



Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

The Heavens and Earth of Genesis

SELF-SEEKING vs. SELF-SACRIFICE

BUILDING WITH THE BEST

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"I WILL . . .

CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN THESE TIMES

MINIMUM EFFORT, MAXIMUM PLEASURE

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

VOYAGERS

Megiddo Message

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A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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Editorially Speaking...

Without Murmuring

DISCONTENT and dissatisfaction are closely related troublemakers. Their seductive influences overpower both the aged and the youth. One person, incited by discontent, takes violent action. Another locks mind and hands and broods over his grievances.

Dissatisfaction can be virtuous. Our forefathers were a dissatisfied people. And this dissatisfaction wrought their release. Freedom from tyranny and servitude were their ideals. What though a perilous sea lay between them and their goals? They shook off the yoke of oppressive bondage and became one nation under God.

As their privileged descendants, we today enjoy more blessings and comforts than any other people on earth. Why? Because dissatisfaction's power was harnessed to turn the wheels of progress.

However, in this most enlightened twentieth century, a destructive discontent is rising. Everywhere we hear of protests, strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations, and violence. Evil is fast approaching a point of no control. What proportions will it reach before the spirit of rebellion is checked?

Our anonymous society is the cause of much of the spirit of rebellion. Everybody naturally wants a name for himself in some way. If a youth cannot distinguish himself as an outstanding leader, he will be a hippie; if he cannot be a musical maestro, he will be a Beatle; if he cannot own a business, he will destroy one. Still others seeking escape from the monotonous routine and responsibilities of everyday life plunge into the demoralizing ranks of the alcoholics or drug addicts.

What is at the base of it all? Murmuring, grumbling, dissatisfaction, discontent.

This spirit of discontent is not restricted to non-believers. We as professing Christians need constantly to guard against it. Are we who bear the name of Christ still murmuring and finding fault?

God dealt well with Israel, clothing them with garments that did not wear out, feeding them daily with manna from heaven, supplying them water out of the flinty rock and spiritual food in great measure. Yet they murmured against their leader and were ready to return to Egypt.

And what of us? Has not the providing hand of God been with us? We are far removed from the days of Moses, but the complainers are still complaining.

Let us take stock of ourselves. When Aaron and Miriam murmured against Moses, God had something to say to them. Because God is silent today does not mean that the grumblers will not be exposed.

God help us to stop murmuring before the final Day arrives. Let us do away with all murmuring. ●●

The Heavens and Earth of Genesis

PRAYER

O God, Thou who art worthy of more perfect praise than any of Thy creatures may give, for all things Thou art Maker and Ruler, Sustainer and Lord. From Thee all things come; by Thy grace all things living have life; under the judgment of Thy truth and love we live. Yet because Thou art so great in majesty, in wisdom, in power, in love, we must praise Thee.

We praise Thee for Thy mighty acts in history, in our own experience, and for the greater things Thou hast in store for all who qualify for a place in Thy better new world. We praise Thee for Thy great works of creation. The heavens declare Thy glory, and the earth shows Thy handiwork. In Thee we live, move, and have our being.

But especially do we praise Thee for the magnificent plan outlined in Thy Word. Thou hast planned a new creation. Thou hast decreed a time shall arrive when Thou wilt develop a new heaven and a new earth; a new system of government composed of men and women who have learned to rule themselves down to the smallest detail; and a new populace, all of whom have learned to live peaceably with each other, to work for the common good, the clannish selfish spirit entirely subdued, all evil banished from their hearts and lives.

We rejoice in the assurance that the new heaven and earth which Thou wilt make shall eternally endure, that a day will dawn when all iniquity will be obliged to stop her mouth; that the gods which men so stupidly and completely worship to-day shall perish from the earth, and from under Thy new heavens.

Father, grant us the foresight to project ourselves into that better era, and the wisdom to now make a full and complete surrender of all of self, that we may develop the quality that it will be Thy good pleasure to use in Thy new order.

Be with us in this service, and bless Thy people wherever they are. Grant the grace of healing if it be in accordance with Thy perfect will, to all who are sick or in any way troubled. Thou art giving us so many, many blessings, may we be willing to be used in Thy ministry of healing, of comfort, of fellowship. Make us responsive to Thy will. These things we ask in the name and grace of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Mediator and Lord. Amen.

DISCOURSE

ONE GREAT system of divine truth, one perfect plan of salvation, one positive means of participating in that salvation is the sublime theme of the Bible, God's message to the children of men. This inspiring theme threads its golden way through the visions of seers, the dreams of prophets, the revelations of the Son of God, and the teachings of His disciples.

Though one theme pervades the whole, the styles of treating that theme are as diverse as the writers themselves, who were men from all walks of life, from the profound Lawgiver of Israel to the simple herdsman of Tekoa. Sometimes the theme is expressed in figurative language, and again in plain speech. There are the inimitable parables of our Lord, the types and shadows of the Pentateuch, the deep symbolisms of Ezekiel, as well as the plain, direct styles of such men as James. Because of this broad diversity of authors and styles, the Book not only fascinates the keenest scholar, but its meaning can be understood by the humblest servant.

We might think of the Bible as prefaced with an outline of its contents, incorporated in the first three chapters of Genesis, and covering in brief, abridged form the substance of the whole. The style is figurative, or, more specifically, allegorical.

An Allegory

What is an allegory? Webster defines it as "the description of one thing under the image of another. It is the veiled presentation, especially in a figurative story or narrative, of a meaning metaphorically implied, but not expressly stated. An allegory is a prolonged metaphor, in which typically a series of actions are symbolic of other actions, while the characters often are types or personifications."

Figurative language is employed freely in the literary field, and its meaning is readily perceived. Such figures of speech as the simile and the metaphor add strength, color and brilliance to composition. Surely we cannot deny the Almighty the right to such usages, nor should we be so dull of comprehension as to fail to grasp His meaning. Should we exercise less intelligence in divine matters than we would employ in reading common literature?

In an effort to thwart an over-literal approach to

the Scriptures, the Almighty has given certain rules which must govern all Bible study. Through Paul He enjoins the student to compare spiritual things with spiritual (I Cor. 2:13); and from the reading of Isa. 28:10 in our Common Version we learn that the Bible must be studied by subjects, "here a little, and there a little."

By applying these rules to the study of the Genesis allegory, we shall find that it becomes understandable; for all the symbols employed there are thoroughly defined elsewhere in the Scriptures. Therefore, an accurate knowledge of God's spiritual creation, or the moral development and ultimate salvation of mankind, is not dependent on human interpretation; for the whole subject is a matter of divine revelation and entirely self-explanatory.

As the fragrance and beauty of a rose is locked within the tightly enfolded bud and known only as the flower comes to full bloom, so the perfect beauty and exquisite loveliness of the creation account in Genesis is revealed only as the prophets, apostles, and Jesus unfold its hidden qualities. With the aid of all the inspired writers, the Genesis allegory presents a picture fairer than that of the choicest rose, for its beauty is unfading. With the passing of time its splendor increases as the reality of God's eternal plan continues to unfold.

To grasp the full spiritual import of Genesis is to see the entire Bible as one comprehensive unit, one harmonious whole, combining in one earnest appeal for mankind to live the higher life and thereby become worthy of sharing the grandeur of God's eternal salvation in a paradise of delight on earth made new.

Fiction—Theology

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Popular theology once held that this first verse of the Bible applies solely to the literal creation, that by the word of His power the Almighty created heaven and earth in six 24-hour days some six thousand years ago.

Is there any reason to such an assertion when throughout the Book numerous references are made to the eternal existence of the Creator and the eternal nature of His work? Has such a Being been idle through the countless ages and just stirred Himself to purpose a short six thousand years ago?

Fact—Science and the Bible

Astronomers realize that the illimitable reaches of the heavens—our solar system and the myriads of galaxies wheeling through an endless sea of space beyond—have existed for untold æons in the past. The telescopic eye reveals stars so deeply sunk in the abyss of space that the light by which they disclose themselves required millions and billions of years to traverse the distance to the earth. The

200-inch Hale telescope at Palomar has revealed the visible universe outside the earth's own galaxy to be twice as far away, twice as old, and eight times as large as previously calculated. And radio telescopes have far exceeded all this.

Now scientists are asking themselves whether the universe has either boundary or beginning. Only in the twilight of man's reasoning, long antedating modern astronomical knowledge, could the theory of a six-day creation program six thousand years ago have been conceived and accepted.

Geologists know from the record of the rocks that the great forces of nature—wind and wave and fire—have destroyed and built, wrecked and wrought on this earth for hundreds of millions of years.

The Grand Canyon of Arizona discloses a marvelous perspective of the geologic past. Its intricately sculptured chasm, penetrating over a mile in depth below its rim and displaying stratum upon stratum of rock, tells a story that began many millions of years ago and reveals to the student of geology that this earth is no infant of creation. The rock beds deep in the canyon take an informed observer back to the first of the five great eras of geologic time, the Archeozoic Era.

Estimates concerning the age of the earth will continue to be made; increasing knowledge tends to enlarge the figures.

Scientific fact presents indisputable evidence that heaven and earth far surpass six thousand years in age; and *the Bible offers no contradiction*. In fact, it does not discuss that subject in detail. Rather, it is devoted to the theme of *spiritual* creation; and it is upon this subject that the first verse of the Bible is focused.

"In the beginning God created . . ."

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The Bible reveals that this heaven and earth are now in the process of creation. Men and women are being created in "righteousness and true holiness," transformed by the indwelling Word to such creatures as shall be worthy of eternal life. When completed, they shall form the heaven and the earth, or rulers and inhabitants of God's universal Kingdom.

This is the *alpha* and the *omega* of God's mighty plan of salvation. It is stated briefly in Numbers 14:21, "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." Jesus taught His disciples to pray for the consummation of that plan, in these words, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Throughout the Book some forty inspired writers restate this majestic theme in multiple ways, some employing symbols, others using plain language, but all uniting in one grand concert of voices to proclaim that God's Kingdom—composed of a righteous heaven and earth, or rulers and common people—shall one

day extend "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

Heaven and Earth in Scriptural Terminology

Lest it seem incongruous with Scriptural usages to define heaven and earth as rulers and subjects, we shall refer to Isaiah 1, where this very usage is employed. "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, . . . Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah" (vs. 1, 2, 10).

The prophet Isaiah addressed the aristocracy of Israel first as "heavens" and then as "rulers"; the subjects of the realm he identified as "earth" and then as "people." To heavens and earth alike he made his appeal: "Hear the word of the Lord." Having no ears, the physical heavens and earth would be incapable either of hearing or of responding to such a request. Clearly, kings, potentates, rulers and the people within the scope of their jurisdiction are indicated.

Parallel usage occurs in Deut. 32:1, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth."

Since such a heaven and earth are essentials in any kingdom, God's universal Kingdom for which all Christendom prays is no exception. Suitable rulers and subjects must be prepared, as implied in Genesis 1:1.

Who Compose the Heaven of Genesis 1:1?

Let us examine the definitions of the word "beginning" to determine the deeper meaning of this verse. Quoted from the Hebrew Lexicon, they are as follows: "Head, chief . . . the first of its kind . . . with regard to time; firstfruits . . . firstborn, firstfruits of things created by him." The second definition of "beginning" is "Christ, head of creation . . . with regard to dignity, the first." The heaven of Genesis 1:1 is composed of Christ the head, and the Church His body.

Revelation 3:14 is an example of this usage of "beginning": "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Christ wanted it known that He is "the beginning of the creation of God." He is the "head," the "chief" of that creation, the King of the new world. Numerous passages of Scripture identify Christ as earth's future king. Perhaps most pointed is Zech. 14:9: "The Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one."

We must not think, however, that Christ occupies this position alone as "heaven" in the new creation. By His title, "King of kings, and Lord of lords," (1 Tim. 6:15) we are assured that there are to be

associate rulers. This is confirmed by Jesus' personal promise to the overcomers: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 3:21). This "heaven" now being created by God is a collective term including Christ and the saints.

Also significant among the definitions of "beginning," as from Genesis 1:1 are the following: "The first of its kind . . . firstfruits . . . firstborn, firstfruits of things created by him." In what sense is Christ the "firstfruits" of the new creation? We read in I Cor. 15:20, 23: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. . . . Every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Christ is the "firstfruits" in that He was the first of our race to obtain immortal life. "They that are Christ's"—the overcomers—shall be granted the victory over death as afterfruits, "at his coming."

The same truth is reiterated in Col. 1:18, "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." By virtue of His life of matchless obedience, Christ is to occupy the pre-eminent position in the new heaven: He is "King of kings," or "head" of the Church, and "firstborn from the dead."

Heavens and Earth that Shall Pass Away

In the third chapter of his Second Epistle the apostle Peter spans the ages allotted to the human race. Kingdoms have waxed and waned, man ever striving for supremacy over man; but in the end all will be subjugated by the all-conquering Son of God who comes to establish His universal and everlasting Kingdom.

Let us read II Peter 3:3—7. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:* whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Despite the word of the scoffers, the destruction of the present heavens and earth is as certain as that ever the Flood inundated an ungodly world in Noah's day. Divine judgments are decreed upon

* The "earth standing out of the water and in the water"—as rendered in our King James Version, this text proves that the Flood was local and not universal. Archæological discoveries confirm this fact.

this dispensation "*by the same word*" that pronounced doom upon the antediluvian civilization.

In both cases—then and now—the *physical* heavens and earth survive the judgments, for the Psalmist assures us that the Lord hath established the heavens forever and ever (Ps. 148:4—6), and we know from Eccl. 1:4 that the earth is destined to abide forever. Destruction is determined only upon the political heavens and earth, the incorrigible rulers and subjects.

Concerning their annihilation we read further: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (verse 10). When earth's potentates and rulers are compelled to step down and surrender the throne to Christ, it will not be without a "great noise" of protest.

Peter also informs us how the present heavens and earth, once consumed by the judgments of God, will be replaced. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (v. 13).

This is the heaven and earth of Genesis 1:1, composed of Christ and His chosen aristocracy and the people over whom they rule. The Apostle states very plainly that righteousness is a prerequisite to those composing either the heaven or the earth of the new world. In other words, only those who are righteous *now* will qualify for entrance *then*.

When Are the New Heavens to Be Established?

We find also in II Peter 3 a clue as to the time of the dissolution of the kingdoms of men and the inauguration of the divine regime. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (verse 8). This rule for reckoning prophetic time expands the allegorical "six days" of Genesis to an actual six thousand years.

Other passages of Scripture confirm this duration of six thousand years. For example, it was "after six days" that Jesus took Peter, James and John up the Mount of Transfiguration to give them a preview of the Son of man coming in His glory (Matt. 16:27, 28; 17:1—9).

Men have looked for Christ's return through the centuries. Had they understood this message from Peter, they would have known that the creation of the new heaven was not destined to be complete until the conclusion of the six thousand years.

Not until the consummation of this period will the new heavens take dominion. During their thousand-year reign, the *new earth*, or populace of the Kingdom, will be formed, completing the work of creation as outlined in Genesis 1:1.

Our Lord foresaw the corruption and collapse of the present heavens and earth with such detailed accuracy that He was able to give us a prophetic

photograph. We read: "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 the 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" (Luke 21:25—27).

Sun, moon and stars in the *physical* heavens continue to pursue their endless courses with perfect regularity. But in earth's *political* heavens there are unmistakable signs of decay. In like figure, there is drastic surging in the sea—the sea of nations (Rev. 17:15)—as men quake in the grip of an appalling dread, a terrifying fear which their own inventions have created—the fear of atomic annihilation.

These events are signs of the Second Advent, as Jesus' following words reveal: "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27). At that time "heaven and earth shall pass away," not the physical universe, but the human systems of misrule (v. 33).

In His last message to mankind, the book of Revelation, Jesus informs us of the means of their displacement. "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. . . . These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings" (Rev. 19:19; 17:14). This is the Battle of Armageddon in which the thrones of earth's political heavens are swept clean and bare to make room for Christ, the rightful heir, and His co-rulers, the new heavens of Genesis 1:1.

A Utopian World—the New Creation

We are by no means dependent upon some isolated text by an obscure writer to describe the heaven and earth of Genesis 1:1. We have drawn evidence from the Lord Himself, from two of His most prominent apostles, Peter and John; and now we shall consult the chiefest of the prophets, Isaiah, whose writings form the grandest of Messianic passages of the Old Testament.

The 65th chapter pictures the Golden Age when the new heaven holds sway over a transformed world. "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die a hundred years old; but the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.

"And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them" (verses 17—23).

From this passage it is clear that under the administration of the new heavens, perfect social and economic conditions shall prevail; and with the protection of universal law, the humblest citizen shall live in perfect safety and happiness. During this Millennial reign of the new heavens, Christ and the saints, "a great multitude . . . of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Rev. 7: 9) is developed to be the new earth, or populace of the Kingdom.

This task performed, the work of spiritual creation on this planet will be accomplished; Genesis 1:1 will be fulfilled in the establishment of right-

eous rulers to administer the affairs of righteous inhabitants for eternity.

Looking afar future to this grand consummation of God's plan and purpose for the earth and mankind, John saw "a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." And he heard a great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself [Emmanuel] shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:1, 3, 4).

Such are the eternal blessings to be bestowed upon the heavens and earth of Genesis 1:1, new heavens and a new earth.

Would you participate? Then "be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." ●●

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Self-Seeking

versus

Self-Sacrifice

DIOTREPHES and Onesiphorus are two Bible characters not so well known but whose lives bear a lesson for our profit.

Many of us would have a hard time remembering who Diotrephes was, or what he did. His life really only matters to us if we have the good sense to read about him and say, "I will not be like Diotrephes." He had a bad habit that made it hard for him to get along with other people.

Though he lived hundreds of years ago, when the Christian Church was young and new, his bad habit is one that you or I can easily have today. When we read about Diotrephes, let us ask ourselves, "Am I like him? Am I even a *little* like him?"

We find Diotrephes mentioned in the third letter of John, that great Christian leader who was writing to his very dear friend Gaius. Gaius was a faithful worker of the same church as Diotrephes. The churches along the Mediterranean grew because of such leaders as John, who worked and traveled from one city to another helping and teaching the people in the way of salvation. The churches also grew because of such workers as the beloved Gaius, who while doing their daily tasks worked for God in their community.

Indeed, John the Elder thanked God for such a sincere worker as Gaius. Nothing brought him greater joy than to hear of his children walking in the way of truth.

But there were also men like Diotrephes, who had a place in the Church but did not know how to work with others.

In just a few words John the Elder gives us such a clear picture of Diotrephes that we know right away why he could not get along with others. The Elder describes him as a man "who wants to be the head of everything" (III John 9, Phillips Translation). Diotrephes was working for the church, to be sure, but he wanted everything done *his* way. He would not consider the ideas of others, but always wanted to tell them what they should do.

According to John's letter to Gaius, Diotrephes carried his wish, "to be head of everything" much too far. He refused to recognize or to take suggestions from others who knew more than he did. He even said mean and untrue things about the leaders and others who were more loved and honored than he was. He was impolite to other Christians who came to visit the brethren. Instead of helping them, he even told others in the church not to welcome them.

What trouble and discord one person can make in a church—if he is like Diotrephes. And realizing what evils such a besetment may lead to, let us watch that we are not *at all* like Diotrephes, always assuming that *our* thoughts and ways are so pre-eminent.

ONESIPHORUS was another man with a long name and a short story. The few Bible verses written about him are found in the second letter to Timothy, written by Paul the great missionary while in prison in Rome. He recalls the many times Onesiphorus ministered unto him at Ephesus, pointing out that Timothy, too, knows very well the kindness of Onesiphorus.

It is altogether likely that Onesiphorus was one of the Ephesian elders. If so, he must have been a very virtuous one, for Paul speaks so warmly and nobly of his household. Paul sums up his ministry at Ephesus in his farewell to the Elders: "Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone of you night and day with tears." He had spent three years of great labor and suffering among the Ephesian Church. No wonder Paul was thankful for a friend like Onesiphorus, who had often put "fresh heart" into him.

Certainly such a man as Onesiphorus was present at Paul's departure from Ephesus, when he prayed with the brethren and they wept sore, and embraced Paul and kissed him, not expecting to see him again. It was difficult for Onesiphorus to see Paul go because he had loved him and had carefully ministered to his needs.

It is often true that we love a person in the measure that we have done them good.

Here is a lesson, both from Paul and from Onesiphorus, that we need. Paul had many tears and trials also many comforts and victories; but he was not moved by the attention, by words of praise or by anything that man could do for him. He was not moved from his course, but only worked more and more to finish his course with joy and the ministry which he had received of Christ Jesus (Acts 20: 24). Like Paul we should be very thankful for the kindness of friends, but not become overconcerned about ourselves, always expecting someone to minister to *us*. Our greatest concern should be that *we* finish *our* course with joy.

At the same time it would be well if more of us were like Onesiphorus, diligent to help others, to put fresh heart into one another's lives by a word, a kindly deed, or a sunny smile.

After many years we find Paul in Rome as a prisoner, ready to be offered, and the time of his departure is at hand. He is about to be brought before Nero the second time, and everyone knows what that means. It is in these circumstances that Paul pens these words to Timothy: "When Onesiphorus arrived in Rome, . . . he sought me out with

all the greater diligence because he knew I was in chains till at last he found me." How Onesiphorus must have longed to see his dearest friend on earth, with whom he had so often transacted the great business of salvation. No doubt by this time Onesiphorus, as well as Paul, had a great treasure laid up in heaven.

All the stormy way from Asia to Rome Onesiphorus went to see Paul. Persecution being high, it is not likely that he was able to get to see Paul without suffering persecution himself. But at last his arms were round Paul's neck, and the two old men wept and embraced. What a coal of holy love must have burned in their saintly bosoms.

Noble-hearted Onesiphorus! We can learn a lesson from you.

Let us forthwith imitate him. Let us be a support to those in need, especially those who need our sympathy. There are those in the work of the Lord who may be forgotten by those who should stand by. Like Onesiphorus, may we have that unquenchable loyalty to all those who suffer in the way of righteousness, prisoners of the Lord. Yes, by a word, by a letter, by a willing heart and hand we can refresh them under their chains.

In Paul's letter to Timothy it was a comforting thought that when Onesiphorus visited him he was not in the least ashamed of his chains. Some who visited Paul *were* ashamed of being seen with the condemned prisoner—at least Paul recognized the fact as worthy of mention. Perhaps while there, such visitors watched the guards and wondered if they were not taking chances—and decided they would not come again.

In his letter Paul writes sadly of some who forsook him. Then he tells gladly about his dear old friend Onesiphorus: "Many a time did that man put fresh heart into me," he writes, "and he was not the least ashamed of my being a prisoner in chains. Indeed, when he was in Rome, he went to a great deal of trouble to find me. . . . And you well know in how many ways he helped me at Ephesus as well" (II Tim. 1:16—18, Phillips).

We have met Onesiphorus in Ephesus, and in Rome. May we be worthy to meet him face to face in the Kingdom of our Lord. ●●

A BEAUTIFUL HEART

Compassion is a sign of a truly great and generous heart. Compassion is understanding the troubles of others, coupled with an urgent desire to help.

Man naturally is not compassionate.

It is an attribute he must learn by living and by his own experiences. It is cultivating an ability to put himself in the other fellow's shoes, remembering that all facts and circumstances influencing the other fellow cannot be known to him.

FEBRUARY, 1970

Self-Denial Week

For the benefit of distant readers who may wish to observe the time with us, we would announce that our annual Self-denial Week will be observed this year from February 1 through 7. During this time we will dispense with all dainties, desserts, meat, cheese (except cottage cheese), eggs, fish and fowl, and make choice of any three substantial articles of food—fruits, fresh, canned or frozen; potatoes and other vegetables, seasoned to taste; bread, butter—the entire meal being confined to this selection, varied with each meal, as desired. Exception is made for the ill and aged, and those on special diets.

Believing, as the Bible teaches, that every follower of Christ must fast as a means of eliminating the "old man," the lower nature, the Rev. L. T. Nichols, founder of the Megiddo Mission Church, instituted this custom many years ago as an exercise to self-discipline and godliness. And can we not enter into it wholeheartedly when we realize how many times we ourselves have stumbled in our spiritual walk? Can we not enter into it willingly and with glad thanksgiving, when we think of the great number of earth's inhabitants who never know sufficiency? Can we not enter it joyfully, remembering the exceeding great reward in the future that will be bestowed upon all who grow to the full stature of Jesus Christ? ●●

Announcement

Abib First, the beginning of the year as given to ancient Israel, falls this year on April 6 and 7. Bible time being reckoned "from even to even" (Lev. 23:32), and the new moon after the Spring equinox occurring after sundown on April 5, the day of Abib First does not begin until the evening of April 6.

At this time the Megiddo Church will observe the anniversary of the birth of Christ and the beginning of the New Year.

Interested friends and subscribers wishing an Abib window card please write: Megiddo Mission, Dept. MS, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619, before March 1. ●●

THE PRICE

A nonconformist
Died on a cross
Lashed by the world's displeasure
Because He conformed
Perfectly
To truth.

Building with the BEST

HE WHO would develop his personality into the full measure of its strength and power must set his goal at living constantly in the presence of the best." Here is a practical and profound suggestion: to live constantly in the presence of the best.

Let us apply this thought to all would-be followers of the lowly Nazarene. For the kind of personality that counts for Christ is achieved through living in the presence of the best—the best in thought, the best in memory, the best in anticipation. It means making all that is best a part of us.

The Wise writer of the book of Proverbs says, "Out of the heart are the issues of life." The Teacher of Galilee in His analysis of human nature says, "That which cometh out of a man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts. . . ." He places evil thoughts at the head of a long list of evils which come from the heart of man (Mark 7:20—23).

Deep in the mystery of the human mind is a kind of laboratory or workshop wherein man fashions his character and builds his personality. And the tools he uses are the thoughts he thinks. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The apostle Paul meant the same when he exhorted his brethren to think on the things that are honorable, just, pure, lovely and right. He knew that the kind of things we think about, if we think long enough and hard enough, will eventually become actions.

Thoughts are the most powerful force in the world; they mold the whole course of our lives. In the armory of thought man forges the weapons by which he destroys himself. He also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself mansions of joy and peace and strength in this present time, and in the world to come pleasures for evermore.

Before we can live in the world to come, we must now live in the best thought-world we can build for ourselves. We must follow the advice of the Psalmist, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee." This living Word will direct the thoughts and energies along the channels of divine duty. It will enable every one to live in the presence of the best, the best thoughts concerning life and eternity, concerning man and Christ and God. Thoughts of the eternal written on our minds and meditated into the fiber of our everyday thinking will build up a reserve of strength to meet trials awaiting in the days ahead.

The earnest Christian who lives in the presence of the best will not live in the past. But he will take a retrospective view of past experience to observe the cause of each failure, to see where he has been lacking in his duty to God and man, drawing from it a lesson by which to profit in the future. Through such analysis he can build high heaps around the pitfalls that beset the pathway and let those memories be a challenge to better the best of yesterday. For this is the test of every man: to reach God's standard of fitness. God's promises are for those who will do their best.

There is no better way to live in the presence of the best than to busy ourselves doing the things God asks us to do, realizing that if we are faithful in little things, He will recognize our trust-worthiness to be faithful in matters of greater responsibility. But let us remember that this is our day of preparation. This is our day of training. Are we doing our best with our present opportunities? Are we building a noble character that will meet the approval of the Judge? He who is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; but slighted talents and neglected opportunities will bring to us bitter disappointment and regret in that great Day when the Master reckons with His servants.

God's Word abounds with promises to those who will practice living in the presence of the best. His promises are to the conqueror, the overcomer, the valiant warrior who wars against sin until the enemy is defeated.

As Christians we have a vision of something beyond the difficulties and disappointments of this present time. We are journeying toward fulfillment, completeness, and expansion of life. Over the ages God has been working with men upon the earth with one purpose in view: to fit a people for perpetuation and to ultimately fit the earth for their eternal abode.

We now look out upon a world filled with tumult, strife, unrest, crime and trouble of every kind. The kings, rulers, and armies of earth are doing on their part, carrying out the predictions of the Almighty. Are we as valiantly doing on our part to prepare our hearts, being today what we wish and long to be through eternity?

Let us so live in happy anticipation of the glorious future that we will bend every energy to prepare ourselves to stand the test, and be worthy to be chosen with the best of all ages to enter into the new order, to have a part in the building of a better world—the Kingdom of God on earth.

Until that Day arrives, the wisdom of God entering into our hearts and the knowledge of God pleasant unto our souls, discretion shall preserve us and understanding shall keep us living in the presence of the best. ●●

A man should keep his faith in constant repair.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

Jesus Christ

AS WE continue our study of Jesus Christ, we should remember that we are not studying the life of any ordinary student, tradesman or teacher. Here was the Son of God living among men, prophet, teacher and priest, and destined to the Kingdom of the whole earth. And here was **our** perfect example, tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Early in the Gospel of Matthew we learn the pattern of Jesus' ministry: He "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23). Teaching, preaching, healing—that was the threefold pattern of Jesus' ministry.

In our last lesson we studied the teaching portion of the ministry; now we shall examine His healing, which was also an inseparable part of the work. We shall follow our outline of study:

III. As He Came—History E. The Ministry 3. Healing

As we review the miracles of Jesus, let us keep in mind that they were not isolated events in the remote past but demonstrations of the power of a God who still lives and works!

III. AS HE CAME—HISTORY E. The Ministry

3. Healing. Jesus taught by deeds, as well as by words. No man could conclude honestly that His words describing the power and ability of His Father were idle tales of greatness, for they were accompanied by dramatic and convincing expressions in deeds—miracles.

What is a miracle? Is it simply a doing of the impossible? No, Julius Caesar would have called the destructive capabilities of a single atom bomb impossible. Our great grandparents would have thought a safe landing on the moon impossible.

A miracle such as Jesus performed is an extraordinary event manifesting the power of God. The Greek word used to describe the miracles of Jesus is *semeion*, which is "a sign; it is a significant event; it is an action which reveals the mind and character of the person who performs it; it is

an outward action designed to allow him who sees it to see into the inner mind and heart of him who performs it."*

Our modern minds often tend to be suspicious of the miraculous. We dislike what we cannot explain. We almost think that we know so much about the universe that miracles do not happen. But such thinking only manifests our ignorance, for the more problems men solve, the more they find to solve.

Accepting the Bible as the veritable Word of God, we must believe in miracles, the open demonstrations of the power of the Omnipotent Creator. But to understand more fully the miracles of Jesus, we need to know something of the attitude of the people among whom Jesus performed them.

a. Background. To understand Jesus' miracles we need to see them against the mental and spiritual climate of the age in which they happened.

To the average man or woman of the first century, healing was not in itself a novelty. Both Romans and Greeks believed that the gods came to the assistance of mortal men in need. Most of this assistance took the form of "healing" which was magical in character. All disease, they believed, was caused by the presence of a living spirit or demon. Curing the disease meant simply expelling the demon, a practice known as exorcism. The cure was not always effective, for the ancients believed that the air and atmosphere were so crowded with demons that it was impossible to insert the point of a needle into the air without touching one.†

Thus the ancient world revelled in the miraculous. It looked for miracles; it expected miracles. And as a result, the miraculous was commonplace. Miracles were welcomed as evidence of the presence of God.

"Healing" deeds being customary with religious functionaries of the time, Jesus would probably have attracted very little audience without any healing accompaniments. From the standpoint of the populace, Jesus was *expected* to be a healer.‡

The historian Josephus was familiar with a broad range of incantations and mysterious means

* William Barclay, *The Mind of Jesus*. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1961, p. 81.

† *Ibid.*, p. 71.

‡ Charles M. Laymon, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*. Abingdon Press, New York, 1955, pp. 141 ff.

designed to "heal" by casting out demons. Even the Jews tried to expel demons. When Jesus was accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, the so-called prince of demons, He replied: "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out?" (Matt. 12:27). This clearly recognizes the fact that the Jewish priests practiced some form of healing.

b. Jesus' Attitude toward Miracles.

Jesus Himself regarded miracles as part of His added to the Gospel story for ornament or pleasant reading. The miracles had significance and purpose. Delete the account of the miracles and the whole story falls to pieces, and often the teaching of Jesus is left without occasion or illustration.

Jesus Himself regarded miracles as part of His ministry to preach the Kingdom of God. His opening manifesto delivered in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:18), quoted from the prophet Isaiah, proclaims healing as a part of His ministry. Although probably the greater significance of this prophecy of healing is spiritual (Ps. 107:20), actual healing was part of His mission: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." His healing ministry was clearly foretold, and Jesus accepted it.

On another occasion Jesus identified healing as part of His ministry. Answering messengers whom John the Baptist had sent to Him, He replied: "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised" (Luke 7:22). Miracles were a manifest part of His ministry.

The multitudes who followed Jesus tended, apparently, to place the primary emphasis of His ministry on His healing, forgetting His message. For this reason Jesus left Capernaum for other communities, rather than remain there and continue to heal (Mark 1:35—39). He kept His miracles in a proper relationship to His teaching, which was at the center of His ministry.

Frequently Jesus withdrew from the publicity which His miracles brought. He charged the leper whom He had cleansed, "See thou say nothing to any man"; but hardly was the leper out of sight before he began to spread the news of his healing abroad. This happened more than once. Why did Jesus shrink from publicity? Perhaps He was afraid of inciting unnecessary trouble. Like John the Baptist, He might be mistaken for a political agitator—it is a simple historical fact that within the thirty years before the emergence of Herod the Great no fewer than 150,000 men perished in Palestine in revolutionary uprisings.

c. Purpose of Jesus' miracles. Why did Jesus perform miracles?

By His miracles, Jesus confirmed the faith of His disciples and His listeners. The leper who came to Jesus and worshiped Him, said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean" (Matt. 8:2). And immediately Jesus cleansed him. The blind Bartimaeus, confident that Jesus could give him sight, begged for mercy: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." What was his request? "Lord, that I might receive my sight." Jesus healed him, commending and rewarding his faith (Mark 10:46).

By His miracles, Jesus demonstrated His divine authority and the power of His Father. He healed the man sick of the palsy "that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. 9:2—8). When the multitudes saw it, "they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." On another occasion, when Jesus was in a ship with His disciples, a storm arose. The disciples, afraid, implored Jesus to save them. Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith; and then, to remind them of the power of God, quietly used His power to still the sea; "and there was a great calm." Again the people "marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" (Matt. 8:23—27).

By healing on the Sabbath, Jesus demonstrated His superiority to the Law of Moses. Pharisaic Sabbath-keepers branded Him as a dangerous and heretical law-breaker, one who must be eliminated as quickly as possible; but Jesus only continued His "Sabbath-breaking." He clashed with them over the healing of the man with the withered hand (Matt. 12:9—14), the woman bent for eighteen years with her infirmity (Luke 13:10—17), the man with the dropsy (Luke 14:1—6). But Jesus was doing more than healing: He was teaching that the "Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28). The Sabbath law of Moses was terminating.

d. Types of Jesus' miracles

The miracles of Jesus may be divided into three general groups:

Restoring life: Jesus raised Jairus' daughter (Matt. 9:23); the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11—17), and also Lazarus (John 11:43) from death.

Restoring health: Jesus' healing covers a varied field, including epilepsy, paralysis, blindness, deaf and dumbness, atrophy, dropsy, fever and leprosy. Leprosy in this period was used to cover every sort of skin disease, as well as leprosy itself, which is still the scourge of Africa and the Middle East. Those tainted with it were not only outcasts from all human society under ban of excommunication, but were exiled even from their own families, regarded as "impure," cut off from every form of

(Continued on page 14)

The Miracles of Christ

Miracle	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John
Two blind men healed	9:27			
A dumb demoniac healed	9:32			
The coin in the mouth of the fish	17:27			
The deaf and dumb man healed		7:31		
A blind man healed		8:22		
Christ passes unseen through the multitude			4:30	
Draught of fishes			5:1	
Raising the widow's son			7:11	
Healing the infirm woman			13:11	
Healing the man with dropsy			14:1	
Healing the ten lepers			17:11	
Healing the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant			22:50	
Turning water into wine				2:1
Healing the nobleman's son				4:46
Healing the impotent man at Bethesda				5:2
Healing the man born blind				9:1
Raising of Lazarus				11:43
The draught of fishes				21:6
Demoniac in synagogue cured		1:23	4:33	
Healing the centurion's servant	8:5		7:2	
The blind and dumb demoniac	12:22		11:14	
Healing the daughter of the Syrophenician	15:21	7:24		
Feeding the four thousand	15:32	8:1		
Cursing the fig tree	21:18	11:12		
Healing the leper	8:2	1:40	5:12	
Healing Peter's mother-in-law	8:14	1:30	4:38	
Stilling the storm	8:26	4:37	8:22	
The legion of devils enter the swine	8:28	5:1	8:27	
Healing the man sick of palsy	9:2	2:3	5:18	
Healing the woman with the issue of blood	9:20	5:25	8:43	
Raising Jairus' daughter	9:23	5:22	8:41	
Healing the man with a withered hand	12:10	3:1	6:6	
Curing the demoniac child	17:14	9:17	9:38	
Curing blind Bartimaeus (two blind men, Matt. 20)	20:30	10:46	18:35	
Walking on the sea	14:25	6:48		6:19
Feeding the five thousand	14:19	6:35	9:12	6:5

(Continued from page 12)

life. To touch them was forbidden: they were regarded as a species of living filth. They aroused feelings of horror that bordered on hatred.*

Jesus also "cast out devils"—not that Jesus believed that disease was caused by the presence of a foreign spirit or demon within a man, but this was how the people of His day understood sickness. The term is applied in the Gospels to insanity especially. By casting out devils Jesus was merely healing that which was opposed to a healthy condition of body or mind. Careful reading of the various narratives of Jesus' casting out these so-called demons reveals simply human insanity. For example, Luke 8:29: "For oftentimes it [the evil spirit] had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness." Asked his name, the insane man answered "Legion," revealing his confused thinking—he thought of himself as a composite personality.

Demonstrating His power: This type of miracle includes: walking on the sea (Matt. 14:25); stilling the tempest (Matt. 8:26); turning water into wine (John 2:1); feeding the multitudes (Matt. 14:19).

Jesus healed with the same authority with which He taught. "With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him" (Mark 1:27). On one evening in particular, Mark tells us that at sundown "they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons" (Mark 1:32-34).

But let us remember that Jesus' miracles were not simply for the purpose of charity: They were bringing conviction of the power of God to that generation and to many generations to follow.

IN SUMMARY

Jesus' ministry began with His baptism by John in Judea; He was the prophet of whom John had said, "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16, 17).

Jesus quickly attached to Himself a few personal followers—two pairs of brothers—Peter and Andrew, James and John (Matt. 4:18-22). With these, and eight others selected later, He "went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:1). Bestowing on these twelve apostles a special power (Matt. 10:1), He assigned to them the same program which He Himself followed: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is

at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:7, 8).

Besides the twelve, Jesus appointed seventy other disciples, whom He sent out two by two "into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1). Theirs was the role of advance emissaries. He commissioned them: "Go ye your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. . . . And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:3-9).

The early part of Jesus' ministry centered in Galilee, perhaps having headquarters in the fishing village of Capernaum, the home of His first disciples. Everywhere He went He was proclaiming "good news"; He was accomplishing "mighty works." Naturally He received public acclaim for His deeds of mercy, especially when He showed His power over disease. But He also aroused suspicion. Jealous Jews saw in Him a character and a teaching superior to themselves; certain public officials saw in His promises of a kingdom a threat to their own positions. And the days of His ministry were numbered. ●●

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. What is a miracle?
2. Why may we consider Jesus' miracles a means of teaching?
3. What reason have we to accept Jesus' miracles as manifestations of the power of God?
4. What was the significance of "healing" to the Greeks and Romans of Jesus' day? What did the Jews think of it?
5. What was Jesus' attitude toward miracles?
6. Give two references from the Old Testament to show that healing was to be part of Jesus' ministry.
7. Why did Jesus shun publicity?
8. What were two fundamental purposes of Jesus' miracles?
9. What was the meaning of Jesus' "casting out devils"?
10. Name three miracles by which Jesus demonstrated His power.
11. Name three miracles performed to convince his followers.
12. Under what commission did Jesus' apostles minister to the people after Jesus' ascension? By what power could they heal?

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

* Jean Steinmann. *The Life of Jesus*. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1959, p. 55.

"I Will..."

WHEREBY are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises"—the apostle Peter recognized the value of God's promises—do we? Do we treasure them above everything else? Do we remember them? Do we live for them?

Here are a few of these promises which are "exceeding great and precious," and each one carries the definite promise: "I will . . ." Try meditating on one of them each day, and see your determination to work for them increase!

Of Forgiveness:

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14).

"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34).

Of Deliverance:

"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: . . . I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him" (Ps. 91:14, 15).

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. 43:2).

Of Prayer:

"Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Ps. 50:14, 15).

Of Protection:

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

Of Recognition:

"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2).

Of Rest:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy

laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

Of Authority:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

Of Salvation:

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God" (Ps. 50:23).

Of Life:

"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6).

Of Christ's Return:

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).

Of God's Dependability:

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:10, 11).

But remember, these promises are all conditional: we must do on our part. God says, "I will" IF "you will."

The Lord Is Coming!

Jesus is coming from the heavens:

His chariot-wheels draw nigh;

And all "the wise" who understand

For His appearing cry.

Lord Jesus, come! Oh, swiftly come,

Our longing hearts release;

And on this sin-sick earth set up

The longed-for reign of peace.

Praying with words the Spirit gives

And watching thereunto,

We fix our gaze upon the Lord

Who maketh "all things new"

Till "things invisible" appear

To greet our weary eyes,

And faith, with outstretched hands, takes hold

Of the eternal "Prize."

Christian Youth in These Times

Faithful in Little Things

YOU'RE cheating!" shouted Roy as his lightning-quick pass just missed contact with Alan's stealthy fingers and crashed onto the table. This wasn't the first time they had bought candy together and divided it, and Roy was wide awake.

Alan's round dark eyes blazed with fury. "You're sure touchy," he retorted; and snapping his finger at the piece of candy he had filched from Roy's pile, he sent it whirling across the table and off onto the floor.

"I shall never never *never* buy another bag of candy with you." Roy herded his small pile of candies into a bag, shoved back his chair, and bounded for the door. "Every time we buy something together you have to cheat." Roy opened the door and slammed it behind him, then opened it again to give Alan one last word. "Just remember, Alan, never ask me again! Never! You're too big a cheat." The door closed firmly and Roy was gone.

Mrs. Brown, hearing the commotion from the kitchen, hurried into the room, wiping her hands on her terry cloth apron. There sat Alan, resting his elbows on the table and staring blankly at the small pile of candies.

"Alan"—

He turned slowly around in his chair to face his mother.

"Alan," she said in a kind voice as she looked squarely into the eyes of her nine-year-old son. "Alan, are you—are you cheating again?"

Alan did not answer.

Mrs. Brown placed a firm hand on her son's shoulder. "Are you cheating again, Son?"

Still he did not answer.

"Never forget the importance of being faithful in little things."

"Aw, Mom," he muttered as he slumped down in his chair. "All I did was take one l-i-t-t-l-e candy and Roy made all this big fuss."

"Yes, but—"

"Just—" interrupted Alan, "just one small candy! Nobody but Roy would ever miss one *tiny* piece of candy."

"It doesn't matter how small it is," returned his mother. "*Anything* you take which is not rightfully yours is stealing."

Alan sat up straight in his chair and opened his mouth to continue his defense, but his mother's stern look checked the words which rushed to his lips.

"Alan, what was that Bible verse we studied yesterday?"

Alan knit his brow and tried to put on an air of concentration. That verse did come close home, and he squirmed a little. "It was, ah, ah—"

"From a parable of Jesus," hinted Mrs. Brown, trying to be helpful. "He that is faith. . ."

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and, and . . . and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

"Now tell me in your own words just what that means."

Alan scowled, blinked his eyes and wiggled his nose. But seeing no way out, he stammered, "If you are not er—uh—honest in little things, you—you will not be in—in bigger things."

"That's right. Now Alan, do you think you were obeying that verse just now?"

Alan hung his head but made no reply.

Mrs. Brown repeated the question, this time more emphatic. "What do you think, Alan?"

"No, I guess not."

"Criminals do not start out stealing diamonds or big amounts of money," explained his mother. "They begin with *little* acts of dishonesty. One boy may steal an apple when no one is looking. Or, just as you did, he may try to cheat his friend out of a t-i-n-y piece of candy. Little things, almost too small to notice. But these little sins of dishonesty do not stay little. They grow and grow and grow until *no one* can really trust us.

"Now I want you to apologize to Roy, Alan. Start right now to break that habit of cheating so we can always trust you."

Alan looked up from a spot on the floor which he had been studying and smiled a crooked little smile. "All right, I'm sorry," he mumbled.

Later—

"Albert, wait up—" Alan hurried to catch up with his friend. "I've got bad news—we're in trouble."

"Trouble? about what?" Albert rolled his eyes curiously in Alan's direction.

"Miss Fraser says you and I will have to make an 'A' in the final exam Friday or lose our credit for history."

Albert stopped dead still in his tracks. "That means—" he ran his fingers nervously through his hair.

"You're right. No graduating unless we can pass it."

The two boys gazed at each other a moment, then walked on slowly. "Is it really *that* bad, Alan?" he queried as he moistened his lips with the tip of his tongue.

Alan nodded glumly. "I don't see any way out," and the two walked on, shoulders hunched and hands driven deep in their pockets.

"Well well, captains!" a voice from the rear startled them. Melvin wedged his way in between Albert and Alan, grinning broadly. "Why so glum today?"

Albert explained their predicament, and Melvin listened, still grinning.

Alan couldn't stand it any longer. "But Melv," he interrupted, "tell me—what's up *your* sleeve?"

"Nothing to worry about at all, boys. Just let me tell you." The three boys huddled together as Melvin put an arm around Albert's and Alan's necks.

Melvin lowered his voice to a whisper. "Miss Fraser made the mistake of leaving a copy of the test in a book on her desk. When she was out of the room, I managed to copy the questions, word for word."

"Really!"

"You did—how'd you get away with that?"

"Just stop over to my house tonight and we'll look up all the answers."

"Good!"

"Best news I've had today!"

And Melvin went whistling down the street.

"Are we in luck!" chuckled Alan. "If all our problems could be solved as easy as that!"

Still later—

"An unexpected pleasure!" exclaimed Alan Brown as he thrust his hand forward to grasp the hand of Mr. Smith, a highly respected citizen and adviser in the community. Having just recently graduated from law school, Alan was grateful for the recognition of a long-established man of distinction. Mr. Smith's friendship would be a valuable asset.

"I was about to stop for lunch," said Alan, nodding toward the restaurant.

Mr. Smith smiled pleasantly. "I was about to do the same."

The two men chatted steadily until the waitress placed their orders on the table, along with their checks.

Mr. Smith glanced briefly at his check. Thirty-five cents for his hot drink and roll. Alan's order

had been identical, but his check, Mr. Smith's sharp eyes noticed as Alan quickly turned it over and went on talking, was only twenty-five cents.

Soon they were ready to leave, and Alan stepped up to the cashier, handed over his ticket and twenty-five cents, and left. Mr. Smith paid his thirty-five cents and followed him.

Several months passed, and Mr. Smith had almost forgotten the incident with Alan Brown until a business man called at his office one day for advice.

"It's this way," explained Mr. Norton pulling thoughtfully on his ear. "My brother Jake has died, leaving a considerable amount of property and money. We'll need the services of a lawyer, and I want somebody I can *depend* on. And since a lot of property is involved, the fee for the lawyer who gets the job will amount to several thousand dollars. I've been thinking about Mr. Brown for the job. What do you know about him?"

Mr. Smith thought a moment, then said simply, "I don't believe he's just the man you want."

"You wouldn't give it to him if you were in my place?"

"No, I would not."

"Thanks very much for your advice, Mr. Smith. But would you mind telling me why?"

"A man who would be dishonest for a dime cannot be trusted with a large sum of money, I regret to say. The great Teacher knew human nature when He said, 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.' " ●●

A Prayer

Heavenly Father:

Convince the hearts of all of us that:

If we build in wood,

It will someday rot;

If we build in marble,

It is destined to crumble
before the onslaughts of time;

If we build in steel,

It will someday flow as water
before the melting process of
the universe.

But if we build in human character,

In noble purposes of enduring worth,

If we build usefulness,

Devotion,

Honor,

Good faith,

Meekness

Integrity in the

lives of our youth—

Then we build for ETERNITY!

minimum effort | MAXIMUM PLEASURE

EVERYTHING has been made too easy for most of us," wrote a Dr. Carrell some years ago. "All life has aspired to the condition of minimum effort and maximum pleasure. Amusement has been the national cry; 'a good time' is our chief concern. The perfect life as viewed by the average youth or adult is a round of ease or entertainment. This indolent and undisciplined way of life has sapped our national vigor, imperiled our form of government. Our race pitifully needs new supplies of discipline, morality and intelligence."

"Minimum effort—maximum pleasure"—these words summarize the philosophy of many. But is this approach to be totally condemned?

We, too, are aspiring to maximum pleasure, and God does not condemn it. "Seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life," wrote Paul. God's people shall be "abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures," said the Psalmist—isn't this maximum? "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast . . . of fat things full of marrow" (Isa. 25:6). And still more: "Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him" (Isa. 64:4).

God offers maximum pleasure, but only in exchange for *maximum effort*. "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). "All" is the maximum degree, "all" that we have and are. Every waking moment of every hour of every day belongs to God.

We must keep in mind that we are here only for a short time; therefore, we must use every opportunity to prepare for the "maximum pleasure" God has in store for us. For when the last hour comes, we will begin to think very differently of our whole past life if we have wasted our time. And if we have been negligent where we should have been alert, in governing our thoughts, and that little member, the tongue, we shall be exceedingly sorry.

It isn't enough for us to know *what* we should do. We have to do it. Each of us has a definite obligation to change ourselves for the better, if we would become part of God's eternal plan.

Willingness to make the first simple effort and patience to follow through is what spells success. What we so often lack is faith that the work can be done. Like the people of Ezekiel's time, we "pine away" in our transgressions—"How shall we then live?" (Ezek. 33:10). But we cannot—we must not—have this attitude. Such insidious thought should

warn us that we are not applying our effort in the right direction. Temporal concerns are crowding out the one thing most needed to keep our faith active. Maximum effort is required here: to give more time and thought to our daily devotions; to impress our minds with God's greatness and His goodness and His merciful kindness; to dwell upon those maximum pleasures that await the faithful. In this way we can connect our line to the spiritual powerhouse of God, "from whence cometh our help."

Work—continual work—is the lot that God intended for all His people. Only through this unrelenting effort and sacrifice can we achieve success and gain the glories of the life to come. Every day presents us with countless opportunities for new effort; but too often we let them pass, judging them too small to be significant.

The pilot of a small transport plane was caught in a 150 mile per hour gale which held his plane perfectly still. The motors were roaring, but the plane was not moving an inch. If the pilot had shut off the motors, he probably would not have lived to tell the story. It was only because he made every effort to go forward that he was able to stand still and yet be held up.

And let us remember that the only way *we* will be held up in our spiritual endeavors is by maximum effort at all times, especially when things seem to be at a standstill. We cannot afford to relax our effort—the time is too short!

We face a constant temptation to "take it easy" until an emergency arises. We tend to excuse our spiritual idleness, postponing action until some future time which we imagine will be more opportune. We try to tell ourselves that routine goodness is good enough and we put off the really energetic spiritual activity which is essential to genuine improvement.

But God does not want such postponers. He wants *workers*. He wants *doers*. Vague intentions are not enough. Solemn resolutions are not enough. We must translate our thoughts into actions. Our possibilities for obtaining maximum pleasures in God's eternity will be in exact proportion to the effort we apply now.

The apostle Peter says in the first chapter of his second letter: "Wherefore, let us labor the more abundantly, that by good works we may make sure our calling and election. For by doing these things, you shall not sin at any time. For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"—and that will be the entrance to maximum pleasure. ●●

Obituary

Maude E. Frantz

Life is meaningful; life is beautiful; life is fruitful; but at best it falls far short of the ultimate which we desire—unending life. Of this fact we were once again reminded as we assembled on December 23, 1969 to pay our last respects to an elderly friend and sister, Maude Ellen Frantz.

It was Brother K. E. Flowerday who made the initial visit to the Frantz home in 1924 when with the missionaries of the Gospel Car in the vicinity of Columbus, Ohio. The logical, reasonable teachings of the Bible, as presented by our literature, appealed to Brother and Sister Frantz, and within two years they and son Richard made Rochester their permanent home.

Sister Frantz took an active interest in all Church work, helping in the mailing of the MEGIDDO MESSAGE, later becoming manager of the department until failing health forced her to leave the responsibility to others. She also took active part in correspondence with distant believers, which she considered a pleasant duty and fulfilled ably.

Having a longing desire for life eternal in Christ's Kingdom, she labored to qualify for that unspeakable boon and spared no effort to inspire others with the hope that was so bright to her. Her years at Megiddo were pleasant and fruitful.

Sister Frantz is survived by her husband, John D. Frantz, with whom she lived happily through nearly 59 years, and who did everything in his power to make life happy and comfortable for his ailing wife during her months of failing health. His husbandly concern and kind care will be long remembered by those who knew them best.

Also surviving her is one son, John Richard Frantz, of Smithfield, North Carolina; one sister, Mrs. Glen Hotchkiss, of Northfield, Ohio; one granddaughter; one grandson; and three great-grandchildren. She also leaves behind her a goodly number of church friends, among whom she shall be missed.

Funeral services were conducted by our pastor, Brother K. E. Flowerday. Interment was in Mount Hope Cemetery, where rest others of our beloved dead.

But let us remember that life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. Our sister believed firmly that at the appointed time—which we are confident is near at hand—the dead in Christ shall awake, and with the living shall rise to “meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” ●●

Those who would build high must remain low.

FEBRUARY, 1970

Words to WALK By

Count ten before you speak. When angry, count one hundred—and then don't speak.

God trusts those who trust Him.

Life has but two ends and one of those has been used; better take care of the other one.

The way to keep your religion is to keep it busy.

A mule can't pull while kicking; neither can you.

God is never pleased with the man who does what he pleases.

The wages of sin have never been reduced.

Don't compare your goodness with that of other men; compare it with the goodness of the Man of Galilee.

He most lives who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

A religion that is not worth exporting is not worth keeping at home.

A joy shared is two joys. A sorrow shared is half a sorrow.

Nothing is truly and eternally great and worthwhile when God is left out.

Weak Spots

Did you ever hear of testing material before cutting it? I can remember my grandmother always gathering the fabric and pulling it between her fingers before cutting it to make some garment. I remember asking her, “What are you doing, Grandmother?” “I am testing the material for ‘weak spots.’” Then she would go on to explain that the garment made would be no better than the basic fabric.

It has been a long time since I thought of this, and it was probably during the war years; but it brought to mind our own spiritual garment and the material we are weaving. Is it of “wrought gold, all glorious within”? or does it contain many “weak spots”? We must make our own garment by careful and diligent labor; we must fashion our own royal robe of “fine linen clean and white,” without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Creeping in could be envy, jealousy, just a tinge of bitterness. These must all be banished immediately or surely we will have a garment full of “weak spots.” Now is the testing time. We have many an opportunity to find out what kind of material we have in our garment. ●●

LETTERS

God's Samples

One thing I have noticed with men who have something to sell: the sample of anything they have is always better on the top and not so good in the bottom. But with the Lord, His sample of three score and ten years of life is not nearly so good as what is to come. His promise is of more than eye has seen or ear has heard, or has entered the heart of man to imagine, for those who love Him.

What is to come is far better than His sample!

North Augusta, Ontario, Canada

G. H.

The Unadulterated Gospel

I am writing to you at this time to notify you that I'm trying to keep in touch with the *Message* paper. I still enjoy the paper very much.

I believe it is the unadulterated gospel of Christ to us in this generation. It is really worth the price. It gives us food for thought. It gives us wholesome thought to meditate on. It comes in as a very welcome guest.

Charleston, Miss.

Mrs. E. S. W.

Great Insight

Thank you for sending me your booklets. I have found them very enlightening and will now reread them in a more studious attitude. They are filled with great insight and meaning.

Vestal, New York

V. W. F.

Elijah Coming

I see that you say: "The prophet Elijah must come before Christ." I heartily agree, as the Word of God says so. Twenty-five of us in this city stand upon this truth, and we would like to know more.

We are willing to "buy the truth and sell it not."

Christchurch, New Zealand

D. A. M.

Important: The Kingdom

I know of the great importance of the Kingdom of God. It is amazing to realize that as many sermons as I have heard on sin, the wages of sin and numerous other fine subjects, so few—and so barely touched upon—are the ones concerning the Kingdom of God.

Oneonta, Ala.

G. F. S.

Needed: True Understanding

Most people live under assumptions and just take all things for granted. But we must all thank and praise the Living God of Heaven for all the truth we find in His Word. I just want to believe it, just like it is.

I sincerely hope more of the people of this world will wake up to a true understanding of the truth of God's holy Word before time runs out—there surely can't be enough to last much longer.

Easley, S. C.

J. H. L.

Searching

I have studied several denominations and religions in contrast to the Bible teaching. I do my best to live according to

the standard of God's Word and the commandments as given in the Bible.

May I say that you teach the Word of God (the way I have studied it) better than any denomination or religion yet. I wish I could become more acquainted with your teaching. I thank you very much for your help.

Rosebud, Mont.

L. W.

Growing Stronger

My faith grows stronger each day. I still have trials, for which I am most thankful. But with each trial or test that occurs I can feel myself growing closer to God, and I try harder to do according to what Christ taught.

Through your guidance and truth about the Bible I believe I found myself, and I feel I have become a better person in knowing what to do. I am so thankful to God that when I was seeking, He let me become acquainted with your teachings.

Republica, Missouri

L. P.

Genuine Sharing

I enjoy reading the Psalms. When you read them over and over again, it just seems as though you know the authors so well, you can just feel their hearts breaking with sorrow and then again you can see their faces radiant with thanksgiving and happiness. They tell a great story if you just take your time and let them tell you the story.

Ayr, Ontario, Canada

Mrs. H. H.

Coming Soon

Bible prophecy is fast fulfilling all around. Soon God will send His Son Jesus Christ to bring judgment upon sin and all sinners. That will cause the great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time (Dan. 12:1). That time of trouble is coming nearer every day. Soon it will be here.

The reward God has offered for His faithful servants is eternal, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away. When the hour arrives for Jesus' return, He will bring a blessing to all those who have worked out their salvation with fear and trembling. May we hasten to prepare ourselves for that coming.

Aberdeenshire, Scotland

J. S.

Seeking Rewarded

I keep myself occupied by reading the Holy Bible and your messages. I find it in harmony with God's Word. I think if it had not been for the efforts of your church, I would still be in the dark sleep as most people are and have been for a long time.

Seek and ye shall find: I did. Know the truth and the truth shall set you free: I am.

Lansing, Ill.

H. H.

Climbing

I read Isaiah's words this morning, "Wash and be clean." We must not be just hearers of the Word, but *doers*. Right now the climb may seem steep, and the goal far away, but when the reward is given, it will seem but a small task that we did for so great a prize.

Albion, N. Y.

Mrs. E. B.

That prayer which does not succeed in moderating our wish, in changing the passionate desire into still submission, the anxious tumultuous expectation into silent submission or surrender, is no true prayer, and proves that we have not the spirit of true prayer.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Meditations

On the Word

"And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men: but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15).

There is no habit more universal or more pernicious or more stubborn than that of self-justification. It is even more than a habit; it is a veritable part of us, separable only by radical and painful "surgery." For many it has become a way of life. Most of us know, in our sane and thoughtful moments, that we are not what we should be, or even what we could be. But facing that last phrase is uncomfortable; it implies that we have been negligent; therefore we immediately and unconsciously set to work to smother it with excuses, to justify our present status as the best possible in the circumstances. It is so much easier to deceive ourselves than to reform ourselves, and the majority take the easiest way.

A noted writer says it well: "When such acceptance [of responsibility] involves self-condemnation, . . . an alibi almost inevitably rushes to the rescue. The fire companies of a city, answering an alarm and converging upon a conflagration to put out the blaze, do not move more swiftly and automatically than do our alibis, hurrying to extinguish our unhappy self-accusations. All of us resemble the lawyer in the New Testament story, concerning whom we read: 'But he, desiring to justify himself, said . . .'"

In the passage of which our text is the central point, Jesus had been speaking in the presence of His bitterest critics and enemies, the Pharisees. While some of His teaching was parabolic, they understood the drift of it all too well. In attacking the vices of avarice and dishonesty, He was getting them "right where they lived." They felt the sting of His fearless words and writhed under the lash, but it brought no thought of repentance or reformation, only defensive alibis. "Everybody does it." "Business is business." "God is not concerned with such little things."

"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him."

What they said we do not know, and it is not important. It was no doubt as silly and childish as the things which men have said through the ages and still are saying when they try to justify their misconduct. The writer previously quoted has more to say on the subject:

"All of us are tempted to act on emotion or self-

interest and then call what we have done by the best name possible. In personal relationships this alibi-habit commonly takes the form of face-saving. One of the deepest impulses in human life is self-defense. Without it the race could not have survived, and alike its biological rootage and social necessity are obvious. Nevertheless . . . its perversions are notorious. We do not wish to be put in the wrong: we passionately desire to protect ourselves from blame; face-saving becomes the primary concern in all cases of personal conflict, and almost automatically we throw the blame on others in order to protect ourselves."

So it was with those ancient Pharisees; acknowledgment of faults was humiliating, reform likely to be troublesome and painful; it was easier to deride and ridicule the blameless Teacher who had spoken to them the wholesome if unpleasant truth.

It is possible to fool all of the people some of the time, and many a man succeeds in fooling himself all the time, but God cannot be deceived. No matter how smooth or successful our self-justification has been, He knows our hearts. Some day their deepest secrets will be brought to light, and if we are surprised it will be our own fault. Now is the time to investigate ourselves, to look at ourselves with clear eyes, which often means through the eyes of others, and to face the facts manfully. Then reform!

The latter part of our text could easily be misconstrued by extremists or those who glory in being on the contrary side, regardless. While the gospel is in direct opposition to the spirit of the world at every point, we cannot deny that many of the things which it commands are also held in high esteem by the world, or the decent portion thereof. We are commanded in our relations with the world to "abstain from all appearance of evil." Jesus did not say that *all* which the world esteems is abomination to God, but certain things. Such virtues as honesty, morality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, helpfulness, in their simplest forms, rate high in both scales of values. However, the world do not approve of carrying even these characteristics to the ultimate, to the point required by the exacting law of the Lord. Some individuality must be retained, some emotion of the flesh preserved as an "outlet," according to human standards. To stop short of the highest level would be an abomination in the sight of God.

There are many things in which the cleavage is sharp and definite. In a materialistic world, perhaps nothing rates higher than material success, whether in the fields of business, politics, education, society, or otherwise. First things are automatically put first, even as water seeks its own level; and the visible evidence of the lives of the vast majority indicates that Mammon occupies a higher seat than God.

"Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself," said the inspired Psalmist: and in spite

of our boasted democracy it is still true that with the masses a man's worth is judged by his financial or social standing. This is abomination to the One who reads the hearts and judges according to character.

To be a citizen of the world, a part of its every activity and a "good fellow" with everybody, is a spirit very highly esteemed by man, whereas the Christian is warned to "come out from among them and be ye separate"; "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

The acme of worldly charity is to cover up the faults and transgressions of a friend or relative, seeing and remembering only the good. This is not the mind of God. His principle is, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13). Blind loyalty, regardless of character or true worth, while admired by men, is abomination to God.

So the contrasts might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, but it all adds up to the same thing. Jesus made no mistake when He said, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." ●●

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I don't claim to be a Bible scholar, but there is one thing that I absolutely do not agree with you on and that is the pre-existence of the Son of the living God. You say, 'Paul testified that Christ was "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). And how could he have existed before the material from whence He came existed?' I believe that it was the Spirit of Christ that existed, not His mortal body.

"The Spirit is the Word that existed in the beginning with God that the Bible speaks of in St. John, chapter 1, verses 1 and 2. I do not believe that the flesh of Christ existed in the beginning with God. But I do believe that the Spirit did exist in the beginning with God and I believe that the spirit of God dwelt in a mortal body as mine and yours. 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'"

You make a number of statements in your question that seem to be in accordance with our understanding of the Bible. Perhaps our differences are more in terminology than in understanding.

We agree that Christ had no mortal body until He was born of the Virgin Mary. Our point is this: Jesus did not exist as a spirit in heaven at any time previous to His birth of the Virgin Mary.

We agree that the Spirit as used in the Bible often refers to the Word, as Jesus said in John 6:

63: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." And you add, referring to the spirit, that it existed in the beginning and was with God. With this we agree. In John 1, it was the Logos, or "spoken word of the Deity," the Word, that existed in the beginning and was with God, not the literal Christ, as many believe. Some of the newer translations make this clearer, adding that the "Word was divine" (Moffatt).

We also agree that God is a spirit, as the Bible says He is, a spiritual being as opposed to mortal flesh and blood. The word translated "spirit" can also refer to a teacher (I John 4:1).

To clarify our subject, let us point out that there are four different "Christ's" spoken of in the Bible:

1) the man Christ, as in Luke 2:11; Acts 3:22; Gal. 4:4.

2) Christ the truth, or the wisdom of God personified, as used in Eph. 3:17. Christ lived the law of God so perfectly that He could be called the living Word. No intelligent person would even suggest that the man Christ could dwell in our heart or mind, as in Col. 1:27. See also Col. 3:16; Phil. 4:13; II Cor. 5:17—no one would suggest that we could be in the man Christ.

3) Christ the Head of the body, the Church, as in Col. 1:18.

4) Christ the multitudinous man composed of Christ the Head and the Church His body, together referred to as "Christ" as in I Cor. 12:27; or as one man in Heb. 2:6—8.

"I suggest you read carefully St. John, chapter 14, verses 7 through 10. Just as I believe that the Father was in Jesus, I believe that Jesus was in the mortal body."

John 14:10 reads: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." These are the words of Jesus, and Jesus could not have been mistaken. But how did the Father abide in Christ? Just as Paul declared in Col. 1:27 that Christ must dwell in us as true believers: "Christ in you, the hope of glory," His interests our interests, His purposes our purposes, His Word our sole guide. It is not the literal Christ but "the hope of glory" which Christ possessed. And Christ was in the Father just as we must abide in Christ if we are His. We must have chosen His type of life as our type of life, and above all other choices. We are in Him in the same way as a man can be said to be in politics, in industry, in agriculture. Only he who is "in Christ" can be saved.

In this same way Christ was in the Father—He shared His Father's interests, thoughts, standards, and ideals.

Many people believe that Christ and God were

one and the same person because Jesus said that He was in His Father. But Jesus also said, "I do only those things which please him." And in John 14:28 He said, "My Father is greater than I." When asked which was the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus answered: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:30).

People often bring up John 10:30 to prove that God and Christ are one and the same being. But the Word says, "Come and let us reason together." And to believe that the Son of God could be the same physical entity as the Father is neither reasonable nor Scriptural. Jesus explains in John 17 how He and the Father are one. He is praying for His disciples, and in verse 21 He prays that they may be one "as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." No one would assume that Jesus was praying that His followers should be one being, or that they were a part of another man or a part of God.

They were all to be one in mind, of one purpose, as Paul declared in I Cor. 1:10: "that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." As Jesus said He did only those things pleasing to His heavenly Father, so we must do only that which pleases Him. Then it may be said of us that we are one and that we are one with Christ and with God.

"Doesn't the parable of the Talents teach that God will accept varying degrees of goodness, that all do not have to reach one standard?"

I believe you have the wrong idea of Jesus' parable of the Talents, as recorded in Matthew 25, or the Pounds of Luke 19. Perfection of character is demanded too many times throughout the Bible for the words to mean anything less. The "talents" or "pounds" do not denote varying stages or degrees of perfection of character, but rather degrees of ability.

Leaders such as Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, and Paul, could be classed as ten-talent men. They had a greater capacity to serve and used it all for God, hence will merit a greater reward. Even their capabilities to enjoy the reward will be greater. However, the foregoing does not infer that the character of the ten-talent men was any better than that of the five- and two-talent men, or vice versa. All must come to the same standard of perfection; all must become perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. Despite the varying talents, the cup of every one entering the Kingdom will be full, though some cups be larger than others.

The angels that have charge of our earth seem to possess differing degrees of authority. The more important missions seem to have been entrusted to Gabriel, and the less important to angels of smaller stature. In the future Kingdom on earth, Jesus will

be King of kings, higher than any of His 144,000 associate rulers.

Analogous to the parables you mentioned is the parable of the Sower. The good seed planted in the good and honest hearts brought forth fruit thirty, sixty and an hundredfold. Luke 8 gives the seed that fell among thorns as bringing no fruit to perfection. Certainly there is nothing to indicate that the thirty and sixtyfold did not bring forth fruit to perfection, as did the hundredfold. All the grain was of the same quality, though some stalks bore more kernels than others.

"It is not reasonable to believe that God will condemn all the people who have never heard of Him or His name, who have never had a chance to know of His will. God is not unfair."

No, that is true, God is not unfair. Jesus said: "If any man will do his [the Father's] will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). We have no good reason to doubt Jesus' words, or limit the power of God to inform those who will do His will. Jesus also said: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). God will never save a man against his will.

Megiddo Faith and Work

The Megiddo Mission Church is an independent organization. It is in no way affiliated with any other religious body. It was founded in the year 1880 by the Rev. L. T. Nichols, and has been located at the present address of Rochester, N. Y., since 1904.

It is the firm belief of the Megiddo Church that the second coming of Jesus Christ and the inauguration of His world-wide Kingdom is imminent. The Bible clearly declares that this event will be preceded by the coming of Elijah the prophet to herald the glorious Day, to gather the saints, and raise the dead to be ready to meet the Lord when He comes.

Being convinced that these events are near at hand, the Megiddo Church earnestly endeavors to prepare a people to be ready for the Lord's advent. Moral perfection, besides purity of doctrine, is a direct Biblical command. Among the members of the Megiddo Church, upright living and moral perfection of character is the goal. Invitations are always extended to whomsoever will to come and join in this work, and partake of the "water of life freely." ●●

O Maker of the mighty deep
Whereon our vessels fare,
Above our life's adventure keep
Thy faithful watch and care.
In Thee we trust, whate'er befall;
Thy sea is great, our boats are small.

Voyagers

We know not where the secret tides
Will help us or delay.
Nor where the lurking tempest hides,
Nor where the fogs are gray.
We trust in Thee, whate'er befall;
Thy sea is great, our boats are small.

When outward bound we boldly sail
And leave the friendly shore,
Let not our hearts of courage fail
Before the voyage is o'er.
We trust in Thee, whate'er befall;
Thy sea is great, our boats are small.

When homeward bound we gladly turn
O bring us safely there,
Where harbour-lights in welcome burn
And peace is in the air.
We trust in Thee, whate'er befall;
Thy sea is great, our boats are small.

Beyond the circle of the sea,
When voyaging is past,
We seek our final port in Thee;
O bring us home at last.
In Thee we trust, whate'er befall;
Thy sea is great, our boats are small.