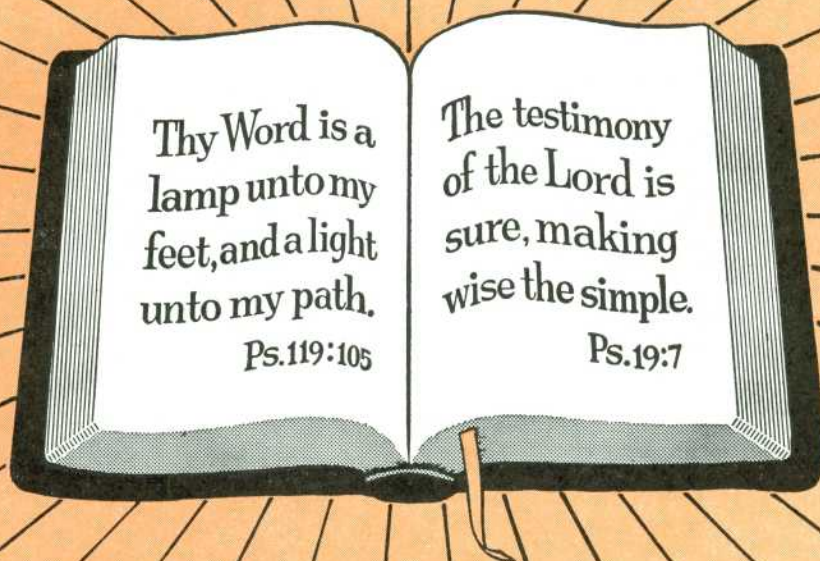


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



The Body of Christ

Elijah-God's Man for Crisis Hour

Spirits and Spirits

Pentecost

Megiddo Message

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

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Editorially Speaking . . .

Do We Really WANT Him?

WHEN we think about the returning of our Lord to earth, one thought persistently rises in our minds: Will He actually come back? Scripture answers this question abundantly: Christ *will* return; He Himself said so. But with the answer comes a shocking thought which Scripture addresses to each of us individually: What is our attitude and our relation to this fact? How do we feel about it? Are we thrilled with the expectancy of hope, or is there a slight shadow of dismay upon our expectation? Do we really *want* Christ?

How instinctively in the throes of pain or sorrow do we long for the return of Christ; or when life seems to fall apart and nothing is secure. When we think of the devastation of war, or of man's inhumanity to man, or of the tragedies of fire and flood, we long for Christ.

But when health is abundant and all is well, the pull of eternity is not so strong. When life is pleasant and the days come and go in peaceful succession; when work is fruitful and neighbors are friendly and life has more than its share of creature comforts, then there is danger—grave danger—that deep down in our hearts we may feel satisfied with things as they are. Not for a moment would we deny our belief that Christ *is* coming—*Never!* But so absorbed are we in our own small circle of existence, so settled in a selfish, shortsighted contentment with the present that we feel not the fiery fervor which kept the Christians of an earlier age living on hope.

The thought has been expressed by a young mother who told her minister: "There must be something wrong with me. You asked us this morning whether we 'love the Lord's appearing,' and I don't. I'm happy with my family. I guess you could say I'm reconciled to Christ's coming back, but it's not exactly top priority on my list of wants."

What of us? The apostle Paul said Christ would return to those who "love his appearing," who are looking and longing for it so intensely that to prepare for it is their *one* desire.

Christ *is* coming. What is *our* reaction, yours and mine? Are we each day loving—looking—living—longing to see Him? Do we really *want* Him?

Some day soon the trump of God will shock us from our smug selfish complacency, and things as they are will disappear in the sweep of the things that shall be. Are we prepared for that moment, mentally, morally, spiritually? Are we so prepared that we are really longing for it?

Jesus is coming, and He has told us to be ready. Not only should we be getting ready, but we should be eager. For however good the present may seem, the future will be better—infinitely better. "The things no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him."

MARANATHA!

The Body of Christ

GOD has purposed that His followers in all ages should compose one select unit, one perfect organism, a type of organism higher than any we know now. So united are they in thought and purpose, so functionally perfect and complete, so fully coordinated and capable of doing His service that the apostle Paul compared them to the physical body of a living man. He called them the "body of Christ."

Paul described this special composite "body" in his letter to the Romans: "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:5). It is one body composed of many members. "Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ" (I Cor. 12:12, Jerusalem Bible).

"One body" requires one head; and this being the "body of Christ," Christ Himself is the head—the coordinator and governor of all the body's activities. "And 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" (Col. 1:18). "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him"; for God "hath put all things under his feet, and [given] him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:10, 22-23).

Christ Our Head?

"The head of every man is Christ," wrote Paul to the Corinthians. What he meant was, Christ is the head of every man who is part of Christ's body. For Paul was not thinking of the Adamic race collectively, irrespective of character or quality. Christ definitely is *not* the head or controlling power in this rushing, surging world; nor was Christ the head of all in Paul's day. Christ's life, His example, the principles for which He lived and died, His kindness, His courage, His selflessness are not to be found among the world at large. Christ definitely is not their head.

Still the words come down to us: "The head of every man is Christ." Before this can be true, there must be a dramatic shift of center; for it is so easy

to put ourselves in the center of our universe. It is so easy to say—or at least feel—that we know well enough how to direct ourselves. We pamper our own feelings and tell ourselves that our opinions are the best. We know *our* judgment is always right, and our notion should most certainly be followed through. But stop! What did Paul say?

"The head of every man is Christ."

What does this mean? It means that strong feelings must be redirected; strong wills must be broken; strong dispositions must be transformed; strong opinions must be surrendered; strong heads must be severed. No head individualism can remain. "You have a head of your own"—of course! But, saith the Law and Gospel, *Christ* must become your head.

To think Christ's thoughts; to do as Christ would have done; to be able to say, "I do always those things that please him"—this is to have Christ for our head. This is to become part of His composite body.

But this is not the transformation of a moment; it is a matter of growth. We must "grow up in every way into Christ, the head. For it is from the head that the whole body as a harmonious structure knit together by the joints with which it is provided, grows by the proper functioning of individual parts, to its full maturity in love" (Eph. 4:14-16, Phillips).

The Body United

A perfectly united body means that all individualism must go. Should an organism fail to function as a body and become divided into countless little bits of life and activity, it would cease to be a body. Likewise, if each person would try to be an independent, self-sufficient cell, instead of joining for the good of all, there soon would be no body. But the body of Christ is solid. And those who would prefer to be individuals simply are not part of the body.

Belonging to the body of Christ has its price; and that price is the value we place on our right to be individuals. All our longing to be seen, to be noticed, to be praised as a distinctive individual must be forfeited in exchange for the greater honor of being part of the body of Christ. For an honor

Belonging to the body of Christ has its price; that price is the value we place on our right to be individuals. But what is our individualism worth compared to membership in such a body!

indeed it is, to strive for one standard, to preserve one hope, to serve one purpose, to attain one goal—to be part of a body which will live on and on forever and ever! What is our individualism worth, compared to membership in such a body!

Binding Power

What is that special something which makes the followers of God in all ages *one*? It is the binding power of a common goal, even “life for evermore,” reinforced by bonds of patience, forbearance, love, longsuffering and trust. These virtues must become firm and fully developed before the individual members can truly be said to be “one in Christ.”

Patience is a first essential. When we think of our own need for the constant exercise of this virtue, we must admit also the necessity for others to have it with us. This feeling binds the body together.

Trust is one of the primary requisites for creating a united body. How can we be anything but alone if our attitude toward our brother is one of “armed neutrality,” if we are suspicious, assertive and complaining in our contact? If we approach our brother with a negative question, we are almost certain to get a negative response. However, where there is magnanimity and openness of mind there is growth and development; this is essential if we would be part of Christ’s body. We must be willing to give ourselves freely and unreservedly to the Cause and to each other if we would all be part of Christ’s body.

Then there is love. A true brother or sister in Christ will never hurt another needlessly or intentionally, for that is not Christian love. The members of the body of Christ must be “knit together in love,” a love that is deep and “passeth all understanding.” It is love which is so concerned with the welfare of another that it is never so cowardly as to let slip an occasion to help another. Each member of the body of Christ is responsible to do right himself, and also to assist a fellow-member when he is in the wrong. This is not an unpleasantness, but a preservation of spiritual life—

for what sincere member of this select body would wish to see his brother die out and cease to be part of the body? We must think of our mission as that of saving a soul from death, spiritual death; however painful may be the method of rescue, he is sure to thank us for our thoughtfulness. This is true love. And it is a relationship which breeds understanding, courage and faith. This relationship exists only in the body of Christ.

Fellowship

Membership in the body of Christ means fellowship—fellowship with Christ, and fellowship with men; the two cannot be separated in our mortal life—they can hardly even be distinguished. For in our relationships with one another we express our devotion to God. Paul explains it this way: “I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; . . . and the head of Christ is God” (I Cor. 11:3). If the head of every member of this one body is Christ, then every man is following the direction of the one head, and every man is one in Christ. This is true fellowship, fellowship that grows higher and higher until it reaches its ultimate in the fountainhead of life itself, Almighty God. For when we enjoy the benefits of fellowship, we share in a blessing that is itself divine. And slowly, step by step we become increasingly like those with whom we fellowship.

But our fellowship with God depends upon a very practical basis—it depends upon our relationship with our fellowman. “For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he has not seen” (I John 4:20). The true life of Christianity is found in the united enjoyment of God and His principles, and in life that is expressed in totally selfless service to others. That is God’s plan for us: that we should be one body.

Such was the relationship that existed between Ruth and Naomi; it is something that spiritual life demands. Ruth needed Naomi. Naomi tested Ruth, suggesting that she might go back to her own country. She tried to cut her off from fellowship, but Ruth replied that that would be worse than death itself. Ruth said, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (Ruth 1:16-17). Ruth’s fellowship with Naomi was strong because Naomi’s God was *her* God, and

Naomi's people *her* people—she was part of Naomi's family.

David and Jonathan are another example of the fellowship that is divine; their relationship shows the strength of unity that grows under adversity. Out of all the chaos of the time and the disorder of their lives, there arose for them a new and beautiful world of peace and content. It was the miracle inner world created by the death of self. Jonathan forgot his heritage and David his ambition, and the two became one in their love for God. Jonathan's princely soul had not room for envy or jealousy. David's frank nature rose to meet the greatness of his friend. They agreed to be true to each other in their difficult position. Close and tender was the bond, which had its fruit in mutual loyalty.

Fellowship is the relationship that existed between Mary and Jesus when she sat at His feet listening to the gracious words that flowed from His lips. Or it is the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus. When they met in the garden after Jesus' resurrection, Jesus knew her whole heart and He knew that they were both serving the same God; for He said to her, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). Not only was God the Father of Jesus; He was the Father of Mary Magdalene as well.

This was true fellowship; the fellowship in which character may grow and blossom and bear fruit unto eternal life. It is divine fellowship which enlarges the soul and binds men to each other with unbreakable cords of faith and faithfulness. It is fellowship which has vitality enough to grow in any soil that is good and honest—it is not dependent on outward circumstances; it is fellowship which is the heart loving. It is the binding power of the body of Christ.

We may attempt to feign fellowship when we are walking in darkness, but this is impossible. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (I John 1:6-7). The road to fellowship is in imitating the Christ-life. It is part of the life of those who live as Christ lived, who walk as Christ walked, who think as Christ thought, and love as Christ loved.

Fellowship is the closeness of the unity of the body of Christ, where self-interest is obliterated in consideration for others. It is what Paul described in I Corinthians 12: "The body should work together as a whole with all the members in sym-

Fellowship is the closeness of the unity of the body of Christ, where self-interest is obliterated in consideration for others. It is divine fellowship, which enlarges the soul.

pathetic relationship with one another. So it happens that if one member suffers all the other members suffer with it, and if one member is honored all the members share a common joy" (I Cor. 12: 25-26, Phillips).

The life of the body of Christ lies in each member functioning properly in his particular role and coordinating with every other member. This means that selfishness must give way to selflessness; pride to humility; resentment must be replaced with kindness, and anger with patience. Slander and malice must be removed and truth and love must fill their place. Hastiness must be superseded by careful judgment, fault-finding faded completely by understanding.

Do we want to be part of the body of Christ? It is a challenge to the best that is in us, but it is not beyond us. Membership is open to us, if we will but qualify. And as we progress in our union with the Author of love, we shall find that we can enjoy a higher, richer association with our brethren. The nearer we get to the center of the circle, the nearer we get to each other.

Dearer than the tie of blood; deeper, higher, stronger and closer than the strongest bond of kin, the unity of the body of Christ is the only permanent relationship in the universe. For "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17). Why not seek the highest and the best?

Such is the fellowship, such is the unity, such is the binding power of the body of Christ. ●●

Life is a stormy sea, and upon the waves of indecision many are tossed. But for those who have seen the beacon afar off, their path is set out, their indecision decided. And the life of the decided is a revolution. It is a revolution of battle against the old character, bringing up the new. It is revolving around the one center of life, GOD.

Life is too short to be wasted in indecision. God should be the center of our life.

Prayer

WE THANK Thee, our Father, for the gift of life. Help us to concentrate on the opportunities for service which each day brings and not to dissipate our thoughts and energy by vain regrets over past failures, or fruitless worry over the troubles which we fear may come tomorrow.

As we see the shortness of life, the fragility of all things temporal, Thy greatness and the enduring nature of Thy handiwork, may we be constrained to relinquish our hold upon the things of the present and fix our hope on Thy great and precious promises.

Help us to realize the high calling to which we have been called, even perfection of character. Thou in Thy mercy hast condescended to look upon us in our lowly estate, revealing to us Thy great plan, and through the power of the gospel provided us with an impelling force by which we can lift our naturally evil selves to Thy moral standard now in this life, and in the world to come be raised to the heights of immortality.

May we grow more diligent in every good work. May we be more anxious to see our own shortcomings than to see the failures of others. May we willingly take up our cross of self-denial, and not be ashamed to have others see that we are becoming crucified.

Help us to come out of this wicked world so rapidly moving down the broad road to destruction, and not be like them in act, word or thought. May we neither touch, taste, handle, nor in any way be influenced by the uncleanness and decadence of this sinful and adulterous generation.

Give us an understanding heart that we may understand our errors; and having seen evil in all its hideousness, may we abhor it, turn from it, and make Thee an offering in a clean vessel.

Give us humbleness of mind, and may we always remember that before honor comes humility. Give us strength always to say "no" to self when tempted to do wrong.

Give us what is best for us, whether prosperity or adversity, and may we see Thy hand in every affair of life and always say, Thy will be done!

In Jesus' Name. Amen. ●●

THE NEW Testament word for "power" is *dynamis*. From this Greek word we get two English words. One is *dynamite*; the other is *dynamo*.

Dynamite is tremendous explosive power. It can cleave great masses of rock and earth.

They Received A dynamo is another kind of power—it is constant, ongoing power. It doesn't make much noise, but it keeps lights burning hour after hour and turns the wheels of industry by night and day.

"Power" . . . The Holy Spirit which the apostles received at Pentecost so many centuries ago was dynamite. It was a taste of the tremendous potential that rests in the hand of God. By it the hearts of many were turned to God.

The "dynamite" of the Holy Spirit has been temporarily withdrawn. But what remains to us is a great *dynamo* of faith and instruction, the written Word of God. It is the steady, ongoing source of power to all who attach themselves to it. It is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

When our power seems to be gone, let us go to our dynamo, the Word of God. For its power shall never fail until the real dynamite is with us again—when the Holy Spirit is renewed.

(Pentecost falls this year on June 13, 14.) ●●

A Fourth Century Pentecost Hymn

The rolling years, in joy complete,
The jubilee of glory wrought,
The time the Heavenly Paraclete
Great gifts to the apostles brought.

Aglow with living light it came
Upon the twelve in tongues of fire,
That they might all the world inflame
With word of truth and pure desire.

Then guided by this power divine
The tongue of every clime they spake,
Filled with God's truth as with new wine
They bade the sinful earth awake.

Great God of mercy and of power,
Bowed at Thy feet in prayer and love,
We wait till Thou shalt send again
This power divine, from heaven above.

As Thou hast filled our lives with light
And taught us of Thy truth and grace,
So guide us now in paths of right
That we may run the heavenly race
And win—that we for evermore
May share Thy matchless dwelling place.

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Who Held the Rope?

The great apostle Paul, relating his experiences to the brethren of Corinth by way of letter wrote, "In Damascus the governor... kept the city... with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down and escaped his hands" (II Cor. 11:32-33).

Paul was let down over a wall in a basket. And who were the people holding that rope? Who tied it to the basket? Who steadied the Apostle as he stepped in? Their names have not come down to us, and yet the work they did eclipses all that was

done that day in Damascus—even in the world.

Perhaps one day we shall meet one who in answer to our inquiry, "And what work did you do for the Lord?" will reply: "In time of bitter persecution I owned a house in Damascus, and the balcony reached over the wall. A gospel preacher named Paul was being pursued, and in a basket this maltreated one was let down over the wall, and I was the one who helped to hold the rope."

On what a small tenure great results hang! Whatever you do, "do it heartily as to the Lord." Remember, you "serve the Lord Christ." God gives to each of us something to do for Him, some basket to steady, some rope to hold. Will you do your part?

E**L****I****J****A****H****GOD'S MAN
FOR
CRISIS HOUR**

Part 3

IT was hot in the palace of Ahab. And dry, intolerably dry. The palace gardeners spent their time arguing about when the last rain had fallen; no one really knew, but it was more than three years previous. The last green blade of grass had long since disappeared along the wall; the gardens, always so lush and green, looked like the Arabian desert. The flowers in the great courtyard urns had dried up the summer before, and now the hot wind had blown them away. Ornate stone fruit bowls served only to display the artistry of the unknown sculptor. The hopes and prayers of everyone in the land could be voiced in a single resounding plea: "Rain!"

But day after day the sun shone mercilessly from a cloudless sky. There was no rain, nor any sign of it.

Dry Reaction

Everywhere in Israel there was reaction—sometimes violent, sometimes cynical, sometimes passionate; occasionally religious. Some blamed the king. Some blamed the stars. Some blamed the Prophet. Some blamed Baal. Almost everyone had *some* explanation of the cause. (But no one thought of *himself* and *his idolatry* as the cause.)

Ahab called a meeting of his advisors. "We have to do something," he told them. "Our most valuable chariot horses are in danger. And the donkeys, and all the animals—where will we find pasture for them?"

The animals were a more urgent concern than the starving people!

"But we've already done about everything," one advisor began. "I've seen more prayers and sacrifices to Baal in the last six months—I'm beginning to wonder if—"

"We've sacrificed enough!" bellowed the angry king. "Call in Obadiah, my governor," he shouted, "and all of you—Out!"

"Yes, your majesty," and the advisors filed out as Obadiah entered.

"Obadiah, my most trusted servant, I have a plan. We *must* have pasture for the animals. And you and I can find it. You start to the north, and I'll go south. And when you find grass, send word to me by your servant. I will do likewise. And—" the king paused to clear his throat and lower his voice—"if you should happen upon that man Elijah, send him to me *speedily*. I have a few words to say to *him*. Understand?"

"Yes, your majesty," and Obadiah departed to carry out the king's wishes.

Leaving Zarephath

In the meantime, up in Zarephath, "the word of the Lord came to Elijah, . . . saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth" (I Kings 18:1).

For three years nothing drastic had happened in Israel. For three years Elijah had kept himself in silent hiding. Elijah may have wondered why the long delay, why he should have to abide so long unknown in Zarephath. He may have had no knowledge of the spectacular events which were to follow. He may not have known the drama God would use to bring Israel to their senses and convince them that He alone is God in heaven and in earth.

But now the waiting time was over. "The word of the Lord" said "Go."

And immediately, "Elijah went." That is all there was to it. No

questions, no hesitation, no wondering whether it would be better to go or to stay a little longer in the comfortable quiet security of Zarephath. Elijah was a man of obedience, instant obedience. He was God's man, and when God spoke, Elijah acted.

"And Elijah went." Here is the dramatic opening of the movement which would ultimately bring the house of Ahab crashing to the ground. It was the opening of the challenge for which God had been all this time preparing him.

We should realize the courage of Elijah in obeying that simple command: "Go." Would you and I have done as well? It meant facing an angry king and a more angry queen. It meant placing yourself in the hands of those who hated you and who had for months past vowed that they would take your life. It meant a constant threat of death in every step you took upon Israeli sod. For in Ahab's mind, Elijah was public enemy Number One. As Ahab saw it, Elijah was the whole cause of Israel's trouble. He was responsible for the terrible famine and all the suffering that was making Ahab unpopular and ruining his nation. And the sooner he could be eliminated, the better.

Two Men of God Meet

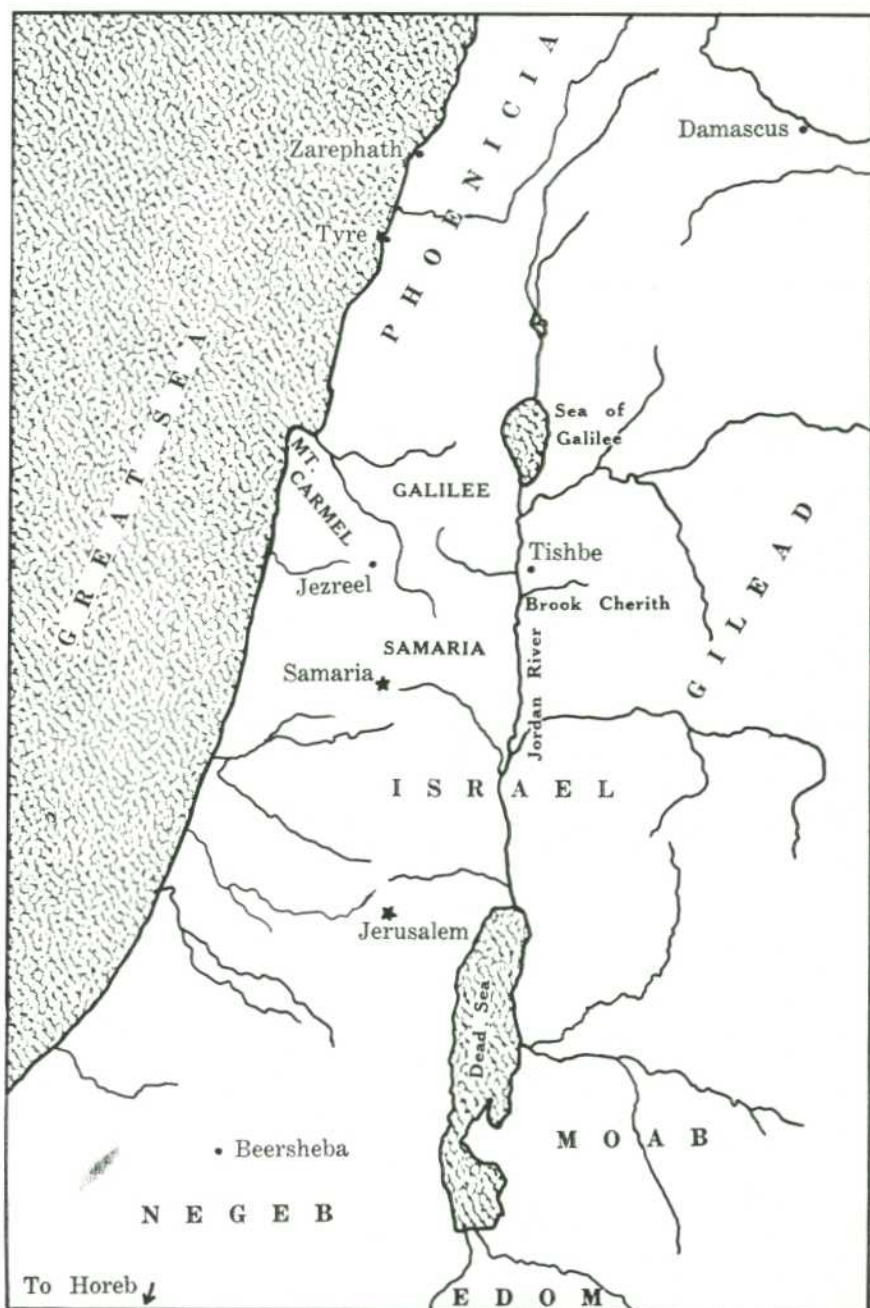
Ahab's governor, Obadiah, was out searching for grass when he saw in the distance—could it be—a traveler, a lone wanderer upon the plain—a man—a man of God—Elijah!

"Elijah! Is it really you?" The Scriptures record nothing of their greeting except this recognition, but we can imagine the joy as the two men of God met. Their callings were so different—one a servant in a heathen palace; the other a man of the solitary wilderness. Even as they met they were fulfilling totally different missions—Obadiah was there because Ahab

had sent him, and Elijah was there because God sent him. Yet their hearts were one in their love for God. Each had remained true in his particular field of duty.

Elijah immediately requested Obadiah to tell the king of his presence in Israel. This was what the Lord had commanded Elijah to do, and to fulfill that command was Elijah's first concern: "Go," the Lord had said, "show thyself unto Ahab."

But Obadiah objected to Elijah's suggestion. He had lived too long with Ahab's quick temper, and had apparently seen too much of Elijah's ability to disappear quickly. If Obadiah were to tell the king



of Elijah's presence and Ahab not be able to locate the prophet, it could easily mean Obadiah's life. "If I tell Ahab you are here, by the time I return you will be gone. And what will Ahab do to me? He will kill me!" And Obadiah went on to explain how the king had searched and searched for the missing Prophet.

Elijah seemed to understand, but reaffirmed his desire to meet Ahab. God's command was uppermost in his mind. So Obadiah went and told Ahab, and Ahab came to meet Elijah.

Ahab Confronts Elijah

At last—at last Ahab was going to meet the man he had been seeking all these months. Now there would be an *end* to all this trouble Elijah had been making with Israel's new gods.

With kingly bravado Ahab stalked up to the

Prophet and cried, "So here you are, you troubler of Israel!"

But Elijah was not to be taken off guard. This was the moment for which he had been preparing, and he was ready. Like a thunderbolt out of blue sky came Elijah's reply: "You are talking about yourself, King Ahab. *You and your family* are the troublers of Israel, because you have turned away from God—to worship *idols!*"

Here is a lesson for us. Ahab knew the real cause of the famine in Israel; Elijah had made that clear before the drought ever struck. But Ahab had told himself so repeatedly that Elijah was the cause that he came actually to believe his own thoughts. So totally blinded to his own sinfulness was he that he convinced himself that he could see.

We should beware, lest we tend toward this same condition of being "past feeling," our conscience becoming so blunted by continual transgression that it ceases to remind us of evil and to

A Good Work by A Good Man

Ahab was the most informed man in the kingdom of Israel in his day. He knew the suffering of the people and the plight of the nation's economy. He knew what other nations must be thinking of Israel, the land God was supposed to take care of. He even *thought* he knew the *cause* of the disaster.

But he didn't know everything. He didn't know about the good work being done by a good man *right in his own household*—in opposition to the wicked work of his wicked wife Jezebel.

There were in Israel in the days of the kings what were called "schools of the prophets" or "sons of the prophets." These associations possibly originated as an experienced prophet attracted to himself young admirers who sought to acquire his wisdom and emulate his virtue. It was customary for such disciples, together with their families, to live in colonies around the master. The prophet Samuel may have been the first to have such a "school"; the first Biblical reference to this type of colony is to one near Ramah, where Samuel lived (I Samuel, chapters 10 and 19).

Because these groups were called "schools of the prophets" does not mean that all of their members had God-given power to foretell the future. "Prophesying" means also "to teach, to sing or to speak for God."

And that is apparently what these "schools" did.

They were centers of spiritual life, even in bad times. According to history, the members would arouse each other with music and singing. Not only did they cultivate sacred music, but they preserved the sacred history of God's people—by handing it down to their children, both orally and in writing. For these people were dedicated. The law said, "Thou shalt teach [these words] diligently to thy children," and these men *did*. They were dedicated. Daily they sought God by prayer and meditation, and their steady reviewing of God's great deeds in the past kept them ever ready for new avenues of divine service. In such groups the religion of Jehovah prevailed.

But when disaster struck the land, *all* the inhabitants were affected—faithful servants of God as well as idol worshipers. And Jezebel's determination to do away with all who had anything to do with the true God placed the school of the prophets in real peril. What would they do?

God provided a way—and it came right out of Ahab's household!

We might expect, and naturally enough, that the palace of Ahab and Jezebel would have been the center of corruption and idolatry in Israel. It was. But it was not *all* bad.

For right in the midst of it was a good man named Obadiah. A strange place for a man of God, and we are not told how the appointment came about; but the record tells us that Obadiah was the "governor" of

reprove us for it. As a thermometer when its mercury is frozen marks no lower degree of cold, so we may lose our sensitivity to sin and feel no guilt when we do wrong.

If we persist in an evil habit, it will become so much a part of us that we may feel justified in supporting it. Thus we put "darkness for light, and light for darkness," and call "evil, good; and good evil." This was Ahab's downfall; it should be a warning to us.

Ahab stood motionless, while Elijah talked on.

"Now," said Elijah, "bring all the people of Israel to Mount Carmel, with all four hundred fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah who are supported by Jezebel."

Who was giving the orders? And *who* was listening?

Elijah had the moral courage to cry aloud and spare not, to lift up his voice like a trumpet—even to the king. ●●

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Ahab's palace, and also that he "feared the Lord greatly."

As governor of the palace, Obadiah probably held the highest position Ahab had to give. It may be that the king despised his piety, while he valued his faithful counsel and stainless character. We are not told.

But Obadiah proves one fact: that it is possible to live above one's circumstances; it is possible to maintain faith and virtue in the midst of evil. It may be difficult, but it is possible; and it is a test which every loyal servant of God must be prepared to face. For God does not promise a sheltered life; He does not guarantee a smooth and easy-going atmosphere always abounding with faith and love. Sometimes we may be called upon to live or work with those who are hostile and antagonistic. We may have to dwell in the house of Ahab. But even there we can "fear the Lord greatly"; we can be an Obadiah.

The Lord made use of Obadiah's position in a very special way. Being the governor of Ahab's house, Obadiah had ways and means which ordinary men in Israel did not have—he used his position to do a great service to God's people. The Bible tells us that he saved the lives of one hundred prophets by hiding them in caves and providing them with food and water.

This may have been dangerous business; Obadiah may have risked his own life and his position to do it. But he was a man of great character, and he stood the test.

June, 1975

God-Sent "Troublers"

Three times in the Biblical account Elijah is hailed as a "troubler" (see I Kings 17:18; 18:17; 21:20). God sends him forth to bring relief and blessing to Israel, and he is greeted as a disturber of the peace.

But in reality, this is one of the finest tributes Ahab could have given Elijah. For is not God's whole purpose to arouse men from their lethargy, to make them uncomfortable in their sinfulness—so uncomfortable that they will turn away from it? It is the disturbance which heat brings to the person who is freezing to death. He is comfortable while he is freezing. Heat brings pain, but the pain is the sign of returning life; if there is no pain, there is no hope, for it means that the person is freezing slowly into a comfortable—and fatal—numbness.

This was the mission of every prophet of God in every age: to disturb people who were satisfied and smug; to arouse those who would settle for moral mediocrity; to awake those who would slumber while their craft moved rapidly with the current toward the crest of the waterfall. Ahab needed troubling; Israel needed troubling. And so do we. We need to be aroused, awakened, lest we perish in our own folly.

The purpose of God's prophet is not to comfort but to cure. He comes to awake men to their responsibilities and alert them to the dangers which surround. To sink in sin may be comfortable, but we cannot sink and live. The divine "troubler" comes to save us from the peril of ourselves.

But woe unto us if our hearts become so hardened that, like Ahab, we meet every servant of God as a "troubler."

READ for Your LIFE!

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?
GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION
THE KINGDOM OF GOD
THE GREAT APOSTASY
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?
HELL AND THE DEVIL
TRINITY OR UNITY?
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE ATONEMENT
THE SABBATH

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THE WINDOW CURE

“WHAT’S all the commotion I hear?” demanded Mother sternly as she switched on the light in Joyce and Jean’s bedroom.

“Oh Mother!” cried Joyce, “go down to the foot of the bed, and *see* if Jean isn’t over on my side!”

“I’m not!” contradicted Jean. “She’s on *my* side. Tell her to move over, Mother.”

Mother was a little amused at what she saw. Both girls were crowded into the middle of the bed, as close together as they could possibly get—with plenty of room on either side of them! But her lips closed firmly—something had to be done about this quarreling habit; she was seeing too much of it.

“Move over, both of you!” she said. Then she sat down beside the girls’ bed. “I want to tell you a story,” she began, “about the Kilkenny Cats.

“Once upon a time there were two cats. One was all black, with a white tip on his tail. The other was white, and the tip of his tail was black.

“These cats were always fighting. When the white cat would lay before the fire and doze and the black cat would come into the room, up would spring the white cat, his back humped up and his tail fluffed out. The two cats would growl at each other, and hiss and spit and call each other all kinds of names. They would act just like two little girls I know.”

Joyce and Jean looked at each other. Mother pretended not to notice and went on.

“One day some boys saw the cats growling at each other in the back yard. They tied the two cats together by the ends of their tails and hung them

over the clothesline and left them. ‘By morning,’ said one of the boys, ‘they’ll have had enough of each other.’

“But when the boys went back in the morning to take the cats down, there was nothing left but the tips of two tails—one black and the other white. They had eaten each other up!”

“Oh Mother! how horrible,” cried Joyce.

“They couldn’t have done that, Mother, could they?”

“No,” smiled Mother, “they couldn’t, of course. That’s just a story. But it tells us something we need to learn about ourselves. We never do each other any good by quarreling. One little girl will say something biting to another little girl, and back and forth the biting will go until there is really nothing left to bite. Now each of you tonight has said that the other was selfish; worse than that, you have each said the other was lying. You are just biting each other, to see who can take the biggest bite out of the other. You are eating up all that is good, all the unselfishness and the truthfulness, and I’m afraid that some day there’ll be no goodness left in my two little girls. It will all be eaten up—and just the bad will be left.”

“Oh Mother, we won’t quarrel any more. Really, we won’t,” volunteered Jean.

But the very next day the two girls were doing the dishes, and the sharp words were flying again.

“I said *I* wanted to dry tonight, and you can wash.”

“No, it’s *my* turn to dry them. Mother said so. So move over—it’s *my*—”

“I thought,” interrupted Mother, “that my black and white kittens had stopped fighting.”

But Joyce and Jean paid no attention. “It’s *my* turn,” insisted Jean.

“No it isn’t! You just had your turn yesterday.”

Mother opened the cupboard and took out two

(Continued on page 23)



UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

World Religions

HUMANITY is indebted to the religious leaders of the past. While the world situation is and has been far from ideal, it might have been worse had it not been for the civilizing influence of the major faiths.

Confucianism taught the Chinese people to work and to respect the rights of others. Kindness was uppermost in the teachings of Confucius. Islam, the faith of the Moslems, has had a definite civilizing influence on the Arab nations that have embraced it. The Koran, their rule of law, imposes stiff penalties for crimes of violence, and today those nations are less violent than our more highly educated nation. Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists and Shintos all profess non-violence; and while they do not control all their people, they do have a definite effect.

Religion has been defined by one as "the eternal a civilizing force or an influence toward non-violence if it is to be of value. It must give purpose and direction to life; it must point toward higher goals than merely getting along with one's neighbors.

Religion, however, must be something more than a quest for the meaning of life." Seeking the meaning of life is good, but unless that quest leads somewhere while the seeker lives, it is of little value. This life, with all its trials and tribulations, is good. Few would deny it. But true religion should give to life a broader dimension through hope—a hope founded on the solid rock of God's Word, underwritten by God Himself. Such a hope removes the futility and adds purpose and zest to life. Such is the hope of the true Christian.

The religions we have covered in these studies to this point lack this hope. Some offer a measure of comfort; all may be civilizing. But all lack the most important ingredient, the one thing that only a living God can give—the hope of eternal life. Gods of men's minds, whether heroes or self-proclaimed prophets, can offer nothing that does not end in the grave.

In this issue we will briefly cover another religion which has greatly influenced history—Judaism.

VI. JUDAISM

The development of the Jewish religion and of Israel as a nation is intertwined with the life of Abraham and his descendants. Abraham was the first of the Hebrew race to be called to serve God. He had lived in "Ur of the Chaldees," a progressive city in southern Babylonia. From there he had emigrated with his father Terah to the north and west into Mesopotamia, and from thence into Canaan in answer to the call of the Almighty.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram [later called Abraham], Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great" (Gen. 12:1-2).

God called Abraham to be the head of spiritual Israel, all those who would believe God and come into His service. "Abraham believed God," reported Paul the apostle, "and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). Abraham believed the words of the Lord and obeyed, leaving the comforts of city-dwelling for the life of a herdsman in Canaan.

Abraham was already 75 years old when God delivered to him His first mandate to leave his homeland. When Isaac, the child of promise, was born, Abraham was 100 years old. Sixty years later Isaac's son Jacob was born. It was to Jacob that an angel of the Lord gave the name Israel, the name retained by the Jewish people until this day.

God had promised Canaan, the land now known as Palestine, to Israel and his descendants as a possession; but it was to be more than 400 years before they would inherit their land. Jacob became the father of 12 sons who with their father and their families went down into Egypt to escape a famine in the land. Here they were made slaves of the Egyptians for 400 years, fulfilling the prophecy of the Lord to Abraham.

God had also promised that He would bring them again into their land (Gen. 15:14), and He called Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land. It required 40 years of encampment in the wilderness to civilize them and

to teach them the benefits of obedience. God was with them throughout the long journey that often seemed to go nowhere. He gave them His laws and made a covenant with them. He provided them with food and clothing.

Israel is the only nation to have been chosen by God for His own, but their status as the chosen people was conditioned on their obedience to His laws. He gave them a territory and laws and established them as His Kingdom on earth. He was their King.

In return for His favors He demanded obedience: "Keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out" (Lev 20:22). There was always the possibility of their losing God's favor. "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, . . . But . . . if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, . . . all these curses shall come upon thee, . . . and the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other" (Deut. 28:1-2, 15, 64).

Many times Israel temporarily forgot her God, but at the urging of a God-sent deliverer they repented and turned again to Him. The nation's entire history is a cycle of rebellion, retribution, repentance and restoration. In the end, there was no repentance and God allowed them to be dispersed among all the nations as He had said.

Israel's rebellion against God in demanding an earthly king was the beginning of the end. God allowed them a king, but a king of His choosing. For 120 years Israel remained a united kingdom. David, the second king, was an able ruler and he left a well-organized and prosperous kingdom to his son Solomon. To this day, David's reign is looked upon as the "Golden Age" of Israel, and his kingdom is seen as the ideal kingdom.

Solomon failed to exercise the judgment of his father. He taxed the people heavily to pay for his extravagance and became unpopular. After his death, his son Rehoboam set out to continue his father's policies and found himself rejected, the people favoring a commoner named Jereboam. Rehoboam was able to retain only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin for his kingdom (known as **Judah**), while the remaining tribes (known as **Israel**) followed Jeroboam. The land was divided with Rehoboam restricted to the southern part. Jeroboam ruled the northern kingdom.

The division fulfilled the prophecy of the Lord, but from the moment of the split the fortunes of Israel declined steadily until eighteen kings and about 240 years later Samaria fell to the Assyrians and the best of the people were taken captive. The southern kingdom was able to stand about 140 years longer, but in the end they saw their beloved Jerusalem fall to the Babylonians and they too became slaves of a foreign nation, Babylon.

God had done on His part. He had sent them His laws and prospered them when they obeyed. He sent prophets to warn them that their disobedience would mean their downfall, but they would not hearken and they fell victim to their own rebellion. Israel was no longer a nation; but some years later, a remnant of the people returned and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and re-settled in their homeland. The temple was rebuilt and worship restored. In the interval between the return in 538 B. C. and 70 A. D. when the city was again destroyed there was much strife and almost constant warfare.

Judaism in the time of Christ was represented by the Pharisees and Sadducees as the two principal sects. The Pharisees were the more influential and maintained spiritual authority with the majority of the people. They held to strict obedience of the ceremonial law and demanded observance of the minutest details. Many times they were found in conflict with Jesus. He openly chided them for their failures: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23).

Judaism never acknowledged Christ as the Messiah, and it was their Sanhedrin that held the mock trial and condemned Him to be crucified.

A. Judaism Today

Judaism today is a far cry from the tightly knit band known as the children of Israel that settled in the Promised Land after the exodus from Egypt. Judaism today has no Moses or Joshua to lead, but it is a divided congregation, each holding to the laws and traditions they deem most important.

The Jews have through the years remained loyal to their nationality. One Jew is bound to another by the simple virtue of having been born of a Jewish mother. They remain a closely allied ethnic group although scattered throughout the continents of the world. The divine forecast was that they should be scattered—and scattered they are. According to the 1973 religious population census

there are approximately 14 million Jews living in the world today. There are some on every continent, but the largest concentrations are in the United States and in the Jewish state of Israel.

God gave the land of Canaan to the children of Israel as a possession when He brought them out of Egypt, but the Jewish race has occupied the state during less than one third of their history. Jewish independence has been even more short-lived, amounting to about one eighth of the time. Because of its strategic location, Israel has felt the tread of warrior's boots more than any other land in the world. The original kingdom of Israel lasted until Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, about 587 B. C. In 1948, Israel again became a nation, a homeland for the Jews, but through human initiative rather than by divine decree. God had no part in it other than to allow it. The state of Israel is now inhabited by about half the Jewish population of the world.

Judaism today is divided into three main branches: **Orthodox**, who claim to hold to all the precepts of the Mosaic law; **Reformed**, who accept the Mosaic law, but not in its entirety; and **Conservative**, who fall somewhere in between, accepting much of the Law but allowing for some adjustments.

B. Jewish Beliefs

One characteristic noticeable in Jewish literature is tolerance. In Judaism there is room for all viewpoints on all issues. There is no fixed canon, no catechism, no papacy, no high priest, no confessions. There is no supreme ecclesiastical body with authority over all Jews.

After the exile and the dispersion, the Jews met in congregations called synagogues. This pattern has remained and Jewish synagogues are to be found throughout the world. The synagogue is headed by a rabbi, but a rabbi is a teacher, not a priest. His only authority is to teach the law. He administers no sacraments, performs no ablutions.

Judaism is primarily a way of life; it is a "here and now" religion. There is no teaching of salvation, no emphasis on a future life. In the words of one rabbi, "Most Jews have assented to the judgment that 'One hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is better than the whole life of the world to come.'" Doing the good deed, living the good life, is its own reward.

Although diversity of belief is permissible in Judaism, there are a few cardinal doctrines to which all subscribe. We will list a few.

1. One God. This belief is the common denominator of all Judaism. The words of Moses, "Hear O

June, 1975

Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," are at the center of the beliefs of every Jew. This statement, known as the **Shema**, is repeated first in Hebrew and then in English at every synagogue meeting. **Judaism, to its eternal credit, rejects the common theological belief in the Trinity, insisting as did Moses, on the absolute Oneness of God.**

2. The Messiah. The coming of the Messiah was the hope and lively expectation of all ancient Jews. But when Christ came as the Messiah, the Jews as a people rejected Him. And still today, the majority of Jews refuse to accept Him, believing rather that they as a people form a collective messiah. They see themselves as the "suffering servant" of the prophet Isaiah, as a messianic people destined to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth.

Rabbi Bernstein of our city sets forth some of Judaism's reasons for rejecting Christ: Jesus was said to "fulfill the law," henceforth it could be disregarded. The law was the foundation of Jewish faith, and its annulment was impossible. The Messiah was to usher in the kingdom—a time of justice, truth and peace. Wars, oppression, corruption, continued as before. The real Messiah was yet to come.

"Finally, Jews have rejected Christianity because of the concepts with which the Church fathers buttressed and embellished the new faith in order to make it acceptable to the pagan Roman world. . . . such ideas as Immaculate Conception, virgin birth, trinitarianism, Holy Ghost, vicarious atonement, the assumption of Jesus (and later of Mary), and the 'fall.' The religion of Jesus was understandable to them; it was Jewish. The religion about Jesus was beyond their recognition. They doubted even that Jesus would recognize it."*

We can agree with the rabbi's rejection of some of the concepts of the nominal Christian church, but we cannot agree with the rejection of Christ. The doctrines of immaculate conception, the trinity, a vicarious atonement, the assumption of Mary and the "fall," otherwise known as original sin, are all foreign to the Scriptures—but Christ is central.

Jesus was born of a virgin according to the words of the prophet Isaiah, but He was not born immaculate or perfect. The "assumption of Mary" is purely "assumption," without a word of proof. God is one, not three; Moses truly said, "The Lord our God is one Lord." Jesus' literal death did not atone for the sins of the world, nor are all men sinners

* Rabbi Bernstein, *What the Jews Believe*, pp. 66, 67.

because Adam sinned. We agree with Judaism that man is responsible for his own sin. In the words of the prophet Ezekiel, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20).

We cannot agree, however, on the other points made by the rabbi. The establishment of the Kingdom of God is yet future. The Jews have misunderstood the Scriptures and confused Jesus' first coming with His second coming. When the disciples thought the Kingdom of God should come at that time, Jesus spoke a parable to them indicating that it would be a long time before it came. Shortly before His crucifixion He said to Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world, . . . my kingdom [is] not from hence" (John 18:37).

3. The Sabbath. Observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is considered the sacred privilege of every Jew. It is kept from sundown Friday until sundown Saturday as a sacred day, despite the fact that the Bible makes no mention of either "Friday" or "Saturday." The Jews claim a continuous cycle of seventh-day Sabbaths from the time of Creation and observe the Sabbath as a sacred period of time set aside by God, though they have absolutely no evidence to support this claim—except for statements by their rabbis. The observance of the Sabbath is "among the great affirmations and prohibitions of the Jewish faith," a fact to "be deduced from its place in the Ten Commandments." No other day on the Jewish Calendar is more important.

The Sabbath is kept as a day of rest, of family togetherness. It is considered desirable, but not necessary, to attend Sabbath services at the synagogue. Ordinary activities are to be set aside except where so doing would create hardship. The Orthodox Jew will not cook, ride, light a fire or carry anything (including money) on the Sabbath. The Sabbath meal is special, but it must be prepared the day before. "Sabbath candles" are lighted in Jewish homes each Sabbath.

While Jews profess to keep the Sabbath according to the Law, it is noticeable that while they have kept the rules they have abolished the penalties. Under the Law, the penalty for breaking the Sabbath was death by stoning, harsh punishment as we see it today. The strict observance today by the Jews appears to be more ceremonial and traditional than a rule of law.

4. Jewish Scriptures. The Jewish Bible is divided into three sections: **The Torah**, meaning the Pentateuch, or the first five books of our Bible; **The Prophets**, which is what the name would suggest; and **The Writings**, which include the balance of the Old Testament as we know it. The Torah is read in fixed weekly readings on every Sabbath un-

til the entire law is read. At the completion of Deuteronomy, a few verses are read from Genesis to complete the round and a festival of joy is held.

5. Commandments. The Torah forms the basis of Jewish law. It is said that it contains 613 commands which the Orthodox Jew is expected to keep. In addition, many more are contained in what is known as the **Mishnah**, a volume of about 1,000 pages, and the **Talmud**, which consists of many volumes. These books are held on a par with the Torah. They contain the interpretations of many rabbis which were written mostly since the time of Christ. The directives contained in these volumes are equally as binding as the commands of the Torah for the Orthodox Jew.

Conservative Jews take a more liberal approach, allowing for some adjustments to the Law. Reformed Jews are far more liberal, having disregarded most of the dietary taboos as well as many commands.

6. Holy Days. Strict observance of the Feast Days according to the Law given to Moses is held sacred by all branches of Judaism. First in importance is the Sabbath which is to be kept at home if not at the synagogue. The yearly celebrations of the New Year (the civil in the fall and the religious in the spring), the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur and the Passover are also to be kept. Much that is tradition enters into the keeping of the Feasts.

7. A chosen people? That the Jews are a chosen people, chosen by God to be His for all time, is commonly accepted by Jews regardless of group affiliation. This belief dates back to their miraculous deliverance from Egypt and the promise of the land of Canaan made to Abraham.

The covenant was conditional, however; and when they failed to keep their part of the agreement and disobeyed His commands, the agreement was voided. Simply being a descendant of Abraham did not give them an automatic right to Palestine for all time.

In our next issue we will draw further comparisons between Judaism and Christianity.

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. List four basic differences between ancient and modern Judaism.
2. Why did God cease to work with the Jews as a nation?

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

Spirits and Spirits

THE term "spirit" is common in our vocabulary today. And it has many meanings. We say that a man works with "spirit," meaning that he is energetic, quick and alert. We call a song "spirited" if it is bright and animated. We use "spirit" as a disposition of mind, saying that our friend is "in good spirits." A man shows a willing "spirit" if he is of congenial disposition. And of course there are those "spirits" or imagined beings thought to inhabit an invisible world.

The Bible also uses the term "spirit" in a variety of ways, and with a variety of meanings. Unfortunately, some of these meanings are often overlooked, resulting in confusion and misunderstanding. We have received several questions on the subject, and so will attempt to clarify a few of the more common meanings of "spirit" as used in the Bible.

The original word translated "spirit" in the Bible is *ruach* in the Hebrew and *pneuma* in the Greek. The root meaning of both words is the same: it is "a movement of air," "breeze," or "wind," and so "breath."

The Wind Is Spirit

Air in motion was commonly termed "spirit" by the Hebrew people. They thought of the breeze as the breath of God; the wind and the air we breathe were thought of as God's spirit. Therefore, in Genesis 8:1, *ruach* is a term for the "wind": "God made a wind to pass over the earth." Also in Isaiah 27:8, "he stayed his rough wind in the day of the east wind." Also in Isaiah 40:7, "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." In each verse, the *ruach*, or "spirit," is what we would call "wind."

The Breath Is Spirit

Because the Hebrews believed that air in motion was the spirit of God, it followed then that the breath of man was God's spirit. In other words, the vital principle of a man, shown by breathing, was "spirit," or "the spirit of God."

By His breath, or "spirit," all living things in the universe are animated and filled with life.

Many Bible texts use "spirit" in this way. It is a single "living" property common to all living things. All men and animals and all living beings in creation are animated by this same vital principle, called the breath or "spirit of God." "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast" (Eccl. 3:19). Job thought of his "breath" as the "spirit of God," declaring himself to be alive "all the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils" (Job 27:3).

The Psalmist likewise believed that the breath, which he called the "spirit" of God, is the animating property of all life; its presence means life, and its absence means death. He wrote, "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created" (Ps. 104:29-30). When "the spirit... returns unto God who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7), a man is dead. All human life is dependent on God to supply the breath and thus, the life. Job realized this when he said, "If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:14-15).

Hezekiah spoke of his own life, which God had spared, as "the life of my spirit" (Isa. 38:16), meaning that while he had "spirit" or "breath" he had life from God. There is "no spirit" or "no breath" in something that is dead (see Ezek. 37:8; Hab. 2:19).

For this reason, Moses addressed God as "the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num. 16:22), meaning that He was the God of all created life. This was at the time when Korah, Dathan and Abiram had rebelled against His authority; and Moses, by calling attention to the fact that God is the source of all life, showed the people God's

supreme right to withdraw that gift of life from those who did not deserve to live. Again in Numbers 27:16, Moses called God "the God of the spirits of all flesh" in acknowledgement of His supreme power and man's complete dependence.

The author of Hebrews gave to God the same recognition as the Almighty Father. "... We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of [our] spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9).

Divine Power Is Spirit

The term "spirit" is also applied to God's divine power which He manifests to men, through men, or for men. By means of His "spirit" he revealed His message to the prophets (see Zech. 7:12). Ezekiel was "in a vision by the Spirit of God" (Ezek. 11:24). Isaiah and Micah and Daniel all spoke the word of God as revealed to them by His "spirit" (see Isa. 61:1; Mic. 3:8; Dan. 4:8). Whether this "spirit" revelation was by vision or by impression or by a spoken word, we are not told. But it was some form of the power of God used to convey God's message to His men.

God's power, by which He creates, is also called His "spirit." "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6). "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:13).

By this same divine "spirit," God gives super-knowledge and skill to men. For example, when He appointed men to do the work on the tabernacle, He "called by name Bezaleel" and "filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" (Ex. 31:2-4).

The apostles experienced a measure of this divine "spirit" during Christ's earthly ministry; and the "power from on high" which they received on the day of Pentecost was an even greater bestowal of the same divine spirit, then called the "Holy Spirit" (Acts 2). By it they were able to carry God's message to all parts of the then-known world.

The Mind As Spirit

The Bible uses "spirit" in a totally different sense to refer to man's mind, as the seat of the senses, affections and emotions. A person may show a spirit of love, or of patience; of fear or of pride. Therefore, "He that hath no rule over his

own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls" (Prov. 25:28). The Psalmist prayed that he might have "a right spirit" within him, that is, right feelings, right affections, right attitudes. Speaking of this same type of "spirit," the apostle Paul wrote that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7).

We read that "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18; see also James 4:5). How fortunate that we are able to control this spirit within us!

A Mode of Thinking and Acting

The term "spirit" is also used in the Bible as a mode of thought or action, as in Proverbs 11:13: "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." In the same sense it is used of a disposition, as in Isaiah 19:14: "The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof." The text is rendered more clearly in other translations, as "The Lord has mingled within them a spirit of dizziness; and they have made Egypt reel in all her work" (American Bible). Or, "The Lord has so warped their judgment that they lead Egypt all astray" (Moffatt). Not that the Lord altered the people's minds against their will, but He permitted them to do and think as they wished; and God is said to instigate what He permits. They were perverse and warped in judgment, as men not guided by God have been since time immemorial. But God did not force them to be this way; He merely permitted them to have such a spirit, to think and act perversely.

Saul the king of Israel was overpowered by this same type of spirit, which was an all-pervading state of mind, a mode of thinking—in his case specifically, a bad mood. We read: "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God [the words "from God" are omitted in the Septuagint Version] was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him" (I Sam. 16:23). The fact that Saul "was well" when "the evil spirit departed" shows that the "spirit" was an ill state of mind. The "evil spirit" which overcame him was his own uncontrolled disposition and moodiness. The incident occurred again, as recorded in I Samuel 18:10*, with the same cause and the same cure.

Of Will and Intellect

The human will is also called the "spirit" of a man, as in Proverbs 18:14: "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity." Man possesses by instinct the will to live, and this will may sustain him through prolonged illness and suffering. It is this faculty of man that the Lord may sometimes use to accomplish His plans and purposes. We read how the Lord influenced Cyrus to release the captive Israelites: "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus" (Ezra 1:1). The Lord is supreme and all-powerful, and when it suits His divine purpose He uses as human instruments for shorter-ranged acts men who are not part of His eternal plans. Knowing the "end from the beginning" (Isa. 46:9-10), He is always righteous and just; and He can influence the will of men to act in His behalf, even without those men knowing it. In the same way the Lord was said to stir up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, in order to punish him for his wrongdoing in leading Israel into sin and idolatry (II Chron. 21:16). Whether the Biblical writer said that "the Lord stirred up" the Philistines, or simply that the Philistines came against Jehoram, the meaning would be the same; for God is supreme, and all men and nations are working out His eternal plans and purposes for the benefit of those few who will make themselves part of His eternal creation.

Men have also a "spirit" which is their intellect and seat of understanding. As Job said, "I have heard the check of my reproach; and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer" (Job 20:3). Again, "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8). This "spirit" of man may work for his good or for ill, according to the direction given it by the man himself. Micah 2:11 records a time when it worked evil and falsity: "If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people" (Mic. 2:11). The thought of the text is clearer in the Septuagint; Bible: "Ye have fled, no one pursuing you: thy spirit has framed falsehood"—it was their own

* I Samuel, chapter 18, verses 8 through 11 are omitted in the text of the Septuagint Bible, with a note that they were supplied from the Alexandrian text at a later date. Apparently they are not included in the original Hebrew text.

evil action; no spirit of the Lord was influencing them. Or, "If a man, walking in a false spirit," etc. (American Bible). If we walk by a "false spirit," we allow our minds to lead us into evil, just as James told us a man is tempted (Jas. 1:13-14). It is *our* act of sin, and *we* are to blame.

The Spirit of Truth

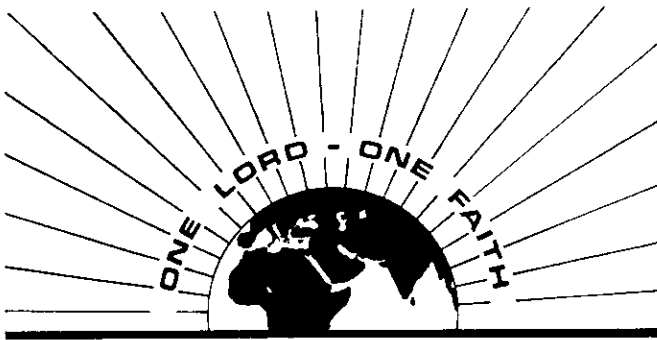
There is yet another "spirit" in the Bible, one which is life-imparting, and that is the spirit of truth. Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). Jesus called His words "spirit" and "life," the quickening power of the spirit-man. Just as the breath gives life to the body, so the words of Jesus, the "spirit," the truth, give life to the spiritual man. They make us "alive" in Christ, as we live by them. They are the transforming power of God to change us so completely that we may "serve in newness of spirit" (Rom. 7:6) and worship God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

The New Testament writers felt a strong bond with this spirit, or word of truth. By it they were led (Rom. 8:14); by it they spoke (I Cor. 12:3). Through it they were sanctified (I Pet. 1:2). In this "one spirit" they stood fast (Phil. 1:27). It united them in the bond of peace and fellowship (Eph. 4:3; Phil. 2:1). It strengthened them with might (Eph. 3:16); it was the same "spirit of faith" which the saints of old possessed, and by which they could say, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken" (II Cor. 4:13). Unlike the "letter which killeth," the "spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:6).

And what this spirit of truth did for them it can do for us. We today have this same spirit, or word of truth; and it can be for us also the way of life!

The spirit of God has breadth and depth and meaning. It comes with power to reach a man's innermost life and deep-seated emotions and feelings. God wants men and women today who are filled with His spirit, His word of truth, men and women who are spiritually *alive*. That is why we must be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

We have been quickened by this spirit of God. Let us walk in it (Gal. 5:25). Let us live by it—it is not an ethereal nothing, but a solid foundation of belief and evidence, of which Jesus Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone. ●●



One King Over All The Earth

The Kingdom of God has been the hope of God's people for ages. Someday soon it will become a reality; events will follow in rapid succession until the Kingdom of God extends "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." It will not be a kingdom of the United States, or a kingdom of Europe, or of India, or of Asia or of the Far East. It will be worldwide. It will affect you and me and everyone living on this earth.

If you have been following the articles in this series, you should know a little more of how that Kingdom will be set up and how all people will come under its dominion.

Study carefully and compare each point with your Bible. Check the evidence closely, and see that it is God's revealed plan according to His Written Word. If you speak another language, translate this study into your native tongue and share it with the people you know. Tell them it is from the Word of God, and that shortly it will come to pass, just as He has promised. Do your part to help spread the message, for "the day of the Lord cometh: it is nigh at hand."

We know nothing can create itself; all things must have a Creator. A building must have a designer and a builder; someone has to do something. Just so with the world in which we live; our Earth had a designer and a builder; someone had to do something to bring it into existence—and that "someone" was God!

The creation of our planet and of man upon it is but a very small part of God's work, but it is a very important part so far as we are concerned; for without it *we* would not be, to say nothing of our possibilities for knowing anything *eternal*. We should be eternally grateful to God for designing and creating our earth and letting us live upon it.

All this has purpose in God's plan, for He does nothing in vain. "For thus saith the Lord that

created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18).

In our previous section we spoke briefly of Armageddon. It is to be a great, worldwide battle. It will be caused by man's resistance to God's authority, and will have just two sides: the forces of God against the forces of men.

When Christ arrives and begins setting up His new government, everyone will hear the all-important announcement: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7).

It would seem that just everyone would welcome such divine deliverance from the sufferings and frustrations of human mismanagement. Some will be willing to surrender; but the great majority will reject the idea of an outside power coming to tell them what they can and cannot do. They will resist; they will even rise up to fight against Christ and His saints.

This is just the situation Jesus pictured in one of His parables. He was comparing Himself to a "nobleman" who "went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke 19:12). In the parable, the nobleman turned over his property to his servants, asking them to take over until his return. The servants are represented as sending a message to the nobleman saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (v. 14).

Jesus was saying that He Himself is the nobleman who was to go away (to heaven) and after "a long time" (Matt. 25:19), to return. But the resistance He will meet upon His return will be real, as pictured in the prophetic book of Revelation: "The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies" will gather together to "make war" against Him (Rev. 19:19; 16:14, 16).

All the modern machines of warfare will be enlisted against Christ and His army, those who agreed to serve Him but proved unfaithful to their agreement. We learn this from Psalm 17:13, where "the wicked" are called "thy sword": "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword." Also from Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations."

When God entrusts His saving knowledge to men, He does not leave them free to take or leave it at their whim. Knowledge brings responsibility; those who agree to serve God must live according to their agreement, or they will be compelled to pay for their evil deeds by serving in the Lord's army.

Before God's kingdom can be a worldwide, working government, all nations must submit to Christ. And according to the Word of God, this will require the destruction of two thirds of the earth's population, because the majority will resist the new authority. We read, "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God" (Zech. 13:8-9).

From the beginning of history there have been wars and more wars. Does Armageddon sound like one more? It will be, but it will be very different. Wars through the centuries have caused untold suffering, the innocent often being victims. But Armageddon will be under God's direction, and only the wicked element will be destroyed. The Bible tells us that "in righteousness he doth judge and make war." No innocent person will be cut off or have to suffer, for "he is just in judgment and just in war" (Rev. 19:11, NEB).

The results of this battle are known in advance: The Lord and His army will be victorious. The earth will then be ready for the setting up of God's Kingdom. For "the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (Zech. 14:9). Never will there be another war because "he maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth" (Ps. 46:9). Other wars have been fought as "war to end wars," and there have been more. But this battle will be the last, for henceforth the earth shall be under *one* supreme authority. No foreign nations will resist or invade, for there will be no foreign nations.

The conflict of Armageddon over, the Millennium will begin, the one-thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints over the nations of earth. Christ and His saints, then immortal, will be rulers—"they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him for the thousand years" (Rev. 20:4, Phillips).

That thousand years will be a time of peace and worldwide prosperity and happiness such as our earth has never known. A few details of this new era are revealed:

Far-reaching Educational Programs

Those who possess the knowledge of God, Christ and the saints, will inaugurate a new worldwide educational program, the greatest the earth has ever known. People who will become the populace

of the Kingdom must be trained, informed and disciplined. They must learn to live together in peace and harmony; they must learn how to guide their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord." They must learn the laws of the new government and how to obey them. During this time, all will be taught God's law: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:34). Obedience to God's law will blot out past sins; "none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live" (Ezek. 33:16).

No Open Sin

Death will still be in the land, but sin cannot be done openly. "And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21). Turning from the right way will result in immediate punishment.

Officers of Peace

Isaiah the prophet gives us a preview of that grand time: "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise" (Isa. 60:17-18).

Longer Lifespan

"... the former troubles are forgotten, . . . For, 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 be no more 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 an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." (Isa. 65:16-20).

Sorrow and pain will be a thing of the past. A person who reaches 100 years in our day is rare, but in that wonderful time, one will still be a "child" at 100 years!

Shortly before the end of the Millennium there is
(Continued on page 23)

Kathy
Kandor's
Korner

The Frequent Sin

"OH, Neal!" I greeted him as the door opened. "Where's Janet? Where could she be? Here it is five-thirty and she isn't home yet! She always phones if she is going to be late. *What* do you suppose has happened to her? She couldn't be at school *this* late. What if she's sick? Or maybe she's been in an accident, or kidnapped, or—" my voice broke with the horrible things that raced through my mind.

"Now, now, Kathy." Neal's voice was calm and deliberate as he removed his jacket and placed a cool hand on my forehead. "You're just worrying, and it's no use."

"But Neal, something *must* have happened. She's always home before *this*. Such terrible things happen these days, I can't help but—"

"I know, Kathy, but why get upset when you don't *know*? What good can your worrying possibly accomplish?"

I bit my lip and shook my head as I picked up a cake tin to wash it. How could Neal be so unconcerned? Surely he loved our daughter as much as I.

"Kathy, ever hear about the robin and the sparrow?"

"Yes, yes," I responded very matter-of-factly, and the words went through my mind.

*Said the Robin to the Sparrow,
"I should really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so."*

*Said the Sparrow to the Robin,
"Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father
Such as cares for you and me."*

"Kathy, when you worry like this, you're telling God by your actions that you don't quite trust Him to do what is right. Really, Kathy, worry is a *sin*!"

"A *sin*?" I looked up at my husband in shocked surprise. "Sin" sounded *bad*!

"Worry is a sin, and a serious and damaging one."

"But Neal, aren't *you* concerned? You don't seem to understand. Janet should have been home *long* ago. Something *must* have happened."

"But Kathy, you aren't looking at it right. Is all your worrying helping Janet any, if she is in trouble?"

I had no answer.

"Do you think it is helping Kathy any?"

Still no answer.

"Or Neal?"

I felt his kindly hand on my shoulder as he smiled affectionately.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't let myself worry like this, but—"

"But you forget that we have the Lord to help us through all our problems, if we are trying to do what is right. Remember that verse in Proverbs, 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' When God says to trust Him with all our heart, He means *all*—and all the time, when everyone is safe at home and when they are not. When we worry, we're really insulting Him, like telling Him He isn't able to watch out for Janet as well as we would."

I glanced up at the clock.

"I saw a clipping the other day that I'd like to read you. Just a minute. Let me find it." Neal disappeared into the other room and in a moment was back.

"Worry opens doors for other sins," he began. "It encourages doubt and disbelief. It often leads to the wrong use of one's money and possessions. It dulls the sweetness of the Word of God and discourages prayer. It sours the disposition and shrinks the—"

"Isn't that overdrawing the picture a bit?" I interrupted.

"Let me read on. 'It shrinks the generous heart. It stifles the song of praise and deadens the testimony of God's power in the life of the Christian. Worry makes one's chosen work a chore to be somehow gotten through. It brings physical exhaustion and innumerable little physical distresses.' Is that right, Kathy?"

Neal went on. "It kills joy and laughter and

speeds up old age. It robs a man of his sleep. It dulls the pleasure of friendship, destroys dreams and goals, and condemns one to a life of pettiness."

"I guess you're right, Neal. Worry is a sin. And the sooner I confess and forsake it, the better off I'll be." I thought of the numberless hours I had wasted in needless worry. Neal must have been saving that bit of reading just for me.

"Instead of worrying, Kathy, let's pray and ask God to give us the strength we need to meet whatever comes. He'll see us through, I'm *sure* He will!"

The door burst open and in bounced Janet, bubbling with excitement. "Oh Mother! Daddy! you should have—"

She had been gone just long enough for me to learn a much-needed lesson.

Perhaps you learned it long ago. If not, keep trying. It's really worth learning.

Trusting instead of worrying,

Kathy

One Lord One Faith

(Continued from page 21)

a rebellion on the earth. During this period all evil has been suppressed, but men have been allowed to harbor it in their thoughts if they chose. During this time the nations are mortal, and as mortals they still possess their human nature. All are not yet willing to be held to the line, to walk strictly in obedience to God's law. The evil in the heart suddenly reaches the boiling point and a rebellion ensues. We learn of the event from the Revelator: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan [representing evil and evil men] shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, . . . and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Rev. 20:7-9).

This revolution marks the beginning of the end. Those that rebel are cut off by the power of the Almighty; they have lost their chance to inherit the Kingdom. Then follows a second resurrection to restore to mortal life all who have died during the thousand years. Those that survived Armageddon by submitting to the new rule must now be judged and rewarded. Those worthy will be rewarded with immortality to become the populace of God's everlasting kingdom.

The words of God which we now know only as

The Window Cure

(Continued from page 12)

small rags and two bottles of window cleaner.

"Now," she said briskly, "I'll wash the dishes. And I want you girls to wash something else." She handed a bottle and a cloth to each and gestured for them to follow her.

What was Mother up to now? The girls wondered. Was she going to scrub their *faces*?

But no—she sent Joyce outside to work on the outside of the living room window, and put Jean to work on the inside.

"Now, girls," she said, opening the window a little, "I want you to clean this window thoroughly. But *scowl* all the while you are doing it. Don't *smile* at each other *at all*. Understand? Quarrel all you want to while the glass is between you, so you won't be able to eat each other up. I don't want Daddy to come home tonight and find nothing left of his two little girls."

And Mother took up the dish towel to finish the dishes while they worked on the window.

Poor Joyce and Jean! It was so hard to scowl when you *had* to! They tried and tried, but finally burst out laughing. How foolish all their quarreling seemed now!

When the window was finished and both girls were again in the kitchen, Mother had a long talk with both of them.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourselves?" she asked at last.

"Yes, Mother, I am," said Joyce.

"And I am, too," added Jean. "I love Joyce."

"Then let's not have any more quarreling. All right?"

The two girls assented. But of course, that was not quite the end of it. Things seemed to keep going wrong between them, but always one of them would remember in time and say, "We'd better be quiet—or Mother will have us washing windows again! ●●"

promises will become a living reality: "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. 21:4). Then "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

This will all come to pass, "for these words are true and faithful" (Rev. 21:5). ●●

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

“What do you think about this bringing of so many Vietnamese people to this country? It doesn't sound good to me. I wonder if it will lead to the fulfilling of some prophecy in the Bible. I don't know of one. I thought this country already had all the people it could expect to feed as it should.”

Recent events in Vietnam add another sad chapter to the story of man's inhumanity of man to man. And our hearts naturally go out to the innocent sufferers involved.

As to what is the proper action for our nation to take, opinions differ. In such issues we refrain from taking sides or becoming entangled. The problem is in the hands of our heads of state. To them we trust the full administration of the affairs of state, knowing that they will act to the best of their wisdom and ability. Whether they do what we personally might be inclined to feel is best should not concern us. Our business is to serve God “acceptably, with reverence and godly fear” and let those who administer the affairs of state deal with matters of national concern. Our duty is to not resist their action; for if we resist them, we are resisting God's ordinance (see Romans 13:1-2).

We know of no Bible prophecy that would apply to the situation in Vietnam. The time has not yet come when God is directly managing the world's affairs.

“I have noticed in your literature where you base your arguments on secular historians such as Gibbon instead of the writings of the Church Fathers and other sacred sources. This is especially true of your evidence that the Holy Spirit was withdrawn after the Apostolic Age. If you will read the writings of various members of the Christian Church during the second, third, fourth centuries and so on, you will see where they had personal experiences with the Holy Spirit.”

We hold the Bible to be the sole basis for all our beliefs and our only source of information concerning God and His plan. However, there are times when it becomes necessary to look to outside sources—not as a basis for belief but as a witness to the truthfulness and fulfillment of Bible prophecy. This is necessary in reference to the withdrawing of the Holy Spirit power after the Apostolic Age. The Bible having been completed about A. D. 70, we could not expect to find in it any record of

events which occurred at a later time.

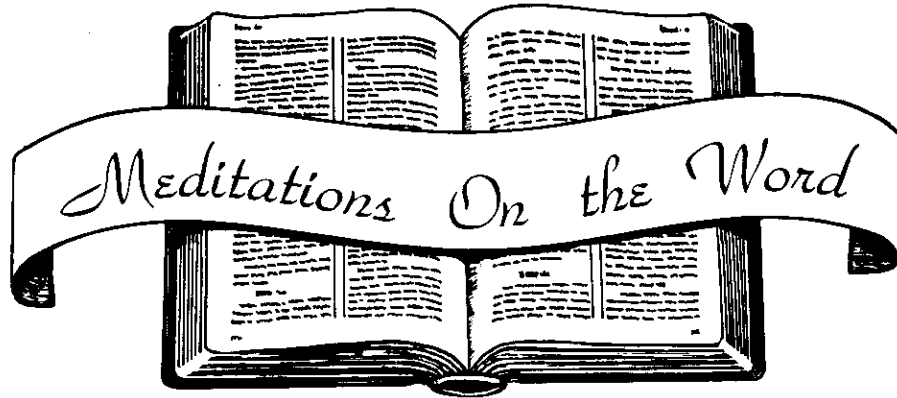
There are basically two sources to which we might look for information: secular history and sacred history. Of the two, we choose the secular generally, as a multitude of diverse beliefs were extant during the years immediately following the Apostolic Age, and the limited sources available to us today are not sufficient to permit us to judge which would be reliable authority and which would not be reliable. Of course the same problem exists in quoting secular historians; but it would seem that a secular historian would be less biased in his thinking than a member of a particular sect of the church who was perhaps writing to promote his own beliefs.

Our quotations from literature outside the Bible serve only a secondary purpose. We do not quote to *present* the truth, but only to *verify* or *reaffirm* that which the Bible has already stated to be true. In the case of the withdrawing of the Holy Spirit, we quote historians to *verify* the fulfillment of what the Bible prophesied. We do not use any source outside the Bible as a *basis* for faith—we base our belief on the strong and sure foundation of the Word of God and what it teaches and “prove all things” by it.

“Could you explain why in your booklet, *The Coming of Jesus and Elijah and the Great Battle of Armageddon*, on page 8 you say the Ancient of days is Christ, and on page 13 you say ‘One like the Son of man’ is Christ. You leave out the part of Daniel 7:13 which says they ‘came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.’ I believe this is plain that Jesus is coming up to the Father.”

Your criticism is in order; we are at fault. Verses 9 and 13 refer to two different individuals.

The context of Daniel 7:9-10 defines the “Ancient of days” as Christ. This personage is to sit as Judge. That definitely is Christ's role. The “one like the Son of man [who] came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days” must be another individual. Verse 14 pictures him as the personage to whom will be given “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom,” etc.; hence it would fit perfectly that this other individual was Christ's true Church or “bride.” There seems to be no basis for this second personage being God, as you suggest. Verse 27 reveals clearly who shall receive the kingdom: “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”●



"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15)

THE Psalmist here expresses cause for a satisfaction that outshines any satisfaction we can obtain in life, that hope of awaking with God's likeness. The term satisfaction expresses an attitude of contentment with one's lot, of physical well-being, of peace and tranquility.

Many times through life we are obliged to be satisfied with conditions that do not fully meet this definition. Often it is difficult to make financial ends meet, hence we find we must be satisfied with a standard of living far below the ideal. Again, our physical health may not be up to par, yet if we cannot improve it we must be satisfied with it, and make the most of the health we have.

When we speak of enduring satisfaction as applied to anything in our mortal life, what we actually mean is, relatively enduring. Nothing here is really enduring. Life itself does not last, hence any satisfaction that we individually may develop ends with our demise.

Merchants trying to sell the public on quality rather than price sometimes play up the factor of lasting satisfaction, employing the slogan, "quality is

remembered long after price is forgotten." And their point is well taken. We may occasionally get a bargain, be able to purchase something for less money than its value actually represents, but as a general rule we get just what we pay for. And usually the quality is remembered long after the price is forgotten.

In Jesus' parable of the Treasure Hid in a Field, the price of that field was so high that he who would possess it must sell all that he had to raise the purchase price. But eternity is a long time for one to enjoy the fruits of his labor. Hence the quality of the reward will be remembered long, long after the price is forgotten.

The other side of the picture was covered by Jesus' parable of the man whose ground brought forth plentifully. This man was so completely satisfied with the way things were going that he said to himself: "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

But alas! his satisfaction was not enduring. God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:18-21).

In choosing our values in the spiritual life we often are too easily satisfied. We are too apt to be attracted by the cheap glamor of the things a worldly life has to offer, and forget how worthless and unsatisfying they are. We have been much like the lark which, in the legend, traded feathers for worms. As the lark was about to soar into the air to sing his morning song he saw an old man passing near him with a basket of earthworms. The hungry lark thought he could spare just one wing feather for a succulent worm, so made the proposition, and the old man consented to swap on that basis. The same thing happened morning after morning. There was no noticeable change in the skylark's appearance, or his ability to fly. A morning came, however, when he was unable to lift himself by his wings. He had lost too many feathers. (To page 27)



LETTERS

Deceased

My husband (Joseph Garner) passed away April 9. He was 86 years old and had been in poor health for the past several years.

Phoenix, Arizona

Mrs. Hazel Garner

Besides his wife, Brother Garner is survived by three sons, Wayne, Ben and Melvin. He had been a long-time subscriber to the Megiddo Message.—EDITOR.

To Be "Winners"

I was looking over an essay my son is working on for a school project. It was about racing and racing cars. What he had written there could well apply for a Christian's life. I will copy a few lines of it.

"The stakes are high and it is every man for himself. When the checkered flag comes down, win or lose, the race is over. We do not get a second chance."

That is how it is in a person's life. If we want to be among the "winners," we must forever be on our toes, as the stakes are high and we don't know when the checkered flag will come down for us and the race will be over.

We must remember, too, that we do not get a second chance. If we did, how different things would be. We would not live the same type of life again. But the sad truth is that we do not get a second chance. So we must make the most of the one we have.

Ayr, Ontario, Canada

Mrs. H.

God's Provisions

Our God has provided us with all sorts of plant life to behold, and to use for our needs. Some grow quickly, others take a long time. I have some pine on my farm which I think must be well over one hundred years old. A few years ago we cut and drew oak logs which, as I recall, had over two hundred fifty rings, a few of the stumps measuring four feet across.

We certainly can see and enjoy the wonders of nature in our section of the earth. And then to think of all the other parts of the world, each with its different kinds of plant life and trees.

Now who hath created all these things—and not only the earth, but also heaven? The Lord is His name. If we would like to have fellowship with the great Creator, we must walk in the light even as He is in the light.

Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness and walk as children of light, putting our trust in Him who is able to turn the shadow of even death itself into the morning.

Fort Plain, New York

R. V.

Striving

I don't get too discouraged too often, but I do have to be honest with myself to realize I am far from perfect. I have to work out the old and work in the new. And it takes a lot of time and effort.

I spend time each day studying some portion of Scripture for my spiritual food for that day. It gives me something solid to hold on to.

La Grande, Oregon

L. L. P.

Appreciative

This is a short note of appreciation for the literature I receive. I am grateful indeed for the thought and work that is put into it, for there is much solid food for our spiritual growth. I earnestly look forward to receiving the *Megiddo Message* each month. We not only read but meditate on the lessons and compare with Bible reference.

This has encouraged us in Bible reading and has been a wonderful help to us in many ways. Henceforth we shall continue to build our house with faith and hope on a sure foundation which is in our Lord and Saviour. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

A. L.

Morning Praise

Every morning is good. I am always thankful every morning that I have been given one more day of life, one more day to ready myself for life eternal.

We all love life, but are we proving it by our actions? It takes all of our mind and might and strength. We have no time for the forbidden interests of the world.

We need much courage and fortitude to stand against every foe, within and without, and relentlessly force ourselves upward.

We certainly have a generous, patient Father to loan us so much time and opportunity, and to offer us such a great reward. One would think that when we think of the reward we would get all worked up and anxious. And we do for a while, then some little thing creeps in and if we are not watchful we fall.

We have had plenty of examples before us to follow. Our trials are really small compared to what many of old had to endure.

Winterset, Iowa

F. B.

Using Opportunity

God is sufficiently kind to every man, to help him according as his need shall be, so long as it be within the divine will. I know He has been giving me help in many ways.

But I do not want to be ignorant of the fact that my duty is to God, and to my fellowman, not to myself. Though I may be a person fortunate enough to live in such a good country as Canada, strong enough in health to work for a living, and intelligent enough to order the affairs of my life in a proper manner, I am warned not to be proud. Rather, I should be thankful for these blessings which have been bestowed upon me.

God has lifted me up to show me that I am not what I should be, but that I should start life every day anew and walk in the paths of righteousness the Lord has laid out for all who desire His blessing.

British Columbia, Canada

Mr. F.

Meditations On the Word

(Continued from page 25)

In selling his birthright for a "single meal," Esau received but temporary satisfaction. At the moment he may have thought that meal was most essential. However, the day came when he saw his mistake, but he "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12:17).

There is grave danger of our being too easily satisfied with ourselves, with our progress in the divine life. Every way of man being right in his own eyes, it is a work to judge and condemn ourselves for our halfhearted service to God with the rigor that our slowness of heart deserves. Too often we look into the "mirror"—God's revealing law—with a hand covering our deformities and moral defects, so they will not look so bad to us as they really are.

In Proverbs 14:14 we read about a man who is "satisfied from himself." Perhaps it is easier for a man to be satisfied *with* himself than *from* himself. In other words it is easier for him to be satisfied with himself as he is than to expend the necessary effort to form the godly character to warrant that satisfaction. Moffatt translates that text: "He who goes wrong must take the consequences: the good man reaps the harvest of his deeds."

The man who is double-minded, trying to serve God a part of the time and self a part of the time, will never get the enduring satisfaction. In fact he does not reap the same satisfaction from this present life as does the man who serves God with all his mind, might and strength. He may think at times that he is enjoying himself, but there is always that guilty feeling back in his mind. He knows he is not serving God one hundred per cent.

A craftsman engaged in a type of work requiring great skill and application had just finished a superior piece of work. An admirer said: "There is your best piece of work." "No!" was the quick answer of the artisan, "tomorrow's work must be still better." And that is the correct formula for a successful Christian life. We must never be satisfied with ourselves as we are. The apostle Paul besought his brethren at Thessalonica that as they had received of him how they ought to walk and to please God, so they would "abound more and more" (I Thess. 4:1).

But to obtain a satisfaction that is truly gratifying and enduring we must take ourselves entirely out of our present sphere of mortal existence and project ourselves into God's glorious Tomorrow.

June, 1975

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This satisfaction is voiced in Ps. 36:8, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." These words dramatically picture the eternal reward for a righteous life: "Abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house." The inheritors of glory shall bask in the sunshine of eternal bliss, lacking nothing to make them contented and happy. "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." Try to contemplate a river of pleasures. By comparison our pleasures of today are but a trickle, and always mixed with sorrow or apprehension.

In our memory verse the Psalmist shows he is fully cognizant of the ultimate in enduring satisfaction. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." He longed for the physical change, yearned to have his mortal body changed to the image of the heavenly. But he also realized that ever to look upon God's face he must develop qualities of righteousness, must first reflect the mental and moral image of his Maker in his own life. ●●



God of Our Life

*Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory streams from sun and star;
Center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each faithful heart how near!
Sun of our life, Thy quick'ning ray
Sheds on our path the glow of day;
Star of our hope, Thy soften'd light
Cheers the long watches of the night.*

*Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose word is love,
Before Thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no luster of our own.*

*Grant us Thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for Thee,
Till all Thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heav'nly flame.*

Amen.

