

Megiddo Message

This Is...

Vol. 75, No. 4
April, 1988



Our Father's World!

Soon glorious 'twill be;
"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done"
through all Eternity!

I Will . . .

walk in daily fellowship with my Heavenly Father . . .

like Enoch

keep in mind the better country, that is, the heavenly . . .

like Abraham

be patient under all circumstances . . .

like Job

know that God will exalt when the time is right . . .

like Joseph

choose rather to suffer than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season . . .

like Moses

uphold the hands of my spiritual leaders . . .

like Aaron and Hur

refuse to be discouraged though multitudes disobey . . .

like Caleb and Joshua

advance whether my friends are many or few . . .

like Gideon

always strengthen myself in the Lord, from whom comes my help . . .

like David

consecrate myself to do God's work and answer the call of Christian duty
with "Here am I, send me" . . .

like Isaiah

prepare my heart to seek God . . .

like Jehoshaphat

be faithful to God and commune with Him often, come what may . . .

like Daniel

keep faithful in my commitment to Christ, even though He rebuke me; and have
the courage to try again each time I stumble . . .

like Peter

show a right spirit even to those who oppose me . . .

like Stephen

forget the things which are behind and press forward to that which lies before . . .

like Paul

study the Word of God and give myself to it wholly . . .

like Timothy

look beyond the cross to the joy that is set before me . . .

like my Lord Himself . . .

so that I may endure without flinching, and someday find rest in His Kingdom.

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 life, all men, and all things.

We believe

—in the Bible as our only source of knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for the salvation of humankind.

We believe

—in Jesus 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 humankind 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 applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God in our own lives, in this way 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

NASB—New American Standard Bible

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

Goodspeed—The New Testament translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

AAT—The Bible: An American Translation

About Our Cover

Our cover photo is a satellite view of the earth. For this photo we are indebted to Fran Bidy, Director, Strasenburgh Planetarium of Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, New York.

Megiddo Message

Vol. 75, No. 4

New Year Issue

April, 1988

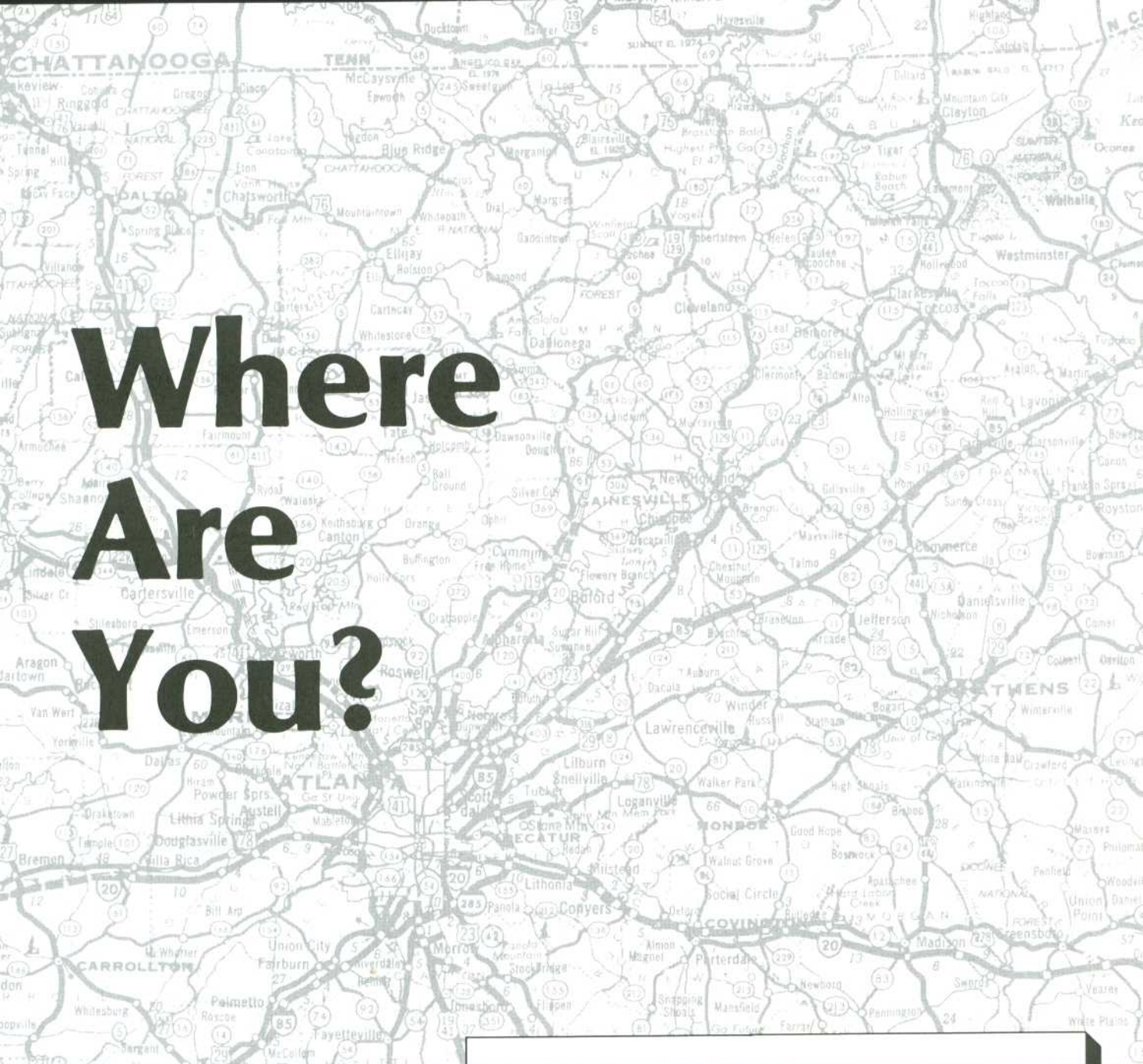
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The MEGIDDO MESSAGE is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, Founder; Newton H. Payne, President and Editor; Ruth E. Sisson, Executive Editor.

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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.



Where Are You?

Let this truth come home to each of us with special vigor: The Lord will come.

You know the hour is late. You know the time is short. What are you doing about it? What have you accomplished for the time and privilege you have had? How serious are you about your progress along the road to My Kingdom? How far have you come? How far yet to go? Are you going to make it by the time I give the final call? Where are you?

IN the book of Genesis we read that the Lord placed Adam in the garden, to "till and to keep it." We know the rest: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the delicious-looking—but forbidden—fruit, the serpent, Eve, temptation, transgression. We marvel at the close parallel to our own situation, to *our* work in the garden of the Lord, *our* temptation, *our* transgression.

Then came the time the Lord called Adam and Eve to account for what they had done in His garden. "In the cool of the day" they "heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden."

If all had been well, Adam and Eve would have been delighted to hear His voice and would have gone looking for Him, eager to receive His commendation. But they knew—and they knew *God* knew—that all was *not* well. They had transgressed, and there would be consequences. And so they sought to postpone the dreaded moment by hiding from His presence.

But the Lord could not be fooled by their hiding. Little did they realize how futile it is to hide from God. Little did they think how easily His demanding words could search them out: "Where are you?"

We can be very thankful that the Lord has not yet called us to account. But these words come with a message especially for us at this late hour. They come to ask our whereabouts—not physical but spiritual. *Where are we, you and I?* Where are we in the great task we have undertaken? What have we accomplished?

It is as if the Lord were saying to us, You know the hour is late. What have you accomplished for the time, the privilege and the opportunity I have given you? How serious are you about your progress along the road to the Kingdom? How far have you come? How far yet to go? Are you going to make it by the time I

give the final call? *Where are you?*

As we begin this sacred New Year, we find ourselves at perhaps the most critical hour yet experienced in the day of salvation. Never has any people lived so close to the climax as we. The history of four world kingdoms is behind us. The fig tree, long barked and peeled, has blossomed and borne fruit. Summer is nigh at hand. Any day, any hour, it may be here. We are in the time of which Jesus spoke when He said, "When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28, NIV).

Never has the weight of responsibility upon any people been greater than that resting upon us. Never has a more solemn charge been given than that which is our own: "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching... Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.... If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'" (Luke 12:37; Mark 13:33-37, NIV).

What if the angel of the Lord should reveal His presence among us tonight and put to us that penetrating question: "Where are you?" What would be our reply? Would our hearts thrill with joy at His presence, or would we, like disobedient Adam and Eve, want to run and hide?

All of us know that we cannot hide from God. Whether we are willing to believe it or not, whether we can see Him or not, we live *every* moment in His presence. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13). He sees, and He knows. There can be no running away. There can be no hiding from His all-seeing eye. As the Psalmist observed ages ago, "If I go up to the heavens,

When the Lord calls, "Where are you?" will your response be an eager, ready "Here am I"? or will you want to run and hide?

you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you" (Ps. 139:8-12, NIV). From such a one there can be no running, no hiding.

A more fitting reaction might be that of silence before Him. Have we ever stood speechless before the Lord? Are we able to look up to Him in solemn, reverential silence? Have we felt the message of: "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord"? (Zech. 2:13). Being silent before God speaks volumes, because it means we have no more excuses to offer, no more arguments, no more contentions. By silence we are saying that we accept what He says, and will obey without question. There is no need for words; the record of our life will speak for us.

"Where are you?" Where am I? In these trying days just before the coming of the Lord, we need to draw upon every resource God

*Where are we, you and I?
What have we accomplished in the great
task we have undertaken, to prepare
ourselves for a place in Christ's
Kingdom? Where are we?*

has provided. We need to keep ourselves active in our spiritual disciplines. Together they should be a constant reminder to us to re-examine our priorities, to make sure we know why we are spending our time, our interest, and our energy the way we are. We need to be continually renewing and reviewing our vision, our sense of purpose, and our faith, because we are accountable. Our contract with the Lord is non-negotiable; we have no alternative but to see it through to a successful finish.

And where are we in this project? Perhaps we agree readily that we are not where we could be, considering the opportunity and advantage we have had.

But we have our reasons, just as those who have gone before us. The Lord will understand that we have been busy, preoccupied, or not feeling well. Or we have run into circumstances too difficult for *anyone* to cope with.

And so we put off, and put off, and put off the real work of remaking ourselves. And while we dally, while we put off, life is slipping by. Opportunity is slipping by. Soon we shall hear the voice of the Lord *our* God walking in the midst of the garden, and the question from His lips will be directed to us: "*Where are you?*"

What will we say? What will we say if we have been enjoying any of the still-forbidden fruit? What will we say if we have *known* the right,

and failed to *do* it? What will we say if we have given more concern, and more weight, and more diligence to things that should be secondary?

Christian living is a matter of making the right choices. We are constantly choosing our thoughts, our attitudes, our feelings, our activities. We are either choosing, or we are letting circumstances dictate to us. In either case, the responsibility is upon us. Victory lies in daring to say "Yes" to the most important and "No" to everything less.

This was what Jesus did. He said "No" to anything this world could offer Him, because He could see that the kingdoms of this world were headed for history's junk yard.

Oh, that we might share this superb vision! Oh, that we might fix

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our sights on the eternal and *keep them there*. The transience of the present, things good or bad, things pleasant or unpleasant, has been demonstrated countless times in the annals of the world. Civilizations rise, rule, and fall. A man who narrated a film called "Empty Cities" told of his experience. "We visited and studied the rise and fall of many civilizations," he said. "In the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, we observed and photographed the impressive pyramids of the Mayan Indians. These people excelled in architecture, astronomy, mathematics; but today their descendants are an unknown, unlettered people...not asking much of themselves, or of the world; and not getting much. A light went out."

All the lights of this world are going out. And only that light which comes from God shall shine. Truly, "the things which are seen"—the civilizations, the cultures, the people, with all their petty goals—"are temporal" (II Cor. 4:17-18).

But the Word of the Lord comes to tell us that this is not all there is. There are other—far more important—*unseen* realities.

Where are we in laying hold of these unseen realities? Are we fixing our minds on them and keeping them there?

What stands between us and the great goal before us? Can we say with Paul that *nothing* can interfere with the fixed reality of our hope? Can we say that "though our outward man perish," yet our inward man is being constantly "renewed day by day"? (II Cor. 4:16).

Here is mind-stretching potential for every day, as we confront the realities of our lives. Here is a call to focus on the eternal, not the temporary, because only the eternal really matters.

We need to think often of the day when "the trumpet of the Lord shall sound and time shall be no more"

for as surely as we are living, that trumpet *shall* sound, our day of probation *shall* end, and all the wonderful events we have anticipated will come to pass.

Our King will arrive, and time will merge into eternity. It is coming. It is the sure Word of the Lord.

What does this reality mean to us? It means that *now* is the accepted time, now is our day of salvation. Now is the time to "seek the Lord, while he may be found," for the time is coming—is near—when He will *not* be found. Has He not warned, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3).

Are we ready for that great, that awesome event? Are we preparing for it in every way we can, mentally, morally, spiritually? Are we thinking about it so constantly that it cannot possibly come upon us unawares?

Are we preparing so steadily that we will be ready to welcome our Lord with confidence when He arrives?

This was the prayer and plea of the apostle John to his brethren, "And now little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (I John 2:28). Not be ashamed before Him. Think of it. And what is the secret of this confidence? It lies in abiding, abiding in Him. Here is constancy: constantly abiding; never leaving, never wandering, never allowing anything which He forbids. If such is our desire, if we are really getting ready, the nearer ready we get, the greater will grow our eagerness. And why not? For everything that comes

with Christ will mean greater joy and happiness and a vastly better life than the best we can imagine now. "The things no eye hath seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all this God has promised for those who love him."

Surely there is nothing terrifying in such a promise! Who would want to run and hide from such wonderful joy?

Our confidence, our assurance in that day will depend entirely upon our readiness. The apostle Paul personally prepared for this. He was working, he wrote to his brethren, that he might "rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil. 2:16). Again he wrote to his brethren, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed" (Phil. 1:20).

Thousands of years earlier the patriarch Job had the same longing: "If you will turn your mind to God and stretch your hands to him, if sin you banish from your life, and evil from your house, then you can face him unashamed, you may be firm and fearless" (Job 11:13-15, Moffatt).

So let us ask ourselves this question now, *before* we hear it from the voice of the Lord, *before* He calls us to account: "Where are you?" Where are you in perfecting self-control, purity, and love? Where are you in maintaining a steady, onward course toward the Kingdom? Where are you in keeping your mind fixed on all that is good, and true, and noble, and pure? Where are you in keeping a calm, patient, radiant, Christlike spirit whatever comes or goes?

Years ago a father shared with his son this wise advice, that one of the great tests of human character is found in making the critical choices of life, and rejecting many apparent "opportunities" that lurk in one's past. "Your challenge," he told him, "will not be in separating out the good from the bad, but in grabbing the *best* out of all the possible good."

So let us ask ourselves, What do I love? What do I prize above all else? What do I long for more than anything in this world? What do I esteem, what do I value? In short, where am I?

The Lord will come. Let this truth come home to each of us tonight with special vigor. The Lord will come and call us to account. Wherever we are, however far from Him we may have tried to run, His penetrating question will reach our ears: "Where are you?"

And we will know immediately if we have tried to hide, if we have tried to avoid facing the reality of these things, that we cannot. We cannot hide from God. We cannot run away from the great things that are coming. We are committed. His all-seeing eye will search us out, and we shall be judged for the things we have done.

Contrast Adam's response to the voice of the Lord with that of the young Samuel. He, too, heard the voice of the Lord calling, and in the dead of night. But there was no fear for Samuel, no terror, no wanting to run and hide; only an anxious expectancy, only an eager and ready "Here am I!"

May this be our answer, too. MM

*Our King will arrive, and time
will merge into eternity. Our confidence then will
depend entirely upon our readiness.*

The Runaway's Return

Part IV

Scene 5 The Home Coming

Characters:

Philemon master and Christian convert
Archippus son of Philemon
Onesimus young household servant of Philemon
Androcles servant of Philemon
Admeatus son of Philemon

Setting:

Philemon and his son Archippus are talking. The father sits on a bench, the son stands. They seem distressed and worried.

Philemon: How in the world are we going to do this, Archippus? There just aren't enough of us.

Archippus: You're right, father. One of us has to go to Alexandria to straighten things out there, and one has to stay here to see to the business. It's shearing time, and the wool is pouring into the warehouses so fast we can hardly handle it. One plus one makes two. So who does that leave to carry our Spring offering to Rome?

Philemon: We could send it by a ship captain as we did once before, but this time we ought to send a personal messenger. News travels so slowly... He may be ill. He may have had his hearing and been freed; he may not even be in Rome. Or he may... (a pause.)

Archippus: I know what you mean, Father. We don't like to think about that, but it may happen. Some say the Emperor is a madman, and that he grows more bloodthirsty every day. It is dreadful to think of our beloved Paul standing before such a character for judgment. We *must* find out, some way, how it is with him.

Philemon: The Lord's work should come first, I know. But it takes so long to go to Rome, and back, and there are so many places one is needed. I wish there were two of me and three of you, Archippus.

Archippus: Isn't there some one of the ecclesia we can send?

Philemon: I'd gladly buy him a first-class ticket if we could find some one. I've been going over and over the list, and I can't see who it would be. Some are slaves, most of the rest are not able to leave their work, the way times are. Gaius is free to go, but his health is bad. So there you are. It looks like you are going to Rome, Archippus, business or no business.

Androcles: (entering) There is a man at the gate to see you, Sir.

Philemon: (Rather annoyed) Who is it? Doesn't he know it's past business hours?

Androcles: He didn't state his business, Sir, nor his name. He only asked to see you.

Archippus: Do you suppose he's got wool to sell?

Philemon: Probably.

Androcles: I doubt it, Sir. He doesn't look like the type. It may be you have talked with him before; his face... seems familiar.

Philemon: Well, show him in. (Exit Androcles.)

Philemon: (grumbling) Every year I say I'm going to cut down and do no more business at night, and every year I keep right on. I don't know why I do it.

Archippus: Well, Father, all you'd have to do is...

(Enter Androcles with Onesimus. Both men show shocked surprise as they recognize the runaway. Onesimus has restored his master's initial to his costume.)

Philemon: Onesimus!

Archippus: Onesimus!

Onesimus: Yes, Master, it is I.

Archippus: Onesimus! Is it really...?

Onesimus: Yes, the traitor has come back. I have returned, Master, to ask your forgiveness, and to right the great wrongs I have done you.

Philemon: Well, that should be possible. Why did you run away, Lad? Had I treated you badly? Had I been unfair to you? Many's the time I have searched my heart for the answer.

Archippus: Your going as you did Onesimus, was a terrible blow to us all.

Onesimus: It was a terrible thing I did, Master. You had always treated me fairly and kindly. It was only that I did not appreciate my blessings, and I became dissatisfied. And, worse than that,...I stole money from you.

Philemon: So you did. You should not have done that, Onesimus, but we can talk about that later. It's the violation of our trust that hurt, not the loss of the money. But go on with your story, Lad. What led you to return?

Onesimus: (with strong emotion) How base I was, Master, and how I misjudged you. I thought I was only hurting your purse, when it was your heart. Well, I had freedom, but not the wisdom to use it. I went from bad to worse until, penniless and desperate, I walked the streets of Rome. And there I met a man who changed my whole life. (Father and son exchange wondering looks.) His name is Paul.

Philemon: Paul! Do you know Paul? The Christian preacher?

Onesimus: Yes, Paul, the greatest man who lives on this earth today. Under his tutelage I became a Christian, and for the past eight months I have been his helper.

Archippus: Now it begins to clear. Do you remember, Father, what I said when we received Brother Paul's note last winter?

Philemon: Yes, you said he must have a new secretary, and that the handwriting made you think of Onesimus. But of course, we never dreamed!

Onesimus: It was when he dictated that letter to me that I had to tell him I was your runaway slave, and a thief. Although he needed me, he sent me back to you to make things right. I have no money to repay you and nothing to give except myself. So here I stand, ready to take my punishment, whatever it may be.

Philemon: I'm not worrying about punishments right now. What we want to know is, how is Brother Paul?

Archippus: Has he had his hearing yet?

Onesimus: No, not yet. Perhaps it would be better if he never had it. The Emperor Nero is...well, there isn't much law in Rome these days, just the Imperial whim. But Paul is well, well and busy. He is still a prisoner in his own hired house, with a few brethren to keep him company and carry on his work outside. He is the busiest prisoner you ever saw. He...he sent a letter to you, Sir (hands over letter.)

Archippus: Read it aloud, Father.

Philemon: (reading) "Paul, a prisoner for the sake of the Truth, and Brother Timothy, to our dear fellow-worker Philemon, and our Sister Apphia, and our true soldier Archippus, and the church that meets in your house. God bless you with every favor and peace.

"Every time I mention you in my prayers, I thank God for your love toward the Truth and those who are trying to live it. And I pray they may share your faith and your knowledge of all the wonderful

things the Truth will surely bring to us. I am greatly pleased and encouraged by your good example to those around you. It warms our hearts here.

Now I could use my authority as an Apostle and give you orders, but I would rather rely wholly on your love for the Truth. I write as a humble follower of our Lord, not as Paul the Ambassador of our coming King, but Paul, an old man in prison for His sake.

"I appeal to you for my spiritual child, born during my imprisonment: Onesimus, the valuable; once worthless to you, but now priceless to me, and to you too, for I return him to you as your brother and my son. Parting with him is like sending you my own heart. (Overcome by emotion, Philemon hands the letter to his son Archippus, who continues.)

Archippus: "I yearn to keep him here as a loving son to comfort me, imprisoned as I am for the Truth, but not without your permission. Now if you send him back it is a voluntary act of love, free from all compulsion. Are you and I partners in the Truth? He and I are too. Receive him as my partner. Does he owe you anything? Charge it to my account on our books, and I will pay your loss. I write this promise myself: I Paul will pay. Now of course, I will not stress unnecessarily how much more you owe me, even your chance for eternal life. This is your chance to make a small payment on this account with me, and how happy it will make my heart.

"I have great confidence in you apart from any arguments I advance, for I know your Christian character and generosity. Now you have Onesimus, I wish you would also reserve a room for me, for I hope I may soon be released through your prayers.

"Epaphras is in prison with me. He greets you too, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke. They are all working with me here. God bless you every one."

Philemon: (taking Onesimus' hand) Brother Onesimus, on my part, all is forgiven. I have no desire for vengeance, and I suspect that you have been punished more than enough by your experience and your conscience. Your repentance and willingness makes everything right between us.

Archippus: We cannot refuse Paul's request.

Philemon: And I have no inclination to do so. From the moment I saw your face tonight, I longed to forgive you. There has been an empty place in our house-

hold, Onesimus, which only you can fill. The children have missed you so much.

Onesimus: Young master Admeatus is he well?

Philemon: Well, and grown to be a fine lad. This will be the happiest day of his life.

Onesimus: Will you receive me again into your service? I know you can never trust me as you once did, but I will do any work, no matter how hard, and I promise to do it faithfully.

(Archippus calls Philemon aside and whispers to him. Philemon assumes a sterner face.)

Philemon: Yes, I will receive you, but I am convinced that some punishment is in order something to make you remember. Archippus, give me your knife. Onesimus, come here. (Onesimus steps forward, fearful. Philemon takes the knife and cuts off the red initial and puts it in his pocket.)

Onesimus: What what does this mean?

Philemon: Onesimus, you made life hard for yourself by doing what you did. You could have been a free man these four years or more.

Onesimus: You mean —?

Philemon: Four years ago I freed all my household in obedience to a Christian conscience. And I may as well confess that this trouble is partly my fault. I had it in mind before I went away to give you your freedom within the year. But, selfishly, I neglected to say anything to you about it. I forgot that you, too, had feelings and hopes and fears. I could not know that your hopelessness and dissatisfaction were getting the better of you. I had it in my power to stop it—and I failed. You will forgive me? (Onesimus is too full to speak, but makes a gesture revealing his feelings.) But now you are free. Tomorrow we will go to the magistrates and complete your manumission. I am sorry it has been so long delayed. There will always be a place for you in my business, if you care to work for me. But you will be working for wages.

Onesimus: But I will work out what I owe you, first.

Philemon: We'll talk about that later. It is your return as a brother that matters. All my former servants, with one or two exceptions, have stayed with me, and most of them have become Christians.

Onesimus: Androcles?

Philemon: Oh, yes. Androcles is one of our strong members. I wonder how he kept a straight face
(Continued on page 26)

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof? or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

"Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?...Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

"Who hath divided a water course for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man; to satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen....

"Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

"Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart? Who can number the clouds in wisdom?...Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite for the young lions, when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait? Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat....Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?...Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it..."

—Job 38, 39, 40

Against Evolution

An anonymous local resident has written the following article, which was printed by the Rochester Times Union, March 10, 1987. In it the author points up another powerful argument against the theory of evolution, which we thought might interest our readers.

—The Editor

THE best argument against evolution is still St. Thomas Aquinas' five proofs of the existence of God, the best of which is that the manifest harmony and order of the universe necessitates a creator. But evolution can also be refuted by scientific arguments in the classroom, if the Supreme Court allows it.

Consider the probability of forming, by random chance, a simple protein of 100 amino acids in length. A protein is a molecular chain; the links consist of amino acids of which there are 20 different types. A given protein differs from other types by its unique sequence of these 20 different amino acids. If we assemble this protein from a soup of amino acids by randomly linking them up, then for each of the 100 successive choices that will have to be made, the odds are only 1 in 20 of correctly choosing the correct type of amino acid. The overall probability of assembling this protein by blind chance is one chance in a number that can be approximated by a 1 followed by 130 zeros! (The exact number is $20 \times 20 \times 20 \times 20 \dots$ with the multiplication done 100 times.)

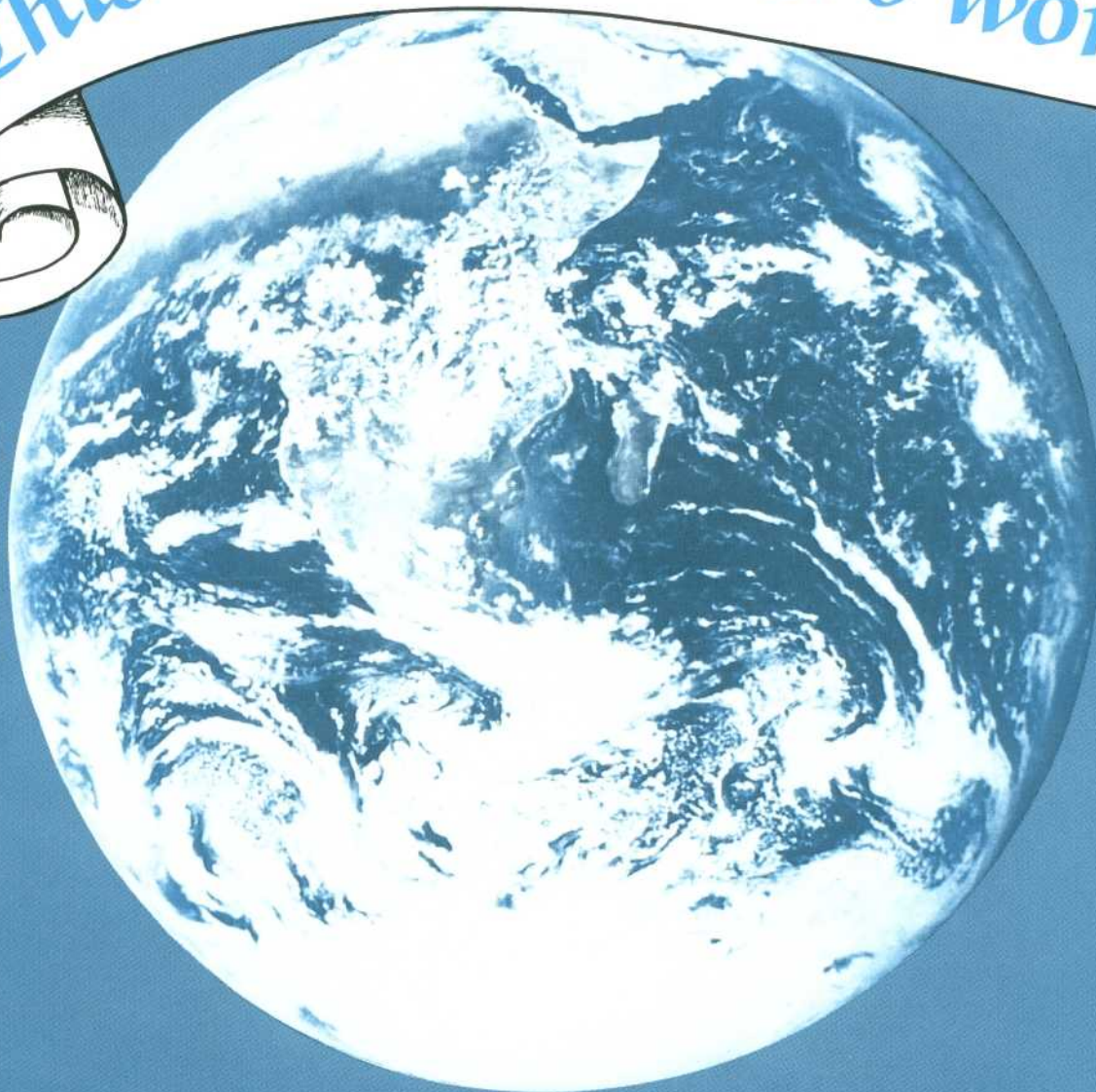
This calculation shows that the formation of even the tiniest constituent of life cannot be explained by evolutionary theory.

How, from mere molecules, does one construct human aspiration, love, courage, loneliness, agony or heroism? Why do so many people who know little of science possess an unshakable belief in evolution? Is it because evolution allows them to deny the yearnings of their soul and to escape the moral restraints of a God-created universe?

"In all its history, evolution has offered no rational solution for the basic problems of the universe. It has no answer for the origin of matter, nor for the origin of life; no answer for the magnificent order in the universe, nor for the immutable laws of nature by which all things are regulated.

"Evolution cannot bridge the gulf between plant and animal life, nor can it account for the origin of the species and the fixity of their kind. Evolution has not found the link between the lower and the higher forms of plant and animal life...Evolution has not produced a single missing link, and their number ought to be countless if its theory were a fact. Evolution cannot account for the wonders of the human body, much less for the miracle of the human mind. Evolutionists cannot explain why all living things deteriorate and eventually die, nor have they an answer for death itself. And there are thousands of other questions for which they have no answer, only wishful speculations."—Alfred M. Rehwinkel, *The Wonders of Creation*

This is our Father's world!



APARENT watches eagerly the development of his child, from birth, through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood.

A gardener keeps a close eye on his tender plants as they germinate, put out their first leaves, blossom, and finally bear fruit.

The scientist gives the same careful attention to his experiments. Through many tedious stages and long hours he carefully charts each significant detail to obtain the perfect results.

Even so does our heavenly Father watch over His planet Earth and its human family, through many stages of development. It is not haphazard. Every step has direction, destiny, and purpose. One among countless other worlds of His creation, it is all according to His "eternal purpose."

(Continued on page 16)



Soon glorious 'twill be;

A World With Heavenly Promise and Destiny

What Does the Bible Say?

Destiny of the Planet: "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21). "Thus says the Lord, the creator of the heavens, he who is God, who made the earth and fashioned it and himself fixed it fast, who created it no empty void, but made it for a place to dwell in" (Isa. 45:17-18, NEB).

Kingship: "The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name" (Zech. 14:9, NIV). "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:32-33, NIV). "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this" (Isa. 9:6-7, NIV).

Associate Rulers: "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne" (Rev. 3:21, NIV).

Qualifications of Leadership: "The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: 'When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth'" (II Sam. 23:3-4, NIV).

Officials and Governors: "I will make peace your governor and righteousness your ruler. No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise" (Isa. 60:17-18, NIV). "Their leader will be one of their own; their ruler will arise from among them. I will bring him near and he will come close to me, for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?"



declares the Lord. 'So you will be my people, and I will be your God'" (Jer. 30:21-22, NIV).

Populace: "For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations" (Isa. 61:11, NIV).

Laws: "Many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.' The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Mic. 4:2, NIV).

Social Standards: "Your people shall be all of them righteous, and shall possess the land forever, as the shoot of my planting, the work of my hands, with which I may glorify myself...I the Lord will hasten it in its proper time" (Isa. 60:21-22, AAT).

Social Conditions: "The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest" (Isa. 32:17-18, NIV). "None shall injure, none shall kill, anywhere on my sacred hill; for the land shall be as full of the knowledge of the Eternal as the ocean-bed is full of water" (Isa. 11:9, Moffatt).

World-wide Prosperity: "They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the Lord, they and their descendants with them" (Isa. 65:21-23, NIV). "They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the Lord—the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more" (Jer. 31:12, NIV). "Yet her profit and earnings will be set apart for the Lord; they will not be stored up or hoarded. Her profits will go to those who live before



be done" through all Eternity!

the Lord, for abundant food and fine clothes" (Isa. 23:18, NIV).

Longevity: "Never again will there be...an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands" (Isa. 65:20, 22, NIV).

Education: "All your sons will be taught by the Lord, and great will be your children's peace" (Isa. 54:13, NIV). "There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know Yahweh!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest—it is Yahweh who speaks" (Jer. 31:34, JB).

Metropolis: "'Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,' declares the Lord. Many nations will be joined with the Lord in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. The Lord will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem" (Zech. 2:10-12, NIV). "Jerusalem...is the city of the Great King" (Matt. 5:34-35, NIV).

Stability: "In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more. He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations" (Ps. 72:7, 5, NIV). "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:...and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).

General Morale: "From them will come songs of thanksgiving and the sound of rejoicing. I will add to their numbers, and they will not be decreased; I will bring them honor, and they will not be disdained" (Jer. 30:19, NIV). "'I will satisfy the priests with abundance, and my people will be filled with my bounty'" (Jer. 31:14, NIV). "Men shall rejoice and exult forever in what I create" (Isa. 65:18, AAT). "No more shall be heard...the sound of weeping and the cry of distress" (Isa. 65:19, RSV).

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This Is Our Father's World

(Continued from page 12)

The Eternal Purpose

Amid the apparently chaotic conditions of our world today, a plan is in operation, skilfully devised and expertly executed. Events are not raging out of control. The heavenly Creator designed the whole according to plan. This is the plan: That "Israel [representing God's chosen ones] shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else" (Isa. 45:17-18).

According to this plan, the eternal Creator gives mortal life to countless billions during a limited period of time. From among these He selects those whom He deems worthy of His greater, eternal life. He selects these by their compliance with certain definite rules and guidelines He has set. To those who give their utmost in obedience and devotion, He will give eternal life, eternal happiness, eternal blessings. This is His long-range plan, a plan by which He shall ultimately fill the earth with His glory (Num. 14:21).

A knowledge of this great plan gives purpose and meaning to our lives. The great Creator who has given us life and breath and all things that we enjoy has more to give. This life is not the ultimate in creation. It is but a beginning. A knowledge of this great plan affords vision amid obscurity, design amid confusion, pattern amid purposelessness. Though indiscernible to multitudes, the plan is clearly visible in the Scriptures, and is being slowly but definitely worked out in the affairs of humankind.

*God has a plan
by which He
shall ultimately
fill the earth
with His glory.*

For nearly six thousand years this plan has been operating, and is now approaching a point of consummation. Soon the first phase of it will be complete, and the second phase will begin with the sudden intervention of God into human affairs.

In the first three chapters of Genesis we have an outline of this plan, brief but comprehensive. This outline is presented as an allegory, a narrative of a creation process spiritual in nature, unchangeable in its destiny. Though told as a completed event, it is a process spanning seven days or, in prophetic language, seven one-thousand-year periods ("one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"—II Pet. 3:8). The first phase of this plan is the first six days, or six thousand years, during which God is selecting and perfecting a superrace of humankind suited to rule the earth in righteousness, to administer its affairs with justice and judgment for all, to bring about the ideal conditions which God promised through His prophets.

At the end of the first six days, Christ will be sent to inaugurate the work of the seventh thousand-year day, during which will be selected the populace for this new creation. We find ourselves right now almost at the end of the first six days, or six thousand years, the period during which humankind are permitted to rule unrestrained.

The author of this plan is the Eternal Creator Himself. This means that there is in it no element of chance at all. With God Almighty behind it, it cannot fail. What He has promised, He will fulfill. He who knows the "end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done" (Isa. 46:9-10); He whose purposes are as unalterable as the seasons, and as certain as the succession of day and night (Jer. 33:20), He will do as He has promised. "God is no man to break his word, no mortal to change his mind; he promises, and does he not perform? Does he not carry out his word?" (Num. 23:19, Moffatt).

And to whom does the earth belong? To Christ, whom God has appointed to be its chief administrator. The heavens are the Lord's, but the earth He has given to the children of men, under the direction of His Son (Ps. 115:16). It is He to whom it rightfully belongs (Ezek. 21:27), who shall soon return with power and authority to bring all these wonders to glorious completion.

This is our "Father's World"—a world still in the making, but a world nearing completion, a world soon to be annexed to heaven when "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" has been fulfilled. Heaven will open its doors to take in the earth, and a finished world will join the multitudes of already glorified worlds where live the happy, immortal members of God's heavenly family.

This is not a dream, this is all in the plan of God. It is sure and certain. It is a plan already in progress. Soon Christ, the Sun of righteousness will arrive, in power and great glory, to continue the plan and bring all that God has promised to glorious reality.

This is *our* Father's world, and praise Him that we can be part of it!

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JESUS:

Pattern of Excellence

*God sent His Son to show in real, living flesh-and-blood
a perfect pattern of the life He wants.*

*Thank God we have
One who says truly,
I have not only
told you, I have
shown you.*

WHEN GOD first made known His plan of salvation, it consisted of two parts: a law and a promise. There was something to give, and something to be received in return; there was a law to be lived by, and a promise of eternal blessing to those who complied. "Obey and live; disobey and die." By living in obedience to the law, men and women could prepare themselves to receive the promise and live eternally.

And they did.

But the time came when it suited the plan of God to give more than a law to be lived. The time came when He sent His Son, one who would *show* in actual flesh-and-blood a true and perfect example of the life God wanted.

Now the law took on new meaning and beauty. Now no longer was the law simply pen and ink, no longer was it the plain, harsh commandment. Now the law walked and talked in one who was Himself the Son of God. Now it was translated into the loveliness of a human life, a life of love, of compassion, of holiness and virtue. No longer was it a stark "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." Now it shone with a glory and purpose above the brightness of the sun. Now it glowed with the beauty and compelling majesty of a perfect life.

How was all this possible? What made the difference? It was all from one fact: the life of Christ, the Son of God, the perfect example of the life God loves.

The Total Plan

It seems impossible to offer too much gratitude to God for this unique part of His design for us. What more could God have done to make the way clear to us? What more could He have done to sweep away uncertainty and light the path to the celestial city?

In Christ the total plan was revealed. Birth, childhood, growth, maturity, death, resurrection—then glorification, the raising to a state of immortality, freed forever from the bondage of corruption. This is the victory that the God of heaven designed. This is the route He planned for each of His faithful children, and demonstrated in the life of Christ.

Jesus' entire life was one of example. He was "the word made flesh." In Him the Word of God became alive; right doing, right thinking and right feeling became reality. In Him the Gospel became arms that lift you, eyes that pierce you, hands that grip you, and feet that carry you. So real was all this to

Note: *JESUS: Pattern of Excellence* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

Jesus showed us the ideal: that life truly lived does not end in the oblivion of death.

His closest followers that it was as if He said to them, You may think this task difficult, and if you were in it alone, it would be. But you and I are in this thing together, and together we can see it through. For remember, there are two of us; I will never send you alone; I will go with you. What is there that you and I together cannot do? With My power at your disposal, My faith, My strength, there is just no limit to what you and I together can accomplish.

Is it not true? Isn't this what Paul said: "We then as workers together with Him"? And how much more we can accomplish if we think of ourselves as always *working with Christ*! if we say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." This is a promise and a possibility that did not end in the first century. It is just as true today. We also can do all things that God asks of us if we work *with Christ*.

How is this possible? Because He is speaking of "all things" that lie within the will of God. He is speaking of that which furthers Christ's work, and at the same time furthers our own. That is why, when we are serving Christ, we have all His resources behind us to draw upon.

And consider His promises for all this: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12). Here is a promise so big, so sweeping, so emphatic and unlimited that we gasp as we realize the meaning of it. *Who* is promised greater power than that given to Jesus during His ministry? Could it be that such a promise as this can someday be experienced by

ordinary people like us?

Jesus showed us what God can and will do. He showed us that life truly lived does not end in the oblivion of death. This life, be it fraught with joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, is but the beginning, the preparation for *real* life ahead.

When Jesus said, "Come, follow Me," and "take up your cross," He spoke of something that we do deliberately, voluntarily. He was not compelling. He was simply showing the way. It was a cross of self-denial and self-crucifixion. He was saying, in effect, I am dying and I want you to come and die with Me.

Christ's commitment to His Father was so overriding and so clear that no lesser goals found any place in His life. "I do nothing of myself," He could say. But this did not mean He was a weak person. It meant only that He had abandoned *His* will for a *greater*, the will of His Father. He wanted to *do* more and *be* more than He could ever do or be on His own. He did not make His own plans, or choose His own methods for carrying them out. He knew that being free to choose one's own course in life means only being free to err. Submitting to God means certain victory. Jesus knew, as we all should know, that in God is the greater wisdom, the greater strength, the greater promise and the greater glory. In fact, when God chooses to favor us, nothing in the whole world can even begin to compare with what God can do for us.

There is a small illustration of this in the life of Thomas Edison. When the twenty-three-year old inventor arrived in New York from Boston,

his head was full of ideas for great inventions, but his pockets were empty.

Because Edison had worked earlier as a telegraph operator, he headed for a Western Union office. Did they need an inventory clerk? No, but they had some equipment in need of repair. So the company's president Leferts agreed to let him try it for awhile, saying he would settle up with him sometime in the future.

Edison restored the equipment, then stayed around for awhile as an unsalaried troubleshooter. Then one day Leferts decided to honor his promise to "settle up." "Well, young man, how much do you think your improvements are worth?" Edison didn't know what to say. A thousand dollars would be fine, two thousand would seem fair, but he really wanted five thousand. Or should he settle for three?

The man handy with his hands was inexperienced in finance. So he decided to let Leferts set the price. Leferts responded, "How would forty thousand dollars strike you?" The young inventor turned pale and mumbled his approval.

But what is *any* earthly reward compared to the reward God is offering? Can we even with our most spectacular dreams measure the value of what God has offered us? Could Jesus' farthest imagination even faintly capture the joy of arriving in His Father's presence and having His Father beckon Him to a place at His right?

And can we, with our small mind, imagine the joy of meeting Christ and some day being introduced to His Father? Should not the reality of it, the magnitude of it, the wonder of

it, be enough to make us turn pale?

A Pattern to Follow

Consider the value of a pattern. How does the tool and diemaker cast the perfect die? How does the dressmaker know exactly what cuts to make in the costly fabric? How does the tailor know how to taper and form each line? How does the carpenter know how to measure and cut his boards so that the result is the building the owner expects? Each follows a pattern.

Think what the world would have if there were no patterns, if the tool and diemaker cast his metal according to his whim; if the dressmaker or tailor cut the fabric anywhere it happened, if the carpenter cut his boards according to what seemed convenient.

If there is to be form, beauty and usefulness, there must be design, order, and precision. And if there would be any of these, there must be a pattern to follow.

Can we wonder, then, that God, too, has seen fit to have us follow a pattern in the designing of a 100% Christian character? He has not left us to go by feeling or whim, or even precise instructions. He has done more. He has left us something to see, something we can comprehend, a living pattern. And just according to the quality of the pattern will be the quality of the finished product. In fact, in the end He is going to evaluate our work by comparing it with His pattern.

There is something else about a pattern we should not overlook. When we follow a pattern, we are acknowledging that we do not have all the answers, that we do not know

how to do it ourselves, that someone else knows better. We are giving up two things: the right to do it *our* way, and the instinctive feeling that our way is the best. True, we could set aside the pattern and cut our own design. But to expect a superior result would be sheer folly.

Any accomplishment can be no better than the quality of the pattern

followed. That is why, when God provided a pattern for us, He provided the very best.

Everything about God is excellent. Mention any aspect of His life or existence—His holiness, His love, His truth, His goodness—and you mention an aspect of His perfection. With Him is no deficiency, no lack, no falling short. It is all excellence.

Let Us Pray

FATHER in heaven, God of all life and comfort and hope, we thank Thee for bringing us once again to the dawning of a sacred New Year. We praise Thee for time, and for what we know lies beyond time. Thou hast blessed us more than we can measure. Above all Thou hast given us Thyself, in whom we can trust, on whom we can depend for every need; and Thou hast given us Thy Son, our Messiah and a perfect pattern of excellence. Our heavenly Father, we thank Thee.

At this the beginning of the sacred year, we stand before Thee in awe. We know not what the next twelve months will bring. Great and momentous events are ahead. Some day soon Thy long silence will be broken by the reappearance of Thy dear Son to earth, and we, with all Thy servants through the ages, will be called to answer for the things we have done. Father, alert us to the momentousness of that event, and may we now spend each moment of every day getting ready for it.

Father, lift our thoughts from the littleness of our lives to contemplate the height, the depth, the length and breadth of Thy eternal plan and purpose. And as we contemplate the example of Thy Son, and His love and forgiveness, may we show love and forgiveness toward one another.

We pray not for the changing of Thy will, but for help in conforming our will to Thine; not for what we think we need, but for what Thou in Thy wisdom knowest is best for us. Thou art the way, the truth and the life; help us to learn Thy way, and walk in Thy truth, that we may someday partake of Thy life.

We pray that Thy many-splendored love may minister to each of Thy children, wherever they may be. For the lonely, the suffering, the defeated, the bereaved, the discouraged, the stricken, we pray Thy help according to Thy promise. And hasten the day when Thou wilt fulfill Thy promise, when Thou shalt wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain; for the former things are passed away. In the name of Thy Son and our glorious coming King we pray. Amen.

**This life is but the beginning,
the preparation for real life ahead.**

**Christ
abandoned
His will for the
greater will of
His Father.
He wanted to do
more and be
more than He
could ever do or
be on His own.**

The tabernacle, the first physical representation of God's plan for His people, and of God's contacts with His people, was delivered in the form of a pattern. These were the words of the Lord to Moses: "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount"

(Ex. 25:40). God provided the pattern, and it, too, was all excellence.

In the same way the Eternal Father long ages ago set the standard for the quality of persons He wanted. He decreed, according to His eternal purpose, that they should be the very best. Only with the noblest would He share His matchless privileges. In the words of the apostle Paul, He declared that "We should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4-6). It was all excellence. God will have nothing less than excellence in His finished handiwork.

His very nature decrees it. His name is "Excellent" (Ps. 8:1); His work is "honorable and glorious" (Ps. 111:3); His will is "good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2). "Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (Isa. 12:6).

Hasn't He, He who is excellence Himself, He who has given us the perfect pattern of excellence, hasn't He every right to ask our best?

Our Excellent Pattern

Such was the life of Christ. His entire career on earth was a striving for excellence, first in Himself and then in those who followed Him. No teacher ever required more of His students than did this Master of men. And no teacher ever required more of Himself. He would tolerate no mediocrity. So meticulous was He in adhering to the will of His Father that He could say, "I do *always* those things that please him"; again, "I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of him that sent me"; again, "I do nothing of myself, but as the Father hath taught me." In other words, He was saying, I don't promote myself in anything I do. Isn't that a superhuman achievement? Who of us can say that we never did anything to promote ourselves; that we never were preoccupied with selfish interests? Truly He was one above us; a pattern of excellence.

Excellence describes Jesus' standard in His teaching. He was con-

Showing the Father

AT the Last Supper with His disciples, Philip put to Jesus the most astonishing question. We do not know exactly what Philip was thinking, but these were his words: "Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied" (John 14:8, RSV). Since this was the last question from any of the disciples that night, we may credit Philip with providing the subject of His masterful sermon;—how Jesus showed the Father. In other words, they said, Master, we do not want to *hear* a sermon, we want to *see* one. We do not want to *hear* about the Father, we want to be *shown*, in real, everyday life. We want to *see*.

This is exactly what Christ had done. He came to *show* the Father.

Isn't that the whole point and purpose of a plan, a guide, a pattern? It is something to see, something to follow. It doesn't leave us wondering whether we

should go this way or that way, because we know, because we can follow someone who has gone this way before us.

We have One who says truly, I have not only *told* you, I have *shown* you.

What was Jesus' reply that night when Philip asked Him, "Show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied"? "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John 14:9).

Do we hear what Jesus was saying? Have you followed Me all these years, Philip, with your eyes closed? If you had been looking, you *would* have seen the Father, because I have been showing Him to you every day.

Oh, Philip! how could you miss so much!

cerned with excellence in knowledge, that proper knowledge which forms the basis of all holy living. Nothing less would qualify. Frequently He challenged His audience with: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Or, in other words, I have something different to tell you. It is heavenly knowledge. To hear this, you need your mind open, as well as your ears.

The natural sequel to excellent knowledge was excellent behavior, i.e., knowledge that results in excellence of life and character. Here again there was no room for anything even one degree less than the very best. Well He knew the standard of His Father; well He knew what would be honored in heaven.

This is why Jesus made such a difference in the lives of those who knew Him. Those who had been with Him stood out. Men could see that "they had been with Jesus." Though considered "unlearned" by men, they may have been among the highest in God's standing. "For the

**As responsible moral beings, we must
not trifle with our eternal future.
For our soul's sake, we dare not.**

Lord sees not as man sees"—in the days of Samuel, in the days of the Apostles, or in our own day. God measures by a different standard; He is seeking excellence by *His* standards, excellence of the heart, the very highest standard humanly attainable.

The apostle Paul was acknowledging this when He wrote of himself that he counted "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8). The greatest worldly attainment could not even begin to compare with the

glory of winning Christ. Gladly he gave up the lesser for the greater.

The knowledge of God is excellent knowledge. It communicates a true estimate of our worth before Him, a true description of what we are in His sight, along with a picture of what we must become.

Why a Pattern?

God provided a pattern because He knew we needed it. He knew we needed the motivation that could only come from actually seeing what had been done. He knew that we would not make the change to His moral likeness until we could yearn for that likeness; and He knew that

But let us not be too quick to condemn. How much have *we* taken in for all the advantages *we* have had? Have we not seen some great and wonderful things even in our day? And have we not the complete record of Jesus' life, all written down in black and white for us to read anytime we need? Are we using to the full the advantages that are *ours*?

Those who saw and knew Jesus had a heritage which cannot be ours. But they have relayed it to us through their written words, fully documented, fully proven, clear and concise for us to follow, so that we, too, can "see" the Father. Are we looking?

How did Jesus show the Father in His daily life? He showed the Father in the same way that we can show the Christ—by the life He lived. The Father's patience, the Father's long-suffering, the Father's forgiveness, the Father's compassion, the Father's vision—all shone in the life of Christ. He combined all these

with a loving obedience; and in that priceless combination was the perfect pattern for them to follow.

Godlikeness, Christlikeness is something to be seen, in small things, as well as in great. Let us never discount the value of small things. The life of Christ is something to be seen in our actions, our attitudes, in our relations with others every day. It is not something we talk about, but something we do; not what we say with our lips, but what we preach with our lives.

What example are we, you and I, showing to others? Are we showing the Father, or do we say by our actions that we prefer to show our own small selves?

Is our first thought in the morning a prayer to God for help to be and to do always and only the very best of which we are capable?

Let us not forget those words of Philip to Jesus: "Lord, show us the Father." Yes, show the Father; show Christ in our own lives.

MM

**As free moral
agents, we are the
makers of our
own destiny.**

we could not yearn for it until we had seen it in real life.

Why such a perfect pattern for us when others were not so favored? Because God knew that we down in this end time would not risk everything of this world, even to life itself, without it. Thank God, He knows our frame! He knows our weakness. Just so, He knew our need, and provided.

Until we have set ourselves beside this perfect pattern and seen ourselves as God sees us, we cannot truly appreciate the height of His stature. And as we compare the qualities of our lives with His—His humility, His intensity, His love, His kindness, His courage, His future-mindedness, His nearness to the Father—we will be inspired to reach beyond ourselves, to be like Christ. Without this view of His perfection, we are too easily self-satisfied. We are too comfortable with ourselves as we are. We have lived so long with so much unholiness that it does not disturb us.

We need to be struck anew with the seriousness of our responsibility before God. As free moral agents, we are the makers of our own destiny. As responsible moral beings, we must not trifle with our eternal future. For our soul's sake, we *dare* not. God means what He says, and when He tells us to follow the pattern, He means just that.

How easily in the midst of our daily problems we lose sight of this. How easily we forget that whatever we meet, it has all been met before;

whatever we must conquer, it has been conquered by others before us—and with the same determined spirit and the help of God, we can conquer it, too.

Contrast the task of one blazing a trail through the wilderness with that of following a well-marked trail. The first is faced with hundreds of decisions, as he decides which way to go; and the place of arrival is always in question until he actually arrives. The one following is concerned about neither; he knows both where to go and where he will arrive—because someone has gone ahead.

Thank God we are in the place of the second. We have One who has gone before us, who has trod every step of the way to life. We are not left with One who “cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity,” but One who “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:14-15).

Are we doing it, you and I? Are the brush strokes of my life reproducing the likeness of Christ? Is our primary concern to excel as Jesus excelled, to be and to do right, whatever others may say, whatever others may think?

Being “Like Christ” in Excellence

In everything we do, we are either like Christ, or we are not.

Jesus’ life of excellence set the standard of God’s ideal. In coming or going, in working, in watching, in speaking, in thinking, in praying, in suffering, Jesus set the pattern. And those who would follow Him must be like Him. They must share His

love of excellence, His aspirations, His desires, His purity, His constant reaching for the highest heights. Nothing less would suffice.

Sharing this same love of excellence was the apostle Paul. As he wrote to the Philippian brethren: “This is my prayer, that your love may grow ever richer and richer in knowledge and insight of every kind, and may thus bring you the gift of true discrimination. Then on the Day of Christ you will be flawless and without blame” (Phil. 1:9-11, NEB).

May this be our desire and prayer. Let us be consistent in striving for this excellence that is “flawless and without blame” in all the varied details of everyday. Let ours be that love which grows ever richer and richer in knowledge and insight of every kind, bringing us the gift of true discrimination between right and wrong.

But oh, the temptation to compromise is always with us, the temptation to settle for something less than our best, the temptation to put off the serious confronting of ourselves; to tell ourselves that we really aren’t that bad, that we are doing “pretty well.” If such is our attitude, small wonder that at the end of the day we must look back upon a record of which we must humbly say, “This is not my best.”

God grant us this New Year the determination and the power to *change*, to fix our eye on our great Pattern of Excellence and say with firmness, “This is what I want to be; this is what I am *going* to be, so help me God.”

MM

**“This is what I want to be;
this is what I am going to be,
so help me God.”**

Facts Are Stubborn Things

WE call the Bible the Book of all books. We speak of its poetry, its drama, its history. In it we find nearly every literary form known to man. Yet it is not its literary forms that make it precious to us, but the fact that in it we find the knowledge of God. We hear Him speaking through the words of the prophets, apostles, and Jesus, revealing His power, wonderment, and might; revealing His plan, and how lowly mortals like ourselves may have a part in that far-reaching plan.

For centuries the Bible has stood as the only book which deals forthrightly and truthfully with the issues of man's origin, his reason for being, his responsibility, and his eternal destiny. Ultimately, the Bible is the only voice that can speak rightly of God's plan of salvation.

For those who will believe, trust and obey, the Bible abounds with precious promises. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9). He is able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20).

All this, and so much more, we know only through the Word of God. Do we treasure this divine Book as we ought? Do we realize its priceless value?

The Lord calls us to be a holy people. "Be ye holy, for I am holy" was His command to Israel long ago, and it is still His call today. Merely to sing of holiness, or talk about holiness, is not to be holy. To be God's holy people, holiness must be the driving force in our lives, governing all we do. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do: do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). These are some of the facts we find in the Word of God. And they cannot be withstood.

If we would benefit from our knowledge of this Sacred Volume, we must obey it. An athlete who is training to run a race would not expect to develop strength and endurance by just reading or listening to good

advice; he would realize that in order to win he must practice and grow strong. So in our spiritual lives, we must read, understand, and keep the things written for our learning (Prov. 4:10; Rom. 15:4).

The Bible presents facts from which there is no escape. After we have tried every alley of evasion, we shall still be face to face with this: that we are here on earth by laws which God has set in motion, that we have been given an opportunity to do something, to be somebody in God's sight, to live in a far better, glorious world. When we consider this seriously, we know that all that is holding us back is ourselves, our own indecision, our own lack of faith.

Why are we so slow to believe? We know the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. The heavens, those innumerable shining worlds above us, all belong to God. Here is plan, design, beauty, and creativity beyond our grandest comprehension. We know that we ourselves are living beings because God gave us life. And we know that the Book of all books is the Lord's. It has proved itself a thousand times—its prophecies, its harmonies, its teachings all stamping it divine. It stands forever as the unfailing Word of God.

We know it is of God, and we know what it teaches. We also know the age in which we are living, that the Day of the Lord is near, speeding apace. How can we hesitate in indecision? These things are facts which we cannot honestly escape or explain away. If we refuse to believe, the facts remain unchanged. By our unbelief we only hinder ourselves. God's purpose is going steadily forward.

Let's face the facts for what they are, realize the opportunity that is ours, and go after it with all our powers. We know God has spoken. We know God will be true to His word. Let's have the good sense to listen, believe, and obey before it is too late.

MM

About God's Justice

"Deut. 24:16 says that the children are not to be put to death for the sins of their fathers. Yet in II Sam. 12:15-18, the child born to David and Bathsheba died because of the sin of his parents. How do you reconcile the two?"

In Deuteronomy 24:16 the Lord laid down a basic principle that should govern all human judgments: that each person is individually responsible for his own actions, good or bad. Children were not to be punished for the sins of their parents, nor were the parents to suffer on account of the guilt of their children. An obedient son should not be punished for the sins of his father, nor should a righteous father bear any guilt for the waywardness of his son. Each person should stand or fall according to the merits of his own conduct.

God Himself judges by this same principle, of giving to each according to what he or she has done (Rev. 22:12; Jer. 17:9-10). However, His knowledge is not limited to this. He, having infinite knowledge, is also able to judge and act according to what He knows a person *will do*. He is able to foreknow what a person *will do* or *will become* as accurately in advance as we can know after seeing that person perform. This is not predestination—He is not determining what that individual will do—but only foreknowledge, a knowing *in advance*. By this same power and knowledge He knows future events.

Being omniscient (having all wisdom) and knowing the future, God is able to act in the best interests of His human family in ways which we, who must judge by what can be seen, cannot understand. The case of the child of David and Bathsheba is an example of this. The loss of that child was a judgment upon the guilty parents for their sin (a sin which actually merited the death penalty under the law of Lev. 20:14). The child's life was taken because of the parents' sin, and this was God's means of punishing the parents. From a human point of view this might seem unfair; and for a human hand, unauthorized by God, to have taken the life of the child, would have been wrong. But God, knowing the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:9-10), could see what we cannot. God knew that the child's death was the lesson

that would bring David to his senses and move him to repent and reform. Hence, in taking the life of the child, God acted directly in the best interests of David. At the same time we can know that God also acted in the best interests of the child, though for reasons which we with our limited knowledge and insight do not understand.

We must remember, too, that when God administers judgment and punishment, it is entirely within His right to act as He sees fit. Being sovereign God He is also sovereign right. His is the ultimate responsibility for his own action, and we are not in a position to criticize. When we consider that His knowledge and His ways are as much above ours as the heavens are above the earth (Isa. 55:8-9), who are we to find fault!

At the same time, He respects us as free moral agents having the right and the ability to choose our own course in life, and to take the consequences. When children are victims of divine judgment the question arises: Why?

Here we must trust God to be just and fair, and we have good evidence that He is. Several accounts in Scripture illustrate His justice in this respect. In some instances of divine judgment, the children were spared; other times they were not.

The rebellion of certain elders in Israel in the time of Moses is a case in point. We read of this incident in Numbers 16. Korah, Dathan and Abiram, jealous of the authority of Moses and Aaron, were the ring leaders stirring up strife. Apparently the children of Dathan and Abiram were sympathetic in the plot and deserved punishment, as the Lord destroyed them with their sinful father. We read: "And Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives and their sons, and their little children.... And it came to pass ...that the ground clave asunder that was under them and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah and all their goods,...and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation" (Num. 16:27, 31-33). None of the children of Dathan and Abiram appear in the annals of Israel after this time. However, in the account in Numbers 16, nothing is said about the death of Korah's children, and

later it is clearly stated that "the children of Korah died not" (Num. 26:11). We know this is true, because the children of Korah *are* mentioned in later accounts. (The prophet Samuel was among the descendants of Korah—see I Chron. 6:22-28.)

God is just and righteous, and we must trust His wisdom to know where to give and where to take away; whom to preserve and whom to allow to perish (Deut. 32:29).

However, only God can make this judgment, hence His ordinance to His human family is that children shall not be put to death for the sins of their fathers, nor fathers for the sins of their children. Any other action as a part of human jurisprudence would be the height of injustice and presumption.

• Concerning Ishtar

"Do you have any information about Ishtar?"

Ishtar was the pagan Babylonian goddess of fertility, often known as the Queen of Heaven. Other names thought to be equivalent or related include Astarte and Aphrodite.

Associating renewed life in vegetation and the new life of resurrection, the early Christians, apostatizing from the true faith and seeking to combine pagan and Christian practices, brought the name of this pagan goddess into their faith; the term "Easter" is thought to have been derived from Ishtar. This is not to suggest that the resurrection of Christ has any connection with paganism, only as it was reinterpreted and misapplied by those who were no longer loyal to the true teachings of Christ.

The Bible contains an abundance of evidence that Christ was resurrected. All the New Testament authors testify to this fact. Indeed, the fact of the resurrection is the cornerstone of Christian faith. But the resurrection of Christ has no relation to any pagan festival, either in its custom, manner of observance, or date.

MM

Abib Calendar

The Bible New Year:

Abib 1—from sundown April 16 thru sundown April 17. Abib was the first month of the Hebrew year as God told Moses to measure time (Ex. 12:2). On the first of Abib the tabernacle was set up. Abib is the "spring" and "sprouting month" in Israel. How fitting a time for the Lord, our Savior, our Redeemer and coming King to have been born!

The New Passover:

Abib 13—sundown April 28.

The Jewish Passover was on the fourteenth of Abib. Jesus instituted the New Passover on the thirteenth, of which He said, "This do, in remembrance of me."

Christ's Resurrection:

Abib 15—morning of May 1.

In Christ's resurrection lies our assurance that we too may someday triumph over death and gain *real life*.

The Ascension of Christ:

Forty days after the Resurrection—June 9.

This was the last time Jesus was seen among men, until the great day when He shall come again. On that day some nineteen hundred years ago, He was "taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:10-11).

Pentecost:

Fifty days after the Resurrection—June 19.

This was a day the apostles never forgot—Israel had been observing it for centuries. But to the New Testament Church it meant great power to do a great work for God.

*Jesus wasn't afraid of the truth,
or its effects. He didn't back
down because it was a hard saying.
When He asked, "Does this offend
You," He wasn't ready to say
"I'm sorry." His message was always
the truth without apology: "Verily,
verily," He said, and let the
consequences be what they would.*

The Runaway's Return

(Continued from page 10)

tonight. But Paul says he needs you. Do you wish to return to him?

Onesimus: Much as I love you, Master, and my home—the only home I ever had—I would ask nothing better than to be Brother Paul's helper. My presence would release someone else for the missionary work outside.

Philemon: Then suppose you rest up here for a month, then go back to Paul for as long as he needs you. I will pay your expenses. Then if he is released, you can accompany him to Colosse. How does that sound to you?

Onesimus: Master, you are too good to me. Your kindness is...more...more than I can bear.

(Philemon takes both Onesimus' hands in his.)

Philemon: Do not call me master. Call me Brother, for I am your Brother in the faith. We are one in Christ Jesus. We are in the fight together, and together we will run our course, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us.

Onesimus: Yes, Brother Philemon.

Admeatus: 'Nesimus! 'Nesimus! O 'Nesimus! I knew you'd come home. I always knew it. You came home! You came home to me! 'Nesimus I'm so glad you've come home.

(The End)

OUR READERS WRITE

Sudden Change

Christ's sudden intervention will usher in a drastic change, and will finally cause God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven above. O, what a breath-taking phenomena will soon take place on Planet Earth!

Truly, we all long for the time to come when the inhabitants shall not say, "I am sick." Let us live a spotless life now, so we will always be well in that great future Day!

Idaho

R. B.

More Pressure

We need to put more pressure into our work of overcoming the evil with the works of righteousness, and of always exhibiting the right spirit in the little trials which so often cross our pathway.

If we can keep calm and unruffled, the little trials will soon disappear and we will be the stronger spiritually for the victory won.

Like David of old, let us also declare, "We shall behave ourselves wisely in a perfect way:...May we ever strive to walk before God with a perfect heart" (Ps. 101:2). God will truly help us in our difficult trials, He will be our strong tower of deliverance, "For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth we are dust."

Like the wise buyer of the Eastern bazaar, we need to keep ourselves in the

revealing light of God's Word of Truth, and seeing any faults in our characters. For when Our Master comes we want to be able to stand before Him without spot and blameless.

We shall indeed be near to Him, and He will surely be near to us, as He sees our faith and trust placed implicitly in Him. He will be our strength and our salvation, and will guide us and lead us in the path of true holiness and righteousness.

Australia

A. B.

End Times

Just about everyone realizes that these are the last days. Look at the newspaper, the ever-increasing crime statistics, the number of murders, rapes, and armed assaults per hour or even by minute calculations. Even those who are "blind" cannot help but notice the numbers of such events in a local newspaper.

If this isn't the end times just prior to Christ's return to establish the Kingdom, then I can hardly imagine how it could get any worse.

How I wish I could turn back the clock and start again knowing what I know now. But this can't be and we can only ask for His forgiveness and mercy and stop making the same dull, foolish mistakes repeatedly. This means self-discipline, and more self-discipline.

I've been rereading many of the Mes-

sages. The article dealing with the opportunity of a second chance is intriguing. God gives us many, many chances to straighten out our lives, to exercise self-discipline, and do those things which we know are pleasing to God. We just have to use them.

Louisiana

D. K.

No Imitations

Winston Churchill once said of Russia when trying to describe it that it was "A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

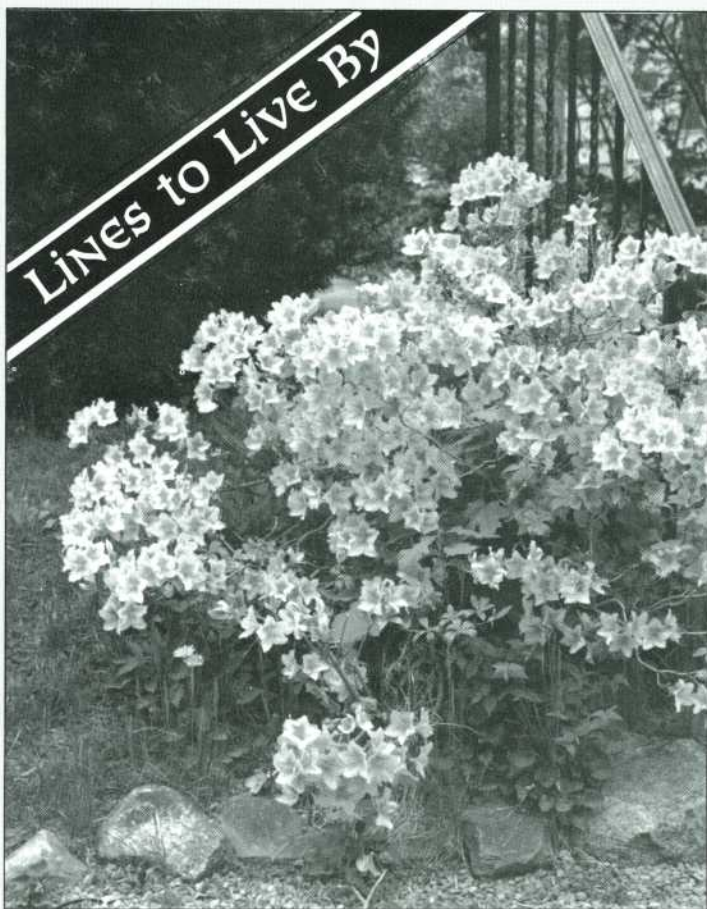
Some teachings of Christianity, like the trinity, could be described in the same language that Mr. Churchill used in describing the Soviet Union.

How fortunate we are not to have to labor under such a delusion. God is a God of reason, and the trinity certainly does not qualify under any heading of "reason." Thanks to God we can feed on the *real* word of God. Even advertisers point out this fact, as they advertise *real* cheese, *real* butter, etc. They know that people are getting fed up with imitation products.

One writer states that most people attending church today are only cosmetic Christians feeding on the essence of Christianity. He goes on to explain that the essence of anything is the smell that is left after the real liquid has gone. What a warning!

Manitoba

E. H.



A Prayer for Today

Lord, help me today,
to give a cheery smile;
to go the second mile;
to not seek worldly fame;
to praise Thy holy name.

Lord, help me today,
to be a shining light;
to know the wrong from right;
in each and every way
to seek You when I pray.

*No garment is more becoming to the
Christian than the cloak of humility.*

There is only one time that is important: NOW.

*Worry about tomorrow places an
obstacle between us and today's
sunshine.*

Peace of Mind

"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

What gets our attention gets us. If we set our minds on the carnal, the things of the flesh capture us. The end of this mind-set is death. If we set our minds on the things of the spirit, we shall have both life and peace.

If we think low thoughts, we slide down. If we think high thoughts, we climb upward. If we reach down to the devilish, our minds become whirlpools of confusion, conflict, and consternation. If we reach up to that which is divine, our minds grow peaceful, purposeful, and poised.

There is no way to improve on the psychological accuracy of this proposition from the Scriptures: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). There is little margin between what we think and what we are.

The quality of the thoughts we harbor becomes stamped on our countenances. The drama of the face tells us what has been going on in the backstage areas of life. The quality of these thoughts is inevitably printed on our character.

Because our lives reflect the thoughts we filter through our minds, we ought to entertain the most elevating, inspiring, and enriching thoughts. We ought always to entertain positive, constructive, and creative thoughts from the heavenly realm.

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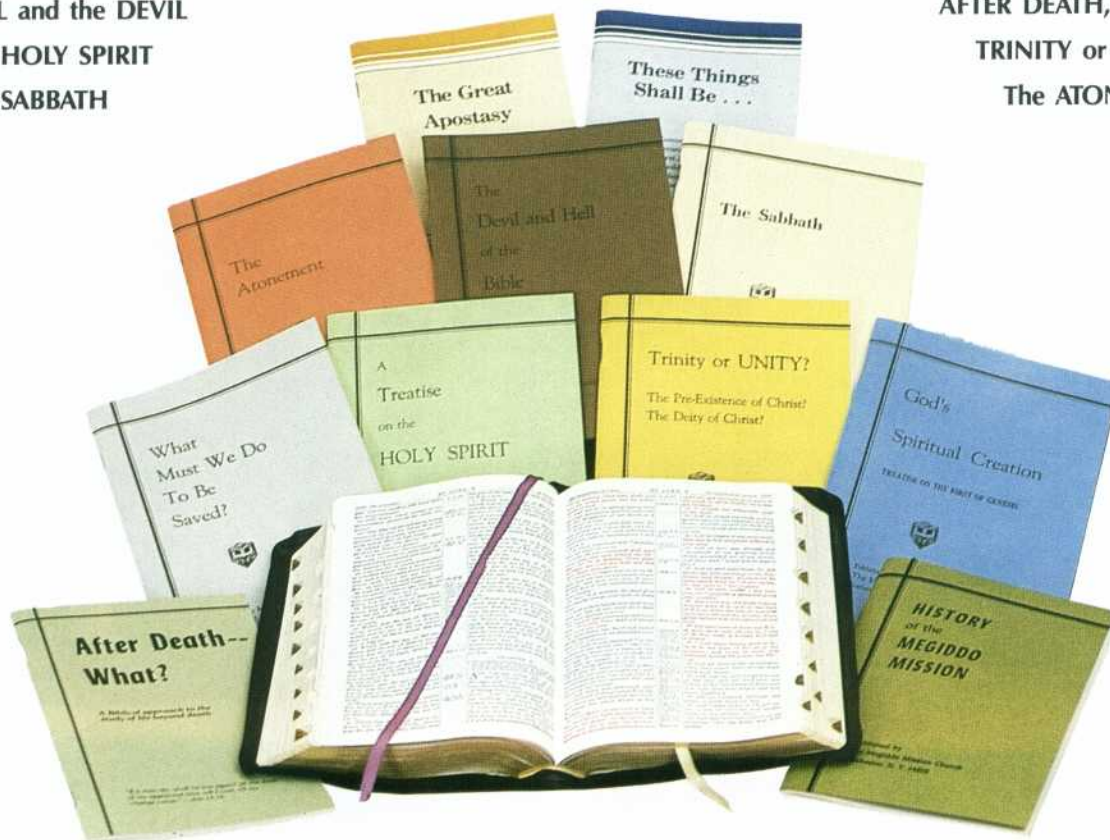
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

THESE THINGS SHALL BE

AFTER DEATH, WHAT?

TRINITY or UNITY?

The ATONEMENT



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