

Megiddo Message



There's A New Age Coming!

"Nostalgia for the Future"

AS we turn another year's records over to the safe keeping of the heavenly Accountant and look upon the fresh, clean pages that lie before us, our hearts are vibrant with anticipation. What lies ahead? What will the next twelve months bring? We do not know, but we have within us what someone has called "a nostalgia for the future."

The present, with all its comforts and pleasures, does not offer the satisfactions we seek, because it is so temporary. We live in the midst of change. Nothing we know is permanent. Every moment of our time, whatever its burden of pain or its thrill of joy, is fleeting.

There is an account of an Indian monarch who suffered many hours of discouragement. He desired a motto short enough to be engraved on his ring as a suitable reminder alike in prosperity and adversity. After many suggestions had been rejected, his daughter offered an emerald bearing this inscription: "This, too, shall pass away." And so, whatsoever it be of the present, it shall.

Our high and happy moments are wonderful, if only they could go on forever. We do not want sound health to be interrupted. We do not want our family circles to be broken. We do not want our friends to leave us, or our strength to fail us. We do not want our privileges to be withdrawn or the sun of our successes to go down. But alas! Change is the law of our lives; we are powerless to stay its onward march. The present, however ideal, leaves us with longings unfulfilled. We have a nostalgia for the future.

The last two decades have brought human achievements beyond the farthest imagination of our grandparents—the development of atomic energy and nuclear power, space exploits which have placed men on the moon and brought them safely back to earth, the unbelievable powers of the laser beam, phenomenal advancements in the various fields of communication, and the technology which has made all these possible. Still, in all this, we find no lasting satisfaction. In fact, our

feeling of distrust of the present intensifies as we see our proud civilization confronting problems which defy human solution—monetary problems, pollution problems, moral problems, problems of starvation, inequity, injustice, and unprecedented social unrest.

We look out upon all the heathen splendor and pagan power of modern Babylon and see at the heart of it all the fatal void. A deep and awful night hides at the very center of the bright achievements of modern culture. We see mighty structures erected not upon the Rock of Ages but upon the shifting sands of human standards and human philosophies. And we hear the message, as if whispered in our ear: "This, too, shall pass away."

But we are not melancholy. Our hearts are vibrant with expectancy. We have a nostalgia for the future. We are not at home; the present scenes are merely passing views of landscape *en route*. Our home is in the eternal Kingdom of God—our heart is there already. By faith we can already hear the angel choir, and feel the glory and bliss of immortal duration. Our expectation is so vivid that nothing here can distract us from arriving at that glorious new home.

Without this vision of the future, which God has given us in His Word, life is meaningless and futile. But because as Christians we know something of divine happenings which are just ahead of us, life is radiant with purpose and anticipation. Better times are coming! Life which will be glorious and satisfying and enduring is ahead! The darkness of the present does not discourage us; the future will be indescribably magnificent! Does anyone wonder that we feel a nostalgia for the future!

That future will begin with the arrival of the King and His forerunner. The Second Advent was the hope which kept alive the early Church. And it is our hope today. Whether it will happen in the next twelve months, we do not know. But our hearts are bound up in its reality. It may happen yet

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Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Supremacy there has long been the envy of aggressive nations, and the prevailing power has guarded it with jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, it is a place of troops, where soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "The weapons we wield are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, NEB).

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Part One

*This is the first in a series
of articles on the coming
MILLENNIUM.*

*"For, behold, I create new
heavens and a new earth: and
the former shall not be remem-
bered, nor come into mind"*

—Isaiah 65:17

There's A New Age Coming!

TODAY'S date is so ordinary. We write it on a letter, or a check, or a record, scarcely giving thought to its meaning.

But can you picture yourself writing other figures someday—like 2000, 2416, or 2977? Do such dates sound strange and unreal? It is time to look ahead. All of these dates *may* someday be real to each of us—it all depends on us and the use we make of today.

Time is a strange and changeable commodity. So much depends upon our viewpoint when we describe it. Time past is history. Time present is NOW. Time future is—?

We need to think more about time future. What do we see as we look toward the year 2000 and beyond? A civilization destined to collapse under the weight of its own blunderings? an endless repetition of the cycle of birth, growth, decay and death? or an attitude of "all things continue as they were from the beginning"—or what?

What do we see as we look ahead? What do *you* see as *you* look ahead?

Mr. Kissinger was asked this question not too long ago. Part of his answer was this very significant statement: "We are moving into a new world," he said. "We are adjusting to a new environment."

Removing his words from their intended context and translating them into the vocabulary of divine prophecy, we have a tremendous thought: *We are moving into a new world. We are adjusting to a new environment.*

This very moment we are on the verge of stupendous events. All things do *not* continue as they have for centuries past. Change is upon us, change that will convulse the present system to its very foundations. The God of heaven has spoken: "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17). New heavens (new ruling powers) and a new earth (a new populace) will come into being in the age that is just ahead. A righteous government shall displace the present inadequate and corrupt systems of men, and a superior race of holy men and women shall fill the earth with the glory of the Lord. The God of heaven has spoken; *there's a new age coming!*

God has created this planet and populated it with a definite purpose in mind. He "created it not in vain," according to His prophet

Isaiah (45:17-18); "he formed it to be inhabited." And as truly as He lives it shall be filled with His glory (Num. 14:21). As truly as He lives, "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa. 52:10).

We are indeed moving toward a new world. This is why, right here and now, we need to be adjusting to a new environment; we need to be creating in our lives the environment which will be in the new age that is just ahead. We must *be* now what we will have to be then, for God will not tolerate anyone who is morally inferior. All must reach His standard. Sin and evil will not be tolerated—and neither will *we* be tolerated, if we have sin and evil still clinging to us.

If we would live in that new age that is about to dawn, we must be preparing now, adjusting ourselves to the new environment of holiness and righteousness. We *must*, if we want to be there. And who can think of missing it!

The Millennium--How Long?

THE word *millennium* is a combination of *mille*, meaning a "thousand" and *annum*, meaning "year." When we talk about a millennium, we are talking about a thousand years—or three hundred sixty-five thousand days, or more than eight million hours, or more than five hundred million minutes!

To get some idea of how long a thousand years is, imagine yourself living one thousand years ago, and think how different your life would have been then.

A thousand years ago was the tenth century. At that time there was no paper as we know it, no glass, no steel. There were no trains, steamboats, busses or cars. There was no printing press, no oil burner, no automated equipment and no light bulb. There was no telephone, or typewriter, or airplane, or jet propulsion. Columbus had not yet discovered the lands across the sea, nor were the people of that day thinking for themselves. Ignorance, error, and religious darkness still enveloped all, with true religion buried under a "senseless mass of superstition," in the words of the historian, "unable to raise her head."

That was ten centuries ago, a millennium past.

Now what do we see as we project our thinking a millennium ahead?

We cannot do this of ourselves; we have no power even to know what will happen tomorrow morning. To learn about the Millennium that is coming we must turn to the Word of God and learn *His* thoughts and plans.

When we speak about the Millennium in these articles, we will be referring to a certain thousand-year period, the thousand year-period foretold in Scripture, God's Millennium. Webster's Dictionary describes it as the period of time during which "holiness is to prevail and Christ is to reign on earth" and all will experience "peace and prosperity." This is the Millennium, sometimes called "the Golden Age," or "Utopia," a "state or place of ideal perfection in laws, government, and social conditions."

The dictionary speaks of the Millennium as a dream, which it may be called, so ideal are the conditions it promises, so far be-

"But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end."

"For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else"

—Isaiah 45:17-18

yond our present understanding. But the danger of a dream is that we so often dismiss it as unreal. "Only a dream!" we say, and turn to face what we call reality. But if we believe the Bible, we can never call this coming era only a dream. As someone has said, "Call it rather the promise of God." Say not that it *may be* true, but that it *is* true—it is as true as if it were already reality, because God has decreed it. And what He has decreed *shall surely be!*

Someone once said he could never believe in the Millennium because the Bible mentioned it in only one place (as a thousand years). Later he changed his mind and said, "How many verses do we really need from the Bible to believe it?"

One word from God should be sufficient for us to believe, but He has given more—much more. The Millennium is the subject of prophecy upon prophecy. There is not *one* text that tells of it but a *hundred times one*, and then some. Sometimes we learn of its length; other passages tell of living conditions at that time; still others discuss the physical and social changes that will take place. All together, there are many, many verses about the Millennium in the Bible. We cannot hope to study them all in this series of articles, but we shall try to fasten in our minds a few of the outstanding ones. ●●

The Millennium--Where?

THOSE who believe there will be a millennium have different ideas as to where it will be. Some say it will be in heaven, others say it will be on earth; others say we are not told.

Let us see what the Bible has to say about the place that will see this Golden Age.

In a song which the Revelator heard, the redeemed were singing of reigning on the earth. We read, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood [life] out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). "We shall reign *on the earth*."

John the Revelator also saw in vision Christ standing with one hundred forty-four thousand faithful ones, and they were not standing somewhere in heaven or halfway between heaven and earth but on *Mount Zion*. "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Fa-

ther's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1).

The prophet Daniel foretold of the Kingdom that it would be "under the whole heaven" (Dan. 7:27), not *in* the heavens. "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

The prophet Isaiah also indicated that the Kingdom of Christ would be on the earth. He wrote of the establishing of the "Lord's house" in "the top of the mountains"; and then he became even more specific: "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"—not from heaven (Isa. 2:2-4). He wrote again, "the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously"—an earthly setting, without question (Isa. 24:23).

Six times in Psalm 37 we are told that the righteous shall inherit the earth, or that the meek will dwell in the land; there is no suggestion of their dwelling any other place. The Psalmist speaks again of the kingdom as extending "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8). He speaks prophetically again of the Lord's setting His king "upon my holy hill in Zion" (Ps. 2:6).

The prophet Zechariah (chapter 14) pictures the time of Christ's arrival in these words: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east"—the place is definitely on the earth, even the Mount of Olives (another name for Mount Zion) "... And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (vs. 4-5). Again the Prophet wrote, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth" (v. 9). The earth is to be the place of His domain.

The Millennium--From the Bible

ALL specific references to the Millennium as the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth are found within one chapter of Revelation (chapter 20). But it is mentioned six times in this one chapter. And each time it is mentioned, we learn something about that period of time.

The first mention of it (verse 2) tells us it is a time when sin and evil (represented by "the Devil, and Satan") will be bound, or severely restricted, and "shut up" in the "bottomless pit." From this one statement we can be certain that we are not now living in the Millennium, for sin and evil are

rampant now. This same text indicates that the Millennium is a period of time *on earth*, for an angel is said to "come down from heaven" to "shut up" the "Devil, and Satan" (v. 1).

The second mention of the thousand years is in verse 3, where we are told that at the end of this period "Satan" will be "loosed a little season."

Verse 4 describes the qualifications of those who rule during the Millennium, and the government as it shall be: "they [the saints] lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Verse 5 tells us there will be a resurrection at the end of the thousand-year period.

Verse 6 mentions again the reign of the "priests of God and of Christ," who share the throne with Christ during the "thousand years," and the seventh verse repeats the statement about "Satan"

being "loosed" at the close of the Millennium.

If all we could know about the Millennium were from this one chapter, we could know that it is a period of time promised by God, that it will be on earth, that it will be a time during which earth will be under the rulership of new government, that Christ and the saints will be the rulers, that evil will be "bound" during this time and "loosed" at the end of it; that there will be a resurrection at the end of the period (hence, there will be death during the Millennium), that the forces of evil will be "loosed" only temporarily at its close ("for a little season"), after which they shall be destroyed forever (vs. 9-10).

We will discuss the significance of these points in future articles; for now let us take them as ample evidence that such a period of time is within the plan of God. ••

An Interview with Rochester Churches

Millennial

CONFUSION

What do others believe about the return of Christ and the Millennium?

To find out, one of our members conducted telephone interviews with eighteen different denominations and church groups in our city, as follows:

Adventists, Seventh Day
Assembly of God
Baptist
Christadelphian
Christian Missionary Alliance
Church of Christ
Church of Christ, Scientist
Church of God
Episcopal
Jehovah's Witnesses
Latter Day Saints
Lutheran
Methodist
Presbyterian
Roman Catholic
Salvation Army
Society of Friends
Unity Church

The question: What do you believe about the return of Christ and the Millennium?

Here is an edited version of the various replies.

"Christ will take David's throne and reign a thousand years upon the earth."

"Christ will never appear again in person. His second presence is here now. This generation will see the fulfillment of Armageddon, followed by a millennial reign of a thousand years during which the earth will be restored to Eden paradise."

"We believe in the personal return of Christ in the end of time, followed by a general resurrection and judgment and then the eternal order of things. There will always be a struggle with evil, though, to the very end. Things will go along very much the same as they are now, as it says in Luke, people will be eating, drinking, marrying; Christ's coming will be a surprise."

"We believe in the personal return of Christ. History is going downhill now, and Christ will come because things are out of hand."

"But we don't give much thought to the Mil-

lennial reign of Christ. It does not matter one way or the other. To try to be specific about the eternal abode is bordering on ambiguity and presumption. Even those who have definite ideas are not specific about such matters."

"There are ten million of us, and we do not all believe alike. We favor a belief in no millennium. As the parable of the wheat and tares, we believe evil and good will exist until the harvest in the end of the world. After the general resurrection and judgment will follow the eternal state. Our central doctrine is salvation through the atoning work of Christ."

"It will be wonderful when Christ comes to reign. He will reign forever, without any specially allotted time before or after His coming. The world will not get better before He comes."

"Whether Christ will return personally or whether He will reign a thousand years are no pressing issues. These are individual matters, each one believes as the Holy Spirit leads him when he reads the Bible. I believe in the ultimate triumph of faith, but how it will be I do not know. This physical earth will never be part of the heavenly, though."

"We believe in the personal, visible and imminent return of Christ and the Millennial reign on earth, after which the new earth will be the eternal abode, the hub of the universe. But we will be spirit beings."

"Christ will come in God's good time, when He gets good and ready. But most of the ideas about the Millennium come from the book of Revelations, and we don't take stock in that book. It was written for a certain time. We don't get into matters of the eternal order."

"We believe in the personal, visible return of Christ and a Millennial reign on earth."

"We take absolutely no position on the second coming of Christ. We do not have any creed. Everyone believes that there is 'that of God in every man,' and that is the only article of faith we subscribe to. It is up to each individual to decide which kinds of religious testimonies speak to his experience, and which he accepts as meaningful to him."

"We do believe He will come again, just as He said. We do not know when. But He will not be on the earth again. When He comes we will meet Him

in the air and go with Him. We do not believe in any Millennium."

"We believe what Jesus taught: The spirit of God is within you. We believe in Christ in you. The coming of Christ has already occurred. I know there are various beliefs that He will come again, but we do not have dogma or doctrines. Our people have their own collections of beliefs and concepts."

"We believe He is coming, but He is not going to stay down here. He is coming after us, and we will go with Him. We don't believe in the Millennium. The eternal abode with Him will be enough. The earth is going to be destroyed."

"We believe we are in the last days. We are preparing for Christ to come. If we die before He comes, our spirits go to heaven to finish their preparing. Christ will reign a thousand years, and during that time all who never heard the gospel will be resurrected and given a chance to hear it. The Millennium is God's time for completing His work here."

"We really do not need Christ any more. Jesus said, I will give you a comforter, and our religion is that comforter. Why does the Bible say He will come 'in like manner' as he went away? I can't answer that one. I'll have to think about it."

"Our Church believes in the visible and personal return of Christ. We do not know when. We do not know what will happen when He comes. We do not know whether this world will be in a blessed or wicked state when He comes. He has not told us. The thousand years are symbolic. We do not know how long it is. It would take a great deal of study to go into the prophecies."

"The Golden Age of the Millennium will take place in heaven, while the earth is a desolate wilderness. Christ will come and take His people to heaven, there to live and reign a thousand years."

What is the belief of the so-called Christian churches? Is it "one Lord, one faith"—or one mass of confusion!

Who is right? What does the Bible teach? We hope that many of the questions raised by the answers to our interview will be answered in the series of articles to follow, as we study and compare the various points with the thoughts of God expressed in His Word.

Follow the subject, studying carefully and critically, and then look forward with exultant joy to the great events which are soon to come. ●●

Kathy
Kandor's
Korner

The Things That Matter Most

AND the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58:11).

How Kathy was enjoying it, this time set apart each day for Bible reading, and this lovely new Bible Neal had brought home to her a week ago!

Isaiah, what a prophet! What a foreview was his of the splendor of God's Kingdom.

Such was Kathy's reverie when the doorbell rang and in burst her sister-in-law Karen. "O Kathy! Have you been down to Brandon's yet? It's their grand opening today, and you should see the beautiful coats they have on sale. Oh, I think I could spend a million dollars in that store! They have just *everything*! This town has never had anything like it before! Seven floors stocked with the newest of the new! It's really great! Just look what I got—" Karen paused long enough to catch her breath while she spilled her armful of parcels onto the kitchen shelf and immediately proceeded to open the first. "Just look!"

"Well, Karen"—Kathy's calm, quiet voice caused Karen to stop short and look at her—"I've just been basking in another realm. I awoke this morning with a prayer for help to make the most of this day, to give all my mind to the *things that matter most*."

"And then I burst in with something like a political harangue! O Kathy, I'm sorry. Will you forgive me? Please? I say I want to be spiritually minded"—she folded the paper over the sweater she had unwrapped—"and I make great attempts at times, but, I do so often fail. Oh, I got completely unbalanced by all that merchandise, and the brand new store, and the people, and—"

"Yes, Karen, I know. That is why I try to make

my errands as infrequent as possible. I'm tempted the same way you are. So I try to be fortified to do just my business, and to keep intent on getting just what I need or can use profitably. We *do* have to take care of our temporal needs. But I'm realizing more and more that it takes some learning to know the *limits* of our needs sometimes."

"You're right, Kathy."

"You spoke of the beautiful coats. Didn't you just get a new coat, very durable and becoming?"

"You mean that brown one?" Karen nodded.

"Shouldn't that one, along with what you already had, last you a long while to come, at least for the immediate future?"

Karen nodded again. "It isn't that I need a coat, it was just the nice collection. They caught my eye, and when I looked at the prices and the quality, and—"

"Then you said you could spend a million dollars in that store. Isn't that rather extravagant talk?"

"I didn't really mean it, Kathy."

"I'm sure you didn't. But haven't we talked about the necessity of watching our words?"

"Yes, I know. I would have done much better to wait and go to Brandon's some day after they've been open awhile. O Kathy, I do need a lot of help, a *great* lot, if I ever amount to anything for God's Kingdom."

"It's a case of keeping the most important matters on top."

"I should know that. Neal often mentions it, trying to impress me to keep first things first. I *want* to, Kathy, really I do." Karen was overcome with the feeling of having "done it again."

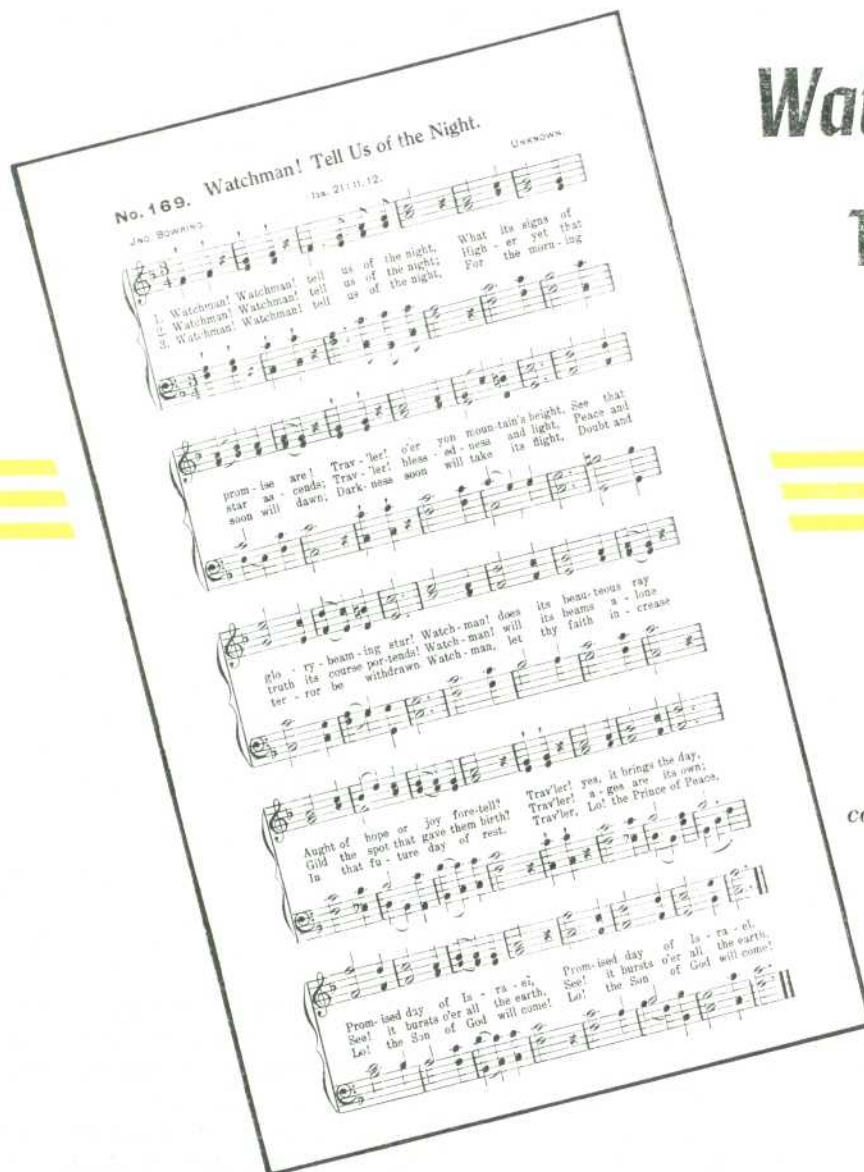
"No time to get discouraged. It's so easy to stumble on some trivial thing. We all have done it. We just have to keep thinking of the larger, more enduring things *coming*. What we eat, or drink, or wear, and the countless *things* of temporal value that we can possess—"

"*Things* really don't matter that much," Karen interrupted. "And they should be secondary."

"I like to think of the words of Paul: 'In my opinion, whatever we have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own.'"

"Oh, I love to think of it, Kathy, when I remember to. But—it, it so easily gets crowded out. The things we can see so easily gain precedence over the really *important* things. But I will do better, Kathy, I will. You just watch me, and help me

(Continued on page 12)



Watchman!

Tell Us of the Night

*"Watchman, what of the night?
"The watchman said, The morning
cometh, and also the night"*

—Isa. 21:11-12

IT is night and the gates are shut, the massive bolts securely in place. Within the walls the city sleeps, sleeps peacefully and without fear; all are confident that the night watchmen, strategically positioned in the towers along the wall, will sound alarm if danger should threaten.

These watchmen are not ordinary men. They have been singled out because of their loyalty and dependability; one needs only to observe them in action to be fully assured of their abilities. With quick step, sharp eye and keen ear they patrol the area entrusted to their care. The slightest unusual sound arouses thorough and instant investigation; and if something is amiss, the warning cry rings out from tower to tower to awake the slumbering and alert them to the danger. Only with the first glimmer of the rising sun does the vigil cease.

Fellow Christians, heirs of the Kingdom, have

we made our dwelling place behind the impregnable wall of a strong, unshakable faith? And are our ears open and eager for any warning word from the watchmen upon the wall, those who "watch for our souls, as they that must give account"? Are we all the time anxious to check the security of our abode, so anxious that we do not wait for the watchman to speak but feel an urgent longing to inquire with frequency:

"Watchman! Watchman! tell us of the night."

That the night is dark and sometimes frightening no sane person will deny. Human perversity seems almost to have reached its zenith. Hatred, greed, violence and immorality have all but subdued decency and principle, while nations reel in political, economic and social chaos.

What, we ask, is the meaning of all this? How will it all end? Watchman, what of the night?

It is with a deep sense of relief that we turn to the pages of Holy Writ and hear the prophetic words of the Eternal's watchmen echoing through the centuries. Listen, Paul is speaking: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:1-4).

The prophet Micah, peering far into the future, exclaimed: "The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men" (Mic. 7:2).

Daniel, a watchman greatly loved by his God, proclaims a coming "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (Dan. 12:1). And the Great King Himself adds: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). For "then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (v. 27).

What does the watchman see, then, as he lifts his eyes and looks beyond the things of here and now?

*"Watchman! does the beauteous ray
Aught of hope or joy foretell?"*

And the reply comes sounding back, filling us with hope and expectancy:

*"Traveler! Yes, it brings the day,
Promised day of Israel."*

What thankfulness should thrill our hearts, to know without a shadow of doubt that beyond this dark night a brighter day will dawn! Through the eye of faith we can see a beautiful plan, a plan that has order and purpose. From the dawn of history to the present time, events have followed a well-ordered course and will culminate in glorious reality in God's own time; this earth will be made over new. It is the word of all of God's watchmen.

Listen as they speak:

"Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for

oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all" (Jer. 31:12).

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. 32:1).

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17).

"Behold, . . . I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts 13:41).

Upon the promise of that bright new morrow was centered the hope of the faithful of past ages. Abraham could see it afar off, by eye of faith, and he was glad. Patient Job said with complete assurance, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth" (Job 19:25).

That latter day is upon us. What are we doing about it, here and now? Are we alert to the warnings of the watchmen? Do we really believe that the watchmen are right? Do we believe them so that we are acting upon the timely admonition of Jesus: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34)?

Why is it that we are so slow of heart to believe and to do? Why is our vision so circumscribed, in the presence of a wealth of fulfilled prophecies? Why do we allow ourselves to drift along in a lethargic, careless manner, when God's watchmen all proclaim—"The morning cometh!"

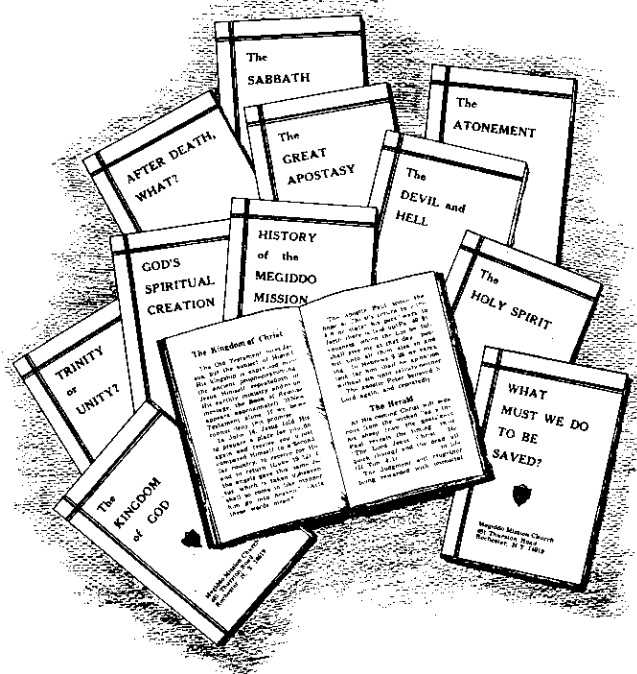
A morning is coming, brilliant beyond compare, which will usher in the dawn of a new age for earth's inhabitants, a never-ending Day of peace, joy and prosperity. Listen to one more of God's watchmen. It is the voice of John, a special friend of the Great King, and the last watchman to receive an inspired message. "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:3-5).

John, standing upon one of the highest of God's high towers, describes a distant vision which is beautiful beyond description. But it is more than a vision; it is more than a beautiful picture; soon it will be a glorious reality. The eternal God has decreed that it shall be, and His plan cannot and will not fail.

Never mind the short intervening period of darkness. God's watchmen all agree, "The Morning Cometh!" *Lo! the Son of God will come.* Just remember this, and be ready for the morning when it comes! ●●

Good Reading



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Editorial

(Continued from page 2)

today! It is the inner longing and expectation which keeps us living and looking forward.

As committed followers of Christ, we dare not forget it—"lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping." We cannot forget it because we have an obligation to fulfill *before He comes*. His words are ringing in our ears: "Therefore be ye also ready..."

And if we are ready, what lies beyond the moment of His arrival for us? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

Does not our nostalgia for the future become more and more acute as we think about such promises? Oh, let it give such impetus to our life of service now that every day God grants us in this new year will be spent in earnest preparation. For soon we shall see "the glorious appearing of... our Saviour Jesus Christ." He *is* coming! ●●

Kathy Kandor's Korner

(Continued from page 9)

when I slip again. I know God will have enough for us in the future—His storehouse is far better stocked than Brandon's."

"Yes, Karen, God has every good thing for us, *everything*. But it has its price, every item."

"That price is working out our salvation, and keeping this old nature *under*—even when Brandon's have a grand opening."

"If we can pay the price God asks, think of all the time we'll have to wander around and look at all the good things He has prepared for us—they will be ours to enjoy forever!" Kathy's face was shining, and so was Karen's.

"Remember what we read about Jesus the other night, Karen?"

"You mean, 'Who for the joy that was set before him endured'? He endured even the cross, despising the shame, and now He is seated at His Father's right hand."

"And that's all because," added Kathy, "Jesus kept topmost in His mind *the things that matter most*." ●●

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Resurrection and Judgment

WE live in a world that is morally degenerate. Crime and violence are the order of the day. Lacking the firm hand of divine jurisprudence, evil men and seducers have grown worse and worse, fulfilling the words of the Great Apostle's prophecy. We are reminded of the words of another prophet: "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: . . . truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter" (Isa. 59:14).

Still, God is silent.

There was a time when judgment was rendered on the spot and punishment was meted out immediately. God was not silent; He was in full control. He was the Judge and the Jury. He rendered the verdict, pronounced the sentence and executed it. When He "saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth" in the days of Noah, "and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5), He wiped out that portion of the world by a flood, deeming only Noah and his family worthy of saving.

Again, "Because the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah [was] great, and because their sin [was] very grievous," He sent His angels to cleanse that part of the earth of the wicked, rescuing only Lot and his two daughters from the holocaust. God rendered His judgments against Pharaoh and the Egyptians in the form of the plagues. He destroyed their army so completely that "there remained not so much as one of them" (Ex. 14:28). Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, perished in an instant when "there went out fire from the Lord," because they did that "which he commanded them not" (Lev. 10:1-2).

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were judged guilty of sedition and were consumed with their followers when "the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up" at God's direction (Num. 16). The judgments of God were frequent and swift in the time of the Judges. When Israel walked in God's ways, they prospered; but when they forgot Him, He punished them, sometimes with death and

sometimes with servitude and oppression at the hands of their enemies.

Even in New Testament times, God intervened occasionally with judgment. Ananias and Sapphira paid with their lives because they conspired together to lie to God concerning the sale of their property (Acts 5:1-10). God's angel struck down the wicked king Herod "because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and [died]" (Acts 12:23). Elymas the sorcerer was stricken blind because he contested the words of Paul and Barnabas and sought "to turn away the deputy from the faith" to which they had converted him (Acts 13:7-11). In these instances, as well as other instances in the Bible which we have not mentioned, God was rendering judgment.

Since the Holy Spirit power was withdrawn, God has not executed judgment openly on anyone. Catastrophes occur (devastating floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, famines, plagues), but these are not God's judgments. They are only natural disasters such as have always occurred. For nearly twenty centuries now God has been silent.

That silence, however, is to be broken when God sends His Son to earth: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:16-17). This meeting of Christ with the resurrected dead and the living covenant-makers is a first step toward the Judgment when every man will receive for what he has done.

III. THE JUDGMENT

A judgment is a decision, a discernment, an opinion. When an individual stands before a court of law, he is judged either guilty or innocent, according to the evidence presented. Just so will it be with every individual who stands before the Great Tribunal: He will be judged according to the evidence, "according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

But the judgments of God are of a vastly more serious nature than those of a court of law—the Judgment of God determines our eternal destiny. And the verdict is final; there is no appeal. The Judgment of the covenant-makers is the final separating of the righteous and wicked.

The idea of judgment is not popular in our modern world. God is looked upon generally as a loving and doting parent who fails to restrain His children, rather than a stern disciplinarian who will one day call men to account. Jesus is remembered more as the baby in the manger than as the King and Judge who will return with power.

For many years God has been long-suffering, but His long-suffering has its limit. And it will end when His silence is broken, when “he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:20-21).

When Christ, “whom [God] hath appointed heir of all things,” returns, the Judgment of the covenant-makers will be the first order of business; the Judgment of the nations will follow.

A. The Judgment of the Covenant-makers

According to His plan, God began calling workers into His vineyard early in the morning with the call of Adam. He called again in the third hour (Noah’s day), and again in the sixth hour, and again in the ninth. Now in the eleventh hour, our day, He is still calling.

Those who have responded have been those who had faith in the promises He set before them. Seeing these promises in the distant future by the eye of faith, “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice”; Enoch left the testimony “that he pleased God”; Noah “prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” Abraham journeyed to a strange land, “for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” Sarah believed to bear a son in her old age. These, and many whose names we never knew, responded to the call of God and agreed to serve Him. And when their term of service was done, they went the way of all mortals—to the grave—to await the resurrection and Judgment at the time of Christ’s second advent.

This was the plan, that all should be judged and rewarded together—“that they without us should not be made perfect [immortal]” (Heb. 11:40). And when that time arrives, those who sleep in Christ will be resurrected and gathered together with the living covenant-makers to meet the Lord in the air (I Thess. 4:16). And the next event will be the Judgment.

1. What Is the Judgment? The Judgment is the time of separation, when all of God’s servants will be assembled and separated according to what they have done: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered [out of] all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matt. 25:31-33).

John the Baptist compared the Judgment to the separating of wheat from chaff, after which the wheat would be gathered into His granary and the chaff would be destroyed (Luke 3:17).

2. Who Will Be Judged? The initial Judgment does not include all the nations; only those who have made a covenant to serve Him. As in the parable of the Talents the man upon his return dealt only with “his own servants” (Matt. 25:14), so Christ will reckon only with those who agreed to serve Him. “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Rom. 2:12).

All who have covenanted to serve God during their lifetime must stand before Christ as Judge: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”; “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12). Paul included himself among those who would be judged; it was “we . . . all” and “us.” Paul is one of “the dead in Christ” that will rise to meet Christ and be judged and rewarded.

Daniel the prophet saw in vision the Judgment scene: “I beheld till the thrones were cast down [seats were placed], and the Ancient of days did sit. . . . A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Dan. 7:9-10).

The “thousand thousands” who ministered unto Him are the accompanying host of angels; the “ten thousand times ten thousand” are the covenant-makers of the six-thousand-year day of salvation. All these agreed to work for God, and all will be judged for what they have done or failed to do.

3. Who Is the Judge? The Bible plainly identifies who will be the Judge: Christ. “It is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of [living] and dead” (Acts 10:42). “. . . He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteous-

ness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Cor. 5:10). There is no question who will be the judge.

Jesus Himself said that God would delegate that authority to Him: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father" (John 5:22-23).

As Judge, Christ will be fully qualified. In present-day courts of law, opposing lawyers present whatever evidence they can gather in favor of their client in an effort to obtain a verdict in his favor. There will be no such proceedings at Christ's Judgment. It was said of Christ when He was on earth that He "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:25). As future Judge, He will possess the same power, but in even greater measure, having spent these many years at the Father's right hand. His judging will be as the Father's: "without respect of persons . . . according to every man's work" (I Pet. 1:17).

Righteousness and justice are two of the prime attributes of God, and they will be attributes of the appointed Judge as well. "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with justice"; "Righteousness and justice are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Ps. 72:1-2; 89:14, Scofield Bible). "With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. . . . And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins" (Isa. 11:4-5).

4. What Are the Rewards?

Rewards at Judgment will be entirely on the basis of merit: to "every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

a. To the Faithful: Eternal life. Those who have given the full measure of service and faithful obedience will receive the full reward, even eternal life. Jesus set the standard when He said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48)—moral perfection. And so they will be judged: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing" have sought for "glory and honour and immortality" will be given "eternal life" (Rom. 2:7) with the measureless blessings that shall accompany it. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the

heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

The number who will receive the full reward, who will reign with Christ, is revealed in Revelation 14:1. The Judgment is past, and the Lamb [Christ] is seen standing on Mt. Zion, and "with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. The "Father's name written in their foreheads" signifies the Word of God written in the mind so indelibly that it is expressed in the life of the individual. They are further described as "they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. . . . redeemed from among men, . . . without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:4-5).

The 144,000 are the select of the covenant-makers from the time of Adam to the Lord's return. By "patient continuance in well doing" (Rom 2:7) they gained this high honor. They are the inheritors of the promises of God, the greatest of which is eternal life. Because they overcame their old natures, they have the high privilege of sharing with Christ the rulership of the nations (Rev. 3:21); they have been made "kings and priests: and . . . shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10).

b. To the Unfaithful: Eternal Death. The "righteous judgment of God . . . will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:5-6). "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Hence, the unfaithful will ultimately receive eternal death.

Because there are varying degrees of unfaithfulness, there will be varying degrees of punishment. Such as Cain, Solomon, Judas and others who turned willfully against the Lord will be subject to greater punishment than those who never entirely departed from the faith but who served God only halfheartedly and never completed the work they began for Him. Sin is sin in God's sight; He can have none of it in His eternal Kingdom; hence all who have any sin remaining in their lives will have to be eliminated.

Among the kings of Judah we read of Rehoboam who "did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord" (II Chron. 12:14), who will be worthy of no reward. But of Amaziah, it was written: "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart" (II Chron. 25:2). Amaziah served the Lord, but not wholeheartedly. He worked, but not hard enough to merit the full reward of eternal life, hence he will receive only a partial reward.

Because everyone shall be rewarded according to his works, and because John exhorts us to work for the "full reward," we are confident that there will be a partial reward for partial service. The

Lord may do this by granting extended life to such during a portion of the Millennium; some may be permitted to live a hundred years, or several hundred, depending on what their service to God merited. But all such rewards must end before the beginning of the eternal day, for beyond that time there will be no death.

To those who prove unfaithful, those in whom some sin still remained at the close of their day of probation, the Lord cannot grant eternal life; the tomb will be their eternal home.

A Study of I Corinthians 15 (Concluded)

Paul's words, "in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet-call" (v. 52, NEB), indicate that the change is sudden, even instantaneous. But before the change takes place, the covenant-makers must be gathered together and judged. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).

Notice that Paul includes himself: It is "we... all" who must appear. He knew he was worthy, yet he knew he would have to stand at Judgment, because the separating and the rewarding does not take place until that time. In Jesus' own words, it is after He comes that "he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats"—both classes will be present. Following the separation, "the King [shall] say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you...," and "he [shall] say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting [destruction]" (Matt. 25:31-34, 41).

There is a ring of triumph in Paul's words as he closes his discussion in this chapter. "And when **our mortality has been clothed with immortality**, then the saying of Scripture will come true: 'Death is swallowed up; victory is won!' 'O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and sin gains its power from the law; but, God be praised, he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (vs. 54-57, NEB).

Paul knew whom he believed and he knew what he believed. He believed so thoroughly that he might well have added: "O glorious victory!" He knew that Day would come, when God "will swallow up death in victory," as the prophet Isaiah had spoken (25:8). That Day was the goal of his life—"If by any means," as he said, "I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:11).

The vision was so real that he could almost feel the new life pulsing in his being as he wrote!

"The sting of death is sin," but there was no longer any sting in death for Paul, once he had overcome sin. While still mortal, we are subject to sin—and the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Sin, unrepented, unconfessed and continued in after knowing the law of God will bring death, eternal death, penal death. There is no sting, however, in death that ends in victorious resurrection and lifting up to immortality. Paul knew that he would die, but he did not fear death. Because he was confident of the resurrection, the sting was gone.

"The strength of sin is the law," or as rendered in the New English Bible, "Sin gains its power from the law." The law of God reveals the exceeding sinfulness of sin by the high moral requirement it sets, and by showing sin's disastrous results. But the same God shows us how to gain the victory over sin by following the example of His Son, giving us the opportunity to share in His victory over the grave. When "death is swallowed up in victory," the sting of death will be gone forever. Then there will be no more sin, hence no more death from sin.

The Great Apostle then lifts his voice in thanksgiving and praise: "God be praised, he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" What could give greater cause for rejoicing and thanks than the assurance of a resurrection, that death will finally be vanquished? Death that has been conquered by Jesus Christ, can likewise be conquered by those who follow in His footsteps. Thanks be to God!

Paul concludes his resurrection thesis with an exhortation and an appeal: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." No doubt Paul had in mind the persecutions the Church would be called upon to endure; he had already endured much himself. They would be tested, and they would have to stand firmly by their convictions; but if they always abounded in the "work of the Lord," they could be sure that the Lord would recompense abundantly: "for your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

The message speaks to us. Their labor—and ours—will not be in vain. The great change from mortality to immortality will come for each one who proves faithful.

*Reprints of these studies available,
10 cents per copy.*

You Can't Have This, If You Want That

A CARTOON which appeared in a popular magazine shows a doctor's office in which a young woman is saying this to her doctor, 'What can I do to feel better, without giving up what's making me feel awful?'

"Yes. We can smile at that. But our smiles of amusement are also smiles of recognition, even smiles of identification.

"How can I lose weight without cutting down on any of my favorite foods? How can I get better marks at school or university without having to give up any of the extracurricular activities I enjoy so much? How can I have better relations with other persons—at work, at home, and in my marriage—without having to make some sacrifices in personal convenience and inclination, some sacrifices in desire and aspiration and freedom to do as I please? How can I find more satisfaction in life, more fulfillment, more happiness, without having to change any of my cherished habits? 'What can I do to feel better without giving up what makes me feel awful?'

"As we struggle toward maturity we learn that we often must sacrifice things valued, for other things to be more highly valued, and we do come to the awareness that we can't have *this* if we want *that*. Your life and mine is a continuing exercise in making choices, in establishing personal priorities, and built into this process is the necessity of practicing renunciation, the necessity of making personal sacrifices. No person is anywhere near maturity until he or she has come to terms with the principle of renunciation, and this principle is especially true when applied to our spiritual life.

"That word 'renunciation' does seem to have a rather negative ring to it, suggesting something which makes life dull and glum and dreary, something which is life-defying, not life-affirming. But

before you decide that renunciation is essentially negative I ask you to explore it with me, explore it in its specifically Christian context. First, we will look at a parable of Jesus in which the principle of renunciation is suggestively presented. Second, we will consider renunciation as exemplified in the life and death of Jesus." And, third, we will try to discern what all this can mean for us as we work out our life-patterns, as we strive to fit ourselves for a place in Christ's coming Kingdom on earth.

"In His parable of the great supper, Jesus made a very important point about renunciation. The parable as a whole has other points, but the renunciation principle is incomparably delineated in its opening section.

"A rich man sends out many invitations for a great supper which he has planned. As the custom was in those days, shortly before the appointed time he sends a servant to remind the invited guests. The first man approached explains that he will not be able to come; he has just bought a large piece of land, and he must inspect it immediately. 'Please accept my apologies,' he says courteously.

"The second man to be approached is also well-mannered as he declines the invitation. He has just bought five team of oxen, and he must attend to them. He too says, 'Please accept my apologies.' And the third man says, 'I have just got married, and for that reason, I cannot come.' A bridegroom, of course, should not be expected to leave his bride to attend a dinner where his newly wedded wife could not be welcome.

"Jesus is here likening the supper invitation to God's call to men to come under His rule and guidance, to the commitment in faith which brings meaning and purpose to life. Some interpreters suggest that the excuses of the three men for not accepting the invitation are trivial, and that that is the point here. I would challenge that line of interpretation. I do not think the excuses trivial. I find them quite plausible, quite defensible. A man who has put his money into land surely has a right, even a duty, to check into his investment. A man who has gone into the ox business in a big way should concern himself about the condition of

For this thought-provoking New Year message we are indebted to J. A. Davidson, and to the New Pulpit Digest, who granted us permission to share it with our readers.

his stock. According to Hebrew-law, a man was exempt from all military and civil duty for one year after his marriage, and surely formal dinners can be included in that. These are the kinds of excuses which we quite sincerely and quite unblushingly make to one another and the kinds which we readily accept from one another. They cannot be dismissed as trivial evasions. Jesus' point here surely is in their plausibleness.

"Jesus is saying here that, if you wish to know the assurances and the joys which true discipleship can bring, you sometimes will have to give up things which are in themselves quite valuable, and neither trivial nor evil. The great practical danger in life for most of us most of the time is not that evil will defeat good, but that the good will crowd out the better and the better the best. You can't have this if you want that, and renunciation is often in having to decide whether this or that best serves God's purposes for you.

"Let us now look at the expression of the principle of renunciation in the life and death of Jesus. Jesus undoubtedly could have found good reasons, plausible reasons, honorable reasons, for declining God's invitation to Him. But He practiced a consistent renunciation, and that is an essential dimension of His whole ministry. [He witnessed that He "did always those things which pleased His heavenly Father."] He never diluted His commitment with compromise, and yet He had many opportunities for compromise, the kind of compromise for which no worldly-minded person would criticise Him. Even during His last week He had opportunities for compromise. He could easily have found a way around Gethsemane and Calvary. Had He compromised, even just a little, denying He was born to be a king, He might have lived to a ripe old age—looked upon, at worst, as a rather troublesome religious fanatic or, at best, as a respected new prophet. But Jesus made the renunciation, and He died on the cross.

"Whatever else the cross may mean, whatever other significance it may have for the earnest life-seeker, it is surely the master symbol of the renunciation which is essential in the life of faith.

"In 1865, Dr. Sabine Baring-Gould, a clergyman in England, wrote the hymn, 'Onward Christian Soldiers,' as a marching-song for the children of his church school. The story is told—and if it isn't true, it should be!—that when the bishop of the diocese heard the hymn he objected to the line, 'With the cross of Jesus going on before'; he said that it smacked of Romish practices. To meet the bishop's silly objection, the author suggested a change: 'With the cross of Jesus left behind the

door.' According to the story, the bishop immediately surrendered.

"But does not that line, "With the cross of Jesus left behind the door," suggest a way in which many of us seem to want to have our faith? We do tend to prefer an easy, pleasant, undemanding sort of faith, a please-accept-my-apologies kind of religion, a cross-behind-the-door form of service for God. We like a pleasing religion, one loaded with inspiration and uplift, one with which we can be comfortable and cozy without definite demands for renunciation and self-sacrifice. But that kind of religion can have only a few superficial resemblances to the narrow way of life taught by Jesus, the way supremely exemplified in His life and in His death.

"Let us now get down to some of the particulars of renunciation, particulars which are relevant to your life and to mine if we hope to win a full reward in the world to come. We have seen that Jesus taught the way of renunciation, and demonstrated that way in His own life. But what can that mean for us as we work out our life-patterns [as we strive for perfection of character]?

"We are, of course, not averse to practicing a few convenient little renunciations from time to time, not unwilling to make a few little sacrifices. . . . Small, relatively easy renunciations can have some value in the Christian's life."

But surely Jesus had much more in mind when He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

Renunciation for the Christian cannot be limited to rather insignificant things; it must be, rather, the giving up of some things which do matter for the sake of things which matter more. People search frantically for something which will make life meaningful for them, something that will help them to inner peace and satisfaction and happiness. But such satisfaction does not come through half-hearted surrender.

Profession without real renunciation, Christianity without the cross, can be a rather pleasant religion, even a gently comforting religion—for a time, anyway. But "it does not stand up in life's storms, and it will not support us when support is really needed—when we stand before the Judgment seat of Christ. Too often we approach our duty to God with the attitude of the man who, when told by his doctor that the best thing he can do is to give up drinking and smoking, asks, 'What's the next best thing?' "

Well, there is no next best thing. God demands perfection—nothing less will win His favor. For

whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all (Jas. 2:10), a broken law stands between him and God. God wants our best. He wants perfection, and He will be satisfied with nothing less.

To the nominal church member, if one thinks God is trying to make some pretty hard demands on him, he just turns Him down. Politely, of course. They claim to respect Him. They admit they do owe Him some courtesy as they decline His invitation. "Please accept my apologies, God. You see it isn't convenient for me to accept your invitation."

No. It isn't always convenient to accept God's invitation. Our material well-being may be adversely affected if we do. Commitment to God's purposes can interfere with some of our cherished interests and pleasures. We may become an object of ridicule if we let faith go to work in the depths of our being. Our precious self-esteem may be severely disturbed if we open our heart and mind to God's leading.

There is always a price to pay in the life of faith. If you wish the peace and fulfillment which faith nurtures and sustains, if you wish the meaningfulness and purposefulness which faith engenders, you will have to pay the price. You will have to practice renunciation. You can't have *this* if you want *that*. You cannot have life in the world to come without forfeiting the right to think, speak and act as you please here and now.

"The principle of renunciation applies in all spheres of life. Any kind of mastery—in the arts and music, in the professions, in business, in maintaining a home and raising a family, in community service and in the public service—any kind of mastery necessitates renunciation. And you will see that renunciation, when seen not as an end in itself but as an agent of the good life, is not negative but positive, not life-denying but life-affirming." Paul the apostle pictured it well when he said: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, . . . ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the *end everlasting life*" (Rom. 6:21-22).

Renunciation is a matter of sorting out one's life priorities, a matter of putting first things first. And it is indispensable in the struggle for perfection. For the Christian, renunciation is in striving to live constantly in accord with what, through the disciplines and demands of God's Word, he comes to know to be God's will for him. This, it must be acknowledged, is never easy, but it is the only avenue to life. ●●

A New Year Prayer

Almighty, everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. In Thy merciful providence, Thou hast brought us to the beginning of this new year.

We come with hearts grateful for Thy care and goodness during the days that are passed. We thank Thee for Thy guiding hand which has been ready to direct and restrain us, for Thy watchful eye which has protected us, and for Thy love which has been a constant source of care. In our successes Thou hast rejoiced. In our sorrows Thou hast been a source of healing, and in our trials Thou hast made a way of escape that we were able to bear them.

Our Father, forgive us for the time misspent in the vanished days. Where the days have been spent in shoddy living, doing less than our best, where moments and hours have been lost in evil intent or futile struggling, or shallow restless frittering, there grant us, we pray, the strength to sweep these cobwebs from our lives through the application of Thy cleansing Word.

Where the days have been spent under the burden of pain or sorrow or tension, there grant release—or failing that, grant courage, hope and love enough to turn our sadness into rejoicing.

Where the days have been spent chasing fleeting goals or passing shadows, where we have been too pre-occupied with the cares and concerns of the fleeting present, there help us to see through the veil of material things to the greater value of the things above, where Christ sits at Thy right hand, and from whence He will soon return to begin Thy great work upon earth.

Where the days have pointed out to us our limitations, whether of body or circumstance or looks or mind, there help us to accept our lot and use whatever we have to the best of our ability, being examples of the believers in word, in conduct, in faith, in spirit, in purity.

Help us to improve upon whatever future Thou dost stretch out before us. Impart us the will to make good resolutions, and give us the strength to keep them. Remind us day by day of our dependence upon Thee, and help us to amend our lives according to Thy holy will.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord and coming King we pray. Amen. ●●



Out of the Archives

The Second Epistle of Clement

The following paragraphs are from an ancient sermon believed to have been written in Corinth sometime between 120 and 140 A. D. It is commonly called the Second Epistle of Clement, although we cannot be sure who the author was.

The importance of righteousness and holy living and the necessity of being separate from the world are strains which run throughout the letter. The author speaks of God's Kingdom as being yet future, and he believes that the keeping of the commandments of Christ is the means by which we become worthy of entering that Kingdom. It is significant that he does not mention or even allude to the atoning blood of Christ. Such an omission would have been extremely unlikely if the vicarious atonement had been among the teachings of the early Church.

For our translation of these excerpts we are indebted to the work of J. B. Lightfoot.

Seeing then that Christ bestowed so great mercy upon us; first of all, that we, who are living do not sacrifice to these dead gods, neither worship them, but through him have known the Father of truth. Yea, he himself saith, Whoso confesseth me, him will I confess before the Father. But wherein do we confess him? When we do that which he saith and are not disobedient unto his commandments, and not only honor him with our lips but with our whole heart and with our whole mind. Now he saith also in Isaiah, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Let us therefore not only call him Lord, for this will not save us: for he saith, Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall be saved, but he that doeth righteousness. So then, brethren, let us

confess him in our works, by loving one another, by not committing adultery nor speaking evil one against another, nor envying, but being temperate, merciful, kind. And we ought to have fellow-feeling one with another and not to be covetous. By these works let us confess him, and not by the contrary. And we ought not rather to fear men but God. For this cause, if ye do these things, the Lord said, Though ye be gathered together with me in my bosom, and do not my commandments, I will cast you away and will say unto you, Depart from me, I know you not whence ye are, ye workers of iniquity.

Wherefore, brethren, let us forsake our sojourn in this world and do the will of him who called us, and let us not be afraid to depart out of this world. For the Lord saith, Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves. But Peter answered and said unto him, What then, if the wolves should tear the lambs? Jesus said unto Peter, Let not the lambs fear the wolves after they are dead; and ye also fear ye not them that kill you and are not able to do anything to you; but fear him that after ye are dead hath power over you, to cast you into Gehenna. And ye know, brethren, that the sojourn of this flesh in this world is mean and for a short time, but the promise of Christ is great and marvelous, even the rest of the kingdom that shall be, and of life eternal. What then can we do to obtain them, but walk in holiness and righteousness, and consider these worldly things as alien to us, and not desire them? For when we desire to obtain these things we fall away from the righteous path.

But the Lord saith, No servant can serve two masters. If we desire to serve both God and mammon, it is unprofitable for us: For what advantage is it, if a man gain the whole world and lose his life? Now this age and the future (age) are two enemies. The one speaketh of adultery and defilement and avarice and deceit, but the other biddeth farewell to these. We cannot therefore be friends of both, but must bid farewell to the one and hold companionship with the other. . . . For, if we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest. . . . And the Scripture also saith in Ezekiel, Though Noah and Job and Daniel should rise up, they shall not deliver their children in the captivity. But if even such righteous men as these cannot by their righteous deeds deliver their children, with what confidence shall we, if we keep not our baptism pure and undefiled, enter into the kingdom of God? Or who shall be our advocate, unless we be found having holy and righteous works?

So then, my brethren, let us contend, knowing that the contest is nigh at hand, and that, while

many resort to the corruptible contests, yet not all are crowned, but only they that have toiled hard and contended bravely. Let us then contend that we all may be crowned. Wherefore let us run in the straight course, the incorruptible contest.

Wherefore, my brethren, let us do the will of the Father which called us, that we may live; and let us the rather pursue virtue, but forsake vice as the forerunner of our sins, and let us flee from ungodliness, lest evils overtake us. For if we be diligent in doing good, peace will pursue us. For for this cause is a man unable to [attain happiness], seeing that they call in the fears of men, preferring rather the enjoyment which is here than the promise which is to come. ●●

Obituaries

Willard H. Yemm

Once again we were reminded of the limit of our span as we were informed of the passing of a long-time friend, subscriber and faithful correspondent, Brother Willard H. Yemm, of Hamilton, Ontario. For many years he and Sister Yemm were welcome visitors at our church, and their home was always open to welcome visiting friends from the Rochester Congregation with warmest hospitality.

Brother Yemm is survived by his wife, Sarah Jane; by two sons, Arthur and Robert; also three brothers, four sisters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, and many friends.

Funeral services were conducted on January 27, Assistant Pastor Newton H. Payne officiating. ●●

Homer C. Walton

On February 10, death claimed another long-time friend and correspondent, Homer C. Walton, of Carrollton, Ohio. Brother Walton was always ready to discuss his convictions with anyone who inquired.

Brother Walton is survived by his wife, Melva, who cared tenderly and faithfully for him through nearly thirty years of chronic and often critical illness. He is also survived by his mother, Mrs. Lillian Runyan; a son, Willard, and a brother, John, all of Carrollton; also several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted on February 14, Brother Newton H. Payne officiating.

Let us the living take to heart the words of the apostle Paul, that "Now is the day of salvation," and make each day show maximum progress toward that great salvation while our time is still extended. ●●

March, 1977

Abib Calendar

The Bible New Year:

Abib 1—from sundown March 19 through sundown March 20.

Abib was the first month of the Hebrew year as God told Moses to measure time (Ex. 12:2). On the first of Abib the tabernacle was set up. Abib is the "spring" and "sprouting month" in Israel. How fitting a time for our Perfect Example and coming King to have been born!

The New Passover:

Abib 13—sundown March 31.

The Jewish Passover was on the fourteenth of Abib. Jesus instituted the New Passover on the thirteenth, of which He said, "This do, in remembrance of me."

Christ's Resurrection:

Abib 15—morning of April 3.

In Christ's resurrection lies our assurance that we too may someday triumph over death and gain real life.

The Ascension of Christ:

Forty days after the Resurrection—May 12.

This was the last time Jesus was seen among men, until the great day when He shall come again. On that day some nineteen hundred years ago, He was "taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:10-11).

Pentecost:

Fifty days after the Resurrection—May 22.

This was a day the apostles never forgot—Israel had been observing it for centuries. But to the New Testament Church it meant great power to do a great work for God.

Questions

(Continued from page 27)

portant, most prominent" (*Arndt and Gingrich's Greek-English Lexicon*). This "first" and "most important" exaltation will be when those who will be co-rulers with Christ are judged and rewarded and exalted, as we read in Revelation 20:6. All who have part in this exaltation are "blessed and holy", and "they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." This text clearly indicates who has part in the "first resurrection," and what is the result of that "resurrection" or lifting up: "they shall . . . reign with him a thousand years." ●●

Which is worth more on a dark night—an artfully molded decorative candle unlighted, or a plain and simple one that is shining? When we need LIGHT, we look at

The Shining, Not the Candle

IN the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus set forth the true motive and real value of all Christian living. He said, "Let your light so shine before men,

Not the

Candle

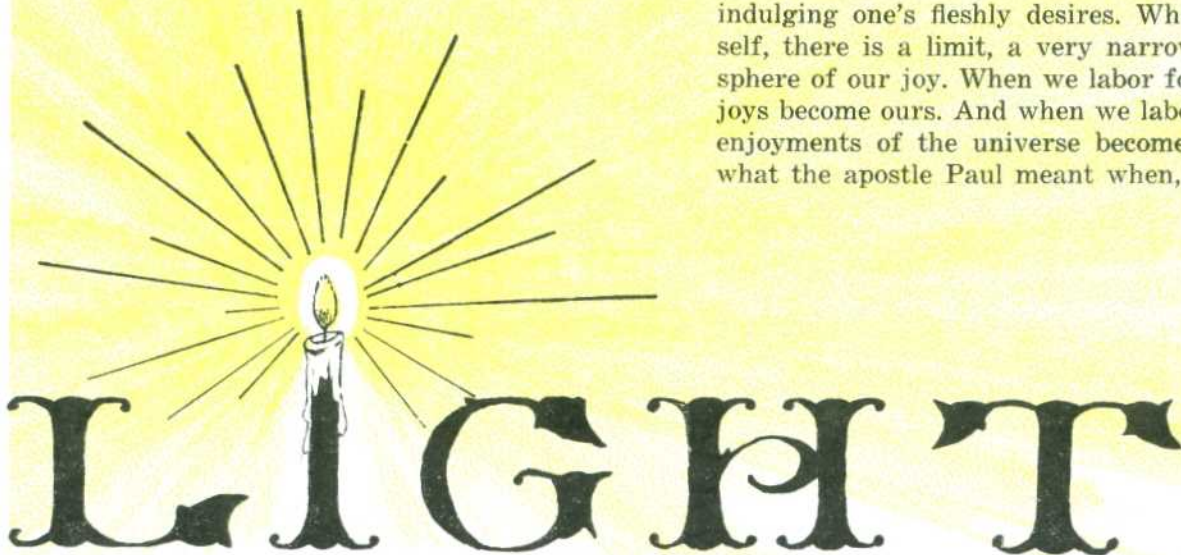
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that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). This light, this light of divine wisdom shining in you, He told His followers, is the only light in the world. Only as you let it shine through you can it be light to guide the steps of others, to illumine their inner lives even as that light has made your own lives radiant.

But notice the emphasis and direction of Jesus' thought: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see *your good works*"—not yourselves, "and glorify" not you but "*your Father which is in heaven.*" Self is left entirely out of the picture. It is the shining, not the candle, that is all-important; it is the Creator of the wondrous light that is to receive the glory, not the human instrument that makes it shine.

Our purpose and our calling is but one: *to shine.* Right close at hand are dark corners which it is our duty to illumine. It is for us to convert our varied abilities and God-given opportunities into shining light, to transform all our physical and mental resources into glory to God, to spend and be spent that the heavenly light may shine upon the path of others.

The world at large may look dimly upon such endeavor. They may protest that it is throwing one's life away. But what human calling could equal in worth or benefit the rewards of dispensing divine light, by precept and especially by example? In such endeavor is joy few people will understand: the joy of sharing God's beneficence, of doing good for others, of promoting a high and noble cause with heart and soul to the exclusion of lesser, selfish interests. Then there is the joy of dispelling darkness, of doing right and watching another walk within that light. Such joy reaches far beyond that meager satisfaction gained from indulging one's fleshly desires. When we live for self, there is a limit, a very narrow limit, to the sphere of our joy. When we labor for others, their joys become ours. And when we labor for God, the enjoyments of the universe become ours. This is what the apostle Paul meant when, using another



metaphor, he said, "He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. . . . He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (II Cor. 9:6; Gal. 6:8). Letting our light shine and sowing to the Spirit are two terms for the same Christian duty—and note the limitless benefits, even "life everlasting."

When the candle rather than the light becomes the object of attention, something is wrong. The light is too feeble; candle and light are not in proper proportion. An over-industriousness in temporal affairs, resulting in a proportionate neglect of spiritual things, may be the cause. Temporal success may draw admiring attention for the candle, for "men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself"; but if the light is dim, the candle is not doing its duty. It is the *light*, not the candle, that counts.

When we are too busy to assess our spiritual gains and losses each day, we are neglecting our shining.

When we are too involved in our conversation to watch what we are saying and with what purpose we are saying it, we are neglecting our shining.

To set our candle on a hill is not sufficient—it is the shining, not the candle.

We are by nature self-centered; the natural mind is continually seeking ways and means to glamorize the candle; but that is not God's purpose. He has created us and called us to be a resource of light. Our worth in God's eyes is measured in proportion to the light we radiate, not the size of our candle. When a candle, even a candle of exquisite beauty, sends forth no light, it is useless. It is merely a part of the cold, damp darkness unless it is spreading the light of life. It is only more of the earth and earthly unless it is shining.

God's ways are not man's ways; His thoughts are not man's thoughts. And godly men and women are not born; they must be trained to godliness. They do not come into the world burning and shining lights. They must be taught to shine, to radiate God's eternal light.

Among the lights of the great Jehovah there is no rank, no station, but only candle upon candle joyously pouring forth the light to its fullest capacity to the glory of its Maker.

"Anything, Lord, for Thee," should be our prayer. Anything. Does that mean a lowly place? We must fill it cheerfully, shining in our obscure corner as brightly as we would if we were situated on the hilltop. God is directing our lives, and we can shine best where God wills that we be.

March, 1977

More to God than all else is the shining of a brightly burning candle. In the great eternal Day that is soon to dawn, all such shining candles will become immortal pillars of light within themselves, for "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." ●●

Our Readers Write . . .

Good Economy

We must be redeeming the time, as Paul tells us, "because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16). Or, as one version puts it, "Use your time with all economy, for these are evil days." If not careful in these times of inflation, we may find it easier to put the economy on the dollar than on the way we spend our time. Really, being what God calls "economical" involves using everything to God's honor and glory.

People often judge our religion by how we behave, it has been said. If that is so, the Christian must remember that by being what he is, he is either a good or a bad advertisement for the faith he bears. It is not by his words but by his life that he will attract people or repel them.

On us as professing Christians is laid the great responsibility not of talking about Christ but of showing men Christ—not in words, but in life. If we are doing this, we are being economical with our time, redeeming the short working hours we have left. And if we are doing this, we will not be found sleeping in that great Day.

Tyro, Kansas

C. H. F.

By Obedience We Are Freed

Congratulations to you for your magazine, the *Message*. Whenever the magazine is received, I rejoice greatly because it is very constructive and meaningful in our study.

The masses of people have been misled into thinking that Jesus Christ did all the work for them and therefore they have nothing to do themselves. But not so. Jesus Christ the great Teacher said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Naturally we are servants of sin; but there is a merciful provision by which we can escape that condition, as Paul says in Romans 6:17: Though "ye were the servants of sin, . . . ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Obedience must be from the heart, not from the mouth out. If the death of Christ upon a literal cross freed us from bondage to sin, here would have been the place to find such a theory recorded. But not so. It is by the doctrine that we become freed from sin and become servants of God, with our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.

Many religious organizations today misconstrue the teaching of Jesus Christ. Through your publications we are comprehending the meaning of many scriptures from the Bible.

Monrovia, Liberia

J. D.



SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

"No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"
—(Luke 16:13).

WILLIAM Barclay has made this statement of Jesus' even more meaningful by his translation: "No household slave can serve two masters. . . . You cannot be the slave of God and of material things."

To one living in the environment of the ancient world, this was a vivid lesson. A servant was a slave, and the master had absolute ownership. The master possessed the slave as completely as he possessed any material property or goods. He could mistreat the slave as he chose, or even kill him. A slave had no rights of his own; he had no moments which were his own. Every moment of his time, every ounce of his energy belonged to his owner and was at his owner's disposal. This is why there is special meaning in Jesus' words: "No servant can serve two masters." No slave could give himself totally to two owners.

Jesus uses this illustration of the slave's total obligation to his master to tell us that there can be no halfway commitment to God. It is all or none.

A disconcerted minister once commented, "The most discouraging thing in many churches is that their people are only halfway to God—halfway Christian, halfway loyal, halfway responsible, halfway in and halfway out." This is what James said long ago: We tend to be double-minded; and, "a double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1:8). He is unstable because he cannot give himself completely to either interest.

This is why Joshua challenged his people: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." There can be no halfway business when dealing with God. You have to decide, make up your mind, *choose*. "Choose you this day." You cannot be neutral or halfway in your service to God.

An old lady, ripe with years of experience and

common sense, once said that some folks have just enough religion to make them miserable. She was right. It is misery to live halfway to God. If we try to keep up a Christian appearance and comply with Christian standards when our heart isn't in it, we have a heavy burden to bear. There is no joy in that. And there is no stability, either.

Still, most people go only halfway. They "follow our Lord halfway, but not the other half. They give up some things, but it touches them too closely to disown themselves."

Does this indictment fit us? Halfway is not enough. It is a point of hesitation, of indecision, of uncertainty, of anguish. The halfway house is a haunted house. It is a "house divided against itself." And it is built on the sand, hence is destined to fall.

Let us return to our text. The master possessed the slave, and possessed him exclusively. Here, then, is our relationship to God. God must be undisputed master of our lives. We, like the slave, have no rights of our own. We have no time which is our own. There is no escape from our sacred duty. Being a Christian is a whole-time job. There is no time when we can relax and declare ourselves free from our responsibility.

Serving God can be neither a part-time or a spare-time job. Once a man chooses to serve God, every moment of his time and every atom of his energy belongs to God henceforth. God is the exclusive master. We either belong to Him totally, or we belong not at all.

This is the warning in Jesus' words: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." You may try it, He says, but it can't be done.

In the ancient world it was the custom of a man leaving home for some time to entrust the care of his possessions to someone else for safe-keeping.

But in time, it is said, this custom was abandoned as material possessions became the things in which a man put his trust.

A man's god is the power in which he trusts. And when a man puts his trust in material things, then material things usurp a place in life which they were never intended to fill—they become not his support but *his god*.

There is nothing in this world of which a Christian may truly say, "This is mine." Of all things he can only say, "This belongs to God, and God has granted me the use of it. As a good steward, I must use it as its Owner intended it to be used." Whatever it is, we cannot place our affections upon it as if it were our very own.

What then shall we do with the instinct within us that clings to *things*, that passion which moves us to acquire? We shall use it, as we must learn

to use every other passion of our life: to worship God. Mammon must never be the object of our worship. All worship belongs to God.

Which are we doing? Are we hating God and loving mammon, or are we loving God and using mammon to glorify Him?

When this world masters a man, it blasts him. When God masters a man, He *makes* him. And if God masters a man, that man does not abandon his money or his treasure, but he masters it and makes it serve him to lay up treasures in heaven that will yield eternal dividends.

God demands of His children every moment of their time, every mite of their money, every word of their mouths, every beat of their heart, to be used as He directs.

This is why Jesus said we cannot serve God *and* mammon. ●●

A true story . . .

Brian's Accident



FIFTY-six, fifty-seven, fifty-eight, . . . five dollars and fifty-eight cents." Brian was counting the money he had been saving in his bank. "Mom," he called out, "how much do I need to buy this wagon?"

Mother appeared in the kitchen doorway. She glanced at the catalog as her six-year-old held it up to her. "About fifteen dollars, dear."

"Fifteen dollars," Brian repeated. "Will you help me count the rest of my money, Mom?" He was anxious to see if he had that much in his bank.

Mother sat down to count. Brian had been saving money toward a new wagon for a long time. It had been so long that Brian was sure he must be nearing his goal. So this morning he had pulled

out all the catalogs and looked and looked until he found just the kind of wagon he wanted. It was bright red, and sturdy-looking.

For a few moments he sat on the floor watching his mother count his dimes and quarters. Then he picked up his polar-bear bank and gave it another hard shake—polar bears could hold a lot of money, and Brian wanted to be sure the very last coin was out.

"You have just seventeen dollars and thirteen cents." Mother smiled as she added the last coin to the stack.

"I have enough! I have enough!" Brian shouted and jumped with glee. "I can have my wagon now! I have enough!"

"Your patience and careful saving has really paid off, Brian. That's the way dimes and nickels add up, when you save them." Mother was happy for her young son.

"Can we write out the order now? I can take it to the post office," Brian offered.

Mother smiled. "Later, perhaps. Just now we had better hurry or we'll be late. Remember our outing this afternoon?"

"Where are we going?" For an instant Brian had forgotten. "Oh, I know! Sledding!"

Soon Brian and his little sister Tina were in the car with their mother and on their way to Aunt Linda's. There they found her two eager boys and two of their friends all ready to go.

"Can Marie ride with us?" asked Tina.

"Marie can ride with us, and Tim can ride with Aunt Linda and her boys." (*Continued next page*)

The Hanson's lived on a high hill out in the country, and the children always looked forward to visiting them in the wintertime. "Mommy, I heard someone say the Hanson's aren't home. Can we still go sledding down their hill?"

"The Hanson's are not at home, Tina, but they left a key to their house with Aunt Linda so we can go in and warm up after sledding. Isn't that nice of them?"

The children all nodded. Soon they were in the Hanson's driveway, and almost before the car had stopped, they tumbled out.

Across the Hanson yard they pulled their sleds, until they came to the crest of the long hill. Then "all aboard!" and six delighted boys and girls went flying down the hill. It was a just-right day. There was lots of snow, and the cold night had made a hard crust on the top of the snow so that the sleds rode well, almost all the way to the weatherbeaten fence at the far end of the field. It was a long trek back, but no one seemed to mind—not at first. All were eager to do it again, and again.

It seemed all too soon when Mother and Aunt Linda called everyone into the house to warm up before going home. But they were delighted to come when they saw the big potful of steamy-hot chocolate that was waiting for them, and a plate heaped with Aunt Linda's crispy nut cookies. Only a few minutes, and there was barely a crumb left.

"Now," suggested Aunt Linda, "you boys can go out and pack the sleds into the cars, and the girls will help us clean up here. Then we will all be on our way home."

Mother was repacking the last of the dishes when they all heard a commotion outside, then a crash and some loud crying.

"Sounds like glass breaking!" Aunt Linda and Mother hurried to the garage to see, and there stood two little boys. Brian was crying, and Tim looked puzzled. All over the garage floor lay the broken fragments of what had been a glass storm-door. Mother and Aunt Linda examined the children closely. "Are you hurt?" Both shook their heads, and Brian wiped his sobs with his thickly mittened hands.

"What happened?" questioned Mother, as she rested a tender hand on Brian's head.

"Tim said he's not going home in our car, and I want him to ride with *us* this time!" Brian wailed.

Mother looked stern. "Were you boys *arguing* about it?"

"I want Tim to ride with *us*," wailed Brian again.

"But what happened to the door?"

"I just got so mad, I came running to the house

real fast and I couldn't stop, and my arm went right through the door. I couldn't help it!"

"Now calm down," Mother spoke quietly. "Let's clean up this glass, and then we'll decide who's going to ride with whom. Brian, you should be very thankful you were not hurt. If you didn't have all those warm clothes on, and that heavy jacket, you could have been on the way to the hospital right now. I've heard of children getting hurt severely by going through glass doors."

When they arrived home, Mother told Dad what had happened, and the three sat down in the living room to talk.

"Mother told me what happened today," Dad began, "and we've decided that you should pay for a new glass for the Hanson's door."

Brian looked stricken as the picture of a red wagon flashed through his mind. "Me? with *my own money*?"

"Yes," said Mother firmly. "After all, you were responsible for breaking the glass."

"But Mommy, it was an *accident*!"

"I know you didn't do it purposely, Brian. But if you think about it, you will realize that it could have been avoided."

"But I was running, and I couldn't stop!"

"Brian," asked Dad. "Why were you running in the first place? Wasn't it because you had lost control of your temper?"

"Yes," Brian muttered. He had to agree.

Dad went on. "If you hadn't been angry, you would have been watching where you were going and would have seen the door and opened it. Besides, we are responsible even for our accidents. Somebody has to pay, even when we don't do something deliberately. And Mother and I feel you are old enough to learn this."

"But—" Brian started to cry. "But what about my wagon?"

"We're sorry, Brian," said Mother, "we know you've waited a long time for that wagon. But we hope you will remember this lesson. The wagon will have to wait until you can save up enough money again."

She stood up.

"Just remember, Son," Dad put a loving arm around Brian, "that anger always costs, and costs. Some people are never able to make up what they lose in a moment of anger. You will always be sorry for what you do when you are angry. That's why God wants us to learn to control ourselves."

After supper, when the family said verses around the table, Brian quoted Psalm 37:8. Look it up, and you'll know why. ●●

Questions

"I have read much of your work in the last fifty years and have always held your teaching in high esteem, yes, above that of any others.

"However, in the *Message* for January, 1977, I read 'Understanding the Bible' three or four times, concerning the Resurrection. I understand from this article that there will be only one resurrection. But turning to Revelation, which was the last of the sixty-six letters recorded for our learning, we read in chapter 20, verse 5, of the 'first resurrection' and of another resurrection: 'But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.' This seems to indicate more than one resurrection. Also, according to this portion of the Scripture, all of those coming forth in the first resurrection were given eternal life. 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years' (v. 6).

"This writing is not to criticize the work you are doing but to clarify something which is not too clear in my mind."

You are exactly right in believing that there will be two resurrections. The first resurrection takes place at the end of the six thousand years, at the time of the Second Advent when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise" (I Thess. 4:16). At the close of the seventh thousand-year period, the Millennial reign of Christ, there will be a second resurrection of those who have died during the Millennium who are to be judged at its close (see Rev. 20:11-12). These will be the populace of the Kingdom of Christ, the "great multitude" of Revelation 7:9 "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," whom the Revelator saw standing before the throne, "clothed with white robes," representing their spotless character.

The article in the *Message* to which you refer (January, 1977, p. 13) was describing the first resurrection at the end of the six thousand years only, and stated that there would be only one resurrection. We should have stated more clearly that

there would be only one resurrection *at that time*; this was the point intended.

Some denominations believe that the righteous will be raised at the close of the six thousand years and the wicked will be raised at the close of the seventh thousand years. This position is not Scriptural, as both faithful and unfaithful appear at Judgment together to be separated "as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats." The second Judgment will likewise include both faithful and unfaithful, its purpose being to separate faithful from unfaithful and reward each accordingly.

However, the "first resurrection" as mentioned in Revelation 20:5-6 has reference not to all who are brought forth from the grave at the time of Christ's return but to what the author of Hebrews called "the better resurrection," the lifting up to immortality (Heb. 11:35). And this is the "first" such resurrection. The Greek word for "first" is *protos*, which is defined as "first, earliest," also "first of rank or degree, foremost, most im-

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Which Kind Are You?

Someone once said that there are three kind of givers:

the flint
the sponge
the honeycomb

To get anything out of flint, you must hammer, and then you get only chips and sparks.

To get anything out of a sponge, you must squeeze it, and the more you squeeze it the more you will get.

But the honeycomb just overflows with its own sweetness.

Some people are stingy and hard; they give nothing away if they can help it. Others are good-natured; they yield to pressure, and the more they are pressed, the more they will give.

But a few are like the honeycomb, so filled with the sweetness of God that it just overflows. They give because they cannot keep it all in themselves.

—Selected

When the

ANGELS SING

*When the azure blue is riven in twain,
And the Great King comes to the earth again,
When the trumpets sound and the saints acclaim
And they own and bless His sovereign Name,
When the thunders roll and the heavens ring,
Oh! I want to be there—
When the angels sing.*

*When He comes with power to reward His own,
And the Great Judge sits on His mighty throne,
When the saints come forth from among the dead
And the Court is set and the names are read,
And the thunders roll and the heavens ring,
Oh! I want to be there—
When the angels sing.*

*When the marriage feast for the Bride is set—
A glorious Day they shall ne'er forget—
When myriads of angels shout as one
And praise the bride for her work well done,
And the thunders roll and the heavens ring,
Oh! I want to be there—
When the angels sing.*

*When sin and sorrow are gone for aye
And the night is lost in eternal day,
When struggle and toil are forever done,
All the earth is the Kingdom of God's own Son,
And the thunders roll and the heavens ring—
Oh! I want to be there—
When the angels sing.*

—Contributed.

