



Megiddo Message

*As pants the hart for cooling streams
When heated in the race,
So pants my soul for Thee, O God,
And Thy transforming grace.*

A Time to Be Selfish

WE are individuals, free moral agents, free to make our own choices in life—and take the consequences. When we agree to serve God, we engage in a selfish task; we are responsible, for ourselves. I will not be called to answer for what you do, and you will not have to answer for me, or anyone else.

In the words of the apostle Paul, “We therefore make it our ambition, wherever we are, . . . to be acceptable to him. For we must all have our lives laid open before the tribunal of Christ, where each must receive what is due to him for his conduct in the body, good or bad” (II Cor. 5:10, NEB). Or as it is phrased in the Jerusalem Bible, “All the truth about us will be brought out in the law court of Christ, and each of us will get what he deserves for the things he did.”

Here is demonstrated the matchless wisdom and fairness of God, in blessing or punishing exactly according to what each one has done or failed to do. Nothing could be more just, or more generous. No good deed will go unrewarded; no evil will go unpunished.

To liberal twentieth century minds, this may sound very hard, narrow, and selfish. Aren't we as Christians supposed to love one another? Aren't we commanded to help one another, to bear with one another, to support, encourage and edify one another?

We are; but it is possible to be too concerned about others—and not enough concerned about ourselves. Paul admonished Timothy to be selfish when he wrote him to first “save thyself” and then “them that hear thee.” This is important, because the end benefit of all our efforts lies wholly with ourselves. We will either reap reward or suffer loss because of what *we* do.

We may give generously to help others—the church, the community, the unfortunate—but only *others* will benefit unless our hearts are right in the giving.

We may speak good, upbuilding words. But only the other person will benefit unless we open our own hearts to receive impression. Solomon spoke and wrote many excellent words that have reached even to us, but they were profitless to him—because his own heart was not touched by them.

We may use our hands to help others, but only *others* will benefit unless our motives and our thoughts are right.

We should thank God for all the advantages that are ours, all that He and others have done and are doing to help us, but unless we ourselves actually *use* these advantages to improve and purify ourselves, they will not avail to our salvation.

The Scriptures contain numerous examples of this truth. In the familiar phrase, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). In the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, did any laborer receive reward for what someone else had done? In the parable of the Talents, did the persons entrusted with the master's wealth decide to pool and divide equally the proceeds of their stewardship? The one talent man might have favored such a plan (he had nothing to lose!), but surely not the servant who had gained ten talents, or even the servant who had only five.

In the parable of the Ten Virgins, when the five foolish virgins said to their companions “Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out,” what was the response of their companions? They all had one answer: No. Why? Why such a heartless refusal? Wasn't this being selfish? Perhaps, but there is a time to be selfish. There is a time when selfishness is a virtue.

This is essentially a selfish world. Even though we are commissioned to love and help each other, God has made us responsible for ourselves. It is a hard fact that each of us must recognize and live with, grow with, suffer with, die with. I must fight my own battles, face my own temptations, be rewarded for my own achievements and suffer the consequences of my own failures.

When we stand at the bar of judgment, we will be on our own. The record brought forth will be all in our own handwriting, signed and sealed by us. Only our own testimony will justify or condemn us.

I will have to answer for my record, and only I will receive what my lifework has merited.

Yes, it is selfish. But when all is said and done, who would want it any other way?

MM

Megiddo means . . .

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

—in God the Creator of all things, all men, and all life.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as being our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in all mankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of fulfilling the precepts and principles given us in the Word of God, thus perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible Quotations

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

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NAS—New American Standard

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

RV—Revised Version

About Our Cover

Our cover photo was taken above the Chittenango Falls, at Chittenango Falls State Park, New York, by Mr. and Mrs. David Sutton.

Megiddo Message

Vol. 73, No. 7

July/August, 1986

Editorial

A TIME TO BE SELFISH

Personal accountability is God's plan

2

Sermon

LIVING WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY

Repeated warnings should alert us

4

Article

A TIME OF CRISIS

8

Series

EVERY DAY, EVERY DAY

11

Article

AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT?

12

The role of Elijah as Christ's messenger and herald

Lines to Live By

14

Articles

IF A MAN LIVES . . . CAN HE DIE?

16

The popular belief in the immortal soul does *not* come from the Bible.

So What Do You Know?

BE-ATTITUDES FOR ALL

19

Questions and Answers

24

Concerning:

Is Physical Death the Result of Adam's Sin?

Do We Sin Because We Fear Death?

Did Adam and Eve Actually Live?

Letters

26

Finally, Brethren

ARE YOU EASY TO LIVE WITH?

27

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

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106.

The **MEGIDDO MESSAGE** (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: One year, eleven issues, \$2.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

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

Living with a Sense of Urgency

Scripture Reading: Rom. 13:7-14

SHORTLY before the outbreak of the Civil War in this country, a thoughtful observer wrote a book which he called "The Impending Crisis." In this book the author pointed to numerous factors which he saw building toward the inevitable: civil war. His purpose was to awaken people to a sense of urgency. The danger was not far off but imminent; it was a time of crisis, a time that called for everyone's patriotic best.

We today find ourselves living in another time of impending crisis, a crisis unequalled in the history of the world. While it will affect all people of the earth worldwide, the national or international aspects of it are not so much our concern as the consequences that it will bring upon each of us personally. Never before in the history of God's people has the arrival of the Great King been so imminent. Never before has any one lived so near the glorious reality of the great things we have been waiting for. Never has the dawning of God's New Day been so near as it is this very moment. Our time has been truly called the time of the "end"—it is the end of an age, the end of a dispensation in the plan of God, the end of the era of man's rule upon earth—and, most meaningful to us, the end of opportunity as we now know it.

It is a momentous time, bringing as it does the closing of the first phase of God's great plan for this earth.

It is a solemn time. Well we know that the arrival of this "end" will bring the hour when those who are accountable shall be called to stand in the presence of Him whom they call Lord, to receive for the things which they have done or failed to do.

God has provided an abundance of evidence that we

are in the "end" time. We have not been left to wonder or guess. We are not in darkness that that Day should find us unprepared. We have been warned, and warned, and warned. If we have not heard and heeded the warnings, we have only ourselves to blame.

God Always Warns

This is one of the outstanding features of God's fairness in dealing with His human family. He punishes; He judges; He removes from the scene of action those who oppose His plans. And ultimately He will do away with all who offend, to make room for the new and better order, those who are eager to submit themselves to His righteous laws.

But never does He punish or judge without warning.

There is something very special about warnings. They carry a message of concern, of caring, even of love. Enemies do not warn. Someone who warns us is on our side and is looking out for our best interests. A warning tells us that there is something unfavorable ahead that we might not be aware of—and which we *can avoid*. By warning us, they are saying that disaster is not inevitable, that there *is* a way out—if only we will take the proper course of action.

Warnings are for our safety. Parents warn children against countless dangers of which they are unaware—things too hot, too hard, too sharp, too cold, too high, too deep. Highway signs warn drivers. There are signs that absolutely forbid a specific action, such as "No Parking," "No Standing," "No Left Turn," and "No Stopping Except for Repairs." There are other signs that alert to danger, such as "Caution" or "Slow Down," "Dangerous Crossing" or "Blind Drive," "Sharp Curve" or "Falling Rock Zone." No safe or sane driver will disregard the message of these signs.

Warnings are meant to be appreciated. A warning sign of "Bridge Out" will be welcomed by the driver

Note: *Living with a Sense of Urgency* is available as a complete church service on cassette. Price: \$3.00

who wants to arrive home safely. The warning sign tells him there is another way than to plunge into the rocky abyss. Just so do God's warnings inform us. They tell us we need not meet disaster. There is another way, a better way—a way of escape.

Warnings also tell us that we are not self-sufficient, that we need help. They tell us that someone knows more than we do, someone is more aware, more informed, or more perceptive—else how could they warn us? In accepting a warning we are recognizing this fact. We are saying, in effect, "You know more than I do, and I'm thankful that you do—I'll listen."

This should be our response to God's warnings. And whatever means He uses to deliver His warnings, we should appreciate them.

Ministers to Warn

Delivering God's warnings has been the special ministry of God's spokesmen through the ages; each has had a divinely appointed duty to "hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me" (Ezek. 33:7).

From the writings of the apostle Paul we know how diligent he was in performing this part of his ministry. Take, for example, his first letter to the Corinthian brethren. The letter contains many a stinging rebuke. They were deep in sin. They needed to be informed of the error of their ways and of the grievous end of sin, that "the wages of sin is death." This is why Paul wrote these entreating words: "I write not these things to shame you," he said, "but as my beloved sons I warn you" (I Cor. 4:14). Notice how warmly he addressed them: my "beloved sons." Paul cared for them with a tender, fatherly care. He wanted to see them have the best, but he knew also that if they were to have it they would have to change. If they continued on in their present course, they would come to ruin.

Each God-appointed prophet, apostle, pastor and teacher through the ages has shared in this responsibility. Each has been divinely commissioned to "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 58:1). Their duty was to alert to the consequences of disobedience, to warn of approaching judgments upon sin, and stir God's people to *action*. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Micah; even Jesus, Peter, Paul and John—all delivered warnings from God. It was their special duty to announce that disaster was approaching *but that its dreadful consequences were not inevitable*. There was still opportunity to escape; something could still be done—if it was done *immediately*.

Never does God judge or punish without first warning.

Which brings us to the most important aspect of any warning: *urgency*.

Urgency in Warnings

Any warning, to be of value, must incite a feeling of urgency. A warning without urgency is no warning at all. If the weather-watchers discovered a hurricane over the Gulf of Mexico rapidly traveling toward the coast of Texas, and made only a casual statement of its existence, their announcement could hardly be called a warning. A warning to be effective must tell of danger and *demand response—immediately*; something needs to be done, and done quickly, because time is limited.

God has intended that His people in every age should live with a sense of urgency. Always His words and His warnings convey the message that there is much to be done, and only a limited time in which to do it. How else can He overpower the human tendency to delay, to postpone, to take things casually?

Long ago He made known His plans for a new and glorious world, with "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." But before that new world can become a reality, there will be a time of decision, of separation, of judgment both for His own and for the world at large.

As the end of the age draws nearer and nearer, our primary concern is with the approaching Day of judgment, when He shall gather His servants, when He shall "separate them one from another, as the shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The time separating us from that great event is limited. No one in any age has ever had opportunity longer than the extent of their natural life, which is at best uncertain; and we today face the further reality of the end of the age upon us. Who should not feel the urgency of this hour!

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). We shall be called to stand, with only the record of our life to speak for us.

The arrival of that hour is sure; and its verdict will be final. Do we wonder why God is so insistent in warning us? By warning us He is saying that there is danger of not standing. He is saying also that there *is* a

A warning tells us that there is something unfavorable ahead and that it can be avoided.

way to stand, there *is* a way to escape the dreadful consequences of rejection, that there *is* a way to have that solemn event the opening of a door to everything beyond, to life and joy and happiness that will be as enduring as eternity!

The thought should stir us with a sense of responsibility here and now; more, it should stir us with a sense of urgency, a realization that opportunity is not forever, and that what we do must be done *now*.

Living with a sense of urgency may be difficult for us in this day when the spirit of complacency is so prevalent, when the "all things continue as they were" philosophy dominates mankind.

But never has there been a time when God did not want His people to feel the urgency of the time—how much more as we "see the day approaching"!

Let Us Pray . . .

O Thou Eternal One, whose presence bright all space doth occupy, all motion guide; unchanged through time's all devastating flight, Thou only God! there is no God beside.

We come into Thy presence this morning with hearts overflowing with gratitude for Thy abundant goodness to us. We thank Thee for the gift of life and the countless opportunities it brings; for the gifts of body and mind, and the numberless blessings that attend us. We thank Thee especially for the knowledge we have of Thy Word, and for the circumstances Thou dost allow to teach us what we need to learn.

O Thou Omnipotent One, who hast entrusted to us the sacred gift of life, grant us also a due sense of responsibility in using that life. Help us to be constantly aware of the limited nature of our time, that our day of opportunity will close just as surely as it began, and we be obliged to face our record as it stands, either to our

Urgency Not Natural

Why is this sense of urgency hard to develop? Why is it hard for us to feel the urgency of the time? It is because we are so bound to our world of sense. We tend to be confident of what we see, and to think that it will always be. When it is sunny and warm, we forget entirely the feel of drenching rain. The same is true of circumstances—when they are favorable, we do not concern ourselves with the reverses that may come.

We are so accustomed to judging by what our senses tell us, as though that were all there is. But is this right? Does it not occur to us that there are realities *beyond* the reach of our senses? Can we not be just as sure—even more sure—of the things that are not seen—which God has promised—simply because *God has given His Word*? In fact, the things not seen are a thousand times *surer* than the things known to our senses—can we not believe it?

The decision is ours. God does not force us to believe. He does not compel us to respond. But let us not think for a moment that our unbelief will change His plans or save us from facing the events that are coming—any more than the unbelief of ancient Israel changed His plans for them. The apostle Paul pointed up this fact in his Epistle to the Romans: "What if some

eternal joy or unspeakable sorrow. In view of this fact, may we be scrupulously careful of what we allow ourselves to do, that our labor for Thee be not in vain.

Help us to see the value of the life we now possess, and not to count any day as ordinary, or any experience as unimportant. Each hour is laden with eternal consequences; it makes a difference to all eternity whether we do right or wrong today.

Father, we pray Thee to imbue us with a sense of urgency this morning which we cannot forget, which will act as a constant stimulus to right thoughts, right attitudes and right motives in everything we do and compel us to live every moment as in Thy sight.

We pray Thy help and support through every trying hour. Be with each and every one of Thy people, wherever they may be, who are making an earnest effort to do right.

And may a sense of urgency stir each of us to a deeper dedication to the faith we profess, a closer examination of ourselves and a more careful walk in the straight and narrow way, that we may know the joy of full acceptance in the great and final Day to come and receive a place of eternal honor in Thy eternal Kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid" (Rom. 3:3-4).

We are free moral agents, masters of our own destiny. We may close our eyes and ears to the evidence that is fairly screaming at us, and say blithely that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Or, worse still, we may join with those who say "My Lord delays his coming," but whatever we think will affect only ourselves. The Day of the Lord is coming.

Always, in all ages, God wanted His people to live with a sense of urgency. Though He clearly revealed that the Second Advent would not be at that time, the New Testament is filled with admonitions to act and act immediately. There was no time to lose.

What are our thoughts on the Second Coming of Christ? Is it an event that we casually accept, or is it a certainty that is with us constantly, a part of our very being?

We are aware, of course, that only God knows the day and hour, but Jesus described in some detail the conditions that would prevail just before His second appearing. He said, among other things, that His coming would be in a time such as it was in the days of Noah. What was the attitude of the people before the flood? What were they doing? We do not know a lot of particulars, but we do know they scoffed and ridiculed Noah. Are not the majority very much the same today? In Noah's time they went right on living in their own routine, worldly ways, giving no thought to the impending end of their world. Are not people today doing the same?

The Test of Not Knowing When

One point always observable in God's warnings is this: that never does He disclose exactly *when* a judgment will come. We might feel that His warnings would have had more effect if He had told *when* to expect judgment. Why does He withhold information that would seem so useful?

But perhaps, on second thought, He knows us better than we know ourselves. Perhaps He means in this way to separate real believers from those who give only casual assent. Perhaps He means to distinguish the whole-hearted, obedient ones from those who might respond only to save their life at the moment. Again, it may be that He wants His people to be constantly on the alert, to be ready *whenever* He may choose to act.

Through the ages God has appeared to use this singular means of instilling a sense of urgency in His people, the anxiety of not knowing. No one in the antediluvian world knew *exactly when* the flood was coming. No

Opportunity is not forever; what we do must be done NOW.

one in Sodom knew *exactly when* the fire would fall. No one living in Judah in the days immediately before the Captivity knew *exactly when* or how the terrible predictions of Jeremiah would meet their vivid and awesome fulfillment. Nor did they concern themselves unduly about them. No one living in Jerusalem in the first century knew *exactly when* the city would fall, or how it would happen. All were warned, but no details were available as to exactly *how* or *when*. Consequently, the majority chose to disregard the warnings, to take their chances and live in the bliss of forgetfulness.

But human forgetfulness did nothing to alter the divine plan, and in each case the predicted calamity came—in due time—exactly as predicted.

We look back upon these people and denounce them for their folly. How needless for all those thousands to perish in the destruction of Jerusalem—when they could have escaped so easily in advance! How foolish were those Israelites in the days before the Captivity, to pay no heed to God's prophets, and continue as though nothing could happen! What willful blindness! What savage unbelief!

But—how much different is *our* situation today? How mindful are *we* of the warnings that have been given us? Ahead of us is a time of trouble the like of which has never been since there was a nation. Are we living as though we believed it? In the words of the book of Hebrews, "How shall we escape"—any more than those of other ages—"if we neglect so great salvation," if we turn a deaf ear to the warnings *we* have received!

Was prophecy ever any more definite than that which concerns the events which have been predicted for *our* day—the Second Advent of Christ and His auspicious herald, the Resurrection of the dead in Christ, the Judgment of the covenant-makers, and the inauguration of a new worldwide government on the earth? Did the things written aforetime ever apply more precisely than they do right now?

Who can read the inspired words of God's prophets for our day and remain complacent? For whom did Zephaniah speak when he wrote, centuries ago, "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly"? Or for whom were these words of Habakkuk

***Is the Second Coming an event
that we casually accept, or is it
a certainty that is with us constantly,
a part of our very being?***

ever more meaningful: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth. . . . For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Hab. 2:2-3).

We have been warned. We can *avoid* the fatal mistake of so many who have gone before us, who failed to take seriously the warning of God until calamity was upon them. The coming Day can be for us the most glorious event we can imagine—and far more! It can bring to us the fruition of all our hopes, and deliverance

from all that vexes and grieves us here. It can be, if . . .

If we maintain a sense of urgency in our lives from day to day, hour to hour that compels us to give every day our maximum best. There is just no escaping our responsibility. And there is just no escaping the impending crisis that hangs over us. Never has time been so precious—or so short. Never has our obligation for right attitudes, right thoughts, right feelings, right doing been more urgent than at this very moment. We have no time for any side-tracks, back-tracks, or off-tracks. Why? Because we are at the time of the end, and it is a matter of life or death; eternal life or eternal death.

Feeling the Urgency

What is a feeling of urgency? One of the best illustrations of urgency comes from the military world. When young men are learning to become military parachutists, they tell them a little story about how important urgency is. "When a plane is flying along at twelve hundred and fifty feet and you jump out," they say, "if your parachute does not open in eight seconds you will die. Right there they get your attention. And they say that for the normal man it takes something like four

A Time of Crisis

WE ARE living in a time of crisis. Long ago the inspired writers forewarned that there would be times of crisis at the close of this age, days of desperation, days of difficulty, days of stress. "You must realize that in the last days the times will be full of danger" (II Tim. 3:1, Phillips). Or as it is worded in the New English Bible, "The final age of this world is to be a time of troubles."

The prophet Daniel was divinely pre-informed of this same critical age. When he asked to learn more,

the angel replied, "Ask no more, Daniel, for the revelation is to be kept secret and close, till the crisis at the close" (Dan. 12:9, Moffatt).

The word "crisis" has a significant history. In Chinese the word is composed of two pictures (Chinese writing is made up of painted pictures which illustrate the ideas of the words they represent): one means danger; the other, opportunity. Thus a crisis in Chinese is a "dangerous opportunity." In French the word is *krinein*, which means "to separate." In Greek, the word for crisis is

krisis, meaning "judgment." Thus, a crisis is a time of judgment, an examination time, a proving time.

A crisis is a testing time, a time of separation, a time in which we are tried by dangerous opportunities. As free moral agents we are free to make either the right or the wrong choice. Let us choose our opportunities, and watch our choice!

Are we standing ready, at such a time as this? Today we have before us this challenging question. Today, while momentarily expecting the arrival of Christ's forerunner, Elijah, and Christ Himself, in this the tarrying time, could there be an era of more complete abandon to wickedness, immorality and vice? Hippolytus, a great teacher of the second century, stated that the great Prophet would come at a time of "surpassing wickedness and impiety." And isn't this just such a time?

This is a trying time, the most

seconds to realize that something is amiss with his parachute. Eight minus four equals four. And then they say that for the normal man it takes about three seconds to activate the reserve parachute. Many people imagine that if one parachute doesn't work, you just pull a cord and the other one pops out and saves you. Well, that's not the case. You've got to reach down in there and get that reserve parachute, throw it out, and hope that it opens. And that takes three seconds. So eight minus four minus three equals one. The moral of the story is that you have one second to lose!"

This is the kind of urgency we need as we think about the condition of the world today, and—most important—about the condition of our own lives in the sight of God.

Urgency generates concern, and concern leads to action.

As we face each extended day of opportunity, the question should be constantly upon our minds: What can I do *today* to prepare me for the Day that is coming? What can I do to increase my chances of being accepted when I must stand before Him?

Yes, what does God want me to do? What does He see that I must do? How can I correct that which is lacking in my faith? What can I do to overpower the

***Urgency generates concern,
and concern leads to action.***

sins that beset me? How can I build up where I am weak?

God is just, but His justice will not allow Him to overlook any imperfections in us. His justice means that He will compare us with the standard He has fixed. If we measure up to that standard, we will win. If we fail to measure up to it, we will lose. But in either case, His judgment will be final; there will be no second chance and no appeal.

Should we not feel the urgency of this hour? As someone has said, we will have all eternity to enjoy the fruits of our victory—but we have only one short hour before sunset to win it!

We do not know what tests lie ahead for each of us, but know we will be tested. Let us seize the opportunities with which the present hours are laden, and be desperately serious each and every day about our own

(Continued on page 10)

trying of all times, when the world at large is lost in a sea of religious confusion, a multiplicity of faiths, and an almost unprecedented bewilderment, uncertainty and turmoil. We cannot deny that these are fear-filled days, even perilous times spoken of by Paul in his second letter to Timothy. Facts and figures prove it. The hours of the Day of salvation are fast running out.

States of mind are infectious, and we shall do well not to be affected by the thinking of the world around us. One of our greatest dangers in this age is the slow attrition of time, the waiting for a sign from heaven. People have waited expectantly for a sign from heaven; and when the day lengthens, the inner voice whispers, "My lord delayeth his coming."

But such an attitude will never prevail in the heart of the true

believer. A time of crisis calls for a greater degree of faith, a fuller consecration and an unrelenting endurance. But great tests promise great reward. God has provided some better thing for us. Said Jesus: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Times never have been and never will be "just right" to work out our salvation, not until the Millennial reign of Christ ushers in a new age. To wait for a more favorable time and condition is to die waiting. The saints of old never waited for times to improve but used the time available to improve themselves. They realized the need of improving the time. Good living—even the best—is possible in the worst of times, as the history of God's chosen eloquently proves.

In a time of crisis Queen Esther dared go before the king to seek

deliverance for her people, even though she knew very well that her life was at the caprice of the king. What if she had thought the time not "just right" to appear before him?

And what of us, if we do not think *our* time just right to serve our God?

If our life, our will, has been completely surrendered and we have learned to stand in the strength of Jehovah, our faith and courage will not fail. "He only who has clean hands and a heart unstained, who never sets his mind on what is false, who never breaks his word; he gains a blessing from the Eternal."

We are in a dangerous crisis today. At any time we may find ourselves facing an external crisis, a dangerous opportunity. To try to avoid such crises by setting up our own defense is as useless as seeking

shelter under a tree in a hard summer shower. This life and this time is meant for testing.

At such times we must remember to seek the help of God. There are times in life when the dangerous path is the only path, and there is nothing to do but follow it through. But however dangerous may be the path over which God sends us, we have one never failing consolation:

THERE can be no pure gold without the refiner's fire; there can be no steel without the heat of the blast furnace; there is no statue without the harshness of hammer and chisel; there can be no diamond without the keen edge of the cutter's tool; and there can be no character for the ages without the intense heat of tribulation.

BUT when we are victorious and look back upon it, who would will it otherwise?

that He goes with us, and with Him every step becomes an opportunity—an opportunity to walk closer to God.

"You know what this Crisis means, you know it is high time to

waken up; for Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. It is far on in the night, the day is almost here; so let us drop the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us live decorously as in the open light of day—no revelry . . . or sensuality, no quarrelling or jealousy. No, put on the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and never think how to gratify the cravings of the flesh" (Rom. 13:11-14, Moffatt Bible).

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Living with a Sense of Urgency

(Continued from page 9)

spiritual growth. Let us tell ourselves over and over and over again that these things are real, these things are true, these things are sure, that the only uncertainty lies with us. God will give us the strength, the opportunity and the time we need, but we cannot expect Him to extend our time infinitely while we dally along, or put off the really intense work of mastering ourselves. When the time is right, He will break the long silence and act, and we shall either stand or fall according to what we have done or failed to do.

Brethren, the time is precious. Brethren, the time is short.

*Some year will be the last year,
Some day will be the last day,
Some hour will be last hour
Of this appointed time;*

*Christ with the holy angels
Will come in clouds of glory
And ev'ry eye shall see Him—
Oh! advent hour so nigh!*

*Be ye therefore ready!
Be ye therefore ready!
For ye know not the day nor the hour
When the Son of man shall come!*

In Time?

MAN, from very early times, tried to invent a reliable method of keeping track of time, as time is very important in all our lives.

How many times a day do we glance at the clock, or our watch, to see what time it is. Is it time to get up? Is it time for breakfast? Is it time for the meeting? Will I make it to work on time? And so it goes, on and on throughout the whole day. We even set our clocks a few minutes ahead to give us a little extra prod to get going!

Important as all these times are to us, we as life-seekers have one time which is more important to us than all the others, and this is: Are we going to finish the work in time for the Lord's return?

We need daily to review our progress, for as many a business which relied on an annual financial statement has discovered to their sorrow, the information came too late to take corrective action. A daily financial statement in certain businesses is the only way in which to tell what direction the business is headed.

The modern computer can do this task with ease if the information on sales and purchases for the day is punched in correctly.

We are in such a business, where daily review is essential to keep to the straight and narrow way. Annual reports could be disastrous. Let us keep a finger on our pulse to make sure we are healthy and robust in the things of the Lord, and headed in the right direction.

—Contributed

GOD often entrusts us with a little to see what we will do with a lot.

Every Day, Every Day

Grace and Peace, the Spiritual Twins

The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. It is the regular salutation of friends in the Orient and in the Middle East. The city of peace is known as Jerusalem (*Jeru-shalom*).

The apostle Paul interlocked "grace" and "peace." Seldom did he use them separately, because he knew that when the grace of God (His law of life) dominates a man, the by-product is peace, harmony, and serenity. When one's inner being is pulsating with divine life, the heart is calm.

Here are some texts where the Great Apostle place these spiritual twins side by

side: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:7); "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 1:3); "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (II Cor. 1:2). In all 13 of his letters, Paul opens with this sublime partnership of grace and peace. The pairing of these terms implies that if we have grace in our hearts we will have peace, and if we have real peace it is because of grace.

Long-suffering Turns Tragedy into a Teacher

"We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Rom. 5:3-4)

Tribulations are common to everyone. No person is exempt from the rough places of life. These tribulations, however, can help us develop patience, and this patience brings experiences that add life-building blocks to our character.

By exercising long-suffering in the midst of tribulation, we learn lessons the Lord wants to teach us—lessons that come from no other source. If we get our eyes on the storm, we become fear-ridden and fretful. But by patience and persistence we can see the handwriting of the Lord on the cloud, and learn what He wants to teach us.

The breadth of our mastery of the virtue of long-suffering depends on the breadth of tribulations through which we have come triumphantly, with patience.

Our lessons from experience are the best credentials of spiritual maturity and greatness of character. Those serve best who have long-suffered most.

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

As a Thief in the Night?

The Role of the Prophet Elijah as Part of the Second Advent

WE have received this question from a friend in Australia:

"Truly the signs of the times indicate that the coming of the Lord is near. However, there have been quite a number of people we have talked with who do not accept that Elijah will come first to warn the world of God's judgments that are coming on the earth. Some say the prophecy of Malachi 4:5 was fulfilled at Jesus' first coming, that Jesus said John the Baptist was the Elijah which was to come.

"It has been said by others that as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when Jesus comes, when the floods came and swept them all away, except Noah and his family. Also they quote that Jesus is to come 'as a thief in the night.' Could you please comment."

For our information on the coming of Elijah before the Second Advent of Christ we have two clear Scripture prophecies, one by the prophet Malachi (4:5-6) and one by Jesus (Matt. 17:11).

Was the prophecy of Malachi 4:5 fulfilled by John the Baptist at the time of Christ's first coming? The answer is no, this cannot possibly be true. There are too many details given which would conflict with such a view.

Consider the following:

1) Malachi describes the advent of Christ as the "great and dreadful day of the Lord." Christ's first coming, announced by angels; His ministry of teaching and healing; His submitting to His persecutors, even to crucifixion; His being resurrected and forty days later being carried to heaven by angels—none of this could be described as "the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

2) Malachi further states what will cause some of the terror and dread of that day: the "proud" and "wicked" will both meet destruction at the hand of a righteous God. We read: "Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1). Here is a prophecy unmistakably *unfulfilled*. The "proud" and "they that do wickedly" have not yet been reduced to a level where they do not remain, "root nor branch." Notice especially that the prophecy concerns "all" of each category.

3) Malachi also states that those who fear the Lord shall see "the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." This prophecy is likewise unfulfilled.

4) Jesus said in Matthew 17:11, "Elias truly shall first come"—

Elijah was *still to come*, and Jesus said this *after John the Baptist had been beheaded*.

The Mission of Elijah

As to the mission of Elijah, Malachi states it symbolically in these words: "And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:6). Jesus says only that Elijah must "first come, and restore all things." Left alone, both statements leave much open to question and discussion.

However, we have more information than this, because we have numerous prophecies to which we can relate the above two statements, prophecies that tell us of the condition of the world at the time of Christ's second advent (i.e., at the time of Elijah's coming); also prophecies of the work Christ will perform when He comes. Knowing these, we can know what work will need to be done by *someone*, prior to the arrival of Christ, and who is more likely to perform those tasks than the returning prophet Elijah?

For example, we have the prophecy of the apostle Paul in II Tim. 3:1-4, that the time of the end will be a time of surpassing wickedness, godlessness, and general peril. Into such a world Christ will come—as will Elijah. And if any of the masses

of mankind are to escape swift destruction, lest they be smitten "with a curse," isn't it reasonable to think that Elijah will enlighten them and in this way rescue a few who will submit who would have otherwise perished?

We have also the prophecy of Christ, that when He returns, faith among mankind will be at an all-time low. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Part of Elijah's mission, then, will be the reviving of faith, convincing the world by demonstrations of divine power that God is, and that they will either have to submit to His judgments and His will, or die.

Again, we know that the majority of God's servants who will be called to judgment to receive for the reward of their life work, will have died, and before they can meet Christ and be judged they must be resurrected. In I Thessalonians 4 we are told that those who are living at the time Christ comes will have no priority over those who sleep; hence, those sleeping in Christ must be awakened. Now if they are to be awake and ready to "meet the Lord in the air" when He shall appear, does it seem reasonable that *Christ* will resurrect them? Is it not more logical that the work will be done in advance by someone divinely empowered, either by angels or, more likely, by Christ's forerunner, Elijah? Given the power commanded by Elijah during his mortal career, it surely is not beyond reason to conclude that Elijah will be the one assigned this great work as a direct part of his commission of preparing the way for Christ.

We have also the knowledge of the mission of John the Baptist, and the two are clearly said to be parallel. Of the mission of John the Baptist we have several prophecies in the Old Testament (cf. Isaiah 40)

which tell of what he would do. The prophecies were fulfilled, and John came preaching "repentance" a full six months in advance of Christ, also telling the people that "After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, . . . whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" (John 1:15, 30, 27). Again he said, "He that cometh after me is preferred before me" ("is my superior"—*Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) (John 1:15). Clearly, his mission was to announce who would follow—just as Elijah will announce the imminent arrival of Christ.

As It Was in the Days of Noah

The comparison between the days of the coming of Christ and the

"Elijah truly shall first come"—Jesus said this after John the Baptist had been beheaded.

days of Noah is a point made by Jesus Himself: "As it was in the days of Noah, . . . so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man." As it was, so shall it be. Today we see the first part of this prophecy fulfilled and know that the actual visiting of destruction upon the workers of iniquity and the saving of the few who believe will also be fulfilled.

Also parallel with the days of Noah is God's plan to warn those who will take heed and save their lives. In the time of Noah, Noah himself was the one sent to warn—he was a "preacher of righteousness," though we know from the number who entered the ark that his message was not widely believed. Just so will Elijah be sent to warn the nations of the

coming of Christ, but his message, too, will fall, for the most part, on deaf ears.

As a Thief in the Night

As for Christ's coming as a "thief in the night," upon first thought it does seem contradictory to say that Christ is coming as a thief and then to say also that His coming will be announced by a messenger who will herald the news of His coming worldwide.

However, if we carefully look at the context of both thoughts, there is no conflict. Each thought is intended to make a point pertinent to those who will be living in the era of the coming of the Son of man.

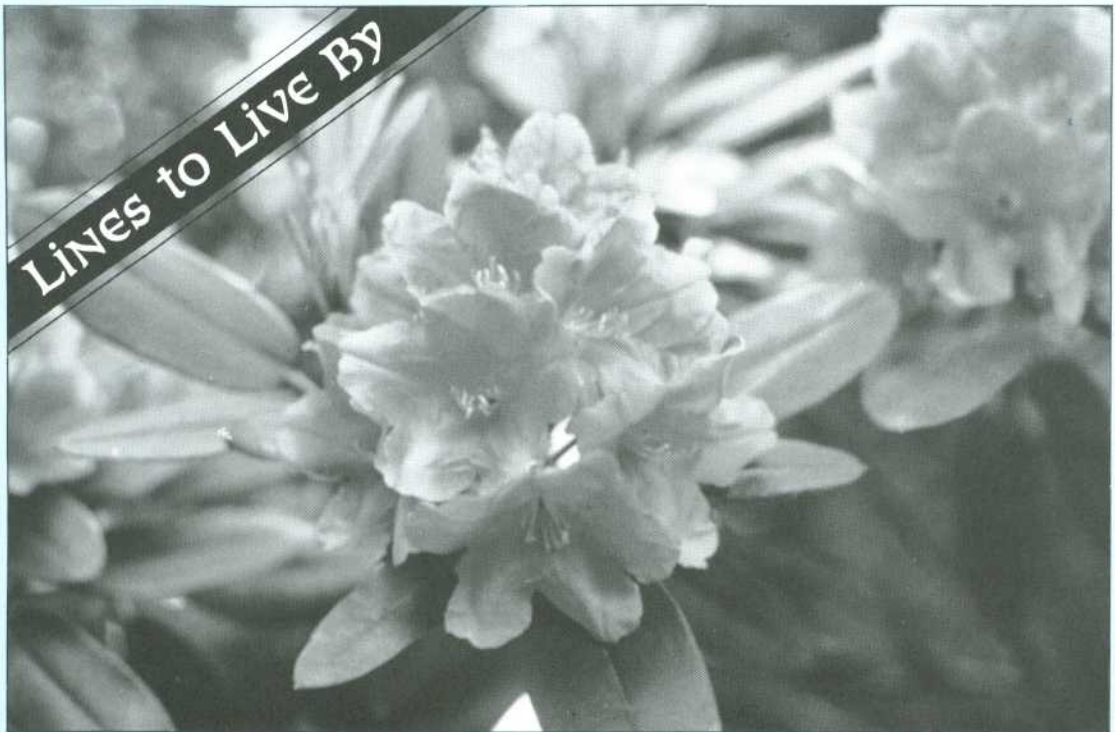
Let us consider first the different passages that speak of Christ coming "as a thief in the night." We want to notice, in particular, to whom they were spoken, and what was the intended force of the statement.

One text is in the Second Epistle of Peter, where the Apostle refers to the world at large, the world that shall be destroyed: "The Lord is . . . longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (II Pet. 3:9-10). What is the Apostle's point? That the second coming of Christ is to arrive "as a thief in the night," so shocking, so sudden, so unexpected it will be to the world at large.

How can this be true, considering the mission of Elijah?

We know first of all that Elijah's mission is not going to have a high rate of success, because even after Christ comes and men *see* the Judgments of God meted out, only one out of three worldwide will submit (Zech. 13:8). This might indicate that *less than* a third will pay attention to the message of Elijah.

A second testimony that speaks
(Continued on page 22)



NEEDED:

One who has self-confidence but does not show it.
One who can be courteous in the face of discourtesy.
One who keeps his word and his temper.
One who wins respect by being respectful and respectable.
One who understands people and can make himself understood.
One who has a steady eye, a steady nerve, a steady tongue and steady habits.
One who is silent when he has nothing to say.

SOMETIMES, when all life's lessons have been learned
And we have overcome the sins that oft beset,
The things which our weak judgments once had spurned,
The things o'er which we grieved with lashes wet
Will flash before us out of life's dark night
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue;
And we shall see how all God's plans were right,
And how what seemed reproof was love most true.

The Charter of Salvation

*WAIT, Christian, wait, in quiet contemplation
Before His throne, where grace and truth hold sway.
Lift up your hearts in holy adoration,
As now to Him with heart and mind you pray.
Wait, Church of God, it is thy preparation
On earth to strive in faith to speed His day.*

*Speak, Christian, speak, His message clear proclaiming
To hearts in grief and broken by the wrong.
Hold high His truth, God's grace fore'er retaining,
God's answer true, to each and to the throng.
Speak, Church of God, nor cease thy testimony
Till wrong is gone and all to God belong.*

*Go, Christian, go, forward to thy salvation
When all the nations, torn by war and hate,
Shall have a part in God's great new creation
And peace shall rule in ev'ry land and state.
Go, Church of God, and by holy consecration
Till Christ shall come, and one bright world create.*

—Selected.

POINTS FOR THE MONTH

- Week 1:** Humility is the root of all heavenly virtues.
- Week 2:** Humbleness is always grace; meekness always strength.
- Week 3:** Be careful of your thoughts; they may break into words at any time.
- Week 4:** Three great maxims: know thyself; control thyself; deny thyself.

If A Man Lives . . . Can He Die?

The Question of Immortality

By Edward William Fudge

*Where did
belief in the
immortal
soul originate?*

WHILE the linguists and exegetes hammer out a definition of "eternity," popular preachers and men in the pew are often talking about a different subject. Their attention is focused on man himself, and particularly on that unseen "part" commonly called his "soul." Physical death cannot touch this element of man's being, it is believed, because it possesses immortality. At the last judgment, it is often said, God will sentence the wicked, then banish their never-dying souls to conscious torment throughout the age which never ends. "You have an immortal soul," the revivalist message often puts it, "and it will spend eternity in either heaven or hell."

Theologians also fall back at times on the doctrine of man's immortality as a basis for interpreting Scripture's teaching about the wicked's end. "*If man is admitted to be immortal*," writes Pusey, "and punishment is not to be endless, there is no other conclusion but that he should be restored." Shedd notes that "Scripture speaks of but two aeons, which cover and include the whole existence of man, and his whole duration. *If, therefore, he is an immortal being*," he reasons, "one of these must be endless." Hodge ties the two statements together and completes the traditional argument as it is often made. "If the Bible says that the sufferings of the lost are to be everlasting, they are to endure forever, *unless it can be shown either that the soul is not immortal* or that the Scriptures elsewhere teach that those sufferings are to come to an end."

Shedd is bolder than most in his expression, but he clearly presents this common understanding of man's innate immortality. He even awes himself as he states what he believes.

But irrepressible and universal as it is, the doctrine of man's immortality is an astonishing one, and difficult to entertain. For it means that every frail finite man is to be as long-enduring as the infinite and eternal God; that there will no more be an end to the existence of the man who died today than there will be of the Deity who made him. God is denominated "The Ancient of Days." But every immortal spirit that ever dwelt in a human body will also be an "ancient of days." . . . Yes, man must exist. He has no option. Necessity is laid upon him. He cannot extinguish himself. He cannot cease to be.

Writes Henry Barclay Swete:

... Man is immortal in the sense that there is in him that which does not die. His body dies, but his soul survives. It lives on after it has left the body. His identity is not lost when he dies; his true self, the ultimate being and personality of the man, remains as it was before death. ... Not all of him dies; there is a part of him, and by far the more essential ...

These theologians frankly admit that the expression "immortal soul" is not in the Bible but confidently state that Scripture *assumes* the immortality of every soul. A popular writer says, for example: "The Word of God assumes the eternal existence of every soul regardless of its destiny. Every man's soul is immortal and can never be annihilated." He later notes, "They that are Christ's" tells us who shall become immortal," and "At His coming" ... tells us when we shall become immortal," but still says that "As a matter of fact the soul never lost its immortality."

Since John Calvin, Reformed writers in particular have viewed man's immortality as a consequence of his (assumed) formation in God's image and his quickening by God's breath of life. Buis is careful not to claim too much but says that while "this cannot be considered absolute proof of the natural immortality of man, it certainly points in that direction."

Although advocates often present this view with a quiver in their voice and with a less certain tone than usual, they seem constrained to keep up their insistence. They see the supernaturalist view up against the anti-supernaturalist. The anti-supernaturalist says that man's death is his end—period. These orthodox thinkers know that that is not his end, but how do they distinguish themselves from their unbelieving opponents? The answer has often

been to insist that a part of man does not die. Besides his body, every man has a soul, the argument goes. That part of him is immortal and escapes the death to which the body succumbs.

Uneasiness Within Orthodox Ranks

The feeling has persisted, however, that something here does not fit. While some orthodox writers have continued to affirm the immortality of the soul—though often with a

ground that there is a mind or spirit in him. He proceeds upon the Old Testament view of man." That view, Salmond continues, "is essentially different from the Hellenic idea which ruled the scholastic theology, and has exercised a deep and unfortunate influence on modern systems of doctrine." Westcott notes that "on principles of reason there seems to be no ground whatever for supposing that the soul is separate from the body. Such a statement goes against popular language and belief,

The Bible places hope for life after death in a bodily resurrection, not in an "immortal soul."

look over the shoulder—many others have charged that the doctrine has serious deficiencies. These critics have charged that the doctrine of inherent immortality is pagan in origin and crept into Christian thinking through Platonic philosophy. The Bible places hope for life after death in a *bodily resurrection*, they say, not in an "immortal soul." They point to the passages which speak of immortality, and point out that they attribute it to man's future glorified body, not to his present soul, that it is God's gift for the saved, not the inherent birthright of every person born into the world.

"The dream that death is an emancipation of the spiritual essence from a body that imprisons and clogs it, and is in itself the entrance on a freer, larger life, belongs to the schools, not to Christianity," writes James Orr. Salmond calls attention to the fact that Paul, who gives more "of a seeming psychology" than any other New Testament writer, "never contemplates a simple immortality of soul; he never argues for man's survival merely on the

he admits, which "are so strong in the assertion of the personal immortality of the soul ... that it is very difficult for us to realize the true state of the problem."

Dispensationalist J. N. Darby expressed his conviction that the idea of the immortality of the soul "is not in general a *gospel* topic; that it comes, on the contrary, from the Platonists; and that it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the Church, or at least began to be lost sight of, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to replace that of the resurrection."

Beasley-Murray followed through on the stroke Darby initiated. Philosophical arguments in favor of man's survival of death "usually proceed without reference" to Jesus' resurrection, he observes, and therefore "cannot strictly be termed Christian." In the end they are therefore "irrelevant, for the Resurrection is itself a sufficient revelation both of the fact and the nature of immortality." The kind of liberal preaching which dissolves Jesus' resurrection into an example of every man's im-

mortality is unworthy of the gospel, Beasley-Murray declares, and such an argument "bears little relation to the New Testament."

Such statements could be multiplied for pages on end—and are, in the second volume of a recent work by LeRoy Edwin Froom. It is not enough today to say that the Bible *assumes* the immortality of the soul even though it does not teach it. John W. Wenham throws down the gauntlet. That "so important a

persistent officer of *Les Miserables*, he ferrets out the offender, then dogs his heels through nearly 2500 years and practically as many pages.

Yet further reading suggests that much of Froom's energy might be misspent. For orthodox writers through the centuries—from the apologists of the second and third centuries after Christ, to Augustine, to Calvin, to Reformed theologians today—have usually been careful to *qualify* their claim that man is immortal.

ultimate point to the greater sovereignty of God. The issue really becomes a matter of exegesis. Since God is *able* to preserve or to destroy His human creature, what does Scripture *indicate* that He *will* do to those He finally expels to hell?

Misunderstanding and overstatement have also frequently clouded the historical picture. As a matter of fact, the immortality of the soul has *not* been the universal faith of the church. It has always been questioned by some of her faithful children, as Froom clearly documents and other conditionalists have shown. It was championed, however, by the Roman Catholic tradition and, later, by the Calvinist. Today the doctrine is under attack in both those houses as well—not in the name of science or philosophy but, as the direct result of intensified work in biblical theology, in the name of purifying the stream of tradition from pollutants which for nearly two millennia have slushed into its waters from philosophical factories which line its shore. Furthermore, a great portion of the Protestant world has roots in another view of man which does not insist on his native immortality at all. That includes the Lutheran, Anglican, and Anabaptist traditions, which all either sprang from or have from earliest times included the outlook known as "Christian mortalism."

The Biblical View of Man

The Western church—along with the larger culture—bears the unmistakable stamp of the philosophies of ancient Greece and Rome. Biblical scholars continue to identify these alien traces in the theological current and attempt to distinguish them from what is authentic and pure. The nature of man has become a kind of focal point in that enterprise.

Many evangelical scholars charge
(Continued on page 20)

Every expression of hope after death, is for biblical writers grounded on the faithfulness of the living God.

truth should not be explicitly taught is strange. The onus of proof is on those who say it is assumed."

It has generally been thought that the immortality of the soul was a necessary tool for Christian theology. Today, however, the doctrine is increasingly regarded as a post-apostolic innovation—not only unnecessary but positively harmful to proper biblical interpretation and understanding. Critics further charge that the traditional view of immortal souls is without support either from Scripture or from human wisdom.

The relation between the doctrine of the soul's immortality and the doctrine of final punishment is real, though it is deceptively clear. If every soul lives forever, the traditional view of hell as unending *conscious torment* seems to follow. This presupposition has wielded tremendous influence on biblical interpretation in intertestamental Judaism and through most of the Christian centuries. One of Froom's main theses is that "innate Immortal-Soulism" is the villain behind the traditionalist view of hell. Like the

His immortality, they say, means that something about him survives physical death and ensures a life beyond the grave. They emphasize that he is not immortal in the same way God is. For man's immortality was a gift from his Creator—and that same Creator is at perfect liberty to require it back again! Man is immortal or "deathless," they say, in the sense that physical death will not be his final end. But that does not mean he is inherently indestructible.

Just as Christian advocates of general immortality have qualified their view by saying that *God* can annihilate the soul, so Christian "mortalists" have recognized that God can grant deathlessness and incorruptibility to any person He wishes. In the view of the first, the final annihilation of the wicked is possible—if God so wills. In the view of the second, the eternal preservation of the wicked is only if God so wishes. The crucial question does not really concern man's natural mortality or immortality, therefore, for both sides concede the

Be-Attitudes for All

Christians should, by their attitudes, BE different from other people. Can you fill these blanks to show why?

1. "And *be* ye ____ one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another."
2. "That ye may *be* ____ and ____, the sons of God, without rebuke."
3. "For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt *be* ____, and shalt not fear."
4. "And *be* ____ always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
5. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, *be* ye ____, ____, always ____ in the work of the Lord."
6. "Hear ye, and give ear; *be* ____ ____: for the Lord hath spoken."
7. "And let us ____ *be* ____ in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."
8. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; . . . then shall I be upright, and I shall *be* ____ from the great transgression."
9. "And that there be no divisions among you; but that ye *be* ____ ____ in the same mind and in the same judgment."
10. "Hear instruction, and *be* ____, and refuse it not."
11. "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may *be* ____ also with exceeding joy."
12. "*Be* ____ that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."
13. "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may *be* ____ and ____, wanting nothing."
14. "Let your conversation *be* ____ ____; and *be* ____ with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
15. "But *be* ye ____ of the word, and not hearers only."
16. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and *be* at ____: thereby good shall come unto thee."
17. "Can two walk together, except they *be* ____?"
18. "Only *be* thou ____ and very ____, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law."
19. "*Be* ye also ____; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."
20. "*Be* of ____ ____, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."
21. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work *be* ____, and whether it *be* ____."

22. "*Be* ye therefore ____, and watch unto prayer."
23. "Finally, my brethren, *be* ____ in the Lord, and in the power of his might."
24. "Fear not, O land; *be* ____ and ____: for the Lord will do great things."
25. "*Be* ____, *be* ____; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."
26. "Let my heart *be* ____ in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed."
27. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so *be* ye ____ in all manner of conversation."
28. "Finally, *be* ye all of ____ ____, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* ____, *be* ____."
29. "Thy people also shall *be* ____ ____: they shall inherit the land for ever."
30. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and ____ *be* ____."
31. "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may *be* ____ and ____ till the day of Christ."
32. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but *be* ____ unto all men."
33. "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and *be* ____ with ____: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."
34. "Let the saints *be* ____ in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds."
35. "For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to *be* ____."

Answers:

1. Kind (Eph. 4:32)
2. Blameless, harmless (Phil. 2:15)
3. Steadfast (Job 11:15)
4. Ready (I Peter 3:15)
5. Steadfast, unmoveable, abounding (I Cor. 15:58)
6. Not proud (Jer. 13:15)
7. Not, weary (Gal. 6:9)
8. Innocent (Psalm 19:13)
9. Perfectly joined together (I Cor. 1:10)
10. Wise (Prov. 8:33)
11. Glad (I Peter 4:13)
12. Diligent (II Peter 3:14)
13. Perfect, entire (James 1:4)
14. Without covetousness, content (Heb. 13:5)
15. Doers (James 1:22)
16. Peace (Job 22:21)
17. Agreed (Amos 3:3)
18. Strong, courageous (Josh. 1:7)
19. Patient (James 5:8)
20. Good courage (Psalm 31:24)
21. Pure, right (Prov. 20:11)
22. Sober (I Peter 4:7)
23. Strong (Eph. 6:10)
24. Glad, rejoice (Joel 2:21)
25. Sober, vigilant (I Peter 5:8)
26. Sound (Psalm 119:80)
27. Holy (I Peter 1:15)
28. One mind, pitiful, courteous (I Peter 3:8)
29. All righteous (Isa. 60:21)
30. Not, afraid (Isa. 12:2)
31. Sincere, without offence (Phil. 1:10)
32. Gentle (II Tim. 2:24)
33. Clothed, humility (I Peter 5:5)
34. Joyful (Psalm 149:5)
35. Content (Phil. 4:11).

If A Man Lives . . . Can He Die?

(Continued from page 18)

the church with drawing conclusions in haste and with frequently over-generalizing in stating them. They point out that while man (as they believe) is made in God's image, immortality cannot be credited to this alone; for omnipotence and omniscience are as much essential qualities of God as immortality, yet no one has considered these to be inherent in the creature man.

So far as man becoming a "living soul," they note that the identical Hebrew words are translated "living creature" in the same context (Genesis 2:19; 9:12) and are applied to brute animals. Furthermore, the man who *became* a living soul was told that if he disobeyed God, he would surely die.

Jesus' quotation of the declaration, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Matthew 22:32), has often been used in support of man's immortality. Staunch conservatives have noted, however, that Jesus uses the quotation to prove, not immortality, but the resurrection! The Lukan parallel (Luke 20:37-38) says that "to Him all are alive," but both the context and the argument point to the resurrection of those who belong to God, not the immortality of every person. When the Bible speaks of the "salvation of the soul" and equivalent expressions (e.g., Mark 8:35ff; Hebrews 10:39, KJV; I Peter 1:9), it is simply quoting such passages as Psalms 16:9-11, 49:15, and 73:24, in which the psalmist expresses his hope for abiding fellowship with God, who will not let His own perish. "The 'soul' . . . does not stand in dualistic contrast to the body, but signifies man himself whom God seeks and saves for life eternal." The *soul*, for New Testa-

ment writers as well as Old, generally stands for "the natural life of man . . ." in his limitedness and humanity over against the divine possibilities and realities."

Man in the Old Testament

Man is described as a "soul" (Hebrew: *nephesh*; Greek: *psyche*) something over 150 times in the Old Testament and about 16 times in the New. The Old Testament displays *nephesh* in such a rainbow of shades that English translators have rendered it 45 different ways! God

fies "reasonable man." Nikolainen summarized the Old Testament's teaching like this:

Man is an indivisible whole. Seen from different points of view, he is by turns body, flesh and blood, soul, spirit, and heart. Each of these portrays a specific human characteristic, but they are not parts into which man may be divided. Body is man as a concrete being; "flesh and blood" is man as a creature distinguished from the Creator; soul is the living human individual; spirit is

"The Bible contains no definition of the soul that implies its indestructibility."

forms Adam of dust, breathes into him "breath of life," and he *becomes* a "living soul." We use the same kind of language when we say that a man or animal *is* a conscious being and also *has* conscious being.

The Old Testament applies the same terms to both man and the animals. This is true of *nephesh*/soul-life (Genesis 9:5), *ruach*/spirit-breath (Genesis 6:17) and *neshamah*/spirit (Genesis 7:22). "Soul" is the most comprehensive term for man in his wholeness, and its meanings range from "life," "self," and "person" to what seems the opposite of life, "corpse" (Numbers 19:13).

"The soul is not only the upholder of certain states; it is the full soul-substance with special qualities and powers." It "is man himself viewed as a living creature." Wolff breaks down the Old Testament view of man in his wholeness according to its primary terms. *Soul* speaks of "needy man," *flesh* is "man in his infirmity," *spirit* points to "man as he is empowered," and *heart* signi-

man as having his source in God; heart is man as a whole in action. What is distinctively human is in every respect derived from God. Man is in every cell the work of God (body), he is in all circumstances the property of God (soul), he is absolutely dependent on God (spirit), and in all his activity he is either obedient to God or disobedient (heart). The God-relationship is not merely the life of the "highest part" of man. The whole man "from top to bottom" exists only by relation to God.

All these details lead to a single conclusion.

When *death* occurs, then it is the soul that is deprived of life. Death cannot strike the body or any other part of the soul without striking the *entirety* of the soul. . . . It is deliberately said that the soul dies (Judges 16:30; Num. 23:10), that it is destroyed or consumed (Ezek. 22:25, 27), and that it is extinguished (Job 11:20).

This is the consistent witness of the Old Testament.

Man in the New Testament

The New Testament does not take a different view of the matter. Paul uses "soul" (*psyche*) only 13 times, usually with reference to the natural life of man. . . .

Every expression of hope after death, of vindication beyond the present life, or of communion with God beyond the grave is, for biblical writers throughout, grounded on the faithfulness of the living God, who has shown Himself so true in life and will certainly not forsake His own people in death. David expects to "dwell in the house of the Lord forever" for the very same reason he anticipates "goodness and love all the days" of his earthly life (Psalm 23:6). That reason is the fidelity he has always seen in God who keeps covenant, not in any death-proof substance he discovers in his own self. Like Jesus (Luke 23:46), Stephen (Acts 7:59), and Paul (II Timothy 1:12), the Christian believer's hope is in the faithfulness of his Creator (I Peter 4:19), who is able to raise the dead (Romans 4:17; I Peter 1:21).

Reichenbach probes into man's nature in *Is Man the Phoenix?* He finds Adam's race, like Mr. Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, to be made of dirt. He concludes that "the doctrine that man as a person does not die . . . is apparently contrary to the teachings of Scripture. . . . There is no hint that the only thing spoken about is the destruction of the physical organism and that the real person, the soul, does not die but lives on." Donald Bloesch underscores this conclusion. "There is no inherent immortality of the soul. The person who dies, even the one who dies in Christ, undergoes the death of both body and soul."

Anthony Hoekema says that "we cannot point to any inherent quality in man or in any aspect of man

Time Enough Yet

*"I can't see the need of such hurry and speed,"
Said Silas McCracken, well known for his greed.
"This talk of religion's all right in its place,
This doing to others, and saying of grace;
But who will take care of me when I am old,
Unless I provide them with silver and gold?
As to my salvation, why worry and fret?
Regarding religion, there's time enough yet."*

*Then young Johnny Wiseboy reechoes the cry,
"I'll think of religion some day, bye and bye.
But why put a damper on youth with its joys,
By mentioning something that only annoys?
I'm for a good time—it's my candid belief
That the wild oats I've sown will not bring me to grief;
And though all my past I may some day forget,
I'm of the opinion there's time enough yet."*

*Who then do we hear but hard-working LaMere,
Who says, "Of a truth, I the Saviour revere;
But now I'm as busy as busy can be
Providing a home for the children, you see.
However, I've thought of the future a bit,
And hope that some day with the Master I'll sit;
So when I have time, for more knowledge I'll seek:
But what does it matter—a day or a week?"*

*Oh, many LaMeres, and McCrackens as well,
And Wiseboys you'll find, who the story will tell—
Acknowledging God as the Ruler supreme,
They think He will wait while they dally and dream.
They think that their tales will His tender heart melt,
Not knowing that mercy with justice is dealt.
And so they make pledges that never are met,
Because they believe there is time enough yet.*

*Today is the day of salvation, we're told,
As said and repeated by prophets of old;
And no one is sure that tomorrow he'll find
In which he may leave all the earthly behind.
So haste, and wait not till confronted by death,
To prove your intentions are good, the Lord saith;
Or by disillusionment you will be met,
Who say to yourselves, "There is time enough yet."*

—L.L.S.

which makes him indestructible." F. F. Bruce warns that "our traditional thinking about the 'never-dying soul,' which owes so much to our Graeco-Roman heritage, makes it difficult for us to appreciate Paul's point of view." Helmut Thielicke tells us that Paul speaks of no "immortal substance which would victoriously break through our mortal fate." Our hope is altogether in God, he continues. And "God has given us the hope that on the other side of the great fissure he continues to be Lord and does not allow his history to be ruptured, that he is for us a God of life and resurrection—and his initial installment of this hope is the (Holy)

Spirit (II Corinthians 5:5)."

Murray Harris offers eight theses concerning resurrection and immortality. He concludes: "Man is not immortal because he possesses or is a soul. He becomes immortal because God transforms him by raising him from the dead." Platonic thought made immortality "an inalienable attribute of the soul," he goes on. "But the Bible contains no definition of the soul's constitution that implies its indestructibility." MM

This article is excerpted from chapter four of *The Fire That Consumes* by Edward William Fudge. Used with permission from Providential Press, P.O. Box 218026, Houston, TX 77218.

As a Thief in the Night?

(Continued from page 13)

of the "thief in the night" is a statement addressed to believers, and it is stated in the negative: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. . . . But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thess. 5:2-5).

The clear inference is that the arrival of the Lord *will* be as a thief to some; to others it will *not* be as a thief. The difference lies in the condition and preparedness of those receiving Him, whether they are "children of light" or "children of darkness." It seems that He will come as a thief to those who belong to "the night" and "darkness"—because they are not prepared to receive Him, because they are not expecting Him.

But how can Christ's coming be

said to be "as a thief" even to these, if Elijah comes first and announces it?

There are two possibilities: 1) that those who hear do not believe the message of Elijah; and 2) that those who hear only partially believe—their belief does not move them to take any corrective action; they do nothing to prepare for Christ's coming, do not change their hearts or lives, and so, when Christ arrives, they are taken by "surprise."

A third text which speaks of Christ's coming as a thief is found in Revelation 3:3, and is addressed to believers. "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

The whole issue here is watchfulness on the part of believers. To those not watching, not expecting

His coming, not preparing for it, Christ will come "as a thief"—it will surprise them. The issue is not that they did not know He was coming—they were believers, they knew and believed He would come. The problem was their lack of watchfulness and preparation.

The same point on the necessity of watchfulness is made in Rev. 16:15, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments. . . ."

The point is not whether Christ's coming will be announced or not; the point is the watchfulness of the one to whom Christ comes. One who is surprised by a thief is not watching for him; one who *does* watch for a thief is *not* surprised. This is the point in Jesus' parable of the faithful and wise servant, recorded in Matthew 24. "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up" (Matt. 24:43). Jesus made very plain that the *time* of His coming would be unknown. The lesson, then, is the need for *perpetual* watchfulness. If one would not be surprised, he must be watching *constantly*.

We must realize also that Bible prophecies are often condensed; all details are not related. One overall point of emphasis may be indicated, and in this case that point is the suddenness of Christ's coming and the need for preparation and watchfulness.

Then, too, in another sense, Christ's coming and that of Elijah may be said to be one event, the two being so closely related. Elijah's coming does not stand alone in its significance; he comes solely to prepare the way for the coming of Christ, in the same way that John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ at His first advent. John took

no credit to himself for his mission. Of himself he said that he came only to "bear witness to the light," that he himself was "not worthy." He was only "a voice," and so is Elijah.

It seems, too, that the same will

be true with this warning that has been true with all of God's warnings through the ages: it will be largely unbelieved and unheeded. Even though the nations are told in advance that Christ is coming, they

still will not recognize or accept Christ as the deliverer when He does arrive—if they did, how could they marshal their forces to go out to fight against one who had come to bring the very conditions for which they have longed? MM

Are You Able . . .

- *To think more about what you can be than what you can enjoy?*
- *To close your book of complaints and open your book of praise?*
- *To never criticize what you cannot improve?*
- *To stand by your convictions even though it be at the cost of personal suffering?*
- *To value principle above appearance, and being above seeming?*
- *To be thankful for what you have and stop wishing for what you have not?*
- *To think first of others, and second of yourself?*
- *To strengthen your moral muscles by giving up your own ideas?*
- *To put your love of truth and right above your love of comfort and ease?*
- *To think more of what you can give than what you can get?*
- *To esteem integrity above personal gain and loyalty to principle above being well thought of?*
- *To think more of your character than of your reputation?*
- *To change your opinion when it has been proven wrong?*
- *To value eternal gain above temporal loss?*

● Is Physical Death the Result of Adam's Sin?

"I have heard Romans 8:20 quoted to support the idea that physical death resulted from Adam's sin. It reads: 'Because the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption . . .' What do you think?"

The apostle Paul in Romans 8:18-24, is describing the whole process of God's plan for this earth. Some of the newer translations use the term "created universe" rather than "creature". The Phillips Bible translates as follows: "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!"

In other words, mankind's existence on this earth outside the plan of God and the hope of life which He offers is a meaningless frustration. But Paul goes on to say that the situation is far from hopeless, "because even the created universe itself will be liberated from its servitude to death's decay and will come to enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God."

We see no basis for assuming that Paul refers to any subjection other than man's natural mortal state, there being no mention of Adam in the passage and no evidence that Adam was ever immortal before he sinned. This mortal life, outside the plan of God, is vanity, as Solomon many times testified; it has no lasting value. Mortal bodies also need to be delivered "from the bondage of corruption"—this is what the change to immortality will be, when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53).

God's plan was that man would be created mortal and subject to death, not because Adam sinned but

because that was God's plan. Man is mortal not because of any "fall" but simply by design of the Creator. It is God's plan that those who would be part of His eternal creation would be enlightened and given the opportunity to prepare for it, and this opportunity would be extended to every one who would make use of it (John 7:17).

● Do We Sin Because We Fear Death?

"A Christadelphian Greek student has made this original translation of Romans 5:12. 'As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death has passed into all men AS A RESULT OF WHICH all have sinned.'

"In other words we all sin because we all have inherited these deathful bodies that resulted from Adam's sin. Could you please comment."

We must agree with you, that this translation is original—more original than Scriptural, and a most unlikely conclusion. To make sin the result of death seems to be stating the formula backwards. James says that "lust" leads to "sin," and "sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (Jas. 1:13-14). Again, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), not the wages of death is sin. Death brings nothing but unconsciousness. Death does not bring either righteousness or sin. "There is no work"—either good or bad, righteous or sinful—"nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom" in death (Eccl. 9:10)."

"What about Hebrews 2:15, 'And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' The argument I have heard is that fear of death makes us sin."

This argument seems directly contrary to fact: The fear of death makes us *cease* or *turn from* sin, because we know that sin brings death.

As the prophet Ezekiel pleaded with wayward Israel, "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin" (Ezek. 18:30)—sin

would be their ruin. Again, "Cast away from you all your transgressions . . . for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 18:31). Sin would bring sure death.

Again, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 1:19-20). Obedience would bring good; rebellion and disobedience would bring death.

Again, they who "hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord," who "would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof," they shall "eat of the fruit of their own way," for "the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Prov. 1:29-32).

Again, "And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the Lord our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours. . . . Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you" (Jer. 5:19, 25).

Again, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. . . . For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:21-23).

Until we are delivered from the bondage of mortality by a righteous life and the reward of eternal life, we are all our lifetime subject to the bondage of death and will in the course of time all die a natural death. Our hope for liberation from this "servitude" lies not in breaking the bondage caused by Adam's condemnation but in Christ changing our mortal bodies to be like His immortal body, (Phil. 3:20-21).

• Did Adam and Eve Actually Live?

"The allegories you deduce from the first 3 chapters of Genesis are very interesting and do flow through the Bible, but to me they appear to be based on factual events. Do you believe that Adam and Eve actually existed? And how did their sin affect all others?"

If we try to understand the first of Genesis as merely a narration of a series of literal events, we find ourselves having to accept numerous inconsistencies and statements contrary to the facts as we know them—hardly appropriate to the revelation of a divine Mind.

Taken as an allegory, the passage reveals deep and long-range truths according to the Creator's all-wise

plan, a plan that is detailed through the entire Bible.

However, as you suggest, the allegories are "based on factual events." We do believe God literally created the heavens and earth and all that is in them, though we are not told how He did this, or when, or any details associated with the literal creation event. We believe also that a literal man named Adam and a literal woman named Eve actually lived. They were *first*—not the first inhabitants of this planet but the first to be enlightened with a knowledge of God's saving plan, the first called to work in God's "garden" or "field," the first to be held accountable for their conduct.

And they are accountable as individuals, just as those who served God in any age, though we know very little of their actual lives.

As figures in the allegory, Adam and Eve are *representative* persons, representative of those God calls to serve Him in every age. To each one called He gives specific, definite commands to keep, and they obey—or disobey—to their own eternal credit or shame.

If they sin, their sin affects all only as all *like them* sin. If they are righteous and obedient, their righteousness affects only the "all" who, like them, are righteous.

It seems that the theory of Adamic condemnation is founded on a literal interpretation of the creation narrative of Genesis. Without the literal Adam being the first created man, and the forbidden fruit the first temptation, etc., etc., the theory falls flat. MM

Have You Forgotten God?

*In the hours of busy pressure
Or the moment spent in leisure,
'Mid your blessings without measure,
Have you forgotten God?*

*While His bounty you're accepting,
Are you His commands neglecting,
And His call to you rejecting—
Have you forgotten God?*

*See the shades of night appalling,
On the path of men now falling!
But they heed not Him that's calling—
Have you forgotten God?*

Visualize the Glory

To receive a reward in the day of final account we will have had to diligently seek God in faith and through much tribulation, in this our only time of opportunity. How many of us can endure to the end? We shall know then.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). Our record of works will stand as a witness unto ourselves; for every man shall bear his own burden. If our works will show diligence in study and self-renewal, we will hear the Judge's "Well done."

For someone whose life's goal is to grow spiritually, the effort put into the necessary work will seem like light afflictions. We must be like Christ and take up our Christian responsibilities daily.

If we can constantly visualize the abundant weight of glory that our brief life's burdens will bring, we shall be able to press on joyfully. We must, however, realize what is our required standard.

God is preparing a very special people, a select group of men and women of all nations. Our personal standards must therefore be high. May we be able to truthfully say, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

I must become one with Christ, one with that peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Ontario

W. B.

Mere sorrow, which weeps and sits still, is not repentance. Repentance is sorrow converted into action, that moves into a new and better life.

No Time to Lose

The Scriptures tell us a New Era is soon to be ushered in, an age when earth will be beautified and glorified and its inhabitants all pure and undefiled. But ere that blessed time arrives, there is a work to do and a conflict to be waged against the lower nature.

In our daily walk in this Christian way, perseverance is one of the greatest virtues; to walk and not faint. Only if we endure to the end will come the victory.

We have no time to lose in complacency. The Christian's life is a growth. To us faith means everything, for we walk by faith, not by sight (II Cor. 5:7). May we ever have a stronger faith, growing more diligent in every good work. For "To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Our goal is to be worthy to receive that inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away.

Missouri

H. W.

Great Promises

I have just been studying I Kings and the account of Elijah and the wicked King Ahab. What great faith Elijah had to stand against so many evildoers. By his faith he knew God was on his side.

Certainly we need to take a lesson from his courage at Mount Carmel. What training he had to fit him to be forerunner of Jesus' coming (Matt. 17:11). Imagine seeing the dead raised, the blind made to see and the healing of all illness and the evils that abound today!

These great promises should give us added courage to work harder for that soon-coming Day, putting away any thoughts not to God's glory, also setting a good example in our everyday life.

Alberta

L. S.

Take Heed

To lay up a good foundation, we must study God's Words, have them in our heart and do what they say.

The trials of everyday living are a test of our faith. We are taught to be thankful for trials and rejoice in them.

Georgia

S. J.

Obituary

Lela M. Jackson

On June 6, we met to pay our last respects to a friend and sister, Lela M. Jackson. Sister Jackson enjoyed a full 65 years of Christian fellowship with the Megiddo Church, since April, 1921. During those years she was a valued member, amiable, optimistic, with an energetic desire to help others. She was frugal with her resources, and very generous in sharing with others.

Sister Jackson was of an exceptionally kind and selfless disposition; whenever she perceived a need, she was the first to fill that need, if it was within her capability. During months of waning physical strength, she still had a strong desire to help and did whatever she could to assist in the church's home care unit. Even her last two weeks saw her still folding freshly laundered towels, bedding, and articles of clothing. She could not be idle.

Throughout her lifetime Sister Jackson memorized many verses of Scripture, which stayed with her, and which she could recite even during months of failing memory. The Bible hope of a resurrection of the dead and a bright vision of the future were her constant incentive.

Sister Jackson is survived by two grandchildren, Ray Shaver, of New York City, and Patricia Cicherillo, of Rochester, New York. Interment was in Mount Hope Cemetery, where rest others of our beloved dead awaiting the morning when the "trumpet shall sound," and the "dead in Christ shall rise."

God Will Reward

There is no greater work a person could be engaged in than to kill the "old man" of the flesh. If we can overcome the flesh and our carnal thoughts, God surely will reward us for our victory, for He is faithful in His Word.

While in this life, the most important thing is to obey what we know. It is never too late to learn. If we can incorporate into our life the death to sin, we will certainly have an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of God.

Haiti

E. D.

From New Friends

I saw your magazine, MEGIDDO MESSAGE, at the Morenci, Michigan Hospital and would like to receive it at my home. Please send me a subscription for one year.

Michigan

I. P.

I saw your publication, MEGIDDO MESSAGE, in one of our hospitals, and would like to receive it. Would it be possible to send the last two issues as well as the upcoming issue?

Louisiana

Mrs. B. J.

Thank you for such a wonderful magazine. I love reading the MEGIDDO MESSAGE. It's a blessing to read the sermons, and every article you print. I have learned so much.

I pray that every person will know that God is love, and His Son, Jesus Christ, is the Best Friend anyone can ever have.

Thank you again, and may the good Lord bless you all for putting out a religious magazine that Jesus would find a blessing to read!

California

K. F.

FINALLY, BRETHREN

Are You Easy To Live With?

LEARNING to live with others is a large part of our Christian duty. The apostle Paul was very aware of this fact and expressed his specific concern about how his brethren lived with one another in these familiar words: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (Eph. 4:31-32).

This text would have little meaning to one living alone on an island, who never saw anyone else from one end of the year to the other. Each of these human emotions involves a relationship with other persons. We should notice, too, how definite and all-inclusive is the command: "Let all. . . ." There is no difference made for good days or bad, or for sugar-and-spice dispositions or the powder-keg variety. We are all to live always and absolutely *without* bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, and malice.

Even though another person may display these unholy traits, as servants of Christ we *may not*, however difficult this prove to be.

This brings us to the haunting question: How easy am I to live with? Does my attitude always convey to those around me a desire to make other lives better, easier, more pleasant, more Christlike? Or does the channel of my goodness sometimes get clogged with an attitude of complaint?

A sanctified person may be defined as one who is willing to give up his will. How fittingly this describes the one who is easy to live with.

Unfortunately, this is not a natural disposition. One lady upon being asked if her husband had a den replied, "He doesn't need one: he growls all over the house."

Any amount of growl around the house or anywhere else quickly lowers the spiritual temperature to near zero.

Unkind words, malicious words, angry words are like poisoned barbs that cause pain and distress.

No one contends that everyone should always agree on every issue because we all belong to God. There will always be need for discussion and consideration. However, if we are Christlike, we will never speak with an intention to wound or cause strife.

Very often, too, it is not what we say but how we say it that hurts or hinders those around us.

Before we speak, we might do well to ask ourselves a few questions: What effect is this comment going to have on those who hear it? Do I want that effect—along with my words—to go on my record before God?

If we would check ourselves, we might find that a good number of our words would be better left unsaid. Very often, too, the attitude we show at the time we speak leaves a deeper imprint—for good or ill—than the actual words we say.

When we are called to stand before the Judgment seat of Christ to give account for our life's conduct, it will then be too late to ask, "Have I been easy to live with?" So let us take the step now.

May God help us use our words and our attitudes to create an atmosphere that inspires courage, confidence and hope in those about us, that we may be always "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven [us]."

MM

would be their ruin. Again, "Cast away from you all your transgressions . . . for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 18:31). Sin would bring sure death.

Again, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 1:19-20). Obedience would bring good; rebellion and disobedience would bring death.

Again, they who "hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord," who "would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof," they shall "eat of the fruit of their own way," for "the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Prov. 1:29-32).

Again, "And it shall come to pass, when ye shall say, Wherefore doeth the Lord our God all these things unto us? then shalt thou answer them, Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours. . . . Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you" (Jer. 5:19, 25).

Again, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. . . . For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:21-23).

Until we are delivered from the bondage of mortality by a righteous life and the reward of eternal life, we are all our lifetime subject to the bondage of death and will in the course of time all die a natural death. Our hope for liberation from this "servitude" lies not in breaking the bondage caused by Adam's condemnation but in Christ changing our mortal bodies to be like His immortal body, (Phil. 3:20-21).

● Did Adam and Eve Actually Live?

"The allegories you deduce from the first 3 chapters of Genesis are very interesting and do flow through the Bible, but to me they appear to be based on factual events. Do you believe that Adam and Eve actually existed? And how did their sin affect all others?"

If we try to understand the first of Genesis as merely a narration of a series of literal events, we find ourselves having to accept numerous inconsistencies and statements contrary to the facts as we know them—hardly appropriate to the revelation of a divine Mind.

Taken as an allegory, the passage reveals deep and long-range truths according to the Creator's all-wise

plan, a plan that is detailed through the entire Bible.

However, as you suggest, the allegories are "based on factual events." We do believe God literally created the heavens and earth and all that is in them, though we are not told how He did this, or when, or any details associated with the literal creation event. We believe also that a literal man named Adam and a literal woman named Eve actually lived. They were *first*—not the first inhabitants of this planet but the first to be enlightened with a knowledge of God's saving plan, the first called to work in God's "garden" or "field," the first to be held accountable for their conduct.

And they are accountable as individuals, just as those who served God in any age, though we know very little of their actual lives.

As figures in the allegory, Adam and Eve are *representative* persons, representative of those God calls to serve Him in every age. To each one called He gives specific, definite commands to keep, and they obey—or disobey—to their own eternal credit or shame.

If they sin, their sin affects all only as all *like them* sin. If they are righteous and obedient, their righteousness affects only the "all" who, like them, are righteous.

It seems that the theory of Adamic condemnation is founded on a literal interpretation of the creation narrative of Genesis. Without the literal Adam being the first created man, and the forbidden fruit the first temptation, etc., etc., the theory falls flat. MM

Have You Forgotten God?

*In the hours of busy pressure
Or the moment spent in leisure,
'Mid your blessings without measure,
Have you forgotten God?*

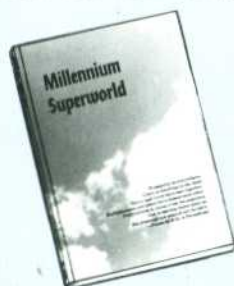
*While His bounty you're accepting,
Are you His commands neglecting,
And His call to you rejecting—
Have you forgotten God?*

*See the shades of night appalling,
On the path of men now falling!
But they heed not Him that's calling—
Have you forgotten God?*

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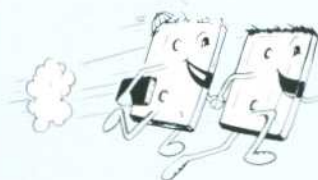
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