



Megiddo Message

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"The Morning Cometh"

April 1983

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SINCE the beginning of time, "morning" has held the hope and promise of life. Morning suggests renewal, restitution, invigoration, opportunity, joy, delight. "Weeping may endure for a night," wrote the Psalmist long ago, "but joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. 30:5).

King David in his last message to his people saw prophetically the dawning of the better Day "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (II Sam. 23:3-4). This Day is almost upon us, the Day that will bring the glorious light of a new morning to all mankind.

The thought of the morning is especially meaningful as we contemplate the present world situation and realize how utterly hopeless it is—from a human vantagepoint. I would like to quote from an editorial by Max Morrow, entitled "Terminating History." The article was published in *The Bible Advocate and Herald of the Coming Kingdom* of December 21, 1959, but its message is as timely today as when written.

"Just how much longer the present trend of world affairs can continue, only God knows. He has not let man know the extent of patience and long-suffering that He has toward mankind. But there is a breaking point. There will come a time when violence has prevailed long enough. Then is when the great voice shall peal out from heaven, 'It is done' (Rev. 16:17).

"God was long-suffering with rebellious mankind in Noah's day. But there came a day when the clouds poured out their contents and the springs of the earth broke loose, causing the great deluge. The means of escape were sealed away from those who had refused to listen. Only destruction awaited them.

"In the closing days of this decade, the world is in a whirl. The pendulum keeps marking time; the calendar keeps turning pages; the years keep rushing by. And with each advance in time, the culmination of this sinful world approaches at rapid speed. World events today are only curtain lifters of the climactic scene of Christ's return.

"December, 1959, marks the end of a progressive decade; progressive, that is, in automation, science, industry—

practically everything that pertains to this world and its system. It also marks the end of a decade of world-wide fear and tension. What do the 60's hold?

"The curtain raiser is almost finished. The great Director of events is ready to give the signal for the greatest of all displays. 'The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord' (Zephaniah 1:14-15).

"We are at the end of a prosperous decade in monetary values. Capital investment is at an all-time high. But the ancient admonition was: 'Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath' (Zephaniah 1:18).

"Nations of the world seemingly are unable to stir up enough strife to satisfy them. While diplomats talk peace, rebels plan insurrection. While negotiations are being made to end hostilities, budgets are exceeded in production of implements of nuclear warfare. Peace seems to be pending, but sudden destruction lurks in the shadows. Current events surely point to a termination in history.

"To view the past year in retrospect produces a feeling of awe and amazement. Viewing the decade just ending makes one tremble. The tension is mounting. Surely it must be about time for the curtain to rise on the most dramatic event known to the world. It promises to be a tragedy, a glory, and a mystery all in one: a tragedy because of its unhappy ending for the wicked; a glory because of its joyous climax for the righteous; a mystery because its scenes are shrouded in obscurity and arouse curiosity.

"The annals of worldly history are about to be closed. The millennial age is very near.

"A preview has been given of the wonders of coming events, but present conditions demonstrate their terminating nature. The closing shadows are pressing in upon us, but a golden dawning awaits."

Indeed, the morning is coming, brilliant beyond compare, that morning which will usher in a new age for earth's inhabitants. Let us prepare, that we may greet that eternal morning with joy!

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

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

About Our Cover...

For our cover photograph we are indebted to the kindness of D. C. Lowe, who resides in Oregon. The photograph was taken south of Cannon Bay, Oregon Coast.

Special Bulletin

JERUSALEM—Word has reached here that the long promised Messiah has been born in Bethlehem of Judea. Elderly Jews interrogated in the temple say this may be the Messiah child prophesied by Isaiah more than 700 years ago.

Four shepherds who were outside the village of Bethlehem last night (Abib First) report a strange happening—if you can believe it. The men report having seen a bright light descend from heaven, so bright that it lighted up the field where they were keeping their flocks for the night. They quoted an angel who they say appeared in the light and said, "Don't be afraid! (They already were!) I bring you the most joyful news ever announced! . . . The Saviour, . . . the Messiah, . . . has been born tonight in Bethlehem!"

Following the announcement of the angel they report hearing the most beautiful singing imaginable, coming from the heavens! Immediately they left their flocks and went into the village where they found the child lying in a manger in the stable at the rear of the only inn in town.

They report that the child's mother and her husband, Mary and Joseph, both of Nazareth, arrived late in the day to be on hand for the New Moon feast, and found all the rooms filled because of the influx of Jewish people attending the feast. The innkeeper, sensing the plight of the young woman, provided them blankets and directed them to the stable in the rear. The story has been confirmed by several of the townspeople who talked with the shepherds.

—*Josiah Shallom, Jerusalem*

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, **Founder**; Kenneth E. Flowerday, **President and Editor**.

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Wise Men Still Seek Him

WHEN JESUS was born in Bethlehem of Judea many centuries ago, we read that "wise men from the east" came seeking Him. However, they came not to Bethlehem but to Jerusalem, where they inquired of the most unlikely person—Herod—who was then ruler of the province. "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" they asked. "For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

To the wise men from the east it was a simple question; for Herod it was a matter of his authority, a challenge to his own almighty position in the land, a threat to his supremacy. "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled," not only he but "all Jerusalem with him."

We know from the narrative in the book of Matthew that Herod was not pleased with the news. He proceeded immediately to gather the "chief priests and scribes of the people together," and "demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet."

So when Herod sent the wise men on their way, to Bethlehem, He added this instruction, "And when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

It does not take much imagination to see Herod's ulterior motive in this. No

idea of worship was in *his* mind, but only hate and revenge. Who should *dare* rival him for the throne? He would have no chance, not the slightest. Herod would see to that!

The wise men from the east came seeking; they were doing on their part. God recognized this, and provided special divine guidance; and at length their seeking was rewarded. They found. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

This is all we are told about these mysterious "wise men from the east" who came seeking the King. Were they nobles, merchants, traders, or just ordinary men of good and honest hearts? They must have been men whom God considered wise at least in some degree, for they were given heavenly guidance which even Herod did not have—they saw "his star in the east." We may also observe their humble, worshipful attitude. They came bringing rich gifts. They were ready to sacrifice for the Child of Promise. In the words of the poet, "They brought him the best, the fairest, that earthly wealth could find." Nothing was too good or too costly to sacrifice for the King they adored.

Wise men from the east. They sought

and they found; they brought and they gave. Does it not make us think of *other* wise men—wise men who even today seek Christ, and *find*? They are not seeking the newborn infant but the real authority of the King Himself, Christ, His wisdom, His will, His way, and—above all—His approval. Yes indeed, wise men *still* seek Him.

Thank God for these few, honest-hearted seekers today. For the divine promise still stands, "Seek, and ye shall find." "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

Who are these wise men? Are you and I qualified to be numbered among them? What are the distinguishing aspects of their noble wisdom? What makes them *wise*? Whom does God call wise? First of all, we know that they are not the wise of this world, for we read that "The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God." God's wisdom is so much higher, deeper, purer, and surer than the highest wisdom of men. For as "the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." So vast is the difference that there is just no comparison.

The book of Proverbs tells us much about the wise.

We are admonished to "go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways

and be wise" (Prov. 6:6). The wise prepare for the future.

The wise control their words: "He that refraineth his lips is wise" (Prov. 10:19). "A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards" (Prov. 29:11).

"The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death" (Prov. 13:14).

It is wise to be afraid of wrong. "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident" (Prov. 14:16).

The wise make the proper use of knowledge. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright" (Prov. 15:2).

It is wise to hear and heed reproof. "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise" (Prov. 15:31).

The wise listen to advice: "He that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise" (Prov. 12:15). And again, "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end" (Prov. 19:20).

Being wise means speaking "right things": "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things" (Prov. 23:15-16).

Wisdom of God means spiritual strength. "A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength" (Prov. 24:5).

Being wise means taking reproof in a spirit of humble obedience. What is more beautiful than "a wise reprover upon an obedient ear"? (Prov. 25:12).

Being wise means being ever ready to hear and learn. "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning" (Prov. 1:5).

According to James, the wise and "endued with knowledge" are they who will show their wisdom out of "godly lives, with humility and wisdom in their actions" (Jas. 3:13, Jerusalem Bible).

Paul's advice to his son in the faith Timothy was he should continue in these words of life which are "able to

make thee wise unto salvation" (II Tim. 3:15).

Making proper use of our time classifies us as wise. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise" (Eph. 5:15-16). Or as phrased by another translator, "Be very careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent and not like senseless people"—this is a sign of real wisdom.

The wise virgins showed exceptional foresight in doing more than would have seemed necessary. They pre-

pared—and also took with them an additional supply of oil, more than they expected to need. Because of this extra oil, they were able to survive the extended delay when their less prepared companions could not.

and our interests in the perspective of God's long-range promises? Have we the foresight and good sense to sacrifice present advantage in the interest of eternal gain?

The ancient Lawgiver used far-sightedness as a measure of wisdom. "O that they were wise, that they understood this," he wrote, "that they would consider their latter end" (Deut. 32:29). Have we this wisdom?

Have we the wisdom that will allow us to take reproof with good grace and

Are we numbered among the wise who still seek Christ?

pared—and also took with them an additional supply of oil, more than they expected to need. Because of this extra oil, they were able to survive the extended delay when their less prepared companions could not.

According to Jesus, the "wise man" is he who builds his house of life on the sure foundation of evidence, digging deep, so that he may be prepared to stand the storms and stresses of life without falling. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Matt. 7:24).

The prophet Hosea classified the wise as those who understand. "Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them?" (Hos. 14:9).

Are we wise?

It might be well for us at the beginning of another Sacred Year to test ourselves and see whether we qualify as "wise" in the sight of God.

Are we numbered among the wise who still seek Christ?

Are we wise enough to see our lives

profit by it, no matter what our own thoughts in the matter might be? Have we the humble honesty to see ourselves as we are, admit our wrong, and go to work with real earnestness to do better?

Have we the even deeper wisdom to seek and long for that which will show us what we are naturally and which will train us in the good and right way?

Have we the still deeper wisdom that moves us to be constantly suspicioning ourselves, fearful lest we slip into error and jeopardize our interests in the coming Kingdom of Christ?

Have we the wisdom to apply what we know to every situation of our lives, to force ourselves to live according to the maximum we have learned, to be always alert, watchful and apprehensive, never giving ourselves any latitude to please ourselves?

Have we the wisdom not to put off even for a single hour what we know we should—and could—do right now? The mental discipline, the moral alertness, the word of encouragement, the self-denial—have we learned to do it now? Have we learned that opportu-

nities must be grasped immediately as they appear, that procrastination is indeed the thief of time—and worse, the thief of life itself?

Are we wise enough to overlook petty slights, realizing that in all probability they were not intended? And can we rise above petty feelings, petty gripes, petty strifes?

Have we the wisdom that can keep ourselves firmly under control at all

nary gain in the world to come?

Are we wise enough to judge situations as God judges them, to see as He sees, to weigh everything we do in the scale of its eternal value? Are we sure that everything that is important to us is important to God?

If we can acquire such wisdom as this, the next twelve months, if they be granted us, should find us many miles nearer our goal and many miles further

Thank God for these few, honesthearted seekers today.

times, body, soul and spirit?

Have we the wisdom that can say No to ourselves and mean it?

Have we the wisdom never to appear what we are not, but yet keep reaching for what we long to be?

Yes, how wise are we? Are we wise in all the choices we make—in our choice of companions, of occupations, of friends—and even in our choice of the thoughts we entertain? Do we exercise the utmost caution in what we allow ourselves to read or look at?

Are we wise enough to avoid temptations which might overpower us, until we have mastered the strength to stand against them?

Have we the wisdom to keep ourselves from being too encumbered with the things that are seen, to keep our eye fixed firmly on the world to come and our whole heart bent on obtaining for ourselves a place in it?

Have we the wisdom that can prefer another above ourselves and hold no feelings of hostility or ill will?

Are we so wise that we never do anything to be seen of one another, but seek to impress only our Father which is in heaven and the Christ whom we are seeking?

Have we the wisdom to choose a humble position now, to do ordinary tasks, in the prospect of extraordi-

ary gain in the world to come?

Why are we so concerned about being wise? Because God's promises to the wise are beyond comparison. The wise are they who shall shine "as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Then, too, the "wise shall inherit glory" (Prov. 3:35). And we must never forget those beautiful promises in the hand of Wisdom: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding....Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is everyone that retaineth her" (Prov. 3:13-18).

Is not this the height of our longing and our desire?

Oh, let us in each and every day of this new year prove ourselves wise men who seek and seek earnestly the highest and best, the good and the right way for ourselves, and the shortest route into the heavenly Kingdom of Christ.

Let us be in deed and in truth those wise men who still seek Him, and who seek with all their heart and soul and strength, knowing that such seeking shall surely find Him, and be found—
and blessed—of Him.

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How About that Luggage, Traveler?

ARE WE, as travelers on the high-road to lands celestial, keeping pace with the onward march of time? Let's look at our luggage, all these gripsacks of sin. Why carry them along? Without them we shall puff less and be able to move considerably faster.

Hebrews 12:1 advises us to lay aside the weights. Several of the modern translations suggest action more vigorous. "Surrounded as we are by such a vast cloud of witnesses, let us fling aside every encumbrance and the sin that so readily entangles our feet" (Heb. 12:1, Weymouth).

"Fling." Is this more violent than we are used to in dealing with our personal besetments? Such spiritual energy puts our own lethargy to shame! Whenever did we "fling" or "drive by violence" an evil from our nature? The zealous author of Hebrews was disgusted with any impediment to his progress toward the eternal prize upon which he fixed his gaze. So he was, and so must we be also.

We travel along, expecting the weights to drop of their own accord, but they never will. Weights which we have carried so long are not easily laid aside. It is like any other process: if we are going to do it, we must muster all our strength, courage and determination and be done. "Fling" them away.

MM

Facing Reality

—with God

THE ABILITY, courage and perseverance to face reality and successfully cope with it is perhaps one of the greatest personal achievements. It certainly cannot be classed as a natural endowment, especially when we look about us and observe the lengths to which we poor, weak humans will sometimes go to sidestep reality's harsh certainties.

Consider the reaction of the vast majority who have no knowledge of coming events or of God's purpose for this sin-sick, morally decadent and explosive twentieth-century world of ours. Are they facing reality and grappling with it? They are definitely aware of the fact that something is going to happen and relatively soon, but their one thought seems to be, "Let's eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die." Consequently they scurry madly from one round of pleasure-seeking to another in a vain attempt to shut out reality.

No honest person can fail to admit that life is hard at times, exceedingly hard; but vainly attempting to hide our heads in the sand, refusing to face reality, will accomplish nothing. Most assuredly no one travels life's road without entering more than once the darkness and loneliness of personal Gethsemanes. Perhaps unexpected circumstances force us to relinquish something that took years to attain; or we are perplexed, bewildered and sometimes deeply grieved by the attitudes and reactions of our friends; or possibly our faith in the mercy and justice of God is severely tested.

How often have we, when driven to our knees by the fury of life's storms and adversities, uttered the doleful lament: "Why me, Lord? Isn't life hard enough without the added weight of this ruthless testing?" The answer is relatively simple; but the understanding and acceptance of it will require a tremendous amount of reality facing on our part. Why does God allow the trials? Because He wants to make something of us. He sees our potential, He knows our capabilities. He knows infinitely better than we what is necessary to humble, to purify and perfect in us a noble, spotless character. It is just possible that we are not spiritually mature enough to possess what we thought was within our grasp; perhaps we need to learn a few hard lessons in our own attitudes and feelings towards those whose lives touch ours. And last but not least, we may require stern reminders to acquaint us with the fact that our ways are not God's ways, neither are our thoughts His thoughts.

All of which brings us to the inescapable fact that we are frequently blind to ourselves and our many failings. All too often we search desperately for some way to run away from facing the harsh and condemning realities about ourselves. But though we prefer not to face the distressing and humiliating facts, honesty forces us to admit that many of our problems are self made. We don't like the glaring reality; it's damaging to our ego and comfortable complacency. But there is no erasing it; the fact still remains.

What are our options? What course shall we pursue? The answer is simple. Either we face the realities about life in general and our inherent spiritual

weaknesses in particular and do something about them, or we go on living in a dream world. The choice is completely ours. We cannot attempt to claim ignorance or hide behind a naive attitude. We know better! Have not the eyes of our spiritual understanding been enlightened? The reality of our responsibilities as aspiring Christians is no secret. Our task is to face the realization that we by nature are not what we need to be, and go about remedying the condition.

We would do well to heed this timely advice from the book of James: "Don't I beg you merely hear the message, but put it into practice. The man who simply hears and does nothing about it is like a man catching the reflection of his own face in the mirror. He sees himself, it is true, but he goes on with whatever he was doing without the slightest recollection of what sort of person he saw in the mirror. But the man who looks into the perfect mirror of God's law, and makes a habit of doing so, is not the man who sees and forgets. He puts the Law into practice, and he wins true happiness" (Jas. 1:22-25, Phillips).

If ever we attain to the joy and happiness of the upright life that James speaks of, there is one reality we must face from the very start. Nobody can do the work for us; it is entirely ours to do. While it is true that godly associations are of benefit, we would do well to remember that holiness does not rub off. The character we admire in others did not just happen. They also had to face reality; they also had to admit that the mirror of God's Word revealed many unpleasant personal qualities. However, they did not ignore or make excuses for their deficiencies. They fought valiantly against sin's beguiling snares and they won! Just so must we face ourselves as we are and make some radical changes.

Where do we start? Why not with some of those miserable besetments
(Continued on page 22)

Who was Jesus? Rather, who is He?

The original story is simple. Jesus was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was 30 years old, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never went to college. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where He was born. He never did any of the things that usually accompany greatness.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone since He lived among men, and died and was buried. And yet He lives! He is living today, this very day! Death could not hold Him. Three days in the power of sinful men, suffering the cruelest penalty of their law, He was raised from the sleep of death to live forevermore. Men rejected Him, but God exalted Him. And He was taken to heaven, where God has glorified Him.

Wherein lies His power to change men? In the hope He offers men, in the life He demonstrated before them, in the appeal He voiced among them, in the flawless example of purity He lay before them. Only thirty-three years of mortal life, but those were years of intense preparation, discipline and accomplishment. So thoroughly did He develop Himself during that short time that when He emerged a Leader among men, nothing could divert Him from His heavenly calling. Popularity could no more turn His head than rejection could cast Him down. He knew the ground whereon He stood, and He knew the Author of the words He spoke.

And so He set the example of holiness for His brethren, His followers, and all who should live in years to come—even us. Jesus changes lives, as powerfully and as completely as He changed Himself. Jesus changes lives—not for a day, or a few years, but ultimately for all eternity!—just as He Himself has been changed, crowned with glory and honor! an inheritor of life forevermore!

Let us imagine that we can hear from a few of those men and women whose lives Jesus changed. What was their reaction to the change Jesus wrought in their lives? What would we have done had we been in their place?

Zaccheus

Picture: *Zaccheus up in a tree, Jesus standing below, looking up at him. At Jesus' silent beckoning, Zaccheus comes down and speaks:*

You know me as the businessman in Jericho who was too short to see what he wanted to see. So, all other methods failing, I climbed a tree one day to be able to see Jesus. I wanted to see Him and hear what He had to say. I had a big empty place in my life; I wasn't happy, and I didn't have any friends—probably because of my business: tax collecting.

But that day Jesus invited Himself to my house for dinner. Unbelievable! No one else ever came, even when I invited them—it was a disgrace to dine with a tax collector. But here was Jesus inviting Himself!

We had a bountiful dinner, for money and goods were no problem to me. We lingered a long while over our meal that day—I scarcely knew what I ate, so involved was I in what He had to say. He told of His mission on earth, of His coming Kingdom and how we might prepare to live in it. I listened in amazement, for I had never heard anything like it before, nor had I ever listened to so powerful a speaker.

My life was never the same after that day's meeting. As I sat and pondered His words and searched my heart, I realized why my life had been so empty—I had no hope, no purpose, no goal, no God. But Jesus changed all this. I learned so much! And I learned I could have friends someday, a whole grand company of people, even the glorious fellowship of the saints!—if I could now live as one of them. Think of it—I, Zaccheus, the hated publican, joining the fellowship of the saints!

What a change! That very day I made a start—I turned my stingy selfish nature inside out and decided to be generous and helpful to others. I even restored fourfold what I had taken. There followed many days and weeks and years of surrender, but remembering Jesus I kept at it. I knew that if I became like Him, He would someday do even more for me—far more!

Simon the Zealot

Picture: *Four warriors conspiring together and brandishing their swords, obviously scheming against the government. Simon steps out and speaks:*

They called me Simon the Canaanite, but I am better known by my nickname Simon the Zealot. Not a flattering name, for the Zealots were a political party, and a revolutionary one. Fanatic patriots. We were out to get—by force, if necessary—the freedom we thought belonged to Israel. We wanted Israel to have independence—national, political, and religious.

Why did a man like me listen when Jesus came along? Was it the fiery, challenging, gripping preaching of this Prophet from Nazareth? Or maybe I had some idea that He might be the hero we Zealots were looking for. I don't really know.

But the more I saw of Him, and heard Him, the more I realized He had something. He had not come to throw off the yoke of Rome, He had come to change us as men, to make of us the type of men He could use for His Kingdom. And nobody needed more changing than I. You can imagine what I was—a man of fervor, often burning with passion, and a strong instinct for revenge. If Jesus wanted enthusiasm in His group, I had it—enough for all! I could make things move for them!

But I soon learned that my fiery fervor had to be harnessed. Jesus wanted enthusiasm, true enough. But He wanted it aimed in the right direction. He wanted my freedom-fighter blood used, first of all, to fight the evils in my own nature—my pride, my self-confidence, my intolerant spirit, my explosive anger. And that miserable spirit of revenge. All these had to be done away with!

Well, it was a great change. But I did it. I changed as I could never have believed possible. Slowly I was able to see my aims and motives becoming more and more those of my new Commander. I was learning the wonderful lesson of submission.

I marvel as I think back at the man I was—hot-headed, daring, visionary firebrand among Jesus' own apostles! What a risk He took when He chose me! But Jesus was willing to take the risk; and I—I can only say I am thankful He was. Who knows how long I could have survived the life of a Zealot? And what if I had thrown off the yoke of Rome, what then?

No, I needed Jesus, His life, His example, His teaching to save me from the terror of myself. He gave my life a purpose and a goal. And when the change is complete, I will be more than a subduer of Rome—I will be a stone in the foundation of a new and eternal government—even the new Jerusalem. What an honor! What a triumph!

Mary, Sister of Lazarus

Picture: *Mary, Martha and Lazarus seated in the living-room of their home. Mary steps out and speaks.*

We made our home together, Martha and Lazarus and myself. We owned a business and were happy living and working together.

And we were Jews, good Jews. Faithfully we attended every service at the synagogue. We knew the law and the prophets, and looked for the promised Messiah. But little did we realize that He was right among us, living in our part of the world at that very time, and only a few miles from our home!

One day Martha was in Jerusalem, and she chanced to hear Jesus preaching. She came home bursting with the message she had heard. Such a contrast to the lifeless rituals of the priests at the synagogue! We just had to hear Him. Well, it wasn't long until He came again, and we *did* hear Him, all three of us. Such teaching! such authority! we had never heard anything like it. We tarried afterward to talk with Him. We even invited Him to come to our home—and He accepted!

But oh, the changes that came with Him. We were loyal Jews, and accustomed to outward obediences; but Jesus taught us to do something about our *inner* lives—He wanted us clean through and through. Those thoughts, motives, and attitudes. His doctrine centered around one requirement: *purity of heart*.

After Jesus visited our home, we grew more and more aware of little things that had to change—petty jealousies, little grievances, and so many trifles which, He assured us, would add up to that masterful degree of perfection.

Yes, Jesus came to us with life-changing power. And we changed!

(Continued Next Issue)

Free to Obey

FREEDOM: One of Mr. Webster's definitions for freedom is exemption or liberation from the control of some other person or some arbitrary power. Another one is: Being able to act, move, use, etc., without hindrance or restraint. The former definition is how we as followers of Christ know freedom. The love of God constraineth us. We are free to act, move, use, etc., as we ought, not as we please.

"Stand fast in the liberty"—yes, the liberation from sin is what makes us truly free. If we let the word of God work effectually within we shall be free. If we practice it in our lives daily, it will make us free from our besetments, from all the evils that defile; which come from within.

Yet we have a strong tendency to hold back. He has given us His promises which are sure if we let His Word work freely within; let the word have free

course in our mind. Still we hesitate. This must be from lack of faith. Sometimes, it seems that we are like Joseph when an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream in Egypt, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel." And he arose and followed the Lord's instructions. "But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee." We, too, have a tendency to hesitate, even though we have been told. But we must grow; work hard and harder to overcome these occasional uneasy feelings. God called Abraham; he immediately obeyed. Paul immediately obeyed. We need not hold back, we must be strong in His grace, crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts. We have to love to do this so that faster progress can be made.

Faith and also perseverance will see us through. We are truly blessed in that we can inquire in His temple; inquire of the pure and holy. We shall get good advice and warnings to keep us in the way.

—Contributed

And Still She Speaks

Extracts from sermons, discussions, talks, comments
by Rev. Maud Hembree (1853-1935).



A Christian will not overtax himself on the one hand, nor will he kill time on the other. Nor will he be overbearing because he has a little authority; but he will be just, he will be meek and humble, doing to others as he would have them do to him.

On the Mission Steamer boat (1902-1904), we had to learn to be at peace, no quarrels or we knew there was a boat to take us to land. We knew there was law; there had to be. Forty women cooked on one stove. That was something to do. We did not have much room; a little bit of a place, one little cupboard and a shelf below that, that was our space in the kitchen. It was good for us. We learned self-control.

You must overcome your evil ways. Everybody has some evil. If you think you are not naturally selfish, you are greatly mistaken. You may not be in some ways, but you must watch yourself and you will find that you are selfish in some things. You may be liberal, but that also has to be governed by the law of God, for you may not be liberal at the right time or in the right place.

We are compared, in our natural condition, to a flower of the field that so soon passes away to be no more; but when God speaks of living long, He means through a gladsome eternity, not this fleeting, ephemeral existence. This life is so short that we are not really counted as living, in the sight of God, unless we are going to live eternally.

Do your work "with singleness of heart, as to the Lord." If you are working for someone, don't dally along with your work just to kill time; take an interest in it and work for the Lord, "with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" No wonder it will fill our soul with ecstatic joy! God—not man—has promised this. So often man cannot fulfill his promises, he cannot reach into the future. But the mighty God, that wonderful God whom the heavens declare His glory and the firmament showeth His handiwork, His mighty works of old, He is able to fulfill His promises. And what ecstatic joy will fill our very being when we gain the victory over death and the grave!

As we see the fulfillment of so many Bible prophecies, we can know the rest shall be fulfilled in God's own good time; and this should increase our faith in this Divine Word and stimulate us to be doers of the word. It should help us to come out from this world, this wicked world by which we are surrounded, and to put iniquity far away. It should help us to wash and become clean, that in that soon-coming Day we may be found worthy of helping to clean up this old earth; worthy of seeing the desert blossom as the rose; when all warfare and strife shall be past, forever banished from the earth, and love, joy and peace flow to all mankind throughout the endless cycles of eternity.

"Don't let it be said, Too Late." How needful is this admonition! We need to practice promptness in our temporal duties, but much more important is promptness in our spiritual life. We shall be too late if we do not use the time God is giving us.

How good God is to tell us what we must do, what these evil works are that must be put away! It is much more necessary to know this than to understand the parables and the allegories.

“Thou Art . . .

Thou Shalt Be”

SPOKE the Master to one, saying: “Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone” (John 1:42).

When Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus, those who knew Simon best decided that Jesus knew not the man He was surnaming when He announced Simon’s new name would be Cephas (Peter) which meant stonelike.

Jesus presented His challenge to Simon in two graphic phrases: “Thou art . . . thou shalt be.” Jesus was saying literally, “I know what you are at the moment, including your weakness for lying, profanity, bluff, and bluster. Nevertheless, I know that you can have granite-like stability, unflinching loyalty, and undying love. That quicksand in your nature can be mixed with the solid cement of integrity and you will become immovable.”

Perhaps no life recorded in Holy Writ contains more contrast than that of Simon Peter. Here is a man we can all understand, love and forgive because he is so like ourselves. A strange bundle of contradictions, he was earthly, boastful, talkative, cowardly, violent; yet the coin turned over was pure gold.

One might wonder why Jesus should choose for His disciple such a mixture of good and evil. It was because He could look past the evil and see the good—the warm-hearted loyalty, the fervid zeal, the leadership, the possibilities of granite courage, which should mark this rough-hewn character, once he was truly converted, as one of God’s truly great men.

Outspoken, vigorous Peter, we feel we know him because we know what he thought. We know what he thought because he said it. Out loud. To him, thought plus desire meant action, and sometimes trouble. Energy and determination are good in a good cause, and how much better when used in the best cause of all, in building a lofty and noble character worthy of being perpetuated in God’s eternity.

“Thou art . . . thou shalt be.” It was a most amazing thing to say, and unless we sadly misunderstand human nature, no one was quite so amazed as Simon himself. A rock? That is one thing he knew he was not!

Men would say, “Oh, yes, we know Simon, he is a good

sort, but . . .” But here were eyes piercing his own and a voice that said, “Thou shalt be a splinter—but part of the great rock of ages.” . . . and Peter was captured. Simon, a great elemental soul, with all the essentials of humanity strong in his personality; and yet just as weak as a man can be, until the day when he was apprehended by Jesus Christ, and the process began to transform his shale-like nature into a character of rock.

We are all familiar with the aching details of Peter’s denial of his Master. Cut to the heart, he went out and wept—bitterly.

What happened to Peter after that we do not know, for the gospel story draws a kindly veil over the agony of his shame. But we do know that this was not the end for Peter. On the morning of the Resurrection, no less a personage than an angel from heaven gave instructions that were to Peter words of reclamation and restoration: “Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here . . . But go your way, tell his disciples and *Peter*. ” Yes, don’t forget Peter. It was a message of hope. Penetrating beneath the smothering weight of shame, it was the fresh air of hope. For all his shameful faltering and denial, he was not rejected. He could *breathe* again, and with new strength he faced the remaining Ten, ready to charge ahead into a new life!

For our own encouragement in bridging the gap from “thou art” to “thou shalt be,” let us look a little closer at the life of Peter.

According to the record, no disciple was so pointedly reproved by our Lord as was Peter, and no disciple ever ventured to reprove his Master but Peter. No other disciple ever so boldly and outspokenly acknowledged and reassured our Lord as Peter did; and no one ever intruded and interfered and tempted Him as did Peter. To Peter, the Master spoke words of approval and praise, even blessing; at the same time, almost in the same breath, He reproved him sharply.

Hasty, headlong, speaking impertinently and unadvisedly, ever ready to repent; ever wading into waters too deep for him, and ever looking to his Master for help—that was Peter. Our Lord implies the strength of his

character when He called him a "stone." Indeed, Peter became the Gibraltar of the early church.

Behold this man who became rock. See him fearlessly preaching to the multitude at Pentecost. After being thoroughly flogged, hear him *rejoicing* that he was even accounted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's cause! See him accusing the men of Israel of denying the Holy One, crucifying Him and preferring a murderer's freedom instead. Hear him as he fearlessly proclaims, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Behold him in the prison guarded by sixteen soldiers, the threat of death at Herod's caprice upon him. But the time was not yet for this man whom the Master Himself had picked. He had not yet completed his work. So, while Herod raged, God's angel miraculously delivered Peter.

Note his epistle as he exhorts his fellow slaves and brethren to be brave and strong in the face of persecution. For the faithful there awaits an everlasting crown of glory—"an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." "Be faithful to your masters," he exhorted his brothers, "and put off malice, guile, hypocrisy, envies and all evil speaking." He urged them to war against sinful desires, to have their conversation and good works such that the Gentiles beholding would glorify God.

The apostle Peter set a standard so lofty as to require all of a man's mind, might and strength to attain. When they were accused falsely, they should "take it patiently." Was not theirs the highest calling, even to membership in the royal priesthood of God.

Peter was a sufferer with them, and he exhorted them that theirs be a trial-proof, fire-proof faith more precious than perishable gold and which might be found unto praise, honor, glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (I Pet. 1:6-7).

The Apostle was a man as human as his brothers but bent on being transformed from the stumbling, blundering fisherman that he was, to an unflinching valiant man of God, even to be a pillar of the Church. Christ's holy example shone out through Peter and gave them hope that they could do likewise.

Amid severe persecution, his great joy of living the Christian life overflowed. Body and soul set on fire for God, Peter knew no half-way ground. He wanted these brethren to know, to love their Master even as he knew and loved Him. Though they had not seen Him, he knew they could believe and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Christian joy flows from no surface pools, but from deep fountains, even from God's Word where holiness is of head, hand and heart.

If our Christianity has not the power to bless us with

gladness in our hearts, there is something wrong in the completeness of our surrender to it. Peter assures us that trials are for development and intended as a test, a proof, causing us to see ourselves.

But this man's character study would be fruitless unless we benefit from Peter's trials and triumphs.

Our Master is still calling disciples today, and the terms are still "absolute surrender of all you have and are to Me."

We want them, oh, how we want those glorious unending ages of supreme bliss!

But the Master is speaking, and His first question plumbs the deepest areas in human life. "What are you seeking?"

Today, attending sacred devotions, or tomorrow in the store, in the midst of a bustling crowd; in the office, the shop, the home—that is the supreme question for each one of us individually—what do I want? What is the central inspiration, and urge beneath all my life's activities? What am I looking for? What am I trying to extract from life? What is my aim and goal? If I am honest, which in the depth of my heart holds first place, my Master or my own natural desires? Am I Peter (one) a fragment, or like Peter (two) changed, solid, fixed?

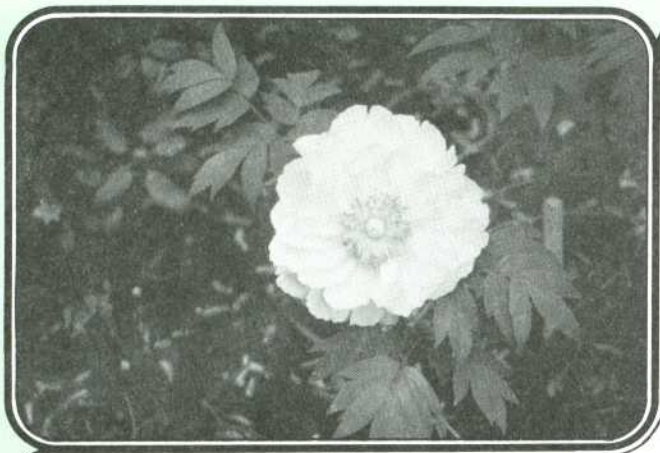
As we strive to bridge the gap between, "thou art" to "thou shalt be" we find how often we shamefully fall and must arise to gather our lives about us. We have sinned grievously. Have we stumbled so many times over the same weakness that we are ashamed to go to the throne of grace and once more ask to be forgiven?

Peter, you did not allow your crushing defeat to hold you back. As you, we would go out and weep bitterly for our sins and misdeeds and charge forward into a new life.

Beneath the failure, Jesus could see what Peter would become, so beneath all our failures our Master knows what we can become. He sees not only our faithlessness, but our loyalty, not only our defeat by sin, but in our reaching after goodness even when faced with defeat—with Peter's "win ability."

There is no greater courage needed than in facing ourselves. To search our hearts and try our ways daily, even momentarily requires not only high courage but Peter's continuous overflow of determination and energy to let nothing hinder our advancement until we have reached the point where obtaining a perfect character is unreservedly our all consuming desire. Conquering will be most difficult even excruciating at times. It will never be accomplished without our expending every ounce of our energy to win, to speed on, on, on, to push, press, and stamp to nothingness beneath our feet our every besetting sin.

(Continued on page 23)



Bloom Where You're Planted

*Have you ever watched a tulip
As it pushes through the ground,
Spreading bright and cheerful contrast
To the bleakness all around?
It chooses not the season
When most blossoms grace the sod,
But is content to add its beauty
At the time arranged by God.*

*Have you noticed how the robin
Appears in early spring?
It matters not if crowds surround
To hear the song he sings.
Nor does he look for men's applause
Or lofty trees to rest,
For princes or for beggars
His throat swells to sing his best.*

*So Lord, I pledge my heart and hands
To serve Thee with delight,
Remembering that the humble tasks
Are great within Thy sight.
And as I work in my small world,
Make me content to be
A source of love and sunshine
In the place You've planted me.*

*GOD of our life! Thy various praise
Let mortal voices sound;
Thy hand removes our fleeting days,
And brings the seasons round.*

*To Thee shall annual incense rise,
Our Father and our Friend;
While annual mercies from the skies
In genial streams descend.*

*In every scene of life, Thy care,
In every age, we see;
And constant as Thy favours are,
So let our praises be.*

*Still may Thy love in every scene,
In every age, appear;
And let the same compassion deign
To bless the opening year.*

*O keep this foolish heart of mine
From anxious passions free;
Each wayward thought may I resign,
And trust my all to Thee.*

*If mercy smile, let mercy bring
My wandering soul to God;
And in affliction I will sing,
If Thou wilt bless the rod.*

The most reckless spendthrift there could possibly be is the one who squanders time. Houses burned may be rebuilt; lands lost may be regained; friendships lost may be won again; but what power can restore the lost moment, the day whose sunset tells us another day has come and gone away? If we have used it wisely, well and good; but if not, it is just another day of lost endeavor. And when the year, upon whose threshold we made so many good resolutions, has been numbered with the ages, what power is there that can restore all this?

*The Lord of earth and sky,
The God of ages, praise;
Who reigns enthroned on high,
Ancient of endless days;
Who lengthens our probation here,
And spares us yet another year.*

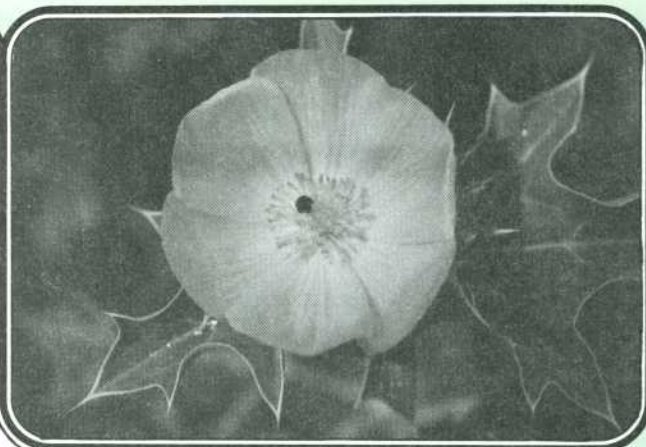
*Barren and withered trees,
We cumbered long the ground;
No fruits of holiness
On our dead souls were found:
Yet doth He us in mercy spare
Another and another year.*

*When Justice bared the sword,
To cut the fig-tree down,
The pity of our Lord
Cried, 'Let it still alone!'
Just so our God inclined His ear,
And spared us yet another year.*

*Then dig about our root,
Break up the fallow ground,
And let our gracious fruit
To Thy great praise abound:
O let us all Thy praise declare,
And fruit unto perfection bear!*

New Year's Resolutions....

*A little less impatient with those we deem too slow;
A little less arrogance because of all we know;
A little more humility, seeing our worth is slight....
We are such trivial candles compared to stars at night.
A little more forgiving and swifter to be kind;
A little more desirous the word of praise to find,
The word of praise to utter and make a heart rejoice;
A little bit more careful to speak with gentle voice;
A little more true eagerness to understand each other;
A little more high courage to help a ship-wrecked brother.
A little more real striving to each task that must be done;
These be our resolutions....and God help everyone!*



*Father, let me dedicate
All this year to Thee
In whatever worldly state
Thou wilt have me be:
Not from sorrow, pain, or care,
Freedom dare I claim:
This alone shall be my prayer,
'Glorify Thy Name.'*

*Can a child presume to choose
Where or how to live?
Can a Father's love refuse
All the best to give?
More Thou givest every day
Than the best can claim,
Nor withholdest aught that may
'Glorify Thy Name.'*

*If in mercy Thou wilt spare
Joys that yet are mine;
If on life, serene and fair,
Brighter rays may shine;
Let my glad heart, while it sings,
Thee in all proclaim,
And, whate'er the future brings,
'Glorify Thy Name.'*

*If Thou callest to the Cross,
And its shadow come,
Turning all my gain to loss,
Shrouding heart and home;
Let me think how Thy dear Son
To His glory came,
And in deepest woe pray on,
'Glorify Thy Name.'*

On Measuring Time

A Study of the Ancient Hebrew Calendar

TIME IS an intangible substance. We cannot label it as we would a book, or count it as we would count apples. Yet if human life is to be seen in perspective, in relation to events; if it is to be chronicled for the benefit of present or future generations, time must be counted and that count preserved by a uniform and intelligible method.

Through the centuries different methods of measuring time have been attempted. Some people today wonder why the dates of sacred calendar festivals (e.g., New Year, Passover, Pentecost) vary so much from year to year when national events such as the Fourth of July always occur on the same calendar date (unless physically moved, as in recent years). The reason is the method of time measurement used by the people who established the date of the festival.

How are points in time determined and marked? The most common method is by observing a recurring natural event and establishing it as a basic time measurement unit, then subdividing that unit in an orderly manner into smaller periods of time; in other words, a calendar. The basis of

most calendars in use today is the solar year, the time required for the earth to complete one circuit of the sun.

The solar year has been the most commonly used primary basis for time-counting among all civilizations and governments. Many of the ancient people—including the Hebrews—counted time in smaller units also. The Hebrews were instructed to use as their basis the length of time that the moon required to complete its cycle from new through full and back to new. They also recognized the New Year (solar) as a proper division of time. As an agricultural people, the seasons by which they planted their crops were determined by the solar year.

Today we are so accustomed to our calendar that we tend to think it has always existed and that all people everywhere follow it. But not so. Our calendar, too, developed; and in developing, it underwent many changes. Some of these changes were to correct inaccuracies in methods of measuring time. Many were the direct result of advances in the science of astronomy. Other changes were the ideas of certain individuals or

governments who wished to adopt their own means and measures.

Over the years, many calendar systems have been devised by various civilizations and governments to record specific points in time. In this study we will concern ourselves primarily with the Hebrew calendar, which was directed by God and practiced in some form through more than fifteen centuries of Israelite history. We shall also see our modern calendar in relation to the Hebrew.

We are especially interested in the beginning of the sacred New Year in ancient Israel; how the dates of religious festivals were determined; and what God wants us to do in remembering these sacred occasions.

Units of Time

Let us think about the units by which we measure time, and the source of those units. Some of these units of measurement are built into the created order. Others that we use every day are purely arbitrary.

The first unit of time we want to consider is the year. A year is not an arbitrary unit. It is established by the motion of the earth and is, as mentioned above, the time that is

required for the earth to complete one circuit around the sun. Almost all calendars, ancient and modern, have established the year as a basic unit of time measurement.

A second measurement of time-counting is the month. Our months today are arbitrary. We begin our months by the date on our calendar, not by any built-in natural occurrence such as the new moon. The ancient Hebrews determined the beginning of the months by the moon.

What we call day and night is a reference to time that is dictated by sunrise and sunset. But our separation of "day" and "night" and the point at which we begin a "new day" is purely arbitrary. The Hebrews started their day—and their year—at sundown. Later on, to be more precise, they started it at 6 o'clock.

We, of course, begin our day at midnight. Astronomers start their day at 12 noon to give them the entire period of darkness within one recording period. They want the records of one night's observation to be within a single "day's" record. It would be awkward to report observing a star at five minutes to midnight on one day and continue the observation the next "day."

The seasons are not arbitrary. They are determined by set laws of the universe. Spring and summer, autumn and winter all follow in natural sequence as determined by the revolution of the earth around the sun and the inclination of the earth's axis in relation to the sun.

Abib, the Sacred New Year

How did the ancient people determine the beginning of a New Year, or a new revolution around the sun? Primitive men, before the days of astronomy, did it by observing recurring events in nature (i.e., the

trees budding, barley maturing). The Egyptians started their year at the time the Nile flooded each spring.

God gave the Israelites specific instructions as to when they should begin their New Year, which we want to study.

The Bible gives us a brief background of the Jewish calendar as it was given to Moses when he was leading the Israelites out of Egypt.

The first month on that calendar was the month Abib, which according to God's direction was to be the beginning of the New Year, as we read in Exodus 12:2 and 13:4. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." Abib was to be observed as the "first month of the year."

Abib, the time God appointed for the beginning of the sacred new year, was known in Palestine as the "spring or sprouting month," "month of green ears," month of flowers, month of ripening barley, according to the climate of Egypt and Palestine in this month. It began with the new moon of April or March.

The Abib season was not to be taken lightly or overlooked by any loyal Israelites. Among the Hebrew festivities it was doubtless the most significant, and its remembrance was directly commanded. As we read in Deuteronomy 16:1, "Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the Lord thy God: for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night."

A passage recorded in Psalm 81 very possibly had reference to this same primary feast day: "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob" (vs. 3-4).

The observance of Abib was in exactly this category. It was not something that they could do or that they could refrain from doing at their caprice, for it was "a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob."

Abib marked the beginning of the year; it was important also for another reason: the annual anniversary of Passover fell in the month Abib (Abib 14), "for in the month of Abib, the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night" (Deut. 16:1). In Exodus 12, the Lord is instructing Moses in the observance of the passover on the 14th of the first month. In the 23rd chapter of Exodus, 15th verse, the command is repeated: "Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread...in the time appointed of the month Abib."

Determined by the Moon

We are particularly interested in how the Hebrews originally determined the time for beginning this sacred new year and how they counted the days and the months following.

Several passages in the Bible show that the timing of the months of the Hebrew year was by the moon. We read in Numbers 10:10: "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God."

We also have ample evidence that the occurrence of the moon was a major factor in determining the beginnings of these months, particularly the first month of the year.

How did they know when the moon was new? Originally the Hebrews determined the time for the beginning of the new year moon of Abib by stationing observers on

THE HEBREW CALENDAR

The Jewish people used two basic calendars: the SACRED Calendar, on which sacred festivals were computed; and the CIVIL Calendar which was used for official business records (reigns of kings, childbirths, contracts).

Names of Months	Roman Months	Month of Sacred Year	Month of Civil Year	Sacred Festivals/ Biblical References	Agricultural Seasons
ABIB or NISAN	Mar/Apr	1st	7th	Ex. 12:2; 13:4 1st - New Moon SACRED YEAR begins. 14th - Passover Feast 15th - Holy Convocation; Week of Unleavened Bread begins 16th - Offering of Omer or First Sheaf (Lev. 23:10-12) 21st - Holy Convocation	Latter or spring rains (Deut. 11:14) Barley harvest
IYYAR or ZIF	Apr/May	2nd	8th	I Kings 6:1	Barley harvest (Ruth 1:22)
SIVAN	May/June	3rd	9th	Esther 8:9 Feast of Pentecost	
TAMMUZ	June/July	4th	10th	Jeremiah 52:5-7	Wheat harvest
AB	July/Aug	5th	11th	Not mentioned	Grapes, figs, and olives begin to ripen.
ELUL	Aug/Sep	6th	12th	Nehemiah 6:15	Vintage begins, also harvest of maize. Pomegranates ripen
TISHRI	Sep/Oct	7th	1st	I Kings 8:2 1st - Beginning of CIVIL YEAR Feast of Trumpets 10th - Day of Atonement 15th - Feast of Tabernacles begins. 21st - Feast of Branches or Palms.	Former or early rains (Joel 2:23) Plowing and sowing begin.
BUL (Marcheshvan)	Oct/Nov	8th	2nd	I Kings 6:38	Wheat and barley sown.
KISLEV	Nov/Dec	9th	3rd	Jer. 36:9, 22; Zech. 7:1	
TEBETH	Dec/Jan	10th	4th	Esther 2:16	
SHEBAT	Jan/Feb	11th	5th	I Chron. 27:14; Zech. 12:7	
ADAR	Feb/Mar	12th	6th	Esther 3:7	Almond tree blossoms.
*VEADAR	Intercalary	13th		Not mentioned	

*Hebrew months were alternately 30 and 29 days long. Their year, shorter than ours, had 354 days. Therefore, about every 3 years (7 times in 19 years) an extra 29-day month, VEADAR, was added between ADAR and NISAN.

The Jewish day, from sunset to sunset, was divided into 8 equal parts:

DAY:	NIGHT:
First Watch Sunrise to 9 A.M.	First Watch Sunset to 9 P.M.
Second Watch 9 A.M. to Noon	Second Watch 9 P.M. to Midnight
Third Watch Noon to 3 P.M.	Third Watch Midnight to 3 A.M.
Fourth Watch 3 P.M. to Sunset	Fourth Watch 3 A.M. to Sunrise

the hills to watch for the new moon. In the "Biblical Critical Interpretation of the Bible," in a discussion of the history of the Jewish calendar, we find the following:

"It is certain that . . . the month was dated from the time when the

earliest visible appearance of the new moon was announced to the Sanhedrin. That, if this happened on the 30th day of the current month that month was considered to have ended on the preceding 29th day and was called deficient. But if no

announcement was made on the 30th day, that day was reckoned to the current month which was in this case called full and the ensuing day was at once considered to be the first of the next month."

During a large part of history—

including Bible history—watchers and observers set the time. Among the Jews, the watchers would announce to the Sanhedrin, who would in turn announce the beginning of the month or the beginning of the year. In modern times this is done by calculation. Astronomers can tell within a fraction of a second when the sun crosses the line and when the moon is new.

The Use of "Months"

The Hebrew marking of Abib as the first month of the year at the time of the Exodus was not the beginning of counting time by months, for notice the reading of Exodus 12:2, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months"—they already had months, of which this was to be known as the "beginning."

In Noah's time, when the flood was receding, people were measuring time in months. Genesis 8:14 records, "And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried."

Genesis 7:11 also records the measuring of time in months: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." They were measuring time in months, and this was approximately 2400 years before Christ.

There is yet one more detail we may discover from this bit of Genesis history: a month consisted of about 30 days. Genesis 8:3 records that at the end of an "hundred and fifty days the waters were abated." We read also that the flood began in the second month, on the seventeenth day (Gen. 7:11) and that the waters "were abated" in "the seventh month, the seventeenth day." This defines a period of five months, the

same period described as 150 days in Genesis 8:3, showing us that the length of a month was 30 days.

In the days of King David, as recorded in I Chronicles 27:1-2, about 1060 B.C., months were used as a measurement of time. We read:

"Now the children of Israel after their number, to wit, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course were twenty and four thousand. Over the first course for the first month was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel: and in his course, were twenty and four thousand. . . ." There were 12 captains, one for each month of the year, a fact which shows that they were counting 12 months to the year.

The Hebrews Months—By Name

Before the Babylonian exile few of the months were identified by name. Numbers were the more common designation. During the exile the Jews adopted the Babylonian names of the months. The Bible records the names of most of the ancient Hebrew months.

As we have seen, the month given by the Lord to Moses to be "the first month of the year" was "Abib." It was to be remembered because, "This day came ye out in the month Abib" (Ex. 13:4).

Abib is mentioned by name four times in the Bible (see Ex. 13:4; 34:18; 23:15; Deut. 16:1). And in the book of Esther, this first month is given a second name: Nisan. "In the first month, that is, the month Nisan" (Esther 3:7). There is yet another mention of Nisan in Nehemiah 2:1. "And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I

took up the wine, and gave it unto the king." It was during the month Abib that Nehemiah obtained permission from the king to go to Jerusalem and begin the rebuilding.

First Kings 6:1 gives us the name of the *second* month: "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord."

The *third* month was named Sivan. "Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that is, the month Sivan" (Esther 8:9).

The *fourth* month was Tammuz, corresponds with our June-July. It is mentioned (by number, though not by name) in Jeremiah 52:5-7.

The *fifth* month was Ab, comparing to our July-August.

The *sixth* month was Elul, mentioned in Nehemiah 6:15. "So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days."

The *seventh* month was Ethanim, now known as Tishri and corresponding to our October. It is mentioned in I Kings 8:2: "And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month."

The *eighth* month was the month Bul, as mentioned in I Kings 6:38: "And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month."

The *ninth* month was the month Kislev, mentioned by number in Jeremiah 36. Notice the details in this passage which identify the season of the year. "And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in

the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem. . . . Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him." (Jer. 36:9, 22). This places the ninth month in the wintertime, and corresponds to our December-January.

This ninth month is mentioned by name in Zechariah 7:1: "And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu." (The spelling differs slightly, but the name is the same.)

We find the *tenth* month, Tebeth, mentioned in Esther 2:16. "So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign."

The *eleventh* month was Sebat, comparable to our January-February. It is mentioned in I Chron. 27:14, though its name is not given. The eleventh is mentioned also in Zechariah 1:7, "Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet. . . ."

The *twelfth* month was Adar. We read of it in Esther 3:7, "In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar."

That gives us all the months of the Hebrew year. All are mentioned in the Bible by number, ten by name. It is interesting to note, however, that all the names mentioned occur in passages written

after the return of the Jewish people from captivity. This suggests that the names could have been learned in Babylon and brought to Israel, that they did not originate in Israel.

Complications and Adjustments

Now there are a few complications in trying to match a lunar calendar with the four seasons, which are determined by the sun. On the Hebrew calendar, a lunar month was from new moon to new moon, which is 29 days, 12 hours and 44/100ths of a minute. Twelve of these months equal 354-1/4 days, which is approximately 11 days short of the solar year. If the Jews followed this calendar for 10 years, with a year of 354-1/4 days, soon their months would not correspond to the same seasons which they had formerly. Only a few more years and they would be celebrating their new year in the middle of the winter, and Abib instead of being "the spring or sprouting month" would be the month of rain and snow.

To overcome this problem, they made an adjustment by adding a thirteenth month to their year every few years, to bring the lunar year into conformity with the seasons. This practice is called intercalation. At first it seems the month was added wherever the ruling power dictated. However, a pattern was developed, and the additional month was added after the twelfth month in years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 of a 19-year cycle. This brought them out approximately right with the solar year and the seasons.

A Second—Autumnal—New Year

At some time, not noted in Scripture, the Hebrew people began observing a second new year which they still recognize today. This

second new year (in the fall of the year) is often identified as their "civil" new year in contrast to the "sacred." This new year falls in the seventh month, known in ancient Israel as Tishri.

Why a second new year? The Encyclopedia gives us this information (under the heading, "Pass-over"): "The passover was kept in the month Abib in commemoration of the rescue of the Israelites by Jehovah out of Egypt which took place in that month. In order to make the season more remarkable, it was ordained that henceforth the month in which it took place should be reckoned the first of the national religious year. From that time accordingly the year began in the month Abib or Nisan, March to April of our calendar, while the civil year continued to be reckoned from Tishri, September to October."

There doesn't seem to be any clear record of when the observance of the second calendar was instituted. There is ample evidence, however, that the Jewish people did have two calendars, one beginning with Tishri in the fall and one beginning with Abib in March and April of our time. From available evidence it would appear that they kept their religious feasts according to the spring new year as God commanded them but that for their civil year and for recording the reigns of some of their kings, they kept the fall new year.

A note in Winston's Dictionary is of special interest. While this dictionary is not intended to be a religious dictionary at all, it does mention when the Hebrew people kept the new year and why. We quote: "During the exile, under the influence of the more scientific Babylonian calendar, the new year was observed in the spring month, Nisan, at the time of the equinox. During this time the memory of the

old year was preserved by an ecclesiastical new year observed in the autumn." But then the dictionary goes on to say, "From the sixth to the first century B. C. the year began with Nisan." This brings us to the time of the birth of Christ.

Concerning the spring or fall new year, scholars seem almost to contradict one another. Some say that from the time of the Babylonian captivity the Jewish people kept a spring new year; and others say, or at least infer, that from the time of the Babylonian captivity they kept the fall new year. The Winston Dictionary states that beginning with the sixth century B. C., they kept the spring new year, starting with the month Nisan.

Hebrew people today recognize the fall new year. They begin their year with Tishri, the seventh month. But they also recognize the month of Nisan or Abib as far as their Passover observance is concerned.

We do not know when the Jews began celebrating the beginning of their civil new year in the fall. But evidence is overwhelming that they started their sacred new year in the spring. Exodus 12:2 is a direct command from the Lord to Moses.

The writer in a Bible dictionary states that there is a "hint" of a spring new year in the Bible. But it is more than a hint. It is a direct command from the Lord. All the feasts and festivals commanded by God were based upon a spring new year beginning with Abib or Nisan, which means green ears, newly ripened grain.

The Effect of New Year Dating on the Weekly Sabbath

The Jewish people even today date their Passover from Abib. And yet they keep Saturday as the Sabbath, just as the Seventh Day Adventists do. But with the first new moon occurring on different days of

the week from year to year, and the Sabbath being always seven days later, it is not possible to follow a seven-day sequence around the calendar from year to year, as our Saturdays do. Also, with all the shifts in the calendar that have occurred through the centuries, the Sabbath could not possibly fall on the same day as it did two thousand years ago. There were odd days at the end of each year, because the New Moon began a new year. And the Sabbath was always the seventh day of the new year, the fourteenth day, the twenty-first day, and so on through the year.

About the Date of Christ's Birth

From the foregoing it should be evident that dates of festivals on the Hebrew calendar cannot fall on the same date of our calendar every year. What do we know about the date Christ was born and why both Mary and Joseph happened to be in Bethlehem at that time?

Prophecy and history alike agree that Bethlehem was Christ's birthplace. Was there any event during the year which attracted Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem? The enrollment as ordered by Caesar Augustus and mentioned by Luke required the presence of only the male member of the household. Certainly this enrollment would never have brought Mary to Bethlehem in her condition.

Yet, she was there, impelled by some inner urge to make the journey with Joseph. Why? Was it the Passover, principal of Jewish feasts, which motivated Mary to make the long difficult trip? Not so, as the Passover was observed in Jerusalem, and Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem when Jesus was born.

Abib was the first month of the Jewish sacred year, as defined in the Hebrew Lexicon. It was the likely season for the political rulers

to impose a census for tax purposes, for loyal Jews were under obligation to observe "the month, Abib." According to custom, Bethlehem was the town where the family of David assembled to carry out this command. You will remember David mentioned to Jonathan the yearly new moon feast for "all the family" (I Sam. 20:5-6). It was this yearly feast for the family of David of which both Mary and Joseph were members that brought her to Bethlehem with a strong desire to observe the new moon of Abib when Christ was born.

This is all from the standpoint of reason. We cannot say that we know Christ was born the first day; but we know how precise God is in everything He does, and all the evidence seems to point to the fact that He must have been born on the first day of Abib. At least we know He was born at that season of the year.

Another point of evidence for Christ's birth occurring in the spring is found in the fact that the tabernacle was set up on the first of Abib and that Christ was, in a spiritual sense, the door of the spiritual house of God.

The tabernacle was completed on the first day of the first month of the year. The God of heaven being a God of order and Christ being the firstfruits from the dead, it seems very possible that He arranged that Christ's birth should coincide with the anniversary of the setting up of the tabernacle.

Feasts Still Observed

In New Testament times they were still keeping some of the ancient Hebrew feasts. When Jesus was twelve years old, we read that Mary and Joseph, with Jesus, "went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast," the feast of the Passover (Luke 2:41).

The apostle Paul also mentioned certain of the feasts which were important to him. One was the Passover, as he records: "and we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread" (Acts 20:6). Again he mentioned that he wanted, if at all possible, to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16).

To Summarize:

A lunar year was made up of 12 lunar months and that figures out to approximately 354 days.

A solar year or tropical year as it is called on which the return of the seasons depends is the interval between two consecutive returns of the sun to the vernal equinox, and this tropical year consists of approximately 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds. To bring the lunar year into approximate synchronization with the seasons in the solar year, it was necessary to add one month 7 times during a 19-year cycle. This causes the variation in dates. So it is impossible to synchronize exactly the two calendars; nor is it necessary that we do.

The New Year began with the actual sighting of the New Moon of Abib, which was the first new moon after the spring equinox. Whether the preceding day had been the first or third or fifth of the week, the sighting of the new year moon meant the beginning of the year and the beginning of the week, as the first day of the new year was always the first day of the week. In view of such evidence, is it not strange that the Seventh Day Adventists can claim a succession of "Sabbath" Saturdays?

Should We Observe Abib First?

We know that this observance was a command to the Israelites. Is it a command to us?

We today are not subject to the laws and ordinances imposed upon the nation of Israel. The law of

Moses was taken away, superseded by the greater law of faith and Christ.

However, could God *condemn* our remembering a day which He in former times commanded His people to keep? Furthermore, in view of Paul's command to render "honour to whom honour" is due, can we think for a moment that Christ, the Son of God and our future King, is unworthy of our honor? To whom could we owe greater honor than Him who is our mediator, our advocate before God, our perfect Example, and our future Judge and King!

In observing the first day of Abib as the anniversary of His birth, we remember Him not as an infant but as the King He was born to be. No other among earthborns ranks so high or means so much to us. No other could be so worthy of our honor.

Honoring Christ is our sacred privilege. MM

Facing Reality

(Continued from page 7)

which so often destroy our happiness and peace of mind? If beset by a fiery temper, face the reality and do something about it. Don't go around blaming someone else for that senseless exchange of harsh words. Remember, it takes two to tangle.

Then there is that green-eyed monster jealousy. Just take a good hard look at its hideousness in the mirror and eradicate it from your life once and for all. What if you can't do what others can, or your talents are miserably few? Face the reality and make the best of what you do have. Remember that God wants *character*, not talents, whatever men may think. Our Heavenly Father asks only our best, not someone else's. Why try to be some-

thing you are not and never can be?

This candid facing of reality with complete honesty is not easy. A good many of our pet whims and notions, characteristics and ideas will have to fall by the wayside; but it can and must be done. We haven't the time to continue going to the Mirror with a hand over the spiritual deformity; neither can we thoughtlessly or indifferently shrug off our responsibilities. They must be faced and dealt with as the realities they are.

Just what do we do with those disquieting circumstances, those especially harsh realities in our lives which at times appear unbearable and lend much toward making our lives unnecessarily difficult?—and I don't mean conditions over which we have no control! I mean those situations which honest soul-searching reveals as having no justifiable excuse for existing. Perhaps we have tried repeatedly—and without any degree of success—to find a relief from a situation that distresses us. What can we do? We can face the reality that there are just some people and some situations that will never change, set our face like a flint and keep marching steadily on in spite of it all. Does any circumstance that may exist make null and void the fact that God is still in His heaven and that He knows the difficult and stony trail we tread? Someday the crooked paths will be made straight. Some glorious day we will understand. Can we not well afford to work and wait for that better Day?

Some beautiful day not far distant now we will be face to face with a reality of dazzling and magnificent eternal proportion. Just think about it. Try to visualize the time when the battle against sin will be forever in the past. And best of all, our former struggles with sin's realities will never, not even once, come into our mind.

What a splendidly magnificent paradox! I want to face that reality and enjoy it to the full! Don't you? MM

Bible Quotation or . . . ?

Some men have drawn so heavily from the thoughts of Scripture that at times their words can be difficult to distinguish from Bible quotations. Here is a chance for you to test your knowledge. Write "Yes" before each statement which you believe to be a Bible quotation. Write "No" if you think it is found elsewhere.

1. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.
2. In unity there is strength.
3. One who is not prepared today will be less so tomorrow.
4. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
5. Be slow to judge but quick to forgive.
6. If any would not work, neither should he eat.
7. A man is rich according to what he is, not according to what he has.
8. Wealth consists not in having great possessions but in having few wants.
9. Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.
10. The work can be done, but not by halfway workers.
11. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.
12. Judge a tree from its fruit, not from its leaves.
13. Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.
14. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.
15. A good reputation is more valuable than money.
16. Be thankful for favors; never find unnecessary fault.
17. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?
18. How far a little candle throws its beams.
19. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

20. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.
21. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
22. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.
23. With malice toward none; with charity for all.
24. Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.
25. God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.
26. They also serve who only stand and wait.
27. It is more blessed to give than to receive.
28. With a furious man thou shalt not go.
29. Stone walls do not a prison make.
30. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God.
31. The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.
32. God save the king.
33. All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.
34. Win Christ! When we have won Him, we have won all.
35. Cleanliness is next to godliness.

Answers:

1. Yes, Eccl. 9:11 2. No 3. No 4. Yes, Matt. 26:41
5. No 6. Yes, II Thess. 3:10 7. No 8. No, Epicurus
9. Yes, Matt. 22:21 10. No, General Letter 11. Yes, Job 7:6
12. No, Phaedrus 13. Yes, Eccl. 1:2 14. Yes, Matt. 12:34
15. No, Publius Syrus 16. No, General Letter 17. Yes, James 3:11
18. No, Shakespeare 19. No, Pope 20. Yes, Psalm 27:10
21. No, Pope 22. Yes, Lam. 3:27 23. No, Lincoln
24. Yes, Luke 3:14 25. No, William Cowper 26. No, Milton
27. Yes, Acts 20:35 28. Yes, Prov. 22:24 29. No, Lovelace
30. Yes, Deut. 29:29 31. Yes, Luke 10:2
32. Yes, I Sam. 10:24 33. Yes, Matt. 26:52 34. No, General Letter 35. No

"Thou Art . . . Thou Shalt Be"

(Continued from page 13)

Oh, Peter, what a shining example you have left us. Of your life you have fashioned a jewel rich and rare, of everlasting duration. As we struggle to follow you, we hear those words of long ago from our Master, "Thou

art" but "thou shalt be" and we labor on to make our bending and breaking a vivid reality, even to form a new creature, a character so pure as to be welcomed to share with our Master and you, Peter, and with every faithful one the glory and splendour to be revealed as the ages roll on and on—even forever more!

MM

• Concerning God's Love for Sinners

"Although I have sometimes agreed with you and sometimes disagreed, I have not written before. But your article, 'God Loves Us...or Does He' makes, I feel, a serious error.

"You seem to be confusing God's love and His justice. That God punishes or even destroys people does not mean He doesn't love them. That He will not hear their prayers does not mean that He doesn't love them. One Scripture you quote, that 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish,' proves that He loves all. There is only one reason He should want sinners to live—He must love them."

From your statement it would seem that you think God loves everyone, regardless of character; that His love to humankind is unconditional and for all.

However, what you or I might think about the love of God makes no difference to God. He is all-wise and just and, as the prophet Isaiah puts it, His thoughts and ways are as much higher than our thoughts and ways as the heavens are higher than the earth. The apostle John informs us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8).

There is no question that God has shown love to all His human family. He supplies them with life, food, material for homes and clothing, air and water, a comfortable environment, and enough intelligence with which to make a living. Jesus describes this "love" of God for His earthly family in Matthew 5:45: "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." This is the first step in the love of God.

Then God has gone further. For those who desire more than this present life, He has made known His saving knowledge through His prophets, apostles and His Son Jesus. The revealing of this knowledge is a manifestation of an even greater love, for by taking advantage of that knowledge we can make ourselves over into new creatures worthy of living forever on this earth.

The idea of man being responsible to God for his actions has always been distasteful to man and he has sought out many inventions to bypass this one important step, the doctrine of the atonement being the most

flagrant violation of justice, intelligence and Biblical truth. The fact that it has a long and almost universal tradition in no way proves its validity.

The concept that God hates sin but loves the sinner stems from this doctrine of the atonement. It may be a pleasant doctrine, but it is only an ego booster and a narcotic making men oblivious to their true—and dangerous—condition.

To use an analogy: If you were a student in high school and were planning to become a doctor, and you were careless in your studies and not making good grades, who would be your best friend? the person who warned you that if your grades did not improve you would never be accepted in medical school; or the person who said to you, "Just do the best you can, fool around and have a good time, your grades will not make any difference"?

The answer is obvious. After a careful study of the Bible we are convinced that God is most certainly a God of love, otherwise we would not know of His plan or how to perpetuate our lives beyond the grave. But as the apostle Paul states, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell severity; but toward thee, goodness if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off" (Rom. 11:22). The teaching of the nominal church stresses the goodness of God while ignoring His severity. Many people who write to us criticizing our position do not want to hear the facts as recorded in the Bible. They prefer to believe a pleasant song without proof than a serious statement of fact. I am sure that you are not of this type.

The evidence all the way through the Holy Bible points to the fact that God *does not* love any sinner who does not repent and turn from his evil ways. Consider the following: God destroyed the people at the time of the flood. He destroyed the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. He brought punishment upon the Children of Israel when they refused to keep His law—and to such an extent that all but two of the original number of adults who left Egypt died in the wilderness. Where was God's love toward them?

Indeed, God's love and His justice are too closely related to be separated. He executes His justice, enforces His judgments, because He loves the good. Ponder the fate of Uzzah, who put up his hand to steady the ark,

transgressing a long standing commandment forbidding anyone to touch the ark (I Chron. 13:7). Again, swift and severe punishment was meted out to Ananias and Sapphira who lied to Peter.

God is never cruel or vindictive but He is just and stern. In Rev. 2:27, Christ states that the overcomers, each one that "keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron." That rod is not cruel, but it will be unbreakable. Jesus warned that as it was in the days of Noah and Lot so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man. Zechariah 13:8 predicts that, "it shall come to pass that in all the land saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die but the third part shall be left therein."

Read the eleventh chapter of Jeremiah for a description of how God would deal with Judah and Jerusalem when they forsook Him. See Isaiah 40:15-17 for God's opinion of mankind. Also Psalm 5:4-6, "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou

hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man."

In Jesus' parable of the wedding feast, what did the king say to the man without the wedding garment? He issued the order: "Bind him hand and foot and cast him out." Again in Luke 19:27 Jesus makes a statement which we should seriously consider: "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." We are promised that when Christ returns, "All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7).

We do believe that God is a loving God. But we think that it is a serious mistake to perceive God and Jesus as a Father and Son team who love every sinner so much that they could not possibly see one member of the human race destroyed. This is only wishful thinking. It would not be just. God rewards the righteous and He punishes the wicked. Anyone who thinks Jesus is "sugar and spice and everything nice" will receive a severe shock when He returns.

MM

Sing!

*SING to the Great Jehovah's praise!
All praise to Him belongs:
Who kindly lengthens out our days,
Demands our choicest songs.*

*His providence hath brought us through
Another various year:
We all, with vows and anthems new,
Before our God appear.*

*Father, Thy mercies past we own,
Thy still continued care;
To Thee presenting, through Thy Son,
Whate'er we have or are.*

*Our lips and lives shall gladly show
The wonders of Thy love,
While on, in Jesus' steps, we go
To see Thy face above.*

*Our residue of days or hours,
Thine, wholly thine; shall be,
And all our consecrated powers
A sacrifice to Thee:*

*Till Jesus, in the clouds, appear
To saints on earth forgiven,
And bring the grand Sabbatic year,
The Jubilee of Heaven.*

Proper Preparation

"Let your loins be girded about."—Luke 12:35.

Loose garments can be very troublesome. An Oriental robe, if left ungirdled, entangles the feet, or is caught by the wind and hinders one's goings. For this reason the wearer binds the loose attire together with a girdle, making it firm and closefitting about his body.

Loose principles can be more dangerous than loose garments. Indefinite opinions, caught by the passing wind of popular caprice, are both a peril and a burden. Many people go through life with loose beliefs and purposes, and lose all.

"Let your loins be girded about." Bind your loose thinking together with the girdle of firm action and saving conviction.

"And your lights burning."

Be ready for the emergency. Don't wait for darkness to fall before you buy oil. And when you buy, buy an ample supply. Be prepared, in case the darkness should linger. Don't be like the five foolish virgins who carried no oil reserves. Look after your resources, and be competent to meet the crisis when it comes.

The oil of faith will keep the lights burning through the longest night.

So Many Blessings

We have many present day blessings and luxuries to enjoy, it would be easy to go along leisurely and without concern if we did not have that hope of a lasting eternal happiness so soon to emerge upon us.

While we yet have the opportunity of seeking higher levels and set our affections on things far above the world and our own petty desires we must not let anything of this life, any pleasure or idea or thought that God forbids, come between us and the true lasting values He offers us.

Let us press on to learn and keep the Law to develop into a new man. "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

Iowa

F. B.

Give Your Best

I have been greatly impressed with the necessity of giving of my best service to the Lord while I still have life and a degree of health. Daily, momentary self-denial is a must, all the more now as we see how fast the day is approaching.

One of the seeming paradoxes of the Christian life is that when one spends enough time with God, in prayer and Bible study, he will have a certain sense of leisure and quietness in doing his regular tasks and apparently more time.

When we are careful to be alone with God for a certain time every day—preferably the first thing in the morning—we shall find that other things fall into their rightful place and the work of the day goes more smoothly. How true.

New Jersey

L. K.

Stop to Search

It will be a very sad thing for any of us to miss being included in God's Holy Mountain. We have been warned over and over to hasten our escape from the storm and tempest, to flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his soul. Let us stop to search and try our ways at the thought of that Mountain of Holiness; consider our ways, be more watchful in keeping God's holy law as we see the world going rapidly down to destruction.

South Wales

G. S.

Space for the Spiritual

We all tend to make too much time for all the temporal things in our lives and make a very small space for our spiritual lessons. The Lord has given us plenty of time and He alone knows whether we have enough time for building a life worthy of that soon coming Kingdom. We had better rearrange our daily routine to suit the Lord's schedule. He has allowed us time and more time if we use it to His advantage and in His way.

Oh, it will be a great day if we ever hear Him say, "You have used your time allotted well, now there is a reward for your constant good work." Will it not be all worth so much more to have that great reward than to have put off for another day the time to study and do God's words now?

We must make very good use of our time and not get so wrapped up in the cares of our daily life that we do not have sufficient time for study and meditation. It would certainly be sad to stand before the throne at Judgment Day and hear Him say, "I'm sorry, I have no time for you today."

Ontario

M. G.

A Joyful Sound

Christ, upon His return to earth, is to occupy the position of the universal King. Psalm 72 speaks of this King and lists the high qualities He will possess and speaks of the endurance of His Kingdom.

At that time the situation can never get out of hand as the result of divided or overlapping authority, or personal ambition, as has so often happened with the set-ups of human rule.

It is a joyful sound that the threat of war can no longer plague earth's inhabitants in that glorious Day, that He will make wars to cease unto the end of the earth.

Liberia

H. K.

More and More Beautiful

I hope we can make our lives more interesting and beautiful to our Heavenly Father than in any year yet. Let us work to become better and better.

How thankful we should be for all the many blessings being bestowed upon us from day to day, and that we have time and opportunity to keep working out our salvation. When the Master comes will He find us watching?

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

*I thanked God in the evening,
When the day was past and gone.
And I praised Him for His presence,
Guiding me from early dawn.
Many were the cares and problems
There arose unseen to meet
But His presence was my pilot
Calmly sailing o'er the deep.
So I lay aside earth's problems
Now the shades of evening fall
Thus in peace and faith to slumber
With His presence over all.*

Iowa

E. T.

"My Cup Runneth Over"

"Study to show thyself approved"; that is what I am doing daily, to enable me to give an answer to everyone that asks for the reason of my faith. I have been given so much help via the cassette tapes. It's a strong statement: The truth is not popular, yet it is the only way to eternal life. For me the Truth is foremost; all else secondary. Learning each day is rewarding, we use time wisely when thus engaged. We take time for literal feeding, so, too, the mind needs to be refueled daily. It's a privilege looked to with eagerness.

If we would gain life we must take what is set on the Lord's Table, whether we like it or not, for it is not for us to say how it is to be set or even what the meal should consist of.

To be able to be a hearer so as to be a doer, even though across the world, is really marvellous. To be in on the doing now can lead to being in on the Harvest, when our Lord will judge us, everyone according as his works shall be. May it not be said of us, "Too late."

The food comes as fast as we can eat it. And at all opportune times, a real stimulus for each moment of each day too. Truly, my cup runneth over.

Crewe, England N. T.

Truly Spiritual

Several years ago I received your booklet, "The Coming of Jesus and Elijah." Putting it aside after a cursory reading, I picked it up again recently and perused its contents slowly and studiously. I enjoyed it very much, truly spiritual! I would like to read your other publications.

Alabama J. T.

A Guide

The Message and cassette tapes are so much a part of my life, I would not like to try to get along without them. They are a guide with the Bible, showing us the Light, the Truth and the Way.

Alabama D. McD.

Enthusiastic

Your ministry is fantastic. I love it. Send me more of your books, and keep me informed as to what the church is doing.

I love God and like all of us I need God and I need strength.

Mass.

D. H.

Finding Faith

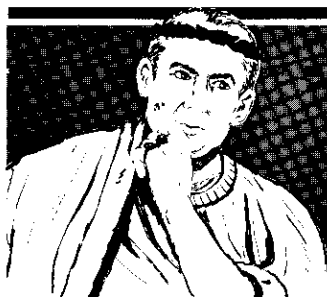
Please send me your cassette "Love That God Loves".

I want you to know I "love" your Messages and do not know how I would have survived these last few years without it. I have found strength and faith I never knew I had.

May God's peace and love be with you all always!

Maine

R. D.



Pilate Remembers

*I wonder why that scene comes back tonight,
That long forgotten scene of years ago?
Perhaps this touch of spring, that bright-orbed moon;
For it was spring, and spring's fair moon hung low
Above my garden on the night He died.*

*I still remember how I felt disturbed
That I must send Him to a felon's cross
On such a day when spring was in the air
And in His life; for He was young to die.*

*How tall and strong He stood, how calm His eyes,
Fronting me straight the while I questioned Him.
His fearless heart spoke to me through His eyes.
Could I have won Him as my follower,
And a hundred like besides, my way had led*

*To Caesar's palace, and I'd wear today
The imperial purple. But He would not move
One small iota from His wild madcap dream
Of seeking truth. What wants a man with 'truth'
When He is young and spring is at the door?*

*He would not listen, so He had to go;
One mad Jew less meant little to the State,
And pleasing Annas made my task the less . . .
And yet for me He spoiled that silver night
Remembering it was spring and He was young.*

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