

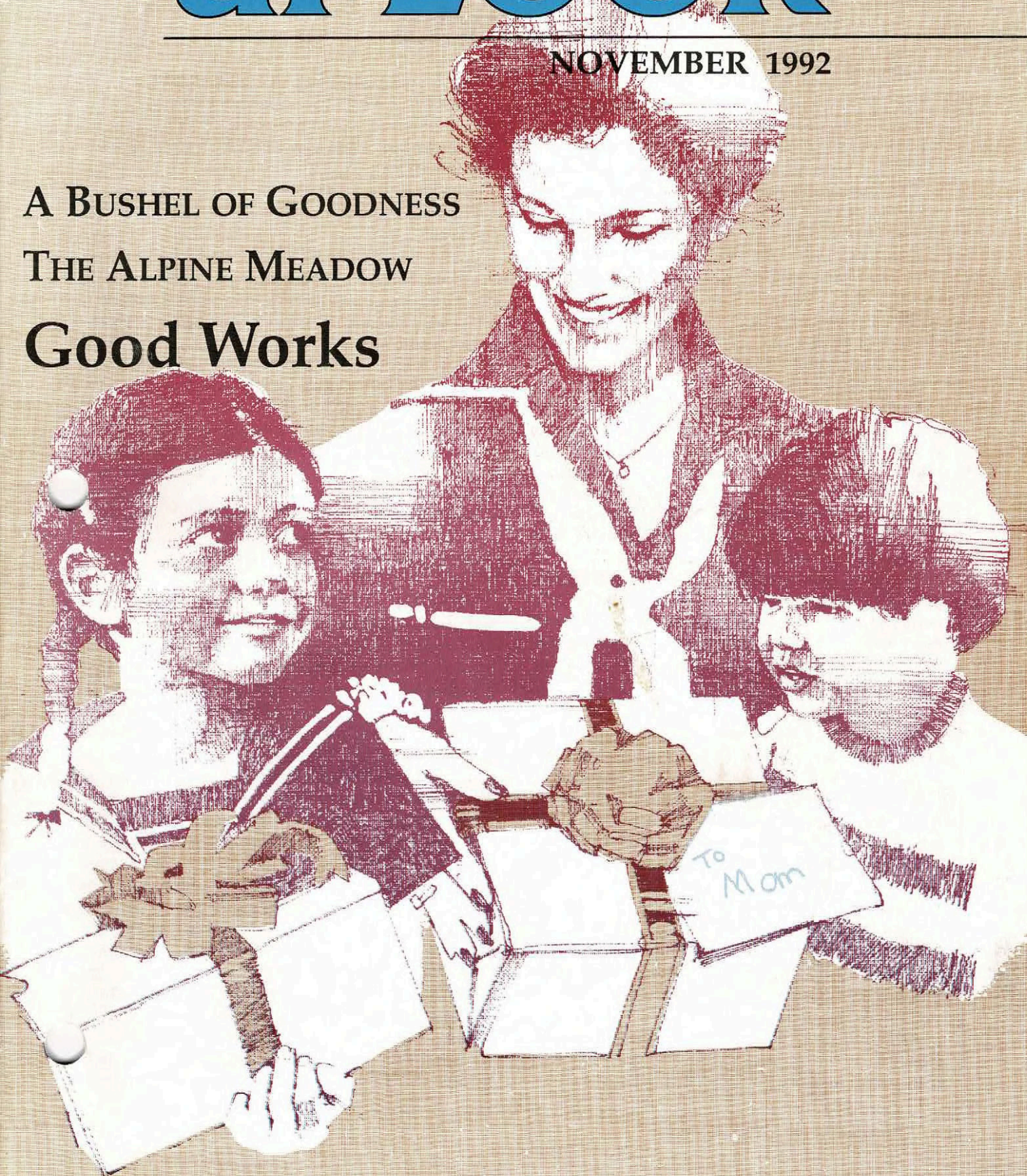
UPLOOK

NOVEMBER 1992

A BUSHEL OF GOODNESS

THE ALPINE MEADOW

Good Works





EDITORIAL

Good Works

J. B. Nicholson, Jr.

Dan was a mountain of a man. He could drink anyone else under the table on the university campus where he attended. He was not afraid to take anybody on. He usually won—until he decided to challenge the group of Christians who had an outreach in one of the dorms each Tuesday night.

The Christians at first seemed to be a pushover to Dan. They didn't fight back. They didn't argue. They *loved* him, of all things. Hardly playing fair, was it?

Dan stopped arguing, but continued to come. He would sit silently and observe the believers. Near the end of the academic year, Dan was challenged to put his trust in the Lord.

"Dan, you know everything you need to know to become a Christian. You go to your room (it was a wisp of a girl saying this) and start reading John's Gospel. We'll stay here and pray."

One a.m. One-thirty. Two. He's not coming down. Two-thirty. He's gone to bed. At about two forty-five, Dan appeared. No one needed to tell us. Dan was a child of God.

The Lord burdened Dan with the need of our inner city. Who would reach the hundreds of vagrants and migrants in the summertime? Many of them drifted through, did a little fruit picking for pocket money, and moved on. Couldn't we pick some fruit for God?

With the simple faith of a child, Dan encouraged us to rent a house affronting the park in the heart of the city. It had previously been inhabited by someone with a penchant for black walls with Pepto-Bismol pink trim. It took some effort to make the place presentable. We even planted a few flowers outside. It ought to look inviting. After all, our Father made "all things bright and beautiful." And besides, good works.

The believers had donated some derelict furniture for the place. The period? Early matrimonial, I think. Anyway, we thought it looked terrific as we wiped our brows, turned the key in the lock, and headed home for a well-deserved rest before our first day of ministry.

As we stepped through the doorway the next morning, it didn't take us long to notice something was missing. *Everything* was missing!

Chairs, table, sofa, lamp—all gone! Should we call the police? If we did, we might as well close down the ministry too. The people we were trying to reach would make themselves scarce if they thought 911 was our favorite number.

"Did they leave anything?" Dan asked.

"Just an old iron in this closet," came a voice from the back.

"Jabe, would you come with me?"

"Where are we going, Dan?"

"To visit our neighbors around the corner."

Our neighbors happened to be a notorious motorcycle gang. We assumed they were also the movers who had been working the night shift.

With the iron under his arm, and with me in tow, Dan approached the door. There was no need to knock. The door opened to reveal a suitable caricature of all that you might imagine. Leather. Chains. Hair. Earing. Tatoo. And not the hint of a smile.

"Whadayawant." It was hardly a question.

"We understand you came for a visit the other night when we were out," Dan began.

"So?"

"You left this," and he handed him the iron.

I don't remember if there was a response. My brain had shifted into neutral when the door had opened. Whatever the case, the door closed on the biker—and the iron. So that was that. If a man asks for your coat, give him your cloak as well. If he takes your table, give him your iron. Does good really work?

The next morning, everything was back in its place. Including the iron. So good really does work! The gang became the best of neighbors. I do not know that any trusted the Lord, but they showed respect to the Word given to them.

Good works because God works. Man does his worst; God does good. And good works. Its the story of creation; of the cross; of the consummation. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Heb. 13:20-21).

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Good Samaritans

Since the world began, there never has been such a storyteller as Jesus of Nazareth. His parables are priceless. They are the most unique word pictures ever presented to the wondering eyes of the children of men. A parable is sometimes defined as "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." However you define them, they will repay the most careful study and the most skilful analysis.

In all of them you discover that Jesus paints a picture in which every stroke tells. Each story is simple and tender as He shows how certain typical persons carry themselves in some of life's most critical moments.

When, for example, He paints the picture of "The Good Samaritan," He is dealing with more than theology: He is seeking to correct something in human nature. The truth is, there is too much of the priest and the Levite in most of us, and far too little of the Samaritan.

You should, this very day, hang that picture on the walls of your imagination and study it till all that is best in it is reproduced in your own life. If you will study it in all seriousness, I am certain that you will begin to pray to be delivered from all sanctimonious snobbishness, and from all that is merely formal.

Cultivate the spirit of the Good Samaritan. It will be welcomed by multitudes as a May day is welcomed after a long dreary winter of snow and ice. Jesus can turn the small and mean things in life to some larger good; and He often makes them the messengers of grace and good news to the tired and the tried, to the weary and the way-worn. I, for one, am glad for the question which gave Jesus the chance to paint this beautiful word-picture. The fact that the questioner was in reality only quibbling did not prevent the Master from using his question as an opportunity for pressing home to every honest heart a much needed lesson.

"A certain lawyer stood up and tempted Jesus, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

There is something suggestive in the fact that to men this lawyer is both unnamed and unknown. There are those who think that when this is so, they can with impunity do what they would not

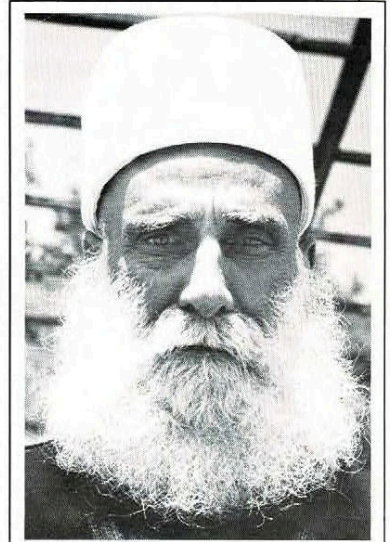
dare to do if they were known! Let us never forget that although we may be able to hide our identity from our fellows, our lives are open before God—and we never can escape the consequences of the attitude of our souls or the actions of our lives.

In reply, Jesus referred him to the law, leading him on step by step in an attempt to make him realize that in a Christ-like character, from which springs Christ-like conduct, a man possesses a treasure which will enrich him beyond measure both for time and eternity. If there is anything the world really needs today it is just such character and such conduct.

In spite of all this lawyer had in his favor—education, culture, and good standing in society—he showed himself to be at fault in the most vital part of his being. His spirit was all wrong. He was not really in earnest. He asked a right question, but he asked it in a wrong spirit.

If it were right to be judged religious because we can ask religious questions, then indeed religion has become the cheapest exercise of life. My dear friends, never forget that God can see through all hypocrisies and concealments, and it is only the broken heart and contrite spirit to which He will come with redemption and life and helpfulness and grace.

The conditions upon which we receive the revelations of God's will are these: a quiet, self-re-nouncing, reverent spirit—a spirit that is really anxious to know God's mind. Give such conditions and light will be flashed into the life, and healing words will be dropped into the sorrow of the heart.



A modern-day Samaritan

Front Lines

FREE BOOKLET

The Influence of the Family on the Local Church by Robert Gessner, a 13 page booklet, was originally printed as a three-part series in *Milk & Honey* in 1990. It raises some serious questions regarding what many families, and in particular fathers, expect the local church to be doing for the family.

The booklet considers six different individuals from Scripture and shows how similar individuals would influence the church today.

All members of the family will find this booklet challenging. It is a short booklet that every family member, and every elder should read.

The booklet will be sent free-of-charge to any who write to *Spread The Word* and request it.

Spread The Word, Inc.
2721 Oberlin Drive
York, Pa 17404

KEEP PRAYING FOR TIM!

As reported in the last issue of UPLOOK, Tim Allyn, an evangelist working in the Massey/Spanish area of northern Ontario, was diagnosed with an advanced stage of cancer. A twelve-pound tumor had been discovered, stretching from his shoulder blade to his kidney. Initially, he was given eight to ten days to live by the doctors. Tim and his wife Marlene are grateful for the medical staff and their kind and knowledgeable care, but are thankful that their lives are in better hands than those: "If the Lord will, we shall live" (Jas. 4:15).

A mighty ocean of prayer has been poured out on behalf of the

Allyns all around the world. Tim even received word of some in Russia praying for him. Tim and Marlene want to express their thanks to you for your intercession, encouragement, and fellowship in the work.

Recently Tim visited the hospital for scans and was told by the doctor that his cancer is in total remission. There is no trace that they can see but Tim will be going in for one final series of chemotherapy from November 16-December 8.

This is a new experimental protocol. Tim is the third person in Canada to receive it, and his case is being used in clinical study. But he has told the doctors that their results will be misleading if they leave out "the God factor." If his strength is back, Tim hopes to be home by Christmas.

Tim and Marlene Allyn
General Delivery
Walford Station, ON P0P 2E0

ZAIRE UPDATE

Despite the unrest in Zaire, the work of the Lord continues to prosper. Bert Mast, who has remained in the country, advises: "One of my greater joys is seeing how the pygmy assembly near Lolwa is progressing. We have now finished building a simple chapel through work parties each Wednesday after the meeting, and are seeing approximately 20 pygmies coming each Sunday and Wednesday. There have been a few who have requested to be baptized and so we are preparing for a baptism after we have had a chance to see the sincerity of their faith."

INTERCESSORS NEEDED

Please pray for Mark and Joan Levengood, South Africa. Mark has just been diagnosed as having lymphoma. He writes, "Fortunately it is of a low-grade type which responds well to chemotherapy treatment. I start next week with a six-month course. We value and appreciate the prayers of the Lord's people." —dated September 17

STILL AT WORK IN NAZARETH

Brother George Khalil writes from Nazareth:

"It is now one year since we opened the Book Center and since then over 1,000 portions of Scripture have gone out.

"To our surprise, these have mostly been in Russian. There is a real spiritual hunger among these people, so please pray that they would read and be convicted by the Word.

"One day the Director and some of the professors of the Moscow University of Medicine were on a private tour in Israel and, when driving through Nazareth, they saw the Russian sign outside our shop offering free Bibles. They came in and took 20 Bibles and two copies of every Russian Christian book to put in the University library!

"Praise the Lord for Dinah, a Russian-speaking Jewish believer who comes to help every Saturday to speak with the immigrants who come in."

NEW BOOKS!

Don't miss the advertising on the inside back cover. New books from T. E. Wilson and J. M. Flanigan available *now*.

Spanish Work in Waukegan

Mariano Gonzalez

The United States is the fifth largest Spanish speaking country in the world with 22.4 million Hispanics. The nation is fifth only to Mexico's 85.7 million, Spain's 39 million, Colombia's 33.6 million and Argentine's 32.7 million. Presently, the Hispanic population represents a minority of roughly 9% of the total population of the United States. Some analysts project there will be 32 million Latinos in this country by the end of the century.

New York City is considered the largest Puerto Rican city in the world and Miami the largest

Cuban city outside of Havana. San Antonio's majority population is Latino and there are more, or at least as many, Spanish speaking people in Los Angeles County as in any of the six Central American capitals.

Some sociologists estimate that 60,000 His-

panics in the United States abandon the Catholic Church every year. That means about a million of them in the last 15 years. The impact of the new cultural setting and other sociological factors seems to facilitate the religious change among the Latinos. According to unofficial estimates of the Latin American Conference of Catholic Bishops, "In some countries such as Brazil, Chile, and Guatemala, between 25 and 50 percent of all Catholics have defected to Protestant evangelical churches over the past 20 years."

The city of Chicago has over half a million Spanish speaking people of various national origins. There are two Spanish assemblies in that city. Forty-seven miles north of Chicago is Waukegan, Illinois, where there are 17,000 people of Spanish descent. There is also a flourishing

Spanish assembly. Francisco and Ivelisse Reyes from the Dominican Republic started and have nurtured this work since 1973. At present, the meetings are held in an old building in downtown Waukegan. The Spanish assembly here is a true inner city gathering and a melting pot of Colombians, Dominicans, Hondurans, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Salvadorans.

The Waukegan brethren have done a remarkable job of remodeling their old building inside. On the main level, they have constructed an attractive meeting room. The Sunday School rooms, dining hall, and kitchen are located in the basement. They carry on a rather aggressive evangelistic thrust.

Besides the Reyes, Eladio Colon, Miguel Morales, Miguel Calderon, and others carry the burden of the ministry to the Spanish community in this northern Illinois town. Brother Reyes, besides devoting most of his time to the Lord's work, teaches English as a second language at the College of Lake County. His wife, Ivelisse, teaches fifth grade at the West Elementary School in Waukegan.

The group had its early meetings in the apartment of Alberto Obregon, and moved several times before settling in the present facilities located at 146 S. Genesee Road. The assembly meets on Sundays for Breaking of Bread, Sunday School, and the preaching of the Gospel. During the week they gather for ministry, prayer, and children's work. Their gospel service is remarkably well attended by the unsaved. Many have found the Lord over the years through this ministry, including two medical doctors.



WHAT'S GOING ON?

News from Around the Globe

WHAT RIGHTS?

The U. S. State Department's latest annual human rights report criticized China, India, Peru, Cuba, Israel, Syria, and Burma for abuses. The document says China has grown more repressive since Tiananmen Square, with continuing abuses in Tibet and the repression of worship outside official religious bodies. In Burma, with an estimated 2,000 political prisoners, torture and beatings are common, with repression of Muslims and Christians increasing. Syria stands accused of "widespread and systematic torture."

WORLDWIDE RADIO

New technologies—including land and satellite-based mobile phone services, digital radio broadcast by satellites, and high-definition television by satellite—could revolutionize communications around the world. If delivered by satellite, digital audio broadcasts could make today's international shortwave broadcasting receivers and transmitters obsolete. Current international agreements call for shortwave broadcasters to shift to a different band by 2015; the U.S. wants to move that deadline up to 2007. Digital audio technology, however, could start to come on line in about two years.

SPREADING THE WORD

According to the United Bible Societies, the number of languages with at least one book of the Bible increased last year by 32. The new worldwide total is 1,978 languages, with between 3,000 and 6,000 to go. That

means more than 80% of the world's people have access to at least a portion of the Word of God in a language they can understand.

NO BIG MACS HERE

Twenty percent of China's children are malnourished, according to the United Nations Children's Fund, which gets numbers from governments. "Malnourished," or underfed, means weighing at least "two standard deviations" below normal for age and race. Only children under 5 are counted. Worse off than Chinese children are African children (26 percent malnourished). Countries in Southeast Asia and West Asia come in at 42 percent, while India and the nations of the Indian subcontinent stand at 47 percent underfed. The figure for Central and South America is 14 percent. European and North American children usually get enough to eat, but more now live below poverty lines than 10 years ago.

RACIAL ATTACKS IN BRITAIN

The murder of a 24-year-old Afghan immigrant in London by a group of white teenagers highlights a worrisome trend in Britain: increasing racial abuse and violence against ethnic minorities. Scotland Yard reported a 16 percent increase in racial assault or harassment in 1991 compared to 1990. A civil rights group says that racial assaults reported to police in England and Wales grew by nearly a third between 1988 and 1990.

COLLAPSING FAMILIES

Women who struggle to survive in Africa's urban jungles and denuded countryside have a new fight on their hands: keeping their men. According to the Associated Press, more than a decade of mounting hardship is breaking the links of traditionally strong black African families. Rural men who took several wives and had many children to work their fields are deserting villages and streaming into the cities, where they often take mistresses who have children, because most African men object to contraception.

"In the rural areas, in the urban sprawls, our entire social system is being jolted," said Papa Kane, director of the Inter-African Centre for Vocational Training Development, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. "The increasing crime, the street children, child prostitution, abandoned women—this is just the beginning."

AUSSIE ANXIETIES

Australia's three-year-old recession has led to new arguments over how the country should reform its labor practices, educational system, and comfortable life-style to become more competitive with the rising economic powers of Southeast Asia. The central question seems to be why Australia cannot get in on the growth spurt of the Asian-Pacific region. Australia's unemployment rate is above 11 percent.

Meanwhile, Taiwan, South Korea, and Hong Kong are beginning to transfer manufacturing to countries with even lower costs, making it harder for Aus-

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tralia to lure the kind of manufacturing investment it needs. Psychologically, some leaders believe, Australia must abandon its British roots and become more Asian. Only 4 percent of the population is of Asian descent.

SIXTH TERM?

Indonesia's 71-year-old President Suharto, who came to power in 1966, refuses to say what his plans are for a sixth five-year term. In his annual National Day speech on August 15, he kept mum on the subject, but it's no secret that if he wants it, he will get it from the 1,000-member People's Consultative Assembly next March. He did say that any political reform would come slowly as the government focuses on maintaining stability and keeping the economy from overheating.

ALGERIA'S DILEMMA

In the face of increasingly bold attacks by Islamic fundamentalists, including the attempted assassination of the government's security minister, Algeria promised more drastic controls. This was a tacit admission that seven months of repression, censorship, mass arrests, and stiff jail sentences have failed to solve the nation's political and religious turmoil. Rather, diplomats fear that the nation of 26 million faces a total collapse of law and order. Although 7,000 fundamentalists are in prison, and political activity in mosques has been banned, the movement continues under a new, harder generation of leaders.

PRAY FOR INDIA

Currently India has more than 900 million people; the

Christian population (of every brand) stands at less than 4%. In the past there has been an open door for the Gospel but that is changing. Militancy among both



Hindus and Moslems is leaving little room for religious freedom. Harrassment against local evangelists is becoming more common. Recently, *The Truth*, a magazine distributed by the Gospel Literature Service of Bombay, reported the deportation of two foreign missionaries who had been in India for over 40 years and have not been back to their own countries in decades. They have expressed their desire to die in India. But it seems that is not to be.

In this state of Madhya Pradesh it is reported that 150 hospitals and dispensaries, 1528 schools, and 122 other services are being operated by Christian missionaries.

JOSEPHUS AND MISHNA STAND ON ROCK

One of the largest ancient construction blocks ever found, and largest discovered in Israel, has been revealed during excavations north of and beneath the Western Wall. The stone, 13.6 meters long, 4.6 meters deep,

and 3.5 meters high, weighs an estimated 570 tons and is felt to confirm records of both the Mishna and Josephus.

—*Jerusalem Post*, 1/25/92

NEW RAGE

New Age enthusiasts are a retailer's dream. Readership surveys by Goodfellow Publishing Representatives (Berkeley, CA) show that most New Agers are in their mid-40s, 70 percent are female, 80 percent have a college degree, and household median annual incomes hover between \$40,000 and \$60,000. Harpers San Francisco reports sales of books on alternative religions and recovery programs based on the AA 12-step program now account for \$27 million of their \$40 million annual sales.

Sales of New Age-related products "are way over \$1 billion," says Marilyn McGuire, president of the New Age Publishers and Retailers Alliance, a national association of 450 booksellers and shopkeepers based in Washington state. Included are books, records, goddess statues, tarot cards and healing conferences, as well as natural foods.

—*Oregonian*, 4/11/92

INTEREST IN WITCHCRAFT PERMEATING PANAMA

When the going gets rough, Panamanians switch on the sorcery station. If you want your mother-in-law out of the house, carefully peel six apples, drop the skins behind a door and place a broom over them. That's some of the advice Fu Man Chu, and other self-described warlocks are giving over Panama's airwaves to a growing audience of loyal listeners.

Witchcraft programs have grown by about 20 percent in the last two years and are broad-

WHAT'S GOING ON?

cast over at least 30 Panamanian radio stations, says Fernando Nunez Fabrega, president of Panama's radio broadcasters association. Most are Colombian or Dominican and broadcast 30-minute taped messages.

—*Orlando Sentinel*, 11/28/91

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

All over the country, experts are now starting to say that religion can be addictive, says staff writer Martha Sawyer Allen. Even as Karl Marx's teachings are being discredited in Europe, his insistence that "religion is the opium [*sic*] of the people" is being echoed in America . . . It seems to happen most often in . . . fundamentalist religions. Seminars on religion addiction are being held, books written, lectures given. There's even a national religion-addiction hot line. Proponents say . . . the major message of the Christian faith is acceptance, tolerance, forgiveness and love, and organizations that pervert that message in the name of Jesus are addictive.

Rev. Leo Booth, an Episcopal priest, contends that people can end up with *low self-esteem* when they fail to meet unreal expectations imposed by the system. "The system controls the use of scripture and behavior about what is virtuous and sinful."

Daniel Batson, professor of psychology at the University of Kansas, says, "Religion has the potential to be very good for some people, some of the time. Whether one calls it an addiction or devotion is sometimes a little hard to know." [Italics ours.]

—*Minneapolis Star Tribune*,
11/3/91

ZEAL MISTAKEN FOR ADDICTION

In a new book, *When God Becomes a Drug*, Rev. Leo Booth has developed a 12-step recovery plan to kick God addiction. The Episcopalian priest, 46 and vicar of St. George Church in Hawthorne, CA, considers himself a former religious addict and calls it the ultimate form of co-dependency. Booth does not believe "addicts" should abstain from religion or God but that they can recover by recognizing their addiction, getting therapy, and joining a program similar to AA. "I think the church needs to...try to get the person to find the God within," says Booth.

—*Cincinnati Enquirer*, 2/16/92

GOOD FOR YOU

In a *Toronto Sun* report, researchers at the University of Western Ontario concluded that religious beliefs may be good for your physical and mental health. Ted Hewitt and Gail Frankel, sociology professors there, found that students who belong to religious groups rated themselves happier and more satisfied in their lives. They also had fewer visits to doctors and emergency rooms, spent less time in hospital, and were more likely to describe their health as good.

COSTLY WORDS

The Pakistan Senate has amended the country's criminal code to impose the death penalty on anyone convicted of insulting the prophet Mohammed. Previously, the punishment was life imprisonment.

PRISON EPISTLE

Jim Bakker, former head of the PTL Ministry, has asked his followers to forgive him for "preaching a gospel emphasiz-

ing earthly prosperity." In a letter written from the Minnesota prison where he has been serving his sentence since 1990, Bakker said his conclusions were drawn after months of intensive Bible study: "There is no way, if you take the whole counsel of God's Word, that you can equate riches or material things as a sign of God's blessing."

CONVICTED IN ATHENS

Three Greek men, Air Force officers, have been convicted of proselytism and sentenced to prison for 12, 13, and 15 months. The country's anti-proselytism laws were enacted in 1940, but recently there has been an increase in their use by officials against evangelicals.

IS IT A TREND?

A slim, but growing number of women are choosing to stay at home, at least while their children are young. A StatsCan report shows a two-percent drop in women's participation rate in the work force between July 1990 and July 1991. This is the first time there has been a drop since 1965.

In the US, a similar picture is emerging. The birth rate has increased 7.4 percent in the last five years, and the half-percent decrease in working women aged 20 to 44 in 1990 is the first recorded since 1948.

THE MARK

Frequent flyers into Schiphol International Airport, Amsterdam's gateway to Europe, no longer have to wait in lines to have their passports checked. Using a card with a template of the user's fingerprints stored on it, it is a simple matter of inserting the card, give a reading of one's own fingerprints on a sen-

WHAT'S GOING ON?

sor, and the gate opens to let the traveller through.

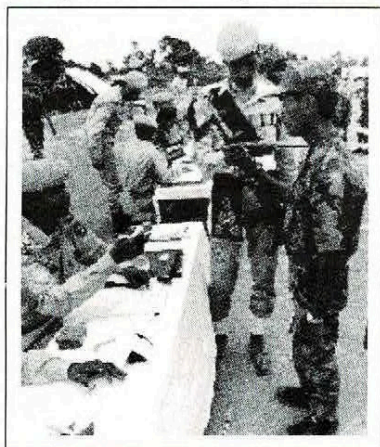
UNBREAKABLE CHINA

China, with more than 1.2 billion people, is the most populous country in the world. An estimated 50-60 million of these profess to be Christians (in a land where professing Christianity is not taken lightly—it could cost you your life). About 85% of these Christians meet illegally with banned congregations.

A recent edition of the South China Morning Post reported the government's intention to close every house church in the country. The crack-down has included expanding police surveillance, increasing the number of arrests, and intensifying the abusive treatment of Christians during interrogation. Pray for your brethren in bonds.

WHITHER CAMBODIA?

It's been a year since a United Nations peace treaty was accepted by four warring factions in



Cambodia, but the pact is in danger of becoming unglued because the Khmer Rouge refuses to disarm its army. Diplomats hope partial disarmament will begin in time for scheduled elections next spring. The U.N.

hopes it will not have to use force.

ALIYA: GOING HOME

A group of 145 Moldavian Jews arrived recently in Israel, fleeing the fighting in their former homeland. Jewish Agency chairman Simha Dinitz said that about 70% of Moldavia's 40,000 Jews already hold family reunification permits, the first step to immigrating to Israel.

A combined effort by French, British, and American Jewish organizations is underway to free Yemen's Jewish community. There are an estimated 1,700 Jews left in Yemen.

Almost 600 Jews have left Syria since Damascus announced in April that it would allow travel privileges. Between 25 and 40 Jews a week have been leaving Damascus. There are approximately 4,000 Jews left in Syria.

BRIDGING THE GAP

According to the 1992 *Ethnologue*, Bible Translations Needs Bulletin, and *Index of Wycliffe Bible Translators*, 28 of the world's 286 languages do not have a translation or any part of the Bible. Ten are regional versions of Arabic, five are in China, four are in India, three are in Afghanistan, with one each in Thailand, Nigeria, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, and Indonesia.

FEBE REPORTS

On September 21, three men were shot and killed at the FEBE station in Zamboanga, Philippines. The three men were killed while broadcasting a Bible reading program aimed at Muslims. News Network International reports the names of the three men to be Gregorio Hapalla, Greg Bacabis, a technician; and Ambre

Al-Hari, a guest speaker. Hapalla had received death threats from angry Muslims before.

FROM UNREST TO REST

As a result of the recent strife in Croatia, many new faces are turning up in an unusual place—the church. No one can



predict how many will remain once the fighting is over, but Christians throughout the country are witnessing to any who will listen. Croat Christian writer/editor Ksenija Magda explains that one reason is, "because of the church's traditional separatist mentality and stern refusal to mix with the 'sinful' outside world." However, having to share a bunker with the outside world has helped Christians to open up as never before.

Many believers are eager to witness to those in spiritual need around them. Izvori, the publishing house of the Evangelical Church of Croatia, has published 400,000 copies of the gospel of Mark for refugees. Another 20,000 copies of the four Gospels will go to refugees; 80,000 are designated for distribution in high schools and universities.

Duhovna Stvarnost (another publishing house) has published 50,000 copies of Billy Graham's *Peace with God*. Most have been distributed to refugees, the military, and others.

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A Bushel of Goodness

J. Boyd Nicholson Sr.

Johnny was just one of those people in life that you never forget. He was getting up in years when I first met him. Well, my first encounter with this son of Italy wasn't really an introduction. I heard him pray at the Lord's Supper!

When he finished his prayer, I confess I looked up to see who this man was who entered the presence of God with such simplicity, such intimacy, and with tears.

There was nothing of note in his appearance. Not tall, but stocky, a nondescript gray suit draped over what had once been the powerful figure of a working man. He was obviously more at home in his mother tongue than the American English of his adopted land. His accent was still highly seasoned with the characteristics of the traditional Italian immigrant, but that in no way hindered his approach into the Sanctuary.

Oh! those prayers! When he rose to pray before the Gospel meeting to lay hold on God on behalf of lost sinners, his earnest appeals carried us with him into the throne room of the universe. He was a man who appreciated being saved and longed for others to "Taste and see that the Lord is good."

Yes! God had been good to Johnny and to his dear wife of many years. He had never lost the joy of his salvation and wanted my preaching colleague and I to come for dinner so that he could tell us his story of the goodness of God.

We were invited for a noon-hour meal. We realized—as the meal progressed—how much we had to be thankful for, that this was not the evening meal just before we preached! After all, who can translate hospitality into those wonderful aromas, delectable dishes, and spicy marvels like an Italian mama?

The real purpose, however, was not just to set a delicious feast before us for our bodies, but to tell us his story. It took the whole hour of the meal as he spread out before us a more wonderful feast than that crossing our palate. Even after these many years I still relish it.

It is a long time ago now, and no doubt some of the details may be lost to my memory, but I have

never forgotten the salient facts.

He, his wife, and children were very poor in Italy. Some of his relatives had made it over to the United States and enjoyed the benefits of their new land. So to help out, they sent Johnny the fare to bring his little family over to the New World with all its promise and prospects. So they came.

But the promise and prospects had died in the crash of the late 20's, and the depression filled the streets with the unemployed. Johnny walked those streets every day looking for any kind of a job that would put food on the table.

One day, someone told him that an Italian preacher, Caesar Patrizio, was preaching the Gospel at a nearby meeting place, and invited him to attend. Johnny wasn't too interested, feeling that he had his own religion. But time lagged in those days and there were few distractions, so one evening found Johnny slipping into the back seat to hear the Italian preacher.

The message was simple, the text was the Golden Gospel Text, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Johnny didn't get much out of the message. His mind was already thinking about tomorrow and the daily hunt for a job. But there it was, "For God so loved the world . . ." Well, thought Johnny, if God loved the world, just maybe that included him, and maybe



GRACE AT WORK

this God could get him the job he needed. So he sent into heaven his desperate prayer, not for his soul, for his salvation, or for heaven, but just for a job. "O God, if You love me, please get me a job, so I can feed my wife and kids."

The very next day, at the market, a man offered Johnny a job, loading vegetables on the trucks, for 75 cents a day! "Wasn't God a-good to me?" he would say. Then he went on, "The next day, he hire' me again—an' I got a promote; he pay me a dollar a day! Say, wasn't God a-good to me?"

At the end of that long, hot day, the boss said, "Hey, Johnny, you look hot. Here, drink this Coke," and handed him a bottle of pop.

"Thank you, boss," replied Johnny, "But you keep the Coke and give me the nickel instead, an' I buy a loaf a' bread for my kids." "Oh, Johnny," laughed the boss, "Drink the Coke, and here's the money for a loaf of bread for your kids, too."

By this time Johnny is beaming as he tells us again, "Say, wasn't God a-good to me?" But his story isn't over yet. The next day, after a hard day's loading of trucks, the boss called him over, "Johnny, d'ya like a cabbage?"

"Sure boss."

He tossed a large fresh cabbage into a bushel basket. "Like potatoes, Johnny?"

"Sure thing."

"What about squash and cauliflower?"

"Yes, yes, we like them all," Johnny gasped as he saw the boss fill up the bushel basket to the top with delectable vegetables and fruits.

"There, Johnny, take that home to the wife and kids."

We could hear it coming. And the tears in his eyes primed ours too, "Say, wasn't God a-good to me?"

He hoisted the bushel of vegetables and fruit on to his shoulder and set out to walk across the city, seven miles to his little home. "An' my heart was-a sing," he laughed.

Johnny always had difficulty with his prepositions. "Under this roof" was "A-bottom this roof." "In front of the house" was "A-top-a the house." So he arrived home at last, perhaps a little later than usual because of the load of blessing in the bushel basket, and his wife was "a-waitin'" for him "a-top-a the

house."

Once inside, he put down the bushel basket from his shoulder and explained their good fortune. Then after some silent moments, Johnny spoke again, "Wife, if God goin'-a love me like-a this, I goin'-a love Him back."

No doubt Heaven was moved at the sight of that little family, bowed in the presence of the God of John 3:16, drawn in loving response and obedience by the evidence of the goodness of God in a bushel of vegetables. For as Johnny would learn, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4).

How good God has been to us in these western lands. Not just with a bushel of vegetables; "He daily loadeth us with benefits." The food we eat, the ability to eat it and the appetite to enjoy it. A measure of health and strength and soundness of mind. A bed to sleep on and shelter from the elements. Meaningful employment and a paycheck God enables us to earn. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights . . ." (Jas.1:17). Friends and loved ones around us, and God handing us a breath at a time without fail, "The God in whose hand thy breath is" (Dan. 5:23). Yet the greatest evidence of His goodness and wondrous love is still emblazoned in John 3:16, the gift of His only begotten Son.

If indeed God has so loved you as Johnny found out, do you love Him back? Have you obeyed His gospel call? Has there ever been a time when you got down before Him and thanked

Him for all the riches of His goodness and received His greatest Gift, His own beloved Son as your Saviour? If not . . . why not? God is not good to us because we are good, but because *He* is good!

Well, Johnny, his dear wife, and the Italian preacher laugh and sing and serve together in a Land where the fruit doesn't come in bushel baskets, and the trees never lose their leaves. They are at home with the Lord, to bask forever in the sunshine of the riches of the goodness of God. And there, in the House of the Lord, Johnny will "love Him back" forever and forever.

Isn't God good?

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Good Mind Food

N. A. Woychuk

Memory," said Cicero, "is the treasury and guardian of all things." The little girl however, had a different idea when she defined memory as "the thing that I forget with."

The human mind is a masterpiece of God's workmanship (Ps. 139:14). We fail to appreciate what a great trust God has given each one of us. Among many other endowments, He gave us the amazing capacities of the brain, including the one called memory. Life would be virtually impossible without it. Memory underlies our ability to think rationally and make decisions. Imagine what it would be like if we tried to drive a car and didn't remember which was the accelerator and which the brake! In the final analysis, we know only what we can accurately remember.

How vital it is to have the memory adequately stocked with God's Word so that mental reactions can be quickly made in accordance with God's wisdom. In the day of trouble, the Psalmist was comforted and strengthened as he "remembered" the "song in the night" and the wondrous "works of the Lord" (Ps. 77:6).

Before the printed book, memory ruled the daily life. The fruits of education were gathered and stored in memory. Socrates (470-399 BC), lamented the adverse effects writing would have on the memory of the learner. Though he himself wrote nothing, his famous student Plato quotes him: "This discovery of yours (writing) will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories. They will be hearers of many things and will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing."

We certainly must not deplore books. Thank God for the availability of the printed Word of God. Reading it is always to be encouraged. Though reading the Word of God is good, memorizing it is better, and meditating on it is best of all. Casual reading of the Bible is like a bee skimming over the surface of a flower, but memorizing the Scripture is where the bee penetrates into the

depths of the blossom to secure the nectar. Then meditating on that Word is like the bee taking the nectar home and making it into honey. The Word in the Book makes it easily available most of the time; the Word in the mind makes it instantly accessible at all times.

ITS IMPORTANCE

Satan knows the power of God's Word when it lodges in the human mind and heart. Like birds who devour the planted seed, he strives to remove the Word from the memory of the hearers "lest they should believe and be saved" (Lk. 8:12). He knows that what our minds feed upon becomes the most influential force in our lives, and that the remembrance and release of God's Word in us breaks his power and forces him to retreat.

Satan keeps people from assimilating the Word of God by shutting off access to it, as has been the case in many countries throughout the centuries, or simply by inducing them to neglect it. The enemy's grand scheme is to fill the mind with such things as will not enlighten nor influence us to seek after God.

Perhaps we fail to realize that the memory needs to be continually cleansed. It is by the sanctifying power of God that the spaces of our memory become dwelling places of eternal truth. We pray with the saint of old, "Lord, help us to remember what we ought not to forget, and to forget what we ought not to remember."

We do well to esteem God's Word as being more urgent than our "necessary food" (Job 23:12). We must memorize Scripture because God commands us to do so (Deut. 6:6). This was God's directive to the Israelites who were also instructed to teach these things "diligently" to their children. It is equally God's command for all of God's people today. We are never sufficient of ourselves (2 Cor. 3:5). We need the Word of God to dwell richly in our hearts and be continually on our lips in order to enable us to be "doers of the Word and



GOOD FOOD FOR YOUR MIND

not hearers only" (Jas. 1:22).

HAVING A PLAN

But how may a person really commit God's Word to memory? First, you must have some *definite system*. The slogan is true: If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. One plan which has been successfully followed by many is that of memorizing certain chapters or books of the Bible. Reading them over repeatedly with the thought of remembering them seals them in the mind.

Frances Ridley Havergal, one of the outstanding hymn writers who lived only 42 years (1836-1879), committed to memory all of the New Testament, the Book of Psalms, and Isaiah while still in her teens. Later she added the Minor Prophets.

When implemented with *systematic effort*, such a plan is effective and has some obvious advantages in that you follow the sequence of thought and learn the verses in their context.

Third, there must be an *accountability system*. Submit to thorough supervision of someone at home, in the local church, or at work, and follow a prescribed schedule of recitations.

With a desirable system of memorization before you, there must come a *resolute commitment*. Not only, "I want to do it," but "I will do it." Purpose in your heart like the Psalmist, "I will delight myself in Thy statutes; I will not forget Thy Word" (119:16).

CONCENTRATION

Concentration is the ability to converge your mental powers on a particular objective. This involves determination and discipline. Many people would like to memorize Scripture if it did not involve this arduous process of concentration. In this respect, some have eagerly grasped at mnemonics (techniques of improving the memory) and other artificial memory aids which on the surface sound very promising but which often become a distraction and a disappointment. You assimilate the Word of God best through the exercise of your mental powers in concentration.

RELAXATION

It is a strange thing, that although children generally do not understand the Scriptures as well as adults, and do not possess the same appreciation for the Word, yet they memorize more quickly and remember longer than adults. Perhaps the chief reason for this is that children are free from

the pressures which so universally distress adults.

There always seems to be the pressure of time. Well-meaning people say, "I just don't have time to memorize Scripture." There is no denying the fact that we always seem to be pushed for lack of time. But as you reflect upon the dilemma, is it not generally true that you always manage to find time for the things you desire to do most?

Then there are the inescapable pressures of daily living. There is no question but that we have to take care of these legitimate responsibilities, but it is here that we must decisively appropriate the words of our Lord: "Take no thought for your life . . . but seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:25-33).

It does not really matter how long it takes. Just relax and relish the sweetness of the Word as you joyfully try to place the very words of God into the memory chambers of your mind. Think about the meaning of it. Consider each word, each phrase, each sentence. Say it out loud. Say it with enjoyment and conviction. "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Ps. 119:103).

Suppose you have a golden chest, studded with precious stones. Everyone is curious to know what it contains. Imagine their surprise when they see rubber bands, pieces of string, paper clips, laundry claim checks, and toothpicks! What a disappointment! What a shame to have such a valuable chest used for collecting bits of trash!

The memory is like a bank. Money deposited in the institution is not only safe, but bears dividends that accumulate with time. The precious promises of God will yield dividends, which, though intangible, will be of more personal enrichment than material possessions.

The memory is like a garden. Beautiful flowers, fruits, and vegetables come with cultivation; weeds and thistles come with carelessness. Plant in the "good ground" of the honest heart the "seed" of the Word and it will result in bountiful fruit (Lk. 8: 11-15).

The *Scripture Memory Fellowship* has a plan for memorizing Scripture systematically, utilizing the principles in this article. Forty carefully developed Memory Books for all age levels are available.

Scripture Memory Fellowship
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Alas—It Was Borrowed!

Jim Cormack

We understand a miracle to feed 5,000 or to raise the dead, certainly, but for a lost axe?

The young man knew its importance. With the axe head gone, his means of serving the Lord and His people and being able to do the things expected of him were gone as well. Now others would have to do his share as well as their own, and if they were not gifted for it, then the work would be slowed or its quality would suffer.

Gone too, were the less tangible benefits of involvement. There is often a special bond between those with a common aim and work, but as an on-looker, he would lose the benefit of the close companionship of his fellows. His witness to his friends and neighbors would suffer too. They would see he was no longer involved and would wonder what was wrong. No longer would he be able to anticipate the day when he would hear his child, perhaps yet unborn, say, "My dad helped build this place. See his mark on this beam?" Knowing one's parents are happily involved in the Lord's work often has a steadying influence on children as they grow up.

Important as these things are, there was one overriding concern in his cry to Elisha, "Alas, Master, for it was borrowed." Yes, he knew he was accountable. It was not his axe. It had been given to him to enable him to do the work. Now the one who gave it would lose the joy of partnership in the work and the young man would have to go home and say that he had lost the

thing given to him to serve the Lord.

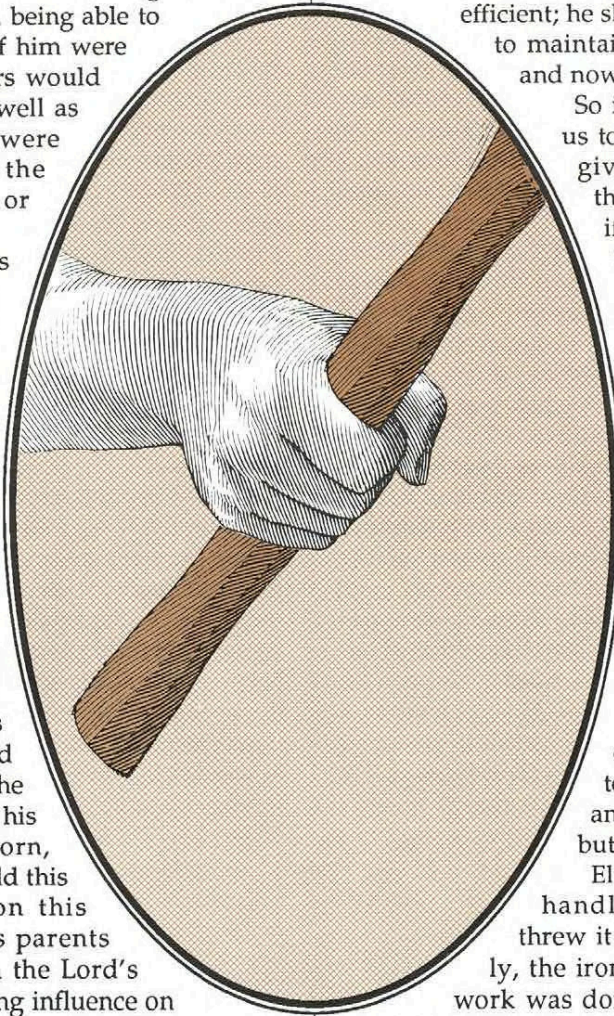
It is hard not to feel sorry for the young man, but axe heads do not come loose suddenly. They loosen little by little. He must have known. He had to work harder as the axe became less efficient; he should have taken time out to maintain it. But he did not stop and now it was gone.

So it is with us. God expects us to maintain the gift He has given us lest we also lose the use of it. What do we do if we already have lost it? The young man holds the answer. Elisha was his contact with God and he immediately sought his help. "Where did you lose it?" is the question we must answer as well. It probably won't be hard to go back to a time when we allowed something to come into our life or service, when we noticed that all was not right. Our axe head had begun to loosen but we could not, would not, stop to put it right. Now the gift and its benefits are gone—but not our accountability.

Elisha then fashioned a new handle for the axe head and threw it into the water. Amazingly, the iron began to swim. Elisha's work was done, the axe again became available to the young man. But it was his responsibility to pick it up and go back to work!

Let us keep our axe head tight. If necessary, let's go back to where we lost it so we can take it up again and return to the work committed to us by the Master.

Brother Jim Cormack resides in Guelph, ON and fellowships with the believers at the Arkell Road assembly



The Alpine Meadow

Doug Kazen

The Big Stony River is just to the left. We are walking upstream on a well-worn game trail. Behind us, momentarily hidden in clouds, rises the massive bulk of Mount McKinley—North America's highest peak. Miles ahead, at the moment unseen in the morning mist, in the mountains near the headwaters of the Big Stony, is an alpine meadow that is our intended destination. We expect to find it aglow this August day with a glorious assortment of central Alaska's wild tundra and mountain flowers. It should prove to be a delightful destination, well worth the effort of the hike.

Our trek is not unlike that of many saints along life's pathway. The waters along which they forge their way—ever going upstream—are cold and stony. Sometimes the trail seems clear enough; sometimes it is almost as if the pilgrim is on a trek never trod before. The soul has heard of a glorious destination far ahead. It is strewn with the flowers of heaven. Its acres are a realm of peace. But the climb to get there is the present challenge. How far is it? What hurdles and dangers lurk closer at hand? Faith must be constantly honed, or the prospect becomes vague and forlorn.

Our faint trail enters a glade of small aspen and willow. In the center of the stand is a little clearing and here we stop in our tracks! The tundra sod has been plowed asunder. Not plowed by a farm instrument; this "plow" had four powerful paws, each with five long claws. Grizzly! A glance at the tracks is enough to tell us that this was done by a sizable bear and it was since the early morning rain ended. That means less than four hours ago. The grizzly had been digging for a meal of a sweet root that grows in places here in Denali Park. With our boot we kick aside small morsels that he missed. A chilling thought: Did our approach interrupt his meal? If so, is our grizzly friend watching

us at this moment? We glance around, noting no sinister sight or sound. All seems still. Even though the bear may be close by, if we move on about our business, there is no reason for real fear. But there is ample reason for caution. We must not blunder into a close encounter.

The upward bound saint needs likewise to exercise due caution. There is a sinister presence, Satan, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. Even the shady glades along life's pathway may contain his dangerous presence. His purpose is the ruin and downfall of any saint he can waylay. To turn away from temptation; to follow closely the path of Scripture; to stay close to the Lord—these are the keys of the safe walk. If those cautions are observed, there is no cause for fear or alarm. The saint is blessed with an inner Presence whose power is far greater than that of Satan. When we let the Spirit guide us, we are safe. It is blundering on in blind self-confidence that can be disastrous.

We move forward, sticking close to the river. Admittedly, it is a relief to reach an open meadow where we have an unobstructed view for a good distance in all directions. But soon there comes to our view, in the bank on the right, more grizzly signs. These are places where the big fellow has been trying to dig ground squirrels out of their dens. Most of these little animals are well prepared for the grizzly. They have dens composed of several far-ranging tunnels, each with its own opening to the surface. A grizzly may dig furiously for a long while, tearing up the earth in a fren-



THE ALPINE MEADOW

zy, only ultimately to end tired and frustrated when it dawns on him that his quarry has long since escaped via some remote passageway.

And so it is with the child of God, whom Satan seeks to make his prey. If well grounded in the Word of the Lord; if prepared for the onslaught of the enemy; our foe will not succeed. He becomes frustrated and moves on to other prey, when his intended victim proves well prepared for the attack. It is the weak, the unwary, those who seek close contact with the world and its ways, that he catches and consumes with great delight.

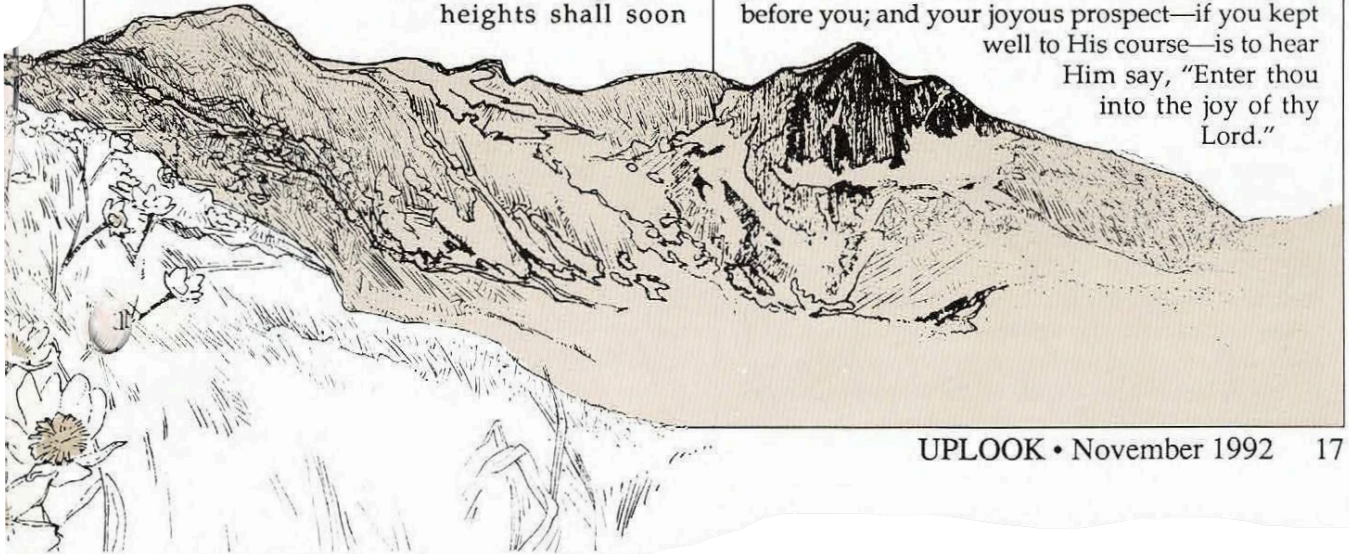
The game trail has disappeared. We are crossing an open meadow so pristine it appears as if no one has ever been here before. As miles pass beneath our feet, it is easy to become concerned. We wonder if we are still on course, if we will ever reach our goal. Cameras, binoculars, food and beverages are getting heavier as we climb. It's a long way back to the cabin, with its cozy stove and warm bed. Should we press on? We stop to glass the slopes ahead. The mists and clouds are parting and there—far ahead—we discern our goal. On a high shoulder overlooking the river is the flowered field we seek. Just this side of it we can see the entrance of a ravine up which we must scramble to reach the heights. New vigor courses through the veins. New resolve stimulates the mind. With quickened pace we move on.

Many are the trudging saints for whom the trail has become dim. The years of prayer and trial and sacrifice seem to have borne so little fruit. Discouragement increases and so do doubts. Is it worth going on? Are we still in the right way? Will we ever reach the happy destination? But that soul who lifts his thoughts above shall hear a voice behind him saying: "This is the way, walk ye in it." The eye of faith that probes the mists of time in search of glorious heights shall soon

find itself fixed on the happy prospect of eternal bliss. The goal is now in sight. The climb is almost over. The pulse quickens; the burdens lighten; stride lengthens; and the hope draws close to reality.

We turn away from the river, into the steep defile that leads directly to the long sought heights. By looking sharply upward, we can discern now the fringes of the flowered meadow, with its reds and yellows and purples and blues and whites in indescribable array. We find ourselves climbing swiftly. No thought now for the sweat streaming from the brow or the panting breath. Now the rigors of the trail and the possible threatening presence of our grizzly friend seem far behind. With the goal at hand, and even the rest of the party lagging farther back, we reach a rocky outcropping and pause. A few more steps—the top! But from this vantage point for a moment we look back far below. There is the river and the meadow we have crossed. There is the long valley of our ascent. All now seems so well worth the effort. The view from here is sublime. A fresh breeze is blowing upward through the defile, as if to lift us on its wings to the glorious heights above. A golden eagle, with wing span approximately two yards across, soars above us, enjoying the same updraft; and for a moment we feel almost at one with that noble creature, to whom the eerie heights are home.

Yes, fellow saint, the heights of glory are just ahead. Your climb is perhaps now at its steepest. Your path may now be its most challenging. But keep your eye on the goal! You are almost there. Now is not the time to falter, to lose sight of the happy objective. Press on. The fields of glory are just above. Look up. Can you now almost see the tree-lined river with its wondrous fruits? Soon you will hear the voice of the One Who has gone before you; and your joyous prospect—if you kept well to His course—is to hear Him say, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."



Going Online

Kevin B. Shantz

In 1890, James Strong published a book that was to become a favorite of Bible students for the next 100 years. His exhaustive concordance of the Bible is now considered an invaluable resource and indispensable for the serious student of God's Word. If you have never used a concordance, see Jim McKendrick's article in the February 1991 *Uplook* for an explanation of this important Bible study tool.

Despite the incredible usefulness of Mr. Strong's book, there is now something even better. With the advent of the computer age, many Christians have begun to use computers in their work for the Lord. One tremendous use for the computer is in studying the Scriptures. There are now many concordance programs available, ranging in price from \$20 to over \$250. However, by far the best of these is the "Online Bible." Not only is the Online Bible superior to most, if not all, of the commercial programs, it is also free!

Now, if you have not yet joined the "Computer Age," don't stop reading here. The Online Bible is enough to convince you to take the plunge and acquire a computer.

Online Bible was developed by Larry Pierce of Woodside Bible Fellowship, an assembly in Elmira, Ontario. Larry and his band of devoted volunteers have poured thousands of hours into producing and enhancing this program. Ken Hamel of Oakhurst, NJ, has taken the original version of the program, written for the DOS operating system, and rewritten it for use on Macintosh computers. Christians are greatly indebted to these men for their labors in producing this wonderful Bible study tool.

Hopefully by now you are asking, "Just what is the Online Bible?" Online Bible is a Bible study tool that combines the best features of several study books with the referencing capabilities of a computer. It contains the complete text of the Authorized Version of the Bible (NIV and RSV ver-

sions are also available). You can easily call up on screen any verse or passage in the Bible almost instantly. If you are looking for a verse but can't remember the reference, Online Bible will find it for you. Like any concordance, it provides a list of all the verses in the Bible where a particular word occurs.

Unlike a conventional concordance, it can also do searches for phrases or for combinations of words. Let's say you wanted to study the use of the phrase "grace and truth" in the New Testament. If you were using *Strong's*, you would need to first look up "grace" and note all the references. Then you would have to go through them one by one to determine if "truth" also appeared in that verse. Online Bible will do all of this for you almost instantly.

As well, it can do searches for verses where certain words do *not* appear. For example, say you were doing a study on how the Bible writers addressed the Lord. You wanted to look at all the verses where He was simply referred to as "Jesus" without the titles "Lord" or "Christ" added. The program will do this for you.

You can also do proximity searches. For instance, say you wanted to find instances where "righteousness" and "justification" appear close together, but not necessarily in the same verse. You could search for all verses where these two words appear within one or two (or whatever you choose) number of verses of each other. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, you can do searches based on the underlying Greek and Hebrew words of the original languages.

Interspaced with the English text of Scripture are the *Strong's* reference numbers that correspond to the words in the original language, similar to the *Word Study New Testament*. See the example below. You have the option of displaying the text in this mode or in the conventional mode without the numbers.

The example in the next column shows a search

"If you have not yet joined the 'Computer Age,' don't stop reading here."

GOING ONLINE

"4309" 1/6

Ac 4:28 For to do <4160> whatsoever <3745> thy hand <5495> and thy counsel <1012> determined **<4309>** before **<4309>** to be done <1096>.

Ro 8:29* For whom <3739> he did foreknow <4267>, he also <2532> did predestinate **<4309>** [to be] conformed <4832> to the image <504> of his Son <5207>, that he might be the firstborn <4416> among <1722> many <4183> brethren <80>.

Ro 8:30 Moreover <1161> whom <3739> he did predestinate **<4309>**, them he also <2532> called <2564>: and whom <3739> he called <2564>, them he also <2532> justified <1344>: and whom <3739> he justified <1344>, them he also <2532> glorified <1392>.

1Co 2:7 But we speak <2980> the wisdom <4678> of God <2316> in a mystery <3466>, [even] the hidden <613> [wisdom], which <3739> God <2316> ordained **<4309>** before <4253> the world <165> unto our glory <1391>:

Eph 1:5 Having predestinated **<4309>** us unto the adoption <5206> of children <5206> by Jesus <2424> Christ <5547> to himself <848>, according <2596> to the good pleasure <2107> of his will <2307>.

Eph 1:11 In whom <3739> also <2532> we have obtained <2820> an inheritance <2820>, being predestinated **<4309>** according <2596> to the purpose <4286> of him who worketh <1754> all <3956> things after <2596> the counsel <1012> of his own <848> will <2307>:

on *Strong's* number 4309. All six occurrences in the Bible are listed. In Acts 4:28, in the KJV, it has been translated "determined before"; in 1 Corinthians 2:7, it has been translated "ordained"; twice in Romans 8 it has been translated "did predestinate" and twice in Ephesians 1 it has been translated "predestinated."

The *Strong's* numbering system is used by many other Bible language tools. Online Bible integrates three of these in the form of a Greek and Hebrew lexicon. This lexicon provides detailed information on the meanings of the Greek and Hebrew words.

The Greek is based on *Thayer's Lexicon* and *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. The Hebrew is based on *Brown, Driver and Briggs's Lexicon* and *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. In the next column is a sample lexicon entry for *Strong's* number 4309.

For each word, the lexicon provides a transliteration, pronunciation guide, derivation (if not a root word), and the part of speech—noun, verb, etc. For further study, the page reference to Kittel's 10 volume *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT) is provided as well as the refer-

ence to the one volume "little Kittel." (The Old Testament references are to the *Theological Word-book of the Old Testament*.)

The lexicon also provides details of the usage of the word in the Bible with the number of times it is used in each manner and a brief explanation of its meaning. What's more, these lexicon entries can be edited so that you can include the results of your own studies.

Greek #4309

4309 proorizo (pro-or-id'-zo)

from 4253 and 3724; TDNT - 5:452,728; vb

AV - predestinate (4)
 - determine before (1)
 - ordain (1) [6]

1) to predetermine, decide beforehand; in the NT of God
 decreeing from eternity; to foreordain, appoint beforehand

Whenever you do a verse search, the output on the screen consists of the entire verse for each reference where the subject word appears, not just a brief phrase as with a conventional concordance. The subject word is highlighted and you can scroll back and forth among the verses.

If you want to look at the passage containing one of the verses you have found, a single keyboard command will show you the context of the verse in question. You can also do additional searches while the result of your first search stays on screen. There is no limit to the number of search windows you can have open at one time.

You can also ask for cross-references to any of the verses resulting from your search. Included in the Online Bible are the 570,000 cross-references from the *Treasury of Bible Knowledge*. You can add your own references as well.

Notes can also be added to any verse. When a verse comes up in a search to which you have at-

Note - Ro 8:29

This is a note on Romans 8:29

I

GOING ONLINE

tached a note, an asterisk appears beside the reference, indicating the presence of a note. In the example on the preceding page, a note is indicated for Romans 8:29.

You can save the results of your word searches under a particular topic heading. These topics are completely user defined. Thus you can create indexes of verses on literally hundreds of topics. When you want to study that topic, the Online Bible will display all the verses in your list without you having to repeat the searches that produced the list.

Other features of the Online Bible include a built-in mini word processor for editing text and adding cross-references and notes. While its features are limited, you can use it for preparing message outlines, study notes, reports, etc. It performs all of the low level functions you would expect, including cutting and pasting of text, printing and limited formatting. You can also import/export text from/to other programs.

One of the features I like most is the ability to access the Scriptures from within other programs. Included with the Online Bible is a "hot key" command that automatically retrieves verses from the program. Do you need a quotation from the Bible for an article you are writing? Just type a predefined key sequence and the computer produces a dialog box asking what verse(s) you would like. You type the reference of the verse(s) you need and they are instantly inserted in your document. This feature works from within any program that handles text. The Online Bible does not even have to be running. You are assured of

totally accurate quotations with minimal typing.

James Strong probably never imagined his numbering system would ever be put to use in such a fashion. But just as his concordance opened up the Greek and Hebrew roots of the English words of the Bible to a multitude of non-linguists, even so will the Online Bible, and other programs like it, once again revolutionize the study of God's Word. There is no longer any excuse for lack of thoroughness in Bible study. This tool easily lets you find any verse of Scripture that bears on a passage or subject. This program is a must for any computer user. It will help make you a better student of the Word.

To obtain the Online Bible, contact Gospel Folio Press. We would appreciate a donation of \$15.00 to cover the costs of the disks and postage. We will send the program on high density 3.5 inch disks unless you specify otherwise. Or you can also send us four blank, high density disks (six regular density ones), and we will be glad to send you the program on them.

Technical Information

Online Bible requires 8 megabytes of disk space to install all of the features, but it will operate with as little as 3.5 megabytes. The Macintosh version requires a Mac Plus or better running System 6.0 or later with at least one megabyte of RAM. The DOS version requires a 286 based processor or better and DOS version 3.3 or higher. The storage space requirements are about the same.

I used the Macintosh version in preparing this article, but the DOS version is very similar. **U**

HESITATIONS ABOUT A COMPUTER

If you don't own a computer, but are now beginning to consider it, you probably have a lot of doubts and questions in your mind. First among these often is: "Will I be able to learn how to use it?" One of our staff didn't learn how to use a computer until she was in her "golden years." She would say to you, "If I can learn how to use one, anybody can!"

Another thought may be "I've got along this long without one, why should I change now." Depending how old you are, you may well be able to get along without one for the rest of your life. However, increasingly computers are becoming essential in many areas of life. Moreover a computer is a wonderful tool for saving time and making many tasks easier. Word processing is so much easier than on a typewriter, keeping track of your finances is a snap and maintaining a file of records, of any type—be it an address list, a listing of books in your library, message outlines, or even a recipe file is so much more efficient on a computer. There are also many amazing educational programs available for a computer.

"But a computer costs too much!" Not any more. A good basic system that four years ago would have cost \$7,000 to \$8,000 can now be purchased for as little as \$1,200.

Purchasing a computer for the first time can be very intimidating. There is a lot of unfamiliar jargon and a dizzying array of choices. Seek out several knowledgeable computer users and ask their advice.

Is Christ Your Focus?

F. C. Bland

More and more I am made to feel that Christ does not have His proper place among the children of God. He is not the object. It is either a doctrine, a dogma, a party, my experience—something beside Christ. We seem possessed with much the same spirit that actuated Peter on the mount when he said: "Let us make three tabernacles."

The Father would remedy this. "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him . . . and when they had lifted up their eyes they saw no man save Jesus only" (read Matt. 17:1-8).

Have you ever been in the "cloud," brother? Have you ever heard the "voice"? Have you ever been on your "face"? Have you ever felt the "touch"? Then have you heard another voice, "Arise"? Do your eyes see "no man save Jesus only"?

"Christ is all" (Col. 3:11). Is He this to us? Is it a question of my salvation? "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God" (Jn. 1:12). Is it a question of experience? "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). Is it a question of service? "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). Is it a question of my path? "I am the way" (John 14:6). Is it a question of heaven, the place to which my path leads? He would define it as "where I am" (Jn. 14:3). O, let us know more of that rich blessedness which comes of making Christ all. Our cry should be, "That I may know Him" (Phil. 3:10).

In our selfishness, we cry and beg for blessing. It is the Blessor we need, Himself. He is the joy of our Father's heart. Let us taste with Him the delight He takes in His Son. Christ is infinitely higher than doctrine or experience. Experience we will have, doctrine we will need, but only with Him can our hearts be satisfied.

Why is it we are not changed more from "glory to glory"? The veil has been rent; the blood has been sprinkled; the Spirit is given. The reason is that we are occupied with ourselves and the work

of the Spirit in us, rather than with Christ alone. This is a weakness in the widespread holiness work, so much of which is superficial. Let us look more into that unveiled Face from which the light of the knowledge of the glory of God streams (2 Cor. 4:6). The Spirit never occupies me with His work in me. And if I am thus occupied, I am

out of the Spirit. The word is, "He shall not speak of Himself . . . He shall glorify Me" (Jn. 16:13-14). Nor was the work of Christ, wonderfully blessed as it is, ever intended to be the object of my heart. It gives my conscience peace, sweet peace, but only His Person can satisfy the heart. And O, how His person does it!

The Father would direct us to Him (Acts 7:55-56. The Word of God would speak of Him (Jn. 5:39). He is the object of faith; He is the object of love; He is the object of hope; and faith, or love, or hope that does not make Him the object is spurious and unreal.

He is all for my path; He is all for my service; He is all for my worship; blessed, blessed be His holy name. He is not on the Cross; He is not in the grave; He is on the throne. Wondrous fact, a Man in the glory of God, and that Man my precious Saviour; my Bridegroom; my Priest; my Advocate; the One who died for me; the One who lives for me; the One who is coming for me. It is not surprising that Peter should say, "Unto you, therefore which believe, He is precious."

Both the secular world and the religious world seem bent upon shutting Him out. The former is "reserved unto fire," the latter He will vomit out of His mouth (see 2 Pet. 3; Rev. 3). Keep clear from them both, dear brother. "Go forth unto Him" (Heb. 13). He is enough.

May it be with us, Christ, Christ, Christ. You will not get a greater portion or place than He got. Your portion here will be "food and raiment," your place "outside." There your portion is all "spiritual blessing," your place "in Him." Let every affection, every desire, every thought be gathered in and centered upon Him.



Goodness

Goodness is love in action, love with its hand to the plow, love with the burden on its back, love following His footsteps who went about continually doing good.

—James Hamilton

In the heraldry of heaven, goodness precedes greatness, and so on earth it is more powerful. The lowly and lovely often do more good in their limited sphere than the gifted. —George Horne



"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness." (Psalm 65:11)

Be not merely good; be good for something.

—Thoreau

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

(Romans 8:28)

In the graveyard of St. Machar's churchyard, Edinburgh, Scotland, is a plain gravestone. On it there is no date, name, or flowery epitaph. On it, however, are three eloquent words: "A good brother."

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

*You ask me why I see no charm nor glory
In this world's pleasures or its wealth and fame?
And why I love that Galilean story
Of One who died upon a cross of shame?
It is because my soul hath known its sinning,
The grief and darkness of that cry undone,
And at that Cross has found a new beginning,
Life through the death of that dear dying One.*

*You ask me why I find no rest or gladness
In paths where selfish ease would while my hours?
And why I toil where hearts in bitter sadness
Lie crushed beneath sin's fierce overwhelming powers?
It is because I know life's thread is slender,
But one short hour, one little stretch of road.
Then yearns my heart with love divinely tender,
To seek the lost and bring them home to God.*

*You ask me why, what gifts I have, what graces
Are poured an offering at His holy feet,
And why I brave the cold contemptuous faces
Of those who love this world and find it sweet.
It is because I see a distant morning
When stand God's sons around His jasper throne;
I see bright crowns those holy brows adorning,
And I, too, long to hear my Lord's "Well done."*

—E. M. Govan

Men are made good by spirit and not by law. There is no goose-stepping goodness. Unless we live up to the spirit of the good life, we shall live down to the level of mental slavery and moral mediocrity.

—R. W. Stockman

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
(1 Thessalonians 5:21)

It is only great souls who know how much glory there is in being good.

—Sophocles

The greatest pleasure I know is to do good action by stealth, and to have it found out by accident.

—Charles Lamb

We must first be *made good* before we can *do good*. We must first be made just, before our works can please God. We cannot be justified *by* works, but we are created *unto* good works.

—Hugh Latimer

Girolamo Savonarola

John A. Bjorlie

When the vitality of the Word of God is missing from the pulpits, the vacuum has always been filled, sometimes by eloquence, by joke-telling, by man's philosophies, or by anecdotes. Almost anything has been pulled in to fill the void, but the godly have shunned such froth. In many ways, the setting that Savonarola spoke to was like ours. The Florence of Renaissance Italy was the capital of every diversion the world offered. Michelangelo and daVinci strolled the plaza in Florence. People's appetites demanded entertainment.

But just because people have itching ears does not mean we should obligate ourselves to scratch them. Paul spoke "not with enticing words of man's wisdom" (1 Cor. 2:4).

Savonarola thought it better not to preach at all, than to pretend to preach. Early in his career, a young friend advised him that his manner of preaching did not compare favorably to that of a great (but now forgotten) orator of his day. "To which Savonarola made reply, almost in anger, "These verbal elegancies and ornaments will have to give way to sound doctrine simply preached." Savonarola did not aim to impress the people with his preaching, but with the truth. In fact, his early attempts at preaching were flat and nondescript, but in time, by means of "sound doctrine simply preached," his delivery became so eloquent it both stung and stunned the world.

Sound doctrine, simply preached, in the power of the Holy Spirit will not only inform men's minds about the truth, it will make them feel what they know. This is why strong emotions are expressed when the gospel is preached in power. How much to be dreaded is the orthodoxy which is as clear as crystal, but as cold as ice.

Today it seems many preachers are really only stand-up comedians. They attend Sunday morn-

ing preaching meetings to spend their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new joke. No matter how searching the Bible text under examination, the solemnity is lost amid the sarcasm, clever gags, and witticisms.

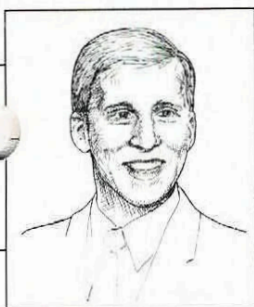
Does any Christian who has read the Bible have to be told that the church was never called by God into the entertainment business?

Silliness coupled with a lack of tears, even a dread of tears, characterizes this lukewarm day. "This is a rebellious people . . . which say

. . . speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits" (Isa. 30:10-11). But lest we despair, so also was Savonarola's time. And yet we read of whole congregations of people, ungodly people, including the most hardened sinners, weeping uncontrollably under the searchlight of God's Word.

"Words fail to describe it; he was, as it were, swept onwards by a might beyond his own, and carried his audience with him. Men and women of every age and condition, workmen, poets, philosophers, would burst into passionate tears, while the church re-echoed with their sobs. The reporter taking notes of the sermon was obliged to write: 'At this point I was overcome by weeping and could not go on.'" His biographer tells us that many of his sermons are partially preserved, with a similar notation.

Girolamo Savonarola was born at Ferrara in 1452. The slender, nervous youth could have been set up for a grand business career by his grandfather, but he ran away from home to Bologna and became a Dominican monk. Writing back of the depravity of the world, he said, "There is nothing left for us but to weep and to hope for better things yonder." Fourteen years he lived in the convent studying theology. There he realized that monastic walls do not deliver from sin and the world. Moving to Florence to teach the young men in the convent of St. Mark, he began his



GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA

scorching denunciations of the sins of the church that would earn him excommunication, torture and a bonfire in the plaza of Florence.

In 1489, he gave expositions of the book of Revelation in the convent chapel. It was during this series of messages that revival swept through Florence. Immodest dress was shunned, men and women weeping in the streets were not uncommon. Why they were so affected is open to question. Were there really mass conversions, or just mass excitement? But at the bottom of all that happened is this fact: the hidden fountains of feeling had been opened. They were roused from careless apathy. The Word of God preached in power did this.

Besides preaching repentance, he was apt to warn of temporal calamities. But in spite of Savonarola's eccentricities, the people were brought face to face with the realities of life and death, eternity and God. They might have known before, but they did not think about these things. Afterward they could hardly think of anything else. Before they thought of nothing but striving to succeed in this world, afterward they thought of nothing but striving to enter in at the narrow gate. They were moved.

Savonarola said the Scriptures led to Christ and not to the priests. He said when he preached doctrines of human invention he pleased an impatient and fickle people, but when he turned to the Bible, he shook men's souls. He preached against Lorenzo, and when advised to "change his style,"

he sent word for Lorenzo to "change his ways."

There was a strong mystic element in his warnings. In one message we find the following description of the plague he thought would come upon Italy: "Believe ye this friar, that there will not be enough men left to bury the dead; nor means to dig the graves. So many will lie dead in the houses, that men will go through the streets crying, 'Send forth your dead!' and the dead will be heaped in carts and on horses; they will be piled up and burnt. Men will pass forth and say, 'Here is my son, here is my brother, here is my husband!'" (from the *Life and Times of Savonarola*, by Villari).

He was convinced that Italy was ripe for severe judgment and suggested that a military defeat at the hands of the king of France was imminent. Shortly thereafter, Charles VIII of France crossed into Italy, driving out the son who succeeded Lorenzo. He received Savonarola as a prophet, and left the Florentines to direct their own affairs. Then followed a time when Savonarola exercised sweeping influence over the city.

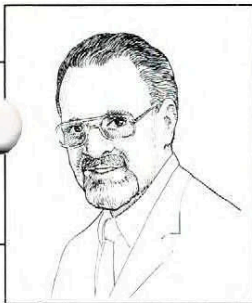
In 1496 he was forbidden by Pope Alexander VI to preach and then excommunicated. His failure to meet the challenge of an "ordeal by fire" turned the people against him temporarily. His enemies took advantage of the public mood, taking him prisoner. He was tortured shamefully, and finally hung May 23, 1498, between his two companions. His body was burned on the gallows, the ashes being cast into the Arno.

Fly Far From Babylon

"The Church," exclaims Savonarola, "must be renewed" And he professes the grand principle which alone can restore life to it. "God," says he, "forgives man his sin, and justifies him in the way of mercy. For every justified person existing on the earth, there has been an act of compassion in heaven; for no man is saved by his works. None can glory in themselves; and if, in the presence of God, the question were put to all the righteous, 'Have you been saved by your own strength?' they would all with one voice exclaim, 'Not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name be the glory.' Wherefore, O God, I seek Thy mercy, and I bring Thee not my own righteousness: the moment Thou justifiest me by grace, Thy righteousness belongs to me; for grace is the righteousness of God. So long, O man, as thou believest not, thou art, because of sin, deprived of grace. O God! save me by Thy righteousness, that is, by Thy Son, Who alone was found righteous among men."

—from *The History of the Reformation* by M. D'Aubigne

Note: D'Aubigne, with many historians, romantically painted Savonarola as a reformer. But they can only imagine what the friar from Florence might have become, had he not been burned at the stake so young. When his total message is surveyed, it is evident that his teaching fell short of the reformation truths Luther would teach although he taught that Alexander was personally antiChrist. Luther taught that not only the pope personally was antiChrist, but that the office of the papacy was antiChrist.



LOOK AT BOOKS

The Long-Awaited Book

Jim McKendrick

A few years ago, a book named "Roots" took the country by storm. It was about an Afro-American who traced his roots back to Africa. This exploration gave him a sense of continuity with history and changed the way he lived. In much the same way, each of us can trace our heritage back a few generations and discover things in our histories that cause us to stand a little taller and may even change the way we live.

This can be true of our ecclesiastical heritage as well. To explore the great men of the past is of great value and can affect the way we live today. John Nelson Darby is a name with which most who read this column will be familiar. But how much do we really know about him? Unfortunately most of what is written today, even in the circles of people who would follow much of what he taught, is in a critical vein.

However, there is a new book being released this month that is supposed to be a balanced and positive biography of his life. The book is called *John Nelson Darby and the Beginning of the Brethren*. Written by a German author, Maksym S. Weremchuk, it has now been translated into English and is being distributed by Loizeaux Brothers of Neptune, NJ. A review of the book by brother David Dunlap was sent to my attention and the information I have concerning the book is from that source.

William Kelly would write to a friend in 1901 and say, "Mr. Darby was an individual of exceptional learning, and highly gifted in almost every area; he possessed unusual knowledge of the moral and metaphysical sciences, not to mention his literary ability in the classics as well as in modern languages." Concerning his linguistic ability, he was proficient in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, along with French, German, and Italian. He also had a working knowledge of Dutch and while on his visit to New Zealand he learned the Maori dialect well enough to minister to the na-

tive Indians from the Scriptures. He was not the sort of scholar that cloistered himself away from people in the ivory tower of academics, but one that would much rather be found laboring among the poor and common man as a pioneer evangelist, sensitive pastor, and humble servant of Christ. In spite of his accomplishments, Mr. Darby remains unknown to most in the church today. Yet his life and teaching has shaped the theology of the evangelical church of our day possibly more than any other modern scholar.

The late professor F. F. Bruce has said, "This book reaches a level of research that in consideration of this subject is thus far unequaled." After beginning to write this book in 1980, his subsequent eight years of research led the author to make extended visits to England, Ireland, and Canada.

The book is in three parts. The first consists of an extensive history of the Darby family and his early life. The second part concerns itself with his character and ministry. Noticeably absent in this discussion are references to the controversy associated with assembly divisions during Darby's life. Concerning this omission the

author writes, "Many could criticize me for giving a wrong impression because of my decision not to go further into the controversy and divisions of the later years. I have done this with purpose. It is much more important to concern ourselves with the positive truths. Negative discussion often proves to be interesting and satisfying to the flesh, but often evidences a failure to have any further benefit." The third part consists of a supplement of twelve essays, charts, and sermon fragments.

The book will become an excellent resource for those interested in the life of J. N. Darby and the history surrounding that period. His dedication and zeal for the truth of God's Word and his unrelenting conviction to be obedient to it will serve as an example for many years to come.

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"He was not the sort of scholar that cloistered himself away from people in the ivory tower of academics"

Serious Business

George F. Lartz

When life goes on well, self-sufficient complacency toward the Lord is apt to creep in. There is failure to feel the need for consistency in prayer. But when a critical issue looms, impossible to solve humanly, it results in a hurry-up call to get serious in prayer.

There must be a deeper understanding of what dependence on the Lord means. God wants to work out our problem in a supernatural way so that others will learn to have confidence in Him.

A typical example of the importance of prayer is seen in the purposes of one of the tabernacle furnishings. While the burning of incense on the golden altar primarily pictures the Lord Jesus Christ as a perpetual sweet savor to God, there are other implications. Among these is the intercessory ministry of the priest. His responsibility was to intercede for the sinning Israelites. He stood in the gap between the sinner and God. This was symbolized in his approach to God by offering the prescribed sweet incense on the golden altar. The sweet ascending odors present a lovely picture of the prayers of the saints rising up to God from a heart on fire with the love of Christ (Rev. 8:3-4).

Every redeemed sinner has become a priest before God (Rev. 1:5-6) on the basis of his faith in the cleansing blood of Christ for the forgiveness of his sins. As such, each has the joyful confidence and assurance in Christ that he has an audience with God (Rom. 8:26-27, 34). Because of this, the believer-priest can come boldly before God with his prayers (Heb. 4:16).

In the tabernacle days, the priest's special privilege of burning the incense on the golden altar had to be in accordance with certain specific con-

ditions. The incense had to be offered up God's way that the priest "die not," or be "cut off from his people" (Ex. 30:20-21, 38). The ministry of the priest was serious business then. It is serious business for the believer priest now.

GUIDELINES

There were three things that the priest had to do to be prepared that he "die not." First, he had to serve at the brazen altar. The blood of a sacrificial animal had to be shed every day to make an atonement for his sins (Lev. 4:3-7; 16:17).

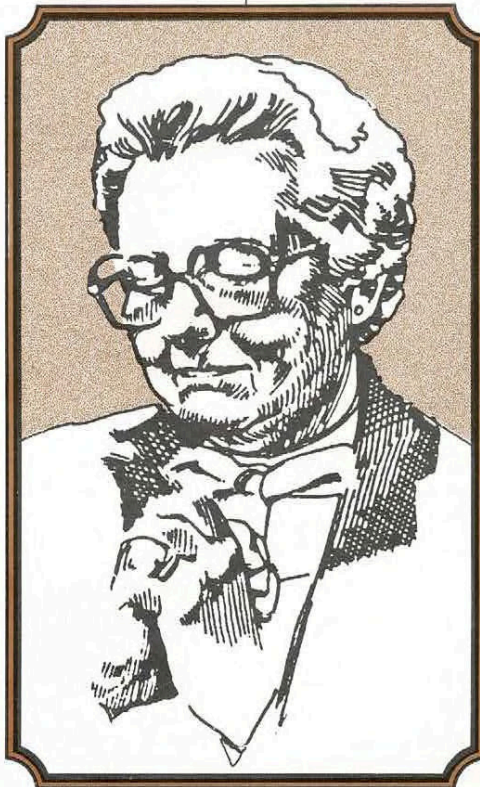
Secondly, he had to wash at the laver. He had to be physically clean, free from the defilement of bloody hands and feet soiled while serving at the brazen altar (Ex. 30:18-20; Ps. 24:3-4).

Thirdly, he had to be in the right place "before the testimony" (Ex. 30:36). That is, he had to be in a right standing with God. Now on holy ground, he had a distinct privilege.

Only then could the priest offer and burn the sweet incense on the golden altar with the fire he had brought in his censer from off the brazen altar. This was the fire which was left after consuming the blood sacrifice. This fire represented the judged sin which God hates. Now the fire burns up the incense in a fragrance of ascending worship and prayer that God loves most.

THE PARALLEL

In all of this there can be seen a delightful parallel. The tabernacle priest's preparation for his service illustrated what the believer priest must attend to in order to experience the joy of an-



SERIOUS BUSINESS

swered prayer.

Above all, it means the approach to our holy Lord is by virtue of the "redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).

It means that by virtue of "the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. 5:26) the believer is sanctified and cleansed from the defilement that may have crept in because of his walk in this life. By confession, he is cleansed to serve.

Now he is ready to assume an important spiritual obligation: to address the special needs of those around him.

The believer priest's duty is fulfilled by "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18). Furthermore, Paul adds this: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1).

INTERCEDING PRAYER

From some examples that are disclosed in Scripture, we can conclude that prayer is hopeful interaction with the Lord. A look at several "model" prayers shows that there are some vital common ingredients.

For example, there is Daniel's prayer in chapter 9. The ingredients of confession, supplication, humility, and dependence are found.

There is David's plea in Psalm 51. He cries out for forgiveness and cleansing. From the depths of his soul and with "a broken and a contrite heart" (17) he asks for deliverance from his sin.

There is Solomon's response to God (1 Kings 3:5-14). He recognizes who God is in his prayer of choice. He asks for an understanding heart and discernment to know God's will.

Other ingredients of praise, thanks, and joy come out in various prayers. (see Hannah's, Nehemiah's, Paul's, and, of course, the Lord's prayer in John 17.)

How then does a believer-priest properly face the responsibility of intercessory prayer for the saints to whom he has committed himself? How does a believer appropriately intercede?

It is fitting to pray for things that are for building up the heart and soul first. For example: that the Holy Spirit would have the freedom to cultivate His desired fruits (Gal. 5:22-23); that the Spirit would be able to develop needed skills that lead to fruit in the Gospel (Col. 1:5-6); that the Lord

would be able to make His Word fresh to our hearts every day (Josh. 1:8); that recognition of sins and improper attitudes be revealed and confessed (1 John 1:9).

Why, then, is there unanswered and powerless prayer? Could it be that there is failure to understand that God expects the *condition* of the heart to be pure before Him. It may also be a failure to approach Him *consistently*, and not just when faced with a critical issue.

God is God. He cannot be appealed to lightly without regard for who He is and that He hates sin. There are consequences for sinful attitudes. He warns. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). There are other passages that warn about this (Prov. 1:24-30; Jer. 11:11, 14:10-12; Jas. 4:3).

This is not to say that unanswered prayer always indicates there is sin in the heart. Because a prayer is not answered according to our desire, could mean our request was not in line with God's will.

"No!" can be an answer. If so, then we must go in peace and confidence that our omniscient Lord knows best and is in control. He always answers, even though denials are often hardest to accept. The trouble comes when we refuse to take "no" for an answer.

This takes us back to the importance of "praying in the Holy Spirit." The Spirit is the key to understanding what God's will is. This is why He sifts our prayers by interceding for us "according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27).

Prayer is a very serious business. These are very serious times. God is very serious about working with us through prayer. Are you serious too?



Every Day Reading Plan

Section 24: Isaiah — The prophetic compendium of the Old Testament

December 1	Isaiah 1:1-31	Come now, and let us reason together
December 2	Isaiah 2:1-22	They shall beat their swords into plowshares
December 3	Isaiah 3:1-4:6	Seven women shall take hold of one man
December 4	Isaiah 5:1-6:13	In the year the king Uzziah died, I saw . . .
December 5	Isaiah 7:1-8:22	Behold a virgin shall conceive
December 6	Isaiah 9:1-10:34	Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given
December 7	Isaiah 11:1-13:22	Draw water out of the wells of salvation
December 8	Isaiah 14:1-16:14	Hell from beneath is moved for thee
December 9	Isaiah 17:1-18:7	Woe to the land shadowing with wings
December 10	Isaiah 19:1-21:17	And how shall we escape?
December 11	Isaiah 22:1-23:18	He shall open, and none shall shut
December 12	Isaiah 24:1-25:12	He will swallow up death in victory
December 13	Isaiah 26:1-27:13	And He shall slay the dragon
December 14	Isaiah 28:1-29:24	Precept upon precept, line upon line
December 15	Isaiah 30:1-31:9	In returning and rest shall ye be saved
December 16	Isaiah 32:1-34:17	The effect of righteousness: quietness
December 17	Isaiah 35:1-36:22	The lame man shall leap as an hart
December 18	Isaiah 37:1-39:8	Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die
December 19	Isaiah 40:1-41:29	Comfort ye, comfort ye My people
December 20	Isaiah 42:1-43:28	Mine Elect, in Whom My sould delighteth
December 21	Isaiah 44:1-45:25	Floods upon the dry ground
December 22	Isaiah 46:1-48:22	Their idols . . . are a burden to the weary beast
December 23	Isaiah 49:1-50:11	Where is the bill of your mother's divorce?
December 24	Isaiah 51:1-52:15	O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments
December 25	Isaiah 53:1-12	The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity
December 26	Isaiah 54:1-55:13	Without money and without price
December 27	Isaiah 56:1-57:21	Taken away from the evil to come
December 28	Isaiah 58:1-59:21	Is not this the fast that I have chosen?
December 29	Isaiah 60:1-61:11	Arise, shine; for thy light is come
December 30	Isaiah 62:1-64:12	Sought out, A city not forsaken
December 31	Isaiah 65:1-66:24	I am sought of them that asked not for Me

Isaiah

Alexander McEachern

The name Isaiah means "the Lord is salvation." There could hardly be a more appropriate name to give to this majestic prophecy. The scope of the book is immense. Its substance deals with dreadful sin, great judgment and the awesome holiness of God. Yet through it all, God's gracious answer shines amid the gloom—the Lord is salvation. Isaiah, the author, is a marvelous figure, one of God's choice servants. He is regarded by many as the greatest of the Hebrew prophets. From the biographical material contained in his book, we learn he was a man who loved the Lord and the Lord's city, Jerusalem, with a passion. He moved with ease in upper-class circles, counseled kings, and denounced governmental corruption. Apparently a product of the finest culture in Judah, he turned his back on whatever this might gain him and devoted his life to proclaiming God's Word to His people.

Isaiah covers probably 55 years. His public ministry began with the death of Uzziah, thought to be in 742 BC, and continued through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. During this time, the ten northern tribes went into Assyrian captivity in 722 BC. The prophet Micah was one of his contemporaries. Tradition ends the life of Isaiah around 690 BC with martyrdom (possibly by being sawn asunder).

Isaiah came on the scene during a time of weak leadership in both the Egyptian and Assyrian empires. For this reason, Israel had enjoyed prosperity during the reign of Uzziah to a degree that had not been seen since Solomon. The message of Isaiah makes it clear that the goodness of God to Israel had certainly not led to repentance. They had become decadent in their life-style. Idolatry and corruption ran rampant. The kings that followed Uzziah, particularly Ahaz, simply added fuel to the fire. In the meantime, great leaders were emerging in Assyria, notably Shalmaneser (who enslaved Israel) and Sennacherib (who besieged Jerusalem). Egypt also began to grow in power.

Into this maelstrom came Isaiah with the awesome authority of the God of heaven behind him and the message of the Lord on his lips. Fortunately he was commanded of God to inscribe his words in a book (Isaiah 30:8) and so we have a

record of God's sovereignty through it all.

The themes of the book of Isaiah emerge with great power. God's message is pointed and severe, yet interwoven with grace. The major themes are as follows: the holiness of God; the sinfulness of the people; the certain judgment of God; God's gracious preservation of a remnant; and the messianic hope. There are sixty-six chapters, and they divide into two distinct sections, chapters 1-39 and 40-66, the same way that the books of the Bible are divided. When it comes to Isaiah's presentation of the Messiah, each of these sections reflects the message of the Old and New Testaments regarding the Lord. In the first thirty-nine chapters, just as in the Old Testament, He is seen as the anticipated Messiah of promise and hope, while in chapters 40 to 66, just as in the New Testament, He is seen as a suffering Saviour.

The following is a brief overview:

Chapters 1-12: a combination of threatened judgments on Judah and Jerusalem, but also reminders of the promises and goodness of God.

Chapters 13-23: a series of prophecies concerning foreign nations.

Chapters 24-27: contain several psalms describing the general judgment of God and the day of the Lord.

Chapters 28-33: six woes deal with a general denunciation of the people of Judah and their attitude towards the Lord.

Chapters 34-35: again a description of the judgment of God.

Chapters 36-39: could be termed the book of Hezekiah. It deals with the attack of Sennacherib, the healing of Hezekiah, and the delegation from Babylon to Judah.

Chapters 40-66: chapters of comfort. In chapters 40-49, the greatness of the Lord is contrasted with the idols of the day. The Servant of the Lord emerges in these chapters. In chapters 50-55, we find the rebuilding and glorification of Jerusalem and the servant of the Lord in full view. The final section (56-66) contains general prophecies concerning the Lord and His people.

Isaiah is timely, rich, and challenging, yet sadly unknown by most believers. May God unlock its treasures to us.

We Ought

James Allen

In some of the passages of Scripture in which the words "we ought" are applied to us, they carry with them the thought of an obligation, based on what God or the Lord Jesus has done for us. To such obligations we are expected to give heed, and if no heed is given the obligation remains undischarged; we remain in debt to our brethren.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, *we ought* also to love one another" (1 John 4:11). This obligation to love one another is put upon us by the love of God, and if we do not act towards our brethren as God has acted towards us, we offend, in that we are selfish and do not recognize the obligation which nevertheless remains. What a difference it would make in the assemblies if, instead of looking down on some of our brethren in Christ, we had that fervent love which will cover the multitude of sins (1 Pet. 4:8).

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and *we ought* to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16). Here also love has put us under obligation. Because under good national government we are not required to lay down our physical life, let us not deceive ourselves. What is there stated applies equally to the laying down of life in a moral sense. We can do all that is needed to discharge this obligation without physical death. Two things happen when we die morally. One is that we come to the end of self and the other is that every link that binds us to earth is broken. The heart that is ready can face all this and will succeed, for the Lord never expects us to attempt the impossible.

In coming to the end of self, there are four things we have to part with: ambition, reputation, will, and strength. These four can be fitted into the four chapters of the epistle to the Philippians, and are just about what make up our life in a moral sense. Beyond question, this involves deep soul exercise before the Lord. It is worse than physical death, for then we just fall asleep. It is no light matter to lay down one's life deliberately for

others: yet it is in one's little way following the example of the Lord Jesus, Who never thought of Himself, but of those for whom He came to die. Seeing how this part of the truth has been lost sight of, there is great need of its being put into practice now. It is the assertion of self in some form or other that lies at the root of most troubles and difficulties among brethren.

It may be said that the breaking of the links which bind us to earth is a very unnatural thing; but where it is a question of God's claims over us, God must come first, unnatural or not. It was said of Levi (Deut. 33:9) that he "said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children."

God approved of Israel standing for Him and gave them a great reward for it. The Lord Jesus also said: "He that loveth father or mother

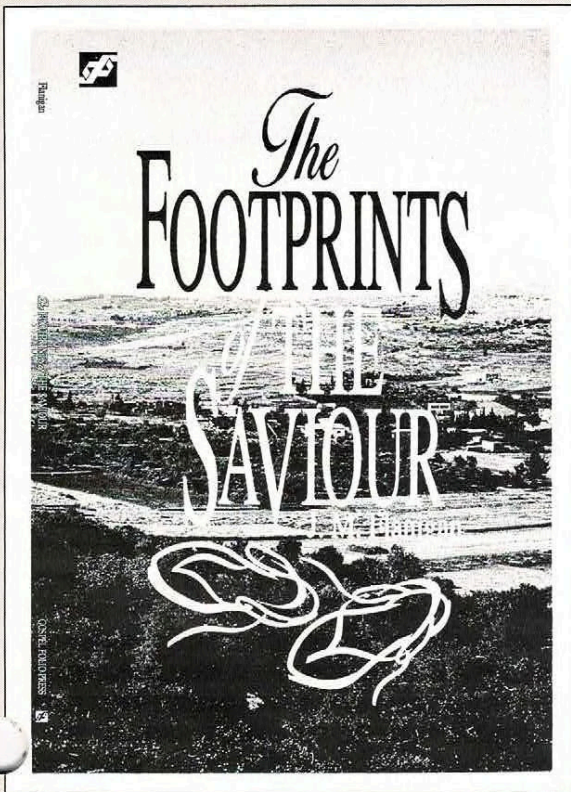
more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." The thing is that the links should be broken in the heart before the Lord and not necessarily outwardly, though one might be called upon to make good in actuality that which is true in the heart before the Lord. In every case, the Lord will order the circumstances.

May the Lord stir us up to act according to His Word. His blessing will rest upon each one of His own who is prepared to recognize the obligations under which divine love has placed him, and to fulfill them. He will be drawn very near to the Lord, and since death leads to resurrection, he will find that the heavenly things will be opened up to him in a manner far beyond what he might expect. This is the compensation such sacrificial saints will find, and it will enable us to bear patiently and take joyfully the being misunderstood, disliked, and looked down upon which will almost certainly follow. Then he will rejoice in the day of Christ that he has not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

"The truth has been lost sight of, there is great need of it's being put into practice now."

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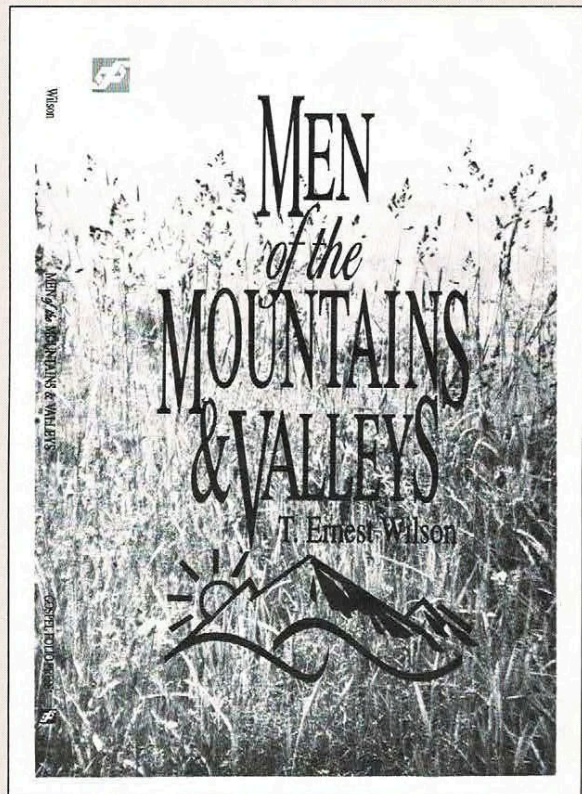
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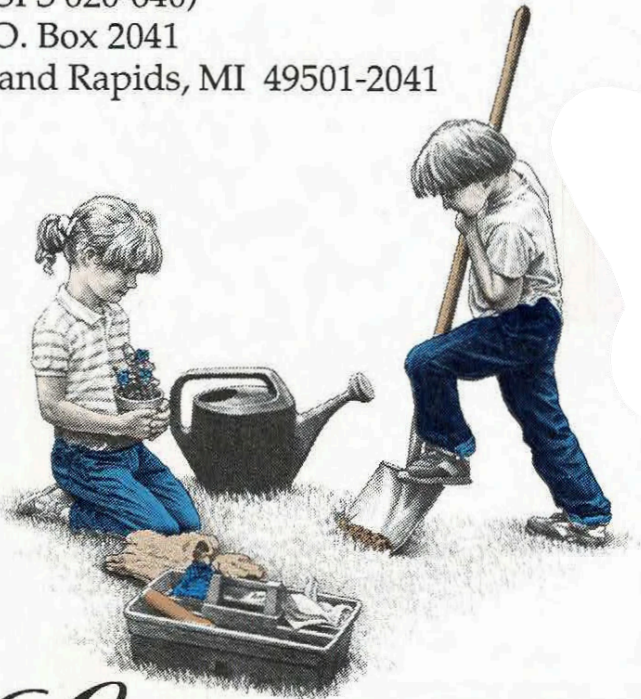
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Love **AT WORK**

by William MacDonald

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4:11).

We must not think of love as an uncontrollable, unpredictable emotion. We are commanded to love, and this would be quite impossible if love were some elusive, sporadic sensation, coming as unaccountably as a common cold. Love does involve the emotions but it is more a matter of the will than of the emotions. We must also guard against the notion that love is confined to a world of dream castles with little relation to the nittygritty of everyday life. For every hour of moonlight and roses, there are weeks of mops and dirty dishes.

In other words, love is intensely practical. For instance, when a plate of bananas is passed at the table and one has black spots, love takes that one. Love cleans the wash-basin and bathtub after using them. Love replaces paper towels when the supply is gone so that the next person will not be inconvenienced. Love puts out the lights when they are not in use. It picks up the crumpled Kleenex instead of walking over it. It replaces the gas and oil after using a borrowed car. Love empties the garbage without being asked. It doesn't keep people waiting. It serves others before self. It takes a squalling baby out so as not to disturb the meeting. Love speaks loudly so that the deaf can hear. And love works in order to have the means to share with others.