

The Reformer

WORLD WIDE REFORMATION

"He That Winneth Souls Is Wise"



THE BANNER

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NEW YEAR'S GREETING

Another year has dawned upon the earth, and brings with it all the possibilities of life freighted with responsibilities. The old year has left us with work undone. But thank God that our lives are spared and we have still another chance to follow where He may lead us. We thank Him for the light that is now shining on our path way, and pray for help and strength to walk in it as it continues to shine.

We realize that God has been our helper, because we lived through the year with all the troubles and burdens and heartaches we encountered. Therefore we give praise and honor to His holy and righteous name.

Now as we are entering upon a New Year, unknown to us, holding in its great bosom only what the great God alone is able to discern, we therefore, look to Him for mercy, guidance, care and protection as He shall pilot us through the New Year.

Checking up the resolutions we made last year, we find many of them broken, nevertheless, we take courage once more to renew, with the determination that His word shall be a lamp to my feet and a light unto our path-way. We resolve to make the complete surrender to God for a deeper consecration, for a broader and wider search of His word, and to be numbered among that people for which He is call-

ing to make a complete reformation, the 144,000, which is to be a special work in finishing this great work in the earth.

Now that 1935 is in the past, and looking backward we probably have many regrets to make in failing to accomplish the task we set before us and the goals we attempted to attain. But may we at this time, on the very threshold of the year surrender our lives to God for His service and rededicate our entire being, which means all we have and all we are, to embrace every opportunity to fulfill the task that God in His providence has set before us.

This year should find us engaged, one and all, in giving this eleventh hour message to our fellowman, telling them that the day is at hand when the work of the reformation, and the sealing of the 144,000 is to take place in the church.

The year 1936 shall be one in which the big things shall be performed for the Master's kingdom. Since we know not what this year has in store for us, and since it is possible for it to be the end of our earthly journey, how careful we ought to be in perfecting our lives worthy of our holy calling.

May heaven help us to consecrate ourselves on the altar of God, and heed the message of present truth which is to purify and prepare His church for The Loud Cry, Rev. 18:1, and that we all may be numbered with the 144,000 to finish the work. Wishing you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Mrs. A. B. Brown.

PREPARING

Another year begins. Sadly we realize that we are one year older. We find that we are a little more inclined to linger in a deep chair, a little less inclined to climb a snowy hill than we were last year. Our sinews, muscles, and joints are a shade less supple than they were a year ago. The time is coming when we shall have to slow up in our work, rest more. It means a readjustment, and if we are wise we shall face it and plan for it now.

You know the man who drives himself furiously through his

life work hoping to retire at a certain age and "enjoy life" or "really live." But on retiring he is utterly lost and unhappy; his mind and body sicken and die. Why? Because during his working time he has completely forgotten how to live. He has dug hard and toilfully keeping his eyes on the ground and never once taking time to look up at the blue radiance of God's sky. With the result that when his working time is over his neck is permanently bent and stiffened so that he cannot look upward.

We must plan for this time that is coming to all of us. Revive your younger hobbies and enthusiasms; do something about the interests that have intrigued you lately. We know a man who practises metalwork in his basement a couple of hours a week so that he can fashion the things he has always wanted to when he retires. Another middle aged man is studying Spanish so that he may do a little exploring and excavating in nearby Mexico later. They realize that it will not be enough to vegetate in the sun when they retire. They know that their spirits and bodies will sicken in a vacuum of pure idleness, and they are preparing to live in their later years.

—Selected.

GREETINGS

To the readers and well-wishers of the Banner, especially those at my home in Milwaukee, Wis., I wish to say to you that my Missionary journey over the wide field under God has been so far a grand success.

At this writing, Jan. 7th, I am with the church in Des Moines, Iowa, having spent five days joyfully with the people in Chicago, Ill. My next stop will be in New York City.

I am happy to report that the work the Lord has given me charge over is progressing and is in fine condition. With kindest wishes to all.

M. L. Ivory.

He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself.



IN THE LAST DAYS

The word teaches that the last days of earth's history will be marked by a great agitation for peace. We see that agitation taking place at the present time. Isa. 2:1-8. The Scriptures reveal the fact that instead of this cry of peace among the nations of men being realized, there will be great preparations for war, and this preparation will be a sign of the coming of Christ. Joel 3:9-16.

The Master states that the last days shall be like unto the days of Noah and Lot, marked by drunkenness, excessive eating and drinking, a disregard of the marriage relationship, etc. We are witnessing today a marked fulfillment of this prophetic statement. Luke 17:26-30.

The apostle James sets forth the great industrial conflict

which we see being waged throughout the world, a fight between entrenched capital on one hand and federated labor on the other. This condition is a sign that the coming of the Lord is near. James 5:1-8.

The Scriptures also indicate that in the religious world will be seen conditions which constitute a significant sign of the Lord's soon coming. Great spiritual degeneracy will ensure. Men will forget God and plunge into the wildest excesses of self-gratification. This prophecy is meeting its fulfillment at the present time. 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Spiritism, the greatest delusive movement which ever swept over the world, is a fulfillment of the prophetic word, and constitutes a sign that we have reached the closing days of earth's history. Rev. 16:13, 14.

Conditions In Our Day

It is true that similar condi-

tions have been found in other periods of the world's history, but there is significance today in the fact that we are living in a day when all the lines of prophecy will converge at one focal point, indicating the coming of the Lord is near. The evidences of the coming of the Lord are not in any one condition enumerated, but in the conditions existing in all phases of human experience, revealing the breaking up of stable institutions in preparation for the dissolution of all things. Declares our Master in the great prophetic discourse recorded in the twenty-first chapter of Luke:

"There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Verses 25-27.

No Permanent Peace

Let us not deceive ourselves by adhering to the doctrine of our great statesmen that there will be better times, and that there will be peace and safety in the future, and that war is to cease. There is never to be permanent peace on this earth as long as nations exist. For in the midst of this peace talk, every nation is making greater preparation for war.

"But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. 5:1-3.

Christ's coming will usher in everlasting peace and righteousness. He will not come as a social reformer. He will not seek the regeneration of his church or the world through social service schemes, however helpful some of these schemes may have proved in the past. He will not come as a political reformer to establish in the midst of the nations of men a kingdom of

righteousness as a model of other kingdoms.

He will come, it is true, to establish His everlasting kingdom, but that kingdom will be established on the ruin of all earthly rule. He will send forth His angels in that day, and gather out of his kingdom all things which make for righteousness. Matt. 13, 41-43. His kingdom will be located on this earth which, purified by the fires of the last day, will be brought back again to its Edenic beauty. 2 Peter 3:10-13. The subjects of that kingdom will be the righteous of every age, the children of Abraham, gathered from every nation, kindred, and tongue throughout earth's history. The New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven will constitute the capital of the kingdom. Rev. 21:1-4. Christ, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, will occupy the throne of universal dominion. Thus shall be fulfilled the prophecy of the Word relating to the restoration of Israel. Luke 1:68-74. It will be the gathering of spiritual Isreal to the heavenly Canaan rather than the gathering of the literal seed of Abraham to old Jerusalem. Isa. 11:10-12.

That glad day is hastened no apace. In the very nature of the case it cannot be long delayed. The word of God declares it. The signs of the times foreshadow it. May we who read these words prepare our hearts for the reception of the coming King.

T. T. P.

A STEP AT A TIME

In accomplishing your day's work you have simply to take one step at a time. To take that step wisely is all you need to think about. If I am climbing a mountain, to look down makes me dizzy; to look far up may make me tired and discouraged.

Take no anxious thought for the morrow. Sufficient for the day yes, and for each hour in the day—is the toil or trial thereof. There is not a child of God in this world who is strong enough to stand the strain of today's duties and all the load of tomorrow's anxieties piled upon the top of them. Paul himself

would have broken down if he had attempted the experiment. We have a perfect right to ask our Heavenly Father for strength equal to the day, but we have no right to ask Him for one extra ounce of strength for anything beyond it. When the morrow comes, grace will come sufficient for its tasks or for its troubles.

"Let me be strong in word and deed

Just for today!

Lord, for tomorrow and its need
I must not pray."

C. L. T.

TACT

Tact is the life of the five senses. It is the open eye, the quick ear, the judging taste, the keen smell and the lively touch.

Talent is power, tact is skill; talent is weight, tact is momentum, talent knows what to do, tact knows how to do it; talent is wealth, tact is ready money.
—Anon.

OBEDIENCE TO FAITH

In the obedience to faith, Abraham had forsaken his native country, — had turned away from the graves of his fathers and the home of his kindred. He had wandered as a stranger in the land of his inheritance. He had waited long for the birth of the promised heir. At the command of God he had sent away his son Ishmael. And now, when the child so long desired was entering upon manhood, and the patriarch seemed able to discern the fruition of his hopes, a trial greater than all others was before him.

The command was expressed in words that must have wrung with anguish that father's heart: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him for a burnt-offering." Isaac was the light of the home, the solace of his old age, above all else the inheritor of the promised blessing. The loss of such a son by accident or disease would have been heart-rending to the fond father; it would have bowed down his whitened head with grief; but he was commanded to shed the blood of that son with his own hand. It seemed to him

a fearful impossibility.

Satan was at hand to suggest that he must be deceived, for the divine law commands, "Thou shalt not kill," and God would not require what he had once forbidden. Going outside his tent, Abraham looked up to the calm brightness of the unclouded heavens, and recalled the promise made nearly fifty years before, that his seed should be innumerable as the stars. If this promise was to be fulfilled through Isaac, how could he be put to death? Abraham was tempted to believe that he might be under a delusion. In his doubt and anguish he bowed upon the earth, and prayed, as he had never prayed before, for some confirmation of the command if he must perform this terrible duty. He remembered the angels sent to reveal to him God's purpose to destroy Sodom, and who bore to him the promise of this same son Isaac, and he went to the place where he had several times met the heavenly messengers, hoping to meet them again, and receive some further direction; but none came to his relief. Darkness seemed to shut his in; but the command of God was sounding in his ears. "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest." That command must be obeyed, and he dared not delay. Day was approaching, and he must be on his journey.

Returning to his tent, he went to the place where Isaac lay sleeping the deep, untroubled sleep of youth and innocence. For a moment the father looked upon the dear face of his son, then turned tremblingly away. He went to the side of Sarah, who was also sleeping. Should he awaken her, that she might once more embrace her child? Should he tell of God's requirement? He longed to unburden his heart to her, and share with her this terrible responsibility; but he was restrained by the fear that she might hinder him. Isaac was her joy and pride; her life was bound up in him, and the mother's love might refuse the sacrifice.

Abraham at last summoned his son, telling him of the command to offer sacrifice upon a distant mountain. Isaac had often gone with his father to

worship at some one of the various altars that marked his wanderings, and this summons excitead no surprise. The preparations for the journey were quickly completed. The wood was made ready, and put upon the ass, and with two men-servants they set forth.

Side by side the father and the son journeyed in silence. The patriarch, pondering his heavy secret, had no heart for words. His thoughts were of the proud, fond mother, and the day when he should return to her alone. Well he knew that the knife would pierce her heart when it took the life of her son.

That day—the longest that Abraham had ever experienced—dragged slowly to its close. While his son and the young men were sleeping, he spent the night in prayer, still hoping that some heavenly messenger might come to say that the trial was enough, that the youth might return unharmed to his mother. But no relief came to his tortured soul. Another long day, another night of humiliation and prayer, while over the command that was to leave his childless was ringing in his ears. Satan was near to whisper doubts and unbelief; but Abraham resisted his suggestions. As they were about to begin the journey of the third day the patriarch, looking northward, saw the promised sign, a cloud of glory hovering over Mount Moriah, and he knew that the voice which had spoken to him was from heaven.

Even now he did not murmur against God, but strengthened his soul by dwelling upon the evidences of the Lord's goodness and faithfulness. The son had been unexpectedly given; and had not He who bestowed the precious gift a right to recall his own? Then faith repeated the promise, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called,"—a seed numberless as the grains of sand upon the shore. Isaac was the child of a miracle, and could not the power that gave him life restore it? Looking beyond that which was seen, Abraham grasped the divine word, "accounted that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead."

Yet none but God could un-

derstand how great was the father's sacrifice in yielding up his son to death; Abraham desired that none but God should witness the parting scene. He bade his servants remain behind, saying, "I and the lad will go yonder to worship, and come again to you." The wood was laid upon Isaac, the one to be offered, the father took the knife and the fire, and together they ascended toward the mountain summit, the young men silently wondering whence, so far from folds and flocks, the offering was to come. At last he spoke, "My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" O, what a test was this! How the endearing words, "my father," pierced Abraham's heart! Not yet—he could not tell him now. "My son," he said, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

At the appointed place they built the altar, and laid the wood upon it. Then with trembling voice, Abraham unfolded to his son the divine message. It was with terror and amazement that Isaac learned his fate; but he offered no resistance. He could have escaped his doom, had he chosen to do so; the grief-stricken old man, exhausted with the struggle of those three terrible days, could not have opposed the will of the vigorous youth. But Isaac had been trained from childhood to ready, trusting obedience, and as the purpose of God was opened before him, he yielded a willing submission. He was a sharer in Abraham's faith, and he felt that he was honored in being called to give his life as an offering to God. He tenderly seeks to lighten the father's grief, and encourages his nerveless hands to bind the cords that confine him to the altar.

And now the last words of love are spoken, the last tears are shed, the last embrace is given. The father lifts the knife to slay his son, when suddenly his arm is stayed. An angel of God calls to the patriarch out of heaven, "Abraham, Abraham!" He quickly answers, "Here am I." And again the voice is heard, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for

now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

Then Abraham saw "a ram caught in a thicket." And quickly bringing the new victim he offered it "in the stead of his son." In his joy and gratitude, Abraham gave a new name to the sacred spot,—"Jehovah," the Lord will provide."

On Mount Moriah, God again renewed his covenant, confirming with a solemn oath the blessing to Abraham and to his seed through all coming generations: "By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Abraham's great act of faith stands like a pillar of light, illuminating the pathway of God's servants in all succeeding ages. Abraham did not seek to excuse himself from doing the will of God. During that three days' journey he had sufficient time to reason, and to doubt God, if he was disposed to doubt. He might have reasoned that the slaying of his son would cause him to be looked upon as a murderer, a second Cain; that it would cause his teaching to be rejected and despised, and thus destroy his power to do good to his fellowman. He might have pleaded that age should excuse him from obedience. But the patriarch did not take refuge in any of these excuses. Abraham was human; his passions and attachments were like ours; but he did not stop to question how the promise could be fulfilled if Isaac should be slain. He did not stay to reason with his aching heart. He knew that God is just and righteous in all his requirements, and he obeyed the command to the very letter.

(Continued next issue)

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."

FREE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS PROGRAM

Our Program Is:

1st—A deeper consecration to do service in the vineyard of the Lord.

2nd—To do our BIT in preaching the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ, in all the world, for a witness unto all nations.

3rd—As a race, maintain self-respect, and do as Our Lord has said, "Occupy until I come."

4th—To establish among Negro Seventh-Day Adventists, Negro Conferences with Negro officers—Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers and Bookkeepers.

5th—To establish schools for the training of our children and for workers in our organization.

6th—To establish a publishing house in which we may furnish employment to Negro Men, Women, Boys and Girls, as we strive to preach the truth of the Third Angel's Message through the printed page.

An invitation is extended to all "INTELLIGENT" Negro Seventh-Day Adventists, those, with a vision, with moral courage, with backbone, those who are strong in the knees, in short, just common self-respect, who have the love of God in the heart, to join with us and help to put this program over the TOP, for over the TOP it must GO.

"Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Acts 10:34. Therefore, we are determined to, "Stand fast . . . in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us Free." Gal. 5:1.