



# Megiddo Message

*"Truth shall spring out of the  
earth, and righteousness shall look  
down from heaven, . . . and God,  
even our God, shall bless us."*

*—Psalms*

## The Quest for Excellence

**J**ESUS' 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. Nor would He tolerate any mediocrity, in His own life or in the standard He set for His followers. Everything about Him and His had to be the best. It was all excellence.

First He was concerned with excellence in knowledge, that is, excellence of the mind, that proper knowledge which forms the basis of right living. How frequently He challenged His audience with: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Or, in other words, If you want to hear what I am about to say, you will need your minds as well as your ears. If you think you can hear Me with your ears open and your mind closed, you may as well go home.

Following close upon this excellence of knowledge was His concern for moral excellence, i.e., excellence of the life and character. Well He knew that knowledge without application could never win the recognition of God.

We know that Jesus called and used "unlearned" men (Acts 4:13). But this does not suggest any lack of intelligence, or any deficiency of general knowledge, or even any carelessness in the use of opportunity. It merely describes their status as it was judged by certain members of the Jewish hierarchy who considered themselves the ultimate in intellectual attainment during their day—a standard which Peter and John looked down upon. So far as these high-up professors of religion were concerned, the apostles were ignorant nobodies.

But their being "unlearned" in the eyes of men was absolutely no discredit to them so far as God was concerned. "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth"—in the days of Samuel, in the days of the apostles, or even now in our own day. God's call is always to excellence—excellence by *His* standards, excellence of heart—which, incidentally, represents the very highest in human attainment. Even the apostle Paul, already a

high achiever according to Jewish traditions, put it all behind him when Christ called, counting it "mere refuse" in his quest for greater excellence.

In the eyes of God, excellent knowledge is, first of all, *true* knowledge, or knowledge of that which is true. It is knowledge that speaks to the heart, that speaks of the realities of life and death and salvation. It is knowledge that communicates a true estimate of one's worth, and a sense of total dependence upon God.

How easily in the midst of the struggle we lose this vital sense of dependence. At such times the words of our great Teacher come to rebuke us: "Without me, ye can do nothing."

Jesus' quest for excellence included also an excellence in life and attitude. What man or woman seeking the heights of Christian achievement would stop with excellence in knowledge? Right knowledge must issue in obedience, an obedience that reaches into every aspect of one's life. In coming or going, in working, in watching, in speaking, in thinking, in praying, we must be *like Christ*. We must share His aspirations, His desires, His purity, His aspiration to excellence. Nothing ordinary will do.

This was Paul's thought as he admonished each candidate for the crown: Ordinary running is not enough. "Run in such a way that you will get the prize" (I Cor. 9:24, NIV).

The apostle Paul set the standard in masterful language when he wrote in his letter to the Philippians: "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, reaping the full harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:9-11, NEB).

Have we this consistent striving for excellence in all the varied details of everyday? Is our primary concern to excel in obedience, in *doing* right and *being* right,

*(Continued on page 19)*

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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 precepts and principles given us in the Word 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—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

## About Our Cover

Our cover photo is of the Moose River taken near McKeever, New York, by Mr. and Mrs. David Sutton.

# Megiddo Message

Vol. 73, No. 6

June, 1986

### Editorial

#### THE QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE

Because God cares about excellence. He wants the best.

2

### Sermon

#### A PASSION FOR ETERNITY

*A passion that can carry us through any storm or difficulty we may encounter.*

4

### Series

#### EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY

10

### Article

#### TIME AS OPPORTUNITY

11

### Lines to Live By

14

### Articles

#### WALKING CIRCUMSPECTLY

16

#### HOW IS EVE THE MOTHER OF ALL LIVING?

20

Discussion of Genesis 3:20

### Meditating on the Word

#### RIGHT TO LIVE

22

On Psalm 90:12

### Questions and Answers

24

Concerning:

Did Jesus Have to Die to Uphold Adamic Condemnation?

Enoch and Elijah Must Die?

### Letters

26

### Finally, Brethren

#### THE UPSETTING SIN

27

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.

# A Passion for Eternity

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 40:3-10

**E**VERY living person is concerned with the issues of life and death. In the 40th chapter of Isaiah, the Prophet is pondering these same issues. These are the words he was inspired to record for us:

*A voice says, "Cry!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
All flesh is grass,  
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.  
The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people is grass.  
The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand for ever.  
—Isaiah 40:6-8*

In this passage is distilled in a simple image a truth which can never be far from our minds. You are grass: your life is a blooming and a fading, a flourishing and a withering, a birthing and a dying. The thought is never far from the human mind, though we often try to hide it away under a cloak of "busyness." But it is still there. Whether walking to work, or peeling potatoes, or sitting in the living room, or meeting the day's obligations, there is always the lurking thought: grass withering, flowers fading and disappearing.

There are times when the reality of the thought gives us a nagging uneasiness. Sometimes it seems almost to defeat us. At other times we are able almost to forget it.

It is easy to survey the life of a blade of grass, it is so simple. *Of course*, we say. It springs up fresh and firm and green in the springtime, then, if it is not cut off sooner, it withers with the winter freeze. That's how it

goes with grass, as any of us can readily see who have survived the changes of a few seasons.

But to get the full lesson from the grass, I must comprehend my life as a tiny droplet of the universe's time. That droplet is the moment which belongs to me, and *my* flesh. This is the moment in which I may flourish, and disappear, for *all* flesh (including *my* flesh) is as grass. But here I'm not inclined to say, "*Of course* that's how my life is. That's just the way it is with flesh." No, when I apply it to myself, the thought of withering appalls.

If we view our own lives with this type of honesty, we must admit that all flesh—including our own—is grass. And if we do this, we will welcome the thought that there is amidst the flux of things *that which endures*. Isaiah's preaching, if we really hear it, touches our deepest need. He ministers to the worry that pervades all our thoughts. He brings us quickly to his own stronghold, "the word of our God," which "endures forever." Not everything is fleeting. There *is that which is as enduring as eternity*. "The word of our God endures for ever." Is this just a cover-up for his despair? No, it is a surety that has captured him. He has secured a promise, and it has been guaranteed by God.

## Imaging the Higher Life

Here is the contrast: the lifetime of a blade of grass, versus the lifetime of the eternal word of the Lord. A moment, compared with eternity. Can you imagine that contrast?

It is easy to measure the life of a blade of grass. Now what about eternity? How shall we measure that?

Have you tried to imagine what life on the angelic plane must be, where each new *aion* brings fresh raptures and joys in a cycle that goes on and on and on and on, from glory to glory, with eternal youth, eternal health, eternal life?

Note: *A Passion for Eternity* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

Have you thought about it today? Have you lifted your mind into those infinite realms, where every pursuit is purest pleasure, every friendship is heavenly, and every relationship an eternal delight? Have you pictured what it will be like to have time without limit, days without number, and a life that you know will never, never end?

Have you pictured yourself a co-worker with angels, with access to the fathomless reservoirs of the knowledge of omniscience?

Have you thought about what it will be like to have everyone on earth sharing in your hope, your faith, and your joys?

Have you imagined what it will be like to have everyone you meet immortal—just like yourself—never tired, never sick, never knowing a physical limitation, never the slightest fear of accident or death?

Have you pictured that world with you yourself a living, essential factor in an eternal, expanding future . . . where every task is a challenge, a delight, and an opportunity to expand your God-given abilities to ever new and greater dimensions?

And this is only a beginning. Of whatever you can imagine much, there is infinitely more, for "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).

And best of all, it is not a fanciful dream or escape from reality. It is all according to God's plan, and it is sure and certain. And, once begun, it will be unending. All this is bound up in what God calls "eternity."

Can we really believe and anticipate all this, and not have within us a passion for it, a passion for eternity?

### **A Passion Is . . .**

A passion, according to the dictionary, is an "intense, driving or overmastering feeling or conviction; ardent affection, love; strong liking or desire for or devotion to some activity, object or concept."

A passion is something that is so much a part of us as to be dominant. Everything that touches it affects us deeply, because our passions are rooted deep in the serious concerns that govern our lives.

When we talk about a passion, we are talking about something that is as close to us as life itself. Our passions are motivated by our underlying concerns, the concerns that make us what we are, that have to do with life itself, and its preservation. We cling to what we feel is life-supporting, whether it be our friends, our homes, our possessions, our money, our personality—anything that we feel is distinctly our own.

And yet we know that we have no power to hold

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***What will it be like to have time  
without limit, days without number, a  
life that will never, never end?***

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them. All that we have—and our own lives also—are only loaned to us. Something within us rebels against this fact, but we know that it is true. We try to subdue it, still it rises again to haunt us. What is this something within us? It is what the Wise Man calls "eternity in our hearts," (Eccl. 3:11), the desire for something lasting, the longing to escape non-entity. "He has set eternity in their hearts," and there it is, like a seed within us, always seeking to grow, always making us discontented with anything that has an end, always protesting against the temporary, always reminding us that life is brief. We are fundamentally dissatisfied with the things that are, because we know they will not last. We do our best to keep the reality buried a fraction of an inch below the surface of our consciousness. And whenever it begins to peek up above the surface, we quickly shovel a bit more dirt on it. But we cannot destroy it—it is always there.

And it is good. We need it, for without this ever-present consciousness of the brevity of all things here we would not have the motivation to seek the eternal things that God has promised. We want what God offers us because we have a passion for life, a passion for eternity.

### **Infinitizing**

A thoughtful writer, observing this fact, has said that the human race has a singular ability to "infinitize." Infinitizing is the ability to soar in thought beyond one's immediate circumstances. This may seem a small thing, before we think about it; but it has enormous consequences. Of course not all imagination is "infinitizing," but we have the potential, if we use it.

Picture two men in a Roman prison. One is a political prisoner, waiting to be executed for his maneuvers against the government. The second is the apostle Paul, a prisoner for the sake of "the gospel." The place is about as inhospitable as can be imagined, comfort-wise—it is damp, dark, cold, and the men are ill-clothed and ill-fed. The first prisoner mirrors his surroundings. He is morose, despondent, spending his last hours in the deepest depths of human misery. The second is calm, radiant, expectant, as he uses every extended hour to

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*We want what God offers us because  
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a passion for eternity.*

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revel in the mental pictures he is creating of the glorious world to come.

We are as happy as we choose to be, for our life is, fundamentally, a life of our mind. In fact, so much does our attitude of mind determine our character and our life that what we think about is what we become. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

And think what this "infinetizing," this thinking above and beyond our environment, can do for us. The capacity to look beyond the moment; to picture the ideal toward which we strive; to see life—our own life—in its total perspective from beginning to end; to see the present moment, however "good" or "bad," not as an end in itself but as a means to the great goal ahead—what can give greater power and force to faith!

Yes, that world to come is worth *all* our thought-power. Our songs picture it vividly: "Where the sun never sets and the leaves never fade"; where "the right-

eous forever shall shine like the sun." And, "When we've been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun, there's no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun."

We need each and every day to reinforce this passion within us. We need to stir ourselves with these thoughts, to stimulate our desire for that matchless future. We need each and every day to remind ourselves of the contrast between what we are and what we will be if made like Christ; between a bit of withering grass and the eternal word of the Lord; between time and eternity. We need each and every day to expose ourselves to the eternal, to walk with God, to tread in heavenly places; to company with the angels and share their glory.

Yes, we need a passion for eternity.

### **Forward Thinking**

Our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, had this passion. It possessed him. He did not waste his thought-time on trivial nothings. When not occupied with urgent matters at hand, his mind was busy companying with the divine, picturing the bright new world that is coming and what he could be doing to get himself and others ready for it. This kind of thinking furnished the power that kept him working, strong in faith and the power of hope, his eye fixed on the glory ahead. Again and again

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## *Let Us Pray . . .*

O God our fortress and our strength, our bulwark never failing; our helper strong amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing: hear us this morning as we come into Thy presence with hearts and minds eager for new impressions from Thy Word. We are creatures of a moment; Thou art from everlasting to everlasting.

Father, we appreciate the favored place Thou hast granted us in the day of salvation; for the privilege of living so near the glorious climax, when all the things Thou hast spoken will be fulfilled. Help us to live in a constant expectancy, aware that time as we know it will soon end and Thy glorious, never-ending Day be ushered in. May we so live that the arrival of that Day be for us a day of joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We thank Thee for all Thy bountiful provisions for our

lives, for life itself, for the vigor of health, the warmth of friendship, and for every gift of happiness and strength. We thank Thee for Thy Word, and the brilliant hope it sets before us. Help us to use all these gifts in ways that honor Thee.

May we have a passion for eternity and all the things Thou hast promised; a desire so strong that it will dominate every aspect of our lives and impel us to make a complete surrender of ourselves to Thee. May we be so possessed by our sublime hope that no experience of the present can distress us or cause us to lose our buoyancy, but we will see everything as preparing us for Thy new world.

Lord, we pray not for lighter burdens but for greater strength; not for easier disciplines, but for the grace to accept them and grow under them, until we attain to Thy full mental and moral likeness.

We pray Thee to bless all who are making a definite effort to be part of Thy family. Strengthen the weak, uphold the suffering, and grant to all of us the steadfastness to keep pressing on and on to the end of our day of salvation. And hasten the Day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of Thy Son and He shall reign forever and ever. In His worthy name we pray. Amen.

he pictured it before his mind. He could not speak with his brethren without reminding them of its rapturous delights—and how much more did he remind himself!

“Oh,” he said, and I quote, “this future home in glory, filled with resplendent beauty; surrounded with bliss, peace and happiness; laden with more than every conceivable comfort, embellished with the beauty of Jehovah—we will look until our eyes glisten in rapture as we tell of our happy amazement, as we see them painted with vermillion, in all the streaming colors of the mighty rainbow of His righteousness, enveloping us in its resplendent light and beauty. O the glory! the glory that will surround this blessed throng!

“To enter through the pearly gates into the Elysian fields of bliss, where we can enjoy for evermore the fruit of our labor, at home with the blessed throng of immortal ones; to be at home with such a company of high ones, and to realize that we are indeed a part of this stately band, will be pleasure far beyond our capacity at the present time to fully realize. *Nothing short of experience will ever cause us to think of and fully realize this wonderful pleasure.*

“As we form a part of this holy throng and begin to realize their nobility of action, their majestic appearance, sublimity of thought, stateliness of being, their loftiness in every way, our hearts will begin to well up with increased adoration to the High and Lofty One; it will be spontaneous, will gush forth in tones both loud and clear, speaking forth a joy no mortal ever knew, as the words are repeated so evenly by all, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! which was and is, and is to come. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.’

“The happy inmates of these celestial worlds have enjoyed their delightful home for a long, long time, and many times have they had their hearts stirred with joy at hearing similar grand expressions sounded forth from some world or other, as they repeated the same gladsome words we will repeat when our world is born into their innumerable family of happy ones.

“And as we are busy in performing many wonders yet untold, wonders that will so expand our capabilities, we will become more and more capable of enjoying ourselves. And as we are used in the unending plan of Jehovah, our hearts will become more and more sensitive to the feelings of pleasure until we can testify from experience that it is indeed ‘exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.’ We will then more fully realize what it is to participate in the fulfillment of Psalm 36:8-9, ‘They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them

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### ***Would you settle for 70 years when you could have eternity?***

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drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.’

“What a promise! What a thought! What a comfort evermore, to think of being permitted to experience the fulfillment of these wonderful predictions, and that in the near future, where no sorrow or pain will ever come, no trial either great or small; no sin to cause our hearts to throb and ache; no hardships to be endured.

“Think of viewing Gabriel some day and listening to his marvelous voice, joined with all the dear old saints of his grand home and planet, to hear them sing the wondrous song of their redemption, making the grand old shores of Eternity ring with their joyful, melodious voices until every world born into the celestial family will hear the praise and with hearts filled with peace and goodwill to all will raise one grand response, ‘Alleluia! Amen, and Amen!’

“What a time, what a meeting, what a joyful meeting of the faithful that will be! Words cannot tell of that wonderful gathering. And to think it is so nigh at hand, almost here.

“If we would only let our mind run out and behold this grand river of pleasure and consider that it will be an ever-flowing stream, it would seem that we could not rest until we had secured a true genuine pass to enter Eternity’s shores.”

Do we not need this same passion for eternity? Do we not also need to let it dominate us, day and night, so that nothing that happens, however good or bad, can cause us to forget it? With such a prospect ahead of us, how *can* we forget it, even for a moment? And how can we allow ourselves to do anything which might lessen our chances of having a favorable verdict from the great Judge in that Day of final account?

The apostle Paul had this same passion for eternity. “If by any means,” he wrote, “I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” Any means, whatever—if only he might attain. It was the dominant thought of his life, wherever he went, whatever he was doing.

The apostle Peter shared in this same dominating passion. Speaking of our great hope, he said, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might

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***It is impossible to separate a passion  
for eternity from a passion for a  
life fit for eternity.***

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be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (I Pet. 1:6-9).

The trouble is that eternity is out of sight, and it is so easy to let the vision fade. The things at hand seem to have so much more real worth than things at a distance. In the words of the old adage, a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. This is our instinct, but it may, *or may not*, be true. It all depends on who or what is in "the bush."

**Eternity—in Perspective**

A Father, wanting to impress this thought on the mind of his teenage son, said to him one day, "Son, I have a proposition to make to you. I want to give you a million dollars."

The son laughed. He knew a bit more about his dad's bank account than that!

But the father persisted. "Pretend that I'm a multimillionaire and that I'm going to give you a million dollars. Are you interested?"

"Of course," he answered.

"But there are two conditions," the father continued. First of all, you have to agree to spend the whole million in one year."

Well, the son would have preferred to spread it out over a longer period of time, but better a million for one year than no million at all.

"The second condition," the father continued, "is that at the end of the year, you die in the gas chamber."

"I . . . I beg your pardon?" the son questioned.

"Yes," the father affirmed, "at the end of the year you die. There's no way out. Yes, it is a sure thing that you'll die at the end of the year. Are you still interested?"

"No way!" was the firm reply.

"Why not?"

"Because I'd be spending the whole year thinking about the gas chamber and that would spoil any pleasure I might get from the money!"

If this offer were put to a cross-section of people,

probably very few would wish to trade a whole normal lifetime for one year, even if it be a fantastic year.

However, this is, in effect, the proposition that God sets before us. I am giving you life, He says, and you can have your choice. You can have 70 years of just-as-you-please living. No rules, no regulations. Do anything, go anywhere, get anything you can get. No inhibitions, no restrictions. But at the end of the 70 years—maybe less, maybe more—you will die.

Or, if you prefer, you can give Me what remains of those 70 years and live according to My rules, doing just as I tell you to do, and then I will give you an eternity in which to enjoy yourself. Which will you choose?

Most people are willing to accept the premise that it would be foolish to settle for one year when 70 years are available. But what about settling for 70 years when you could have eternity? Isn't that even *more* foolish?

And, taking the analogy one step further, for us who have chosen to forfeit our freedom to do as we please during the 70 years in exchange for eternity—isn't it *still more foolish* to forfeit also our prospect of the eternal simply because we wanted some petty way of our own, some habit, some impulse, some feeling, some selfish-satisfaction which we know God forbids—and which we would be better off without!

How is it that we fall for these ill-conceived choices? Who is to blame? None other than we ourselves. It is because we forget, because we lose our passion for eternity, because we lose the vision of what is ahead and think only about what we are gaining or losing during the present moment; it is because we forget that for every moment we give up doing as we please we are gaining endless years in eternity.

We cannot have everything. Who has said it? No less than God Himself. We cannot have everything, only a choice of things. "Choose you this day." Yes, choose: the present moment, or eternity.

**Conditional Promises**

The passion for eternity is no idle dream, no vain longing for what might be. It is the promise of God; but it is a conditional promise. The blessings of eternity are not for everyone; one does not enter into eternity with just any sort of condition of heart or any sort of character. And when we look honestly into our own hearts, we realize that as we are, God cannot accept us. He has no tolerance for the self-deceived, the proud, the petty, the fault-finding, the impatient, the arrogant, the self-seeking, the jealous, and a hundred other evils to which flesh is heir. He is looking for those who will become morally like Himself, who are



fit to bear His image. Fitness is the key.

It is impossible to separate a passion for eternal life from a passion for fitness, for purity of heart, because everything that God forbids is morally abhorrent to Him, and if we have in us any of the qualities that God abhors, we shall never have Him realize for us our passion for eternity.

Before we can stand in His presence and be a member of His Kingdom, we must be *fit* for it. The passion for eternity, then, becomes a passion for a *life fit for eternity*. It is an overpowering desire to attain to the moral likeness of Christ. It is an earnest, passionate striving to remake ourselves, in thought and deed, to His standard of righteousness, with a passion for His patience, His self-control, His faith, His long-suffering, His meekness, His love. To achieve this we must develop a transparent honesty in reading and evaluating our own hearts. Our yearning for eternity must be explicit and strong.

When the desire for life becomes the dominant passion of our lives, our effort toward righteousness will be likewise dominant. Questions like these will be constantly on our minds: Is this right? How will this or that appear on my record? What is the best thing for me to do with my time? What is my motive in doing this? How should I react to that comment, or that criticism? What should I let myself think about this? What is the right way for me to feel about that? Is this thought better spoken, or left unsaid? Is God pleased with my attitude toward this? . . . and so on and on.

If our passion to be fit for eternity is the overpowering desire of our lives, nothing that comes or goes in the course of a day will be able to obliterate it. How else shall we ever know the reality of the eternal in ourselves? How else can we be sure of receiving the approval of the great Judge before whom we shall have to stand, in whose power it will be to determine our eternal destiny?

Herein, then, is the challenge to us, to let our love for God and future life be a real thing, with an abhorrence of evil and an intense devotion to good.

Do we find our goal eluding us, that we are not reaching it as quickly as we should be? Perhaps it is because we have not enough of the passionate quality in us; we are too complacent, too self-satisfied, too unconcerned, too casual about our pursuit of goodness.

There was nothing casual about Christ's concern for goodness. And there was nothing casual about Paul's following of Christ. He was pursuing Him with a passion, and everyone who knew him knew it.

Oh, let us develop this same passion for eternity that will impel us to a life fit for eternity. Let us pursue it

with a passion that will feel no sympathy for the suffering of our own flesh-nature, that will give him no peace until he lies dead at our feet. Let there be such a passion within us that we will cry to the Lord from the depths of our heart:

*Stir me, O stir me, Lord!  
I care not how,  
But stir my heart in passion for Thyself.  
Stir me to live, to love, but most  
To give—  
Give till my smallest sin is sacrificed,  
Till Thy peace and holiness  
Pervade the deepest recess  
Of my heart.*

*Stir me, O stir me, Lord!  
Till all my being  
Is filled with deepest yearnings  
For Thy life;  
Till Thy compelling "must" drive me to share,  
Till Thy constraining love bring me in prayer  
O God, to Thee;  
Help me believe.*

*Stir me, O stir me, Lord!  
Touch Thou my heart with Thine own holy flame,  
That I  
In burning, deep desire  
May blaze anew with faith's great quenchless fire!  
Stir me to give myself and all I have  
To Thee  
In humble trust,  
Then Thou wilt give Thy greatest gift  
To me.*

*Stir me, O stir me, Lord!  
Stir Thou me now—  
For I can see  
Thy glorious triumph-day begin to break;  
The dawn already gilds the eastern sky!  
Awake! Awake my heart,  
Yes, stir—stir ev'ry nerve my heart within;  
Till it is free from ev'ry taint of sin;  
Stir Thou me now—  
The night is past,  
The King is on His way!*

*Father, we seek Thy help in developing a passion for eternity, a passion that will carry us through any storm or difficulty we may encounter, that will result in our developing a life fit for eternity.*

*Help us to realize that our serious problem is not our mortality but our unrighteousness, and if we will but remove the unrighteousness it will be Thy pleasure to lift us to immortality. In the name of our coming King we pray. Amen.*

# Every Day, Every Day

## The Cycle of Peace

"BE perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (II Cor. 13:11).

One phrase of the Lord's Prayer is, "Forgive us . . . as we forgive" (Matt. 6:12). We are asking the Lord to forgive us in the measure that

we forgive others. The Lord promises to be with us also as we are with Him, in the measure that we are one with Him and live in peace with others.

These parallels present both an overwhelming responsibility and an unparalleled privilege. The Lord shares

himself with us as we share with others; He gives himself to us as we give ourselves to those about us; He projects himself to us as we project ourselves into the lives of those in our sphere of influence. He relays His peace to us as we relay peace to those we contact.

## Peace: Absence of Friction

The peace of God brings power to heal misunderstandings. It helps us to go the second mile and to turn the other cheek.

God's peace does not mean inactivity or indifference. Instead it is related to an efficiency going at full speed, but with an absence of drag and friction.

The automobile cruising at 55 miles per hour, without vibration, strain, or noise, can give one a feeling of effortlessness. The car is totally engaged in complex activities, but its operation is peaceful and smooth.

However, smoothness disappears when something goes wrong. If a valve sticks, or a spark plug

fouls up, or a fuel pump stops working, or a bearing gets scored, the car becomes a struggling mass of machinery. The temperature shoots up, harsh noises develop, and forward motion stops.

There is a cruising speed on the highway of holiness. If every part of our personality is functioning the way it was designed by God, we can "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). There is an absence of friction caused by divided loyalties; we enjoy freedom from strife caused by mixed motives, and we are free from the struggles spawned by conflicting purposes.

Let us master the art of activity without conflict and efficiency without friction.

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# Time As Opportunity

SEE then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil," said Paul, the apostle of our Lord.

There is an element of mystery about time, and the more we think about it, the more mysterious it appears to be. Time has an elusive quality. How easily it slips away from us, and we hardly notice it until it is gone.

The elusiveness of time may impress us as we sit before an open fire. The stillness of the night is broken by the ticking of the clock on the mantel, and it sets loose a train of thought on the enigma of time. The tick we hear reminds us of the present but, even as the tick is recorded, it slips into the past. The action is irreversible; it is gone forever and can never be recalled. Seconds pass into minutes, minutes into hours, hours into days. One day slips into another and, as page after page is torn from our calendar, the months pass into years and the years into centuries. It is said, "Time washes everything into its gully. We see men and nations, kingdoms and empires, cultures and civilizations, all swallowed up inexorably by the stream of time."

## Various Perspectives

What does it all mean? It is a strange experience to consider how the same time may mean various things to different people. To a rapidly growing

boy on his way to school, there are many moments when he is impetuous and impatient. He can hardly wait until he is a big man, when he really will be able to do the things he dreams of doing now. He chafes under his limitations. He wants to be big. His burning desire is to grow up in a hurry. Time moves much too slowly for him. Many an older person, looking upon him, shakes his head and sighs: "Ah, if he only knew it, he is now having the best time of his life." But is he really?

To the young men or women who are ready to leave school and make their own way in the world, as they look to the road ahead, the time-stretch seems almost unlimited. There is time enough for everything, and then some. But observe these same people twenty or thirty years later, and we find they view time in an altogether different perspective. Now, as they have used up half, or more than half of an ordinary life span, the remaining time seems very short and it becomes exceedingly precious.

Yet not all appreciate the value of time. We hear older people speak listlessly of "marking time" or "putting in time." Others speak more forthrightly of "killing time," and they have high praise for anything that helps them "pass the time away."

## Chronos Versus Kairos

How then shall we think of time? It may be helpful if we keep in mind a

distinction made by the ancient Greeks. They had two words to designate time, *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* is time as measured by the clock or the calendar, whereas *kairos* is time as measured by opportunity.

An example of the use of *chronos* is the record of Christ's birth as given in Matt. 2:1: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king." Again, "The words of Amos, . . . two years before the earthquake" (Amos 1:1). The birth of Jesus is recorded in a specific period of history. Amos heard the word of God at a specific time before a definite earthquake. *Chronos* is what we are concerned with on New Year's or birthdays. On New Year's especially time seems to go round and round—it is circular. It comes out where it went in. This is the sort of time ancient pagans knew—and modern pagans: "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." It tells us to take the round of existence that we have and make the most of it. Happy New Year; then 365 days later another Happy New Year, with the same eating, drinking and making merry.

The second kind of time is *kairos*, which is a point of time which has a fixed content. The time, the *kairos* has arrived. D-Day is here. Jesus in preparing for the Last Supper, sends His disciples into the village with instructions for the bringing of a colt. The Master said, "My time [my

*kairos*] is at hand" (Matt. 26:18). In the first chapter of Acts, while answering the disciples' question about the restoration of the kingdom of Israel, Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons [the *chronos*], which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7). And Paul alerted the Roman Christians with the following words: "And that, knowing the time [*kairos*], that now it is high time to awake out of sleep" (Rom. 13:11).

The Greeks pictured *kairos* as a youth who is a swift runner. The back of his head is smoothly shaven whereas the hair in front is long. It symbolizes the truth that, if we are able to seize the time-charged opportunity, we must be prepared for it as it comes, and grasp it by the forelock. If we hesitate, the swiftly running youth passes us by and we cannot possibly seize him, as his hair is too short in back to lay hold of him. The time-charged opportunity is then no longer within our grasp. This observation points up the importance of redeeming the time.

*Chronos* also is pictured in human form. He, however, is portrayed as an old man, bowed down by the weight of years, and his face is incredibly sad. It symbolizes the mere passage of time. As no use has been made of time, nothing is left save a legacy of futile regret which is indicated by the tragic figure whose spirit has been broken by the passage of time. The faithless covenant-makers will be in this category when they stand before the Judgment seat of Christ with nothing to show for their life's work. In the words of the Prophet, their doleful lament will be: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jer. 8:20).

There is a term sometimes used by thoughtful persons, "the moment of truth." The idea projected is that of insight. For a long time a vital fact may have been sufficiently obvious

that we should have grasped it, yet due to mental blindness or inattention we have failed to do so. If we find our home burned down with insufficient insurance to cover the loss, or if the plaintiff in a highway accident, in which we are the defendant, gets an award for one hundred thousand dollars when the limit of our liability policy is only fifty thousand, that moment of truth could prove a serious jolt. Likewise it will be a sad moment for us if unfaithful servants, when the disapproval of the great Judge will drive home the truth that our time of opportunity, our *kairos*, has all been spent, with nothing to show for it, and that we have been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Jesus pictured this sad plight in the following graphic words: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:28). And this frightful experience can be the fate of any one of us. Inattention and inaction—plain drifting—is all that it takes to assure it.

If time is charged with opportunity, and not merely a succession of empty moments, it is shameful to waste it; and sinful to kill it. The Bible places the accent upon time as *kairos*, as a God-given opportunity to use, and not abuse. We are never justified in killing time, no matter how "evil" it may appear. We are to make the most of it, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

#### God Is Time-Conscious

Christ's birth was a decisive moment, the *kairos*, in which God arranged that another step should be taken toward the fulfillment of His plan for the salvation for the human family. Paul expresses it: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them

that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).

Through Christ, God carried His plan to reconcile the world to Himself one step nearer completion. Christ did what no other man had done. He showed the Perfect Example. He never transgressed His Father's command once that command was made known to Him. In this act of God time was redeemed. It was charged with opportunity, giving man spiritual ground for a dynamic faith, a vital hope and heart-warming love which could transform his existence. God has done His part and done it well, and it is for us to redeem the time and repay His kindness with our utmost in goodness.

In the brief span of 33 years, Christ's teaching and example affected the lives of people not only in His generation but of all subsequent generations. A nameless writer has described the place of Jesus Christ in history and His influence upon human living in words which are worthy of repetition:

"Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon the earth as has that One Solitary Life."

Jesus Christ is the admitted high point in history, for we mark all activities in reference to Him, and we date all events as coming before His birth or after. The B. C. and the A. D. on our calendars pay tribute to the centrality of Jesus Christ. Not only does He occupy the central place in history, but He is the Paragon, the standard of excellence, the source of spiritual life to every God-fearing man and woman in the world today.



Wherever His redemptive power is felt, life becomes *changed*. It is cleansed and purified by His redeeming Word, it is renewed and fortified for nobler living by following His footsteps. Through following His example life can be made over so completely that the New Testament likens it to a new birth. Faith in Jesus Christ opens the door to purposeful living. Whenever that takes place time is being redeemed.

One view of time is that of the ancient Persians and the modern evolutionists, who think of time as an upward sloping line. Things will finally work out, and will graduate into a state of heaven on earth—if we just have time enough. This would actually be salvation by historical process, or we might say, by evolution. But it is a view that has been discarded by serious thinkers today, especially in the light of a possible atomic holocaust; and the Bible refutes it. Men are becoming more wicked; with the spread of Communism nations are becoming less responsible for their actions; the masses of mankind are becoming more pleasure-loving; and in place of the church converting the world, the world has converted the church. Where then is there any prospect of heaven on earth as the result of man's efforts? All the factors point in the opposite direction.

When we turn to the Bible we discover that Biblical time can be described by a straight line. It starts magnificently with "In the beginning God . . ." and marches in a vast sweep to a "new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is said, "Primitive Christianity knows nothing of a timeless God." God is the One who is, was, and will be. For the followers of the Christ *kairos* has a significance that gives orderly understanding to time. Time is not meaningless. It is weighted with vital meaning—salvation. It has a definite and luminous goal—the Kingdom of God

upon earth. It brings about a glorious but concrete reality—new creation.

Christ as the mid-point in history involves all of the event factors in Christ's birth with its attendant wonders; His dedicated life with its central purpose, "Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God"; His profound teaching of righteousness as the only key to salvation, and His ultimate position as King of the whole earth.

Paul's words in Ephesians 5, as phrased in Moffatt's translation, seem to have a special significance for us: "Wake up, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, so Christ will shine upon you. Be strictly careful then about the life you lead; act like sensible men, not like thoughtless; make the very most of your time, for these are evil days." *Kairos* is a swift running youth, as he hurries past he can be grasped only by the forelock. If we attempt to grasp him after he has passed we shall have only our pains for our trouble. He cannot be caught that way. We are unable to lay hold of opportunity from the rear, the hair is too short to grasp. Though we may feel very mournful about it, we have, nevertheless, missed the opportunity, and are left only with futile regrets. Each moment not lived to the glory of God is one moment lost. We cannot retrieve it, we cannot draft it to serve us at some other time. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," and it may be later than we think.

In every home is the *kairos*, the opportunity, of strengthening the spiritual life of every member of the household through family devotions in the home. Faithful day-by-day alertness protects against inheriting a legacy of regret when we stand before the Judge. When people pray together they are strengthened not merely by the stimulation they receive from each other; they are fortified by the living Lord who said, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

When our own changed lives witness to the Christ-life within us, we become an influence for good that nothing else can equal.

Each moment not lived to the glory of God is a moment lost. Throughout every day of the year, Christians ought to order their lives by God's time, conscious that "yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." We should strive to make the daily record of our lives a holy record. With the standard of good and evil given us by Christ no human actions are proportionate. Either our works are right before God or they are not. There is no halfway ground. And there is no true greatness where simplicity, goodness, and truth are absent.

Time is of the essence, and we know not what a day may bring forth. What we do during the next twelve months may decide our fate for eternity. The power of habit is tremendous. At some point along life's way our iniquities shall have become so ingrained that, as the Ethiopian who cannot change his skin, or the leopard that cannot change his spots, so it will be too late for us to change. That point could well be reached during this very year. We have no assurance of life, only as we are sincerely trying to keep God's commandments, and the coming of our Lord, and our calling to account before His Judgment seat, could occur at any time, so let us redeem the time lest that Day overtake us with our work unfinished. MM

*Some year will be the last year,  
Some day will be the last day,  
Some hour will be the last hour,  
Of this allotted time!  
Christ, with His holy angels  
Will come in clouds of glory,  
And every eye shall see Him,  
O advent hour so nigh.*

*Be ye therefore ready!  
If it be at morning or in midnight gloom,  
For ye know not the day nor the hour,  
When the Son of Man shall come.*



So here hath been dawning  
 Another blue day:  
 Think, wilt thou let it  
 Slip useless away?

Out of Eternity  
 This new day was born;  
 Into Eternity  
 Tonight 'twill return.

Behold it aforetime  
 No eye ever did;  
 So soon it forever  
 From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning  
 Another new day:  
 Think, wilt thou let it  
 Slip useless away?

A smile costs nothing but gives much. It enriches those who receive it without making poorer those who give it. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it may last a lifetime.

*God expects our best. In Old Testament times, men were instructed to bring a lamb as an offering. Not just any lamb would do; no sickly, crippled animal was acceptable. God required the best.*

*We do not have to bring lambs as offerings today, but we are to give our best: our lives, our service, our talents all belong to God.*

*Integrity means dependability, honesty, uprightness, moral soundness, faithfulness, fearlessness, straightforwardness.*

*Integrity is the first step toward true greatness.*

*A man of integrity will stand firm for what is right. A wise man will have integrity because he knows that respect is more important than money. Though the price of integrity is often condemnation and unpopularity, a man of integrity will do what is right no matter what.*

## Highways for Jesus

*"Prepare ye the way of the Lord," is the call  
That comes to the Christian, to one and to all,  
True highways for Jesus; Prepare ye the way,  
For Jesus is looking for channels today.*

*He's looking at your life; He's looking at mine,  
He's longing to make them His highways divine.  
Yes, highways for Jesus; pure paths for our King,  
To purify hearts; to make joy bells to ring.*

*He wants us to level our mountains of pride,  
To humble our high thoughts o'er which He can't ride.  
To bring down our high looks, our selfishness, too,  
This is the work He will help us to do.*

*He wants our lives altered, the crooked made straight,  
Root out ev'ry evil before it's too late.  
Oh, clear the King's highway, be at it today,  
Make highways for Jesus! "Prepare ye the way!"*

THE TRUTHS of the Word of God are not meant merely for our entertainment or enlightenment. They are to be *applied*. We are to be "doers of the Word, and not hearers only."

REMEMBER, when you talk you only repeat what you already know, but if you listen you may learn something.

*HE who receives a benefit should never forget it; he who bestows should never remember it.*

*I'VE put a seal upon my lips  
To help me guard with care  
The things I say and swift repeat;  
O tongue of mine, beware!*

THE MAN who wastes today lamenting yesterday will waste tomorrow lamenting today.

*Do you have a little worry  
That bosses you around?  
And will not let you sleep at night,  
At least not very sound?  
Well, now's the time to pull it up;  
Don't let it go to seed,  
For that nagging little worry  
Is just an ugly weed.*

## POINTS for the MONTH

**Week 1:** Do not speak unless you are sure you can improve on the silence.

**Week 2:** O God, impress me with the value of time, and to give regulation to all my thoughts and movements.

**Week 3:** Opportunity knocks, but it has never been known to turn the knob and walk in.

**Week 4:** No sin is small. Any size grain of sand in a watch is too big.

**Week 5:** Before we can speak for God, we must learn to listen.



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# Walking Circumspectly

**I**N Ephesians 5:15-16 the Apostle tells us: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

The word "circumspectly" in this text is translated from a Greek word *akribos* which means "exactly, circumspectly, diligently, perfectly." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon gives this definition: "to live carefully, circumspectly, deviating in no respect from the law of duty." This type of living requires light and guidance. Perhaps this is why the words of the apostles, prophets, and our Lord are so often compared to a "lamp," a "light," a "guide."

Blindness, when total, is synonymous with darkness. A totally blind person has no perception of light whatsoever and cannot tell light from darkness. To walk circumspectly, we must not be blind. We must walk with sufficient light so that we will not stumble. Paul is warning us that we must not allow our spiritual vision to be hindered. It is indeed our duty to read and obey all the commands of God. In doing so, our daily walk will be straightforward, and we will not grope in darkness.

The word "circumspect" is a Latin word which literally means "to look around." It is "*circum*" (around) plus "*specere*" (to look.) The dictionary gives its meaning as "carefully attentive to all circumstances that may relate to an action, judgment, conduct, etc; cautious; careful." It is an impossibility to walk in darkness and walk circumspectly at the same time.

When every fiber of our being is attuned to the heavenly, our every thought will be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; our every word will be edifying; our every action will be to the glory of God. Does this sound like one who is groping and fumbling his way over a path strewn with all manner of evil? No! The life that is pleasing to God is one that is upright, filled with light.

So, we are to walk with all caution, carefully watching our conduct every minute of the Day of Salvation. Our physical bodies need rest and relaxation, but spiritually we can never relax.

The next phrase of Ephesians 5:15: "not as fools but as wise," is as striking a contrast as light and dark. A fool "despises wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). The "way of a fool is right in his own eyes" (Prov. 12:15). It is an "abomination to fools to depart from evil" (Prov. 13:19). But the wise man will hear reproof (Prov. 17:10); he will keep the law (Prov. 28:7); he will "lay up knowledge" (Prov. 10:14); he will fear the Lord and depart from evil (Prov. 14:16).

David was wise enough to accept reproof. He could accept it because he loved to walk in the light. When he sinned before God and was reproved by Nathan, he repented immediately.

There is little contrast between many so-called Christians today and the world. I read recently that we have become a people who can no longer blush. Gross sins are yawned at today that would have caused us to recoil in disgust just a few short years ago. Many feel no shame of evil—even when caught in the act.

Yet, we are mortal in every way. As the Psalmist wrote, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. . . . So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Ps. 90:10, 12).

Moses realized the brevity of life. He knew that life at best was short and full of troubles. Anyone can count the number of man's allotted days, but those who are enlightened by the law of God realize much more. They realize the short length of time they have in which to do the work before them. As James says, this life is but a "vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

Cognizant of the fact that our days are swiftly passing, we must redeem every precious moment. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon gives this meaning of the word "redeeming" as used in Eph. 5:16, "to buy up for one's self, for one's use . . . the meaning seems to be to make a wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good, so that zeal and well-doing are as it were the



purchase-money by which we make the time our own." Only by taking advantage of every opportunity that comes our way can we be sure of sufficient time in which to work out our salvation. "For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).

We must be wise, exercising unto godliness if we expect to accomplish the work. There is so much that would lead us astray. Let us not be so smug as to think we could not be caught in a snare of evil, for though the grossest of sins may not tempt us, the "small" subtle sins of our natures can so very easily entrap us.

Sin is sin; and small or large, it will keep us from inheriting that most cherished possession—eternal life. God is just. He will not—indeed He cannot—overlook one sin.

We must be up and working. Time is running out. Let us walk day by day as though we really believe what we read and preach. MM

## Habits—Servant or Master

OUR habits are either the best of servants or the worst of masters. Habits are either good or bad. They move us along pathways of good or evil. They shape our personality, mold our character, and in the end control our destiny.

The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt until they are too strong to be broken. The alcoholic did not intend to become a drunkard when he took his first drink; the prisoner did not intend to become a thief when he first stole an apple as a boy and "got away" with it. But such were not willing to make the necessary sacrifice to free themselves from a bad habit.

Good habits like honesty, truthfulness, perseverance, and punctuality, formed early in life determine our character and measure our success in life. MM



## The Song of Your Life

*YOU have written a song for the world to sing and chosen each note with care;  
and ever so perfect its harmonies ring in melody everywhere.*

*You have written a poem for others to read, and wisely selected each word;  
and many the care-laden hearts in need that are cheered when that poem is heard.*

*The song that you wrote for the world to sing, its own inspiration imparts,  
and the perfect poem continues to bring its courage to wearying hearts.*

*But what of the song of your life, my friend, the song that you live each day?  
Are its notes as well chosen as those that you penned, and as perfect in every way?*

*You watched the rhyme in each written line you wanted the world to see;  
but are you as careful what the design, the style of your life's poem shall be?*

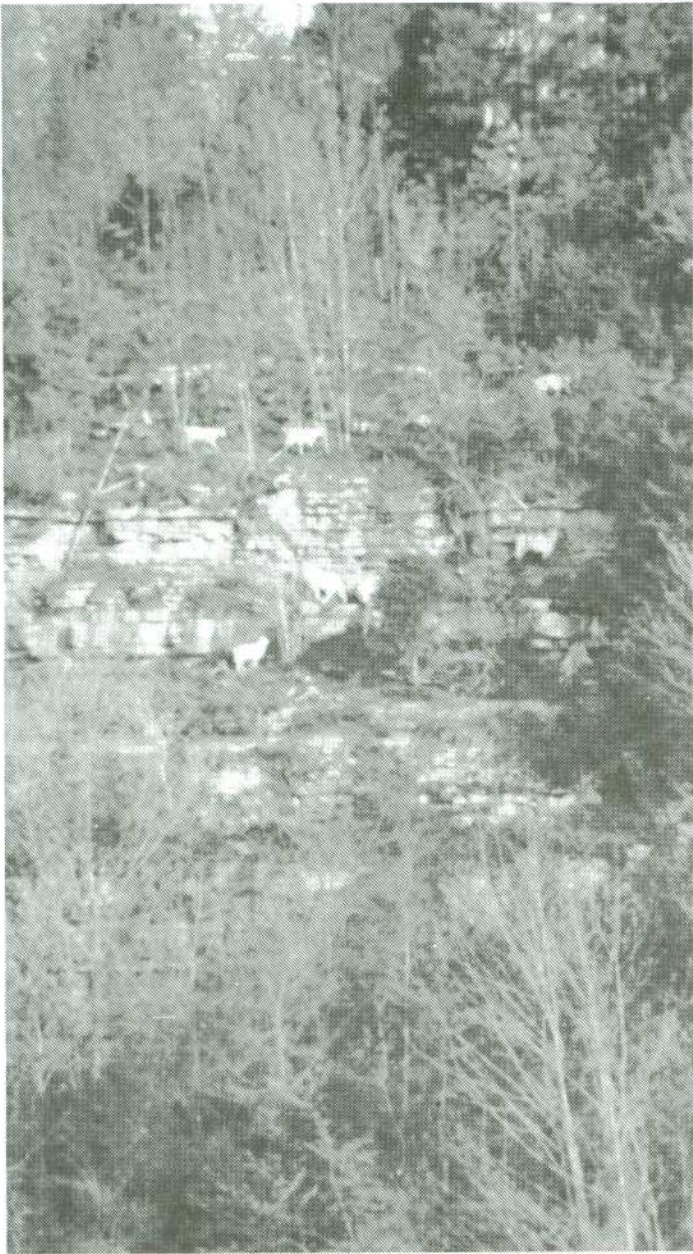
*The song of your life is a work of art not written in letters that dim, but its theme is recorded in somebody's heart like the lines of a lovely hymn.*

*And someone plays back the record you made, hears over again each word,  
and ponders each passing chord that you played in the song of life that he heard.*

*Make the chords in your life as perfect, my friend, as those you so carefully wrote;  
for somebody's heart hears the song never penned, and listens intent to each note.*

—Selected.





## Consideration

**I**F TWO wild mountain goats meet each other in a narrow path on a high precipice above a body of water, what do they do? They cannot turn back, and they cannot pass each other; there is not an inch of spare room. If they butt at each other, both would fall into the water below and be drowned.

What then, will they do, do you suppose? What would you do? Well, some inborn instinct has taught the one goat to lie down and let the other pass over him, and then they both get to the end of the day safe and sound.

Paul was always meeting goats on the narrow ledges of rock with the sea below. So are you, and so am I. God ordains our meeting one another in this narrow way, with a pit of destruction right below.

Is our spirit of cooperation such that you and I will lie down, so to speak, and let another go over us? The Scriptures teach, again and again that the prize, the glory, the honor, the dominion and the life eternal will be given only to the humble, the meek, the lowly.

***“F**INALLY, let all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, loving as brothers, deeply compassionate, humbleminded, returning no evil for evil. . . . Quite to the contrary you will be blessing, because you are called for this, so as to inherit a blessing. For, He who wants to enjoy life and to see happy days must silence his tongue from evil and his lips from uttering deceit. He must turn away from vice and do right; he must search for peace and keep after it.”*

*—I Peter 3:8-10, Berkeley*

# Tired of Being Patient?

**W**HAT a possession to acquire! Millions of dollars cannot fill the heart with such satisfaction as can be gained by developing this one virtue. Night may find us tired, but if we can look back over the day and see that we have taken all patiently—what a comfort! I believe it is safe to say that we are not as tired as we would have been had we yielded to impatience. An impatient spirit places a double strain on the physical system.

It has been said that God never asks us to do anything that does not make us better for this life while preparing for a future life. Effort enlivened by enthusiasm will bring patience to perfection. Many times we have put forth the effort and so been patient. But our effort is too apt to be intermittent instead of constant.

We might be patient time after time, but here comes an exceptionally trying circumstance. We lose our grip on ourselves, and patience is gone. It has yet to have its *perfect work* in us. We may attempt to justify ourselves with the excuse that such a situation was unusually trying. But what of it? The fact remains that our patience was not perfect; we were defeated where we should have triumphed. If our patience were never tried, how could we ever know the extent of our achievement?

The command given us in the book of James is not simply to have patience, but to "Let patience have her *perfect work*" (1:4). The requirement is patience to perfection. Nothing short of this will be acceptable to God.

**"IN everything give thanks," I read,  
And this I know is right;  
The sacrifice of praise to God  
Is ever His delight.**

## The Quest for Excellence

(Continued from page 2)

wherever we are and whomever we are with? Is our first thought always to be and do the very *best* of which we are capable?

The temptation to compromise is always with us, to put off the serious confronting of ourselves as we know—and God knows—we are.

How often at the end of the day we look back upon a record of which we must humbly say, "this is not my best."

But the standard is fixed, and we must reach it. God will have excellence. His very nature decrees it—His name is "excellent" (Psalm 8:1); His work is "honourable 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 every right to ask our best? The Old Testament sacrifices were to be always and only the best the worshiper could give. Offerings were to be the finest of the flock, without defect (Lev. 1:10), the finest grain, the first fruits, the best sheep—always the best belonged to God.

And still today He wants the best. He wants *our* best—in return for which He will give us *His* best.

Are we ready for this? Have we the steadiness to continue this quest through all the mundane tasks of every day? Do we keep ourselves wholly and thoroughly Christian in all our associations with others? Do we excel in patience, humility, kindness, and long-suffering in the hundred details of every day?

Are we continuing our quest for excellence with an attitude that is thoroughly Christlike as we face the pressures of the home, the office, the shop, or the job?

It is not easy, but it must be done. Our quest for excellence must be the consuming desire of our hearts. In praying, in working, in watching, we must excel.

We cannot afford to risk a single unguarded hour. "For at such a time as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

MM

***GREAT GOD, whose voice I hear in the winds,  
And whose breath gives life to all the world, hear me!  
I am small and weak; I need Your strength and wisdom.***

***Let me walk in Your light, and make my eyes ever behold the beauty of  
Your world.***

***May my hands respect the things You have made and may my ears be  
sharp to hear Your voice.***

***May I be wise to understand Your teachings, to learn what You would  
teach me.***

***Give me strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to be greater  
than myself.***

***May I be always ready to come to You with clean hands and eyes that  
look straight before me so that when life fades as the sunset, I may  
face You without shame. Amen.***

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# How Is Eve the Mother of All Living?

*"A small problem we have at this time is verse 20 of Genesis 3, 'And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.' By this we understand the man called the woman (the bride, or the church) Eve, because she was the mother of all living. We require your correction in this matter, as it comes up in our discussions concerning life prior to Adam and Eve, etc."* —F.H.

The Bible contains two basic types of instructive material which we might call natural and revealed. The "natural" type includes passages that are simple, observable fact, i.e., knowledge which we can acquire through the use of our five senses. The meaning of such statements is obvious and can be understood literally. For example, "Joseph lived an hundred and ten years" (Gen. 50:22). Or, "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. 7:28).

The "revealed" portions of Scripture contain knowledge for which we are directly dependent upon some form of divine revelation. They disclose knowledge which can originate only with God or those instructed or empowered by Him. Included in this group are:

1) passages which are highly symbolic and reveal prophetic truths (such as are found in the book of Revelation)

2) portions of the "wisdom" literature of the Bible which teach spiritual truth by use of poetry or literary pictures (i.e., passages with more

than literal meaning, such as may be found in the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or Songs of Solomon)

3) passages containing knowledge which cannot be known except by divine foresight and foreknowledge (short- or long-term prophecies)

4) passages written under the supervision of the Holy Spirit and containing knowledge pertinent to our salvation (i.e., passages in the Epistles of Paul, Peter, or John which outline the character God requires)

5) portions of the Bible which employ illustrations from the natural world to emphasize/illustrate points of spiritual insight and teaching (including parables, allegories, analogies, metaphors, similes, types)

While Adam and Eve were literally two human persons, we believe that the account in Genesis, chapters 2 and 3, belongs to a part of Scripture which is most meaningful when approached as an allegory. (See the *Megiddo Message*, November, 1984, "Literal vs. Spiritual.") Adam and Eve, though real persons, were not the first persons to live upon the earth but rather the first to be called to serve God during the first stage, or first six thou-

sand years of His plan for the earth. But as they fit into the picture in Genesis 2 and 3, we find the narrative far more instructive if we see them as representative persons, figures of those who serve God, both faithful and unfaithful.

The portion of the Genesis account pertaining to Adam and Eve begins with the picture of the garden of Eden, recorded in Genesis 2. The images are familiar. "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed . . . to dress it and to keep it."

Notice that immediately the man (Adam) was given responsibility, something to do.

As a generous husbandman, God also provided for the sustenance of His laborer. "Out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." (The identity of these trees tells us that the account is definitely *not literal*—whoever saw a literal "tree of life" or "tree of knowledge"?)

In this Garden of Eden was law, unequivocally stated: "Of every tree



of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:8-17).

We sense immediately that here is no ordinary garden. Here is a picture of mutual obligation and cooperation. God and man are working together toward a specific goal. The goal is not stated in Genesis 2 but is described elsewhere in the Bible as those individuals who will be kings and priests with Christ in the eternal Kingdom which He will set up. The time period for this selecting process is six days or six thousand years of prophetic time. The criteria for selection is obedience.

The narrative is an allegory, or a series of metaphors which combine to illustrate a divine truth. Not all of the details in the narrative necessarily pertain to the truth being presented, but the overall point is conclusive.

"The man" placed in this garden is not an individual but a representative person. He represents all those whom God calls to work in His garden, all to whom He entrusts His knowledge and His law. Some of those called obey, some disobey.

The garden represents the "field of the Lord," the time and space allotted by God in which His servants work.

In chapter 3, two representative persons are found in the garden, still illustrating those who covenant to serve God during the first six days or six thousand years of the plan. The picture is true to reality: sometimes these servants are true and obedient; sometimes they are false and disobedient.

In much of chapter 3, they (both Adam and Eve) are false and disobedient. They look upon the forbidden fruit, desire it, and then partake of it in direct disobedience to

the command of the Lord. To make matters worse—and to be very human—they attempt to conceal themselves from the presence of the Lord, when He comes to call them to account at the end of the "day." To make matters still worse—and to be still more human—they refuse to accept the responsibility for their own misconduct, choosing rather to blame another.

But God is not deceived, and in keeping with the fairness of His plan to reward "every man according as his works shall be," both Adam and Eve receive sentences of condemnation.

Although the overall picture in the allegory is of those who prove unfaithful, it does not intend to say that *all* who serve God disobey and are subject to the curse. Some of those represented by Adam and Eve prove true and faithful; hence some parts of the allegory narrate details that apply to a "faithful Adam" and a "faithful Eve"—who, instead of being punished, will be richly rewarded.

One of these details is the portion in question, in verse 20 of chapter 3. Immediately following the account of the curse upon Adam and Eve for their transgression, the author turns his attention to the faithful side, to the "Eve" who represents the faithful servants of God during the six thousand year period, who is "the mother of all living."

How can the faithful of the six thousand years, those who become kings and priests with Christ and are rewarded with immortality when Christ comes, be said to be "the mother of all living"?

In other passages, the Bible represents the true knowledge of God as a woman having "children." Jesus spoke of "wisdom" as being a mother who is "justified of all her children" (Luke 7:35). James used the same simile, placing himself and his fel-

lowbelievers in the category of the children born of the union of God and His truth. These are his words: "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth" (James 1:18). The apostle Paul speaks of "Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26). The faithful servants of God, represented by the faithful "Eve" in the allegory of Genesis, who become fully obedient to this "wisdom" or "woman," are in some cases said to have certain properties or likeness of that woman, i.e., the "wisdom," the "truth" of God—in some instances they are even said to *be* that "woman," so completely do they become *like* that wisdom by living according to it. In this sense, the children of "wisdom" or the children begotten by the truth of God, i.e., true believers, may be said to be all children of Eve, or children of divine truth. And these children are all those who truly "live" in the fullest sense of the word. Only they will live eternally.

There is yet another sense in which the faithful Eve may be called the "mother of all living." Those who prove faithful during the six thousand year period will be chosen to reign with Christ, and will share with Him the rulership of the earth during the next period in the plan of God, the Millennium (Rev. 5:9-10; 14:1). Those who occupy this position will in a direct sense be the parents of the new generation. They will be responsible for the rulership, guidance, instruction, education, and welfare of the great populace of the Kingdom which will be developed during that time. These will form the "great multitude which no man could number," seen by the Revelator (7:9). The members of this new nation, when fully developed and rewarded with

*(Continued on page 23)*

## Right to Live

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"

—Psalm 90:12

"IN THE MIDST of life we are in death," run the stately words of the Book of Common Prayer; and human experience gives sad confirmation. Death is life's greatest, in fact its *only* certainty. As natural as life and as common, death borders upon our birth, and our cradle stands in the grave. The natural man is born only with the right to die. As the living pass through a perilous world, Death walks by their side. In the increased perils of our high-speed, mechanized age, he is but a split second from us.

The poet Dryden explains the universal fear of this stark reality in these words:

*Death itself is nothing, but we fear  
To be we know not what, we know not where.*

Fear of the unknown has led to the invention of various "escape" theories, based upon the pagan conception of the immortality of the soul. "There is no death; what seems so is transition," may be exquisite poetry, but at best it is no more than wishful thinking.

To those who know and understand the revealed ways of God, there is no mystery or uncertainty surrounding the death state. We know *what* and we know *where*. "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything." "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep" (Eccl. 9:5; Ps. 146:4; I Thess. 4:13). The knowledge that death is but a dreamless sleep takes away the fear of eternal punishment and pain. On the other hand, to the normal mind this knowledge makes death a most unattractive and uninteresting state, a thing to be escaped if at all possible.

It is fortunate for man that his interest in life is

stronger than his awareness of mortality. Constant morbid meditation upon his frailty, the shortness of his days and his personal insignificance would inhibit all action, all progress, all joy in living. Yet the man who refuses to consider it at all, who lives for this life only with no thought of the future, does not really love life. At any instant one of Death's thousand doors may open before him, and his ambitions and achievements, the hopes and fears of all the years, add up to exactly nothing.

Somewhere between these extremes of morbidity and materialism there must be a desirable mean, something more substantial than a human philosophy of life, be it ever so satisfying for the moment. Naturally, we should expect to find the truths concerning life and death not in human experience but in the Word of Him who is the Creator of life, who holds the keys of death and the grave.

The first part of the immortal psalm from which our text is taken is as profound a meditation on the frailty of man as can be found in all literature. Tradition ascribes this psalm to "Moses, the man of God." The identity of the human instrument is immaterial; the sublime words are from God, and as such they demand our attention, respect and belief.

"For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

"So teach us to number our days . . ."

It might be argued that our own experience teaches us as much. "Threescore years and ten." Well, what about it? We knew that already. It is our life span, more or less, and what good can come of numbering

our days, of troubling ourselves with dark thoughts of mortality, when there is nothing we can do about it?

Or is there?

Yes, on second thought, or further reading, we know there *is* something we can do about it. The challenge of Death can be met. There is a way out. It is not an easy way, or a popular way, or an obvious way. It is not the way which worldly philosophers have invented through the ages. It is only for those who truly love life, who love it so much and desire so much of it that they are willing to dedicate every remaining moment of their precious threescore and ten years to its attainment. For this short life is not all; it is but a probation, a proving ground, to develop a class of men and women worthy of a more abundant life. And the first step toward that life is the same as the first step toward any desirable goal—wisdom.

"Wisdom is the principal thing." It is the difference between angels and mortal men. It is the difference between the Creator and His creatures. Herbert Spencer once laid down the premise that the only thing which separated man from eternal existence was lack of knowledge. He was right. That knowledge rests with the Eternal and with those to whom He imparts it. Mankind at large could not be trusted with it. That is the ultimate wisdom, the tree of life, which we are seeking; but it can wait. The wisdom which concerns us now is that contained in the familiar question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Wisdom pursued for its own sake is far better than pleasure sought for the same purpose; but, even so, it is not very satisfying when we get to the end of the way where "wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others." Solomon is the classical example of this truth. The first two chapters of Ecclesiastes, so obviously written from the depths of a bitter personal experience, are the autobiography of a man who had tried it all, had pursued both courses, and found them alike hollow and unsatisfying. Wisdom, he learned, "excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness," yet it, too, was vanity—for him. Why? Because he failed to see or remember that wisdom is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. Wisdom applied to everyday life and its problems, is what will enable men and women to meet the arrogant challenge of the Last Enemy.

"My sheep hear my voice," said Jesus, "and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John 10:27-28). They have used this Divine wisdom to transform their lives, to become new creatures; and they have His promise, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast

out . . . and I will raise him up at the last day." At this point, having fully employed the revealed wisdom, their power is gone. The next step is up to Him. Then it is that the higher wisdom will be applied to unlock the tomb. "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death" (Hosea 13:14).

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body" (II Cor. 5:10). Then, if one of His sheep, we shall be given access to the ultimate wisdom, the goal which has inspired us to apply our hearts to the lesser, the knowledge of how to change our vile, mortal bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

To this end we live, to attain that right to live eternally. MM

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## How Is Eve the Mother of All Living?

*(Continued from page 21)*

immortality, will fill the earth with the glory of God.

At this very special time, those select persons represented in Genesis by the faithful "Eve" will be in a very special sense the "mother" of "all living"—the great multitude of "children," the new generation, the "nation born at once." In fact, all who live at that time will belong either to faithful Eve or to the great populace who will comprise her "children," who will then be in a state of growth and development, on the way to full maturity.

The new generation will no doubt receive much guidance and direction from the then-glorified saints—that is why Christ will need associate "kings" (governors) and "priests" (teachers, instructors). Those who prove faithful among the new generation will owe their life and their knowledge to the faithful "Eve" who instructed them. MM

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Do you ever see the wicked prosper, sometimes even at the expense of the righteous, and wonder why the Lord doesn't *do* something about it? Why doesn't He reward those who fear Him, and judge those who disregard Him?

Be patient; He will. Payday isn't every Friday, but it will come. He *will* settle His accounts in due time.

● **Did Jesus Have to Die  
to Uphold Adamic Condemnation?**

*"I would like your opinion on Romans 6:9-11. It is used by the Christadelphians to uphold the idea that Jesus had to die for himself to uphold the law of Adamic condemnation and thereby display God as a righteous God for decreeing that all men, including His son, had to taste of death."*

Before turning to the passage you question, we would like to inquire as to the foundation or source of the idea to be "upheld." Where does the Bible say that Jesus had to "die for himself to uphold the law of Adamic condemnation," or that "all men, including His Son, had to taste of death" because of a condemnation upon them resulting from Adam's sin?

Then we come to the text in question: Romans 6:9-10. The passage reads: "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

If we understand correctly, the Christadelphians claim that death had dominion over Jesus while he was alive, and the only way he could cleanse himself of it was by a temporary death, to satisfy the law of Adamic condemnation. They say that if the death of Jesus had not been inflicted upon him, and he had lived out a righteous life, God would still have let Him die of old-age to fulfill the requirements of Adamic condemnation before resurrecting Him and giving him a chance.

According to this position, nothing short of physical death can free us from Adamic condemnation. We bear condemnation as long as we live, or until we die.

An interesting philosophy, but where is the Scripture to support it?

We know the premise is not true; nowhere does the Bible teach that all mankind must suffer physical death because Adam transgressed. There are two serious problems with this position:

1) It assumes that the human race was immortal before Adam sinned

2) It assumes that the results of one's guilt or goodness are hereditary.

Both statements are unbiblical. There is no indication in Genesis 1, 2, or 3 that Adam, when first created, was immortal by nature. Simply because the law decreed that he should die if he disobeyed does not suggest that he was immortal. Breaking the sabbath under Moses' law was punishable by death—"he shall die," was the decree—but this did not indicate that those who obeyed the law were immortal.

(Were Adam to have lost immortality by eating of the forbidden fruit, immortality would seem not to be a very secure possession, if it could be so easily and quickly lost!)

Nor are the results of any one's guilt or goodness inherited. "Every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16) is the age-old principle. And Ezekiel 18 makes crystal clear that the individual who sins is condemned, the individual who does right is commended. The son will not suffer for the sins of the father, nor can the father benefit by the righteousness of the son.

What then is Romans 6:9-10 saying?

Let us study the passage beginning with verse 6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

We must realize first that the Bible speaks of more than one type of death. Besides physical death, there is a death which is called "death in sin" (Eph. 2:1)—the association with the term "death" is most appropriate because one who is dead in sin has no conscience for sin, no sensitivity, no awareness; it is as though he were dead in its presence.

Then there is another death which is also appropriately called death, because it involves pain and suffering. It is the death of our lower nature, called "death to sin," as in Romans 6:11, "Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." It is a death which results from crucifying "the flesh, with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

This death to sin is the death Paul is referring to in Romans 6:6 and 7. Our "old man" or lower nature being "crucified" has no reference to a physical death.



Likewise, destroying "the body of sin" has no reference to physical death. But becoming "dead" to all sinful tendencies, i.e., uninfluenced by them, unmoved by them, unresponsive to them, does have the effect of destroying the "body of sin," the sinful nature, with the result that we recognize no more allegiance to sin—"henceforth we should not serve sin." Said another way, becoming dead to sin frees us from sin's dominion.

Paul seems to link this "death to sin" to the physical death of Christ because Christ in submitting to physical death completed His own death to sin. Christ was subject to physical death just as we are, not because of Adam's condemnation but because He was made mortal, like His brethren (Heb. 2:17-18). Paul says also that this is a death of Christ in which *we must share*—"Now if we be dead *with Christ*." The result of this special death is life: "If we be dead with Christ, . . . we shall also live with him."

The Apostle then tells what liberated Christ from physical death: He was raised. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." Christ, having suffered death and been raised, is no longer subject to its terrors—because He was taken to heaven and glorified, not because the condemnation demanded by Adam's sin had been satisfied. Once His death to sin and sinful tendencies was complete, physical death could have no more lasting power over Him because He was then morally eligible for the crown of life.

The next verse (10) points up the far-reaching significance of Christ's death to sin: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth he liveth unto God." This same death is required of all believers, as the next verse says: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (v. 11).

Must all men suffer natural death before receiving immortality? The answer is no. Jesus said to Martha, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." And Paul in I Cor. 15:51, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

Here is a comforting promise to those living just before the second coming of Christ.

#### ● Enoch and Elijah Must Die?

*"They say that if the death of Jesus had not been inflicted upon him (Jesus), God would still have let him die of old-age to fulfill the requirements of Adamic condemnation before resurrecting him and giving him eternal life. It would not have been good enough for Him (Christ) to have been translated as*

*Enoch was or to have been taken up as Elijah was, before their deaths."*

According to those who believe in universal condemnation of death for Adam's sin, Enoch and Elijah must also die. This, however, does not agree with the facts as stated in Scripture. Hebrews 11:5 reads, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death." As phrased in the New English Bible, this text reads, "By faith Enoch was carried away to another life without passing through death." This text would effectively counter the argument that Enoch died.

Hebrews 9:27 is often cited to prove that all must die physical death: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so was Christ once offered to bear the sins of many."

There is one problem, however, in taking these words literally: If *all men* must die, then *all men* must be judged, and the Bible clearly tells of those who will *not* be judged. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law" (Rom. 2:12). Again, "they [the heathen] shall sleep a perpetual sleep and shall not wake, saith the King whose name is the Lord of hosts" (Jer. 51:57).

Not all men are accountable to God; again, not all men die.

If we remove Hebrews 9:27 from the realm of natural death and think instead, in the context of the chapter, of the death to sin which has been appointed to all who covenant to serve God, we have a statement which is in harmony with Bible teaching: those who establish a covenant relationship with God must each die to sin, and "after this the judgment" — to determine the completeness of that death, as a condition for eligibility for eternal reward.

The thought of Christ's role follows on in logical sequence: Just as every believer must die to sin, "so was Christ once offered to bear the sins of many"—His is a special ministry in our behalf, to obtain forgiveness for us, because He is going to return as our Judge and King. Even now He is working in behalf of the believers, those who are dying to sin, as their mediator, their intercessor.

According to the Lexicon, the word translated "bear" can mean also "to bring, to lead into the presence of, as to a Judge." This definition seems especially appropriate to Christ, who has indeed gone into the presence of God, as to a Judge, to intercede for us, to obtain forgiveness for our sins. And "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

MM

## Set Free

I have been studying the Bible subjects in your booklets and have a better knowledge of what the Scriptures tell me about the man Christ, how He was not God, but man.

I was taught early in my Christian life that Christ was really God. But I have always had a problem with accepting this doctrine. Your Bible studies set free the doctrine with truth. I believe He is God's Son, my Redeemer and Judge, but not God.

Oklahoma

R. S.

## Everyday Thanksgiving

We are blessed and God has promised protection. By whatever means He accomplishes this wonderful blessing, we are very thankful.

I read an article recently that says, "Do you know that among our fellowmen God is trying us out? He is giving us the opportunity to walk with one another and to learn, if we will, how to live. Our degree of true Christianity can be marked and measured by how we treat our fellowmen. This is the Golden Rule."

So we give thanks for our manifold blessings, for life, health, food, raiment and shelter. And as we praise God for His Truth and His protection and promises, let us remember that one of the finest ways to show our thankfulness is to do good to His people, our brethren. Let us remember Jesus' words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

This Thanksgiving is to be celebrated every day of the year that we go forth to live for God and Truth; that we pay our vows; to be more gentle, kind and true now in the presence of all His people.

Iowa

W. P.

## Appreciative

How thankful I am for the true Word of God and its meaning. God has not left us in darkness but would have all come to the light with the promise: He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

I am very thankful and appreciative for all the Megiddo tapes, Bible lessons and letters. It gives one much to think about and meditate on his ways.

Georgia

S. J.

## God Will Strengthen

We can understand Peter's joy in declaring, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. . . . Wherein ye do greatly rejoice" (I Pet. 1:3-6).

Our hope projects our minds forward to the grand time of blessedness, when the earth will be filled with a righteous people, and praise and thanksgiving shall rise to God from the four corners of the earth. Our hope takes our vision ever forward, through all the trials and problems of life, striving to be purified even as He, Christ, is pure.

Like David of old, let us declare our faithfulness and trust in the God of Israel, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my high tower." If we make this great trust ours, if we call upon the name of the Lord, we know God will never leave us nor forsake us. He has promised and He will always help and guide us through the darkest trials. We must remember Jesus' words spoken to His disciples near unto His darkest hour: "Be of good cheer. Let not your hearts be troubled." We can make the victory ours, even as Jesus did, by obeying every commandment of God.

God will help and strengthen us for the road ahead. We must watch that we are close to Him in the Path of Life.

Australia

A. B.

## Happy

A happy person is a joy to have around for he is not thinking of himself but of others. When we keep our lives in tune with God we will be a happy person. Prov. 16:20 tells us that "he that trusteth in the Lord happy is he," and I Peter 4:14 tells us that, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you, on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

Brother Paul's faith and his stirring words of determination to press on to the prize that awaited him, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" should encourage and give us determination to do likewise.

Every day God gives us is sweeter than the day before. As we see the end of all things coming to a climax before our very eyes we know it won't be long until God will set up His righteous Kingdom on earth with Jesus our King and Lord of all at its head.

Ohio

M. W.

## Learn from the Experiences of Others

Sometimes we have to fail a course before we learn it. But, if wise enough we can learn from the experiences of others and put their experiences to good use.

I was reading about Stephen and how they stoned him to death, and with his last breath he was begging God to forgive them. How much he suffered and how forgiving he was—even of his enemy. Such an example to follow, and SUCH faith! I wish I were as strong. Maybe, someday, with God willing and with my trying, if only time permits.

Maine

R. D.

## The Upsetting Sin

*How upsettable are you? Have you ever felt the need to wear a label,  
"Handle with care"?*

**I**N HEBREWS 12:1, we find these resolute words, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." Another translation reads, "Let us fling aside every encumbrance, and the sin that so readily entangles our feet." Still another, "Let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely." And another, "Put away every encumbrance, and the sin entangling us."

But whatever the exact words, the underlying problem is the same: it is "the sin that doth so easily beset us." What attracts our attention especially in this statement is the word "easily"—yes, even "*so easily*." We are *so easily* beset, *so easily*.

The sign often printed on the carton of certain articles being shipped reads: "Handle with care." Why? Because the contents of the carton might be easily damaged with rough handling, *so easily*. We have all seen people who could use such a label, printed in the front and back: "Handle with care." Perhaps we have at times felt the need of it ourselves. Yes, we, too, are so easily beset, so easily.

The import of such a sign in connection with aspiring Christians would be "Handle with care, or you will insult them." "Handle with care, . . . or you will upset them." Handle with care, . . . or . . . they'll be peeved, or quit, or won't speak to someone, or be out of sorts for days.

These "handle-with-care" Christians have an impediment which is a handicap to Christian living. The handicap is variously described in the Bible as "the old man," the "root of bitterness," being "yet carnal," "the sin which doth so easily beset us."

Little Mary heard the preacher talk about "besetting" sins and was quite impressed. However, being somewhat confused, she thought he referred to these vices as "upsetting" sins. A few days later she was visiting her aunt whose husband was very wayward and far from

the Lord. "Aunt Lucy," said Mary, "I've been praying for Uncle Joe a lot these days. I've asked the Lord to help him get over his 'upsetting' sins."

"You mean 'besetting' sins, don't you, dear?" her aunt replied.

"No," said her niece, "I mean 'upsetting.' It's upsetting him, and you, and everyone else!"

All of us when we start on the road to life find ourselves beset with plaguing sins. They are sins to which we are prone, which seem to be part of our very being, and for which it is so easy to find an excuse. They are sins which at times we are tempted to believe we can never be fully free from. With many it is anger, or its milder form, impatience. With others it is revenge or a spirit to retaliate. With others it is pride; or selfishness; or envy, or covetousness. Whatever its nature, we seem to be born into the world with it, and find we must struggle with it our whole life through.

Whatever it may be, we are exhorted to "lay it aside"; subdue it, get rid of it, even crucify it until we can say with the apostle Paul, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live"; and again, "knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

This is the only way out of the sin which does so easily upset us. Confession alone won't take it away. We must actually *stop* doing the wrong, thinking the wrong, feeling the wrong; and compel ourselves to do the *unnatural* and *uneasy*.

Right now is the time to take the step and tackle our "upsetting" sins. Right now is the time to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us" and "run with patience the race" before us (Hebrews 12:1).

It is now or never.

MM

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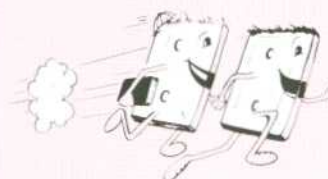
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