

UPLOOK

NOVEMBER 1993

COMING EVENTS
OUT OF THIS WORLD

THE ART SHOW



THE ART SHOW

I SHOULD HAVE FELT honored. One of my pieces of art had been accepted for an art show in the nearby trendy community of Niagara-on-the-Lake. College art students from our area had been vying for a place in the prized showing. I should have felt honored, but I didn't.

The painting that had been chosen from my portfolio to be submitted to the selection committee was, in my mind, underwhelming. It was not great art; it was not even good art. It was, in my humble opinion, almost-good-enough art. Almost-good-enough art is not good enough and should have been discarded. They say the difference between a good artist and a bad artist is simply that a good artist has the courage to throw his bad art away. Why hadn't I done it?

Something you have created is a little like your own child. It may be ugly, but it's my baby, and you better be very careful what you say about it. And the more time you have invested in making it what it is, the more reluctant you are to destroy it. It's like a piece of congealed time and it seems such a waste to put your time in the garbage can. Now I was committed. The teacher had turned a deaf ear to my pleas. The art show was set to open that Friday evening at 7:00. My art was going to be on display and that was that.

In times of crisis, when the pressure is on, ordinary, honest folk are sometimes driven to desperation. And I was desperate. At 6:45 P.M., I stood in the lengthening shadows outside the town hall where the show was to be held. I should have been wearing a trench coat.

At 7:02, someone turned the lights on inside, and in short order a security guard unlocked the front door. I was the first one in. Grateful that the conveyors were busy with last-minute preparations, I made my way along the corridors, scanning the displays. I slunk (or is it slinked? Not usually being in the slinking mode, I am unfamiliar with the appropriate form) past some very nice pieces before I saw mine hanging there.

I had been disappointed with it before, but now seeing it in this exalted company, it looked even more sorry than I had thought. It had to go.

It isn't possible to steal something that is already yours, I told myself as I removed the piece and slid it

into a nearby receptacle. But it didn't seem to calm the butterflies in my stomach. I didn't begin to breathe naturally until I was back in my car and heading for home.

The teacher may have suspected foul play, but she never said a thing about it. I returned to art class determined not to let that happen again. If I wasn't prepared to let a piece come under the scrutiny of the public, my signature didn't go on it. That was the time to deal with it. Which reminds me of a little poetry fragment from the pen of John Oxenham:

*Every day is Judgment Day,
Count on no tomorrow.
He who will not, when he may,
Act today, today, today,
Doth but borrow sorrow.*

When I was younger, we used to hear a great deal about Coming Events. I don't remember much about the signs, but the reality of heaven and hell were so impressed upon our young minds that I thought of them in the same terms as Hamilton, where we had loved ones living. Heaven and hell and Hamilton were real places with real people—and not very far away either.

Since those days, much of the preaching on the Lord's return seems to be tinged with guilt or fear. It must be thought that these emotions are appropriate stimulants to arouse God's people to action. I have not found it to work. Only the constraining love of Christ (2 Cor. 5:14) will carry us through the hard times and discouragements, the personal criticism and opposition.

There will be a fire at the Judgment Seat, and loss will be suffered, it is true. But isn't this done in grace too? From my meeting the Saviour at the cross until He seats me on His throne (can it be!), my story is all grace from start to finish. Anything that I have done in time for my own glory will look so tawdry there in the glorious splendor of the Servant of all, I will be glad to see it burn! Of course, I will wish I had done it for Him. But how good to have my life edited by the Master Himself, to have it just the way He planned it.

So the question is this: Is what I'm living for worth Christ dying for? When He puts His signature upon me, will those things be in or out? **U**

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IS THE RAPTURE SELECTIVE OR INCLUSIVE?

THE RAPTURE, the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed people, will vitally affect every born-again soul, whether dead or living. If confusion is to be avoided, this event, which will take place "in the air," must be sharply distinguished from our Lord's Revelation, when He will make His public appearing on earth to bring judgment on His foes and deliver His earthly people, Israel (1 Thess. 4:17; Mt. 24:30-31).

Some teach that participation in the Rapture will depend on the spiritual vigilance of the believer at Christ's coming, and that those who are not ready will be left behind to endure the trials of that unrivaled persecution known as "the Great Tribulation," "the hour of trial which is to come upon the whole world," and to await deliverance at its climax by the personal intervention of Christ. Others contend that those left behind will be excluded from the millennial kingdom and cast into "the outer darkness," where there "will be weeping and gnashing of teeth," to await the general Resurrection and Great White Throne. They escape "the second death" and belatedly enter heaven because their names are found "written in the Book of Life."

If the doctrine of the Second Coming is understood to include all believers, the necessity for vigilance is not weakened. On the contrary, belief in the imminent return of the Lord Jesus should afford the strongest incentive to earnest endeavor and holy living. "Therefore . . . be ye . . . always abounding in the work of the Lord." "Everyone that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself" (1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Jn. 3:3).

These graces are needful, however, not because their absence will debar believers from participation,

but because the Judgment Seat of Christ is closely related to His coming (1 Cor. 4:5; Rev. 22:12). At this solemn assize, the service of the believer will be called to account and reward be given or denied as required.

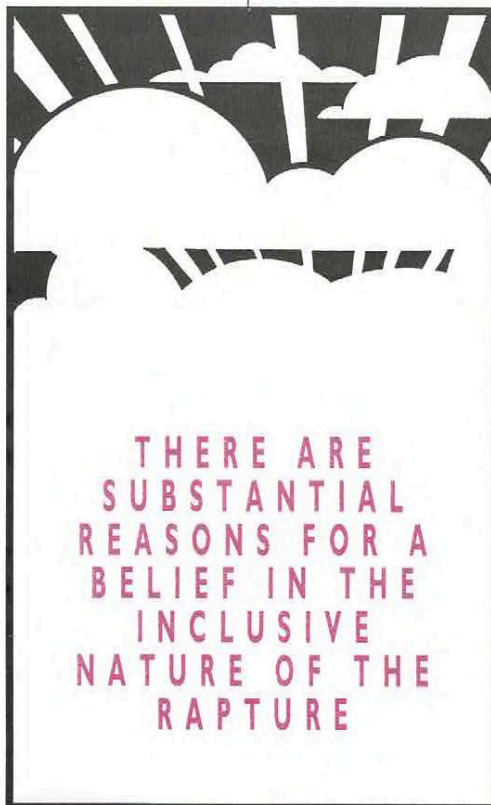
In this sense, therefore, certain Scriptures are to be understood which solemnly warn of the folly of indifference on the part of the believer in the light of Christ's coming. Thus John exhorts his "little children (to) abide in Him; that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." Likewise Paul writes of the possibility of being "rejected" in regard to the incorruptible crown, the reward for a "good fight" and a "finished . . . course," at that Day; of suffering "loss" if one's work

is destroyed as belonging to the wood, hay, and stubble sort, even though one is "saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). There is also the possibility of being "denied" reigning with Christ, if we deny Him in refusing to endure hardship for Him, however gratuitously "life" with Him may be assured (2 Tim. 2:11-12).

The writer affirms that there are substantial reasons for a belief in the inclusive nature of the Rapture in the light of which a selective interpretation is untenable.

First, in the absence of any differentiation between believers in the great Rapture Scriptures: John 14; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4; etc. In the Lord's discourse to His disciples in the Upper Room, there is no hint of distinction, whereas in His earlier discourses regarding His Advent at the "consummation of the age,"

warnings against unwatchful profession abound, and vigilance is seen to be a *sine qua non* of participation in His earthly kingdom (Mt. 24:40-42; 25:10-13). Is it not reasonable to infer that if a possibility of exclusion



from the Rapture existed, he would have given equally clear warning of it? Paul's great resurrection chapter, however, is quite explicit. Of the Rapture he writes, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall *all* be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:51-52). This passage clearly teaches that all believers, whether dead or living, will be instantaneously changed, alike "conformed to the body of His glory." When the known spiritual defections of the Corinthian assembly are weighed against this explicit passage, the argument for an inclusive Rapture seems incontestable.

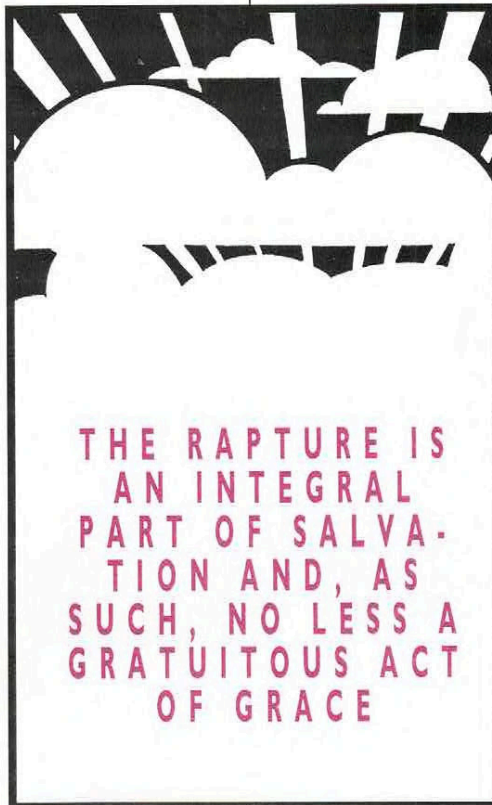
The Apostle's other great treatise on the Rapture was written to counteract the fears of the Thessalonians for the safety of fellow-believers who had died. Since those days, thousands more have "fallen asleep" and it is certain that the saved dead will vastly outnumber the saved living at the time of Christ's return. Can it reasonably be inferred that all the former died in a vigorous expectation of His coming? As it was not until comparatively recent times that scriptural teaching on the subject was revived, many believers must have died in ignorance of this "blessed hope." Yet no distinction is made by the Apostle: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them that are fallen asleep through Jesus will God bring with Him," and "the dead in Christ shall rise first." Likewise, no distinction is made between living saints: "Then we which are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up." Unless it is contended that these passages were exclusively addressed to the believers at Corinth and Thessalonica, a contention which would be subversive of the authority of Scripture affecting all believers, the case for a selective Rapture collapses.

Second, there is *the inclusive nature of the Judgment Seat of Christ* which will attend the Rapture, its indispensable preliminary (1 Cor. 4:5; Rev. 22:12). Thus Paul writes, "We shall *all* stand before the Judgment Seat." "So then *each* one of us shall give account

of himself to God." And of the Day when the work of each believer will be "revealed in fire" and its true character shown, whether it be of the "gold, silver, costly stones," or "wood, hay, stubble" class. According to the result of that test, each will "receive a reward" or "suffer loss." There is nothing in this passage to suggest that what is good or bad is tested other than at the same event (see also 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12).

Third, in *the fact of the mystical Body of Christ*, which would lack completeness were any of its "members" excluded at His return. Thus writes Paul, "We are members of His body" (Eph. 5:30). The growth of this mystical body, in its broadest sense, is provided for in the work of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, to the end that we all attain "unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The absence of even the "more feeble" members would cause the whole body to be imperfect. It then could not be described as "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23).

Fourth, *the theory of a selective Rapture makes it a conditional reward*, whereas it is an integral part of salvation and, as such, no less a gratuitous act of grace than any other part. Thus, in his first epistle (1:5-9), Peter writes to those "who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" and of such "receiving (anticipatively) the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." This aspect of salvation will be effected at the revelation of the Lord Jesus (vv. 7, 13), and is as much of "grace" (vv. 10, 13) as that present aspect of salvation which is the common possession of all believers. Again, Paul writes of believers as "waiting for the . . . redemption of our body," to be accomplished at the Rapture (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14). Such an aspect of redemption is an essential part of that "redemption which is in Christ Jesus," which encompasses "spirit and soul and body"



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FRONT LINES

YEAR-END CONFERENCE

By now you have seen the posters and ads concerning the CMML conference, *Missions93* to be held December 27-30, 1993, in Cincinnati, OH.



This conference is sure to be the highlight of the year for those who attend. CMML has assembled a large group of speakers and evangelists for the theme, *God's Work God's Way*. David Gooding and William MacDonald will be the keynote speakers, and there will also be panel discussions and various seminars along similar lines.

If you haven't registered yet, you still have time, but you had better hurry. Space is limited. Almost 1,000 have already signed up:

CMML, Inc.
P.O. Box 13
Spring Lake, NJ 07762
(908) 449-8880

COMMENDATION

The believers at Bethel Gospel Chapel (New Liskeard, ON) have joined with the saints at Malton Bible Chapel (Mississauga, ON) in commending to the Lord's work

throughout Northern Ontario, Phil and Marilyn Barnes.

In January, 1994, they plan on leaving for France for a period of time. Lord willing, they expect to return in June to resume their ministry in Ontario.

YOU MAY BE OF HELP

Pittsboro Christian Village is looking for Nursing Assistants. Certification preferred. However, they will train and assist in obtaining certification while working. These are paying positions, 30-40 hours per week. Benefits include health, life, and disability insurance, and paid vacations. Contact:

Dave Dewhurst, Administrator
P.O. Box 518
Pittsboro, NC 27312-0518
(919) 542-3151

ARE YOU A TEACHER?

Victory Christian School (St. Louis, MO) is in need of teachers. The immediate need is for a math/science teacher—certification or teaching degree is not necessarily required.

Openings for the 1994-1995 school year include: elementary teachers and high school English, Bible, math, and science. Contact :

Stan Vaninger
Victory Christian School
10255 Musick Road
St. Louis, MO 63123-5064
(314) 849-3425 (days)
(314) 752-3778 (evenings)

CAN YOU SPARE A DIME?

Pedro Dillon, President of

DIME, a Spanish publishing ministry, is in need of persons who can do bookkeeping, or is an experienced graphic artist with knowledge in computer graphics. If you are interested, contact:

Pedro Dillon
10353 Imperial Avenue
Cupertino, CA 95014
(408) 253-9096

SE MICHIGAN AREA

Believers who live in the Rochester/Pontiac area of Michigan are encouraged to help with a new work begun in that area. Since March 1993, believers have been gathering together for worship and other services and activities. Since October 17, they have begun meeting in a temporary facility,

Knights of Pythias Hall
948 Voorhies
Waterford, MI 48328

If you would like to meet with them, or could help with evangelism in the immediate area, contact:

George Chacko
(313) 268-7003
Abbey Johnson
(313) 979-9242

WINTERIZED

SNOASIS 1993 will be held December 27-30, for 10th grade and older. Cost is \$38.00 per person and will be held at Camp Li-Lo-Li (Ran-



dolph, NY). Director will be Ray Blais from Rochester, NY and the speaker will be Frank Burgess from Piggott, AK. Contact:

Cathie Whitcomb
Camp Li-Lo-Li
8811 Sunfish Run Road
Randolph, NY 14772
(716) 945-2747

LIKE TO TRAVEL?

"Bible Truth" in conjunction with Milk and Honey Ministries is sponsoring a trip to Israel and Russia. The proposed trip is for December 28-January 11, 1994. The group plans to hold crusades in Yaroslavl, show the "Jesus" film, and hand out Bibles and tracts. Contact:

Gail Baxter
(800) 949-4428

CAMP WORK

The Guelph year-round Bible Conference Grounds requires full-time manager/team leader, to oversee all aspects of the work. Information and job description available on request. Contact:

David Turner
1340 Bouffard
Windsor, ON N9J 1G9
(519) 734-6533

THANK YOU!

The saints at Keystone Bible Chapel (Omaha, NE) wish to extend a special thank you to all those who attended the Annual Omaha Conference held October 8-10, 1993. They were greatly encouraged not only by the Spirit directed messages given by J. Boyd Nicholson Sr., Sandy McEachern, and Jim McKendrick, but also by the hearts of the hundreds that came. It was a blessing to see so many who desire to know Him better.

STILL THE POWER OF GOD

Today, in our technologically advanced society, the feeling often is that the gospel campaign couldn't possibly work today. But reports have been coming in from assemblies that have held gospel cam-

CONFERENCE NOTICES

If you or your assembly is hosting a conference and would like to let the Lord's people know about it, we request that you inform *Uplook* as early as possible, but no later than two months prior to the scheduled event. This will enable us to get your notice in the appropriate issue. Send conference or any other news items to:

UPLOOK News Editor
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paigns to say that it works today, too—if we work at it. The saints at the Tenth Avenue Bible Chapel (Burnaby, BC) have just concluded similar meetings. The saints worked well together to get the unsaved out to the meetings and the Lord blessed in salvation.

There were also encouraging meetings at the New Hampshire Avenue assembly in Silver Spring, MD, with Boyd Nicholson. Again there was a work of God in the lives of unbelievers brought out to the meetings. The gospel is still "the power of God."

CHANGES

The believers at the Grace Gospel Chapel (Erie, PA) are pleased to announce that they have moved to a new location:

Grace Gospel Chapel
3218 Tuttle Avenue

Erie, PA 16504

For more information, please contact: Jim Ott, (814) 899-8936.

SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD

On October 25, 1993, at the age of 76, Denta Smith went home to be with the Lord. The daughter of

Leonard Shel-drake, Denta for many years served the Lord at Rest Haven Homes and Gospel Folio Press. She faithfully



labored on behalf of missionary enterprise around the world and was always a willing servant. Her place will be missed. This will be the first *Uplook* in a long time that was not prepared for mailing by Denta.

HOMECALL

Henry Peterson passed away on October 25, 1993 in Lynchburg, VA. Henry was born in Chicago, IL in 1901, and was commended into full-time work in 1932 by the Irving Park assembly. For more than 60 years he traveled as an evangelist and speaker among the assemblies throughout the US and Canada.

He began the camp work in both Northern and Southern California and conducted many series of children's meetings and conferences.

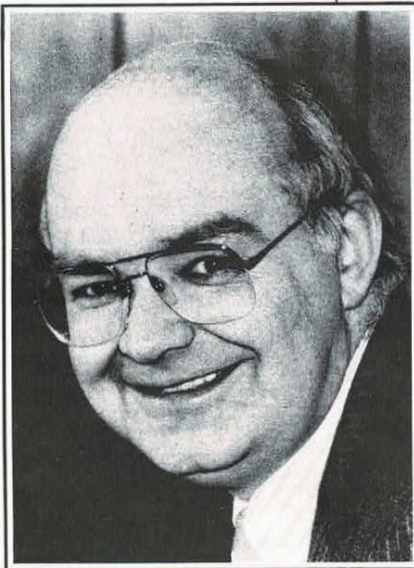


Many hundreds were led to the Lord by his ministry throughout the years.

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SPOTLIGHT ON RUSSIA

Russian society is falling apart. Family life is disintegrating. Alcoholism and abortion are endemic. Men and women are yearning for spiritual reality. As they turn from the bankruptcy of communism they are open to examine the basis for faith.



Dr. John Lennox is a senior lecturer in Mathematics at Cardiff University and regularly visits in Eastern Europe

Since the fall of Communism, the gospel has flooded into Russia. *Echoes*, a British assembly missionary magazine, reports several interesting accounts including the following:

In June of 1992, David Gooding, John Lennox, and David Blevins, took an exhibition model of the tabernacle to two centers in Siberia—Akademgorodok, a world famous scientific center, and Irkutsk, near Lake Baikal. In Akademgorodok, first in the House of Scientists, and then in the University, audiences of 200-250 crowded into a lecture hall every night to hear an explanation of the gospel by David Gooding, with the help of the tabernacle model. After each lecture, members of the audience crowded around to examine the model and to hear more about its meaning. Many atheists, agnostics, and those from an Orthodox background, grasped spiritual truth.

During the mornings, John Lennox gave a series of apologetic lectures on topics having to do with the Bible or Christianity. Everywhere there is a critical need for good expository literature. The Russian people need our prayers. They have suffered under Communism and the reign of Czars. The Orthodox church has regarded itself as the official guardian of the soul of Russia, and is largely opposed to evangelicals, therefore trying to sway the government against foreign missionaries proselytizing the Russian people.

These brethren continue to publish specially written articles in leading

Russian language newspapers. In the prestigious *Literary Gazette* and in *Search* (the weekly newspaper of the Academy of Sciences) they have just completed a series of 12 major articles entitled, "The World's Fatal Flaw," "A Conflict of World Views," "Magic and the Gospel," "Martyrdom or Fanaticism?" and "The Fight Against Religious Oppression."

Since February, 1993, they have been publishing a series of 26 full-page articles entitled, "The Bible and Moral Education in Schools" in the teacher's weekly newspaper *Uchitel'skaya Gazeta*, read by teachers in every part of Russia. This is their response to the interest shown by the Chief Editor in teaching moral and spiritual values to schoolchildren to fill the moral vacuum left by the demise of communism. Each article is accompanied by a relevant passage of Scripture (printed in full since very few teachers have Bibles) and is in the form of a lesson, with suggestions for discussion. Free literature is offered.

Since the first publication in 1990, about 2,500,000 letters have been received and in the past year (up to June, 1993) an average of 13,500 per week. In the past year 670,770 gospels of John, 82,973 New Testaments and 402,621 copies of David Gooding's book, *Christianity—Opium or Truth?* have been sent out. Special gifts have made possible the printing of 300,000 copies of David Gooding's book, *Windows on Paradise*, 500,000 Scripture portions and 4,000,000 tracts for children. Please pray for the Christians in Moscow who handle these enormous quantities of letters.

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WHAT'S GOING ON?

PERSECUTED!

Christians in China are under brutal attack from the Chinese government. Human rights groups have documented the following incidents



of persecution in the last 18 months:

- 772 Christians currently in prison, labor camps, or under house arrest.

- at least 360 incidents of churches closed down or destroyed.

- 14 incidents of torture.

- 6 Christians who died while in detention as a result of mistreatment or torture by officials.

The *Bible League* believes that prayer and sending Bibles to China is how you can help. Did you know that there are about 63 million Christians in China, and only 8 million Bibles? It is estimated that every day nearly 10,000 people in China accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. For more information on how you can help, contact:

The Bible League
16801 Van Dam Road
South Holland, IL 60473
(800) 334-7017

MORE VIOLENCE

Ethiopian security forces shot and killed 50 Christians in Gondar, and another 200 were wounded. The violence, according to London's International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity, followed an unsuccessful attempt to arrest an influential Christian preacher. Gondar, a largely Christian city, is under curfew. Government radio and television have announced that no Christians may preach anywhere in the country unless they are licensed by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. —*Pulse*

A WORD FROM BRAZIL

Floyd Pierce writes, "Most of our friends know that we have been using computers as helpers since 1984. We now rely heavily on them for much of our activity. This work consists largely of translations of books, tracts, and articles from English and Spanish to Portuguese. As the editor of the ministry magazine, *Amados*, since 1986, I have responsibility for selection of articles and the final layout of the original material that goes to the printer for the offset process. We are in the process of developing a Portuguese module for the *Online Bible* produced by Larry Pierce of Woodside Bible Fellowship, in Elmira, ON, Canada. Please pray with us as we seek permission to use an old ver-

sion of the Portuguese Scriptures and make this valuable study tool available to Brazilians."

ALL THAT GLITTERS

Recent reports tell how Israel is prospering among the nations. Despite the world recession, the Israeli diamond industry is forging ahead and has increased exports by 7% last year. An Israeli seed company has produced a hybrid variety of cotton which requires 30% less water. The crop is easy to harvest and produces 20% higher yield over other varieties. And the Israel Institute of Technology has developed a non-toxic glue which binds broken bones and also encourages new growth to mend the fracture. As the healing process continues, the glue dissolves without harmful effects.

NOT GOOD ENOUGH

According to a recent poll by *National & International Religion Report*, 88% of Catholics and a majority of Presbyterian and Methodist evangelizers (those who actively try to share their faith) believe that "if people are generally good, or do enough good things for others during their lives, they will earn a place in heaven."

JADED BY COMPARISON

Viriyang Sirintharo, 74, a master monk from Bangkok, bought a 32-ton block of pure jade from Canada, and he's overseeing the building of the world's largest Buddha statue from a 14-ton hunk. According to *Asiaweek*, he's not abashed by the

WHAT'S GOING ON?

seeming contradiction with Buddhism's traditional austerity. "Not at all; people will come from all over the world. This will help spread Buddhism," he said.

Meanwhile, international thieves have apparently stolen the human remains of the Buddha from Nepal. ". . . having no hope, and without God in this world" (Eph. 2:12).

FINALLY GETTING THROUGH

Fire has ravaged the Topanga Canyon area of Southern California. In Malibu it is estimated that 35,000 acres have been burned and nearly 300 homes destroyed. Early damage estimates exceed \$130 million. The fires—the latest in a string of California disasters—has demoralized many of the spirits of the residents there. One resident who witnessed the destruction from 10 miles away has been reported as saying, "We've got floods, we've got earthquakes, we've got riots. Now we've got fires that won't go away. I hesitate to say that God has marked us for doom, but you have to wonder after awhile." —*USA Today*

NO CONVICTIONS

The 6,000 member Church of Joy (Glendale, AZ) needs only five minutes to distribute communion to 1,000 worshippers. Still, Pastor Kallestad insists, "It's a very meaningful moment for our people."

Terey Summers, Arizona's Actress of the Year, likes to stage skits in the sanctuary instead of having ministers preach from the pulpit. "People today aren't interested in traditional doctrines like justification, sanctification, and redemption."

Television preacher Robert

Schuller, recently formed *Churches Uniting in Global Missions*, a national coalition of 200 pastors of "the most dynamic and successful" congregations, like Arizona's Church of Joy. The aim is to lure baby boomers back to church by welcoming all comers regardless of their beliefs and appealing to their lack of theological convictions. The mainline denominations may be dying because they lost their theological integrity. The only thing worse, perhaps, would be the rise of a new Protestant establishment that succeeds because it never had any.

—*The Berean Call*

JEWISH HOMOSEXUALITY?

The Jewish Conservative Movement is concerned about the outcome of Liberal Judaism opening its doors to gay and lesbian rabbis and the creation in large urban centers of gay synagogues where Jews of "alternate lifestyles" can create a community of kindred souls. Quoting Leviticus 18:22, orthodox Jews are pointing out that Judaism stood alone during sexual revolutions in the past in the Ancient Near East, Rome, Greece, and Arabic cultures and insisted on adherence to the Word of God. They also say that the family is the bedrock of society and homosexuality is the family's most lethal enemy.

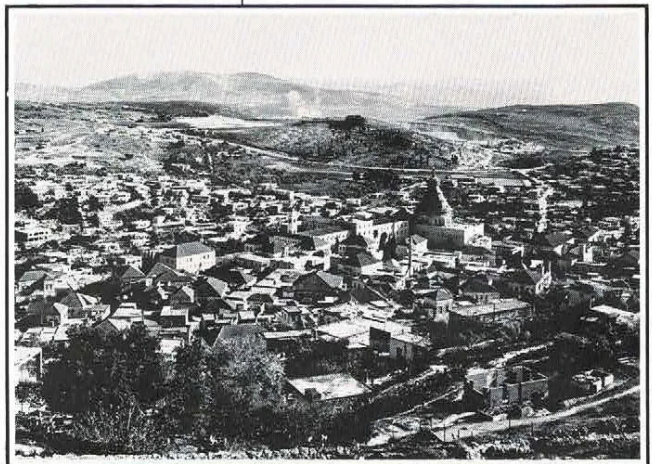
—*Spotlight on Israel*

A "GOOD THING" IN NAZARETH

In their recent newsletter, George and Ros Khalil report of some new meetings in Hay El Wu-rud, Israel.

"In the past 40 years Nazareth has grown from a population of 25,000 to 60,000 people, and yet the number of evangelical churches has remained the same. In northern Nazareth, we have been burdened to reach out to the neighborhood. We started children's clubs, but there is a great need for adult meetings to reach the many young families around us.

Since other believers have moved into our area we felt the time was right to begin meeting in our home with them and a number of like-minded believers who live nearby. From the beginning of September, a nucleus of 15 have been meeting together on Sunday evenings for worship, and Thursday evenings for Bible study. Please



The city of Lower Nazareth

pray for unity, love, and acceptance of one another as we seek to work together. We hope to organize visitation and follow-up on local contacts."

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WHAT A DIFFERENCE!

THE LORD BY HIS GRACE and mercy saved my wife, Betty, and me eighteen years ago. We heard the gospel at a home Bible study that I was invited to attend. I went that evening, but would not allow Betty to go, because I didn't know who these people were. So I went alone. That night, I heard Ephesians 2:8-9, John 3:16, and other verses that presented the true gospel.

I went home and got Betty out of bed. "Get up! Get up! I've got some great news I have to tell you." She got up, and we sat there and talked about it late into the night. We read the Scriptures from a list I had been given that evening. I had a Bible and I just went through it again and again and I believed, just like that. Within a week, Betty and I both believed. We both believed and the Lord made a difference in our lives.

The Christians said we hit the ground running for the Lord. We just loved the Lord so much. He was all we talked about, all we thought of, He was all we lived for. We started attending Martin Road Gospel Chapel immediately, and within months we were baptized. We were involved in the Bible study where we heard the gospel, and we started teaching Sunday School at the Central Bible Mission in Detroit. This was all within the first few months. We were really running.

Within that first year, we got involved in a new work in the area where Lakeside Bible Chapel is today, the result of that work that started in a basement as a Bible study. It was just something we had to do, something we wanted to do. We wanted to live for the Lord.

But like the fable of the tortoise and the hare, that's what happened to me. Within 5 or 6 years, I ran out of steam. I took my eyes off of the Lord. Basically, I put myself back in the world and I started living for myself and the world. The cares of the world began to predominate my life, so much so, that I lost my first and greatest love, my love for the Lord. The Lord that saved me took second place in my life. Consequently I became backslidden. This condition lasted for a decade.

Now all the time that I was running on my own steam, I just knew that I wasn't living for the Lord. But the Lord never left me alone. I asked Him to. But He didn't leave me alone for a minute. I was under conviction

from the start.

During this time, I came up with a formula for my life that I would recommend to no one: "Jesus plus sin equals misery." That's the way it was. We were really saved. It wasn't like I heard the gospel and believed for a season and then said, "Ah, forget it!" No. The Lord saved us. Yet, in my backslidden state, I had no peace. I couldn't enjoy my sin. I knew I had to confess it, and go back to the Lord. But I would not, even though nothing had ever satisfied like the Lord. I just continued for a decade. That's a very long time. But the conviction grew stronger and stronger in me that I had to repent. The Lord kept drawing me back.

So finally, two-and-a-half years ago, March 17, 1991 to be exact, I was sitting in my easy chair with my newspaper, the kind of worship I was doing every Sunday. I just couldn't sit there anymore. I got up, started getting dressed, and my wife asked, "Where are you going?"

"I'm going back to Lakeside."

"I'm going with you," she replied.

So we came back. Not that I wanted to; a part of me didn't really want to come back. But deep in my heart I did. We walked in and sat down right where we always sat. That day Chris Schroeder was speaking on James. He brought out the Scripture that says our lives are "but a vapor."

Boom! Right between the eyes. I broke down and cried. I repented right then and there and recommitted my life to the Lord. We both did. That was the greatest move we ever made. Because when you belong to the Lord, you can't run with the world and be satisfied. Only the Lord satisfies.

All the time that I was wandering, I knew that I owed it all to Him. I knew that I was purchased with a price—His blood. I had wandered and wandered, and when I came back I was totally different. I used to tell Betty, "It would be better if I never knew the Lord, than to live in this misery." When you live for yourself, and you are the Lord's, it is miserable.

Now, we haven't regretted one day coming back to the Lord. I realize now that He has used my fall to teach me to be humble. I needed to be humbled be-

cause I was proud of being saved. I got to that point. I used to say, "I don't believe in backsliders. I don't think they were ever saved." I would tell brother Barry Mahloy this. And he would say, "Brother, there isn't any depths a saint can't fall to, if he takes his eyes off the Lord." I didn't believe it then, but I believe it now.

After we came back, I got into reading the Bible again and studying it. I quickly found 1 John 2:15-17. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." There's the secret!

What has the Lord done for me and Betty in the last few years? Everything. Everything that we could possibly think. I couldn't even tell half of it. He sustained us through the most difficult time of our lives. The year 1992 was good for us, physically and spiritually.

Physically, the Lord answered my prayer. It was the first time in 19 years that I was pain-free almost the entire year. I used to pray, "Lord just give me one day without pain. One day without back pain." He gave me a year without back pain. We really grew. We learned to rely on Him through adversity.

In 1992, Betty had a terrible time at work. Money had been stolen, and she, being the manager, was questioned by police, along with other employees. She became the chief suspect, and was requested to take a polygraph test.

The Lord came to us and seemed to say, "Don't worry. I'm in charge." That is when the Lord gave us Psalm 27:1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" We would get on our knees every morning and pray and recite that verse, because it was out of our hands.

But soon the thief was found—an assistant manager. Soon things got back to normal, and we just praised the Lord. Yet through this, although we didn't know it at the time, He was preparing us for what was to come.

Betty and I have been going through a few other trials lately. The day after Thanksgiving, I was injured at work. I incurred a second ruptured disc. The first one, which had been removed, was ruptured in 1990.

This one was a bit different. I was hospitalized in December, but the doctor wouldn't operate. He said

there were complications with the scar tissue from the first procedure and it could be debilitating. So he said, "Go home, rest up for a couple of months, and see if it will get better."

I went home and laid there. I couldn't walk; I couldn't sit up. Many of the Lord's people came and visited me at that time. I couldn't move, but the saints were wonderful at that time. They prayed, they sent cards, made telephone calls, and visited. Some men even came over and had the Lord's Supper at my house, because they knew how much I loved the Lord's Supper and worshipping the Lord. They knew how much I missed it because I couldn't be out.

Things were *bad*. They were real bad for us. I was told I would never work again. But things were *good*, because I knew that the Lord and the saints were on my side. With them on our side, I knew things would work out for us. So we just held on to that truth . . . and then the ceiling dropped in.

On February 1, Betty went in for a biopsy. It turned out to be cancerous. This was the same lump we had been told repeatedly, for two years, that it was nothing. I couldn't even be there with her that day at the hospital, but some believers were there. They called me and told me the news. It was like being stabbed. I don't know how else to relate it. I just dropped to my knees and asked the Lord to help us. And He did. I didn't lose heart. I knew that the Lord was in charge.

That night, Tom Johns and his wife Lizzy, Pam, and Rick came over and prayed with my family. Tom said, "Look brother, you have fallen. But here's Psalm 37:24. Read it, and put it in your heart. 'Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholds him with His hand.'"

That night, I went to sleep thinking about that wonderful verse. The next morning, since I couldn't drive, my sister had to drive me to my doctor. He said, "You need back surgery. Your condition is worsening." Another blow! What can I say? We were devastated, but we just had to rely on the Lord. And by His grace, we both did.

I had to postpone the surgery for several months because I knew Betty had to go into surgery. Someone had to take care of her.

Three days later, we went to her doctor. Betty's doctor said that she needed a mastectomy and chemotherapy. Could we keep taking these blows? We didn't know where to turn but to the Lord. It was during this

time that the Lord gave us Psalm 27:13-14, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." We memorized it, we prayed about it, we just held on to that.

Well, Betty had her surgery on February 27, and started her chemotherapy in March. It was a bad time. But we still held on to that Scripture and the Lord continued to strengthen us. She had been in and out of the hospital with complications and blood clots. She spent ten days in the hospital in April. She was released for Easter Sunday but returned to the hospital. I went in for my surgery the following Wednesday.

During this time, she was in Royal Oak Belmont and I was in St. Joseph's East. We made the rounds in the hospital. The accommodations aren't too bad, but I would rather have been home. I had to go in for a test to see where exactly the disc laid before they operated. On that occasion, the doctor also found that I have a condition called spinal stenosis. This is a closing down of the vertebrae, or the spinal canal, onto the spinal cord. And this can cause pain, many complications and paralysis. And he said that he recommended some extensive surgery which would entail cutting the vertebrae in half vertically and then removing the disc and fusing three vertebrae to my pelvic bone with six pieces of my own pelvic bone that they would cut out. It was another blow. The doctor asked me to decide if I wanted this operation.

I couldn't even consult with Betty because she was in the hospital at Royal Oak and I was at the hospital in Mount Clemens. What could I do? I got on my knees and prayed to the Lord. I was afraid. I said, "Lord, take this from me. You make the decision. I can't make this decision. I can't do it, Lord."

I asked the elders to please pray that I make the right decision. Two days later, the phone rang very early in the morning. It was my doctor. He said that though this condition is like a time bomb waiting to happen, he chose not to do the surgery at this time. He would just remove the disc.

Well, I was elated. I said, "Praise the Lord, Doc! Time bombs don't always go off. This is an answer to prayer." It was. It was out of my hands, and the Lord took care of it. By the way, if they did that surgery, I would have to stay in a body cast for four months, without moving.

On April 14, I went in for my surgery. Betty could not be there for all of it, because she was so sick because of the chemo. But Pam Mahloy was there from dawn until dark every day. She had promised Betty that she would be there with me.

We have since continued to receive our strength and guidance from the Lord—and our patience as well. The love of the saints at Lakeside was wonderful to us: the cards, the letters, the phone calls. We were never left alone. Not ever. Every surgery we ever went through, someone was there from the chapel, praying with us. We could not have done it without the Lord. We could not have done without the Lord and the saints.

The Lord knew what we would be going through, and He drew us back. He has sustained us since then and continues to sustain us. I'm still going through therapy. I've since gone back to work (though not in full capacity), but I have gone back to work. The Lord is continually strengthening Betty to face her ordeals. Her chemo is to go at least to the end of the year, and she has several other surgeries. But she continues to trust in Him.

Has it been easy? No! It hasn't been easy. Could we have lived through it without the Lord? No! Have we been blessed through it all? Yes!

In conclusion, I can take the words of Psalm 116:1-2 to sum it up for us: "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live."

What a difference He has made.



Carmine and Betty Calibeo fellowship at the Lakeside Bible Chapel in Sterling Heights, Michigan



BEYOND!

H *Heaven is the center of the Christian's universe and he is bound to it by eight golden links: our Father is there (Mt. 6:9); our Saviour is there (Heb. 9:24); our home is there (Jn. 14:2); our name is there (Lk. 10:20); our life is there (Col. 3:1-3); our heart is there (Mt. 6:19-21); our inheritance is there (1 Pet. 1:3-5); and our citizenship is there (Phil. 3:20). —Henry Durbanville*

"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 (Rom. 8:18)

So when my latest breath
 Shall rend the veil in twain,
 By death I shall escape from death,
 And life eternal gain.
 Knowing as I am known,
 How shall I love that word!
 And oft repeat before the throne,
 Forever with the Lord!
 —James Montgomery

He who has no vision of eternity has no hold on time. —Thomas Carlyle

Over the triple doorway of Milan Cathedral there are three inscriptions: above one—All that pleases is but for a moment; over another—All that troubles is just for a moment; over the center arch—That only is important which is eternal.

*Eternity! Eternity!
 How long art thou, Eternity?
 A little bird with fretting beak
 Might wear to naught the loftiest peak,
 Though but each thousand years it came;
 Yet wert then, as now, the same.
 Ponder, O man, Eternity!*
 —Anonymous

Alexander Whyte would cry out at the close of his message: "What will it be to be there?" Then he would add, "Aye, and what will it be *not* to be there?"

The light of heaven is the face of Christ; the joy of heaven is the presence of Christ; the melody of heaven is the name of Christ; the harmony of heaven is the praise of Christ; the theme of heaven is the work of Christ; the employment of heaven is the service of Christ; and the fullness of heaven is the person of Christ. —Anonymous

*Oh! what a meeting,
 There in the skies,
 No tears nor crying
 Shall dim our eyes;
 Loved ones united
 Eternally,
 Oh, what a daybreak
 That morn will be.*
 —C. A. Blackmore

"Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."
 (John 17:24)

*I have only just a minute,
 Only 60 seconds in it.
 Forced upon me—can't refuse it;
 Didn't seek it, didn't choose it.
 But it's up to me to use it.
 I must suffer if I lose it,
 Give account if I abuse it.
 Just a tiny little minute,
 But eternity is in it.*

On an American troopship during World War II, a soldier asked his chaplain, "Do you believe there is a hell?"

"I do not."
 "Then would you please resign."
 "Why?"
 "If there is no hell, we don't need you; and if there is, we don't want to be led astray."

*He and I, in that bright glory,
 One deep joy shall share—
 Mine, to be forever with Him:
 His, that I am there.*
 —Paul Gerhardt

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. 4:16-17)

RAPTURED TO HEAVEN

WOULD IT NOT BE WONDERFUL to celebrate the Second Advent of the Lord instead of His first? Let me illustrate how near it must be from Elijah's last journey in 2 Kings 2. The last places he visited once knew Jehovah's power and presence, but no more.

GILGAL (v. 1)

In the conquest of Canaan, (Josh. 4 & 5) Israel's base camp was pitched here. Here Egypt's reproach had been rolled away and the first Passover was kept in Canaan. Here circumcision—proof of separation to God—was known. Elijah remembered it all, but now he knew such experiences were gone.

We can make a present analogy with today's spiritual condition in the Church. Does it not look the same? The flesh is prominent instead of being cut off. (Rom. 7:18; Phil. 3:3). The power of Acts 4:32-33 is gone.

BETHEL (vv. 2-3)

"The house of God" and "the gate of heaven" are not now known (Gen. 28:10-22). Jacob's ladder to heaven, with God's grace and faithfulness are not there. Jeroboam's golden calf was worshiped at Bethel (1 Ki. 12:28-33). Instead of leading Israel heavenward, he led them into idolatry, selfishness and greed, into a false system, with false worship, false sacrifices and a false priesthood. Elijah *knew* it. He *felt* it.

What about today? Compare "the house of God" in 1 Timothy 3:15-16 with 1 Timothy 4:1-2, where Paul prophesied departure from "the faith" in "the last times." The Person of Christ, the glory of the house (1 Tim. 1:17 and 3:16) is displaced by men "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons," and teaching such right in the house. They are here!

JERICHO (vv. 4-5)

Elijah would remember faith's power associated with Jericho (Josh. 6). Israel's greatest victory was here, a victory of *faith* that tumbled the walls of Jericho. It was destroyed, cursed (Josh. 6:26), and never to be rebuilt. But in Ahab's day, Hiel, the Bethelite dared to rebuild it, reaping its curse.

Where is faith's great victory over the world today? Read 1 John 5:4-5 and sadly see that today, "When I look for the world, I see it in the Church." How many, like Demas, forsake Paul, "having loved this present world" (2 Tim. 4:10). It is only by the shield of *faith* we can overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil.

JORDAN (vv. 6-8)

What memories here! Israel crossed from the wilderness on dry ground through Jordan, the sacred ark opening the way. An altar of twelve stones set in the riverbed; another twelve on Canaan's shore, commemorated the miracle. Now it meant nothing to Israel, for past glories were darkened by present weakness.

All this is a blessed type to us of the death and resurrection of Christ, which has positioned the Church in "the heavnlies" in Him (Eph. 1:3). This typifies our position as stated in Ephesians: "dead *with* Christ . . . quickened *with* Christ . . . raised up together *with* Christ . . . seated together *with* Christ in heavenly places." How many saints today live in the heavnlies?

THE WILDERNESS (v. 8)

Elijah has retraced Israel's past and arrives in the wilderness. There is nothing left in the land that attracted his heart. All was a moral and spiritual wilderness to his soul. And today? Is it not very much the same for us? But Elijah had a blessed hope. There was one goal before him, and that was heaven! He was leaving the political scene to its coming destruction; and he was leaving the ecclesiastical scene to its judgment, as God had prophesied through him.

RAPTURED!

He was taken from the wilderness to heaven (2 Ki. 2:11). Happy man! This was God's plan for him; and God's plan for every believer is the same (1 Thess. 4:15). All indications suggest that the Rapture is near: "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). Is your heart ready for it? I would love to have it *now*! How about you? "Even so, come Lord Jesus," let us say in happy response!

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DEPARTURE TIME

THE LARGE LOUNGE is alive with people, mostly business types. They are bound for many destinations. Over there, a couple of men earnestly talk about a task they face in Hong Kong. Others are headed for Amsterdam, San Francisco, Tokyo. My destination: Frankfurt. Days of intensive business meetings lie ahead.

At a nearby table, a group of men, speaking a language I do not understand, are studying and exchanging sheaves of papers that look like contracts. Their lively discussion is serious, intense. But there is little joy in evidence. Everybody looks so serious! The business world, lived for itself, is a cheerless place.

I swivel my chair to turn my back on the whole scene and gaze out the window. There, a few miles away is the skyline of Vancouver and beyond, the jagged peaks of Canada's coastal range. Out there is a home filled with the people I love, and it was only an hour ago we said "good-bye." The words of one of them are not easy to forget: "I'm fed up with the whole scene—business, money, politics! Unrest is everywhere you look. Nobody is thankful. Nobody is content. Nobody has confidence."

Yes, the world is restless. Governments totter. Families dissolve, diseases rage incurable, suicides are at an all-time high. There seems to be a pall of gloom over mankind. Something, someone is needed (they think) to put things right! The end of the cold war, and the interruption of the arms race have not put the world aright. All is not well with mankind.

Then comes the announcement: "Lufthansa Flight 493 is now ready for boarding, Gate 24. Departure in 40 minutes." It's time to go. No more thinking. No more hesitating. Time for the departure lounge.

But another departure looms, any moment now. Totally unannounced. No time for good-byes. No time to reminisce. Too late to think on the might-have-beens of life. Too late to tend to the undone things of our passage. The Voice! The Shout! The Trumpet!

Glory for eternity. Bodies changed. Values put right. Priorities corrected—including those that should have been righted long ago.

Why do I do what I do? Is it just for self? If so, it's a

write-off; all wasted. Perhaps, hopefully, some is for others. Love of family, responsibility to friends and to country motivates us. These are noble instincts and necessary. But is there anything for Christ in it all? What sacrifice, what effort, what loss is just for Him? Which claims of the One Who died for us do we allow to mold our earthly way? How often do we stop and listen to the still small, but persistent, voice that says: "I gave My life for thee; what hast thou done for Me?" Yes, daily, in everything we do, we should be asking ourselves: Why? For whom? What is my motive?

The departure lounge is packed with the hundreds of souls who will soon fill the 747 waiting at the end of the passageway. Here they are; all races, varied cultures. Young and old. Some look eager; some merely appear to be resigned. Who are these people with whom I will travel today? A 9-hour flight lies ahead and during those hours, our destiny seems sealed as we sit within that great flying container. Among us there is only one thing in common—our destination. But our names, our hopes, our fears, our purposes are hidden behind the masks of silent faces. Perhaps some are departing in joy, some in sorrow; some for gain, others for loss. But we are all going. We wouldn't be in the departure lounge otherwise.



And so it is around the world. We are all on a journey. Everyone is in the great departure lounge—some happy, if in Christ, some in fear, without hope and without God in this world. Even for those on the way to heaven, in view of the Judgment Seat, for some, the journey is profitable; for others, it could be lost. What will we hear from the One Who gave us our talents?

And what of our fellow passengers who live and then depart without Christ? Eternal woe! The endless agony of the second death. The awful sentence: "Depart from Me." There is no parole; no second chance. The Christ rejectors' plunge to endless horror knows no parallel. Blackness, doom, haunting memories, remorse, want, loneliness, eternal unrelenting death.

I pause to grab a newspaper, something to read on the plane. But a glance at the headlines is enough to chill the appetite for reading! A report says the world economy looks like it did just before the crash of '29. No wonder businessmen here look so glum (I hope I don't!). There is news of gays, race riots, famines, divorces of prominent people. Who would want such a world, anyway? Is that all there is to live for?

The world AIDS conference has just ended. The plague is spreading, says the paper. No cures or relief in sight. Like of the plague of sin, it is a universal and terminal disease. Outside of the life-giving gift of God in Christ, there is no cure. A chilling thought—an epidemic poised to sweep the modern world. In the mind's eye, we see our children and grandchildren, growing up in their youthful naiveté. It sends a chill through the

heart! But, thank the Lord, there is a changeless Christ, who will never leave us nor forsake us.

The newspaper says that some brainy group is inviting the citizenry to join in a contest to rename the Big Bang Theory. Apparently the idea is to try to cement as fact this mindless idea that the universe had its beginning in some huge helter-skelter chance explosion of energy. Never mind that what emerged was a universe of matchless order, perfect and predictable precision—all of which places haughty man in his true puny perspective. Man aspires to be God! But the fact remains: It is only in Him who made the stars that a sinner becomes a child of God, an heir of salvation, at one with the eternal Godhead. What assurance. What reality.

My paper is called "USA TODAY." Well, if what the paper describes is indeed the land of my temporary residency—and it is—it sure is not worth living for! How easy it should be to say with the poet: "Nay, world, I turn away . . ." How delightful it is for the ready Christian to wait expectantly in the departure lounge, for the Rapture.

And now, there's the call. The flight is ready for boarding. It is departure time; time for one last check of readiness—passport, boarding pass, return ticket. All are in hand. From this moment onward on this journey, the only thought worth thinking is that of getting home again. Fellow traveler, have you checked your state of readiness lately? Is all in order for imminent departure to eternity? Can you look forward to getting home . . . forever? If not, you haven't long to get ready. We are already in the departure lounge!

An enthusiastic fellow passenger strikes up a conversation. He is eager to get to Frankfort to meet one well loved and longed for. He makes me feel momentarily even more lonely. No one will meet me over there. I've been to that faraway land often enough to find my solitary way to my appointments. But a land where no loved ones are is lonely at best, no matter how well we know our way. However, One well loved will one day meet me! Heaven's portals will not be destitute. Over there One waits who loves me and gave Himself for me. Neither He nor I will be fulfilled or content until together we enter on the bliss of His eternal preparation, where through the endless ages to come He will pour out the exceeding riches of His grace. No need to be lonely or destitute even now; the glories of the meeting will burst upon us at any moment. It's almost departure time!

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WILLIAM TROTTER

WILLIAM TROTTER (1818-1865) was born again in 1830 under the gospel preaching of Methodist preacher, Billy Dawson. In the book, *Chief Men Among the Brethren*, Henry Pickering claims that Trotter had “done the work of three lives” in his 47-year race through life. The statement seems true enough. He did triple duty as evangelist, pastor, and teacher.

There in the north of England, he was saved during a spiritual harvesttime. At the age of 14, he was already testifying and exhorting in the Methodist class meetings, and when 19, Trotter was officially recognized as a preacher in the Methodist New Connexion. The Methodists had been quite strong in that part of England. We get an idea of the scope of the work from Hudson Taylor’s biography.

The Taylors lived not far from Trotter’s hometown. Hudson Taylor was a fourth generation Methodist from the town of Barnsley in Yorkshire. Hudson’s great grandfather was an early convert (he was privileged to house John Wesley when he came to preach). When the older Taylor first began preaching in that mining town, “drunkenness, licentiousness, and gambling” were rife. William Bramwell said, “Scarcely any people raged against the Methodists or persecuted them with such ferocity as the people of Barnsley.” Mrs. Geraldine Taylor tells us that the church buildings were deserted and “the ale-houses overflowing, with what results may be judged from notices such as . . . “Drunk—a penny: dead-drunk—two-pence: clean straw for nothing.”

But Yorkshire did not stay that way. The gospel came “in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” Perhaps you can better appreciate the force

and vastness of the work of God in those days when you realize that by the time of John Wesley’s death in 1791, in methodical fashion he had organized one hundred circuits in Great Britain alone, which were traveled by three hundred itinerant preachers and more than a thousand local “exhorters.”

It was very likely that Wesley was in the Taylor home when he made the entry in his journal, dated Friday, June 30, 1786: “I turned aside to Barnsley, formerly famous for all manner of wickedness. They were then ready to tear any Methodist preacher to pieces. Now, not a dog wagged its tongue. I preached near the Market Place to a very large congregation, and I believe the truth sank into many hearts. They seemed to drink in every word. Surely God will have a people in this place.”

Wesley’s words were prophetic. But what he did not know is that God’s people would not always go under the banner of Methodism. After Wesley’s death, a leadership vacuum occurred, resulting in splinters such as the New Connexion, Primitive Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists, Free Methodists, Methodist Protestant Church, etc. Of course, these factions did not occur all at once, and the movement was still quite vigorous well into the 1800s. But an autocratic style was Wesley’s ghost to haunt the movement.

William Trotter was active in a revival at Halifax at the same time when Hudson Taylor’s father, James, was seeing remarkable fruit in the nearby town of Barnsley. I do not have a record of it, but I imagine that the two knew each other since they were both active itinerant evangelists. This was one of the happiest periods of Trotter’s career. From Halifax, the young Trot-



ter was assigned to work in metropolitan York, an industrial center of that time. God was again at work converting the lost. It was just at this time that Trotter's eyes were opened to the mischief of being controlled by the New Connexion's yearly conference. There he was surrounded by the eager young converts in York in 1841, when he received the shocking news that the conference had decided to transfer him south to work with a sickly congregation in London, with, as Pickering put it, "the result that his mouth was virtually closed in his ministry."

At this time, Trotter delivered two messages that were afterward published, that demonstrate the man's personal devotedness and willingness to stand by his convictions. As any worldlying knows, "He that pays the fiddler calls the tune." Trotter saw that to whatever degree men of God entrust their welfare to financial institutions, to that degree they will be tempted to allow their message to be trimmed, clipped, and shaven. To pass from being the Lord's freeman to being man's hireling is a step too easily taken. In a *Lecture on the Use of Money*, he argued against hoarding resources, and in a second pamphlet entitled *The Foolishness of God Wiser than the Wisdom of Men*, he answered objections to the first pamphlet, and explained the positive side of how our money should be used for the legitimate needs of our family and to supply the needs of the saints and to help the poor. But in this second pamphlet, he made forceful statements against benefit societies and all other forms of insurance. It wasn't hard for his fellow Methodists to see how his words applied to the Minister's Benevolent Fund. Shortly thereafter, a brief report was issued saying that Trotter had been "discontinued from the ministry."

Trotter was not alone in his concerns. An estimated 29 congregations, with a total of more than 4,300 members, withdrew their membership from the New Connexion. The unique feature of this exodus is that the principle leaders had no intention and made no attempt to form a new sect.

Once on the outside of the New Connexion, Trotter went back to Halifax and joined fellowship with a congregation of saints there. He also came into contact with J. N. Darby.

There were others, such as George Brealey and W.

H. Dorman, who came out of Methodism and were remarkably used of God at that time. Not far from Halifax, in south Yorkshire, William and Thomas Neatby also left their Methodist memberships, as did J. Hudson Taylor, and began to meet in a more scriptural way. Sad, but so often true, that the very movement that had carried the torch of testimony in a previous generation, would become "the system" from which devoted souls would have to separate.

For a few years, Trotter edited the paper, *The Christian Brethren's Journal and Investigator*, which recorded the "little companies of earnest men who began to meet in the early part of the nineteenth century in various parts of the country, unknown to each other, and under no human leadership . . . the inception of this movement arising from a new illumination of the Personality of Jesus Christ, and of the essential unity of all who believe in Him, under whatever name they were differentiated."

His close friend, J. N. Darby, advised him that: "The secret of peace within, and of power without, is to be occupied with good; ever and always to be occupied with good." Trotter would quote Darby's advice and claim that he had made this his aim. This is curious, considering that the one who said it was so often engaged in critical and controversial debate, and Trot-

ter was also no stranger to literary combat.

He wrote about the difficulty in 1848 between J. N. Darby and George Müller in *The Whole Case of Plymouth and Bethesda*. His account carried considerable weight when it was published in 1849, but the pamphlet has since been both scrutinized and castigated. For those aware of the conflicts of that time, I can only submit that men like Darby and Trotter had legitimate concerns. And by comparison to other controversies (not that we are justified by comparing ourselves to others) at least Darby did not murder his opponents, in the way the Reformers had hunted down and persecuted the Anabaptists. All said, this period was not Darby's or Trotter's finest hour.

But when we look at the whole of Trotter's writings, perhaps he had found the secret of how to face off with an enemy and still keep his eye on Christ. He did not become jaded. There is a freshness in his writing that reflects a high level of intimacy with Christ. *Eight Lec-*

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WILLIAM TROTTER

tures on *Prophecy* and *Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects* dealt heavy body blows to the post-millennialists. For sane, clear teaching on prophecy, Trotter has never been excelled. And his *Five Letters on Worship* and his paper called *Heaven* were the sort of cheering, other worldly writing that disarmed his assailants. His opponents so admired the man that their opposition sounded very hesitant. J. Grant wrote an exposé of the dangerous tendencies of those people called Plymouth Brethren, and admitted that Trotter was, "one of the very ablest and best in every respect." W. B. Neatby said he was "highly spoken of by everyone who knew him." And again, when describing another eminent saint—G. V. Wigram—Neatby says, "Perhaps no leading member of the community left behind him a higher reputation for personal sanctity, unless it were William Trotter."

One final note: Trotter could sing. Two of his hymns are in the *Little Flock Hymnal*: "Behold the Lamb Whose Precious Blood," and "Farewell to This World's Fleeting Joys," to which the following lines belong:

*Farewell to this world's fleeting joys,
Our home is not below;
There was no home for Jesus here,
And 'tis to Him we go.*

*And has this world a charm for us,
Where Jesus suffered thus?
No! we have died to all its charms
Through Jesus' wondrous cross.*

*Farewell, farewell, poor faithless world,
With all thy boasted store;
We'd not have joy where He had woe—
Be rich where He was poor.*

His promotion to higher service came when he was only 47 years of age. It was a heavy loss that the saints felt they could scarcely afford.

Much of the material for this article was taken from:

Brethren: The Story of a Great Recovery; Beattie
Chief Men Among the Brethren; Hy. Pickering
Hudson Taylor In Early Years; Mrs. Howard Taylor
The Origins of the Brethren; H. H. Rowdon
A History of the Plymouth Brethren; W. B. Neatby
The History of the Brethren; N. Noel

A Taste of Trotter

"There are two grand objects which God has had in view in separating Israel to Himself as His peculiar people. One was, that there might be a testimony to the unity of God, and that He alone was the object of worship. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4). "Therefore ye are My witnesses," saith the Lord, "that I am God" (Isa. 43:12). His other object was, that by the prosperity of this people, under his own immediate government, His character might be manifested; so manifested, that all men might understand, that "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 144:15). I need hardly say that it is in the future reign of Christ that this purpose of God will be accomplished. Israel will then be a sample, a specimen, before all nations, of the happiness of a people under the immediate government of God.

With regard to the past, both objects that God had in view in separating Israel to Himself, have entirely failed. It is not meant by this that God has failed; but that God having placed Israel under responsibility to Himself, in a position where, had they been faithful, these objects would have been accomplished, they have, through Israel's unfaithfulness, entirely failed of their accomplishment. Israel failed to bear witness to the unity of God; for they fell into idolatry like the nations around them. They could not then be a sample of the happiness flowing from God's government, for that government can never make rebels and idolators happy. Their captivity and dispersion formed the final expression of God's disapproval of their ways . . . They consummated their national guilt by crucifying their king. The one of whom God says, "Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion," was crucified by His own people . . . The longsuffering of God still lingered over them. They had consummated their iniquity, but there was to be a little longer patience; and when God had raised from the dead Him whom they had crucified, mercy was afresh proclaimed to them in His name."

—from *Eight Lectures on Prophecy*

A MILLENNIUM OF PEACE

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL for thousands of years have been a despised race and a downtrodden people. Their sufferings have been indescribable. Peace, in spite of every effort, seems far from their borders.

Yet the dawning of a millennium of peace is rapidly approaching, when righteousness and peace shall be triumphant. Then the power of Israel's Messiah, presently rejected, will be universally acknowledged. Christ will reign on this earth as her manifested King. This is no mere fanciful speculation or dream, but a "sure word of prophecy" to which we should take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place. Israel is now in deep darkness, but they shall dwell in the full effulgence of a millennium of peace.

The passionate cross of Calvary, with all the fundamental truths that are entailed in it, is the message of grace in this dispensation. Flying beside this banner is a regal crown, proclaiming God's Son as their rightful Monarch. This they will as a nation gratefully accept, and hail the Christ with wonderful jubilation as their legal King.

I would like to bring to your notice a number of outstanding thoughts on the millennial reign.

IT IS A REVEALED FACT

Viewing the Jews today under their sad dispersion and sorrow, one would wonder what the future

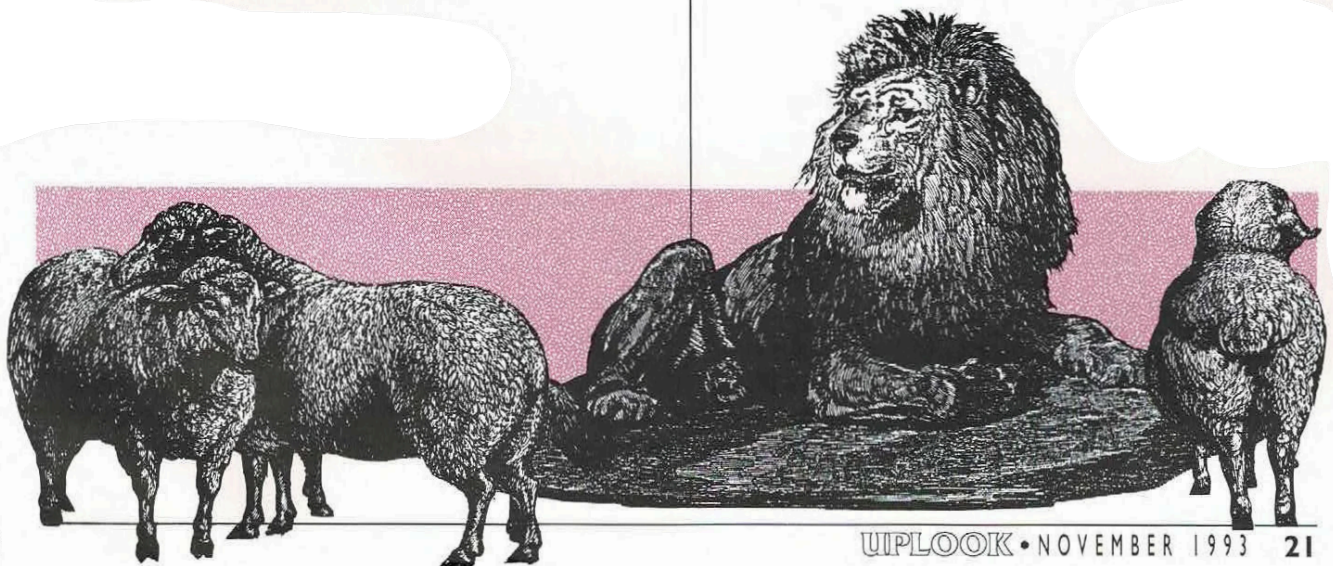
prospect of such a scattered race could be. Presently they are fighting for their future. Yet God will accomplish for His chosen people what they cannot perform for themselves. Has He forgotten the covenants He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? No! Israel's future is assured.

The millennial reign of peace is a radiant fact which the prophets foretold. David, the man after God's own heart, over and over again in his marvelous writings mentions the King and His kingdom. Constantly his mind and heart were animated by this theme.

By parable and prophecy, by precept and by promise, our blessed Lord gave emphasis to all that the prophets of old had said concerning Him.

Peter could say to the Jews of his day, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ, who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).

The Apostle John in the great book of the Revelation, unfolds the fundamental fact of a kingdom yet to come, and a reign of Christ and His saints in connection with the earth and earthly scenes, such as our dispensation cannot develop.



A MILLENNIUM OF PEACE

ITS PLACE IN THE DIVINE PLAN

Everything that God has performed in the program of this world has been brought into being according to a divine plan. Nothing is ever accomplished in a haphazard way. In Isaiah 44:7, God declares, "I appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass." Man cannot force them into being before their time. God works according to a divine calendar.

Habakkuk also reminds us concerning the vision of the coming King, that, "It is for an appointed time." Paul asserts that, "God hath determined the times before appointed." The order and precision of God are beyond human comprehension.

We review the history of God's past dealings with men, and find them unfolding in a marvelous order, which fully establishes the belief that the seven days of creation in Genesis are but types of as many dispensational days in which the Creator of all things is bringing to perfection His new creation. Eden is the first of them; the antediluvian age, commencing with the fall, is the second; the Noahic, dating from the covenant made with Noah after the deluge, is the third, and Abrahamic beginning with the call of Abraham, the fourth; the Sinaitic with Moses at its head, is the fifth; the gospel, originating in the incarnation of the Son of God, is the sixth; and where shall we look for the seventh—the grand Sabbatic rest, in which the curse is uplifted, creation gladdened, man restored, and God rejoicing in all His works—if not to that millennial reign, which is ushered in by the return of Him whose coming shall be "As the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds when the tender grass springeth out of the earth, through clear shining after rain"? When the millennial reign appears, it will come in the dispensational setting of the holy and divine plan and purpose of the Almighty.

ITS PURPOSE

God has national and material destinies to unfold during the millennium. Christ, when on earth, was known as a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Earth as yet has never seen the fullness of His glory. It shall soon witness such for, "The whole earth shall be filled with His glory. Yea all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the

ends of the earth." The Jews shall see the King in His triumphant beauty, they shall behold Him in robes of majesty and in undimmed, unclouded glory, as "the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

THE SALVATION OF ISRAEL

In this wonderful dispensation of grace, a remnant of Jews is being saved. Missions all over the world are laboring hard for their enlightenment, but the largest majority of them are rejecting Christ as their Messiah. Israel shall yet be saved, however, for it is written, "There shall come out of Sion the deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and this is My covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins." Although Israel has been faithless, God has been faithful. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger forever, because He delighteth in mercy . . . Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

BLESSING TO THE DARKENED RACES

There are millions of heathen in the world today, unevangelized. This presents to the Christian church a challenge. God has a deep interest in those who have not heard or accepted the gospel message. If Israel in past dispensations had been faithful to God, their influence for good would have extended all over the world. Their perversity to the will of God prevented this. In the millennial reign, under the glorious control of Christ, "The whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, for then shall all the kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ."

THE DEFEAT OF SATAN

In this majestic reign the devil shall be defeated, and all his works revealed. He will be bound for 1,000 years, and cast into the abyss, and all his agents driven from the hosts of men. Universal blessing shall come, and even the animal kingdom shall share in it. The whole creation shall cease to groan, and universal praise shall fill the earth. Then His glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. God's King will at last be vindicated. We shall reign with Him and He shall reign forever.

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THAT BLESSED HOPE (TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH)

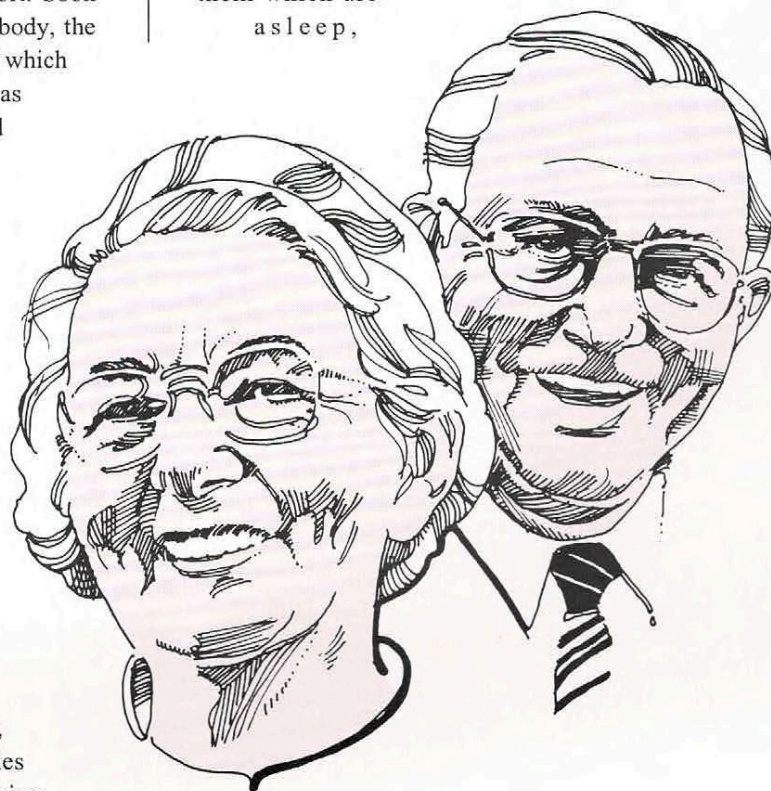
PERHAPS YOUR EARS, my elderly friend, have become dull, and you no longer hear distinctly the sweet sound of the voice of your fellow-saints. Your communications with them are so rare and so difficult. But comfort yourselves. Soon, in the Paradise of God, you shall hear the sweet songs of the saints and of the angels; you shall then hear those unspeakable things which the tongue of Paul himself could not repeat, and which the ears of his brethren could not hear on earth. Meanwhile, be diligent to commune so much the more with the Lord Jesus, as you are able to do so less with men.

Perhaps your eyes, having become dim like those of the patriarchs, no longer distinctly discern the features of your relations or of your friends. You cannot any longer read in their eyes that mirror of the soul. The beauties of this earthly creation, in the midst of which God has placed you, are seen by you only as through the mists of an autumn day. But take comfort. Soon you shall see with the eyes of your glorified body, the splendors of a heavenly creation, the glory of which no eye of flesh could endure, were it as keen as that of the eagle. You shall see the saints and the glorious inhabitants of that new world, the cherubim, the seraphim, and the angels. Above all, you shall see the Lord Jesus Himself. He who by His obedience unto the death of the Cross, has purchased this happiness for you, and who remains forever the Center and the eternally flowing Source of all bliss. You shall be able to gaze on His blessed face, for it is written, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." And that sight will fill your heart with more joy and happiness than all the splendors of heaven itself.

Thus the thought of the near return of the Lord is eminently calculated to sanctify, by raising the heart above the earth, its cares, and its desires. And as it sanctifies while consoling, so it comforts while sanctifying.

If this were a truth known experimentally, it would be sufficient to convince oneself of it by the words with which the Apostle Paul concludes the most complete picture he has given us of the coming of the Lord: "Comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4:15).

The Thessalonians were very different in this respect from the majority of Christians in our day. They believed with a faith so simple, and so childlike in the near return of the Lord, that they did not doubt they would see Him without passing through death. But in their simple faith—and in some respects ignorance—they anxiously asked themselves what would become of those who from among them had "fallen asleep" in the Lord. It is on this point that Paul wishes definitely to instruct them: "I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep,



THAT BLESSED HOPE

that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

For that purpose, he first fixes their eyes on Christ, the first of the resurrected ones, the Firstborn from among the dead, the Cause and the Chief of all resurrection: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also those who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him.” God will bring them back with Jesus, when He shall come to take possession of His own.

But this can give rise to the question: How can God bring these saints back with Jesus, if they are still on the earth? The apostle anticipates the objection, and answers the question by a special revelation of the Rapture of the Church into the presence of her Lord: “For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord (by a special revelation), that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise go before them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.”

How far this is from the dead in Christ being left in their tombs, and so losing their part in this glorious day of the coming of the Lord. They shall be the *first* to share in it, for we shall in no wise go before them—we who are alive and remain until that hour. On the contrary, they shall rise first. “Then we who are alive and remain,” shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

Here, then, is the appointed place of meeting given for the whole family of God, at which not a single one of its members shall be absent. For He who is responsible to present them there is the Lord Himself, the Faithful and True Witness, the Conqueror of death and the grave.

Comfort yourselves, then, by this hope, you who weep for beloved ones fallen asleep in the Lord. You shall find them again at that meeting place. Assuredly even today they are not dead. The God in whom they have believed, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not the God of the dead, but of the living, and all live unto Him. These, then, also live unto Him—in spirit—as said the dying Stephen: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (Acts 7:59). They, in a holy and happy rest, await—as we do here, in the wilderness—the redemption of their bodies, and the gathering together of the whole family of God. Then you shall find them again, no more with infirmities of all sorts, which made them groan. But then, trans-

formed as regards this weak body of humiliation, into the likeness of the Lord, they shall be like Him. You shall find them, never again to leave you, as it happens in this world, where everything finishes with farewells. But then, all of us filled with the life of the Lord Jesus, shall be like Him, and with Him forever.

Comfort yourselves also by these words, ye who groan under the weight of the conflict against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Soon Satan shall be bruised under the feet of the saints, and they shall no more have to walk through the defilements of this world, where it is necessary to wash the feet every day. Clothed in white garments, they shall walk on the street of pure gold of the holy city. Such is the portion of him who shall have overcome. Be strong, then, in the grace which is in Christ Jesus, reminding yourselves that there is never a victory without a conflict, and that it is necessary that the laborer toil before receiving the fruits of his labors (Jas. 5:7).

Do you suffer from the infirmities of this body of sin? Paul also groaned under it; but he comforted himself in the hope of the redemption of the body at the coming of the Lord. “We who are in this tabernacle groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life” (2 Cor. 5:4). After having shown that the whole creation groans and is in pain until now, “we also” (he adds), “who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23). Your weak body, worn out by infirmities, is not just an opportunity for suffering and humiliation for you, but also of support and of patience for others. Well then, like Paul, comfort yourself with the assurance that when the Lord shall come, He will “transform this body of our humiliation, and will fashion it like to His body of glory.”

Then, as an instrument endued with power and blessing, it will move without any more trouble than our thoughts today, to wherever the service of the Lord shall call it. While waiting for this, call to mind these three great words—“Joyful in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer” (Rom. 12:12).



Joyful in hope,
Patient in tribulation,
Continuing instant in
prayer.

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THE SUPREME EVENT AHEAD

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

(1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)

COULD ANY MAN have written these words? Could Matthew, John, Peter, or Paul have written them? Not apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit! Read the words once more, and note their simplicity, conciseness, and heartwarming power. Let us study them piece by piece.

"The Lord Himself." Not Michael, not Gabriel, not anyone in heaven, or even the hosts of heaven, but "Himself." He will be the first to welcome all His own. What a moment of triumph that will be, to hear that Voice we have never heard, to see that Face we have never seen, to be in the immediate presence of the Man who died for us. It will indeed be glory for me.

"Shall descend from heaven." Did He not come "out of the ivory palaces" for our salvation? Did He not "become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8) for our sakes? With what joy must He come out of heaven the second time, to secure the full fruition of salvation of all His own.

"With a shout." The word used for "shout" is *keldsmo*, the cry of the helmsman or boatman, only used here. It will not be a mere whisper, but a loud cry, to call saints out of the deepest depth of ocean and re-

motest corners of the land to be with Him.

*"From the deepest depth of ocean,
From the mountain and the plain,
From the desert rock and valley
Countless throngs shall rise again."*

No matter what the mode of burial—those quietly laid to rest in God's acre, those lost in the desert, torn to pieces by the lions, lost on some lonely mission field, or left fathoms below in a mine shaft—these shall hear the Voice and come forth (Jn 5:28-29).

"With the voice of the Archangel." His own voice will be joined with angelic fervor. Those heavenly servants to the saints on earth will see them "changed in a



THE SUPREME EVENT AHEAD

moment of time" (1 Cor. 15:51). You feel you sadly need to be changed; so do I. That will be a revolutionary change into His own image, the image of the Heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthly.

"And with the trump of God," or "last trump." The Roman Army had three trumps. The first was the call to get ready, to prepare oneself. The second, to fall into line, to get ready for marching. At the third trump, every soldier went marching forward.

The first trump has long sounded: "Be ye also ready"; the second trump is sounding loudly now—"Stand together, march in step, a united band," "one body" (1 Cor. 12:20). The third trump may sound any moment, and not one saved one will be left on earth. As in Egypt when redeemed Israel marched out, "not a hoof" was left behind (Ex. 10:26), so when the Redeemed of the Lord "arise," not a particle of one of the Redeemed will be left to the devil and his angels.

"And the dead in Christ shall rise first." Sweet thought! Sympathetic Lord! That sweet babe, sorrowfully laid to rest, will be resurrected before one living soul is touched. Before ever He takes in hand the loving son, that loved mother will be raised. The great masses of the dead, whom we have loved and lost and laid to rest, will receive first attention.

"Then we which are alive and remain." Not "them," but always "we," implying that the living state is the constant hope of His own. Look at a map of the world, think of the saints in all these lands, a mighty remnant indeed. What a host on earth, with even a mightier host in heaven!

"Shall be caught up together with them." Two sweet words: "caught up" and "together." Down long enough on earth, "up" to the realms of light and glory. Artists picture Elijah the prophet seated in a chariot of fire in stately magnificence, drawn by fiery horses, riding triumphantly to heaven. But Elijah did not go to heaven in a chariot of fire, he went the way that I and all the living hope to go "in a whirlwind"—one breath here, the next there (2 Ki. 2:1). Like Elijah, one moment traversing the dusty lanes of earth, the next moment impelled by heavenly power away from earth

"Together." The dead shall not get to heaven first.

All competition will be gone, for together saved dead and saved living will go triumphantly forward at His return.

"In the clouds." Some read this as "in clouds" or in massive companies of saints. Such may be, but I think it simply indicates the cloudy heavens as the assembling place of those masses as they rise "to meet the Lord in the air." As a cloud received Him at His ascension, so His people shall leave the world behind.

"To meet the Lord in the air." The best is left to the last. Not to meet with archangels or angels, not to meet with patriarchs and prophets, not to meet with apostles and elders, nor with Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, or even, in one sense, with loved ones gone before. It is to be "with the Lord," to see Him face to face, to be like Him, to be with Him forever. Oh, consummation of bliss! and that may take place today. Well may this marvelous moment be called "that blessed hope" and the "glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." No wonder we are exhorted to be "looking for" that event.

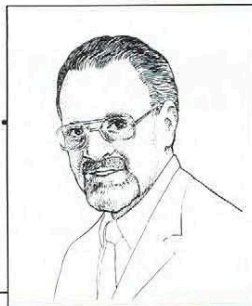
"And so shall we ever be with the Lord." This is not for a day, not for a year, not for a holiday, nor for a while, but "forever." All works of time are past. We reckon now "yet a little while" (Heb. 10:37). Such is unknown then. Peter speaks of "after that you have suffered a while" (1 Pet. 5:10), but then, neither suffering nor a while. Oh, blessed eternal state, and it is to be with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to be with Paul and Peter and John, to be with loved ones gone before, and even better than all these, "with the Lord."

For obvious reason, the Divine author adds: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Not frighten one another, not ever threatening the Judgment Seat, but "comfort" one another. Say to your brothers and sisters: "The way may be rough, but it cannot be long; the trials may be great, but they will soon be past—the Morning cometh."

On reading or meditating on this blessed hope, so graphically foretold, only one cry comes from our hearts—the last words of the Blessed Book—"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

COMING EVENTS
OUT OF THE SKY

**The way may be
rough, but it
cannot be long;
the trials may be
great, but they
will soon be past—
the Morning
cometh.**



DISPENSATIONAL!

A few years ago I was preaching a series on "Dispensationalism" when an elder's wife came and said that those things were too theological for her. A young man at the same meeting came and said he had never heard of the term "Dispensations" before, even though he had been raised in an assembly. The "Brethren Movement," through its well-known leader, J. N. Darby, has played a significant role in systematizing and spreading Dispensationalism; yet many today in the movement would not be able to defend it or even know how to define it. Perhaps as you read this, you are saying to yourself, "So what? Doctrine isn't so important—it's loving your brother and being tolerant that is the key to Christian living." In many assemblies the amount of time, or lack thereof, given to the systematic teaching of the Word of God bears this out.

The Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." To paraphrase, we need to be diligent in our Bible study so that when we stand before God to give an account, we may not be ashamed due to a careless handling of His precious Word. To this end, may I suggest three books for your study? These are study books. They could be used as a basis for a group study on the very foundation of the way we approach the Scriptures.

God revealed Himself in history. The events of history that are selected by God's Spirit are selected so we might understand the revelation of God and His purposes for mankind and the universe in general, thus answering the eternal questions: "Why am I here?" and "Where am I going?" There are two systems of interpretation of the Bible's history that are most prevalent today. One is called "Covenant Theology" and the other is "Dispensational Theology." These two systems are dramatically different. They differ in the goal of history and the fundamental way in which Scripture is viewed. A very fine book has been written to compare

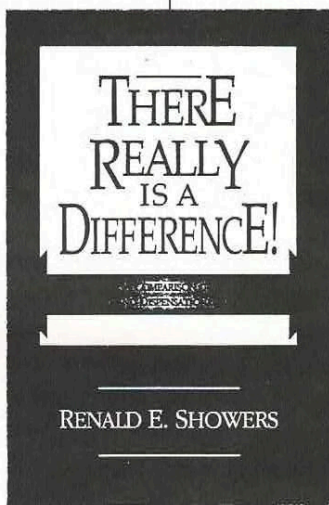
these two systems. Renald Showers gives an overview of Covenant Theology and shows its strengths and weaknesses. He devotes a larger part of the book to an examination of Dispensational Theology and demonstrates its superiority over Covenant Theology. *There Really Is a Difference*, the book's title, is a good description of the book's contents. It *does* make a difference which of these two systems you follow, for it greatly affects your understanding of God's ultimate goal in history and the way in which you view its history.

If in fact you are convinced by Renald Showers' book that Dispensational Theology is for you, then there is another book you must study. It is called *Dispensationalism Today* by Charles Ryrie. It has been around a while, but is still available. This is an excellent book on the definition, the origins, the hermeneutics, and distinctive features of Dispensationalism. When you get through with this book, you will be able to defend its precepts and understand its principles.

There is an aspect of Dispensationalism which concerns the future events of the Bible. As Charles Ryrie says in his book, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith*, "All dispensationalists are premillennialists, but not all premillennialists are dispensationalists." To understand this statement and to see the outworking of prophecy from a dispensational standpoint, this book is "must reading."

Why are any of these books important? Because if I am to open my Bible to study it, I must have a consistent interpretive guideline. It is the lack of this which is bringing much error into the church and is causing so much discouragement among God's people. May we be delivered from error as we "rightly divide the Word of Truth." All three books are available from Gospel Folio Press (*plus postage and any applicable taxes*):

There Really Is a Difference	\$5.95
Dispensationalism Today	\$8.99
The Basis of the Premillennial Faith	\$5.99



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ACTING IN THE SPIRIT

THE BOOK OF ACTS has often been called, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" and rightly so. "The Spirit" or the "Holy Ghost" is referred to more than fifty times, more than in any other book of the Bible. In the narrative, we read of first century believers being "full of the Holy Ghost" and being "led by the Holy Ghost." If the Lord's people ever needed to be controlled, motivated, and filled with the Spirit, it is today. Trends in the church today focus on *external* stimuli or *internal* feelings rather than on the *eternal* Spirit guiding through the Word.

In this book, God has given us a blueprint for Christian testimony and witness—personal and corporate—in a world that is opposed to all that aligns itself with God. We do well to follow this pattern today.

The book of Acts can be divided in a score of ways:

Biographically. In chapters 1-5 and 10-12 we see the activity and ministry of Simon Peter, and unfortunately we tend to remember only his mistakes. In chapters 6-7, we have Stephen, and tend to remember only his martyrdom. In chapters 8, 9, and 13-28, the activity of Paul is traced. We tend to remember only his ministry. But the fact is that they each had their mistakes, their ministry, and their martyrdom. Acts largely revolves around these three great men of faith and how they were used by God in the spread of the gospel.

Ethnically: Peter began right there in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Being a "salt," that old fisherman cast out the gospel net and about three thousand of his own countrymen were captured for the Master. We see much of Peter's activity limited to the house of Israel. However, in chapter 10, the Lord gives Peter an opportunity to be a fisher of Gentiles as well. There Cornelius and his household were saved.

We see that God did not intend to leave any high, unscalable wall dividing the ministries to Jew and Gentile. For instance, it was Peter who was chosen to go to Cornelius, to bring in the first Gentiles. And it was Paul who was a star witness at the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15. Nevertheless Peter's ministry seemed largely to the Jews and Paul's to the Gentiles.

The book of Acts records a transitional period in which the gospel goes from an almost exclusively Jew-

ish audience until it is almost exclusively going to the Gentiles. But this does not mean that the basic gospel message also changes. To imagine so is a serious misunderstanding. This notion obviously contradicts plain statements such as Matthew 28:18-20, Hebrews 2:3, and 1 Timothy 6:3-5. The great proof that the gospel of the grace of God as Paul preached it was not at odds with the gospel as our Lord and the other apostles preached it is seen by comparing Luke 24:46-47 with what Paul says in Acts 20:21 and 26:20.

Geographically. The Lord gave His disciples His program for the propagation of the gospel. "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It was the Lord's intention that we be witnesses of His saving power and grace in Jerusalem (where the disciples were, where the Lord was rejected and crucified), Judea (the province of which Jerusalem was the capital), Samaria (the next-door neighbor to Judea, where lived a people racially and religiously mixed), and the uttermost part of the earth (a place where they could not even imagine themselves to be). In Acts, we see this program's progression in the world, like ripples in a pond, in ever-widening circles.

In Acts 8:26-38, we have the conversion of the man from Africa—a son of Ham. In Acts 9:1-6, Saul is saved, he being the man from Asia, of the house of Shem. And in Acts 10, Peter witnesses to Cornelius—the man from Europe—a descendant of Japheth.

The rest of the book recounts Paul's three missionary journeys: the first to Cyprus, Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 13-14); the second in response to the Macedonian call saw victories for Christ in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and briefly at Ephesus, Caesarea, and Antioch (Acts 15:36-18:22); the third including two years at Ephesus, and then various parts of Macedonia (Acts 18:23-21:14).

The book of Acts doesn't seem to end. What happened to Peter? To Paul? Of course, it hasn't ended. Hopefully we are all writing a chapter to be added to the book. One of these days it will be finished. Then the Lord will "unroll the canvas and explain the reason why." What a story will be unfolded then!

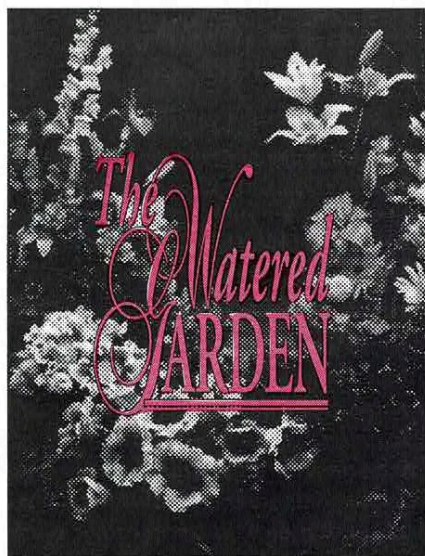
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EVERYDAY READING PLAN

Section 36: Acts

December 1	Acts 1:1-26	Witnesses in Jerusalem & Judea; the ascension of Christ
December 2	Acts 2:1-47	Pentecost—the Comforter comes; Peter’s first address
December 3	Acts 3:1-26	The first miracle and Peter’s second address
December 4	Acts 4:1-37	Peter and John before the Sanhedrin; the first persecution
December 5	Acts 5:1-16	The danger of lying to the Spirit; more miracles of healing
December 6	Acts 5:17-42	Second persecution—we ought to obey God rather than men
December 7	Acts 6:1-15	The first ministers; Stephen’s ministry and arrest
December 8	Acts 7:1-60	Stephen’s defense and death—the first martyr
December 9	Acts 8:1-25	The first missionary; “witnesses unto Me . . . in Samaria”
December 10	Acts 8:26-40	Philip in the desert, reaching the man from Africa
December 11	Acts 9:1-22	Saul’s conversion, baptism, and first sermons
December 12	Acts 9:23-43	Saul—taken out with the trash; Peter heals Aeneas and Tabitha
December 13	Acts 10:1-48	The gospel goes to the Gentiles; the vision of the great sheet
December 14	Acts 11:1-30	The first label—called Christians in Antioch
December 15	Acts 12:1-25	God’s glory—an angel frees Peter and executes Herod
December 16	Acts 13:1-52	Paul’s 1st missionary journey—unto the uttermost parts of earth
December 17	Acts 14:1-28	Pioneer work in Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, Perga, and Attalia
December 18	Acts 15:1-41	Contention among brethren—the circumcision and John Mark
December 19	Acts 16:1-40	2nd missionary journey; Timothy, Lydia, & the Philippian jailer
December 20	Acts 17:1-34	Riots in Thessalonica, students in Berea, worshippers in Athens
December 21	Acts 18:1-28	The home of Aquila and Priscilla; 3rd missionary journey
December 22	Acts 19:1-41	Ephesus—conversion, perversion, and persecution
December 23	Acts 20:1-38	Paul raises Eutychus and bids farewell to the Ephesian elders
December 24	Acts 21:1-40	“I am ready . . . to die . . . for the name of the Lord Jesus”
December 25	Acts 22:1-30	Paul gives his testimony and appeals to his Roman citizenship
December 26	Acts 23:1-35	Rescued from terrorists—an evening ride with 470 soldiers
December 27	Acts 24:1-27	Trial before Felix—Don’t call me, I’ll call you
December 28	Acts 25:1-27	Trial before Festus—Paul appeals to Caesar’s judgment seat
December 29	Acts 26:1-32	Paul’s appeal to King Agrippa—Almost, almost—but lost
December 30	Acts 27:1-44	Storm on the sea—Four winds and four anchors
December 31	Acts 28:1-31	Paul in Rome; “salvation . . . is sent unto the Gentiles”

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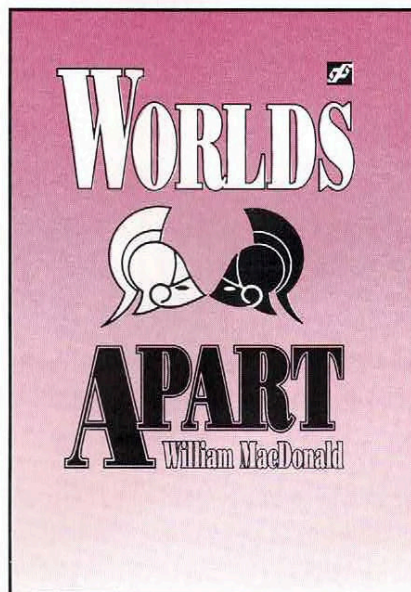
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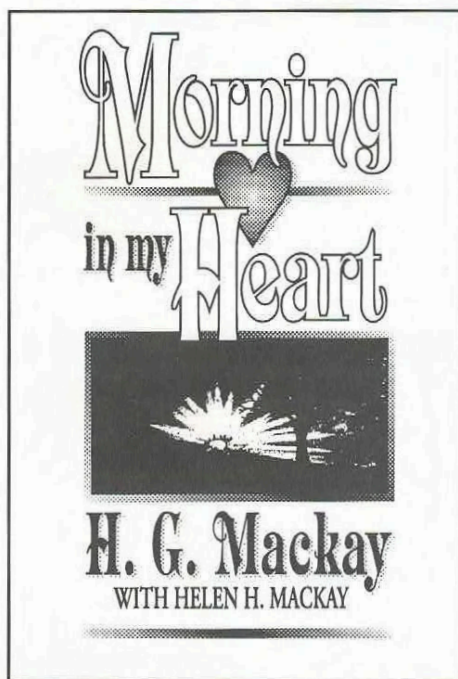
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Just in Time for Christmas



Morning in My Heart by Harold G. Mackay

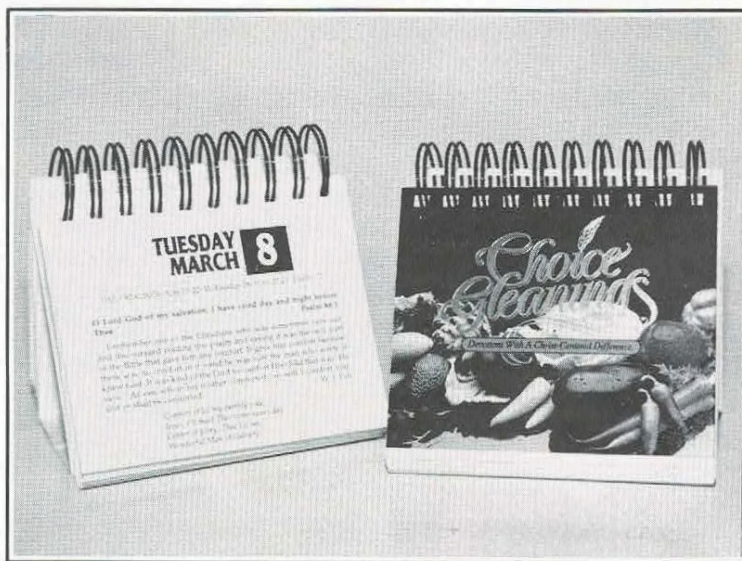
Harold Mackay was born and raised in Galt, Ontario, by godly parents. As a young man interested in sports and making his way in the business world, the Spirit of God brought him to repentance. Almost immediately, he "nailed his colors to the mast." Heading to North Carolina in 1928 with the man who led him to Christ, Mr. Mackay began a lifetime of fruitful labor, primarily in the southeastern states. This is his story.

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THE DAY BEFORE

*Some time some ordinary day will come,
A busy day, like this, filled to the brim
With ordinary tasks—perhaps so full
That we have little care or thought for Him.*

*And there will be no hint from silent skies,
No sign, no clash of cymbals, roll of drums—
And yet that ordinary day will be
The very day before our Lord returns!*

*The day before we lay our burdens down,
And learn instead the strange feel of a crown!
The day before all grieving will be past,
And all our tears be wiped away at last!*

*O child of God, awake and work and pray;
That ordinary day might be—today!
Make ready all thine house; tomorrow's sun
May dawn upon the Kingdom of God's Son.*

—Author Unknown