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THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Golden Text. — Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?—Mal. 2:10

THE LESSON AS A WHOLE
By J. C. Macaulay, D.D.

Approach to the Lesson

Isaiah prophesied in Judah during four reigns, Uzziah, Jotham, Abaz, and Hezekiah (chap. 1:1), in the latter half of the eighth century B.C. Our portion (chap. 65:17-25) is a part of the second of three closing addresses, and is in the major key of hope and triumph. "But to what part of the history of salvation are we to look for a place for the fulfillment of such prophecies as these... except in the millennium?" (Dellitzsch.) In the outworking of God's new order in the millennium we may see a parable of how we ought to live now who belong to God's new creation, the church.

Our portion in Acts (17:24-28) is part of Paul's address before the august body of Athenian philosophers on Mars' Hill, in A.D. 51. This address, delivered at the invitation of the philosophers themselves, exposes the folly of idolatry. Our verses are part of his argument. Still, what he says about the unity of creation, and our common origin in the creative act of God, argues not only the sin of idolatry, but the duty of man to man.

So, if we are going to teach the lesson as suggested in the title, we should be careful to give the original intention of the passages first, and then show that the other is a logical deduction. Both passages are so big in content that most teachers will be satisfied to handle one of them.

Verse by Verse
Isa. 65:17. — "I create new heavens and a new earth." This

cannot be the final act of Revelation 21:1. For one thing, it is not yet the state of perfection (v. 20), and it has special reference to Israel. In the same way we are called "new creatures" now (2 Cor. 5:17), although our perfection has not yet been realized.

Verse 18.—"I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." The "wailing wall" in Jerusalem well symbolizes the age-long oppression of Israel, and we will know the all too general attitude to the Jew. What a change when Jerusalem and her inhabitants will be "the joy of the whole earth"! (Psa. 8:2.)

Verse 19.—"I will rejoice... and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard." The day of God's rejoicing is the day of the wiping away of all tears. Compare Zephaniah 3:17, and contrast Revelation 18:21-23.

Verse 20.—"The child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner... shall be accursed." Longevity will be restored as in patriarchal days, and infant mortality will be unknown. Death at the "early" age of a hundred will be the curse on sin.

Verse 21.—"And they shall build... and inhabit... plant... and eat." See Ezekiel 28:26. None of the futility and frustration caused by war, drought, and the like.

Verse 22.—"As the days of a tree... mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands"—like oaks and cedars that live for centuries. God's people will not just have time to get things in good shape for the next generation to enjoy—or spoil!

Verse 23.—"The seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them." The Revised Version margins adds "shall be" after "offspring." The thought is that they will not be bereaved of their families by early death.

Verse 24.—"Before they call... while they are yet speaking." The order seems strange, but the more striking for that. Such intimacy and immediacy of prayer is our privilege now, but not many enter in. In the day of Israel's restoration, it will be the normal experience.

Verse 25.—"The wolf and the lamb... They shall not hurt nor destroy." Nature itself will be "regenerated," and instead of being "red in tooth and claw," will fit into the general picture of peace. And doubtless this verse, is a parable of the new understanding among men.

That man to man, the world o'er, Shall brother be for a' that.
—Robert Burns.

Acts 7:24.—"God... dwelleth not in temples made with hands." The Creator and Lord of all things cannot be confined within the walls of an earthly edifice. Housing God is a heathen conception. See I Kings 8:27.

Verse 25.—"He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." The bounteous giver of all good is not in need of human ministrations. Our worship adds nothing to Him. Feeding God is another heathen conception. See Psalm 50:7-15.

Verse 26.—"And hath made of one blood all nations... the times... the bounds." Here is a fact of science and a philosophy of history. The nations, with all their differing cultures and ideologies, are "one blood." We are all "brotherhoods." But God determined before the division of the race, and the rise and fall of nations, their location and their duration. These are all matters of divine decree.

Verse 27.—"That they should seek the Lord... not far from every one of us." The purposes of grace run through all God's providential dealings with men. He "will have all men to be saved," and although men may be far from Him through the alienation of sin, yet He is ever near, still wooing, ready to answer the first cry.

Verse 82.—"For in him we live, and he is also his offspring." The latter statement, quoted from Aratus and Cleanthes (for both made the statement), is true in the sense that we are the creatures of His hand. How tragic that men should be strangers to the God who made them, and upon whose power and benevolence they depend for their very existence!

The Heart of the Lesson
Dr. Graham Scroggie said, "It's better farther on." So it will be for us, for Israel, and for the world. The prophets do not look back to "the good old days," but forward to the good new days, when all controversy between God and Israel will cease, and the benefits



Foiled!

Rabbits on some western farms are leading frustrated lives these days. The succulent bark of their favorite fruit trees has been wrapped in aluminum foil, so now they can't get at it.

This was a new one on us. We had heard of dozens of uses for the foil we roll at Kingston, Ont., but never for frustrating rabbits. However, it just goes to illustrate why more people are using more aluminum and why we, as the most efficient producer of this modern metal, must go on expanding. Aluminum Company of Canada, Ltd. (Alcan).

of that reconciliation will flow out to the ends of the earth. Isaiah describes that day in terms of a new work of creation. The new order will be so satisfying that none will even think of the former days, far less wish them back (Isa. 65:17, 18). The new day will be characterized by joy (v. 19), long life (v. 20), prosperity (v. 21, 22), and a full prayer life (v. 24). Nature itself will be quieted (v. 25), as the present creation, which "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," is "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:22, 21). In the midst of all the confusion and turmoil of our day, it should assure us to know that God's plan has not gone awry. Whatever the travail of the movement, God will bring forth His new creation. We do not cry havoc, but salvation!

Does not all this have some present application for us who are "the redeemed of the Lord"? Each one of us is "a new creation," and who among us craves for the old days of sin? And even though we are at times "in heaviness through manifold temptation," do we not realize a "joy unspeakable and full of glory?" (1 Pet. 1:6, 8.) Surely futility and frustration are not the marks of the Christian life! We are laying up "treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. 6:20). In the spiritual realm we bring forth children for eternal life. The secret of prayers is ours—far more than we have entered into it. A new nature has been given us in the new birth, so that our wild hearts are subdued under the control of the Holy Spirit. We know "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), and we are "safe in Jehovah's keeping."

GIVES HER CLOTHES AWAY CONTAINING LIFE SAVINGS

Police were trying to help a 50-year-old woman who said she had given away a bundle of old clothing — not knowing it contained her \$4,200 savings.

Mrs. Freda Krasney said she discovered the loss last July 5 but had not reported it sooner because she was afraid to let her husband, Ben, know.

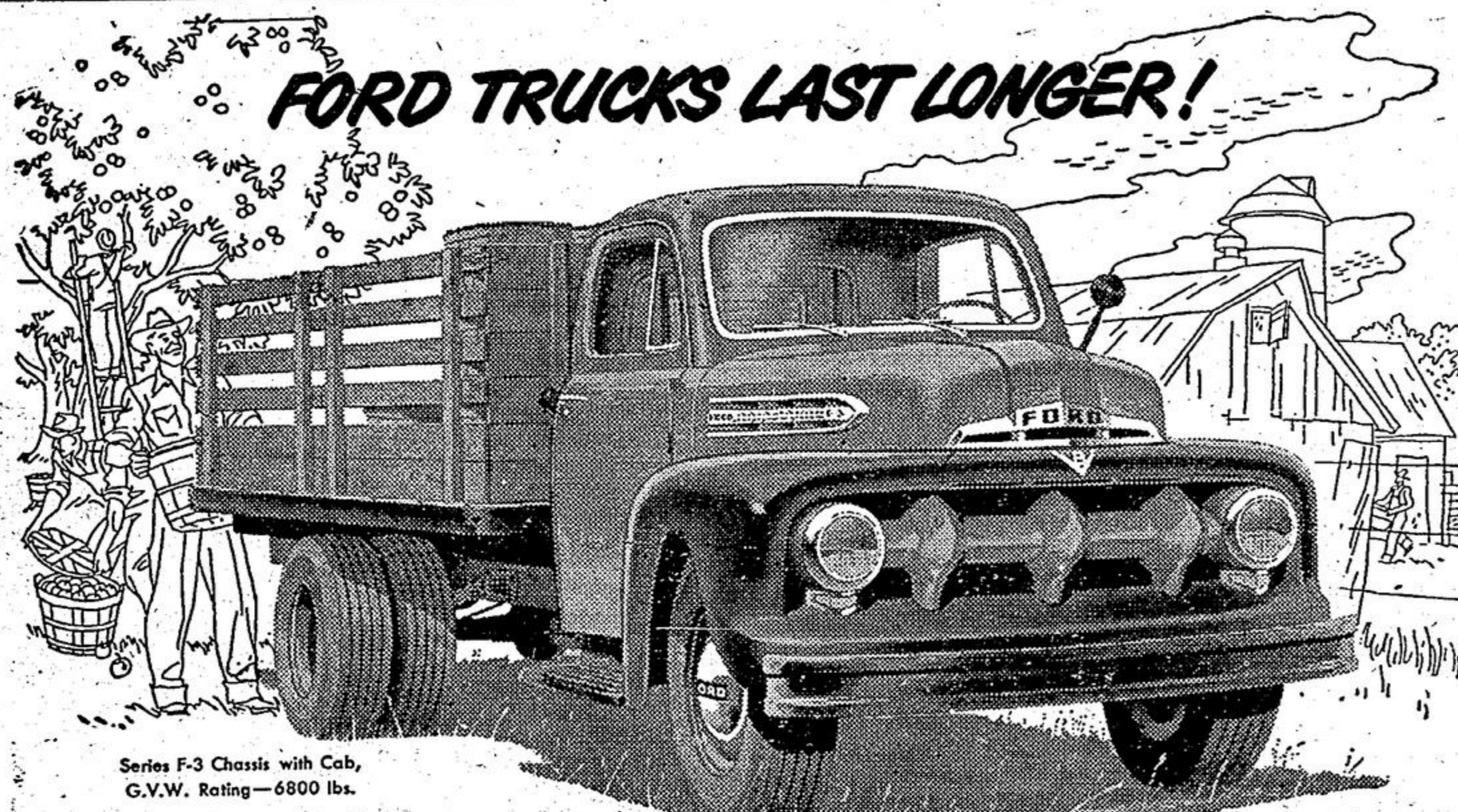
She had been saving the money for their old age, concealing it in a vest. When she couldn't find the vest last July, her husband — who did not know of the savings — told her he had placed it in a pile of old clothes she had given away. Since then, she said, she has tried without success to trace the clothing.

It's amusing how borrowing neighbors are always glad to take anything but a hint.

Skinny men, women gain 5, 10, 15 lbs.

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