

# Megiddo Message

THINK  
BIG.

*"Though your beginning be small, He will make your end exceeding great —Job 8:7*

December 1990





*"My cup runs over!"*

## The Plus Quality

**T**he growing Christian, like the serious minded student in school, is never satisfied with his progress. He always sees where he can do more and better. There is always something greater toward which to reach. For every field of self-knowledge conquered there open ten more previously unknown to him.

This spirit was especially strong in the apostle Paul. His letters ring with the challenge that motivated him—to be more and yet more like Christ, to do more and yet more for his brethren, to do more and yet more for his Master. He was exuberantly grateful that God was able to do exceedingly more for him. Indeed, the reward to which he was aspiring promised to be "exceeding abundantly above all" he could ask or think (Eph. 3:20).

This "plus quality" is apparent in his first letter to the Thessalonians. Very early in the letter he expressed his gratitude for faithful brethren. "We are always thankful to God as we pray for you all, for we never forget that your faith has meant solid achievement, your love has meant hard work, and the hope that you have in our Lord Jesus Christ means sheer dogged endurance in the life that you live before God, the Father of us all" (I Thess. 1:2-3, Phillips).

Yet it was not enough. They had not yet reached the ideal of the life God requires. There were yet problems to surmount, lessons to learn, goals to reach, before they could be found "unblameable in holiness before God" (I Thess. 3:13). They must ascend to steps yet higher; they must, by Moffatt's rendering of the text, "increase and excel"; in Phillips', "increase and overflow"; in Williams' Translation, "continue to live this life better and better." And there is no way any can conclude that this

is an impossible request, for he declares that this is according to the pattern that he himself has shown them—in other words, he was doing it first. Paul himself shares in this holy dissatisfaction, this desire to do more, be more, serve more—and yet more.

Paul emphasizes this plus quality in many of his letters. He tells the Roman Christians that they must be "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37). He writes to the Philippians that their love is not only to abound but that it is to "abound yet more and more," or in other words, "grow yet stronger and stronger" (Phil. 1:9, KJV, Twentieth Century New Testament).

His words to the Thessalonians reiterate the same thought. "Go on then, brothers, we beg of you and strongly advise you in the name of the Lord Jesus to continue advancing in the ideal you caught from us, how to behave in a way that pleases God, and as you are behaving—to keep on doing still better" (I Thess. 4:1, Berkeley). There was no place for any selfish satisfaction, only room to do better—and "still better."

If there should be any reluctance in going along with this "plus" spirit of Paul's, we should remember that it is God's way of working through and through. He never deals in mere sufficiencies, but in magnificent plusses. He never skimps, doles, or carefully parcels out. He is generous, abundantly generous. For what did the Psalmist give thanks? Was it for a cup carefully filled to the brim? No, it was for a cup that overflowed. "My cup," he said, "runneth over" (Ps. 23:5).

When we consider the bounty of God, unstinting, overflowing—how can we shrink from giving our utmost, little as it is? The writer of Hebrews caught the same spirit when he wrote, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of

*(Continued on page 26)*



## 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

— 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 God's 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

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**THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church, L. T. Nichols, *Founder*; Newton H. Payne, *President and Editor*; Ruth E. Sisson, *Executive Editor*.

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**O**nly an acorn. Not very much of anything. One of many millions of its kind.

Yet bound within that tiny acorn is vast potential. For that acorn is *alive!* It is not a stone, or a clod of dirt, but something that was made to grow. And given time and the proper conditions, that tiny acorn can grow, and grow, and grow until it has become a mighty oak.

**O**nly one solitary human life. Only one out of several billion on this planet. Only alive for a brief span of sixty, or eighty, or ninety years, then passing out of existence forever.

But God looks not at what we are but at what we *can become*. When He looks at a human life, He

sees the potential for something greater. When He looks at a human being, He sees raw material for the making of an angel. He sees a will, a disposition, a spirit, a determination which that individual can fashion and recreate into His own moral likeness. That accomplished, He does the rest—and the result: a magnificent immortal being!

As long as we are satisfied with what we are, what we see, what we know, we are of no use to God.

As long as we are content with acorn faith, acorn vision, and acorn growth, that is all we will have. But thank God this need not be! We *can* break out of this comfortable smallness by putting our roots deep into the soil God has provided us, and begin to grow—and

**"Mighty oaks from little acorns grow"**

**Think**  
**BIG.**



grow—and grow—and grow!

Yes, grow! The creative God made us for creative growth. Growth is the law of being. It is the law of life. There must be physical growth, and mental growth. And if—someday—an immortal being is to be the end result—there must be moral growth.

This last type of growth—in character—is what concerns us. God doesn't expect us to start full grown, anymore than parents expect their newborn child to walk and talk like an adult. Nor can maturity be reached in one grand leap. We are sinful by nature. Time and again we transgress the law of God, and learning *not* to transgress takes time. We would all like to go to sleep some night and wake up a brand new person. But it cannot happen that way. God has arranged that we should *grow*.

More, He *commands* us to grow.

This is the advice of the apostle Peter: "Put away all malice, and all guile and insincerity and envy and all slander. Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation" (I Pet. 2:1-2, RSV).

If these words came from one who by nature was nearly flawless, a perfectly developed person, they might have less meaning. But Peter stumbled. He stumbled badly, even as you and I stumble. Yet, as he writes this letter, he says in a fatherly sort of way, "It is time you put away all those childish traits; let them be outgrown forever. And then, 'like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation.'" Just as the newborn child craves the nourishment of milk, so those who have been born into a new life in Christ will crave His words, His laws, His correction, His discipline—and all for one purpose: that they may "grow up to salvation."

Who is there who has never been

guilty of malice, has never felt spiteful, never deceived, never played the hypocrite, never been moved by feelings of envy? The presence of these traits in us is sure evidence that we need to grow.

This is not all that Peter says about growth. His final words are one final admonition to grow. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

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**W**hen God looks at a human life, He looks for raw material for the making of an angel.

Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). Growth must be two-sided: there must be growth in knowledge, and growth in grace. Knowledge is essential, but it must be *applied* to become that grace which transforms into a new creature. So Peter says, "Grow in grace, and in knowledge."

The apostle Paul also emphasized the need to grow: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The standard was not one that could be reached in a moment, but by "speaking the truth in love," he wrote, you "may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (v. 15).

God cannot make us grow, but He has provided the factors necessary for our growth. First, we have something within us that yearns for a better life; God has set "eternity" in our hearts. Along with this we

have His great and precious promises to serve as an incentive.

Then we have the environment which is appropriate for our growth. Environment is both physical and spiritual or mental; and the spiritual or mental often presents the greater problem, because the greater part of that environment is made up of people.

What about this environment of people when it seems to be against us? That, too, is part of the prod to perfection. It is part of the divine plan that imperfect people should help to make perfect those who are determined to grow and become perfect. Did not the Wise Man say that "the wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright" (Prov. 21:18)? They are a "ransom" because they provide the point of irritation, the prod, the means by which the righteous and upright may be developed. Not what happens to us, but what we do with it determines the result. We have the power to decide whether we shall be *bitter* or *better*.

Someone has suggested that when a person is converted, there is an "instantaneous change from entire sinfulness to entire holiness." But what acorn ever *instantly* became an oak? Or what child *instantly* became a mature adult? Or what student ever *instantly* reached the level of his professor?

Growth, learning, maturing—all require time. And effort. And diligence. The same are needed in the making of a character worthy of eternal recognition from the Great God. That is why He commands us to grow, and that is why He allows time for us to grow.

So remember the tiny acorn, and resolve to grow. And grow. And keep growing. Never be satisfied with what you are until you are in every aspect like the Pattern, even "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

MM



# RUN to WIN

*Run to win with your eyes fixed on Jesus,  
Following the pattern of the One who's gone before you;  
Run to win, lay aside each weight and hindrance,  
Called to be victors, to receive the crown of life—  
RUN TO WIN!*

A small boy was asked if he knew what a race was. "Yes," was the ready reply. "A race is where you win."

Such has been the positive determination of every successful runner in the race for life. Ask the apostle Paul what was the meaning of the Christian race to him, and more than likely he would have replied: It is a race to win! Hear him telling the Corinthians of the zeal that kept him running at top speed:

"You know that at the sports all the runners run the race, though only one wins the prize. Like them, run to win! But every athlete goes into strict training. They do it to win a fading wreath; we, a wreath that never fades. For my part, I run with a clear goal before me; I am like a boxer who does not beat the air; I bruise my own body and make it know its master, for fear that after preaching to others I should find myself rejected" (I Cor. 9:24-27, NEB).

Nothing could be more natural, and more effective, than Paul's comparing of our Christian effort to an athletic contest. The honors given the winners in these games were so highly coveted that nearly every ambitious young man in Greece was fired with a desire to distinguish himself in these contests.

Now we want to notice that Paul's comparison is with a *race*, and if he were among us today, he would keep reminding us of this fact. The Christian life is not a perpetual wandering in circles, nor a sliding downhill; nor a warm, leisurely summer-night's stroll. It is a race, and a race implies urgency, speed, all-out effort. Why? Because there is so much to be won, and so short a time in which to win it. Anyone who would cherish any idea of winning must be serious about it. No indifferent competitor could entertain any hope of

winning in the ancient races. And no indifferent runner will ever win in the Christian race. The halfhearted do not get far from the starting point.

Why did Paul choose the "race" for comparison? It is parallel in several important aspects. First of all, a race is a highly selective affair. Whether you win or lose depends to a large extent upon the effort you put into it. If you were entering a literal race and had any hope of winning, you would expect to work and work *hard*! You would do everything in your power to improve your chances of winning. You would be careful to give your body the proper proportions of rest and exercise, and you would practice, practice, practice. Why so much effort? Because you realize that you were not the only qualified contestant in the race. Others were good, very good, and if you wanted to win against them you would have to *work*!

The nearer drew the day of the final race, the more intensely you would work. And when the day of the contest finally did arrive and you were at the line with the other contestants, would not every nerve and muscle be tensed for running as you heard the words, "Ready,...set...GO!"? And as you sped down the race course, what would you be thinking about? Something you expected to be doing next week? or some little insignificant thing that had happened a month ago, or a nonsensical comment someone had made, or some little flower alongside the race course? No! your whole thought would be on running to win!

It is said that professional runners learn to pace themselves. They learn to gauge their effort so accurately that they use every ounce of available strength in the course of the race. If they reach the end of the race still able to run even another yard or two, they didn't run hard enough. And of course, if they use up their

strength and give out just short of the finish, they lose everything.

So winning depends to a great extent upon your ability to apportion your strength accurately over the entire course of the race, so that you force yourself to use your strength to its limit. Is not this what is asked of us as Christian runners, to use *all* our powers, concentrate *all* our effort on winning the race? Isn't this how we run to win?

There is yet another reason why a race is so meaningful as a comparison for our Christian effort. A race is a highly *individual* affair. The contestants are judged strictly by their own merit. There is no "getting by" on the credits of another. Winning or losing depends entirely on the individual runner himself. If you win, you show that you were well qualified, and that you put forth the necessary effort—and you *won*. If you do *not* win, what does that show? That circumstances interfered? or that some other runner broke the rules? or that "Fate" was against you? No, you can always rationalize. You can feel that you weren't given a "fair" chance, that you would have done better *if...*, that you were not feeling up to par that day, that things were against you, that the race was not conducted properly, and so on and on. But the simple fact remains that you weren't as good as someone else or *you would have won*. Someone else was better. *It is an individual matter.*

Is not this same fact true in our Christian effort? If we win we show that we met the requirements, that we used our God-given powers, that we concentrated all our effort—and *won*! If we fail, we have only ourselves to blame. We *could* have won—if we had tried harder.

#### The Differences...

But when all the comparisons have been made, there remains one great

difference between the athletic contests and the Christian contest, which Paul did not hesitate to point out. In the athletic contest, "but one receiveth the prize." In our efforts on the Christian race course, *every-one who runs can win*! This means that we are not competing against one another; we are all running to win. If we put forth the necessary effort and *run*, we *each can win*! This is what the great runner Paul would have, each one a winner, each spending himself to snatch the victory; hence his earnest appeal, "So run, that ye may obtain"—every one of you! Run as though you had to outrun everyone else to win, with the same effort, the same concentration, the same all-out determination. "So run"—and you can *all win*!

Jesus put the same thought into a different simile when He said "Strive to enter in" (Luke 13:24). "Strive—strain every nerve—to enter in at the narrow gate." The Christian life is not a life of ease and relaxation. It requires real, concentrated effort. The stakes are life and death. Merely to run with the runners is not enough; we must exert ourselves; we must *strive* with all that is in us. We must not be as those who "beat the air," merely make a show of fighting. We must really *run to win*!

#### Pointers from a Winner

There are a few other pointers in Paul's advice that we should note. Paul would have us prepare for a test of real endurance. Every runner knows that he will have to endure fatigue, weariness, and prolonged strain. It is part of running a race. Likewise the Christian must prepare to endure, to hold out to the end. And this race for life is no fifty-yard dash; it is a marathon which calls for the utmost in endurance.

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***To succeed in the race for life, we need the will to win, the confidence that we can and the determination that we will.***

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Then Paul would have us concentrate our effort. "This *one* thing I do" (Phil. 3:13) he was able to say. The whole man was dedicated. He was a runner with his eye on the goal; nothing else mattered. All his energies were focussed on one thing: winning.

Nor would Paul have us neglect our discipline. Not for a moment. Something must be put "under" constantly, so that something else may take priority. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (I Cor. 9:27). It is as if he means to say, "My body is my slave, not my master. I am using it to lift me higher, I am concentrating all my powers on the higher."

Paul would have us keep a strong hand on ourselves. "I keep under my body," "I buffet," "I bruise," "I maul and master my body." This does not mean that he was depriving the body of necessary food and sleep, as though disabling the body would purify the heart. No, the self-discipline which Paul practiced was a restraining and governing of himself for a higher purpose. He was keeping himself under control. Whatever external circumstances might be, the man *inside* was the man in command. He could sacrifice, give up, endure *anything, everything*, if only he could be sure of the prize to which Christ had called him.

Then last but by no means least in Paul's personal advice to us was

his scrupulous avoidance of overconfidence. Paul had a keen eye to consequences. He was no conqueror who was eager to relax at the first opportunity, saying, "I have it made, I can take things easy now." No, he could not relax until he was *sure* of the prize. His glowing imagination could realize something of the glory gained by the successful athlete who was honored by the state—a statue shaped in marble by some illustrious sculptor; praise embalmed in deathless verse; a chaplet of pine leaves, which soon faded—yet its possession was coveted and counted as a great reward. How much more, thought Paul, should the Christian be willing to do for an eternal inheritance and an everlasting crown! How much more should he, with his clear moral perceptions, his elevated spiritual aims, feel the impelling force which inspires men and women to work for a heavenly diadem, to keep on running and running and running until the prize is won.

At the same time, Paul could not forget the disgrace of failure should his effort meet with the Master's disapproval. How mortifying for one who had been the means of helping others to be himself excluded as unworthy! This fear was continually on Paul's mind: "Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." It was a possibility. He who had proclaimed the rules

and conditions of the contest to others, he who had done so much to help and encourage others to run, how disgraceful if he, through a lack of thoroughness in his own personal training, should be disqualified by the great Judge at the close of the Day!

That great Day of settlement was ever present in Paul's far-seeing vision. And should it not be in ours also? Confidence, yes; enough to tell himself a thousand times a day, "I'm running to win, and I will win!" But there was always an unspoken danger that he sought to guard against. Perhaps it was a fear that familiarity with sacred truths could destroy their forcefulness to him. Or perhaps it was a fear that a continual, professional handling of the Divine might interfere with his personal application of it. While he was busy cultivating the vineyards of others he might neglect his own.

"Human nature is weak and needs stimulating." It is true for us now, it was true for Paul. He was no born winner. He too had to run. He too had to build himself up in faith, in holiness, and humility. Every one of us has need, great need, for spiritual, inner, personal culture. The good seed of the Kingdom will not grow in our hearts and bear fruit untended. This fact was vivid in Paul's mind and he sought diligently to fortify himself against it—"lest that by any means"—by any means imaginable!—"when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." It mattered not how humiliating the problem; if it threatened to interfere with his own success, he was ready for battle, firm, fierce and deadly. What was the shame of repentance compared with the shame of defeat?—if it be found at the last that he who had urged great truths on others had himself inwardly disbelieved; if he who had enforced laws on others



had himself transgressed; if he had spoken words to warm and burn into the hearts of others while his own heart remained cold as ice.

What was the prevention against such shame? It was self-mastery, self-control, self-discipline. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest...."

But while Paul was not overconfident, neither was he lacking in the proper measure of confidence. He had his eye on the prize, and he was set on *winning* it. Whatever. "I run to win." It was a confidence that springs from faith, and grows as it is fed. It is a solid confidence that comes from progress made, from battles actually fought—and won! It is a confidence that reasons like this: "If I won that victory, then certainly I can win this one. And if I can win this one, then I can win the next. And the next. And the next"—and so on, all the way to the top. In this way he was able to rise above the chilling, paralyzing mists of doubt and see the heavenly crown clearly before him; and so he had the strength and encouragement to continue striving, running to win!

#### Another Runner...Peter

Let us look now at another runner, the apostle Peter. What was his means of "running to win"? His answer is brief and to the point: "*Remember! Keep your mind on it!*" Read through his Second Epistle, and notice how many times he exhorts us to *remember, keep* in mind, be stirred up to remembrance.

There is something to keep in mind, something to remember. "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye *know* them, and be established in the present truth" (1:12). Knowing is not enough; even though we know and are "established in the present truth," he still feels it necessary to

put us "always in remembrance of these things." "Yea, I think it meet, so long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (v. 13). "I keep stirring you up with reminders," he says. "I want you to have a means to call these things to memory." Something to keep calling to mind, something to keep stirred up about. There is no time for daydreaming or any moments of placid nothingness if we follow Peter's directives! Well he knew our tendency to forget, to let the keen impression slip.

Peter was approaching the end of his time with them, and he wanted to say a few words that would be the most helpful in carrying them through to a successful finish: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (II Pet. 1:12-14). I will not always be with you to keep telling you these things, he says. You must learn to recall them for yourselves. You must get your minds in a deep groove that nothing can shake them out of. You must learn to keep these things in remembrance—not away in the background but right up front where they will influence everything you do!

Nor is this all he says about what we should keep in our minds. "This second epistle, beloved," he begins again in the third chapter, "I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance"—now he is bent on stirring up even minds that can be called *pure*! And if *pure* minds need stirring, how much more those which have not yet attained that high quality of virtue!

"I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which

were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (vs. 1-2). They were to keep in mind the words spoken long ago by the holy prophets, the words of the apostles, and the words of their Lord. Would not this be a good admonition for us also? If they needed to give such diligence to remembering, what of *us*? Ours has not been the direct contact that was theirs, but is not our task the easier, we who have the Word

**Every one of us  
has need for  
spiritual, inner,  
personal culture.  
The good seed of the  
Kingdom will not  
grow in our hearts  
and bear fruit  
untended.**

all written down for us to read? How much excuse shall we have for not *remembering*?

This was Peter's success formula. "Watch what you think about." Beware what you allow in your mind. If it is the right thing, nothing can help you more. If it is the wrong thing, how deadly!

Wasn't this Peter's success formula? Wasn't he saying, "Watch what you think about"? He was insisting that right thinking was the basis of right conduct. And if they kept their minds *filled* with the *right* things, there would be no room for any wrong. As some one has said it, when the "devil" comes knocking on the door of such a mind, he will see immediately that



**The Christian  
life is a race,  
and a race  
implies urgency,  
speed, all-out effort.**

there is not even standing room inside—and so will slink away.

*Knowledge kept in remembrance* is the one means of escaping spiritual disaster. As Peter said, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (v. 17). There is danger of being led away; there is danger of slipping, even when you feel secure. So “keep these things in mind,” says Peter—“don’t forget.”

How keenly does this thought of remembering impress the aged apostle Peter, perhaps because he is still recalling vividly the night *he forgot*. Yes, Peter knew what it was to stumble; he knew the shame, the remorse, the bitter self-condemnation that follows falling. And he knew also the sure-preventive formula: *Remember!* Had he only remembered that night long ago—. But he had not.

Should not we take this as *our* formula for winning: Remember! Remember the prize, the glory for which we are working. If we remember that, how can we possibly be distracted? What is there in this world that can even faintly compare with the “great and precious promises” that can be ours?

We should remember also our own tendencies to wrong, the places where we are most likely to stray. If we look back seriously

upon our own experiences, we can see many times where we have slipped because we were not *thinking*, because we were not *expecting* what happened, and were not prepared. At other times we have failed because we let our vision of the future lapse as we became more intent on some momentary gratification—holding onto our own position in an argument, or justifying our own conduct, or satisfying some longing of the flesh, or simply nursing our own hurt feelings. But what are any of these compared with the heavenly goal? If we always kept this in mind, how could we possibly slip into sin? If we always kept near to our hearts the glory of the blessings God has offered us, how could we possibly go our own way?

#### **Advice from Other Runners...**

And now before closing let us pick up just a few thoughts from some runners who are nearer and dearer to us than Peter and Paul. What was the success formula of our founder? He was bent on winning. “I am going to be there,” he said, “and I want you to be there, too.” It was a matter of determination. This same spirit kept Sister Hembree persevering and dedicated her whole life through. “How can you be sure you are going to hold on?” someone asked her. “There is no way of actually knowing,” she said, “but it is my determination”—a determination she never let go.

What was the late Brother Flowerday’s word to us on how to be sure of winning? Just one word: *dead-earnestness*. Well he knew, to quote his words, that “the Christian life demands resoluteness, unwavering determination to carry its faith and purpose to a successful finish.”

The will to win, the confidence that we *can* and the determination

that we *will*—how great is our need for all of these in this last hour of the day! And should not the prize, the goal, the crown of life, be uppermost in our minds? Whatever we may have to go through now, is it not infinitesimally small by comparison? To think of the glory, the beauty, the happiness, the pleasure, the delight that will be the continual portion of the glorified ones—we have talked about it, sung about it, read about it, dreamed about it; yet we know that we have not conceived the thousandth part of its reality. Truly, what will it be to be *there*!

Our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, kept himself stimulated by his mental excursions into the delights of that better world. Daily, hourly, probably almost momentarily, he glimpsed its glories. When not otherwise occupied, he kept his mind actively engaged, conversing with the saints, or speeding through space with the angels, or enjoying himself in their heavenly home.

“To think,” he said, “of basking forever in a hundred times Eden beauty. To have a right—what a blessing! To have a right to enter and compose a part of that happy throng that will glow with grandeur and beauty, thrilling with great swelling words of joy and gratitude, as we meet and greet and partake of the more than wonderful beatitudes upon eternity’s shore. Such blessings, too wonderful for the human heart to conceive of! Beyond, yes, says Paul, ‘exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think.’ No wonder Peter styles them ‘exceeding great and precious promises’!”

“Oh, how they swell the goodness of God into a fathomless ocean, yea, like space unending in every direction. To think of basking forevermore in such wonderful sunshine of bliss with more than ecstatic joy upon the evergreen plain of



eternity should keep our hearts filled with constant gratitude and deep settled devotion to the mighty and everlasting God; so much so that we will ever be found reverentially bowing in meek submission to His loving will. To think of the joy when each move, each turn, every moment will increase our joy and comfort as we onward move upon this unending plain of eternity; as we are introduced, perhaps by a Gabriel, to new worlds on high and are permitted to view their wondrous beauty and glory and participate in their more than wonderful joys. We will indeed stand filled with joyful astonishment and be led to exclaim in the language of the Revelator, 'Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints' (Rev. 15:3)."

This is the goal upon which we have set our hearts. We are not running for naught. We are not foregoing the opportunities of this present world simply for the satisfaction it might bring us. Ahead lies a goal, a reward, a prospect so great that beside it all other goals pale into nothingness.

And it can be *ours*.

How can we be sure? What gives us the vision to picture ourselves among those immortals, freed forever from the limitations of mortality? What makes us believe that *our* hands may someday be changed to a substance superior to flesh and blood; that *our* eyes may become immortal eyes with vision beyond our fathoming; that *our* mind, which now wearies us with its lapses and forgets, may someday be a mind ever expanding in intelligent capability and creative thought, retaining forever the rich impressions it receives? How can we be sure it is not merely a pleasant dream?

Thank God, He has provided so much evidence that there remains not the slightest part of a question. All these promises are certified by the Word of God and sealed with His own seal. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21). Who has given this promise? Who is the "I" that is speaking? It is none other than our Lord and Creator Himself. Can any surety surpass this?

The only question lies with us—whether we will reach the standard He has set. We know it is high, incomparably high. But don't we expect prices to be in relation to real value? Should not the greatest possible value carry the highest price? Even so, there can be no possible comparison between what we will receive and what we are asked to give. What have we done to deserve even a few years of this *present* life? And how can anything we might have to do or give up or suffer in thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, eighty or even ninety years be sufficient to entitle us to ages upon ages upon ages of glorious, heavenly, immortal life?

Oh, let us multiply our determination as we face the testings of the days ahead, and *run to win*. Let us

**A**nyone who cherishes any idea of winning must be serious about it. The half-hearted do not get far from the starting-point.

grasp *every* opportunity that comes our way to think right, feel right and do right, anything that will increase the possibility of our own success. There is no danger of doing too much—what runner ever feared running too hard or fast? No, ours is not the danger of overrunning the finish line; our danger lies in falling short.

*Some* are going to participate in the New World that is coming. *Some* are going to be part of its glorious forever. *Some* among the sons and daughters of earth shall know and partake of the Divine nature. *Some* runners shall *win*.

Shall you? Shall I?

MM

**R**un the straight race through God's good grace;  
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face.  
Life with its way before us lies;  
Christ is the path, Christ holds the prize.



## No Room for Selfishness

*"The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."*

—Proverbs 11:25

About a century ago a certain man wrote: "One always receiving, never giving, is like a stagnant pool, in which whatever flows remains, whatever remains corrupts."

From our Heavenly Father we have received an abundance of temporal and spiritual blessings; far more than we deserve or could ever count. Were we never to share with others less fortunate, we would indeed reveal our ingratitude.

Although it is virtuous to give temporal help to those in need, what our world lacks most is not material things but spiritual; not things for this life alone but faith in God and His Word and that upright life that can benefit eternally.

In proportion as we help in this service to others, our souls will be made fat, or "enriched," as another translation reads. A person who possesses more earthly wealth than he himself needs feels a greater satisfaction in using it to benefit others than in merely hoarding it to satisfy his greed. All we have belongs to God, and we are His stewards. Possessions are given to prove and train us for the greater work God has for us if faithful. If we use our goods with the thought that they belong to God, then we will use them with care. We shall possess an inner peace and contentment which comes with an assurance that we are sincerely doing what God requires. And though we should suffer temporal losses, whatever we have done for God will stand to our eternal credit.

Not by wealth alone can we be of service to our fellowmen. Time and ability are two great elements which we can use to help others, and at the same time enrich ourselves. Naturally we look at our own affairs with little, if any, thought for others. The apostle Paul, after having spent the most of his life in the service of

God and of his fellowmen, wrote, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:4). The few occasional days, hours, or even minutes spent to assist others in the way of salvation are by no means wasted. Did not others help us? Is it not because others have labored that we enjoy spiritual blessings today? Left to ourselves we should still be wandering in the wilderness of ignorance, and struggling in the mire of our own selfish interests and lusts.

The great characters we read of in the Bible who were always busy aiding others were undoubtedly well aware that in this way they kept themselves full of faith and in favor with God. The apostles who took active part in the great missionary work after the ascension of their Master at the same time applied to themselves those same lessons which they taught to others. "I keep under my body," said Paul, "and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27). He wanted to be sure of his own salvation. The apostle John pointed to this same all-important task. "Look to yourselves," he wrote, "that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (II John 8).

The apostles' experience in proclaiming the Word of God to others enriched their own knowledge also. Their earnest endeavor to persuade men to obey as well as believe the gospel, developed in them a better understanding of the practical principles which the law of God demands of believers. Furthermore, they had to be examples before the world to whom they proclaimed the Word. They had to demonstrate to them the power of the Gospel; they had to show how it could turn ordinary men, sinners, or heathen, of whatever



race or rank, into new creatures in Christ. As they followed the example of Christ they left their own lives as examples for their hearers to follow. We can truly say of them that while giving their all in service for others they were themselves enriched; while "watering" others—dispensing to them the water of life—they themselves were watered.

No one can live a selfish life and be accepted by the Almighty. Though our chief concern must be to save ourselves, still we must always be helping others to this same end. This help may be material in form; again it may be by exhorting or encouraging. Or it may be simply the example of our lives. By every act of assistance to others we ourselves are strengthened.

As we have received, so let us give, that in the Day of Judgment it may be said to us, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you...for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:34-36). For, "If a man has enough to live on, and yet when he sees his brother in need shuts up his heart against him, how can it be said that the divine love dwells in him?" (I John 3:17, NEB). Such will hear the dreadful sentence and there will be no appeal: "Depart from me, ye cursed,...for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" (Matt. 25:41-43).

Whatever our strength, whatever our talents, there is something we can do—must do, for our own good as well as for others.

*"My burden is too heavy, Lord," I trembling said.  
"I can no further carry it!" and tears I shed.  
Then came a sudden cry for help from one sore  
pressed;  
I ran to seek him, gladly gave him of my best.  
Then thought I of my heavy burden—but, lo,  
'twas gone!  
The gloom and doubt had vanished quite and  
love's light shone.  
When we another's burden lift or try to bear,  
Love's gentle hand removeth swift our load of  
care.*

## *I Am His, But...*

*I am His; but is self buried?  
Is my one and only aim  
Just to honour Christ my Saviour,  
Just to glorify His name?*

*I am His; but am I wholly  
Separated unto Him?  
Do I really shun things doubtful,  
Things my better sight would dim?*

*I am His; but would I gladly  
Give up all, my Lord's to be?  
If He called me, could I answer,  
"Master, here am I, send me"?*

*I am His; but am I doing  
Everything that I can do,  
So that others, searching, longing,  
May be taught of Jesus too?*

*I am His; but is my home life  
All my Lord would have it be?  
Is it seen in every action  
That He has control of me?*

*I am His; but am I looking  
For my Lord's return from heaven?  
Am I daily watching, longing  
For the signal to be given?*

—Selected.



**L**ife can  
be repeti-  
tious. Days,

weeks, months, years can take on a  
sameness that borders on boredom.  
Day after day, day after day becomes an  
endless round of sleep, work, and eat—with  
little purpose or direction.

Or—

Life can be fresh, challenging, always changing,  
always opening upon something new—like the seasons.

We are all familiar with the changing seasons of  
life; but what we have seen is not all there is. God has  
invited us to something more than this. He has invited  
us to live in a never-ending Springtime of happiness  
and delight.

What is the plan? He has told us that by doing our  
work well through each season of life, by giving up  
what we might naturally seek, by not pursuing our own  
ways or seeking our own pleasures or speaking our own  
words (Isa. 58:13-14) He will ultimately refashion our  
mortal bodies into His own likeness and usher us into  
an eternal, glorious *Spring*, this earth made new, where  
we shall never again know pain, toil or even weariness;  
where life will be one rapturous progression “from  
glory to glory,” with nothing to hurt or harm—forever!

But first we must do our best during each season of  
this life, using our God-given strength of body and  
mind to carefully plant and cultivate a harvest that God  
will accept, to show ourselves fit for His greater  
favors; for life in His eternal Springtime is reserved for  
those—and those only—who have proven themselves  
worthy stewards here and now.



**SPRING** is the time of beginning, the time when—  
whatever our age in years—we first become acquaint-  
ed with God and the world in which He has placed us,  
and the great plan by which He has designed to save  
worthy mortals. If this time is for us also the spring-  
time of our life, thank God! for it is the greatest of  
privileges to be able to remember our Creator “in the  
days of [our] youth” (Eccl. 12:1). It is then that our



*Spring,*



*Summer,*



*Autumn...*

minds are most active, most supple, most impression-  
able, when we can most easily learn the principles and  
precepts of the law of God and commit to memory  
those portions of Scripture which will help us in later  
life.

But whatever our age, as new believers we must  
concentrate on preparing the soil of our heart to  
receive the good seed of the Kingdom: we must plow  
deep. This means turning over again and again and  
again the soil of our minds, to break up the hard clods.  
Close examination of our soil will reveal large areas of  
prejudices, pre-conceived notions, and a whole lot of  
worthless opinions firmly set because of being so  
many years undisturbed. Hard plowing will be needed  
to break them up, so that the warm sunlight of God's  
law can penetrate deeply. But it is work that we must  
do. There is no easier way. However well others have  
prepared *their* soil, however devoted our elders, our  
teachers, or associates, we must nourish and grow *our*  
own convictions. However bountiful the crop *they*  
have grown, we are responsible for producing our  
own. Our faith must be our own. We cannot expect to  
live and grow strong in the strength of others. We must  
study and master the evidence ourselves. We must  
think through the deep patterns of understanding that  
will shape and guide *our* life. We must decide upon the  
crop we want to harvest, and prepare accordingly. The  
best seed planted in hard or poorly prepared soil will  
not grow well.

Then we must plant the seeds that will mature into a  
godly character.

But be careful! Unfortunately, all seeds are not  
equal, and the first seed we come upon may not be the  
seed that will give us the harvest we want! And the  
universal law of horticulture has no exceptions: *What-  
ever we sow we shall reap*. If we want our Master to  
accept our crop we must plant only His seed. “Sow to



# SPRING!

yourselves...righteousness" (Hos. 10:12)—right deeds, integrity, uprightness, purity, truth.



Spring is also a time for pruning. Just as one who tends an orchard must prune the excessive growth from his trees, so the Lord allows pruning in our lives. The pruning may come through circumstances, or an experience, or it may come through those we work with. Whatever the means, let us recognize that it is of God, appreciate it, and benefit by it.

Although most of the pruning is done in the springtime, there will be some pruning in each season of life, for in this special cultivation process good crops are the result of good pruning. "Every branch in me that bears no fruit he prunes away, and whatever bears fruit he prunes so that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2, New Berkeley Version).

Do God's requirements seem severe?—deep plowing, sharp pruning? Do not be dismayed. The season of springtime will pass quickly enough, and we will be grateful for the good results of the severity we endured. After all, the whole purpose is *the crop*, so that we can be accepted to live and enjoy God's *eternal* springtime, where there will be no more pain, sacrifice or surrender.

**SUMMERTIME** in the Christian life brings many jobs to be done, seemingly all at once. But thank God, we can work more efficiently now, because we have acquired some useful skills.



At the same time the Word of God grows steadily more meaningful in our lives, and we find we can grasp concepts which earlier we could not. The plan of God impresses us ever more deeply, and we are thrilled at its breadth! To think that God Almighty has offered us poor mortal creatures an opportunity to live in an eternal Springtime!

And so to the work!

Summer is the season of most rapid growth.

Almost before we realize it we are seeing the benefits of our springtime plowing and planting. The tender plants are growing rapidly—but alas! so are the weeds. Now it is time for cultivating, quickly, before they multiply and our precious crop is ruined!

No time can be lost. We must go after them, whatever their kind. Weeds belonging to the selfishness family spread wide over the ground, smothering any good plant that happens to grow near them. Others, like bitterness and jealousy, put down deep branching roots, and the longer they are left growing the harder they are to pull. Some, like pride, are viney and entangling. Others, like deceit and dishonesty, have leaves that are poisonous to touch.

Whatever the nature of the weed you discover, pull it as soon as you discover it. And if it reappears, pull it again. Don't leave it to grow up and mature—and go to seed and make a million more! This point cannot be mentioned too often, because any weeds left to grow unrestrained will only multiply, and ruin the crop. The smaller the weed, the easier to uproot.

So keep after the weeds. It is the only way to save your well-planted crop.

And while you are busy weeding, take time to survey the growth of your crop. Just how well is it doing? Are there any parts that need extra watering or nurturing? Is there any more deep plowing that you neglected in the springtime of your life? If so, do it now. Are there any areas of your life not planted to good seed? any parts planted to an inferior seed? If so, now is your chance to take care of them. Now is the time to be sure that every inch of your ground is planted to *the crop you want to harvest*. For it takes time to grow a crop. And once autumn approaches, there will not be time enough for a crop to mature before frost.







AUTUMN is a pleasant season, often thought to be the most delightful season, perhaps because the pressures of work begin to ease as the fruit of life begins to ripen. It's exciting to see the crop coming to maturity, to see the results of all your careful years of pruning, cultivating, and growing a character. The good habits acquired during the spring and summer are now beginning to bear fruit, habits of right thinking, right doing, along with habits of patience, gentleness, self-control, forbearance and love. Altogether, you feel an inner joy, a peace, a freedom that can hardly be described—a radiant happiness and a deep and genuine freedom: freedom from fear, anxiety, depression and worry—because your life has been worthwhile, because it is under the care of God. Yes, autumn is a wonderful time!

Then, too, if you worked well during the spring and summer, there is a release from the constant weeding that has been keeping you busy, for weeds do not grow as fast now as they did during the spring and early summer. If you were diligent and kept the weeds from going to seed and producing another crop, there will be few weeds now anyway.

But autumn is not a time for rest. There is yet hard work to be done. It is not the work of planting and cultivating, it is the work of harvesting, and what a delightful work it is!

There is so much harvesting to be done, so much completing of the work we have begun. Everything takes longer now, too, because we do not have the resilience we had in spring and summer. This adds a new feeling of concern: we *must* redeem every moment!

However, the spiritual wisdom and expertise we have gained should more than make up for failing of physical stamina. Though growing weaker in body, we can keep growing stronger in mind, stronger in faith, stronger in hope.

Autumn, however, can also be a time of tragedy. Now—perhaps suddenly—we realize that there is less time to correct our mistakes. If we did not plant well, if we planted only hit or miss, if we did not take care to find good seed, if we failed to prepare the soil, if we

neglected to pull the weeds, if we failed to do much planting at all, now it is too late, for autumn has very little time for growing.

If you are in the autumn of life, work hard, and bring to maturity as many of the good fruits of the Kingdom as you can. Remember the glorious coming—eternal Springtime! And all depends on the crop you harvest—now!

WINTER is a season few like. It is a time when we are confined, when we cannot plant and cultivate our crops, when we must live on the fruit of the work we did during the spring, summer and autumn.



Winter is also a time of release from the hard work of earlier life, a time when the good habits we have formed can work for us, while we turn our attention to the finer details of character polishing.

If we have worked well during the spring, summer and autumn, winter can be a time of great joy. Above all it is a time of looking ahead. For the next season is...God's glorious, eternal Springtime! Never has it been so near!

There is no need to dread winter, it is as much a part of life as spring and summer. Accepted in the right spirit and in the strength of God, winter can—and will—be another blessed season of our life, blessed because we are still under God's loving care.

Wintertime, too, gives us more time to help younger laborers, who look to us for an example of how God leads His saints who walk with Him all their days. They are looking to us, and they will learn from us, whether they see in us examples to follow or *not* to follow.

Above all, it is a time to make sure that our work is ready to pass beneath the scrutinizing eye of our God. For soon He will be inspecting our life work, the harvest we have grown. And what will be His judgment of us? What will He say about us? Will He consider us worthy of a place in His eternal scheme, where there will be no more sorrow, sickness or suffering?

Yes, ahead is the glorious Springtime...never has it been so near... the earth glorified and filled with happy immortals... forever!

That is why we have been planting, and cultivating, and weeding, and harvesting. *We want to be there!* MM





## *The King In His Beauty*

*The King in His beauty is coming!  
His form soon descending we'll see,  
Attended by hosts of bright angels  
To Zion—'tis waiting for Thee.  
Our harps which have hung on the willows,  
Anew shall be tuned to Thy praise;  
One voice of thanksgiving and honor  
To Thee, King of beauty, we'll raise.*

*The King in His beauty is coming!  
The sleeping ones now are awake;  
They mount up to meet the bright convoy;  
What joy then the faithful will take!  
Descending, they rest on Mount Zion,  
Establish their King on His throne  
From whom shall come justice with mercy,  
And limitless love for His own.*

*The King in His beauty is coming!  
Earth's kingdoms shall totter and fall,  
There'll be one domain and one Kingdom,  
King Jesus will reign over all,  
The faithful shall then be exalted,  
And with Him shall sit on His throne;  
Receiving the promise to Abram—  
The rich, goodly land all their own.*

*The King in His beauty is coming!  
Ye downtrodden, be of good cheer;  
Be firm, and rely on the promise;  
The word of Jehovah now fear.  
Press on! He will bless through each trial,  
Hope cheers us and brightens our way;  
Though oft it requires greatest courage,  
Thick darkness is just before Day. —E.D.N.*





***There is urgency here. You must read the vision in haste—on the run!***

**T**he prophet Habakkuk lived in a time when the children of Israel were at the point of despair. For years they had lived in oppression. Their land was devastated, their children taken into captivity, and their temple profaned. For years they had prayed for deliverance, but deliverance had not come. They had waited for rescue, but rescue was not there. And now they had just about reached the breaking point. So Habakkuk opens his prophecy by exclaiming, "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear. Even cry out unto thee violently, and thou wilt not save" (1:2).

In response to this plea the Lord gives Habakkuk this very strange message: "Write the vision and make it plain, so that he may run that readeth it." What does that mean? He says, Write the vision clearly enough, plainly enough, so that whoever gets it may read it on the run, in haste—speed-read it, if you like. There is no time to stop and read casually. This is not a book to be tucked away in your library and read in leisure hours. There is urgency here. You must read

the vision in haste—on the run!

What makes this especially strange is the next verse in which the Lord says: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, for it will surely come, it will not be late."

What can be so urgent about a message that you have to read it running, you have to speed-read it, when all it says is "Though it tarry, just keep on waiting for it"? And what is the vision?

The vision is in chapter 3, and it is a horrible sight:

"I have heard thy speech and was afraid, O Lord, The mountains saw thee, and they trembled. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation. Thou didst march through the land in indignation. Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed."

It is a vision of destruction and judgment, also of deliverance and justice. This is the message of Habakkuk.

It was precisely out of this kind of



imagery that Christianity was born. Jesus came preaching the imminence of Divine intervention. "Repent," he said, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He referred to Himself over and over again as "the Son of Man" who would be coming "in a cloud, with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27), with saints, and angels and trumpets (I Thess. 4:16-18).

Jesus told often of His second, greater coming. He said there would be signs in the sun and moon and stars, the political powers of earth. He said there would be great distress among nations, with perplexity (Luke 21:25-26), wars and rumors of wars. And He said, just before He bade them farewell, "If I go away, I will come again" (John 14:3), sealing the promise of His return.

The authors of the New Testament saturated their writings with the promise of Christ's return. In that day, when they would meet in the marketplace or along the street they would whisper to one another, "Maranatha," meaning, "The Lord cometh."

Let us not forget even for a moment the reality of this prophecy. It should be with us continually. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we should keep it in mind: *Jesus is coming, and I must get ready.* Do we not partake of the Lord's supper each year that we may "show the Lord's death till he come"? (I Cor. 11:26).

In our day this emphasis on Christ's coming has been subjected to some very perverse and different versions. However, the force of Jesus' words remains unchanged: *I will come again.* We should remember it constantly. It should hang over our heads like a Damocles' sword, ready to fall upon us and shatter our petty pretensions into a thousand smithereens.

There is much we would like to

know about the end-time which we are not told. There is much we would like to know about how Christ will come, and the changes that will take place when He comes, and so on and on. Most of all we would like to know just when He is coming. There is so much in the realm of the unknowables. But God has not intended that we should know.

What the second coming does is to radically call into question all of those false gods to which I give my allegiance, and the false securities with which I prop up my life—my money, my status, my imagined power and influence. The second coming says to me that these too will pass away. I can go my own way, I can ignore the God who made me. But one night when my barns are filled with wheat, and I am sleeping soundly on my soft pillows, God will whisper in my ear, "You fool, you fool."

"Write the vision and make it plain," says God to Habakkuk. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie—though it tarry, wait for it."

It is here, at the point of waiting, that most of us have our greatest difficulty being faithful. Yet we are forced to spend much of our lives waiting for one thing or another. We wait for a certain letter which we hope will come in the morning's mail; we wait for examination grades to be posted, we wait for the doctor's report to be released; we wait for weekend, or weekday.

So much of life is lived in the waiting zone. How then are we to wait while the vision tarries?

It is not the kind of waiting with nothing to do but wonder what to do next. No. There's an urgency in this waiting. Something to do. Something to be. Something to become. "Write the vision and make it plain," said God to Habakkuk, so that who-

ever gets the message may read it as one who runs, may speed-read it.

It is the kind of waiting that has been called revolutionary patience. It is the kind of waiting that feels the stretch and strain between having and not having, between knowing and not knowing. It is the kind of waiting that is active, busy, doing all that can possibly be done in the interim.

**W**e live in  
a world  
where  
*nothing is ours, but if  
we are Christ's, and  
we know Christ is  
God's, then we are  
secure—in Christ.*

While we wait we wonder and we worry; and sometimes, if we are honest with ourselves, we know that there are moments when the world is too much with us, when we are thrown back on ourselves and are prompted to forget the urgency of the hour.

But through it all we live by the assurance that we stand in whatever waiting room of life we may find ourselves, free of past encumbrances and open to the future. We live in a world where nothing is ours, but if we are Christ's, and we know Christ is God's, then we are secure—in Christ.

Do you hear the message? "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Our patient waiting shall surely be rewarded.

MM





## As God Judges

*"We refer to a previous issue of the Message (April, 1988), and the question and answer on II Sam. 12:15-18, and beg to differ in your views. That God knows all is not in question, but the child of David died because of his mortal frame, and some weakness, or sickness. True, the text states God struck the child. The text referring to Abraham states God tempted, and we are well aware God tempts no man. It was a prophecy from God that the child would die. Let us acknowledge this as another short prophecy fulfilled.*

*"I understand that natural death is the result of our mortal state, and the second death is due to sin. Why should this be different? Are any of us truly worthy to tread this land?"*

When discussing the death of the child of David and Bathsheba and God's part in it, it may be helpful to consider a few fundamental facts about God's plan. One is God's view of human life. It is difficult for us, with our limited perspective, to realize God's very different viewpoint, and that He does not place the same value upon every human life that we naturally do. God sees all life in relation to His eternal purpose. If a life fits into that purpose, then the value of that life becomes exceedingly great; if it does not, that life is only as a vapor, appearing for a little while and then vanishing (Jas. 4:14).

Those chosen of God in all ages have been few, the "fewest of all people," yet they are counted as commodities of highest value—"precious," "jewels," "the apple of his eye" (Deut. 7:6-7; Ex. 19:5-6; Mal. 3:16-17; Zech. 2:8). On the other side of the picture, whole nations outside His purpose are counted as "a drop of the bucket," "less than nothing, and vanity," "the small dust of the balance" (Isa. 40:12, 15-17). This being God's view of nations, we can readily understand that God is not under

any obligation to preserve every individual.

Another point to consider is God's overall plan for the earth and its inhabitants. God as the Creator and designer of all life has set certain laws of life in motion, and all of us are here because of the operation of those laws. Also, He has made us free moral agents. We can do what we wish with our lives, and God does not interfere. God's principle is "Choose ye" (Josh. 24:15).

Until the time Christ intervenes and takes direct control of the world and its affairs, God has committed its government into the hands of men and has left them, for the most part, on their own, to do as they please. "The heavens... are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Ps. 115:16). Still He holds supreme control in the sense that He allows nothing to hinder His long-range plans, and at times He has intervened to remove opposition or to work in behalf of His people.

With this thought in mind, let us address the part of your question. "Are any of us truly worthy to tread this land?"

### **Do We Live Because We Are Worthy to Live?**

We cannot say that any of us are here because we are worthy of the life we have, or that those who die are unworthy. God gives the present mortal life to all indiscriminately. If we do as we please, this is all we will get. But God has given us another option: if we submit to the authority of His law, and achieve the standard of moral excellence He requires, He will give us a better, higher—even immortal—life. This is the core of God's purpose as revealed in Scripture.

You are correct in stating that the death of the child of David and Bathsheba was a short-term prophecy fulfilled. God did foreknow that the child would die, and the death occurred just as foretold. But you infer that you do not feel God had any part in the death of the



child except in foreknowing that it would happen; that the child died wholly of natural causes. In this it would seem that you are overlooking a significant part of the information given in the chapter.

The passage reads, "the Lord struck the child...so that he was very sick" (v. 15, NASB). The Lord gave and the Lord took away. And in this "taking away" God was dealing with David; He knew what discipline would be most effective in turning David to repent. There is no indication that the child suffered much or long; it was David that suffered. And David repented (see Psalms 32 and 51).

### God Does Not Tempt

You suggest that God was said to strike the child in the same sense that God was said to "tempt" Abraham. It is true that God is often said to do what He allows. But the phrase, "God tempted Abraham," is not entirely parallel to "God struck the child." God does not "tempt" anyone (Jas. 1:13-14). The passage in Genesis 22:1 may be more correctly translated, "God put Abraham to the test." While God does not tempt, He does test, chasten, and try His people for their good (Heb. 12:5-11).

And nowhere are we told that God does not "strike." On the contrary, God does "strike," "smite," "kill" (see II Sam. 12:15; Isa. 19:22; I Sam. 2:6). The phrase, "the Lord struck the child," is wholly within the realm of possibility, given the record we have of His work in times past and the prophecies of what He will do in the future.

The Scriptures give many accounts of God directly intervening in human life and "striking" when it suited His purpose (i.e., the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain; the Flood in the time of Noah; the ten plagues upon Pharaoh and Egypt).

In this context let us look closely at two types of death spoken of in Scripture.

## Two Types of Death

The Bible speaks of two different deaths:

- A. Natural death, i.e., death from natural causes, and
- B. Death that is a judgment from God or a punishment for sin.

Subjects of this second type of death may be divided into three smaller groups:

- 1) Those who died from the judgments of God upon individuals or nations in times past;
- 2) Those who will be removed by God's judgments when Christ comes to bring the nations of earth into subjection;

- 3) Penal death, i.e., punishment for transgression of law, which will fall upon all who agree to serve God and prove unfaithful to their agreement.

### A: Death from Natural Causes

By far the most common type of death is death that is the result of our mortality. This includes death from all natural causes, i.e., sickness, disease, old age; also calamity, famine, war, pestilence, accident, etc. Natural death is as universal and as old as the human race. This type of death is part of God's design for the human race and is not related to anyone's good or bad actions. It is the end of the cycle of life, and has been from the beginning: conception, birth, growth, maturity, decline and death. In the natural course of events it comes to all, whether they are serving God or whether they are not. The most righteous die, as well as the most wicked.

Some people believe that those who die in a natural calamity are receiving a judgment from God for their sins; but Jesus took great care to explain that this is not true.

Using as an illustration a calamity that had just occurred (Luke 13), Jesus made the point that premature death is not an indication of one's sinfulness or of Divine judgment. Someone had told Him about "the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifice." Jesus answered their question: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (vs. 2-5). The victims of the tragedy had not suffered because they were worse sinners than anyone else.

Whenever a condition vital for the support of life is removed, the person dies. This is true for the person who lives every moment as a child of God; it is true for the one who gives no thought whatever to God; it is true also for one who is not sufficiently mature to be able to know God or serve Him. The only difference of the one serving God lies in the fact that the one serving Him becomes an object of God's special concern. In this way he or she merits God's protection and the promise of sufficient mortal life, "the life that now is," in which to qualify for His eternal blessings and so to merit the life "which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8). God will not allow one to perish without providing sufficient opportunity for that individual to fashion the character He requires of all who will be heirs of salvation. Also, all servants of God who suffer natural death have the



promise of a physical, bodily resurrection at the coming of Christ, at which time they will be judged and rewarded according to the record of their lives (II Cor. 5:10; Eccl. 12:13-14; Luke 14:14; Rev. 22:12).

### **B: Death that Is a Judgment from God or Punishment for Sin**

Now let us think about the second type of death: death that results from a judgment from God or punishment for sin. This death occurs at any time God chooses to remove one from the scene of action immediately because of his or her sin. The effect upon the person is the same as natural death; "the dead"—from whatever cause—"know not anything" (Eccl. 9:5); but there is one difference: From such death there is no release; God offers no "second chance."

#### *1) Those who died from the judgments of God upon individuals or nations in times past.*

At different times during the 6000 years, up until the time when the written Word was completed and all open manifestations ceased (about AD 70), God has caused the death of those who opposed Him to show His disapproval of their errant conduct. The people died, being mortal; (had they not been mortal by nature they could not have died from any cause). But their mortality was not the cause of the death. Again, many times their death was also a fulfillment of a short-term prophecy; but again the prophecy was not the cause of the death. The immediate cause of the death, according to the record, was a judgment from God. The purpose: that others might "hear and fear."

Consider the time of the Flood: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). God said that the flood would come; when it came it was a prophecy fulfilled. But God sent the flood to wipe out a people who were utterly corrupt and whom it suited His purpose to remove. We read that God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (II Pet. 2:5). God was directly responsible for the destruction of these ungodly ones.

Another example was the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain. When the angels came to visit Lot and warn him and his family to escape, they were in a sense making a short-term prophecy which was fulfilled the next day. But the cause of the conflagration was the wickedness of the people. Commenting on this dramatic destruction, the

apostle Peter writes that God turned "the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes [and] condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly: And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked" (II Pet. 2:6-7). Jude also reports that "Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire [eternal destruction]" (Jude 7).

During the days of the Israelites, thousands perished at a time, by plague or other means God used. Jude, referencing this fact, said that "The Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" (Jude 5). The Lord was directly responsible for the destroying of the unbelievers. There were many other instances of rebellion, in which the offenders were smitten; i.e., those who died as a result of the building of the golden calf (Ex. 32:25-28); or the ten spies who brought back a false report of the land of Canaan (Num. 14:36-37); those who died in the sin of Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16).

Two sons of Aaron, while they were ministering before the Lord as His priests, disobeyed God's command and lost their lives as a consequence of their disobedience. We read that "Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron,...offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:1-2). This was not death from mortality or from any natural cause. God struck them at the moment of their disobedience.

Another instance of immediate judgment was upon Uzzah, when he put forth his hand and touched the ark of God, which the law of Moses strictly prohibited (II Sam. 6:1-8). Uzzah's death, as far as we are told, had no other cause than his disobedience of the law—a fact which David realized keenly.

Another example of immediate judgment was the case of Herod, when "the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost" (Acts 12:20-23). The cause of his death was the judgment of God.

The families of both Rehoboam and Ahab died because of sin and the judgment of God upon them, and according to the prophetic word of the Lord. Eli's family was also wiped out because of sin and the judgment of God, again as prophesied (I Sam. 3:11-14).

In the early days of the New Testament Church,



Ananias and Sapphira experienced Divine judgment. Because they lied to the Holy Spirit and misrepresented the price of the sale of their land, the apostle Peter decreed their immediate deaths (see Acts 5:1-10).

Sometimes it suited God's purpose to mete out judgment at the time of the transgression; sometimes to very large numbers of people. At other times God let wickedness go unrequited. The apostle Paul described the latter situation in these words: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at" (Acts 17:30). Paul also gave the reason for the delay: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). Judgment is not forgotten; it is only waiting for the "appointed" day.

We at the present time do not see or experience any death that is a punishment for sin because we live during a period when God is silent. Today "sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily," with the result that "the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). God's "silence" is no sign that He does not still mean what He says; He is merely waiting for the right time, when He will execute the judgments that have been promised.

*2) Those who will be removed by God's judgments when Christ comes to bring the nations of earth into subjection.*

A day of final judgment upon sin has been decreed. God will not always overlook men's wickedness and inhumanity. The present "silent" age will end suddenly with

the arrival of the great Day of the Lord, when Christ will arrive as Conqueror and King. When the time is right, "The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake;...And he shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth....He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked....When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;...yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them" (Joel 3:16; Ps. 96:13; Isa. 11:4; 26:9, 11).

*3) Those who receive penal death, i.e., punishment for transgression of law, which will be the fate of those who agreed to serve God and proved unfaithful to their agreement.*

The coming of Christ will mean the arrival of the Day of Judgment for the servants of God, when all will be rewarded as their works have been (Rev. 22:14). This was Paul's thought when he said that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

At this Judgment, those who are judged unfaithful will ultimately suffer the second or penal death, i.e., death as a punishment for their sin, from which there is no awaking (Rev. 21:8). Those who are judged faithful will receive the highest commendation and eternal rewards. To them the Judge will speak those most gracious and loving of all words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23).

MM

## Obituary Murat Duverger

On September 19, 1990, Murat Duverger, 43 years of age, a subscriber to the Megiddo Message for many years, was fatally injured when the automobile he was driving was struck by a tractor-trailer in his home area of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Brother Duverger with his family visited the Church in Rochester on several occasions. He had long cherished a hope of being able to emigrate to the United States, but was prevented by the laws of the U.S. Department of Immigration.

Brother Duverger had a keen interest in the Bible and was diligent in teaching it to his children.

Brother Duverger is survived by his wife Evelyne, one son Mickel-Ange (age 14), and three daughters, Mickaëlle (age 17), Marie Esther (age 12), and Marie Magdala (age 10). No details of the funeral arrangements are available.

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# ME Change?

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).*

**W**hat did you say, Lord? Do you really mean that *I* must change? that I am not "good enough" just as I am? Did you say that you do not even want the old "me" inside?

You must understand, Lord, that we live in a "modern" society, where individualism runs strong, where it is socially unacceptable to downrate myself. We have been trained in it from childhood. "My" rights, "my" interests, "my" work, "my" feelings, "my" property, "my" self-worth—are all supremely important, and everyone should recognize this. The worth of the individual is the very basis of our society. Anyway, Lord, *that's the way I am!*

**E**verywhere around us are examples of this built-in reluctance to change. We see it in the workplace. Changing quality standards in manufacturing is difficult—because people do not want to change old habits. They have become accustomed to doing certain tasks in a certain way, and change threatens their security. The very idea is frightening. When they are asked to

change, their first thought is, "There is nothing wrong with the way I've been doing it." Nevertheless a few brave enterprisers accept the challenge, and eventually the change is made. And finally everyone must admit that it could be done—is being done—better.

All changes are not unwelcome. Some we are eager for, such as a new car, or a new house. Acquiring something new makes us feel better about ourselves. A good vacation may leave us refreshed. Why, then, are we so reluctant to change old habits?

The reason lies in the effort required and in the immediate results of the change. We can purchase a new car, for example, with far less effort than is required to change an old habit. *And the results are immediate.* We lay down the money, or show we have reasonable means of paying for it, and drive it home. On the other hand, we may work for years before we finally break an old habit, and once it is broken no one even notices!

How shortsighted are we! not able to see further than the immediate limits of our brief existence. Why will we not believe what God has set

before us—and believe also when His Word tells us how it can be obtained? Are we not willing and eager to give up anything for that which will be enduring, when it offers us peace, contentment and joy even now and endless life in the future?

But it all comes back to where we began: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." New. If we are not "new," we are not "in Christ." This means that my natural drives, ambitions, traits, attitudes, habits are not acceptable. I cannot lay hold on Christ, all that He stands for, all that He offers, without changing "me".

And none of us like to change. Changing our attitudes, our temperament, our habits of thinking and acting is the very last thing that interests us. It is not that we are trying to be stubborn and perverse; but changing from our accustomed patterns makes us feel insecure.

But all this is just one more evidence that our thoughts are not God's thoughts, and His ways are not ours. The ultimate of God's requirements is summarized by Jesus in these words: "Be ye there-



fore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

"Be ye therefore perfect." The thought may be staggering. It sweeps the weak-hearted off their feet. Many turn away scoffing and will not accept the challenge. Many others, not understanding the help God will give to those who do accept, declare that no man *can* become perfect.

But God does not ask the impossible. This means that *we CAN change!* God has provided all the tools necessary so that you can change, I can change, *we* can change and become such creatures as He will accept.

### Tools for Change

What are the tools God has provided to help us?

The first and most basic is our mind. But like so many other tools, it can be either used or abused. And we can't blame the tool! Even a pick and shovel can be used either to bury us, or to dig us out. Minds are much the same. We can use our minds to reason and meditate, to be thankful, to lift us above our naturally low level of existence to commune with God and dwell with Him in heavenly places in Christ. Or we can allow our minds to eat the "dust" of human reasoning, on our naturally low level of existence, feasting on our own thoughts, reveling in the things that naturally appeal to us.

A mind rightly used is our greatest blessing, because what we think we will do.

The second all-important gift from God is His written Word. God does not work haphazardly. He was preparing for our needs many centuries before we were born, inspiring His spokesmen to write the important truths which we would need to know. Today we

hold the finished product in our hands, a gift "without money or price," valuable beyond fathoming, truly "heaven sent."

What shall we do with it? We must seek its instructions with all our mind, and we shall find in it an inexhaustible storehouse of knowledge that has the power to bring about in us the required change, for "All scripture...given by inspiration of God,... is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

But although this gift of God-given instruction is a "thorough furnisher unto all good works," it must be accompanied with action. Of itself it can do nothing. There is nothing automatic about it. We must put the knowledge to work in our lives before we can experience the desired change.

Our third heaven-sent gift follows naturally from the second, and is the trials and tests that make us aware of our shortcomings and give us opportunity to change. Very few have probably ever thought of trials as a "gift from God," yet when we realize what they are working out for us, we come to long for them. And as quickly as the Word of God points out our weaknesses and shows us what we are, we want to change. Until we see ourselves as God sees us, we will look "pretty good" to ourselves and will never see the need to subject ourselves to the discomforts of change, to the humiliation, the hardship, the suffering or pain. But once we truly see, we will gratefully seize every opportunity for change, knowing that "reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Prov. 6:23).

How ashamed Peter must have

**G**od does not  
ask the  
impossible.  
*We can change.*

felt after he denied his Lord. How humble Paul was as he sat, blind, in the house of Ananias, waiting to receive his sight. Peter had been sure he would never deny his Lord. "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee," he had said, only hours earlier. But the Master could see right through to Peter's needs and told him in advance that he would deny Him three times. And Paul, already a noted figure among the scribes, a descendant of Abraham no less, was sure that he was right. He knew he was on a mission for God that day as he headed for Damascus! But each man needed to become better acquainted with himself, and that acquaintance brought change.

Without the tests of life we would never know our weaknesses—or how we could correct them. Peter and Paul were both grateful for the storms in their lives that brought them to change from the old creature to the new. Shouldn't we be equally grateful? Should we not agree with Paul, that "All things work together for good to them that love God" (Rom. 8:28)?

Viewed from another angle, who would want to remain the old, rough creature we are by nature? Who admires the rough stone just out of the quarry—beside the glassy smooth, polished stone? Who will buy platinum, though its value be high, if it is still mixed with many tons of ore?



Let us look at Christ to see the likeness of the new creature we want to be, then keep changing until we are like Him. If God does not want our old self, neither do we! And if our old self is keeping us from being the dynamic, spiritually-minded, growing personality we want to be, why hesitate to change! The sooner, the faster, the better!—if only we can reach the likeness of Christ and be accepted by Him.

ME change? Yes! And the sooner, the better—for only then will we be able to have a place in the eternal family of God. MM

## The Plus Quality

(Continued from page 2)

some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). He wrote also that we must give heed, even "the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1).

The more we have of this plus quality, the more we shall receive, for God has promised that our reward will be just in proportion to what we do. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (II Cor. 9:6). This principle is the universal law of God: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7-8).

But the plus quality on our side cannot begin to equal the plus quality from God's side. For all our doing of "more and more," all our abounding, all our increasing still falls far short of equaling what God is able to do for us, He who has promised "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20), whose reward will be "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17-18).

Isn't this the only fair way? Isn't it the only right way? Can we skimp on our giving to God and expect Him to share His greater abundance with us?

This is our goal and our earnest prayer, that we may be found "holy and blameless in heart and soul, before himself, the Father of us all, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all who belong to him" (I Thess. 3:13, Phillips). MM

## Gold Refined

*"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"—Job 23:10*



Did you know that it takes 2000 pounds (one whole ton) of gold ore to yield 0.154 ounces of the pure precious metal?

Or, stated another way, this means that 207,792 ounces (6.5 tons) of ore yields one single ounce of gold.\*



Do we wonder that gold is precious? And can we wonder that the Lord compares His people to gold? Think, too, what an enormous quantity of inferior substance He must reject to find the pure precious metal.



Strange, isn't it, that real worth comes in such small quantities. But God did not expect the whole world to believe Him. He foreknew that all would not be willing to submit to the tough refining process that separates the gold from the dross.



Next time you feel the heat of God's refining process, remember how gold ore is treated, and how much must be burned away—more than 200,000 ounces—for every single ounce that remains, and pray God's help that you may come through the refining process, ready to take your place in the eternal Temple of God.

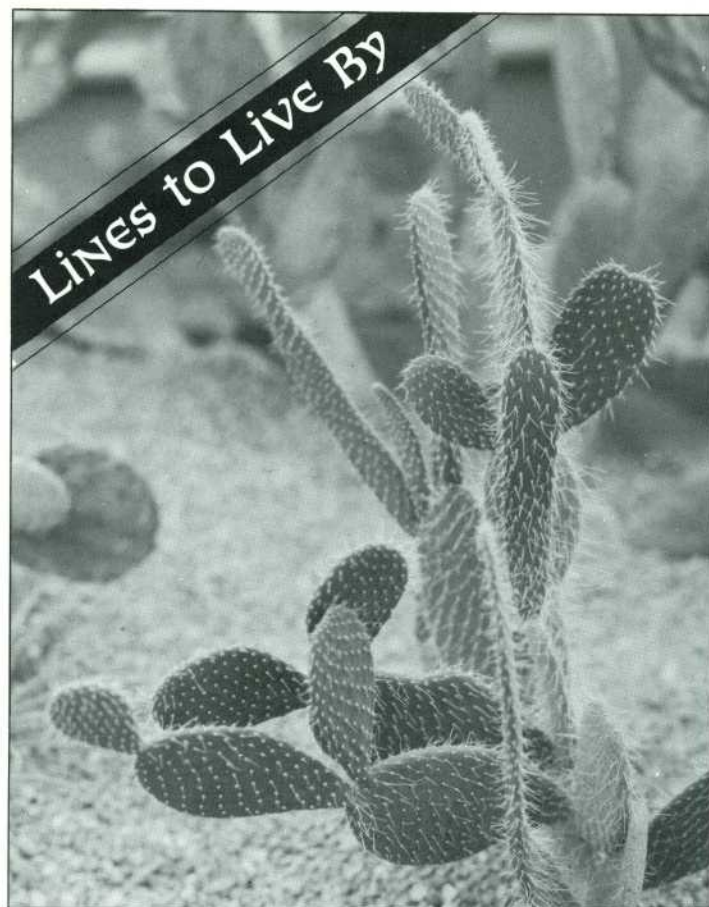


**6.5 Tons yields 1 ounce of GOLD**



\*Gold ore from the Cauty Group in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. In gold ore from the Hedley-Mascot Mines, about 150 miles north of Vancouver, British Columbia, 256,000 ounces yields one ounce.





Being a Christian is doing  
Things that are pure and good—  
Striking up friendships wisely,  
Living as Jesus would.

*The one who is using all his energy to row the boat has no time to rock it.*

A person shows what he is by  
what he does with what he has.

*Keep your lamp trimmed and burning, and let God place it where He will.*

Faith in God draws the poison  
from every grief; takes the sting  
from every loss; and quenches the  
fire of every pain, as only faith  
can do.

*A gracious word may soothe the way;  
A joyous word lights up the day;  
A peaceful word will lessen stress;  
A loving word will heal and bless.*

If you want to realize your own importance, put your finger into a bowl of water,  
take it out, and look at the hole.

*God never alters the robe of righteousness to fit the man, but always the man to fit the robe.*

No one can be saved by buying a Bible he does not read; and no one can be saved by  
reading a Bible he does not obey.

*No matter how long you nurse a grudge, it won't get better.*



# *The Lord Is Leading*

*Thus far the Lord hath led us...*

In darkness and in day,...Through all the varied states of the narrow, homeward way;...Long since He took that journey—He trod that path alone;...Its trials and its dangers full well Himself hath known.

*Thus far the Lord hath led us...*

The promise hath not failed;...The enemy, encountered oft, has never quite prevailed;...The shield of faith has turned aside, or quenched each fiery dart,...The Spirit's sword in weakest hands has forced him to depart.

*Thus far the Lord hath led us...*

The waters have been high,...But yet in passing through them we felt that He was nigh....A very present helper in trouble we have found,...His comforts most abounded when our sorrows did abound.

*Thus far the Lord hath led us...*

Our need hath been supplied,...And mercy hath encompassed us about on every side;...Still falls the daily manna; the pure rock-fountains flow;...And many flowers of love and hope along the wayside grow.

*Thus far the Lord hath led us...*

And will He now forsake...The feeble ones whom for His own it pleases Him to take?...Oh, never, never! earthly friends may cold and faithless prove,...But He is changeless pity and everlasting love.

*Thus far the Lord hath led us...*

Through joys and sorrows past,...We know that all is mercy now, and shall be well at last;...Calmly we look before us; we fear no future ill,...Enough for safety and for peace, O Lord go with us still.