



Megiddo Message

Vol. 73, No.1

God Goes Before You

January, 1986

Mercy for the Merciful

✓

WE ALL make mistakes, perhaps more often than we like to admit. Many times they are only that—human blunders, errors in judgment that could have been avoided if—if we had only known before what we know now. Sometimes the mistake is without consequences. Other times, the consequences are heavy. But very often the punishment of consequences is not so severe as our own self-condemnation or the condemnation of those we offend. That is where we need to add mercy, especially when we are the one offended, because sometime we may need it, too.

Mercy is a quality we expect and appreciate in God. In fact, we cannot imagine God being unmerciful. We think and speak often of His mercy in lengthening out this last hour of the day of salvation. In His mercy He tolerates a world of dreadful wickedness—to give His own a little more time. Were it not for His mercy, where would we be? We appreciate His mercy especially in giving us another and yet another opportunity, we who have stumbled again and again. How unworthy we have proved of all His love and kindness to us, yet His mercy is with us yet. Yes, God is merciful.

But mercy does not belong exclusively to God. There must be mercy this side of heaven, too, though, sad to say, such mercy is rare. Not that there is any particular reason for this rarity, because mistakes aren't that rare. But something in us instinctively wants to revert to the old principle of "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot," whatever the circumstances. How exceedingly rare is genuine, outgoing mercy. And how quickly do we forget how much we ourselves have needed mercy when someone seeks mercy from us.

While the "mercy of the Lord" is "from everlasting to everlasting *upon them that fear him*," it is also said to be reserved for those possessing the quality. God has mercy for the merciful. In the words of the Psalmist, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful" (Ps. 18:25). The forthright James states the same fact in the negative: "He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy" (James 2:13).

Who would wish to find himself in such a position? And we must not forget the words of Jesus: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

If we would be godly, we must have mercy. It is not an option; it is a direct command. And we must have mercy not only in the area of simple human mistakes but also when someone has sinned. When Jesus told Peter how many times he should be willing to forgive his brother, the issue was not a mistake but a sin. "Lord," he asked, "how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Matt. 18:21).

Buried in the fifth-century records of one of the desert monasteries in Egypt is the story of a man who wept when he saw someone sinning. "He today," said the thoughtful one, "perhaps I tomorrow." All of us, with our feet of clay, need to realize this, that we can—and do—fall. We need to remember this when someone else stumbles.

The apostle Paul set the standard when he wrote, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31-32).

Peter also described the Christ-like attitude in these words: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (I Pet. 3:8).

As Jesus told Peter, we need a forgiving spirit that is literally unlimited, a spirit that is willing to forgive "until seventy times seven." How many times we have repeated the words that are recorded in Matthew 6:12: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," little realizing what we were saying—that we were actually asking God to forgive us to the same extent that we forgive others!

If we think about it, this might be one prayer we would prefer not to have answered; because do we

(Continued on page 23)

Megiddo means . . .

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

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

Bible Quotations

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

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NAS—New American Standard

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

Williams—The New Testament, A translation in the Language of the People

About Our Cover

Our cover photo is of Independence River, near Lowville, New York.

Megiddo Message

Vol. 73, No. 1

January, 1986

Editorial

MERCY FOR THE MERCIFUL

2

Article

GOD GOES BEFORE YOU

4

He never asks us to go alone

Sermon

WHAT ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT?

8

Our concerns are the great impellers of our lives

Lines to Live By

14

Bible Study

JEREMIAH, PROPHET OF HOPE

16

One of the brightest stars of the Old Testament

Series

EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY

19

Article

GOD MEANS WHAT HE SAYS

20

Meditating on the Word

INWARD TRUTH

22

On Psalms 51:6

Questions and Answers

24

Concerning:

Sin Unto Death

Letters

26

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

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: One year, eleven issues, \$2.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

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

1650

God Goes Before You

ONE OF the warmest and most precious of the divine promises is the promise of God's presence. His guidance. His leading. Wherever we are, wherever we go, whatever God asks us to do or to be, He goes before us.

It was so with Abraham. Look first at this man, comfortably settled in Ur of the Chaldees, where he expected to spend the rest of his days just as his family had done for generations. But one day there came a message from God, and the next time we see him, he and his family have relocated to Haran. And when the Lord speaks to him again, He says, "I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees."

Yes, Abraham did not leave Ur alone. God "brought" him out. God was leading; God went before him.

The same was true of Jacob. From the day that Jacob left the security of his father's house and set his heart to serve God, everything in Jacob's life, no matter how small or ordinary, was overarched by the high purpose and providence of God. "And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest . . . for I will not leave thee" (Gen. 28:15). This was God's promise; God would go before him.

Joseph was equally confident of the leading of God. Mistreated by

his brothers and sold into slavery when he was but a youth, it would not be strange if for a time he felt the barbs of bitterness in his heart. But as we read the rest of his story, we learn that Joseph was able to see all his life as under God's direction. And near the end of the record, when his brothers, brought to penitence by the severity of famine, confessed their guilt, how greatly Joseph showed his spiritual stature and his unflinching confidence in God. "God did send me before you," he said, "to preserve life. . . . God meant it unto good, to save much people alive." Even though it meant hardship and suffering for him, Joseph could accept it because "God meant it unto good." God went before.

IN the book of Deuteronomy, we see another of God's great men following God's leading. The man is Moses. He has grown old; he is now 120. At one time he had looked forward to leading his people into the Promised Land, the "land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8). But intervening events changed the picture. God ruled otherwise. Now Moses will be allowed only to view that land of promise "from Pisgah's lofty heights, on this side Jordan's wave." He must die this side of Canaan.

But Moses is too great a man to be dispirited. He has seen so much of God's leading and has grown so close to God that his confidence is unshaken. He will carry on triumphantly right to the end. And so he does everything in his power to encourage and support his successor Joshua and to assure both him and the people that God will be with them.

Moses addresses the people in these words: "I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the Lord hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan." But this did not mean that they would go alone. Never! "The Lord thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath said. And the Lord shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Then Moses turns to address Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the

Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it" (Deut. 31:7). Reassurance follows assurance: "It is the Lord who goes before you; he will be with you, he will not fail you or forsake you; do not fear or be dismayed" (v. 8, RSV).

The book of Joshua continues on this same high note of confidence in God. Upon Joshua has been bestowed the honor of entering Canaan. But more than this, his is the solemn responsibility of taking all this people with him.

There they are, sprawled out along the banks of the Jordan as far as the eye can see, a host of them, with their children, and their sheep, and their cattle, all waiting to cross. If you look closely, you see that all eyes are looking in one direction—toward Canaan. They are eager, expectant, almost impatient as they stand there. Waiting. Waiting for the next word of command.

But Joshua is not alone at the head of this great host. At his right stands the new high priest Eleazar, third son of Aaron, who as Joshua's associate will offer steadfast counsel and spiritual insight to him. And close by is Caleb, that one hundred percent dedicated follower, to offer his support. And—most important of all—*God goes before*.

God speaks directly to His servant: "As I was with Moses," He says, "so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. 1:5-7).

It is a message of stirring spiritual support, so simple, yet so startling. "It is God who shall go before you! It is God who shall fight for you! It is God who, little by little, shall steadily and surely give you victory over your enemies! It is God who shall eventually give you rest! So be strong in His strength!"

It was not a new lesson. Joshua had already learned that God was faithful. In his mind's eye he could still see those remarkable times when

cause he was keeping in intimate communion with the Great God, whom he trusted implicitly.

AND WHAT of us, we who know and serve the same great God? Is it not ours to know and believe today that the God who lived in Jacob's day, or Moses' day, or Joshua's day, is *just the same today*? Is it not the assurance we need, that God goes before *us*, that we are not alone, that we can

It is a message of stirring spiritual support, so simple, yet so startling.

God had wrought mighty miracles for Moses and Israel. How vividly he could recall the first Passover night, and their hasty exodus from the land of the Nile. Then there was the overthrow of Pharaoh's military might in the surging waters of the Red Sea; and that first flush of victory over Amalek at Rephidim. He had clear, flashing memories, too, of the defeat of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and of Og, king of Bashan. Yes, God had worked mightily for them; He had proved His faithfulness abundantly. He had made known His mighty arm in the sight of all His people.

If He had done it before, He could do it again—and again!

The lesson was imperative. Joshua must somehow see clearly that he was not alone. His strength was in God. It was God and he together who would achieve great triumphs. It was God and he who would lead Israel into new achievements. It was God and he in close cooperation who would occupy Canaan. All would be possible not because Joshua was a great genius but be-

depend on Him to see us through, all the way to Canaan?

God's aspirations for us are enormous, beyond all we can ask or imagine—not because we of ourselves are a great people, but because we have a great God, who delights to do great things with and for those who will cooperate with Him.

We never have to make our way alone because God is the same "yesterday, today and forever." He who keeps eternal vigil; He who "neither slumbers nor sleeps," He the Eternal God stands guard over life.

Tasks may seem impossible and tomorrows fearsome to face when God is left out, but when we live in the awareness of His presence, there are no impossibles.

All through the wilderness, the Israelites were reminded of the visible presence of God with them. All through those forty long years, the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day gave silent testimony to the fact that they were not alone. The promise was, "Behold, I send an

Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. . . . For mine Angel shall go before thee" (Ex. 23:20, 23).

WE LIVE in an age when we must walk by faith. We see no angels ministering; we hear no voice from heaven; we have no Urim and Thummin which we may consult. But shall we think for a moment that we are on our own?

God is with us because there is yet work to be done. There are yet battles to be fought and won before the land of Canaan is our own. There are yet attitudes to be surrendered, life patterns to be refined, wills to be broken; wandering thoughts to be harnessed; feelings to be controlled; conflicts to be settled; giants of sin to be conquered. But through it all, God goes before us. He will not leave us or forsake us.

Joshua was given emphatically to

rests with us. The positive response of our wills to His depends upon us. It is for us to obey, to carefully carry out the commands and ordinances of our God.

If we do this, we can be certain that He goes before us. It is He who provides the power, the courage, the capacity to conquer. If only we go with Him we cannot fail; if only we stay with Him, we shall yet claim the inheritance we have been promised.

The apostle Paul put it so well in his letter to the Ephesians (3:16-21), "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with all might by his spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." MM

Our possibilities are enormous, beyond all we can ask or imagine—not because we of ourselves are a great people, but because we have a great God.

No! God still goes before us. His angels still encamp. If our eyes could be opened we might see in our midst this very hour the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, angels watching over us, ministering to our needs. We are not alone. As surely as God was with our forebears, so surely will He be with us. His cause cannot fail.

understand that if he kept God at the center of his concern, he was bound to prosper, he was bound to conquer, bound to enjoy enormous success.

The same is true with us. We simply cannot overexpose ourselves to God. His precepts must be the central core of our lives. The responsibility for reading lies with us. The carrying out of His commands

Faith and Prayer

FAITH to live by is the urgent need of people today. A supreme faith in Almighty God could dissolve tensions, worries, anxieties, fears, doubts. Man needs no stronger equipment than an intelligent faith in God.

Faith in God is secured through prayer. Faith and prayer appear to operate in a circle. Each is dependent upon the other. Faith was best defined in the letter to the Hebrews: "Now faith is the substance of the [confidence in] things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Prayer is a supplication for help and a thank-you for help already received. Ever since man began to think, he has prayed, and through prayer has acknowledged there was a power greater than he.

Faith is bigger than the individual. Faith backed by courage and strength can accomplish the impossible. Remember Christ said, "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness; and all things shall be added unto you."

My God and I

My God and I begin the day together,
And strengthened by such fellowship divine
I set my will and heart in earnest effort
To make the passing hours with goodness shine.

My God and I, we tread the path together,
He leads me by His hand, and by and by
If I but follow on in meek submission
He'll show me where the streams of Eden lie!

My God and I, how much we can accomplish!
Yoked in with such divine assistance, I
Must never fear to climb the path before me,
Though it should scale a mountain steep and high!

My God and I face all my foes together,
He gives me strength to fight without retreat;
He keeps me safe within His full protection,
My God and I will never know defeat.

My God and I—I'll give Him first place always,
Above, before, beside me He'll abide;
His law my stay, His Word my meat and manna,
His voice my comforter when ills betide.

My God and I, we tread the way together,
And oh! the sweet communion that we share
As on He leads me o'er the rugged pathway,
Until within His Kingdom joy I share!

My God and I, how we converse together!
He talks of higher realms where I may dwell,
Of planes of holiness and true endeavor
Where light and peace the mists of gloom dispel.

My God and I—oh, what a precious friendship!
It dwarfs the best of earth to nothingness;
It draws me ever closer to His circle,
Till I with angels share eternal bliss.

—Contributed

What Are You Concerned About?

Scripture Lesson: Matt. 6:19-33

FROM the time the infant cries for milk, through the carefree years of childhood and the responsibilities of middle age until the feet of the aged stumble on the dark mountain, everyone is concerned about something. For some their chief concern is family, home or business; for others, it may be health, or the welfare of their friends. Others are seeking wealth, honor, power, position, or any of a thousand different interests. Multitudes tug and toil day after day, hoping, always hoping they will encounter something better further on.

The foremost concern of Alexander the Great was to conquer the world, and history records that he wept when there were no more worlds to conquer. Columbus' great concern was to reach the shores of another land that he fully believed lay beyond the broad expanse of uncharted sea, and he lived to see that long-ing desire fulfilled. Admiral Byrd spent the greatest portion of his life in deep concern over what he might see and discover in the wide waste of the polar regions; but he died a disappointed man because he did not have the honor of setting his feet where the compass shows no direction. The glory that might have been his was given to another.

The rich young ruler who came to Jesus showed that he was at least marginally concerned about his own future existence. "Master," he asked, "what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" But our Master soon revealed to him that his real concern was not the heavenly Kingdom but his riches, and when he thought he would have to part with them, he "went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (Matt. 19:16-22).

Saul's great concern was his own pride and self-es-

teem. If we had asked him, this might not have been his answer, but "actions speak louder than words." So long as he was first and unchallenged, there was no problem. But let circumstances change and another get some of the honor he had enjoyed, and Saul was beside himself with jealousy. He simply *had* to be first.

So consuming was this passion that there was no solution short of doing away with his rival. And so he plotted, he schemed, he hounded David at every step; but it was all in vain, because he hadn't consulted God's plans. With all his strategy, there was absolutely nothing he could do to prevent the Lord's chosen from being king.

So it will be when Christ the Anointed, the David after God's own heart, comes to rule the world in righteousness. All the Sauls with evil eyes will unite their forces to defend their "rights" and destroy the usurper, but they shall fail utterly. The Lord's anointed shall be king.

Countless thousands are chiefly concerned with the trivia of life—what shall we eat, drink, wear? Possessing a distorted sense of values, they busy themselves grasping for more and more of these petty pleasures, wholly oblivious to any real objective or purpose for life.

Other people are concerned with the government and management of others. Time fails to tell of the host of politicians, kings, potentates and ecclesiastical divines whose whole concern is for authority over others, or recognition, or fame.

Let us ask ourselves: What is *our* longing desire? What is *our* great concern? What is the motivating desire of *our* lives?

A "concern" is something we feel deeply. It touches our heart and determines how we respond to what happens around us, about us, to us. Our concerns are the great impellers of our lives. If something is of no

Note: *What Are You Concerned About?* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

concern to us, we will scarcely notice what happens to it. If it is a concern, we will react strongly.

It might be said that our whole Christian life is a task of properly regulating our concerns, directing them to the things that *God* says we should be concerned about.

Martha's Concern

Ponder again the lesson taught by Jesus at the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany. What made the great difference between Martha and Mary that day? It was their concerns. Martha's whole thought was on preparing a "just-right" meal for the Master. She was hot and tired; she felt flustered and driven; her patience was sorely tried. And there, in the very presence of the Master Himself, it broke through to the open view of thousands who would afterward read of her mistake.

Mary's concern, meanwhile, lay deeper—this was her opportunity to hear from the Master more of those precious lessons of life. Everything else was secondary.

Those of us who know the multiple tasks of daily life can share in Martha's rebuke from the Lord. How easily in the midst of temporal duties we lose sight of the eternal, and the really great values of life are pushed aside. In our distress, we overlook the priceless opportunities with which the ordinary days are crammed—opportunities to practice patience, forbearance, kindness, love; opportunities to think high thoughts and ponder our lofty goals; opportunities to build faith and fortitude and hope.

The task of maintaining our existence is complex and time-consuming, to be sure. But it need not consume all our thought. If it does, if living in this world is all our absorption, we shall find that this is all we shall have. There will be nothing more for us to hope for beyond.

But perhaps we have learned. Perhaps we have mastered Martha's lesson and even in the most pressing hours of every day can conduct ourselves as in the fear of God. Perhaps we have learned to make temporal stresses train us for eternal glories. If we have, we shall find that whatever we are doing, the future is more real and more vivid in our mind than anything of the present.

Still, we must be careful, lest while paying "tithes of mint, anise and cummin" we neglect the weightier matters of the law of God, our sacred task of nurturing and developing the new nature within.

Hear the Master's gentle rebuke to Martha. "Something simple will do just as well, Martha. Come, sit down, and let's talk about the Kingdom."

There was nothing wrong with Martha's motive. She wanted everything to be the very best—for the Lord.

Our whole Christian life is a task of properly regulating our concerns.

All her elaborate preparations were for *Him*. Yet she was reproved.

And what of us? We, too, want to give Him our very best. But oh, how easily we lose our perspective. How easily we become so concerned with the task at hand and the eternal glory fades away. The little incident at Martha's house that day should remind us that it is possible to be too concerned even about lawful things; that all our activities in the Lord's work and all our temporal concerns are not an end in themselves but only a *means* to an end—to perfect in us the holiness God is seeking. When we become overly anxious, flustered and tried in the thing we are doing, our Master's kind and thoughtful words should reclothe us in our rightful mind: "Stop your frenzied rushing about, Martha. There is only *one* thing that really matters."

Excuses, Excuses

Jesus taught the same lesson in the parable of the Great Supper, recorded in Luke 14:16-24. Said the Master, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready." When our King returns, He is going to spread a great supper. Some will have been "bidden"—invited by special invitation. Yes, our King prepares invitations—personal ones. Think of it! Think of being personally invited to a wedding feast where only the truly noblest will partake. Shouldn't such an invitation awaken in us the deepest concern—to be eagerly preparing for the great occasion?

Or will we be among those who started right in to be excused and turned the heavenly servant away?

Oh, how little interest there seems to be among those who are bidden to the great feast. The excuses for not attending are all but endless. Yes, we read that "they all with one consent began to make excuse." They all had other interests, other concerns, to which they assigned a higher priority than the great man's invitation. These things had to be done immediately; the feast could wait. And so, "The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have

***If we have mastered Martha's lesson,
we have learned to make temporal
stresses train us for eternal glories.***

me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Oh, excuses, excuses, excuses.

When the servant in the parable came and reported to his lord the reception he had had, did the Master say, "Hurry back and plead the harder with them—maybe they will change their minds"? No! The opportunity for them was gone. "Go quickly out into the streets and find the lame, the halt, and the blind. Find those who recognize their need and are eager to come. . . . But those ungrateful ones with all their excuses shall not so much as *taste* of My supper. They have received the one and last invitation they will ever get. They are not concerned with Me—neither am I concerned with them" (paraphrased from Luke 14:20-24).

Oh, let us look to ourselves. How are we replying to the invitation from our King? Are we saying by our

actions, if not by our words, that we want to go—later? Or do we complain of lack of time, or opportunity? If we didn't have so much obligation we would be glad to come! Or if we didn't have to live with this one, or work with that one . . . But deep down in our hearts we know it is not time we lack, or opportunity, but only application. Opportunities are all about us, if we just open our eyes to recognize them. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, each hour is loaded with spiritual possibilities. If we miss them, it is our own fault.

A woman who was visiting at the home of a busy wife and mother was impressed by the almost countless pieces of beautiful needlework about the house. Upon learning that the mistress herself was the artist, the visitor exclaimed in utter amazement: "I could *never* find time for all those stitches! How do you do it?"—to which the mother replied in a quiet, sober tone, "I use the moments you waste."

It is the stabbing truth we, if not careful, shall hear someday from those who win in the race for life. How did they do it? what made the difference? Simply this, that they *used* the moments *we wasted*!

Only a moment, we say; but a moment here, and a moment there, and what vast potential they have when they are added together! "Only a moment," we think, but these moments are life itself.

Let Us Pray . . .

Our kind heavenly Father, Thou great and mighty Being to whom all flesh must come; this morning brings us under renewed obligations to thank and praise Thee for Thy great goodness and mercy to us; that in a world filled with dangers we have until this hour been kept secure and unharmed. We rejoice that we have been given Thy Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path to guide us to that haven of eternal rest; that we have Thy great and precious promises as an anchor to our souls sure and steadfast, and the stabilizing influence of a lively hope to keep us on an even keel through every storm.

Grant, Father, that our eye may be single, that our interest in winning the great eternal future which Thou hast promised may be the first and uppermost consideration in our lives. May we not be too concerned with what we shall eat or drink, or wherewith we shall be

clothed, always aware that the well-being of the new life is more vital than our daily food, and the health of the new man of greater consequence than the greatest temporal good.

Help us to live above the level of those who make food and drink their aim in life forgetting that Thou knowest they have need of these things, and that they must be kept secondary. The invisibles are the realities, and the intangibles are the permanencies. May we then set our affections on things above, assured that if we seek first Thy kingdom and the righteousness that will fit us for it, every needful thing will be provided.

Be with Thy people wherever they are, with all who are striving to learn and live Thy glorious precepts; be with those in sickness or trouble, and those who have not our privilege of constant assembly; and may we see Thy hand in all the affairs of life, and always say, "Thy will be done!" Forgive us for the sins we have turned from and forsaken, and may we never look back, but press with all our might and strength toward the mark of the prize, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. Amen.

And what tremendous value they *can* yield.

If only we could learn to watch our moments as we watch our dollars and dimes. How many idle moments we let slip—moments that we could, with a little concentrated effort, turn to spiritual profit. How can we measure the value of the moment we use to check our attitude, to listen to our words, or preview our thoughts. Who can tell the value of the moment we seize to catch a fresh vision of the goal ahead, or send a sentence prayer to heaven. Yes, only a moment, but how much it can yield!

Paul's Concern

Oh, that we today might catch the spirit of the apostle Paul, that tireless dynamo of spiritual energy! We have not the least trouble seeing what concerned him. "Brethren," he wrote, "I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14). We know a little of the activities that filled his days—travelling, seeking the necessities of food and shelter, tentmaking, teaching, writing, sitting in prison—yet what was he doing all the time *inside*? "This one thing I do," he wrote. One thing was dominant, and from this he could not be moved. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

See this noble Apostle kneeling down on the shore to offer one last prayer with the Ephesian brethren he loved. What was his great concern? Listen to his pleading words: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Can't we feel the concern, the love, the self-sacrifice in that warning?

Yet Paul's concern for others, deep though it be, was always secondary. Over and above all was his personal concern for himself and the fulfilling of his own obligation to God, on *finishing* the work he had begun: "that I might finish my course with joy" (Acts 20:24). And the only way to finish with joy was to keep on pressing, struggling, fighting, all the way to the end. With such determination he was sure to win. And when the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is spread, he will be there. Yes, he will be there—will we?

The concern of the beloved John was that his children be found walking in obedience to God's truth: "I have no greater joy than to hear that

Each hour is loaded with spiritual possibilities. If we miss them, it is our own fault.

my children walk in truth" (III John 4).

The patriarch Jacob, leaning on his staff, blessed the two sons of Joseph "concerning things to come." Where was his concern? His mind was set on the future.

What of us? Where is *our* concern? Is our eye of faith fixed on the great things God has promised, or are we distracted by present delights, present troubles, present distresses? Are we contenting ourselves with goals already achieved while we let valuable opportunities slip through our fingers?

Lessons from Jesus

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught several lessons on properly placing our concerns. Comparing the security of spiritual achievements with that of anything we might set aside for ourselves in this world, He said:

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21). Yes, every one has treasure. And where our treasure is, there will be our concern, our heart, our motivation, our first love.

This is the Master's question: Where is your treasure? Where is your heart? What is your really first concern in life? Then He compares the possibilities—and let us notice the contrast in their surety, the contrast between things temporal and things eternal; between the things of this life that so soon are gone and the life and joy that last forever. In the everyday affairs of life it is simple wisdom to purchase things which will last, things which have quality and durability. And that is exactly what Jesus is advising here: Concentrate on securing the things which will last.

The "moth" and "rust" He mentions are especially meaningful here when we consider what they would have meant to people of Jesus' day. He first says to avoid the things that moths can destroy. In the east, a substantial part of a rich man's wealth was in elaborate

***He is foolish who gives his heart to
joys which the years can take away—
he is asking for disappointment!***

clothing. When Gehazi, servant of Elisha, wished to make some forbidden profit out of Naaman, Gehazi asked for a talent of silver and two changes of raiment (II Kings 5:22). A goodly Babylonish garment tempted Achan to sin (Josh. 7:21). We are foolish, says Jesus, to set our hearts on such things, for moths get at them and their value and beauty are soon gone.

Then there is the threat of "rust." The Greek word translated "rust" means literally "eating away." It is the picture of a man whose wealth consisted of large stores of wheat and other grain. Rats and mice could easily invade and ruin the entire supply.

Jesus was saying that the man is foolish who finds his consuming pleasure in things temporal, for they are bound to offer diminishing returns. He is foolish who gives his heart to joys which the years can take away—he is asking for disappointment! And yet how much we see of it, people whose whole life and love are bound up in going and coming, getting and spending, with little or no thought of the future. It may be all good and profitable, as long as it lasts. But the not-too-hidden truth is that it cannot last. Sooner or later the years will take their toll; health and strength will vanish, and the life that has been centered in these will be broken.

What a contrast to the triumph of the one who finds his greatest delight in the real inner values, which time is powerless to erode, pleasures which grow brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

Again Jesus warns against pleasures that can be stolen. All material things are just that uncertain; build your happiness on them—on money and the things money can buy; on youth and the activities that accompany it; on health and the things you can enjoy—and you are destined to lose. In words of the poet,

**... pleasures are like poppies spread:
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever.**

If wise, we will build our happiness on things which are independent of the chances and changes of this life, on the treasures which are eternal.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"—our heart, our affections, our real inner love and concern. It is not natural, it is not instinctive, to transfer our loyalties to things above, but it can be done; and oh, the delight, the security, the joy, the release that will come with the new perspective! We will learn to see everything of the present—pleasant or otherwise—in the light of things to come. In that bright, all-penetrating light, present pleasures will seem cheap and paltry; and present distresses will be viewed for what they are: minor, temporary inconveniences sent to train us for better things to come.

With such a picture before us, how can we possibly get distracted, even for a moment!

BUT, strangest of realities, we can. We are like the hunting dog that disappointed his new owner. The hunter bought the dog because, in the words of the former owner, she was really excellent in "tracking down the big ones." Eager to see how his new dog would perform, the hunter took her and set out for the woods. Sure enough!—no sooner had they gotten into the woods than the animal picked up the trail of a deer. Excited, the hunter followed close behind. Then suddenly the dog stopped, sniffed the ground, and headed in a different direction. She had caught the smell of a fox that had crossed the path of the deer. The hunter was somewhat disappointed, but still hopeful—at least he would get something! They followed a good distance, then suddenly the dog halted again, this time captivated by the scent of a rabbit that had crossed the path of the fox. And so on and on it went until finally the breathless hunter caught up with his new hunting dog only to find her barking triumphantly down the hole of a field mouse.

Oh, how far short of our goal we can fall when we let ourselves be distracted by the things at hand. Jesus says it again in Matthew 6:22, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." It is another problem that comes from misplaced concern: the problem of distorted vision. With one eye on the earthly and the other eye on the heavenly, we will not be able to see either clearly.

He says it again in verse 24, using another simile: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Yes, you cannot be faithful to two masters. This is not a threat, but a truth plainly stated. A slave in those days was a living tool. He had no time which he

could call his own. Every moment belonged to his owner.

This, then, is our position as servants of God. We never have the right to ask, "What do I want?" but must always ask, "What does God wish for me?" The Christian has no time off from his responsibility. There is no time when he can relax his Christian standards and call his life his own, as though he were off duty. Spasmodic, off-again-on-again service is no service at all. Being a Christian is a full-time job.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The point is not that possessing wealth and serving God are incompatible, but that *serving* what Jesus calls "mammon" cannot coexist with the service of God.

The problem is one of making the right choices. And when all is carefully compared, the choice narrows down not to a hundred possible masters but only two, which Jesus calls "God and mammon." God stands for all that is holy, supreme and everlasting, while "mammon," coming from an Aramaic word meaning "property" or "riches," implies the many facets of worldliness. In other passages of Scripture the choice is between figs and thistles, right and wrong, the Father and the world, the narrow road and the broad road, time and eternity.

Choose we must, not just once but again and again and again. Life is a series of choices. If we choose to make the things of this world our first concern, that is all we will have; we will never receive anything eternal. That is why Jesus advised, "Be ye not of the world." "For the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof." Only "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17).

Jesus' climaxing thought is in verse 33 of Matthew 6: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." A lens cannot have two focal points. A country cannot have two prime ministers. The universe cannot have two First Causes. And so a life cannot have two first concerns. One must dominate.

What is the propelling interest in our lives? What are we living for? What are we concerned about? If our real love and affections are bound up in God, our minds will as automatically turn toward Him as the hands of the compass point toward North, and nothing that comes or goes about us will be able to draw us off course. Whatever we consciously apply our minds to think about, the "pull" will be always there; and whenever our minds are freed from concentrating on the task at hand, they will instantly return to that which is good, and wholesome, and pure, and heavenly. The pull will be that strong.

We cannot take too seriously the invitation of our King. Opportunity is not forever.

And what we are thinking about is what we will be talking about. He who comes and goes in the service of God, swinging in and out like a door on its hinges, without concern or longing for the glory and majesty of his King and the invitation he has received, without a word of warning or encouragement to his brother, will never partake of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. For when he gets his prior duties all done and comes knocking, he will find that the place he could have had has been taken by another.

Oh, we cannot take too seriously the invitation of our King. Opportunity is not forever, and if we desire to have *our* life perpetuated in His Kingdom, we must be seriously seeking that Kingdom now. In the home, in the shop, in the field, in the office, wherever we are, we must be showing that we really *want* the things He has offered us.

If we are someday privileged to sit down with Christ in His Kingdom, we can be sure that it will be because we were above all else concerned about getting there.

MM

Gossip

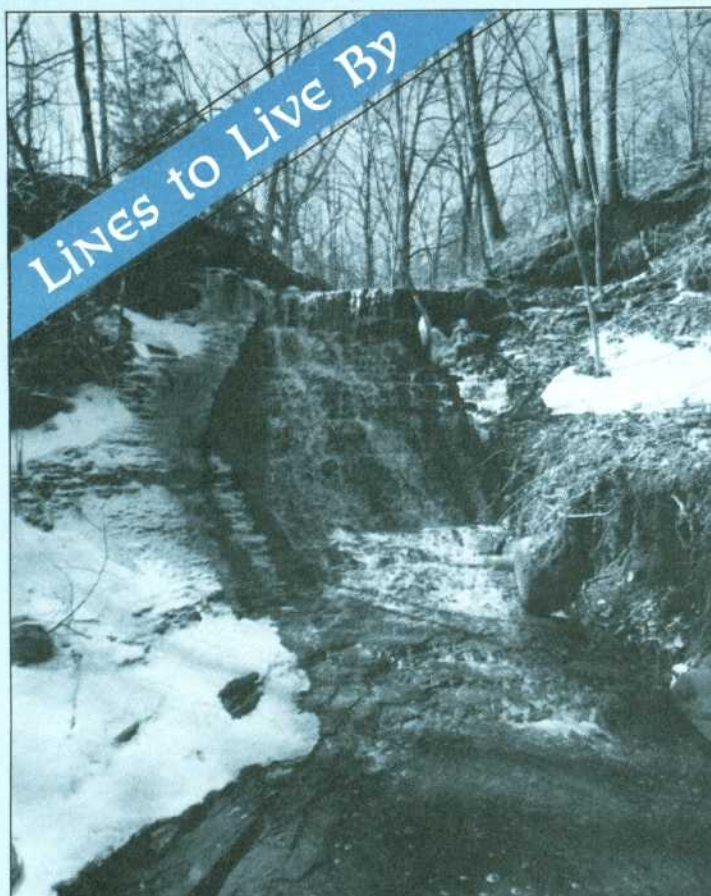
A witty dictionary defines a gossip as a person whose tongue continues to work after the conscience has ceased to function.

The tongue is a small but powerful thing. Sometimes its persistent wagging brings trouble and sorrow. The gossip apparently derives some measure of neurotic satisfaction from his sly insinuations and loose talk.

Gossiping wastes time and energy. If the energy and time given to unrestrained and malicious talk were devoted to criticising ourselves, much inner-satisfaction would result.

Why not try it and find out?

The next time there is an urge to make some unkind remark, change your thinking. Say something good instead. Something good can be said about everybody. It helps him; it helps the would-be gossip.



O give me the joy of living,
And some glorious work to do;
A spirit of thanksgiving,
With loyal heart and true;
Some pathway to make brighter,
Where tired feet now stray;
Some burden to make lighter,
While 'tis day.

*The way some people criticize, you'd think
they get paid for it!*

Closer Drawn To Thee

*In the morning when I rise
I shall lift to Thee mine eyes,
Asking only this of Thee,
Strength sufficient to be free;
Free from all the stain of sin,
Some new victory to win.
Father, this my prayer shall be,
To be closer drawn to Thee.*

*And at noontime may I be
Drawn still closer, Lord, to Thee
By the ties of righteousness
That are sure my life to bless.
So that now, the day half gone,
I can know I've done no wrong.
This my comfort then shall be—
I have closer drawn to Thee.*

*When at night I seek repose,
If victorious o'er my foes,
Over sin that would defile,
Over cares that would beguile,
I shall rest without a fear
That should the Saviour appear,
I may joy with Him to be,
To be closer drawn to Thee.*

*Whether it be early morn,
When the eastern tints adorn;
At the noontide; or at night,
When the heavens shed their light;
Through the day, and through the week
This shall be the joy I seek—
From all evil to be free,
And to closer dwell with Thee.*

*Closer, Father, yes, and still
Closer drawn to Thee, until
Every thought, and word, and act,
Everything I do, in fact,
Will reflect the holy life,
Free from discord, sin and strife.
This is my desire, to be
Daily closer drawn to Thee.*

—L. L. S.

Wash and Be Clean

A leper, all filthy and vile,
Came once to a Prophet of old
To be healed by his marvellous power,
Bringing treasures of silver and gold.
What were the words of the Prophet?
They teach us a lesson, I ween:
"Go dip seven times in Jordan,"
Go wash in pure water; be clean!

As Jesus was walking the highway,
A blind beggar sat by the way
Whose vision had never beheld
The glorious light of the day.
The Master, with such loving pity
For the one who sat there all alone,
Anointing his eyes, said kindly,
"Go wash in the Pool of Siloam."

If you find in your heart that you're hiding
The vile, leprous spottings of sin,
Go dip seven times in Jordan,
Go wash in the Word and be clean.

'Tis the way to the life that is holy,
'Tis the truest of offerings seen;
'Tis obedience, perfect and holy
To wash in the Word and be clean.

With faith in the salve of anointing,
And God's Word the water of life,
We may, if we will, come out seeing
Our way through earth's darkness and strife.
Are you one heavy-laden with grief?
Seek comfort and rest from the Word;
Cast all of your care on the Saviour
And walk in the law of the Lord.

Go wash, and come seeing the brightness
That's guiding the wanderers home;
Have faith, like the poor and blind beggar
Who washed in the Pool of Siloam.
Go wash and be clean, says the Master;
Go wash in the fountains that foam—
In the pure, cleansing fount of His knowledge—
Go wash in this Pool of Siloam.

My Needs

*I WOULD not lose the hard things from my life,
The rocks o'er which I stumbled long ago,
The griefs and fears, the failures and mistakes,
That tried and tested faith and patience so.*

*I need them now. They make the deep-laid wall,
The firm foundation stones on which I raise—
And mount therein from stair to higher stair—
The lofty towers of my House of Praise.*

*Soft was the roadside turf to weary feet,
And cool the meadow where I fain had trod,
And sweet beneath the trees to lie at rest
And breathe the incense of the flowerstarred sod.*

*But not on these might I securely build,
Nor sand nor sod withstand the earthquake shock.
I need the rough, hard boulders of the hills,
To set my house on everlasting rock.*

POINTS FOR THE MONTH

Week 1: May we master the secret of gentleness, so we can offer the cup of kindness.

Week 2: Read, meditate, grow.

Week 3: Our prayers and our devotions lead only to a spiritual deadend
if our heart is not right.

Week 4: What must be done *can* be done, and what *can* be done *we can do*.

Jeremiah, Prophet of Hope

WE SHOULD all like to become better acquainted with Jeremiah. Fortunately we are told more about this Bible personality than about any other prophet, for Jeremiah had a biographer such as few men had. Even though the book bearing his name does not record Jeremiah's experiences in chronological order, we must credit his faithful secretary with an exceptionally complete narration of events.

Some students shy away from Jeremiah as from a stern old prophet of doom who never really got anywhere. However, this is a false impression, for he was one of the brightest stars of Old Testament history.

Background

Jeremiah was born at Anathoth a few miles northeast of Jerusalem. When the young king Josiah came to the throne, the boy Jeremiah was growing up in this small, priestly village in the territory of Benjamin. His father was Hilkiah the priest, although not Hilkiah the High Priest of Jerusalem. Jeremiah was of the tribe of Levi and of the priestly line of Abiathar, a descendent of Eli the high priest of Samuel's time.

As a child, Jeremiah must have wandered up and down the rocky hills near his home and as a keen observer watched the speckled birds

and the migration of the stork, the turtledove, crane, and swallow of which he later wrote. He said that although these birds obeyed the times appointed by the Lord, the people would not obey God's judgments. Jeremiah probably talked with the shepherds and knew how their sheep were sometimes destroyed—the lion that came to slay, the wolf to spoil, or the leopard to tear to pieces. These dangers Jeremiah used later as a comparison to show the judgment that would come upon the people that had forsaken their God.

Jeremiah lived in a very troublesome time. The Northern Kingdom had been taken by Assyria, the great world power. Now Assyria was tottering on the brink of ruin, while Babylon and Egypt were struggling to take control. The wicked kings of Judah had introduced and practiced idol worship, and numberless heathen abominations flourished in the land, even the worship of Molech which included the rite of causing live children to "pass through the fire."

The Call

Jeremiah's call to the ministry came at this restless, uncertain time. The Lord informed him early that he was not to occupy the priest's office but to speak as a prophet for his

God. Like Moses, Jeremiah shrank from the task and pleaded that he was but a child. The Hebrew word for child means "one under 20." Because of a history upward of 40 years of fully active life, it is likely that Jeremiah was about 20 years of age when he was called. Again, the expression of being "but a child" might be symbolic of the Prophet's feeling of inadequacy. Even today when confronted with a task people sometimes say, "Someone ought to do it, but I'm not the type"; or "I am too young"; or "I am too old"; "I am not the one to do it." Jeremiah also had this conflict.

The Lord had a very unwelcome message to be spoken to the people. Jeremiah was to announce to Judah that because of their apostasy Jehovah had rejected them, and the kingdom of Judah would end. Long and patiently the Lord had borne their insincerity and moral corruption; now the time had come for recompense. God would withdraw His protection and allow them to fall into the hands of the Gentiles. Perhaps through suffering they would learn and turn again to their God.

It was God's will that Judah should surrender to these Gentile powers and acknowledge their sovereignty as a judgment for Judah's disobedience. The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, and the Prophet

made plain to the people that if they would accept their punishment in the right spirit and submit to the Chaldeans as God's will for them, they would live and their city would not be burned. But if they rebelled against this Gentile nation, they would be resisting God; for God was using that nation to chastise Judah. And they would have to suffer the consequences at the hands of the Gentiles.

A Mighty Task—and Opposition

God did not conceal from the young Prophet the opposition which he would encounter from kings, princes, priests and people. They would bitterly oppose Jeremiah and think him a fanatic. They would refuse to believe that God would ever permit the destruction of their sacred temple, Jerusalem, or their nation.

The false prophets would defy Jeremiah's words and say that God would give them victory, that Judah would continue as ever. But Jeremiah must have courage.

It was a mighty task that Jeremiah was called to face; who would not think so? He loved his people as nobody else, yet he was compelled to speak out against them. The nation he was to denounce was his nation; the people, his own countrymen. Jerusalem and the temple were as near to his heart as to that of any Jew. Yet, the Lord promised to be his guardian; and he must go forward. Indeed, the Lord said He would make him strong as a defenced city, an iron pillar, and a brazen wall against the whole land.

Sometimes Jeremiah became discouraged at the fruitlessness of his task. But the Lord was near to help. He encouraged him; He commanded him; He challenged him; He threatened him. One meaning of his name is "Jehovah hurls," and he has been termed the "Javelin of Jehovah." Indeed, he was hurled with violence

into the life of his nation, there to contend with forces too powerful for him to defeat, yet just as unable to break him.

And Jeremiah's words were strong. His appeal called for more than the forsaking of certain forbidden rites and customs. True repentance plows deep into the soul and stirs things up. It consists of a radical change of mind and heart. God would not compromise: If Judah would survive, she must reform.

Human, Like Ourselves

Jeremiah has been called the "weeping prophet." This is hardly fair. Certainly he wept; but he had plenty to weep about. It is a poor sort of man who cannot weep. Jesus wept; Paul wept; John wept much; Peter wept bitterly. Jeremiah wept not for his own trials, grievous though they were, but for the sins of the nation and the fearful destruction that those sins were bringing upon her. Who could watch unmoved the death of that nation, chosen by God to be a pattern to the nations around her? From his fiery denunciations of evil, we can see that Jeremiah was much too active a person for anyone to say that he wept beyond his share of weeping.

There is no question but that Jeremiah was a very great character, a truly noble soul. By nature gentle and tender in his feelings, he was unswerving from principle, courageous as a lion, zealous, tactful, yet very human in his godlikeness. He is an example and inspiration to all of us.

While Jeremiah was inspired of God to speak His words, yet he had personality. He was a man like ourselves, with all of our problems and battles, which often reflect themselves in his writings. He was also a thinker, pondering deeply the meaning of life and death. And we must

not imagine that his contact with the Holy Spirit was continual. This inspiration seems to have been more or less irregular: "The word of the Lord came to me" and "Again the word of the Lord came to me." In between these times the Prophet was thinking and working just like you and me.

It would seem that Jeremiah was in need of love and sympathy and encouragement, yet the Lord commanded him not to take a wife. His life was to be a living symbol in that critical time, his celibacy a sign to the nation doomed to destruction.

We should not think that all of Jeremiah's messages were of doom. His warnings and rebukes were often severe, but through them all, there is a longing tenderness that his people should return to God and be happy. Jeremiah pleaded with them and prayed for them until God told him not to. God, through Jeremiah, called for inner purity. External circumcision was of no value without a pure heart. The external temple would be destroyed because it had become the hiding place of sinners. External sacrifices had no value because those who offered them lacked spirituality.

The happiest time of Jeremiah's career was under the reign of Josiah, a God-fearing man, and one of the best kings of Israel. During this time, he seems to have been working and preaching, but not writing. Baruch had not yet entered the picture. When his good friend, the king, died in battle at an early age, Jeremiah mourned for him. Jeremiah was also contemporaneous with the vassal kings of Judah, Jehoahaz, Jehoakim, Jehoachin, and Zedekiah. All these were wicked rulers, as were those just preceding Josiah. These troublous times seemed to be the sort of challenge that called out the best that was in the prophets; they were Jehovah's good men in

bad times. Ezekiel and Daniel also lived for a time contemporaneous with Jeremiah, though they are not mentioned in connection with him. Ezekiel and Daniel prophesied in Babylon. The two minor prophets Habakkuk and Zephaniah were also very close to his time; also Huldah, the prophetess during Josiah's reign.

To understand the persecution which Jeremiah endured we would have to go with him from place to place and observe how he was ridiculed, ignored, beaten, misrepresented, starved, mocked, threatened and cursed by all kinds and classes of people, even by those he considered his friends. When he proclaimed God's message to his fellow-townsmen at Anathoth, they attacked him violently. When he spoke the Word of the Lord in the temple court, the priests and false prophets shouted that he must die.

When he was no longer permitted to speak at the temple, his word was written on a scroll and read by another; perchance the people should repent. When the king heard the scathing words from the written roll, he fearlessly cut the leaves as they were read and cast them into the fire. Then Jeremiah took another roll and wrote on it all the former words, and added even more urgent warnings, for indeed the judgments of God were closing in on this obstinate king and his people. Once when he acted out one of his symbolic warnings before the elders, they smote him and put him in stocks at the Benjamin gate of Jerusalem so that all who passed by might mock him.

Besides these hardships, Jeremiah was repeatedly imprisoned. On one occasion those in authority cast him into a slimy pit, from which only the pity of a courtier Ebed-melech delivered him. After this, Jeremiah was placed in the court of the guard where he remained until the city

was finally taken by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

After the first deportation of captives, Jeremiah sent a letter to the captives in Babylon urging them to submit, to settle down and live peaceably in Babylon, offering them forgiveness and hope if they would obey. We read this letter in the book of Jeremiah (chapter 29).

Prophet of Hope

Over and over again hope is reflected in Jeremiah's message and in his life. Even just before the final fall, while in prison, he purchased a piece of land from a cousin to demonstrate his faith in God's promise, for the Lord had said, "Houses and fields, and vineyards shall again be possessed in this land." Jeremiah reminded the people of that glorious future time when a "king shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and justice in the earth," when everyone shall know the Lord from the least of them to the greatest.

When the final destruction of Jerusalem came, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, charged the captain of his guard to take good care of Jeremiah, do him no harm, and let him do as he wished. Jeremiah chose to remain with the small remnant that was left in Judah. The Captain left him in the charge of Gedaliah, the governor at Mizpeh, a God-fearing man and friendly toward Jeremiah.

The short interval of peace was soon followed by the treacherous assassination of Gedaliah, abetted by the jealous eye of Ammon's king. Now the people feared what the Chaldean king might do. The remnant inquired of Jeremiah what they should do, but when he told them not to go to Egypt, they refused to listen. Setting out for Egypt, they compelled the now aged Prophet and Baruch to go with them.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah at Tahpanhes in Egypt and he continued to warn his people of the judgments that would come upon them if they continued to worship other gods. But they would not listen to him. Both men and women declared openly that they would offer incense to the queen of heaven, the gods of foreign nations.

Jeremiah continued active in Egypt for some time. Solemnly and bravely he continued to plead with and warn his people. We are not told what happened to him, but when we last hear of him he must have been between 70 and 80 years old.

We have scarcely approached the border of Jeremiah's experiences. We have not touched the depths of his sayings. The book of Jeremiah was written for us. While his sayings have an immediate application to his time, they have a significant application to our day. We are living in a time even more critical than Jeremiah's. Prophecy is being fulfilled and will continue to fulfill. Gentile rule shall end. The wicked will be cut off and the righteous delivered. Let us take heed to God's warnings and prophecies and not be like the obstinate Jewish nation who refused to listen. We may think we would never worship such gods as Baal and Molech or the sun and stars; but do we let our own thoughts and ideas hinder us from serving God in all purity?

Through years of rejection and persecution, Jeremiah clung tenaciously to his task. His faithfulness to his call makes him a prime example of devotion to God at great personal sacrifice. May his life stir us with courage to fearlessly and wholeheartedly serve God in the midst of a decadent and evil world.

MM

In Everything Give Thanks

THANKS is joy communicating to God and to one another. It cannot be silent when it has so much to rejoice about. Thanksgiving is interlocked with the joy of making known all that has come to us to make life complete and satisfying. Joy speaks forth its thoughts of gratitude, and feelings of appreciation. It is always looking for something good to compliment, something beautiful to commend, and something fine to talk about.

A joyful spirit gives honor where honor is due. It gives word bouquets when they can be enjoyed. It thinks on things that are true, honest, good, and pure—and it fashions words that express appreciation for these qualities.

We parents always remind our children to acknowledge anything that is given to them. The gentle reminder is, "What do you say?" This thankful response to kindness, thoughtfulness, and helpfulness should become a permanent part of our dispositions as we follow the admonition, "In

Every Day, Every Day

every thing give thanks."

The grace of the Lord enables us to mature enough that we go out of our way to call attention to the things that please us. We are on the lookout for ways to give words of encouragement. We take time to let the other person know how much they mean to us, how much they have influenced us, and the contribution they have made to our lives.

God's grace is sufficient to help us give thanks in the midst of every situation, even though we cannot give thanks for everything.

May we be quick to send our thank-you notes to God, and to those who are a part of our everyday contacts.

Rejoice Evermore

REJOICING is joy compounded. It is joy multiplied. Joy squared. This intensified joy is to be operational in our lives in everything, everywhere, and evermore. When we become new creatures in Christ, we possess an optimism that rejoices moment by moment, hour by hour, and day by day.

If we rejoice evermore, we will be joyous when the Lord gives; and when the Lord takes away, we can still say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord." We will be joyous when praise comes our way and when blame is given; when we have it easy, and when we have it rough; when we are lighthearted and when we are brokenhearted; when we are getting the breaks and when the breaks are going against us; when all appointments turn out to favor us and when we have disappointments; when the sky is clear above and when the storm clouds gather; when prosperity is filling the horn of plenty, and when adversity leaves the cupboard bare; when everybody seems to understand, and when nobody understands; when compliments come our way, and when correction is our lot; when the breezes are gentle and when the gale is turbulent.

God will help us to grow into spiritual giants so that we can reach the level of maturity where we can "rejoice evermore."

We have some giant strides to take before we reach this level, but let us do some climbing today.

"Everyday with Paul," by Mendell Taylor. Copyright 1978 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City; used by permission.

✓ God Means What He Says

THE LORD is a serious God, who means just what He says. The sooner we realize this, the safer we will be. It is our responsibility to pay attention to His commands and obey.

The Book of II Samuel has a good lesson for us which we should never forget. It happened in the time of David.

David gathered together thirty thousand chosen men of Israel to go to the house of Abinadab to bring up the ark of God. Thinking a cart would be a convenient way of handling this rather large and cumbersome piece of furniture, and wanting it to travel safely, they secured a new cart for the purpose, set it upon the cart, and started on their journey.

There was only one problem with this: it wasn't the way God commanded that the ark should be carried; hence, their action, however carefully planned and executed, was disobedience. His command was explicit and plain: Put staves through the rings provided that the ark may be born upon the shoulders (Ex. 25:14, I Chr. 15:15).

When we disobey God we should not expect our disobedience to go unnoticed. We should never take anything lightly that God says.

The children of Israel needed this lesson. Here were thirty thousand of the chief men of Israel bearing the ark on a cart when God had com-

manded that it be carried with staves upon the shoulders. Could He let this go unnoticed? No; one little act of disobedience leads to another, and soon there is hardly any semblance of reverence at all.

The people bringing up the ark were half asleep, spiritually speaking. They seemed awake, but they needed arousing to the obedience of God's exacting words. They needed a shaking; and before long they got one, all thirty thousand chief men. As the oxen shook the cart, the ark seemed to tip, and Uzzah put forth his hand and took hold of the ark. This might seem like a very small thing to us, but God means what He says. "God smote him there for his error" (II Sam. 6:1-7). The Lord did not hesitate, but acted immediately.

What about us? Are we half asleep, half awake? Do we justify ourselves in our actions, thinking that what we do is all right, even if it isn't strictly according to the command? Let us be careful, lest we disobey the commands God has left for us, as did Uzzah and fail to grasp eternal life.

Some would argue that God had no right to smite Uzzah, that a little sin is nothing serious; that God really didn't mean it when He said through Jesus, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." But if we want

God's blessing, we must believe the Word of God and never think or even feel that He doesn't mean something He says.

Oh, how many times have we heard that it is impossible for us to be perfect! But is God unjust to require it of us? Christ was a perfect example and He said "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). Abraham thought that God's commands were all just requirements, and obeyed. Noah was another of whom it is written that he was "a just man, and perfect in his generations" (Gen. 6:9). Zacharias and Elisabeth walked in "all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). This is evidence that it *can* be done. As a matter of fact, the Revelator in his heavenly preview of coming events, saw on Mount Zion one hundred forty-four thousand whose records were perfect, who stood "without fault before the throne of God." We know it is possible. But it is not possible for us as long as we are not willing to obey.

Did David and the thirty thousand chief men of Israel learn their lesson? They got a shaking, but did they learn their lesson? It seems they did, though many may have forgotten soon after; but the account continues that David turned aside and took the ark into the house of Obbedom where it remained for

three months. David was indeed shaken by the experience. He, too, needed to learn to pay attention, that God does mean exactly what He says. After three months David returned to the house of Obededom to bring up the ark of God, but not without paying strict attention to the ordinances of God.

This time David went about bringing up the ark of the Lord quite differently. These were his instructions: "... None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever," said David (1 Chr. 15:2).

David convened all Israel at Jerusalem for the occasion. "Summoning Zadok and Abiathar the priests along with Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab the Levites, David said to them, 'You are the heads of the Levitical families: purify yourselves, you and your fellows, for bringing the ark of the Eternal, the God of Israel, up to the site I have prepared for it. It was because you did not carry it at first, that the Eternal our God broke out upon us, because we did not go about it in the proper way'" (1 Chr. 15:11-13 Moffatt). The Lord does mean what He says: "God broke out upon us, because we did not go about it in the proper way."

David had learned his lesson well. No doubt about it, God *does* mean what He says.

How about us? Are we being careful to follow God's words exactly? Are we imploring Him for guidance, or do we think sometimes that we know best? What about that last time I had a few choice words of my own? Was this in keeping with the Lord's requirements? When I lost my temper the other day, did I remember that God really means it when He says I must put away anger? "And be

ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another" (Eph. 4:32).

Since life is so short we must be doing all within our power to be ready for Christ's return. Like Paul, we have to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14) or we will find ourselves wanting when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ. God's plan doesn't allow for any second chance just because we wasted our first one or just because we thought that everything He asked us to do wasn't really necessary. He is fair, and rewards all

exactly according to what they have done. It is written in Revelation 22:12, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." His reward will be with Him, then and there, and He will dispense it to the faithful. It will not be, "Go and work some more and come again to receive your reward when you are ready."

God knows best and He does mean what He says. Let us be careful to hear His every word that we may, in the end, meet His approval. Let us be alert to not forget His "Royal Law." MM

Under Pressure ✓

THERE IS no worthwhile accomplishment in life that does not require pressure. Men must train for a high station in life; they must prepare for greatness. This effort toward their goal must be constant and vigorous. Any letdown means failure, and another will take the coveted position.

Speaking of the Kingdom, Jesus declared, "Every man presseth into it." All who desire life in that blest abode, press eagerly toward their goal. There can be no drifting, no idle or passive waiting for the end. While the day of salvation lasts we must continue our pressure.

Through the past centuries many have had a vision of the Kingdom to come, and had a desire to live therein. But the majority did not have the qualifications to continue their pressure to the end. They started out all right; when things were easy they were willing to stay in the Way. But when difficulties were encountered they relaxed and began to drift.

But we must learn to press on at all times against the wiles of the old carnal nature. The pressure must be so constant and vigorous that all our wayward inclinations will be overcome. As long as sin lingers within or temptation lures from without, the pressing must not cease. Rather, we must continue pressing on until we leave behind the sins of humanity and stand at last in the Kingdom of our Lord.

MM



"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom"

(Ps. 51:6).

N FIRST thought, this would seem to be a perfectly natural attitude for the professing Christ-follower, to have truth in his heart, and to be truth-loving in every way.

But as we study the text, we see that it presents a more difficult situation. A person might not countenance lies or liars concerning anything temporal, yet, at the same time, might be a long way from having deep in his heart the "truth" here referred to. Truth is the quality or state of being true. It is absolute verity, the quality of a thing that is exactly what it purports to be; it is in complete accordance with the facts. To have truth in the inward parts, we must be true to God and keep every one of His commands.

This is a reasonable demand; wherein then does the difficulty lie? Inner honesty is often highly inconvenient, and many do not want to pay the price. It may demand a good deal of moral courage to refuse to be swayed by popular opinion. It may require readiness to sacrifice when personal advantages lie in one direction while the voice of right calls in the opposite direction. When fidelity exacts a fearful price, it is sometimes easy to stifle it by saying: "Oh, why try to be so different? If all these other people say it is right, your conscience must be wrong." In that very moment we start lying to ourselves for the sake of our own comfort, forgetting that God desires "truth in the inward parts."

Desiring truth in the inward parts requires a most strenuous work on the part of the person striving to reach that point, and is accomplished only by walking uprightly and working righteousness.

To crave truth in the inmost being is to desire purity; it is to desire truth more than excuses, and the revealing of sin more than covering it up.

The Moffatt Bible renders this verse as follows: "'Tis

inward truth that thou desirest; grant me then wisdom in my secret heart." If truth, or God's wisdom abides deep in our hearts, deep below that which is visible, it will work within us until we see what manner of persons we are. When we see the many spiritual sores with which we are covered, we will go about seeking a way to rid ourselves of this affliction. Having assured ourselves that God will be true to His Word, we read of our natural selves: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." We need to be taught the law of God that we may discern the evil from the good.

We ask, What then is good? "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8). We now see there is more to desiring truth in the inward parts than at first appeared. The prophet Zechariah gives us the formula: "These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath" (ch. 8:16).

Desiring truth in the inward parts teaches there is a work to be performed which is much opposed to the ways of the natural mind. If we "speak every man truth to his neighbor," we will be speaking only that which will strengthen faith in the eternal God. If we execute peace and judgment in our gates, we will never be swayed by prejudice or sympathy but will always stand on the facts in the case. And to love no false oath is much more than to avoid falsifying in court. We say we believe God and will obey all His precepts, but do our lips and lives agree? When something very trying crosses our pathway or someone is rude and hateful, do

we always remember to return good for evil and let a soft answer turn away wrath, or do we give a cutting retort forgetting the words of the apostle James to "Let patience have her perfect work"?

In "working" this righteousness, there is great necessity that we constantly speak the truth. Audible truth is not the only factor involved. The old adage is still true, that "Actions speak louder than words," and the prophet Samuel confirms this in saying that by God, "actions are weighed." Acting the truth and speaking the truth is only accomplished through the longing desire to have "truth" working within.

The result of this work will be a tongue and life established in the truth.

To support the inward verity for which he prayed, the Psalmist added this further petition for inward wisdom. The American Translation gives us the thought of confidence in God's wisdom. "The confidence of wisdom thou dost make me know." In every avenue of life we find wisdom a most necessary asset, and it is surely no less necessary in the plan of the Almighty. Job tells us that this wisdom must be imparted and how we must apply it: "I will fetch my knowledge from afar," and the Wise Man added, "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee (Prov. 2:10-11).

We find, then, that the knowledge which is in the hidden parts is the knowledge of God; it is not found in the archives of the learned of this world but in the unfailing Word of God. It will not only give us knowledge of ourselves but if we live according to this knowledge or wisdom of God, it will bring happiness to our days, and in the end long life in which to enjoy that happiness.

Reading again our text, we find it to be, in the words of a current commentator, a "corrective of the idea of original sin. If truth is what God desires in the inward being, sin is not according to his will. Sin therefore is not God's choice for man; it is man's choice for himself."

Inward truth is the true doctrine of the gospel. Truth is opposed to hypocrisy—dissimulation, formality; it is joined to mercy and kindness.

To have truth in the inmost being brings chain reaction. Truth expands as light, and He who is the "Light of the world" says "he that followeth me . . . shall have the light of Life."

There it is: inward *truth*, heavenly *light*—endless *life*!

MM

Mercy for the Merciful

(Continued from page 2)

really want God to forgive us our debts and trespasses only to the degree that we are willing to forgive others? There is a clear warning in this: that we *must* forgive others. For "if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:15).

Sometimes people think that forgiving others their debts, trespasses, or "mistakes" is the same as condoning their wrong. But nothing could be more mistaken. Forgiving those who have wronged us is part of our duty as Christians. When we are harsh and unkind, when we hold a grudge against another, when we harbor and nurse feelings of ill will, we only add our sin to theirs and both stand to receive condemnation from God unless we turn and seek His forgiveness.

All judgment, all retribution rests with God. If our brother fails to repent and persists in the wrong course after he has been warned, he will have to answer to God, not us. "I will repay, saith the Lord." Far be it from us to endeavor to play God's role. Our part is to make *ourselves* right, to realize how easily we, too, may fall, and to heed the words of Jesus, who said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt 5:7).

By our attitude toward our brother who has erred we reveal our own spiritual stature. And it is *our* attitude for which we shall have to give account to God.

True mercy seeks to help a brother—*before* he "trespasses," if possible—to point him to the right choice and so avoid the trespass. Failing in this, he then helps all he can *after* he falls to "restore such an one in the spirit of meekness," always considering himself, lest he also be tempted (Gal. 6:1). Temptations, trespasses, or simple "mistakes" happen so often, so easily. Mercy needs to be given just as often, and just as easily.

This is not a weak view of Christian mercy; it is God's view.

MM

✓ It is a most fearful fact to think of, that in every heart there is some secret spring that would be weak at the touch of temptation, and that is liable to be assailed. Yet it is good for us to think of, for the thought may serve to keep our moral nature braced. It warns us that we can never stand at ease, or lie down in the field of life, without sentinels of watchfulness and campfires of prayer.

• Sin Unto Death

“What does this verse mean: ‘If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it’? (1 John 5:16).”

In this passage, the apostle John is stating a principle regarding prayer for sin. Until we arrive at a state of perfection, we all sin, and we need God’s help in overcoming our sin.

The Apostle’s thought begins in verse 14: “And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.” Prayer to be acceptable must be within the framework of what God has promised. He has not promised a life free from temptation, pain, or hardship, though He has promised that we will not be tempted above that which we are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13). If we should pray for a trial-free life, we should not be asking according to God’s will.

Then verse 15 continues: “And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” Notice the Apostle’s positive stance: “we know.” There is no question in his mind that God hears and answers petitions that are according to His will.

But is John saying that we will get just anything we may ask for?

He has already said that our petitions, to be heard, must be in accordance with His will. But how can we “have the petitions that we desired of him” *when we ask*?

We must remember John’s point in the preceding verse, that our prayer, to be heard and answered, must be according to His Word. And prayer that is according to God’s will seeks only what *God has promised in His Word*. John then takes us one step further and says that all that God has promised we are justified in expecting. In fact, we can know that we “have the petition that we desired of him.”

By praying according to His will we are acknowledg-

ing our dependence upon God and asking for what He has promised; we are not asking for whatever *we* might happen to want. And when we ask for what He has promised, we may be confident that our petition will be heard and immediately granted; we will “have the petition” as surely and as soon as we ask.

For example, if we pray for strength to face the trials of the day, this petition is according to God’s promise, and we can be sure that we have that strength as soon as we ask. If we ask that our testings not be greater than we can bear, we can be assured that we have this petition, because it is among the promises of God. If we ask for forgiveness as we forgive others, we can know that as we forgive others He will grant us forgiveness, for this again is according to His promise.

Dr. Phillips captures the thought in his free translation: “We have such confidence in him that we are certain that he hears every request that is made in accord with his own plan. And since we know that he invariably gives his attention to our prayers, whatever they are, we can be quite sure that what we have asked for is already ours” (vs. 14-15).

All true prayer springs from our recognition of our need, and our Father’s response to that need: “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need” (Matt. 6:32). For this reason, Christian prayer is not persuading God to fulfill our desires, prayer is actively linking ourselves to the divine will, offering up our will to God’s desires. Prayer is the devotional expression of the principle by which God calls us to live, a life dedicated to His standards and bound up in reaching the goals He has set.

Christian prayer, while it includes petition and praise, is in essence a fellowship with God, as person with person. This is why “He hears” is so important. The Being to whom we pray is not a life force or a cosmic figurehead but a real being with whom we can communicate. And John’s point is that the communication travels two directions, from us to God *and* from God to us. The consequence of this two-way communication is a solid assurance within: “we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” As surely as we talk to God, God communi-

cates with us and answers us, if we pray according to His will. This high experience of true, believing prayer rebukes the skepticism of disbelief and confirms the faith of believers.

The next verse reveals John's keen awareness of human nature. He knew that Christians in the making do sin, and that they need the help of each other—and God—in overcoming their sin. It shows also that John recognized and wanted to encourage the spirit of brotherliness in the Church. One special feature of their brotherly kindness was praying for one another. When one sees a brother sin, he should pray for that brother; that is, pray for his repentance and forgiveness from sin. Verse 16 reads: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death."

What is a "sin not unto death"? It is a sin from which one may turn and receive God's forgiveness. The phrase "he shall give him life" could suggest God's promise of extended time to overcome the sin if one is truly earnest about overcoming it; or it could refer to the one's eligibility for eternal life, once he has repented and turned from his sin.

While sin "is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4) and "all unrighteousness is sin" (I John 5:17) and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), there are different degrees of sin, and different consequences. There was at the time John was writing a "sin unto death." The circumstances of the Apostolic Age were such as to make a certain type of behavior fatal. There is no remedy or forgiveness available, hence prayer should not be offered for his sin—and if prayer were offered for such sin it would not be "according to his will." John calls this special sin a "sin unto death."

What is this sin?

During the period when God's people possessed the

power of the Holy Spirit, God showed special favor to His people, and with that favor came a special accountability. There was a requirement of continuous, uninterrupted loyalty to the faith. No repentance and forgiveness was available to those who had had this power and then turned against God and fell away. Jesus described this unpardonable sin in Matthew 12:31, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men." "Blasphemy" according to the Greek-English Lexicon is "vilification, especially against God; evil speaking, railing" and is derived from the verb *blasphemeo* meaning "to vilify; speak impiously; defame, rail on, revile." To those who had had the privilege of possessing divine power God withheld forgiveness from the sin of "blasphemy."

The author of Hebrews also discussed this sin using slightly different terminology. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6).

In this age, when no one has Holy Spirit power, there is no danger of committing the sin for which we cannot pray and seek—and receive—forgiveness, provided we repent of and forsake that sin while we still have time. If we delay, if we persist in a sin and do not forsake it while we have the time and life, even today that sin cannot be forgiven. It, too, becomes a "sin unto death," or as rendered in the newer translations, "a deadly sin." There is no second chance. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).

MM

A quaker, raged at by a merchant, received the outburst of ill-temper in silence. Afterward, ashamed of himself, the merchant asked the Quaker how he was able to maintain such self-control.

"Friend," replied the other, "I will tell thee. I was naturally as hot and violent as thou art. I knew that to indulge temper was sinful, and I found it was imprudent. I observed that men in a passion always spoke loud, and I thought if I could control my voice I should suppress my passion. I have therefore made it a rule never to allow my voice to be above a certain key, and by a careful observance of this rule I have, by the blessing of God, mastered my natural temper."

The King's Business

Yes, we are thankful for the extended time, and we would do well to be about the King's business and not our own, for soon He will be right here among us.

So few are in the narrow way. Of all the multitudes that followed Jesus, only one hundred and twenty tarried in Jerusalem to receive power from on high. There were only eight saved in Noah's day. Let us not be discouraged but press steadily on.

Mississippi

R. S.

Dim or Glowing with Zeal?

The highest and most effective shining is pictured by Jesus our pattern and example, who was Himself a bright shining light in a world of darkness and superstition in His day. When He said "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven"; He meant for us to get on with the job of being a jubilant Christian glowing with the zeal of the Lord in our everyday practical walk before God and others.

As we go along from day to day, our contact with others determines the sort of lights we are, either dim or bright. The God that commanded Abraham "to walk before me and be thou perfect" is the same God today. Centuries have passed since Abraham and others like him responded to the challenge, resolved to be glowing and shining witnesses for God, come what may. They are in the Almighty's book of remembrance, never to be forgotten, because they dared to be different, dared to keep themselves pure and unspotted, faithfully resisting all

contaminating influences about them. Holding fast to that which was good and acceptable to God they triumphed victoriously over sin and evil. They will shine in the new heavens forever and ever. We can shine with them, if we meet the same tests they did and never grow weary in doing well.

N w Jersey

L. K.

With a Song in the Heart

We have so much to be happy about. Just to have a chance to work in the Vineyard is a privilege. God does not ask us to do anything impossible. We in these last days are offered the same wages which is eternal life as were the saints of old, like Paul, and Abraham, and Noah, and Moses. They went through many trials and we are spared the suffering they endured. Yet we are promised the same as they. What a merciful God!

I often think of the sermon, "When the Outlook is Bad, Try the Uplook." I thought it so good for these last days when the world is in such turmoil. We who have been blessed with Truth have so much to keep a song in our heart and our hearts filled with praise and thanksgiving to our wonderful Father.

Ohio

M. W.

Don't Forget

We all need to study and meditate on God's Word and not forget to pray often.

We need to watch our everyday life and conduct and make haste to do good works.

Texas

B. N.

Really Trusting?

The time is short for us. As our founder said, it must be spent in searching self and comparing self with the plain demands of God. We must have the Word at our command, so that it will flash upon our mind at every temptation. We should be constantly meditating upon the law of the Lord until it will be ever present with us. We must be like our Master pure and holy.

We must "live unto God not unto men." By study and meditation we can see what God has written and what He wants us to do. The things we naturally love are gone so soon. But if we think and do what God wants us to do, we can live and see the wonders of the universe.

Now is the time to get ready. He has given us this opportunity to obtain that great prize. We must think: Am I really trusting in the Lord and getting ready? Right now is our only opportunity.

Iowa

W. P.

Following

We must work all the time following the ways of righteousness, keeping our minds on God's laws, and working with all our mind might and strength. "For to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

How thankful we are that we have the truth and understanding has been shown to us that we may work and have no part in the things of the world.

Iowa

B. M.

Do Better

I must do better if I want real life, and that is my aim and object in this present existence. I must be training for something better, lasting, and worthwhile. I have had so much unlearning to do this last 20 years, but it's been worth it all. Now I live in another world, one of real hope.

*Heaven now is filled with Thee:
Soon this earth the same will be:
O Lord! Most High.*

*Living for self is all in vain,
Living for Christ, we'll live again,
And by such living, with Him
we'll reign,
Oh glorious hope!*

"Is this all there is?" Not for us if now we make every move count in being ready. What warnings we have for us to come away from Babylon. Most assuredly we have God's promise to be with us, and to see we have sufficient for each day. What more could we want? We have hope of wonderful glory and the knowledge of how to be eligible for it. What more can we ask?

I long to be free from mortality, able to go with freedom of the wind. That day *will come*.

England N. T.

Closer

We are getting much closer to "Maranatha," aren't we?

We must work hard to make self over into a new person. May we make the everyday lessons mean something in our everyday lives. For now is the accepted time, now is the Day of Salvation. We have much to do in so short a time.

What counts most in our lives is our spiritual progress. It must exceed that of the "scribes and Pharisees."

Nebraska M. M.

Keep Shining

We are so thankful for our perfect Example, Jesus, and for all the other faithful examples we read about in the Bible, for our teachers also in these end days who have made the way to eternal life so clear to us. May we strive to reflect the radiance of Truth as they did, by allowing God's Word to work effectually within us that we may be "a light that shineth in a dark place."

Before we can set an example to others, we must first be very watchful of self, our ways and our conduct. So let us strive to keep a bright glow of heavenly virtues burning around us and never let anything dim the radiance of its luster that our path may be as a shining light "that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The light of the righteous rejoices, so may we be doers of God's Word and not hearers only, knowing that our labour will not be in vain, for it tendeth to life everlasting.

South Wales G. S.

A Great Battle

How good God has been to us. Some of us have had only a few years with our eyes open to the narrow way that leads to life. God must have seen something in us that He could use now.

We are responsible for the lives we are living. Let us not lose heart in doing what is right, conquering self. The conditions in the world today should give us faith that nothing can shake. Let us please God by serving Him with thankful hearts and with holy fear and awe.

May we realize our great opportunity now and fight with our human nature to put away every sin. It is a great battle but we can do it by obeying God.

Newfoundland D. T.

Sure Promises

We surely do long for that wonderful time portrayed in Rev. 21:3, 5, which will shortly come to pass. The promise is so stimulating, encouraging and comforting to contemplate. When we think of the beloved John's words which the angel gave him to write, and that they are "true and faithful," because the revelation was made known to John by the angel of Jesus Christ "who in telling all that he saw has borne witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ," we really are encouraged to press on, to strive to make ourselves worthy to receive life, when the former things are passed away and all things are made new. "There shall be no more night, nor will they need the light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will give them light; and they shall reign for evermore" (NEB).

What a wonderful time to anticipate! We still have battles to fight and win, but "God will see us through," so may we keep His commandments that we "may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

South Wales R. B.

No Greater Work

There is no greater work a person could be engaged in than to kill the "old man" of the flesh. If we can overcome the flesh and our carnal thoughts, God surely will reward us for our victory, for He is faithful in His Word.

While in this life, the most important thing is to obey what we know. It is never too late to learn. If we can incorporate into our life the death to sin, we will certainly have an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of God.

Haiti E. D.

Megiddo Church
481 Thurston Road
Rochester, N. Y. 14619-1697

Second Class Postage Paid
(USPS 338-120)
Rochester, New York

Did You Get Your Copy ?



Millennium Superworld

Send Now.

Only \$2.00 postpaid

It puts the reader on the pulse-point of tomorrow!

NEW
EDITION

Understand the Bible

Study the Bible
BY SUBJECT

In the Beginning God	\$.40
The Bible: Light of Life .....	.50
Of Life, Death and Immortality .....	.40
Jesus Christ .....	.70
The Kingdom of God .....	.80
Apostasy and Restoration .....	.70
The Hell of the Bible .....	.40
The Devil of the Bible .....	.70
Baptism and Baptism .....	.40
The Trinity Mystery .....	.40
Did Christ Pre-exist? .....	.40
What About Original Sin? .....	.50
Atonement and Salvation .....	.60
The Sabbath of the Bible .....	.40
The Three Christs .....	.10
God's Spirit at Work .....	.90
Of Origins, Evolution and Order .....	.70
Three Classes of Humanity .....	.50
World Religions .....	.40
The Mosaic Law—Its Significance .....	.70
The Second Advent of Christ .....	.70
The Resurrection, Judgment and Eternity .....	.60
ALL OF THE ABOVE	\$10.00

ORDER NOW!

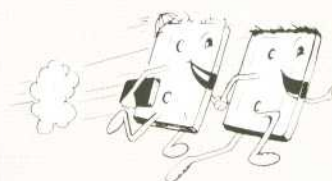
FREE!

LEAFLET SAMPLER

Biblical leaflets to give your friends, neighbors, relatives

- CHRIST THE HOPE OF THE WORLD
- DO YOU BELIEVE IN A FUTURE LIFE?
- A MESSAGE FOR YOU
- READ FOR YOUR LIFE!
- NO SMOKING—WHY?
- WHY?

Available
in quantity
Price: \$1 per 100



Cassette Subscription Plan

Six months ..
One year

It works like this: We mail you two cassettes—two church services, complete with message, prayer and music. You play them as many times as you wish for one month, then return them to us and we send you two other cassettes.

Order now! Share the rich experience of hearing the Word of God in your home.

READ for Your LIFE!

THE SABBATH
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE ATONEMENT
TRINITY OR UNITY?
HELL AND THE DEVIL
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?
THE GREAT APOSTASY
THESE THINGS SHALL BE
GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?
HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION

ALL for \$5.00, Postpaid