

Megiddo Message

MARCH/APRIL, 2002

*I am the way,
the truth
and the life.*

—JESUS (JOHN 14:6)

YOU'RE NOT SATISFIED...

by RUTH E. SISSON

Can you imagine a sinister voice whispering in your ear, "You're not satisfied ..."?

That voice is just what the advertisers today want us to hear, a voice that tells us we don't have what we deserve—until we buy their product!

Most of us are grateful to live in parts of the world where we are not subjected to continuous propaganda, yet our daily lives are bombarded by information, ideas, and images that are designed to shape our thinking. The mass media effectively controls the mass mind. Witness the millions of dollars funneled into advertising via billboards, banners, radio, TV, and web, not to mention the countless agencies and businesses that support these media. Why is it done, and why does it continue? Because it works! We hear or see, and soon we begin to believe it and start spending.

In the psychology of advertising, those images and that language are carefully crafted to draw the right response. Crafty? Yes! Subtle? Maybe! Secretive? No! Their avowed purpose is to get you, the consumer, to exchange your money for their product. The concern is not whether the information in the advertisement is totally truthful, or whether the product is reliable, but only whether the advertisement will persuade you the buyer to exchange your money for that product.

Advertisers go so far as to *create* a need or a want by connecting a certain product with our inborn hopes and dreams. They try to figure out what we hunger for and what we fear; what need is real and what is perceived. They even conduct extensive, costly surveys to measure our values and spending habits. The data collected is carefully analyzed, then used to promote the right product to the right set of consumers. The end result: increased sales and profits for the manufacturer.

What is the effect of media advertising on us as Christians? Let none think themselves immune. We are all exposed. How much gets through? How much are we influenced by our money-driven environment?

As Christians, awareness may be our best line of defense against the purposes of advertising and the creeping discontent it fosters because, try as we may to separate from our environment, we are still part of it. But we need not be influenced by it. The ploys of the advertisers cannot affect us if they do not strike a responsive chord within us. And why should they? If we have followed the advice of the apostle Paul and set our thoughts on "*things above*" (Col. 3:2), *we don't care* what kind of shampoo the movie stars are using.

We don't have any desire for a trip to some fashionable resort where the celebrities vacation. *We don't even know* what is advertised on TV because TV viewing is not on our agenda.

What about the ads that promote the entertainment world? If our "*life is hidden with Christ*," we won't even notice—our minds will be in another world. The best advertiser cannot make us dissatisfied with the car we

own if that car is still serving us well. Nor can anyone make us feel deprived or miserable because we do not have as much as our neighbors.

Why? Because Christianity is not about getting and spending. Christianity is about peace, joy, holiness, love, purity, and faith. Christians know that spending money does not make life meaningful. The book of Hebrews says it sharp and clear: "*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have*" (Heb. 13:5 NIV).

As long as we are in this world, we will be sub-

ject to its influence, but we need not be affected by it. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Rome, "*Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold but let God remold your minds from within*" (Rom. 12:2 Phillips). What is he saying? That our minds will be molded, and that mold will be provided either by the world around us or by godly influences. The choice is ours.

Would we stand against the influence of our environment? Then let us focus on the alternatives Jesus provides: a life of service and self-sacrifice. For "*He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it*" (Matt. 10:39 NASB).

If our heart is not in this world and the world is not in our heart, we won't even hear the voice that says "you're not satisfied." In Christ we have all that we need now, and will be looking forward to satisfactions even more abundant in the world to come! ♦



*Our minds
will be molded
either by our
ungodly
environment
or by godly
convictions.*

I AM the Way

and the Truth
and the Life. No
one comes to the
Father except
through Me”

—John 14:6



Which Way?

*What does Jesus
have to offer at the
end of His way?*

You are in a strange city, and you are lost. You stop to ask someone the way. He says, “I’ll tell you where to go. The street you want is the third left—no, it’s the second left—after the first right from the light. There’s a drugstore on the corner. Wait a minute, I think it’s a service station. Anyway, you can’t miss it.”

But unfortunately, you *can* miss it, and it is no surprise when you *do*.

Now suppose you ask another person. He says, “I’m going that way. Just follow me.” You get there easily, because this person is *the way*.

In our natural human condition, we are lost on the road of life, with no guide, no purpose, no direction, no goal. Some are saying, “Go here.” Others say, “Go there.” How are we to decide?

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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 (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

WE BELIEVE...

- ♦ in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- ♦ in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- ♦ in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to

heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

- ♦ in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- ♦ in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- ♦ in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- ♦ in ourselves as capable, with the help of God, of applying to our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

- ♦ in the promise of God, that Jesus Christ will soon return to rid the earth of all sin and suffering and inaugurate an eternal and worldwide kingdom of peace and righteousness, until God's will is done here as it is now done in heaven.

THE HERALD AND THE KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse"* (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

I AM the Way

continued from page 3

Along comes Jesus and says, *"I am the way."* Here is no confusion, no ambiguity, no danger of getting lost. For Jesus doesn't merely point to the way, or tell us about the way—He is the way. All we have to do is follow.

Who else could ever say with such confidence: *"I am the way"*? None. But we must remember Jesus was no ordinary man. Nor do His words bear an ordinary message. Divine in its authority, His message comes from the lips of the Son of God Himself.

"I am the way," says Christ. The very suggestion of a *"way"* implies destination. Every way leads somewhere. And every one instinctively seeks some destination, whether near or far, temporary or permanent. We are attracted to Jesus because the destination He sets before us far surpasses any we could find of ourselves. Our own goals, at best, are limited to the boundaries of mortal life. What does Jesus have to offer at the end of His way?

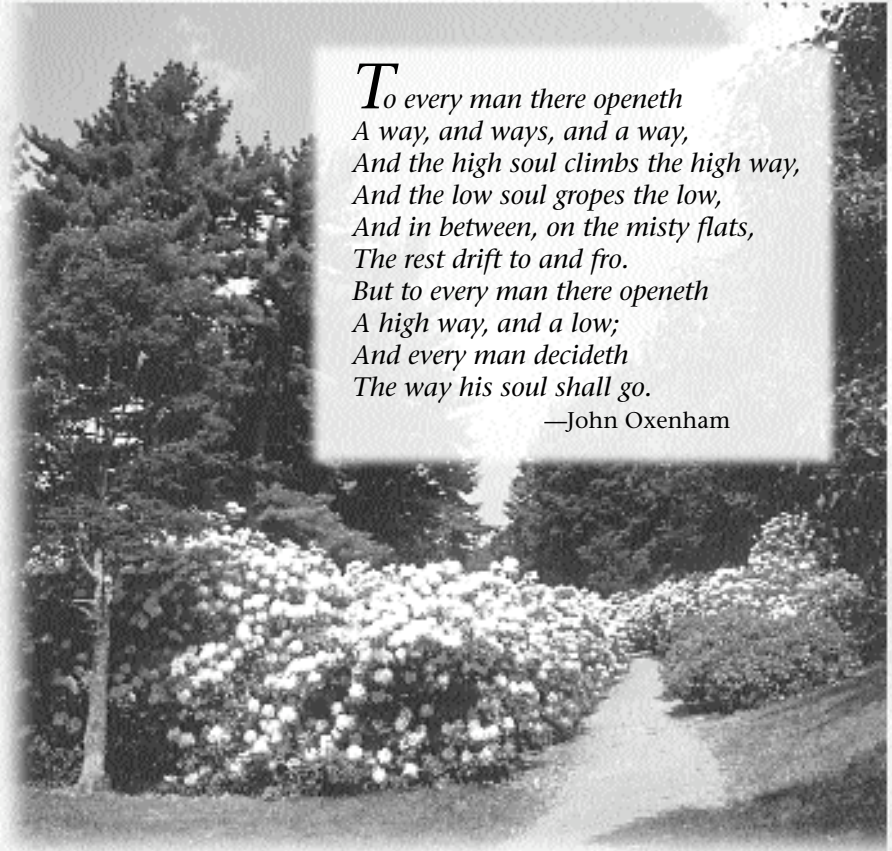
In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus described the end of His way vividly by contrasting it with the end of all other human possibilities. *"Enter by the narrow gate,"* He advised, *"for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few"* (Matt. 7:13–14 RSV).

There are only two ways, He says. All human roads form the broad way, and they lead to death. There is only one other way, and *I am that way*. And My way leads to life. It is the difference between the easy, natural way and the straight, disciplined way. It is the difference between God's way with its limitless possibilities and our own, selfish way.

In this world we are constantly faced with the short, easy way that promises immediate rewards. The benefits of the longer, difficult way are in the far distance. But we must remember: Good things never come easy; lasting things never come soon. Christ's way is the best in the end; for it is the only way that leads to eternal life!" (John 6:63). By His words He taught men the way to life. And more—by His flawless example of holiness in an everyday flesh-and-blood existence like our own, He showed men the perfection of total dedi-

cation to God. In Him the way to life became real and visible to human eyes like yours and mine. *"When he was reviled, he reviled not again"* (1 Pet. 2:23)—of whom else could this have been written? Who else could say in the fullness of honesty, *"I do always those things that please him"*? (John 8:29); or, *"As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do"*? (John 14:31).

When we outline the life of Christ, we describe the way to life for each of His followers. He led the way, being *"in all points*



*To every man there openeth
A way, and ways, and a way,
And the high soul climbs the high way,
And the low soul gropes the low,
And in between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A high way, and a low;
And every man decideth
The way his soul shall go.*

—John Oxenham

tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). *"Holy, innocent, unstained, far removed from sinful men"* (Heb. 7:26 Williams), Christ is indeed the way. Not only down the road of discipline and character-building do we want to follow, but clear through to the end until He awards us a place in His kingdom and a share in His immortal crown.

"I am the way," says Jesus. But the way is glorious, because it leads to life that is full and abundant and everlasting!"

If any man will come after me"—remember, "I am the way"—"let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Is it worth the journey? Are you ready to go with Him—all the way? ♦



I AM the True Vine

I am the Vine. You are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit: apart from Me you can do nothing.” —John 15:1, 5

Ouch!—That Hurts!

by ELVA E. BYERS

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful...

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

—John 15:1–4 NIV

When Jesus referred to Himself as the vine, He was using a figure of speech familiar to His audience. For centuries the vine had had a place in the religious literature of the Hebrew people, and in their national life it had become strongly symbolic.

The figure of the vine emerges in Psalm 80, as David sings, *“You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it”* (80:8 NIV). He was thinking of their miraculous deliverance from bondage centuries earlier.

But the symbol of the vine is used most often in the Old Testament with an idea of degeneration. Jeremiah pictured the vineyard of the Lord as well planted but now degenerate and running wild (Jer. 2:21). Hosea cried, *“How prosperous Israel is—a luxuriant vine loaded with fruit! But”*—he stops short. Israel was not the nation they might have been. *“But the more wealth the people got, the more they poured it on the altars of their foreign gods. The richer the harvests they brought in, the more beautiful the statues and idols they built”* (Hosea 10:1 NLT)

Now Jesus stood among His disciples and declared, *“I am the vine”*—true, real, genuine. *“And you are the branches.”* And what does He do with these branches? *“He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful”* (John 15:2 NIV).

Not long before, He had made use of the same figure. The twenty-first chapter of Matthew’s Gospel records the parable of the Vineyard. A certain householder planted a vineyard, which he entrusted to the care of gardeners. When the time was right, the householder sent his servants into the vineyard to receive the fruits of it; but the gardeners beat, stoned and killed them. So he sent more servants, but they received the same treatment. Finally he sent his own son, but they killed him also. The Lord’s vineyard, in the hands of unfaithful Israelites, was a national failure.

So what did Jesus do with the figure of the vine and the vineyard? He took the

vine, the emblem of Israel's national life, which the prophets had used to show national failure, tore it loose from the position of responsibility and privilege it had held, and said in effect, God has not failed, even if the nation has. He can still use you, but you must expect His pruning knife. Yes, you will feel the keen edge of His pruning shears, but that only tells you that you are not abandoned. He created the vine to bring forth fruit, and this is how He prepares you to bear fruit!

The figure of the vine is especially meaningful as Jesus used it when we think of how the vine lives and grows. The union between the branch of a vine and the main stem is the closest that can be imagined. Just that close is the union between Christ and every true believer. The vine is the branches' life, strength, vigor, beauty and fertility. The sap and juice that flow from the vine are the sustaining power of all its leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruit. Cut off the branch, sever it from the stem, and it soon will wither and die. The relationship between Christ and His church is just that close, just that real, just that vital.

Prune, Prune...

The symbol of the vine is particularly fitting because the vine, unlike most cultivated plants, requires relentless pruning. When Jesus compared Himself to the vine and His Father to the Gardener, He knew the arduous work, the severe pruning required. He knew the great amount of attention the vines must have if the fruit is to be harvested. A vine left to itself will grow—vigorously. But into what? A few years of neglect, and it will be an ungainly, tangled mass, choked with its own dead and worthless branches, capable of producing little or no fruit. Worse still, it will tend to revert to its original wild stock.

So along comes the Gardener. Clip! Trim! Snip! Break! whatever removes the worthless growth. Jesus welcomed the keen blade that removed from His life all that was worthless. When His heart's desire was denied Him by the higher demands of His Father's will, He remembered that the Gardener makes no mistakes, that nothing worthwhile will ever be removed but only that which would hinder greater yield.

Just as the vinedresser prunes and cuts back the branches of a fruitful vine to make it still more fruitful, so God uses the

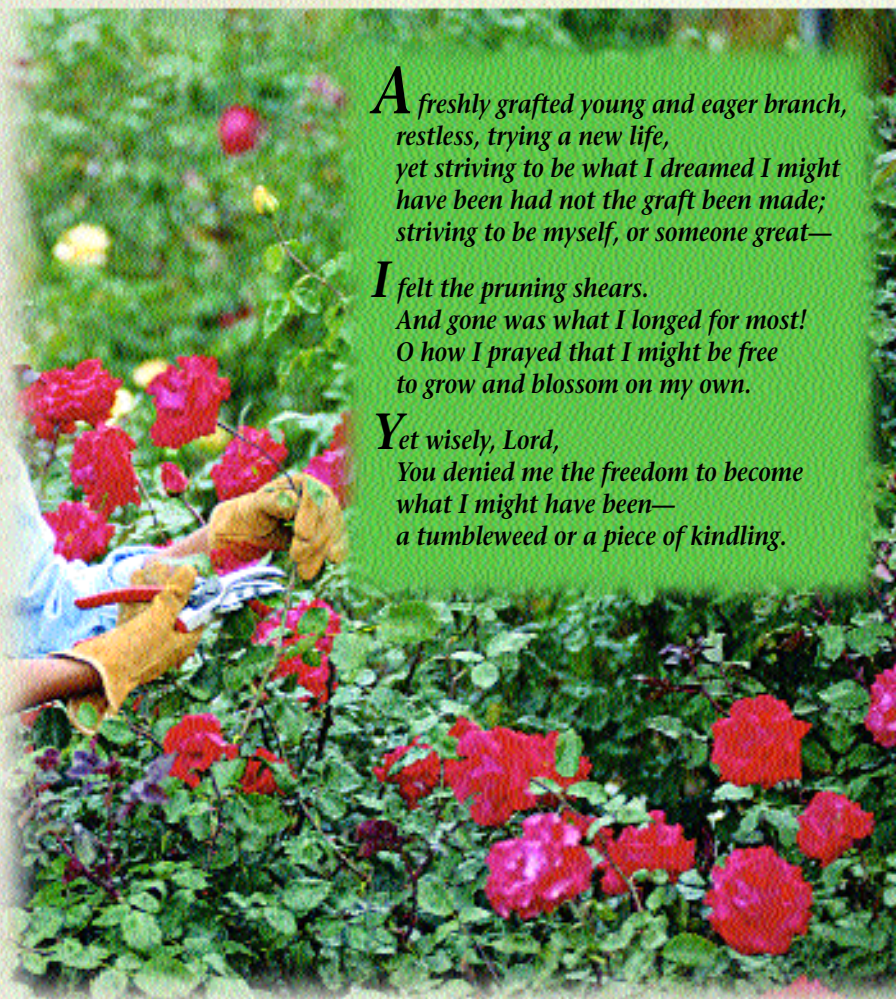
circumstances and trials of life to purify and prune believers to make them pure and holy.

Fruit is the sure evidence that one is a true branch of the true vine, fruit of patience, peace, love, humility. The disciple who "abides in Christ" as the branch abides in the vine will always bear spiritual fruit. Where there is no fruit there is no life. Good fruit will always be evident in the daily conduct of those who are part of the true vine.

The Great Gardener wants fruit. And He will not spare the pruning knife when He sees it is needed. The pruning may seem severe, but in the last day we shall know and see it was done well.

Would we be fruitful true branches of

*The Great Gardener
wants fruit. And He
will not spare the
pruning knife.*



*A freshly grafted young and eager branch,
restless, trying a new life,
yet striving to be what I dreamed I might
have been had not the graft been made;
striving to be myself, or someone great—*

*I felt the pruning shears.
And gone was what I longed for most!
O how I prayed that I might be free
to grow and blossom on my own.*

*Yet wisely, Lord,
You denied me the freedom to become
what I might have been—
a tumbleweed or a piece of kindling.*

the true vine? Then let us welcome the keen blade that God the Master Gardener uses to separate us from all that is low, base and selfish. Then we can be living, thriving, fruit-bearing branches that will be permitted to draw life-sustaining sap from the True Vine forever. ♦



I AM the foundation

When the Storms Come

by RUSSELL HAMBY

"I will show you what it's like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then obeys me. It is like a person who builds a house on a strong foundation laid upon the underlying rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against the house, it stands firm because it is well built. But anyone who listens and doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will crumble into a heap of ruins."

—Luke 6:47–49 NLT

Jesus knew a great deal about the necessity of strong foundations. He had been a carpenter. In fact, some scholars believe that He was actually a builder accustomed to masonry and stone. If so, it is no wonder that He built one of His most powerful parables around the everyday lesson of building on a solid foundation.

Certain characteristics about the two houses built in His parable are the same. The main difference is in the foundation. The house that did not survive was the one built on sand. It was most probably built in a riverbed or right by it on sandy soil. If you happened to build your house in a creek bed, you would have to suffer the consequences if a raging torrent came. You may have picked that spot because it was an easy place to build—it was accessible to water, seemed very convenient for other needs, and gave you some security from wind. But when the river rose too high, your house was likely to be destroyed by the stream.

Jesus had just delivered the Sermon on the Mount. He had presented His chief teachings, then He declared that the foundation that undergirded life was His teachings and His way of life. He declared, in essence, **"I am the one sure foundation of the life that stands."**

There is a second lesson we can draw from this parable, and that is the necessity for action. Following Him, He says, is not merely *hearing* but hearing and *doing* what He has taught. Some of us like to admire Jesus. Others say we will listen today and follow some time later, when we have more time and life is more normal for us. But Christ's teachings, to be of value, need to take on flesh in our lives today. We cannot act too soon.

Whether we choose it or not, each of us is building a house of character. First we lay the foundation. Then, still early in life, we begin putting in the planks of what we approve and uphold. Some of these may be warped, broken or marred; or they may be straight and carefully chosen. As we nail in impressions and habits, the structure begins to form. Every action, every lesson, every mistake forms part of our house of life.

What do we put into our foundation? What materials do we use? That decision is ours. We have the freedom to build just where and as we choose: on rock that will withstand the storms when they come, or on the sand.

One point we must remember: the storms will come. Wherever we choose to

build, the storms will one day beat upon our house. It will be tested by wind, rain, and flood. It will be tested by the raging storms of life.

God has never promised a storm-free life. Storms do come. Rains fall on the just and the unjust. The rains will come. They will beat down on our lives, and we need to anticipate them. If we prepare for them, we can avoid the "great fall" of the house that was not built on a proper foundation.

The ultimate foundation that Jesus is talking about is not visible. It is internal. It is the character we form by willpower, discipline, decision and faith. If we build it solidly on the principles Christ taught, we will be able to stand when the storms of life come raging, whether in the form of illness, grief, failure, criticism, or frustra-

tion. When we follow Jesus, when we live by His laws of life, we have inner braces that are stronger than the force or power of any storm. We will be able to stand.

If we will only listen, Jesus Christ can tell us how to build. He is the Master Builder, and His own structure is perfect—what better instructor could we find! We build our foundation of character on Him as we forge our life by His teachings. We stand secure when He has full authority in our lives, when we make every decision according to His will, when He is truly Lord of our life.

"No other foundation can anyone lay"—because no other foundation is guaranteed to stand when the storms come. ♦

The rains will come. We need to anticipate them and be prepared for them.



I AM the Bread of Life

*The Dream,
the Wilderness,
the Bread of Life*

"And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst...I am the bread of life."

—John 6:35, 48

You have a dream. We all have a dream. Perhaps we first became conscious of our dream in our early teens. We were old enough to sense the great possibilities of serving God, yet had no idea of what could bring that dream to fruition. We could only look to God, our heavenly Father, in trust.

You have a dream. We all have a dream. However buried, however torn apart, however tarnished, that dream persists. The Bible says that God has "planted eternity" in our hearts (Eccl. 3:11 NLT).

Our dream becomes clouded. Perhaps we are tempted to view the dream with cynicism, even with despair. And so we pass from the era of the dream to the era of the wilderness. But even in the wilderness God will lead if we are willing to follow.

In Deuteronomy 8, Moses is instructing the people of Israel to remember that during their time in the wilderness, during those forty years, they were led by God.

continued on page 16

I AM
the

Resurrection and the Life



Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life.
He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall
live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never
die. Do you believe this?" —John 11:25-26



Life After Birth

by RUSSELL HAMBY

*"Therefore, if anyone is in
Christ, he is a new creation; old
things have passed away; behold,
all things have become new."*

—2 Corinthians 5:17

When Jesus said to Martha at the time Lazarus died, "I am the resurrection and the life," He spoke of His own power to restore life. But He also may have spoken to our need to be spiritually alive HERE and NOW if we hope to have a part in that future resurrection to eternal life. This new life of faith that we must live now is the life which the author calls "Life After Birth."—Editor.

Several years ago, Dr. Ashley Montagu, an outstanding anthropologist, was speaking at the University of Miami. While being chauffeured along the fabulous Gold Coast en route to the university, he observed the people along the streets and on the beaches. He turned to his student escort and exclaimed, "The living dead!" The student, somewhat puzzled by the comment, asked Professor Montagu what he meant. He replied, "I see people here trying so hard to have a good time; but, they have a hollow look about them; they appear empty behind the eyes. Many of them live so superficially, I can't think of any way to describe them but as the 'living dead.'"

Jesus warned against undue speculation about the hereafter. His teaching about the future is very simple: If I apply myself to live according to His law of life here and now, I can depend on Him to bless me in the hereafter He has planned. My first concern now must become LIFE AFTER BIRTH, genuine spiritual life here and now.

The main thrust of Christ's ministry was to bring to life the "living" dead, those who professed to be "alive" but who were still, spiritually speaking, dead in sin. Jesus

was concerned about the atrophied mind, the dulled imagination, the calloused heart. Eyes that view without comprehending, ears that hear and yet are unbelieving—all must be made “alive”! It is the only route to what lies beyond the grave.

This, I believe, is a lesson we can draw from Jesus’ teaching surrounding the raising of Lazarus. Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” only if we have made the right use of our “life after birth,” the life that is NOW.

By saying “*I am the resurrection and the life*,” Jesus is pointing the way to future life, and that way is the blessed way of real, abundant, spiritual *life after birth*. It is a life that every believer can and must experience here and now. It is a life of growing in Christian love, joy, peace, goodness, kindness, mercy, patience, and every Christ-like virtue. It is the life of the inner man, the new nature by which we become that “all new creation” in Christ.

Can we not take the raising of Lazarus as presented by the writer of the Fourth Gospel as a parable of the power of God in Christ to raise “the living dead” to a life of holiness now, so that we can participate in the physical resurrection “*at the last day*”?

In other words, the hope of the resurrection for you and for me depends on our living the new life here and now. The New Testament teaches that that new life must begin for the believer in the here and now, or it will never begin. Many of the people who are preoccupied with resurrection after physical death, it seems, are looking for some kind of cosmic trick that will spring them from the grave without the experience of day by day growing a new life of holiness now.

Let me say it another way. If you are a believer, Christ for you is the Lord of life and death. But if you do not know Him as the Lord who can lift you out of death in sin to a new life here and now, how can you expect Him to raise you physically to new life in the future? The God who is calling you to resurrection—to new life—in the here and now of this time is the same God who will awaken those who are sleeping in the grave there and then.

We can depend on this because the Bible teaches that God keeps His promises. The New Testament writer assures us, “*The Lord is not slack concerning any of His promise*” (2 Pet. 3:9). We know this to be true from experience. But how can you

expect to claim the promise of life after death if you have not met the preliminary condition of living that new life after birth now?

Jesus’ promise, first spoken to Martha and in turn to every believer, is often printed in funeral bulletins—“In Memoriam”—on the occasion of a death: “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*” Then Jesus puts the question to Martha: “*Do you believe this?*” Martha replies, “*Yes, Lord: I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world*” (John 11:25–27).

Jesus did not put this question to Martha for His benefit but for hers—and ours. She needed to affirm her faith in God and His ability to restore—and perpetuate—life. And she needed to hear herself make this affirmation.

This most interesting and revealing dialogue between Jesus and Martha is too often neglected. Do you recall how it begins?

When Martha hears that Jesus is coming, she goes out to meet Him. She says to Him (there may be something of a reprimand here for, as the writer notes, Jesus has delayed His coming), “*Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.*” Jesus replies, Martha, why all the anxiety? Your brother will rise again. Martha responds, “*I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.*”

Martha has faith. She believes in life after death through a physical resurrection of the body. This was the teaching of God’s prophets throughout the Old Testament, and was not an uncommon belief among the Jews in the first century. Martha candidly was expressing this belief.

Jesus affirms that her belief is right in the first part of His answer to Martha: “*I AM the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live....*” For the faithful Hebrew, this was nothing new. But Jesus continues: “*And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.*” Think of it: never die! And who, Jesus, will experience this special blessing? It is reserved for those living and believing in Jesus when He returns.

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? It is to live in Him. Note the order here: “*I am the resurrection and the life. He who*

*Being spiritually
alive here and now
in the only route to
the life that lies
beyond the grave.*

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"I am the light of the world whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" —John 8:12

I AM the Light

The Light Still Shines!

by JOYCE MANKTELOW

Jesus: *"I am the light of the world."* (I am setting the example...)
Jesus: *"Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness."* (When you follow My example, you are safe in the darkness because you are walking by My light.)
Jesus: *"You are the light of the world."* (...Then **You** will be light, too.)

This bit of dialogue extracted from Jesus' words tells us the purpose of Jesus' life and ministry. He came as the Light to show us how to be lights.

When Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world,"* can't you imagine that those pious, hypocritical Pharisees were outraged? Who did this young upstart think He was anyway? What was this light He was talking about? And what was the "world" He thought He could light up? Everyone knew that He was only an obscure carpenter from nowhere (called Nazareth). Did He dream of being the Messiah foretold by Israel's prophets, the brilliant Light they had anticipated for centuries? Preposterous!

But there was another man in the picture, one who was giving this Jesus high recommends. John described His illustrious cousin in words filled with meaning and reverential awe. *"After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie"* (Mark 1:7 NIV). This Jesus, said John, even had authorization from heaven. At His baptism He had heard these words: *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

What was the source of His authority, His inner strength? It came from His close connection with His heavenly Father. No idle dreams, no wandering thoughts could He entertain, for He had one all-consuming, divinely assigned task: to do the will of His heavenly Father, to be the Light in a dark, sin-ridden world.

And what a Light! During three short, event-filled years, He lived and walked among men, showing them by example the better, more meaningful life. Attracted by His personality, large numbers listened. Patiently and tenderly He taught them the difference between darkness and light, faithlessness and faith, hopelessness and hope. At

the same time He showed them the meaning of gentleness, patience, purity, love. So compelling were the eternal principles of truth in His sinless life that *"In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men."*

What was the secret source of His goodness? His heavenly Father! And so He led them to the throne of grace, where they, too, could experience the thrill of closer communion.

However, a life so nobly lived will have enemies; and Jesus' was no exception. The Pharisees and chief priests, incensed by His sharp reproofs of their hypocrisy, would not rest until they had designed a dastardly plan to destroy Him. Yes, they succeeded in taking the life of this Greatest Man; but they could not put out the Light. During a

few desperate days it burned low, but just when the powers of darkness were shouting their success, the Light burst forth with new brilliance as God raised Him from the dead. Yes, resurrection! Jesus was alive! Death could not hold Him. He arose, a victor over mortality, lighting the way for any who would follow.

A short while later, this Light was taken to heaven, escorted by celestial beings to His Father's throne. And there He waits, victorious over the darkness of sin, enjoying the glory of His eternal reward until the day when the promise of the angels will be fulfilled: *"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"* (Acts 1: 11). ♦



You BE Light!

Perhaps no greater compliment could be paid an aspiring Christian than this, *"You're here to be light!"*

Jesus did not say, "You are here to *reflect* the light"—a good mirror could do that.

And He did not say, "You are here to *absorb* the light"—a piece of black cloth could do that.

Nor did He say, "You are here to *transmit* the light"—a window glass could do that. He said, *"You are the light"*—all meaningful, all inclusive, all responsible. You *be* light. In other words, "SHINE!"

What are we doing with this intense, penetrating Light? Is it visible to all with whom we come in contact?

Is our life shining brilliantly in this dark world? Do we dare to stand for right when others want to compromise? Do we insist on telling the facts when others want to distort or cover them up? Are we unmoved by the indifference, the coldness, the doubt so prevalent today? Or does our light flicker and fade?

Somewhere in the darkness a soul is searching for light. Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world."* Are we showing that light in *our* life?

Why do we want to keep our little lights burning true and bright? Because just a little further down the road of life we shall meet Him who could say, *"I am the Light of the world."* When He comes, He will not even see us unless we are lights, glowing and bright.

But what a glorious day for all who have followed Him faithfully! Such will be given a royal welcome to the celestial city, where *"they will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them. They will reign for ever and ever"* (Rev. 22:5 NJB). ♦

"You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine!"

—Matthew 5:14-16, The Message Bible

What did Jesus say to His disciples that day on the mountainside? *"You are the light of the world"* (Matt. 5:14). He did not say, "You are the light of the church" but *"You are the light of the world."*

Christians have a double assignment. Their lives were to radiate a pattern of good works and inspire others to live richer, fuller, more Christ-like lives.



I AM
a King...

King of Kings

Is This the KING?

Pilate said, "So, then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "It is you who say that I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice."

—John 18:37 NJB

THE Roman world into which Jesus came was not a good world in which to live. There was a semblance of peace and order, but it was the Pax Romana, which "made a desert and called it a peace." The vulgar fraud of Roman civilization, founded upon violence, armed conquest, pillage and human slavery, had been forcibly established in Asia Minor, North Africa, and most of Europe; but with greatness came moral decay. The sturdy virtues of the early Republic had disappeared in a putrid welter of immorality, political corruption, and universal pauperism. A symptom of the nation's desperate sickness was the growing popularity of the gladiatorial shows, which year by year became more elaborate and more brutal. Meanwhile, a handful of imperial favorites were bleeding the provinces for the profit of a few millionaire landlords to adorn a capitol that produced nothing and consumed all.

Behind the iron curtain of military might was discontent and rebellion. Nowhere was the spirit of revolt more chronic than in Judea, that narrow strip of land to the east that has made history out of all proportion to its size. Lacking even the protection of Roman law and justice, it was ruled in despot style by Herod the Great, a native prince who maintained his throne by collaborating with the conquerors. Human rights did not exist. Human life was cheap—even worthless—in the hands of a tyrant who murdered, tortured and robbed at will even while he restored the Temple of Yahweh in magnificent fashion.

Does one wonder that a proud and patriotic people like the Jews constantly dreamed of deliverance? While they had never demonstrated their ability to make use of liberty, there was in them a fierce nationalism that made them a perennial problem to their masters. From the days when they demanded of Samuel a king so as to

be like the nations around them, their desire to be big in the eyes of the world led them to forget that their real superiority and advantage lay in the realms of the spirit—in their custody of the Law and the Prophets.

Through the centuries the cord that bound the Jewish people in an incredible unity was the hope of the Messiah. Revealed through the prophets of Israel and Judah, this hope of a divinely sent deliverer and king had comforted them in captivity and supported them in persecution. What they overlooked, or forgot, or did not like to believe, was that this Messiah was to enter the world as all men, to prove Himself and develop His character and work out His salvation, His kingly power being reserved for His second advent at a time far distant, and that the blessings of His reign were not for the Jews alone but for all mankind.

Misunderstood and perverted, this hope had fallen into disrepute with those who had grown impatient and had become advocates of direct action. Self-styled Messiahs had arisen from time to time and taken up arms for liberation, but the inevitable result was a quick collapse of the rebellion, and then the wayside crosses with their hundreds or thousands of nailed and drooping victims.

Still there were those who hoped, even though it seemed a distorted and discolored hope. The priests and scribes, at least, must have known of the *"seven weeks, threescore and two weeks,"* or 483 years, which, according to the prophet Daniel began with the return from Babylon and should end with the arrival of *"Messiah the Prince."* Surely they realized that the time was near. This knowledge may well have accounted for much of the foment in Palestine at that time; for to a people in hopeless, galling bondage, the prospect of a deliverer, a king, who should forcibly break the power of Rome and restore the throne of David in multiplied glory was a ray of light in the darkness.

True, they had heard prophets to the contrary. In every other age, there are prophets of deceit who are preferred by the masses. But those who had sound

hope for the future were few and obscure.

Then one spring night a few humble, honest-hearted men saw and heard that which was not believed in their day but which has grown in wonder and beauty with the passage of the centuries. The setting was simple, almost crude. A band of shepherds guarded their flocks on a lonely Judean hillside. It was the eve of the New Year, and naturally, they would have liked to be in the town with their kin, keeping the feast. But sheep had to be tended.

As they watched, or slept, or talked, or brooded in silence, suddenly a great light shined round about them. And while they stood wondering, trembling, a mighty angel, glowing like the sun, spoke to them the deathless words:

"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:10-14).

Was this the King?

Those mysterious Wise Men (of whom we should like to know more) thought so, for when they came to Jerusalem inquiring, their question was, *"Where is he that is born king of the Jews?"*

Thirty years passed, thirty years of obscurity, thirty years of intensive preparation and discipline and training

*The great day of coronation
has not yet arrived. But it
is coming—soon!*

as the King proved Himself. Then He appeared publicly among men, a Prophet, a Priest, the Messiah. He knew where He stood, and He knew what He spoke of. For three crowded years He went about doing good—healing the sick, feeding the hungry, cleansing the

lepers, even raising a few from death, all the while preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Avoiding politics, and refusing worldly honors, He fled more than once from the worshiping multitudes who could not and would not realize that this was the time for repentance, not deliverance.

Was this the King?

Yet all the while He constantly affirmed His future kingship. And when He faced the Roman Procurator, His life hanging upon His answer to the question, *"Are You a king?"* He reaffirmed His claim with the quiet dignity of true royalty. *"It is you who say it,"* He answered. *"Yes, I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice"* (John 18: 37 JB).

Where now were His popular supporters—the adoring thousands who a month ago would have placed a crown upon His head, who a week ago had shouted and spread palm branches in His path as He entered the city? There were many of those of His own nation who had consistently opposed Him, rejected Him, persecuted Him. Shortly afterward the mob was howling for His blood. *"Crucify him!...We have no king but Caesar!"*

So they crowned Him with thorns, and mocked Him and scourged Him. And at high noon of that day they crucified Him.

Was this the King?

Pilate did not know, but the title He placed above Jesus' cross was a badge of glory, a testimony to an eternal truth. *"Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews"* gave no shame or scorn to true nobility. This was the King.

Centuries have passed, and the great day of coronation has not yet arrived. But it is coming. The truth of that noble statement lives on: *"I am a King."* The day when He shall take the throne of earth and execute judgment and justice worldwide is coming. It is near, very near. It is a prophecy on the verge of glorious fulfillment, for when He takes the throne He shall be *"King of kings and Lord of lords"* forever, even for ever and ever! ♦

I AM the Bread of Life

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The bread of adversity is the bread of life that Jesus provides for our growth.

"Remember," he says, "how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would really obey his commands. Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes by feeding on every word of the Lord....So you should realize that just as a parent disciplines a child, the Lord your God disciplines you to help you" (Deut. 8:2-5 NLT).

When we come to our wilderness—and we all do—we are tempted to feel that it is our singular experience, visited upon us and us alone. We imagine other people to be unburdened, unfettered by such a time of testing. But no, we all experience the wilderness of trial. And in our wilderness God gives us the bread of adversity and the water of affliction to help us grow.

The bread of adversity is the bread of

life that Jesus provides for our nourishment and growth, so that we can attain our dream. We need instruction. We must learn His ways and what pleases or displeases Him. Jesus said to His disciples in John 6:35, 48, and now He says to you and to me, "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE." In other words, Come to Me and let Me give you the answer to your needs. My words nourish. My words strengthen. My words sustain. My words—and My words only—can transform that old, selfish nature into that new, inner, spiritual life of holiness and purity that pleases our heavenly Father and opens the door to the future, eternal life that I am offering you. Come and eat. "I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE."

Do we want life, the endless life that Christ can give? Christ is the living bread. As we study and follow this LIVING BREAD, written for us in the Word of God, our eyes are opened and we know Him. And we hear a voice behind us instructing us, and a figure out front leading the way out of the wilderness of this world, saying, "Come, eat, LIVE!" ♦

I AM the Resurrection...

continued from page 11

believes in me...shall live" (John 11:25). Whoever believes in Me...shall live. In our believing in Him we come to live in Him (life after birth), and follow Him. This is how we recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the one who can and will ultimately redeem us from death if we are worthy.

To follow Jesus is to follow Him in the high purpose to which He committed His life. And to follow, we must be truly alive in Him, live that glorious "life after birth," be committed to His great purpose. There are persons who are dead as far as having any compelling God-directed purpose, any vital concern, any worthwhile cause, any noble aspiration, any "magnificent obsession."

It takes a great and heavenly purpose to endow life with "forever." Jesus took hold of such a purpose for His life and He wants us to do the same.

Some young person may be wrestling with his or her vocational choice. With the confusion of many

voices of different vocational options crying, "Choose me!" "Choose me!" may you hear the words of Jesus echoing through the centuries: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...." In other words, turn over the rule of your life to God, the God who rules with His law of love. Let His law be the *modus operandi* of your life, the director of every impulse, the "mind" behind every decision.

To be numbered among the "living" rather than the living dead is to live the higher life of Christ-like love whatever the risk, whatever the cost.

Those who are captured by the Christ who is the resurrection and the life will have a reverence and awe of

God now that will be seen in a life of loving obedience to Christ. They will live as He lived, and love as He loved. In this way they will be able to handle any rejection by men as He did when He prayed from the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." To follow Jesus is to be raised to a new and vibrant spiritual life in Christ.

The thrust of all New Testament teaching is our need to live "resurrected" lives here and now, alive from being dead in sin. As the Apostle Paul declares, "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead...we also should walk in 'newness' of life" (Rom. 6:4). It is the way to endless life hereafter.

Glory, Hallelujah! ♦

Procrastination is the grave in which opportunity is buried.

“Many Mansions”—Where?

“What did Jesus mean when He said, ‘In my father’s house are many mansions’?”

Your question is part of a passage which reads, *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:2–3).

It is generally assumed that Jesus is saying here that He, who is now in heaven, will return to earth and take His people back to heaven with Him so they can dwell there in some heavenly “mansion” forever.

If this passage were our only source of information about Jesus’ coming and His plan for His people, we might be justified in assuming that Christ is coming to take the saints with Him to heaven. But what are we to do with the following:

- ◆ the promise of the angel to Mary before Jesus was born, that *“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever”* (Luke 1:32–33)? David never reigned from heaven.
- ◆ Jesus’ words in His first sermon, *“Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth”* (Matt. 5:5).
- ◆ the words of the prophet Daniel, that *“the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him”* (Dan. 7:27). A kingdom “under the whole heaven” surely doesn’t suggest Jesus in heaven with His saints.
- ◆ the Lord’s prophecy through Zechariah: *“And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—‘The Lord is one,’ And His name one”* (Zech. 14:9).
- ◆ the 37th Psalm, where it is repeated six times, in varying words, that *“the meek shall inherit the earth....The righteous shall inherit the land, And dwell in it forever”* (vs. 11, 29; see also vs. 9, 22, 27, 34).
- ◆ The Lord’s Prayer: *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven”* (Matt. 6:10).
- ◆ In the book of Revelation, the saints are pictured with Jesus as reigning *“on the earth”* (Rev. 5:9–10).

Would Jesus be contradicting the main line of His teaching? What could He have intended to tell us in John 14?

If we could read the passage without any prior teaching in mind, I do not think we would see as much in it as is com-

monly believed. Observe that Jesus is stating four facts: 1) He is preparing something special for His people; 2) He is going away; 3) He is coming back; 4) He and His people will be together from that point forward.

But notice also that Jesus does not say He will take “you” (His people) away, only that He will “receive” them so that from that time forward they can be together.

What is the meaning of the word *mansions*? The original Greek is *mone*, and is defined as “a staying, i.e., residence (the act or the place):—abode, mansion.” It is derived from the word *meno*, meaning “to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy):—abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance).

Jesus may have been drawing an illustration from the temple at Jerusalem, very familiar to His immediate audience. In Jer. 35:2, we read the following: *“Speak to them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers.”* Verse 4 suggests that different chambers (rooms) may have been designated for persons of different rank. If the temple is a type of the Father’s house, may not the different “rooms” in the Father’s house be, in a spiritual sense, designated as residences of persons according to their rank (e.g., doorkeeper or official)?

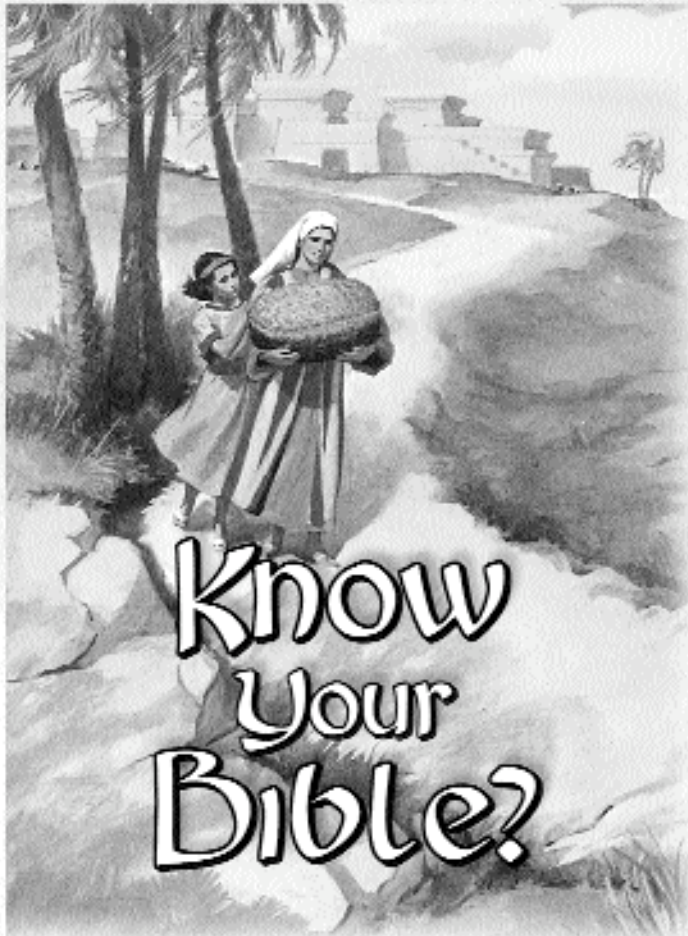
How can we understand Jesus’ words, *“In my father’s house are many mansions,”* if those mansions are not in heaven? On one occasion Jesus called the temple in Jerusalem *“my Father’s house”* (John 2:16). The saints are also termed *“the temple of God.”* We read, *“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are”* (1 Cor. 3:16–17).

Hebrews 3:6 suggests the same, that Christ is *“A Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.”*

If all the faithful together compose the spiritual *“temple of God,”* isn’t it possible that each could have a special abode or dwelling within that temple, as a share of Christ’s authority? Isn’t it also possible that He may have a singular reward fashioned for each of His children, in view of God’s plan to *“give everyone according to his work”* (Rev. 22:12)? There may be various levels of position, office, and rank among the faithful. Certainly the Apostle Paul will be worthy of greater honor than one of his humble followers, though both will receive immortality.

Jesus ascended to the Father’s right hand 40 days after His resurrection, to be judged and glorified. When He returns, He

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NAME THE MOTHER

1. She knelt before Jesus, asking that He let her two sons sit with Him in His kingdom, one on His right hand and the other on His left.
2. Name the mother who dressed her younger son in the clothes of the elder and gave him some food to take to his father.
3. This mother said to Mary, *"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb."*
4. She promised to give her child to the Lord all the days of his life, if He would bless her with a son.
5. Name the mother who said to the servants, *"Whatever he says to you, do it."*
6. Name the mother who instructed her daughter to ask the king for the head of John the Baptist.
7. This mother placed her son in an ark of bulrushes to hide him from the king.
8. This mother was cast out by her mistress together with her young son. What was her son's name?
9. Who became a mother for the first time in her old age (90-91 years old)? What was her child's name?
10. Name the mother of the child who became the "spiritual son" of the Apostle Paul.

WHERE?

1. Where was the hidden treasure found by the man in Christ's parable?
2. Where did Jonah seek to go when running away from his duty, and from what port did he set sail?
3. Where was Christ's home for most of the first thirty years of His life?
4. Where was John when he wrote the book of Revelation?
5. Where did Moses flee after he had killed the Egyptian?
6. Where was Moses bidden to take off his shoes?
7. Where did the prophet Amos live?
8. Where were two disciples going on the afternoon of the resurrection when the risen Lord joined them? What was the name of one of them?
9. Where did Paul and the others on board spend the winter after being shipwrecked on the way to Rome?
10. Where did Christ suffer just before his arrest?

WHAT CITY?

1. Here Paul saw a pagan altar inscribed with *"To the Unknown God."* He used this as the basis of a sermon which he preached to the people of the city. Some mocked him, others wanted to hear more.
2. The Israelites destroyed this city, and a curse was laid on anyone rebuilding it. However, it was rebuilt, and the eldest and youngest sons of the builder died as a result.
3. This was the city of the disciples Philip, Andrew and Simon Peter.
4. Paul wrote a letter to the Christians of this city, including the words, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
5. It was built by Nimrod, the hunter, and later had a population of over 120,000.
6. This city, much referred to in the Old and New Testaments, is used symbolically as the "Lamb's wife."
7. In the synagogue of this city, Jesus read from Isaiah. Those who heard Him wondered and said, *"Is this not Joseph's son?"*
8. The Ark of the Covenant was kept here until the Israelites took it into battle, when it was captured by the Philistines.
9. In this city, Ananias laid hands on Paul, and restored Paul's sight.
10. The church in this city not only received an Epistle from Paul, but also one which Jesus dictated.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 25

BE Courteous!

"Go get that bicycle pump!" Mike snarled at his younger brother.

"Get it yourself!" Jeremy flung back defiantly.

Hurriedly placing a folded towel on the growing pile of laundry, I headed for the back yard. As the door stood open to let in the spring breezes, I heard their voices clearly. What was the problem? I wondered to myself. These word hassles were becoming too frequent.

As I stepped to the doorway, I saw an angry Jeremy eyeing his older brother almost viciously.

"Whatever is the trouble?" I asked, looking from one boy to the other.

"Just because he's older"—Jeremy was all ready to defend himself—"he thinks he can boss me around and not even say 'please.'" Jeremy's lower lip protruded further than usual. "You'd think he was the president. It's—it's the big bully way he says it."

"I can tell you what the problem is." A big, deep voice spoke from behind us. "And it doesn't make any difference whether one is a president or a sibling. Does either son of mine know the meaning of the word 'courtesy'?"

"I didn't mean to be rude or bossy, Dad," Mike spoke lamely, "but I was in a hurry and Jeremy had the pump last."

"There is no excuse for being discourteous," answered Father firmly. "We are never too busy to be courteous." Placing a hand kindly on Mike's arm, Father continued, "I'm sure Jeremy would gladly have run an errand for his brother if you had politely asked him and not demanded it roughly."

Father sat down on the deck glider and I sat down beside him, glad for a moment to rest my feet. The boys slumped to the nearest chairs.

"Rudeness is lack of consideration for others. We interrupt others while they are speaking because we want to be

heard. We push others aside because we feel superior to them. They get in our way. It is our way they are getting in, remember. We can't wait our turn because we have so much more work to do than others."

"If courtesy is so valuable," interposed Mike lightly, "why isn't everybody courteous?"

"We are all born self-centered," was Father's answer. "Good manners have to be learned, and remembered. Then they have to be practiced."

"Mike, you would never think of speaking to your Uncle Gerald in the same way you spoke to Jeremy," I added.

"Of course not! But Uncle Gerald isn't my little brother."

Father leaned his head back, as if to analyze. "Somehow we feel we don't need company manners at home with those we love. But there is a verse of Scripture which says we should 'learn first to show kindness at home.' It's so

strange how we tend to be irritating, ugly and mean to those we love."

"I never see you or Mother rude with each other," volunteered Jeremy.

Father smiled. "We are glad you can say that, son. Your mother and I have tried very hard to make courtesy a habit, and"—Father tossed a cheerful glance my way—"I think we're doing it."

"Well, then," Mike spoke, a bit sourly, "what am I supposed to say to Jeremy when I know he's done something with something I want?"

"Be courteous, Mike. Think how you would like Jeremy to ask you, if you

were in his place."

"Well, Jeremy, I still need the bicycle pump. Would you please see if you can find it and bring it to me?"

No answer was necessary. Jeremy jumped up and off to the shed, where he knew he could find it. Courtesy made all the difference. ♦



We are never too busy to be courteous.

Questions & Answers

continued from page 17

will come bringing *"a crown of glory"* for every faithful one (1 Pet. 5:4). The Apostle Peter described that reward as *"an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"* (1 Pet. 1:4-5). Right now that inheritance is in layaway, in heaven, until the right time when Jesus comes to bring it to each faithful one. The prophet Isaiah foresaw this part of the plan and described it in these words: *"Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him"* (Isa. 40:10).

There is yet another reason for Jesus going to heaven: to prepare Himself for the great work which lies ahead for Him, which He will begin when He returns. This preparation is an important link in His career. He has been in heaven now nearly 2000 years, receiving that training. When He comes He will be well prepared. This aspect of His career is described in His parable of the talents, where He compared Himself to a *"certain nobleman"* going *"into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return"* (Luke 19:12). When this was spoken, imperial Rome was the governing authority, and all governors had to be directly commissioned from Rome. To become a governor of a province, one had to go to Rome, present his credentials, and receive an official appointment. So Jesus went into *"a far country"* for His preparation, even heaven itself, where He has been judged, accepted, and commissioned, and when the time is right He will return.

The Apostle Paul also described the reward of the saints as *"a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,"* which Jesus will come and bring to us, that we may be *"further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed by life"* (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

Jesus went away, and we have every reason to believe He is coming back to be with His people here on the earth, not in some faraway heavenly abode. When Christ's work here is complete, earth will be annexed to heaven, when God's will is done here as it is done in heaven (1 Cor. 15:28; Matt. 6:10). We look forward to that Day!

The Date of Abib or Nisan

I read in the Megiddo Message that "Abib is the first new moon following the spring equinox." I have researched whether Abib was the month with the first new moon after the equinox as you state, or whether it was determined with some flexibility as long as the Passover (Abib 14) was after the equinox. I would be most interested in any historical documentation to support your statement, as I have not found any.

The Bible tells us that the first month on the calendar, as God instructed Moses to measure time, was the month Abib (Ex. 12:2; 13:4): *"This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you...On this*

day you are going out, in the month Abib." God also instructed Israel, *"Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib the Lord your God brought you out of Egypt by night"* (Deut. 16:1).

In the book of Esther, this first month is given a second name, Nisan. *"In the first month, which is the month of Nisan"* (Esther 3:7). There is yet another mention of Nisan in Nehemiah 2:1.

How was the date of Abib or Nisan determined? For this we must rely on history, and it does seem that your observation is correct, that *"with some flexibility,"* the people observed the new moon nearest the equinox rather than the new moon following the equinox. But as you say, this is difficult to verify. In the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, volume 3, under *"Jewish calendar,"* it is stated in a discussion of the intercalary months that the months of the Jewish year were lunar but that the calendar was actually a composite arrangement. It states that the months of the Jewish year *"are lunar, but from time to time an extra month is intercalated in order to effect an adjustment with the solar year. This was done even before the establishment of the continuous calendar. It was regarded as a matter of special importance that the month of Nisan should not begin before its tequsa (beginning of spring, or the moment at which the sun arrives at the equinoctial or solstitial point), and a second Adar was intercalated as required."* Then in a footnote we find the following: *"As the feast of the Passover could not take place before the beginning of the tequsa Nisan (beginning of spring), i.e., the 26th of March, then, according to Samuel's tequsa, an intercalary month would already be required at the end of one year..."*

Hastings' *Encyclopedia* makes another point, also in a discussion of the intercalary month, stating that a leap year was decided upon only when required, the main factor in the question being the state of the young crops as it was desired that the Passover should coincide with the earing of the corn; the intercalary month was therefore always an Adar. It was not until a later date that the position of the sun was also taken into account. This procedure was continued after the destruction of the temple."

Dates of Jesus' death and resurrection

What day did Jesus die? When was He buried? On what day was He resurrected?

To understand the dating of events around the crucifixion of Jesus, we first need to review a few facts about the Hebrew calendar, which as far as we know was the calendar the Jewish people were still using at that time.

First of all, the day, according to the law given to Moses, was measured *"from evening to evening"* (Lev. 23:32). That is, the day began at 6 o'clock in the evening, rather than at midnight.

Next, we need to realize that the sacred year began in the spring, with the month Abib or Nisan. We learn from Exodus 12:2 and 13:4 that the first month of the year was called Abib, and this was the month in which the Israelites left Egypt.

The Hebrew month Abib commenced with the first new moon following the spring equinox. According to the original arrangement given to Moses, the first day of the year was also the first day of the month and the first day of the week. Remember, the day began in the evening (Lev. 23:32).

The Israelites were commanded to observe the Passover, which fell on the fourteenth day of the first month. *"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord's Passover"* (Lev. 23:5).

We also need to observe where the Sabbaths fell in relation to the month Abib and the new year. Counting from the first day of the year as the first day of the week, the seventh day of the year would be the first Sabbath; the fourteenth day would be the second Sabbath (also the Passover), etc. It is important to remember, however, that the second Sabbath (the Passover), like all days, actually began the evening before the fourteenth day, because of the *"evening to evening"* arrangement. Following the same pattern, the fifteenth day of Abib would begin before day fifteen, and the following day (still the fifteenth of Abib), was the Hebrew festival of waving the sheaf of the first fruits of wheat harvest. The command was, *"on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it"* (Lev. 23:10-11).

In the time of Jesus, the Jews were still observing the Passover on a Sabbath, as Luke 23:54 confirms. Speaking of the day of Jesus' crucifixion, we read, *"That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near."*

When did Jesus observe the Passover with His disciples? Was it on the usual Jewish Passover on the fourteenth day of the month? We believe that it was one day earlier, on Abib 13 rather than on the accustomed day, and that Jesus, knowing when He would be crucified, arranged it especially to accommodate the time. Recall that Jesus sent His disciples to make the arrangements, because He wanted to eat the Passover with them before He suffered (Luke 22:15). The gospel of John indicates that He did this before the regular feast day. We read, *"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended..."* (John 13:1-2). This suggests that had He waited until the usual time, He would not have been able to eat it with them. The supper with the disciples was *"ended"* and it was still *"before the feast of the Passover,"* the regular feast day.

The narrative continues with details of conversation that took place at that last Passover supper, how Jesus said that the one who would betray Him was present, and all the disciples asked, *"Lord, who is it?"* John also mentions how Judas left early, *"And it was night"* (John 13:30).

Following the supper, Jesus went with His

disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane, where He prayed and *"His sweat became like great drops of blood"* (Luke 22:44). There He was betrayed, arrested (Luke 22:54), and led away to be arraigned before Annas and Caiaphas (John 18:13; Matt. 26:57). These events took place during the evening and night of the thirteenth of Abib.

The following day, the morning of the thirteenth, He was taken before Pilate (Matt. 27:1-2), then sent to Herod (Luke 23:7), and back to Pilate again (Luke 23:11), then condemned to die, and by the sixth hour, at noon, He had been placed on the cross. By the ninth hour, or three o'clock, He was dead (Matt. 27:45-50). During the remaining three hours of the day He was removed from the cross (Matt. 27:59), placed in Joseph's new tomb, the tomb was sealed (Matt. 27:60) and the people returned to their homes to begin the celebration of the Passover feast (Matt. 27:62) during the early (evening) hours of Abib fourteen.

Following the events in this sequence, we learn that Jesus died about three hours (about 3 o'clock in the afternoon) before the Passover and the Sabbath began at six o'clock that evening.

The resurrection took place early in the morning of abib 15, the anniversary of the day when the ancient Hebrews waved the first sheaf of their wheat harvest before the Lord, to consecrate it to Him. The day was significant, Christ being the first fruits of the New, Spiritual harvest (1 Cor. 15:23). ♦

OBITUARY

Ernest C. Jones

On February 11, 2002, we met to pay our last respects to a friend and Brother, Ernest C. Jones. A veteran of World War II, he always said that his religious life began on the boat as he was returning from the service—he had grown up in a home without any religion, yet at this point he felt a strong desire to know God. Only a short time later, he married Ruth Switzer, whose family was already acquainted with the Megiddo Church.

Not long after they were married, Ruth's grandfather died, and the Megiddoes conducted the funeral—and the preaching was of special interest to young Ernest, because it did not follow the norm. It is said that when he heard them read from the Bible that "the dead know not anything" until they live again at the Resurrection, he was overcome and fainted. But he did not give up. He only wanted to learn more.

The solid Bible evidence appealed to young Ernest, and after the funeral he intensified his stud-

ies of the Bible, visited the Church, and later moved with his family to Rochester.

Brother Ernest was of a buoyant and kindly disposition, generous, good-hearted, and a real lover of life. Totally loyal as a husband, loving and caring as a father, hard working and always ready to help inside or outside the family, he was exemplary for his kindness. He was especially good to the children in his family, teaching and helping them wherever he could.

Brother Ernest had a passion for Bible study. In fact, when he died, he was seated at a table in his home, preparing the Bible lesson which he planned to present the following Saturday.

Brother Ernest is survived by his wife, Ruth Jones, with whom he shared life for 54 years; their two sons, L. Clyde Jones and Clinton Clark Jones, both of Rochester, New York, also a number of nieces and nephews, and grandnieces and grandnephews.

MINUTES

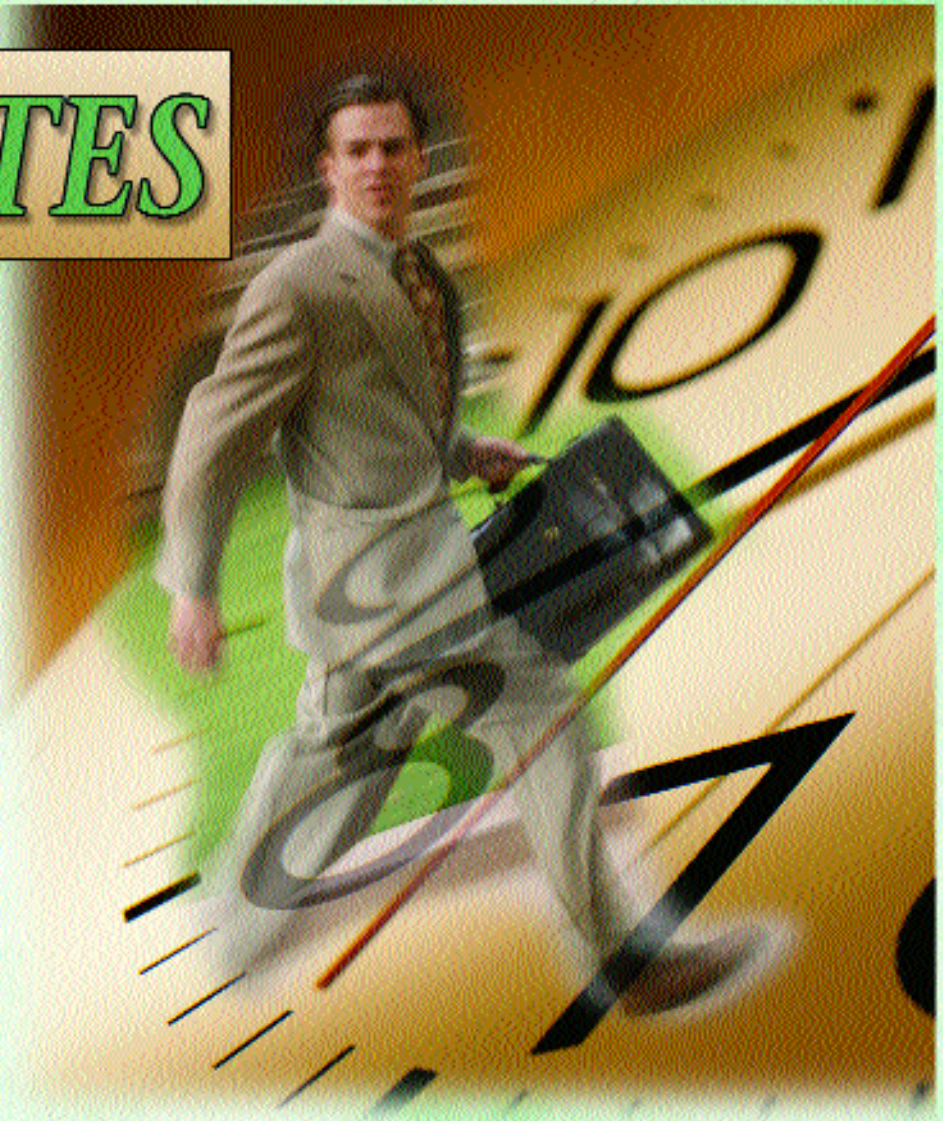
Another year stretches out before us. We call it a New Year. God calls it a new opportunity. This year holds for each of us about 526,600 minutes. And God is interested in every single one of them. He is interested in what you will be doing with the minute between 3:04 and 3:05 tomorrow afternoon and the time between 10:45 and 10:47 tonight. He is interested in those 2- and 3- and 10-minute periods of time that you call "mine."

David said long ago, *"My future is in your hands"* (Ps. 31:15 NLT). And in chapter 40, we read his exclamation of joy in the thought of the God he served. *"Oh, the joys of those who trust the Lord...O Lord my God, you have done many miracles for us. Your plans for us are too numerous to list. If I tried to recite all your wonderful deeds, I would never come to the end of them"* (Ps. 40:4-5 NLT).

And God is watching. Said David again, *"You know when I sit down or stand up, you know my every thought when far away. You chart the path ahead of me and tell me where to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am"* (Ps. 139:2-3 NLT). You know—every moment. That means God knows what you are doing, whether you are alone, or with a friend. He knows if you stretch your work project another twenty minutes so that you can draw an extra hour's overtime pay. God knows.

He knows when you put your loyalty to a friend ahead of your loyalty to Him, when you compromise your conscience to go outside His law, when you are away from those you respect. He knows.

He knows what you harbor and cherish in the portals of your mind, thoughts which no one else can read or guess. He knows the pictures that delight your heart, and the unfulfilled longings of your soul. He knows what you really love and enjoy. He knows.



And He cares. He cares about how we spend our time, because our time is a gift from Him. It is ours to redeem, commit, waste, or even steal. But it comes to us from Him. How are you treating your heavenly gift?

Time! God's time! It comes to us in measures of years, months, weeks, days, minutes, even seconds. Wasted years never start out as wasted. Wasted years begin with wasted minutes and seconds. They can be wasted in so many ways, or they can be profitably redeemed—even when we are relaxing, or waiting—it all depends on how we use the time. How we present it to Him.

The question of time and our stewardship comes down to how we are going to invest it—not the year, but the next few minutes, and the few minutes after that. We know that the whole year will be His if the minutes in it are His.

Best of all, He will know what He can depend on from us if we are giving our time faithfully, minute by minute.

The year ahead is His when we commit the minutes. Then, no matter what the circumstances of our lives, no matter what happens, each of us will know that God has us and our time in His care. That is the only way to live acceptably to God.

God's love, His blessing, His guidance, and His goodness don't just come to us occasionally. They come minute by minute, like every breath we take. Let God have those minutes, one by one. They are your life. Let God have this New Year. Commit it all to Him. Minute by minute.

Then see what He has for you—minute by minute, year by year—eternally. You will be amply repaid for your investment. ♦

The Right Time is NOW!

Everyday tragedies remind us how quickly life can end. Every day there are new victims of plane crashes, automobile wrecks, and the horrors of war which, if they were not on the other side of the world, or at least a hundred miles away, would keep us in a continual state of shock. Thank God we do not have to witness all the misery in the world, but we should not forget the lesson: that life is extremely brief, that *"we spend our years as a tale that is told"*; that life is *"swifter than a weaver's shuttle"*; that we are as the *"grass that withers"* and *"flowers that fade."*

As we step across the threshold into a new year, we feel a new sense of gratitude to our Creator for the gift of life, and the manifold blessings we enjoy. At the same time we are brought face to face with the reality that our days on earth are numbered. Our days in this age are numbered. Yesterday is passed; last year is passed; its events are sealed in God's book of remembrance, and the only way we can change the record is to change the way we are spending the present moment. For only this moment is ours, this moment and no more.

We are all slaves to time. There is no doubt about it. From our tenderest years, time follows us like our shadow. Even as children, we were frequently reminded of time. Some of the most unpleasant remarks we heard as children were: "It's time to go to bed," or "It's time to get up," or "It's time to brush your teeth." Even children are slaves to time.

The older we grow, the more insistent the clock seems to become. Everywhere people know the pressures of time, as they race from one engagement to another, fitting in this or that, giving a few minutes here, a few hours there. Time haunts all of us. Millions of people go to work every day and return home by the clock.

The Bible speaks of time this way: *"What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"* (James 4:14).

Because life is brief, because we have only a measured amount of it, no thoughtful Christian can enter the new year

without looking inward, backward, and forward. We look inward to see the progress we have made in refashioning the raw material we were given into something resembling the character likeness of Christ. We look backward to see the failures, the mistakes, the missed opportunities, with a resolve that we will make better use of our time during the coming year. We flex our moral muscles and determine that the sins that held us back last year will hold us back no more. From now on we will do better, and be better.

But haven't we done all this before? How many new years have we welcomed? One answer is appropriate for all of us: more than we have made use of.

**We cannot count
on tomorrow unless we
have used today.**

The Psalmist was reflecting on this great fact of life when he wrote those words so familiar to us all: *"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"* (Ps. 90:12). In other words he was praying, "Lord teach us to remember the brevity of life, and how soon it will be gone." We all know, but in

the hurry-scurry, hum-drum of everyday, we forget. The new year comes to remind us that there is only one right time to be all that we want to be, and that right time is now.

History is strewn with the wreckage of those who forgot: *"Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: Therefore...they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"* (Ps. 107:11-15). They forsook Him, but then they remembered, and turned back, and God in His mercy rescued them.

So let it be with us. Time and again we have forgotten; we

have fallen down, we have turned back in thought if not in deed. But let us this new year arise and call upon God. Let our heart prayer be: *"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."* Let the Psalmist's prayer be our prayer also. No one can say with any certainty, "I know that I will be living tomorrow." The thread of life is so fragile that none of us can boast that we own even one second of the future. Only the present moment is God's gift to us. Only the present moment can we really call our own, the moment in which we are now living. That is why the Bible is so explicit about the importance of the present moment: *"Now is the accepted time;...now is the day of salvation"* (2 Cor. 6:2). That is why it is important to resolve and act upon that resolve right now. The right time is now.

Who of us has not looked over our life and said many times, "if only I

It may be that we are harboring ill will toward someone because of something that happened long ago. The festering sore has lingered in our heart through the years. Perhaps we have said many times, "Some day I will make it right, some day I will get rid of these feelings." But in the meantime, we nourish them—not often, but occasionally. Once in awhile something happens to renew the feeling, and it grows a little stronger. When, oh, when will we face the reality of these feelings and overpower them? It will never be any easier than it is this very moment.

Or perhaps we look into our heart, and see a dear idol to which we are still clinging. "Some day," we promise ourselves, "we will let it go." But day after

strength continues to haunt us. We know that we are falling short of this complete dedication. But that little love or lust of the flesh is so close to us, and so near, and so dear. What shall we do about it? There is only one answer: To cast it down, break it, and do it now. It will never be any easier than it is this very moment.

We are here to change. We are not here to remain as we are.

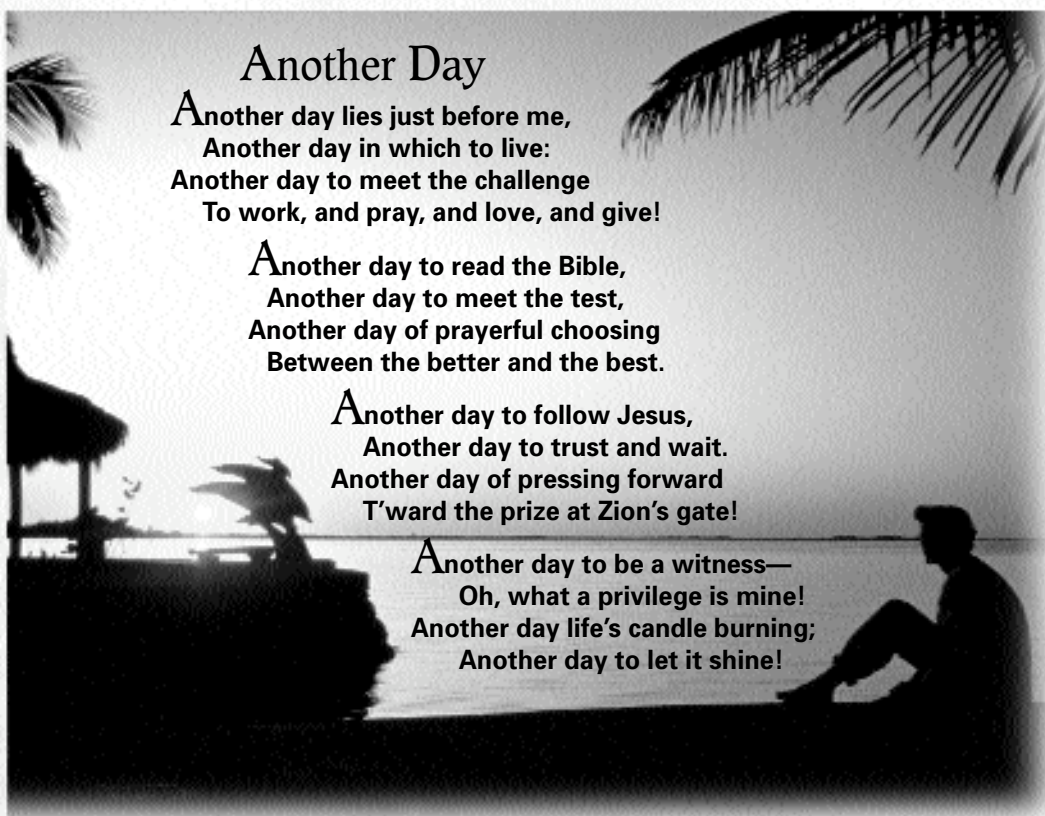
Or it may be a spirit of overconfidence that is holding us back. We feel quite surefooted, though we know inwardly our weaknesses. But when a severe trial comes, will we have the inner strength to trust everything to God, everything we have and are? This is a reality for which we must be preparing. It was not without purpose that the Wise Man wrote, *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart."*

But our own opinions, our own ideas, our own resources are so much closer, and surer. But if we cannot trust God in the small things of life, how can we trust Him in the greater things? How can we let go of our confidence in ourselves if we do not practice relinquishing it in the little things of everyday?

Or we may have said, "Someday, I will break this disposition of mine." Someday....but we keep putting it off, year after year, year after year, and all the while it grows stronger, and stronger. It is so natural, so comfortable, so instinctive to be the way we are. But we are not here to remain as we are. We are here to change, to make a total commitment of ourselves to God. We are not our own, we have been

bought with a price. Let us not enter the new year as we are.

Few mistakes are more common or more tragic than that of counting on time in the future. God does not guarantee us 70, or 80, or 90 years of life. Among the well known of this world,



Another Day

**Another day lies just before me,
Another day in which to live:
Another day to meet the challenge
To work, and pray, and love, and give!**

**Another day to read the Bible,
Another day to meet the test,
Another day of prayerful choosing
Between the better and the best.**

**Another day to follow Jesus,
Another day to trust and wait.
Another day of pressing forward
T'ward the prize at Zion's gate!**

**Another day to be a witness—
Oh, what a privilege is mine!
Another day life's candle burning;
Another day to let it shine!**

could get over this bad habit, if only I could get rid of this sin." Oh, the "if only's" are many! When shall we do something about it? Do it now! The right time is now! This is the only moment we can ever claim, and in it lies our only opportunity to begin anew.

day, month after month, year after year, we put it off. Meanwhile the idol becomes more and more a part of us, and the sacrifice harder to make. And meanwhile, that command to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our mind, and all our

many have been cut short. The poet Keats died at 26, Shelley at 30, Byron at 36. For each one, friends had prophesied a great future, but not one of them reached middle age. A well known missionary, Cecil Rhodes, planned big things for Africa, but died at the age of 49, saying, "So little done, so much to do."

We cannot count on tomorrow, nor is it within the promise of God for us, unless we have used the time that we have today. The present moment is the only time we have. Let us take advantage of it, and do it now, because there may never be another hour like this one for us.

Another reason we should "*number our days*" and "*apply our hearts unto wisdom*" is that the day is lost which does not add stature to our character. In eternity's scale of values, that day is lost which has no added light of knowledge, no growth of soul, no word of praise or prayer of thanks. For the dedicated Christian, prayer and praise are not occasional notes played on the organ of life; they are the very breath of life itself.

To multitudes, the Scriptures are an untapped treasure. This mine of spiritual gold lies unopened and unused, while they subsist in spiritual poverty. How contrasting the experience of Job: "*I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food*" (Job 23:12).

How small a segment of eternity is this brief period called now! And yet, how valuable it is to us. For us it is the key to all that lies beyond. By the use we make of the moment right now, we are determining our eternal destiny. We will be either a forgotten bit of dust, unknowing and unknown, or we will be

one of the family of God, enjoying happiness and delight far beyond our most exhausting ability to conceive.

Do we wonder that the apostle Paul pleads with us to "*redeem the time...make the very most of your time*"?

Oh, let the coming year be for us a year of growth such as has never been before. Let us be every moment developing our sinews of soul, that we may be strong to meet the tests this year will bring.

Let us fill each and every moment of this new year with a task consecrated to God. However ordinary or however lowly, each one can be God's if we make it so, and can

count to our eternal credit. Anything, everything that we permit ourselves to do, let it become His task, His work, His assignment, His glory, and His good.

And everything that we do, let it be done with love, love for Christ and love for one another within the bonds of Christ. For "*now abideth faith, hope and love; but the greatest and most abiding is love*" (1 Cor. 13:13).

Let us take time this coming year to live closer to Christ than we have ever lived before, to make His way our way, His will our will. The hour is coming when we will want His approval more than anything else in the whole world. Let us make sure that we are getting that approval on every deed, every thought, every feeling—right now. The right time is now. We cannot have it then, if we are not securing it now.

And now is the only time we will ever have. God says, "*Today, if ye will hear my*

voice," but we have so often responded, "No Lord, tomorrow! I will do better, or tomorrow I will break this habit." Or, "tomorrow I will resist this temptation." The other half of those statements—unsaid but just as real—is, Today I will give in to my lower instincts. Today I will gratify the flesh. Let no such compromise blot our record. As long as we are saying, "Tomorrow, tomorrow," we

None of us own even a second of the future. That is why we need to act on our resolves today.

can know that Christ will come and find us still saying, "Tomorrow, tomorrow," and the work that we had begun will be unfinished.

"*Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*" "Today"—not tomorrow.

If only we could bid farewell to the old year, along with all our sins and failures forever! If only we could so easily turn our backs on our old selves, and everything we want to leave behind! What a glad farewell it would be. Then we could look ahead to the glorious promises of God, and know that they will surely be ours!

Right now is the time to be taking the steps to make those promises our own. The right time is now. Not later on but now. Let those words ring in our ears: "Today if you will hear his voice...Today...Today...Today."

And today is now. ♦

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 22

NAME THE MOTHER

1. Mother of James and John (Matt. 20:20–21, 10:2)
2. Rebekah (Gen. 27:15–19)
3. Elizabeth (Luke 1:39–42)
4. Hannah (1 Sam. 1:9–11)
5. Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 2:4–5)
6. Herodias (Matt. 14:6–8)
7. Jochebed the mother of Moses (Ex. 2:8–9, 6:20)
8. Hagar, Ishmael (Gen. 21:9–10; 16:15, 19, 21)
9. Sarah, Isaac (Gen. 16:1; 17:17)
10. Eunice, the mother of Timothy. (2 Tim. 1:2, 5)

WHERE?

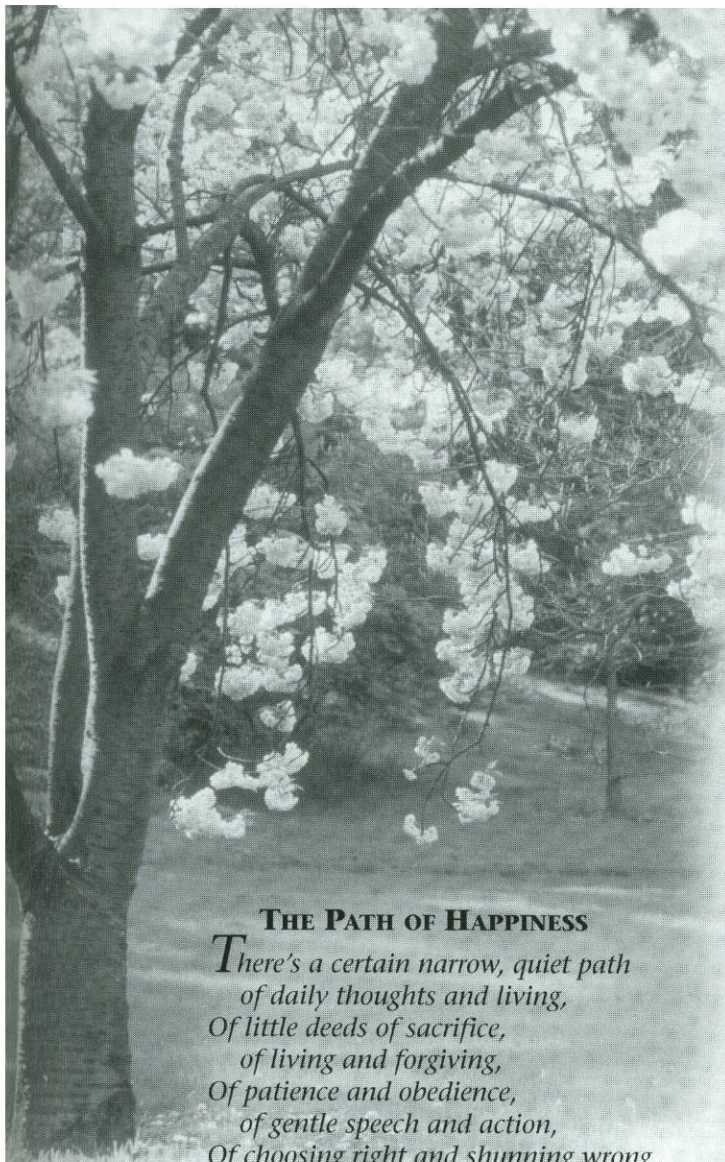
1. In a field (Matt. 13:44)
2. To Tarshish, and from Joppa (Jonah 1:3)
3. Nazareth in Galilee (Luke 2:39–40)
4. He was a prisoner on the isle of Patmos (Rev. 1:9)
5. To the land of Midian (Ex. 2:15)
6. At the burning bush (Ex. 3:1–5)
7. In Tekoa (Amos 1:1)
8. To Emmaus; one of them was Cleopas (Luke 24:1–18)
9. On the island of Melita (Malta) (Acts 27–28:1)
10. Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–46)

WHAT CITY?

1. Athens (Acts 17:22–32)
2. Jericho (Josh. 6:26, 1 Kings 16:34)
3. Bethsaida (John 1:44)
4. Rome (Rom. 1:7, 6:23)
5. Nineveh (Gen. 10:8–11, Jonah 4:11)
6. Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9–10)
7. Nazareth (Luke 4:16–22)
8. Shiloh (1 Sam. 4:3–11)
9. Damascus (Acts 9:10–18)
10. Ephesus (Eph. 1:1, Rev. 2:1)

*Faithful believers, we watch and we pray.
Soon You will come to bring a new Day.
Then all of the world Your story will tell.
O come, O come, Emmanuel.* —Selected





THE PATH OF HAPPINESS

*There's a certain narrow, quiet path
of daily thoughts and living,
Of little deeds of sacrifice,
of living and forgiving,
Of patience and obedience,
of gentle speech and action,
Of choosing right and shunning wrong
with sunny satisfaction.*

*And if we never leave this path
for what the world calls pleasure,
Someday we'll know a heavenly joy
beyond our power to measure;
For in this narrow, quiet way.
God's angels move forever,
And silent mark for peace divine
our ev'ry high endeavor,*

*While shedding on that lowly life
The glow of sweetest beauty:
Not the pursuit of happiness,
but the happiness of duty.*

The first thing one must do if he desires to be in the Lord's work is to make an unconditional surrender of himself to God. He must **consecrate** and then **concentrate**.

We are living in an intense age, and the one who will succeed is the one who sets himself apart for the work and throws all his energy into it.

Use the talents you have and you will not feel so keenly your need for more talents.

Thy will be done" is the keynote to which every prayer must be tuned.

The person who aspires highly is the person who achieves highly.

Putting on Christ" is donning the celestial armor to make us secure against the assaults of evil.

The Bible is a textbook of life, not merely a book of texts.

We are workers together with God; let us not forget God.

A successful person is one who does not let the disappointments of life turn him bitter.

SQUARES FOR LIVING

A young boy watched his father carefully check a board with a square. Pointing to the square, he asked "What's that? Why are you so careful, Daddy?"

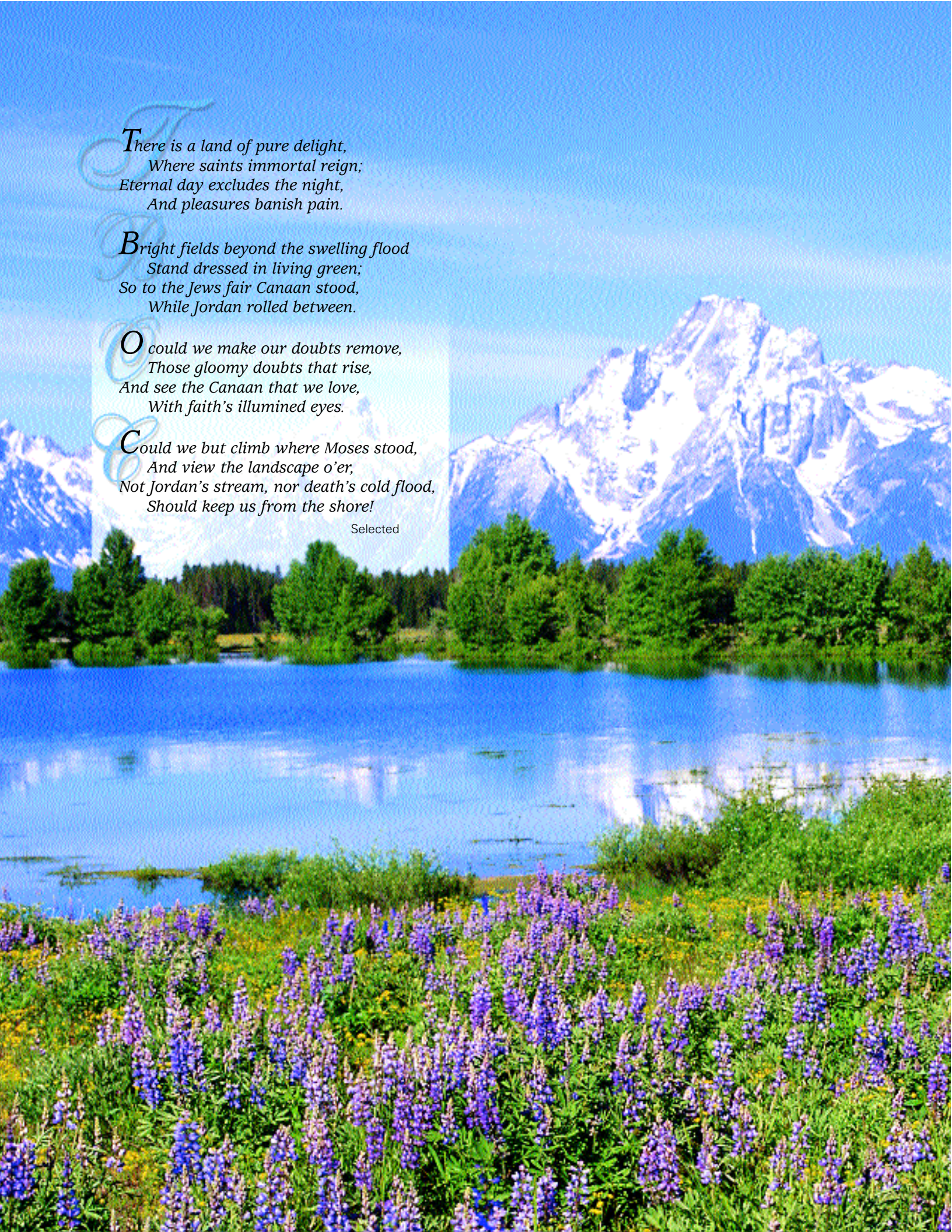
"This is a square, son. We can't guess in carpenter work," replied his dad. "Everything has to be just right. People guess at too many things. God does not like that way of living."

"Too bad God does not give us squares to live by," said the boy.

"He does give us squares, son. You will find them in the Bible. What does Ephesians 6:1 say?"

"'Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.'" The boy's face lit up. "I see! I know another one, Daddy. 'Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too and what they are doing.'"

"You've got it," beamed his dad. "Test all that you do by the Bible, and you will go straight in life, my boy."



*There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Eternal day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.*

*Bright fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews fair Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.*

*O could we make our doubts remove,
Those gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love,
With faith's illumined eyes.*

*Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should keep us from the shore!*

Selected