

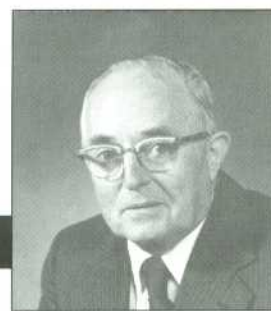
# Megiddo Message

Give unto the Lord  
Glory and Praise!



# *A New Year Message*

from Our Pastor



*A*s an experienced traveler in the way to the heavenly city I can assure you that no joy can compare with the joy and satisfaction derived from true Christian living. Complete surrender to God gives us poise, it acts as a stabilizer to keep our ship of life on an even keel however rough the sea or adverse the winds. What other assurance can even begin to compare with the assurance that all things will work together for good for us if only we truly love God and are called according to His purpose. Indeed, as our noble founder once said: "The whole disposing of the true Christian's life is of the Lord."

We stand at the threshold of a new year, and now is a fitting time to take stock of the treasure that we have amassed during the past year for the time to come, and so determine our chances of laying hold on eternal life. The astute business man takes stock at the close of the business year to ascertain whether his business is in the black or in the red. This same process should serve the earnest life-seeker well. But let us be realistic in the evaluation of our own character. Let us beware lest in judging ourselves we are inclined to call evil good; a liability an asset. Let us remember that we cannot fool the Almighty. He is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.

If our balance sheet shows FAITH on the decline and DOUBT showing up more persistently in our record, we may know we are badly in the red. If the words, "lost temper," appear more frequently in our record than "allowed patience to have her perfect work," our balance most certainly will be unfavorable. If insertions of the words: "displayed haughtiness" outnumber the "humility" entries three to two, our condition is serious. And the same is true of each virtue and weakness common to human nature. In fact, if we are striving in dead earnest to prepare for future life, deep concern will seize us if we are shown even one bad

mark on our book. In Revelation 14 it is written of each member of the Bride or Church of Christ: "they were without fault before the throne of God."

Perfection of character is God's unalterable demand. The standard is high, but the stake is higher. While trifles make perfection, perfection is no trifle. And time is of the essence; it may be later than we think.

What we do during the oncoming twelve months may decide our fate for eternity. The power of habit is tremendous. At some point along life's way our iniquities shall have become so ingrained that, as the Ethiopian who cannot change his skin or the leopard that cannot change its spots, so it will be too late for us to change. That point could well be reached during the year we are just entering.

Furthermore, our life is uncertain and could end before the arrival of another Abib. Or the appearing of Elijah as Christ's forerunner could terminate the day of opportunity for us who have had time enough to complete our work. Then the years of doing the wrong thing, or putting second things first, cannot be brought back.

To induce us to live right God has offered us the greatest pay possible to be given a human being. He offers us endless life replete with every conceivable joy and pleasurable experience, glory, honor, wealth, and much more. Yes, He has promised to do for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think."

The fruition of our great hope depends upon the personal return of Christ to earth and the work that He will accomplish. We have Jesus' own promise that at His coming He will bring our reward: "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." In keeping with the prenatal promise of the angel Gabriel to Mary, He was born to be a king.

Let us here resolve that the coming year shall be the best year of our lives. □



## 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 warfare against sin and wrong 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 Himself and His plan, 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 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 full 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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Our cover photo was taken in Highland Park, Rochester, New York.

# Megiddo Message

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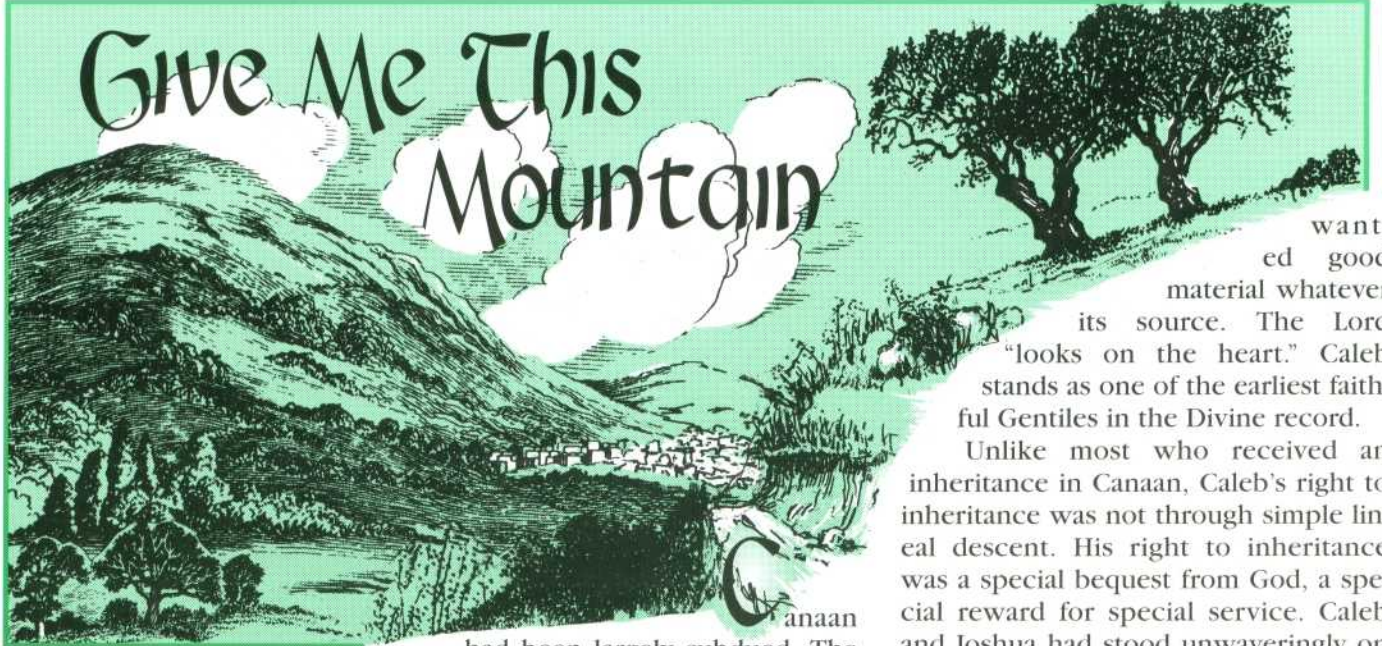
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# Give Me This Mountain



Canaan had been largely subdued. The coalition of the Canaanite nations had been broken, as far as they were going to be. The time had arrived to distribute the territory among the war weary tribes so that they could settle down and enjoy their inheritance.

Who would be first to claim his inheritance in Canaan? Would it be the tribe of Reuben, or Ephraim, or Benjamin? No, it was not a tribe at all, but—strangely—an individual. The first claimant was Joshua's faithful colleague, Caleb, a man to whom God had promised a special inheritance.

And Caleb was not even a full-blooded Israelite. Actually, Caleb was a descendant of Esau's eldest son Eliphaz, who had joined the tribe of Judah by marrying a daughter of Hur. Caleb's father Jephunneh was a Kenezite (Josh. 14:6).

The fact that Caleb was really a foreigner emphasizes the fact that God does not judge by one's nationality or gifts. Even though God was at this time working with Israel as His chosen nation, He

wanted good material whatever its source. The Lord "looks on the heart." Caleb stands as one of the earliest faithful Gentiles in the Divine record.

Unlike most who received an inheritance in Canaan, Caleb's right to inheritance was not through simple lineal descent. His right to inheritance was a special bequest from God, a special reward for special service. Caleb and Joshua had stood unwaveringly on the side of God and Moses in the face of the fiercest protests, even the threat of death. Then, when the people had had opportunity to show which side they were on, God had declared of the rebellious, hard-hearted host, even "all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: but—"

But what? But who? How fair is God, how just. Never does He condemn the innocent with the guilty. He would make an exception for His faithful ones. "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num. 14:22-30).

The promise was brief—only a word; but it was from the Lord, and Caleb heard it. And Caleb remembered it, through 40 years of wandering,—40 years of dwelling with the rebellious host, 40 years of delay because of a sin he did not commit. Many a lesser soul would have been bitter, ready to take

**C**aleb mastered the art of serving God patiently, perfectly, joyfully, even when compelled to live among a wicked and rebellious host.



God to task for making him waste the best years of his life suffering for a sin he did not commit. Where was the justice in it, or mercy, or kindness? But none of this spirit marred the beautiful character of Caleb. As the Lord said, "My servant Caleb...had another spirit with him" (Num. 14:24), a spirit of meekness, a spirit of patience, a spirit of obedience, and genuine joy in the Lord. Caleb mastered the art of serving God patiently, perfectly, joyfully, even in the wilderness, even when compelled to live in the midst of a wicked and rebellious host.

Do we wonder, then, when the wilderness years are past and the land is conquered; do we wonder that Caleb is the first to step forward and request the inheritance he had been promised, the inheritance he had waited for through forty-five long years?

Closely Caleb watches the conquest of the land winding down to a conclusion. Then, when the time is right, through all the maze of people he makes his way straight to his old friend Joshua, where he spreads his request before Joshua and before the Lord. First he recites a bit of history, which both he and Joshua know only too well. Their minds go back some forty years to the day when Moses the servant of the Lord sent them from Kadesh-Barnea to spy out the land of Israel.

What seemed a simple assignment soon turned into a crisis—and a long-term blessing. For both Caleb and Joshua had stood the test.

And so Caleb recounts: "You know what the Lord said to Moses the man of God at Kadesh-barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to explore the land. And I

brought him back a report according to my convictions, but my brothers who went up with me made the hearts of the people melt with fear. I, however, followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly" (Josh. 14:6-8, NIV).

There is no pride in these words, no self-conceit, only an honest stating of the fact: his obedience, his devotion, his integrity had been complete.

What an exalted statement: "I followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly." Few and precious are such statements, even in Scripture. And what an assurance to us that complete obedience to God *is possible*, that *our* service to God can be likewise complete, that we too can "wholly follow" the Lord our God, and feel one day the thrust of victory. We have it in Paul's statement, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And the words of Jesus: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And the words of the angel to Daniel: "Thou art greatly beloved." Just so Caleb is able to say, "I followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly," or as rendered in our Common Version, "I wholly followed the Lord."

Caleb associates his receiving an inheritance directly with his total, faithful obedience. "So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on

which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly'" (v.9).

And just as God recognized Caleb's faithfulness, so now Caleb recognizes the faithfulness of God. God has kept His word. At the advanced age of 85 Caleb is still strong and vigorous, and He gives all credit to God. "Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the desert. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day" (Josh. 14:9-12, NIV).

Was Caleb presumptuous in asking for the fulfillment of God's promise? Not at all. This is only what God would expect. If we show no interest in what God has offered us, no concern, no love or desire for His rewards, what gratitude is there in that? When we have met the requirements, God wants us to seek our reward.

Exactly what was Caleb's inheritance to be? Did he ask for the broad open plain? No, nothing easy attracted Caleb, nothing of the low country. He wanted a certain mountain area. Said Caleb, "Give me this mountain" (Josh. 14:12).

At the time Caleb made this request, "this mountain" was still the territory of the Anakims, the same giants that had frightened the ten spies forty years before (Num. 13:21-22). Even after five years of fighting in the land, they were still holding out, strong as ever. But Caleb wanted "this mountain." Did mighty giants live

No bitterness  
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## Give Me This Mountain

All the way Caleb was following, obedient, wholehearted, for he "wholly followed the Lord."

there? His faith was in a God to whom the mightiest giant was no more threatening than dust. Caleb had no cause to fear. The God who was with him when they spied out the land was *still* his God today and *still* able to overcome the enemy. Neither Caleb's faith or Caleb's God had weakened with the intervening years. He still possessed the strong spirit of "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

What was the area of the mountain? Hebron, probably the choicest spot in the land of Canaan. Fertile and productive, and highly elevated, it commanded a wonderful view. And to Caleb it had even more to offer, for Hebron was sacred soil. Here the patriarchs—his "true" family—had spent much of their lives. Here Abraham had built his first altar to the Lord. Beneath its oaks, he had pitched his tents, and its soil had been trod by the angels

who visited those tents. Here Abraham and Sarah had heard from the angel those blessed words of promise: "At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son" (Gen. 18:14). Here Abraham had pleaded with the angel to spare the city of Sodom if ten righteous could be found there. Here Jacob had sojourned, and Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah lay buried.

No doubt about it, Caleb wanted *this* mountain—Hebron! He could not be content with the good when by paying the price he could have the *best*. He was willing to pay the price, even if it involved a heavy conflict. For this was the land God had promised him as a reward for his integrity and faithfulness (Num. 14:24), and if God wanted him to have it, Caleb would have it!

Can we not take Caleb's request, "Give me this mountain," as our watchword? As our days are passing, what advances are we making toward the

Canaan upon which we have set our hearts? What yet stands between us and a full and complete conquest? What mountain of sin is still hindering us? What mighty Anakim is still wielding authority over us? Is it pride, or bitterness, or self-confidence, or self-love? Is it impatience, or deceit, or envy or ill-will? Let our earnest plea arise this very day: "Lord, give me this mountain." Give me the strength, the courage, and the power to assail it, that I may slay the giants of sin and plant the flag of victory on its crest! For ere this day is done, I *must* stand victor over this mountain.

### Caleb's Character

All through his life, Caleb showed outstanding qualities of character.

The name Caleb means "all heart." His chief distinction lay in the fact that he never stopped growing. The passing of the years, instead of witnessing a gradual decline, only served to increase his stature and enhance his standing before God. His name is appropriately derived from a Hebrew word associated with the ideals of fidelity, obedience, and alertness—qualities in which he excelled.

Caleb's biography, though condensed in a few sentences, illustrates two exhilarating truths: first, that it is possible for life's greatest achievement to take place in old age; and second, that there is no retirement in God's service. At no stage of life can we say, "I have done all I need to do." As long as God gives us life and strength, we must keep using it.

Like the life of Moses, Caleb's life divides into three distinct periods. Until the age of 40 he was a slave in Egypt. Then, as a leader in his tribe, he was selected as one of twelve to explore Canaan. He spent a second 40 years in the desert, wandering with the children of Israel. During the third period of his life he set out to claim his inheritance. But all the way he was following, obedient, wholehearted, for Caleb "wholly followed the Lord."



Caleb's early life is not recorded. The first we hear of him, he is among those selected to spy out the land of Canaan. But as soon as he is introduced, his character and conduct stand out as one wholly loyal to God. And qualities like these are not won overnight. Even as a slave in Egypt, Caleb had been serving God. Even in the miseries of slavehood, he had practiced the godly qualities of patience and faithful endurance. Even in slavery he had learned to live close to God. So now, when Moses is looking for someone to give special service for God, Caleb is ready.

Of those selected to spy out the land the Lord said to Moses, "Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them" (Num. 13:2). "Every one a ruler"—that tells its own story. Leaders do not just happen. But neither are all leaders of sterling character, as the testing of these soon revealed. It all depends on what has been happening behind the scenes, in the everyday tests of life. Of our Lord's 30 years of obscurity, only one incident is recorded, but His subsequent years tell us all we need to know about His youth. It was consecrated to God.

Crisis only reveals the man; it does not make him.

Crisis for Caleb came with his being selected to explore Canaan, and his character won for him a place in the leadership of his tribe and nation. He was never numbered among the murmurers, nor did he hanker for the lost delicacies of Egypt. His goal was to follow wholly, to serve wholeheartedly, wherever God would lead him. He trusted his life to God—wholly—and allowed nothing to deflect him.

Of many admirable qualities, two stand out conspicuously. First, Caleb was a man of great moral courage. Doubtless in his early years, his back had felt the sting of the merciless slavemaster's lash. But instead of growing hard and bitter under the mistreatment, Caleb used it to develop great moral courage—the kind he would need when he and Joshua would have to stand alone against the fury of the multitude and even of the other leaders of the tribes. It takes a strong man or woman to stand alone. This is one of the most stringent tests of life, for who does not crave popularity? It is all too easy to remain silent or to compromise one's position in the presence of fierce opposition.

But Caleb and Joshua did not compromise. They stood firm and courageous in their attitude of faith, in opposition to the popular majority report of the ten spies, when "the whole assembly talked about stoning them" (Num. 14:10). They refused to be intimidated, or to do violence to their convictions, even to save their lives. They were willing to hazard all for God.

Second, Caleb showed a robust and unwavering faith in God, another quality which ranks high in the Divine scale of values, for

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). His faith was the more remarkable because it grew and flourished amid the unbelieving and rebellious hosts. Caleb was not privileged to grow up and live among those of strong, stalwart faith. He had to be faithful *in spite of* his surroundings. How easily he could have rationalized that it just wasn't possible to be full of faith among people so unbelieving; or that it wasn't possible to be patient as a mistreated slave. But no excuses were for Caleb. He realized that his life was *his* responsibility, and *his* opportunity. It was the only life he would have, and he would make the most *and the best* of it while he could. God would help him.

The magnificent blending of faith and courage that Caleb displayed in standing against the popular majority report brought no acclaim from the people. Caleb and Joshua had seen all that the ten had seen. They had neither underestimated the power of their foes or minimized the size of the task before them. The difference in their outlook lay in the fact that the ten matched the strength of the giants with their own grasshopper strength, and were discouraged; while the two matched it against the omnipotence of God. The ten gazed at the giants, while Caleb and Joshua looked up to God.

Difficulties always dwindle in the presence of God's power. Were there fearsome giants in the land? They were bread for them, and as one writer has quaintly put it, "The bigger the giant, the bigger the loaf." They saw and trusted a God infinitely greater than the giants.

Faith gives true perspective to life.

Unbelief has a notoriously short memory. The ten urged the people, "We should choose a leader

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dust.



## Give Me This Mountain

What mountain of sin is still hindering us? What mighty Anakim is still wielding authority over us?

and go back to Egypt" (Num. 14:4). Had they forgotten so soon the harsh taskmasters, and the bitterness of servitude from which they had been delivered? But for Caleb there was no going back, or even *thinking* back. He countered their fear and unbelief with his own confident statement of faith: "Let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it."

### Caleb and the Tests of Middle Life

But Caleb did not stop there. Yes, he had done well in youth. But he had to go on, on to the tests of middle life. Midlife has its own peculiar testings, both in physical and spiritual realms. They may not be so dramatic as those of youth, but some who have soared like rockets in youth have descended like burned out sticks in middle age.

There are some obvious advantages when we reach this stage of life. Our powers are at their zenith. Important

life decisions have been made. Ideally, our circumstances are settled and somewhat easier. We have arrived at many of the answers to problems and questions we faced in earlier years.

But there are counter-balancing dangers; for often at this stage of life there develops a loss of fervor and a waning of personal zeal and devotion. A lukewarm sense of duty replaces ardent love. Instead of transmuting the enthusiasms of youth into a worthy and absorbing purpose, life becomes insipid and anemic. We are tempted to ease up on the self-denials and self-disciplines we have maintained. At this period in life we would do well to pray, "God, harden me against myself, the coward with pathetic voice who craves for ease and rest and joy; myself, archtraitor to myself, my hollowest friend, my deadliest foe, my clog, whatever road I go."

It is all too easy to stop growing and striving at any age or stage of life, especially after we have achieved some of our Christian goals, after we have mastered some of our most unruly inclinations. It is all too easy to feel we have "arrived," and begin to relax. Let us all take warning and keep renewing our fervency, our zeal, our determination, our love. Let the path of our life be the path of the Just One, shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect Day (Prov. 4:18). Let us take an example from our noble founder who could look every day upon the truth of God and say, "How it grows in wonderment to my soul!"

Caleb passed the tests of youth with flying colors, but how did he fare in the heavier, drawn out tests of middle life? Someone has suggested that in middle life we need the resources of God more than ever before. How did Caleb draw on these resources?

Caleb "wholly followed the Lord." The middle mile is perhaps the hardest part of the journey. There is the enthusiasm of the new undertaking which buoys one at the start, and the thrill of reaching the goal near the finish. But it

*Make me Thy mountaineer: I would not linger  
On the lower slope;  
Fill me afresh with hope, O God of hope,  
That undefeated I may climb the hill  
As seeing Him who is invisible.*

*Make me Thy mountaineer, O God most high;  
My climbing soul  
Would welcome the austere; Lord, crucify  
On rock or scree, ice-cliff or field of snow,  
The softness that would sink to things below.*

*Thou art my Guide; where Thy sure feet have trod  
Shall mine be set;  
Thy slightest word my law of life, O God; lest I forget,  
And slip and fall, teach me to do Thy will,  
Thy mountaineer upon Thy holy bill.*

—Amy Wilson Carmichael



is the middle mile, where you are a long way from the start and still a long way from the finish, that tests most stringently the mettle of the runner. It is in this middle mile that the true believer needs most that virtue of patient endurance.

Few have faced so hard and embittering a lot as Caleb. The sin and unbelief of his contemporaries might easily have doomed him to a life of frustration and disappointment for the years that should have been the best part of his life. And could he not have complained, when the apparent reward of his early faith, courage and devotion was aimless trekking through a barren desert, when his powers were at their peak?

By all normal standards, Caleb would have been justified in being resentful, despondent, and disagreeable. But none of this for Caleb. This stalwart man of God survived the long sustained test and built his spiritual integrity on the very situations that would have ruined a lesser man. He was one of those rare souls who was not offended with God's way of dealing. Maybe he did not understand, but that did not matter. Caleb had learned that most valuable of all lessons: to trust God.

Then, too, there was the matter with Joshua. When Moses died, it was Joshua—not Caleb—who was chosen by God to be Israel's leader. The two had lived and worked together, shoulder to shoulder, for many years. Together they had shared the lessons of life, and grown because of them. Caleb might have been hurt, deeply hurt, and bitter at God's decision. Was not he just as good, and just as qualified as Joshua? Had he not been just as loyal and just as faithful? But in this great man's heart was neither jealousy of Joshua nor resentment against God. He realized immediately that Joshua's

higher call was not a reward but a call to duty, and a stern duty it was. After all, who could want to be responsible for that complaining, unbelieving, hard-hearted host?

### **Caleb and the Tests of Old Age**

Caleb, who had soared with wings in his youth, now mastered the art of running without growing weary. But what about the next challenge, the adventures of old age? Could he continue to walk without fainting in old age?

No other Bible character presents such an inspiring and optimistic picture of old age. The supreme challenge of his life came when he was 85 years old, the age when most are dreaming only of security and comfort. This hero of 40 is no less a hero at 85, demonstrating to all that advanced years need not mean spiritual deterioration.

William Barclay told of receiving a letter that concluded with, "Yours, 83 years old and still growing." Such was the spirit of Caleb. To him, old age was but a continued pressing on to grander attainments, not slowly descending the mountain but ready to

scale another peak; not senility, but adventure and a desire for new achievement. His life moved steadily forward, not to termination but to consummation.

Caleb's strength came from the fact that all his life he was clinging to the promise of God. For 45 years Caleb waited patiently for the fulfillment of God's promise to him through Moses. In his interview with Joshua at the partitioning of the land, five times he refers to the Lord's promise. It was the one and only certainty in his future, the promise that had buoyed him up through the weary desert years and guaranteed him a possession in the land of Canaan. The passing years had only strengthened his faith in God and sharpened his ardent spirit.

Such is the power of living, working faith. It lifts us out of the ephemeral, above the temporary, into the realm of the permanent and eternal. It corrects our perspective because it sees everything of the present in the light of an eternal future. In such a light, even 40 years of desert wandering could be fruitful and fulfilling—because they were 40 years with God, 40 years biding God's time.

Caleb's faith in God was nourished by yet another promise that had accompanied the promise of an inheritance: that his life would be prolonged until he would reach the land of Canaan—a promise that grew richer and dearer every day as he saw thousands and thousands of his brethren perishing in the wilderness. None of us have ever experienced anything like this. Being continually in the presence of death—and death for disobedience—would surely keep one very conscious of his personal accountability. Continued life was part of God's promise to Caleb. God had said, "...Ye (the Israelite

*(Continued on page 23)*

**What advances  
are we making  
toward the Canaan  
upon which we have  
set our hearts?  
What yet stands  
between us and a  
full and  
complete conquest?**



## *The Right Time Is Now*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



The Psalmist was reflecting on this great fact of life when he wrote those words so familiar to us all: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). In other words he was praying, "Lord teach us to remember the brevity of life, and how soon it will be gone." We all know, but in the hurry-scurry, hum-drum of everyday, we forget. The new year comes to remind us that there is only one right time to be all that we want to be, and that right time is *now*.

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

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

explicit about the importance of the present moment: "Now is the accepted time;...now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). That is why it is important to resolve and act upon that resolve *right now*. The *right time* is now.

Who of us has not looked over our life and said many times, "If only I could get over this bad habit, if only I could get rid of this sin." Oh, the "if only's" are many! When shall we do something about it? Do it *now*! The right time is *now*! This is the only moment we can ever claim, and in it lies our only opportunity to begin anew.

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

Or perhaps we look into our heart, and see a dear idol to which we are still clinging. "Some day," we promise ourselves, "we will let it go." But day after day, month after month, year after year, we put it off. Meanwhile the idol becomes more and more a part of us, and the sacrifice harder to make. And meanwhile, that command to love the Lord our God with *all* our heart, and *all* our soul, and *all* our mind, and *all* our strength continues to haunt us. We know that we are falling short of this complete dedication. But that little love or lust of the flesh is so close to us, and so near, and so dear. What

*Today, if ye will  
hear his voice..."*

*TODAY—not  
tomorrow.*



*So teach us to  
number our days,  
that we may  
apply our hearts  
unto wisdom"*

*—Psalm 90:12*

shall we do about it? There is only one answer: To cast it down, break it, and do it now. It will never be any easier than it is this very moment.

Or it may be a spirit of overconfidence that is holding us back. We feel quite surefooted, though we know inwardly our weaknesses. But when a severe trial comes, will we have the inner strength to trust everything to God, everything we have and are? This is a reality for which we must be preparing. It was not without purpose that the wise man wrote, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." But our own opinions, our own ideas, our own resources are so much closer, and surer. But if we cannot trust God in the small things of life, how can we trust Him in the greater things? How can we let go of our confidence in ourselves if we do not practice relinquish-

ing it in the little things of everyday?

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

Few mistakes are more common or more tragic than that of counting on time in the future. God does not guarantee us 70, or 80, or 90 years of life. Among the well known of this world, many have been cut short. The poet Keats died at 26, Shelley at 30, Byron at 36. For each one, friends had prophe-

## *New Year Prayer*

*L*ord God of eternity, whose far-flung majesty the heavens declare and the firmament shows Thy grandeur, we praise Thee for bringing us safely to this New Year and all that it means to us. We praise Thee for giving us Thy Son, by whose shining example we have been called to walk.

Lord, we thank Thee for the beauties of earth and sea and sky; if Thou hadst not created them, they would not be. We thank thee for the bounties we find in field and tree and ocean; if Thou didst not sustain them, they would cease. We thank Thee for the wonderment of our own lives; if Thou didst not will us to be, we would vanish in an instant. Everything belongs to Thee, and for all, O Lord, we praise Thee.

As we commemorate this sacred New Year, we look ahead to the greater New Year soon to be, and rejoice as we anticipate the fulfilling of the angels' song: "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men." Soon this world of Herod's taxes, Caesar's armies, man's inhumanity to man, and pub-

lic deceit will give way to the righteous government of Thy Son and "all the ends of the earth" shall see Thy great and magnificent salvation. With longing hearts and radiant faces we look forward to that Day. Lord, hasten us in our preparations, that it may not take us by surprise.

We pray that the life and teaching of our Lord may so impress and inspire us that they will be a constant influence upon our lives, impelling us to be more and more like Him.

Let this hour be a door opening into a place where we have never been before. Let it be a road branching into new paths of service and up to higher heights of holy living. And if at times the road turns strangely, may we never forget that Thou dost go with us, and, relying on Thy providence, we may face the unknown future with courage and hope.

And may Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done on earth as now it is done throughout Thy vast universes of worlds above. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and coming King we pray. Amen. □



sied a great future, but not one of them reached middle age. A well known missionary, Cecil Rhodes, planned big things for Africa, but died at the age of 49, saying, "So little done, so much to do."

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

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

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

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

delight far beyond our most exhausting ability to conceive.

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

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

Let us fill each and every moment of this new year with a task consecrated to God. However ordinary, or however lowly, each one can be God's if we make it so, and can count to our eternal credit. Anything, everything that we permit ourselves to do, let it become His task, His work, His assignment, His glory, and His good.

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

Let us take time this coming year to live closer to Christ than we have ever lived before, to make His way our way, His will our will. The hour is coming when we will want His approval more than any-

thing else in the whole world. Let us make sure that we are getting that approval on every deed, every thought, every feeling—right now. The right time is now. We cannot have it then, if we are not securing it now.

And now is the only time we will ever have. God says, "Today, if ye will hear my voice," but we have so often responded, "No, Lord, tomorrow!" We say, in effect, "*Tomorrow* I will do better," or "*Tomorrow* I will break this habit." Or, "Tomorrow I will resist this temptation." The other half of those statements—unsaid but just as real—is, *Today, I will do as I please. Today I will give in to my lower instincts. Today I will gratify the flesh.* Let no such compromise blot our record. As long as we are saying, "Tomorrow, tomorrow," we can know that Christ will come and find us still saying, "Tomorrow, tomorrow," and the work that we had begun will be unfinished.

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

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

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

And today is now. □

*Will Christ  
come and find us still  
saying, "Tomorrow,  
tomorrow"?*



“And His Name Shall Be Called...”

# Wonderful Counsellor, God the Mighty, Father of the World to Come, the Prince of Peace.

**T**he prophet Isaiah, looking some seven centuries into the future, saw a certain child that would be born. Looking even further into the future, He was able to reveal certain aspects of the great work this Child would perform as monarch of the entire earth. The Prophet condensed the glory of the vision into a brief passage, which reads as follows:

“For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come,

the Prince of Peace. His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace: he shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom; to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:6-7, Douay Bible)

Here are names weighted with significance, names revealing the various aspects of the character and work of the Messiah which should be otherwise difficult to grasp.

## Wonderful Counsellor

Commentators have disputed whether this title is intended to be two titles or one. For purposes of this discussion we shall take them as a joint title. For, looking back, we can see that Jesus was indeed, even during His earthly ministry, a “wonderful counsellor.” What more appropriate title could be given Him who

is our intercessor, our advocate, One who can assist us with any problem we may encounter? In Isa. 28:29, the Prophet speaks of this attribute as belonging to God, “who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” And could it not belong also to His Son? Being our Elder Brother, He has gone before us. For



"in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able also to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). He knows our needs even better than we know them ourselves.

The word "wonderful" used in this passage means "great, difficult, marvelous, accomplished." Jesus' teaching was in every respect "wonderful." It struck His contemporaries with awe and astonishment (Matt. 5:28-29), for He "taught them as one having authority, not as the scribes." (See also Matt. 13:54; 22:22). It was just incredible that a Jew, brought up in Nazareth, receiving very little education, having had no formal training, could teach as He did about such profound issues as the Kingdom of God, and the character God requires, and the possibility of life after death. His hearers could not but wonder.

Combining the term "wonderful" with "counselor," we have one who is marvelous in giving guidance, an accomplished advisor, one who can answer even the most difficult questions.

We are told, also, that the word used for counselor in this passage is of one who gives advice, most notably to kings. Jesus' role is just this; He is advising the kings-to-be, those who will rule with Him in the world to come. No ordinary mission this!

And because He can see beyond the present, He is always able to point us in the right direction. Then, too, He sees not only what we are but what we can become. Whatever our situation, He knows the way through—all the way into the world to come.

Is He not indeed a wonderful counsellor?

Why is His counsel superior? Because it is always right. Being able to see the end from the beginning, He has always the right perspective, the right information, and the right advice. He always sees things as they are, not as they might appear. Furthermore, His counsel is impartial and without prejudice, always righteous and holy. And if we are looking for someone with experience, there is no area of our lives He has not experienced, for He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Do we have any examples of Jesus' counsel? Even with our limited record, we have several. Take, for instance, His advice to the rich young ruler, who approached Him asking what he should do to gain eternal life. Jesus told him the truth—and more. He told him the truth as it affected the man's own situation. And there was no compromising, no hedging, no second-rate alternatives. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." The man, thinking immediately of the law of Moses, to which he had adhered faithfully, said smugly, "Which?"

Jesus could see through the young man's self-satis-

faction to the heart of the problem. The man's real idol was his wealth, and if he would have eternal life, he must be willing to give it up. And so Jesus continued: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, . . . and come and follow me."

Now here is the test of the genuineness of the advisor, because this was not what the young man wanted to hear. Did Jesus stop because He saw the young man's face fall? Did He say, "I know that what I am saying is a little rough," and proceed to offer an easier way? No, Jesus told him the truth, and left the young man to act upon it or not, as he should choose. For there are no "six easy steps" to eternal life, then or now.

Or take the time Nicodemus came to Jesus seeking counsel. What we remember most about this is that Nicodemus chose to come at night—he did not want to be seen asking counsel of one who was unpopular among his peers. But at least he came—most of his contemporaries did not do that well. Again, Jesus proved a "wonderful counsellor." His advice was direct and uncompromising. The way to life was strait and narrow, and not without its complications. Nicodemus might take it or leave it as he desired, but there was no wondering what Jesus meant.

What about the advice Jesus gave the woman at the well, the woman whom He told in one brief statement what she described as "everything that ever she did"? He advised her to drink of the water of life, which only He could give, water that would spring up "into everlasting life" (John 4:12-14).

Or what about the advice He gave His Apostles at the Last Supper? "In the world ye shall have tribulation"—again He was a wonderful counselor, and the counsel He gave was recorded for our benefit as well. Again Jesus made no effort to make the way seem easy and effortless. There would be suffering, discipline and sacrifice. But through it all He could say, "I have given you an example." In other words, do as I have done. What makes a counselor more noble than this! And how well they knew what Jesus meant! Here was the supreme embodiment of a "wonderful counsellor," one whose advice was tested and sure. Who else could be facing crucifixion and say, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"? (John 14:27).

How do we get counsel from Jesus? For we are not the Apostles. We have not walked and talked with Him. We cannot even make an appointment and meet with Him once in awhile. How do we get His counsel? We find it in His written word, where we can go to learn the mind of God on any subject. For every need of life, we have a "Divine line" to help us. Truly ours, too, is a wonderful counselor!



## God the Mighty

The next name applied to Jesus is "God the mighty." How can this be, when Jesus said clearly, "My Father is greater than I" ? (John 14:28).

Jesus is not the mighty God of heaven, but He is "God" to us in the sense of being "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23). He is God to us in that He is the supreme authority on our planet. God has placed the direction of the earth under Him. The earth is His special jurisdiction, and everything that happens here concerns Him. In this sense He is our God, being supreme in this realm.

And He is "mighty." The word translated "mighty" here comes from a root word that means "strong," "valiant," as one who prevails, one who is stronger; as a warrior or king is strong to rescue, strong to save, strong to give victory. Is not Jesus our "mighty God" in this sense, that He is returning as earth's conqueror and everlasting king—not the supreme Creator but "God with us," the One whom God has appointed to abolish sin and bring in everlasting righteousness. Nothing and no one will be able to stand against this "mighty God."

## Father of the World To Come

This phrase is translated "everlasting Father" in our Common Version, but the fact that it can be rendered "Father of the world to come" gives great meaning to the name. Another possible translation is "Lord of all future time." It is a name looking forward. Jesus is "Father," a word of tenderest association and most reverent feeling. There is strength in it, protection in it, love in it. There is also authority, justice, and holiness. It would not be fair to say that a good earthly father is anyone of these alone; he must be all of them combined. And that is why Jesus is called "Father." We go deeper, far deeper, into the heart of the truth about Christ when we say He is our Father.

Jesus is "Father" of all who are part of the new world coming, this earth beautified and glorified and filled with His eternal family. Just as He is the head of the church (Col. 1:18), so He is the "Father" of all who receive immortality, all the saints who will be eternally blessed on this planet.

And when the work of God on earth is complete and earth is annexed to heaven, Jesus will still be "Father," for "unto the angels hath he not put in sub-

jection the world to come, whereof we speak" (Heb. 2:5). The new world will be under the jurisdiction of Christ and His saints, and all who live will glorify His name (Phil. 2:10-11; Heb. 2:6-9).

Actually, the term "Father" focuses as much on Jesus' character as on His future work. Just as a father is concerned for his children, so Jesus is concerned for those who will be part of His eternal family. And just as a father is eager to help his children, so Jesus is our intercessor, our saviour, our deliverer, and He who has been given the authority to give us eternal life if we are worthy. For "As the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son" (John 5:26-27). And "As the Father raiseth up the dead," so "the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:21). Truly, Jesus is for us "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

And this is a fatherhood which will never end. He will be Father "for all time to come" because His children will be immortal, and "of his kingdom there shall be



## Prince of Peace

This last title of Jesus is most reassuring. Everyone wants peace, for peace implies safety, prosperity, health and favor.

But we should notice also that here is not only peace but a "Prince." Is not this an intriguing combination of words? For too often we want the "peace" without the "Prince."

A prince is one who has authority, whose word is law. And herein lies the secret of true peace. The peace which this Child of promise will bring is a peace that results from being subject to His authority. It is conditional peace—a peace on condition that we submit, that we obey, that we yield, that we give up. It is not peace at any price. It is *peace at the right price*.

Jesus as the Prince of Peace has the

solution to every disturbance. He will bring peace because He will bring law and the authority to enforce it. And that law will demand uprightness, virtue, kindness, love. When His principles are in force, the result will be peace.

Sin is the great disturber, the constant troubler of the human heart. Not until we get rid of sin can we enjoy peace. Sin casts down that which should be ever uppermost—holy aspiration, goodness, and virtue. Sin enthrones that which should be in subjection—passion, self, temporal interests. The Prince of Peace comes to elevate what should be elevated and put down what should be put down. When we submit to His mandates, the result will be peace—inner peace and, ultimately, world peace.

## From henceforth and for ever...

What, then, do we learn from the names given to Jesus? Here is prophecy that shall be fulfilled. Its fulfillment began when He was born nearly two thousand years ago. But it will not be complete until He comes the second time to set up His kingdom of righteousness and peace, a kingdom which will last forever.

Do we ever wonder if Jesus can really be and do all that is prophesied for Him? Read the seal of divinity upon the prophecy: "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isa.9:7) There is no doubt about it, for "the zeal of the Lord of hosts" is a power no human hand can thwart. What He has decreed *shall be*.

Do we wish to qualify for a place in His Kingdom? Do we wish to live under such a One as this Jesus Christ is destined to be? Then let us set ourselves to becoming more and more like Him, to imitate His goodness, to meditate on His wisdom, and apply ourselves to observing His law of life. Then when the fullness of time has come and God's

plan is fulfilled, we shall see and know how He can be all of these to *us*: Our Wonderful Counselor, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. □

### Announcement

#### *The New Year is Dawning!*

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. The equinox this year occurring on March 20, and the first new moon following on March 23, the beginning of the month Abib falls on Tuesday evening, March 23, continuing Wednesday, March 24, Bible time being counted from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32). The day will be observed as a double holiday, as the beginning of the New Year and the anniversary of the birth of Christ.

Thirteen days later (Abib 13, this year on Sunday evening, April 4), we will commemorate the anniversary of our Lord's Supper, and the morning of April 7 (Abib 15) will be observed as the anniversary of Christ's triumphant resurrection.

Fifty days later (May 26) will be the anniversary of the day of Pentecost, when the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the assembled disciples. □



## 66 Letters from Heaven

▶ *The Bible is the record of real men and women who actually lived, who were inspired to write what God wanted recorded.*

If we are pursuing human goals, human ideals, and human careers, we need to equip ourselves with the knowledge obtainable from the best schools of human knowledge. But if we want something more, something that reaches beyond our world, something that is not limited to this brief life, we must look to our Creator: God.

But God is in heaven. What can we learn from Him? How can we know what He intends for our planet and our race? For none of us can by ourselves perceive anything outside our five senses. We are mortal, corruptible, and our scope of knowledge is limited. For anything that reaches beyond the limits of our world and our experience, we must look to God.

Through the ages God has used many different means of communicating with His human family. Right now He is using a silent means, His written Word. Long ago He planned for this time and began preparing for it. Long ago He moved upon one sacred writer after another to write down what he received from God by revelation, dream or inspiration. He caused these writings to be preserved, compiled, and translated, and today we have them in the Bible.

The Bible is not a book of the feelings, impressions and philosophies of men. Nor is it a book of fiction. The Bible is the record of real men and

women who actually lived, who were inspired to write what God wanted recorded for the instruction of His people. And they wrote of events that actually happened, of places that actually existed—many of which still exist today—and information that they could not possibly have obtained from their own resources.

What does the Bible tell us? It tells us of the plan of God which is slowly, steadily moving toward completion.

How can we know that the Bible is a book of facts, that it is not just another book by human authors? Among the countless volumes of human lore and philosophy, how can we single out the Bible as being divinely inspired? How can we know that its writing was actually directed by the God of heaven? The Buddhists have their sacred scriptures, and give glowing testimonies of what their religion does for them. The Hindus have their Vedas, the sacred writings of their holy men. And the Moslems have the writings of Mohammed, and so on and on. How can we be sure the Bible is the Word of the great, Almighty Creator?

We need evidence, strong supporting evidence. And God has provided this evidence in abundance.

Either the Bible is true and can be depended on, or it is false and should be wholly rejected. Either it is the Word of God, or it is not. There is no neutral position.



## The Evidence

How can we know the Bible is of Divine authorship?

### ◆ *The unity and harmony of the Bible.*

Imagine forty men meeting around a large table. Imagine they are from different parts of the world and represent widely differing cultures and social strata. One is a king from a small, wealthy country, another is a nomad from the desert, and the rest are somewhere between.

Now ask these men to write about their basic beliefs and philosophies. Tell them to write about their understanding of the Deity, their assessment of the human experience, their insights into the purpose of life and the creation, and such issues as future life and the state of the dead. Tell them to be sure to include their ideas of what constitutes the "good" life, the life acceptable to the Deity.

Go one step further and tell these men that they are not allowed to corroborate with one another or share any of their thoughts and ideas.

Now imagine that you compile the writings of these forty men into one book. What would you have? How many different ideas would you expect in your book—something like forty different ideas on each of the topics you specified?

Now the Bible was written under just about these conditions, except that its writers represent a timespan of some 1500 years. Yet the Bible projects *one* concept of God, *one* philosophy of life, *one* plan of salvation, *one* teaching about life after death, *one* pattern of acceptable conduct. How is this possible? Because *one* God directed and inspired the writing. There can be no other answer.

### ◆ *The Bible has been preserved.*

The Bible has had the fiercest of enemies. It has been burned, and its advocates have been persecuted and tortured, to say nothing of the ridicule it has suffered in the hands of intellectuals. Yet it has survived in numerous copies—no book from antiquity has so many known surviving copies so old as do the various books of the Bible.

### ◆ *The Bible is verified by fulfilled prophecy.*

What human mind can know the future? We cannot tell with any certainty what will happen even five seconds from now. Yet the Bible is filled with hundreds of predictions which were fulfilled as predicted, many of them hundreds of years later. This feature is unique. It is without duplicate in any other religion. Why? Because no human being has power to know the future. Men may speculate and guess—and possibly guess right occasionally. But the ability to *know* is reserved to God, and the quantity of Bible

## God's Book

"Mother, I've found a dusty old thing  
High on the shelf—just look!"  
"Why, that is a Bible, Tommy dear,  
Be careful, it's God's own Book."  
"God's Book!"—the child looked up, surprised;  
"Then, Mother, before we lose it,  
We'd better send it back to God,  
For you know we never use it."

How often this fact, though sad, is true,  
The Bible unopened lies,  
Covered with dust the whole year through—  
Few do its contents prize.  
Only a few from its pages glean  
Truths that will help them live  
Closer to God through each passing scene,  
Few will attention give.

How long would a letter unopened be  
From mother or brother dear?  
You would quickly open it wide to see  
What it contained to cheer.  
Every wish you would gladly note,  
And joyfully carry out;  
But the letters of God that His prophets wrote,  
You know so little about.

The letters your Father in love has sent—  
Peruse them often with care;  
For you and your children they were meant,  
That you might get wisdom there.  
Such wonderful knowledge God's Book contains,  
I implore—do not refuse it!  
Don't let your children say to you,  
"You know, we never use it."



prophecy accurately fulfilled attests to the fact that the Bible is indeed the written Word of God.

For example, take the hundreds of prophecies in the Old Testament that tell of the Messiah—His birth, His ministry, His death, His resurrection, His ascension to heaven. So detailed are these prophecies that it is impossible that they could have been blind conjecture. And is there any question that these prophecies were written *after* the fact? All are incorporated in the Septuagint Bible, a compilation of the books of the Old Testament, which was assembled several hundred years before the birth of Christ.

Or take the prophecies recorded in the book of Daniel, prophecies of four great and powerful kingdoms—Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, each succeeding the other—written when only the first was in existence. Study the precise details in each prophecy, and you can only marvel at the Divine eye that could foresee them. Again, is there any possibility that these were written *after* the

fact? Again, these prophecies are in the Septuagint. At the very least, the record of only the first three empires could have been written from any human knowledge or experience, because the fourth was not even in existence *then!*

◆ *The Bible is accurate in its statements.*

The Bible supports all true science, and its accounts have repeatedly proved historically accurate. Archaeological discoveries and records of history have confirmed and re-confirmed numerous details of custom, circumstance and setting incorporated into the Old Testament accounts.

The degree of accuracy we find in the Bible becomes even more marvelous when we consider the countless times it has been copied and re-copied by ordinary men, who could easily have distorted the record. But newly discovered manuscripts differ hardly at all from those found years ago—more evidence that God was at work preserving His message for us.

## How Can I Know The Bible Is From God?

*I*'ve heard it all before, you can't tell me anything new."

"My parents were religious, but it's all hypocrisy. I've seen it firsthand. Just look at the people who attend church, even the minister. I'm just as good as they are. What can I expect to learn from them?"

Often thought if not expressed, words like these reveal the attitude of many people today. And unfortunately, much of their criticism is true.

But we cannot rely for our standards upon the interpretation of Mr. or Mrs. Average Church-goer, or even upon the graduates of the theological schools. Our founda-

tion must be the sure Word of the Lord, the Bible, and all that it teaches. And, unfortunately, much religion lacks this solid foundation.

In a matter as weighty as our eternal destiny, we need evidence, solidly grounded evidence. Every field of science must have evidence. Is it not fair to ask the same when our eternal welfare is at stake?

And God does not ask us to believe without evidence. He does not ask of us a blind trust. He wants us to know *what* we believe and *why*. He even invites us to "search," "study" "prove all things, hold fast that which is good" (John

5:39; II Tim. 2:15; I Thess. 5:21).

All true religion will bear investigation. It is equally steadfast against the critics or scoffs of the cynics and the serious queries of the sincere believer. For all, *the Bible has the answer*.

But that answer may not always be obvious, or upon the surface. We must take certain steps to find the answer. We cannot expect it to come without effort.

If we have a question in any field of science, or engineering, or technology, we first research what has been written on the topic by specialists in the field. Why not do the same with religion?



◆ *The Bible writers testify to the God behind them.*

The internal testimony of the Bible to its own authenticity is unique. The Bible authors did not hesitate to say, and many hundreds of times, "Thus saith the Lord," or "The word of the Lord came, saying..." If they had been "normal" authors writing on their own, they would have been quick to take the credit to themselves—especially when they could have had the fame of speaking prophetically and having the words obviously and unquestionably fulfilled. But these men were not writing their own message; it was God's message, as they repeatedly testified.

◆ *The Bible does not contain the thoughts or philosophies of human writers.*

Compare the Bible on any of its basic teachings with the general thinking of secular writers on that subject, and the contrast is astonishing. The Bible writers were not writing their own thoughts, but the thoughts of God.

For example, what school of human philosophy teaches that what-

ever men exalt, whatever is counted worthy of recognition among men is abominable to God?—but this was the teaching of Jesus (Luke 16:15).

What human institution is so exacting as to tell its followers they cannot think as they please, say what they please, or do what they please?—but this was the teaching of God through His prophet Isaiah (Isa. 58:13-14).

What school of human psychology would say that all nations outside the scheme of God are as nothing, even "less than nothing and vanity"—but this again was God's message through the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 40:15-18).

What human reporter would say that all architecture and buildings, all fortresses and battlements are unsafe without the overseeing eye of God?—but this was God's message through David (Ps. 127:1).

There is only one answer: The Bible is Divine, the written Word of God. It is God's special provision for us, so that we can learn the way to eternal salvation. And it has been preserved through the ages so that we today may have it in its original purity. □

The specialists we want to consult are those whom God appointed, the authors of Scripture, whom He inspired. Their words are, in actuality, His words. If only we can understand them, we can know what God intends us to believe.

The first step, then, is to get acquainted with the Bible and its teachings.

*T*he Bible tells us about God, His ways of working with His people in times past, His plans for the future, His promises, and His prophecies. It also tells us our obligation to God, which we must fulfill if we would have a share in what He is offering.

If we decide to pursue any area of knowledge, we expect to read

and study what has been accomplished in that field. Just so with the Bible. The knowledge of God does not come to us automatically. We have to apply our minds, and read and study it.

So let us read—read—read. There is a wealth of information in the Bible for those who read. We may not understand all we read, but if we do not read, how can we expect to become acquainted? This was the advice of the apostle Paul: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Notice that he does not say faith comes by thinking, or by believing, or by praying, or by trusting, but only by *reading*. And it comes by reading—not the works of the philosophers and

sages of this world, but only by *reading the Word of God*.

Jesus Himself showed His own thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures by His frequent quotations from them, and He commanded that they be studied. "Search the scriptures," He said, because "through them you get eternal life" (John 5:39, BAS).

What will studying the Scriptures do for us?

1: It will build up our faith in God and His work. We will see how and where God is and has been working, and know that He will continue to work in the future.

2: It will build our reverence for God. We will appreciate God's goodness, God's love, God's mercy and kindness to us in giving us this



► *The Bible predicts a cataclysmic end to all human governments and institutions, to be superseded by the eternal Kingdom of God's own Son.*

life and every good, and most of all in showing us the way to a better life.

3: We will learn what the Scriptures teach about salvation and the plan of God for this earth.

4: We will learn how we can be part of the eternal plan and purpose of our Creator.

God did not create this world and leave it to the blind forces of chance. He has a plan for it, "He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18).

Before we can expect to know the God of the Bible and His plan for us, we must study. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isa. 54:13). And, "All things that pertain unto life and godliness come through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Pet. 1:3).

#### **More Evidence That The Bible Is From God**

Any book by any philosopher, or statistician, or historian will contain human thoughts, human reasoning, human judgments. The Bible stands above all these. It speaks directly against the thoughts of the human mind. This is one of the surest evidences that it is indeed a Book from God and authored by His divinely inspired representatives.

Human reasoning tells us that "the best in man is God." The Bible tells of one Supreme Creator, over and above all, and says also that man is as a "worm" of the dust, "less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:17).

Instead of extolling man's greatness, the Bible counts all the human race together as "altogether lighter than vanity" (Ps. 62:9).

Instead of lauding man's ideas and accepting his judgments as right, it says that "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the hearts" (Prov. 21:2).

Instead of setting up human standards for comparison, it tells us that "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for

man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

Instead of inviting the opinions and accepting the values of humankind, the Bible says that "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

Do we wonder that the Bible is set aside, that it is not a popular Book in the majority of human circles? Do we wonder that it is not recognized as "the authority"?

Again and again the Bible places the greatest possible distance between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of men. Instead of saying that the highest thoughts of men are God, it says that the thoughts of God are as far above those of men as the "heavens are above the earth" (Isa. 55:8-9).

Instead of proclaiming that the achievements of the human race will eventually bring about a Utopia, it predicts a cataclysmic end to all human governments and institutions, to be superseded by the eternal Kingdom of God's own Son and His appointed ones. For that Kingdom "shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms [of men], and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

Are we ever tempted to see ourselves as the highest level of life in the universe? Do we think our civilization the greatest ever achieved? Let us not be blinded by pride. For our every breath we are dependent upon God. For a mind that can think, and reason, we are dependent upon God. For every bite of food that sustains us and every drop of water we drink, we are dependent upon God.

God must, in fact, intervene to save us from ourselves, to rescue the handiwork He designed. Let us not show ourselves willingly ignorant by ignoring (setting aside) or criticizing the Book that He has provided for our instruction. *(Continued Next Issue)*



## Give Me This Mountain

(Continued from page 9)

people who left Egypt) shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son Nun" (Num. 14:30). In other words, Caleb and Joshua would come into Canaan. Each day of continued life thus became a reassurance to Caleb that God was being true to His word.

So Caleb trusted God. And do we not have the same strong reasons to trust? Do we not serve the same God? Do we not have the same assurance that Caleb had, that God is leading us, that He is in full control, and that what He has promised He will fulfill?

The apostle Paul did not have such physical youthfulness in his later years as did Caleb, for he describes himself in one of his letters as "Paul the aged," at a time when he was probably not even 60 years old. All are not blessed with physical strength and health, but all *can* be strong in spirit. All can bind on their shoes of iron, ascend the mountain and rout the giants of sin. Even as we grow weaker in body we can grow stronger in heart and soul (II Cor. 4:16).

And so Caleb makes his request. "Give me a mountain, that I may go out and conquer it." Not an easy, fertile river flat, but a mountain that had held fearsome giants. Caleb asks for the most difficult assignment in the nation! His request revealed the caliber of the man.

The flame of Caleb's courage had not died down, even in old age.

As our years advance, are we renewing our inner life day by day? Whatever our physical strength, have we the same spirit

of adventure, the urge to go on and conquer more and more until our victory is complete? Or are we hesitant to risk another step of faith for God? Do we shrink from the rigors of battle? Let us pick up the spirit of Caleb and attack our enemies with new energy. "The best is yet to be"—the best in spiritual attainment, the best in new heights of holiness, and sincere devotion to God and righteousness.

Caleb was the oldest man in all Israel at this time, because all others his age—except Joshua—had fallen in the desert. And none of the younger men had succeeded in expelling the enemy from the territory. But it is recorded that "from Hebron Caleb drove out the three Anakites, the descendants of Anak" (Josh. 15:14). Concerning other Israelites, we read the melancholy refrain, "They did not utterly drive them out....The Canaanites would dwell in the land...." How contrasting the record of Caleb.

And what was the secret that enabled Caleb to succeed while the younger Israelites failed? It was enshrined in seven words: "I followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly" (Josh. 14:8, NIV). His undivided allegiance to God never wavered. There had been no divergences, no swerving from the direct course. "I followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly," he could testify with a clear conscience.

"You have wholly followed the Lord," Moses was able to add

(Josh. 14:9, NIV). As leader of the nation, Moses had every opportunity to appraise Caleb's character and devotion to God.

But the most astounding testimony comes from God Himself: "My servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly" (Num. 14:24, NIV). What higher eulogy could one seek!

Throughout Caleb's life there was consistent obedience and uncomplaining submission to God's will. He entertained no divided loyalties. Caleb presented his body a living sacrifice to God, in striking contrast to the faithless multitude whose bodies fell in the desert because they were unwilling to make that sacrifice.

Oh, let our New Year conviction ring with the challenge of Caleb: "Give me this mountain." But remember, when God gives a bestowment, He gives also a conflict—and the strength and help we will need to overcome it. He does not leave us on our own. He fights for us. He goes before us.

Whatever our mountain, whatever is keeping us from enjoying the hundredfold blessings of Canaan even now and the surety of an eternal inheritance in the future, let us pray God for the strength to conquer, to subdue the enemies that assault us.

With God to help us, and the strength of our convictions, and the multitude of the heavenly hosts to acclaim our victory, how can we fail?

God will give us this mountain in victory if we but let Him fight for us. The mountain *can* be conquered, if we face it honestly for what it is, and go forward in the strength of Jehovah. With God on our side, we cannot be defeated. With God on our side, we shall yet enjoy the fullest blessings of Canaan, even life for evermore! □

"I followed the  
Lord my God  
wholeheartedly"  
- Caleb



## How Is Prophecy Fulfilled?

*"In your booklet Christ The Saviour Is Born, it is written that Mary went with Joseph to Bethlehem to celebrate the first month of the sacred New Year beginning with the new moon of April or March, the first month of the Hebrew year. It is also stated that loyal Jews were under bond to observe the new moon feast according to custom at Bethlehem, where the family of David assembled to carry out the command.*

*"I know that Mary did not go to Bethlehem for the tax enrollment, but wasn't the reason Mary went to Bethlehem to fulfill the prophecy of Mic. 5:2, for both Mary and Joseph would have known about the prophecy and to fulfill it? They would have known because it is in the Old Testament. Would you please help me to understand this subject."*

You are correct in your conclusion that Mary and Joseph would likely have known of the prophecy in Micah 5:2, because as far as we know from historical records the Old Testament books were already assembled by this time in a volume known as the Septuagint.

You are also correct that Mary would not have been required to go to Bethlehem with her husband for the enrollment for taxation.

It does seem realistic that Mary would have gone to Bethlehem to keep the new moon feast, and the fact that the family was doing this when Jesus was twelve years old is further evidence that it was a family custom, for we read that "When he was twelve

years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast" (Luke 2:41-42). The Passover feast was held in Jerusalem; the new moon feast would have been kept with the family in the city of David, or Bethlehem.

However, your thought that Mary would have gone to Bethlehem for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2 does not seem like a valid conclusion. God does not depend on the will or decisions of us human creatures to fulfill His predictions. He prophesies by His ability to know *in advance* what *we will do*, and any decision we may make will not change that, for His foreknowledge includes all. If God had to depend on human decisions and human willfulness, His Word would not carry the authority and power that it does. But God is able to say "I will," or "It shall be," and there is no question about the certainty of its fulfillment. As the prophet Isaiah wrote, speaking for God, "As rain and snow from heaven fall not in vain, but water earth until it yields seed for the sower, food for hungry men, so would the promise that has passed my lips: It falls not fruitless and in vain, but works out what I will, and carries out my purpose" (Isa. 55:10-11, Moffatt). Or as the Psalmist wrote, again speaking for God, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips" (Ps. 89:34).

God's Word is certain beyond anything humanly possible. The only certainty on the side of man and what he will do lies in the foreknowledge of God, who can read the future as easily and as surely as we can read the past.



### ◆ Confirming the Resurrection of Jesus

*"Would you please respond with your interpretation and belief regarding Matt. 27:52-53."*

The passage in question describes an event at the death of Jesus, when "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," and "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (vs. 51-53). Some translations indicate that the saints were resurrected at the moment Jesus died and *after Jesus' resurrection* went into the "holy city, and appeared unto many." For example, the American Translation, which reads, "the earth shook, the rocks split, the tombs were opened and many of the saints who had fallen asleep rose and left their tombs and after his resurrection went into the holy city and showed themselves to many people." The change is only a slight re-wording of the text in the process of translation, and makes the event much more understandable.

Actually, the clarification in the meaning requires only the moving of one comma, as is done in *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*: "The tombs were opened; and many bodies of the sleeping saints were raised; and coming forth from the tombs, after his resurrection went into the holy city, and appeared to many."

This incident is apparently one more means that God used to add weight to the evidence of the Resurrection. And from the reading of the passage it would seem that the resurrection appearance of these persons was to those who had

been instrumental in Christ's death, rather than to Jesus' own followers. It is not hard to imagine the effect it had on those hard-hearted unbelievers.

How long these persons lived we are not told. Perhaps it was only for a few days. It was not the "resurrection of the last day," and those restored to mortal life had to return again to the grave to await the final resurrection at Christ's second coming.

### ◆ What About Suicide?

*"What does the Bible say about taking one's own life in suicide?"*

The Bible does not directly address the point of one taking his own life, however we do have a number of guidelines, also examples.

First of all, the Bible writers always assumed that God being the designer and giver of all life, it was His rightful prerogative also to take it away. Hannah, under the influence of inspiration, prayed, "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up" (I Sam. 2:6).

The breath of life is the gift of God, and beyond our jurisdiction. Job, also writing by Divine inspiration, credited all life to "the breath of the Almighty" (Job 33:4; 12:10). If God were to withdraw this breath of life, all of us would perish together—this would be God's doing, not ours (Job 27:3; 34:14-15).

But the fact that God gives breath to every living thing does not mean that all life is precious to God, for entire nations before Him are as nothing (Isa. 40:17); neither is it our right to end any life, for we have no way of knowing God's plan or will for any individual, even ourselves.

The law of Moses contained an injunction against taking life:

"Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13). Although this command does not specify whether the prohibition was only against taking the life of another or also included one's own, it seems that it could include both. And Jesus in citing this command did not remove it but amplified it to condemn even anger against one's brother (Matt. 5:22).

Elijah, at a point of extreme discouragement, prayed that God might take away his life, but he did not end it himself. Elijah soon learned, however, that God had other plans for him (I Kings 19:4-15). And far from being alone, God told Elijah that He had yet seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal (I Kings 19:18).

The Bible contains several examples of those who ended their own life, and none of them were righteous or God-fearing. King Saul was among these, and we know that he was rejected by God very early in his career because he would not obey the command of God. "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king over Israel" (see I Sam. 15:22-23, 26; 31:4).

Ahithophel was another who ended his life, when he saw that his counsel was not accepted by the king. He chose suicide rather than lose face—a decision which no God-fearing person would make.

Another who ended his own life to save face and avoid facing the results of rejection was Zimri, a self-appointed king of Israel who reigned only seven days. Zimri took the throne by force; but when he learned that his opponent had more popularity than he, he burned the king's house down upon himself and died (I Kings 16:15-18).



Probably the most well-known suicide in Scripture is Judas, who after betraying Jesus and seeing that he was condemned for it, went and hanged himself (Matt. 27:3-5), thus ending by his own hand any opportunity for true repentance or change in his life. Judas had sinned, but the Lord would have given Judas opportunity to repent and reform. But Judas refused and made his sin unpardonable by taking his own life, thereby ending his day of opportunity.

The man or woman who is truly serving God and has a healthy state of mind will never take his own life because he regards life as his greatest blessing, and realizes that only as he makes proper use of all of it can he merit God's eternal favor and blessing. He is too thankful for the present, whatever its condition, to wish to end it. However heavy his trials, he looks upon them as something he can sustain, with the help of God; as "light

afflictions"—which indeed they are in comparison with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory for which he is striving.

The true believer realizes that there is no conceivable price either in suffering or denial that one may pay which is too much compared with the magnificent reward God offers for patient endurance. No present sufferings can overwhelm him because he has God's promise that there will be no temptation or trial above his power to endure (1 Cor. 10:13). Hence, suicide will be out of the question. Even though he knows his days are numbered by disease or infirmity and the immediate future is dark with suffering, he will face it bravely in the strength of God, place his life in God's care, and let God deliver when He sees the time is right.

Any sacrifice is a small price to pay for an eternity of bliss, the supreme honor of God, and a life on the level of the angels. □

## Danger!

### *You are in danger*

- ◆ when you grow bolder with sin, or with a temptation to sin, than you were in your more watchful state
- ◆ when you make a small matter of a sin which once was almost intolerable to you
- ◆ when you settle down to a course of religion that seems easy and comfortable
- ◆ when your God and Saviour seem even a little strange to you
- ◆ when your religion consists of conversing with men and their books, and not with God and His Book
- ◆ when you take more delight in hearing and talking of secular affairs than in prayer and in the Word
- ◆ when you regard the opinion of men too much and the eye of God too little
- ◆ when you grow more hot and eager about some disputed point or opinion of your own than about those matters which concern the great cause of Christ.
- ◆ when you feel harsh, vengeful or bitter toward anyone
- ◆ when you think more of outward ordinances than of heartwork
- ◆ when you are thirsting after some worldly enjoyment and eager for it
- ◆ when the thought of God and of His Kingdom does not stir a deep love and longing within you
- ◆ when the world seems near to you and eternity only a dream.



## Hard Hitting!

A young ambitious actor was asked how he managed to secure the leading part in a movie of renown.

He replied: "When you see something that you want, you should go after it with all your energy and let nothing stand in your way. Those who wait for things to come to them usually have to be satisfied with leftovers."

That is just what the unfaithful will receive: because they did not go after the full reward with all their energy. Because they did not apply that extra measure of effort, they will receive only the leftovers; as Jesus said, they will be "less than the least," or "they shall not attain unto it at all" (Matt. 5:20, paraphrase).

Said Jesus, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The Christian's life is not one of ease; we must push, press, storm our way into the Kingdom of God. We must be aggressive to obtain it. Whatever stands in our way—and Jesus named thirteen such obstacles—we must hit it hard and be sure that we keep moving. The young actor had the right idea: when you see something you want, go after it! □



*All the year through  
The pages of our life  
Have been turning,  
Turning.*

*All the year through  
The pen of the angel  
Has been scribing,  
Scribing.*

*And how reads the record?  
All the year through  
Our deeds and our words,  
And even our thoughts  
Have been written,  
Written.*

*And as we look back  
O'er the months and the days  
Silently and prayerfully,  
Thoughtfully,  
What is our wish?  
What is our desire?  
"Teach me, O Lord, teach me  
To watch."*

*Time is measured by how  
well it is used.*

Did you ever realize how important it is to cultivate the ability to say "no" to yourself? It is much more important than to say it to others, for when one has acquired the habit of saying "no" to himself, it is easy to say it to others at the proper time.

*Winners focus on the goal,  
not the barriers.*

Winners press forward without looking back.

*Make today your best day  
ever.*



# Waiting



*Watchman, waiting for the morning,  
Canst thou see its glimmering light?  
Canst thou tell by signs prophetic  
When will end this long, dark night?*

*When we see the fig tree budding,  
Know we not that summer's near?  
So by prophecy fulfilling  
Know that Morn will soon appear.*

*Christian, wait! The Day is breaking;  
O'er the hilltop Morning dawns;  
See! light streaks the east horizon—  
Wait and hail the coming Morn!*

*Night so long, so dark and dreary,  
Casts her sable garb aside;  
Morning breaks with rays transcendent,  
All her gates are open wide!*

*Marching through her portals glorious,  
Jesus with His convoy comes;  
Crowned with might, His robes resplendent,  
Brighter than the noonday sun.*

*List! His voice fills every dungeon,  
Ope's the prison gates of earth  
And the prisoners, when immortal,  
Shout the victory over death.*

*—L. T. N.*