

When God has an especially bright crown for a soul, He first imparts an equally heavy cross.

The Hopelessness Of Idolatry

By Albert G. Larson
Minneapolis, Minn.



Ptah, the chief god of Memphis, in Egypt; called "the creator." Notice the mummy like appearance of his form, with a skull cap.

tions of Deity. It is utterly impossible to make any visible representation of that which is invisible. No architect or artist ever lived who could make a visible object to represent an invisible being. The true God is invisible, and therefore it is utterly impossible to fashion any image of Him. Since the natural eye of man can not see God, how then shall the art of man represent Him, and carve any image of Him? It is useless for men, to pride themselves about giving God a visibleness, when "no man hath seen God at any time." Another reason, it is utterly impossible, to make any visible representation of that which is infinite. God is an absolute, infinite being. How are we going to contract, and inclose such a being, to be contained within the compass of some visible image? To draw we need some kind of measure, some kind of bound, but to what

kind of a dimension, are we going to confine Him, who exceeds all the understandings and estimations of men? Any and every such attempt is bound to be hopeless. Another reason, it is utterly impossible, to make any visible representations of that which is spirit. Because God is a Spirit, it is impossible, to frame any image or picture of Him. How is anyone going to mould a spirit into a corporeal form? If we cannot grasp the nature of a spirit with our own minds, how are our feeble hands to contrive an image for our sense? We cannot draw any figures of our own souls, how much less of God. It is therefore impossible, that any corporeal image can represent a spiritual substance. Many more reasons could be established, to show the impossibility of such attempts. More important than all these reasons, is the absolute prohibition of God. God has de-

clared the unlawfulness of making any visible image whatsoever of Him, and that with terrible threatenings. It is not possible, that God should spring from man, since man sprang from God. That is what the apostle argues, "forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God." It is contrary to reason, that you can get that which is superior, from that which is inferior. Nor is it possible, that a god evolved by man, should ever be above man. The thing made cannot order the one who made it. And though the heathen did not have the law prohibiting their practice of idolatry, yet they were equally guilty in transferring the honor which belongs to the true God, to creatures and graven images of them, since God's majesty did shine forth in His works and in His creatures everywhere. They clearly set forth

(Continued on page three)

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"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."—Isaiah 8:20.

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Is There Any Harm In The Making Of New Year Resolutions

By Roy Mason
Tampa, Fla.

Some erroneous things:
1. To make no new resolutions at all. Because so many resolutions are broken, some decline to make any. That really means, "I'll just go on in my ways without even trying to do better." The person who makes a number of resolutions and breaks some of them, is better off in the keeping of some, than the fellow who doesn't make any. It certainly isn't wrong to make good resolutions at any time—and the new year is a convenient time to start afresh.

2. Another erroneous thing is for people to make resolutions hurriedly. If you make a resolution, make it deliberately and with the intention of keeping it. (See Psa. 76:11 on this.) What foolishness to resolve to smoke no more cigarettes, when you let a package of "Camels" stay right in your pocket. The Lord doesn't like for people to say that they are going to do something and then not do it. (See Acts 5:1-11.)

3. Another wrong thing is to resolve and to expect to carry it out in your own strength. "He is able to deliver thee." People fail because they look to the energy of the flesh and the flesh is weak.

4. Another wrong thing is to have less sense in your spiritual life than the ordinary business

man has in business. (See Luke 16:8.)

Thousands of business concerns take inventory. If they see that they are losing out by pursuing their present policy they will make some changes. Yet — many people who know that their present habits and manners of life are ruinous, will keep right on.

The truth about resolutions:

1. It is all right to make them at new year or any other time, if they are made in all sincerity.

2. The best resolution for the unsaved is this: "I will NOW turn unto the Lord, and will receive His Son as my own Savior, and I will serve and live for Him this new year."

3. What are some good resolutions for Christians? Suggest-

tions:

(1) What about family worship? It would be a good thing to introduce the practice of Bible reading and prayer in the home.

(2) What about your church attendance? How many Sundays have you missed the worship of your church? (See Hebrews 10:25.) How many Sundays have you missed when the Lord knew that you didn't have to miss? Suppose everybody else had staid away at the same time?

(3) What about the prayer service? Why should we have such fluctuation in attendance? It would be a great thing to set yourself to attend every Wednesday evening, unless providentially hindered. (And you will miss mighty few.)

(4) What about the number won to Christ? What? "Ain't won nobody," did you say? Can't you beat that this coming year?

(5) What about your giving? Have you robbed the Lord this past year? Most of you have spent everything, and you might far better have invested that tenth in the Lord's cause. If you had done so, it wouldn't all be lost. It will mean a lot to you to resolve to tithe—and to keep the resolve.

(6) What about your personal habits? If they are harmful, it would be a fine thing to quit

them.

(7) What about your fellowship with God—your spirituality? Are you as cold as an iron wedge spiritually? It is a good time to renew vows and draw nigh unto God.

The Only Safety Any Of Us Can Know Is In Jesus' Blood

A missionary from China, now in Los Angeles, has related a most striking incident said to have occurred in one of the cities overrun by the Communists. A search was on for every Christian in the community, and several were found in their homes and taken away, apparently to be martyred. It was noticed that whenever the searchers found their man, they labeled the house by putting a smear of blood on the door. Discovering this method other Christians killed a goat and applied its blood in similar manner to their own doors. No others were disturbed.

—Prophecy Monthly

ABOUT HIS SOUL

A pastor was passing a large department store, when he followed a sudden impression to speak to the proprietor.

He said, "I've talked carpets and beds but never my business with you. Will you give me a few minutes?"

Being led to the private office, the pastor took out his Testament and directed his attention to passage after passage, urging the man to become a Christian.

Finally the tears began to roll down the proprietor's cheeks as he said, "I'm seventy years of age. I was born in this city, and more than a hundred ministers and five hundred officers of the church have known me in a business way. You are the only man who ever spoke to me about my soul."

"Some people have too much religion to be happy at a dance, but too little to be happy at a prayer meeting."

The First Baptist Pulpit

"SIGNS OF HIS COMING"

"And what shall be the sign of thy coming?"—Mt. 24:3.

There is no truth in all the Bible that is more prominent than the truth of the second coming, or the return, of the Lord Jesus Christ. One out of every twenty-five verses from Matthew to Revelation has to do with our Lord's second advent. In the Old Testament prophecies the majority of the verses, instead of speaking of His first coming, refer to our Lord's second coming. I think that I would be safe in saying that fully two-thirds of the Bible from Isaiah to Malachi has

to do with the second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than that of His first advent. There is no truth in all the Bible that is more generally taught than the truth of our Lord's return to this world.

Take for example on that memorable night when our Lord Jesus was getting ready to leave His disciples, when He spoke those words:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for

you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

—John 14:1-3.

These were the parting words of our Lord with His disciples at the time when they were troubled over the fact of His impending crucifixion. As He comforted them and spoke words of consolation unto them, He did so with one thought uppermost in His mind, namely, His second coming.

When our Lord Jesus ascend—
(Continued on page two)

LIQUOR ADVERTISING

Here are some suggested improvements in bad liquor advertising that might help our country.

"Four red roses" for more red noses!

"For men of distinction" and early extinction!

"P.M." is also the abbreviation for post mortem.

"The aristocrat of bonds" for an aristocracy in bondage!

"Mellow as a sunny morning" and poisonous as a nighshade.

Hot stuff, all of this liquor advertising. No mention is ever made of the 50,000 confirmed alcoholics and the 100,000 near-alcoholics who are being crushed between the millstones of torment and oblivion and are bringing great joy to all their loved ones . . . the joy of seeing someone they love going down, not too slowly, to the nearest hell on earth, chronic alcoholism!

—Moody Monthly

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor the child of God perfected without adversity.

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"The Second Coming"

(Continued from page one)
ed into the skies, it was from
Mt. Olivet. The prophecy of
the Old Testament is that when
He comes back again, the first
place that His feet are going to
tread will be Mt. Olivet. When
He left this world, He lifted
Himself up into the skies and
was bodily taken up with the
Father. As He was lifted up, I
imagine those disciples that
stood round about Him must
have gazed intently into the
ethereal spaces as they saw Jesus
going up out of their sight. As
the disciples stood gazing thus,
the angels said unto them:

"Ye men of Galilee, why
stand ye gazing up into heaven?
this same Jesus, which is taken
up from you into heaven, shall
SO COME in like manner as ye
have seen him go into heaven."
—Acts 1:11.

When the Apostle Paul dis-
cussed the Lord's Supper as he
wrote to the church at Corinth,
he said to that church:

"For as often as ye eat this
bread, and drink this cup, ye
do shew the Lord's death till he
comes."—I Cor. 11:26.

While everytime this church,
or any church, comes together
for the observance of the Mem-
orial Supper, as the bread is
broken and the wine is poured,
that is a message to us that
Jesus Christ is coming back
again. We are to do it now as
a memorial of Him, but some-
day this memorial is going to
end when He comes again to
this world.

So I say, beloved, there are
many, many instances within
the Word of God whereby the
second coming of our Lord is
abundantly proven.

It was when Jesus preached
concerning His second coming
that He caused the high priest
and those who were surround-
ing Him in the judgment hall
to become so infuriated that
they struck Him. Listen:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou
hast said: nevertheless I say un-
to you, Hereafter shall ye see
the Son of man sitting on the
right hand of power, and COM-
ING in the clouds of heaven."
—Mt. 26:64.

I could cite you verse after
verse to show you that the sec-
ond coming of our Lord is
abundantly taught all the way
through the Word of God. I
imagine that the majority of
professing Christians believe it
but many, many times though
we believe it, because His com-
ing is delayed and because we
are so taken up with the cares
of this world, we forget about
it and we are prone to become
careless concerning His second
advent.

We read:

"Knowing this first, that
there shall come in the last days
scoffers, walking after their

CHRISTIANITY AND NON-CHRISTIAN
RELIGIONS COMPARED
FUNERALS

CHRISTIANITY provides at every funeral a sweet, healing
balm for its bereaved and sorrowing followers, and they need not
sorrow as those who have "no hope." The cross, the resurrection,
and the heavenly reunion rob death of its sting and assure be-
lievers that it is but a short time until they will meet again.

BRAHMANISM. After the death of a man, Brahmans must
pray to raise the soul of the deceased up to heaven. They use the
important ceremony of kakasparsha, that is, they expose a ball
of rice to be taken by a crow.

THE DEVIL IS SURPASSINGLY CUNNING AND, IF HE CAN, HE WILL
MIX AN OPIATE EVEN WITH THE COMMUNION WINE.

HINDUS. The body of the deceased must be washed, hair,
beard and nails trimmed. The grave must be southeast or south-
west of the place where the man died. Old men, without their
wives, carry the corpse. The priest walks three times around the
grave, sprinkles it with water from a branch of a tree and re-
peats a verse of the "Veda-Code of Manu."

BUDDHISM. After death, a short service is held in the home,
then the body is reverently borne to the temple for more elab-
orate services. There the priest gives the man a new name which
is inscribed upon his tombstone and tablet, and by this name he
is known in the spirit world.

THERE IS NO GREATER MISTAKE THAN TO SUPPOSE THAT CHRIS-
TIAN CAN IMPRESS THE WORLD BY COMPROMISING WITH IT.

TAOISM. The correct burial under Taoism calls for a funeral
every seventh day until the forty-ninth day. In wealthy families,
priests chant every day for seven weeks. Ceremonies of lighting
the lamps, bathing the soul, crossing the bridge and scattering
the cash, take place. Death is considered unclean.

CONFUCIANISM. Large prolonged funerals are sought in
China, because they bring honor. Paper articles for the house-
hold are burned at the grave and are believed to be transported
in smoke to the spirit world for the use of the deceased. Paper,
representing money, is scattered on the way to the grave to de-
tract the spirits from following the corpse.

SOME PEOPLE HAVE HEAVEN ON THEIR TONGUES, BUT THE WORLD
IS ON THEIR FINGERS' ENDS.

ZOROASTRIANISM. When a man is dying, the priest ap-
proaches and repeats texts from the sacred "Avestas." After death,
prayers are said for the repose of the soul. The men friends go
and bow their respects before the corpse to indicate their sym-
pathy and sorrow. It is borne on four men's shoulders to the
"tower of silence."

THE PARSEES reverence earth, air, fire and water, therefore,
a corpse cannot be buried in earth, burned in fire or thrown into
the water as it would defile these elements. The body is ex-
posed on a circular roof and swiftly devoured by vultures. These
structures are called "towers of silence."

HYPOCRITES ARE THE GREATEST DUPES THE DEVIL HAS. THEY
SERVE HIM BETTER THAN ANY OTHER BUT RECEIVE NO WAGES.

SHINTOISM has simple funeral rites. The deceased is placed
in a long, narrow coffin. The ceremonies are elaborate, expen-
sive, solemn and yet somewhat boisterous. Fish, vegetables, fruits,
rice and sake are put on the grave, at intervals after burial, in
honor of the dead and to nourish the spirits of the departed.

MOHAMMEDANISM. Mohammed said: "A prophet should be
buried where he died." He was embalmed in fragrant aromatics.
His family led the procession, followed by his companions and
fellow citizens. A death is announced by a "molla" from the house-
top. It is said that after burial, two black angels come and order
the dead man to sit up for examination. For this reason, some
have their graves made hollow so they can sit up easily.

own lusts, And saying, Where
is the promise of his coming?
for since the fathers fell asleep,
all things continue as they were
from the beginning of the crea-
tion. For this they willingly are
ignorant of that by the word of
God the heavens were of old,
and the earth standing out of
the water and in the water."
—II Pet. 3:3-5.

Isn't it true since the second
coming of Christ has been
preached for two thousand
years and still He hasn't come,
and since men have looked for-
ward to His coming confidently
for at least two milleniums and
still Jesus hasn't put in His ap-
pearance,—isn't it true that in
view of His delay, many, many
times we doubt and we wonder
and we are perplexed as to
when our Lord surely will come.

I don't mean to set a time,
beloved, for His coming. I am
not one to say that on such and
such a date, Jesus will put in
His appearance. I do say that I
believe in His second coming,

and I believe that Jesus Christ's
coming surely can't be far away.
It would appear to me that time
is fast running out and that God
Almighty's hour glass is about
empty. It would seem to me
that we are living well in the
end of the eleventh hour, or
that we might say that we are
well along toward the world's
"Saturday night." I believe, be-
loved, that the second coming
of Jesus Christ can't be very,
very far removed.

Recently when I dictated a
number of letters to Christian
friends scattered all over Amer-
ica, I put in at least a third
of those letters a paragraph
something to this effect, that in
the light of the Bible and in
view of world conditions, surely
it couldn't be long before our
Lord comes. I said to each of
these individuals, "I hope to be
able to see you in the flesh, but
I rather imagine that I will be
meeting you some day soon in
the air."

I tell you frankly, beloved, I

believe that there is going to be
a meeting in the air of God's
redeemed people at an early
date when our Lord Jesus
Christ comes again.

In answer to my text, "And
what shall be the sign of thy
coming?" I want to give you
a few of the signs of the return
of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I

THE JEWISH SIGN, OR THE
BUDDING OF THE FIG TREE.

"Now learn a parable of the
fig tree; When his branch is yet
tender, and putteth forth leaves,
ye know that summer is nigh:
So likewise ye, when ye shall
see all these things, know that
it is near, even at the doors."
—Mt. 24:32, 33.

This Scripture is taken out of
the chapter that has to do most
of all with the second coming
of Jesus Christ. If you will read
Matthew 24 and 25, you will
find that every verse in those
two chapters refers to the sec-
ond coming of Jesus. One of
these signs is the budding of
the fig tree. The fig tree is a
reference to the Jewish nation.
Our Lord tells us that whenever
we see a tree budding and put-
ting forth leaves, we don't have
to guess that summer is nigh.
We know that it is nigh. Like-
wise, He says that whenever we
see these things coming to pass,
we can know that the time of
His return is near, even at the
door.

Beloved, there is a tremen-
dous amount of Jewish news
these days. I can remember fif-
teen years ago when I first be-
came concerned relative to the
Jews, that you could scarcely
find anything in the paper about
Jews. Jewish news was almost
impossible to find in the daily
paper. Yet today, beloved, there
is hardly a page in any paper
but what you find items per-
taining to the Jews. There is
scarcely a day goes by but what
I read something that makes me
realize that the fig tree is bud-
ding and thereby I can know
that our Lord Jesus' coming
can't be far away.

I'll never forget how happy I
was the day when they ran up
Israel's flag. I'll never forget
how happy I was the day the
first anniversary of the state of
Israel was celebrated. Beloved,
everything that pertains to the
Jews as a nation is an indication
to me of the budding of the fig
tree and it tells me that the time
of my Lord's return is at hand.

II

THE SOCIAL SIGN.

"But as the days of Noe were,
so shall also the coming of the
Son of man be. For as in the
days that were before the flood
they were eating and drinking,
marrying and giving in marri-
age, until the day that Noe en-
tered the ark, And knew not
until the flood came, and took
them all away; so shall also the
coming of the Son of man be."
—Mt. 24:37-39.

There isn't anything wrong
with eating and drinking. There
isn't anything wrong with mar-
riage and giving in marriage,
but, beloved, all this will char-
acterize the nations of the
world before the coming of
Jesus Christ. There isn't any
wrong in these things in them-
selves, but they indicate that
these shall be paramount in the
eyes of the people at the return
of the Son of God.

You don't have to go very far
today to see that this is true, for
the majority of the people of
this day are living in a world
that is circumscribed and sur-
rounded with four thoughts
—eating and drinking, marriage
and giving in marriage. They
are living for the world with no

thought of God within their
minds.

Listen again:

"For as the lightning cometh
out of the east, and shineth even
unto the west; so shall also the
coming of the Son of man be.
For wheresoever the carcass is,
there will the eagles be gath-
ered together."—Mt. 24:27, 28.

The word "eagle" is the word
for "buzzard." Whenever you
see a buzzard floating around
in the air above, you can know
that something is dead down on
the earth beneath.

Jesus said that at the time
when He comes back, society is
going to be morally and spiritu-
ally like an old rotting, dead
corpse that the buzzards would
be looking for. Beloved, I don't
know whether your experience
is comparable to mine or not,
but frankly I look upon the
society of this generation spiri-
tually and morally as a dead
corpse. Profanity of men and
women is lurid. The immoral-
ity, the vice, the licentiousness
and the sin that is to be found
on every side is positively so
common that society is nothing
more nor less than a rotting,
putrifying, decaying, decompos-
ing corpse.

Our Lord said that this was
the social sign as to when He
comes again.

I was impressed about a year
ago at this time when one of
the whiskey dealers sent out a
letter, I judge, all over the
country, even to preachers, sug-
gesting to be of help in the
Xmas shopping that the person
might include a bottle of their
best products for some friends.
I personally got one of those
letters. I don't know how many
other preachers received them.
Can you imagine the unmitiga-
ted gall of that liquid octo-
pus that would even suggest
that a preacher give a bottle of
damnation to someone of his
friends as a Xmas gift. Yet I
am satisfied that plenty of
preachers accepted the sugges-
tion.

Beloved, the social sign —
eating, drinking, marrying, and
giving in marriage — is surer
being proven true before our
very eyes today.

III

THE NATIONAL SIGN.

"For nation shall rise against
nation, and kingdom against
kingdom: and there shall be
famine, and pestilences, and
earthquakes, in divers places."
—Mt. 24:7.

It used to be that men thought
of war as two nations being in-
volved. Until World War I no-
body thought about a whole
world being embroiled in battle.
France and Germany fought
time and time again over Al-
sace and Lorraine. England and
France fought time and time
again. Other nations fought
among themselves, but for the
nations to be embroiled and em-
broiled in battle until the
whole world was involved, was
unheard of until a few years
ago.

Our Lord Jesus said that this
is one of the signs of His
coming.

A few days ago one of the
news commentators said in pro-
phesy that one had better make
much of this Xmas, for by Xmas
1951 the whole world would be
embroiled in the worst war that
has ever been known. I don't
know whether he speaks the
truth or not. I don't know
whether you and I will even be
here when the pagan, godless
Xmas season of 1951 comes
around. You and I may have
joined the saints in the meeting
in the air before that time. But
beloved, I am inclined to be-
lieve that what that commen-
tator said will come to pass.

(Continued on page three)

Grace teaches us in the midst of life's greatest comforts to be willing to die, and in the midst of its greatest crosses to be willing to live.

"The Second Coming"

(Continued from page two)

It is impossible for us to realize the enormity of the battles that have raged within the last three months time. World War II, as destructive as it was, never in any wise at all reached the gigantic proportions of physical and human destruction that has taken place in the last three months.

Our Lord said things like this was to tell us that His coming couldn't be far away.

IV

THE ECONOMIC SIGN.

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."—James 5:1-3.

I believe that we are living in the light of this passage of Scripture today. I challenge you to find business men today that are making money. To be sure, there is lots of money being spent. There is lots of money passing through the hands of business men. Taxes, in one form or another, and all kinds of costs eat away the profit. Before you at any time are prone to accuse your grocer or the man from whom you buy your clothing of profittering—making a tremendous profit—I ask you to ask him to let you see his books, and I will guarantee you that every little business man in America today is feeling the squeeze of economic depression and is having a hard time making ends meet.

Our Lord said it would be this way. What difference does it make how great the taxes may be? What difference does it make how hard a time the little business man has of making ends meet? It is only a prophecy that the coming of Jesus isn't far away, for Jesus said this connection:

"Stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."—James 5:8.

V

THE CHURCH SIGN.

"And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."—Mt. 24:11, 12.

Beloved, they have arisen. Oh, how many false prophets there are in this world today—men who stand clothed in sheepskin but whose hearts are nothing but the hearts of wolves—men who pose as being men of God but actually are ambassadors of the Devil—men who claim to have had a call into the ministry but surely their call has not been of God. I cannot believe that God would call any man to preach contrary to the Book that He has called men to write.

There are plenty of false prophets that have gone out into the world today, but our Lord says that when iniquity abounds, the love of many is going to wax cold. Beloved, if you are saved, it oughtn't to have that effect on you. The abounding, prevalent presence of iniquity oughtn't cause your love to wax cold. When you see sin, and when you observe wrong, and when you see that which is absolutely contrary to God's Word being practiced in the world, and when you see immorality and vice and iniquity abound, it ought to make you love your Lord more. But, beloved, it doesn't. How easy it is for our hearts to become cold in the service of the Lord. How easy it is to find our

spiritual nature dwarfed by the presence of iniquity on every side. Our Lord says that is the church sign.

Notice again:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."—Mt. 25:1-13.

Here we have the story of the ten virgins—five wise and five foolish—who were all looking for our Lord's return. The Word of God tells us that while they were looking for His return, they went to sleep. Regardless of what interpretation you put upon this parable as to who the five wise and the five foolish virgins may represent—regardless of that, the fact remains that those who represented saved people evidently went to sleep while waiting for our Lord's return.

I am wondering, beloved, if maybe you need somebody to wake you up spiritually sometimes. I stand and preach and somebody goes to sleep physically. While I might wake you up physically, I don't know what to do to wake you up from your spiritual sleep.

We read:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."—Rev. 3:15-17.

Beloved, can you imagine anything that would be more nauseating to God than "dish-water" Christianity—neither hot nor cold? Show me the church that isn't characterized by lukewarmness. We have revivals from time to time. People get warmed up and stirred up by the Spirit, and hearts are thrilled and strangely warmed, but then, beloved, in a few days they become strangely chilled by the frigidity of the world in which they live.

I ask you, does lukewarmness characterize your soul today? Are you on fire for God? Or, are you cold in His service? Beloved, we are just what the Book says—lukewarm concerning the Lord.

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."—II Tim. 3:5.

There was a time when people boasted of the fact that they were members of the "big church," meaning they were not members of any church at all. People don't say that anymore. Everybody boasts of the fact

that he is a church member. Everybody likes to have it said of him when he comes to die that he was a member of a church. Everybody belongs to some church today but find the man or woman who doesn't deny the power thereof.

Paul said that one of the things that shall characterize this world just before the coming of Jesus Christ is that men will have some form of godliness but will deny the power thereof.

Of recent date I put it to a test. I asked ten men that I talked to, one after the other, "Are you a church member?" Assuring me that they were, I then asked them what Jesus Christ meant to them within their lives. There wasn't a one of those men but what denied the power of God. Church members are just exactly what Paul said—having a form of godliness, but no power of God within their lives.

CONCLUSION

All these are signs of Jesus' coming, and I believe that His coming can't be far away.

Are you ready for His coming? Those of you who have heard the truth and have had the opportunity to be saved might as well write "finis" over the door of your spiritual hopes, for there will be no salvation for any individual, after Jesus comes, who has heard the truth and has had an opportunity to be saved before He comes.

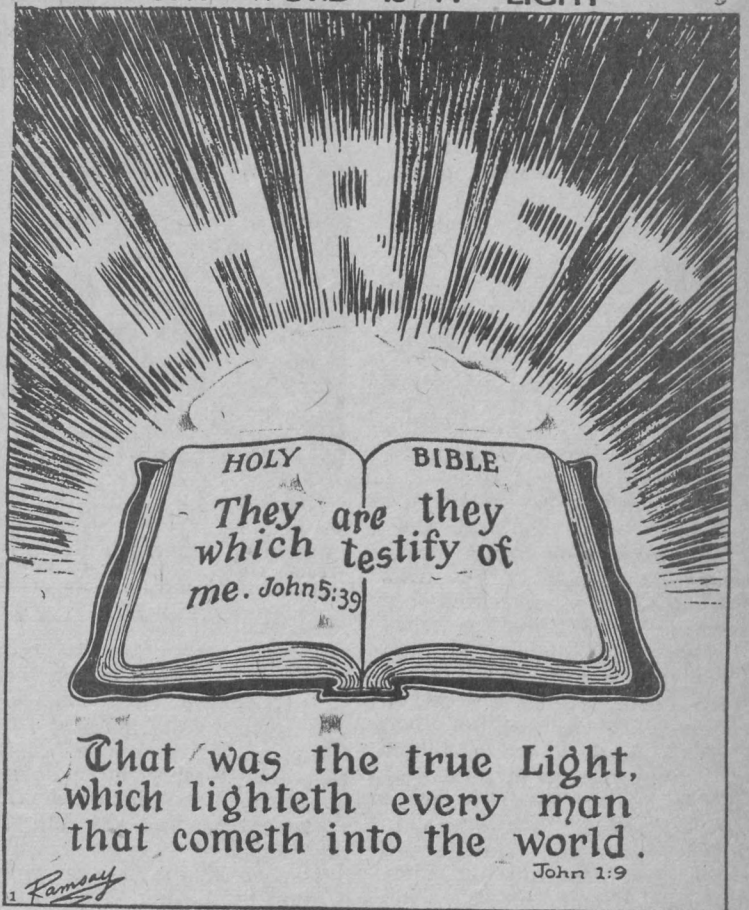
"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in uprightness."—II Thes. 2:7-12.

There will be plenty of people saved after the Son of God comes back. The greatest missionary era that the world will ever know will be after the return of Jesus, but, beloved, it will be in behalf of those who have never heard the truth. The man or woman who has heard the truth but who refused the Gospel and believed a lie in this life—that individual will be damned. There are people on the other side of the world that have never heard the Gospel—people in China, Japan, Russia, Peru, Brazil, and in the islands of the seas, who will be saved when Jesus comes again.

I say again, I believe the Lord's coming can't be far away. Are you ready? Thank God, I am. I am happy when I think about our Lord's return, but I am saddened when I think of those who attend services here from time to time and whom I have prayed for time and time again, who are lost and on the road to Hell. Beloved, get ready for His coming. The only way you can get ready is by trusting Him who came nineteen hundred years ago and spilled His blood on Calvary's Cross for your sins. May you trust Him, believe Him, and receive Him as your Saviour and be saved, and after you are saved, take your stand for Him.

May God bless you!

"THY WORD IS A... LIGHT"



Idolatry

(Continued from page one)

their maker. But to subvert this glory of God by the vanity of man's reason, surely makes man guilty.

In the second place, man's inconsiderateness is brought before us by the crudeness of his imagination respecting Deity. To him "the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

This crudeness is seen in his comparison of God—"like unto gold, or silver, or stone." These materials are inanimate. How then can they be made to represent living Deity? Paul argues the unreasonableness of men, who are the offspring of God, and yet suppose that God is like unto the mineral density of "gold, or silver, or stone." Then too, this crudeness is seen in his identification of God, "by art and man's device." Since when did man become sufficiently expert to make any likeness of God? In Isaiah 40:18 God questions, "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Design, art, quarrying, sculpture, carving, gilding, etc., have no effectiveness when it comes to converting inanimate materials into God's. Man's ability does not extend in this direction. This is to pervert art and device into an ugly vulgarity. Likewise is this crudeness seen in his misapplication of materials. There is no doubt but what "gold, or silver, or stone" have a certain degree of durability, and desirableness for purposes of ornament and building. But what fitness can such materials have, to show the propriety of a real God, since these materials are but creatures? To convert raw materials to represent Deity is surely a misuse of materials; in fact a prostitution of materials, to that for which they were never ordained. Besides it is a ridiculing of the One who made these things for man's beneficial use.

Yet making of idols was a specialized craft, as we see in these words, "graven by art and man's device." A craft skilled in modeling, casting, and ornamenting by tooling, and graving; and garnishing with silver and gold, to dazzle the eyes of worshippers. The sculptured images were apparently of

wood, iron, or stone, covered with gold or silver. See Deut. 7:5; Isa. 30:22; Heb. 2:19. It was a specialized craft in the days of the Apostle Paul. Here is the speech of Demetrius, a silversmith, made to the union of idol crafts: "Sirs, ye know that by THIS CRAFT we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands; so that not only THIS OUR CRAFT is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

In the third place, man's inconsiderateness is brought into view, by the disagreeableness of such idol gods as are the work of man's hands.

The disagreeableness is in their inability. Such gods never have any ability to spread themselves, and must be either carried, or stationed on their particular bases. And though they have heads, yet they cannot think, or express themselves. They are deficient, as the Scriptures declare in Psalm 115:5, "They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but see not: They have ears, but hear not: Noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: Feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is everyone that trusted in them." Again, the disagreeableness is in their oddity. It is most evident, that when men undertook the making of visible representations of Deity, they committed an absurdity, a passing from the sublime, to the ridiculous. Their oddity has appeared in statuary under all kinds of shapes, such as men, monsters, animals, etc. They could easily be classed under three groupings: Zoomorphic gods (animal form), Anthropomorphic gods (human form), and Polymorphic gods (having

Idolatry

(Continued from page three)
many forms). But since we are not dealing with the classification of gods, we will not waste words. Sufficient is it, that these idols are very monstrous, very fallacious, very odious, and very incongruous.

Again, the disagreeableness is in their futility. Those who would make gods strive after impossibilities, as we have already stated. They are like those who pour water through a sieve. It is toil in vain; labor thrown away. Idol gods are good for nothing, of no earthly use. They are objectionable, and inconsistent because they do not advantage them that worship them. Instead they only make the soul more wretched. Besides, men ought to consider the hopelessness of worshipping idol gods. A hopelessness that amounts to desperation. To get any action out of an idol is out of the question. Did not the prophets of Baal yield to despair? Was not their worship undone with total despair? Did not Elijah laugh at the faintness of their efforts to intreat Baal, and did he not ridicule the insanity of their frenzied worship of a dumb god? Did not the Lord deal destruction to them who perpetuated sacrifice to Baal? Down through the centuries has it been necessary for the living God, to throw down idols, and lay in ruins, cities who were given over to idolatry. In spite of these judgments upon idolatry, there are enough relics of idolatry left in the world, in such a state as to be commentaries of man's total depravity, and ignorance of the true God.

Not only do we have the disagreeableness of inability, oddi-



The Egyptian god Horus, with the head of a falcon bird, thus identifying him with the king.

ty, and futility, but also the disagreeableness of diversity. Where men differ about their god, there you have diversified gods; all kinds of gods, yet differing. The true God has no variability, but the idol god, is always in distinguishable variation, varying according to the notions of their makers. The difference is due, to the modification of the heir god, to suit man's fancy. This is too plain to need further comment; and it might be well to digress here a little, to call your attention to another disagreeable diversity, common in our day, namely; images of Christ. Why are there so many multiform pictures of Christ? There is extant more than one hundred different Christs. Unto what are we going to impute this, but to an indiscriminate attempt to make some visible similitude of Christ. Since Christ is the exact image of God, we ought not to be guilty of making inexact carnal images of Him, reducing Him to a mere common sinful humanity. God would have His Son intact from external imagery. Nor should we worship Christ in those multiplied images, which are figures composed from likenesses gained from corruptible men. Those representations of Christ, which are the products of the art of man, are no suitable conceptions of Christ. It is vain to conceive of Him according to artists who have had differing conceptions in keeping with whatever substitute model they employed. And it is equally a sin to have anyone alternate for Christ, just like it is a sin to liken Him to other sinful men. Obviously, paintings and pictures of Christ are but a sinking of His glorious humanity into that of a corruptible nature, like that of all sinful humanity. What artist is there who shall construct a picture of Christ whom he never saw in human form? Such pictures, and such images, could not possibly have any equivalence with Christ, neither are they Christ, nor are they acceptable to God. Dabbling in external images of Christ is but a subtle and promiscuous form of present day idolatry.

To continue our text further, we see God's tolerance of man's past inconsiderateness — "the times of this ignorance God winked at."

The duration of time coexistent with the Old Testament, is here called, "the times of this ignorance." God's salvation was not made known to Gentiles in other ages as it is now. Eph. 3:5,6. It is the mystery which had been hid from ages and generations, according to Col. 1:26,27. In keeping with His pleasure, in these ancient times, God confined His attention to His people, Israel. The Gentile



Osiris, the god of the dead, and the god of the resurrection of the ancient Egyptians.

world was looked upon as in unbelief; as having an ignorance consisting in vanity of the mind, understanding darkened, blindness of heart, and alienation from the life of God.

Thus, it may be said, that God passed over this time of ignorance with much toleration, — "God winked at it." However, we must not understand this as if God were indifferent to idolatry. The apostle is drawing a contrast between the old and the new. There is no exact parallel between the old and the new; they are not alike in God's dispensation. We do not have the concealment, or the confinement of God's knowledge in this day, that we had in the Old Testament. In the New Testament age, evangelical light has chased idolatry away from a great part of the world. Nevertheless, in ancient times, when idolatry was persistent, God did not fail to interrupt, by the overthrow of those nations who were completely given over to idolatry. Otherwise, then as now, "He endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Yet in comparison to this Gospel time, He winked at those times.

Another thought presents itself in this, and that is, the thought of God's permission of idolatry in the ancient times. Without His permission, it could not have existed. Had He so desired, He could have wiped the whole earth clean of idolatry. But He chose otherwise, and thus we have definite, historic testimony from the cobwebs of antiquity. There are many things which have survived from ancient times. They enable us to derive tangible verification of God's word. Among these relics of the past, we have the remains of actual specimens of the idols contrived by ancient people. Viewing these idols, it is easy to see why they were an affront against God, and a mockery of Him. More than that, they must have been a flattery of man's conceit, in that he could make his own god. It gave man a mastery over his god, instead of his god having a mastery over him; at least, so he might assume. From these relics of antiquity, we may learn.

Reversion to idolatry has ever been the sign of apostasy, or ignorance of the true God. In fact, it is ignorance of the true God which makes passage into idolatry the consequence.



The idol god Horus was often represented as a falcon, it being the royal bird. This statue, placed at the entry of Edfu's Ancient Temple, the most perfect temple now standing in Egypt, makes this falcon god to be the sentinel of this temple, in whose honour it was built.

Man is a worshipful creature, and thus he becomes easily enclosed in this web of fallacy; since idolatry follows the lines of least resistance, it easily finds its way and sway where the true God is absent. In like manner, does declension from the true God make way for an intrusion of idolatry. Delinquency of the ancient children of Israel was followed by the inroads of idolatry. And this subversion of God's people to idolatry was the cause of their overthrow by the hand of God. God may wink at the heathen, in their idolatry, but he can never tolerate his professing people to open the door to idolatry.

And now, if we are to pursue this subject to a conclusion, we need to observe, that God's present order demands the turning away from this state of wretchedness. The last part of the text is most plain — "but now commanded all men everywhere to repent."

Concerning this, we do well to notice, the universality of this command; "commanded all men everywhere." This comprehensive, all embracing order, takes in the generality of mankind. "All men." It includes men of every race and nation; no class of men are excluded. And since idolatry is widespread in the world; so is the command extensive in its reach; it is world wide, or "everywhere." From this universality of command, we infer, that the command requires no special qualifications within men. If it did, it could not be general. God has perfect right to command "all men everywhere," regardless of their class or country. He has an eminency of authority above all. "His kingdom ruleth over all." He has a right to command all creatures, and He has power to make His commands be obeyed, or to punish men for violation of them.

Wherefore, notice what is the necessity of this command; namely, "to repent." In a command of this kind, there is aggressive action on the part of God; for He takes the first step towards man's salvation. Man must be safeguarded against the progress of idolatry; and man is required to discard the relics of this ignorance of God. There are still, in our New Testament age, those who continue under the influence of idolatry. In spite of the progress of the Gospel, there are the remains of idolatry in the world, and those who prostrate themselves before idols. And there are still within our own land, those who

continue to perpetuate the shadows of ancient darkness, under the most subtle cloaks of disguise. But the notices and warnings God has given against idolatry, coupled with public calamities, are but invitations to man's repentance. He will not forever exercise this long time of patience and forbearance with man's abuse of His Deity. Since idolatry is repulsive to God, it is imperative, that man turn from this wretchedness. It only kindles the wrath of God; besides it can never profit those who engage in it; for it only brings wretchedness to the soul. "Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish." Responsive compliance is necessary to a command. How comes it, that men bow to idols? Would not anyone accustomed to bow before a dead image, the more readily and easily bow before the living God? At least, so we might think. However, there can be no expectation of God's mercy without repentance. Repentance is a radical change; a turning to God from idols; a turning to serve the living and true God. Instead of following the vain customs of the people, we begin to accommodate ourselves to God. Instead of traveling in a rut of sinful practice, we will henceforth be regulated by God's will. We discontinue the old life, and begin the new.

Lastly, notice the finality of time in this command, as contrasted with the past — "but now." Under the Gospel dispensation, God does not allow the wide spread duplication of the idolatry of ancient times. That time of ignorance was a definite duration. This gospel time is also of a definite duration, and that is to the time of judgment. This time, therefore, is of greater consequence than any of past history. Throughout the New Testament, God puts special emphasis upon this present time. "Little children, it is the last time." John 2:18. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto us by his Son." Heb. 1:2. "But the end of all things is at hand." I Peter 4:7; and discrimination against idolatry is more pronounced through this Gospel period than in ancient time. The gospel separates the chaff from the wheat; the sheep from the goats. The contrast between fictitious deities and the true God is more easily seen in the Gospel light. In simple words, the ill-contrived badness of idolatry, in contrast to the excellence of the Gospel, is more readily distinguished. And who wants to choose misery, in place of liberty and happiness? But this Gospel age will have an end. For the present it is the day of salvation, yet God has determined to put an end to idolatry; and the termination of this Gospel age will prevent any and all further recurrence of idolatry. In the day of judgment, all idolatry will be fuel for His vengeance. Reverting once more to ancient times; the Ninevites were confronted by the terrible announcement of their destruction. But they averted the fury of God's wrath by repentance. When Scripture exhorts to repentance, it frequently introduces the mention of judgment in order that sinners may consider what divine wrath awaits them unless they repent. Hereby we have sought to show, that God has determined to put an end to idolatry; and that the Gospel is one, means against it, but judgment is also another means against it.

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