

# Megiddo Message



## Your Best Year

**“R**EMEMBER the good old days when . . . ”  
 “My first year in high school was my best year.”

“There’ll never be another summer like 1980.”

“If only we could have another vacation, just like the one we had last year.”

We hear it over and over. Looking back wistfully.

What is your best year? If you are like most people, you will immediately start looking back and reviewing the past. This is all you have to reference—because you haven’t finished living yet.

Furthermore, it is safe back there in the world of memories. We can take what we want, and leave the rest. We don’t have to recall rough passages we’ve been through. Hard things don’t have to bother us anymore. Life there is comfortable, and we can filter through it with as large a measure of self-satisfaction as we choose.

But whatever our pleasure in reviewing the past, it has its limitations. Try as we may, we can’t live back there again. We can’t even visit there. We are powerless either to improve or to degrade it.

So why not invest our effort in looking *ahead*?

The next time someone asks you what was your best year, why not surprise him by replying, “The next one!”—and proceed to prove it by *making* it the best!

This is not wishful thinking. This is *forward* thinking.

We do not want to discount the value of the past. We are deeply concerned with learning from past failures and building on past attainments. But the fact remains that the past is past, and cannot be changed. All that is open to improvement and development, challenge and achievement, lies ahead.

We want to look back only to *learn*—to learn from our failures and mistakes, so that we can avoid them in the future.

We want to look back, too, to keep a proper perspective on life, to discover what God has been doing for us, around us, beside us. If we have committed ourselves to Him, we want to see all as under His guiding Hand. All that we have is ours by His grace. He gave us our skills, our gifts, our abilities, our friends, our influences, our breath, our very life. Even the experiences of our lives happen under His watchful eye. There are no accidents in His leading, no mistakes, and no wrong turns. He is aware of the disciplines that shape us, and the forces that try us. He is aware, too, of the winds of adversity which fan the flames that test our metal. He sees, He knows.

If we can look back upon a walk with God, the past is good. Let us never negate it.

But neither let us stop there. The best past will not justify carelessness in the present or a lack of concern about the future. Everything we want is still ahead. The best opportunities, the greatest challenges, and the richest rewards are still *ahead*.

The future is God’s unopened gift to us. Let us receive it with open hands and hearts, determined to make its every day and hour the best as they are unfolded to us. Let us respond to it with love, grateful for all the experiences it will bring, knowing that with it comes also the promise of His providence, His strength and His protection. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” is the heavenly promise.

How can we know that the year ahead will be the best? Simply by making it the best.

One day at a time.

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## 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

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

- NEB**—New English Bible
- NIV**—New International Version
- NAS**—New American Standard
- RSV**—Revised Standard Version
- TLB**—The Living Bible
- TEV**—Today's English Version
- JB**—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition
- Phillips**—The New Testament in Modern English
- Berkeley**—The Modern Language New Testament
- Weymouth**—The New Testament in Modern Speech
- Moffatt**—The Bible, A New Translation
- Williams**—The New Testament, A Translation in the Language of the People
- Rotherham**—The Emphasized Old Testament

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

# Megiddo Message

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**MEGIDDO** is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.

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## Is Christ Our Saviour AND Our Lord?

**“F**EAR not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” We are all familiar with this announcement of the angel to the shepherds the night of the Nativity. But a timely question in this connection might be, Can Christ be Saviour, yet not Lord?

It is very significant that two of the titles given to Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour, are inseparably linked together.

The Greek word *soter*, always translated “Saviour,” occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament. In two of these instances Christ is called “the Saviour of the world” (John 4:42 and I John 4:14). There are also eight miscellaneous references, such as when Paul told those gathered at the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia that “God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus” (Acts 13:23, Authorized Standard Version) or when Peter spoke before the high priest, “Him [whom ye slew] hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour” (Acts 5:31).

At all other times He is called “Lord and Saviour” or “God and [my] Saviour.” You will notice also that the title “Lord” always precedes the title “Saviour.” It is never “our Saviour and Lord.” In other words, Christ is always Lord before He is Saviour.

Again, notice that Christ is never addressed as “Saviour.” He is always addressed as “Lord” or “Master.” The common title “Lord” (Greek, *kurios*) occurs 745 times in the New Testament; 719 times the word is translated “Lord,” fourteen times “master,” thirteen times “sir” and once “owner.” “Lord” is the title which is used most often in addressing Christ.

Then there is a stronger Greek word *despotes* from

which we get our word despot. This word occurs only ten times in the New Testament, e.g., when Paul speaks of “a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use” (II Tim. 2:21) and when Peter mentions “false teachers . . . even denying the Lord that bought them” (II Pet. 2:1). The word means an owner of slaves, one who has bought another and owns him completely. Christ has bought us, and we are His. He is our Despot. Jude speaks of those who deny “our only Master [*despotes*] and Lord, Jesus Christ” (verse 4, Authorized Standard Version).

We do not like the word despot, but it has been well said that the only perfect government is an absolute monarchy where the monarch is absolutely perfect. Christ Jesus is our perfect Despot.

Then our Lord is addressed as “Rabbi” by both His disciples and others, a word which occurs seventeen times in the New Testament, eight times translated “rabbi” and nine times translated “master.” It means “highly honored” or “respected,” used generally in addressing a teacher. The word *rabboni* is used twice; this is a still stronger term meaning “prince” or “chief.” Once it is used by Mary (John 20:16) and once by a blind beggar (Mark 10:51).

The sum of all this is that the Lordship of Christ and His Saviourhood are always linked together. He is Saviour because He is Lord. If He is not Lord He is not Saviour. When we make Him our Saviour we make Him our Lord; and if we do not make Him our Lord we cannot make Him our Saviour. The Lordship of Christ is proclaimed, shall we say, more than His Saviourhood. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords—Lord of all!

In our Lord’s earthly ministry, while He proclaimed His saving mission, telling us that He came to seek and

to save that which was lost, He always laid down the strictest conditions if one were to come and partake of His salvation. "So likewise," He says, "whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). In other words, His followers are those who make Him their Lord, their Despot. This is the taking up of one's cross daily, the denial of self.

This does not mean that one must forsake his position (unless his position dishonors the Lord) and go about as a beggar. It means that he must bring all things into the captivity of Christ (II Cor. 10:5). It has been well said that a religion which costs nothing is worth nothing.

If you want to go into the heart of Africa you may be introduced to a guide who is able to take you there. You may know his name and believe that he is able. But you will never get there until you follow him. Jesus says, "Follow me." Following Christ is proof of genuine trust, trust that brings a full surrender whereby we make Him our Lord—the Lord of our time, our money, our occupation, our entire life.

We cannot trust one we do not love. If we love Him it will be our joy to follow Him, to obey Him, to keep His commandments. There are gods many and lords many, everyone having his own. But what god or lord is there like unto the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

Furthermore, where Jesus sits, He is King. The record of Jesus' life while here upon earth is a matter of history; the prophecies pertaining to His future Kingdom on earth are too plain and too numerous to admit of doubt by anyone who believes the Bible; hence the burning question with each of us should be, Is Jesus sitting as King in my individual heart? Do I try harder to

please Him than I try to please myself? Are His interests my interests, His Business my business? Can I truthfully say that I neither love father nor mother, son nor daughter, brother nor sister, nor even my own life more than Him and the type of Christian living He stands for?

Remember, where Jesus sits, He is King. He never accepts a second place, and He will not be pleased with halfhearted service; hence if

moved him to warn the church at Corinth to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5).

For Christ to sit as King in our hearts we must let His Word dwell in us richly; then whatever trials cross our pathway or however hard the battle with self goes, we shall have that great peace which nothing

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### ***He is Saviour because He is Lord. If He is not Lord, He is not Saviour.***

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we have any interest in our hearts greater than His, if our affections are on any earthly thing that supercedes Him, He simply does not sit there.

Let us quote again Jesus' words recorded in Luke 9:23: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily* and follow me." To take up our cross occasionally will not suffice. For Him to be the perfect Despot in our lives, we must take it up constantly.

And this condition where Jesus sits as King in our hearts will not be accomplished without effort. The human mind is naturally antagonistic to the Law of God; it is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," hence must be dispensed with completely. Paul the apostle experienced this continual conflict between the two opposing forces. When his better self would enthrone Christ (the Christlife) in his heart, the natural mind was there ready to rebel and to dethrone Him. Recognition of this inherent obstinacy of his nature was what

can offend (Ps. 119:165); we shall be kept in that "perfect peace" of which Isaiah the Prophet speaks (26:3) because our minds are stayed upon Him. We can then in each time of trial answer the tempter as did He: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10). We shall then remember and act upon His words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"; we shall seek first His Kingdom by walking the strait and narrow way that leads to life, and in the end shall hear Him say, "You are my friends, for you have done what I commanded you. You have accepted My Lordship; I will now be your Saviour. I will dispense to you the everlasting salvation which My Father has prepared for all who have striven worthily. Enter into the joys of your Lord!" MM

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*There is no solid basis for civilization but in the Word of God.*

# For the Joy Ahead

*Scripture Reading: John 12:20-36*

**A**S WE stand again on the threshold of a new year, we find ourselves looking forward . . . looking backward . . . upward . . . inward. Once again it is time to review, time to analyze our position in relation to the goal we have set for ourselves and make any mid-course corrections that are necessary.

Where *are* we in our journey through life? Where have we come from? Where are we headed? Has the year just ended shown a maximum of spiritual growth and development, or have we let day after day just slip by without serious thought or attention? As we look at ourselves and the road over which we have traveled, can we say that as a result of the experiences of this past year our vision of the future is clearer, our God nearer, our hope stronger, our faith richer, our step surer, than a twelve-month ago? Were we to be called tonight to give account of ourselves, could we render a good account?

Solid questions these, as they speak to the innermost soul of each of us; because opportunity is fleeting. Again and again we are reminded of this, as we confront the realities of mortal weakness and limitation. Now, right now is the hour of opportunity. Right now is the time to be accomplishing the task before us, we who profess to be seeking first the Kingdom of God and righteousness; we who so fervently long for the fulfillment of all the great and wonderful things our God has promised, yet who so deeply need the mercy of God.

We stand in awe and wonderment at the divine long-suffering that tolerates a world of gross wickedness for the sake of the handful who are seriously serving Him. Who are they for whom He waits—is it you? is it I? Is He tarrying for *us*?

And yet, as we look back over our record, we marvel that He considers us worth waiting for, we who have been so slow to believe, so slow to lay hold on the opportunities heaped upon us. Again and again we have known the right and not done it; again and again we have shown ourselves very *un*Christlike in spirit and in deed. Time and again in the midst of everyday trivia we have lost sight of our high, high calling. Time and again we, who have been offered blessings beyond fathoming, have shown ourselves careless, indifferent, unconcerned.

And still He tarries.

We marvel, too, at the magnitude of the reward before us. To think that we have been invited to *live*—not for a few short years, then pass into oblivion with the multitudes who have come before us. We are living to live—and live, and *live*. And not only this, but it will be life that is meaningful and rewarding, life that is rich with challenge and opportunity, and—blessed thought—life that is forever free from the ravages of mortality, from pain, disease, suffering and heartache. Yes, what will it be to obtain that life!

How deeply has this hope possessed us? Do we want it enough that we are willing actually to change our tastes and our nature? Do we want it enough that we are willing to let go every other longing of our heart, every freedom and “right” to which we are heir, that is contrary to the law of God? Are we ready to follow Jesus *all* the way, to make the complete sacrifice of ourselves and all our natural pulls and passions?

As we step into another year, let us ask ourselves squarely: How far are we willing to take this thing called holiness? Is it possible that we are willing to make *some* sacrifices, forego *some* pleasures, make *some* denials, subdue *some* impulses of our nature—yet not *all*? Yes, how deeply do we *want* what He is offering?

Jesus was serious about this matter of desire. He

Note: *For the Joy Ahead* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

promised the blessed state to those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" suggesting the hunger and thirst of a man in the desert who is at the point of starvation. Again, He likened it to that of a merchantman who is ready to sell "all that he has" to secure the priceless pearl. The desire must be acute, impelling, overpowering.

Is it so with us? How much do you—do I—want life? Do I want it enough that I am seizing every opportunity of each new day? Do I want it so intensely that I am obsessed by it, that the prospect of future bliss is my meat and drink, my support and possessing thought through every hour? Do I want it so fervently and believe in it so fully that I can depend upon it to steady me through any test, any loss, any suffering? Do I want it so much that I can accept every experience of life with gratitude, as a God-sent opportunity to humble me, to prove me, to strengthen my grasp on the joy ahead? Have I committed to "anything, Lord, for Thee"—without reservation—and *meant* it?

### The Question of Commitment

This question of commitment in serving God is a question that must penetrate the inner consciousness of each of us personally. For it is not someone else for whom I am responsible, but *I myself*. And it is *I myself* who will either lose or win the eternal crown. It is *I myself* who will either stand or fall for the things I have done.

At times like these, when we stand looking forward into the unknowns of the new year, the example of Jesus comes to us like a blinding light from heaven, almost too dazzling for our mortal eyes to comprehend. Here is one who in a brief 33 years went the whole way and set the perfect example for us to follow.

How did He do it? What sustained Him through the trying hours?

It was none other than the same sustaining power available to us, the propelling power of anticipation. "Who for the joy that was set before him," wrote the author of Hebrews, analyzing His tremendous achievement. "For the joy set before him" He "endured the cross, despising the shame, and"—What is the glorious conclusion? Jesus was looking ahead, beyond the moment of suffering to the triumphant climax, when He would be carried by angels to the highest court of heaven, to meet face to face with His Father, to be crowned with immortality in the presence of His Father and a multitude of holy angels; and then, highest honor of all, to be "set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Do we wonder that He could endure with such "joy" ahead?

Here is the perfect example for us. Here is one mor-

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### *How far are we willing to take this thing called holiness?*

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tal like us, who lived and worked among men just as we do. Here is one who was tempted in all points as we are. Yet there was in Him a power unmatched by any we have been able to muster. Here was one so committed, so surrendered, so completely at the disposal of His Father's will that He found it utterly impossible to think or move *apart* from that will. So whole-souled was He that once He learned a law of God He never transgressed it. Never. Can we even imagine the magnitude of this achievement?

### Jesus In the Throes of Trial

In the 12th chapter of John we are given a glimpse of Jesus as He approaches the end of His brief mortal career and the most formidable trial of His life. He had known that it was coming, but until now it could be said that "his hour had not yet come." Now, suddenly, its reality strikes. Now "the hour is come" (John 12:23). And what is His reaction?

It is a critical hour in His career. The days of teaching the multitudes are past. The miracles are past. The final hours of His ministry are upon Him. The New Year feast, the last He would see as a mortal man, is past. Only a few days more and—glorious thought—the first stage of His career would be over.

As never before, He realizes it. As never before, He feels the urgency of completing what He has begun. More keenly than ever before He feels the pressures of finishing. Humbly, prayerfully He surveys the course over which He has come.

At this point, we read that "there were certain Greeks" who had come "up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." We are not told why they came to Philip—perhaps they chose to approach him rather than any of the others because he had a Greek name.

Nor are we told their motivation. Perhaps they were sincere; more likely it was only curiosity—we are told in the book of Acts that the Greeks were an inquisitive people, with minds like hounds that constantly quested after anything new and novel.

Apparently unsure of what to do, Philip went to consult Andrew. Together they decided that Jesus should be told. And so they came to Him.

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***Only one week before the crucifixion,  
what was foremost in His mind? Not  
the approaching suffering but glory!***

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We do not know the outcome, or if the Greeks ever saw Jesus, but Philip's question provoked from Jesus a stream of thought that has a wealth of spiritual insight and inspiration for us.

**Looking Ahead**

"And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:23).

Here was Jesus, only one week before the crucifixion, and what was foremost in His mind? Not the approaching suffering but *glory*! "The hour is come," says He, "that the Son of man should be"—not crucified but "glorified"!

Then, as if dropping His sites from heaven to earth, He turns to face what lies ahead. The shadow of the cross falls dark and forbidding on His path and on His

mind. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (v. 27).

So often we see great people only as they move from triumph to triumph. Ours is not the privilege to witness their hesitations, or overhear the mental struggles through which they passed in secret before they saw their way, found their feet, and gained the insight and courage for which we remember them.

But it is one of the priceless characteristics of the gospels that from time to time we come upon Jesus in the privacy of His own soul. We overhear Him thinking aloud, as it were, as if He has forgotten those around Him and is totally unaware that we are listening. At such times we are able almost to hear the tremor in His voice, to catch the tender anguish in His eye and feel the torturous conflict in His breast. His is no struggle far removed from ours. It is an experience as real and as intimate as life itself. It is the age-old struggle between flesh and spirit, between fear and faith, between cowardice and courage.

But as always in the life of Christ, faith is triumphant. Never is He defeated. Always He is able to stand. Nothing is ever too hard to do or to bear—with God.

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*Let Us Pray . . .*

Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who hold-est our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved; who triest us as silver is tried, and bringest us through water and through fire: we come before Thee this morning in humble gratitude for all Thy tender mercies toward us.

We thank Thee that we have been brought safely to the point of beginning another year with Thee, that our souls are still held in the bundle of life. We are grateful for our pleasant surroundings, and for Christian friends with whom we may share the real values of life. We are grateful for the degree of health and strength Thou dost permit us to enjoy; for reasoning minds, for will power to choose between right and wrong, and for memories that can retain the lessons we learn.

We thank Thee especially, our Father, for the blessing of hope, for the unspeakable joy and glory Thou hast set before us.

May our hearts rejoice, as we look ahead to the time when we can renew our strength, when we can mount up with power as do the angels, when we can run and not be weary, walk and not faint. Thou hast promised that for us one day mortality can be swallowed up of life, that we may be made equal to the angels never to die. With Thy promises we can look ahead to receiving an inheritance which will be incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. May these bright prospects buoy us over every trying situation of our lives, may we follow the Example of Thy Son and look *beyond* the trial to the glory that is sure to come, and so rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory as we anticipate receiving the end result of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

We pray Thee to be very near to us in our devotions this morning. Be near Thy people everywhere whose hearts are one with Thee, who are seeking earnestly Thy Kingdom. Forgive us each one for the sins we confess and forsake, and keep us all steadfastly pressing toward the goal Thou hast set before us, that we may someday share the delights of full salvation with Thy Son and the good and faithful of all ages world without end. In His name we pray. Amen.



But it is not easy. We listen, and we marvel. And as we set His moral stature beside our own, we realize how small and weak we are, and His achievement takes on new meaning in *our* lives. Like us He suffered, being tempted. And for this reason He is able even now to succor them that are tempted.

What a stimulus to our faith! Oh, the love, the devotion, the anxiety we feel as we realize that we are called to "suffer with him"!

### **Reaction and Resignation**

Seldom was our Lord so deeply moved. Huge tides of thought and feeling raced each other through His mind as He spoke these words. "Now is my soul troubled." There is at first an instinctive dread of suffering and shame as the gravity of what lay ahead descended upon Him like a thick cloud. Then, spontaneously, He addresses His Father. It is a plea for deliverance. "Father," He prays, "save me from this hour." Then, as if sensing that He might have asked too much, there comes a total resignation of Himself to the will of God.

It is enough. As quickly as the clouds had blown up, they are scattered, the sun breaks through again and He sees even more vividly the coming glory. Yes, glory is ahead! Exultation is ahead! Immortality is ahead! The day and hour of that momentous meeting with His Father in heaven is already set—only hours away. And oh, the exaltation, the honor it will bring!

Do we wonder that He was able to endure, with such a prospect in mind? And do we wonder that it is written of Him that He endured "for the joy set before him?" Here was the focus of His thought, not on the few moments of suffering and trial but on the glory that would follow.

This was the crowning characteristic of Christ. How quickly His keen mind surveyed the picture and looked beyond. For if He had the most resolutely honest of minds, He had also the strongest link with His Father in Heaven. The facts were not to be evaded but seen for what they were within the will of God. But just as certain as the suffering was the glory to follow. And so sure was He of the nearness, the providential care of His Father that nothing, absolutely nothing, was too much to do or give up or bear or suffer so long as it lay within the Father's will.

In this way He saw beyond the suffering to the glory—even as we ourselves must. And events which seemed almost too much to bear became the opening of a door on something huge, tremendous, incalculable. For His suffering was not an end but rather a giant step toward the culmination of the ages, the establishing of the eternal Kingdom of God on earth!

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***Loving the things that pass away,  
setting our affections on the things we  
cannot keep, is like building on the  
sand—it is sure to disappoint  
and ruin us.***

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### **The Message to Us**

Do we get the message that comes to us? Is it not the natural shrinking of the heart, followed by the whole-hearted surrender of Himself to God, keeping back nothing, eagerly looking forward to the glory He had been promised? Is not that the very essence of triumph?

And is this not Christ's revelation of what God is really seeking from us? Is it not the upward call for us to do likewise, to look beyond the sacrifice of today to the glory we can enjoy if faithful? Is it not this in the example of Christ that enables us to climb and keep climbing, all the way to the top?

And so we learn to pray His prayer, and mean it; begging not that we may escape what threatens us, but that we may see it through with honor, our mind fixed on coming glory.

"For this purpose came I to this hour." Grim though it might appear, there is meaning in it, plan in it, love in it, God in it. There is no whimper of complaint or any bleating of self-pity, but only a humble, grateful submission. And when we think we have had all we can take, it is as if He comes yet again, like an invisible schoolmaster, and tears our copybook when we have shown it, saying, "No, Son, thou must write it better." What can we do, but obey—and think it best!

### **The Way of Sacrifice**

At the same time, lest any should miss His meaning, Jesus details the path to glory—not the road of ease but the hard path of sacrifice and suffering. So intense is the suffering at times that it is likened to death. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John 12:24-26).

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*No life is so rich as that which totally forgets itself in the pursuit of the highest good, with "none of self" and "all of God."*

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Sacrifice is the underlying law of life, and of success in life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." First it is a warning against the loneliness of selfishness. If we live for ourselves, immersed only in our pleasures and problems, we are sure to be miserable. Shut yourself into your own life, and nothing can touch you but your own troubles.

But cut loose from the selfish life, stifle your own thoughts; discipline your mind, deny yourself the right to think as you please and instead concentrate on thinking great thoughts of God. Enlarge your inner world, broaden your horizons to include all the realm of the divine, and you will find life rich and abundant, whatever it brings.

### **We Gain by Losing**

It has been said that the man who is all wrapped up in himself is a very small package. Jesus would have us recognize this futility before too late! For "He that loveth his life"—lived only for present gratifications—"shall lose it."

Again, it is a warning against misplaced affection. Loving the things that pass away, loving the temporary, setting our affections on the things that are fleeting, the things we cannot keep, is like building on the sand—it is sure to disappoint and ruin us.

Some feel that the only way to the top of the tree and to the things that count is to be self-centered, self-oriented, to formulate our own ideas and stick to them. But nothing could be further from the truth. For it is in giving that we gain, in sacrificing that we achieve, in dying to ourselves and all our selfish desires that we find real life.

The issue is critical, for to gain what the natural man assumes to be solid and substantial is to throw away the prospect of real life. For while we are busy pursuing the things that are seen, the really big things—the things that cannot be seen—will

all be missed. In the words of the poet:

*The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon  
Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,  
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.*

Such is the gallant and breathless tale of human adventure, of hot and soaring ambition, of proud conquests, of honors daringly sought and won. But in the final hour, what is it worth? What have they of lasting worth to present to Him who has power to save? Suddenly they realize that they are empty handed, empty hearted, tricked, cheated, fooled—because they loved this life, and laid up all their treasures in this world. Suddenly they realize that only by "hating" life in this world—not in the sense of despising this goodly heritage but investing it in the will of God—can we "keep it unto eternal life."

Here is a view of life that is superior in power to even death itself. Here is a view which prevents the terrible fate which Jesus described another time in these words: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

### **Real Profit**

So taught the Master. And He ought to know. For no one ever made life so consequential as He. Even we ourselves have gone far enough to know that there is no permanent satisfaction in gratifying ourselves. No life is so full as that which totally forgets itself in the pursuit of the highest good, with "none of self" and "all of God."

Here is the farsighted view which Christ expects all those to accept who follow in His steps. They must adopt His standards of value, must put their lives to the same uses He did. For the whole point of following Christ is to become *Christlike*. "If any man serve me, let him follow me"—yes, follow all the way. And what is to be the result of such following? That "where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John 12:26).

Do we believe this? Have we grasped the depth of meaning in these words? Are we willing to let go all the honors of the present, all the honors we naturally seek from one another, and wait for His honor?

And what about the promise of His presence, "that where I am, there shall also my servant be"? Are we willing to stake our lives and all our hopes upon it? Are we ready to travel every furlong of the path Christ trod, following Him *whithersoever*? And have we thought about how our hearts will thrill with joy when the Day arrives that we must stand before the throne of Christ, if

as we go forward we may hear the angels whisper one to another, "How like Christ he is!"?

Yet, when we consider the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," do we wonder if it be possible for us? Oh, thank God for the assurance He has given us that it *is* possible, that even now are some whose eager eyes focus firmly on the "joy ahead." Night or day, it is their consuming thought to follow Christ. Such examples are without price, as they remind us of His holiness, His humility, His patience, His love. We watch, and as we watch, we wonder if they do not possess something we lack.

But that "something" can be ours, too, if we but apply ourselves as they have; for it is none other than the steadfast faith that comes from dwelling in the "secret place of the Most High." Well they know that Christianity is not a theory to be accepted but a life to be lived, every day, every hour, every moment. How intense, how concentrated the spiritual life that it demands; for at this late hour, with all the advantages they have had, they *cannot*, they *must* not, fail.

### The Goal of Serving

"If any man serve me, . . . him will my Father honor"? What is this honor—and this service? The apostle Paul tells how Christ achieved His high honor: "he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

What was the result? "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:8-11). God exalted Jesus, and He will exalt us if we follow Jesus, if we travel where He went, if we master His secret of giving up to gain—the momentary for the eternal.

But there is cost in the matter, and Jesus would have us count it. That is why He puts the question to us: How much do you really *want* it? How much do you *want* My honor? How much is it worth to you? When you think out what it really means, are you willing—are you able—are you ready to pay the price—*My* way?

This is where the example of Christ becomes priceless. Looking at Him from a distance, we see the gallantry and triumph. But as we get close to Him we get the other view—of suffering, of sacrifice, of obedience even unto death. Is *this* the road to His Kingdom? Is *this* how we "lose" our life "in this world" that we may "keep it unto life eternal"? Exactly!

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***Christ does not tell us of the difficulties to frighten us but to win us, to challenge us, to draw us irresistibly to Him.***

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But oh, it is so much more comfortable to go on doing as we please, not thinking, not watching, not seeing ourselves as we are. It is so much easier to go on oblivious to the facts of life, avoiding the unfamiliar. Truth hurts. Truth rebukes. Truth demands that we change.

But herein lies its crowning value, that it points us to the joy ahead, that it gives us the power to give up—to gain; to sacrifice the present—and reap the future; to surrender today—and be sure of tomorrow.

It all depends on the value we place on the prize at the end, how much we want it.

Yes, how much do we want it?

Christ does not tell us of the difficulties to frighten us, but to win us, to challenge us, to draw us irresistibly to Him. Such faith He has in those who follow Him! Yes, "if any man serve me, let him follow me," follow *all the way*.

After Jesus' brief struggle, we read in John 12:28 that He prayed, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

Already there was glory, with more—much more—to come; for, said the voice, "I will glorify it again." What were a few brief hours of trial—even though it include the Upper Room, Gethsemane, the trial, the crucifixion—compared to nearly two millenniums of glory at the right hand of His Father, followed by countless vistas upon the throne of Earth, where He would be the means of saving thousands and millions and billions of earthborns world without end!

Oh, thank God for the perfect example He has provided us. We are fighters in a great line. We come of a great breed who have faced their difficulties, staggered but unbroken. And when some grave call is made upon our faith and courage, let us not fail or shame it. Rather, let us, like Jesus, think of the joy ahead and seize our opportunity to follow Him who has gone before, who faced more than any other, and like Him play our part with gallantry.

*(Continued on page 24)*

# Christ, A Bud of Promise

***Just common  
shepherds—yet  
can we think that  
they were ordinary  
men, they whom  
God chose to see and  
hear the angelic host  
that holy night?***

FROM all appearances it was just another evening on just another spring day. But if the new moon could be seen tonight, tomorrow would be the feast of Abib in the City of Bethlehem. Abib was a feast that had been observed for centuries by the children of Israel. Many had grown complacent and had almost forgotten what the feast was all about.

Many, but not all.

On the rolling slopes not far from the city a lone shepherd, Tiphereth, was quietly watching over his flock. He seemed to be in deep thought as he gazed into the evening sky. Looking to the west, he spied the crest of the new moon, not far above the horizon. His eyes fastened upon it, and then on a distant hill. If *he* could see the moon, so could the watchers. And very soon, there it came—almost immediately—a trail of lazy smoke curling its way up into the sky. This was the official announcement of the arrival of the new year. Tomorrow the city of Bethlehem would be all astir with the New Moon Feast.

The shepherd picked up one of the tiny lambs and looked eye to eye with it, then lay back upon his scrip. (A scrip is a shepherd's bag, usually made of goatskin.) One night many years ago, he mused, perhaps a night just like this one, Jacob lay down to sleep, a stone for his pillow. That night he saw a ladder that reached into heaven. "Ah," he said to himself, "I can just see the angels ascending and descending upon the ladder. I wonder how it would feel to have a dream like that!"

There on the hillside in the peace of the night it seemed that he could almost peer into the very heavens and see the angels standing before the throne of God. What would it be like to see an angel, he wondered. Did not David say, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them?" David knew firsthand about deliverance.

Tiphereth couldn't help wondering. There had been nothing spectacular for so many years now—no parting of the waters, no devouring fire, no voices from heaven, no mighty miracles. Wouldn't this be an appropriate time for the Messiah to be born, right at the beginning of the year when everything was budding into new life? The Messiah, a bud of promise!"

He recalled some strange talk he had heard in the city, about Zacharias seeing an angel. It must have been over a year ago. Yes, Zacharias couldn't speak until after the child—John, they called him—was born. It was said, too, that his mother was very old, well past the age for childbearing. Then, only a few months later it was rumored that a virgin was with child. And . . .



didn't Isaiah say something about this? "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel"? Could it be . . . could it be that he, Tiphereth, might live to see the very Messiah with his own eyes!!?

As he lay staring into the heavens, his heart began to pound with excitement. Then suddenly he jumped to his feet. The sheep! Quickly he surveyed the flock and started around the perimeter to be sure that all was well.

He stopped to cuddle a newborn lamb in his arms, then let it go as its mother approached. "It's all right," he said assuringly as he released the little one. The lamb wobbled uncertainly toward its mother. Its tiny legs were still weak.

A short distance away another

shepherd could be heard playing a lonely tune on a reed flute. "Probably Gemaz," he told himself. "He'll find his way over here soon, if I know Gemaz."

It was only a matter of minutes, and Gemaz was at his side.

"Shalom to you, Gemaz," Tiphereth spoke first. "I'm so glad to see you tonight. Have you been at Bethlehem today?"

"Yes," replied Gemaz. "And I've never seen so many people! It's a good night to be a shepherd. All the inns are packed. People are even sleeping in the sheepfolds!"

After a few moments of silence Tiphereth spoke. "Gemaz, you look very disturbed tonight. What is troubling you?"

Gemaz raised his head slowly, his face a mixture of horror and grief.

"Tiphereth, I have just heard such a terrible thing! The wicked Herod has made a decree." Gemaz paused and swallowed hard to control the tremble in his voice.

"Gemaz," whispered Tiphereth, "what is it?"

Gemaz, no longer able to maintain his composure, spoke between sobs. "Tiphereth, . . . my brother," he began, as tears ran profusely down his face. "Herod has passed a decree . . . to destroy . . . an entire city . . . to assure that there will be mourning at his death."

Tiphereth extended a muscular arm and placed it around Gemaz's strong shoulders. "Gemaz," he spoke with a reassuring tone of voice, "you are yet so very young and troubled by so many things. Herod is a tyrant, it is true. But we must



Out of the star-gemmed sky  
A great dawn broke  
And a great voice  
Flooded us with song.  
"In David's city He is born," it sang,  
"A Saviour, Christ the Lord."  
Then while I stood  
Still shivering with the thrill  
Of that great cry,  
A mighty choir a thousandfold more sweet  
Sang suddenly, "Glory to God  
And peace, blest peace on earth."  
My heart would hardly beat.  
Speechless we waited  
Till the accustomed night  
Gave us no promise more  
Of sweet surprise;  
Then all alone, quickly,  
Without a question asked,  
We started through the fields  
To find the Child.

always remember the words of God as spoken by David, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.'

He paused. "I don't think we need to worry too much about Herod's decree," he continued. "His successor will have enough problems keeping peace without honoring such a brutal request."

"I never thought of that," said Gemaz as his sadness subsided. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone served the true God?"

"Gemaz," spoke Tiphereth with a smile, "I've been thinking about something tonight." Gemaz straightened his shoulders as he looked up at his friend. "I've been thinking about the Messiah. This might be the very time for the birth of the Messiah."

"The Messiah!" gasped Gemaz. "You mean *now*—this very night?"

"I don't know that it will be tonight," said Tiphereth, "but this I do know, that the time is near. Remember what we heard about Zacharias?"

"Yes I do," said Gemaz quickly, "and do you remember what we heard at the temple last fall about a virgin with child?"

"Yes," replied Tiphereth, "there was quite a stir about it. Hardly anyone believed it, though."

"Zacharias the priest did," returned Gemaz. "And I remember an elderly lady that believed it—the one that lives at the temple."

"The prophetess Anna," replied Tiphereth.

"Yes," continued Gemaz, "I've never seen anyone's eyes sparkle like hers did when Rabbi Zacharias was telling about it. I *know* she believed it!"

"Gemaz, it's time we checked out the perimeter again," said Tiphereth.

"I'll go with you." Gemaz was

already on his feet.

The two men walked in silence, both thinking about their conversation.

Suddenly the two froze in their tracks as they sensed two strangers approaching in the night. Instinctively Tiphereth picked up a round stone, examined it and dropped it into his bag.

A voice pierced through the darkness. "Tiphereth . . . is that you?"

"Basar," replied Tiphereth. "Shalom to you. What brings you away from your herd tonight?"

The four men stood in silence for a moment. "Tiphereth," said Basar, "I don't think I've ever felt quite like I have felt tonight. We've been talking about the Messiah coming—He may be near."

Tiphereth looked at Zuar, then at Basar. Finally his voice broke the silence: "Yes," he repeated, "He may be near—very near."

"The Messiah," spoke Zuar. "might the Messiah be born tonight?"

Tiphereth and Gemaz told what details they had heard and related them to the prophetic sayings.

"But don't you think that such a great personage as the Messiah would have a grand announcement?" broke in Basar.

"It is possible, I suppose," spoke Tiphereth. "But . . . we never know what the Lord will do."

"Well, there is one thing sure," replied Basar, "and that is that we're not likely to see an angel—not us, just common shepherds."

"I . . . I rather hope not," broke in Zuar. "I guess I don't feel very brave tonight. Why, I think I'd faint with fear if I saw an angel."

**T**HEN suddenly, without any warning, a light like a huge sun burst out of the night sky and came toward them. Nearer and nearer it came.

The four men fell upon their

faces trembling. Then a voice spoke, tenderly, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

The voice increased in volume and power as it continued. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Then suddenly, the whole sky was filled with light as there appeared "with the angel a vast host of the armies of Heaven, praising God, saying, 'Glory to God in the highest Heaven! Peace upon earth among men of good will!'"

Then, just as suddenly as the angels had come, they were gone.

The shepherds scrambled to their feet. Their legs felt useless: their hands were shaking and their faces were as pale as corpses. For a few moments they stood speechless, looking at each other. Then almost simultaneously they said, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

Without thought of the sheep, the shepherds started toward Bethlehem, partly running, partly stumbling in the dark shadows cast over crevices in the terrain. In a short time they were approaching the stable where Jesus lay.

They could hardly speak for excitement as they peered into the manger at the infant. We can be sure that they did not look upon this child as just another newborn. No, what they saw was something quite different to what we see when we look at an infant.

What did they see? they saw a saviour? That's what many Jews saw later—a saviour to deliver them

(Continued on page 25)

# Every Day, Every Day

## The Fruit of Love

*"The fruit of the Spirit is love" (Gal. 5:22).*

FRUIT is the expression of the life inside the fruit bearing plant. A tree is not an orange tree because it has oranges on it; rather, it has oranges on it because it is an orange tree. There is a direct parallel between the nature of a plant and its product. This is why Jesus said: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The first fruit of the spirit is love. As this love of God permeates the roots and branches of our lives, it saturates and regulates our thoughts, our attitudes, our words, our conduct, our emotions, our affections, our interests, our desires, our motives. This take-over by love results in growth in character in every phase of life.

## Joy Is Imported

IF one is given a guided tour of a home where he is visiting, the hostess will often point out things that were made in a foreign country. Domestic products are good, but somehow we attach a special significance to items that are imported.

Christian joy expressed in and through our lives comes from the world above and beyond us. Synthetic substitutes can, of course, be manufactured at the

earth level. Man can work out formulas that play tricks on the nervous system so one can have excitement; or we put together stimulants that give a faster heartbeat so one can have a good time; or arrange a series of thrill makers that give an emotional orgy. But none of these produces joy.

True Christian joy imparts a happiness that does not depend on happenings; a satisfaction that is not derived from circum-

stances; a sense of delight that does not come from either the incidents or accidents of life.

The joy of the Lord flows from us with an artesian thrust and into desert hearts so that they blossom with beauty. It flows into blighted areas until they become rehabilitated into places of attractiveness. It flows into lives where there are only the ashes of burned out hopes and aspirations, and a new beauty emerges.

"Everyday with Paul," by Mendell Taylor. Copyright 1978 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City; used by permission.

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# Jesus Christ:

## *Was His Birth, Life and Death as Other Men?*

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 1

*A discourse by the Reverend L. T. Nichols in reply to a position taken by Dr. Crapsey, a local Protestant minister; delivered at Plymouth Church, Rochester, New York, March 26, 1905.*

**B**ELOVED Brethren and Respected Friends:

I take pleasure in calling your attention to things brought before our minds in the Divine testimony. Although we have met here for the purpose of answering Dr. Crapsey, we have no ill-feeling whatsoever. And whilst we shall answer his arguments, do not think we are doing injustice to the man. Whilst we shall bring forth some of the arguments brought forward by Dr. Crapsey, we shall do it with all due respect and consideration. Whilst we shall answer his argument, do not confound the argument with the individual.

Some of you have perhaps heard him. He told you the higher critics have said that Christ was born into the world as any other man, and died as any other man. Now I have no disposition to contend with truth; my concern lies in directing the intelligence to what truth is. It is immaterial to me: if Christ was born as other men, I would as soon believe that as anything else but I have certain convictions and I cannot throw them off, because they

come from a higher source than man. As we read to you from Hebrews 1: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

Now, do we not see here is a unique character found nowhere else? We must either throw away these Epistles to the Hebrews, Corinthians, and Galatians—every epistle and gospel, not excepting the divine Revelation that came after He was gone to Heaven—or else we are driven to conclude that He was born, lived, and died different from other men.

We find Him quite exceptionally above all other human beings, as we read in the 4th verse of our lesson: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." It says He hath "*by inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they." By virtue of His birth He came into possession of a better inheritance than they. With this statement before us we are driven to conclude that He was

far ahead of other men. He is the Saviour of His people. No other man that walks or has walked the face of the earth has vested in him the salvation of God's people. Again you remember the testimony of our blessed Master, John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Can we find another individual, and cite the instance where God declared of him that he was the "pattern" of all purity? He is set forth in the Divine phraseology as being different from the rest of us. No other man has accepted divine guidance from early childhood as did He.

If His birth, life, and death were only as those of other great men, we have no pattern, guide or priest to whom we can go in prayer for guidance in the Christian life.

**I**N what respects is He different from other men?

- First, look at His name. "Jesus" means, "Jehovah is salvation." The name is deeply significant of the work which the Son of God was born into the world to accomplish, namely, "to save his



people from their sins." For this reason, in the account of the Annunciation as given by Luke, His mother was expressly bidden to call her babe by this name, Jesus. Mary was also told He was to be called the Son of the Highest.

You remember we read in the 5th verse of our lesson, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

- Second, "Christ" signifies "the anointed," or "consecrated by unction." He is also called Emmanuel, Son of God, Holy Child, Prophet of the Highest, Dayspring from on High, The Bright and Morning Star, Lily of the Valley, Rose of Sharon, Redeemer, Prince of Peace, King of kings and Lord of lords, Faithful Witness, First begotten from the dead. Can this be said of any other man?

- Third, He was justly said to be holy, spotless, undefiled, harmless, sinless, pure, separate from sinners, meek, just, always doing the things of His Father, etc. Can this be said of any other man?

- Then notice the authority with which He spoke. He says in Matthew 5:21-22, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; . . . But I say unto you . . ." No other man would dare overrule a time-honored law and lay down a principle by which to be governed. See the statement at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:29). Yes, He talked as one having authority.

- He obtained His knowledge and understanding exclusively from God and His recorded utterances. He was not subject to the training of any of the rabbinic schools, hence His knowledge could not

have been borrowed from such writers as Philo, nor from any of the Greek philosophers. His methods and His whole moral conception differ fundamentally from those of the Alexandrian philosophers or the Jerusalem Pharisees. The fact that He never passed through the normal pattern of training in the classics accounts for His methods and His whole moral conception differing from those of all others.

Jesus' teachings show that He was by no means uneducated. He was wonderfully familiar with the sights

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***Can we find another individual, whom God declared that he was the "pattern"?***

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and sounds of nature, as well as with the habits of men of various classes, for He drew illustrations from both sources. He also had knowledge of both Greek and Aramaic.

- Hear the words of Jesus after His ascension in His Revelation to John on the Isle of Patmos: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." Can this be said of any other man? Again: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, . . . he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." I would like to know if this authority has been delegated to any other man, to open and no one can shut?

- Furthermore, we have evidence from the Divine testimony itself that He was born different from other men. Turn to Matthew 16:13: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men

say that I the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

- Again, our Lord is called "The Day Star," the bright and morning Star. Can this be said of any other man? No other man is called the Day Star, the Bright and Morning Star. Not only that, He is called "The Only Begotten of the Father." Again, the Bible declares that He is "The Root and the Offspring of David."

We find that Christ is not only called the titles we have already mentioned, but He is also called "The Good Shepherd." Can we rise to that grand standard?

All of the above demonstrate that He was superior to the rest of humanity, who are born simply of the flesh. Hence He was born not of man, but of God.

**B**UT WE might ask: If the record of the Bible be true, telling us He was such a wonderful Man, why, as says the enquirer, do we not find more written about Him in Jewish history? It is all told in a few words.

We should rather marvel that He is mentioned at all. The Jews looked upon Jesus as an impostor, and for this reason the Jewish historian passed over the facts of Christ's life in an unscrupulous way with a reticence due only to dislike or perplexity; although, notwithstanding Josephus' hatred or dislike, he mentioned Jesus three times. Whether all that

we find in Josephus relative to this great man is genuine or not, we have no positive evidence; although what He says is found as early as A. D. 324, which clearly sets forth Jesus as having manifested characteristics extraordinary, above the rest of mankind. Josephus clearly points out that He was a wise man, a doer of wonderful works resulting in multitudes of followers; that He was

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***Hear the words of  
Jesus after His  
ascension: "I am he  
that liveth, and was  
dead; and, behold, I  
am alive for evermore."  
Can any other man  
say this?***

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put to death, rose again the third day; and many other wonderful things concerning Him.

Apart from this, we have four works of which the authenticity has never even been assailed by any serious writer. These are the four Epistles of the apostle Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, and the Galatians, of which the testimony is all the more valuable because it is undesigned and incidental. These may be regarded as the fifth Gospel. They are the testimony of one whose personality stands forth with absolute clearness in the light of history. It is the testimony of a man of commanding intellect and culture who, after the death of Christ, was converted from the most bitter hostility to the most intense devotion, and who bears his witness within twenty-five years of the events of which he speaks.

In these Epistles we can find contemporary testimony to almost every fact of primary importance in the life of Christ: His miraculous birth, His poverty, His Messiahship, His divine claims, His founding of the Eucharist, His passion, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, repeated appearances, His ascension, etc.; and if we add the testimony of Paul's other Epistles, we have witness to almost every fact of importance in the four Gospels. These Gospels do not claim to be full biographies written for the gratification of curiosity, but they do preserve for us all that is necessary to explain the origin of Christianity and the life of its Founder. Even the close investigations of historical criticism must admit that the life of Jesus was a life of which the main outlines are historically certain.

**T**HUS we are driven to behold in Jesus a unique and sinless personality, one with whom no other human being can be even distantly compared, either in His character, His teaching, or the results which He accomplished in His brief ministry. He preached but three years; He wore no broad phylacteries; He had no human learning, His rank but that of a village carpenter. His followers were "unlearned and ignorant men" chosen from the humblest of the people. Yet, as a matter of consequence, He altered the whole current of the stream of history; He closed the history of the past, inaugurated the history of the future, and the most brilliant and civilized nations of the world look upon Him as being far beyond anyone who was born, lived, or died as other men.

Kant testified to His ideal perfection. Spinoza spoke of Him as the truest symbol of heavenly wisdom. Strauss said He is the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect

to religion; the being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible. At the age of twelve He astonished and amazed the Doctors in the temple. The knowledge He acquired is far ahead of that of all other men.

Christ *alone* has furnished mankind with a perfect ideal. No one can attain to that ideal only by the aid of His grace, and through the imitation of His example.

His teaching stands alone in its breadth and power; it was fresh, simple, abounding in illustrations the most beautiful and intelligible, drawn from the common sights of nature and daily incidents of social and domestic life. It flowed forth without reserve on every fitting occasion—on the highway, the hillside, the lake, by the well, or at the banquet. His utterances rival and surpass all that preceded and all that followed them. There is never in them a lurking fallacy, but all is vivacity, intelligibility, directly enlightening grace, intending only to convince and to save. They have inspired the aims of the noblest culture, and made the moral and the spiritual being the supreme end of life. The gradual emancipation of the world from the tyrannies of sensuality, cruelty, and serfdom has been won, step by step, by the enforcement of the principles which He taught. The supremacy of the spiritual and the essential equality of all men are fruitful conceptions which have sprung directly from His teachings.

**H**E IS termed "The Man Christ Jesus." He was born of a woman, He grew like other children. He suffered hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, weakness, fear, sorrow, sympathy, temptations, wounds and death. He was liable to the common emotions of our mortal nature. He grew in stature and wis-

dom, and "learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Such human weaknesses as these cannot in any way apply to the great Eternal God. In Christ's person and nature He was not God, but wholly man.

Jesus, like every son, bears the name of His Father, but He could not have been His own father, neither could He have existed before His mother. Therefore He had no existence, only in the plan and purpose of God, before His birth by Mary.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). He will descend with "the voice of the archangel" and "the trump of God," and the dead in Christ shall rise first; "then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:16-17). This is the manner in which we shall get to be with the Lord Jesus.

He declares in Matthew 25:31-34, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Jesus occupies a position no one else can fill. He will be Judge and will exercise His regal power until the world shall be brought into union with the King of kings. It will take a higher power than man to bring about the desired end.

**M**Y TIME is gone; we are compelled to leave it with you whether we have said anything to overthrow the argument of Dr. Crapsey; whether we have said anything to build up the person of Christ. He is our Pattern. Is He not worthy to be our Pattern? We

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***We behold in Jesus a  
unique and sinless  
personality, one with  
whom no other human  
being can be even  
distantly compared.***

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believe these things with all our heart.

We shall have to take up the subject of Christ's death at some other time; it is too wide a subject. Take home with you the evidence we have given and reason upon it. Remember, so long as you are deceived and think that He was God

and existed before His mother, you will never fill your churches with reasonable men and women searching for the salvation of God. Almost the whole world have thrown it over and say that Jesus was born, lived, and died just as other men. Or else they say He was very God, existing from eternity past to eternity future. But no, He could not have lived before the material out of which He was made existed.

There is no trouble in the investigation of this subject when we let God be His own interpreter. And you may rest assured that it will be found in harmony with facts and reason. Whenever we get an elaboration that is not in harmony with reason, we may rest assured we are wrong. God has said, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). Throw away every unreasonable idea, and then Dr. Crapsey and all the rest of us can read the Bible without having our senses outraged in the least.

We leave the subject with you for your further consideration and investigation. May God help in this good work. Amen. MM

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## A Hidden Spring

**O**UR thoughts have sources. If we would safeguard our thoughts we must investigate their sources.

We gather our thoughts from all sorts of places; things we see, hear, and read. We should not let them lodge in our minds if they are the wrong kind, any more than we would invite a thief, or murderer to lodge in our home.

No person can revel in thinking without his thoughts finding their way into his actions. You can never cover an unclean mind with polish and make a good character, any more than you can cover soap with chocolate and make good candy. The contents will sooner or later show up!

How about those thought-sources or springs? Keep them clean!—so clean that not an evil thought of our own, or someone else's can disturb or hurt us for a moment! Not having allowed a single thieving or murderous thought, suggestion, or motive inside, nothing can disturb our peace or poise outside. Hence, from the hidden spring of purity we will be pure. MM

# Behold, He Cometh

Behold, all ye careless, and tremble!  
The day of the Lord is at hand,  
To visit a sin-loving people  
With judgment, thro'out all the land.  
All sinners shall bow at His feet;  
Their punishment just they shall meet.

His Prophets have long given warning,  
'Tis written in letters that glow.  
The world His great mercy is scorning  
Nor care His commandments to know.  
They trample God's law to the ground,  
And scoff at His wisdom profound.

Is this to be earth's ultimatum?  
Is time to forever roll on  
And bring us no help, no salvation,  
No sweet oil of gladness, no balm?  
We read from this Book the glad story,  
"All earth shall be filled with God's glory."

For ages has earth been polluted,  
And Wickedness' flag wide unfurled.  
God's judgments, by men so long slighted,  
Will waken a slumbering world  
And speak forth His marvelous power  
In thundering tones the earth o'er.

Oft history itself has repeated;  
The Wise Man has told us no less.  
Such things as today are transpiring,  
Transpired in the ages long past.  
Great civilized kingdoms of men  
To barbaric hordes turned again.

I look to the heavens above me,  
The beautiful, bright, jeweled dome,  
The firmament over and 'round me;  
How long, oh, how long have they shone,  
Those wonderful worlds there on high,  
Bright jewels illuming the sky!

The stars shining brightly above us  
As when they first shone upon man,  
In phalanx, a mighty procession,  
Are held by Omnipotent Hand.  
God's wisdom guides each one through space;  
His power holds each one in place.

Orion, in all of its splendor,  
Beyond what frail man can conceive,  
Shines now in its glory and grandeur  
As when it first shone upon Eve.  
How truly the heavens declare  
And show forth God's handiwork there!

The bright stars that shine in their glory.  
Those beautiful gems of the sky,  
Where angel lips tell the glad story  
Of God's saving Law from on high,  
Are homes where the saved rest secure;  
Who long ago made their hearts pure.

Our planet has moved in its orbit  
While millions of years have rolled 'round;  
The seasons have followed in circuit,  
No clashing in nature is found.  
God made not this earth all in vain;  
The righteous in it shall remain.

I know that the God of the Bible,  
Who loads us with blessings untold,  
Is God of true science and nature;  
His works do His wisdom unfold.  
Look up now, and see what He's done;  
Sufficient is His arm alone.

We gaze o'er the broad fields of nature,  
We walk through the breadth of the land;  
How few ever stop and consider  
'Twas formed by Omnipotent hand!  
Jehovah alone is the Maker;  
He holdeth all things by His power.



Yes, God is the Maker and Builder;  
The earth with its riches untold  
Belongs to the All-wise Creator,  
Nor needs He man's silver or gold.  
And someday our earth will be bright,  
Its saints clothed in raiment of light!

Men enter this earth's scene of action,  
And quickly they pass from the stage,  
Make room for the next generation;  
So fleeting, so transient, their age.  
As shadows they vanish away,  
As vapors before the sun's ray.

And yet they go on in transgression,  
Defy and resist the High God  
In arrogance past comprehension,  
If 'twere not revealed in His Word.  
In towers they've builded they trust—  
Mere Babels that crumble to dust.

Ye faithless ones, fearlessly saying—  
By actions if not by your words—  
"My Lord is delaying His coming;  
His Word no assurance affords";  
He'll turn your vain hopes to despair,  
The night of your pleasure to fear.

Oh, sad be the day of His coming  
To those who are trusting in self;  
Those who His just laws are transgressing,  
Who live but for pleasure or wealth!  
This wicked, this wicked old world,  
Will feel His stern judgments outpoured.

A few of the wise of earth's statesmen  
Are trying this crisis to face,  
And looking with great apprehension  
As lawlessness hurries apace.  
Alas! they are trusting in man  
To bring about peace by his plan.

The season for our Lord's appearing  
We know by the milestones passed by.  
The bells of the High Priest are ringing,  
To tell us His coming is nigh.  
From east and from west come the sound,  
Yea, loudly they ring the world 'round.

Oh, heed now the kind words of warning  
Ere it is forever too late,  
Your dear Lord you'll meet in that Morning  
'Twill seal then forever your fate.  
You'll enter that sweet lasting rest;  
Or will sadly be placed on the left.

God's Prophets have long given warning,  
O why not take heed to their word?  
The dear, grand old Prophet Elijah  
Will come before Jesus our Lord  
And publish throughout all the land,  
"The Kingdom of Heav'n is at hand!"

But will they accept the Messiah,  
Own Jesus as Ruler and King?  
They'll brand Him a lawless usurper,  
Vile epithets at Him will fling.  
For peace they persistently pray,  
And go on their own evil way.

Oh fearful will be earth's great conflict!  
Their Peace Cry will vanish like smoke  
When Jesus shall send forth His edict,  
"Disarm, and come under My yoke!"  
But armed to the teeth they'll resist Him  
And think by their might to defeat Him.

Earth's final fierce struggle is come then;  
No quarter, no truce, no retreat;  
It rages, the dread Armageddon;  
Earth's millions God's battle sword meet  
Though long be the struggle and fearful,  
God's strong ones will win the last battle.

The peace that will come with possession  
Of earth by our Saviour and King,  
Will roll on through time everlasting;  
What praises to God the bells ring!  
They ring out a loud Alleluia  
To Jesus, our King and Messiah.

The faithful ones waiting and watching,  
Their hopes center round that glad Day,  
They'll hail Him, their Lord, with rejoicing,  
Their all at His feet they will lay.  
They'll know that life's trials are o'er;  
They'll see death and sorrow no more.

At home with their dear Lord forever,  
Beside Him upon His bright throne,  
And from Him no never to sever,  
The saints are forever at home.  
Their songs will ring out the glad story  
Of bliss, with the Saviour in glory.

Fulfilled is the Prayer of the Master;  
Thy Kingdom, our Father, is come;  
With Jesus and saints as earth's rulers,  
Thy will upon earth then be done;  
With peace and good will to all men  
For ever and ever, Amen. —Contributed

# Psst...!



**Y**OU HAVE heard them. I have, too. And in my weaker moments, I have been among them.

A name comes up in a conversation. Someone has something good to say about that person. However, our twisted minds hear in their praise some implied criticism of ourselves.

Immediately our tongues spring into action. Where praise has been offered, we return censure. "Did you know. . . ." or "Have you heard. . . ." or "I wonder. . . ." may be the way we begin. Then we offer our little innuendo, our slur on his character, our question about his motives or our reminder of some long-forgotten mistake.

We do not do it openly—that would be too obvious. Then folks would know that our real motive is jealousy. No, we whisper our "concern" in hushed, quiet, almost reverent tones. That way no one can doubt our "sincerity."

"Sincerity" is what we call it; the Bible calls it "sin." Paul accuses the godless of being. . . . "gossips, slanderers." These two sins are companions. The difference between them is more subtlety than substance.

The slanderer is the one who does not care who hears what he has to say. He openly talks others down.

The gossip is much more subtle. He does his work in small, intimate groups. The slanderer and the gossip are both character assassins. The slanderer "blows away" his victim; the gossip slips up and quietly slits his throat.

The Greek word is *psithuristes*. Its sound suggests its

meaning. It starts off the same way this whisperer does: "Psst. . . ."

The whisperer is much more dangerous than the slanderer. He is harder to stand against for two reasons:

1. Slanderers make allegations; whisperers cast aspersions. They do not charge wrongdoing; they just question motives. Motives are a hard thing to prove or disprove.

2. Slanderers do their work openly; whisperers do theirs secretly. The victim may never know he has been victimized, so he never has a chance to clear his name.

A preacher moved to a new congregation but soon discovered that something about the water at his new residence disagreed with him. After several bouts with intestinal disorders, the church board decided to invest in a water filtering and softening system for the residence. When the abbreviated copy of the minutes of the business meeting were distributed to the congregation, they caused quite a few raised eyebrows: "It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved that the elders would take care of the preacher's drinking problem."

The man who told of the incident remarked that no one had asked for an explanation but that from the side glances and the hum and buzz after Church he couldn't help but wonder what the gossipers left of his good name by nightfall.

This short article I read, I thought was worth passing on:

"Someone has well said that one cannot have a gossiping tongue without having gossiping ears. Just what do we listen for when we hear about others? Do we look for juicy little morsels about their characters that would tear them down? Or do we seek the good in others? I really do think that *how we hear* of others has a great deal to do with *how we speak* of others.

"It would be a good practice if all of us would refuse to receive any malicious information about another. I firmly believe that if anyone will talk about another behind his back in my presence, that same person will talk about me behind my back in the presence of another person. So when someone begins to slip into gossip about others, we should either change the subject or ask the gossipier to go to the person about whom he is speaking and tell him his faults to his face.

"He who speaks devious words usually has few real friends because he is always putting others down. Observe the backbiter. Consider his ways. Then do everything you can to be the exact opposite in behavior.

"Let us use our tongues for *mending* rather than *cutting*. At last count gossip was running down more people than automobiles."

It is said that two kinds of birds fly over the California deserts: the hummingbird and the vulture.

All the vulture can see is rotting meat because that is all he looks for. He thrives on that diet. But the hummingbird ignores the carcasses and the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, he looks for the tiny blossoms of the cactus flowers. He buzzes around until he finds the colorful blooms almost hidden from view by the rocks. Each bird finds what it is looking for.

What are we looking for? Better still—what are we finding? What we are finding tells what we are

really looking for. Our expectations of life will determine our outcome.

Now let us ask ourselves the question, What does our mind feed on? Do we take delight in meditating upon the grand and noble things of God, or are we always ready to listen to gossip, and perhaps even more anxious to pass it on? Gossip has been defined as putting two and two together and making it five.

Who has not been guilty of starting—or perpetuating—a story, which, afterwards, was deeply regretted? But alas, a word once spoken can never be recalled; therefore it is prudent to think twice before we speak, especially when ill is the burden of our talk. There is nothing which wings its flight so swiftly as gossip; nothing which is uttered with more ease; nothing which is listened to with more readiness, or dispersed more widely. Gossip soaks into too many minds as water soaks into low and marshy places, where it becomes stagnant and offensive.

Gossipers lack the Christian virtue of being "eager to believe the best," but instead rashly judge a person by what someone *thought* he knew or saw.

Let us create the habit when something comes to us not to repeat it but to investigate to determine the facts and then, if there is untruth in it, to set matters straight with the informer. If it is true, why do we have to publish it? And if the story is not true, what lawful reason is there to have it aired?

Gossip is a vice that strikes a double blow, wounding both him that commits, and him against whom it is committed.

How many precious hours are spent in gossip—hours worse than wasted. Had that time been used speaking to the glory of God, we would be so much farther up the road to perfection. We not only

harm ourselves, but think of the evil we pass on to our listener. In a few moments we may tear down the good thoughts that took years of laborious work to build up. We may plant in someone's mind a seed that may mature and cause his or her downfall.

Gossip saps our spiritual vitality. We do not die immediately, but little by little the good is crowded from our minds, until we die from lack of healthy, upbuilding thoughts.

It would be well, even lifesaving, to honestly face ourselves and ask, "Do I spend my time discussing the faults and failures of others? Do I find it a sweet morsel to discuss another's past deeds that should be forgiven and forgotten?"

If not exceedingly careful, our minds become like a junk shop. It may contain some items of value, but those items are mixed in with a lot of mental rubbish.

"No one," says Jerome, "loves to tell a tale of scandal except to him who loves to hear it." Learn then, to rebuke and check the detracting tongue by showing that you do not listen to it with pleasure. Never make your ear the grave of another's good name.

Yes, how careful we must be, lest we condemn ourselves by the things which we repeat.

If there is any person toward whom we feel dislike, that is the person of whom we ought never to speak.

Scandal breeds hatred; hatred begets division; division makes faction, and faction brings ruin.

Thoughts are things; they are the great workers which transform or deform life. We are the ones to determine on which level we shall do our thinking. Though we cannot always know what the results will be, they will follow as sure as night follows day. We cannot climb uphill and go downhill at the same time;

neither can we think and speak sinful or harmful things and grow strong spiritually. The ultimatum must be to think and to think right, for the dominant thought finds its way into dominant action.

The spirit which puts the worst construction on everything is evil-naturedness at its worst. At its widest it is malevolence.

Those who put the worst construction on everything Aristotle defined as having "a spirit which always supposes the worst about other people."

It is terrifying to think how many reputations have been murdered over teacups, when people maliciously put a wrong interpretation upon a completely innocent action. When we are tempted so to do we ought to be remembering that God hears and remembers every word we speak.

Every command from God must be taken seriously, and does not God command, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor"?

Now let us look very closely at home: Do we put the worst construction on others' behavior, or are we always eager to believe the best? So often a person sees what he is looking for. Some innocent action can become, in the eyes of those looking for evil, an action to be questioned, with the quick conclusion that that person is acting from some sinister motive.

If we are always looking for evil, something will surely happen to make us feel we have the concrete evidence to substantiate our suspicion.

There are six things the Lord hates, even seven that are detestable to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies

and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

Not a day should pass but that we take time for reflection, seeking to discover where we have failed to do our duty. We should, in sober thought, go over the words that we have spoken. Were they words to comfort, words to strengthen, words to encourage or exhort our hearers? Were they provocative of good feeling or ill? Did our tongues operate constructively or destructively, or just idle, injurious gossip? Have our words through the hours of today testified for or against our profession of Christ?

It isn't the people who tell all they know that cause the most of

the trouble in this world. It's the ones who tell more.

Paul, whose mind was so filled with good, gave us this valuable advice, "Here is a last piece of advice. If you believe in goodness and if you value the approval of God, fix your minds on the things which are holy and right and pure and beautiful and good. Model your conduct on what I have told you and shown you, and you will find that the God of peace will be with you."

Now what is the cure for Psst. . . ? It is eagerness to believe the best.

It is eagerness to make our conversation the best. MM

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## For the Joy Ahead

(Continued from page 11)

Let us gladly, eagerly take up our cross and endure "for the joy ahead"; for lo, as surely as we follow in His steps, its wonders shall be ours, wonders beyond anything we can think or imagine. And can we not imagine great things—of meeting with the heavenly hosts and sharing their delights and joys? Can we not imagine, too, that e'er the ages roll, it will be the delight of our King to take us personally to the high courts of heaven where He spent those many years, and usher us into the magnificent presence of His Father, He who is the source of all our life, our joy, our hope and our salvation?

Oh, the joy unspeakable and full of glory that lies ahead!—if we but follow.

### Benediction

*Our loving Father, we pray for a stronger faith in Thy Word, a closer grasp of the reality of Thy promises, and a firmer determination to follow all the way for the glory Thou hast promised—which may be ours, if only we now take the steps to qualify us for it.*

*Grant us the strength and courage to take Thy Son as our Great Pattern and Example, always practicing His far-sighted vision, always looking beyond the trials of the moment to the glory ahead, never even for a moment surrendering to our natural tendencies to self-pity and despair. We know Thy Word is sure, that our trials are but for a moment; that the glory Thou hast promised will be everlasting.*

*In the name of Him who is our Example, our Saviour and our Coming King we pray. Amen.* MM



## Christ, A Bud of Promise

(Continued from page 14)

from Rome. But the shepherds saw far more. The word "saviour" as used in Luke means "saviour, deliverer; preserver."

The shepherds saw also a King, a righteous King that will reign and judge with justice, a King who will watch over all the people under His rule. They saw the greatest King that will ever be. Even more than this, they were looking upon a King whose kingdom will have no end. They were looking upon a Bud of Promise—but with a glimpse of what the bud would be when it had fully opened.

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**T**HE Bible does not even tell us the names of our shepherds, nor of anything of their lives after this eventful night. But can we think that these shepherds, chosen out of the whole land to see and hear firsthand the angelic host, were ordinary shepherds? Were they not men of faith and hope, men who believed God, and were looking for the fulfillment of His word?

Do we qualify as men and women of such faith today?

Aside from their testimony in Bethlehem, we never hear of them again. Were they among the ardent followers of Christ when He started His career? Or perhaps they feared Herod and kept their distance; or perhaps they were already aged men and had died by the time Christ started His ministry.

Perhaps these questions are left unanswered, as many others are, to cause us to bring our own selves into question. What would we have done? Would it have changed our lives? Suppose we were so privileged . . . ?

And yet, are we *less* privileged, we who hold in our hands the price-

## ABIB MEANS . . .

"month of green ears," "spring or sprouting month." It is the first month of the Hebrew sacred year. God commanded Moses to "observe the month Abib" (Deut. 16:1; Ex. 12:2; 13:4) in remembrance of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.

### Abib 1

begins this year on Wednesday evening, April 9, and continues through Thursday, April 10, Bible time being measured from evening to evening (Lev. 23:32). Following the law given by God to Moses, the Hebrew year began with the first occurrence of the new moon after the Spring Equinox. Accordingly, Abib First is the first day of the sacred New Year, and the day on which we observe the anniversary of our Saviour's birth.

### Abib 13

the anniversary of the night when Jesus partook of the Last Supper with His disciples before He suffered. It falls this year on the evening of April 21. At this time we partake of the emblems (unleavened bread and grape juice) in obedience to the command, "This do in remembrance of me." It is a sacred rite, symbolic of the renewal of our covenant relationship with God, the bread representing the knowledge of the law of God, and the juice the wholehearted application of that knowledge to our daily lives, the offering of ourselves in total dedication to do the will of God.

### Abib 15

is the anniversary of the Resurrection of Christ, occurring this year on the morning of April 24. In ancient Israel, this was the day of the waving of the first sheaf of the harvest before the Lord. On this morning, Christ the firstfruits from death, rose triumphant over the grave. On this morning, even "very early in the morning," certain women found their way to the tomb. Finding it empty, they heard those immortal words that still stimulate us today: "He is not here, for he is risen! Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

### Pentecost

came fifty days after the waving of the first sheaf offering. It falls this year on June 12.

less Gem from heaven, gleaming in all its purity and brilliance? Who can measure the privilege that is ours! Do we really believe it? Should we not bend and quake, as did the shepherds? Do our actions show that we believe?

In starting this new year, let us think deeply on these things, so deeply that they will bring us to a closer walk with our God. —Contributed.

## Wonderful Creator

God has made all things, everything we put our hands on, God has made. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge" (Ps. 19:1-2). This proves there is a God who has created or made these wonderful worlds. God calls all stars or worlds by name. There are millions of them, most of them are too far away for us to see, and the Lord made them all.

Is this the only world God has made? No, He has made billions more shining worlds, and the stars we see at night are shining worlds. And this earth will become a bright shining world like the wonderful worlds on high. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things. That bringest out their host by number. He calleth them all by names by the greatest of his might, For that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. 40:26).

Nebraska

N. M.

## Changed Lives

We cannot change our lives as one would a garment, by taking off one and putting on a new one. Rather, the change must come from within, getting rid of all our wrong inside. As Jesus said, First make clean the inside of the cup and the platter, and not be as the Pharisees whose only concern was to make a good outward show of piety. For we read that only the pure in heart shall see God.

Texas

C. F.

May I compliment you on your fine publications.

New York

Mrs. L. H.

## Only By Growing

We do not attain the stature of Jesus Christ by leaps and bounds but by a steady continual growth as we pass through trials. Even Jesus learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Can we do less? We know His sure promise that God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." These are in a continual conflict but God will be true to His Word.

Do we take Him as our guide, as our fortress, as the rock of our salvation? Our answer should be in the affirmative. If we are sincerely striving with all our mind, might, and strength, we must know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus Christ is the Captain of our salvation. He is always near. Let us not hesitate to come boldly to the throne of grace and ask for help in time of need.

Mississippi

R. S.

## With God's Help—We Can!

We really need to check up on ourselves to see what we have accomplished in getting rid of the old man and how have we been doing toward building a new man this past year, past month and past week.

We know we can with God's help—that is, if we really want to. And we can thank God that He has allowed us to have much help. It is up to us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We must strive, press, to run on in this spiritual work.

We can thank God that we do have our Holy Bible to read, study and meditate on.

South Carolina

H. C.

## God's Good News

We need to be reminded of "God's Good News." We are such leaky vessels. We need to imbibe it, try and remember all we can of it, live it, work to be worthy of that world to come.

The pleasures of earth are so transient, so fleeting—even the longest-lived know that. We now have a chance to qualify for a place in the New World, Earth made over new. What will it be to be there! We know that "eye hath not seen"; it is past our imagination to know the manifold blessings in store for the faithful of God's children.

Far too long have we stumbled along, yet to rise and try again is a privilege of ours. But we do not want to be trading on God's goodness or putting Him to the test. We are the ones to be tested by Him. Time does not stand still or wait for us.

England

N. T.

## Shining?

God has entrusted us with the light of truth which is His written Word, therefore we should feel that a great responsibility rests upon us. The Psalmist says that it is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path; but this light of Truth will only shine if we live it out.

It will require a great deal of effort on our part to keep this light shining brightly at all times. We must let God's word guide and direct us at all times. So let us make sure our lamp is always filled with oil.

South Wales

M. S.

## Appreciative

I enjoy reading the MESSAGE and get much help from it. I thank you.

South Carolina

K. M.

## Good Nourishment

We certainly do get good spiritual nourishment and will have no one to blame but self if we lose out on the main goal, eternal life. Just the thought of angels encamping round about those who fear God and keep His commandments should be incentive enough for us to please God.

Angels are faithfully keeping a record of every word we speak. They go with us wherever we go, sit at the table with us, retire at night when we retire. They are our close companions if we are walking in the commands of God.

Enoch walked with God, and God saw fit to extend his life beyond the normal lifespan. He surrendered his

whole life to God and steadily progressed in his communion with God, becoming completely absorbed with Him. Enoch must have loved God with all his heart to be in such close unity. We too must become closer to God by walking and living in a way pleasing to Him.

Ohio

M. W.

## FINALLY, BRETHREN

# Yours for a NEW New Year

“THERE is no new thing under the sun,” wrote the Wise Man long ago. It is part of nature’s plodding, monotonous round that all things, in a certain sense, repeat themselves. “That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been” (Eccl. 3:15). What we call new may be a fresh combination of the old, or a new way of presenting the old; but in the realm of nature there is nothing new. Not even this new year is wholly new; years have been beginning and ending since the earth began its revolutions around the sun. One year is simply one completed cycle.

However, beyond the world of nature, in the realm of spiritual adventure and experience, there *is* that which is *new*—even in this new year; there *is* that which will be new for me.

This new year will bring new days, days that I have never lived before. These new days will present new opportunities for faith that I have never confronted before. Many and diverse will be the form of these new opportunities—God grant that I may recognize them. They may come in a form that will test my spiritual stamina, strength or endurance. Or they may come in the form of temporal losses or gain. They may come through new acquaintances that God may send my way. Or they may come in the sudden twists and turns that life can bring. But however they come, God grant that I may be ready to recognize them as *from Him* and *for good*.

Then, too, this new year will be new in some of its considerations. There are new impressions for me to gain this year from the mandates of His law, new applications to recognize, new goals to reach toward. There will be new insights for me to grasp, and new evidences

from God’s storehouse of knowledge to comprehend.

But all of this together will not make the new year fully new. There is yet more newness which I must *create*. New years have come and gone before and have shortly become much like the old; and if I am not careful, *this* new year will be much the same. But let me here resolve that *this* new year shall be wholly *new*—it *can* be if I choose to make it so. I can do nothing about the past, and I will not lose time regretting; but what lies ahead is laden with possibilities. Here is my great opportunity to create something new, really *new*. New faith, new hope, new vision, new attitudes, new and unprecedented thrusts toward holiness can be mine this coming year. The days ahead need not be a repetition of that which made the old year old—the blunders, slips and slides. The coming days *can* be fashioned into something wholly new—greater purpose, greater intensity, greater love than I have ever had before. *This* new year, fresh from the hand of God, *can* surpass all new years that have ever dawned. In the hand of my consecrated best it can be a truly *new* creation. It *can* be something besides that stumbling-in-the-same-old-hole ritual that I have enacted so many times in the past.

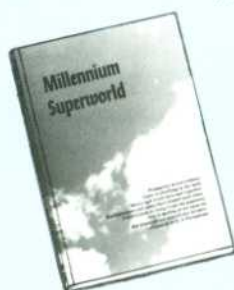
God grant that each of us may carry this resolve through each and every day that is extended to us in the year that is now dawning. That it may be a victoriously *new* new year. He, the eternal, the omnipotent, the unchanging One, will go with us if we go with Him, and there will be no problem we cannot surmount, no crisis we cannot confront, no challenge we cannot overcome. He will be with us all the way as we dedicate ourselves to this *new* and beautiful creation of a truly *new* new year.

MM

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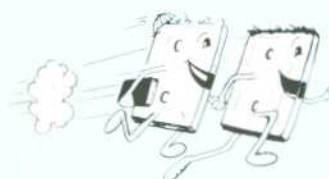
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