thy will more perfectly than we, better than ourselves. May we do all things without murmurings or disputings.

Make our loyalties strong. Grant us the insight to walk boldly behind Thy leading. Give us a firm step to keep pace with those ascending the hill of perfection, lest we lose sight of them and lose our way. May we set aside our petty prejudices to keep in step with their far-seeing vision.

Be with Thy people everywhere, and strengthen them to fight the good fight of faith that they may lay hold on eternal life. And bless us all to do great things in Thy name. Amen.

Get right with God, get right with one another, and do it now.

What, then, can I do in loving my brother that will bring *me* forgiveness?

Jesus explained this in His first sermon, that each of us will be forgiven in proportion as we forgive our brother. When I show the genuine spirit of Christ-like love toward my brother, *my* sins are being covered—because God has promised to forgive me *as I forgive my brother*. I cannot receive any forgiveness for *my* sins until I have extended forgiveness to my brother. These are Jesus' own words: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15). As *I* forgive another *my own* sins are covered by forgiveness.

The apostle Paul described this same contingent forgiveness in Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Would we risk being found with feelings of enmity and strife among us, feelings of bitterness and spite, jealousy and hatred, when "the end of all things is at hand" and any opportunity could be our very *last* opportunity to get right? Oh, let the thought of it worm deep into our hearts, and stir us to get ourselves right with God *and with one another*. Who of us wants to be found with a stain on *our* record simply because we would not forgive another, because we would not extend to another the same spirit of forgiveness we ourselves have so often needed?

When we withhold forgiveness and compassion from our brother, when we give him an attitude of "if you would just shape up and be a man you wouldn't have these problems," we are really saying "I am better than you" and by our self-righteous attitude are inviting judgment upon ourselves. For who of us has not needed—and needed desperately—to be forgiven?

If we cannot forgive our brother, we lack just that much of belonging to Christ ourselves.

True love is never vindictive. It never says, "You let me down before so I won't trust you again." Nor does it say, "If you can't do any better than that, you're not *my* brother." Nor does it feel superior or self-righteous. True love is understanding, sympathetic, forgiving, taking the attitude of the apostle Paul, who said, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

There is no place in the brotherhood of Christ for any attitude of stomping on one another, or looking down on one another, or being harsh or critical of one another. Whatever strengths we have, we must realize that our brother also has strengths. Whatever weaknesses another has, we must realize we also have weaknesses. And thank God!—our strengths and weaknesses are not the same as his, or to whom could we look for help!

Do we wonder that the Apostle tells us, "Have fervent charity"? It is the old lesson of learning to judge ourselves with rigor and another with leniency; doing to another as we would want to be done by if we were in the other's place, with a foremost desire to be right ourselves.

Are we ever tempted to think that *others* are in danger but *we* are safe? Think we for a moment that *we* shall escape the judgment of God?

Oh, how humble and meek in spirit we should be, how cautious, how fearful lest in trying to help another *we condemn ourselves*. We, too, are accountable before God;

oh, let all our giving, and all our admonishing, and all our reproofing be done in the spirit of meekness, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1-2). We, too, may fall, and in the very spot where we tried to help another. We are all made of the same clay, and the sooner we realize it, the better for our own spiritual good.

Some day we will face our last test. Some day will be our last opportunity to help another. Some day the end will arrive, and where will we stand then?

4 End-Time Hospitality

"The end of all things is at hand.... Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Pet. 4:7, 9).

Here Peter strikes "home." He is not admonishing about good "company" manners but of the general spirit of hospitality we show "*one to another*"—at home, and among those of "the household of faith." Of course we can give liberally and in good spirit to strangers, but what are we among those most familiar to us? Is there any "grudge" in our giving to them, whether that giving be of our time, our interest, our energy, or our genuine Christian concern? Well Peter knew human nature, that we have plenty of "kind words for the stranger, and smiles for the sometime guest," but for *our own*, those who are closest to us, what do we have? It is something to watch, especially when "the end" is upon us. Let us remind ourselves often of the message of that simple motto, and check ourselves with: Would I want to be found saying this...when Jesus comes? Would I want to be found doing this...when Jesus comes?

We are not to be kind, says

Peter, because we have to be, but because it is the only right way to be, because it is part of our obligation and duty as Christians, because in being kind to one another we are being kind to Jesus. And who would not go out of his way, if he had opportunity, to be kind to Jesus?

There is no place for grudging service among followers of Christ. A grudging service is no service at all.

5: End-Time Stewardship

"The end of all things is at hand....As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another" (I Pet. 4:7, 10).

Peter's fifth admonition for end-time living concerns the proper use of our bodies and minds. We are not free to do as we please, or think what we please, because nothing we have is our own. Nothing. All is a trust from God. We are, very literally, God's property, and must use what we have as His. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified" (I Pet. 4:10-11).

In the ancient world a slave or steward was totally responsible to the master of the house. As steward he might dispense everything, but he owned nothing. Even so we are God's stewards. We do not own anything. How preposterous, then, to take credit to ourselves for anything we do. Let us rather work "that God in all things may be glorified." Then He will glorify us.

6: End-Time Suffering

"The end of all things is at hand...if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God" (I Pet. 4:7, 16).

Peter knew that suffering and trial would be the lot of all. For his immediate brethren, it was a trial of persecution, in addition to the normal sufferings of life. But for all there would be suffering and trial. Let them be borne, says Peter, as a privilege of bearing trial "for Christ's sake," as partakers with Him. None can escape the "fiery trial which is to try you"—nor would we want to, if we could see the future as God sees it.

This attitude is not natural, but with an eye fixed on the time of the end—and the glory in view—how can we be other than joyful! However hard the testing, it is but for a moment; the glory will be eternal.

7: End-Time Commitment

"The end of all things is at hand...commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (I Pet. 4:7, 19).

As children of God, we have an uplook as well as an outlook. The outlook may be gloomy, but the uplook is glorious. And what matter the trials of the journey, if only it leads us home!—an eternal, glorious home where pain, sickness and death will never be known.

This is not wild speculation. It is the sure promise of God. The very thought of it should spur us to commit ourselves without reservation, and not fear what may come to us, either to our lives personally, or to the people of God, or to the world. God is in control, He is watching tenderly over each one whom He sees will be one of His, arranging so that *all things* will work together for their eternal good. Is it not a precious thought, that He is concerned about *us*—if we are truly sincere and earnest about the things He has offered us?

However dark our surroundings, God is still on His throne, still caring for His own, still arranging circumstances so that every true, wholehearted one will have every test he or she needs to become pure and holy like Christ.

With a solemn sense of the end of all things upon us, how can we live even a single moment as we naturally would had not this saving knowledge of God reached us? How can we forget it for a moment, we who have before us the possibility of living for ever and ever!

Oh, we cannot be too careful, we who find ourselves living in the light of the end. Those words that slip out so quickly when we are not on guard; those hasty judgments we make; those little feelings of spite or anger or jealousy that rise up within us; those thoughts that wander from this to that, when we could be meditating; those concerns which are too much for us, which we ought to offer up to God, for Him to keep and manage—oh, *let us be careful!* We have no time for anything that might hinder, anything that might distract, anything that might encumber, anything that might stand between us and God.

Let Peter's message touch our hearts: Get right with God, get right with one another, and *do it now*.

For "the end of all things is *at hand!*"

MM

To the Heavenly Father, Great God of the Universe,

the Source and Object of my praise,
who has covered my path with blessings
as the waters cover the sea,
who has revealed His creative skill
in the thousand wonders of nature that surround us,
wonders of flower and tree, of insect and animal,
wonders of size, shape,
proportion and variety
beyond my ability to comprehend:
My voice rises in gratitude for all.
I rejoice all the more that I know
the Creator behind creation.

Great God, grant me perspective in perplexity,

patience in trial,
strength in adversity.

Help me to learn from Your servants of old,

to follow in the steps of Your Son,
to emulate the godly examples of those
who have served You in these latter days.

Help me to make good use of the gifts and privileges

You have entrusted to my care.

Help me not to waste my time,

but fill every minute with the work
You have given me to do.

Help me not to waste my strength.

May I see clearly the things which matter
and the things which don't.

Help me not to waste my mind.

Don't let me be mean and miserly, but help me to remember
that everything I have belongs to You,
that I must use it wisely and well.

Above all help me not to waste my life.

Help me to use the talent You gave me,
to seize the opportunities You are sending me
so that some day You may be able to say to me, "Well done."

In all I ask Your help. Amen.

Lions roar, hyenas laugh,
but the camel grumbles.

And thereby hangs the tale of a
useful friend of man who is as
unloved as his worst enemy among
the beasts.

Naturalists tell us that the camel
grunts and groans and grumbles
over everything. He is a living
protest. He protests when being
loaded, and when being unloaded.
He grunts as he lies down, and as
he rises up. His is a perpetual
grouch from morn till night—or so
it seems. Of course, the explana-
tion is that this noise he makes is
the camels only mode of expression.

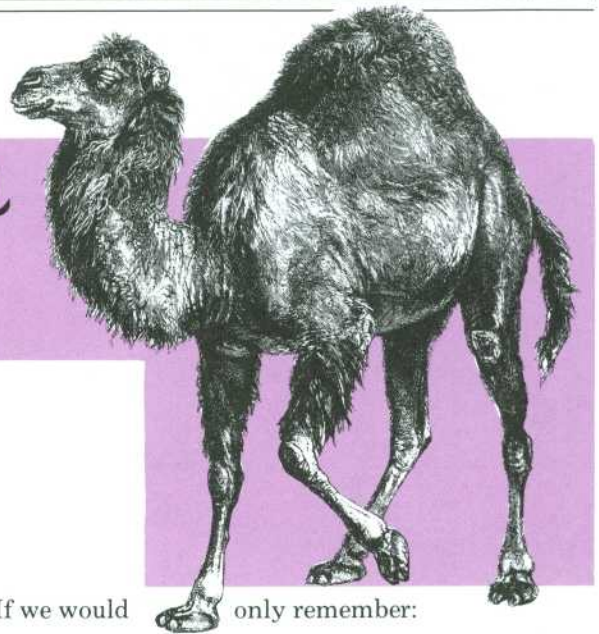
The moral is rough but needful.
There are many well-meaning peo-
ple who have—alas!—the camel's
mode of expression. These men
and women are good workers; they
can deliver the goods, they can
carry the burden, but not without
sighing, crying and grumbling. It
is not that they cannot or will not
work, but they cannot and will not
work *in a good spirit or the right*
spirit. Then they wonder why the
less competent of their fellows often
rise above them and get ahead
faster.

Those of us who have the cam-
el's characteristic and use his mode
of expression have a very great
work to do in overcoming this ter-
rible besetment, and we had better
be about it.

Our former pastor Rev. Maud
Hembree said it is as natural for
human beings to complain as to
breathe. We fret and fume about
every trifle, much as does the
camel. We say, Whew! the weather
is hot! Or it is too cold. I don't like
this and I don't like that. Oh,
dear! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Yes, there
is no end of our making moun-
tains out of molehills.

The apostle Paul has the answer
to all this. He tells us, "Do all
things without murmurings and
disputings"—not do just *some*
things but *all* things. "Neither
murmur ye as some of them also

They've GOT to Grumble!



murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer....Be content with such things as ye have,...for godliness with contentment is great gain" (Phil. 2:14; I Cor. 10:10; Heb. 13:5; I Tim. 6:6).

Why are we always borrowing trouble to dwell on Grumble Street when God has offered us such a wondrous future if we will just put this evil away?

How much more smoothly life would flow, and how it would brighten if we would only stop this grumbling and complaining and take all things patiently as they come. Really, isn't it foolish and unintelligent to find fault with conditions that cannot be helped? To accept them is the highest wisdom. For with that acceptance are bound up the very forces essential for every personal triumph.

Do any of us know of a single instance where complaining ever improved in the slightest degree any situation, however disagreeable? Did it ever solve a problem? Did it ever pay to feel sorry for ourselves and console ourselves that we had a burden heavier than anyone else ever had? Did it not instead only make our wills the more obstinate to bend and thus add more to our burden of sin?

If we would only remember:

*Most of the troubles in life, we know,
Are troubles because we've made them so.
For nothing but goodness comes from God.
And when on a path of thorns we plod,
We ought to remember this for keeps:
The love of the Master never sleeps.
Whether bowed under trials or with favors blest,
All that may come is for the best.*

We know for a certainty that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

None of us know what may be before us in the way of trial or temptation next week or a year from now, but will murmuring remove it when it comes? Never! But if we are determined to meet whatever comes with courage we have won half the battle.

If we just give up to God, we will be amazed that our work is done so easily.

It is time we stopped all this camel-talk, this complaining and discontent, and turn instead to thanking God without ceasing.

*God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through.
God hath not promised sun with out rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.
God hath not promised we shall not know
Toil and temptation, trouble and woe.
He hath not promised smooth roads and wide,
Swift easy travel, needing no guide,
Never a mountain rocky and steep,
Never a river turbid and deep.*

*But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labor, light for the way.
Grace for each trial, help from above,
Unfailing sympathy, undying love.*



"I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord."

—Paul

NO Discord!

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord," wrote Paul to two Christian women in his Church at Philippi. We know nothing about them except this: they were at variance with each other. They disagreed.

There is obvious drama behind this statement. No doubt they were good, sincere, devout women. It may have been at their homes that the congregations of Philippi met. They may have been leading figures in the Philippian brotherhood; they may have been willing workers, giving generously of their time and talent to assist in the work of the Lord. But all this was shadowed by one statement from Paul: they differed. There was discord; there was conflict.

What was the cause of their strife? Why could they not agree? Perhaps they were lacking in those Christian virtues that Paul had stressed—patience, forgiveness, love.

Euodia and Syntyche each seemed very patient. When they worked—separately—no one could have suspected their weakness; but here they were—together—for their mutual benefit.

Why the discord?

Perhaps the cause was a letter

from Paul. The Church had received a letter. Where was it to be read? Who was to have the honor of presenting it to the brethren? Each was willing; each was anxious to know what he had to say—and each wanted it to be read at *her* home.

But was this the *Christ-like* spirit?

Or perhaps Lydia had given some cloth to the Church from which was to be made a new cloak for Paul. Euodia wanted very much to make it—and so did Syntyche. Because Paul stayed at her home during his last visit, Syntyche thought Paul would prefer that *she* do the sewing. Besides, in Syntyche's opinion, Euodia was so slow getting anything finished that in all probability she wouldn't have it ready to give Paul at his next visit.

Or perhaps Syntyche's manner simply irritated Euodia. Syntyche being such a fast worker was not nearly as thorough as Euodia thought she should be. And—and—and... Well, these things are difficult to put into words, though we have all felt them. It just seemed that everything Syntyche said or did was out of place or extreme or too something-or-other. And besides all this, she was much too critical of others.

Euodia and Syntyche—or their prototypes—are still with us today. Human nature has not changed. And Paul's words of exhortation are on record for us: "Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of one another than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but each should learn to see things from other people's point of view."

The Church of Christ stands for perfect unity. Brotherly love and forgiveness are at the heart of its creed. What a bad example these two sisters set before their Church—the Church they were

Should we go down in history with only one fact known about us, what would it be?

trying to serve. The Word of God states plainly that strife, divisions, bitter feelings, personal ambitions are carnal. Unity lies in each member's co-ordinating with every other member for the good of others, all striving together with one mind, having the same love, being of one accord.

No wonder Paul spoke directly to Euodia and Syntyche to make up their differences and become one in the Lord.

When there was strife, Paul mobilized the whole resources of the Church to mend it. He thought no effort too great to maintain the unity and peace of the Church. "Yes," Paul continues after urging Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord, "and I ask you too, true comrade in my work, help these women, because they toiled with me in the gospel, together with Clement, and my other fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. 4:2-3, Barclay).

Who is this "true comrade" in Paul's work? We do not know, but Paul sends word to this "true reconciler" to "help these women."

An individual cannot live the Christian life unless in his personal relationships he is truly like Christ. The Christian virtues of brotherly kindness, forgiveness and forbearance must dominate all his associations. Disagreements, no matter how insignificant, blunt the impact of the Church on the world to which it has been commissioned to be a clear, shining light, the embodiment of the spirit of Jesus Christ.

If this is to be the radiance of our Church, each of us must perfect peace and patience in his own life. God's standard of unity permits us not even a shadow of division or discord (Rom. 13:13-14).

Euodia and Syntyche have found a lasting place in the history of the Early Church as

breakers of the peace. All we know about them is that they quarreled.

Should we go down in history with only one thing known about us, what would that one thing

be? What kind of picture would Paul's one-sentence summary of *our* lives be—that we served from motives of personal vanity and rivalry, or that we were humble peacemakers? MM

So What Do You Know?

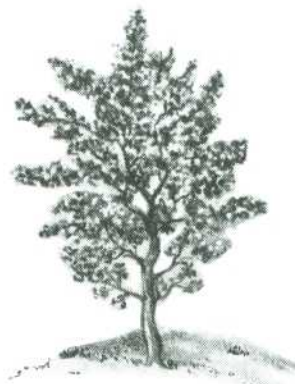
Bible "FIRSTS"

1. Who built the first altar in the Bible record? What was the occasion?
2. Who was the first to prophesy of the Second Advent of Christ?
3. Who told the first recorded lie?
4. Who offered the first recorded prayer?
5. What was the first mentioned meat for food?
6. By whom was the first recorded land purchase made?
7. What is the first recorded use of current money?
8. Who was the first mentioned as giving tithes?
9. Who erected the first monument to the dead?
10. With what operation are physicians first mentioned?
11. Who was the first Jewish high priest?
12. Who was the first sacred historian?
13. Which of the tribes marched first in the wilderness journey?
14. Who was the first to commit suicide, and how?
15. Where is the first mention of a library?
16. What was the key word of our Saviour's first sermon?
17. Who was the first recorded Gentile convert?
18. What was Saul's first response when Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus road?

ANSWERS:

1. Noah, after the Flood.—Gen 8:20. 2. Enoch.—Jude 14. 3. Cain.—Gen. 4:9. 4. Abraham.—Gen. 18:16-33. 5. Veal.—Gen. 18:7-8. 6. Abraham.—Gen. 23:3, 4, 16, 7. By Abraham in the purchase of land.—Gen. 23:16. 8. Abraham to Melchizedek.—Gen. 14:20. 9. Jacob, at the grave of Rachel.—Gen. 35:20. 10. The embalming of Jacob's body.—Gen. 50:2. 11. Aaron.—Ex. 28:1. 12. Moses.—Num. 1:17-18. 13. The tribe of Judah.—Num. 10:14. 14. Saul, by falling on his sword.—I Sam. 31:4. 15. The house of the rolls, or books, the king's library.—Ezra 6:1. 16. Repent.—Matt. 4:17. 17. Cornelius.—Acts 10:3. 18. "Who art thou, Lord?...What wilt thou have me to do?"—Acts 9:5-6.

*L*ook at the fig tree,
or indeed any tree,



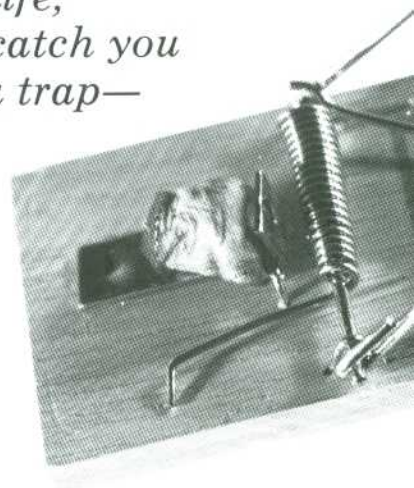
*W*hen it begins to burst its buds,
and you realize without anybody telling you
that summer is nearly here.
So, when you see these things happening,
you can be equally sure
that the kingdom of God has nearly come.



*B*e on your guard—
see to it that your minds
are never clouded
by dissipation
or drunkenness
or the worries of this life,
or else that day may catch you
like the springing of a trap—

*F*or it will come upon every inhabitant
of the whole earth.
You must be vigilant at all times,
praying that you may be strong enough
to come safely through
all that is going to happen,
and stand in the presence
of the Son of Man.

—Jesus, Luke 21:29–36 (Phillips Bible)



Tom Allen was a lad of about twelve years. One day Tom's mother sent him to town for two loaves of bread and a dozen bananas. When Tom had made the purchases and returned to the street, he took a banana from the bag and began to eat it. Slowly he made his way along the street, stopping to gaze at window displays and to take in other sights that attracted his attention. At last he reached home with the two loaves of bread—but not more than ten bananas.

A few days later as Tom was returning from school with a group of his classmates, one of the boys invited Tom over to his house to see some photographs his father had taken. No boy was ever more completely dumfounded than Tom that night. There before his eyes was a boy of exactly his size, and who looked exactly like him, stepping out of a store on Main Street carrying two loaves of bread and a bag. Tom Allen was looking at Tom Allen. He watched himself remove a banana from the bag and begin to devour it. He saw himself stopping to gaze into store windows, lean against an auto-

mobile fender and saunter leisurely along, eating a banana.

On the day Tom had gone on the errand, his friend's father, a photographer for an advertising firm, had been taking a moving picture of Main Street from such a point that the camera was kept focused on him for a whole block. And as there happened to be so few moving objects in the street at the time, Tom was the principal actor.

Tom Allen had been caught unawares.

What of us? What would our reaction be if at the end of one of these ordinary days we were to sit down and view a picture of ourselves as we went about our duties? What would the picture be like if *we* were caught unawares? Would the picture be one we would invite our Lord to view?

Would we see ourselves strolling leisurely along this pathway to the Kingdom, perhaps stopping to gaze at some of the attractions Babylon has to offer? Would we stop off at the House of Dainty Meats and purchase a nut cake from the devil to satisfy our fleshly cravings, thinking that no one had seen? Would we stop for a rest


in the park of "Time Enough Yet" with the thought that the Lord's coming may still be a long way off?

Or would we see ourselves moving hurriedly along in the narrow way, allowing nothing to hinder our progress no matter how strong the attraction? Would we see ourselves giving a flat refusal to every whisper of the tempter no matter how persistent? Would we be found eating the bread of heaven with trembling and with carefulness, lest that day come upon us unawares?

Each day of our lives the Divine Photographer is capturing our every word, thought, and action. And, someday—perhaps sooner than we think—we shall be called to view the final reproduction.

It is far from the natural tendency of human nature to desire such a restricted way of living as is required of a true Christian. Such desire must be cultivated, and this takes time and practice. The Lord does not demand perfection in an individual until he has had sufficient time to attain it. God will give us time to overcome our many, many failures if we are determined to do so. Before He shows us the final reproduction of our life-picture, He will give us opportunity to produce the best picture of which we are capable. As each day we produce a better and still better picture, the old will be discarded; never again will we have to be ashamed because of it. If we have thoroughly accustomed ourselves to right doing every day, then at the arrival of the great Judge, we shall have no fear of being caught unawares.

The God we serve is merciful in extending us time, far beyond what we deserve; but what does time avail if we allow the days, months, and years to pass unused? In this age, God is not going to give us a hundred years to work out our salvation. The work can and must be done quickly. This is why He exhorts us to work speedily!



Get right with God
and do it now, so you
will not be caught unawares!

UnCAUGHT, Unawares!

What an opportunity we have! How can we bring ourselves fully to realize that every idle thought unchecked, every thoughtless word unbridled, every careless glance unrestrained is melting away our opportunity like snow under the heat of a summer sun. And why is it melting away so rapidly? Because the end of the age is near, *very* near.

Never has the time been shorter than it is today; never has the coming of Elijah and Christ been nearer than at this moment. We have absolutely no time to waste. It is time we were waking up. It is time we built high heaps around our pitfalls, lest we again be caught unawares. We have reached the place where it is too late merely to do better. Time is short, and we must actually *accomplish* what the Lord requires of us *now*.

Let us be exceedingly careful, then, never to utter words that might not be fitly spoken if they should prove our last; never to be found in a place where we would not like to be found when Jesus comes; and never to do anything which would cause us regret in the Day of Reckoning.

Let us get right with God and do it NOW so that when our Lord returns we shall not hang our heads in shame because *we* were caught unawares. MM

Your own self-will and anxiety, your hurry and labor, disturb your peace and prevent Me from working in you. Look at the little flowers, in the serene summer days; how they quietly open their petals, and the sun shines into them with its gentle influences. So will I do for thee, if thou but yield thyself to ME.

When You Want to “Get Even”

I’ll get even with that Linda!” Janet’s angry young voice alerted me that there was trouble afoot. Something had gone wrong. I laid my pencil on the desk, folded my papers and went out to meet the girls in the vestibule. Janet and Brenda were just coming in from picking raspberries.

“I’ll make her wish she’d kept quiet. I know how to make her smart!”

Brenda went into the kitchen and carefully set a basket on the table.

“What do you mean you’ll get even, Janet?” I interposed, trying to be casual.

“Linda told a lie on me—she’s telling it all around school. Just because I studied harder and did better on the history test than she did. She says I cheated! Somehow I’ve got to get even with her!”

“I really wish you wouldn’t, Janet,” I pleaded with her.

“But Mom!”

“Getting even won’t help anything, Janet,” I persisted. “It won’t help you, and it won’t help Linda.”

“But Mom, it just makes me boil. Linda telling a story like that all around school. What will everyone think of me!”

“Janet,” I put the question to her squarely, “*did* you cheat?”

“No, I did not. And Linda knows it.”

“Then you don’t have to worry about anything Linda says about you. If you did right, God knows and He will take care of it. Remember what Jesus said about what we should do when people speak evil about us *falsely*? Did He say we should get angry?”

Janet was silent. She knew the answer, but did not care to think about being kind or gentle right now.

Brenda had the answer. “*Blessed* are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you *falsely*, for my sake.”

I looked at Janet’s flaming cheeks and into her flashing eyes. “When someone tells something about you that is false, you don’t have to worry.”

“Then I’m supposed to let Linda go on telling just as many lies about me as she wants to!” Janet was belligerent.

"Leave her to God, Janet. If you try to get even, you'll just be lowering yourself to her level. And besides, you will be interfering with God's business and making more trouble for yourself in *that* way."

"But Mom, you have no idea what it's like to have someone circulating a story about you. It just sets me off!"

"But Janet, what good does your anger do? It doesn't hurt Linda, and it *does* hurt *you*. See how unhappy you are right now. Janet, when you try to injure another person, even if it's just to 'get even,' you injure yourself more." I placed my hand on her shoulder. "What does God say about vengeance?"

"Well, er-r-r," Janet stammered.

"Help her out, Brenda," I suggested, nodding to Brenda who was listening intently.

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

"Come in where it's cooler, girls," I invited, noticing the beads of perspiration on their faces. I've had the air conditioner on a little this afternoon in the den. Been trying to get a few letters written."

"Now Janet," I began when the girls were comfortably seated and enjoying a glass of cool lemonade that Brenda had found in the refrigerator. "Do you still want to get even with Linda?"

"Of course I do!" Janet's answer was harsh. She had not changed her mind, not at all.

"Well, if you really want to get even, the Bible tells of a very sure way."

Janet looked surprised, though skeptical. She hadn't expected this. "What is it?" she asked.

"It is to heap coals of fire on her head. You know what that means."

Janet's face fell. She knew, we had talked about these coals of kindness only a few days ago,

coals that make your enemy burn with shame for what he did.

"You mean I ought to go and do something real kind to Linda for the wrong she did me. *That* won't hurt her any!"

"You try it once," I urged. "Treat Linda kindly. Do her a real favor when you have a chance, and just see if she isn't ashamed and unhappy about the wrong she did you."

Janet leaned on an elbow, chin in hand, brow puckered. "I can't see for the life of me how a kind deed can hurt when somebody has done you wrong."

"I'd like to see you give it a try, Janet. I've seen it happen, when coals of kindness burned up malice, or envy, or ill-feeling and left cold hearts warm and happy."

"Well," Janet started to speak and stopped. She was trying to

think of what she might be able to do for Linda.

"You keep thinking, Janet. There's something you can do for Linda, and when you do it, you'll find *you* are happier too—because you'll be free from that desire to hurt someone else, and you may find that you have a friend instead of an enemy. Make it your business to be kind."

As the girls left the den to go back to their berry-picking, I thought of the many times I had been so eager to "get even" that I couldn't wait for God to administer the revenge. I wanted it right then and in my own way.

But I could also think of many times when that coal of kindness worked, just as God said it would.

"Lord," I prayed, "help me to set up a coal yard. Love is so much stronger than hate!" MM

*You and I, perhaps, are not endowed
To clamber up the ladder of Renown.
Our eloquence, perhaps, sways not the crowd,
No battle's sword achieves for us a crown.*

*It is not granted us to rise to fame,
Nor sit amidst the potentates of state.
We may not see emblazoned high our name,
Nor occupy a place among the great.*

*Not ours, perhaps, to write immortal themes,
Nor rise to glory with an artist's brush.
No argosies of ours bring golden streams,
Nor do our coffers with their treasures gush.*

*A simpler lot is this of yours and mine,
No less important, though, the part we play;
A sturdy link are we in God's design,
And duties are assigned us day by day.*

*So let us lift each burden with a smile,
And do our daily task with all our might,
And as life's path we travel, mile by mile,
Trust God, and set our hearts to do what's right.*

—Selected.

The Kingdom of God: Is It Here Now?

(Concluded)

In this article we continue our discussion of specific texts in reply to our subscriber's questions about the Kingdom of God. Our next topic for discussion is:

The Kingdom—Physical or Spiritual?

Our friend writes again:

"The kingdom of God is not a physical kingdom (Rom. 14:17) but a spiritual kingdom. See also I Cor. 15:50. Only in the kingdom of God can we receive forgiveness of sins, Col. 1:13-14. Paul in this Scripture said that this had already occurred, therefore the kingdom was already in existence when Colossians was written."

The text in Romans 14:17 reads, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." If we understand this text as Paul saying that the Kingdom of God was not a physical kingdom, we contradict numerous other statements by him and by other Scripture writers in which Christ is pictured as returning, setting up His Kingdom, ruling, triumphing over His enemies, etc.

What did Paul mean? Paul was setting a standard of conduct for believing Christian brethren. He was stating how brethren in Christ should treat one another because of their high loyalties to God. Everything they did was to be done to the Lord, because they were accountable to God *for all*: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5:10). Paul was speaking of the way in which we serve God: "For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men" (Rom. 14:18). He was not in any way suggesting that the Kingdom of God was not physical.

What did Paul mean, then, when he said in I Cor. 15:50 that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"? He explained this further in his letter to the Philippians, saying that our physical bodies must be changed into a superior physical substance, made like unto Christ's glorified immortal body. We read, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile [mortal, corruptible] body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. 3:20-21).

This physical transforming of the mortal body into a substance not corruptible, i.e., not subject to death, is the same thought Paul was projecting in I Corinthians 15, that "this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Once this change is accomplished, the transformed being will not be any longer composed of flesh and blood as we know it but of a superior substance that is not subject to death, a substance that is incorruptible. This does not mean we will be spiritual in the sense of being non-material; we will still be physical beings, composed of physical substance, and know as we are known (I Cor. 13:12), but we will have bodies like the angels (Luke 20:35-36).

We know of no passage of Scripture which says that "only in the kingdom of God can we receive forgiveness of sins." Jesus, having power to read men's minds and know the true intents of the heart, had the power to forgive sins, and He used it (see Matt. 9:6, Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24). But long before Jesus the divine arrangement for forgiveness had been clearly spelled out: "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13); and, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14). This condition was outlined long before the establish-

ment of the New Testament Church on the Day of Pentecost.

David also expressed gratitude for having received forgiveness from God, and this, again, was long before the establishing of the Church at Pentecost (Ps. 25: 18; Ps. 32:1, 2, 5).

Translated "into the Kingdom"?

A careful reading of the passage in Colossians 1:13-14 does not suggest that the "kingdom of his dear Son" was then in existence. It reads, as rendered in the King James Version, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." The preposition translated "into" is the Greek *eis*, and has for its meanings "into," also "in order to, for, with a view to, for the use of or service of, with reference to" (*Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*). As rendered in *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*, the text reads, "Who delivered us from the dominion of darkness and changed us for the kingdom of the Son of his love."

Paul is commenting on his brethren's having been delivered from an evil world and placed in a new environment, so to speak, with a new outlook, new interests, a new life, all *in preparation for the kingdom of God's dear Son*. There is not even the slightest suggestion that it had already been established. Later in Colossians 1, Paul speaks of their living in "hope," and "hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. 8:24-25). Also, earlier in the chapter he had expressed the same thought, "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of

the gospel" (Col. 1:5). Paul was emphasizing the standard of conduct required of those who were to be heirs of salvation, those who would share in the Kingdom, not saying they had already "arrived." He said the same of himself personally in Phil. 3: 12-14.

Christ Reigning from His Kingdom in Heaven?

Our friend writes further:

"Christ is now reigning over His kingdom from heaven at the right hand of God: Acts 2:29-33, I Cor. 15:20-28, Eph. 1: 15-23, I Tim. 6:13-16."

All of these passages refer to Christ being at the right hand of God, which indeed He is. But not one of them says that He is at the same time "reigning over his kingdom from heaven."

Let us look at the passages individually. Acts 2:29-33 speaks of those who were baptized and received the Holy Spirit power as part of the special dispensing begun at Pentecost. Accordingly they became part of the true church. Beyond this, everything was theirs only by *promise*; the kingdom was not a present reality: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). They had only the *promise*.

First Cor. 15:20-28 is part of Paul's discourse on the resurrection. In this part of it he is discussing the role of Christ the coming king, but there is no indication that the Kingdom was already at that time a fully functioning entity. On the contrary, the evidence he presents shows it was not existing then, for when

it exists, "all things" will be "put under him," and "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." As of then—or now—neither of these points had been realized; "all things" were not then under the domain and governance of Christ, nor has "death" been destroyed. Nor do these conditions exist now.

The book of Hebrews makes a similar statement about the subduing of all things under Christ, concluding with: "But now we see not yet all things put under him" (Heb. 2:8). In I Cor. 15: 20-28, Paul is looking forward to the glorious day when the kingdom will be established, when all opposing "rule and all authority and power" shall have been put down. The passage does not speak of a then-present reality but of a promise to be fulfilled "at his coming" (v. 23).

The passage in Eph. 1:15-23 speaks first of Christ's present place in heaven at the Father's right hand, then of the worldwide authority which Christ will have in the future, and lastly of His present place of authority over His people, the church. But nothing is said about the church being the Kingdom. Christ, says Paul, has now been exalted at the Father's right hand, "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (v. 21). Then he says further: "And hath put all things under his feet," but then goes on to immediately define His present position of authority as being in relation to His church: "and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (vs. 22-23)—He is "over all things to the church"—not to the whole world, and

not the kingdom. As concerns *the church*, Christ is the head, the supreme authority. "He is the head of the body, the church" (Col. 1:18).

In I Tim. 6:13-16, Paul is again speaking of Christ in His exalted position at the right hand of God. First he speaks of Him as earth's coming King, admonishing Timothy to "keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (vs. 14-15). This clearly describes Christ's future role, which He will fill at the time of His "appearing."

At the present time Christ is the only one of our race to have received immortality: "Who only hath immortality" (I Tim. 6:16). Christ is the "firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I Cor. 15:20, 23).

Then Paul goes on in I Tim. 6 to describe Christ's *present* environment, with His Father in heaven: "Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting" (v. 16). Nothing is said about His reigning over His Kingdom from heaven.

Born Into the Kingdom Now?

Our friend continues:

"Jesus said a person enters the Kingdom of God by being born of water and the Holy Spirit (John 3:5). This is the same thing Peter said in Acts 2:38, the day of Pentecost, and again to the household of Cornelius in Acts 10:47-48."

When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus of being born again, He was speaking of a birth which is necessary before one can live in the Kingdom of God. He was not saying that the Kingdom of God was a then existing entity which one could enter by any immediate physical process.

When Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," Nicodemus questioned His reasoning, and Jesus went on to explain, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:3-6).

In these words Jesus is expressing the same thought (discussed above) which Paul stated in I Cor. 15:50, that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Before we can live in God's eternal Kingdom, we must receive the physical change from the mortal to the immortal state; our bodies must be physically transformed, made immortal, like the angels, like Christ's glorious body (Luke 20:35-36, Phil. 3:20-21).

But we cannot receive this change to immortality, we cannot be born of the Spirit until we are first "born of water," i.e., the water of life, by learning of the knowledge of God and applying it to cleanse our lives morally from every sin until we become "pure even as he [Christ] is pure" (John 4:14; Isa. 1:16; I John 3:3). Being born of this water is the first step toward being born of the Spirit. Jesus did not say that anyone could be born of the Spirit at that time. He was only outlining the steps which must be taken before one can live in the Kingdom. One born of the Spirit has the ability to move with the freedom of the wind.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (v. 8). There is nothing here to suggest that the Kingdom was then in existence.

As for Acts 2:38 and Acts 10:47-48, these passages speak only of the baptizing of believers on the day of Pentecost and after. They say nothing about the Kingdom, or of anyone entering it. Again we must differentiate between the church and the Kingdom.

In The Book of Revelation—A Kingdom Established?

Our friend writes further:

"The key to the book of Revelation is found in Rev. 1:1 and 22:6, '...things that must shortly (i.e., quickly, or swiftly) take place.' Revelation is not a book of far distant future events, but the events described would take place soon."

"Why? Because Revelation was written to Christians who were suffering severe persecution for their faith, and they needed encouragement to realize that their deliverance would come soon, i.e., within a few years. The language was figurative (symbolic) in terms that they would understand, but which would be meaningless to their enemies. This was to protect them from even worse persecution."

We question your statement that "Revelation is not a book of far distant future events, but the events described would take place

soon”—suggesting that these prophecies would be fulfilled in the years immediately following the writing of the book, i.e., in the first or second centuries.

The book of Revelation was indeed written to describe events in the future, which must “shortly come to pass,” and you are correct in defining shortly as “quickly, or swiftly,” but the Greek word used here, *tachu*, has more reference to *speed* or *suddenness*, than to immediacy.

It has now been over nineteen hundred years since Revelation was given to John on Patmos, and which of the prophecies of Revelation have been fulfilled?

Among the events forecast in Revelation are:

- The opening of the seven seals (Rev., chaps. 5, 6)
- The ascent into power of Jesus and His saints (Rev. 11:15)
- The standing of “the Lamb on Mt. Sion, and with him one hundred forty and four thousand” (Rev. 14:1-3)
- The preaching of “the everlasting gospel to all who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 14:6)
- The harvesting of the fruits of the earth (Rev. 14:15-17)
- The fall of Babylon and all that pertains to her (Rev., chaps. 17, 18)
- The marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19)
- The great battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21)
- The binding of the devil, Satan, i.e., all evil (Rev. 20:1-3)
- The judgment of all who live (Rev. 20:10-15)
- The descent of the new Jerusalem out of heaven (Rev. 21)

This is just the briefest sketch of events outlined in Revelation, and who can say that any of

these have already taken place?

The Christians who read the book of Revelation during the early centuries were no doubt encouraged to stand firm in their faith, knowing that they would be abundantly rewarded in the Kingdom which was to come with the second advent of Christ. But there is nothing indicating that anything predicted in Revelation was to take place in their day.

Furthermore, if we understand your position correctly, you believe that the Kingdom began on the day of Pentecost. If that were true, the kingdom would have already been established prior to the time Christ sent His angel with this message to His servant John, which is the book of Revelation.

No, we must take Revelation as a revealing of yet future events, far too magnificent and

vast to describe any history that has yet taken place. The events will be cataclysmic in their effects, and worldwide. The result will be a change of living conditions for all people everywhere, everyone being compelled to bow before the new and Divine authority.

We look forward to that day when the Kingdom shall come, and pray earnestly that we may be ready to have a part in all the great events that will accompany it. With all our heart we look forward to the day when “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him” (Dan. 7:27).

It is coming!

MM

*Forget each kindness that you do
As soon as you have done it;
Forget the praise that falls to you
The moment you have won it;
Forget the slander that you hear
Before you can repeat it;
Forget each slight, each spite, each sneer
Whenever you may meet it.*

*Remember every kindness done
To you, whate'er its measure;
Remember praise by others won
And pass it on with pleasure;
Remember every promise made
And keep it to the letter;
Remember those who lend you aid
And be a grateful debtor.*

*Remember all the happiness
That comes your way in living;
Forget each worry and distress,
Be hopeful and forgiving;
Remember good, remember truth,
Let God's will lead and guide you,
And you will have in age to come,
True joy, and Him to hide you.* —Selected.

Remnant Religion

"He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak...He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself ...And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god." —Isaiah 44:14, 16-17

On the surface, this passage seems to be describing the behavior of a very primitive human being—a savage of the rudest type, such as one does not see in these days. *Homo Neanderthalensis*, perhaps. The satisfaction of his physical wants occupies all his time, and with this he is perfectly content. But trouble comes, or danger threatens. Perhaps a tempest shakes the forest, or the stealthy approach of enemies is heard. Now he goes out to the tree he has hacked down with his stone axe, the tree which has warmed him and cooked his food, and from what is left of it, not yet turned into firelogs, or traps, or supports for the hut which houses him, and with "the residue thereof," the cast off, the thrown aside, the leftover, "he maketh a god."

Fear forces him to make a god. Through fear—not reason or gratitude—he becomes religious. His religion is a remnant, the unused remnant; and to it he appeals for protection from his fears. In our comfortable homes we smile condescendingly, thankful that such things no longer happen, at least in our "civilized" country.

Or do they?

Here is one who pays lip service to the gospel of Christ, while making no personal profession; he may be an apparent follower, but retarded by lukewarmness or stubbornness. In his heart he knows full well what he ought to do; but pride, or stubbornness, or lack of faith, or one of many other reasons, delays his surrender. Year after year he resists the call of God.

Suddenly his sky darkens. Perhaps his own life or health is endangered by disease or accident; perhaps his wife or child now lies at the point of death; perhaps it is merely financial ruin which threatens. In

agony of soul he cries, "Lord, deliver me! Only take away this affliction, and I will serve You as long as I live, with all that I have and am!" He promises God anything now—everything!—he who has given God nothing hitherto. "...the residue thereof he maketh a god."

Where is the great difference between the savage and the "civilized" man?

We have also seen, too many times repeated, the follow-up, the sequel to such repentance. Granted that occasionally the course of a life is changed by the resolution of an emergency, the path of "distress religion" is thickly strewn with forgotten vows and broken promises. The Pharaoh who relented under the plagues and hardened his heart when they were removed was not the first or the last of his kind.

If there is anything Jesus especially stressed, it is that religion is not a *part* of life but *all*. To devote the residue of anything to God, whether it be of tree, or time, or talents, is to make religion a mockery. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all"—not the loose change, nor the leftovers, not the remnant, not the fag-end, but with "all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30).

We easily see and deplore the universal hypocrisy in the practice of remnant religion in others—our neighbors, our relatives, our friends in another city; but before judging others in the matter, let us judge *ourselves*. This thing applies to us all, at every turn of the road, in every act of life. We say, "God First." Perhaps we see it daily in a motto on our bedroom wall. But the extent of our consecration is proved by many things—by the company we seek and enjoy, by

the way we spend our money and our time, by the sort of reading matter we pick up first, by the sort of music we play from choice. Do we put off our religious duties until everything else is done? Do we wait for the convenient season, or until circumstances are just right? Do we day-dream about the great things we would like to do for God and humanity, waiting, waiting, not seeing the work and needs close at hand? Do we find an excuse for leaving the unpleasant duties for the other fellow? In short, are we really giving our best, our all? If not, who are we to smile at the cave man who with "the residue ...maketh a god"?

True religion is the life of God in man, filling him, thrilling him, pulsating through him. True religion says every morning, "Today not for self or business, but for God first"—all the deeds and words and spirit of life weighed and assayed in the light of Truth. Not the last hours, or the convenient hours of life, but all the hours of life must be God's. We should be ashamed to offer Him the broken, frayed, ragged end as to give a valued friend a secondhand, battered, marred birthday present.

But suppose the greater part of your life is already in the past, and a few remaining years is all you have to give—the little end of life? Then give it, speedily and without reserve; it is your all, and more than this can no man give. The time past, in which we had no certain knowledge of good and evil, is never held against us. The only time that matters is *now*—and from now on.

It is an advantage to have known the way of Christ from our youth; this, however, gives us no assurance of salvation but rather an added responsibility. Where much is given, much is required, and life is stewardship. Early teaching and training gives us no such head-start that we have a moment to loiter by the way, to dilute our religion with the pleasures of this life. Another may well take our crown.

The time is surely coming when trouble, real trouble (Dan. 12:1), will drive men to their knees. If already found in that humble condition, we have hope. But if driven there by fear of the spreading judgments of the Eternal, if frantically offering the residue of a life which has wasted its opportunities, we shall find ourselves in the sad condition described in Proverbs 1:24-28:

"Because I have called, and ye refused;...ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:...When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

MM

Knowing (Improving) Ourselves

I have been thinking about what Paul said, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." Without these self-examinations, we cannot possibly know ourselves, or ever hope to correct—and improve—ourselves.

We have many questions to ask ourselves: How is our conduct? Can it meet the test? Do we serve God with our full capacity, or do we limit it to some of God and some of self?

Matthew 5:8 says that only the pure in heart will ever see God. Are we bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ? This is a test we must pass. We should test ourselves every day by asking, Would Christ do this or say that, or feel the way I do in a given circumstance?

Learning to obey is the most important thing in life, and obedience calls for discipline. To condition ourselves as God's soldiers for eternal life, we must submit to a strict training course. It means to exclude from our heart every particle of bitterness, prejudice, malice, impatience, every fleshly desire, evil thought and selfish intent, every quality not to the upbuilding of the spiritual man.

At the same time there are things we must do: be patient, be loving, be gentle, be courteous, be hospitable, be kind. Kind words do not cost much. They never blister the tongue or lips. We never heard of any mental trouble arising from this quarter. Though they do not cost much, yet they accomplish much. They make other people good-natured. They also produce their own image on human souls, and a beautiful image it is.—Contributed

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Every Seventh Day a Sabbath?

"You state, 'the first new moon occurring on different days of the week from year to year and the sabbath being always seven days later...' but you fail to give a Bible text to prove this. Could you please explain."

What you are asking, if we understand you correctly, is for evidence that the sabbath was the seventh day of each year, that each year began with the first day of the week. This point underlies our conviction that no day of our week, whether Saturday or Sunday, can from year to year be observed as the God-appointed "sabbath" as He directed Moses to measure time.

First, the year began with the month Abib. Exodus 12:2 states, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." In Ex. 13:4 we are told the name of the month, "This day came ye out in the month Abib." Also in Deut. 16:1, "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night."

The 14th day of the month Abib was the Passover. Lev. 23:5 states, "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover."

The 15th day of the month Abib was "the morrow after the sabbath," hence the 14th of Abib (the Passover) always came on a sabbath. In Leviticus 23:10-11 we read, "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it." "The fifteenth day" was "the morrow after the sabbath"—this indicates that the fourteenth day of the year was a Sabbath.

The feast of unleavened bread and the waving of the sheaf offering were celebrated on the same day, i.e., the fifteenth of the first month or the day

after the sabbath. This would also indicate that the sabbaths were numbered from the first of Abib, which was the first month of the year.

There is additional evidence for this method of counting time in the New Testament. In Mark 14:1-2 we read, "After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people." Luke 22:1 reads, "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." Luke 23:53-54 states when they laid Jesus in the tomb, "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on." The Passover feast had to be "prepared" before the sabbath, and the passover came on the sabbath. Verse 56: "And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment." The day following was the first day of the week, as mentioned in Luke 24:1, also the day of Christ's resurrection: "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning," etc.

To summarize: Leviticus 23:5 tells us that the passover was held on the 14th day of the first month, and also that the 15th day of the month was "the morrow after the sabbath" (vs. 10-11); thus the 14th day of the month was a sabbath, the 7th day and the 21st day would also have been sabbaths, and so on. The events around Christ's crucifixion follow the same pattern of counting time. Luke states that Christ was laid in the tomb on the preparation (of the passover) and "the sabbath drew on." The women rested on the sabbath (the Passover which was the 14th day of the first month, or second sabbath of the year). The next day, or the first day of the week, they came to the sepulcher.

Though we firmly support the divine principal of setting aside one day in seven for worship and service to God, we feel that the subject of the sab-

bath has been given prominence far beyond what it warrants. The sabbath was important to the nation of Israel because its observance was part of their law. However, when Jesus died, the veil of the temple was rent, signaling the end of the authority of the Mosaic law. Paul was appointed as the apostle to the Gentiles and his advice in Col. 2:16 was: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."

We are not aware of any Biblical evidence that the first of every month throughout the year was a sabbath, only the first month in the spring. The lunar year beginning with the first new moon after the spring equinox contained only about 354½ days, a number not divisible by seven. At the end of the year the Hebrews must have dropped whatever days of the week remained, in order to begin the new year with the first day of the week. Thus the seventh day of the new year was a sabbath, the fourteenth a sabbath and so on throughout the year. This is the reason why our Saturday cannot consistently correspond with the seventh day of the Hebrew calendar year after year. The sabbath might as easily coincide with our Sunday or any other day of the week, depending upon the occurrence of the new moon which marked the first day of the new year. MM

Lord, Thy will be done in everything and everywhere; without a reserve, without a thought, a BUT, an IF, or a limit.

"By his faith he is speaking to us still"—Heb. 11 : 4, Moffatt.

Words for the Living

Excerpts from the sermons, talks and writings
of Rev. L. T. Nichols (1844-1912).

Who would not undergo a little discomfort and pain to save his life? When we make up our mind it is absolutely necessary to have trials and tribulation in order to save our life for eternity, then we will be glad to endure.



Be silent and let God do the speaking. If we are not silent now we will be obliged to keep silent in the future.



When we are working for the Master we are really working for ourselves—we will reap the benefit.



God has provided us bread to eat and water to drink. The question is, will we partake of it?



To have God for our friend we must obey Him at all times, wait on Him all the day long.



The only thing that will make us of any account before the Lord is to know His Word and do it.

If we have the Lord for our light and life there will be no one of whom we need be afraid.



There are oceans of knowledge of the wonders of God that will be revealed to the faithful, and there will be one long age in which to learn them. Is it not worth aspiring to?



We should be constantly asking ourselves: Are we becoming clothed in the garment of righteousness?



Jesus denied Himself and we must deny ourselves; take up our cross daily and follow Him.



Can you sing, 'Tis sweet to follow Jesus' without doing violence to its message? It is sweet to follow Jesus—even through fiery trials through everything He requires—because we know He is leading us to the grand scenery of God, to the evergreen shore.



To rejoice in the Lord is to rejoice in all He commands us to do.

God Is Going to Intervene

All one has to do is look around and observe this world and its ways to know that divine intervention is drawing ever nearer. The nations are at each others' throats as never before. But should you ask anyone if they thought that God would step in and send His Son to earth to straighten out a worldwide situation that is beyond hope, their response would be that "all things continue as they were from the beginning," that their fathers looked for Christ to return and He didn't. Yet the wickedness waxes worse and worse, and men do evil "with both hands earnestly."

I am more convinced now than ever that God is going to intervene in human affairs and that it will astound even those who are expecting it. We who are looking for this event need a faith grounded in the knowledge of God, a confidence that He does exist, and that He is in control of this planet Earth. I am convinced beyond even a shadow of any doubt that God exists and is a rewarder of those who do His will. I know that we cannot do "our own thing" and expect to be pleasing to the Great Eternal One who "inhabits eternity."

Louisiana

D.K.

Trials Work for Good

The trial of our faith is constantly before us. Whether at home or with friends, or in the work place, we must stand as examples of men with a higher calling. With a truly Christian character we are able to emulate qualities that are rarely seen and speak of an allegiance to powers that are above earthliness. Our calling is to shine as lights in the world. Our duty is to strive to never let our light or Christian nature fade or flicker out. We are called to be the light of the world (Matt. 5:14-16, 13).

There are adverse conditions in our lives that sometimes seem insur-

mountable; they try us to the breaking point. At times we must make changes and readjustments to improve our situation in life. These are not always easy to adapt to, but with a determination to go on and a mind to "endure hardness" victory will follow. Few seek God earnestly until calamity or physical suffering strikes.

We must accept that "all things work together for good to them that love God," (Rom. 8:28). Understanding this we can view life positively from a spiritual growth perspective. We must put off our old ways by putting on the new if we would be overcomers and win the prize of eternal life. "Let us not grow weary in well doing" is a vital admonition. May we all heed it.

Ontario

W. B.

Eternal Life, A GREAT Reward

A warm spring rain can give a good start to the garden; so a spiritual warm rain of good thoughts, as Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8, can give a good boost to the garden of the Lord. If we plant right thoughts in the garden of our hearts we will not let ourselves think on the evils spoken of in Col. 3:8-9. We want to hear the Judge say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And if we do, we will receive the reward He, the Lord, has promised: Eternal Life. What a reward, to be able to live for ever.

There will be no chance of death overtaking us if we receive the reward of eternal life. Death will be swallowed up in victory (I Cor. 15:54-55). What a time to live in, and what a reward to work for, when death, the grave, and all sin are destroyed. Then we will be able to live happily for ever!

Let us work harder to obtain this promise, life everlasting. Work, work, work, try, try, try. This promise is worth it.

New York

C. B.

Obituary

Elmer Hampton

On October 20, 1989, Brother Elmer Hampton of Minnedosa, Manitoba, Canada, succumbed suddenly at the age of 60.

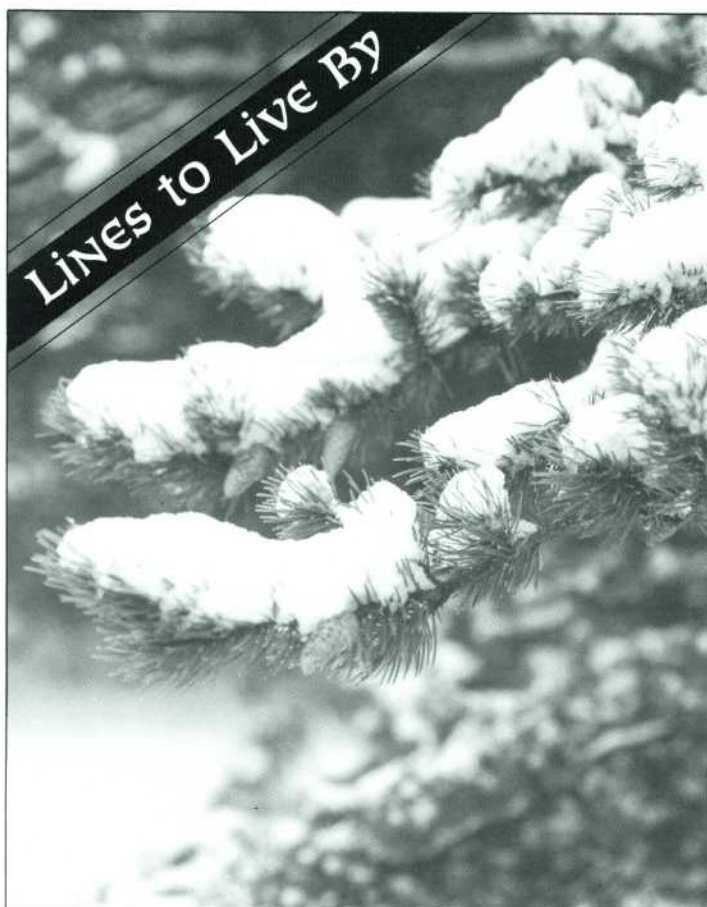
When Brother Hampton was still a youth, his father learned about the Megiddo faith. At the time, he felt no inclination to religion. But as he grew older, he came to appreciate the value of life and to think more and more seriously about the real issues of life and death and God, and began an earnest search for faith. After a thorough investigation, he became convinced that the Megiddo faith was indeed Biblical, and so began his acquaintance with the Megiddo Church, an acquaintance that brought him much happiness and a solid hope of life beyond death.

Brother Hampton was not one to believe just anything. He wanted to know and understand what he believed, and when he did not understand he would ask questions until he did. Convinced of the high character God requires of His children, Brother Hampton made a serious effort to conform to that standard.

Though he lived at a long distance from the church headquarters, he visited at regular intervals and built many close friendships with the brethren of the church.

Brother Hampton subscribed to the church periodical, the *Megiddo Message*, since 1953, and maintained an active and regular correspondence. A deep thinker and resourceful, he wrote many letters which were a valued source of material for the *Megiddo Message*.

Brother Hampton is survived by his wife, Rose Marie Hampton, his mother Pearl and his father Victor, all of Minnedosa; also his sister Irene Birch; three daughters, LaVerne Wahoski, Anita Kasprick, and Teresa Hampton; two sons, Floyd and Adrian; six grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.



*Go out and look at the stars some
night,
The millions that shine in the sky;
And try to realize our little earth
Is one of the smallest on high.*

*Just do it once, and you will learn—
Although its nothing new—
How infinitesimal you and I!
—Has it ever occurred to you?*

*The emptier the pot the quicker it
boils—watch your temper.*

*Don't be like a rocking chair—full of
motion but going nowhere.*

*A thousand ages in thy sight,
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.*

To Gain Contentment:

1. Allow yourself to complain of nothing, not even the weather.
2. Never picture yourself to yourself under any circumstance in which you are not.
3. Never compare your lot with that of another.
4. Never allow yourself to dwell on the wish that this or that might have been other than it was, or is. Realize that God Almighty knows what is good for you better than you know yourself.
5. Never dwell on tomorrow. Remember that tomorrow is God's, not yours.

Let this truth be ever present with you—that to be moved by angry passion is not godly, but that mildness and gentleness are. For in the same degree in which a man's mind is free from angry passion, in that same degree is it nearer to strength.

We prove our faith in the future by the plans we make.

*Could I turn back the leaves of time
As now I turn this calendar
Perhaps no folly and no crime
The record of the years would mar.
I would erase my errors and
Undo the evil I have done—
But what is written now must stand
I cannot turn them back, not one.*

*Could I turn back the leaves of life
And live it over day by day,
There would be peace where there was strife
Because Thy law I would obey.
I would trust more, love more, praise more;
Yes, I myself would worthier be—
But all the moments that we touch
Are ours, and then eternity.*

*Could I turn back! but I can turn
The leaf alone that lies ahead.
God grant that something wise I learn
From something foolish that I said;
The book is closed, the record there
Is written for a life, an age;
But I can be more good, more fair,
And make THE NEXT a cleaner page!*