

# Megiddo Message

*"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*

*"And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.*

*"His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:*

*"And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*

*"And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

*"And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee. . . .*

*"And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word"*

—Matthew 28:1-8.



## Enough to Make You Run!

## The Tragedy of Not Knowing

OF ALL the hazards that threaten the Christian life, perhaps none is greater than the hazard of not knowing. It is not that we lack a basic knowledge of the law of God; acquiring such knowledge is relatively easy. The problem lies in what we do, or fail to do, with that knowledge. We may be standing in dire peril, spiritually speaking, and not know it—if we are ignorant of ourselves as God sees us. And such ignorance is not bliss; it is tragedy.

It is so easy to be general when we come to applying the law, and so difficult to be personal. It is so easy to see how God's precepts should affect "the other fellow," and so difficult to convict ourselves. It is so easy to be aware of God's marvelous plan in general, and yet close our eyes and ears to the warnings it speaks to *us*. It is the hazard of "not knowing"—ourselves.

There are several passages of Scripture which speak to us of this danger.

*"Samson . . . said, I will go out as at former times, . . . and he knew not that the Lord was departed from him"* (Judges 16:19-20, Septuagint). It was the tragedy of not knowing. Samson did not know that the Lord had departed from him, and he paid for it dearly. But think of the implication of these words, that we may lose the divine providence in our lives and be so spiritually unperceiving that we do not know it! God has been with us "at former times." Let us keep our spiritual sensitivity so sharp that we will know He is *still* with us—and when, because of our waywardness, He is *not*.

*"Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not"* (Hos. 7:9). Another tragic example of not knowing; and it is a tragedy which could befall any of us unless we make an all-out effort to keep ourselves growing more and more alert. Are decline and decay threatening our spiritual well-being while we go on all unaware? Have we, like Ephraim, "mixed" so much "among the people" (v. 8) that our spiritual vigor has begun to wane—and we

do not know it? Let us look closely; it is a warning.

*"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"* (Rev. 3:17). The picture is of one who is apparently alive and "in need of nothing" when in reality he has nothing. How can it be? we ask. How can anyone be suffering such spiritual misery and *not know it*? It is because he is "past feeling," as Paul described it. The tragedy did not strike all at once. Little by little he lost his spiritual awareness until he was utterly insensitive to his true condition.

*"Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation"* (Luke 19:44). Again, the tragedy of not knowing. The Messiah had been right among them, and they refused to recognize Him. The results were tragic. Destruction, suffering and desolation were decreed upon them.

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2). The warning is for us. If we do not use the opportunity while it is ours, the same sentence may one day be written of us: "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

*"They . . . knew not until the flood came, and took them all away"* (Matt. 24:39). Tragedy again, and all because they "knew not." God sent a preacher of righteousness to inform them, but they preferred to remain willingly ignorant—until the rain began to fall. "So shall also the coming of the Son of man be." It will find many in the tragic state of "not knowing" because they did not *want to know*. What of us?

There is but one way to escape this terrible tragedy: to keep ourselves growing more and more spiritually alert all the time, so that no area of our lives escapes our super-honest scrutiny. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts." Better to be shocked into sensitivity now, than to meet the tragedy of not knowing. ●●

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## Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

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

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

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## Enough to Make You Run!

*"But on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala arrived at the tomb, very early in the morning, while it was still dark, and noticed that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. At this she ran, found Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have laid him.'*

*"Peter and the other disciple set off at once for the tomb, the two of them running together. The other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. He stooped and looked inside and saw the linen cloths lying there but did not go in himself. Hard on his heels came Simon Peter and went straight into the tomb. He noticed that the linen cloths were lying there, and that the handkerchief, which had been around Jesus' head, was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up by itself, a little way apart. Then the other disciple, who was the first to arrive at the tomb, came inside as well, saw what had happened and believed. (They did not yet understand the scripture which said that he must rise from the dead.) So the disciples went back again to their homes."*

—John 20:1-10, Phillips

THE resurrected Christ is the prime motivator of Christian faith. The message of the resurrection is a message of hope. It is life. It is power. It is motion. It is living evidence that vital, working faith culminates in animated reality. It is proof indisputable that God fulfills His truth and that there shall not fail one word of all His good promise which He has promised in our behalf.

The resurrection of Christ is a tangible demonstration of God's remembrance of His own. The power of death is broken forever, for Jesus Christ, our perfect pattern, is *alive!*

This was the dynamic power behind the early Church. It was this message that sent the apostles everywhere preaching. It was the greatest and most convincing message the world had ever heard. He who was dead is alive! they could proclaim with all the earnestness and power of the Holy Spirit. And this was no philosopher's dream.

This was no prophet's vision. This was fact, as veritable as history itself.

The effects of the message were dramatic. There was something about it that was alive, penetrating, shocking. You simply couldn't believe it and sit still. You had to get up and *do something*. You had to *accept* it, *believe* it, *live* it and *preach* it—it made you feel like *running*.

That was the very effect it had on those anxious disciples that first resurrection morning. The Gospel narrative of Jesus' life and ministry is absorbing, but the overall pace is rather slow and placid. There are the years of preaching, the various parables and miracles, and the journeyings through Judea and Galilee as Jesus traveled from south to north and back again. Then there is the buildup of events toward the dreadful night of the crucifixion. The deed is done, and for a moment everything seems to stop.

But there is no stop, only a pause while greater power gathers for a new thrust.

And then—the resurrection! Jesus is alive!—and the pace of the narrative accelerates. People start to run. Mary Magdalene and the other women are early at the sepulchre that morning. They hear the words of the angels, and immediately Mary *runs* to find Peter and John, to tell them that Jesus is no longer in the tomb where He had been laid. Then Peter and John *race* to the sepulchre—there is no quicker way to get there. And they see and believe.

### Why Run?

What is there about the message of the resurrection that makes men run?

First of all it is the astonishing wonder of it all. The world never looked blacker than it did to the disciples of Jesus the night He was crucified. The hopes and dreams and expectations of the preceding months and years seemed suddenly to catapult to the depths of despair. It was all over. The mission had failed. The disciples went each to their several homes to sit down and reflect and weep.

But when word of the Resurrection reached their ears, they stood up and shook themselves and started to run. Hope revived and the future



brightened. Their Master was alive! It was enough to make any man feel like running!

The resurrection of Christ was convincing because of the solid foundation of fact beneath it. Here was an event proven so thoroughly that it could not be defeated by the finest argument or story the Jews could fabricate. And so no one tried. Too many men and women had seen Him. And everyone who had seen Him was ready to testify in His behalf.

During His first day of resurrected life, Jesus was seen by Mary Magdalene and the other women who were with her; by Peter, by the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, by the ten apostles and "others." During the days that followed before His ascension, He appeared again to the Eleven, to the seven disciples in Galilee, to the apostles and over five hundred brethren at once; to James, the Lord's brother, and finally to the apostles when He was taken up into heaven (I Cor. 15:4-7; Acts 1:9-11). Who could dispute the testimony of all these people?

### Christ Is Different

The fact of the resurrection separates Christ from all the great leaders of all other religions of all time. Of no other man was it ever said, "He showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3). Such a thing could not possibly have been claimed for Confucius, who was buried in his family village; or of Guadama, the founder of Buddhism, whose body was burned after his death; or of Mohammed, who was buried in Mecca. No one tried to associate any idea of resurrection with any of these three founders; no one dared, for they had no evidence to substantiate their claim.

But Christ was different. Death was not the end of the career of this great Man. It was but the briefest interruption, after which He would rise to lead on to victories still more momentous in the next phase of the program God had planned for Him.

There is nothing vague and mystic about the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is more than a story. It is more than a doctrine. It is the real record of a real man who lived and died, and who is alive for evermore. And all this happened in a specific geographical area at a specific time in history. The details of the story fit perfectly into the history and customs of the time in which it happened.

Though Christ is recognized as the most remarkable character of all time, yet, strange to say, He was not of the great. He was born among the

lowly and the poor. He was a carpenter by profession, and nearly all His life was spent amid the humble surroundings of an obscure and despised village. He effected no military conquest. He left behind Him no colossal fortune.

He gathered about Himself a little handful of obscure and, for the most part, ignorant disciples who, at the time of His supreme crisis, deserted Him and scattered in confusion and despair. His enemies completely triumphed over Him. He was crucified between two thieves. His lifeless body was committed to a tomb that was not His own. To make sure that He would no longer harass them, His powerful foes had a guard of soldiers stationed at its mouth and the seal of Rome placed upon the stone.

Measured now by all historic precedent and by any human standard, what is to become of that Man, of His name, and of His influence? Under such circumstances He would be speedily forgotten, even as the thousands of others before Him who had died upon a cross.

But such is not the case. The name of that hum-

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ble Man now shines as the sun in the central dome of God's plan for the earth and mankind. Though He was not of the great, yet He was destined to become supremely great, Earth's ultimate King and Ruler. Without the learning of the schools, He has become the Teacher of the world. Without the aid of fortuitous circumstance, He has become the most vital force for righteousness ever known to mankind.

### Effects of the Resurrection

Consider the effect Christ's resurrection had upon the life of one named Saul, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee." To him, Christ was no twilight character who lived and died in an obscure corner of the world! Christ was blinding light, above the brightness of the noonday sun, light which transformed him from a hot-headed Pharisee and persecutor of the Christian Church into a man on fire for God. The whole change was the result of the living reality of the

*With implicit faith in the promises of God we can say, "Now is Christ risen from the dead," and run the way of God's commands --and win!*

resurrected Christ. The message of the Resurrection set him running, and he never stopped until he reached his goal.

Here are his own words: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11). The resurrection of Christ demonstrated the exceeding greatness of God's power. The same power enthroned Jesus in the heavenly world. The same power can enthrone Him in our lives. It is an inexhaustible supply. Its silent influence can enable us to live as those "risen with Christ," above the seductions and defilements of the world, to "seek those things which are above."

With implicit faith in the divine promises of the Word of God we say with conviction, "*Now is Christ risen from the dead.*"

### Results of Conviction

Call it what you will, this faith, this conviction, this knowledge has many results in our thinking and living. Here are some of them.

*We believe in the triumph of goodness.* By this we mean also the triumph of love, of truth, of justice; for these are good. They are bound together. Let one fall, and they fall together. When Jesus rose from the dead there were myriads of other victories implicit in the event. Our own victories over sin and death were there. How could one expect to win by goodness and love, if Christ could not win, if His life ended with His burial in a garden tomb?

*We believe that life has meaning.* Life is more than existence and extinction. Life and death are not enough. It has been said that there is the "hint of eternity" in every human life. Jesus' resurrection is to that hint of eternity what the springtime sun is to the seed or bud in the garden. It grows, it expands, it flowers. Beyond life and death there can be eternal life. The hint grows into assurance.

*By that assurance our daily acts are no longer*

*futile.* Paul's great chapter on the resurrection (I Corinthians 15) climaxes in the words, "Ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." Every word and every act becomes significant.

*By that assurance we know that the relationships of life need not be eternally severed by death.* "By the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Tim. 1:10), we are assured that eternal life *can* be ours.

*We have the assurance that imperfection can move into perfection, incompleteness into completion.* We find this life too short: we long for something more. Whether measured by time or some other standard of measurement, this something more is assured.

*We believe in the power of the resurrection.* This is a phrase from Paul's writings (Phil. 3:10), "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable unto his death." These last six words, "Being made conformable unto his death" show that the power of the resurrection includes that of which we have already spoken: it is power to triumph over the evil in ourselves; it is the power to give life meaning and bring us the hundredfold as we walk the Christian Way, to arise to walk in newness of life. It is the power that comes to men through the presence of Christ in their midst. By His presence all the small powers we possess are enlarged. A man's capacity for living, thinking, loving, giving, are marvelously increased. Courage, patience, endurance become qualities of the personality. But it means more, much more. It promises that we shall be made equal to the angels, so we can die no more. We shall gain the victory over death and the grave.

By the power of the resurrection a man can say, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." And this conviction will impel us to run, to run the way of God's commandments, and win.

### More Running...

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews lists a number of sainted men and women that had lived prior to that time; it tells of their virtues and what they had accomplished in God's service. The chapter closes with the revelation that none of them had as yet received their reward, but that it was safely held in keeping for them to be bestowed at the coming of the great Judge.

The following chapter continues with the thought

of running, and that the hope held out to all loyal servants of God is enough to make us run: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (v. 1). Verse 2 pictures the goal for which we should run: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The hope of a resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of His Father was enough to make Him run, and surely the prospect of a resurrection and seating at His right hand in His future Kingdom should be enough to cause us to run.

In the closing verses of Peter's Second Epistle he demonstrated that he had not lost the passion to run, or failed in his duty to encourage others to run. Listen to his incisive words: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. . . . Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye

## *The message of the resurrection set Paul running, and he never stopped until he reached his goal.*

may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. . . . Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:11, 14, 17-18).

Jesus lives! And very soon He will be right here among us. Have we heard? Do we believe it? Do we really believe it? Is the message of the Resurrection stirring us today to greater spiritual fervor than we have ever felt before?

There is nothing like the resurrection to certify our faith. There is nothing like the resurrection to renew our confidence and stimulate our desire for the magnificent blessings God has promised. There is nothing like the resurrection to stand us on our feet, ready for any testing that may come our way. It is the greatest message our ears could ever hear. Let it be enough to make us *run*. ●●

April, 1977

## *Let Us Pray . . .*

O God, Thou mighty Being who hast brought us to this holy morning when we renew the memory of our Saviour's resurrection: Fill our hearts with the same adoration and rejoicing that the disciples experienced on that first Resurrection Morning. May nothing disturb the beauty and glory of this day. Help us to keep our vision clear, our insight true, our communion with Thee pure and lovely.

O Thou who didst make the stars, and who can turn the shadow of death into the morning, we praise Thee for the resurrection of Jesus, for the certainty of His victory over pain and death. He broke the dark bars of the grave and now He lives for evermore. He is seated with Thee in Thy throne and assures all overcomers that they too will sit with Him in His throne when He reigns as King of the whole earth.

Give us the faith to realize that every truth that is trampled down by evil, and every Christian ideal that seems to be buried in darkness will rise again. We know that right will one day prevail over wrong, and life will overcome death.

We bless and thank Thee for all the helpful things Thou hast done and art doing for us. We praise Thee for the insight that we have into Thy divine plan for the earth and mankind.

We rejoice to know there is a better day coming when goats and sheep shall no longer dwell together, and the righteous shall shine forth in the Kingdom of Thy dear Son to inherit the blessings promised, and eternally enjoy the fruit of their labor.

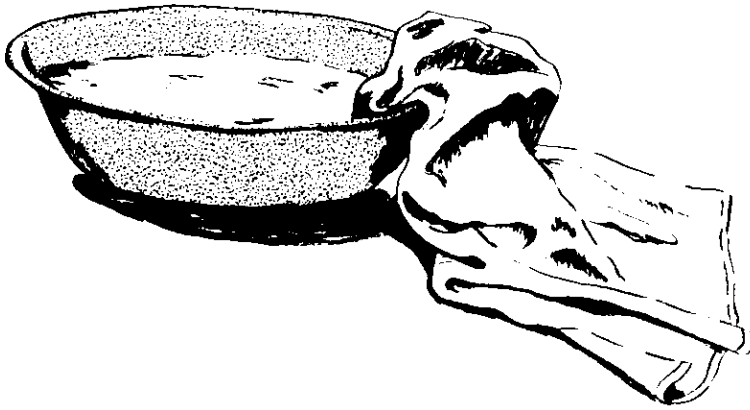
Awaken our minds to the glory of Jesus' resurrection. And as He conquered the shadows of the tomb, so may we overcome the evils that keep our lives from being what they ought to be.

Attune our hearts to songs of victory, that we may one day be in the company of those who live with Thee in eternal joy. Inspire us to give words of encouragement, words of comfort, words of warning, helpful words, words that will build faith. And help us always to live the life that will please Thee and fit us for perpetuation in the world to come.

Bless and preserve all who are striving for perfection of character, and give us the strength to continue steadfast to the end, that we may share with our resurrected Lord and the good of all ages life in the world to come. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Bread and Wine . . .

## And Towel and Basin



*"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example."*  
—John 13:14-15.

**I**N JOHN 13 is recorded one of the greatest discourses of all time. Here, at the close of His earthly ministry, Jesus was with His beloved disciples for the last time. It was a time of fellowship and teaching, a time of parting and admonition. But it would seem that there was even more meaning in the whole event—something intended especially for *us*.

Jesus had arranged to spend this last evening with His disciples. By divine foreknowledge He knew it would be the last opportunity to be with them until they should eat together "in the kingdom of God" many centuries hence. So they assembled in the upper room to partake of this parting Passover meal.

Here Jesus gave them the pattern which His followers should remember through all the years between that time and the time when they should "eat it anew" in the Kingdom of Christ:

"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

"For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:17-19).

Here is the origin of the symbolic rite which we some twenty centuries later still observe in obedience to His command: "This do in remembrance of me." By this annual observance we pledge loyalty to His commands and renew our agreement to consecrate our lives entirely to His service.

After their communion supper on that memorable night, the Gospel of John tells of another event which also seems significant for us. "During sup-

per, Jesus . . . rose from the table, laid aside his garments, and taking a towel tied it round him. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel." Then, "after washing their feet and taking his garments again, he sat down. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked. 'You call me "Master" and "Lord", and rightly so, for that is what I am. Then if I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. I have set you an example: you are to do as I have done for you. In very truth I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master' " (John 13:3-5, 12-16, NEB).

Some people today might feel the foot-washing experience ought to be left to history. But why? How can we remember the Lord's Supper each year and forget this other part of the service that memorable night?

Foot-washing was a gesture of kindness in the ancient world. When the Eastern traveler entered the home of his host, whether the tent of a desert sheik or a city dwelling, the unwritten law of hospitality demanded that water be brought, his sandals removed, and his feet washed. This universal custom was necessitated by the climate, the style of dress, and the conditions of the roads. To have one's tired feet bathed after a long day of walking was a welcome and refreshing experience. Thus Abraham, surprised at his tent door in the heat of the day by three unknown and unexpected guests, welcomed them in a hospitable manner: "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree."

Quite naturally this service was performed by a servant rather than the master of the house.



Hence, to find the Messiah, the future King of all the earth, personally washing the feet of His disciples is meaningful. It is an expression of the genuine humility He had developed, as He said, "I am among you as he that serveth." The act itself is an immortal lesson in humility. Unfortunately it has been misapplied through the ages by many un-Christlike religious persons who used this act of Jesus' to support an external, proud, self-conscious, hypocritical humility wherein high bishops wash the feet of beggars—publicly, of course—and popes wash the feet of priests once a year. The ancient custom has thus fallen into dishonor. Foot-washing was never an ordinance like the Lord's Supper, and there is no authentic record of its practice in the early Church.

Nevertheless, there is in the act a far deeper symbolism than a mere expression of humility. This fact is made clear by Jesus' words in John 13:7, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." If nothing more than the act of humility were meant in physically removing Judean dust from the feet of tired men, surely men of the intellectual stature of the Twelve, familiar with the custom, would have instantly comprehended the lesson. The richer symbolism of the act is emphasized again by the Lord's question after He had taken His garments and sat down with them again: "Know ye what I have done to you?" Certainly they knew He had washed their feet—there is something deeper.

In this simple act is a ringing message for the true Church in all ages, even ours. Passover reminds us of our sacred covenant with God through its symbolic bread and wine. But there is a lesson in the towel and basin which we should not overlook: It is the message of *application*. It is the actual *doing* of what we have just agreed to do in a practical, everyday manner. Physical and spiritual strength must be ready to serve in a practical manner, in the work of cleansing ourselves from all the dust of carnality. There is something to be *done*—this is the message of the Passover. And the simple act of foot-washing tells us it is time to begin right here and now! No suggestion of eating and drinking the sacred emblems and rising up to play. If one would be like Jesus, he must rise up to work, to wash and cleanse and purify himself from every trace of sin. Empowered with divine wisdom and braced by a holy commitment, one must be ready to accept in humility the lowly mission of the towel and basin and demonstrate his willingness to *serve*.

The lesson is much like that which the disciples received the day of the Transfiguration. The

mountaintop experience was exalting—they were ready to make their abode on the mountain. But Jesus said no. The inspiration of the mountaintop was given to energize the weekday valley-traveling.

The lesson of the towel and basin is the lesson of a complete moral cleansing which Jesus requires of all who follow Him. Moral purity is vital in the body of Christ, the Church. It is the admonition of Isaiah (1:16), "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil; learn to do well." That is the way of salvation—no more, and no less.

This washing is both individual and collective in nature. Each of us must wash ourselves; and each of us is responsible to a certain extent for the welfare of our brethren in the faith. There are sins which only we ourselves can cleanse, for they are known only to ourselves and God; these are the hardest to wash. There are other sins which involve our relationship with others, and others can often help us with these. We need each other in the humble service of foot-washing, to apply more and more of the water of life before we can be fully clean.

"Ye also ought to wash one another's feet," was Jesus' admonition (John 13:14). It is a matter of mutual aid, mutual watchfulness, mutual service. We need each other in this work of cleansing ourselves. It is extremely difficult for one to see and correct all his faults himself without any brotherly assistance. We live so close to ourselves; we see ourselves subjectively, our judgment conditioned by all our old habits and excuses and vanities; when we look in the mirror, we see a creature which we judge "pretty good." It is far safer to look through the eyes of others, whenever possible—and this action will give us also a lesson in humility.

As we remember the Lord's Supper this year (March 31), let us think also of the foot-washing that accompanied it. Our agreement with God must find immediate and practical application. As part of the "feet" of the mystical body of Christ, the last members to be taken out before the coming of the Day of the Lord, there is peculiar urgency in this washing for us. It must be done in haste, for time is running out. We have not even the assurance of our natural lifespan, for the present Day of salvation may at any time be overtaken by the arrival of the Day of the Lord.

So let us follow Jesus' example when He took the towel and the basin: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15). ●●



# The Millennium:

## Who Will Be There?

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

*"Sinners in Zion are struck  
with horror and fear seizes on  
the godless. Which of us can  
live...?"*

*"—He who acts with integ-  
rity, who speaks sincerely and  
rejects extortionate profit;...  
this man will dwell in the  
heights,... in a citadel built  
on a rock, bread will be given  
him, he shall not want...."*

*—Isaiah 33:14-16,  
Jerusalem Bible.*

**W**HO will live during the grand, glorious coming age? Who will be there?

This is the question that has been echoed and re-echoed through the centuries by every earnest seeker after the knowledge of God: "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!" (Num. 24:23).

What a question to ask!—and what a question to answer with the sure and unfailing Word of the Lord God!

We take our present lives more or less for granted. We are here, and we do not give too much thought to whether our presence in this world is wanted or unwanted. But life during the Millennium will be different. Anyone who survives to see the dawning of that thousand-year day will thank God for the *privilege* that is his, for he will have witnessed the destruction of hosts of the rebellious, war-like element.

All who are living when the new administration takes office and the Millennium begins will be living with the express permission and consent of the great King Himself. They will be living either by right of God-given reward, or because the King and His conquerors in mercy spared their lives when they showed a willingness to cooperate with the new order. All who live will not be perfect, nor will they all be wholehearted servants of God, but they will have this in common: they are willing supporters of the new regime; all opposition will have been eliminated.

Who will be there?

First, there will be the glorious King Himself.

Second, there will be the King's chosen co-rulers, then immortal, sharing His glory and His authority.

Third, there will be the "great multitude" of mortal nations, the populace of the Kingdom, for whom the Millennium will be the day of probation.

Fourth, there will be those who lived during the different dispensations of the first six-thousand years, who proved unworthy of the full reward of immortality but whose work merited some measure of reward. We shall call them the recipients of a "partial reward"—God in justice and mercy will grant them a limited number of years during the Millennium in return for their partial service during their day of probation.

Let's see what the Bible has to say about each of the above who *will be there*.

The first and most glorious personage during the Millennium will be

## CHRIST The King

"And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16). He is the "blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I Tim. 6:15).

Some three thousand years ago, Balaam, erstwhile prophet to Israel, spoke of the future Messiah as a scepter and a rising star. "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab.... Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion" (Num. 24:17-19). A "star" is a symbol of royalty and greatness. A "sceptre" represents a person eminent for wisdom and of formidable strength and power. The "corners of Moab" mean "the whole of it." Christ will bring the nations of earth into complete subjection when He ascends the throne of earth.

The prophet Jeremiah foresaw a King who should "reign and prosper" at this time, and should "execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. 23:5). The Psalmist also wrote about this King: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," he said, speaking prophetically (Ps. 2:6). And the next words identify the King with all certainty: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (v. 7). Many are the Psalms that tell about the King. For example, the whole of Psalm 72 is an outburst of prophecy about the glorious King.

"Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.... In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth....

"The king of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him....

"His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (Ps. 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 17).

The prophet Zechariah also identified the future ruler and the extent of His domain: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9).

During His earthly ministry, the King-to-be spoke for Himself. When asked by Pilate, "Art thou a king?" Jesus replied with all confidence: "Certainly I am a king. This is why I was born, this is why I came into the world, to bear testimony to the truth" (John 18:37, Moffatt).

With the dawn of the Millennial era, all these prophecies of Christ will be fulfilled. Christ will be the King all-glorious!

*"Thou shalt... call his name JESUS.*

*"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:*

*"And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"*

*—Luke 1:31-33.*

*"And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one"*

*—Zechariah 14:9.*

## The King's Co-Rulers

**N**EXT in importance to the King will be the new rulers of the New World. The Revelator called Christ the "King of kings, and Lord of lords"—indicating that the King and Lord will not be alone; there will be "kings" and "lords" next to Him. It is the position of authority Jesus promised to give those who should be overcomers at the time He comes to set up His Kingdom: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne (Rev. 3:21).

God invested six thousand years in the selecting and developing of this notable class of highest-quality individuals, and when Christ comes and rewards them for work well done, they shall be ready for their next and higher station of service. Another passage in Revelation describes Christ's kingship and tells of the qualification of those who will reign with Him: "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). No ordinary persons, these co-rulers with Christ; no fawning flatterers or figureheads surrounding the Great King. They are themselves kings and lords. And they are thrice proven: "called, and chosen, and faithful."

The Revelator also informs us of the number of these co-kings and co-lords. He writes: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1). There are a good number of them—one hundred forty-four thousand. And again their superior qualifications are noted: All of them have "his Father's name written in their foreheads," and of all of them it may be said, "... in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God" (vs. 1, 5). Their obedience has been complete: "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (v. 4).

Further descriptions of these super-quality achievers are scattered all through the Scriptures. Daniel calls them "the people of the saints of the most High," to whom will be given "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven" (Dan. 7:27). Jesus says they shall "sit on thrones" (Luke 22:30). Paul tells how they shall be "heirs of God, and joint-

heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). They are the "saints" who "shall judge the world" (I Cor. 6:2).

Isaiah tells of these select persons, that "all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (Isa. 61:9).

In the letters from Jesus to the Seven Churches of Asia, recorded in the book of Revelation, are many references to these saints, the "overcomers." The promises to them are exceeding abundant. To them will be given the privilege of partaking "of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). Each will receive "a new name," a high mark of acceptance and accomplishment. They will be given "power over the nations" along with the glory and honor of sitting with Christ on His throne" (Rev. 2:17, 26; 3:21).

Here is not only authority; here is joy and felicity and supreme usefulness. Christ does not allow His throne to put a distance between Him and His loyal followers. He shares His throne with him who conquers.

When Christ comes He will select these super-achievers from among those who agreed to serve God faithfully during the six-thousand years prior to His coming. When they take the honored positions to which they will be assigned, they shall have passed the great white Throne, been proven worthy, and have been rewarded with highest honors, even "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." In their possession shall be that certificate of supreme achievement: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Their bodies shall have been changed and made like the incorruptible body of their glorious King (Phil. 3:20-21). He shall be the King all-glorious, and they shall be co-kings all-glorious, their lives as enduring as the Kingdom over which they shall reign. Theirs shall be the glory that shall never tarnish, beauty that shall never fade, and life that shall never end. When the glorious thousand years are in the past, their lives shall have just begun—the endless ages of eternity shall be theirs!

What honor, what glory, what reward!

## The Great Multitude

**T**HE King and His immortal co-rulers will not be the only people living during the Millennium. A King, however glorious, and co-rulers, however capable and competent and highly blessed, must have someone over whom to exercise their new and righteous authority, someone upon whom they may bestow love and dispense blessing. This

third group is the populace of the Kingdom, the thousands and millions of mortals who will be enjoying a happy and vigorous mortal life in the New World.

This third group begins with those who submit to Christ when He "rides forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). They are the fruit of the great missionary effort which shall extend from sea to sea, when the "everlasting gospel" shall be preached "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

The prophet Zechariah reveals that two-thirds of earth's inhabitants at the time of Christ's return will "be cut off and die" because unwilling to cooperate with the new regime. God will allow nothing to hinder the forward-moving plan; that which will not move with it shall be removed.

The third which remains will become the nucleus from which will spring a whole new populace. The present population of the world is almost four billion. If two thirds are removed, the one third will number some one billion three hundred thousand; and these will begin at once to multiply and increase until the whole earth is "filled" with the glory of the Lord.

So large will be the number of these new inhabitants of the Kingdom that they are described in Scripture as "a great multitude which no man can number." The Millennium will not be a time of holy isolation! Far from it! There will be people everywhere. And they will all be acquainted with the plan of God. It is written, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Jer. 31:34).

The Millennium will be their day of probation, their opportunity to serve God faithfully and live by His every command so that they may finally be rewarded with immortality and become the eternal inhabitants of the eternal Kingdom. Of them we read: "And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. 13:9).

A great number of these—and their descendants—will be successful in their quest for eternal life. Revelation 7 describes them as "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues," and they are standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, "clothed in white robes"—symbolic of their purity and holiness—"and palms in their hands" (v. 9).

April, 1977

## Recipients of the

## Partial Reward

THERE is yet another group of persons whom the Bible indicates will live during the Millennium: those who receive a "partial reward."

God's gracious principle of rewarding every man "according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12; Jer. 17:10), and His unchangeable faithfulness in giving full and eternal life only to those who make a full and complete surrender, suggests that there must be some persons who deserve more than they received during their mortal lives and yet are not worthy of eternal life. A text in Second John speaks of the recompense which will be given for full service as the "full reward." It reads: "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (v. 8). The words of Boaz, recorded in the book of Ruth, suggest the same thought: "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust" (Ruth 2:12). The divine plan is to give the full reward, "glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" to those who are one hundred percent achievers; therefore there must be a lesser, or partial reward for those who serve *but not fully*, if God is to give to "every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12). The man who has done only a little must nevertheless receive something for his work. A partial reward in the form of extended life during the glorious Millennium would seem a logical solution to this; and there is nothing in Scripture to contradict such a plan.

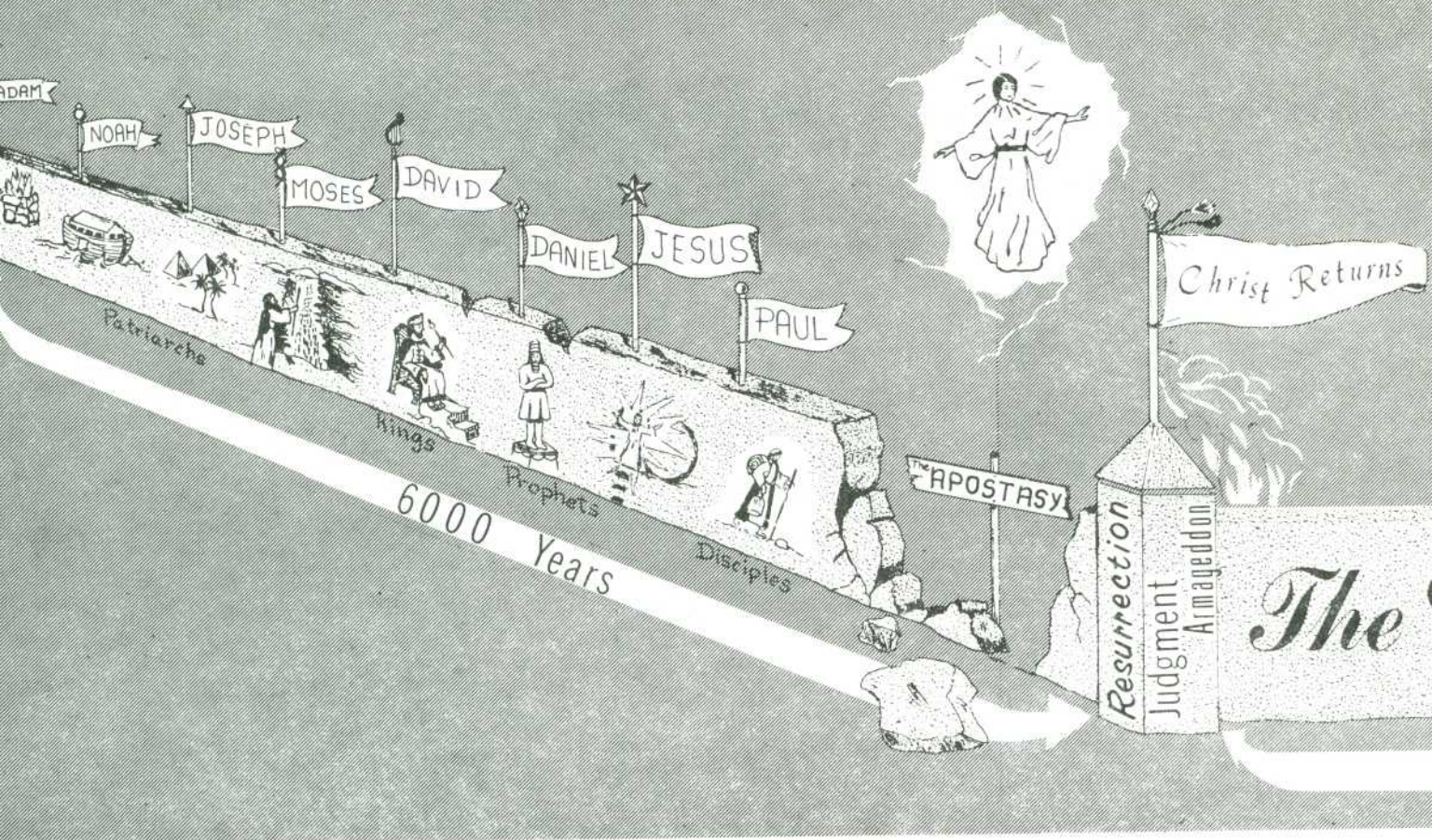
What kind of individuals are these who receive only a partial reward?

They are men and women who could have been among the immortal co-rulers with Christ during the Millennium. They were called, they knew the gospel of God, and they knew what they could obtain by giving themselves in obedience to the law of God. They served, but not fully. They tried, but not hard enough. They ran, but not fast enough. They wasted time they could have redeemed. Their intentions were good, but their efforts did not measure up to their intentions. They did not turn their back on God, but neither did they go all the way in forming a perfect character.

A merciful and just God rewards even a slack service, if continued to the end. These, the less guilty of those judged unfaithful at Christ's com-

(Continued on page 16)





## THE MILLENNIUM PREFIGURED

### IN THE CREATION ALLEGORY

**B**EFORE we start a job, we make plans by which we can see it through to a satisfactory completion. This is what God did when He created the earth. He worked according to a distinct plan. And when He wrote about His work, the first chapters of His Book were His plans. These plans have come down to us as the first three chapters of Genesis.

Genesis presents these plans in the form of an allegory of creation.\* The chapters (1-3) read like a magnificent story of the Creator's handiwork; but deeper study discloses sublime beauty and eternal purpose.

Genesis opens with these words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1), and what follows describes God creating through a period of six days the earth, the firmament, light, grass, trees, and man. If we take this literally, we have multiple contradictions and impossibilities. But if we take it as an allegory we have meaning and beauty. The whole story describes in detail what God is doing in that "beginning" period of six days. The six days, under-

stood as prophetic time, represent six thousand years; for one day is with the Lord as "a thousand years" (II Pet. 3:8). Thus we have outlined here God's long-range plan for this earth, through the time when He is fashioning living beings in His image, first mentally and morally, and finally physically like Him. They do not start out in His image—far from it; but they are shaped or formed into His image through the long process of creation, being "created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).

All this is within the six-day period, which began when God first called men to serve Him and which will conclude when the six thousand years are spent and the work He purposed for that time has been completed.

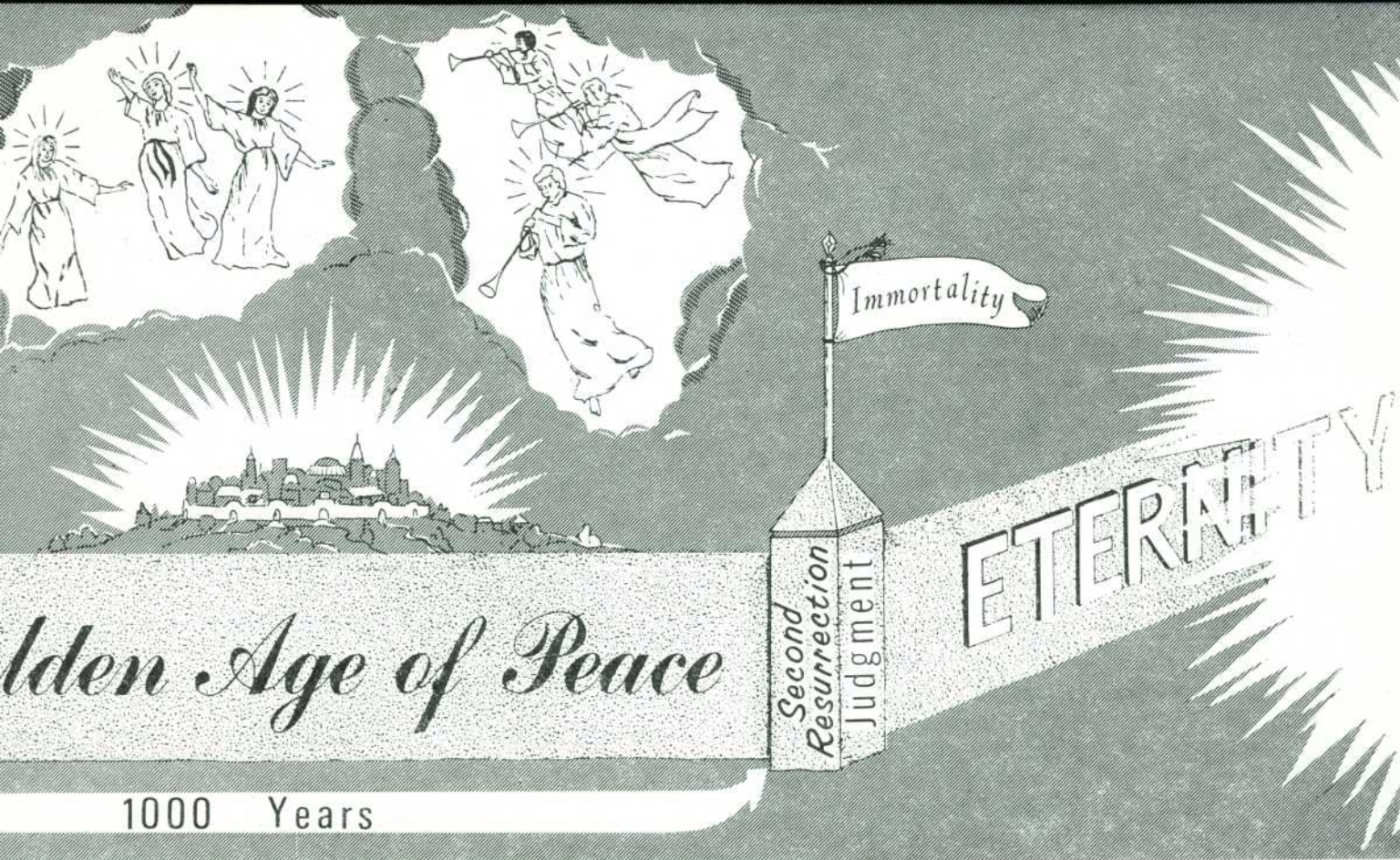
Then follows another "day," or another thousand-year period during which God is said to "rest" from His work. This is the dawn of a new day—a new age. It is the day which God blesses and "sanctifies"—it is the Millennium!

### IN THE SABBATH PLAN

The same pattern of six days, followed by one sacred day, occurs again in the mandate given to Israel: "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy

\* For more detailed discussion of Genesis allegory, send for our booklet, *God's Spiritual Creation*.





work: but the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work" (Ex. 20: 9-10). And the law being a "shadow of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1), the law of the sabbath was also a foreshadowing of an event far more significant than the ordering of the days. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of it as pointing forward in this verse: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:9-11). The "rest" which we must "labor to enter into" is the future, seventh-day rest, the grand Millennial rest. It is the "rest," or literally translated "sabbath," which remains to the people of God.

There was further recognition given to the sabbath principle in the commandment to Israel to let the land rest one year in seven. The pattern was the same: six intervals of work, followed by one of rest. For six years they should sow their land and harvest its fruits; but the seventh year they were to let it rest (Lev. 25:2-5, 20-22, 23).

#### IN THE TRANSFIGURATION

There is still another prefiguring of the Millennium. It is in the account of the Transfiguration,

as told in the gospel of Matthew. Jesus had told His disciples, "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:28). The reality of this statement was impossible, it seemed, for the kingdom was then some two millenniums future, and how could any who heard Him then not "taste of death" during that time?

But our question is answered in the verses that immediately follow (Matt. 17:1-2). We read that "after six days" Jesus took three of those who had heard him in the previous chapter, even "Peter, James, and John his brother" up into "an high mountain apart." There they witnessed a marvelous vision—they saw Jesus transfigured before them. They knew who He was, but He appeared as a glorious immortal being. "And his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," a vivid description of the "Son of man coming in his kingdom." And *when* did this vision occur? "After six days," after the close of the same representative six days, or six thousand years, prefigured in the creation allegory. It is at this time that Jesus appears in His glorified state to establish His kingdom and judge and reward His servants, at the close of the six thousand years. The vision was perfectly timed to inform



the disciples—and those who should read it in years to come—of the time when they could anticipate the reality: after six days.

Thus we have the Millennium prefigured in the creation allegory, in the fourth commandment of the Ten, in the Sabbatic year, and in the transfiguration.

Two of the above reveal the placement of the Millennium in relation to the whole plan of God: It begins after six days, or six thousand years, the period of time which began when God first called men to serve Him.

Where are we in relation to this six-day, or six-thousand-year plan? When can we expect the beginning of the seventh day, the Millennium?

We must realize that Roman time (which our calendar measures) is not Bible time. But we know enough about history and time to know that the six thousand years is running out—it is far spent. Adam lived approximately 4000 years before Christ (most scholars believe he lived *more than* 4000 years before Christ). But if we add to 4000 the date we are writing now (1977) we find ourselves very near the end of it. What does this mean? "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly" (Zeph. 1:14).

This age is rapidly drawing to its close. And the next era will be the Millennium!

It is all according to an eternally ongoing purpose—of creating worlds, populating them, perfecting them and glorifying them. It has been happening through eternity past; it shall continue to happen through eternity future. Ours is the special privilege of living at a highly significant point in the plan of God for this earth.

According to His purpose, God set aside six days, or six thousand years, for the first period of development, a period of time during which all men and women are free to live as they please, to manage their own affairs, to serve God or to reject Him as they choose. Then comes the time when God intervenes and accelerates the program, compelling all to submit to Him or perish.

We are now fast approaching that very point, when God will intervene by sending His Son to judge, conquer and rule. Then will follow the seventh day of rest, the glorious seventh thousand-year day, the Millennial reign of Christ.

These are the basics of the plan. And if this were all God had told us about the glorious time coming we would be grateful. But He has told us more—much, much more, as we shall see.

Study the chart to see the plan of God past, present and future. ●●

## Recipients of the Partial Reward

*(Continued from page 13)*

ing, will receive generously for the good work they performed. Some might be permitted to live a hundred, or two hundred, or five hundred, or eight hundred years into the Millennium—every minute of it better than the best they would have had if they had openly rejected the call of God. And every year of life in that glorious realm will be worth more than half a century in this troubled world.

The only problem with their reward will be its limit: Beyond the Millennium they cannot go. The reward will be good while it lasts, but it will be all too short. They will doubtless serve as a continual reminder to the people among whom they will live, who yet will have opportunity to perfect their character and merit eternal life, which those receiving the partial reward can never do. They will serve as a constant reminder that God means what He says, that immortality is only for those who run the entire race faithfully to the end.

When their allotted time has expired, those who received a partial reward will have to go the way of all the unfaithful, into the darkness of eternal oblivion. What an agonizing disappointment—to have to step out of the midst of such continually increasing happiness and beauty and abounding prosperity. But God will have been generous in rewarding them, and just. ●●

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# More on Politics

A friend writes:

"Your monthly publication is superb! I have enjoyed every article read so far and seldom question, nor is there any reason to, the written word; but finally the tide turned. The article in question is, 'God—Not Politics' (November, 1976 issue).

"The arguments for your side make sense, but it concerns me in that I have felt one of the problems with politics at all levels was a lack of the Christian spirit on the part of many candidates. However, someone else better qualified than I wrote on this subject about the same time your November issue arrived, and the former echoes my sentiments. The title of this article is 'The Christian Candidate.'

"Rather than quote portions of the article in question, I'm enclosing a photostatic copy of it.

"Both points of view are well taken. Perhaps you might care to comment."

THE article which our friend enclosed, "The Christian Candidate," is by Evelyn Wyatt. The gist of the article is that the condition of America is deteriorating rapidly and the only way it can be turned around is by Christians being more concerned with the spiritual quality of the candidates they vote for. It is the duty of every Christian to pray, to consider and vote for the person they think will serve the best interests of the country.

Many statements made in the article seem valid upon surface reading. And if we were concerned only with the present arrangement of things, we would have to say that Evelyn Wyatt's point is well taken indeed: We as Christians should become involved in politics and work together to elect the officials best qualified for the job. If man's rule on this earth were to continue, then it would be most necessary for Christians to do all they could to elect "Christian" candidates.

However, this position ignores several very important Scriptural statements:

1) "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). God in His wisdom arranges the circumstances so that His overall plan is working out.

2) "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13). Paul foresaw a condition that would be true in spite of the best-intentioned efforts of the church to reverse the trend. In the first of this same chapter Paul specifically mentions the condition of the world in these last days as "perilous times." Among other things he says that people will maintain a "form of godliness, but [deny] the power thereof: from such turn away" (v. 5); or as rendered in the New English Bible, "Keep clear of men like these."

3) "Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you" (II Cor. 6:17). Taking part in politics could hardly be said to be *coming out from among them and being separate*.

4) "The kingdoms of this world [shall] become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). John the Revelator saw this already accomplished in vision, but it is to be reality when Christ returns. All kingdoms of this world will have to submit to the new authority: Christ.

5) Revelation 18:3-4 describes in vivid language the condition of the world at the time of Christ's return, combined with a plea to all who would escape its doom: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, . . . and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." If we take part in this system which is destined to fall, we shall fall with it.

Peter describes in symbolic language the passing away of the present political heavens and earth (rulers and people governed) and concludes with, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). This is where our greatest concern must be: in making ourselves worthy to be part of the new arrangement that is soon to be set up, when the earth will be governed by righteous rulers; it is

not our duty to try to change the present system (which is humanly impossible anyway).

Man's knowledge is so limited compared to the knowledge of the Creator, that it is impossible for us to know who would be the best candidate for public office. This is illustrated by the recent example of former President Nixon. I believe a good many people sincerely thought he was the best man for the Presidency. He seemed honest, had a good Quaker background, was intelligent and experienced. However, time proved this judgment wrong. Regardless of our personal feelings about Mr. Nixon, there are two points which definitely condemn him as any candidate of "Christians": He deceived the American people, and he used language no Christian (or President, for that matter) should ever use.

There are many instances in the history of the Jewish people where God warned the nation of the dire consequences of their idolatrous behavior. He always provided an escape if they would only take it; but many times they refused to accept His plan, thinking they could manage their own affairs. In all cases the divine predictions came true. It behooves the Christian today to trust God, who will very soon bring about a government far superior to anything man could possibly achieve.

I would like to mention a conversation which took place between our founder, Mr. Nichols, and a local politician, whom we will call Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith: Why do you not vote?

Mr. Nichols: We will vote when the right man comes along.

Mr. Smith: Will you vote for me?

Mr. Nichols: Were all those stories you told about your opponent absolute truth?

Mr. Smith: No, but he told so many lies about me that I had to tell some about him.

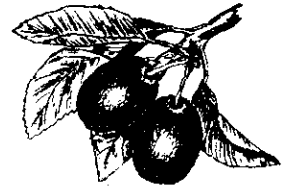
This took place about 1910, and politics in general have not improved since.

King David summed up the Christian position very beautifully when he wrote: "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass" (Ps. 37:7). He said further, "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be. . . . But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (vs. 8-11).

King David also defined God's standard for all candidates of His when he said: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (II Sam. 23:3). When such a candidate arrives, we will gladly give him our wholehearted support. ●●

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## Fruitful Fragments



*Keep out of your life anything that keeps God out of your thoughts.*

*Think before you speak; silent sense is better than fluent folly.*

*Too many of us have the truth on ice instead of on fire!*

*True obedience never procrastinates.*

*We die by living to ourselves; we live by dying to ourselves.*

*It is not enough to say our prayers; we must live them too.*

*Beware of faltering faith. A man begins to go down the moment he ceases to look up.*

*You will never get rid of your temper by losing it.*

*If you rub against the grain of God's law, you are sure to end up with splinters of regret.*

*Master your habits before they master you.*

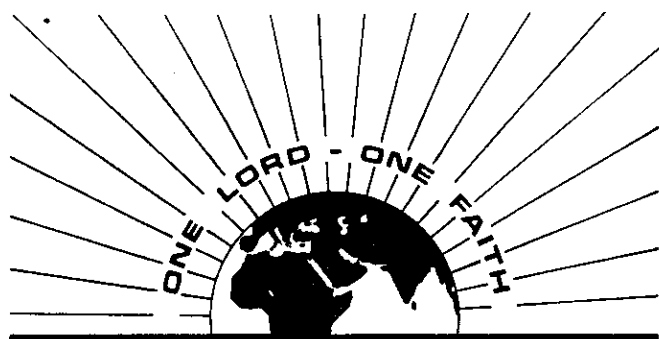
*The greatest act is small if done for self; the smallest act is great if done for God.*

*To succeed in a low endeavor is failure.*

*Whatever God says, do it. Don't inquire whether or not it is imperative.*

*Admitting you need help is the first sign of spiritual strength.*





# People God Used

Part 7

*Last month we looked at the Northern Kingdom, or Israel. We will now look briefly at the Southern Kingdom called Judah. This was a time when God was dealing directly with the Israelite people as a nation, but all the people of the nation were not His special concern. In fact, the majority mattered little to Him. We might say that God was tolerating the many for the sake of the few.*

## The Southern Kingdom

**T**HE Kingdom of Judah lasted some one hundred thirty years longer than that of Israel. This was largely due to the greater loyalty of Judah to the law of God. There were periods when as a nation they openly worshiped God, and God recognized and rewarded them for this.

Nevertheless, even under the rule of their first king, Rehoboam, Judah showed a tendency toward departing from the law of God (I Kings 14:21-24). There is no record that Rehoboam officially tried to influence the people toward idolatry as did Jeroboam. As far as we know the temple worship formalities continued through this time; at least God was openly respected, which made life easier for those who sincerely sought to obey His laws. We would like to live in a nation where the majority of the people at least professed to know and worship God.

Abijam, Rehoboam's son, followed in the steps of his father. But his son, Asa, was a much better man and made efforts at reform. Though he was not sufficiently thorough in his work, he was a great improvement over his predecessors. To Asa the Lord stated His policy in dealing with all men: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (II Chron. 15:2).

Asa's son Jehoshaphat led Judah to the height of her power, and promoted the worship of the

true God, though he himself did not render a life of open obedience. He placed his own name and the name of his nation ahead of God, making unholy alliances with foreign rulers to protect the safety of his land—and so met his downfall.

Once more, under Joash, Judah enjoyed a sovereign who honored God. He repaired the temple and did much to restore the true worship of God.

There were many kings, some better, some worse, until we come to one named Ahaz. He did "evil in the sight of the Lord," even going so far as to sacrifice his son to a heathen idol, a practice which God strongly condemned. He introduced calf worship and set up "high places" for false worship "on the hills and under every green tree" (II Kings 16:1-4). He even sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, saying, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me." But, says the Chronicler, "they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel" (II Chron. 28:23). The true God, to whom he owed his own life, his kingdom, and his nation, was forgotten. He "cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem" (v. 24). What was the result? "The Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel" (v. 19). Had it not been for his son, who became known as "good king Hezekiah," the doom of Judah might have arrived much sooner. During the reign of Ahaz some Israelites were taken captive. God meant what He had said!

Under Hezekiah, however, there was great reform. He removed the high places, cut down the altars, re-opened the temple, reviewed the law, and restored the worship of God—and "all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, . . . rejoiced. So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven" (II Chron. 30:25-27).

Obedience to God always brings joy, for he who serves God enjoys the blessings of God now and looks forward to the greater blessings promised for the future.

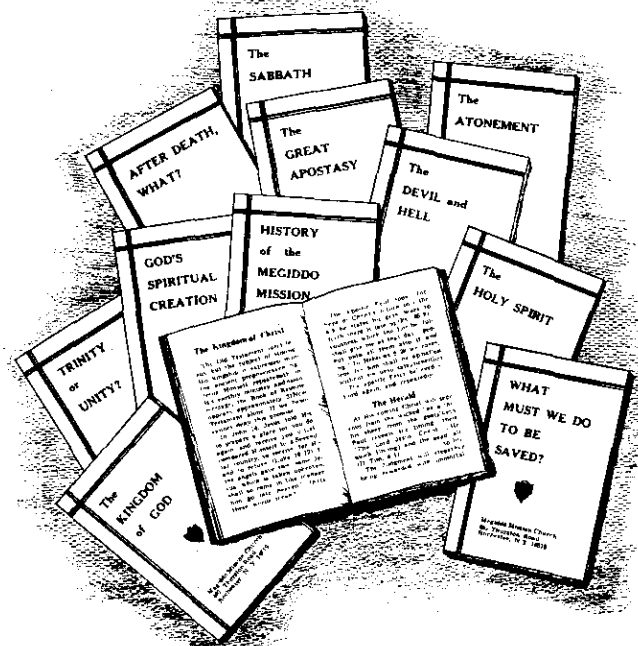
Hezekiah was the best of all the kings of Judah, and had his successors followed in his footsteps, there would have been no captivity of Judah to record.

But such was not Judah's fortune. Human na-

ture is weak, and lacking the foresight and vision to serve God, Hezekiah's son Manasseh led Israel once more into sin and idolatry. It is singular that **so godly a king as Hezekiah** should have been followed by so worthless a man as his son Manasseh. Now the high places were rebuilt, and idolatry re-established. The record says that Manasseh did more to seduce the people to sin than all the nations whom the Lord removed to make place for His people. What a record for a king of a nation that God had set up!

Once again, though, the people had respite, under Manasseh's grandson Josiah. The deserted temple was repaired, the law discovered and studied, and the covenant with God publicly renewed and idolatry taken away.

## Good Reading



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## Judah Into Captivity

But the revival could not outlast the king, and from the time of the death of Josiah the downward trend was steady. At last, though long delayed through the mercy of God, the end came, and the people of Judah were marched off into captivity to the land of Babylon. Thus was fulfilled all that God had warned His people of; the day of retribution came just as predicted.

In this sad drama outside nations played a prominent part. Assyria, Babylon, Syria, Egypt all came against Israel and Judah. But none of them could have wrought the havoc they did had it not been for the apostasy of the people of Israel and Judah. God who had brought the people out of Egypt with a mighty hand would have delivered them from their foes had they been loyal to Him. All the blessings promised (Deut. 28:1-14) might have been theirs, had they only hearkened to the commandments of God. But as it was, the dreadful curses (see Deut. 28:15-68) came upon them—and all on account of their wickedness and idolatry.

## Our Lesson

The lesson is ours; just so will our wickedness and our transgressions and the things we put ahead of God end in our ruin.

The kings and people of Judah did not sin blindly and in ignorance. They knew. And God sent great prophets to warn them. Plainer warnings, grander promises, better counsels have never been uttered by human lips than were proclaimed by Isaiah and Jeremiah. For about sixty years, beginning in the reign of Uzziah, Isaiah pleaded with the nation of Judah. Through the reigns of four kings he was faithful to his mission. Sometimes he was heeded, sometimes he was scoffed at; but always he was faithful. So, too, was Jeremiah, whom nothing and no one could turn from the integrity of his course. By the multitude mocked at, ridiculed and mistreated, these men spoke for God; but their words fell for the most part on deaf ears, so set on mischief were the minds and hearts of the people. But the evil could not go unpunished, and so the end came.

What a contrast between Israel marching triumphantly across the Jordan, and into Canaan winning victory upon victory over the native peoples of the land, and Israel marching out of the land in chains and humiliation! Through faith in God they conquered Jericho, and through lack of faith they themselves were at last conquered and taken off into a land of shame and sorrow. The word of God was fulfilled. ●●

# Pro & Con

A Column for Open Discussion

A friend writes:

"In the 'Pro & Con' section of the Message, the Editor states: 'We cannot find the phrase that "God sent his only son to die" in the Bible. That's because it isn't in the Bible, as you said. But God sent His Son into the world knowing that He was going to die. And the Bible does say, 'Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.'

"The Editor also states that 'Christ did not choose to die.' And 'Jesus did not say once that He was going to sacrifice His life.' I admit that the Son of God did not want to die, but He still chose to do so for mankind's sake. Read verses 15-18 of St. John 10. Verse 15: 'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.' Verse 18: 'No man taketh it [His life] from me, but I lay it down of myself.' If this isn't a sacrifice, what, pray tell, is?

"Thanks for listening, and please reply if possible."

This is one subject on which we differ from the whole religious world today. In fact, many believe that if you deny that the literal death of Jesus on the cross absolves all mankind from sin, you are not even a Christian.

But the fact we are in the minority does not make our belief wrong; and conversely, because nearly the whole Christian world hold the opposite view does not make their view right. At the time of Columbus, nearly everyone thought the world was flat. But they were wrong. So before you throw up your hands in disgust, please consider the following facts.

If the doctrine of the Atonement is so crucial to our salvation, why did not Jesus talk about it?

Matthew 4:23 says: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom."

In His first sermon, why was His emphasis on "Blessed are the meek," "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," "Blessed are the merciful," "Blessed are the pure in heart," "Blessed are the peacemakers"—without a single suggestion of any atoning death to cover those who should fail to merit these blessings? Why would He make these "unimportant" things so prominent in His teaching and never mention His

"important" mission, to die for our sins in our stead, if such had been His "important" mission?

Why did Jesus say in Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me"? This would have been an excellent place to have simply said, "If any man will accept me as his saviour and believe that I am going to die on my cross for him, he will have nothing to do"—if this were what He was teaching.

Why did Jesus say in John 6:63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" if His death was to be the means by which we could have life? He says "the flesh profiteth nothing."

Why did Jesus say in John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" if his literal blood shed on the cross was what could save?

Paul has been praised or blamed (depending on one's attitude) for the doctrine of the atonement. But what about the following:

"For in that he died [Christ], he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:10-11).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom. 13:12).

These passages give no hint that Christ did all the work of salvation for us. Philippians 2:12 states plainly, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Something is obviously wrong: Either the Scriptures are giving us two different stories, or we are misinterpreting many of Paul's statements about the blood of Christ.

We believe the latter to be the case. The Scriptures, if they are to be relied upon as the Word of God, must tell one story only. And they do. The doctrine of the atonement is pagan from beginning to end and is as unreasonable as it is unscriptural. It is impossible to take up all of Paul's statements on this subject in one article, but we urge you to send for our booklet, *The Atonement*, which deals with the subject more thoroughly. Read it and then if you still have questions, write them to us and we will publish your letter along with an explanation. —EDITOR.

Kathy  
Kandor's  
Korner

## Wealthy or Merely Rich?

SOME people get all the breaks!" Karl tossed his hat onto the hat rack with more than usual vigor and strode into the den. "Here I've been working myself skinny trying to—"

Brenda attempted to hide a smile as she surveyed her brother's husky frame. "Trying to get a promotion," she finished for him.

"Right! And who gets it? Roger Page!"

Neal laid down his pen and adjusted his glasses. "Perhaps Roger had the qualifications the boss was looking for."

"You mean I *don't* have the qualifications. That's what it amounts to." There was a tone of bitterness in Karl's words.

Neal's face grew serious. "Son, with so many thousands out of work, you should be thankful to *have* a job."

"I am, Dad, really I am. But I'm still doing the same old thing for the same old wages. There are jobs I'd like better."

"Pretty good wages you're getting, I'd say. And the job *could* be a lot *less* desirable. But Son, money isn't our goal. The Bible says, 'Having food and raiment let us therewith be content.' "

Kathy paused in her crocheting. "There are many things in life, Karl, that are far more precious than money. You can't buy good health in any market, or happiness. Even millionaires don't have the hope *we* have." She checked her stitches again.

"Oh," Brenda exclaimed, "that must be what our neighbors meant. They were talking about the richest man in town who is loaded with money but is never satisfied with anything. The old grouch! They called him a poor man with money. Then one lady said to the other, 'Now the Kandor family aren't merely *rich*, they're *wealthy*!' "

"What are those dames talking about? What do they mean, us *wealthy*?" Karl shook his head in

disgust. "When we can't even afford a decent looking car!"

Brenda ignored Karl's remarks and went on. "They said something about some of the world's poorest men having scads of money and some of the wealthiest don't have any. I didn't get all they said, but they just envied Dad and Mom for their serene and happy faces. They said they'd never seen Mr. or Mrs. Kandor with brows all puckered in worry. They thought we must have wonderful peace."

"But how much is *peace* worth? You can't buy a new car with *peace*." Karl was indignant.

Neal had a ready answer. "Tell me this, Karl. Suppose we lived up on the hill, where the Robinson's have built their new home. Suppose we had their house to live in—I think someone said they have twenty-four rooms—"

"Great!" exclaimed Karl. "Then people could talk about the wealthy Kandor's!"

"Just a minute now. Suppose we had that big house, and three new cars in the garage."

"One for you and Mom, one for Brenda, and one for me. We'd be all set!" Karl's face beamed with the thought of such grandeur.

"But now," continued Neal, "let's go a step further. Suppose you drive your fine new car to work, then come home at night, and you go into the house and you find Mom and me quarreling, I mean really going at each other and trying to hurt each other's feelings just as much as we could. Suppose this happens day after day. How would *you* feel?" Neal looked squarely at his son.

Karl's head dropped. "I'd be sick."

Brenda also looked distressed. "I think I'd try finding somewhere else to live—maybe back down here!"

Neal went on. "Suppose we quarreled so much that we decided we'd have to separate and live apart."

"You wouldn't be Christians, then."

"You're right, Brenda." Kathy spoke with dead-seriousness.

"And," added Neal, "we wouldn't be very wealthy either. Right, Karl?"

"Right, Dad. But I still don't like to think of us being quite so—so *ordinary*."

"We aren't poor just because we can't have everything we want. Money isn't everything. Money can't buy happiness. Money can't buy peace. Money can't buy life. But we know the way to get all these things—and have them forever! Don't you think we're *rich*?"

"Not merely rich, Dad"—Brenda's eyes sparkled—"we're *wealthy*!" ●●

# Our Readers Write...

From A Reader--

## All Things Sharp

### Needing New Grounding

I need aid in obtaining information on various parts of the Bible. I can see now that I need a complete new grounding in my understanding. I am happy to find errors in my understanding, so that I can grasp the true Word.

I am grateful for your publications. I need all the help I can get. I need greater and stronger truths. Please send me anything you feel would help me grow—anything. Thank you.

*Alva, Oklahoma*

Mr. D.

### Holding Fast

We have so much to thank God for in these days when we are surrounded by so much evil. Proverbs 4:13 tells us to take fast hold of instruction, "let her not go: keep her, for she is thy life."

We have been listening to so much good on the tapes we receive from you, and the Message, and the Bible. I would like to be able to grasp it all, but I feel I am so slow to learn. We haven't missed very many nights without having our little church meeting together, six nights a week and twice on Sunday.

The battle we have to fight now is nothing compared to what we will gain if we are faithful. We want to strive in our hearts to be honest before God, so we will be able to have a part in that blessed home (Rev. 22:12).

*Port-Au-Port, Newfoundland*

D. T.

### Worth the Work!

Nothing can be gained unless we work for it. This is a privilege to be able to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

If we run in a race, we do all we can to win. Likewise, this spiritual race we are running must consume all our effort. The prize is there for us if we win.

Just think of actually meeting a King—what a privilege! If we are worthy, we will not only meet our King but will associate with Him. He demands our best and deserves it.

Let us put forth every effort with our eyes straight ahead. Then our Father, in His good pleasure, will give us the Kingdom.

*Carrollton, Ohio*

Mrs. M. W.

### Praise Him!

The Spirit of truth, praise Him forever and ever, has not enlightened me sufficiently to understand your "sacred season," but feeling your earnest conviction, I am inspired to send all of you and your host of readers my heartfelt GREETING and to encourage you, prayerfully, that you may receive what the Lord has to give His faithful servants.

I am an admirer of your faithful service, and of your splendid *Megiddo Message*.

*Miami, Florida*

F. H.

"Decision is a sharp knife that cuts clean and straight; indecision is a dull one that hacks and tears and leaves ragged edges behind it."

Life for us as followers of God's commandments requires decisions. Some are a lot more easily made than others. But prolonging or procrastinating on these decisions is really only hacking and tearing and leaving ragged edges. A sharp knife or needle hurts much less than a dull one, as most of us know from experience. We must cut clean and straight, and this will be less painful in the long run.

The Word of God is quick and sharper than a sword, and we must use it to circumcise our hearts (Heb. 4:12). If we do not, we will find when the angel thrusts in his sharp sickle and reaps the harvest of the earth, we will not be spared.

The sword, sickle and knife of the Lord are always very sharp and should not be used by the un-instructed. Let us be careful and learn to use them well.

There is also a sharp instrument to be kept in its sheath and not used at all. Such is the razor of Psalms 52:2, "The tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully."

*Mr. H., Manitoba, Canada*

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*Have you ever felt all stirred up, or unnerved, or overturned by something someone else said or did? And did it leave you with the helpless, "if only" feeling? Other people's attitudes, and opinions, and mannerisms are so needlessly benign, or malicious, or petty—if only I could change them!*

*Well, next time this helpless feeling overwhelms you, try something else. There is very little you can do about someone else—why not turn your wishes around, and YOU do the changing! Put a little of that wonderful oil of kindness on your squeaky hinges. Knock those sharp corners off your feelings. Check those ill-considered words that are about to spill from your tongue. Warm up your feelings of generosity and tolerance. Stand aside and take a long hard look at your attitudes. And—*

*It's likely that you will be amazed how much other people have changed! Try it!*



# Questions

"If Christ is to reign on the earth and not take His saints to some heavenly realm to live, why did Jesus say, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also' (John 14:2-3)?"

If this were all we were told about the abode of the saints, we might be justified in assuming that Christ is coming to take the saints back to heaven with Him. Also, this verse does not say *where* He and they go once they are joined; it says merely that where Christ is, there His saints will be: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

But Jesus Himself made several other statements we should consider. In the prayer He taught His disciples, He said, addressing His Father: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." The third beatitude reads: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

When Jesus' birth was announced to Mary, the angel Gabriel said: "Behold, thou shalt...bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33). David never reigned in heaven; the "house of Jacob" was not in heaven; neither will Christ's throne be in heaven.

The book of Revelation pictures the saints reigning "on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10), and the faithful standing on Mount Zion (Rev. 14:1). And Revelation 6:15-16 pictures the earth as the base of operations of Christ's kingdom.

In view of all this, we cannot believe Jesus meant that He takes His saints with Him to the Father's house in heaven.

Our common translation uses the word "mansions" in describing the various divisions of the "Father's house" (John 14:2). Other versions render the word "rooms," "homes," "abodes," "dwellings." Jesus on one occasion called the temple in Jerusalem "my Father's house" (John 2:16). And the saints are termed the "temple of God";

"Ye are God's building... For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (I Cor. 3:17, 9).

If all the faithful together compose a spiritual "temple of God," which will be the new ruling authority in the kingdom of Christ, each of the faithful could be said to have an abode or dwelling within that temple, as each of the saints will have a share in the authority. Or we might say that Christ will have a special reward for each of His children, for He has promised to "give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

This is indeed one reason for Christ's going to heaven. He ascended to the Father's right hand forty days after His resurrection, at which time He was judged and glorified. And when He returns, He will have with Him "a crown of glory" for every faithful one (I Pet. 5:4). He will bring the rewards which have been "reserved in heaven" for those who would prove worthy (I Pet. 1:4-5, 13).

Jesus had still another reason for going to heaven: to prepare Himself for the great work He must accomplish upon His return. This preparation is an important link in His career. The wisest and best man on earth today would not attempt to administer the government of even a small province without some knowledge or training. When Jesus returns, He is to be king of the entire earth. To organize and administer the affairs of the entire planet requires special training.

Christ has been in heaven receiving that training these nineteen hundred years. And when He comes, He will be prepared. This is what He taught in the parable of the Talents, when He compared Himself to a nobleman going into a far country, "to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke 19:12). When this was spoken, Imperial Rome was the governing authority, and all governors had to be commissioned directly from Rome. To become a governor of a province or tetrarchy, one had to go to Rome, present his credentials and receive his official commission. So Jesus went into a "far country" for His preparation, even heaven itself, where He has been judged, accepted, and commissioned, and from whence He will return.

There was indeed a purpose in Jesus' saying, "I go to prepare a place for you"—there was much preparing necessary—making arrangements, receiving instruction, gaining divine wisdom. And when He comes He will bring us "our house which is from heaven" (II Cor. 5:2), the "place" which He has prepared for all who prove worthy of it. We must never forget His last promise: "I will come again."

"Doesn't I Thessalonians 4:16 show that the saints will go to heaven with Christ?"

In this passage the apostle Paul is speaking of the risen dead and the living being caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. But does the verse say they go to heaven? Let us read it carefully: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (vs. 14-17). What is there here to suggest they go to heaven? The Lord shall descend, the trump shall sound, the dead shall rise, the saints shall be caught up to meet Him, and "so shall we ever be with the Lord"—but there is no mention of being with Him in heaven. Could they not as easily live together on earth?

To think that because the saints meet Christ in the air they return to heaven with Him is to draw an unfounded conclusion. We meet a friend at the airport, but we do not stay there; nor do we go with our friend to the place he came from. Neither do we stay in the air for the rest of our time with Christ, or go back to heaven with Him. When our friend arrives at the airport, we take him to our home. So our meeting Christ in the air will not be a bidding farewell to the earth and making our home elsewhere; quite to the contrary, the Bible says "we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10).

"Some people quote Revelation 7:9, to prove that Christ and the saints will reign from heaven. This verse pictures the Millennial age and those in white robes are seen standing 'before the throne.' Assuming that the throne is the throne of the Almighty God of heaven, they conclude that the event must take place in heaven."

God is truly said to have a throne in heaven. "The Lord's throne is in heaven" (Ps. 11:4). But is the government of the earth to be administered from the throne in heaven? Will there not be a throne which will govern the earth *on earth*? The prophet Jeremiah says that there will be: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem" (Jer. 3:17). Jerusalem will be called the "throne of the Lord" because it will be the center of the new administration. ●●

April, 1977

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# SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

*"But God forbid that I should boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world is crucified to me and I to the world!" —(Gal. 6:14, NEB)*

**P**AUL might have boasted of many things. Jews were proud of their ancestry, and Paul was a Jew—"of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5). The Pharisees boasted of their strict observance of the Law of Moses, and Paul had been a Pharisee. Education was uncommon, and Paul had been taught at the feet of Gamaliel, a celebrated doctor of the law. But Paul boasted of none of these. They were not the things that counted toward salvation, and to Paul they were therefore of little worth.

Paul's boasting was of a very different sort. "God forbid that I should boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," he wrote. But he was not thinking of the literal cross on which Jesus was put to death. That cross was a murder weapon, not a means of salvation. Jesus met His death on a cross, but that literal cross could do nothing whatever to crucify Paul to the world, or the world to Paul.

Calvary's cross is the symbol of Christian religion for the average layman today. Those who call themselves Christians proudly display the cross of Calvary. It points skyward from the spires of their churches, decorates their altars and pulpits, shines in the stained glass window, hangs from a chain about the neck, and adorns the lapel of many a clergyman. It is eulogized from the pulpit and extolled in the hymnbook:

*"In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime.  
When the woes of life o'ertake me,  
Hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me:  
Lo, it glows with peace and joy."*

This is the cross in which today's so-called Christian glories. It is seen as a symbol of Christ's literal death which is believed to have been a special work in behalf of all mankind, a sacrifice made by God to remove the penalty of sin, a substitutionary atonement that will somehow prove to be their salvation.

Forgotten is the cross that Jesus bore all through His life, and the cross that Paul bore after Him. Almost unknown is the cross that Paul said crucified him to the world, and the world to him. Cross-bearing is virtually unknown in this age of pleasure-seeking. "Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die," is the watchword of our Epicurean society.

But this is nothing new. Cross-bearing never was popular. It is extremely unpopular to be outside the good graces of the crowd, and cross-bearing sets one apart from the crowd. Modern Christians generally prefer a Christ who bore the cross that they might not have to, who suffered that they might be free from suffering, who died that they might be spared the trouble of dying. There is almost a total absence of the greater meaning of the cross of Christ, the cross Paul spoke of, the cross which we must bear in our practical, everyday lives.

To take this cross of self-crucifixion out of Christianity is to take Christ out, for that is the cross He bore. It is not possible to be a disciple of Christ without taking up our own cross. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me," were Jesus' words as recorded by Luke. "And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me," were His words as recorded by Matthew (Luke 9:23; Matt. 10:38).

Being a follower of Christ demands a cross and

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a crucifixion in the life of each would-be disciple—not just a replica on the altar or the lapel. To take up one's cross means much more than giving up one particular interest (often temporarily) or sacrificing one prized possession. Cross-bearing demands a radical redirection of life. It means replacing self-will with the will of God to the extent that we can say with Jesus: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).

Jesus, "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2). Calvary's cross was not the only one He endured. It was a cross to go home with His parents at the age of twelve, when He could confound the doctors of the Law at the temple in Jerusalem. It was a cross to remain silent when He was taunted by the High Priest and the governor when He was being tried. And we can be sure there were many other crosses in between which were not recorded. All were part of His training for His great mission which is yet future—the Kingship of the whole earth.

Bearing the cross of Christ must be the task of each of us each day. Christ does not want "off-and-on" "now-and-then" cross-bearers. Our cross bearing must drive us steadily in one direction, in the footsteps of Jesus, following His teachings, obeying His commands. It is a cross of self-denial, in accord with Jesus' words; if it is not, it is useless.

Each of us may have a different cross, but unless it be a cross which sets us apart from the world, God forbid that we should boast of it! ●●

## Obituary

Dovie L. Switzer

On February 21, death claimed a member of our local congregation, Dovie L. Switzer. Sister Switzer and her husband had made their home among us since 1971, having been interested in and in contact with the Church for many years.

Sister Switzer is survived by her husband, Robert R. Switzer, of our local congregation; also by one brother, Roy Harper, and one sister, Doris Frazee; two sons, Henry R. Switzer of Rochester and Paul Amos Switzer of Oneida, New York; three daughters, Ruth Jones and Doris Dunn of Rochester, and Margaret Russell of Oswego, New York; ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She will be missed.

Funeral services were conducted on February 23, Brother Newton H. Payne officiating. Interment was in Mount Hope Cemetery, where rest our beloved dead until the day of Resurrection. ●●

April, 1977

# NOW!

Rise! For the day is passing.  
Up now from your dreaming; on!  
The valiant have buckled their armors  
And forth to the fight have gone.  
A place in the ranks awaits you,  
Go forward your part to play;  
The past and the future diminish  
In the face of the stern *today*.

Gird now your strength for the battle;  
Prepare now to capture the field;  
Storm now at the enemies' fortress;  
Fight on, ne'er thinking to yield.  
Your future has deeds of glory,  
Of honor (God grant that it may!)  
But your arm may never be stronger  
Or the need so great as *today*!

Rise! Let not the past detain you;  
Her sunshine and storms forget.  
Let no chains so worthless hold you  
As those of a vain regret.  
Sad or bright she is lifeless ever.  
Cast her phantom arms away,  
Nor look back save to learn the lesson  
Of a nobler strife *today*!

Rise! for the day is passing;  
The oncoming sound that you hear  
Is the enemy marching to battle;  
Arisel for the foe is here!  
With loyalty sharpen your weapons.  
Be faithful! be brave to the last.  
Determine to stand with the victors,  
When the fight of the day is past.

Now is the time to be at it;  
Right now is the hour to win.  
Do not for a moment forget it;  
Grim is the battle with sin.  
Now are the conquerors rising!  
Now find your place in their midst!  
Strike *now* with force and decision!  
Right *now* to the goal!—and be brisk!





# I Need YOU, Lord

All through today, help me to be  
Quick to praise, slow to criticize;  
Quick to forgive, and slow to condemn;  
Grant that I may maintain all through today  
Complete control over my temper,  
that I may do nothing I will later regret;  
Complete control over my tongue,  
that I may speak no hasty word;  
Complete control over my thoughts  
that I harbor none which will dishonor You.

Give me today  
Strength to conquer every temptation which comes to me;  
Strength to do every task which is assigned me;  
Strength to shoulder every responsibility which is laid upon me;

Give me  
Wisdom to know when to speak, and when to keep silent;  
Wisdom to know when to act, and when to refrain from action;

Don't let me let myself down today, Lord.

Let me not hurt or disappoint those who have confidence in me.

I want to make everything I do fit for You to see, and  
everything I say fit for You to hear.

Let me never forget the hope You have set before me.  
I need You, Lord.

Amen.