

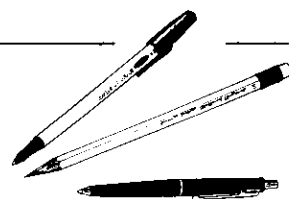
Megiddo Message



Traveling Toward Sunrise

Vol. 68, No. 4

April, 1981



What Time Is It?

SUCH A common question, yet how meaningful. It shows the value we place on time. We have an instinctive concern for its passing.

But the value we place upon it depends largely on our making proper use of time. More than a century ago Henry Thoreau wrote, "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in." Said another sage, "Time goes, you say? Alas, Time stays, we go."

We talk about "our" time, but actually we have very little claim upon time. It moves on independent of our whims or wishes. It moves on, whether we use it or abuse it.

God placed a proper evaluation upon time for us when He through the apostle Paul urged the Ephesians: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16).

The right management and use of time is what we all should be concerned with, for "time is the stuff life is made of." Perhaps it is better to say that we should buy up every opportunity which time provides. Every moment brings its own privilege or duty, and these moments together comprise life itself. By doing the duty of one moment we use that particular opportunity and turn it into gain; thus time takes on value. As we continue to do this, life becomes more and more valuable. If we fail to do this and fall behind, we soon confront a collision of duties, and instead of being the free owners of something of value we become its slavish debtors.

The beginning of another sacred year marks the beginning of a new opportunity and a point in time when we should inspect our lives and reflect upon how well we have used our time during the year past. As Christians this is essential, for we are accountable as stewards of the time granted us.

Paul's injunction to the Ephesians bears upon

the whole of life. He does not say we are to redeem some of the time, or redeem time that we feel like redeeming, or redeem time that is convenient to put to good use; we are simply to "redeem the time," whenever, whatever. And we are to do this knowing that the "days are evil" and that we will be tested by the presence of evil. But there is no excuse to become lax or careless in righteous living or in the right use of time. "Because the days are evil" is all the more reason for each of us to be and live pure and holy before God. The debasement of contemporary society is not an excuse for us to relax and yield to lower moral standards; rather, it is a motive for added earnestness in maintaining the Christian life unsullied and unspotted.

This is especially true as we realize what time it is. We are nearing the end. Facing a new year once again should help wipe out the foolish illusion that "all things continue as they were from the beginning" (II Pet. 3:4). We need only to look back a twelve-month to realize that all things do *not* continue as they were. History and God's purposes are marching swiftly toward their appointed ends. For us, too, our salvation is "nearer to us now than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11, RSV).

What time is it, then? It is time to be watching. In the fulness of time "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). In the fulness of time once again shall He send Him, this time as a conqueror and King, for "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). And unto them that look not for Him shall He also appear bringing ease and indifference to an abrupt end.

We cannot know exactly what time it is, but let us resolve now to spend each moment of the months before us that we may be able to face Him unashamed when this space of time has ended. MM

Megiddo means

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

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the demands and disciplines given us in the law of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version.

Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NAS—New American Standard

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

Williams—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People

Rotherham—The Emphasized Old Testament

The use of selected references from various versions of the Bible does not necessarily imply publisher endorsement of the versions in their entirety.

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Traveling Toward Sunrise

by Kenneth E. Flowerday

OCCASIONALLY we hear people speak of traveling toward sunset, and aging people are advised to grow old "gracefully." From the human point of view, the aging process is inevitable, hence the advice is timely. Human life being designed as it is, our normal expectancy must be birth, growth, maturity, gradual decline and ultimately death. And from the viewpoint of the average man or woman, that ends all. Death is so final.

Indeed, this is the pattern as the Word of God pictures it for the average person: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not" (Job 14:1-2). The Psalmist is equally confident of the fleeting nature of human life: "Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. . . . Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling" (Ps. 49:12, 14). This stark proposition confronts all that segment of humankind who follow the line of least resistance and live their lives with no thought of God or of the life-pattern which He designed for those who would escape death and gain everlasting life in His new world.

A well-known preacher of the last century tells how he was once walking along the seashore with his little grandson when they met an old minister. The old man was very disgruntled and, to add to all his troubles, he had recently suffered a slight sunstroke. The little boy listened as the two preachers conversed, but did not pick up all the details quite correctly. When at last they left the grumbling old man, he turned to his grandfather and said, "Granddad, I hope you never suffer a sunset!"

But "suffering a sunset" is the only prospect outside the hope the Bible offers. A line in the familiar hymn, "It Will Never Grow Old," pictures the normal progression of mortal life in these words:

*In life's weary conflicts, there's fainting and care,
Each year the gray deepens a shade in the
hair. . .*

To think otherwise, from a human point of view, would be to indulge in wishful thinking. But there is hope for a very select few of super-wise men and women, as the following line says:

*But in the blest book where my name is enrolled
I read of that land where we'll never grow old.*

Though the usual pattern is graying hair, bending forms, dimming eyes, arthritic joints, physical weakness, deteriorating hearts, high blood pressure, general decline, ultimate death, yet there is a way to escape.

Active servants of God can have a much brighter prospect. All such are traveling toward sunrise. Although clouds and darkness may be around, it is always bright ahead. The divine promise is: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa. 40:31). The trend of mortality can be reversed. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, . . . they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Instead of each year taking its toll, bringing them nearer to the "king of terrors," age only makes them stronger. The angel that appeared in the open tomb at the time of Christ's resurrection was described as a "young man," yet he may already have lived a million or more years in immortal splendor.

Hence if we are daily living at our best, we are traveling toward sunrise and coming continually nearer to that happy day when for us mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

In our journeying toward sunrise we are in the company of a very select group of hopefuls. There was the patient Job, who said: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the lat-

ter day upon the earth: And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19:25-27). He was traveling toward sunrise, and had no doubt but that the sun of the better day would rise, and that he would arise from death's slumber to share in that better sunrise.

Job trusted in God and knew that his great Defender would not disappoint him. He knew that his Redeemer lived, and that Christ would stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though his temporal life should end, that would not adversely affect his chances of eternal salvation. While he was confident that he would eventually be placed entirely out of the reach of death, and realized the fulfillment of his hope was yet far distant, still he was confident of the reality of that hope.

The captive Daniel was looking ahead when the voice of divine inspiration spoke to him saying, "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days"; (Dan. 12:13). Daniel was confident that his work for the Eternal was not going to prove a journey down a dead-end road and get him nowhere. When he defied the decree of a heathen king and prayed three times daily to his faithful God, he was traveling toward sunrise, and was prepared to take the consequences for his rebellion. Though they might take his temporal life they could do nothing to take away his hope of the brighter tomorrow toward which he was traveling.

The prophet Malachi was traveling toward sunrise when he wrote the book bearing his name. Relaying the Eternal's promise, he actually specified a sunrise: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." One of the modern versions replaces the word "wings" with "rays," which strengthens the thought of sunrise: "the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his rays."

Our prospect is bright. We have no reason to sorrow as others who have no hope. We are journeying toward the dawn of a new day. While a spirit of hopelessness pervades all serious-minded people at the present time, our hope is bright. We know that the dangerous situation existing today, and the world turmoil of our times is only the sign of the dawn of a better Day. As Jesus advised His loyal followers, "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Jesus was aware of the absolute certainty of the blessings awaiting His faithful followers. He said, as recorded in John 4:36: "And he that reapeth

receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." The prospect is not eternal oblivion, but eternal life. "He that reapeth... gathereth fruit unto life eternal."

For this reason, the attitude of the active life-seeker should be to look ahead. As our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols wrote in the chorus of one of the songs in our Megiddo Hymnal:

***Look ahead, look ahead,
Keep the wondrous prize in view;
This will help us to work and our zeal renew,
Working hard till we gain that day.***

We are traveling toward sunrise. The promise of Isaiah 35:10 is: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Who can properly assess the value of "everlasting joy"?

Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, showed he was traveling toward sunrise when he wrote, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Cor. 4:17-18). Paul was looking ahead. Though living in the present he was looking at the future.

The apostle Peter showed he was looking beyond the uncertainties of the fleeting present to the glory beyond when he said, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (I Pet. 1:7-9). Peter was looking ahead; and we today share the same bright hope. We, too, can look ahead with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

John the Revealer, though exiled on forbidding Patmos, was still looking ahead, was still confident that he was traveling toward sunrise, and was rewarded by being permitted to hear words that no other human being has heard. In vision he saw a preview of the great events that will transpire when God's plan on earth begins to take shape, and one part of that revelation centered on his life-long conviction of the emergence of a new heaven and

earth where human perplexities, human limitations, even death itself would no longer exist.

The vision is recorded in Revelation 21:3-4: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

A cynic once described human life as "a miserable episode on one of the minor planets." All he could see ahead was darkness, gloom. He was traveling toward sunset, not toward sunrise.

But as dedicated followers of Christ, we are traveling toward *sunrise*. Our life need not be a half-joyful, half-miserable existence, but each day we should look forward with joyful anticipation to the glorious sunrise that is now approaching. Never before in the history of God's dealings with the people of this earth did any group of people live who had such a bright prospect as we have. The notable events which prophets and sages, holy men and women of old looked forward to by the eye of faith, are now at our very doorstep. We are living in the era when some of us can hope to live to see the Apocalypse of the Son of God, the beginning of God's great work of cleansing the earth from the accumulated evils of man's age of misrule, and the beginning of the Kingdom of God.

We have the bright prospect of being made equal to the angels without ever experiencing physical death. The divine promise is, "We shall *not* all sleep." Some living at this end time will be lifted into immortal life without experiencing physical death. How this prospect should enthuse and invigorate us! How it should make our feet fly and our hearts burn with joyful expectancy!

We are traveling toward sunrise, but traveling has its cost. If we are going to walk, we must rise to our feet, make the effort to actually put one foot before the other, and walk.

If we are going to drive we must see that there is gasoline in the tank, we must crank up the engine of the car, and expend the effort to drive.

If planning to travel by bus we must make the effort to get to the place where the bus stops and climb aboard. We know we cannot continue to sit in our easy chair in the living room, and expect that the bus will come to us and pick us up. If we plan to travel by air we must get to the airport meeting the plane's schedule, then with ticket previously purchased we may board the plane. Likewise traveling toward sunrise requires planning and the expendi-

ture of effort. It has been truly said, we do not drift into holiness.

Brothers and sisters, we may at this moment be at the very point where faith will be turned to sight, hope to glad fruition, expectancy to joyful realization. We know not the time. Let us re-double our effort that our journey may end at that glorious sunrise, and that we may be among those of whom the heavenly angels will sing, "The marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride hath made herself ready."

MM

ABIB MEANS . . .

"month of green ears," "spring or sprouting month." God commanded Moses to "observe the month of Abib" (Deut. 16:1; Ex. 12:2; 13:4) as the month of the Israelites' departure from Egypt.

Abib 1

begins this year on Saturday evening, April 4, and continues through Sunday, April 5. Bible time being measured from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32). It falls upon this day because the first new moon after the Spring Equinox occurs this year on April 4, and the Hebrew pattern was to begin the new year with the occurrence of the first new moon after the Spring Equinox. Abib First is the first day of the sacred New Year and the day on which we observe the anniversary of our Saviour's birth.

Abib 13

is the anniversary of the night when Jesus partook of the Last Supper with His disciples before He suffered. It falls this year on the evening of April 16. At this time we will partake of the emblems (the unleavened bread and grape juice) in obedience to the command, "This do in remembrance of me." We recognize that the emblems are symbols, the bread representing the knowledge of the law of God which we must acquire, and the juice the wholehearted application of that knowledge, the surrendering of ourselves to a life of obedience, which our sacred covenant with God involves. On the night of the anniversary of the Lord's Supper each year we renew our covenant with God to comply wholly with His commands; and go forth into the new year with renewed determination to suffer "with Christ" that most significant death—the death of our own sinful natures, the death that will bring life.

Abib 15

is the anniversary of the Resurrection of Christ. It falls this year on the night of April 18 and the day of April 19. The morning of April 19 will be our observance of Resurrection Morning, the day when "very early in the morning" certain women found their way to the tomb and learned from the lips of the angel, "He is not here; for he is risen!" Fifty days later is the anniversary of Pentecost (Lev. 23:16), which occurs this year on June 7.

At the End of the Days

Part I

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days"
—Daniel 12:13.

WHEN WE hear these words, our minds go immediately to the prophet Daniel and the closing words of the book bearing his name. But Daniel did not speak these words—he *heard* them. The speaker was "the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river," who "held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever"—yes, the speaker was a being from the high courts of heaven, very likely Gabriel or one of his angel comrades. And what was this angel saying to Daniel as he spoke of the "end of the days"?

To Daniel it was a word of promise, hope, and consolation. He who had seen vision upon vision and had been granted so many tantalizing glimpses into the time to come—prophecies compassing varying periods of time—of "two thousand three hundred days" and "two thousand five hundred twenty days" and "one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days" and "a thousand two hundred and ninety days" and many more—is it any wonder that the perplexed Prophet asks, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?"

The angel's reply must have been somewhat less than fully satisfying to this eager, zealous man of God. There was to be no more revelation or interpretation at the moment. Daniel must wait, and waiting is always hard. "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Must not these words have whetted his appetite even more? But at that moment there was no more to be revealed. Yet, what hope! what promise! what grand assurance in these words: "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:8-13).

"At the end of the days." The Greek Testament

gives a free translation of this phrase in these words: "you shall rise to enjoy your share in the Kingdom of the Messiah." What grander promise could Daniel have heard? He would sleep, but he need not fear, his place in the "Kingdom of the Messiah" was all reserved. He had performed his work faithfully; he would rest, and then he would *stand*—forever!

Would we not like to meet him, he who was given divine insight that has been shared with only a few of earth's sons and daughters? Would we not like to hear from him, firsthand, what it was like to feel the angel Gabriel's touch on his shoulder and impart knowledge beyond fathoming? Would it not be the last stimulus we would need to rise above the petty things that vex us here?

"The end of the days" was nothing forbidding to Daniel; it was a glorious beginning!

A Widespread Feeling

The time of the end, the imminence of some kind of end, seems to be on the minds of many people these days. Malcolm Muggeridge, the famous British journalist and television personality suggests that he sees the end of western civilization approaching. His interviewer questioned: "What about your claims that civilization itself is coming to an end? On what grounds do you come to this judgment?"

Muggeridge replied: "The basic condition for a civilization is that there should be law and order. Obviously this is coming to an end. The world today is falling into chaos, especially our western world. . . . There are many other symptoms. The excessive interest in eroticism is characteristic of the end of a civilization because it really means a growing impotence, and a fear of impotence. Then the excessive need for excitement, vicarious excitement, which of course the games provided for the Romans, and which television provides for our population.

Note: *At the End of the Days* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

"The end of the days" was nothing forbidding to Daniel; it was a glorious beginning!

"Even the enormously complicated structure of taxation and administration is a symptom of the end of the civilization. These things become so elaborate that in the end they become insupportable because of their very elaboration. Above all, there is this truly terrible thing which afflicts materialistic societies—boredom, an excessive boredom which I note on every hand."

Dr. Linus Pauling, winner of the Nobel Prizes in 1954 and 1962, has said that the end of the days is at hand. He anticipates a great catastrophe in the world within the next twenty-five to fifty years. And this looming catastrophe might well result in a world war which could destroy civilization and spell the end of the human race.

We know that God will never permit this, for He has revealed that there will be living believers to

welcome Christ at His return. There will be those who are "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" (I Thess. 4:15-17). There will be some *living* and *believing*, and these will *never* die (John 11:25-26). But do not the fears of thinking people today confirm the prophecy of Jesus, that at the time of the end men's hearts would be "failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth"? (Luke 21:26).

All of man's efforts at planet management, it seems, have been an incredible failure—if we may borrow from the modern vernacular, a colossal "flop." With the coming of every new system of government, men have arisen who believed they were right and that their type of government was that which should heal the wounds of earth and set everything right. It mattered not how fundamentally wrong, each believed in himself. Even Hitler thought he was right; but today he is a horrific memory gone down in history among the most contemptible, cruel, inhuman beasts of all time. The world has never produced a more treacherous, brutal or godless individual than Joseph Stalin, a man who thought nothing of murdering and destroying every voice raised

Let Us Pray...

Dear Father in heaven, we thank Thee for the privilege of meeting once more in Thy house, and of having our minds drawn away from the unimportant things of the fleeting present to the grand things Thou hast promised, our gaze focussed on the grand things of eternity.

As we meet today may we share the joy of the Psalmist who said, "I was glad when they said, Let us go into the house of the Lord." May every opportunity offered to worship Thee find us eager to join in hearing Thy Word, in singing Thy praise, in lifting up our hearts in prayer. May Thy holy presence bless this hour of worship, that we may be refreshed in Thy great and precious promises.

We appreciate the glimpses given us of the time-frame used in Thy Word by Thy holy prophet Daniel, pointing to our location at the end of ages. And while we sincerely wish he could have told us more, and that his forecasts could have been

couched in plainer language, we are thankful for what is revealed.

We thank Thee for enough information by which we can assure ourselves that we are now living at the very end of the days, and that the time of the return of Thy dear Son to earth is imminent. And may our awareness of these startling disclosures vivify us and force us onward toward our goal, we who have an insight into Thy changeless plan for the earth and mankind. We are those upon whom the ends of the world are come. And knowing these things before, may we redouble our effort to be on the winning side when these outstanding events actually begin to take shape.

The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night to the unsuspecting world and to the dilatory covenant-makers. Therefore, knowing these things before, let us beware lest being led away with the error of the wicked we fall from our own steadfastness. But may each prophecy that we see fulfilled impress us afresh with the truthfulness of Thy Word, and alert us to the nearness of the Day when Thy dear Son shall come, stimulating us to greater effort in the divine life, and enhancing our determination to be on the winning side at the end of the days. In Jesus' name. Amen.

against him. Yet, for all this he was convinced that he was right and all others were wrong.

Every system of human government the world has ever known has had its little day, flourished for a moment, and then vanished away. Democracy is now fast losing its vision, and where there is no vision the people finally perish.

No Pessimism

But it is not to mourn the failure of earthly realms and governments that we observe these things, nor to fear the fear of those who have no God or hope in the world. Our purpose is to look forward with keener expectancy, for the end of the old means the beginning of the new! We ponder these things to strengthen our faith in the God who is over all, as we see with our own eyes the evidences that proclaim His Word divine, the signs and facts that tell us that we are indeed living at the end of the days.

We need to be awakened, aroused, to know that we are right now very, very, very near the end of man's six thousand year term of authority on earth. Very soon, some day, some ordinary day just like yesterday or today, God will intervene and mark the end of all things past and the beginning of all things future. The next event in the divine program is the total change of earth's government to the new authority of Christ and the saints, the ushering in of the glorious seventh day of rest, the Millennium of Peace and Righteousness, Earth's Golden Age. During that glad day the earth shall rest from sin, from suffering, from woe. The hope of the ages will have arrived, though the majority will not recognize it. And instead of laws going forth from the various capitols of earth, some from Washington, some from Moscow, some from Peking, Tokyo, and Tehran, "the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Mic. 4:2).

This is the promise told and retold in Scripture. But perhaps nowhere is it spelled out more vividly than in the book of Daniel.

The Prophecies of Daniel

The book of Daniel is a book of prophecy. The prophecies bear heavily upon punishments for sin, judgments upon the evildoers, and the overthrow of human efforts; yet there is no tone of hopelessness, fear or despair in the book; only a longing, looking, straining forward, and an intense desire to establish a right relationship with God and so be worthy of His favor and blessing.

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The book contains visions—visions given to Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar, and Daniel, containing prophecies so loaded with significance that nothing less than an angelic interpreter could tell us the whole. But lacking this, we must rely upon comparing scripture with scripture, and scripture with its fulfillment on the pages of history. And what can we learn?

Even with this limited means of study, the wonders of the prophecies are tremendous. To think that God was making known, centuries in advance, the course and climax of this world's history! Shouldn't we be interested in learning what we can, in thinking about what it may mean?

We want to look closely at several of the prophecies of the book to see what, if any, relation they bear to our own day and time. Some of the prophecies in Daniel are very familiar; of others we have little or no knowledge. In studying some we tread on unfamiliar ground. And it is easy for us to become confused as our minds begin to swim with symbols and figures and descriptions of which we have little or no knowledge. We should not at such times, however, rely upon our understanding as upon dogmatic fact, but use what inspiration we can draw to spur us on. We should remember that even Daniel, seeing and hearing firsthand the visions and interpretations given, was still very much in the dark. After one vision he writes, "I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it" (Dan. 8:27). We today, living so near the time of the end, having the advantage of history behind us—events which they saw only as prophecy—may grasp more; but there are still details of which we cannot be sure. However, what we can glean may help us to increase our faith and quicken our steps along the path to holiness as we realize indeed that the "coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (Jas. 5:8).

Before we look at any particular prophecy of Daniel, let us observe one basic feature which all of

In Such An Age!

To be alive in such an age!
With every year a lightning page
Turned in the world's great wonder book
Whereon the leaning nations look.
When men speak strong for brotherhood,
For peace and universal good,
When miracles are everywhere,
And every inch of common air
Throbs a tremendous prophecy
Of greater marvels yet to be.

O thrilling age,

O willing age!

When steel and stone and rail and rod
Become the avenue of God—
A trump to shout His thunder through
To crown the work that He shall do.

To be alive in such an age!
When man, impatient of his cage,
Thrills to the soul's relentless rage
For conquest—reaches goal on goal,
Travels the earth from pole to pole,
Garners the tempests and the tides
And on a dream triumphant rides.
When, hid within the lump of clay,
A light more glorious than day
Proclaims the presence of that Force
Which hurls the planets on their course.

O age with wings

O age that flings

A challenge to the very sky,
Where endless realms of conquest lie!
When earth on tiptoe strives to hear
The message of a sister sphere,
Yearning to reach the cosmic wires
That flash Infinity's desires.

To be alive in such an age!
That blunders forth its discontent
With futile creed and sacrament,
Yet craves to utter God's intent;
Seeing beneath the world's unrest
Creation's huge, untiring quest,
And through Tradition's broken crust
The flame of Truth's triumphant thrust;
Below the seething thought of man
The push of a stupendous Plan.

O age of strife!

O age of life!

When Progress rides her chariots high,
And on the borders of the sky
The signals of the century
Proclaim the things that are to be—
The fall of nations from their place,
The coming of a nobler race.

To be alive in such an age—

To live in it,

To give to it!

Rise, soul, from thy despairing knees,
See what thy Lord in heaven sees.
Fling forth thy sorrows to the wind
And link thy hope with God's own
mind!

The passion of a larger claim
Will put thy puny grief to shame.
Breathe heaven's thought, do heaven's
deed,

Thy King is almost here—take heed!
And what thy woe, and what thy weal?
Look to the work the times reveal!
Give thanks with all thy flaming heart—
Crave but to have in it a part.
Give thanks and clasp thy heritage—
To be alive in such an age!

Sel. and alt.

(Continued from page 9)

the visions and prophecies of Daniel seem to have in common: All begin at different times in history and move forward, but all arrive at the same point: the end of the days. All are beamed directly upon the time of the end, the time when God shall intervene in earth's affairs, interrupt the authority of men and replace it with the Kingdom of God; when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The "end of the days" is the focal point of all. A short conversation between Daniel and the angel right at the close of the book—and apparently near the end of Daniel's mortal life—summarizes this point. Daniel asks, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" When would all that he had seen be fulfilled? And here is the angel's reply: "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. . . . Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:8-9, 13).

So let us ask: When? What can Daniel tell us about this singular time, the "end of the days"? With this thought, let us examine a few of the outstanding prophecies.

The Great Image

The first prophecy recorded in Daniel gives us the basic pattern that time was predicted to follow during the kingdoms of men. It was then two years after Nebuchadnezzar had come to the throne of Babylon, and a certain dream troubled the king. He called in his wise men and interpreters, but none could interpret for him. Only Daniel, that captive Hebrew lad, was able to disclose the meaning of the dream, and Daniel obtained his wisdom from the God who gave the dream. Thus began Daniel's career in prophecy—and apparently very early in life, for this was during the "second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar" (Dan. 2:1), and Nebuchadnezzar was the king responsible for bringing the Hebrew captives to Babylon.

Daniel's interpretation of the dream showed definitely that the dream was prophetic, embracing the entire period of world history from that time (which was about 604 B. C.) to the time of the end when the entire Babylonian system of world government would be destroyed and the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that would stand forever. Here is the dream and the interpretation Daniel gave:

Thou, O King, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. . . . Thou art

this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure (Dan. 2:37-45).

There was no vacillating on Daniel's part, no wondering whether he was right or wrong. "The dream is certain," he said firmly, "and the interpretation thereof sure."

And what is that interpretation?

This dream forecasts the succession of four great kingdoms, which history has verified to the letter—the Medes and Persians succeeded Babylon, Greece succeeded Medo-Persia, and Rome succeeded Greece. We can read it in the prophetic language of Daniel; we can read it fulfilled on the pages of history. Can we not believe?

And what is to follow these four great kingdoms? Is the fourth to last forever, or is it to be succeeded by yet another kingdom of men? The answer to both is *no*. The fifth kingdom was forecast to succeed the broken remnants of the fourth, but it is not to be just another world kingdom; it is to be the glorious, eternal kingdom of God.

**God knows how to humble
proud men; He has done
it before; He will soon
be doing it again.**

The Vision of the Four Beasts

Some fifty or sixty years later the same prophet Daniel had the privilege of interpreting a second dream—this time it was his own. But the content of its prophetic message was the same. This dream is recorded in Daniel 7. “I saw,” says Daniel, “and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings”—the kingdom of Babylon; “and behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it”—symbolic of the kingdom of the Medes and Persians.

“After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads”—symbolic of the kingdom of Greece; “after this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: . . . and it had ten horns”—symbolic of the power of Rome.

Again there is no question about the identity of the kingdoms, or the focus of the message. Once again all is aimed toward “the time of the end,” the “end of the days,” for the vision carries us right to the coming of Christ and the establishing of that fifth world power: “I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man [the saints] came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and . . . there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:1-7, 13-14).

Once again the prophecy carries right through to the end of the days, for “these great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever” (7:17-18). And “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the peo-

ple of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” And then a special postscript to Daniel: “Hitherto is the end of the matter” (v. 27-28).

Such awesome forecasts, covering a long period of history; can we wonder at Daniel’s perplexity, which caused him to write, “As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me”?

What do these two visions tell us about the time that would be called the “time of the end,” or the “end of the days”? It is clearly to be after the rise and the fall of the four great kingdoms of men; it is *after* each of the four beasts has its “dominion taken away” (7:12); and it is just *before* “the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (v. 22), for “the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end” (v. 26). And then, “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High” (v. 27).

The Vision of the Great Tree

Let us look now to see how another prophecy of Daniel spans the centuries to arrive at this same time of the end. It is a prophecy recorded in the fourth chapter of Daniel. This chapter tells of a disquieting dream that overawed the Babylonian king and seemed to make his blood run cold. Though the dream was a revelation from God, it certainly must have seemed to him a veritable nightmare.

Let us turn to Daniel 4 and review the “plot” of the dream. In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar had seen a tree of great height grow out of the earth. The tree was strong. The height of it reached to heaven and the sight thereof to the end of the earth.

The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

Then the vision changed, and Nebuchadnezzar saw yet more:

I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in

the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from man's and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him

(Dan. 4:12-16).

In the remaining verses of the chapter the Prophet explains to Nebuchadnezzar the ominous meaning of the vision. In its immediate application, it forecast a predetermined length of time during which Nebuchadnezzar would actually lose his mind and live on the animal level. And we are told that this did happen; at the end of twelve months (Dan. 4:29), all the calamities he had seen actually came upon him, and the mighty monarch learned—or should have learned—in a very real and literal sense that it is the *Most High* who ruleth in the kingdoms of men and giveth them to whomsoever He pleases.

God knows how to humble proud men; He has done it before; He will soon be doing it again.

But since all the other prophecies of the book of Daniel reach to the time of the "end," is it not possible that this prophecy also has a far—as well as a near—significance? Might not "Babylon" be a term symbolic of all the governments of this world under human direction? For we must not forget that whether it be Babylon, or Medo-Persia, or Greece, or the tattered and broken remnants of pagan and papal Rome, all these systems are the very quintessence of Babylon. Every form of world government, whether it be democracy, monarchy, Nazism, Communism, or any other human "ism," all are Babylon because they are not of God. All are Babylon because they represent confusion. All belong to the beastly system of man's rule (Daniel 7), and all carry and support the drunken harlot with whom the kings and rulers of earth commit fornication (Rev. 17:2). Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon was the *head of gold*, but all succeeding governments come under that Babylonish head. In Revelation, they are all part of the mysterious harlot who in her drunken corruption rides majestically upon the back of the beast. All are part of the "basest of men" (Dan. 4:17) whom God sets up until the time arrives when He shall make them know that the *Most High* is the one and only eternal Ruler.

If we take "Babylon" in this vision of Nebuchadnezzar as representing the human governments of earth, might we not also take the "seven times" that were to pass as a figurative expression of all the time that was to elapse before the

time of the end when the kingdoms of men would be cast down and the one Great, Eternal Kingdom should take their place? We know from other passages of Scripture that the Hebrew people often used the figure "seven" as a "round" or sacred number meaning "all," hence "seven times" might be taken as an expression of the *whole* time, *all* the time that would elapse until the time of the end. Or, there may be some meaning in the "seven times" as a figure of prophetic time as on a scale.

Figuring Prophetic Time

When architects draw the blueprints for a new building, they always use a specific scale of measurement. They know that they cannot draw the full size of the structure on paper, so they establish a scale and then draw everything in proportion to that scale. The scale they use is always plainly indicated on the blueprint so that the builders can know exactly how to read the blueprint and how to erect the building. The scale may be such that one inch on the drawing equals ten feet on the structure, or one quarter inch on the drawing may equal one foot on the building. Then, too, the architect, to show greater detail of a small area, may draw another blueprint using a much larger scale, such that one inch might equal one foot of the building. But always the scale is marked on the drawing.

In exactly the same manner as an architect uses a convenient scale of measurement to represent the dimensions of a building, so the Lord uses time scales in His Word to represent lengths of time that were to pass before certain prophecies were to be fulfilled. Perhaps the simplest example of a time scale may be found in the book of Ezekiel. The prophet was told to lie upon his left side three hundred and ninety days to bear the iniquity of the house of Israel and to lie upon his right side forty days to bear the iniquity of Judah. Then in Ezekiel 4:6 the Lord said to the Prophet: "Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year." This, then, is one Bible time scale where one day represents one year. And there are others. We have a scale of weeks which, of course, are made up of seven days. There is also a week of weeks (490 years), a week of years (2520 years), also a week of millenniums, which is seven thousand years long.

This week of millenniums is the basis of the scale used in the Genesis allegory that forms the introduction to God's marvelous written revelation as
(Continued on page 22)

An Outline of Coming Events

Based on Scripture

The Advent of Elijah, Herald of the King.

"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Malachi 4:5).

"Elias truly shall first come and restore all things" (Matt. 17:11).

Elijah the prophet, at the end of his career on earth, did not die but was taken up by a "whirlwind into heaven" (II Kings 2:11). The prophet Malachi tells us the purpose of this: he is to return "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5). Jesus tells us what he will do when he returns: He will "restore all things." We are not told exactly what the "all things" will be, but we know that when on earth Elijah possessed Holy Spirit power by which he could do miracles and raise the dead; and since this power has not been possessed by anyone on earth for many centuries now, it seems reasonable that this would be among the "things" he comes to restore.

Paul informs us in I Thessalonians 4:16-17 that the "dead in Christ shall rise" before Christ arrives, so that "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" when He returns. If the "dead in Christ" join the living at that time, someone must have raised them to life *prior* to that time. Is it not possible that Elijah may serve as the "archangel" or "chief messenger" in I Thess. 4:16 who shall come to raise the dead? "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."

The Advent of Jesus Christ, the King.

"Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him" (Rev. 1:7).

"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

After the announcement of Elijah and his advance warnings to the people of earth—"lest I smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:6)—Christ will arrive. "The Lord himself shall descend from

heaven with a shout. . . . Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:16-17). Some people have taken the phrase "so shall we ever be with the Lord" as implying their idea of the "rapture," that the saints go to heaven with Christ and remain there. But the words of Paul do not say this. They say only that those "in Christ" will rise to "meet the Lord in the air," and "so shall we ever be with the Lord"—no mention of *where*. And there are too many passages telling us that Christ and the saints will reign on the earth for us to think anything otherwise. For example, Rev. 5:10, "and we shall reign on the earth"; Rev. 14:1, "A lamb stood on the mount Sion"; Zech. 14:4, "and his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east"; Matt. 5:5, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"; Ps. 37:9, they "that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth"; John 14:3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again"; Rev. 22:20, "Surely I come quickly."

The Judgment of His Servants.

Immediately following Christ's arrival—possibly even before He sets foot on the earth—will be the Judgment of His servants. We are not told just where this will take place, but between the time that He "comes" and His feet "stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives," there is a period of Judgment, that "every one may receive for the things which he has done" (II Cor. 5:10).

The separating of the faithful from the unfaithful must be done before the next steps can be taken toward the establishing of the new government upon earth. Jesus described it as separating "sheep" from "goats" (Matt. 25:31-46). Also "wheat" from "tares." "Let both [wheat and tares] grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers: Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:30). And "before him shall be gathered

[out of] all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:32-34).

Some people believe that only the righteous will be raised at the first resurrection and judged at the first Judgment. But is this reasonable? Is not the purpose of the Judgment to determine *who* are the faithful? And many of the texts in the Bible which tell of the Judgment tell us that both faithful and unfaithful are present: both "sheep" and "goats" are present in Jesus' illustration (Matt. 25:31-46). Both "wheat" and "tares" are together until separated. "Let both [wheat and tares] grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:30).

The idea of two resurrections, one of the faithful, and one following of the unfaithful, comes from a misunderstanding of Rev. 20:5-6, "This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

The Bible does teach two resurrections, two physical restorings of the dead to a living state; one at the time of Christ's second advent, and one at the end of the Millennial reign of Christ (see below). But the word "resurrection" as used in Rev. 20:5 speaking of the "first resurrection," does not apply to either. The term here is used in another sense meaning "exaltation," a "lifting up to immortality," a "better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35). Jesus used the term with this meaning, as well as with the more familiar meaning of restoration to physical life, in John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice [all that are in *the* graves, certain graves, the "dead in Christ," not a universal raising of all who ever lived], "and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life [exaltation to immortality]; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [the sentence to eternal death]." The mere fact that a person has a part in the physical resurrection, is restored to life, does not mean that person will be given life eternal. Eligibility for life eternal is determined at Judgment, when He will reward every man "according as his works have been" (Rev. 22:12; Jer. 17:10). But all who have part in the first exaltation, or the first raising to immortality of Rev. 20:5 will be "blessed and holy," for they are those judged faithful, who will be "priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

The Marriage of the Lamb.

The "marriage of the Lamb" is the term which the Bible uses symbolically to describe the union of Christ with His faithful bride. It is stated in Revelation 19 to be an occasion of great joy. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. . . . And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19:7-9). This joyous event will take place as soon as the identity of that bride is determined, as soon as the judging of God's servants is complete, as soon as the saints stand with Christ on Mount Zion following the Judgment (Zech. 14:4).

Christ Is Declared the New King.

Christ and the Saints Establish Capitol at Jerusalem and Declare New Government for the Earth's Inhabitants.

Christ comes to be King, and His first action, upon returning, after selecting and rewarding His own, is to declare Himself King and set up the physical operation of His new government. The saints will be working with Him in the new regime as co-heirs with Him. They shall be "kings and priests" and shall "reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10). Headquarters for the new government will be Jerusalem, the "city of the great king" (Matt. 5:35). And the laws of the new government shall go forth from "Mount Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Mic. 4:2). Jerusalem will become the metropolis of the world, for the whole earth will be under one King: "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).

Christ Calls Upon All Nations to Submit to the New Government. Result: Armageddon.

In the interests of world peace and world progress, Christ will call upon all the nations of the earth to surrender their sovereignty to Him. The decree will go forth: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7).

But all will not be willing. Many show immediately that they would rather fight and die, than surrender. And so they will arm themselves against Christ. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army" (Rev. 19:19). But none of their strategies can find the new regime unprepared.

For "then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations" (Zech. 14:3). "These shall make war with the Lamb," but "the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). This will be the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16).

The outcome of the struggle is predetermined, and unlike any previous battle of the nations of earth, none shall suffer but the guilty; all who submit to Christ, all who manifest a desire to be part of the new order and cooperate, all who seek deliverance and are worthy of it shall find it, for "it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel 2:32). It will be a time of trouble, "such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time" (Dan. 12:1), a time which will result in two thirds of earth's inhabitants losing their lives (Zech. 13:8), so that one third may be spared and learn righteousness. The worldwide call will be to separate from the evil: "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. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:4).

Those who survive this time of judgment and

cleansing will form the nucleus from which will spring a multitude of inhabitants that will fill the earth during the age to come, the Millennium.

The Millennial Reign of Christ and the Saints.

"And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4). The authority of the new government will be unshakable, as the nations of earth will soon find out, and shall remain and grow and prosper for a thousand years, while mortal nations learn to seek the ways of the Lord and live according to His laws.

During this time, evil will be strictly controlled; in symbolic language the Revelator says the "devil," sin and all sinners (the two are inseparable), will be "bound." Evil will not be allowed openly manifest to be repeated and multiplied ad infinitum. "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21).

This strict enforcement of law will make way for the fulfillment of the many and beautiful promises of the Lord spoken through the centuries. Among these are:

The Cessation of War. With one government worldwide international war will be an impossibility; and strife between individuals will also be forbidden. The result: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. 32:17-18). They shall sit "every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid" (Mic. 4:4). The nations shall "learn war no more" (v. 3).

Men and Women Worldwide Seeking the Ways of God. "And many nations shall come and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Mic. 4:2).

No More Sickness. "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick" (Isa. 33:24).

No More Oppression, Injustice, or Cruelty. "I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise (Isa. 60:17-18).

At the Close of the Millennium, a Resurrection and Judgment of All Who Have Been Serving God During That Time.

The Millennial Age will be the time when thousands and millions and billions of people will
(Continued on page 23)

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"Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?"



"Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The Better Part

The narrative is told so simply and clearly that we almost feel as if we had been present in person.

As they pursued their journey He came to a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed Him to her house. She had a sister called Mary, who also seated herself at the Lord's feet, and listened to His teaching. Martha meanwhile was busy and distracted in attending to her guest, and she came up to Him and said,

'Master, do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do all the serving? Tell her to assist me.'

'Martha, Martha,' replied Jesus, 'you are anxious and worried about a multitude of things; and yet only one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion and she shall not be deprived of it'

(Luke 10:38-42, Weymouth).

There was probably no other home in Bethany that gave Jesus quite so warm a welcome. Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and brother Lazarus (John 11:5). Here He enjoyed true Christian fellowship, and He in turn nourished their souls from His bountiful store of heavenly wisdom.

On this particular day, it is reasonable to believe, Jesus was not expected, or preparations for His arrival would have been made in advance. Never-

theless, Jesus was warmly welcomed in their home.

Jesus was an honored guest, and we can be sure Martha's intention was, above all else, to please that guest. She wanted to make His visit just as delightful as possible. There was nothing wrong with Martha's motive. She wanted the supper to be nice for the Lord; but the elaborate preparations made heavy demands upon her time and energy. Martha became so engrossed in her preparations that she lost sight of the more important part—food for her soul. Because of a wrong emphasis regarding her necessary labor, her inner communion with Jesus was being hindered.

Perhaps Martha thought that because Mary did not serve just as she served she was making no contribution at all. There was Mary, listening to the Master as if she didn't have a care in the world, while she (Martha) fussed over the supper.

Or it may be that Martha was secretly vexed with herself as much as with Mary, that the latter was enjoying the privilege of hearing Jesus' words, seated at His feet, while she could not persuade herself to do the same for fear that an elaborate enough repast should not be served to Him.

Martha should have been the happiest woman in Bethany, preparing a meal for the Lord. But she was not. She so far forgot herself as to rebuke not only her sister but their guest as well.

"Master" (Martha was annoyed to say the least),

"do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do all the work? Tell her to assist me."

In her vexed state of mind she included Jesus in her rebuke, and asked Him to release Mary from the season of meditation to help her with practical duties.

Now Jesus appreciated Martha's concern for His welfare, but His concern for Martha's spiritual welfare was much greater.

We hear Jesus' firm but kind reproof: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about a multitude of things; and yet only one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good part and she shall not be deprived of it."

There we have it—Martha was worried about "a multitude of things."

Jesus rebuked Martha because she was worrying about *things*. He was saying in reality, "Martha, Martha, you are busy with many courses when *one* would be quite sufficient. Come, sit down, and let us talk about the things that really matter." As far as Jesus was concerned, simple hospitality would have sufficed just as well.

There is a lesson here for us all—if not in one way, then in another.

Jesus did indeed have concern for the physical needs of men. We recall His compassion for the hungry multitudes, the sick and diseased, the lame and the blind. Yet His greater concern was for their spiritual needs.

True love characterized all of Jesus' utterances. Whenever He spoke it was for the definite purpose of aiding and uplifting His listeners.

What does Jesus say to us? What can we glean from His bountiful store of heavenly wisdom to strengthen and nourish our souls?

Ringling down through the ages Jesus' words come to us—simple, straightforward, the kind that strike at the heart.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Luke 4:4).

While food has its rightful and necessary place in our lives, there is the ever-present danger of becoming absorbed in our culinary efforts to the neglect of more necessary and important duties; or we become overanxious about what we are to eat and drink and wear. This was not Jesus' way. "Do not even begin to be anxious, therefore, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or what shall we wear? for all these are questions that the Gentiles are always asking; but your heavenly Father knows that you have need of these things—all of them."

Jesus' warning does not stop with food and drink. His warning words cover every aspect of the

Christian's life and work. He continues,

But make his kingdom and righteousness your chief aim, and then these things shall be given you in addition.

Are we doing this?

In our day, when so many things are clamoring for attention, we must learn to bend our energies to one point, and go directly to that point, looking neither to the right or to the left.

Genuine spiritual life is a constant challenge. Naturally we are tied to "petty things," "things" that pull us this way and that.

Petty things. We have special names for them—our concerns, our responsibilities, our pursuits, etc. Yes, even our jobs. They are all lawful in their place; but what is their place? Are they primary or secondary? Are they claiming a lawful share of our interest, or are they causing us to be over anxious?

Whenever "things," however important, get into first place, God is in danger of being pushed into the background. To conquer, we must put things in their proper place, giving them no more of our time and energy than is due them.

Life is an opportunity that comes to us but once. We can either use it or squander it. Which are we doing?

The world is full of distractions and the Christian must keep himself on an even keel if he is not to be influenced to his own peril by what the world has to offer. The world offers much—pleasure, education, business and professional careers, popularity. It is not that the Christian cannot have any of these. He can. But what is *vital*? What is *essential*? What may he profitably *let go*?

He may let all things go that he cannot carry into the eternal life.

In times of self-preoccupation, or in times of incessant activity, it becomes easy to lose one's real objective. That is a danger far more pressing in our hectic day than it was in the days of long ago.

Jesus is trying to impress upon us the value of time. The hurrying years set their seal upon us all, and if not careful we shall some day find that the rushing tide of life has caught us with our goal unrealized.

Strive to get in through the narrow door, [said Jesus], for I tell you, many will try to get in, and not be able, once the master of the house has risen and closed the door (Luke 13:24-25).

The service of our great Commander calls for action, loyalty and courage.

What we need in Christian living today is more

of the battle spirit. This is not the time to sound a retreat, nor to mark time, but to *forward* march.

Our evils will not ride into camp and surrender of themselves. We must go after them, we must attack them in their own dug-outs; we must subdue and chasten our inborn impulses lest they become masters, whereas they should be useful and obedient servants.

**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect
(Matt. 5:48).**

What nobler aim or higher calling could the Master have set before us than this?

With a Christian the building of a perfect character is fundamental; without it there is no real hope.

Truly our lives have been enriched by the Master's work and the example He left us. He was unaffected by surrounding turmoil. He displayed coolness and presence of mind under all circumstances, calmness amid storm, always master, in full control of every situation.

Christ could live day after day with unkindness, cold ingratitude, cutting sarcasm; nor did He grow bitter under the strain. He was too big to hold a grudge, too noble for anger or spite. He was a constant inspiration to His closest followers who witnessed His daily living. And if He could do it, so can we who are called to follow His steps. Let us be mature men and women in Christ Jesus—with that maturity which can meet provoking situations without being provoked by them.

One writer effectively pictures Christ in these words: "What sweetness, what purity in His manners! What an effecting gracefulness in His instructions! What sublimity in His maxims! What profound wisdom in His discourses! What presence of mind, what sagacity and propriety in His answers! How great the command of His passions! Where is the man who could so live, suffer and die without weakness and without ostentation?"

The moral principles of the gospel He taught have always worked and always will. Honesty will always be better than deception, kindness than cruelty. In His Father's world, character is more important than talent; responsibility is measured according to endowment; the success of life is to be measured by its secret fidelities and not by its popular triumphs.

Have we longed for peace to come into our lives? If we would have peace, we must rid our minds of the vagabond thoughts of doubt and discouragement, of hurt feelings and pride; those moods that wall us away from God because of a self-centered instead of a Christ-centered life. We

can never have true peace as long as our inner self is in conflict with our outer self.

Do petty annoyances crowd our path of work and pleasure? It is our greatest blessing! Let us realize that this strong irritation is the best-shaped tool in the Father's hand to chisel us for eternity. Then our adversary will become our auxiliary, an instrument to ripen our wisdom, deepen our peace, increase the power of truth in our lives. Whatever may be the patience test, whatever the cost, let us perfect that virtue.

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 6:1-2).

Jesus spoke forcefully to the multitude upon this subject. But the application of His words is not to be confined to that age alone. Seeking the praise of men is still a clinging trait of human nature, and the Master's words re-echo in our ears.

By any ambitious display or unnecessary show of our talent or sacrifices we are guilty of this very offense.

Holy men and women who have made a success of life and left examples worthy of emulation are those who honestly analyzed themselves to detect their own weaknesses. An unsympathetic appraisal of ourselves might reveal more defects than we thought existed.

It is imperative that we keep our minds active and rust-free that we may be alert to the dangers and the opportunities that surround us.

The words of Jesus have a particularly strong therapeutic value. Drop them in the mind, allowing them to "dissolve" in consciousness, and they will spread a healing balm over our entire mental picture. "Thou art careful and troubled about many things; [choose rather the] one thing. . . needful: . . . that good part," and it "shall not be taken away from [you.]" MM

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About God's Silence

BETWEEN the Old and the New Testaments stands a period of time often called the four hundred silent years. During this time there were no writing prophets, and apparently no angelic visitations. Judah had indeed become the dry ground out of which Messiah was prophesied to come. The sceptre seemingly had departed from the house of David, and the glory of Solomon's kingdom had faded.

During these silent centuries there was no new revelation from God. Some of the people of Israel had quietly laid aside their belief in a coming Messiah. Time and the failure of the Messiah to appear raised persistent doubts: Would the Messiah *ever* come? And many tuned out from the prophetic hopes and lived only for the present.

But others there were whose hopes could not be dimmed. Even they, however, were sometimes puzzled and asked themselves hard questions: Why doesn't God do something? How long will it be before God breaks His silence and acts in history to fulfill His promise?

What we know, and what they should have known, is that God's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. He was waiting for the fulness of time to come. And when it came, He acted. He gave Christ visibly to man.

Christ's birth was like a flash of lightning in a midnight sky. In a darkened age there appeared the bright light of God's new act. But even then His act had more darkness than light in it for many people. Most of those who looked for Messiah's coming waited for a king born in a royal palace with, so to speak, a golden spoon in His mouth. But God's lightning flash revealed only a baby born in Bethlehem, the son of a peasant woman, whose husband was merely a carpenter.

Yet the glory of what God had done could not be obscured by the lowliness of Messiah's birth. It was grasped and propagated forever by the writer of the Hebrews: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son." God had spoken! He had sent His Son! He was not silent! The realization awakened the apostles to the hope which the shepherds heard from the angel

choir: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

Two thousand years have passed since God spoke to men through the coming of Jesus Christ. A cross and a resurrection have intervened. A few disciples were baptized and sent out to turn the world upside down for the cause of Christ. His gospel spread from shore to shore until every land and nation of the world has heard the name of Christ and seen those who call themselves Christians. The records of God's new act in Jesus Christ have been imperishably set down in the New Testament, which far surpasses all other books ever written in the number of copies distributed.

The tide of the Christian movement reached its fullest heights in the beginning of this century. Now as we go into the eighties the tide is seemingly running out, slowly and inexorably. The ardor, the eagerness for action is evaporating; the passion is diminishing. Sloth and doubt take a heavy toll. For many the effulgent glory of God whose lightning crossed the darkened sky two thousand years ago has faded. Darkness has begun to descend upon the earth, and the voice of God seems bewilderingly silent. Men grope in darkness, reaching out to touch the hand that doesn't seem to be there, straining to hear the voice that doesn't seem to speak.

But we who have the privilege of living in the true light have learned that even when God appears to be silent He is speaking. We know that in His silence He speaks thunderously. He is showing us for a time what life is like when He does not speak. He is saying to sinful men that there is a final silence, a silence they will experience just before the time when He breaks into history with the roar of a whirlwind.

In Scripture there are few words more pathetic than those spoken of Samson, "And he did not know that the Lord had left him." God was silent. God was withdrawn and so grave was Samson's backslidden condition that he did not even know that God was gone, until he woke from his sleep expecting to use his strength only to discover his loss, to experience the pain of God's withdrawal,

and later to search desperately for the return of the power that had vanished.

Is there not danger that we who name the name of God may slowly drift from the reality of our faith and awake suddenly when it is too late, to find ourselves alone in a dark and troubled world, alone and lost, without hope, and without a God who will answer our longing cry? Our experience may be that of ancient Israel: "Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 7:13).

We are living in momentous times. We are living in the closing hours of this age. Perhaps the present silence and apparent invisibility of God is the prelude to the lightning bolt that once more will flash across the leaden sky. That time will soon come when He who shook the earth once will shake it again. He has promised, "Yet once more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Heb. 12:26-27).

God's silence will not continue forever. Although He will never speak again through more Scripture, He will speak and act visibly and powerfully in the affairs of men. This time the Son of man will come in flaming fire. The sky will be split by the lightning of His arrival: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:27). He will come with vengeance for those who do not accept the gospel. But He will come also with an overflowing measure of blessing for His saints who await in this silence the unveiling of the Lord of hosts.

Athirst

NANSEN the explorer has told in his book how he and his men suffered many weeks from thirst while crossing Greenland. So intense was the cold that they could melt only ice enough for a little tea and a very small amount of water for each man. Every moment of their waking hours they craved water. At last they saw in a hollow what looked in the distance like water. Like madmen they rushed to the spot where the sun melted a little pool, and throwing themselves down on the ice they drank till they could drink no more.

Those who thirst after righteousness as Nansen thirsted after water, shall be filled.

How different for those who choose to stay in the

*While the busy day dies slowly
O'er the sea;
And the hour grows quiet and holy
With thoughts of Me.
E'er you slumber, go and do
What must be done,
For it may be in the evening
I will come.*

*As the evening shades grow longer
And the night
Descends to veil the hills
From mortal sight,
Behold, I say unto you, Watch!
Let the door be on the latch
In your home.
For it may be at the midnight
I will come.*

*When the house is hushed in slumber,
Quiet, still,
And the hours grow long and dreary,
Cold and chill,
Keep the door upon the latch
In your home.
In the chill before the dawning
'Twixt the midnight and morning
I may come.*

*Keep your faith lamps brightly burning
All the night,
As you wait through vigils long
The morning light.
Behold, I say unto you, Watch!
Let the door be on the latch
In your home.
For I soon will break the silence
And will come!*

world! We know from personal experience and can see every day those who thirst after many things; and that thirst is never quenched.

How true the words of one writer, that you may wish for wealth and stay poor. You may wish for reputation, and be dishonored. You may wish for knowledge, and yet be shut up to a life of relative ignorance. You may wish for influence, and yet be so hedged about that all your life seems to be spent in vain. But the soul that longs for a stronger conscience, a clearer faith, more eager and joyous hope, a diviner revelation, shall not go unsatisfied. This is the one hunger to which God promises ever and always enough.

From a member in Minnedosa, Manitoba

At the End of the Days

(Continued from page 13)

we have it today. The "six days" needed for "creating" are symbolic of six thousand years—"one day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (II Pet. 3:8). The seventh "day" is also representative of a thousand years, so He has set aside seven thousand years in which to "create"—select and develop—those persons who will be His eternal, finished handiwork.

While the law of Moses was a literal law to govern a literal people, it was also symbolic of things to come and as such was also drawn to "scale." "Six days shalt thou labor," we read, "and do all thy work: But the seventh is the sabbath of the Lord" (Ex. 20:9-10). Six days to labor; on the divine scale, six thousand years—a limited period of time, which placed a limit on man's term of rule on earth. Six days, or six thousand years; no more, for when that is accomplished, then another prophecy shall be fulfilled and the "God of heaven" shall "set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44).

The Vision Set "to Scale"?

Is it possible that the "time" mentioned in Nebuchadnezzar's vision might also be a symbol on God's scale? A "time" is used elsewhere in Scripture as a measurement, in the book of Revelation. In chapters 11 and 12 we read of "time, and times, and half a time," also "a thousand two hundred and three score days," also "three days and an half," also "forty and two months," all applying to the same period of time. On such a scale, a time would represent 360 days, the length of a Lunar year, or, each "day for a year," 360 years. If this follows, and one time equals 360 years, then seven times would equal 2,520 years.

If we take the vision as representing the time during which spiritual "Babylon," man's faulty systems of government, confusion, was to rule the earth, from the time the vision was given until the time of the end, and apply the "seven times" or 2520 years to this period, do we not confirm the fact that we are living right down at the end of the days? If the kingdom of Babylon was flourishing during the sixth century B. C., are we not right now at a time about two and one half millenniums later? May this have been recorded to tell us that we right now should be heeding Jesus' words, that "when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"? (Luke 21:28). May it not be evidence to us

that we are living *very* near the time when the Almighty will show *who* is supreme in the affairs of earth, when He will arise to "rule" in the kingdoms of men and give them to "whomsoever he will," even to Christ His Son?

No Date-Setting

This is not to say, or even suggest that we have any knowledge of the exact time that Christ will come, for "of that day and that hour knoweth no man" (Mark 13:32). When the Word of God marks out certain periods of time between seemingly identifiable events, we tend to think that we can figure the whole; but not so. There is always an unknowable quantity of time lost or gained through calendar adjustments; hence "true time," by God's scale, cannot be known.

And apparently this is His will. Very seldom in the history of the human family has God granted any "sight" privileges. When the time is right, He acts, but between times He expects only a humble, willing, ready obedience. He wants us to be ready *whenever*, "lest coming suddenly he find [us] sleeping." He wants us to use our own powers of observation, however, so we are not completely in the dark. He wishes us to discern the "signs of the times" just as we read the "face of the sky" and say, "There cometh a shower" (Luke 12:54-56). For, Paul said, "the times and seasons" would be known (I Thess. 5:1-2).

And what are we to do within these knowable "times and seasons"? We are to prepare, living each day as though it were our last, yet willing to hold on and keep working, however long; for though it seem to "tarry, . . . it will not be late" (Hab. 2:3, Moffatt). Maintaining this working frame of mind takes faith, living, growing faith that can see God's promise as sure and all events building up to its fulfillment. It takes the same kind of faith that carried the worthies of old, for do we not read "By faith Enoch. . ." and "by faith Noah. . ." and "by faith Abraham. . ." and "by faith Moses. . ." All had to have this same abiding faith in God, so that when events did not work out as they expected, they could still trust God and know that His promise was just that much nearer fulfillment.

And we must never forget that "the Lord seeth not as man seeth," especially in relation to time. What are a few years to Him to whom a thousand are but as "yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night"? (Ps. 90:4). On such a scale, a time of ten or twenty years would be only a few seconds!

Yet those same seconds—properly used—can mean for us the difference between eternal death and eternal life. Hence the time remaining, however much we can capture of it, spells one word: opportunity.

What are we doing with these moments that are ours, these moments that are so near the end of the days? Are we doing all we can to prepare for the great event? Are we ready to face Him unafraid, unashamed? Are you ready? Am I? Am I doing all He expects of me? Will He find me acceptable in His all-searching sight?

Oh, the concern that should grip us as we realize how near may be the reality of all that has been prophesied through the ages! We have read it, heard it, sung it a thousand times. But let not our familiarity with the great prophecy dull its luster. Jesus Christ *shall* come to our planet, and He shall reign “from sea to sea” (Ps. 72:7-8). The promise is as true as the day it was spoken and as sure as the existence of the living God who spoke it.

Let us lose no time in our preparation for the Day of the Lord, we who live even now “at the end of the days.”

MM

“I Would If I Could”

“I would if I could,” though much it’s in use,
Is but a mistaken and sluggish excuse;
And many a person who could if he would,
Is often heard saying, “I would if I could.”

“Come, John,” said a school-boy, “now do not
refuse,—
Come, solve me this problem; you can if you choose.”
But John at that moment was not in the mood,
And yawningly answered, “I would if I could.”

The scholar receiving his teacher’s advice,
The swearer admonished to quit such a vice,
The child when requested to try and be good
Oft give the same answer, “I would if I could.”

But if we may credit what good people say,
That where there’s a will, there is always a way;
And whatever ought to be, can be, and should,—
We never need utter, “I would if I could.”

—Selected.

An Outline of Coming Events

(Continued from page 16)

have opportunity to cleanse and purify themselves from sin and prepare to live eternally. Many will take full advantage of the opportunity; many will not. The judgment at the close of the Millennium will separate the two classes, much as the Judgment at Christ’s Second Advent separated faithful and unfaithful; and the faithful of the Millennial Age will also be given immortality, to become the populace of the Eternal Kingdom and fill the earth with the “glory of the Lord” (Num. 14:21).

Revelation 20 tells us about this last resurrection and judgment: “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and . . . the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire [symbolic of eternal destruction]” (Rev. 20:11-15).

One Final Rebellion.

During the Millennium all sin is bound, but not eliminated. At the close of the Millennium, strange as it may seem, when the strict enforcement of law is temporarily relaxed for a time (Rev. 20:7), a “great number” shall “gather . . . together to battle”—still preferring their own way to God’s, and shall go up and “[compass] the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.” But the insurrection shall not succeed, for fire comes “down from God out of heaven, and [devours] them” (20:9).

It would seem that a large part of the rebellious element may be persons who were cut off during the Millennium for their wilful disobedience and non-cooperation who, when resurrected, quickly join the movement to vent their hatred for the strict enforcement of law.

The Grand Finale: Eternity Begins.

It is the hour of triumph. “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev. 21:3-5).

MM



In Times Like These

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28)

EVERY AGE has its present, peculiar dangers; and in these abnormal times we must guard most carefully our inner selves and keep our spiritual equilibrium. Has not God for years been warning a complacent world of the coming of "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel 12:1)? Let us not, then, be amazed or alarmed as we find ourselves already in the foothills of the coming time of trouble. This is just as it appears in the Divine advertisement.

If we have been training faithfully during the ordinary days, it is but a beginning, a graduation to a higher class, the opening of a door into a better, cleaner, brighter, more enduring world. One year of the New Order will blot out every unpleasant memory of the world's bad past and unusually trying period of transition in which we now find ourselves.

This is what we have prayed for a thousand times: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Knowing as we do from the Word that the Kingdom of God on earth must needs be introduced forcibly and uncompromisingly in the midst of great, man-made troubles—troubles not foreordained but clearly foreseen—must we not also accept the inevitable preliminary disorders? Since there is but one road to that better Day, and that road lies through storm and stress, let us recognize the storm as a part of the Plan, and rejoice that we know of the peace which lies beyond, rejoice that we have the promise of protection through it all (Psalm 91).

Perhaps we are like the church which was praying for Peter's release from prison (Acts 12). When suddenly, in answer to their prayers, Peter stood before the door knocking, they were incredulous, and charged the doorkeeper with madness! So we, when the prayed-for Kingdom of God comes

thundering at our gates, may perhaps fail to read the "face of the sky" (Matt. 16:2-3) and begin to worry, murmur, or despair as those who have no hope. This is the time for us to show our faith by our works, to demonstrate that we really believe what we have been saying.

Some of us can endure suspense and uncertainty better than others. Most of us do not like it; but since it is the lot of this generation, we might do well to see how a group of eminently successful men and women made the very best of an exceedingly troubled period. Read the book of Acts again, if you have not read it recently. Its author, St. Luke, is recognized by news writers as a first-rate reporter for his skillful handling, in a very condensed space, of the background, motion, and character study which enters into a good story. In other words, a good news writer with limited space touches only the really important points. Now let us see what Luke considered really important.

In the entire book the promulgation of the Gospel is the central theme. Even the biographies of the leading characters are subordinated to the history of the cause they represented. Of the contemporary wars of the Roman Empire there is no mention. There is a brief allusion to a famine, but only as a fulfillment of the words of an inspired prophet. Of local Palestinian and Asiatic political events, we are left in darkness. King Herod's horrible death, terminating his career as a persecutor, is given one short verse; while the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch is considered worthy of thirteen, and that of Cornelius is good enough for almost an entire chapter. "The word of God grew and multiplied." One might gather from the narrative that life in that part of the world was proceeding pretty much as usual.

On the other hand, the historian Josephus' ac-

count of the same period is a depressing chronicle of anarchy and chaos, of rapacious misgovernment, social unrest and unemployment, of bloody insurrection and savage repression, of brigandage and terrorism. Events for several decades had been working up to the fatal rebellion of A.D. 70 which brought the Jewish Age to a violent end, and the secular history of the time would give the impression that life was so miserable and uncertain as to be well-nigh unbearable. Yet of all this no word appears in the Acts of the Apostles! Why not? It was not that the writer did not know of it, but it simply did not matter; it was not of sufficient importance to get into the record. God's scale of values, His thoughts, are not those of men, as this comparison proves.

The apostles and their followers were men and women strong enough and wise enough to hold a true course in a stormy time; and while the Jewish world was going fast to destruction, they were going on to perfection. To them this was their great opportunity to make good, and they did it. To wait for things to settle down would have been fatal; what they did must be done then, regardless of external conditions. Complete consecration lifted them to a stratosphere where the storms no longer mattered; minor inconveniences, "light afflictions," nothing more!

If they, men like ourselves, with all our weaknesses and temptations, could accomplish this work of overcoming self under such trying conditions, and do it uncomplainingly, we can—if *we will*. It will call for vigilance and watchfulness, for vision and faith to look beyond the day's good or bad news, to keep a straight course toward the City whose gates shall never close, where "violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders."

Let us, when doubts, discouragements, and forebodings threaten and crowd close, remember the words of Jesus: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Say to yourself, "This is the test, the hard pull that I have been training for. What am I going to do about it? Am I going to be the man God expects me to be? This is the beginning of what I have been looking, praying, hoping for. Why should my faith fail, so near the end?"

Believing God's promise, we face the uncertainties of the immediate future confidently and without alarm, knowing that, regardless of what may happen in Europe, Asia, Africa, or in America, the final outcome will be the establishment by force of the literal Kingdom of God on

earth, with Jesus Christ as a universal King. The present distress is but the darkness before the dawn. The "times and the seasons" warn that the Day is very, very nigh at hand, even at the door. "For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28).

Remember the words of the Master, recorded in Mark 13:35-37, "Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. *And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*"

MM

Finally, Brethren

More on the Disciples

1. Which disciple's mother-in-law was healed of a fever on the Sabbath? (Luke 4:38-39)
2. At the Last Supper: Which disciple said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us"? (John 14:8)
Which disciple said, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5)
Who said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head"? (John 13:9)
To which apostle did Jesus say, "That thou doest, do quickly"? (John 13:27)
3. To which apostle did Jesus say three times, "Feed my sheep"? (John 21:15-17)
4. Which two apostles healed a man at the gate Beautiful? (Acts 3:2-8)
5. Which apostle was by trade a tentmaker? (Acts 18:2-3)
6. Which apostle said to Jesus, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John 14:22)
7. To which apostle did Jesus say, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice"? (Matt. 26:34)
8. Which apostle was preaching when Eutychus fell out the third story window? (Acts 20:9-10)
9. Which apostle was privileged to have a glimpse of the future glory and kingdom when in exile? (Rev. 1:9)
10. Which disciple brought his brother to Christ? (John 1:40-41)
11. Which disciple heard these words in a vision: "Kill and eat"? (Acts 10:13)
12. To which disciple did Jesus say, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile"? (John 1:47)
13. Which three of the apostles were partners in business at the time of their calling? (Luke 5:10)



Letters

Helps On the Way

In this battle for life eternal, I find help in His Word. We have a list of what to think about in Phil. 4:8, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Reading and studying the Bible every day is a must. Our search through the Bible for golden gems of truth will be enjoyable hours, especially when we realize we are laying up treasures for the future.

Another help is thinking of a song to sing as we go about our work, such as "Sunshine In My Soul." I find I can't think of worldly things when I have one of God's songs on my mind. There is much wisdom in the song "Up and Be Ready, the Day Draweth Near."

As we turn to the Bible for His thoughts and plans, I read of the swelling of Jordan. Where shall we stand in that day when the faithful and unfaithful shall be separated? If we haven't severed our affections from worldly things and people, we could find ourselves in the position of Lot's wife, whose sympathy and interest in that which lay behind her in the doomed city brought about her destruction.

Just to read the book *MILLENNIUM SUPERWORLD* is enough to cause enthusiasm to fight this battle with self until the victory is won.

God has been so good to me to have extended my life until this present time, with still opportunity to work for Him.

Davenport, Iowa

W.P.

Be Doers

We surely need to be reminded often to keep the Word of God always in mind—yes, and act on it; for only the doers of the Word will be saved.

Toronto, Ontario

S. R.

Appreciative

Your recorded and written material of the Word of God means so much to us in these last dark days just before the long-awaited return of our Lord and King. What a joy to know the Truth! Thank you very much.

Conyers, Georgia

Mrs. G. P.

Stronger Faith

If I had not come in contact with the Megiddo Church through the MESSAGE and your books, I know my faith would not have been as strong as it is now.

Blackwater, Virginia

K. R.

Priceless Treasure

We have this shining hope handed to us, and how we should appreciate it. The world has no need of God; their attitude is eat, drink and be merry. We heard how a certain man steals anything he can get his hands on just to pay for his \$70.00 habit. Imagine, and this is only one person. What would happen to this world if it were not for that grand and precious promise that Christ will soon be here!

We have the priceless treasure, the Word of God, that was written for us. God has been gracious in His everlasting mercy to extend our time. I know I have a long way to go and each moment is for my benefit. The old man is not very easy to conquer; he surely springs up on so many occasions, especially when I think I have him under control. God is so longsuffering to give us another chance.

We must learn to accept what comes. The children of Israel murmured and complained continually. We do not want to be like them.

Lake Monroe, Florida

B. B.

Thankful Every Day

Our great question should be, What shall we do? And we know the answer: Read, study the Scriptures, meditate on them and strive to do all to the glory of God!

May we think of this often—"Only a good character will count with the Lord." Yes, we need to keep our hearts filled with good thoughts at all times.

We know all this will take work on our part, so it behooves us to get down to the work and work always until the end.

We should thank God for every new day—whatever it brings. For if we are willing and doing God's will, it will be a beautiful day any way.

Kinards, South Carolina

E. C.

IF Jesus Came

If Jesus came today, what would he find us doing? reading? thinking? This should be such a good reminder to us—to really be up and pressing on, to kill all of the old man. Our thoughts are what make us, for good or ill.

Let us not waste our time, (which is really our life) for time is really marching on.

Kinards, South Carolina

H. C.

Striving to Do Better

I am very happy in the Truth, and am striving to do better each day, and keep a right spirit when cares are pressing sore. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105).

Rome, Georgia

S. J.

Pressing On

The cassette tapes arrived and I'm delighted with them. Many thanks for them.

No turning back for me. It is on, steadily onward. Be ye therefore perfect!

With so much spiritual food, how we are helped to grow, become more like our Master. That day will come, and I must be ready. It is urgent, nothing else is so important. And the wonderful hymns and tunes, we can go on learning, imbibing the Truth.

Truly the cassettes are the greatest and best invention we scattered ones could have access to. My cup runneth over with so much week after week. Just when trials were mounting, strength taxed by various unexpected calls on my time (ever precious) and I being willing but the flesh weak, these blessings showered so unstintingly have proved the greatest tonic I could have had.

I know I can trust in God; He shows the way, I'll follow, never doubting. I'm absolutely overwhelmed at so many overtures from so many of God's people. Thank you for everything. I'm pressing on the upward way with you.

Crewe, England

N. T.

The All-Seeing Eye

If only we could ride smoothly into the Kingdom without the excess weights clinging to us. There is no question but that we must shed them before entering in.

Before boarding a plane the electric eye looks through our baggage and our persons. But when the all-seeing eye of the Judge at that day looks through us we may be sure He will be very scrutinizing. He will not miss anything. We will either be just or we will forever remain unjust. Everything depends upon our individual effort, what use we make of the remaining time still granted us. The hour is very late and Jesus' concern for His own is recorded in Mark 13:33, "Be careful, watch, because you don't know when it will happen."

In the meanwhile let us grow and continue steadfast in the faith unto the end.

South Amboy, New Jersey

L. K.

Working for the Reward

The thought should be with us: Are we redeeming the time as we should? Are we trying to urge ourselves to keep going and doing the things that glorify God; to keep our minds and thoughts pure and holy?

This life is short at best, but we can make it work for a reward far above all we can ask or think, if we subdue our evil nature. We will be trees bearing much fruit for the Master's use.

For blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. The apostle John said this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.

It takes a lifetime to reach this obedience.

Peru, Kansas

W. R.

Put Out All Evil

Perfection of character is the master key to eternal salvation. We must put out all evil from within, and so be dead to sin, and alive to God.

Bright, Ontario

M. B.

Finally, Brethren

BUMP!

IT IS ONE of those familiar yellow highway signs, with its brief, pointed warning message: "Bump." And sure enough, a hundred or so yards down the road, there it is, the bump we anticipated. A real "bump" it was, but not the jolt it might have been had we been taken by surprise. The sign had served its purpose. Or maybe, if we traveled the road frequently, we wouldn't have been surprised anyway, for the bump was there before the sign.

But we wonder: Why the "Bump" sign? Why not repair the road? Then there would be no need for the sign. But putting up the sign was so much easier and less costly. At least it would warn people until the need for the sign could be eliminated. Or maybe the highway department decided that the bump was not that serious, and so long as there was a sign to warn travelers of it, all responsibility was fulfilled.

"Bump" signs are bad enough on the highways; but far worse is this technique when it is used to cover our unrepaired, unreformed and undesirable character traits. We have a tendency to run short of patience. So when we feel the pressure rising, and our supply dwindling, instead of taking ourselves in hand and strengthening our willpower to hold on, we put up our "Bump" sign and let others know that we have had all we can take; any more is dangerous. And from there on it is up to *them*, either to keep quiet or take the consequences. If we become provoked or angered, *they* are to blame—they didn't heed our sign.

Or we have a tendency to want something that doesn't belong to us. Instead of telling ourselves firmly what we will and will not do, up goes our "Bump" sign. We say by our actions, "Don't tempt me—I'm vulnerable"—which is really no shining signal of our honesty. Or we carry a grudge against a certain person. All is well until something is said about them. Then suddenly, up goes our "Bump" sign again, as if to say, "Better be careful!" And so, unconsciously, we say that warning others of our shortcoming is an acceptable alternative to getting rid of it. Raising "bump" signs admits to others that the undesirable trait is there, but it says also that we don't intend to change.

Bad traits, bad habits, bad temperaments, bad moods are not removed simply by admitting they exist. Why not go to work, dig up the "road," and repair the cause of the "Bump." Then there will be no need for any sign.

MM

The Coming of His Feet

*In the crimson of the morning, in the brightness of the noon,
In the amber glory of the day's retreat,
In the midnight, robed in darkness or the gleaming of the moon,
I listen for the coming of His feet.*

*I have heard His weary footsteps on the sands of Galilee,
On the temple's marble pavement, on the street,
Worn with sorrow's weight, and faltering up the slopes of Calvary,
The sorrow of the coming of His feet.*

*Down the minster aisles of splendor, from between the cherubim,
Through the wondering throng, with motion strong and fleet,
Sounds His victor tread approaching with a music far and dim,
The music of the coming of His feet.*

*Sandled not with sheen of silver, girded not with woven gold,
Weighted not with shimmering gems and odors sweet,
But with power and shod with glory in the tabor light of old—
The glory of the coming of His feet.*

*He is coming, O my spirit! with His everlasting peace,
With His blessedness, immortal and complete;
He is coming, O my spirit, and His coming brings release—
I listen for the coming of His feet.*