

Megiddo Message

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Only for one day!

*Oh, why should the spirit of mortals be proud,
Like a fast-fading flower, a swift-flying cloud!*

Who Are You?

Upon leaving his office one morning, a traveling salesman was confronted by a small boy who asked bluntly, "Who are you?" The man kindly explained that he traveled from city to city selling a certain line of products to manufacturers. Right now he was on his way to Boston.

The child seemed easily satisfied. But as he drove away, the man later recalled, "the question came back to trouble me. Why did I answer the question the way I did? Why did I answer it with regard to my occupation? If an angel had asked me the same question, was *that* the answer I would have given?"

Thinking further, he rationalized that he did indeed sell products, but was that his identity? He hoped *not*!

Each of us is unique. And each of us would answer differently. Who am I? With regard to my country, state and nation, I am a citizen. With regard to my family, I am a husband and father. With regard to my faith and my God, I am...?

The further we think, the harder the question is to answer. And if *God* should ask us who we are—He who really knows us better than we know ourselves—what *would* we say? Before Him we would rather *ask* than answer, because it is not what *we think* but what *He knows* we are!

Reflecting further, I wonder: If an angel put the question to me, what would I reply? Could I say that I am—or am becoming—a child of God? Could I say that I had my heart set on being part of His family? Could I say that I belonged not to the world around me but to the *world to come*?

How strange indeed that our automatic response to the question "Who am I?" should be of what we *do* rather than what we *are*. God looks on the heart; He measures the character. He does not value our lives in terms of what we do for a living. It makes no difference to Him whether we hoe corn or punch keys or drive nails or keep house. What He wants is our heart, our inner

desire, our consecration, ourselves. He wants us to be the very best persons we are capable of becoming. He wants us to be as much like Himself as is humanly—morally—possible.

Who are you? Answer carefully—thoughtfully—prayerfully; because sometimes we *show* what we are more vividly than we by our immature standards of judgment can realize. The story is told of a time when Queen Elizabeth and her young daughter were boarding a ship. The child, more absorbed in the excitement of her surroundings than in watching where she was going, stumbled and fell. A sailor who was looking out for the safety of the passengers spoke quickly: "Young lady, watch your step," to which the child replied, somewhat sharply, "I'm not a lady, I'm a *princess*!" At this the mother interceded. "Tell the gentleman," she said firmly to her daughter, "that you are not a lady *yet* but that you *hope to be* some day." God looks upon us much as the parent upon the child. He knows what we are capable of becoming, but He sees also the lessons we need, the time and patience that must come between. Let us not assume too quickly that we are what we should be, but we must keep growing, learning, reaching. The "student is not above his teacher; but when his training is complete he must have reached his teacher's level" (Luke 6:40, JB).

At best we have no time to lose. God has given us the potential; we must not squander it.

Who are we? Let us not think in terms of this world but in terms of *God's* world, the coming new creation. Who are we in relation to His family? How far have we progressed—how far have we yet to go—toward becoming that *new* man created in righteousness and true holiness? the *whole* person He wants us to be?

"Who are you?" God will ask us someday. Let us be living so that we may answer at any time, with justified pride, "I am a child of the coming King—at least, that is what I hope to be *and what I am working diligently to become*."

Megiddo means ...

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

We believe ...

- IN **GOD**, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- IN **THE BIBLE** as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- IN **JESUS CHRIST**, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- IN **THE HOLY SPIRIT**, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- IN **LIFE** as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- IN **HUMANKIND** as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- IN **OURSELVES** as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- IN **THE PROMISE OF GOD**, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Soon-coming events ...

THE HERALD AND THE KING

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

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

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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CHRISTIANS

For nation shall rise
against nation, and
kingdom against king-
dom: ... And ye shall
hear of wars and rumors
of wars: see that ye be
not troubled

—Jesus (Matt. 24:7, 6)

IN A TIME OF WAR

We look out upon our peaceful landscapes and would like to think that all the world was as peaceful. We are free to come and go without any fear of an Iraqi Scud missile landing in our street. No enemy troops are poised on our borders.

But all are not so blessed; it is a time of war, and millions of people are affected. Thousands are suffering, through no fault of their own, deprived of the bare necessities of life. And the end is not yet. All around the world the deadly specter of war—particularly *modern* warfare—and the knowledge of what *could* happen has struck fear into the hearts of millions who, uninformed of the plan of God and having no strong foundation of faith, can only imagine the worst. Some actually fear an all-out, nuclear holocaust before it is over. Others think this may be the end of the world. Still others are wondering if this is the beginning of Armageddon.

In the midst of it all, our hearts well up with gratitude to God, that our lives continue unthreatened, that we can yet enjoy the blessings of peace and security, that we live under a government which looks out for the welfare of its citizens and works to the best of its ability to protect us from harm and danger. None of this was our doing; none of us chose where we were born, or what citizenship we would have. And we can only thank God humbly, wholeheartedly, for His abundant goodness, we who have been so often undeserving. What did we do to merit all this? What did we do to escape the plight of the innocent victims in Israel, Baghdad, or Kuwait?

We thank God, because we can see where He was working. Our blessings did not come about by chance. Long, long before we were born God was arranging, planning, preparing the way so that His Word of life might again live on the earth, so that a few might be made ready before the great Day of the Lord arrives with its world-sweeping changes.

Almost everyone prefers peace, yet as long as the earth is under human mismanagers, there will be periods of war. Why? Because the basic cause is the uncontrolled human animal and his accompanying belief that might is right. So long as there is nothing to restrain those who live by this law of the jungle, there cannot be peace. If *individuals* cannot work for the

good of each other and subdue their selfish, animal natures, what can be expected of nations? What is there to prevent injustice, aggression, and oppression when one nation is stronger than another? When there is no superior authority which all governments respect, what is there to prevent a ruler of one nation taking advantage of another, coveting what is not rightfully his, or abusing the rights of his subjects for his selfish ends? What is there to restrain such injustice—and what is there to stop other nations who choose to use their military power to protest and intervene? Picture what the world might be today if no one had gone out to fight against Hitler. Picture what the world would be if all criminals were allowed free rein, if

there were no law and order. Yes, sometimes war under the present system is a necessary evil.

What should be the attitude and conduct of Christians in a time of war? What guidelines does the Bible give us about our proper duty in a time of war?

We take the position that war under human direction is wrong. We say *war under human direction* because some people take the position that *all* war is wrong; but war directed by God is something very different. Many were the wars which God conducted or commanded, with *good* purpose.

War under human direction is wrong because war involves taking the life of our fellowmen; and since we as human beings without

Is This Armageddon?

Some people are wondering, but the answer is no. It could be the preliminary stages of a war which will turn into that worldwide conflagration if Christ should come before the war ends; we do not know. But Armageddon will be all nations against *Christ*, not all nations against Iraq. And the result: "These shall make war with the Lamb (Christ), and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17:14).

There may be prophecies in Scripture that relate to the present conflict, but we cannot be sure. We know only that we are near—very near—the time of the end. Might the present conflict end in what the nations feel is an assured peace? And might this be the peace cry that will signal the time for Divine intervention? For we read that "when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them,... and they shall not escape" (I Thess. 5:3). One of these days God *will* intervene and break the long silence He has been keeping. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence" (Ps. 50:3).

One point noticeable about the Persian Gulf War

is the unprecedented uniting of so many nations against one power. This shows, on a smaller scale, how the nations will unite against Christ, and marshal their forces to defeat Him (Rev. 19:19; 17:14). Are they rehearsing now for their final showdown?

No doubt many of the same tactics now being used will be tried against Christ and His new regime. But what astonishment to the generals in command when their missiles self-destruct, or their sophisticated weapons will not fire, or their bombs go off course and destroy their senders! Their efforts will be frustrated—because God will be in control. There will be destruction, but only of those who refuse to submit to the new regime. All who submit will be protected (Joel 2:32; 3:16). None will suffer but the evil, the rebellious, those who resist.

Armageddon will be a very different war from any this world has ever seen because it will be a war against evil and wrong, with the result that the evil will be defeated and destroyed and right will win! What a glorious triumph for the earth!

Divine help cannot know who is worthy to live or die, to kill in war is to make a judgment we are not qualified to make.

When God directed war, when He was behind the fighting and it was under His direct control, those doing the killing were acting as His agents. To refuse to fight in such a situation would have been outright disobedience. An example was the removal of the idolatrous Canaanites so that the Israelites could inhabit the land. God planned it, commanded it, and assisted it. Without causing death how could

Taking life in war is wrong for the Christian because God has forbidden it.

He remove the dissolute Sodomites, or the inveterate sinners in Noah's time? Death in the hands of God is a worthy instrument for removing those that oppose Him. And it will be the same in the future, when God intervenes to set up His kingdom of righteousness. No one can enjoy the full blessings of peace as long as selfish, greedy warmongers go unrestrained. But God can read the heart and know who is worthy to live. Knowing the end from the beginning, He can judge justly, and no innocent worthy one will die. Since no man has such knowledge, war under human direction is wrong.

What is our duty in the event of war under man's direction?

When a group of soldiers came

to John the Baptist and asked, "What shall we do?" he answered them, "Do violence to no man" (Luke 3:14)—a strange directive to soldiers, but he was teaching the Divine principle. And when Peter raised his sword and cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest on the night Jesus was betrayed and tried, Jesus said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:51-52). "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Here is another clear statement of the Divine injunction.

Paul wrote also that we as Christians do not "war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (II Cor. 10:3-4)—we do not fight with carnal weapons. Again he wrote, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood" (Eph. 6:12).

Because of these commands, the members of our church have been conscientious objectors through the years. Our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, first took this position during the Civil War, more than a century ago. At that time the United States did not protect conscientious objectors, and standing firmly for his convictions in an unfriendly atmosphere nearly cost him his life. Hearing of his resistance to bearing arms, an over-zealous sergeant took it upon himself to act as judge, jury and executioner, and placed Mr. Nichols before a firing squad. Had it not been for the timely intervention of a superior officer, Mr. Nichols would have been executed.

During World War I, our pastor Rev. Maud Hembree wrote an appeal to the President of the United States to recognize our church as conscientiously objecting to war; a delegation from our church also appealed to the Selective Service Headquarters in Washington. The request was granted, and since then

our church position has been recognized at all times. At present there is no draft law, but should one be enacted, our position would be the same, that we do not bear arms, although we do not resist authority or show disrespect to our Government. As an alternative to military service, we offer to serve under civilian direction in work of national importance, such as farming, forestry, hospitals, etc. Serving our Government is not wrong; it is taking of life that is wrong.

The taking of life is not the only aspect of war that is forbidden the Christian. As Christians we are forbidden all the feelings that underlie the warlike spirit, in great or small degree—feelings of anger, hate, strife, greed, jealousy, rivalry, pride, resentment, bitterness and revenge. All are caveman traits in the sight of God and absolutely and definitely forbidden. The Christian can never under any circumstances harbor feelings of anger against anyone. The Law is plain: "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath"—no exceptions (Ps. 37:8).

Furthermore, war is the desire to hurt, not help; to tear down, not build up. If all men and women worldwide were willing to work sincerely for the good of all others, if each esteemed another better than himself, if everyone followed the Bible laws on kindness, compassion, and love, there would be no war nor any need for war. There would be no strife even between individuals, much less between states, governments, or nations.

Another belief often underlying war is that one's own nation is superior to all others, and that offensive action is as justified as defensive; also the feeling that all other governments should recognize and respect the superiority of one's particular nation—all of which is contrary to God's manner of judging men and nations.

If war under man's direction is wrong, what is our attitude toward our government's participation in the present war? Are we pacifists? No. Are we against all war? No. Do we support the war? No. Do we protest our government's involvement? No.

There are three Bible principles which govern our attitude toward our government in this or any other time:

1) *We are commanded to be subject to the government under which we live.* "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rom. 13:1-2). Even though we may not at times agree with the actions of our government, we are not to protest or be uncooperative. If we resist our government, we resist God. If our government should require us to bear arms, we would have to accept the penalty without resistance in order to be loyal to God.

Even though we cannot take part in any action which may endanger, threaten, or kill our fellowmen, neither are we to take judgment into our own hands and try to hinder those who do. Jesus never taught His disciples to resist the actions of the government under which they lived, but only to behave in such a way that they themselves would be blameless, as far as possible, both before the law of the land and before God.

2) *We do not oppose or condemn our country for going to war; because our nation and its leaders are not under the law of God.* And because of our commitment to God it is not our place to advise, direct, or be concerned with our government's decisions. We are to leave

O Lord God, Thou who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy people, with them that love Thee and keep Thy commandments to a thousand generations; God of our strength and life, who knowest us better than we know ourselves: We worship Thee. Show us, we pray Thee, Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation. We would have ears to hear whatever Thou wilt speak, knowing that Thou wilt speak peace unto Thy people and to Thy saints, only let us not turn again to folly.

O Lord our God, we rejoice in the knowledge of Thy plan which Thou hast revealed, that Thou art yet supreme and in control of Thy world; that in spite of all the wrong that men may do, Thou hast a plan and that Thou art steadily shaping all things to its near fulfillment.

We rejoice especially that Thou hast called us to be part of that plan, for indeed, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, only a bit of dust, here today and gone tomorrow; yet Thou hast offered us hope, mercy, and a more abundant life in Thy Kingdom to come. Thou hast called us to be Thine own sons and daughters, if only we will be such as keep Thy covenant and remember Thy commandments to do them.

Lord, in this time of turmoil and distress, we would draw ever nearer to Thee, and ask that Thou wilt enfold us in Thy love and keep us in the grasp of Thine everlasting arms. Without Thee we belong only to the dust of nations; with Thy blessing we can one day shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of the Messiah.

We pray for those wherever they may be who are carrying out Thy will and keeping the world safe for the furtherance of Thy cause. We pray for those in authority, that they may take the actions which Thou dost deem wise, that our lives may be preserved in safety and that we may continue to enjoy the blessings of peace and brotherhood. We pray for those dedicated men and women who have served and do serve their country in times of distress and need, who willingly risk their lives to protect our freedoms. We pray also for those who are not yet Thy people of whom it may one day be said, These are the children of the living God.

We know that through all Thy plan is going steadily forward. Our hearts leap for joy as we see signs in the political heavens and earth that bespeak the nearness of the wonderful Day when Thou wilt no longer keep silence, when Thou wilt speak openly and command the nations Thyself, and we shall have help from above. Wilt Thou hasten the Day when all who live shall be blessed in Thee, and all nations shall call Thee blessed, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. For that glorious Day we pray. Amen.

all matters of state to the state. God has set up the governments of earth for this purpose—to keep law and order. Our duty is to obey God, to live by His laws, and let the officials of our country take whatever action they deem proper, recognizing that God "ruleth in the kingdom

of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:25).

3) *We cannot be entangled in the "affairs of this life" and expect to please our captain Christ.* "No man that warreth [for Christ] entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath

chosen him to be a soldier" (II Tim. 2:4). We have been chosen to serve a higher cause, to be *Christ's* soldiers, and how can we serve in two armies at the same time? How could we have at heart the best interests of Christ *and* the best interests of our civil government? It would be a clear conflict of interests. We must leave the affairs of this world to the officials of this world, trusting in God that they will accomplish what He wants done.

We are grateful to our Government for administering its national and international affairs so as to give us political security and freedom from strife and war, so that we

instincts of human nature. Watch a very young child. See little Johnnie happily at play, until Buster comes along and strikes him. And what does Johnnie do? In a flash he is on his feet and running after his enemy, ready to return full measure—and then some. We need no instruction in this trait; it is born in us. It is part of the instinct God has given us for self-preservation. If someone challenges our position, our opinion, our property, our life, something within us springs up immediately and we are ready to fight.

Without question this instinct is necessary to the survival of the race; but all vengeance or revenge in the hands of men is wrong. Whatever the magnitude of the injustice, however calculated, however deadly, there is never a situation that can justify revenge because God has said NO. "Avenge not yourselves,...for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19).

As Christians, we have no license to return evil for evil. "Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the Lord" (Prov. 20:22). Again, "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work" (Prov. 24:29).

The law of God allows no latitude whatever for retaliation, not even for the *desire* to retaliate. If "the thought of foolishness is sin," then the thought of retaliation is likewise sin (Prov. 24:9). And if "he who hates his brother in his heart is a murderer," then he who *wishes to take* revenge, though he lack opportunity, does equal wrong.

In Matthew 5 Jesus also spoke against retaliation. He had been contrasting the old Mosaic covenant with the superior law of faith when He came to the point of comparing the force of each. Actually,

the law of Moses had been a law restraining retaliation. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This law may seem harsh to us, but at the time it was a sound means of justice and put a rigorous restraint on vindictiveness. A punishment might be so much *but no more*.

But Jesus went further than all this and forbade *all* revenge. "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5:38-39).

This is a figurative illustration of a general principle. The old law might permit one's worst passions to be vented; the man under Christ's law must have all his feelings under absolute control. He must not even resent injuries—even repeated injuries (Matt. 18:22). And he must never retaliate; but rather, in Jesus' highly figurative language, "turn the other cheek" to the smiter. The mere fact that a wrong has been done does not give one license to do another wrong.

This is not to suggest, however, that a wrongdoer must be tolerated to such an extent that he cannot be reprimanded or punished, as the case may be. There are occasions when in the interest of society and of the criminal himself it is necessary to resist evil and to bring the wrongdoer to justice; and Jesus recognized this (Matt. 18:15). But the Christian can never under any circumstance harbor feelings of revenge or a desire to retaliate. As the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 12, all vengeance belongs to God. It is not our prerogative to mete out vengeance. Our part is to control our own feelings and shame our enemy by acts of kindness: "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head" (Rom. 12:20). Beyond this we cannot go. Beyond

NO, NO, NO! —for Christians—

- ◆ NO feelings of hatred
- ◆ NO desire to retaliate
- ◆ NO anger
- ◆ NO strife
- ◆ NO bitterness
- ◆ NO revenge

can continue serving God undisturbed. God has arranged this, and we can only thank Him, and show our appreciation by an intensified effort to perfect what is lacking in our faith, for we realize that the end of the age is upon us, that the great Day of the Lord is near, is near and hastens greatly (Zeph. 1:14).

"Vengeance Is Mine"

Let us think more about our human instinct to take vengeance. The law of retaliation is one of the earliest and strongest

this we must leave it in God's hands.

This is what Jesus practiced as well as preached. We read that "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:23)—an attitude far from "natural" when His persecutors were taking His life.

Farthest from revenge, we must even return *good* for evil. This was also the teaching of the apostles: "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17). "See that none render evil for evil unto any man" (I Thess. 5:15). "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing" (I Pet. 3:9).

Vengeance Is Coming

Christ is coming with vengeance for His enemies. "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you" (Isa. 35:4).

In Isaiah 59 is a beautiful description of Christ's authority both to mete out vengeance and to bestow the blessings of righteousness on the upright. We read, "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord

Eternal Father, Strong to Save

*Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bids the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.*

*Lord God of mountain, hill and plain
O'er which our traffic runs amain
By mountain pass or valley low:
Wherever, Lord, Thy people go,
Protect them by Thy guarding hand
From every peril on the land.*

*O Mighty One, whose broad extent
Doth spread across the firmament:
Thou God of heaven, by Thy might
Spare Thou Thy children who take flight
And keep them by Thy watchful care
From every peril in the air.*

*Almighty God of love and power,
Thy children shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them wheresoe'er they go;
Till all the world Thy glory see
And all who live belong to Thee. Amen.*

shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord" (Isa. 59:16-20).

War and Christian Service in War

from the *Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, pp. 264-265

"Though war is undoubtedly an evil, it is not unmixed with good,... it is true that in the kingdom of heaven there will be no place for war, and that the development of the work of salvation among men points directly to the abolition of war; but the future can not be anticipated. The Christian must bear with patience present evils and tribulations (Rom. xii. 11) ... Nowhere does the New Testament reject war unconditionally... God has given the sword to rulers that they may punish evil-doers and maintain law and order... It is not for [the Christian] to decide whether or not the war is justified....

"The early Christians abhorred war,...partly because military service brought them in contact with many idolatrous rites. The State seemed to them an expression of the godlessness of the world and its hostility to Christ..." The historian also observes that after a short time this attitude changed, as the church apostatized from the teachings of its Founder. By the early third century Tertullian wrote that "in spite of the reigning aversion, many Christians served in the Roman army; and when, under the reign of Constantine, the relation between State and Church became one of intimate friendship and alliance, the objections of the Christians to war were gradually silenced."

The "day of vengeance" distinguishes Christ's second advent from His first. We have often observed that when Christ read from the scroll of Isaiah during His earthly ministry He omitted the day of vengeance; that day will come, it is part of the Divine plan (Isa. 61:1-3; 63:4).

Many of God's prophets recognized the fact that vengeance belongs truly—solely—only—to God. And they rejoiced in this fact. This was their deliverance from the dark powers that overshadowed them. This was the way God would one day subdue evil, so that good might flourish world-wide. Hence Jeremiah prayed, "O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them" (Jer. 20:12). God Himself said, speaking through Moses, "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence" (Deut. 32:35); and the Psalmist said, addressing God, "O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself" (Ps. 94:1).

God's ways are not ours, His thoughts are not ours. We see an enemy, and we want to take action; we must refrain, for vengeance belongs to God. But when God finally *takes* vengeance, let us be sure that we are fully resigned to His will, because He may not act as we had expected.

Here, then, are two points for us to take to ourselves: 1) that we must not take any vengeance on another, or feel any desire to retaliate; and 2) that vengeance is the Divine right of God, and however He chooses to execute it be ready to say "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15:3-4).

We must not take judgment into our own hands; and we must not criticize when God does; for such is His Divine prerogative—why should He have to ask permission

from us? This was the thought on Paul's mind when he wrote to the Thessalonians about the "righteous judgment of God": "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (II Thess. 1:6-10). *Any* Divine judgment is "righteous"—if we cannot trust our Creator to do right, *whom* can we trust!

It is sometimes hard for us to realize that there are absolutes upon us by God's decree, especially in an age when God is silent and we see no open judgments. But there are things that we *absolutely* and *positively* must and must not do. We are so accustomed to having the right to our own opinion that we are even tempted to tell God what we think; but let us beware. In fact, *any* opinion of our own too strongly held is dangerous. If we would submit wholly to God's authority, we must be taking every opportunity right now to practice it, even in the common things of daily life. For we must feel and say and know that God's way is right, *always* right, one hundred percent. Who are we, mere creatures of dust, to find fault with Him? He is the potter, we the clay. We like to feel that we are mature enough to choose for ourselves, and to make our own judgments. But such is not God's thought. We are here to submit, to give up our will, to break our stony heart, to

"Fear Not"

What is our reaction to the present war? Are we alarmed? Are we afraid? War has been part of the human picture in all ages. Said Jesus, not pinpointing any age or time, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:...And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars" (Matt. 24:7, 6).

What was His message to believers? "See that ye be not troubled." War was part of the human picture, and believers should not worry.

How could Jesus say "Fear not"? Surely He was uninformed about the deadliness of modern warfare!—but no, other prophecies in the same context describe the terrors of our very time.

Yet He said it: "See that ye be not troubled." Yes, in a world filled with violence and turmoil and war, we need not fear. Are we closing our eyes to what is all around us and trusting blindly in fate?

The answer is No. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 24:1)—and is not the Creator capable of watching out for His creation? He has a definite purpose in mind: "He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:17–18), but not by dictators and drug lords and crime mongers and those who have no respect for life or authority. When the time is right, He will come to the rescue. In

the meantime, His plan will not suffer.

What a consolation to be able to live through a time of war without fear, to be able to trust implicitly the great keeping Jehovah (Psalm 121), who has promised to each of His servants sufficient life and ability to complete their work for Him (I Tim. 4:8). God has always protected His own, and He always will. Far be it from Him to forget them, they who are as precious as the "apple of his eye," they who are "engraven upon the palms" of His hands. Even though they live in the most remote part of the world, they are not beyond the reach of His everlasting arms. And the promise holds true: that if the Lord is our guardian, "there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. 91:10-11). What a blessed promise!

Again we have His word that "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34:7). Our only concern need be, are we one who is so fearing God as to be worthy of this protection?

We feel for the victims of war; but we know also that God is in control, that against His Almighty might both Saddam Hussein and President Bush and everyone else are powerless.

crucify our natural affections and lusts, to offer our bodies a living sacrifice, to resist unto blood striving against sin, to take captive every thought and make it obey Christ—we are not here to please ourselves (Ps. 40:8; Matt. 21:44; Gal. 5:24; Rom 12:1; Heb. 12:4; II Cor. 10:4-5; Rom 15:1-2).

Can we think of condemning God for eliminating the opposition when Christ sets up His Kingdom? Do we condemn the surgeon who surgically removes the infected limb to save a life? Do we condemn the killing of wild beasts and venomous snakes when they

invade a peaceful community? No more is God to be censured for removing that which would harm and destroy His good work. Were He to be kind and benevolent and generous to all, He would soon have a condition no better than today.

So it is that "by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isa. 66:15-16)—this is the only way that righteousness can ever fill the earth and God's will be done on earth as it is now done in countless heavenly worlds above.

Let us be alerted. Let the present war stir us to be intense and serious about our preparations for the great Day of the Lord. We need not—we must not—be giving too much concern or attention to knowing all the details of the war. We cannot do anything to help or hinder the war effort; we can do much to help or hinder ourselves spiritually. We do not need to know everything that goes on; but one lesson should come through to us loud and clear: *that the hours of this age are numbered*. We have no time for loitering, no time to spend in indecision or doubt. These are

days to be making the Christ-life *our* life, each and every hour. These are times to be practicing all the noble virtues we talk about and read about and hear about. This is no time to parley with any sin. Does some weakness of the flesh persist in assaulting us? Let us stiffen our resistance and master it. Let us tell ourselves *who* is in charge in our lives, and take command. If we do not, some day soon we may wish with all our heart that we had.

"He Makes Wars To Cease"

One of the brightest promises for the future is the promise of no more war. And that promise is just as sure, just as certain as the sunrise tomorrow morning. "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth" is no blind speculation but an inspired message from heaven (Ps. 46:9). And the prophet Micah left us these beautiful words of promise: "He will arbitrate among the nations and dictate to strong nations far away. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks; nations shall no longer fight each other, for all war will end. There will be universal peace, and all the military academies and training camps will be closed down. Every one will live quietly in his own home in peace and prosperity for there will be nothing to fear. The Lord Himself has promised this" (Mic. 4:3-4, TLB). Notice the signature: "The Lord Himself has promised this"—it is sure and certain!

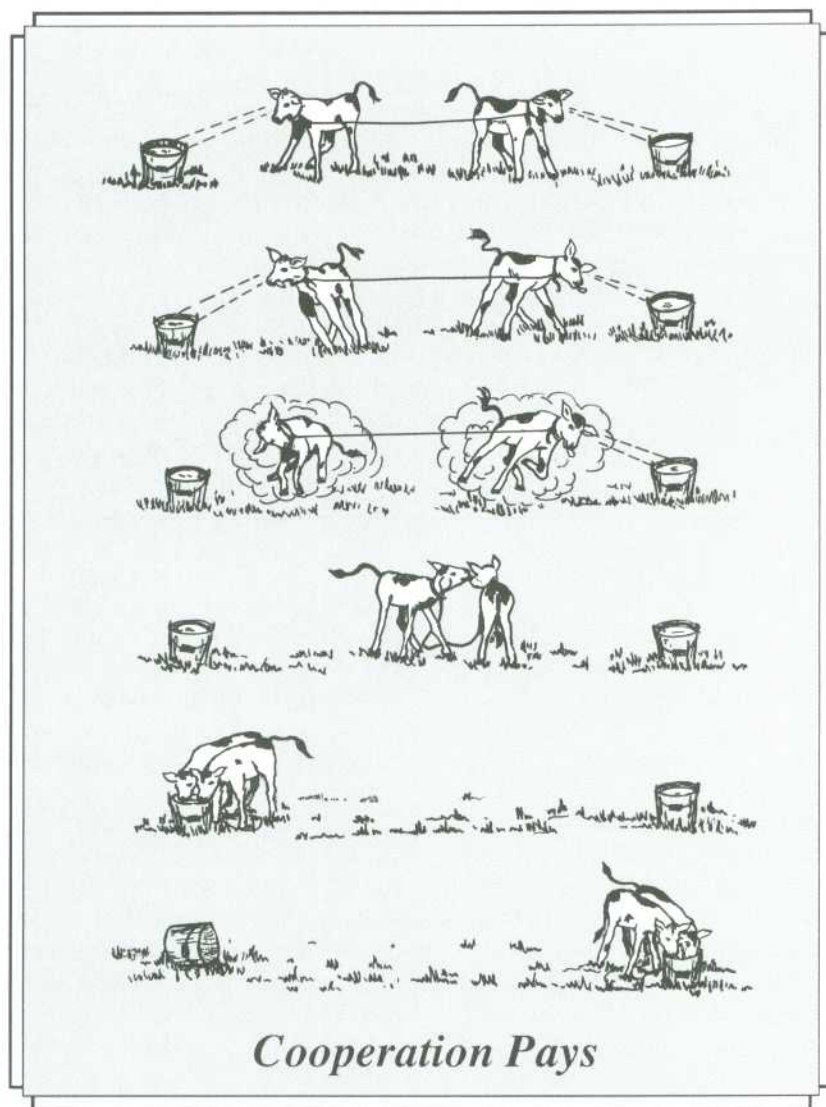
Once the eighth day has arrived and God's work on earth is complete, these promises *will* be fulfilled, and never again shall our planet see any strife. Peace will be universal, from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth (Ps. 72:7-8). For "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and

the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. 32:17-18).

Glorious is the picture, inspiring, thrilling. Do we look ahead with foreboding and dread? Never! For did not Jesus say, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). When you see these things, He says; when you see the nations of the earth in tumult and perplexity, "the sea and the waves

roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken..." what should be the believer's response? Then "stand up, straighten your backs, lift your heads, and look cheerfully forward, for your deliverance is drawing near" (Luke 21:25-28, various trans.). This is the time for victorious faith. This is the time for radiant joy and glowing hope. This is the time to rejoice, for deliverance is at hand.

Yes, "deliverance"—*our* deliverance—if we just prove faithful! MM



Disturbed

Greetings in Jesus' name. I thought I had found a good and true magazine, but the February 1990 issue has just about changed my mind. The article I refer to is 'Prophet Against Pride.' You condemn bracelets, curls, lockets, and collar bonnets, necklaces, etc. You are living the Old Testament. I wear a cross and religious things. I was hoping you were not fanatic.

Also the custom of tree decorating, page 26. I have a Christmas tree, and I don't worship it. I'll finish the magazine you sent me but I have to pray about ordering any more. You kind of Christians chase me and others away from Jesus with your fanatic ideas, that 'You can't do this' and 'You can't do that.' I don't intend for Christianity to drive me crazy like a woman down the street. I have TV and cable. I watch church on Sunday, and other times I watch educational programs and news and good stories. I am disabled and don't get to church. But I don't just dwell on the Bible. I am in the world, not of it. But I can't live in a shell. The way you Christians believe and hide in shells, it is a wonder to me that you get anyone saved. I pray you'll get out of your shell like the turtle below (picture on stationery).

I really enjoyed your magazine, and it was a real blessing. I read with my

Bible to see that you quoted the Bible right, and you did. But I believe God wants us to enjoy life, or He wouldn't have given men wisdom to invent things and He wouldn't have made trees for us to enjoy, even Christmas trees.

As for further magazines, put me on hold till I pray about it."

Montana

S. R.

NOTE: We regret that our friend is offended by the Word of the Lord, but must say with Peter and the other apostles that "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). And, says God, "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully" (Jer. 23:28).

Again we are reminded of the word of the Lord to His prophet Ezekiel: "Thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God....whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear" (Ezek. 2:4-5). God knew that His message would not be popularly received, and we can expect the same. In fact, if it is popular, we can be quite sure that it is not the Word of the Lord, because Jesus said, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14).

The article we published, "Prophet Against Pride," was heavily supported with Scripture (the prophet Isaiah); and if Scripture offends us, we cannot ask God to change His standards. We

can ignore them and go our own way, if we choose, but God's cause will not suffer. "The word of our God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8). —EDITOR.

What Will He Say To Me?

The coming of Christ is imminent, and how important to remind one another of this fact. World conditions seem to be "ripe." Yet we still do not know the exact time. When Elijah comes will he find us ready, and if not, have we done our very best? I often wonder what he will say to me when he comes.

Time and opportunity will not always be available. Let us strive with all our hearts to grasp them now.

Georgia

B. P.

Needed: Discipline

Old enemy self is our greatest evil to fight. He can't be conquered in a little while either. It takes constant fighting to control him.

But God has given us His Word, the sword of the Spirit, to use if we will work as He wants us to work.

We all need discipline to help us overcome all evils—and we must take this discipline and love it—for nothing eternal can we obtain without discipline.

The more we learn of God's discipline, the more we will like to take it—if we want His pay. And we know God pays what He has promised.

South Carolina

H. C.

Announcement

The New Year is coming, the sacred New Year as God commanded Moses to measure time.

According to Biblical records, the ancient Hebrews began their sacred year with the new moon of Abib, or Nisan (see Ex. 12:2, 13:4). Abib is the first new moon following the spring equinox. This year the equinox occurs on March 20, and the next new moon falls on April 14. For this reason, we are observing the beginning of the month Abib on Sunday evening, April 14, continuing through Monday, April 15, Bible time being counted from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32).

The Megiddo Church observes the day with

double significance—as the beginning of the sacred New Year and also as the anniversary of the birth of Christ. Members and friends set aside the day to reconsecrate themselves to God for the new year, and also to honor Christ, our coming King and Ruler. The heavenly Father chose to honor Christ at the time of His birth by sending angels to the shepherds—shouldn't we do our part?

Thirteen days later (Abib 13, this year on Friday evening, April 26) we will commemorate the anniversary of our Lord's Supper, and the morning of April 29 (Abib 15) will be observed as the anniversary of Christ's triumph over death and the grave.

Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortals Be Proud?




Oh, why should the spirit of mortals be proud?
Like a swift-fading flower, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of lightning, a break of the wave,
Man passes from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the high,
Shall molder to dust and together shall lie.

The infant a mother attended and loved,
The mother that infant's affection who proved;
The husband that mother and infant who blessed,
Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye,
Shone beauty and pleasure—her triumphs are by;
And the memory of those who loved her and praised,
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the king that the scepter hath borne,
The brow of the priest that the miter hath worn,
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,
Are hidden and lost in the depths of the grave.



So the multitude goes, like the flow'r and the weed
That wither away to let others succeed;
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,
To repeat every tale that has often been told.

They loved, but their story we cannot unfold;
They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is cold;
They grieved, but no wail from their slumber will come;
They joyed, but the voice of their gladness is dumb.

The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap,
The herdsman who climbed with his goats up the steep,
The beggar who wandered in search of his bread,
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint who enjoyed the communion of heaven,
The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven,
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.

They died—aye, they died; and we, things that are now,
Who walk on the turf that lies o'er their brow,
Who make in their dwelling a transient abode,
Meet the changes they met on their pilgrimage road.

Yea, hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,
Are mingled together in sunshine and rain;
And the smiles and the tears, the song and the dirge,
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud—
Oh, why should the spirit of mortals be proud?

Yes, Why? when his strength is so puny, so small;
And his power—beside God's it is just none at all.
But God in His mercy has offered a plan,
A plan of redemption to save erring man.

To mortals who low in humility bow
And yield all to God, He to THEM will allow
Long life in His Kingdom with never a cloud.
So WHY should the spirit of mortals be proud?



How Much Does It Cost?

Characters:

Mark,.....a young customer
Mr. Daniels,.....shopkeeper and owner
of Barney's Bicycle Shop
Mr. Higgins,.....an elderly customer

Setting: *Barney's Bicycle Shop. Mark enters and looks curiously around, as though trying to find something very special.*

Mr. Daniels: Good afternoon, young man. Can I help you?

Mark: Good afternoon. I hope so. I need a new bike. What do they cost?

Mr. Daniels: Well, son, you're in the right place. (laughs) As to the price, maybe you can tell me a little more about what you have in mind. Some of these are pretty fancy and others....

Mark: I just started a paper route, so I will need a good sturdy bike with a wire rack. It doesn't have to be new, but I'd like it to look nice.

Mr. Daniels: Well, let me see....

Mark: Do you have a good *used* one?

Mr. Daniels: (snaps finger) I believe I've just the bike for you! one I just finished fixing up.

Mark: How much does it cost?

Mr. Daniels: Let's see...I'll let it go for \$52.50. That's a very good buy. Would you like to see the bicycle?

Mark: (eagerly) Yes, please.

Mr. Daniels: (goes out—brings bike in. Mark looks it over carefully.) How do you like it?

Mark: What a beautiful bicycle! I believe it is just what I need.

Mr. Daniels: You'll take it then?

Mark: Yes, I would like to buy it, but...I only have \$29.49. I need to earn some more money before I can buy it. Will you hold it for a while?

Mr. Daniels: (doubtful) How long do you expect it will take you to earn the balance?

Mark: I expect to be getting about 17 dollars a week. I'll save every penny I earn. Will you...will you please hold it for me?

Mr. Daniels: (puts hand on Mark's shoulder) Well, son, I'll try. But good used bicycles don't stay around very long. I'll put it in the very back of the store for ten days. Maybe no one will see it there. How does that sound?

Mark: Fair enough. Thank you, Mr....

Mr. Daniels: Mr. Daniels.

Mark: Thank you, Mr. Daniels. I'll be back as soon as I can. (exits)

Narrator:

Mark whistled cheerily as he ran home. Soon he would be the owner of that shiny full-sized bicycle, his very own bicycle. His mother and father smiled as Mark thought up ways to earn a little extra money. They were pleased that he wanted to buy the bicycle with his own money.

Finally, the day came when Mark had just enough money to purchase the new bike. To be sure, he carefully recounted the money, piling the coins in neat piles on the kitchen table. Yes, he had exactly \$52.50. It was a happy boy who hurried to Barney's Bicycle Shop to see Mr. Daniels.

(Curtain opens. Mr. Daniels is showing bicycles to another customer, Mr. Higgins, as Mark enters.)

Mr. Higgins: I don't see just what I want. That one is too big for my grandson. I don't like the handlebars on that one, and this one isn't in very good condition. Don't you have any others? (He looks around—starts toward back of store where Mark's bike stands.) What's that over there?...Why this is just what I'm looking for...How much do you want for it?

Mr. Daniels: (clears his throat) I'm sorry, but I'm holding that bicycle for a young man (turns and sees Mark standing near front entrance). Why, if the young man isn't here at this very moment! And judging from his face he has come to buy it. (to Mark) Have you come to buy the bicycle?

Mark: (beaming all over) Yes, Mr. Daniels. It's all in here (holds up plastic bag, then suddenly draws hand back with a look of dismay). But... but... I'm not sure. What is 10%* of \$52.50?

Mr. Daniels: (puzzled) Why it's \$5.25.

Mark: (very abruptly) I guess I can't buy the bicycle now.

Mr. Daniels: (surprised) I thought it was just what you wanted.

Mark: (matter-of-factly) It is, but I don't have enough money.

Mr. Daniels: How much do you have?

Mark: \$52.50.

Mr. Daniels: Why, that is enough. It costs \$52.50.

Mark: (slowly) Yes, but all this money isn't mine. One tenth belongs to the Lord. You see, I forgot to take out the Lord's share. Mom and Dad always say that if you put God first you will never regret it.

Mr. Daniels: (embarrassed) Oh...(pauses for an instant) I think you are doing the right thing in not buying this bicycle. I think you should give the Lord His portion. (pauses, then turns to Mr. Higgins) Do you still want this bicycle for your grandson?

Mr. Higgins: (happily but a little confused) Yes...yes I would. How... how much did you say it is?

Mr. Daniels: \$52.50.

Mr. Higgins: (pays Mr. Daniels, takes the bicycle and exits) Thank you very much.

Mr. Daniels: You're welcome. Hope your grandson likes it. Good-bye.

Mark: Good-bye, Mr. Daniels.

Mr. Daniels: Just a minute, young man. I want to show you something. (goes to back, brings out another bicycle) Here is another bicycle that came in just yesterday. Really, it's a better bicycle than the one you were going to buy.

Mark: How much does IT cost?

Mr. Daniels: (deliberately) Let...me...see, Yes that's it. It costs \$47.25.

Mark: I wonder if I have that much left. (pours money onto counter, together they count it) If I take \$5.25 from \$52.50, I'll have 47 dollars and 25 cents. That's just the amount I need!

Mr. Daniels: (beaming all over) Sure enough, my boy, sure enough! (puts hand on Mark's shoulder) When you put the Lord first, things have a way of working out, don't they! The bicycle is yours!

Mark: Oh, thank you, thank you, Mr. Daniels. Thank you!

Mr. Daniels: You're most welcome. God bless you, lad. (Mark exits with bicycle. Mr. Daniels looks after Mark and then bows head and prays aloud):

Dear Lord, thank You for the lesson today from this lad. Help me always to remember to put You first in my life. With shame I confess that too often my wants and my needs have loomed so large that I have forgotten You. I have let my material goals push out my responsibility to You. Help me to remember that everything I have belongs to You, Lord. Everything. May I put You first in my life from now on. Amen.

*Note: The Bible supports the practice of tithing, or giving one tenth of one's income to the Lord. Abraham, upon returning from battle, gave to God "tithes of all" (Gen. 14:20). Jacob also vowed a tenth (Gen 28:22). The Israelites were required by their law to give a tenth to the support of the tabernacle and the priesthood (Deut. 12:6; Lev. 27:32).

God's Spiritual Creation

**“In the beginning God created
the heaven and the earth”**

- ♦ What Beginning?
- ♦ What Creation?
- ♦ What Heaven?
- ♦ What Earth?

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). These words comprise a simple statement of fact, if taken literally. But as part of an allegory, they pose numerous questions: What beginning? What creation? What heaven? What earth?

What Beginning? What Creation?

Popular theology once held that this first verse of the Bible applied solely to the literal creation, that by the word of His power the Almighty created heaven and earth in six 24-hour days some 6000 years ago. But is there any reason to such an assertion, when the work of God is described as reaching “from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps. 103:17–18)? Has such a Being been idle through count-

less aeons, only to stir Himself to purpose about 6000 years ago?

Astronomers who are committed to a serious study of the heavenly bodies, from our solar system and the 100 billion stars in our Milky Way to the more than 200 billion galaxies that whirl through a boundless sea of space, are constantly searching for a clue to the beginning of it all. Using the best finite measuring systems they have been able to devise, they have now pushed back the beginning date to more than 14 billion years ago, and still there is no evidence of a "beginning." The telescopic eye, becoming ever more powerful with advancing technology, reveals only more and more myriads of stars and immense stellar formations stretching billions of light years across space. Future telescopes promise only more of the same. Either the universe is without bounds, or the Almighty Creator does not see fit to have His mortal creatures discover His secrets—or both.

We are humbled, we are awed by the magnitude of it all. And what happens to the 6000-year theory of creation in the midst of this picture? Only in the dim twilight of human reasoning, long antedating modern astronomy, could the theory of a six-day creation 6000 years ago have been conceived and accepted.

Can we begin to fathom the meaning in the words of the inspired Scripture writer, that "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Ps. 103:17-18)? Through an *eternity* past—not simply through 6000 years—God has had individuals upon whom He could bestow His mercy who remem-

bered His commandments to do them. Who are we to limit His work to a mere 6000-year period?

We do not know just when our planet came into being, or when life began upon it; the Bible does not tell us. We know only that God is the great Creator, that life came about by His design and not by any chance combining of chemicals in "nature"; that the earth and all things in it exist by His creative hand. This is a fact, stated repeatedly in Scripture (see Neh. 9:6; Isa. 45:17-18; 40:22). If we choose not to believe it, we harm only ourselves.

What about the special creation narrated in Genesis? A clue to the Genesis enigma is found in the wording of Genesis 2:4: "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens." The word translated "day" in this verse is the Hebrew word *yom*, which has for one of its definitions, "time unlimited, with no reference to literal days." Genesis, then, does not say that the sun, moon and stars and earth were created in 6 literal days 6000 years ago. Positively not!

The opening of Genesis is devoted to the theme of *spiritual creation*, the development of an ideal world "created in righteousness and true holiness," inhabited by persons who have under trial proved worthy of belonging to this "new" world. Upon this subject the first verse of the Bible is focused: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

The point has been well made that the Bible is not a scientific textbook; it was not written to tell us scientific fact; it was written to reveal spiritual truths, God's plan of salvation, though never contradicting any scientific fact; for the

God of the Bible is at the same time the God of all true science.

What is the "beginning" of Genesis 1:1? As defined in the Hebrew Lexicon, its meanings are "Head, chief...the first of its kind...with regard to time; firstfruits...firstborn, firstfruits of things created by him." The second definition is "Christ, head of creation...with regard to dignity, the first." Here is a beginning centering around Christ and those who are "firstfruits, firstborn, firstfruits of things created by him."

As an example of this use of "beginning" the lexicographer cites Rev. 3:14. "And unto the angel of

Only in the dim twilight of human reasoning could the theory of a six-day creation 6000 years ago have been conceived and accepted.

the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Of what creation is Christ the beginning? It is the "new" creation, of which He will be the chief. As the prophet Zechariah identified Him, "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9).

Christ is the "head of the body, the church: who is the beginning,

the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). By virtue of His life of matchless obedience, He holds the highest place, the preeminent position.

What Heavens and Earth?

Now let us look at the heavens and earth that belong to His special creation. First of all, must heavens and earth refer to only the literal entities?

The answer is no. The Bible does speak often of the literal heavens and earth, but it also uses the terms to refer to the inhabitants of the earth as two distinct groups, the "heavens" being the ruling or political powers, the "earth" those ruled over. This symbolic meaning is especially clear in Isaiah 1, where the prophet first addresses a message to the heavens and earth, then defines his audience as "rulers" and "people." We read: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth:...Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah" (Isa. 1:2, 10).

Numerous passages of Scripture employ this symbolic use of the terms heaven and earth. For example, Deut. 32:1: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth." Literal heavens and earth would not

have ears to hear. Again we read of the heavens being glad and the earth rejoicing (I Chron. 16:31). Describing a time of great rejoicing for the inhabitants of earth, Isaiah wrote prophetically, "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel" (Isa. 44:23). No one reading this passage would expect to hear mountains, forests, and every tree "singing"; much less the earth or the heavens "shouting". The language is symbolic, a beautiful description of the time when the earth will be glorified and made new. Using the same metaphorical language the prophet Jeremiah described the heavens as being "astonished" (Jer. 2:12)—a reaction which the physical heavens could not show.

Perhaps the most extensive use of these symbolic terms is in II Peter 3, where the apostle speaks first of the heavens and earth which perished at the time of the flood (vs. 5-6), then of the "heavens and earth which are now," which will pass away "in the day of the Lord" (v. 10), and last of the "new heavens and earth" which will replace the present rulers and populace (v. 13).

This third heavens and earth mentioned in II Peter 3, "wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verse 13) is, we are convinced, the "heaven and earth" of Genesis 1:1. The whole purpose of God's work on earth centers around the creation (development and installing) of this "new heaven and earth," a new ruling body and populace.

New Heavens. Who will compose this new heavens when complete? The "heaven" now being created by God is a collective term including Christ and the saints. As King of the earth, Christ will occupy the principal position in the new heaven (Zech. 14:9), but He is not the whole heaven. He is, by title, "Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17:14). Revelation 5:9-10 describes His associate kings and lords as "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." They are "kings and priests" with Christ, and shall reign with Him upon earth.

Christ is also termed the "firstfruits." We are told in I Cor. 15:20, 23, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept....Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Christ is the "firstfruits" in that He was the first of our race to obtain immortal life. But at His coming "they that are

Through an eternity past—not simply through
6000 years—God has had individuals upon
whom He could bestow His mercy, who
remembered His commandments to do them.

Christ's"—those victorious over sin in themselves—shall be granted the same victory over death, and shall become His associates in authority (Rev 3:21).

The Revelator saw this same group standing with Christ on mount Zion, 144,000 of them, "having his Father's name written in their foreheads." No ordinary individuals these, for their super achievement is described in the following verses: These are "they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth....And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:1, 4-5). Because they overcame just as Christ overcame, He shares with them the honors and authority of His throne (Rev. 3:21).

The New Earth. God's plan for a new creation includes also the development of a new earth.

Who will compose this "new earth"? They are those who submit to Christ when He returns and thus survive the purifying judgments of God, those who are willing to comply with the new order, and their descendants. We read of this group in Zech. 13:9, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

The Removal of the Present Heavens and Earth

The installing of new heavens and earth (new political authorities and a new populace) means that the present heavens and earth (the present political authorities and populace) must be removed.

Does this suggest that the physical heavens and earth will be destroyed? Not for a moment, for

we are plainly told, "The earth abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4).

Do we question the removal of the present heavens and earth, the present ruling authorities and those ruled over who will not submit to the new regime of Christ? This fact has been foretold by many of God's prophets. Isaiah, in chapter 60, describes it in these words: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (v. 12). David, speaking for God, described the same destruction of the "earth" in Psalm 101: "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord" (v. 8). Prov. 2:22 pictures it again: "The wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it." Jesus described this same destruction of the wicked earth when in the Parable of the Pounds He pronounced doom upon all who reject His authority: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27). Jesus pictures it again using the simile of the "lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," which He clearly defines as "the second death." We read: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8). This is another picture of the removal of the present wicked earth (people).

The collapse of the present heavens and earth was further described with detailed accuracy by our Lord. We read: "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of

nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:25-27). This passage shows both the state of the present heavens and earth at the time of their dissolution, and the intervening power of Christ: "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

The sun, moon and stars in the *physical* heavens will not change;

During the glorious Millennium, "officers of peace" will rule over a God-honoring, God-loving populace.

but in earth's *political* heavens there are unmistakable signs of decay. In like figure, there is drastic surging of the sea of nations (Rev. 17:15) as the inhabitants of the world quake in fear of coming events, especially the terror caused by the spread of nuclear power. All these events are to be recognized as signs of the second advent: "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." At that time, "Heaven and earth shall pass away"—again not the physical but the systems of human misrule.

In the book of Revelation, Jesus tells how the present authorities (heavens) will be displaced. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army....These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Rev. 19:19; 17:14). During the battle of Armageddon the thrones of earth's political heavens will be swept away to make room for Christ, the rightful heir, and His associate rulers, the new heavens of Genesis 1:1.

When will the new heavens be established? We learn from Second Peter 3 something about counting prophetic time. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (v. 8).

Applying Peter's rule, what period of time do we have for the six days of creation in Genesis 1? We have a period of 6000 years during which God is creating, followed by a seventh day, also of one thousand years, during which God "rests" and the creative work is placed in the hands of Christ and His saints. This "seventh day" is the glorious Millennium, when "officers of peace" will rule over a God-honoring, God-loving populace.

The Perfect World, God's New Creation

We are by no means dependent upon some isolated text by an obscure writer to describe the heaven and earth of Genesis 1:1. We have evidence from our Lord Himself, from two of His apostles, Peter and John; and also the chiefest of the prophets, Isaiah. The 65th chapter of his book sparkles with pictures of the golden age when the new heavens hold sway over a transformed earth;

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

"I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

"They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them" (Isa. 65:17-23, NIV).

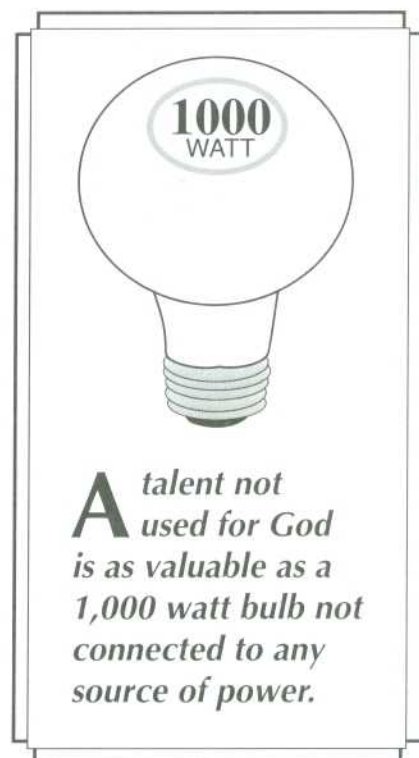
Under the administration of the new heavens, perfect social and economic conditions shall prevail; and with the protection of universal law, all people everywhere on earth shall live in safety and happiness.

During this millennial reign of the new heavens, Christ and the saints, "a great multitude...of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Rev. 7:9) shall be developed to become the new earth or populace of the kingdom. This task performed, the work of spiritual creation on this planet will be accomplished. Genesis 1:1 will be fulfilled in the establishment of righteous rulers to administer the affairs of righteous inhabitants for ever.

Looking afar into the future to this grand consummation of God's plan and purpose, John saw "a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." And he "heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, I am making everything new! Then he said, Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true" (Rev. 21:1, 3-5, NIV).

Such are the glorious blessings to be bestowed upon the heavens and earth of Genesis 1:1, when their creation is complete. MM

(Next: The Man Made in God's Image)





If God Wills?

"It seems sacrilegious to me to use the phrase 'If the Lord wills' in connection with everyday matters, such as 'I am going shopping, if the Lord wills,' or to make plans and say 'If the Lord wills.' It makes it sound like we are puppets of God. What do you think?"

It is never proper to secularize any phrase of Scripture. Any and every sacred expression we use must be kept sacred. However, for the dedicated Christian, all of life is sacred; there is no separating secular and sacred. All our time, all our activities are part of our service to God, even the most ordinary.

The Bible writers felt themselves continually within the care and keeping of God, even in secular matters. David wrote, "My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies" (Ps. 31:15). Again he said, speaking of his common everyday blessings, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage" (Ps. 16:6).

Again they spoke of every life and every breath of life as derived from God. "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12:10). Job wrote, "The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life...I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay" (Job 33:4-6).

If we are dependent upon God for every breath of life—and we know that we are—is it too much to consider Him when planning our daily affairs?

James spoke directly about asking the Lord's permission, so to speak, in the daily concourse of life. "Go to now," he wrote addressing the business-minded, and he condemned those who would "say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little

time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:13-14).

In other words, he was saying, Life is too short and uncertain to say what "we will" do. Then he suggested the proper alternative: "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (v. 15). When we preface every activity with "If the Lord will, we shall live and do" such and such, we are acknowledging our total dependence upon God for breath and all our powers of life, which is the proper attitude for any and every child of God.

Should we wonder if we are misapplying these words of James, we have this statement from the apostle Paul, who in taking leave of the Ephesian brethren stated these plans for his return: "I will return again unto you, if God will" (Acts 18:21). Again, writing to the Corinthians, he expressed his desire to come to see them shortly, adding, "If the Lord will" (I Cor. 4:19).

In fact, we should not engage in any activity which we cannot make dependent upon the favorable will of God.

We have also this statement in the book of Hebrews, concerning our spiritual duty of "going onto perfection": "And this will we do, if God permit" (Heb. 6:3).

On God we depend for every breath, every move, every moment of life. Should we hesitate to make our activities subject to His will, we are certainly not heeding the advice of Prov. 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

◆ More About "All"

"I have completed reading the Megiddo Message for September and October 1990. I enjoy all articles every month. However, I have a question on the article 'How Inclusive Is the Word All?'"

"Please clarify this for me: If death is abolished, then there can be no one in the grave. Thanks for helping me."

To answer your question, we must first clarify the

*KINDNESS is a little seed,
Just plant it in the ground;
Yes, scatter lots of it about
And happiness abounds.*

*Just give someone a great big smile
Before the day is through
And you'll find someone in life's crowd
Who'll smile right back at you.*

*So let us all with one accord
Be kindly every day,
And do it in the Lord's good name
He'll help us all the way.*

— Contributed

distinction between "death" and "the dead." *Death* describes what happens to those who are living; *the dead* have already been victims of death and are, so to speak, out of the picture, unless restored to life by the power of God.

When death is abolished, no one will from that point forward die; no more will a living person experience death. To say that there can then be "no one in the grave" is to say that there must be a universal resurrection, which the Bible does not teach. And to say that there must be a universal resurrection, after which no one will die, adds the further idea that there must be a universal salvation, which the Bible does not teach.

Consider the following passages: "They shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts" (Jer. 51:57). The prophet Daniel wrote that "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake"—he did not say that *all* would awake (Dan. 12:2).

The one passage which might confuse the issue is found in John 5, where Jesus says that "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life;

and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). But this passage must be read carefully, for Jesus did not say, as the passage is often quoted, "all that are in *their* graves" but "all that are in *the* graves"—certain specific graves—shall come forth. He is not saying that all the dead will rise.

The apostle Paul says it plainly, that "the dead in Christ shall rise" (I Thess. 4:16); and all who have died did not die "in Christ."

It is God's plan that the time will arrive when no one on the earth from that time forward will die; death will be unknown. This happy situation is pictured in Revelation 21, when "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" (Rev. 21:3-4). The prophet Isaiah foretold this same time, when God "will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces" (Isa. 25:8). When death is swallowed up in victory, there shall be henceforward no more death, i.e., no one from that time forward will die.

Death shall actually be destroyed. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:26). In symbolic language the Revelator described this same final event, when "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14).

The Bible plainly teaches that the end of the wicked, the rebellious, the sinners is "destruction," "everlasting destruction" (II Thess. 1:7-9). "Everlasting destruction" is destruction that has no termination, death from which there is no rising. The victims of such destruction will "never see light" (Ps. 49:19-20); they shall never see the time when death is abolished.

According to Job, the wicked shall perish for ever (Job 20:4-7). "He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him" (vs. 8-9). There is not the slightest suggestion here that the wicked will ever live again. "The light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine....His candle shall be put out" (Job 18:5-6).

Neither does the Bible teach that all will be saved. On the contrary, salvation is reserved for those who do His commandments (Rev. 22:14), for those who "by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality" (Rom. 2:7), to those who "seek good and not evil" (Amos 5:14), who are "willing and obedient" (Isa. 1:19-20). All will not obey, hence all will not be saved. God "would have all men to be saved

and come to a knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4), but they will not (John 5:40). He has "no pleasure in the death of him that dieth," but neither can He save the unworthy and be true to His promise to fill the earth with the righteous, the upright, the meek and the pure (Isa. 32:17-18; Matt. 5:5; Ps. 37:8, 11, 29).

◆ No One Knows the Day Nor Hour

"In your article *'Be Patient Until the Arrival of the Lord'* (October, 1990), on page 7 you have misquoted 'Be patient for you do not know the day or year.' Matt. 24:36 says, 'But of that day and hour knoweth no man,...' Mark 13:32 says, 'But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, ...'

"Where do you find day or year used in reference to Christ's second coming? I am not being smart, I would like your response to this question.

"I believe Christ intends for Christians to know when He is returning (not the hour or day), but I believe we can predict the month and year of His return. In I Cor. 12:1, in talking to Christians, Paul says, 'now concerning spiritual gifts [of which prophecy is a spiritual gift], I would not have you ignorant.'

"Christ does not want us to be ignorant about His return, except for the hour or the day. He wants us to know the month and the year. His return is predictable. I Cor. 14:1 says prophecy is the superior gift."

Please permit us to clarify our statement in which you say we misquoted the words of Jesus in Mark 13:32. You are correct in your citing of the text, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man,..." You are right that there is no statement in the Bible which reads, "But of that day and year knoweth no man." However, if you will refer again to our statement you will notice that only the words "be patient" are in quotation marks. The following sentence was trying to make the point that because we do not know the time,—i.e., hour, day, year—James tells us not to be disheartened, but rather absorb ourselves in preparation.

But your question raises another point, as you believe that it is possible to know the month and year, though not the day and hour.

Jesus did indeed use only the words "day and hour," when saying that no one knows of His return. But we do not believe either that anyone knows the month or year. Numerous false predictions have been made over the years. Various groups have forecast that Christ would return in 1900, 1914, 1930, 1978, 1987, 1988, 1989, and many more. All have been made by sincere

individuals who believed that they had evidence to support their predictions. Time has proved them sincerely wrong.

We find nothing in the Bible to tell us the month and year any more than the day and hour. The apostle Paul said that the "times and seasons" we would know (I Thess. 5:1) and this expression of time is much less specific than any month or year.

As you say in your letter, Paul did say in talking to the Corinthians that he would not have them ignorant of the spiritual gift of prophecy (I Cor. 12:1). However, Paul lived during an age when God's people enjoyed special Divine gifts which we today do not have. To different ones were given different gifts. One had the gift of prophecy, another of speaking in tongues, another of teaching, another of healing, etc. as Paul goes on to discuss in I Corinthians 12 (see verses 8–11). But all believers in all time to come were not to share in these gifts. In I Corinthians 13, Paul put special emphasis on "faith, hope and charity, these three," saying that they would abide forever while the gifts of prophecies, tongues, and knowledge by Divine power should cease. "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:8–10).

When the "perfect" came, the complete written Word of God, knowledge revealed by direct Divine power was no longer needed, hence came to a predetermined end. We today do not have any gifts of prophecy. No one today can prophesy by Divine power. Our only source of information concerning God and His plan is the Bible. For this reason, no one today can predict with accuracy the hour, day, month or year of Christ's second coming.

However, we do know the "times and seasons," indicated by the fulfilling of prophecies for the last days, and can know that we are indeed living in the era of His coming, when His return is imminent. This is what God wanted us to know, so that we could busy ourselves in preparation, lest "that day come upon [us] unawares" (Luke 21:34).

◆ Will We Know Elijah?

"When Elijah appears, how will we know truly that it is he and not just another impostor?"

Scripture gives several guidelines to answer this question. First, the prophet Malachi states in chapter 4 that the prophet Elijah "shall turn the heart of the

fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (v. 6). From this statement it would seem definite that Elijah will have a dramatic—and worldwide—impact. He will not be just another evangelist, or another diviner, or another preacher. His message will do something—it will cause a mighty turning. So dramatic will be the result that it will rescue multitudes from an otherwise hopeless fate: "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

When Elijah was on earth before, he demonstrated awesome power from God. He restored the widow's son to life. He caused fire to come down from heaven and devour the altar which the prophets of Baal were powerless to do. Not once but twice he caused fire to destroy a company of fifty soldiers who were sent to arrest him. Another time he prayed to the Lord and it rained not "for the space of three years and six months." Again he prayed and the heaven gave rain (James 5:17-18).

When he returns, he certainly will be able to prove his authority by spectacular feats, for in the words of Jesus he comes to "restore all things" (Matt. 17:11), and how could he do this without restoring the power of the Holy Spirit which he had formerly?

There is a vast difference between claiming Divine power and actually possessing that power. Elijah will leave no doubt as to his qualifications. MM

Make every little
bit of time
count for
something eternal.

New Testament Queries

1. Of whom was it said, "He was mighty in the Scriptures"?
2. What prisoner in chains stood on the steps of a castle and addressed a multitude?
3. Who had been Paul's teacher prior to his conversion?
4. What unrighteous judge trembled before a prisoner in chains?
5. Who was captain of the guard that took Paul to Rome?
6. Who was the chief man on the island of Melita, where Paul was shipwrecked?
7. How long did Paul preach at Rome?
8. What apostle expressed a desire to travel in Spain?
9. What Christian was recommended to the apostles for hospitality?
10. What woman carried Paul's epistle to the Romans?
11. Who said, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow"?
12. Who said, "Hold fast that which is good"?
13. What example have we of early piety in the New Testament?
14. Who said, "To the pure all things are pure"?
15. Who said, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above"?
16. Who said, "The devils also believe that there is one God"?
17. Name two New Testament persons who looked upon their afflictions as a source of good.
18. What member of the primitive Church tried the patience of the loving disciple John?
19. God will wipe away all tears from the eyes of whom?
20. Give the name of one angel mentioned in the Bible.
21. Who was the first Christian martyr?
22. From what place in Palestine did the Ascension take place?

Answers to New Testament Queries

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Apollos. —Acts 18:24. | 14. Paul. —Titus 1:15. |
| 2. Paul. —Acts 21:40. | 15. James. —James 1:17. |
| 3. Gamaliel. —Acts 22:3. | 16. James. —James 2:19. |
| 4. Felix. —Acts 24:25. | 17. Paul. —Rom. 5:3; II Cor. 12:9-10; James. —James 1:2. |
| 5. Julius. —Acts 27:1. | 18. Diotrophes. —III John 9. |
| 6. Publius. —Acts 28:7. | 19. Those who have washed their robes and made them white. —Rev. 7:13, 17. |
| 7. Two years. —Acts 28:30. | 20. Gabriel. —Dan. 9:21; Luke 1:19. |
| 8. Paul. —Rom. 15:24, 28. | 21. Stephen. —Acts 7:54, 60. |
| 9. Gaius. —Rom. 16:23. | 22. Bethany. —Luke 24:50-51. |
| 10. Phebe. —Rom. 16:1. | |
| 11. Paul, to the Philippians. —Phil. 2:10. | |
| 12. Paul. —I Thess. 5:21. | |
| 13. Timothy. —II Tim. 3:15. | |

Your Bible: Study it up,
Write it down,
Pray it through,
Live it out,
Pass it on.

If we had no trials, there would be no triumphs.

Remember the weekday, and keep it holy too.

Habit is a cable; we weave a thread for it each day, and it becomes so strong we cannot break it.

Character Only

*I'm sure I would not care to be
So elegant a man
That I should be ashamed to see
The spot where I began.*

*For in a life of ups and downs
We all may win or lose,
And some wear chains and some wear crowns,
And some wear cast-off shoes.*

*But if I don't put on an air
Of high and mighty pride,
I think that few will see or care
What I put on beside.*

*For what are trappings after all
But camouflage and sham?
By character I stand or fall—
Not what I wear—but AM!*



At the bottom of most fears will be found an overactive mind and an underactive body. We generate fears while we sit still. We overcome them by action.

The thing you can give and still keep, is your word.

An old Negro preacher, when shown a commentary prepared by a learned scholar, remarked, "Well, sir, the Bible certainly do shed a lot of light on that book of yours."

The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out.

What the heart does not desire the head will not permit.

We are honored to be called to walk obediently and faithfully before God in these difficult times. The glory ahead will obliterate any memory of the grim past and we shall be eternally grateful that we were able to sacrifice and suffer and serve in times like these!

LEAN HARD

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

— Psalm 55:22

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

— 1 Peter 5:7

Child of My love, lean hard,
And let Me feel the pressure of thy care;
I know thy burden, child, I shaped it;
Poised it in Mine own hand, made no proportion
In its weight to thine unaided strength;
For even as I laid it on, I said,
I shall be near, and while she leans on Me
This burden shall be Mine, not hers;
So shall I keep My child within the circling arms
Of My own love. Here lay it down, nor fear
To impose it on a shoulder which upholds
The government of worlds. Yet closer come;
Thou art not near enough; I would embrace thy care.
So I might feel My child reposing on My breast.
Thou lovest Me? I knew it. Doubt not then;
But, loving Me, Lean Hard.

—Selected