

# Megiddo Message



**A**s the earth puts forth  
her blossom, or  
bushes in the garden  
burst into flower...

**S**o shall the  
Lord God  
make  
righteousness  
and praise  
blossom  
before all the  
nations.

— Isaiah 61:11

# Reaching

*O God, my strength, my hope, on Thee I cast my care;  
With humble, contrite heart I look  
To Thee who hearest prayer.*

*Give me on Thee to wait, nor think the waiting long  
Till Thou dost make Thy plan complete  
And triumph over wrong.*

*I want a sober mind, a self-renouncing will,  
That tramples down and casts behind  
The baits of pleasing ill;  
A soul accepting pain, or hardship, grief, and loss;  
Bold to take up, firm to sustain,  
And daily bear my cross.*

*I want a godly fear, a quick-discerning eye,  
That looks to Thee when sin is near,  
And makes the tempter fly;  
A spirit still prepared, and armed with jealous care  
Forever standing on its guard,  
And watching unto prayer.*

*I want a heart to pray, to find Thy perfect peace;  
Nor ever murmur at Thy stay,  
Nor wish my suffering less;  
This blessing above all, most earnestly I want,  
Out of the deep on Thee to call,  
And never, never faint.*

*I want a true regard, a single, steady aim,  
Unmoved by threatening or bribe,  
From Thee and Thy great Name;  
A jealous, just concern for Thine immortal praise;  
A pure desire that all may learn  
And glorify Thy grace.*

*I rest upon Thy Word; Thy promise is secure;  
My succor and salvation, Lord,  
My refuge ever sure.  
And let me still abide, unmoved from Thy care,  
Till Thou dost change my faith to sight  
And I Thy glory share!*

## Megiddo means . . .

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

### We believe

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

### We believe

—in the Bible as our only source of knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for the salvation of humankind.

### We believe

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

### We believe

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

### We believe

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

### We believe

—in ourselves as capable of applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God in our own lives, in this way perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

### We believe

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

## Bible Quotations

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

**NEB**—New English Bible

**NIV**—New International Version

**NASB**—New American Standard Bible

**RSV**—Revised Standard Version

**TLB**—The Living Bible

**TEV**—Today's English Version

**JB**—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

**Phillips**—The New Testament in Modern English

**Berkeley**—The Modern Language New Testament

**Weymouth**—The New Testament in Modern Speech

**Goodspeed**—The New Testament translated by  
Edgar J. Goodspeed

**Moffatt**—The Bible, A New Translation

**AAT**—The Bible: An American Translation

## About Our Cover

Our cover photo was taken in Highland Park, Rochester, New York, by Mr. and Mrs. David Sutton.

# Megiddo Message

Vol. 75, No. 5

May, 1988

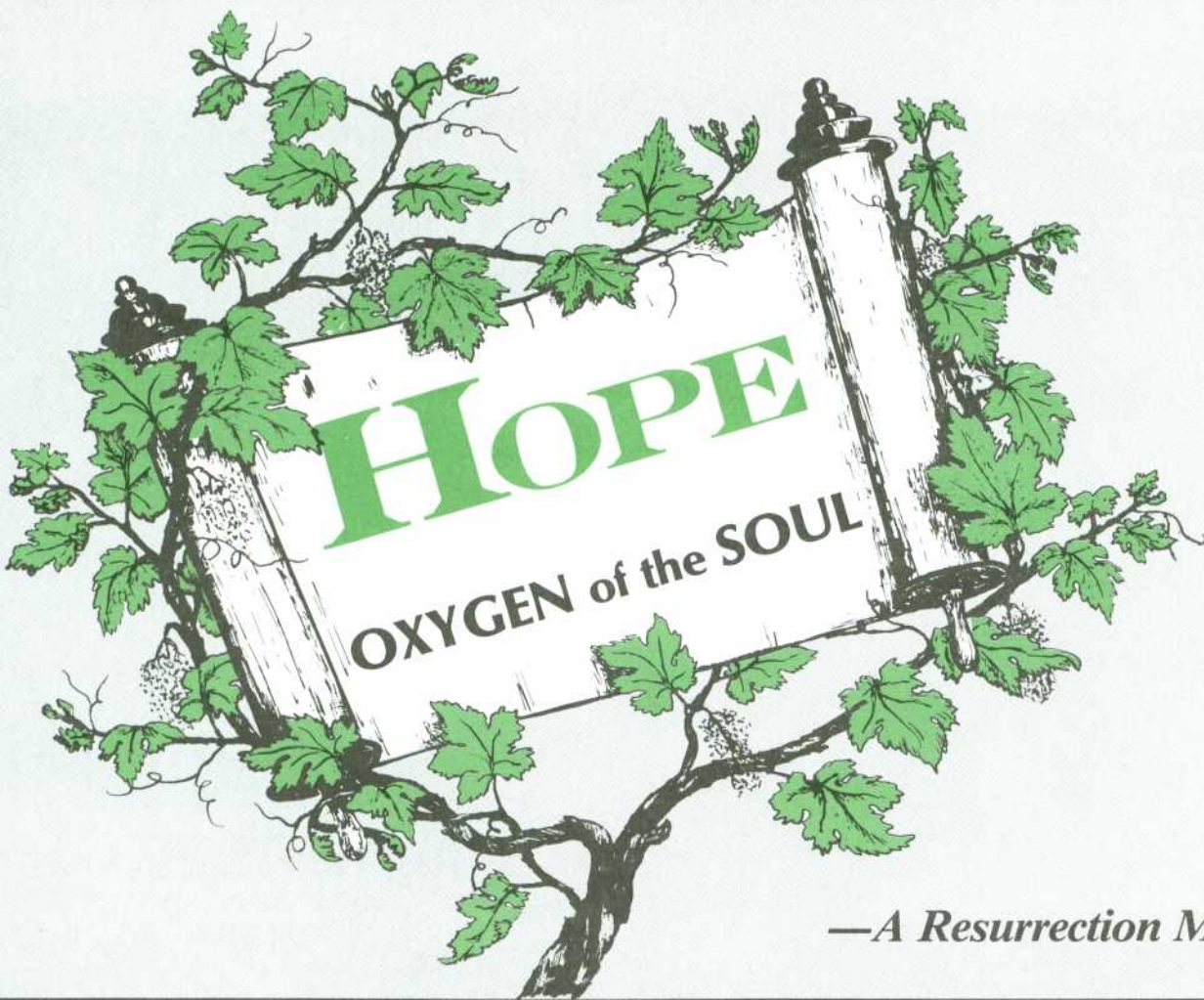
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**The MEGIDDO MESSAGE** is a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ, and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church. L. T. Nichols, Founder; Newton H. Payne, President and Editor; Ruth E. Sisson,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

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

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

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



—A Resurrection Message—

*"We have been saved, though only in hope. Now to see is no longer to hope: why should a man endure and wait for what he already sees? But if we hope for something we do not yet see, then, in waiting for it, we show our endurance."*

—Rom 8:24-25, NEB

**I**F in this life only we have hope in Christ," wrote the wise and instructed apostle Paul, "we are of all men most miserable." Most miserable—without hope. How well he knew our need for the sustaining power of hope.

To us who must live all our lives in the shadow of death, how vital is the lifting power of hope—as vital as oxygen is to life. Our hope is our comfort, our support. Our hope is our real reason for living. Without it we are lost in a struggle of meaninglessness and futility. Without it we are destined all of us to the darkness of nonentity forever. Without it, what we see is all we can expect—and who does not long for more! Without hope in God, there is no future and no final recompense; death is the inescap-

able reality, and all existence is destined to end at last in a monstrous *nothing*.

Such was the dismal outlook of the brilliant philosopher Bertrand Russell. He expressed his view in these words:

"The life of Man is a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, toward a goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long." He commented further "that Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, and his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of the accidental combination of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can

# HOPE HOPE HOPE HOPE HOPE HOPE

preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins."

Could hopelessness be darker? Is all life predestined to futility? Is there no prospect of something better, something lasting, something eternal?

We are not the first to raise this question. It has been asked through the years by every serious seeker after life, by every one who has an insatiable longing for more than the things that are seen. Does life in the long run make sense? Must a lifetime of work and suffering and sacrifice be its own reward? Is there no prospect of fulfillment beyond, no climactic triumph for the human planetary enterprise?

Yes, thank God, there is! There is hope, there is purpose, for the eternal Creator has designed a creative destiny. He has not made us and this earth in vain. In the words of God's inspired Prophet (Isa. 45:17-18), "He formed it to be inhabited." Some among His creation shall be "saved with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end." Can we not hear—and feel—the hope in these words? Some shall be saved "with an everlasting salvation"—there is no question about it! And it is all true, because it is the sure word of the Lord God: "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it."

The anniversary of Christ's resurrection comes to us with this same message of hope. Here is proof positive that death need not be the end

of all endeavor. Death's power *has* been broken, and it can be broken for each of us. Because He lives, we too may live!

## Hope Amid Hopelessness

Among the problems plaguing individuals in this modern time is one of hopelessness. We see much around us to cause this spirit—from the rising crime rate to the threat of nuclear warfare, from the population imbalance to planetary pollution, from the decline in morality to new means of warfare. Massive problems confront the human race.

After World War I the Western nations hoped for a world that would be safe for democracy; after World War II they hoped for the containment of fascist and communist tyrannies. But the utopian dream of a better society seems to be dissolving in the acids of human imperfection and perversity. There is little ground for hope.

Some have become so discouraged that they have written off the human enterprise. Others regard the future as intolerably uncertain and so turn to submerging themselves in taking care of Person Number One—*me*. But this leads ultimately to greater disillusionment.

What underlies the dispiritedness and unrest? It may be the prospect of imminent death on a scale never before perceived. From the earliest dawn of human history, death has been the unconquerable foe; but today we confront a dimension of fear and uncertainty hitherto unimagined—a fear that comes from the presence of nuclear power in our world. What is there to look forward to for ourselves or our children when the pressing of a few buttons could in a matter of minutes result in the total destruction of life on earth?

## Hope gives

- enthusiasm
- insight
- inspiration
- incentive
- radiance

**Is the hope  
of future life  
the propelling  
power of your  
life? Do you  
live for it,  
yearn for it,  
long for it?**

**God writes  
no unfinished  
symphonies.  
What He has  
started He will  
complete.**

**There is  
purpose in  
every line,  
destiny in  
every  
measure.**

Do we wonder that thinking people are worried?

#### **Death Versus Hope**

While a few maintain, like Bertrand Russell, that no power in heaven or earth can perpetuate life, by far the greater portion of mankind reply to life's harshness with the great counterforce of hope. Something within us is instinctively hopeful. Something within us denies the worst and anticipates the best. We were made for hope. We are meant to live on hope. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," wrote Alexander Pope, "man never is, but always to be blest." While this is unrealistic, humans are instinctively hopeful.

Even physically, we live by hope. Our bodies have been constructed so that they can withstand an enormous amount of pressure. God has also made us to be fairly resilient people. With a limited amount of provisions we can survive both the heat of the tropics or the icy winds of winter. We can go through long seasons of illness, devastating personal assaults, financial reverses, domestic disappointments, unemployment or the death of someone dear to us...if we don't lose hold of one essential ingredient—hope.

Yes, we can rebound against wind and weather, calamity and tragedy, disease and death, so long as we retain our hope. We can live weeks without food, days without water, and even several minutes without air; but take away our hope and we are like a plant without water. We wilt, and soon wither away.

Hope is the oxygen of the soul. Without it we suffocate, and hope deferred makes the heart sick. Hope gives us the will to rise above enslaving conditions and envision a brighter tomorrow.

#### **What Hope?**

We live by hope, but what kind of hope? All hopes are not equal. There are small hopes and great hopes, false hopes and true hopes.

What of us and *our* hope? Have we a hope that is sure, a hope that has been tested, a hope that is more than a vision and a dream? And are we laying a solid hold upon it? Can we realistically expect that we ourselves shall someday experience the full reality of our hope?

By far the largest segment of the human race find their hope in their belief in personal immortality. Somehow, somewhere, they believe that their life principle—soul, spirit or personality—lives on in another form, in another realm. Something within them refuses to believe that death is the end. Ideas range all the way from the Spiritualists who say "there is no death, there are no dead," to the Indians who look forward to their "happy hunting ground."

The belief in immortality has had many interpretations. Harry Emerson Fosdick was told that if he died his soul would go on endlessly day after day and year after year in a world where he would be playing a harp all the time. He was frightened and turned away by the prospect. He preferred extinction to this type of life after death.

Almost every segment of the human race has entertained some belief in natural immortality. Somehow, somewhere they expect to enjoy a better life. And so they live by hope; but it is a groundless hope having no foundation outside the imagination of man and nothing to offer beyond a few moments of comfort.

#### **Resurrection Hope**

Then there are those who build their hope on the Word of God and the

## HOPE HOPE HOPE HOPE HOPE HOPE

solid prospect of future life it holds out through a physical resurrection and a physical change to immortality. Here is the pattern Christ set. Here is hope that is truly oxygen to the soul, hope that can sustain through any trial, hope that saves, hope that changes existence into opportunity and that beams an immortal light of life beyond the grave.

God did not mean for us to be idle day-dreamers, but He knew our need for hope and arranged that we in the latter part of the day of salvation should have a mighty buttress to our hope, even the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. Here is an event which demonstrates openly to us the living power of God. Here was the perfect life actually lived, death actually conquered, the eternal crown actually won. Here is life, here is surety, here is hope!

The anniversary of Christ's resurrection comes each year to renew in us this vital fact: that our hope is not a vain and fruitless wish; that it is real, it is sure, it is certain. Each year we hear again those immortal words that echoed that first resurrection morning: "He is not here, He is risen!" "And," wrote the great apostle Paul, "we having...the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." Here is established a solid link between the resurrection of Christ and our own hope of life, "knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (II Cor. 4:13-14). The same God and the same power that raised Christ from the sleep of death shall raise *us* by Jesus so that we

may all be presented together. Here is God's positive answer to our need for hope: the physical resurrection of the body. Here is something tangible, here is assurance doubly reassured. Here is oxygen for the soul.

This hope is one of the crucial points in the gospel of Christ. "Faith, hope and charity, these three" remain, but though the greatest is charity, hope cannot be overlooked, for all three are vital. It has been said that Christianity is the one world religion that stresses hope as a cardinal ingredient of the new life. Others talk of future life, but their solutions end in Nirvana, endless reincarnations, or in a self-centered escape from life in a sensual heaven.

How different is the Christian's hope of a real, physical resurrection of the body, to be followed by a real, physical change to immortality. For the resurrection will be followed by the Judgment, and all who are worthy will be given a new and immortal life. What a glorious transformation, in which even the highest delights of the present will be so enhanced as to make them kindergarten experiences in the larger school of eternity; for how can we even faintly imagine what it will be like to be fully "raised" by the power of God to the level of life which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," neither has entered into the heart of man to imagine!

With such prospects and promises upon its pages, the Bible is truly a book of hope. All creation issues from the will and energy of God. It has purpose. It is not an end in itself. It is the arena or stage upon which God is working out His great story. Even though men seem at times to foul up His purpose, He is not hampered. History is literally *His* story. His watchful eye is over all, and

**Am I really preparing myself for the physical change to immortality? Will this mortal (this "I") someday wear the robe of immortality?**

**Am I actually taking the steps to bring me nearer to God and hope?**

**The  
circumstances  
of this very  
day are the  
opportunities  
we must use  
to make hope  
real to us.**

**Now is  
our day of  
opportunity.  
It is now  
or never.**

when the time is right He will act. He will fulfill what He has promised. In Jesus Christ He has demonstrated the whole. Christ's life, Christ's death, Christ's resurrection, and Christ's glorification were all a model to confirm hope to us. Here was the life actually lived, the holy character actually perfected, and mortality actually swallowed up in a glorious and heavenly exaltation. What a citadel of hope!

Following Christ's example, the early church became the living light of hope in a world of hopelessness, the visible evidence of God's promises for the future. Little wonder that they could endure unspeakable hardships—they were living on hope! Jesus had led the way, and they were following—in hope.

As followers of Christ today, we are the continuation of the same noble work. We today share the same hope. And what God has started He will complete. God writes no unfinished symphonies. There is a purpose running through history, there is continuity, there is destiny. God is at work, directing and overseeing, and in due time it shall be brought to glorious completion. In the end the forces of right will triumph.

#### **A Downpayment Received**

Some of the members of the early Church during the first century enjoyed special grounds for hope, the "gift" of the Holy Spirit. In the Greek, the word for the "gift" of the Holy Spirit is *arabbon*. An *arabbon* at that time was the first down payment on a purchase, a guarantee that the balance would in due time be received. The Holy Spirit was just that. It was an assurance, a seal, a certification from God that what He had promised He would fulfill.

We today do not receive this down payment, but the fact that it

has already been "paid" is a solid assurance to us. And even in addition to this, do we not have other marvelous confirmations? We have the faithful record and testimony of holy men of old to confirm our faith. And what about the multitude of prophecies fulfilled exactly as foretold? And what about the renaissance of divine truth in these last days? What more do we need to give surety to our hope?

Then, too, have we not seen the hand of God in our own lives? Have we not every reason to hope? Have we not seen God perform before our very eyes what would have been humanly impossible? Even today His work goes on in the face of difficulties humanly insurmountable. How is it possible? The answer is simple: what is of God cannot be overthrown.

Our hope today is confirmed again because the fulfillment of God's great plan has already begun. We live today in the midst of many partly fulfilled promises. Christ's birth was the first phase, and the next is destined to be His second appearing. We are between those two "comings."

#### **The Power of Hope**

How we should thank God for hope that is real, sure and certain. What else can guarantee to dying mortals a life that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away? What else can give such mighty bonding-power to faith that nothing in heaven or earth can separate us from the love of Christ?

What but the hope before us can enthuse and inspire us to dedicate ourselves fully, to be willing to exchange everything we can see and touch for that which can be seen only by the eye of faith? What else can give us the incentive to make the complete sacrifice of ourselves, to

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*The Lord will come and not be slow,  
His footsteps cannot err;  
Before Him righteousness shall go,  
His royal harbinger.*

*Truth from the earth, like to a flower,  
Shall bud and blossom then;  
And justice, from her heav'nly bower,  
Look down on mortal men.*

*Rise, Lord, judge Thou the earth in might,  
This wicked earth redress;  
For Thou art He who shalt by right  
The nations all possess.*

*The nations all whom Thou hast made  
Shall come and all shall frame  
To bow them low before Thee, Lord,  
And glorify Thy Name.*

*For mighty Thou, and wonders great  
By Thy strong hand are done:  
O come, begin Thy work on earth  
Till peoples all are one.*

submit wholly to the will of God, to put to death every tendency not in harmony with His perfect law?

What but the hope before us can give us the insight to distinguish between values that abide and values that are perishing? What else can impart a radiance that can keep us buoyant and hopeful in the face of the most discouraging circumstances, that can persevere against any difficulties, that can bear up under pain and can see even beyond death to the power that has *conquered* death? What, save the living, vital power of hope in God!

## Hope and Us...

What does the resurrection hope mean to us? What is it doing in and for us? Is it a living, vital, quickening power? Does it make the difference for us between darkness and daylight, between death and life,

between hopelessness and hope?

Is the hope of future life the propelling power of our lives? Do we live for it, yearn for it, long for it? Is it with us every hour of every day? Is it an irresistible lifting power in our lives? Is it a hope as real to us as it was to Christ in those last hours when the time of the crucifixion drew near? Is our hope our confidence and our support in these troubled times? Do we feel fully prepared to face whatever may come our way—because we have HOPE?

And—most vital of all—is our hope real to us because we are actually taking the steps that will bring its reality to us? Are we making definite headway in conquering the evils to which we are prone—so that we may realistically anticipate its fulfillment in our bodies? Are we really preparing ourselves for the physical

change to immortality? Will *this* corruptible (that is, "I") someday put on incorruption, and *this* mortal (that is, "I") put on immortality?

Now is our day of opportunity. It is now or never. Now is our chance. The circumstances we have this very day are the opportunities we must be using to make this prospect real to us. Only so can we ever hope to lay hold on the promise of God. Only so can we get the fullest benefits even now of the oxygen of hope.

Oh, let us grasp anew the high and holy purpose to which we have been called. Let us realize that our hope is real, it is sure—the only *uncertainty* lies with us. In our hand is hope that is truly oxygen of the soul, that has the power to sustain us now and through all the ages of eternity.

If only we do on our part. May God help us to so do. MM

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*One does not have to be great or gifted or famous to serve Christ acceptably.*



It Was My

# Upper Room

**A voluntary gift—a symbol of the gift offered by Christ's humble followers in every age.**

**W**HAT is my name? And wherefore do you ask? The New Testament does not disclose it; why should I? Let me continue to be known simply for what I did for Jesus. I lay no claim to greatness or fame. I possessed no extraordinary talent, nor had I ever before been confronted by any unusual opportunity. One of the more or less unpretentious and obscure friends of Jesus, I nevertheless loved Him with a full heart and counted it my highest joy to do for Him what I could.

Jesus, like every great leader of men, had His public and intimate company of friends—the Twelve Disciples personally selected by Him and called to office as a president forms his cabinet. With them He traveled through Galilee, preached to the multitudes, comforted the poor, and healed the sick. To them He gave private instruction and issued special orders. They were the officers of His Church, the leaders of His cause.

But, as you read the Gospels, other figures emerge, like pictures from shadowed corners in a gallery. There was the unnamed woman who slipped quietly into the house where Jesus was being entertained at supper and anointed Him with the precious ointment. There was Simon of Cyrene of whom the only record is that he lifted the cross from His smarting, bleeding back, and carried it to Calvary. There was the soldier who touched a sponge to His parched lips.

It is to this quiet group that I belong—and to which, no doubt, many of you belong. When or how you became acquainted with Jesus does not matter—whether it was through the reading of a book, the hearing of a sermon, or the entreaty of a friend. The important thing is that you were persuaded by His teaching. The result, I hope, has since been a genuine friendship stirred by many deep impressions, nourished by many an hour of communion, and strengthened by many a prayer and song of praise.

Looking backward over my life, I see more clearly than ever, as the New Testament writers imply by their silence, that my name did not matter, or my address, or my occupation. What *did* matter was the one act of service I was privileged to perform in behalf of my Master and the spirit in which I rendered it. I did it, not to be remembered, but because I loved Him! That is the way it is told in the Gospels; that is the way I would have it still.

At the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in your nation's capital is a monument, not to one individual patriot but to all who loved their country to the point of giving the last full measure of their devotion; so, let my deed be a symbol of the service rendered by Christ's humble followers in every generation who may not make the newspaper headlines but whose names are written in

God's book of eternal remembrance! And let my example be a perpetual reminder that one does not have to be great or gifted or famous to serve Him acceptably.

Have you considered the difference between dutifulness and thoughtfulness? Dutifulness waits for a spoken command. Thoughtfulness anticipates commands by divining the desires of the heart. Dutifulness goes the first mile because ordered to do so. Thoughtfulness goes the first mile unasked and the second likewise for love's sake. The dutiful son or daughter finishes the household tasks assigned, then hurries away to play. The thoughtful one stops to ask, "Mother, is there anything else I can do?" Dutifulness is the cup of obedience filled to the brim. Thoughtfulness is the same cup running over.

Is your Christian service characterized by the extra that cheerfully goes beyond the call of duty? Obedience? Yes, of course! Jesus expects and commands that. But is your heart behind your obedience? Do you possess that love which always outruns duty?

I speak from experience. The deed which is recorded of me in the New Testament was not something I did in the line of duty. I did not wait to be elected to an office or appointed to a committee. I was not commanded by Jesus to do what I did, or even requested. I *volunteered* to do it, and I did it for love's sake.

It was during His last week in Jerusalem before He was crucified. While the rulers and chief priests were trying to ensnare Him in His

talk, while the gossips were arguing about His claims, while His disciples were wondering when His Kingdom would appear and contending about who would be the greatest, I was turning over in my mind how I might befriend Him. I could not preach or debate. I could not dissuade His enemies from their evil purpose. I could not lead an army to His rescue. But it was clear that He was not seeking to escape them, and I was sure He was not afraid. What would help Him most in facing the great ordeal?

Then it came to me—a place of retirement, a quiet retreat where He could be alone with His disciples and keep the Passover. "I will offer Him my home," I decided. "He shall have the choicest room in my house."

Could I ever forget the warm glow in His eyes when I told Him of my plan and invited Him to be my Passover guest with His disciples? To my joy I had understood His wish. The desire of His heart had been anticipated and was to be satisfied. We set a time and place where two of His disciples might meet one of my servants. We agreed upon a secret sign, "a man carrying a pitcher of water," so His enemies would not know. Thus, in due time, on what turned out to be His last night, He was my guest, in the Upper Room of my house.

I can see it, as though it were yesterday—Jesus and His disciples reclining upon the couches which I had arranged around the table, John's head upon his Master's breast. I can still hear the tone of His voice as he

took into His hand the bread which I had given him. "This is my body which is broken for you." And lifting the cup my hand had filled, He said, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood." Afterward there were other words no less unforgettable: "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.... I am the vine, ye are the branches. ... Abide in me and I in you.... Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am that they may behold my glory." Yes, all of these words were spoken in the Upper Room of my house that evening.

I joined in the hymn which Jesus and His disciples sang as they prepared to go out to the Mount of Olives, said goodnight to them at the door, watched their figures disappear in the darkness, then turned to rearrange the room. It was midnight, but I was in no mood to hurry. The presence of Jesus seemed still to linger.

It was only natural that His disciples should return to my house after the crucifixion and burial. I was waiting for them at the door, and without a word; for I understood their feelings. I led them to the Upper Room. They knew they were welcome to stay as long as they wished. As they left one by one later, I told them to come often, for it would always be His room.

You are not surprised then, when I tell you that it was to that room that the women came running, early the first day of the week, with the first news of the Resurrection. It was

*Are you Jesus' true friend? Will you open wide  
the door of your heart and give Him  
a large upper room, furnished and ready?*

*Is your heart  
behind your obedience?  
Do you possess that love  
which always outruns duty?*

to that room that Cleopas and his companion rushed that same night, coming all the way from Emmaus to make known that the Lord had been revealed to them in the breaking of bread. It was there that the risen Lord appeared Himself a few moments later saying, "Peace be unto you: As my Father hath sent me, so send I you." It was there that He appeared a week later showing His hands and side to Thomas and saying, "Be not faithless, but believing."

And that is not all! It was there, in my Upper Room, that the Church of the New Testament was born with just one hundred and twenty members. It was there that the disciples "tarried," as the Lord had commanded, until they should receive power. It was there that His promise was fulfilled, and, after forty days, there came from Heaven a sound as of a rushing mighty wind and all were filled with the Holy Spirit!

Do not misunderstand me. I am not boasting, but deliberately trying to provoke you to a holy jealousy. For there is a sense in which each of you may do what I did. Still the one appropriate provision is a large upper room, furnished and prepared.

See to it, then, I beseech you, that you give Him a *large* room. At His birth there was no room for Him in the inn. Later He faced cold winds of hostility and rejection. And still the majority of hearts are too filled with pleasure and mirth to welcome what He has to offer.

Then there are those who open

the door a little way when He knocks, but keep Him standing on the outside while they argue about His claims. Others want Him to enter by the back door, and to use the servant's quarters. Their interest is limited to what He may do for them.

But there are others whose primary interest is in what they can do for Him. They joyfully welcome Him to their best and largest room. To them He is the most honored of all guests. Their whole house and all that they possess are placed instantly and unreservedly at His disposal. I beseech you, give Him a large room! Give Him your very best!

Also, I pray you, give Him an *upper* room. In ancient times, the upper room was often like a veranda or patio. Being on the upper floor, it was a secluded place, away from the noise and din of the street; it was a cool place, where refreshing breezes gently fanned away the heat of the day.

Is there such a room in your life? And is Jesus always welcome there?

Once more, may I remind you to give Him a furnished room. In my upper room, I provided a pitcher of clean water at the door. Beside it were fresh towels and a basin. Inside was a table upon which I had placed the food and drink required for the Passover feast. Around the table were couches upon which Jesus and His disciples might recline in comfort as they ate the Passover and communed with one another.

My room was not furnished lavishly, but it was adequate. And that is all He expects of anyone.

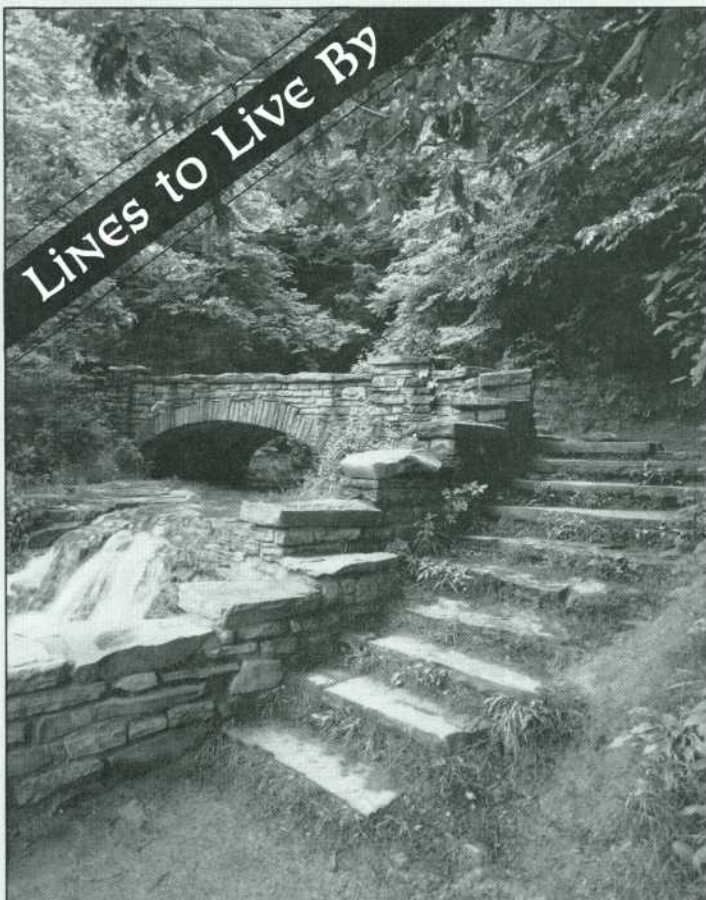
What is the room of your heart like on the inside? Is it characterized by attitudes and emotions in harmony with His? Is that mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus? Has all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander been put away from you with all malice? Are you kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you? Your room, thus furnished, cannot but be pleasing to Him.

And is your room ready *now*? When the disciples called at my door, they were not told to wait. I did not begin at once to make excuses. They did not hear me say, "Oh, yes, I did intend to provide a room for Jesus; in fact, I meant to give Him my very best room. But it is not ready yet. I have not put it in order. Tomorrow it will be ready." But tomorrow He was on the cross! Tomorrow would have been forever too late! What folly if I had procrastinated! But I did not. When His disciples arrived saying, "The Master saith, 'Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?'" my room was waiting. It was a large room. It was an upper room. It was furnished. And it was ready.

And so I beseech you, if you are His true friends, you will have a room for Him. What kind will it be? Open wide the door of your heart and give Him a large upper room, furnished and ready.

—For portions of this article we are indebted to *We Knew Jesus* by John Calvin Reed, published by Eerdmans Publishing Co. Used by permission.

*When you share your joy  
with a friend, you double it.*



*A thousand ages in thy sight,  
Are like an evening gone;  
Short as the watch that ends the night  
Before the rising sun.*

Life is too short to wear a long face.

*You must have long-range goals to  
carry you through short-range disap-  
pointments.*

The straight and narrow way has no  
traffic problems.

*The temper is the most dangerous  
explosive known to man.*

Be content with what you have, but  
never with what you are.

### **Long-suffering Is a Life-style the World Cannot Imitate**

*"Put on...humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;  
forbearing one another, and forgiving one another...  
even as Christ forgave you"*  
—Col. 3:12-13

When we refer to someone as a "put-on," we are saying that he is insincere, superficial, and not for real. Such a life is geared to the business of role playing.

In contrast, Paul uses the phrase to mean that we are to add something to life that makes it richer, fuller, and better. He says we are to clothe our character with an attire that will be attractive, winsome, and appealing to God and to all who desire to be God-like. This involves a life-style that cannot be duplicated by anything the world has to offer.

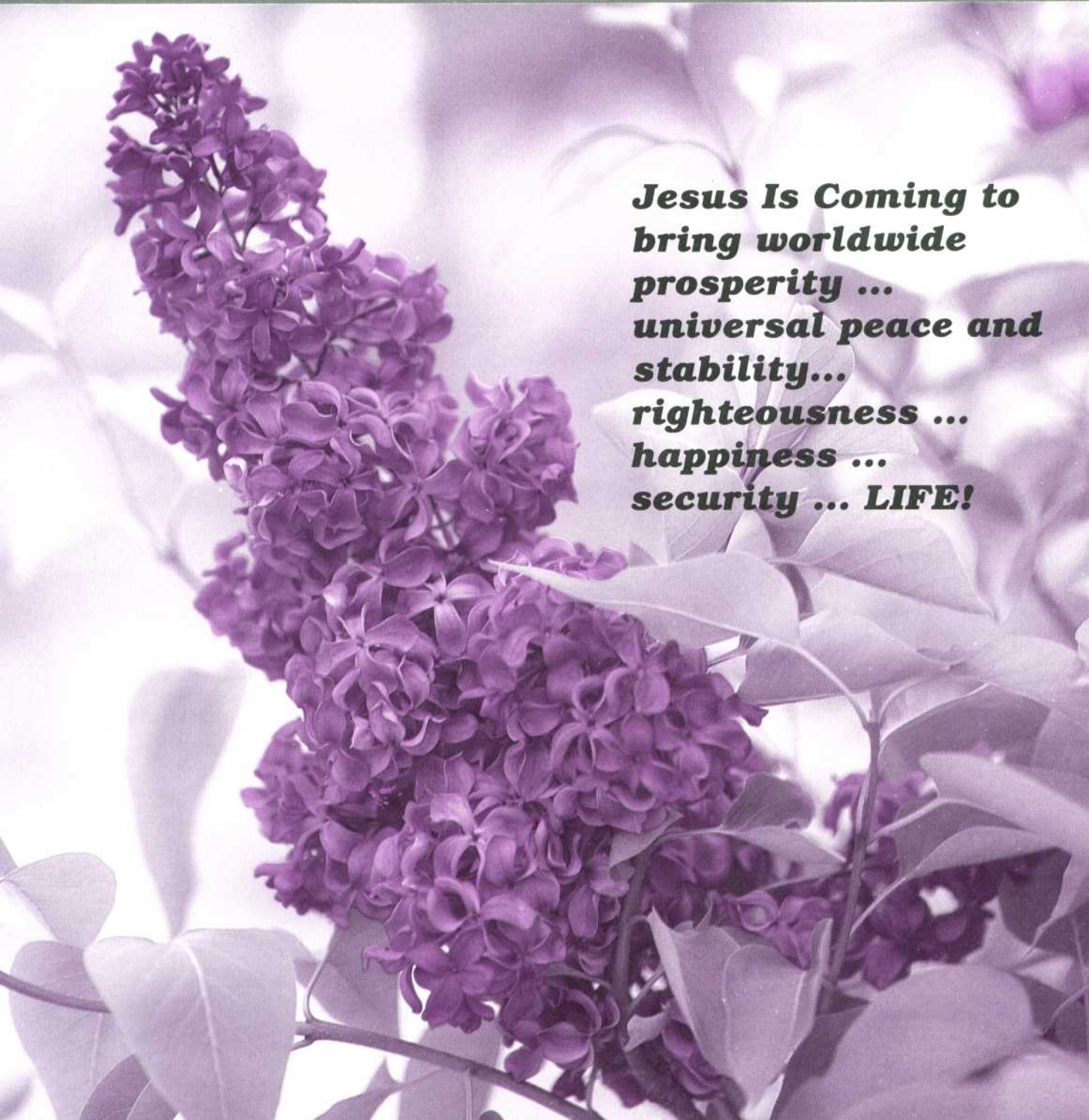
The garment of Christlike character is woven from the threads of "kindness, humbleness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance." The person observing our character will see these colors first.

If we live up to this exhortation, we will manifest meekness and humility. We have so far to go to rise to that level that it will make us long-suffering and forbearing with one another, just as Jesus has shown forgiveness and patience with us. Our long-suffering must make us as forgiving of our fellowman as Christ has been forgiving toward us.

*May we climb higher each day, as we develop our long-suffering for each other.*

# **SURE and**

***The Promises of God Are As Certain***



***Jesus Is Coming to  
bring worldwide  
prosperity ...  
universal peace and  
stability...  
righteousness ...  
happiness ...  
security ... LIFE!***

# CERTAIN

## in As the Budding Springtime!

**W**INTER, spring, summer, autumn. Winter, spring, summer, autumn. Who has ever seen it fail? Who worries that it will?

The great patterns of nature are not capricious. One can always know—with certainty—what is coming next. The coldest winter will yield to the budding springtime, and the heat of summer be not far behind. When did it ever fail? The longest day will be followed by the dark of night, and every night can look forward to another dawn.

Thank God that His creation is so dependable. It is all sure and certain!

Just as certain are His promises. God has given His promise, that:

- Christ is coming to be Earth's Judge, Conqueror, and glorious King
- "Righteousness and praise" shall triumph worldwide (Isa. 61:11)
- "Quietness and assurance forever" shall be the happy portion of all people on the earth (Isa. 32:17-18)

All these promises are sure and certain.

*Sure as the budding Springtime.* "As the earth puts forth her blossom, or bushes in the garden burst into flower, so shall the Lord God make righteousness and praise blossom before all the nations." (Isaiah 61:11, NEB). Spring is our written guarantee, signed with His signature! What He has promised **WILL BE**, just as surely as spring follows winter, just as surely as the trees burst into flower and leaf.

*Sure as the sequence of day and night.* "If you can rescind my ordinance of day and night, that there should be day-time and night-time no more, only then will I rescind the privilege granted to my servant David" (Jer. 33:20-21, Knox).

*Sure as the existence of God.* "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21).

*Sure as the rains that water the earth, giving food to the human family.* "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire" (Isa. 55:10-11, NIV).

What God has promised He *will* perform. "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips" (Ps. 89:34).

"God is not a man, that he should lie;... hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. 23:19).

God has spoken. Let us believe it, expect it, prepare for it!

MM

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# WHO SPEAKS FOR GOD?

## Messiahs False and True

**T**O speak for God, the mighty, omnipotent Creator of the universes; to bear His name, His authority, His message is a privilege and a responsibility not to be taken lightly. It is a privilege not to be taken at all without deep, honest, sincere conviction. Even to "hold the truth in unrighteousness" or to handle the word of God "deceitfully" is a capital offense, according to the apostle Paul (Rom. 1:18; II Cor. 4:2). But to profess to hold His truth, to speak for Him, and then in reality to speak against Him is even worse. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully," said God through His prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 23:28).

Yet with so many claiming to speak for God—and with different messages—whom are we to believe? How can we know who does in reality speak for God?

One title commonly claimed by those professing to speak for God is that of "Messiah." Though used by people of various cultural and religious backgrounds today, the word is of Hebrew origin and means literally "the anointed one," i.e., Christ. The word "Messiah" appears four times in the Bible, and each time refers directly to Christ.

After Andrew had spent the day with Jesus, he went to find his brother Simon Peter and said to him, "We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ" (John 1:41). There was no doubt in his

mind. "We have found the Messiah."

Other Messiahs, so-called, leave much to question.

**O**NE very common distinction among founders of new religions is a claim to have received some type of direct communication from God, whether a vision, a dream, a message or supernatural power. Or they claim to be "Elijah," or the Messiah, or a reincarnation of one of these. Others claim to be gods, or to have received special appointments from God.

The rulers of ancient Egypt before the time of Moses claimed to be reincarnations of Horus, a god of Egyptian mythology. The Pharaoh was worshiped by his followers as a god. At the time Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh at the command of the true God, Pharaoh said to them, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?...I know not the Lord" (Ex. 5:2). In his considered opinion, he himself was the god of Egypt.

Siddhartha Gautama in the 4th century B.C. was a self-proclaimed Buddha. After a struggle with Mara, the evil one, the tempter whom he vanquished, he arrived at a state of enlightenment, or awakening. In his own words: "My mind was emancipated...ignorance was dispelled, knowledge arose; darkness was dispelled, light arose." The Buddha decided to teach what he had comprehended in what he called "the great

enlightenment." Today the adherents of Buddhism number 180 million worldwide, with 100,000 in the U.S.

In the year 610 B.C. Mohammed is reputed to have had a vision in a cave on Mt. Hira, three miles from Mecca. Tradition identifies the divine agent as the angel Gabriel. According to Edward J. Jurji in *Great Religions of the World*, "After waiting more than two years for more visions Mohammed in despair was about to hurl himself down to the abyss... [when] he heard a heavenly voice ...and [he saw] Gabriel seated upon a throne set between heaven and earth who said, 'Mohammed! Thou art the messenger of God and I am Gabriel.' Revelations thereafter steadily increased." Today his followers number 500 million, or about one-seventh of the population of the earth.

The Roman Catholic Church very early claimed to be God's representative on earth, granting its head the right to speak for God and to make decisions in matters of faith and doctrine that would be regarded as supreme even above the Bible. Although modern interpretations vary, it is still the church's official position. Members of the Roman Catholic Church number over 580 million.

In 1827 Joseph Smith, living in western New York State, experienced what he conceived to be an intense spiritual revelation of God and Jesus Christ. He claimed to have been

directed by the angel Moroni to dig in a certain place and uncover golden plates from which, using special stones set in silver bows, his followers believe he translated the Book of Mormon. He is also alleged to have received visions and special revelations from God. Today his followers still claim to receive direct revelations from God. Present membership in the organization he founded is over three million.

In the middle of the nineteenth century Mirza Husayn Ali known as Baha Ullah founded the Bahai faith. Baha Ullah publicly proclaimed himself "him whom God should manifest." The Bahais believe that the writings of Baha Ullah are inspired and constitute God's revelation for this age.

In 1863 Mrs. Ellen White, founder of the Seventh Day Adventists, claimed to have received the gift of prophecy and had visions.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Mirzah Guhlam Ahmad founded an important Muslim sect known as the Ahmadadiyah. The sect is spreading even in the United States based upon the claim of its founder that he was not only a promised Muslim "savior" and a reappearance of the Prophet Muhammad but also that he was Jesus Christ and the Hindu god Krishna.

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), a Swedish scientist, Christian mystic, philosopher and theologian, also exerts an influence on religious thought today. He told his friends that in April 1745 he received a definite call to abandon worldly learning. The

call apparently came in a waking vision of the Lord. For the remainder of his long career Swedenborg devoted his enormous energy to interpreting the Bible and to relating what he had seen and heard in the world of spirits and angels.

Even in the twentieth century the self-proclaimed representatives of Christ continue to appear. In 1954 Sun Myung Moon, a Korean evangelist, founded the Unification Church. In his book *The Divine Principle* which is the basic scripture of the church, the Rev. Moon wrote that at the age of 16 he had a vision of Christ in which he was told to carry out Christ's unfinished task. Moon believed that God chose him to save mankind from Satanism.

Another late nineteenth century evangelist and faith healer was Alexander Dowie who founded the city of Zion, Ill. in 1901. He proclaimed himself Elijah the restorer and first apostle of the church. He is said to have had a room full of crutches taken from people whom he had healed.

William Branham was another who claimed supernatural powers and called himself the servant of God. He is alleged to have healed many broken bones and to have had many spectacular visions. He seems to have been especially noted for his clairvoyance. Active during the 1950's, he attracted a following some of whom remained loyal even after his death.

Oral Roberts, TV evangelist and entrepreneur, in March 1987 claimed that God had threatened to "call him

home" if he did not raise 8 million dollars by the end of the month. Despite protests of the unbelieving, the "faithful" responded, the goal was met, and Mr. Roberts proclaimed himself "still alive" in April; whereupon he said he had received a new message from on high. The new message was: "We must raise 8 million every year for the rest of our lives until Jesus returns"—a profitable business venture!

**WHAT** are we to think of all this? Whom are we to believe? Among all these divergent claims, who is right? Who speaks for God?

To make this decision in this age when God is not working openly, we must first determine what is God's message. We must go to His written Word, the Bible.

And if we accept the Bible for our rule of faith, we must believe that there is no other; that it is in itself complete, a thorough furnisher unto all good works (II Tim. 3:16), and that no one today has any new knowledge or direct revelation from God in spite of numerous claims to the contrary.

Nor can any perform miracles of healing, raising the dead, controlling the elements, or spontaneously producing food today as could the Apostles. Since the end of the Apostolic Age, when these special gifts were withdrawn, we walk by "faith," and faith only. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 13:13). Any new revelation claimed to be received from God today is

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only adding to what God has called complete, and the book of Revelation has a definite warning about all such:

"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19, NIV).

**W**HAT evidence do we have that Jesus, the prophets, and apostles spoke for God, or that they were not like other men in claiming falsely to be God's spokesmen?

Let us begin by comparing the teachings of God's spokesmen as recorded in the Scripture with the teachings popular among philosophers and scholars of this world. What is the difference? Most obvious is the difference in the message. What preacher seeking popularity would teach that "all flesh is as grass," or that "nations are as a drop of a bucket and are counted as the small dust of the balance"? (Isa. 40:6-7, 15). What man would write that the human race, unenlightened by God, are "like the beasts that perish"? (Ps.

49:20). What man would advise, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help"? (Ps. 146:3). What man would write, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"? (Isa. 55:8-9).

We do not have to look far to realize immediately that the teachings of those prophets and apostles who spoke truly for God were not on a par with the teachings of the philosophers and sages who spoke for themselves. In the words of the apostle Paul, their preaching was not the "enticing words of man's wisdom" (I Cor. 2:4). It was not "after men," nor was it formulated to please men (Gal. 1:10). The thoughts of God are diametrically opposed to the thoughts of man, the distance between them being comparable to the distance between heaven and earth! (Isa. 55:8-9).

Then let us look at the spokesmen themselves, as recorded in Scripture, and what they were able to do. Take, for example, the ministry of the prophet Elijah during the reign of King Ahab of Israel. Could any of the present day messiahs make the statement that "There shall not be rain nor dew for the next few years except at my word," as did Elijah? (I Kings 17:1, NIV). Yes, they could make the statement, but would they be able to carry it out? Could they by miraculous power guarantee a destitute widow a never-failing supply of flour and oil, as did Elijah (I Kings 17:16)? Could any call down fire to destroy fifty soldiers, not only once but twice, as did Elijah (II Kings 1:9-12)? The true messengers of God did not only *say* they were of God, but they demonstrated it in most remarkable ways.

Consider Jesus, and the mighty power He demonstrated. Who today can feed five thousand with five

loaves and two fishes (Matt. 14:17-21)? Who, again, can feed four thousand from seven loaves and a few little fishes (Matt. 15:38)? Who today can say to the wind and the waves, "Peace be still"? Who today can walk on the water, or heal the sick, or restore the dead to life? Who today could suffer crucifixion and rise triumphant from death within three days? Which of the self-proclaimed messiahs has demonstrated this ability?

Jesus' apostles also showed unmistakably that they were of God. When they went out to preach, they confirmed "the word, with signs following" (Mark 16:20). The apostle Peter, talking to Ananias and Sapphira, could read the heart, and know that they were guilty—and punished them with instant, painless death. Who today has this power? (Acts 5:1-10).

There is another distinct difference that we should observe between those who claim Divine power and those who really possess it. God's true representatives always performed their miracles openly; there was no chance for question. In the words of the apostle Paul, "this thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26). Pseudo miracles are usually connected with a certain amount of mystery, even outright deception.

**B**UT open demonstrations are not the only evidence of Divine power. Let us look also at the Bible itself. How do we know it is a reliable guide to follow? What evidence do we have that those who wrote the Bible were genuine and not speaking their own opinions?

One answer lies in the unity of their words. What group of men, writing on their own without divine guidance, could write over a period of sixteen hundred years, on five different continents and in several languages, and all speak the same message? (Continued on page 26)

## Our Moral Equipment

"*HEREIN do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men*" (Acts 24:16).

THE literal meaning of conscience is "to know" (*science*) paralleled by the term "with" (*con*). Conscience is knowledge parallel with truth. Conscience is our moral equipment, and it involves three aspects: (1) *moral discernment*—knowing that there is a right and a wrong; (2) *moral obligation*—recognizing that we ought to do the right and avoid the wrong; (3) *moral settlement*—realizing satisfaction when we do the right and feeling guilt if we do wrong.

Another aspect of our human equipment is moral judgment. This determines what particular acts are right and which are wrong. Moral judgment is only what it is educated to be. Moral judgment is influenced and developed by all the spiritual forces that we are exposed to: by religious ideas and ideals we have been taught, by light from the Word of the Lord, and by reproofs of instruction.

Conscience has been called the "still, small voice inside us," the "built-in monitor of our actions," and the "person we face when we look in the mirror," but unless properly instructed it is of no value.

MM

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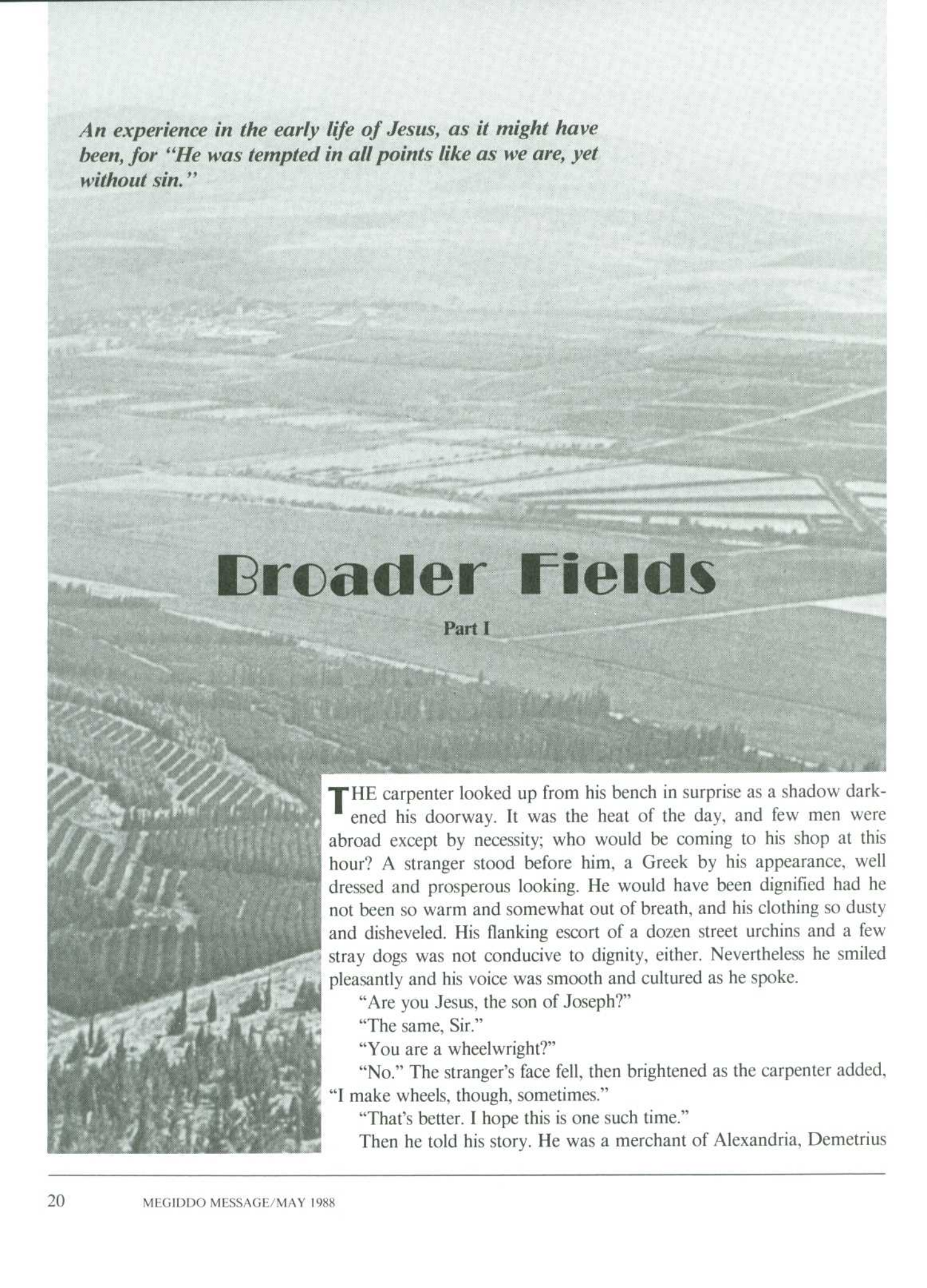
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*An experience in the early life of Jesus, as it might have been, for "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."*

# Broader Fields

## Part I

**T**HE carpenter looked up from his bench in surprise as a shadow darkened his doorway. It was the heat of the day, and few men were abroad except by necessity; who would be coming to his shop at this hour? A stranger stood before him, a Greek by his appearance, well dressed and prosperous looking. He would have been dignified had he not been so warm and somewhat out of breath, and his clothing so dusty and disheveled. His flanking escort of a dozen street urchins and a few stray dogs was not conducive to dignity, either. Nevertheless he smiled pleasantly and his voice was smooth and cultured as he spoke.

"Are you Jesus, the son of Joseph?"

"The same, Sir."

"You are a wheelwright?"

"No." The stranger's face fell, then brightened as the carpenter added, "I make wheels, though, sometimes."

"That's better. I hope this is one such time."

Then he told his story. He was a merchant of Alexandria, Demetrius

by name, traveling by chariot from Egypt to Damascus by way of Capernaum. Curiosity, nothing else, had led him to turn aside from the main highway to see the village of Nazareth; and at the outskirts of the town his horses had taken fright and in the ensuing runaway the chariot had struck a large stone and both wheels had collapsed in a shower of spokes. He himself had been thrown out early in the excitement, but was uninjured. Three streets down lay the wreckage. The carpenter examined the surviving pieces carefully.

"I can do it," he announced. "Not so fine or so graceful as these, but good, honest, oaken wheels which will carry you to Damascus and back, and much more. Many of these pieces we can use again. It will take a little time."

"How long?"

"Ten days, at the least. Longer, if you want them painted."

"Ten days!" The merchant made a wry face, then smiled faintly in resignation. "All right; I'll have to make the best of it."

"I can get at it immediately. My younger brother helps me, and perhaps your charioteer can lend a hand. I wish you a pleasant stay in Nazareth, Sir. It is a nice little town, and I think you'll like it. We do, and we live here all the time. We have a good inn, and while we have no places of amusement, from the top of our hill you may have one of the finest views in all Palestine."

**D**AY by day the wheels took form in the little workshop on a side street. Demetrius spent much of his time there. For one thing, there was little else to see or do in this prosaic, dusty village; for another, he was studying this young carpenter. That Jesus was no ordinary provincial artisan he had learned the first day, and each succeeding day strengthened the conviction that here was a

youth of exceptional ability and promise. In fact, the entire family seemed to be unusual, well above the average. Joseph, the father, prematurely aged and disabled by an injury some years before, sat in a corner of the shop most of the time, giving instruction when needed. As for Mary, the carpenter's mother, she was a woman one does not forget, a veritable queen, dignified and spiritual, yet practical and motherly, possessing that indefinite something which sets the exceptional person apart. There were several younger brothers and sisters who ran in and out of the shop. James and Joses, the largest of the boys, helped with the work from time to time. Young Jesus was kind and patient with them all, but a strict disciplinarian when necessary.

Strangest of all was their attitude toward the Jewish religion. They were all pious Jews, yet not at all like the Jerusalem rabbis he had met. In fact, he thought, the scribes and Pharisees would do well to come to Nazareth for instruction. To this family, moral principles ranked far above ritual formalities and technicalities; a very commendable thing, Demetrius told himself. For many of the Jewish taboos they seemed to have little or no regard. For instance, they seemed to feel no sense of ceremonial defilement from their association with him, a Gentile; and he was almost stunned with surprise the day he was invited to dine in their humble home. At the table the conversation naturally turned to religion. Demetrius was an educated man, a free-thinker in religion, taking what he liked from every faith and philosophy, and it was natural that he should feel somewhat superior to these unschooled outlanders, sincere and blameless though they might be.

"I have read your Law and some of the Prophets," he said, "and I have the deepest admiration for the Jewish conception of the One God,

righteous and just. It is by far the loftiest conception of the Deity I have found in all my studies. Yet some features of your faith are not so acceptable; in fact, I might say they almost repel me. For instance, the tremendous amount of attention given to ceremonial details—the distance one may travel and the weight of a burden which may be carried on the Sabbath day, the washings and the sacrifices, and such like. These things seem too petty and time-wasting to

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be the work of so great a God as yours. I say these things frankly, because I think you people are too broad-minded to take offense."

"Your charges are only too well founded," replied Jesus, gravely. "There is far too much emphasis placed by our teachers on ceremony and ritual. In fact, with most of us it has completely supplanted the religion of Moses and Elijah, which is, in the words of Micah, 'to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' But bear this in mind: These things which repel you—all these hair-splitting technicalities—are not to be found in the Law or the Prophets, but in the great mass of literature which has accumulated in five hundred years of priestly interpretation and speculation. So far as saving truth is concerned, the vast

**Demetrius was an  
educated man,  
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every faith and  
philosophy.**

bulk of these writings is worthless. You know"—with a smile—"our people spent some time in Babylon,

and unfortunately they brought back a good many Babylonian ideas."

"But," Demetrius argued, "in your Law, the very writings of Moses, there is prescribed a very elaborate ritual, is there not?"

"That is true. But only as a shadow or type of the great eternal realities."

"Explain your statement." The Greek was attentive, the food forgotten. Anything in the nature of a subtle or abstract philosophy interested him, and this promised to be something different. And from a small-town carpenter of one-and-twenty it was doubly amazing.

"Well, it is too vast a subject to go through in one day, or two—and those wheels are waiting—but one

point will show what I mean. Our Law prescribed various sacrifices, the death of a lamb or bullock. Now it is inconceivable that a God such as we worship could have any pleasure or interest in the death of a beast; but it had deeper meaning. In our natural, untamed condition we are of no use to God; we are mere animals. To be accepted with Him we must make a complete change from evil to good, laying aside the old life and entering the new, what we may call *dying to sin*, slaying the beast within us. This is a continual, daily process, and is the only sacrifice acceptable to God. The literal offering was only a type, a picture or drama to keep before the minds of the people the thing typified.

**All through today Lord, don't let me forget my high calling,  
my high obligation, my first duty:  
to make everything I do fit for You to see,  
and everything I say fit for You to hear.**

*Help me to use my time and my life wisely and well;  
To be considerate of the interests and feelings of others—always;  
To realize that whatever is done for others is done for You—always;  
To show by my cheerful conduct that I am grateful—always;  
To do my best willingly and gladly—always.*

*Keep me, O God,  
From doing anything without thinking;  
From leaving an untidy mess behind me when I leave;  
From being careless or deliberately destructive;  
From not caring how much worry I cause others;  
From not realizing all I have, and all that has been done for me;  
From failing to grasp the opportunities which come to me;  
From failing to realize the difference between the important and  
The things which do not matter.*

*Give me a will  
to always choose the right,  
to never be persuaded to choose or to do anything that is wrong.*

*I ask Your help in this my high endeavor. Amen.*

"When the people came, as they often did and do at this day, to regard the shadow more than the substance, the prophets protested: 'Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.'"

"I see. . . . Something to think about."

"Incidentally," the young man continued, "the system had other moral benefits. There was a time when we were a pastoral people, all our wealth being in the form of our flocks and herds. Later came the fruits of the earth. To make a free-will offering of that which God had given us, but which we considered our property, called for self-denial and generosity, which was a wholesome discipline for a people naturally covetous and grasping. Again, Moses commanded many washings of bodies, clothing and utensils. All this was a shadow of the reality proclaimed by Isaiah: 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well.' And in this case, too, there were other benefits, for the keeping of these ordinances made us a clean and healthy people when much of the ancient world was encrusted with filth. The Prophets, not the rabbis, are the true expounders of the Law; but unfortunately there are few today who know or care to know its true meaning."

"Remarkable! I see you have something to give the world of thought—even the world of Greek learning. I shall have to ask you more questions. What I should like to know is this: What are you doing here in this little place? Why aren't you in Jerusalem, teaching in the temple?"

Jesus ignored the question.

"Yes, ours was the greatest code of laws ever given to any people—

great because from God. Yet even it, when it has served its purpose, shall be replaced by something better—" He broke off suddenly, as though he had said too much, then went on in an easier tone. "We have a good little synagogue here in Nazareth, and tomorrow is the Sabbath, so the shop will be closed. Perhaps you would like to worship with us."

"May I?"—in surprise.

"With pleasure."

So impressed had Demetrius been with the confidence and wisdom displayed by Jesus at the dinner that he was a little surprised and disappointed to note that he took no active part in the service, but stood obscurely in the congregation during the reading and sermon. When the time came for the instruction of the children, the visitor remembered how earnestly and tactfully the carpenter had talked to the village boys who stopped to watch him work, and fully expected to see him as teacher of a class, but not so. Later, in conversation with a native, he discreetly voiced this

surprise. The man shook his head.

"He is a good boy," he whispered, "but the rabbi doesn't like him. He has strange ideas . . ."

**D**EMETRIUS decided to have his new wheels painted. It was unnecessary, but the truth was, he wanted more time to observe this young genius, for such he certainly was. A plan was taking form in his mind. His old patronizing attitude had faded out, and now he often felt himself subtly on the defensive, as if in the presence of a superior. Although he asked questions occasionally, he never undertook to engage the carpenter in argument or debate; it would have seemed presumptuous. It was all very strange, that he, a wealthy, powerful, cultured business man should be spending so much precious time in a hot, dusty, unheard-of little town in the highlands of Galilee, for no better reason than the fascinating influence of a clever young Jewish workman; but here he was. Truth was stranger than fiction.

MM

*(Continued Next Issue)*

*God's will is better than my will,  
It's always right and good.  
I would not have my way at all,  
Not even if I could.*

*God holds my future in His hands  
He scans my unspent years;  
He knows the trying hours ahead,  
The joy, or bitter tears.*

*I'll learn to trust it all to Him  
And lean upon His breast,  
To know, whatever comes or goes,  
That His dear will is best!*

*Oh! just to let Him have His way,  
Within my heart and soul,  
Brings peace so sweet and joy divine,  
I'll gladly give Him all!*

## Saved or Lost . . . Taken or Left?

*“Please explain Luke 17:33-37. What did Jesus mean?”*

The text in question reads: “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

“And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”

In the last part of Luke 17, from verse 24 forward, Jesus is speaking of His second coming, of events to precede it, of events to accompany it, and of the attitude of the alert Christian toward it.

Verse 24 forecasts the second coming of Christ, revealing the element of surprise that will accompany it. “For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.” This was a long-range prophecy. Verse 25 lists a short-range prophecy concerning Jesus’ rejection and suffering at the hands of that generation.

Verses 26-30 project a long-range prophecy spanning the ages down to the very time of His second coming. “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” The people of the world will be unsuspecting, all taken up with their own small interests, hence His coming would

take them by surprise. As the passage is phrased in the Living Bible, “When I return the world will be as indifferent to the things of God as the people were in Noah’s day. They ate and drank and married—everything just as usual right up to the day when Noah went into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all... Yes, it will be ‘business as usual’ right up to the hour of my return.”

Verse 31 warns against making any delay when that great time of trouble breaks. Temporal concerns or concern for earthly treasure must not encumber those who would escape the great time of trouble that will break upon the earth with Christ’s second coming (see Dan. 12:1; Zeph. 1:14, 18; Ezek. 7:19; Zech. 13:8).

Then, after these general warnings, Jesus issues a special warning to His people: “Whosoever shall seek to save his life [his careless indifferent way of living] shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life [give up himself] shall preserve it [for the world to come]. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left” (vs. 33-36).

The bed, the mill, and the field all represent types of human activity. In a spiritual sense they are symbols of employment in the service of God.

In Luke’s account of the parable of the “pounds” (called “talents” in Matthew’s gospel, chapter 25) the servants to whom the nobleman entrusted his wealth during his absence were commanded, “Occupy till I come.” Both faithful and unfaithful servants are represented in this parable. It has always been thus. Hence in the Lord’s “bed,” His “mill,” or His “field,” faithful and unfaithful servants are present together.

A bed is a device where one rests, becomes refreshed, recuperated. Spiritually applied, God’s service gives us rest: rest from our own ways, rest from the turmoil of the flesh—the flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh (Gal. 5:17). By taking Jesus’ easy yoke upon us can we find rest for our souls.

Faithful and unfaithful are together in this bed. The unfaithful—like the representative man in the allegory of creation in Genesis, who was driven out of the garden—will be forcefully evicted from the “bed,” while the faithful will be permitted to remain. “For we which have believed do enter into rest.... Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein... There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.... Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest” (Heb. 4:3, 6, 9, 11). And that better “rest” once attained, will last as long as the ages of eternity!

The two women grinding at the mill is another symbol of workers in God’s service. But among these also are found faithful and unfaithful, workers and slackers; hence one shall be “taken,” the other “left.” Paul warned the slackers at Corinth, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, ... nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (I Cor. 6:9, 10). They will be taken from the Lord’s mill.

The area of our Christian service through life is also depicted as a “field.” Here again there are many unworthy workers, who must at Judgment Day be forcefully driven from the field, while the others will be privileged to remain in the field to work with delight in God’s exalted service throughout eternity.

Luke 17:37 climaxes what Jesus has been saying. The disciples asked, “Where, Lord?” They were concerned as to when and how these forecasts would meet their fulfillment. Jesus answered them: “Whosoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” If the “body” is symbolic of the body of Christ (Col. 1:18), then those “gathered” may be the saints—a true picture of the love of each for the other, and the loving fellowship they share. Togetherness is pictured for the faithful; separation for the unfaithful. A day is destined to arrive when saints and sinners shall no longer be together. The wicked “shall go away into everlasting punishment: [total destruction, Matt. 7:13; Rom. 6:23] but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:46).

This same separation is pictured elsewhere in Scripture: “The wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.... He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world” (Prov. 2:22; Job 18:18).

Always in Scriptural phraseology, the wicked are removed, the righteous remain; just as Jesus pictured them: one (the unfaithful) taken, the other (faithful) left. Said Jesus, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5); and said the Psalmist, “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever”

(Ps. 37:29); while Proverbs 10:30 assures us, “The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth” again, “the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it” (Prov. 2:21).

#### • Treasures of Darkness

*“What is meant by the statement ‘I will give thee the treasures of darkness’ (Isa. 45:3)?”*

This statement is a part of God’s promise to Cyrus the king of Persia, who was to open the way for captives of Judah to return to their home city Jerusalem at the close of the 70-year captivity. These words spoken prophetically some two hundred years in advance, were fulfilled in detail.

To understand the passage in its context let us read the first three verses of Isaiah 45: “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.”

Then verse 4 reveals the Eternal’s purpose in all this, and Cyrus’ unawareness of the work for which he should be raised up: “For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.”

The Lord was going to use Cyrus to perform His will and fulfill His promise to His people, even though Cyrus himself would never know that he was being used by God.

MM

### Prayer

*I know not by what methods rare,  
But this I know: God answers prayer.  
I know not when He sends the word  
That tells us fervent prayer is heard.  
I know it cometh soon or late;  
Therefore, we need to pray and wait.  
I know not if the blessing sought  
Will come in just the guise I thought.  
I leave my prayers with Him alone  
Whose will is wiser than my own. —Sel.*

## Who Speaks for God?

(Continued from page 18)

sage? Is it not unmistakable proof of Divine authorship?

**A**nother striking testimony to the truthfulness of the Bible is its fulfilled prophecies. Man may guess the future, but only God can predict it with accuracy. Consider the numerous prophecies that were spoken and recorded of Christ. There were prophecies concerning His birth, His life-work, His death, His resurrection. Even predicted was the time when He would be born (see Daniel 9:25). Daniel received a message from the angel Gabriel telling him that from the "going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" until the coming of the Messiah would be 483 years (seven weeks plus threescore and two weeks, or 483 days, each day equaling a year). Is there any man today who would identify a specific child who would be born in the year 2471? The prophet Micah, writing in the eighth century B.C., foretold the city in which the Christ would be born, Bethlehem (5:2). Could any mere man without Divine knowledge be so precise?

All these predictions came to pass exactly as predicted.

Consider also Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the four world kingdoms which were to rise and fall. Only Daniel, with the help of God, could interpret the dream, and we have unmistakable evidence from history that those four kingdoms did indeed flourish and wane, exactly as predicted.

Or consider Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24). The Jewish people could have saved their lives if they had only listened, but they stubbornly refused to believe, and as a result suffered untold agonies, exactly as both Moses

and Christ had predicted (Deut. 28:52-68).

Just as surely as past predictions have been fulfilled, so will the unfulfilled meet their fulfillment in due time. Of special significance are the prophecies of the second advent of Christ. Just as surely as Christ came the first time as predicted, so surely He will come again. It was the promise of the angels at the time He ascended: "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

**C**AN any man living during recent centuries be the reincarnation of Christ or Elijah? The answer is no. Reincarnation is a man-made idea without supporting evidence. No one living on earth today has been through the death state. Any reliable information about a future life must come from one source, the Bible. Ecclesiastes 9:5 is specific, "The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything." All hope of a life beyond this mortal existence must come through a resurrection of the dead (see also I Cor. 15:12-20).

How will we be able to recognize the true Messiah when He comes? Jesus Himself tells us in Matthew 24. First He tells us how to recognize a false messiah, "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (vs. 23-26). And then in verse 27 He says,

"For as the lightning cometh out

of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Then in verse 31 He adds, "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Has any of the self-proclaimed messiahs accomplished this?

The prophet Zechariah gives us a vivid word picture of the coming of Christ with a spectacular description of an unmistakable event that will immediately follow His coming. "Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations as he fights in the day of battle. On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives east of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south" (Zech. 14:3-4, NIV). Any claims to messiahship not accompanied by these signs should not be considered seriously.

Note especially that "his feet will stand upon the Mount of Olives". It does not say that He will be born and die in India, in the Arabian Peninsula, in Illinois, or in Korea. But the promise is that "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Christ the real Messiah will come from heaven, and everyone on earth will know that it is He, the Son of God and King of the Earth, for "the government shall be upon his shoulder, ... and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:6-7).

There will be no question then Who speaks for God. MM

*IT may be more blessed to give than to receive, but the average man is always willing to let the other fellow have the blessing.*

# Let It Shine!

THE story is told of a man who built a large and prosperous business through honest toil and unselfish cooperation with his fellow workers. As he grew older, he became more and more concerned about the future of the enterprise. His only relatives were three nephews.

One day he called these three nephews into his office. "One of you," he said, "shall be my successor, but before I determine which one I have a task for you to perform." He then handed each youth a coin with these instructions: "Go and buy something with this coin that will fill this large room as full as possible. Spend no more than I gave you and return at sunset."

All day long the youths scouted the market place. By night they made their way back to their uncle.

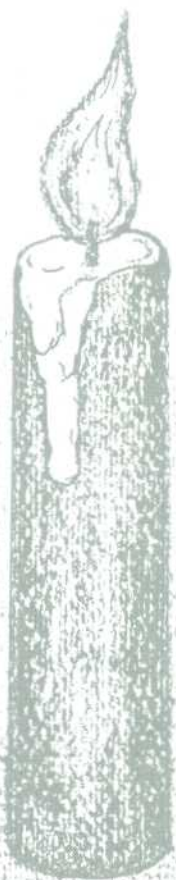
The first one dragged a huge bale of straw into the room which, after he had untied it, he spread between the walls of the room. The others complemented him and helped to clear it away.

The second youth brought in two bags of thistledown. When he released them, they filled half the room. Again the others cheered, then helped to clear the thistledown away.

There was only one youth left, and he seemed to have nothing with him. "What have you brought to fill the room?" asked the uncle. The youth looked at his uncle: "I could not think what to bring, as I wandered about the marketplace," he said, "so here is the balance of the money from my purchase." He placed several farthings in his uncle's hand. Then he pulled a flint and a candle from his pocket. He struck the flint and lit the candle, and the light of the candle filled every corner of the room. The elderly uncle blessed the lad and declared him his successor.

"Let your light shine"! Why did Jesus say it? Because He wants His people to be radiant, encouraging, light-giving, and with one great purpose: "that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5 :16).

How can we discover and dispel every dark corner of evil in our lives? By filling them with light. "Let your light so shine." Yes, let it shine. At home, on the street, wherever you are, *live* what you believe. Let it shine! and shine! and shine! Even a very small candle can reach great distances in the darkness, if we just let it shine.



*At home, on the street, wherever you are,  
live what you believe. Let it shine!*

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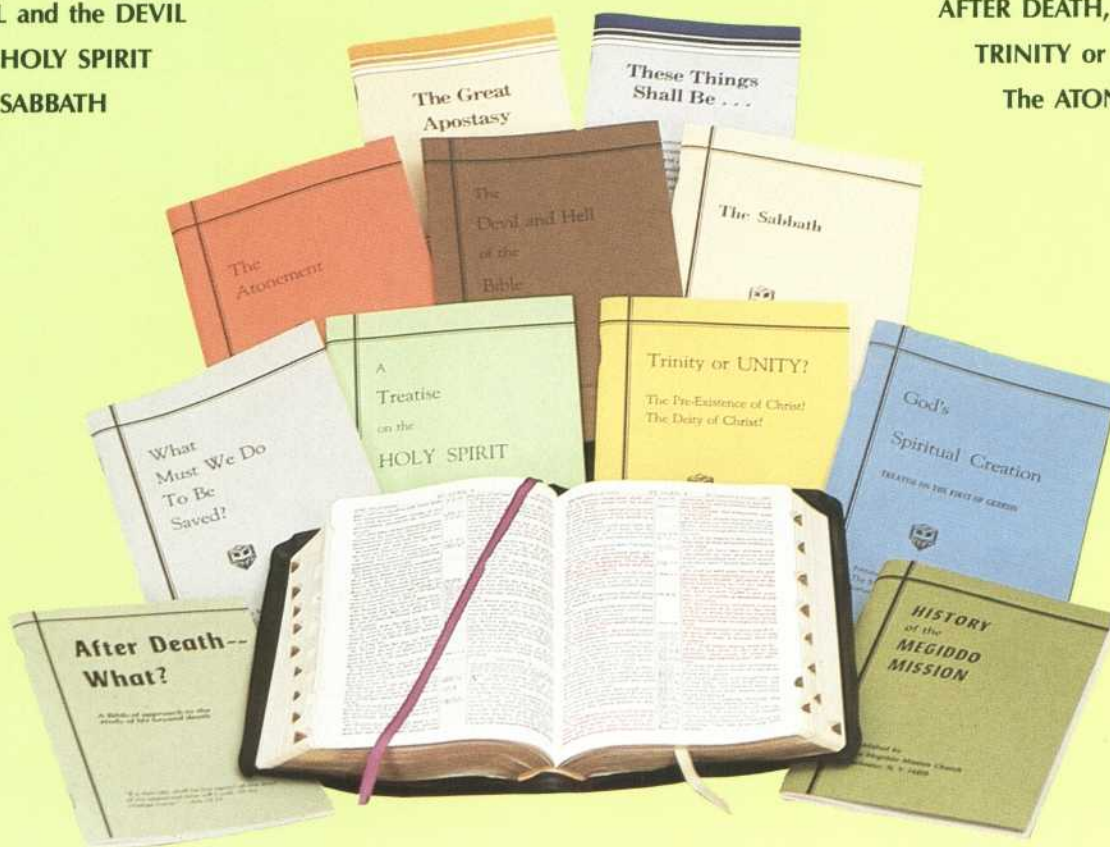
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