

The Sabbath Recorder

THE TREASURE OF YOUR HEART

"A good man" — That is the way Jesus started a paragraph in the same chapter that contains the Golden Rule. There is nothing one would rather have said about him than those three words. But with Jesus goodness was not just reputation; it had to be something of the heart, and the proof of goodness so often depends on our attitude toward money. Thus Jesus goes on to say, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good."

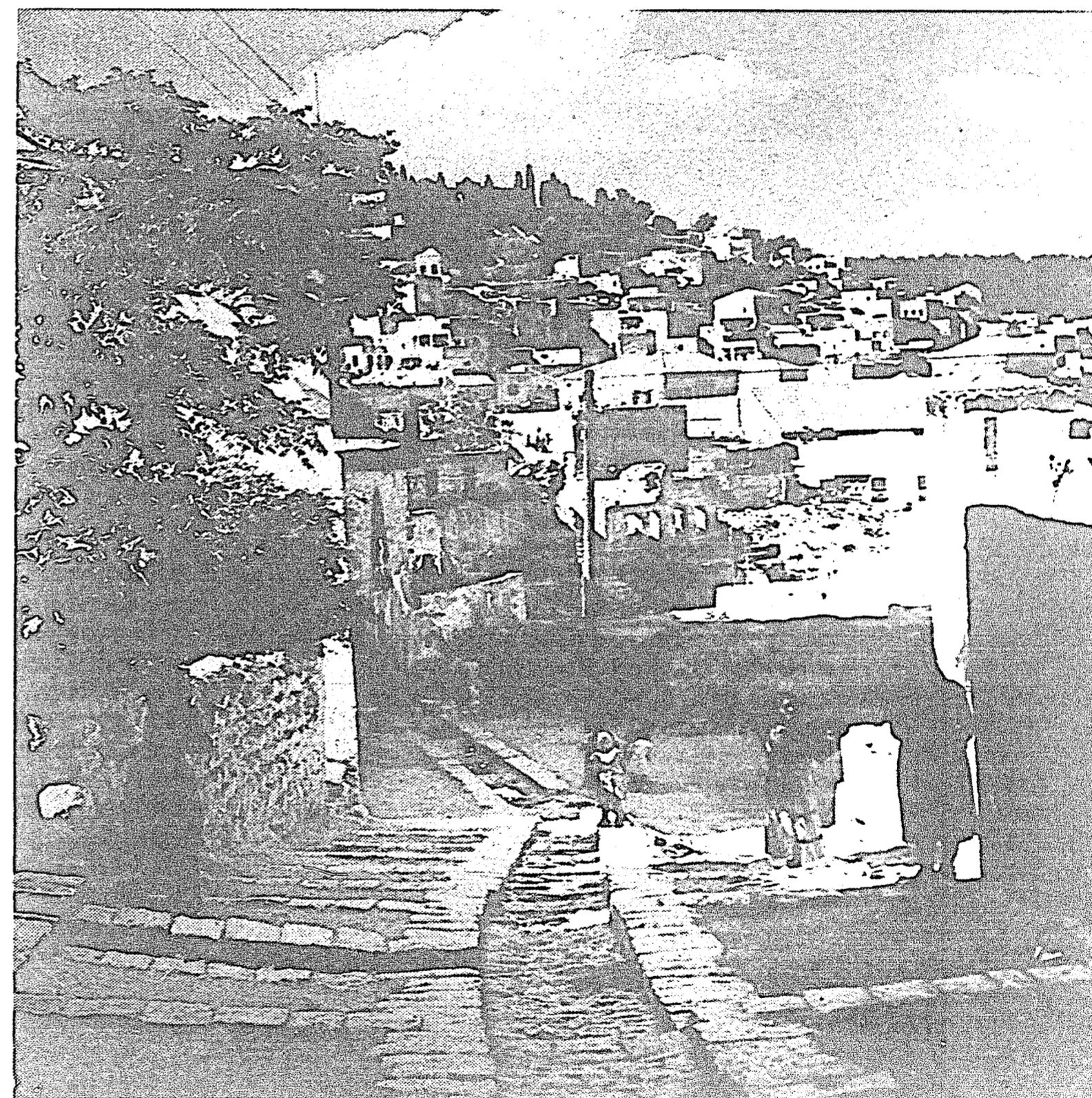
Religion is a matter of faith proved by works. It is a matter of the treasure of the heart expressed in large measure by the treasures of the hand. The inward mark of pure religion is "to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Jesus called it the supreme commandment. The beginning of salvation is opening the heart; the working out of that salvation is opening the hand. The Golden Rule is far more than advice about how to get along well with one's neighbors; it is a rule for expressing a change of heart. It is, if one will accept it, a guide for Christian giving. If we love we will give generously of our means to meet the deeper needs of our fellow men.

Jesus talked much about money, more than any minister or church official dares to talk about it. Jesus is our example. If we would follow Him we too must talk about bringing forth the good treasure of the heart. It is more than words — sweetly soothing words. The disciple of the Lord must be constantly challenged. Perhaps that is why we have in the Bible the widow's mite set over against such stories as of the man who pulled down his barns to build greater and said to his soul, "Eat, drink, and be merry."

Have we forgotten what our Master said about the relation of treasures on earth and treasures in heaven? Moth and rust cannot corrupt that which is laid up in heaven, He taught. He leaves no question as to how we can have the satisfaction of eternal joys in heavenly mansions. It involves, among other things, the giving of our money to the cause of Christ. There is no righteousness which does not express itself by giving — giving from the heart. We will all concede that those who give from the heart find joy in giving. Their lives are enriched, for they have learned that "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12: 15).

How much shall I give? I may be able to honestly say that my income is very small and that I have very little to give. (Many churches get along well on consecrated "widows' mites.") If, however, my income is nearly average, do I dare say that after my necessary expenses are paid I have little left over to give to the Lord? Jesus endorsed the tithing principle for just such average incomes as mine. Let that be my guide until my heart tells me that I can do more than that. I do not want to be ashamed at the close of my life or in the judgment day when everything is "naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4: 13).

With the teaching and example of Jesus before me I am determined that I will not be offended if my pastor, the shepherd of our flock, talks to me about money in the terms that Jesus used or as frequently as my Lord mentioned this Christian obligation and blessing in his Sabbath day exhortations. I want to grow in giving as in other aspects of Christian living.



Jesus of Nazareth

More than twenty-five times in the Gospels and Acts our Savior is spoken of as Jesus of Nazareth. At the time of the taxing, "Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem" (Luke 2:4). Nazareth hasn't changed much in 2,000 years except for the Church of the Annunciation and related shrines. Miracles in the name of Jesus of Nazareth are still possible.

The Sabbath Recorder

First Issue June 13, 1844

A Magazine for Christian Enlightenment and Inspiration
Member of the Associated Church Press

REV. LEON M. MALTBY, Editor

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

John L. Harris, Chairman, Rev. Charles H. Bond,
Florence B. Bowden, Charles F. Harris, Charles H.
North, ex-officio, Owen H. Probasco, Rev. Albert N.
Rogers, Rev. Herbert E. Saunders, Rev. Alton L.
Wheeler, Douglas Wheeler

Contributing Editors:

MISSIONS Rev. Leon R. Lawton
WOMEN'S WORK Mrs. Elmer E. Andersen
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION Rev. David S. Clarke

Terms of Subscription

Per Year \$4.00 Single Copies 10 cents

Special rates for students, retired Seventh Day
Baptist ministers, and servicemen

Postage to Canada and foreign countries 50 cents
per year additional. Gift and newlywed subscriptions
will be discontinued at date of expiration unless re-
newed. All subscriptions will be discontinued six months
after date to which payment is made unless renewed.
The Sabbath Recorder cannot pay for contributed articles
but will send the writer, upon request, up to 10 free
copies of the issue in which an article appears.

Second class postage paid at Plainfield, New Jersey.
The Sabbath Recorder does not necessarily endorse
signed articles. All communications should be addressed
to the Sabbath Recorder, P. O. Box 868, Plainfield,
New Jersey 07061.

A Seventh Day Baptist weekly (two issues
omitted in August) published by the American
Sabbath Tract Society, 510 Watchung Ave.,
Plainfield, N. J. 07061.

PLAINFIELD, N. J. December 21, 1970
Volume 189, No. 23 Whole No. 6,429

Editorials:

In the Fullness of Time	2
Year-End Giving Needed	3
Selective Compassion	4
Television and Evangelism	4

Features:

Baptist Fellowship Stresses Cooperative Endeavor	5
Serving the Seventies	6
Our Bible Interest Draws Us Together	7
Ordination Statement	8
Daily Bible Readings 1971	14, 16
News Notes on Giving	14

Missions:

Wise Words from Wise Men	11
"Serving to the Glory of God"	12

Christian Education:

Adolescence for Adults	13
------------------------------	----

Our World Mission	15
-------------------------	----

In the Fullness of Time

The gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus are historical narratives that dwell more on how it happened than on the eternal significance of the coming of Christ. We need this information with all the beauty of the details. We also need the other statements of Scripture that interpret the incarnation and set the completed work of Christ in proper perspective. One such passage, brief but rich in meaning, is found in Galatians: "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4, 5).

What more can be said about the birth of Christ in its relation to the plan of salvation than that in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, that we might receive the adoption of sons. It is useless to ask if redemption could not have come in some other way; this was God's plan, and we are the beneficiaries of it.

Much has been written as to why God chose that particular time of history to bring His Son into the world. It apparently could not have been earlier and could not have been later. It was during that brief period when the Jewish nation had been revived and He could come to His own. Some forty years later the temple was destroyed and His earthly ministry, as we know it, would have been impossible. He came at a time when the gap could be bridged between Jew and Gentile and salvation's doors, opened wide to all Messianic prophecies, could be and were fulfilled.

In a lesser sense His birth was in the fullness of time following the annunciation. For the mother it was the normal period. She was in every sense a true mother with all its joys and pains even though conception was by the Holy Spirit. There are those who say that the time of Christ's birth can be figured within a few weeks by noting that he was born six months after John the Baptist and that the conception of John can be figured from the time when Zacharias fulfilled his priestly course and returned home at the end of the month of Abib.

This would appear to put the birth of Jesus in the Bible month of Tishri (September-October). There have been many calculations or traditions as to the time of birth, and December 25 is not highly favored by scholars. It was, however, in God's appointed time as to year and month. Again, we do not need to know the exact time. We do need to ponder the why of His birth and the nature of His being—both Son, God, and son of a woman. Only as human and divine could He partake of our nature and also forgive our sins.

Jesus came. We do well to take a set time to thank God for sending Him, remembering, of course, that the Bible does not set up a celebration of His birth as it does of His death. As Christmas comes and passes the presence of Christ continues and we dedicate our lives anew to the salvation of the world which had its beginning with the birth at Bethlehem.

Year-End Giving Needed

How do you interpret the November report of the giving of our churches to Our World Mission as recorded on page 15 of this issue? Do you note that at the end of eleven months we are close enough to our goal to declare that a balanced budget is possible if we respond to the year-end appeal for an extra effort? Without an extra effort in the closing days of December we will not make it, for the treasurer indicates that we need \$16,264 this month.

If we are to reach our goal and not handicap the boards and agencies whose budgets we approved at Conference we must send in almost twice as much in December as we did in November.

It may encourage us a little to note that receipts for October were \$11,528. Furthermore, the actual giving during November must have been quite a little more than the \$8,600 reported, for twenty-eight churches failed to send in whatever had been contributed. In October there were only eighteen such churches. If you have your *Recorders* on file you may note that although there were two months when receipts fell below \$7,000 there were five months when we went

above \$11,000 reported. The figure for January was \$14,725 and for August \$18,071. If we had consistently contributed each month some \$11,700, as the high months showed we could, we would not now face the difficult task of making it up at the end of the year. Even so, \$16,000 is an achievable goal if we all act now and if all church treasurers send the money in promptly. Remember that December 26 is the last Sabbath of 1970. The resolution to help our denominational agencies start the new year with a clean slate and unencumbered with deficits is a resolution that has to be made before New Year's Eve.

Selective Compassion

There is nothing more Christian than compassion. To have Christ in your heart makes you compassionate if for no other reason than that you appreciate His compassion for you that caused Him to die in your place.

There is a compassion, however, that does not come up to the Christian standard. Philip E. Hoffman, president of the American Jewish Committee, in a recent address rightly criticized those of the "New Left" who, he says, practice a selective compassion. From his position he cannot think well of those who are "overcome with sympathy for the Arabs, the terrorists, the Viet Cong, the Black Panthers, and the Chicago Seven, but stonily indifferent, if not heatedly inimical, to the fate of the Jews in Israel, in the Soviet Union, and elsewhere, and to the problems of underprivileged ethnic groups."

We are not of the "New Left" nor of the "Extreme Right," who also practice anti-Semitism, but this charge of selective compassion should make us examine ourselves and see just how much it applies to us in other areas. Can we claim compassion as a Christian virtue if we limit it to certain select groups? Are we sorry for the deprived and oppressed people in one place and indifferent to the needs in other places?

Again, is it Christian compassion if our feeling is only for the physical needs and not for the spiritual needs of people?

Christ had compassion on the multitude who were as sheep without a shepherd. He declared Himself to be the good shepherd giving His life for the sheep. He healed the sick and raised the dead, but His compassion was to heal the sin-sick souls and become the resurrection and the life for those who were dead in trespass and sin. We are truly compassionate when we have the same attitude and goal.

Television and Evangelism

Evangelism by television is coming into its own according to surveys made by the Billy Graham Association. Billy Graham writes, "For the first time in history we have the electronic technology to proclaim the gospel to the whole world."

When the crusade at Shea Stadium in New York was put on the air the mail showed that thousands from coast to coast made commitments to Christ—students, professors, athletes, show people, foreign diplomats, laborers, businessmen, housewives, and hundreds of teen-agers. The television ratings showed that the audiences were much larger than a year ago. One station manager wrote from a large city saying, "Your crusade from Shea Stadium outranks the network shows on the other two stations at the same hours."

One church leader wrote, "Your television program is making evangelism easier than any time in this century." It is further reported that hundreds of pastors have written in telling of people who joined their churches as a result of the telecast. A Bible school president wrote that fifty percent of their student body entering school this year were converted to Christ through the television ministry.

When the leader wrote that television was making evangelism easier than at any time in this century, he probably did not mean that mass evangelism efforts of local churches were necessarily much easier than before. What he probably meant was that the efforts of the local church to reach people by the preaching of the gospel and by personal witness

MEMORY TEXT

"And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy" (Matt. 2:9b, 10).

were meeting with much greater success due to the impact of television, which reaches into the homes of such a large proportion of the population.

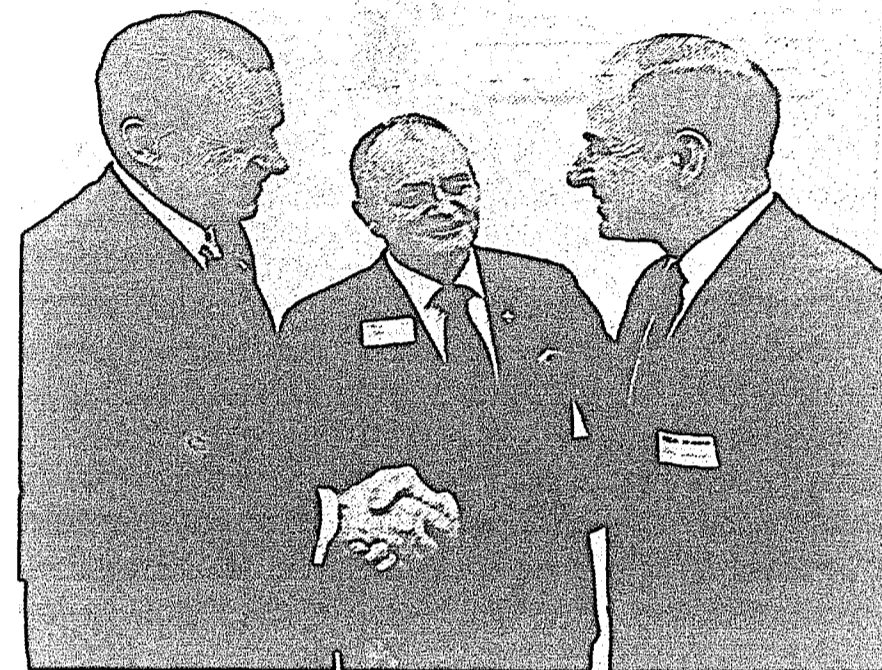
It appears that many people are ready to listen to the message of salvation in person-to-person contacts, and frequently this willingness to listen has been caused by their hearing the gospel over the television from the Billy Graham crusades. If this is so, then it behooves the church, every church, to redouble its efforts to reach the people of its community, people who have perhaps not previously attended church but are willing to listen to the gospel for the hope that it brings to them.

On the week of December 7 another Graham crusade was aired over more and better stations than ever before. If the results are similar to those of the previous televised program from Shea Stadium it may mean that this period before Christmas, 1970, is the greatest opportunity that the churches have had to win souls for Christ. Let us pray that our preparations for Christmas may not blind our eyes to the crying need of the people round about us, people who may be reached for Christ at this time better than ever before and perhaps better than at any time later.

If we can help Christ to come into the hearts of friends and neighbors, it will be far better than any celebration. Any church program that we might put on to remember how Christ came into the world almost two thousand years ago is good, but to help Christ to come into human hearts in 1970 is much better, we will all agree. The opportunity is now, let us grasp it!

Baptist Fellowship Stresses Cooperative Endeavor

Sessions of the General Committee of the North American Baptist Fellowship held recently in Washington, D. C., included a private group tour of the White House. Members of the committee were then individually introduced to President



Dr. Robert Denney in center

Richard Nixon as they met briefly with him in his office.

The general consensus pervading throughout the NABF meetings held in our nation's capital November 22 and 23 was that there should be increased stress on developing closer working relationships among the nine member conferences and conventions. In fact, when it was announced that the general secretaries would join in a special luncheon session in the Independence Room of the Washington-Hilton Hotel, several expressed their preference to having the meeting place referred to as the "Interdependence" Room.

Some forty persons in attendance, including members and invited guests, were divided into four sections to consider denominational mission strategies, the church and young people, evangelism in North America now and financing our Christian enterprises.

The leading of the Holy Spirit became rather apparent to several as group reporters later in a plenary gathering reflected the general consensus that other Baptist bodies as well as member groups

of the NABF should be invited to join in cooperative endeavors wherever possible and that they be urged to share frequently in interchange of information regarding respective programs, resource materials and techniques and in sharing of leadership. (Specific recommendations have been communicated by the general secretary to the appropriate boards and agencies of our denomination for their prayerful consideration and possible implementation.)

A resolution calling for the holding of simultaneous meetings of boards, councils and agencies of the NABF member bodies at a time and place of mutual acceptance was discussed by the executive and general secretaries, and they were asked to continue serving as a committee to explore further the feasibility of such a plan. In the meanwhile, exchange of fraternal representatives by conferences and conventions was encouraged; and several board, council and agency meetings were announced with the open invitation extended to other appropriate departmental leaders to attend.

Seventh Day Baptists were officially represented by the Rev. Delmer Van Horn and Secretary Alton Wheeler with the Rev. Leon Lawton, executive vice-president of the Missionary Society, attending the session dealing with missions.

Special attention was directed to the challenge of evangelizing around the world as well as in our country, details of the fellowship's recommendations will be elucidated in a subsequent article reflecting the sensed urgency of witnessing throughout the world, in concord, and NOW!

—Alton L. Wheeler

Theology and Growth

The slowing down of the rate of church growth has a theological reason, according to Findley B. Edge, professor of religious education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The professor says it is because "church members have too superficial an understanding of God and too shallow a commitment to serve God." This implies that when growth was better we had a better understanding of and commitment of God.

Serving the Seventies

Portions of an address to the Advisory Council of the American Bible Society

by Secretary Laton E. Holmgren

We are entering a new decade of human history. Everyone from Harvard professors to Hollywood buffoons is forecasting the likely outcome of the extraordinary era into which we are moving and their predictions cover the whole range of the created order from molecular secrets to spatial fantasies. Whatever their philosophical or theological persuasions may be, however, most pundits agree that we are facing explosive days. The new age, they soberly predict, will be one of rapidly increasing electronic marvels, mystifying space exploration, grim ecological calamities, stern and aggressive minorities, unchecked proliferating populations, greatly accelerated transportation and perhaps most dramatic of all, a revolution in mass communication through transmitters in the sky which could radically alter the course of human history for a thousand years.

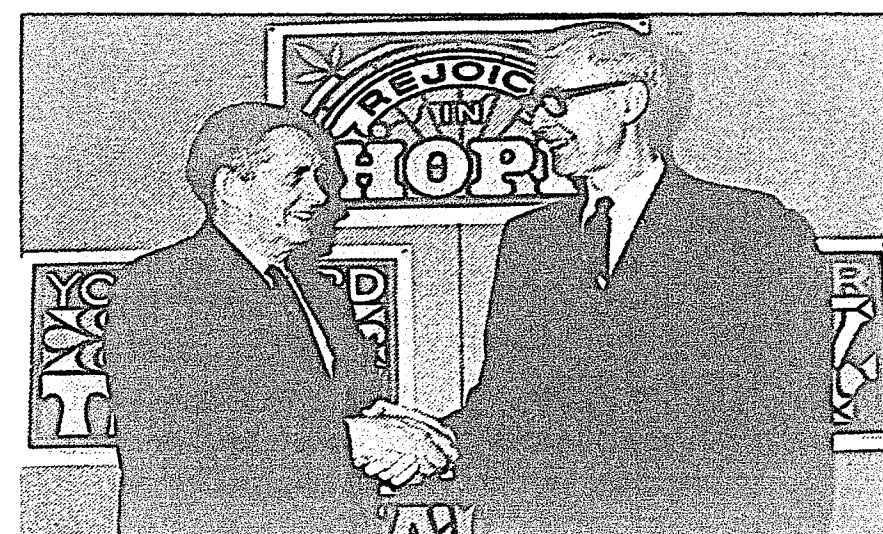
But do we have a thousand years? Many thoughtful observers doubt that we have a hundred. Or even ten! To be sure, there are those who exude optimism over the transforming potentialities of the new science with its microminiaturization, laser beams, electronic gadgetry, swirling satellites, synthetic foods and most promising of all, electrical brain stimulation which Professor José Delgado of Yale confidently predicts will enable us to construct "happier, less destructive, better balanced" men and women. But these incurable optimists are greatly outnumbered by the prophets of anguish who are terrified at the possibilities for evil lurking in these very scientific marvels. Significantly, it is no longer only somber theologians who predict impending judgment—even an end of the world—but secular commentators and most surprising of all, the youth of the world. Leonard Bernstein in a recent article in *The New York Times* said, "I have spent long hours this last year sitting with university students, in America and abroad, rapping with them. What I hear is a constant refrain of hopelessness. The system is too

big, too evil. You can't fight it except by extremist action . . . You can't cope with the madness of a world divided into two mindless juggernauts. Most of these students cannot identify with either side and the result is hopelessness."

Even as frivolous a cynic as Malcolm Muggeridge, who has spent his life and gained a fortune ridiculing conventional morality, has suddenly become sobered by the fading prospects of our erotic and narcotic culture. His new book, "Jesus Rediscovered," contains few theological profundities, but it does provide frequent flashing insights into the moral and spiritual bankruptcy of the age into which we are moving. "In a way it's deliriously funny," he wryly comments, "going to the moon when you can't walk with safety through Central Park." Muggeridge speculates on how some future historian, if any, will account for our suicidal conduct—"Their civilization must have been possessed of a death-wish which so assiduously and ingeniously sought its own extinction—physically, by devoting so much of its wealth, knowledge and skills to creating the means to blow itself and all mankind to smithereens; economically, by developing a consumer economy whereby more and more wants have to be artificially created and stimulated in order to take up an endlessly expanding production; morally, by abolishing the moral order altogether and pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of happiness through satiation; spiritually, by abolishing God himself and setting up man as the arbiter of his own destiny . . . I tell you in all seriousness," Muggeridge concludes, "that in my opinion posterity will find the utmost difficulty in believing that people belonging to a technologically developed civilization like ours could possibly have tolerated such a situation in the world; still less that their affairs were in the hands of men like gods. Men like apes, they'll prefer to believe, and that will seem rather hard on the apes."

The picture would appear to be utterly hopeless if it were not for what scientists and sociologists are calling the "surprise factor," but which we Christians

Our Bible Interest Draws Us Together



Editor Maltby and Dr. Robert Torbet representing two Baptist conferences.

A common interest in the Bible and in promoting its publication and distribution draws together some 200 representatives of most of the Christian churches of America for the annual meeting of the

know as the overarching and overruling power of God . . .

It was that very conviction which inspired the senior officers of the American Bible Society to meet in the early days of January this year prayerfully to prepare themselves for the extraordinary new decade just ahead.

First, we found it necessary to re-examine and reaffirm our central purpose. We have always believed—and now state it again on the threshold of a new decade—that our single goal must be to provide all men, in intelligible and convincing speech, with the faithful record of God's love and power as reported on the pages of Holy Scripture.

Consequently, a proposal will be made to the annual meeting next May for a revision of the ABS Constitution which will reduce the number of committees and departments and provide for greater mobility and flexibility in meeting the Scripture needs of this new age. To meet new opportunities we must engage in new methods while confirming our single urgent mission of providing every man on earth with an opportunity of reading for himself the "wonderful works of God."

Advisory Council of the American Bible Society. That meeting was held in New York City November 30 - December 2.

Seventh Day Baptists and American Baptists, who have so much in common other than the day of rest and worship, feel this drawing together, along with the others who emphasize the Scriptures. By the courtesy of the Bible Society the Rev. Leon M. Maltby and Dr. Robert G. Torbet, executive director for cooperative Christianity of the American Baptist Convention were pictured in a deep-felt handclasp in front of one of the colorful displays. Dr. Torbet will be remembered as a fraternal representative at the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference last August and as a speaker at one or more previous Conferences.

Seventh Day Baptist support of the work of the American Bible Society (like other ecumenical work) is on a voluntary designated-gift basis.

All of this led us, thirdly, to redefine our program goals and establish new achievement targets. One hundred years ago at the dawn of the new decade, the ABS distributed 1.1 million copies of Scripture. Last year it accounted for a world distribution of 105.7 million copies. In 1870, the ABS budget for all purposes was \$321,000. Last year it was \$8,340,000. A hundred years ago there were about four thousand Protestant missionaries in the world who looked to the Bible Societies for supplies and services. Today there are over forty thousand Protestant missionaries, half of them from the United States, and an equal number of Roman Catholics who now are beginning to call on us to help provide easy access to the Scriptures for all their people.

Add to all of this the staggering implications of the revolution in communications which is taking place whereby through the use of stellar satellites it will soon be possible to establish direct personalized communication from any one point on earth—your home, for example—to any other point. What the experts

(Continued on page 14)

Ordination Statement

Presented November 21, 1970 at Salemville, Pennsylvania

by John H. Camenga

(Shortened by the author and the editor)

The Greyhound Bus schedule is "Subject to change without notice." My statement of beliefs too, is subject to change without notice. I believe that it would warrant much more concern if fifty years hence I could, without exception, subscribe to this statement than if I differ from it. While change need not denote progress, the lack of change, more often than not denotes stagnation and lack of interest in growth.

Our faith cannot be compartmentalized; for the way in which we approach the Bible affects our attitude toward God. Our thoughts concerning God have bearing in turn on our beliefs concerning our Sabbath. What we believe about the Holy Spirit affects other areas, and so on.

First: A general statement. To my way of thinking, the practices and procedures historically found among Seventh Day Baptists are most conducive to Christian growth and service.

Without trying to sound dogmatic, it is difficult for me to comprehend the reasoning which concludes that our Statement of Beliefs is too confining. My understanding of it is that its positions are based on Scripture and allow a great deal of individual interpretation.

Bible —

Where to begin? With God? With Christ? With sin and salvation? Where? My choice is the Bible. For me it is easier to start by speaking of something which can be seen. We as a group, in the denominational Statement of Beliefs refer to it as "the final authority in matters of faith and practice." This should mean that the other areas of belief are dependent upon and related to our approach to the Bible. Therefore it is logical to begin with it. It contains the record of the efforts of the people of God to come to an understanding of Him, and of God's revelation and communication to and with them. In it we can find enlightenment, encouragement, devo-

tional material, law, poetry, to name a few and several points which cause a diversity of opinion in interpretation. It is easy to, in effect, exclude certain portions of the Scripture from that which we ourselves accept as Scriptural, that is, authoritative. It is only slightly more difficult for those who have immersed themselves in Biblical study to not only practice de facto decanonization, but to back up their choices as to what is and is not authoritative with the results of their studies. Basic to the concept of the Bible in the Christian faith is the acceptance of it as a source of very significant material concerning God's self revelation to man. This is not to ignore the point which Emil Brunner summed up with the words: "Christianity is not a mere book religion, but a life religion. It centers in a person, Jesus Christ, and the Scriptures are its servant, not its source." Our own Statement of Beliefs refers to Christ as the Bible's supreme interpreter. Of necessity, belief preceded the writing of material concerned with faith. This means that the Bible was compiled by believers. Christ's Church came into being before the Bible, as we have it, was completed. The Bible was, in a sense, its creation and therefore its servant. It was preserved from earliest days by men who saw in its writings material of value to the community of faith. Men of the same vision brought it into its present form. It would seem that they were primarily concerned with preserving that which they believed to be of spiritual value. By preserving two accounts of creation, for example, their purpose was passing on *two* messages about the creativity of God and His dealings with man and man's surroundings. The excesses of unbridled Biblical criticism, which analyzes to death every jot and tittle, every tetragrammaton and Elohim on the one hand, and the like excesses of literalism which claims as Biblical statements and opinions about

the Scriptures that which those Scriptures do not claim for themselves, both do a disservice to the Bible by focussing attention toward it as an object and away from its message to man.

God —

If we had no belief in God all the rest of this, or any statement of beliefs would be of no value or significance. Recognition of the existence of God is the one item on which all the rest hinges. Without the concept of there being a force—a personal force—of greater importance, strength, knowledge and compassion (to name only a few of God's attributes) than man himself, there would be no religion in the traditional sense of any form. I believe there is a God, just one. He is not simply the personification of good or power or anything else. He has these and many other qualities, but to equate them with Him is about as complete as claiming that, by stating I have a scar on the first knuckle of my left index finger, a complete description of me has been given.

One of the most quoted passages of Scripture is "God is Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). Because we are almost totally limited as to what we can comprehend by our physical bodies and ways of looking at things, we tend to, at least in our thinking, limit what we believe God can do to the limits which we must observe. We tend to make God in our image!

Unless God lifts us out of our three dimensional world and endows us with an eyesight that is sensitive to more than physical form, we can't really understand—comprehend God. Thus God is a revealing God. Objective proof of Him is rather difficult to come by. One can take a look at the world and universe which surround him and listen to and read the subjective information presented by others and evaluate his own personal experience. But it is through God's revelation of Himself to us and our spiritual ancestors that we come to a true understanding of Him. The Biblical record, the experience of a "multitude of witnesses" in all ages and my own per-

sonal experience with Him all lead me to accept the truth that there is a God, a Person, who is concerned with—loves—each of us. By His choice He reveals Himself to us.

Our Statement of Beliefs refers to God as "Creator and Sustainer of the universe." Creativity is a central theme of the Biblical record about God. To accept the radical notion that this world, with its myriad of life forms—not to mention the fantastic conglomeration of stars, planets, comets, asteroids and lots of empty space—is a chance occurrence; a sort of freak accident that just happened to happen takes a degree of blind faith that I am simply unable to muster. Thus, while details are of lesser importance, creativity is a basic and important attribute of God.

Probably the most important attribute of God from the Christian perspective is *love*. The New Testament is liberally sprinkled with references to this truth concerning God and hold up Christ as the supreme example and absolute proof of God's love for His creation and most specifically for man.

Christ —

An almost universally accepted article of faith concerning God is His unchangeability. But to read some of the passages from Joshua, the Chronicles, Psalms and other books it would be very difficult to picture the deity described as the one represented by Christ and the one which we describe as a God of love. While God has indeed not changed, man's ability to understand the true nature of God has continued to deepen and develop. I have already made some point of the concept of the self-revelation of God to man. This revelation has taken many forms. In due course He sent a different kind of revelation to man in order that man might, at long last, come to a comprehension of what God was and what He desired for those who followed Him. This revelation took the form of a man who had a human beginning and lived the life of a fairly average man of his day. While, on the one hand, he had human beginnings, the Scriptures also tell us that this revelation was the force

through which God worked in creation. It was through Him that God chose to show man what God's love meant and what He expected of His children. By action and word Christ displayed to those who surrounded Him what it meant to be totally in harmony with God. He came so that each of those who choose to are able to find what life can really mean when lived in harmony with God. Man, by his nature, was in need of an example. Both Christ's life and death stand as witnesses to undeviating devotion to God. His resurrection stands as a witness to the blessings and support which God bestows on His followers, despite apparent defeat. Before Christ (and since Christ as well) man insisted on striving to reach God through methods of his own devising. Christ revealed that what was necessary was total dependence on Him. The secret lies in the concept of letting Christ live "through" us, not setting up our own way to God, but making use of the way which God has provided for us. This is certainly a rather earth-shaking doctrine. We do not approach God with our intellect, (although, if we let Him, He will use our intellect) but with simplicity and trust. Christ's message was "Surrender yourself to God! Get rid of anything that separates you from Him! The way to do it is to follow my example!"

Holy Spirit —

Thus we come to the third person of the Trinity. Perhaps a more accurate term would be tri-unity, stressing the idea of God in three representations or three ways of relating to man. In a very real sense the doctrine of the Trinity has been overemphasized to the detriment of the truth of the unity of God. While Scripture refers clearly to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, there is an essential unity among them which is of at least a great significance as the differences in designation given in different circumstances. The Statement of Beliefs refers to the Holy Spirit as the "indwelling God," in other words, the personification of the presence of God within our lives, the presence which makes our belief take on life and

gives direction to each of us. Our statement also calls the Spirit "the Inspirer of Scripture, the Comforter, active in the hearts and lives of men, who reproves of sin, instructs in righteousness, and empowers for witnessing." Sounds like a pretty important role. On the whole it would seem that we have not placed enough emphasis on the Holy Spirit. On more than one occasion I have noticed that when the Holy Spirit is mentioned in a group, an attitude of embarrassment seems to develop. Christians as a whole have allowed the Holy Spirit to become the property of Pentecostals, much to our shame. There is nothing that should cause embarrassment. If we have accepted Christ, then we have a claim to the Holy Spirit. It is by that name that we recognized God at work in our lives.

Man —

Man, in his natural state, is a rather selfish being. He is egocentric. Within his own mind all things revolve around him. He tends to pat himself on the back for his positive accomplishments and excuse his failures by explaining that he is a product of his environment or some similar statement. But man is not just a creature unto himself. He of course has relationships within mankind. But more importantly, he has a relationship to the Creator. The Scriptures emphasize that no man becomes his best without relating his talents to God and turning over those talents for His use. While reaffirming the significance of the individual in God's eyes, Christ discounted the common attitude of "me firstism" to the zero point. While claiming for man more significance in God's eyes than that which exists for other creatures (note his comparisons to sparrows, etc.) and agreeing that man has need for "food and raiment." He also said "Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, that man is safe" (Lk. 9:24 NEB). I have never been too impressed with a sort of boot-strap approach to life. No matter how hard we grit our teeth and strive to live life as Christ would have us live, we fail.

(Continued next week)

MISSIONS—Leon R. Lawton

Wise Words from Wise Men

The people of our land are again caught up (since Thanksgiving or before!) in the holiday "spirit," manifest by parades emphasizing Santa, displays with dazzling beauty, TV specials with traditional stories for the youngsters, etc. 'Tis the season to be jolly. And jolliness seems to be dependent on being good givers of consumer goods.

But behind all the commercialism and the emphasis on the secular, there is still the fact of Christ's coming that is remembered by millions. Not that this is the literal time of His birth. Rather, it is only tradition. Yet the message of the real meaning of His coming does get through to many. Those who know Him as their Lord have special opportunity to speak more meaningfully of Him to those who know Him not.

And, there are wise men today who have the same attitude shown by their earlier counterparts:

1. *Anticipation* — "... we have seen his star . . ."

They were looking, anticipating the arrival of the "king." While responsibilities and cares of daily life were no less in their generation, they did have their eyes open to heavenly doings. They were looking with expectation. No doubt some thought them foolish. They probably were misunderstood. Scorned. But this did not close them off from the spiritual events of their day.

Can you enter into the gladness of heart they must have known when the star shown brightly? Being human, there were no doubt some among them who had a bit of discouragement and wondered if their vigil was really relevant and realistic. Now this was all swept away in the brightness and wonder of the event. Their faith was justified.

Now it was time to move, and follow the leading of the star. This led to . . .

2. *Action* — "... and are come . . ."

The days and weeks of slow travel were not easy. Yet to encourage and guide, the star was ever before. Expecting the king to be found in the palace,

they sought the ruler, Herod. Through the scribes and chief priests the prophecy of Scripture was shared and they were directed to Bethlehem in Judah.

Again the star went before until it shown directly above the place where the child lay. "The sight of the star filled them with indescribable joy." The prompt action taken on their faith was now bearing the fruit of joy. They were at the threshold of the newborn king. While their anticipation had been fulfilled in the star, their action was now proving itself, leading to the basic reason behind everything. It was not to be aware of heavenly happenings, nor to experience the journey to a far land that motivated them. One word, shown in their conduct, best expresses this:

3. *Adoration* — "... come to worship him."

And worship they did! While the costly gifts carefully chosen speak much of their love and devotion, it was no doubt the attitude of heart which, known by God, proved their intent. They "fell on their knees and worshiped." Humility, love, devotion, dedication, and much more was shown. It was only after what was primary that they opened and presented their treasures to the Christ-child.

Wise men are needed today! Men (and women) of vision, whose hearts and lives are open to heavenly things, who, in faith, are led to understand God's timetable of events and relate themselves meaningfully with them. The religious leaders of God's chosen people, the Jews, were not aware. Reference to the word gave the facts of prophecy, but the hearts and lives were not lived with anticipation. Therefore there was no action nor adoration that could follow.

To be "wise men" today takes more than many are willing to give. Personal commitment to Christ, putting Him first in one's life, plans and purposes is essential. A life of faith is vital. Such a life accepts God's word and will. Yet more, these are sought and followed with obedience. Not because one must, but because it is a joy so to live. Ingredients of such a life include compassion, love, prayer, study of the Scriptures, witnessing, worship, service, and many

more. The true "wise men" would be first to disclaim their own effort and first to proclaim that it is God that worketh in me to will and to do of His good pleasure.

The lights will be bright this Christmas. Gifts, carefully chosen and sacrificially given, will bring joy and happiness and hope to many lives. But the lasting and continuing blessings will be known best by individuals and groups who sense and succeed in following the steps of the earlier wise men—anticipation; action; adoration!

"... we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him."

"Serving to the Glory of God"

1 Cor. 10:31

With the theme of the Jamaica Seventh Day Baptist Conference in mind and heart, the president, Pastor V. R. Smith chaired the regular board meeting, held at the Kingston church on the 8th of November 1970. A full report of this meeting has come in their "Corresponding Secretary's Circular" and shows their vision and forward planning through the actions taken. Some of these are as follows:

The Board of Directors reported: 1) the purchase of five squares of land at Deeside (Trelawny) for use of the growing congregation there; 2) that Maiden Hall be made into a proper Conference Centre, one which would adequately take care of the youth camps, the spiritual retreats, and other Conference functions. An overall plan has been drafted which would improve the present buildings to the extent where 150 people could be accommodated—including sanitary conveniences, electricity, and proper roads. The playfield (atop the first hill) is to be made into a modern plot for sports, making the road so that cars can reach the field. These improvements will cost a total (estimated) of J\$3,000. Their recommendation "that the portion of land on the other side of the road . . . be sold and the money used to implement this plan," was voted.

Plans are under way for an early broadcast on JBC (Jamaica Broadcast-

ITINERARY

Leon R. Lawton:

Dec. 27-31 — Inter-Varsity Missionary Convention, Urbana, IL

Jan. 1, 1971 — Houston Fellowship, TX

Jan. 2 — Texarkana church, AR
—Fouke church, AR

Jan. 3 — Little Rock church, AR
—Algiers church, LA

Jan. 4-5 — Evangelism Section, Dept. of Church Renewal, NCCC, Hotel Roosevelt, New Orleans, LA

Jan. 4-8 — Methodist Congress on Evangelism, Hotel Roosevelt, New Orleans, LA

Jan. 8 — Metairie church, LA

Jan. 9 — Hammond church, LA
—Hammond Westside church, LA

ing Corp.) This will not be on a permanent basis but will open the way for future broadcasts. The EXCO has started a fund to meet the expense of the broadcasting. Both churches and individuals are asked to contribute to this fund.

On Ash Wednesday, the Young People's Day, there will be various kinds of recreation in which there can be competition, but on a team basis rather than on a church against church basis. There will also be an elocution contest. The shield and cups will be awarded the churches collecting the most money and to the church coming first in the elocution contest.

The Council on Ministerial Affairs reported new guidelines for students and pastors that include that "every person entering the Seventh Day Baptist ministry must have some theological training" and set forth a program where this can be realized. There will be a continuing use of the Higher Education Scholarship (matching) Fund supplied by Seventh Day Baptists in America through their Missionary Society to make this training possible.

In other action it was noted that continuing steps are being taken by local churches and the Conference to implement the program of having local churches call and pay their own pastors. More churches have taken this course. Some,

unable to finance such a plan (even in cooperation with sister churches) have been receiving subsidies to aid in support of their pastor.

Representatives from the Jamaica Seventh Day Baptist Conference to the meeting of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation, August 4 - 8, 1971, in Westerly, R. I., were designated. These are to be: Pastors V. R. Smith, C. S. Lyons and Joe A. Samuels.

Corresponding Secretary Joe A. Samuels comments: "In spite of the heavy rainfall the preceding week and over the weekend, blocking roads in many parts of the Island, the attendance was very encouraging. Trelawny was the only parish not represented and that was due to the blocked roads." In addition to the officers, pastors and delegates present, "there was also a large number of visitors, including Sister E. Smikle, retired worker."

The circular closed with "coming dates" listing special services in churches and the fact that December 1 to 30 was "Young People's League TAG DRIVE" to raise funds to improve facilities at Maiden Hall for their camping programme.

Let us continue to remember in prayer the work of our brethren in the sister Conference in Jamaica as we give regular aid to their work through Our World Mission budget amounts.

Our Prayer Corner

Suggestions for Prayer This Week

Pray for:

1) The spiritual opportunities and the continuing physical needs of the people of like faith in Nigeria and the two leaders working separately, E. Osa and G. Harrison.

2) The ministry of Ralph Cann and the indigenous work in Ghana.

3) The further schooling under ecumenical sponsorship of O. Manani of Malawi, which is soon to begin.

4) The several ministers and students in this country who are identifying with us and preparing for effective service.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION—Sec. David S. Clarke

Adolescence for Adults

You have a call, if you are "adult" or "mature" to not only develop an understanding of "adolescence" but to keep that understanding in useful improvement for helpfully relating to growing persons.

The Family Life Committee of the Board of Christian Education is looking into various publications which enlarge the means of understanding the place of the Christian family in bringing persons to the abundant life in Christ.

A booklet titled, *Adolescence for Adults*, is a compilation of articles from several sources. This has been a source book for discussions on such subjects at the different chapter titles: "Signals from a Troubled Generation," "You Force Kids To Rebel," "Songs of the Hang-Loose Ethic," "The Burden of Violence," "Out in the Status-Sphere," "How Adolescents Evoke Adult Hostility," and "Rebels with a Cause."

You won't have to wait long for discussion to develop if you get this into the hands of thoughtful, committed Christians. You won't have to wait long for stronger Christian influence in your community to develop if a group of your friends, as mature, responsible people, deepen your Christian faith in Christ-focused adolescence.

The Family Life Committee will be happy to assist you in setting up discussions about this topic or others related to Christian families. Write to the board at Alfred Station, Box 115, or direct to the co-chairmen, Mrs. Frank Snyder or Mrs. Nelson Snyder, both on Randolph Rd., R.D., Alfred Station.

The booklet discussed above may be had from the board office, or from Blue Cross - Blue Shield, 1215 Western Ave., Albany, NY 12203. It is free.

SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON

for December 26, 1970

ALL OF LIFE FOR CHRIST

Scripture Lesson: Philipians 3:7-16

Daily Bible Readings 1971

Daily Bible Readings have for several years been a part of the Facing Frontiers with Faith program, urging our people to base their church and personal life on the daily manna at a fellowship meal. The coordinated reading proposes that we come to the same tasty nourishment together each day. It helps us to perceive parts of the Word of God that may be specifically helpful in coming together as a people — and with other Christians. It is *certain* to bring us together — if we really digest it!

For instance, what Jane Jones reads Tuesday in Rhode Island will affect her beneficially as she writes to Sarah Smith in California who receives the letter on Thursday or Friday. Sarah has read the same Scriptures as Jane and their correspondence is enriched by the Word's nourishment.

Or, Seventh Day Baptists gathering for association at Parkers' Corners may be better prepared for meeting social needs in their area because of their common Bible reading (by many if not all). The shared readings do inspire understandings that can open the eye for spiritual resources to meet life's complexities with God's fundamental simplicities.

So we encourage you to join in our 300th Year in the U. S. with other Seventh Day Baptists (and all Christians who use the International Lesson Series) in reading the Scriptures daily, in pondering them and seeking to digest them.

Month by month these readings will be shared in the *Sabbath Recorder*. Of course, they are also found in the *Helping Hand* Sabbath School quarterlies — and other International Lesson Series booklets. For the January to June period, you will note that the exact sequence may be a little different between the two publications. Throughout the year, you'll note that the readings have been lengthened for each day to give context, contrast or comparison to the key selection of the International Series.

The Planning Committee of the denomination prays your reading of the Bible may bring you closer to God and to your fellow-Christians.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

News Notes on Giving

The December 5 bulletin of the Shiloh, N. J., church notes that during the preceding week "white Christmas" gifts were sent out from the Sabbath School to twenty different homes or individuals. The total of the checks was \$750, of which \$361.20 was from various classes and \$388.80 from the Missionary Fund. Aside from the generous amount and the wide range of causes helped, the significant thing in the established practice of the Shiloh Sabbath School is the early collection and mailing of the gifts. The white gifts must seem much whiter if received before Christmas.

The Plainfield bulletin reported a much wider variety than usual of special gifts on December 5. Contributions to the church and to O.W.M. were more than \$100 above the average weekly need (making up for some low weeks). There was a good response in the American Bible Society envelopes enclosed in the bulletin (\$60). The other special gifts ranging from \$5 to \$27 were: organ, NCCC, WCC, SDBWF, CWS, and baby-sitter.

Figuring Your Tithe

If you have trouble figuring your tithe try one tither's suggestion, "Can I live on ten times what I give to the Lord each week?"

"Serving the Seventies"

(Continued from page 7)

in the field envisage is that satellite communications will become so inexpensive and widespread that there will be a kind of "electronic literacy" established with every man owning his own communications outlet capable of receiving not only voice and picture messages, but the printed word—all at the push of a button. Surely this must compare in historic magnitude with the discovery of speech, the development of writing or the invention of printing. Could this be the "surprise factor" by which God intends to confront the whole world with the message of His redemptive love and power as revealed in Jesus Christ?

OUR WORLD MISSION

OWM Budget Receipts for November 1970

	Treasurer's		Boards'			Treasurer's		Boards'	
	November	11 mos.	11 mos.	11 mos.		November	11 mos.	11 mos.	11 mos.
Adams Ctr NY ..\$		972.20	20.00		Milton WI	530.76	12,131.50	973.25	
Albion WI		431.06	119.51		Milton Jct WI ..	58.00	978.24	35.00	
Alfred NY	401.45	6,020.83	135.00		Monterey CA		315.00		
Alfred Sta NY		2,881.92	20.00		New Auburn WI ..		589.02	106.61	
Ashaway RI	146.00	2,748.91	140.00		New Milton WV ..	50.00	517.00		
Assns & Groups ..		854.41	1,624.68		New Orleans LA ..		10.75		
Battle Creek MI..	259.20	4,893.26	172.00		North Loup NB..		3,067.81	40.00	
Bay Area CA		465.00	33.40		Nortonville KS ..	153.50	2,659.25	215.00	
Berea WV	43.00	471.83	20.00		Ohio Fellowship..	300.00	680.00	100.00	
Berlin NY	110.00	1,757.67	250.00		Paint Rock AL ..		440.00	20.00	
Boulder CO		928.82	130.00		Plainfield NJ	945.50	4,829.99	495.56	
Brookfield NY ..	103.00	747.00	20.00		Richburg NY	134.75	1,334.09	33.50	
Buffalo NY		130.00			Riverside CA		6,885.04	60.00	
Chicago IL		1,681.00	20.00		Rockville RI	30.00	330.50	10.00	
Daytona Beach FL	100.00	1,521.25	75.00		Salem WV		2,413.15	70.00	
Denver CO	274.37	4,144.33	1,380.00		Salemville PA	55.00	654.35	57.00	
De Ruyter NY		694.50			Schenectady NY ..	20.50	128.00	20.00	
Dodge Ctr MN ..	157.09	2,116.60	115.00		Seattle WA	55.00	305.00		
Farina IL		314.75			Shiloh NJ		8,206.52	185.00	
Fouke AR	108.01	326.01	10.00		Stonefort IL	30.00	290.00	20.00	
Hammond LA		31.00			Syracuse NY		259.95		
Hebron PA	70.00	875.17	60.00		Texarkana AR		10.00		
Hopkinton RI		78.25	110.00		Verona NY	186.00	1,760.74	70.00	
Houston TX		215.00			Walworth WI	270.00	1,492.00	25.00	
Independence NY	126.71	749.26	45.00		Washington DC..		1,028.10	30.00	
Individuals		2,336.60	960.95		Washington				
Irvington NJ		1,850.00	100.00		People's DC				
Jackson Ctr OH ..					Waterford CT	134.52	1,591.35	105.00	
Kansas City MO	60.00	559.50	20.00		Westerly RI	2,119.50	8,226.55	209.58	
Leonardsville NY	55.00	544.20			White Cloud MI	60.70	593.11		
Little Genesee NY	121.08	1,526.50	25.00						
Little Rock AR ..	26.39	572.84	20.00		Totals	\$8,568.35	115,637.79	8,931.04	
Los Angeles CA..	350.00	5,406.35	245.00		Non-Budget	94.00			
Lost Creek WV ..	340.00	1,580.00	95.00						
Marlboro NJ	583.32	3,484.76	85.00		Total				
Metairie LA					To Disburse	\$8,662.35			

NOVEMBER DISBURSEMENTS

Board of Christian Education	\$ 669.54
Historical Society	5.62
Ministerial Education	673.29
Ministerial Retirement	421.55
Missionary Society	3,548.54
Tract Society	1,041.66
Trustees of General Conference	56.26
Women's Society	145.65
World Fellowship & Service	144.41
General Conference	1,945.83
SDB World Federation	10.00
	\$ 8,662.35

SUMMARY

1970 Budget	\$140,833.00
Receipts for 11 months:	
OWM Treasurer	\$115,637.79
Boards	8,931.04
	124,568.83
Amount due in December	\$ 16,264.17
Percentage of year elapsed	91.66%
Percentage of Budget raised	88.45%

Gordon L. Sanford
OWM Treasurer

November 30, 1970

The Sabbath Recorder

BIBLE READING GUIDE FOR 1971

TOPICAL BIBLE READINGS



(Including and supplementing the daily Bible readings of the Uniform Series of Bible Lessons published in "The Helping Hand.")

THE PARABLES OF JESUS Jesus' Use of the Parables

- Jan. 1 The Parable of the Weeds Interpreted. Matt. 13:36-43
Jan. 2 An Acted Parable for Deeper Understanding. John 13:1-20

The Nature of the Kingdom:

- Jan. 3 The Purpose of Parables. Psa. 78:1-8; Isa. 6:6-10
Jan. 4 God's Action in Israel's Behalf. Deut. 26:5-19
Jan. 5 The Covenant in the Heart. Jer. 31:31-34; 17:5-10
Jan. 6 What God Desires of Men. Matt. 9:10-13; Hosea 6:1-6; Micah 6:6-8
Jan. 7 The Joy of the Kingdom. Matt. 9:14-17; Luke 7:18-30
Jan. 8 Ready for the Kingdom. Luke 12:32-48
Jan. 9 The Kingdom Grows. Mark 4:26-29; Jer. 17:19-27

The Value of the Kingdom

- Jan. 10 The Blessings of the Kingdom. Matt. 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-31
Jan. 11 The Greatest Treasure. Matt. 13:44-58
Jan. 12 The Highest Wisdom. Prov. 2:1-22
Jan. 13 The Kingdom Puts Persons First. Luke 14:1-14
Jan. 14 The Danger of Excuses. Luke 14:15-24; Acts 4:34-5:11

- Jan. 15 Count the Cost of Loyalty. Luke 14:25-33; Mark 8:31-38
Jan. 16 Suffering for the Kingdom. Matt. 16:21-23; John 16:1-11

God's Seeking Love

- Jan. 17 Gain Through Loss. Matt. 16:24-28; Phil. 3:7-16
Jan. 18 The Parable of the Lost Sheep. Luke 15:1-7; Luke 5:27-32
Jan. 19 The Friend of the Lost. Luke 19:1-10
Jan. 20 The Good Shepherd. John 10:1-18
Jan. 21 The Parable of the Lost Coin. Luke 15:8-10; Gen. 18:22-33
Jan. 22 The Parable of the Lost Son. Luke 15:11-24
Jan. 23 The Unforgiving Elder Son. Luke 15:25-32; Matt. 27:3-10

The Basis of God's Rewards

- Jan. 24 "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Psa. 23; Psa. 73:21-28
Jan. 25 Riches and the Kingdom. Matt. 19:16-26
Jan. 26 Jesus' Promise, Matt. 19:27-30; Rev. 3:14-22
Jan. 27 God's Care for His Children. Luke 12:22-41
Jan. 28 The Workers and Individualized Rewards. Matt. 20:1-16; Deut. 15:7-11
Jan. 29 Faith, Not Works. Gal. 3:2-14, 19-29
Jan. 30 God's Sovereign Mercy and Government. Rom. 9:1-18
Jan. 31 Bless God for His Mercy. Psa. 103

Catholic Membership Decline

For the first time since records began to be kept in 1889, the Catholic Church in the United States reported a slight decline in membership for 1969. The official report gave the decrease as 1,149. The total membership was 47,872,089, some four times as much as any Protestant denomination. For a church that counts members by birth rather than rebirth, this would seem to indicate a considerable falling away or perhaps that the opening of windows to let some fresh air in lessens the authority and grip of the Church of Rome.

