

Megiddo Message

Vita!

Vol. 80, No. 6
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Better TODAY

Dissatisfaction is the key to progress. When we become satisfied, we stop improving. An inner feeling of dissatisfaction keeps us reaching, striving, seeking. A craftsman turn out a piece of work today, but feels compelled to better it tomorrow, and again tomorrow. Not good enough, he tells himself as he begins again; he can do better.

This attitude seems instinctive in the physical, competitive realm. But how much more vital in the inner world of character, where each of us is constantly being tested. How carefully, how critically do we scrutinize and examine ourselves? How is it that we are so often slow to seek—or even to take—criticism? How is it that we sometimes resent a suggestion that would mean improvement? Wouldn't we be much further ahead if we would look for areas that need improving, telling ourselves again and again, "Not good enough, not half good enough?"

Generally speaking we are too easily satisfied. Wishing to maintain as good an opinion of ourselves as possible, we want others to do the same. We are like the little girl whom the minister asked why she so often played alone when there were other children nearby. Her reply was simply, "I like me." We all naturally like ourselves quite well. Improvement? Well, maybe a moderate amount, but we are pretty much all right the way we are. At least we can see a lot of people who are a lot worse!

However, when we set out to please God and meet His standard, when we begin to look at our character through His eyes and evaluate what He admires, we begin to see quite clearly that we are not naturally "good enough." Improvement is an absolute necessity if we would have His recognition. There

is just no other conclusion possible in the face of such plain commands as "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," and "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Though the majority think this beyond human reach, still the oracle of God is plain; and far be it from God to require the impossible. He does, however, require improvement to the maximum limit of our possibilities. And to accomplish this we shall find that we need all the criticism we can get, whether it be from ourselves or others. Our one objective is to improve.

We need to develop an eagerness to recognize our weaknesses which are a result of carelessness of thought, those failures in character development, that undisciplined behavior. Then we must seize the opportunities which come to us daily and apply corrective measures to overcome them. Strength of character, integrity, firmness, fairness—all are essential. All must be perfected with patience. And in the meanwhile, we will have to say often, "Not good enough; we can do better."

A heart motivated and governed by the law of God is perhaps the most forceful tool available to use in the work of character reformation. The strongest personality must be willing to do or be what God admires; hence comes the anxiety to correct a wrong as soon as it can be detected.

Let us who are in this race for eternal life search our lives. Again and again let us check our motives, inclinations, desires. Let us develop that divine dissatisfaction that is satisfied with nothing short of the full blessing of God. Let us say with the Psalmist, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Until then, let our motto be, "Not good enough—we can do better!" □

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 and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Soon-coming events

The Herald and the KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: ...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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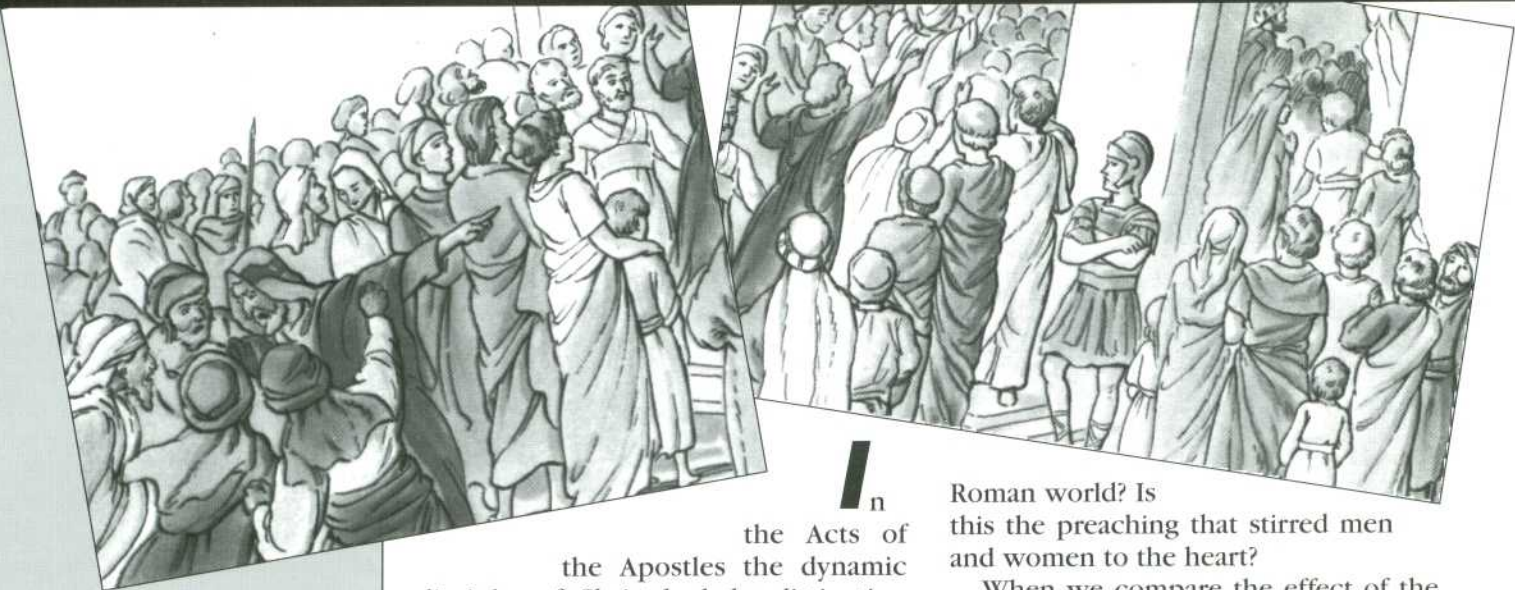
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THEY TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN



In the Acts of the Apostles the dynamic disciples of Christ had the distinction of being called by their adversaries, "They that turned the world upside down."

What a perfect description is this of those who founded the early Church. Propelled by the irresistible vigor of the resurrected Christ, they struck at the very foundations of the superstructure of pagan faith.

What was the source of their newfound power? It was nothing less than the long-promised Holy Spirit. "This is that," shouted their spokesman Peter to the skeptical throngs. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." This is that—a fulfillment of prophecy; a confirmation of their spoken words; an assurance that Jesus Christ was glorified, and a sign to follow them that believed.

What would the apostles think if they saw professing Christians today? Would they recognize the religion they had proclaimed by lip and life? Would they recognize the faith for which they fought and died? What would they think of our parrot-like recitation of sacred Scripture, our halfhearted hymn-singing, our vacillation and indecision? Might they not say, What has happened? Is this the faith that shook the

Roman world? Is this the preaching that stirred men and women to the heart?

When we compare the effect of the Apostolic church with its initial beginning, we marvel at the success of its instigators. Starting in a little upper room in Jerusalem, these men within thirty years had penetrated to the heart of the Roman empire. They out-thought, out-lived, and out-died the pagans of the Roman world.

We would do well to consider carefully a few characteristics of these men who followed in the train of the conquering Christ.

Great Conviction

In the first place, we must say that these believers possessed great conviction. They had certain beliefs which determined how they should live and how they should die, and most certainly the dominant article in their creed was the fact that Jesus was alive. To them He was no historical figure of the printed page, no tender memory blown down through the ages, no figure in a stained glass window, no name in a book. Jesus was their Master and their Saviour, and they insisted that it was because of His resurrection to life that they could live so gloriously. The life of Christ meant the reality of hope and life and liberty and law to them, now and for evermore.

The apostles were men of conviction. And conviction to them meant action!

These convictions were not just inherited and unexamined prejudices. For them the light of reason had shone upon the facts of experience, and the evidence was unassailable. In a pagan society they had to be sure—doubly sure—of what they believed, and they presented those beliefs, the highest in the land, in terms of the best culture of the day. The best deserved the best. Many people of their day—like those of ours—were inclined to debate rather than declare, to discuss rather than to decide, to call a committee meeting rather than to give a commission. But the apostles were men of conviction. And conviction in their realm meant *action!*

Few today have definite opinions about life, God, honor, duty, justice and friendship. Standards too often are governed by the society in which we move, rather than the unalterable Word of the Lord. We are afraid of being considered fanatical, and so we fail to take a stand. Yet we know that those who have done the most to impress this world have not been impressed with it. From Daniel down to our own day, men of conviction have found it necessary to mold what they could of the world to their beliefs, not their beliefs to the world. Of course it had its cost. But what worthwhile thing has not? Will it cost nothing to declare and live the truth? Of course it will cost.

Therefore we must be people who have the courage of their conviction, and like the early Church, refuse to compromise.

Great Courage

This leads us to a second characteristic of these believers. They had great courage. Jesus had said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Here were verbs that spelled action: "come"... "deny"... "take"... "follow." Something to leave behind: "come"; something to lay off: "deny"; something to pick up: "take"; and something to do through every remaining hour of one's life: "follow."

The apostles found the hardness of this command only too true. They were persecuted from city to city, their lives in constant danger, besides experiencing the discipline of daily intercourse. Yet they could go singing down the ghastly shambles of the Roman arena.

It still requires courage to stand for Christ in a society which is only nominally Christian, to be an example of the believers "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12). How many of us are ashamed of that Name which we profess to know? Sometimes the witness of the Church can be damaged more by being persuaded to abandon its principles than by open persecution.

It still requires courage to be an example of the believers "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Pentecost...

is here again (May 26), the harvest feast in ancient Israel, the day which closed the barley and wheat harvests, just as the Feast of Unleavened Bread fifty days earlier had opened them, on the 16th day of the month Abib.

A greater significance came to Pentecost in New Testament times, when the first Christians, assembled together on the same day as the old Hebrew festival, received the gifts of the Holy Spirit—a power from God which was to assist them in their

mission to go and teach all nations, until the end of that age. As the old Pentecost was a harvest feast, it was appropriate that the new Pentecost brought a harvest of about 3000 souls (Acts 2:6, 41).

The greatest significance of Pentecost is yet future—the Day when the Holy Spirit is renewed, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord. For the arrival of this greater Pentecost we work and watch and pray. □

They Turned the World Upside Down

Great Consecration

The apostles were men of consecration. They had one thought, one interest, and one goal in life. The apostle Paul expressed it well when he wrote of himself, "This one thing I do." His love for Christ and the truths He proclaimed was so dominant and so compelling that it absorbed the motive of every action of his life.

Consecration is devotion; consecration is love. But love of this sort does not come automatically. It has to be produced. We know its power only as we submit our ways and thoughts and ideas totally to those which are as much above ours as the heavens are above the earth.

The apostles reached a place of enduring fame on God's honor roll only because their consecration to God was of the

highest order. Their whole physical life, knowing, feeling, and will, was totally consecrated to God. The trouble with us is that we are inclined to consecrate only a part—to give Him our outward life, but not our inner; our thought-life but not our emotional. We surrender to His guiding in part but not in the whole.

Again our consecration is inclined to be a fitful thing, governed by moods and feelings. It

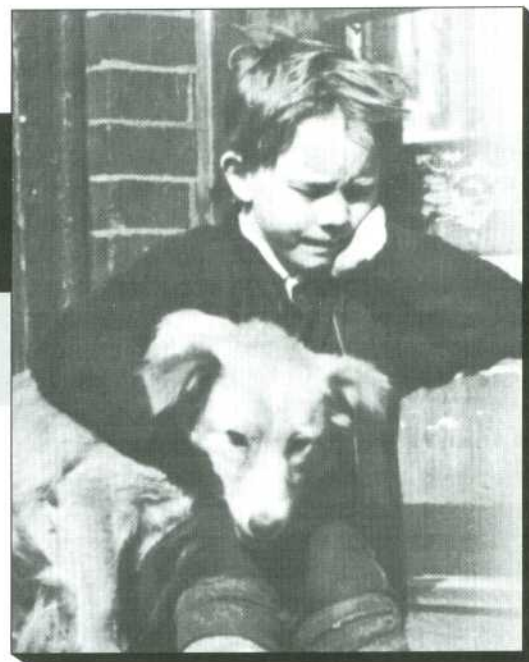
is well illustrated in the story of the small boy who came to his father one day as he sat in his big arm chair. "Daddy," said the little one, "I am going to give you my new book." The father was puzzled by this, but accepted it. "Thank you," he said. The child then brought the book and laid it in his father's lap and went away. But it wasn't long before his father heard the door opening and a little voice said softly, "I think if you don't mind I'll take it back now."

Is this the way we give to God? In some moment of strong spiritual motivation we feel we want to give God everything, but that moment doesn't last and soon we take back that which we have vowed to give.

The times we are living in demand the utmost consecration on our part. The measure in which God will bless us in the future depends on our measure of consecration now. Nothing less than entire consecration—time, hands, feet, voice, intellect, will, heart and love—can ever merit His fullest measure of blessing.

The world is still waiting to see what God can do with Christians who are truly consecrated to Him. We believe that God is able, and that He will do all that He has promised. Why do we hinder Him by our indecision? Why not act right now and join the ranks of the men who turned the world upside down? □

*How many of
us are ashamed
of that Name
which we
profess?*



A DISMAL thing is self-pity, and a mortal danger to every one of us. Who has not known its octopus-like grip around his heart, as he tells himself that no one ever had it so rough, or suffered so much, or was denied so severely, or had to live so contrary to his wishes as he must.

Self-pity is no respecter of persons. It strikes young and old, rich and poor, the unknown and the renowned. Even a king, Saul by name, found himself among its victims when he cried to his subjects, "All of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me" (1 Sam. 22:8).

Actually, Saul's predicament was the painful result of his own self-will. As a young man he was of a retiring disposition. When Samuel went to anoint him after he was chosen of the Lord to be king, Saul played hide-and-seek so well that only the Lord could find him. After a thorough search for him proved futile, the people inquired of the Lord as to his whereabouts and learned that "he hath hid himself among the stuff"

Poor Little Me!

Poor little me ... born in the land of the free, surrounded with countless blessings ... granted the highest privilege and opportunity—is there no one who feels sorry for me?

(I Sam. 10:22). He had to be “fetched” for his crowning.

Almost overnight Saul was rocketed from his life of obscurity to one of fame. He was called a “choice young man,...from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.”

For a time he was popular and in favor with God, and Israel rejoiced in their first king. But he sinned by intruding into the priest’s office and lost his office, his good name and his throne.

Then came David, a little nobody—plus God—who slew the giant that had dissipated the courage of all Israel with his challenges. David’s victory almost immediately raised him to space-orbital prestige and punctured Saul’s ego.

“And Saul was very wroth... and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward” (I Sam. 18:8-9). Jonathan’s deep love for David only added fuel to the fire of Saul’s jealousy.

Saul needed no amplifier to hear the creaking of his crumbling castle, but he fought furiously to evade the inevitable. He saw himself as a “has-been” and retaliated by forcing David to flee from cave to cave to escape his jealous wrath. Many of the king’s subjects followed David, causing Saul to cry, “There is none of you that is sorry for me.”

Who of us will ever find ourselves in Saul’s position—elevated to the kingship and then toppled by our own disobedience? Perhaps none. But we have all pitied ourselves with far less reason than Saul had.

Nevertheless, we protest: our periods of self-pity are justified. No one understands the hardships, the trials, the persecutions, the financial difficulties, the physical infirmities, and the endless troubles and disappointments we have had.

But wait. Listen to the apostle Paul, as he recounts his own experiences: “In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (II Cor. 11:23-28).

What abundant reasons for self-pity—perhaps even more than we ever had! But listen to his reaction to it all: “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body....Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice” (II Cor. 4:8-10, Phil. 4:4).

Poor little me! Born in the land of the free; surrounded with innumerable tangible and intangible blessings; endowed with the privilege to worship, pray and read God’s Word; endued with physical strength to work for food, shelter and clothing; a sharer in the faith once delivered to the saints; given the best of heavenly friendships and family; called to become a son of God and someday to be made equal to the angels; anticipating the return of Christ and the glory and honor He will bring, even life for evermore!

Is there no one who feels sorry for me? □

Shields of Brass

When Rehoboam, son of the fabulous Solomon, came to the throne of Israel, there fell into his lap the broad realm and the vaunted wealth of a strong empire. His was the kingdom which David had conquered from Moab and Philistia, Ammon and Syria. His were the silver, the gold and the gems which Solomon had gathered with his buying and selling of horses and chariots, and his commerce on the high seas. Spectacular power and luxurious riches were his, and he did not have to win them; they were an inheritance.

But within five years he had squandered or been plundered of nearly all of them. His immoderate cruelty drove more than half his subjects into armed rebellion. These angry citizens tore ten northern tribes away from the garment of his empire, leaving him trying to cover his nakedness with the shreds of Judah and Benjamin. Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt poised on the borders, watching these signs of internal weakness in the shriveling kingdom. Finally, in Rehoboam's fifth year, Egyptian armies spilled over into Judah, and swept on into Jerusalem, plundering.

The account runs: "Shishak king of Egypt marched against Jerusalem with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand cavalry, and an innumerable army from Egypt; Libyans, Troglodytes, and Ethiopians. He captured the fortified towns belonging to Judah, and then reached Jerusalem. Rehoboam and the

nobility of Judah had gathered at Jerusalem, on account of Shishak; and to them the prophet Shemaiah brought this message from the Eternal: 'As you have forsaken me, I have abandoned you to Shishak.' The nobility and the king humbled themselves, crying, 'The Eternal is just!' So when the Eternal saw that they had humbled themselves, the Eternal sent this message to Shemaiah: 'They have humbled themselves; I will not destroy them; in a little while I will grant them deliverance. My wrath shall not be vented on Jerusalem by Shishak; yet they must be his servants, to let them know the difference between my service and the service of foreign lands'" (II Chron. 12:2-8, Moffatt's translation).

Among the rich booty which these armies took were the golden shields of the king's guard. These shields, held ostentatiously in the hands of proud soldiers, had graced all state occasions. A blazing square of golden light, they had surrounded Solomon in the line of parade; or, a long golden avenue, they made an aisle through which the king strutted from palace to Temple. These costly symbols of pomp and circumstance were carried away to the Nile. Both the empire and the wealth of David were reduced to a shambles, and Rehoboam stood in the ruins of a vanished yesterday.

But he was still the king, and he did his pathetic best to appear kingly. He ordered brass copies of the golden shields to be made and committed them to the captains that stood guard before the palace. Whenever the king



**Compromising with evil
always ends in
disaster.**

strode from his royal chambers to the Temple, the shields formed the accustomed avenue of honor, and Rehoboam marched, head proudly erect, as though nothing had been lost. The Temple stood empty of its chests of jewels and precious metals. The copper mines of Edom were in foreign hands, and the navy that Phoenician sailors once navigated to Ophir and Cathay rotted on the beaches. The empire lay in riven shreds. The inner substance of royal power was gone, but Rehoboam kept up the outward show. Perhaps he hoped that the pomp would hide the inner collapse of power, that the pageantry would obscure his poverty.

The Lesson for Us

Shields of brass for shields of gold. This is the tragedy that has befallen the majority of those who at one time or another over the ages have covenanted to serve God. As outstanding examples of such dissembling our minds turn to such men as Solomon himself, one of the principals of this spiritual drama; and Demas, who started his spiritual career as associate of Paul, the dean of all Christian missionaries, but ended back in the world he had once left.

Solomon made a splendid beginning, asking, as he did, for wisdom to know how to properly carry on the work of God, in place of asking for wealth, honor, or the lives of his enemies. (II Chron. 1:7-12). But he made an incredible ending when he allowed himself to be carried away with the pride of his own will, and the foolish whims of his idolatrous wives (Neh. 13:26).

Alive, Yet Dead

It would be out of the question for a person to be alive and dead in the same sense at the same

time. A person who suffers natural death cannot be literally alive while he is dead. Neither can we be dead in trespasses and sins and be alive to God at the same time. However, it is possible for us to be alive to God and dead to sin at the same time. To be alive to God we must first arise from our natural condition described as "dead in trespasses and sins," and be quickened by the power of the Gospel working effectually within, causing us to put away the old fleshly ways; become dead to the world and its rudiments, its fame and glory. In Eph. 5:14 Paul speaks of this awakening to the new life in the following words:

"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

In our natural condition, before our lives were influenced by the teachings of the Word of God, we were dead to God, but did not sense it. We were "without God or hope in the world" (Eph. 2:12) a condition that could rightly be termed as "dead." Feeding upon our own thoughts we thought we were all right. We were leading better lives than many we saw about us: it was our aim to be honest and truthful; we paid one hundred cents on the dollar; and tried to be a benefit to the community in which we lived. Measuring ourselves by others in this way, we made a very good showing, yet at the same time were dead to God.

To be fully alive to God requires

vigilance during every wakeful moment of each day of life. He demands that we serve Him with all our mind, all our might, all our strength. To be alive to God is to have His interests our interests, His business our business, the seeking of His Kingdom the first and foremost quest of our lives.


But before we reached the point where we could exhibit these visible signs of an animate being, we had first to familiarize ourselves with the Divine promises, and the demands of God's Word; in short, learn what He wanted us to do.

Once the hope of eternal life entered our lives we became mentally alive to God.

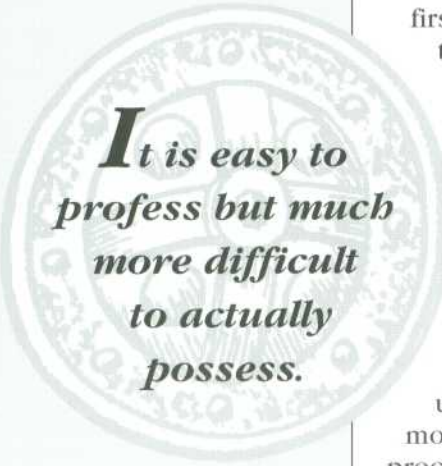
Whereas we had been "dead in trespasses and sins," we now became animated with a new life. We developed new interests, new concerns, a new sense of values. The Gospel which is the "power of God unto salvation,"

became a power to us. The bright anticipation of winning a life that would never end so fired our imagination that every proposition offered us was evaluated before the backdrop of the effect it would have on our prospects of gaining that future glory. Why the tendency to exchange these shields of gold for shields of brass?

Because the high aspiration proves to be a giant undertaking. With many who start in the way the early impression does not remain constant. The fleeting present becomes too pressing, hence the silver becomes tarnished, their bright anticipation becomes dim,



**Being too
easily satisfied is
positively dangerous.
One never shoots
higher than
he aims.**



***It is easy to
profess but much
more difficult
to actually
possess.***

and their deceitful heart falls to dissembling. They had hoped they could conceal their true attitude from others who expected better things of them, their imprudent exchanging of their shields of gold for shields of brass; they had hoped no one would detect the difference in their value.

The sad state of the Church at Sardis, whose members had a name that they lived, yet were dead, has its counterpart today. Jesus' command to John the Revelator was: "And unto the angel of the church at Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (Rev. 3:1). They, too—or many of them—had lost their first love, and apparently did not care to admit it. They had a name that they lived, but were dead. They were living on their reputation, so to speak; but reputation, unless backed up by character, is worthless. As has been truly said, "Reputation is what men think we are, character is what God knows we are."

The church of Sardis is sharply called to reality by an unflinching description of its actual moral and spiritual situation. The process of decline had been so subtle that it was unnoticed. If spiritually awake when we read those sharp words we will find something that comes home to our own mind and conscience. The difference between appearance and reality is of constant importance to the Christian.

Superficial people evidently praised the church at Sardis. Seemingly there were visible signs of prosperity. What met the eye could be interpreted in such a fashion as to call forth words of praise, but the one who looked beyond appearance to the heart, found something very different. It was as if he heard the rattle of dead men's bones. There was no real life, simply a galvanized corpse—powdered and painted death.

And today there still are those who are exchanging shields of gold for shields of brass. Shall we keep up an appearance of sincerity, of being earnest and interested in things Divine, the meanwhile in our inward hearts we are becoming less and less engrossed in things of eternity?

Identifying Our Degree of Life

One identifying mark of decadence in the spiritual life is the freedom of action that we allow ourselves. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, said: "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Rom. 14:22). Do we allow ourselves more than justifiable freedom in our intercourse with the world, justifying our actions by saying that after all we must make a living, and to do this one must come somewhere near meeting them on their own ground? Do we follow the trend of the world by trying to copy in some small measure their freedom of speaking, their carelessness of dress—or undress—and demeanor?

It is easier, yes, much easier, to assume a virtue, than actually to possess that virtue, hence the temptation to exchange shields of gold for shields of brass. The self-righteous Pharisees were guilty of this sort of perversion. While saying Lord, Lord, they refused to do the things commanded them. They drew near to God with their mouth, and honored Him with their lips, but their heart was far from Him.

Knowing the Difference

The message from the Eternal through Shemaiah to Rehoboam and the nobility of Judah at Jerusalem was: "My wrath shall not be vented on Jerusalem by Shishak; yet they must be his servants, to let them know the difference between my service and the service of foreign lands" (II Chron. 12:8, Moffatt).

The service of other gods, like king Rehoboam's service to foreign lands, takes all and gives nothing—nothing, that is, unless one values the brief and

tawdry honors, the transient, souring pleasures, the slothful, ox-like repose which this world's Pharaoh bestows at his caprice upon his favored ones. He may also, in a savage mood, break them, torture them, mock them, impoverish them; and in the end he will slay them every one, eternally.

The service of the Eternal also takes much away, it is true. It takes away the torturing pride and jealousy, the anger and impatience which so often lower our self-respect, all the low and detestable lusts of the flesh. It takes from us the unreasoning clannishness of the savage, replacing it with an enlightened loyalty to a new family, in which every member is weighed by his actions, not by his tribal descent. It takes away the old values and gives us new and better standards. When our sense of values is thoroughly trained, when we have surrendered our

entire will to the service of the King, we realize that even in this life it gives an hundred fold of security and contentment, of the joy of battle and victory, "of houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands," beside which the petty persecutions, the light afflictions which accompany us, pale and vanish away.

But what of the end? In this life, try as we may, all wrongs are not righted, justice does not prevail. Something is left for the future, if things are to be equalized. Is the difference between the service of the two masters only to be experienced in this life? Listen! "And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts." "Man that is in honor, and

understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish." (Jer. 51:57; Ps. 49:20).

And on the other hand: "They that...attain that world, and the



resurrection from the dead, are equal unto the angels, neither can they die any more." "Eye hath not

Our loving Father, Thou who hearest every heartfelt prayer, we approach Thy throne this morning confident that Thou wilt hear us if we call upon Thee in sincerity and truth. We know Thou seekest only such to worship Thee. Insincere words are only an abomination to Thee, and if we say Lord, Lord, without doing Thy bidding we are as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

We know that in Thee is strong confidence and Thy children shall have a place of refuge when the great time of trouble breaks upon the earth. O help us to cease to procrastinate, to run into the strong tower of a completely resigned life now, no longer put off the doing of the things that will fit us for acceptance at the hand of the great Judge. We must become accustomed to doing good, and that takes time.

Help us to remember that now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, now is the time to work. If we wait until our feet stumble upon the dark mountain of death or the shadow of the grave overshadows us, or the close of salvation's day termi-

nates our day for progress, it will be too late to make amends. We can no more change our ways than the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots. If we put off till then, when we stand before the great Judge the edict will go forth, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We know that when we stand at the great Tribunal nothing new will be revealed. Only the things already recorded will be read out either for or against us. If that day finds us filthy we shall be filthy still; if it finds us wicked we shall be wicked still; if righteous we shall still be righteous; if holy we shall be holy still. Whatever we have sown we shall reap.

Help us to have a stronger faith, and a more fervent desire to live a perfect life. Help us to shoulder our daily cross with courage and fortitude, determined that nothing shall cause us to complain or call the burden heavy. Help us to bear it willingly and joyfully until we can lay it down triumphantly. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen. □

seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (Luke 20:35-36; I Cor. 2:9).

Knowing this difference, let us not seek to refresh our memory by returning, even for a moment, to the land of the Nile to experience the service of its king, he who would take our all and give us nothing except a few doubtful pleasures which appeal only to the lower nature. How foolish even to approach his borders, to place ourselves in the way of temptation even for the purpose of testing our endurance. Such experiments are strictly forbidden to the true servants of the Eternal. Of every tree in the garden we may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil we may not eat, lest we die.

The Folly of Face-Saving

Rehoboam's folly in making shields of brass to replace the shields of gold that Shishak had plundered, with the idea of still keeping up a fair show when the glory of his kingdom was departed, is the same as we today call *saving face*.

In the Orient, "face" has a special significance of reputation, prestige, dignity or self-respect, with the idiomatic inference that these things are unearned and artificially maintained. In this sense the word has come into the common language of the Western world. In the Chinese social system, we are assured that the most important thing in the world is to "save one's face": nothing else matters. Even the multitudinous wars which have scourged that unhappy nation are settled in such a way as to permit all the officials involved to save their faces or dignities. For a servant or employee, losing face is worse than losing his job. In Japan, loss of face is taken so seriously that suicide is a common way out.

The absurd lengths to which this

may be carried amuses us, perhaps. Yet our Oriental friends have no monopoly on "face saving"—far from it. We all do it. In a thousand petty ways this petty vice shows itself in us. Not only before others do we attempt to appear what we are not, but even more—to use a phrase from our spiritual forefather—we "parade ourselves before ourselves," always to our own advantage.

In our spiritual affairs this tendency is even more evident and much more serious. When detected in a transgression, the accusing finger automatically goes out toward others, not for their good so much as to deflect attention from the soil on our own face. And when reproved and reasoned with for our faults, although we may know very well we are in the wrong, we surrender gradually, retreating from point to point, contesting the ground as we go, as if there were something craven or weak in frankly and freely acknowledging our guilt at the beginning and proceeding to get right. I have done it—you have done it—we have all done it, more times than we like to admit; there is no use to deny it. It isn't smart; it only reveals us in all our childishness and ignorance and cheapness. And it isn't godlike. Let us never do it again.

Perhaps the reason underlying all this face-saving, although we may not be aware of it, is a definite suspicion that we don't amount to much after all. It has been said that many men think they have an inferiority complex, when as a matter of fact they are just inferior. Suspecting our own inferiority and inadequacy, we cast about desperately to find some point of superiority, real or imaginary, which is cherished and magnified to the last degree. Failing that, we try to pull others down to our own level, or shift the blame to intangibles. Never does a man grasp at a straw so frantically as when he is drowning; and never do we justify ourselves or blame others or plead mitigating circumstances so vehemently as when we know we have blundered or gone astray. Anything—everything to bolster

A shield of gold is a shield of gold, and a shield of brass is a shield of brass, and no more than a worthless counterfeit.

our battered ego and make us something in our own sight; to be at least as good as the average. Having so easily deceived ourselves, we assume quite naturally that others are similarly deceived and should look at us not as we are but as we look to ourselves. And forgetting that we cannot defy the law of spiritual gravitation, and that if we fall from grace we will go down in the sight of God, and in the esteem of those who have the Divine mind, we flatter ourselves in our own eyes, never dreaming that we have fooled no one but ourselves. Too often, much too often, we have saved our faces at the expense of our souls!

Let us ever bear in mind that in the great Day when all our masks and shams and dissimulations shall be swept away and our naked souls stand before the great Judge in their true light, the only way to save our face is to have it clean, not merely an outward cleansing, but one which begins in the heart and extends outwardly through all our members. "If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear" (Job 11:14-15).

A shield of brass—especially if highly polished and coated with gold lacquer—may look very impressive to the untrained eye. Likewise pretended righteousness in ourselves may appear intrinsically good to us, it may completely deceive our brother, but let us remember, we cannot fool God. He is a "God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." He knows the genuine from the counterfeit. He is not "mocked." He is not like men who could be outwitted, and whose laws could be evaded; no man could "turn up his nose"—such is the literal meaning

of the word for "mocked" in the Greek—at Him with impunity. Christians who imagined that they could reap the fruit of the Spirit while competing, envying, boasting, and challenging, instead of bearing each other's burdens, were only deceiving themselves. God knows good trees from bad, wheat and tares do not look alike to Him, He does not call evil good nor good evil. And He "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Good intentions, lofty professions, shining promises, do not equal a feather's weight in His balances unless backed up by actions. It is easy to profess but much more difficult to actually possess. A shield of gold is a shield of gold, and a shield of brass is a shield of brass, and no more than a worthless counterfeit.

Endurance is the quality that marks the difference between the value of gold and the value of brass. Gold maintains its brilliance and good appearance when exposed to the elements, while brass tarnishes rapidly. We may have been amazed at the way the gilded cross on a church steeple retains its brilliance year after year. The whole secret is the metal itself, gold has great qualities of endurance. Sun, rain, fume-laden atmosphere, cannot affect it. Hence to have a shield to hide our past moral defects when we stand before the great Judge it must be a shield of gold, a shield of good works. No other shield will retain its luster and good appearance when subjected to the acid test of

the final Judgment. Every builder's work will be tried to determine whether it be gold, silver, precious stone, or whether it be brass that tarnishes easily.

As Rehoboam vainly tried to cover the nakedness of his empire with the shreds of Judah and Benjamin left him after the ten northern tribes tore themselves away, so shields of brass will prove mere subterfuge for covering an imperfect life, for "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14).

When Enthusiasm Wanes

About a century ago a sage of that day spoke from the authority of a life which refused to change from genuine to counterfeit ideals in this world. He saw clearly the nature of the tragedy which befalls the majority of men when he said: "The youth gets together his materials to

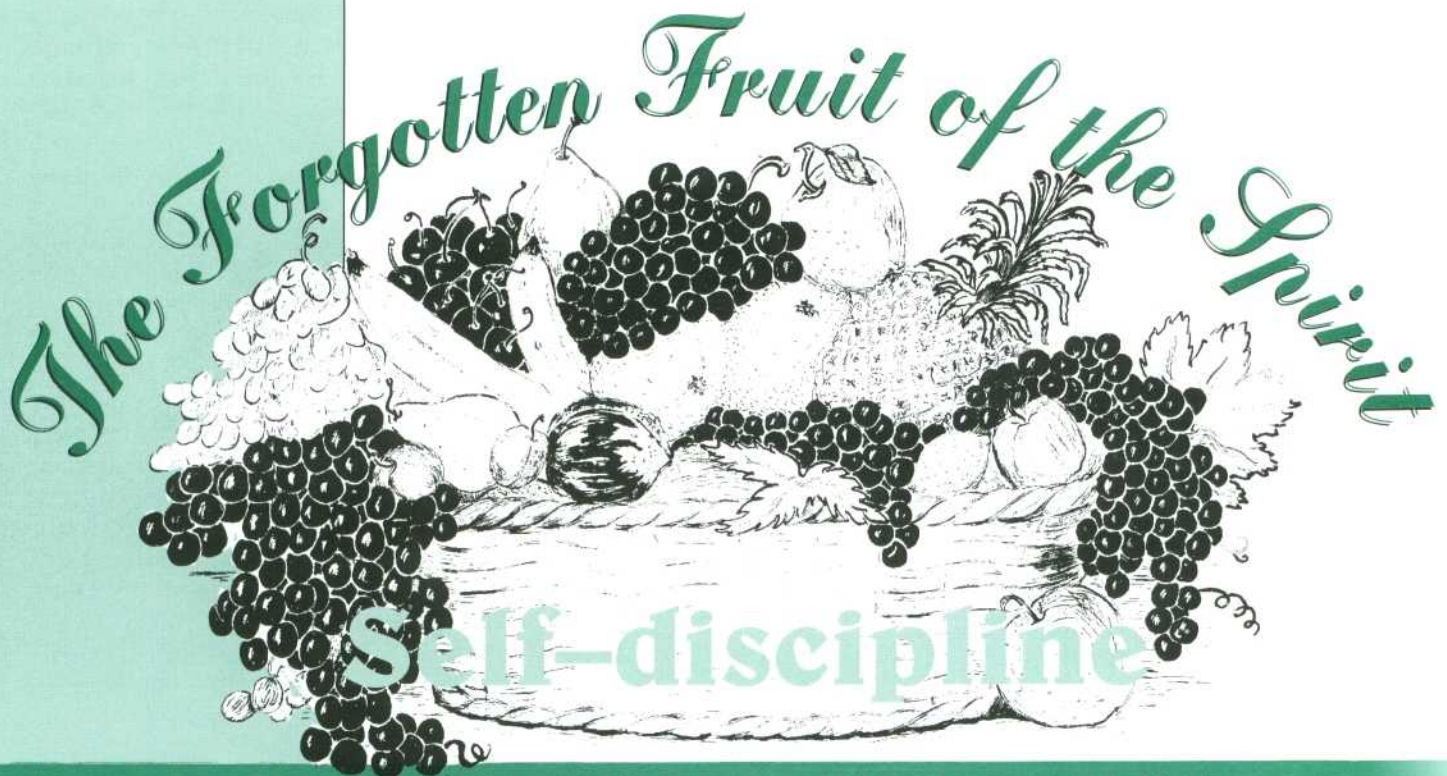
build a bridge to the moon, or perchance, a temple or palace on earth, and at length the middle aged man concludes to build a woodshed with them." How aptly this describes the dismal failure of the man who starts in the way of righteousness, then afterward loses his first love and grows weary in well doing. He started out with zeal mountain-high. The hope of winning eternal blessings in God's future kingdom so fired his imagination that nothing could be too hard for him to do to obtain it.

In the first flush of his spiritual life he started getting materials

(Continued on page 26)



**God knows
good trees from bad.
Wheat and tares do
not look alike
to Him.**



"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22, Diaglott).

Everyone wants love, joy, and peace—but what about self-discipline?

I wish I hadn't lost my temper and said what I did."

"One of these days I'm going to do better."

How often have we heard—or made—statements like these? How many of us really have ourselves under control? Most people *think* they are under control, but the control of whom or what? Probably most of us—to a greater extent than we realize—are controlled by other people, by circumstances, by the mass media, or by the opinions of our peers.

Perhaps the best check of who is in control is not our actions but our spontaneous *reactions*. How do we react when a driver tailgates us for miles, then passes and cuts sharply in front of us, nearly causing a collision? Do we honk the horn, shake our fists, and mutter something under our breath? If

so, some stranger's reckless, thoughtless driving habits have controlled us and determined our behavior. We are not in control.

How do we respond to surly, harsh words? Does our countenance change, our voice quiver, and our minds swim with more of the same? If so, we are more controlled by others than in control.

A Greek philosopher said, "No person is free who is not master of himself." And no person is master who allows the actions of others to dictate his or her reactions.

We live in an age of general self-indulgence, an age largely uncontrolled and undisciplined. We can say what we want, feel what we want, react as we please, and pursue the gratification of almost any desire—with little if any restraint being required from the public

eye. "If it feels good, do it," is the popular way. Or, "If it works, do it again." The seven deadly sins have become an accepted life-style. Many of the problems we face today—economic, environmental, political, moral—are largely the result of a lack of self-discipline. Even many church people are under the same blight of undisciplined living, exhibiting perverted values, wasted time, dulled thinking, and distorted emotions.

Perhaps one of the most familiar passages in the New Testament is Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit. We all delight quite naturally in "love, joy, peace," and so on; but what about that little grace down at the end of the list, so often misused, ineffective, or totally forgotten, that little virtue called temperance, or self-control, or self-discipline? This last little virtue is vital. Without self-control, love may be mere sentimentality or consuming, self-defeating ardor; joy may become a heady euphoria that keeps us on the mountaintop building air castles; peace may become complacency, patience may be leniency, kindness may be blandness, goodness may become self-righteousness, faithfulness may become slavishness, and gentleness may become weakness.

When the apostle Paul wrote to the young Timothy he admonished him, "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7, NASB).

What Self-discipline Is Not

Self-discipline is not godliness, nor is it the *means* to godliness. If discipline led to godliness or were godliness, the most disciplined individuals would be the holiest—a statement that is far from true. The most exacting disciplinary regimen is powerless to make a saint out of a sinner; it will only

make a very regimented sinner. On the other hand, neither is a lack of self-discipline necessarily sin, although it can lead to sin, for "the man who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it is a sinner" (James 4:17, NEB).

Self-discipline is not asceticism, as is shown by Paul's warnings against ascetic practices (Col. 2:23). Further, self-discipline is not immoderation or constriction. The self-disciplined person will be serious, but not somber; steady but not stodgy, upright but not uptight. In other words, we must be disciplined in our efforts to achieve self-discipline.

Finally, self-discipline is not legalism. It is not, "do this" but "don't do that." Spiritually self-disciplined persons hold themselves firmly in check not for the satisfaction of discipline but for the sake of their higher interests. They control themselves in any and every situation, acting as they know they ought to act as children of God, not reacting in relation to every situation that may arise. If others are *loving, patient and kind*, they are *loving, patient and kind*. If others are unloving, impatient and unkind, they are still consistently *loving, patient and kind*.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and spend no thought on your earthly nature, to satisfy its cravings."

Spiritually self-disciplined persons refrain from certain attitudes of mind. Their attitudes and thoughts are predetermined by the values and goals they have set for themselves, for they are masters of themselves.

What Self-discipline Is

Self-discipline is the crowning fruit of the Spirit, which every God-fearing individual must cultivate and nurture. Genuine self-control, the self-control that is a fruit of the Spirit, is, in reality, God-control. Achieving it is part of our assignment to "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). But it is not an instinct. It must be cultivated, like any other fruit.

Seven words of the apostle Paul form a compact definition of self-discipline, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). In these words Paul placed a strict limitation on his "living." It was all "in Christ." But how much greater were his opportunities for fullness of joy by living in Christ than any other way could offer him.

Genuine self-control involves all our faculties—mind, heart, body, will. This means that one can be physically self-controlled—enough to win in an Olympics' game—yet be so undisciplined emotionally that he or she may have childish tantrums and be unable to cope with simple problems of life.

Where and how, then, does one begin to become more self-disciplined?

The Christian's "Daily Dozen"

To have a disciplined life, we need to practice what we might call the Christian's "daily dozen." First, we need *daily prayer* (Ps. 86:6). Self-discipline is both the cause and effect of true prayer. Without it, we cannot really pray, a fact suggested by the apostle



**Self-control
is largely and
primarily
mind-control.**

Peter: "The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray" (I Pet. 4:7, NIV). The Moffatt Bible translates this verse: "Study then; keep cool and pray!" But how does one *get cool*, to say nothing about *staying cool* when life seems frazzled and harried? How can we truly pray at such times? We can, if we are self-controlled and disciplined, if we keep our relationship to God above everything else.

Along with daily prayer must come *daily praise*. Said the Psalmist, "And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised" (Ps. 72:15).

Then we need a *daily keeping of our commitments* (Ps. 61:8), *daily Bible study* (Acts 17:11), *daily self-denial* (Luke 9:23), *daily death to our old self* (I Cor. 15:31), *daily renewal* (Rom. 12:2, Eph. 4:23), *daily exhortation and encouragement* (Hebrews 13:15-17), *daily sharing of our faith* (Acts 17:17), and *daily vigilance* (Prov. 8:34). If we practice all these, we are sure to be bearing more and more of this last fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of self-discipline.

Divine Thought Control

Also crucial is a self-disciplined mind. Self-control is largely and primarily mind-control. To be heavenly-minded we must think heavenly thoughts. And what does this mean? It means that we consciously direct our minds to heavenly subjects and keep them *off* earthly subjects. One real help in accomplishing this is the advice of the apostle Paul on what we should think about: Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy (Phil. 4:8). Disciplined heavenly thoughts will not simply produce themselves in an undisciplined or unheavenly mind. Just as a "corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18), so we must change the topics of our mind before we can expect to know the benefits of disciplined thinking.

Solomon indicated that our thoughts reveal what kind of mind we have. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). What do we think about in those unguarded moments—when we are riding along in the car, or before we fall asleep at night? What do we think about as we walk along a city street? Are our minds filled with the sights around us, or do we keep them fixed on higher values? It is all part of disciplined thinking, part of cultivating a well-disciplined mind.

Note that we *cultivate*—not *acquire*—a disciplined mind. As believers we must have the mind of Christ, says Paul (Phil. 2:5). Paul told Timothy that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind [a self-controlled mind]" (II Tim. 1:7). The Greek word translated "sound mind" in this passage is *sophronismos*, and is sometimes rendered "self-controlled." That is why Paul wrote, "The weapons we wield are not merely human weapons, but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, NEB). Or as rendered in the Jerusalem Bible, "Every thought is our prisoner, captured to be brought into obedience to Christ." Here is a battle, fierce and life-long. Do we wonder that Paul wrote also, "I beg you, therefore, brothers, through these mercies God has shown you, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, devoted and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service. Stop living in accordance with the customs of this world, but by the new ideals that mold your minds continue to transform yourselves, so as to find and follow God's will; that is, what is good, well-pleasing to Him, and perfect" (Rom. 12:1-2, Williams).

To accomplish this, we must have a continual supply of positive alternatives to take the place of dissenting, contrary, or corrupt thoughts that naturally

steal into our minds. For we can make up our minds, *we will be tempted*. We will find that the wrong thoughts are there, quickly, and with the least provocation. The corrupt thought might be the result of our eyes falling upon a street scene we would prefer not to witness—but we did, and instantly the mental picture is captured and the thought is produced. Or it might be a picture in a book, or a comment from a fellow worker, or a secret hidden lust from deep within our own heart. The temptation will come, and we must be prepared, fortified, with a thought or a prayer that might be something like this:

"Lord, I thank you for making me stronger than the corruption around me. Help me to keep my mind fixed on the pure and wholesome, the upright and clean," and so proceed to direct our minds in disciplined channels of thought that God can honor.

Disciplining Our Emotions

For a time, we may be able to keep our undisciplined thoughts to ourselves, or even cloak our undisciplined spiritual life with respectability; but our lack of self-discipline—if it is there—will always show up in our emotions. Perhaps this is because our emotions are such a part of us, and give instant response. The words of the prophet Jeremiah, we find, are all too true: "The heart is the most deceitful of all things, desperately sick" (17:9, NEB). Still, with the help of God, we *can* overcome. We can overpower our most powerful emotions. We can take captive every wayward thought, and make it obey Christ (II Cor. 10:5).

We may suppress our evil thoughts by channeling our minds into right thinking. Or we may

suppress them by another alternative: by not responding at all. There may be times when we can ignore the distractions of evil about us, when we can consciously dismiss them from our heart and mind.

Many of our battles are virtually lost before they begin because we follow pre-established, pre-practiced habits to react in an undisciplined fashion. Over time we have formed patterns which are not easily broken. This is why Paul wrote, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and spend no thought on your earthly nature, to satisfy its cravings" (Rom. 13:14, TCNT); or as translated in the Williams' Bible, "Put a stop to gratifying the evil desires that lurk in your lower nature." This lower nature we all have, and it must be overpowered if we would be true servants of Christ, bearing all the fruits of the Spirit.

The Model of Self-discipline

Jesus Christ Himself is both the model and master of self-discipline. He willingly gave up His own will to do the will of His Father. He was not concerned about what others thought of Him, or the honors He might achieve in this world. He said, "I do always those things that

please him [the Father]... I seek not mine own glory:... I receive not honour of men" (John 8:29, 50; 5:41).

Jesus showed exemplary self-discipline through all His life, especially in His victories over temptation, because Jesus was "tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Heb. 4:15, NIV). Someone may think, "Yes, but He is the Son of God. Why couldn't He be perfectly self-disciplined? We are mortals, with an evil nature, constantly tempted to evil." It is true, but Jesus was tempted just as we are. His strength lay in His self-discipline, in His commitment to do the will of His Father, and His single-minded determination to obey.

Peter tells us that "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). The word translated "example" here is *hypogrammos*, and refers to a line of script which a school child copies by imitation. Why don't we begin to follow Christ just as a school child copies a line of script? Then we will be self-disciplined, self-controlled men and women of prayer, bearing all the fruits of the Spirit—even to the last forgotten fruit. □

Are You A "Keeper"?

*Lord, please grant that I may live
To fish until the Judgment Day;
And when I make my final cast,
I once again will humbly pray
That when I'm safe in God's great net
Across the waters dark and deep,
That in His mercy I'll be judged
As good enough to KEEP!*





Vita! Vita! Vita! *Life! Life! Life!*

During the early centuries of our era, when earnest believers were confined in dark prison cells because they refused to relinquish their radiant hope, it is said that they wrote on their confining walls, "*Vita, Vita, Vita!*" meaning *Life, Life, Life!* They refused to let themselves be imprisoned. They refused to forget that beyond their present suffering and denial is a life that will recompense them far beyond any price they might pay in this short, mortal career.

Even in the dungeon, those early Christians kept their faith strong and their hope undimmed. Constantly renewing the picture of the joy set before them, they were able to pass through fiery trials. Prison walls could not shut out their view of the Promised Land. Chains might bind the body but they could not bind the soul made free by the power of God Almighty. Though physically prisoners of a dark and cruel system, in heart and mind they were "prisoners of hope"—hope of the bright future reward that God will give to those who patiently endure to the end.

At the end of a glowing account of unquenchable faith we have this report: "Through their faith these men conquered kingdoms, ruled in justice and proved the truth of God's promises....From being weaklings they became strong men and mighty warriors; they routed whole armies of foreigners....Others were exposed to the test of public mockery and flogging, and to the torture of being left bound in prison. They were killed by stoning, by being sawn in two....Many became refugees with nothing but sheepskins or goatskins to cover them. They lost everything and yet were spurned and ill-treated by a world that was too evil to see their worth. They lived as vagrants in the desert, on the mountains, or in caves or holes in the ground. All these won a glowing testimony to their faith" (Heb. 11:33-39, Phillips).

How could they do it? Because they kept vivid in their minds' eye those glowing words: "*Vita! Vita! Vita!*" meaning *Life! Life! Life!* What mattered the present miseries, if only it could add up to life everlasting in the coming Kingdom of Christ!

Jesus prophesied of the tribulations that the early Christians would encounter

for His name: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried;...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). A crown of life! Was not that promise the secret of their power to endure? Though we have not their level of trial, let us make use of that same promise, that its glorious hope may stimulate us to endure—for endure we must.

To those of us living far down in the cool shadows of the day of salvation, the extreme cruelty borne by those warriors of old in the heat of the day seems almost unbearable. We wonder what would have been written of us had such been our test. Would we have left behind such a faithful and glowing record? Yet we possess the same knowledge, the same faith that was their strength. Shall we with our lesser trials grow fainthearted and murmur? Shame upon us that we falter at all, when our courageous brothers and sisters of that former age held unwaveringly to their faith! And though our trial be the opposite of theirs, though our test be the extreme indifference and total tolerance of a corrupt and godless world, let us realize that the strength we need to meet it successfully is the same. We are not called upon to suffer the galling bondage of a literal prison, but have we not many times felt the stifling confinement we create for ourselves by our own chains of sin? At times the power of sin seems so strong, and the desire to do right so weak, that we falter. Why are we in such a state? Because we have not kept written on our minds those soul-quicken- ing words, *Vita! Vita! Vita!* The hope of life forevermore fades from our vision; the present looms

large and real, and we give up to the powerful foe—our own selfish desires.

Or, at other times, we look at our circumstances and feel hemmed in. If only we had a better place and time, we could serve God better. But we must remember that all things are working together for our good, if we love God. And that which seemingly thwarts and holds us back is a means to our greater development, if we will but use it. What seems our greatest impediment may be the tool we need to develop patience and meekness and all the godly virtues necessary to obtain Life, Life, Life! These present circumstances are our training, our schooling for that life beyond, if we will only be exercised by them.

Perhaps the darkest dungeon into which we plunge during our struggle for freedom is some particular besetment that seems to bind us in spite of our masterful efforts to be free. We plunge deeper into the mire as we shamefully yield to the desire of the flesh which seems to say, "Thus far you may go and no further." It may be that we are reading that which is not upbuilding, or are paralyzing our effort by compromising our standard with the world around us. We lose sight of the prize, our feet slip and, alas! we find our-

selves in a pit of our own making. It is then that we must take up the sword of the Spirit and fight for our lives, for the battle with sin can be won only by an all-out effort.

If we desire to succeed, if we really want life in the world to come, let us cease building up the bars of discouragement, defeat and despair. Rather, let us do as did those early Christians, write upon our confining walls, "Life, life, life!" It can be ours! Let there be no more sad lamenting, "the work cannot be done." We shall find to our glad surprise that which held us back in the past melting away, and in its place we shall see the vision of that freedom for which we long. Can we not picture ourselves surrounded by our friends who with us have struggled for life standing on the evergreen shore of the ocean of eternity as it rolls in majestic splendor, each mighty wave disclosing a greater pleasure, a new cycle of ages in which we may enjoy the fruit of our labor? As we stand there, we shall ask ourselves, "What did I do to obtain all this? Was anything too much to sacrifice, even the fondest desire of my heart, for such boundless happiness?"

That will be life as God has planned it to be—life free from sorrow, pain and care. There we shall enjoy freedom from death, a glorious liberty that belongs only to the children of God Almighty. There in God's glorious world of tomorrow we shall experience delights beyond anything we can even imagine now.

As we freely mingle with the angelic hosts, listen to them as they relate experiences from their days of probation, and join in one thrilling jubilee after another, only then shall we begin to comprehend the true meaning of *Vita! Vita!*—life for evermore! □

*Even in the
dungeon, those early
Christians kept their
faith strong and their
hope undimmed.*



ON MEASURING TIME

A Study of the Ancient Hebrew Calendar (Concluded)

The Hebrew Months—By Name

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

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

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

First Kings 6:1 gives us the name of the *second* month: "And it

came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord."

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

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

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

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

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

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

year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month."

The *ninth* month was the month Kislev, mentioned by number in Jeremiah 36. Notice the details in this passage which identify the season of the year. "And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem.... Now the king sat in the winter-house in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him" (Jer. 36:9,22). This places the ninth month in the wintertime, and corresponds to our December or January.

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

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

THE HEBREW CALENDAR

The Jewish people used two basic calendars: SACRED CALENDAR — for sacred festivals.

CIVIL CALENDAR — official calendar of kings, childbirth, and contracts.

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

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

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

Night:

First Watch	Sunset to 9 P. M.
Second Watch	9 P. M. to Midnight
Third Watch	Midnight to 3 A. M.
Fourth Watch	3 A. M. to Sunrise

Day:

First Watch	Sunrise to 9 A. M.
Second Watch	9 A. M. to Noon
Third Watch	Noon to 3 P.M.
Fourth Watch	3 P. M. to Sunset

month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign."

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

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

That gives us all the months of the Hebrew year. All are mentioned in the Bible by number, ten by name. It is interesting to note, however, that all the names mentioned except that of the first month (Abib) occur in passages written *after* the return of the Jewish people from captivity. This suggests that the names could have been learned in Babylon and brought to Israel, that they did not originate in Israel.

Complications and Adjustments

Now there are a few complications in trying to match a lunar calendar with the four seasons, which are determined by the sun. On the Hebrew calendar, a lunar month was from new moon to new moon, which is 29 days, 12 hours and 44/100ths of a minute. Twelve of these months equal 354-1/4 days, which is approximately 11 days short of the solar year. If the Jews followed this calendar for

10 years, with a year of 354-1/4 days, soon their months would not correspond to the same seasons which they had formerly. Only a few more years and they would be celebrating their new year in the middle of the winter, and Abib instead of being "the spring or sprouting month" would be the month of rain and snow.

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

A Second (Autumnal) New Year

At some time, not noted in Scripture, the Hebrew people began observing a second new year which they still recognize today. This second new year (in the fall of the year) is often identified as their "civil" new year in contrast to the "sacred." This new year falls in the seventh month, known in ancient Israel as Tishri.

Why a second new year? The Encyclopedia gives us this information (under the heading, "Passover"): "The passover was kept in the month Abib in commemoration of the rescue of the Israelites by Jehovah out of Egypt which took place in that month. In order to make the season more remarkable, it was ordained that henceforth the month in which it took place should be reckoned the first of the national religious year. From that time accordingly the year began in the month Abib or

Nisan, March to April of our calendar, while the civil year continued to be reckoned from Tishri, September to October."

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

A note in Winston's Dictionary is of special interest. While this dictionary is not intended to be a religious dictionary at all, it does mention when the Hebrew people kept the new year and why. We quote: "During the exile, under the influence of the more scientific Babylonian calendar, the new year was observed in the spring month, Nisan, at the time of the equinox. During this time the memory of the old year was preserved by an ecclesiastical new year observed in the autumn." But then the dictionary goes on to say, "From the sixth to the first century B.C. the year began with Nisan." This brings us to the time of the birth of Christ.

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

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

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

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

The Effect of New Year Dating on the Weekly Sabbath

The Jewish people even today date their Passover from Abib. And yet they keep Saturday as the Sabbath, just as the Seventh Day Adventists do. But with the first new moon occurring on different days of the week from year to year, and the Sabbath being always seven days later, it is not possible to follow a seven-day sequence around the calendar from year to year, as our Saturdays do. Also, with all the shifts in the calendar that have occurred through the centuries, the Sabbath could not possibly fall on the same day as it did two thousand years ago. There were odd days at the end of each year, because the new moon began a new year. And the Sabbath was always the seventh day of the new year, the fourteenth day, the twenty-first day, and so on through the year.

About the Date of Christ's Birth

From the foregoing it should be evident that dates of festivals on the

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

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

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

Abib was the first month of the Jewish sacred year, as defined in the Hebrew Lexicon. It was the likely season for the political rulers to impose a census for tax purposes, for loyal Jews were under obligation to "observe the month of Abib." According to custom, Bethlehem was the town where the family of David assembled to carry out this command. You will remember David mentioned to Jonathan the yearly new moon feast for "all the family" (1 Sam. 20:5-6). It was this yearly feast for the family of David of which both Mary and Joseph were members that brought her to Bethlehem with a strong desire to observe the new moon of Abib when Christ was born.

This is all from the standpoint of reason. We cannot say that we know Christ was born the first day; but we know how precise God is in everything He does, and

all the evidence seems to point to the fact that He must have been born on the first day of Abib. At least we know He was born at that season of the year.

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

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

Feasts Still Observed

In the New Testament times they were still keeping some of the ancient Hebrew feasts. When Jesus was twelve years old, we read that Mary and Joseph, with Jesus, "went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast," the feast of the Passover (Luke 2:42).

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

To Summarize:

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

A solar year or tropical year as it is called on which the return of the seasons depends is the interval between two consecutive returns of the sun to the vernal equinox, and this tropical year consists of approximately 365 days, 5 hours,

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God's Love for His Own

"I cannot understand Isa. 43:4: 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.' Can you help me?"

Many passages of Scripture describe God's love for His people. They are His special treasure, His prized possession (Ex. 19:5-6). In describing His love for them He uses the most endearing of terms. "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me"; "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. 49:15-16). They are His jewels (Mal. 3:16-17), even His own sons and daughters (II Cor. 6:17-18).

The verse in question is another example of where the Prophet exhausts every symbol at his disposal to express the depth and power of God's love, and here it appears in a most spacious and universal context, drawn partly from the Prophet's knowledge of contemporary history and partly from his knowledge of the future. The Prophet is saying that there is nothing God will not give in exchange for His chosen ones.

But what about the idea of giving "men" and "people for thy life"? Is God just to require the life of one so that another can live?

Some Bible scholars read the Hebrew words translated "men" and "people" as "lands" and "coastlands." This alternate translation seems logical, because it is parallel with the previous statement (v. 3): "For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." Verse 4 may be taken as a second statement of the same fact, if the translation may be "lands" and "coastlands."

In a sense, God's giving lands or people for the sake of His own is according to what He has done in the past and also what He will do in the future. It was His will that the Canaanites be removed from their land, so that the land could be given to His people. God is the ultimate judge of who is worthy to live and who is not, but we can trust that His judgment is

always fair, and on a basis firmly established by His laws. Those not subject to Him count as very little in His scale of values. Whole nations before Him are as "the small dust of the balance:...behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing....All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity" (Isa. 40:15,17).

In spite of our instinct to regard all human life as sacred, this is not God's view of it. God is the Lord of all peoples, and may dispose of them as befits His long-range purpose. In the words of Hannah's prayer, "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up....He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness" (I Sam. 2:6,9). In this way it is not beyond the scope of His Divine justice to save one nation and destroy another...."Others died that you might live; I traded their lives for yours because you are precious to me and honored, and I love you" (Isa. 43:4, TLB).

♦ "Can anyone ever have eternal life?"

"In your magazine, volume 80, No. 2, on page 24, you quote much Scripture, which makes a lot of sense in the article, 'Who Are Amenable to Eternal Life?' Then you end with this statement: 'Only a complete obedience to the law of God will merit the reward of eternal life.'"

"According to this, can anyone ever have eternal life, when we read in Rom. 3:23 that 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,' and Rom. 3:10, 'There is none righteous, no, not one?' How can this seeming contradiction be resolved?"

You have asked a very thoughtful question: "Can anyone ever have eternal life?" Before considering details, let us look at a few very basic statements in Scripture: "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead...are equal unto the angels, neither can they die any more" (Luke 20:35). This assumes that some will inherit eternal life. Also the statement by the prophet Daniel, that "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life" (Dan.

12:2); also Jesus' statement in Revelation, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6). These are but a few statements among many which state definitely that some will receive eternal life.

Now let us look at the record of some of those who lived, and see if we can determine any individuals who qualified. In Hebrews 11 we read of a number of these. For example, "Enoch...had this testimony that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5). Noah "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (v. 7). Moses "forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." We read also that he "had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (vs. 24-27).

In Luke 1:6 we read of Zacharias and Elisabeth that they were "both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

In Revelation 14 we read of those who stand on mount Sion with Christ that they are "without fault before the throne of God...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (vs. 4-5).

How can these statements be harmonized with the verses you mentioned, which state that "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and "There is none righteous, no not one" (Rom. 3:23,10)? In Romans 3, Paul is describing our natural condition before God. We are all naturally sinners,

unregenerate, not pleasing to God. God calls us to rise above ourselves, to subdue our evil ways, to put off the old nature and put on the new (Eph. 4:22-24). In our natural state, we are not acceptable to God. But the Christian life is a growth. Paul speaks of growing up into Christ in all things: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15). And the apostle Peter says likewise, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Pet. 2:2).

In Romans 3, Paul was particularly addressing Jews who were making a show of keeping the law of Moses but at the same time were not conforming their lives to the standard of righteousness Christ required. In Matt. 23:25 Jesus denounced such hypocrisy saying, "Ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." Those Paul was addressing in Romans 3 were meticulously following an outward ritual but were not adhering to the righteousness of Christ, hence Paul could say, "There is none that seeketh after God...There is none righteous, no not one." But this does not say that we must remain in this ungodly, unrighteous condition. We can change, and God has provided the means and the circumstances by which we can change so that we can offer ourselves as a sacrifice acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1-2). □

ON MEASURING TIME

(Continued from Page 23)

48 minutes and 46 seconds. To bring the lunar year into approximate synchronization with the seasons in the solar year, it was necessary to add one month 7 times during a 19-year cycle. This causes the variation in dates. So it is impossible to synchronize exactly the two calendars; nor is it necessary that we do.

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

Should We Observe Abib First?

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

We today are not subject to the laws and ordinances

imposed upon the nation of Israel. The law of Moses was taken away, superseded by the greater law of faith and Christ.

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

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

Honoring Christ is our sacred privilege. □

ERRATTA - In our May issue, on page 24, column 2, paragraph 3, line 9 should read "that the waters 'were abated' in 'the *seventh* month,'" not the *second* month.

(Continued from page 13)

together to build a temple fit for the Almighty to inhabit, and a bridge long enough to convey him clear into eternity. Yet with the lapse of years the glint of spiritual adventure faded from his eye. The cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things crowded in, and, grown old and cold and complacent, his early decision: "I know that I can do the work, let me go up at once, for I can well conquer the giants of sin," was replaced by the defeatist's lament, "the work cannot be done, the evils of my nature are too strong to be conquered." He muses: Oh, I am certain I set altogether too high an ideal for myself. I might as well take these materials—my potential for spiritual growth and advancement—and build with them a woodshed. It may prove useful as a shelter, a "Jonah's gourd," to shield me from the heat of judicial displeasure, when I shall see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the faithful in the Kingdom, and I myself shut out. At best I can hope for no more than a partial reward, so I might as well content myself with that prospect, and take things easy.

Such an attitude is positively dangerous. One never shoots higher than he aims. This cowardly frame of mind must have dominated the thinking of each of the unfaithful who covenanted to serve God and then relaxed

their vigilance. The people said to Jeremiah: "There is no hope, [we] have loved strangers, and after them [we] will go" (2:25). And in Ezekiel's time the fainthearted among them reasoned: "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" (33:10). Compromising with evil always ends in disaster.

If we have allowed destructive thoughts to steal their way into our minds let us call a halt at once. Again and again let us state and re-state our objective. Let us say to ourselves: I am bound for the Kingdom, and nothing can turn me from my purpose. I know the work is great but it can be accomplished. It must be done, it has been done, and I myself can do it if I throw my entire energy into the task. The prize is too great to miss. I am persuaded that neither death nor life, things present nor things to come, height, depth, nor any other creature, can keep me from living a perfect life.

Let us through faith in God find the indestructible core of our integrity, determined that nothing can separate us from His love or divide us in the great work we have begun. Shishak, the flesh, may camp upon the borders of such a life watching for signs of spiritual decay, but he will watch in vain. The shields of gold will be safe. □

The Known Bible

The Known Bible...

has missed this issue, because of lack of space. We plan to give it an extra allotment in the July/August issue. The topic: *The Inspiration of the Bible*.

What Is Christianity?

*In the home, it is kindness;
In business, it is honesty;
In society, it is courtesy;
In work, it is fairness;
Toward the unfortunate, it is pity;
Toward the weak, it is help;
Toward the wicked, it is resistance;
Toward the strong, it is trust;
Toward the penitent, it is forgiveness;
Toward God, it is reverence and
obedience.*

No man is free who is not master of himself.

Happiness is a by-product of perseverance.



Day by Day

The sharp separation of our lives into days is a benign arrangement of the Creator. It gives to our finite capacity as much burden and opportunity as we can grasp at one time. Were there not such demarcations within our experience we should be lost amid the confusion of our unfinished past and distracted by our apprehensions of the unescapable future. But God sends us one little day at a time, fresh each morning. In the twilight He takes it back to Himself, graciously, and mostly to judge it for what it is. And if He sees fit, He sends us again another day, fresh and sweet, wherein, rested by sleep and fortified by prayer, our soul may give a better account of itself.

The best lessons a man can learn are from his own mistakes.

Until we desire God's way more than we desire our own, we are not likely to make much change.

Life is no fool's or sluggard's paradise into which we have wandered by chance, but a battlefield ordained from of old, where there are no spectators, but the youngest must take his side, and the stakes are life and death.

Decision

Some day, perhaps tomorrow, in the garden
Or at the well, or where the proud abide,
Your heart will either acquiesce or harden,
Will either close a door or fling it wide.

Some day, some wondrous moment, you will hear Him;
Then, out of all the things that men may do
Who had not learned before to love or fear Him,
There will remain these two alone for you.

Oh, He is strangely different from the brother
Who chose divergent paths and left you free.
You may not leave Him as you leave another
To differ partly, partly to agree.

Some day the door will close and you will leave Him,
Your fellowship come briefly to its rest;
Or else with new-found joy you will receive Him
Wholeheartedly forever as your Guest.

—Author Unknown.