



Megiddo

Message

*Almighty God, who has given
us this good land for our heritage:
We humbly beseech Thee that we may always
prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and
glad to do Thy will. Bless our land with honorable in-
dustry, sound learning and pure manners. Save us from violence,
discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogancy, and from every evil
way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multi-
tudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the
spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy Name we entrust the authority
of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and
that through obedience to Thy law, we may show forth Thy
praise among the nations. In the time of prosperity,
fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in
the day of trouble suffer not our
trust in Thee to fail; we ask
through Jesus Christ.
Amen.*

Megiddo Message

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The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Editorially Speaking...

"Iron Curtain"--American Style

FOR nearly two centuries religion has enjoyed unprecedented freedom in the United States. With burgeoning membership rolls and swelling budgets, churches are investing millions in new buildings to house additional worshippers.

But statistical measurements have never been a serious consideration in the plans of God. His people have from ancient times been "the fewest of all people," "a very small remnant," even being likened to "gleaning grapes" and "an handful of corn... upon the top of the mountains." Unrestricted by a sparsity of human participants, He demands quality, depth, intensity.

What concerns all potential members of His true Church today is the uncertainty of its overall general spiritual health. We may have a veritable fever of activity around the church, something going all the time. But is our activism our religion? Are we by activity seeking to conceal the barrenness of our spiritual lives?

There is always an abundance of words in all organizations, Christians not excepted. We have routine, duties, committees, grades and goals. But what about the searching questions we should be asking ourselves, questions of life and death and holiness and right? What is it all about? *Where* are we going? *What* are we doing?

We are not the first people to be threatened by the dangers of spiritual barrenness. It happened centuries ago. As a matter of fact, a good portion of the Letter to the Hebrews is about this very subject. The writer is seeking to stir up the Hebrew Christians to whom he addresses himself. It was not excessive prosperity which was endangering them, but the threat of persecution. Some were growing fearful and indifferent. The Letter reminds them of the tragic history of the children of Israel who, despite all of God's blessings, rebelled against Him and so lost their inheritance in the Promised Land. They ought to have been gratefully obedient, but they were not.

Do not be like them, this great preacher is telling his readers. Nobody was ever more richly blessed than those people. God had rescued them from Egypt's slavery, miraculously preserved their lives, given them the Law at Sinai, fed them with manna in the wilderness. But still they complained and rebelled and hardened their hearts.

That is a relevant word to us today. No people ever had it so good as we have in America. God has been most patient with us and spared us from many a woe. But the storm warnings are up. Things don't look good—it takes no prophet to see that. We had better listen to the Voice, and not put up an iron curtain of material and secular preoccupation. We can choose to drown out God's voice with pleasure, adding material luxury to luxury. We can drown it out by being feverishly busy, even in the church. But we do so at our peril.

"Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."●

The Pre-Existence of Christ

FACT or FABLE?

DID CHRIST exist as a Deity in heaven prior to His mortal birth of the Virgin Mary? Was He a God made man, or is such an idea only a creation of post-Biblical times?

We continue our discussion of this major doctrine with a correspondent who holds firmly to the traditions of Fundamental religion. (The words in boldface type are those of our correspondent; the regular type which follows is the editor's answer.)

"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." We do well to ask ourselves what John means by the phrase 'is come in the flesh.' Only an ignoramus would deny that Jesus lived here as a human being nineteen centuries ago. Even avowed infidels believe this, some even being prepared to give a glowing description of the wonderful man He was. In view of the fact that there is general acceptance of the fact that Jesus was a man here on earth, what is it that John wants us to accept thus proving that we are of God? It is simply the fact that the Jesus Christ of Old Testament times, who had been with the Father through eternal ages of the past, came into this world as a human being. A refusal to accept this great truth brands us as Anti-christ."

The foregoing is a broad statement without proof. Doubtless you believe you can adduce sufficient proof, but honest analysis will reveal the fallacy of your position. It simply is not the teaching of the Bible.

In First John 2:22, John explains who is the Anti-christ. He does not say it is those who deny that Jesus pre-existed, but simply those who deny that Jesus is the Christ. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." A father and son pictures two generations, two distinct persons, not a dual personality.

When John said, "Every spirit that confesseth

that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (I John 4:2-3), what thought was he trying to convey to the recipients of his Epistle? What did he mean by the phrase "is come in the flesh"? What did he want us to accept, thus proving that we are of God?

While to us the fact that Christ was born as other men and lived on the earth seems to be a point that should be easily accepted, it was different at the time of John's writing. Religious histories reveal that at that time the theory was popular that "the manifestations of Christ on earth were only in appearance, that either His form was a physical illusion, or else what was visible was not Christ at all." The leaders of the early Church were much concerned about the danger of such teachings that sought to undermine the Christian faith. Even many of the Jews did not acknowledge Christ.

One such religious group were the Gnostics. Gnosticism "set forth as objects of worship beings variously described as 'Elements of the Universe, and thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, powers,' in such a way that Christ ceased to be the Supreme Head of the religious society."

In John's time there were those in the Church who found the Gnostic tenets attractive; some had left the Church (I John 2:19), and some that remained were inclined toward Gnosticism. Such was the situation which John endeavored to counter.

Certainly it is only a conclusion without evidence to say that John in First John 4:2-3, was branding anyone as antichrist who did not believe that Christ existed with the Father in the eternal ages of the past.

"In Hebrews we have the Biblical author referring to Jesus' coming into this world. He says Christ 'was made a little lower than the angels' (Heb. 2:9). Earlier in the chapter the writer refers to the human

family being a lower order than the angels. But why does he impress on us that fact that Jesus became one of the human order of beings? Does he do that just to fill in paper as he writes his epistle? No. Anyone who gives this a little thought can see that the author is doing this by way of contrast: what Jesus had been, and what He became."

By saying that Jesus "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," Hebrews 2:9 is pointing out the fulfillment of God's promise made centuries before: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me [Moses]; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). Christ did not descend from heaven but was raised up from the midst of His brethren, as was Moses. He was part of the race of men, not of the angels. Moses and his brethren did not pre-exist. Neither did Christ.

"The writer of Hebrews informs us again by way of contrast in the statement: 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same' (Heb. 2:14). If Jesus had not pre-existed, what purpose would there be in His mentioning that Christ 'took part of flesh and blood'? If Jesus commenced His existence with His birth of the Virgin Mary, He couldn't be anything but flesh and blood. But the inference in Hebrews is that having existed in another form, He now became human."

Your last statement is pure conjecture: that "having existed in another form, He now became human." Such a thought is not the inference of the author of the book of Hebrews.

In saying, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," the author is confirming that Christ was made like His brethren, of flesh and blood. He was not immaculate from birth. He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Hebrews 2:14 provides no evidence that Christ existed in some other form in the eternal past.

"A careful study of this chapter reveals that Christ took on Him human nature. 'He took not on him the nature of angels but he took on him the seed of Abraham' (Heb. 2:16). This means that Jesus chose to become human. This is something that cannot be said of any other person. No one has ever had any choice so far as birth is concerned. But Jesus did exercise such a choice. He refused to become an angel

in order to become human. It was only thus that He could reach the human family."

Does Hebrews 2 teach that Christ had a choice concerning His birth? Does it teach that He refused to become an angel and chose to become a human being? Let us study carefully. Christ "took part of flesh and blood." But this does not convey the meaning that Jesus had a choice in the matter. In verse 14 we are told that "the children are partakers of flesh and blood," and that "he... likewise took part of the same." What is the difference between *partake* and *took part*? Are they not the same? If the children partake and He took part, are they not both doing the same? The children had no choice in the matter; neither did Christ.

We should keep in mind that assertions are not proof.

"One more point on Hebrews 2:16-17: The author certainly infers that Jesus, having existed in another form, now became human. He says, 'In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren' (Heb. 2:17). If He commenced existence when He was born into this world, He couldn't be made otherwise than the rest of human beings. This would have followed naturally. But Hebrews says, 'It behooved him to be made like his brethren.' That is, He was under obligation to come in this way. This infers that He could have chosen to come some other way, but any other way would not have been satisfactory."

In attempting to build a theory for Christ's pre-existence on the wording of Heb. 2:16-17, you are building on a false premise. The translation in the King James Version is admittedly faulty. None of the newer versions uphold its translation. Vs. 16-17 in our Common Version read: "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God." You capitalize on the words: "he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham," surmising that Christ must have pre-existed in order to choose the nature He would take on. Weymouth's translation of this verse is similar to many of the newer versions: "For assuredly it is not to angels that He reaches a helping hand, but it is to the descendants of Abraham." This meaning is projected in the marginal reading in the KJV: "He taketh not hold of angels [to help them] but of the seed of Abraham"—human beings.

Many of the modern translations convey the meaning that it was Christ's purpose to help the

human family; not angels, but the descendants of Abraham, that is, all faithful servants of God, regardless of racial origin (cf. Rom. 4:16-17; Gal. 3:29). "It is not angels that He helps; but it is the seed of Abraham that He helps" (Heb. 2:16, Barclay).

The *Interpreter's Bible* makes this comment on verse 16: "The Greek word clearly does not mean 'take on the nature of,' as in the KJV. But it does mean 'take hold of in order to rescue from peril.' On this, reliable commentaries agree. The figure is vivid and is lost by the mild translation of the RSV 'is concerned with.' It suggests the firm hold which a swimmer takes upon a drowning man in order to bring him to safety."

The wording: "It behooved him to be made like unto his brethren" (v. 17, KJV) does not infer that Christ had any choice concerning His birth. God in His wisdom planned that Christ the great High Priest would be raised from the midst of His brethren, and be one like Moses. Moses did not exist before he was born; neither did Christ.

Furthermore, when God selects men for a position, He raises them; they do not raise themselves. When God said He would raise up Christ from the midst of His brethren, He did not say that the Eternal Christ had made such a choice. If this were true, why didn't Moses and the prophets in their prophetic statements about Christ ever convey this thought? No, it was impossible for Him to make a choice because, like every other child, He did not exist until He was born.

Hebrews 2:16-17, reads in the *New English Bible*: "It is not angels, mark you, that he takes to himself, but the sons of Abraham. And therefore he had to be made like these brothers of his in every way, so that he might be merciful and faithful as their high priest before God."

"Emphasizing again what Jesus had been, and what He became, Paul says, 'Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men' (Phil. 2:6-7). Paul says Christ was in the form of God. By stating this He clearly teaches that Jesus had a form before He took the form of a servant. 'He was in the form of God.' We cannot argue that this did not mean a real existence and agree that when Paul speaks of the 'form of a servant' he means a real existence. The word 'form' in both cases is taken from the same word in the original Greek. Thus to begin with, Paul teaches that Jesus was before He became man."

We cannot agree that Paul ever taught that Christ had a form previous to His mortal birth.

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Where is there any proof for your suggestion that Christ's being in the form of God related to some experience prior to the time of His birth of the Virgin Mary? By speaking in past tense, Paul need not be referring to a pre-existence. Paul wrote these words some thirty years after Jesus' ascension, and he was speaking of Christ's relation to His Father during His life upon earth. He was in the "form of God" in the respect that He was in the "express image" of His Father's "person" (Heb. 1:3).

The verses quoted from Philippians 2 are part of a passage which, according to the *Interpreter's Bible*, "is exceedingly difficult and has been interpreted in many different ways." Our purpose is to seek harmony in these verses that will confirm other sacred writings. We cannot accept them as upholding the pre-existence of Christ when Paul wrote to the Galatians of the Christ who was "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). Nor can we believe Paul would say that Christ was by nature equal with God when Jesus Himself said, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

Some of the other versions suggest a slightly different thought about Christ's being in the form of God and also a servant. For example, "who, though being in God's form, yet did not meditate a Usurpation to be like God, but divested Himself, taking a Bondman's Form, having been made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6, Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott*). Note the tense of the last phrase: "Having been made in the likeness of men." Christ's being "in the form of God," or "taking a Bondman's Form" was *after* He had already been made in the likeness of men.

In what way then was Christ the man "in the form of God"? Christ was in God's form in the respect that He was the "express image" of His Father's person (Heb. 1:3). Like Father like Son, is a familiar law of heredity. During His earthly pilgrimage He "made himself of no reputation [with men] and took upon him the form of a servant." But both of these voluntary acts were accomplished during the years between His birth and His ascension to the Father. No evidence of a pre-existence here.

A possible rendering of verse 6 as given in Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* is especially meaningful. Discussing the words translated in our Common Version "thought it not robbery," the lexicon says, "To go before, lead, . . . make the first steps towards." This thought adds beauty and harmony to the words of Paul: Christ led in the way to be like God. He spent His whole mortal life making steps toward and pointing men to God and the virtues that become the child of God—meek-

ness, wholeness, purity, love. Far from considering Himself equal with God, He led the way to God, showing in His own life a pattern of good works.

Christ was not part God, or part divine, or all divine. He was divine only in the respect that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; yet that fact did not change His nature, for He was made "lower than the angels"; He was made "like unto his brethren"; He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"; though a Son, He "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 2:7, 17; 4:15; 5:8). Why? He had been "made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7).

"Secondly, Paul teaches that Jesus was equal with God. The text, as it is rendered, does not convey clearly what Paul is teaching. What he is actually saying is that though Jesus was in the form of God He didn't deem His equality with God as something to be held onto. He relinquished this equality to take the form of a servant. There would be no need to mention the possibility of reaching out for equality with God if Jesus did not possess it. No person who is not equal with God could ever grasp that equality. Only one who has the attributes of God and all the power that He exercises could be equal with God. Paul is clearly teaching here that Jesus having existed in certain form enjoyed equality with God, but stepped down from that exalted position to become a member of the human family. This was a great act of humility on Jesus' part."

I fail to see any evidence for your conclusion that Jesus could not have reached for equality with God if He did not possess it by nature.

The *Revised Standard Version* words verse 7: "but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant." In what way did Christ empty Himself? Being the Son of God, He possessed many inherent advantages. Had He used these natural endowments to advance Himself in the eyes of men, He might have filled positions of honor during His mortal career. He might have advanced Himself to a point where He could feel Himself equal to the Father. Mythology tells of rebellious sons of inferior divinities rebelling against the sovereignty of God, but no such thought stained Christ's record.

Christ humbled Himself, laying aside entirely all the privileges which were rightly His as God's Son, and "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"—the most painful and ignominious of deaths. Paul's emphasis is on the word "obedient." He gave up all personal ambitions, all self-seeking impulses, and surrendered Himself without reserve to the will of God. Instead of aspir-

ing higher, He abandoned everything which He rightly possessed, suppressing His own desire so completely that He could even yield His very life in obedience.

There is in humankind an instinctive desire to reach out for that which is beyond their sphere. Paul speaks of this tendency in II Thess. 2:4, applying it to the "man of sin": "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Again in II Cor. 10:5, Paul points out that it is easy for humans not only to reach out for equality with God but to exalt themselves above the knowledge of God. He saw that we as Christians need to work to "overthrow reasoning and everything raised aloft against the knowledge of God" (Weymouth's Translation). Even today we see this trait of human nature in those who, far from having any claim to equality with God, incline to think themselves greater than He.

Keenly aware that He was born to be King of the whole earth, that He was to fill the highest station in the age to come, Christ could have exalted Himself above measure; but instead, He "divested" Himself of all the glory of a royal destiny and, farthest from meditating a usurpation of God's authority, submitted wholly to the will of His Father, even to the death on the cross.

"Now note the following as we quote again from Paul: 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law' (Gal. 4:4). If the birth of Jesus was simply the birth of a child of which God was the Father and Mary the mother, then it would be superfluous to say he was 'made of a woman.' This would be obvious. Every child has come into the world that way. . . . But if Jesus existed before His birth, and experienced an incarnation, then the situation becomes different. Then there is something outstanding about His being born of a woman. Paul treats the birth of Jesus as something outstanding, something different, and it can be only in the sense that the pre-existent Son of God was made of a woman, when He came into this world."

That theory would be acceptable, if only it were true. But that is not what Paul, or any of the Biblical writers, said. Such a theory is pure conjecture and bears no weight whatever.

It was not superfluous for Paul to mention that Christ was made of a woman; neither does he infer by such a statement that Christ pre-existed. By stating that Jesus was made of a woman Paul was confirming the fulfillment of a prophecy. Isaiah had

(Continued on page 22)

Responsible Freedom

FREEDOM today is frequently defended most fiercely by those who understand it the least. Apparently they classify such freedom simply as the right to differ. This they carry to the extreme of forcing their dissent upon others, so that "freedom" in reality becomes the right to coerce others.

In reaction against this distorted concept, some have concluded that all difference of opinion is undesirable and that examination or analysis of an issue is virtually the same as commitment or even capitulation. For them, the right to inquire is dangerous and should be strictly limited.

The college campus increasingly has become the focus of concern about what true academic freedom really is. All too easily prejudice or popularity can invalidate stated commitments to freedom.

An illustration can be seen in the present concern over the Vietnam war. There is an understandable and wholly justifiable anguish over the terrible loss of life in this conflict. Yet there strangely is scarcely a protest raised when a survey shows that over half of the fatal accidents on our highways are caused by the misuse of beverage alcohol.

The following comments by Dr. Judson T. Armerding, President of Wheaton College, contain objective reasoning from which all Christian Americans may benefit. The only real freedom is combined with responsibility. And the greatest realization of this freedom is future, when all who are worthy shall be freed from the bondage of mortality to enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

It is simply not a popular practice today to demonstrate against the irresponsible drinking that causes the death of more than 25,000 of our citizens each year. The lawmakers in Great Britain have had the courage to enact a bill dealing with this problem that has drastically reduced fatalities in that country. Clearly, if loss of life or serious injury were really the issue, would not the liquor traffic as well as the war in Vietnam merit serious attention?

Even within the academic community the exercise of freedom on occasion seems to be one-sided. Take the instance of criticism. For some, this is an activity that is to be wide-ranging and spirited, sparing nothing.

Yet the critic himself is to be exempt. Any trenchant appraisal of his opinion is often received with a very bad grace. Somehow it seems to the critic that such a response is unfair and can only be explained as an effort to create a climate of alienation or rejection. In the receiving as well as the giving of criticism true maturity is uncommonly rare.

We do well to remember that the early believers were simply called Christians and were enjoined by the apostle Paul from having their human leadership become a cause for strife and division. Their diversity of opinion was measured against the criterion of God's truth as disclosed in Scripture. Upon this common base of authority they found their fellowship. By means of Biblical norms rather than personal prejudice they ordered their lives.

In my judgment the practice of this principle today would allow the kind of freedom that is responsible in its judgments and is splendidly Christian in its actions. A settled conviction about truth combined with a genuine respect for God will do much to create a favorable climate for the exercise of this freedom. ●●

Isaac's Trial

WE HAVE often considered the great trial of Abraham's faith when the Lord commanded him, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." But what about the trial that *Isaac* passed through in the land of Moriah? Was it only Abraham who sacrificed his will upon the altar? Was this not indeed a great test for Isaac, also?

Isaac had grown to manhood and surely at some time, either before or during the three days' journey to Moriah, he began to wonder about the lamb that was to be offered for a burnt sacrifice.

Isaac had probably been told the story of the angel's promise of his birth, and perhaps he felt a deep glow of happiness in the realization that God had seen fit to foretell his birth to his parents. Doubtless, Abraham told his young son, over and over again, of the times when he had been privileged to talk with God's angelic messengers.

We wonder whether Isaac sensed anything at all strange when his father announced his intention of traveling to the land of Moriah to sacrifice unto the Lord. Was the distance at all unusual? Did his father seem preoccupied, or nervous, or did everything seem to be like any normal sacrifice to God?

Abraham arranged for two servants to go with them. He also took a donkey, wood and fire for the offering, and a knife in his hand. Was it at all unusual that a lamb was not taken from the flocks at home? Abraham was very rich in flocks and herds and surely he would have chosen the best to sacrifice to God; or, was it customary to purchase a lamb near the destination when an offering was to be made a great distance from home? Abraham was also very rich in silver and gold, so it probably would not have been any problem to purchase a lamb in the land of Moriah. Is this why the ques-

tion of the lamb did not come into the conversation any earlier than it did?

What of the three days' journey to the land of Moriah? Did Abraham seem more quiet and thoughtful than usual? or did he, perhaps, speak often of God's goodness and mercy? Did he speak of God's promise and of his faith in that promise? Did he try, in any way, to prepare Isaac for the test which lay before him? Apparently, he did not tell Isaac of the visit of God's angel and the strange commandment given him. Was this for some special reason? Had the Lord commanded him not to? Did he think it best that Isaac not know of his intent until he was ready to slay the sacrifice? We can only wonder.

Then after the three days' journey, Abraham saw the place of sacrifice in the distance. He instructed the two servants to stay there with the donkey while he and Isaac went yonder to worship. "Then Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on the shoulders of Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his own hand and a knife, and the two of them went on together" (Genesis 22:6, *Amplified Bible*).

It was then that Isaac uttered his inquiry. "My father, . . . see, here are the fire and the wood but where is the lamb for a burnt sacrifice?" No doubt, this was the question that Abraham had been expecting and yet dreading with a terrible dread. However, he answered simply, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Did this reply to Isaac's question cause him to wonder about the matter even more than before? If so, there is no indication that he again asked his question in any manner whatever. Had that been a part of his youthful training to never press for a direct answer to his questions? Had he been taught obedience, whatever the circumstance, and to obey without understanding the "why" for everything? Had he been taught that his father would clarify things

at the proper time? No doubt, Isaac respected and loved his father a great deal.

We wonder if there was much conversation between Abraham and Isaac during the time that Abraham was erecting the altar and laying the wood in order upon it. Had Isaac begun to suspect that, perhaps, he was to be the lamb for the sacrifice? We do not know.

We do not read of Abraham's making any direct announcement to Isaac concerning the offering, though he must have done so. We read only that Abraham "bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar on the wood."

There is no mention made of Isaac's reaction when he finally and fully realized what his father's action really meant. There is no hint whatever of any resistance on the part of Isaac. Yet, Isaac, at this time, was a strong young man and his father well along in years. If Isaac had wanted to, he probably could have overpowered his father and refused to allow himself to be bound and laid on that waiting altar. Did Isaac realize that his father was only carrying out a commandment he had received from the Lord? Did he feel that God would resurrect him again from the dead, realizing that God's promise was, "My covenant will I establish with Isaac"? Did a prayer escape his lips as he lay there, waiting for that fatal blow by his father's upraised hand? Truly those moments must have been tense, moments of extreme trial for Isaac. Isaac surely laid his own will upon the same altar where his father had placed his physical being.

Then, came the moment when a voice was heard coming from heaven. "Abraham, Abraham! Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear and revere God, since you have not held back from Me or begrudged giving Me your son, your only son" (Gen. 22:11-12, Amplified Bible) What relief! What joy! What happiness! No doubt, father and son rejoiced together when those words were spoken. This had been a great trial for both of them, and they had done their respective parts well. Neither of them withheld their own wishes and desires from God, and we are sure that when that ram was sacrificed upon the waiting altar, instead of Isaac, both Abraham and Isaac blessed and thanked the God of Heaven for His goodness. Abraham proved that he would withhold no earthly thing from God, and Isaac proved that he would give his life itself, if that was what God required.

And now, what of us? Are we willing, obedient servants as Abraham and Isaac were? Are we willing to surrender all we have, yes, and life itself, if that be necessary in order for us to carry out the commandments of our God? We must surrender all

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we have and are and lay it willingly upon the altar of sacrifice.

We all have thoughts, desires and ways that are not acceptable to God. These are the things we must sacrifice each day upon our spiritual altar. If we do, we can be a part of the Isaac with whom God will establish His covenant. God wants obedience to His commandments. Nothing else will secure for us the future eternal blessings He has in store for those who love Him. ●●

Introspection

"The Lord hath made thee priest"

—Jer. 29:26

WHEN THE Lord needs a man for an office, He finds him; He trains him; He makes him. In the days of old, the Lord anointed and consecrated priests for the consecrated ministry.

But now, in the larger purpose of the Lord, each of us can be a priest of the Lord. He has called us to consecrate ourselves, to make our daily lives a ministry in His holy things.

I can be His priest in my home. He has charged me to offer daily sacrifices, and I shall be serving at the altar even while I perform the lowly duties of the house. The humble meal will be sacramental, and the most common task I will sprinkle with heavenly incense.

I can be His priest in my class. I will clothe myself in that "fine linen clean and white" which is the robe of righteousness, and in all my studies I shall maintain that consecrated spirit which pleases God.

I can be His priest in my workshop. In the carpenter shop, in the office, in the factory or in the field, I can serve my Lord. I can close my eyes and ears to all that is low and sensual and fill my mind with thoughts of peace and holiness and Christian endeavor. My life can be the holy life of God's own sanctified.

And woe is me if I attempt to begin a day in this godly office without a thought of God. ●●

A dog makes friends by wagging his tail, not his tongue.

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Great Peace

AMONG the most fervently desired boon of this life is peace of mind. Who does not crave it? It is more to be desired than the most coveted earthly possession, for if one possesses everything else and has no peace of mind, what does it profit him?

This is what true religion, assimilated and lived out, does for men. Among its many gifts is the priceless treasure of peace: "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Ps. 119:165).

We live in a time of intensified stress and strain. Consequently, it is an era of heart disease, high blood pressure, and nervous breakdowns. A noted physician has said, "Men do not die of disease but of internal combustion."

The absence of peace of mind affects one's poise; it makes him irritable and creates friction between that individual and his associates. It distorts his judgments, dissipates his creative powers, and subtracts from life its richest meaning. Where there is no peace, there can be no joy in living, and certainly no creative activity.

The prophet Isaiah gives the remedy for this sad and unhealthy condition: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isa. 26:3). This was written by a man who was well acquainted with human nature, and he wrote it in the indelible ink of human experience.

We cannot meet our problems successfully unless we have a calm and undisturbed spirit. What is it that destroys the peace of mind for so many people? Is it not the little annoyances of every day? The man whose mind is stayed on God is kept in perfect peace because his mind rises above these insignificant matters. Daily and diligently he practices to eliminate all dull, dead, unhealthy thoughts so that his mind may be freshened up and capable of developing enthusiasm for the work ahead.

You will do your best work and be happiest if you resolutely put worries and fears of the future out of your mind and diligently labor on today's task. If you do your work honestly and sincerely, and live well this day, the coming days will also be profitable days.

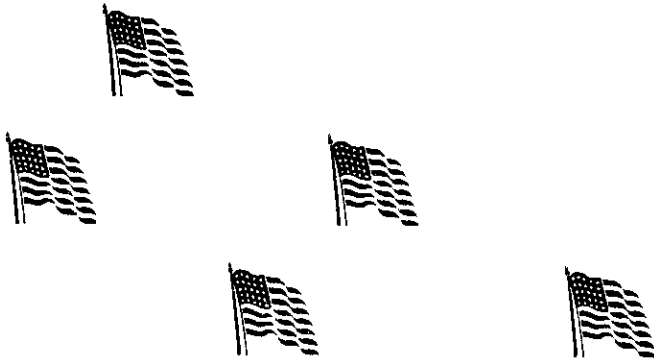
To live a day at a time is sound wisdom and a sure formula for peace. Practice the art of shutting out the dead yesterdays and the unborn tomorrows, and you are reasonably safe for today. It is this kind of patience with life, this being willing to take the day as it comes and the genuine effort to do the best you can with it, that will truly help you to possess your soul in peace. And what is extremely important is the ability, when the day is finished, to put it away without regrets and take up the next new day when it arrives.

Patience means another thing: it means inner quietness and peace. The patient man is surely one who is unhurried in his soul and who finds it possible to relax within.

It is supremely important that in the midst of the confusion of these times there should be no confusion inside a man. One thing is sure: so long as the din and jar of life do not get into the soul of man, he is safe. So long as he can keep an inward stillness and poise, it does not really matter what confusion reigns without. ●●

The wages of sin are always paid: if there is any delay in settlement, compound interest is added.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). We may profess, pray, weep, and talk much about our love for God. But the final evidence of our love is the life we live. Those who truly love God obey Him.



Thank God for America

IT WAS just one hundred ninety-six years ago that our forefathers made July Fourth famous when they declared their independence from the dominion of England.

The fight was hard and long, and General Washington, father of his country, was the man responsible for the liberty which made us a free people to serve God in the way we think best. We cannot forget the terrible privations and hardships that Washington and his soldiers passed through before the victory was won. They did not consult their own pleasures or feelings, for they had sworn allegiance to their banner and the great cause of freedom, and they followed it to the end, regardless of the cost.

And so we are thankful for the great sacrifice those soldiers made that they and their succeeding generations might have freedom of speech and of press. Had there been no Declaration of Independence, we today would not be able to proclaim the Word of God as we believe it.

America has many critics, and they have much to talk about; nevertheless, we are the most highly favored nation on earth. I would like to quote a few paragraphs from a speech made by Treasury Secretary John B. Connally, Jr., before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington last April.

"We live in probably the most turbulent and tormented times in the long history of this nation. I think this is true. I think everybody more or less admits to this.

"This torment and this turbulence is a part of every facet of American life. It is certainly a part of school life in this nation. . . . Business today is under attack as it has never been before in the history of this nation.

"But it doesn't just stop there. It certainly has

permeated the religious institutions of America—all the churches, all the synagogues, all the cathedrals—they're under attack. They're in upheaval. Their ultimate faiths are being questioned. Their mores are certainly under question.

"It doesn't just stop there. All government is being subjected to the most severe criticism probably in the history of this country. . . . Almost every single program is being questioned—not on an objective and a fair basis with real perspective, but always with a critical vein, always assuming that there's something wrong with this country, that there's something wrong with our institutions.

"And sure there is. Sure, there's something wrong with our institutions. They're not perfect. They weren't designed to be. . . . We can't devise something without fault and without shortcomings. . . .

"When you get into talking, it's very easy to be critical. But when you get down to the problem of trying to work out solutions that are equitable, that are fair to the taxpayers of this country, that are fair to the governments—local, State and federal—it's not an easy problem.

"But in any event, this Government deserves more than just criticism. It deserves more than slander. It occasionally deserves some, at least, objective analysis—if not a pat on the back—because occasionally, something right is done. . . .

"And have we been so neglectful? Have we failed so miserably? How have we? Let's ask ourselves. Is there anywhere in the world where people are better fed, or better housed, or better clothed? Is there anywhere in the world where there are more freedoms? How many countries in the world have the freedom of assemblage, such as you have here? And even more than that, how many countries in the world have the freedom of

the press which you enjoy? How many?

"How many have the freedoms that we consider inalienable rights—and they are in the language of our Constitution and our Bill of Rights. But they're as fragile as the political stability of the system under which they operate, and no more. And when that political system begins to totter and to weaken, then you can be sure that your rights and your privileges and your immunities—your rights as free men and women—begin to weaken and begin to totter.

"No nation as complex as this can survive without rules under which we all live and abide, and if we tend to destroy those institutions of government, we are, in essence, destroying the very fabric of this society. Improve them? Yes. Demolish them? No. . . .

... "Each of us, it seems to me, has a very great duty and very great obligation. To criticize? Yes. To disagree? Yes. But also we have as leaders in our nation . . . a solemn obligation to be fair, to be objective and to keep in perspective what we are and what we hope to be and what we've accomplished.

"And I submit to you that, for all our frailties, there is no region of this planet, there is no nation on this earth, that has done as well in as short a time for as many people in as many ways as has this democracy of the United States of America."

We as Christians should above all people appreciate these blessings and thank God that we live where we can focus our energies upon the one great cause which is worth living for and dying for.

Let us declare our independence from all that is evil and base and live a nobler life. When we have done this, we shall realize the hundredfold promised by Jesus in this life, and in the world to come shall inherit life everlasting.

And in that day so near at hand, when the best governments of this world shall be superseded by a government infinitely superior, even the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, when the wicked shall have closed their ignoble existence and the righteous shall have risen above their ruins, we shall be granted the greatest liberty of all. We shall be made free from all sorrow, sickness, pain and death, and shall enjoy an eternal heritage among men made equal to the angels, who die no more. ●●

The only way to gain a good reputation is to endeavor to be what you desire to appear.

Choice, not chance, determines human destiny.

From a Reader—

Peace, Peace

The word "peace" is getting a lot of attention in our world today. There are peace talks in Paris that have dragged on for years with open conferences once a week, while men are dying on the battlefields seven days a week. There are peace marches, peace protests, and peace proposals from almost numberless peace organizations that seem at times to be on the verge of fighting among themselves, while real peace seems to remain as hard to capture as the bluebird of happiness.

The modern peace symbols seem to be showing up almost everywhere—on stickers, motorcycles, cars, pins, bracelets, necklaces, clips, clothes, bridges, buildings, rocks, trees, and even tattooed on human skin; yet the reality of peace goes no deeper than the symbol on the surface of all these objects.

People do not realize there will be no true and lasting peace until Christ comes. They are seeking peace in the wrong places and in the wrong way. The whole problem is that people have not sought and found the "Prince of Peace." There can be no real peace until we can truly be at peace with ourselves by being at peace with God. Jeremiah the prophet said that people would be crying "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Isaiah said, "There is no peace, . . . to the wicked."

When the angels announced the birth of Jesus they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." God's law ruling in our hearts and lives can give us inward peace now, but Christ will have to come again before the world will have peace.

Meanwhile, we should do our part by making peace with God through faith in Christ. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." True inward peace is the result of struggle and death—the death of our old man of sin.

L. G., Covington, Georgia

MAY YOU HAVE—

Enough happiness to keep you sweet,
Enough trials to keep you strong,
Enough hope to keep you happy;
Enough failure to keep you humble;
Enough success to keep you eager,
Enough wealth to meet your needs;
Enough enthusiasm to look ahead,
Enough faith to banish depression,
Enough determination to make each
day better than yesterday.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Trinity

THROUGHOUT the centuries since the founding of the Christian Church, religious thought has undergone a sort of evolution. It is a well-known fact that as the Jews became acquainted with Greek philosophy they added Greek thought to their religious beliefs. Likewise, 19th and 20th century philosophers have contributed much to what is now accepted as orthodox. And the process continues today until the teachings of Jesus have become nearly obscured by the thoughts and doctrines of men.

Not the least of these added thoughts is that of the Trinity. We have learned from our study that the doctrine cannot be found in the Bible; that the word "Trinity" was not even coined until nearly two hundred years after Christ, and that it did not become a church doctrine until more than a hundred years after that, or more than three centuries after the founding of the Christian Church. Why then should it be considered a doctrine of such great importance to the church?

We believe that it has no part in the Christian faith. There are a few religious groups who would agree with us, but the majority accept the tradition of their fathers and cling to the belief, stating flatly that one cannot be saved without accepting it.

Our present age is one of tolerance; to the majority it matters not what one believes. This was not true in former days; and in the early nineteenth century Trinitarians and anti-Trinitarians contended earnestly for their faith. In the little-used religious sections of some libraries can be found many books on the subject, some even dating to the eighteenth century. Some of these quite ancient books record debates between opposing groups. It is noted in one book that a minister in central New York preached a series of 24 sermons in defense of the Trinity in the early eighteen-hundreds. (Most of the series was devoted to a defense of I John 5:7 which he felt necessary to uphold the doctrine.)

"Thomas Jefferson, [President of the United States from 1801-1809], gave classic expression

to the anti-Trinitarianism typical of the eighteenth century:

"When we shall have done away with the incomprehensible jargon of the Trinitarian arithmetic, that three are one, and one is three; when we shall have knocked down the artificial scaffolding, reared to mask from view the simple structure of Jesus; when, in short, we shall have unlearned everything which has been taught since his day, and got back to the pure and simple doctrines he inculcated, we shall then be truly and worthily his disciples; and my opinion is that if nothing had ever been added to what flowed purely from his lips the whole world would at this day have been Christian.' "*

Thomas Jefferson was a well-known statesman, but other lesser personages opposed the doctrine as vigorously, but apparently they obtained only a small following and soon the opposition died out and the doctrine remains today in the creeds of all major denominations.

We will continue our study of the doctrine, following our outline:

- IV. Proof According to the Scriptures
 - A. God Is One (Cont'd)
 - B. Jesus Is **Not** God
 - C. The Holy Spirit

Orthodoxy says, "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."†

All creeds and dogmas notwithstanding, we are confident, as was a nineteenth century minister, that "there is not a single passage in the entire Bible, whose subject is the divine nature, that gives the least countenance to the notion of a plurality of divine persons. All such passages assert clearly and unqualifiedly, the **absolute oneness of God.**"

IV. PROOF ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

* Lowry, C. W., *The Trinity and Christian Devotion*, p. 21.
† *Ibid.*, p. 81.

A. God Is One (Cont'd)

The Bible asserts positively and often that there is but one God. The Hebrew word **JHVH**, or **Jehovah**, from which "God" is translated means the Self-existent, or Eternal One, the First Cause of all things. **This title is applied exclusively to God.** Hence God, or Jehovah is not a created Being, but the Creator of all things, "from everlasting to everlasting," as stated by the Psalmist. **The name Jehovah is never applied to Jesus.**

In our previous study we gave proof from the Old Testament that God is One. We will continue our proof from the Scriptures, continuing with Old Testament proof.

b. God's Word through Isaiah, continued. In our last issue we gave several quotations from the prophet Isaiah, but we would like to add one more since Isaiah places so much emphasis on the **oneness** of God: "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me" (Isa. 46:9). (Other verses on the subject include: Isaiah 40:25; 42:8; 43:10-11; and 46:5.)

c. God's Word Through Other Old Testament Prophets. It is evident that other prophets, while not as vocal on the subject as Isaiah, also understood that Jehovah was the One and Only God. **Solomon**, in his prayer at the dedication of the Temple said, "there is no God like thee, in the heaven above, or on earth beneath." **David**, after being forbidden to build the Temple, acknowledged Him thus: "O Lord, there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears" (I Chron. 17:20). **Cyrus**, King of Persia making a proclamation to rebuild the Temple, described it as "the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:3). **Hezekiah**, praying for deliverance from Sennacherib, addressed his Maker: "O Lord God of Israel, ... thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth" (II Kings 19:15).

Nehemiah likewise recognized God as Sovereign: "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, ... the earth, ... the seas, ... and thou preservest them all ..." (Neh. 9:6). **Jeremiah** was also confident of the One in whom he trusted and whose words he spoke, saying: "There is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?" Then, comparing the Eternal One with idols, he adds, "But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king" (Jer. 10:6-7, 10).

All these testimonies assert the unity of God.

Many other Old Testament passages could be cited as proof that God is One—One in person and One in essence. Not one text contains even a suggestion to the contrary.

2. New Testament Proof. That the New Testament writers studied the prophets is evident in their fluent quotations. Jesus also found the basis for His teachings in the words of His Father spoken through the patriarchs and prophets.

a. Proof from Jesus. When He was asked: "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus replied, "The one that says, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only God. ...'" (Mark 12:28, Living Letters). **Jesus was here quoting the words of Moses, conclusive proof that the God of Moses' day and the God of Jesus' day were the same—ONE GOD.**

Jesus gave further testimony on the subject in His prayer before His death: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). **This text not only shows one God but also shows that Jesus was not God. Because He was sent by God in no way proves that He was God, nor any part of a trinity of Gods, but that He was God's representative on the earth.**

b. Proof from the apostle Paul. The Great Apostle was well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures as is clearly shown throughout the record of his missionary journeys and his Epistles written from prison. **There is absolutely no evidence that he taught a trinity of persons in one God, but to him, as to the prophets and Jesus, there was ONE GOD.**

To the Corinthians Paul wrote: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (I Cor. 8:5-6).

To Timothy Paul wrote: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." In the previous chapter he also spoke of "the only wise God" (I Tim. 2:5; 1:17).

To the Galatians Paul wrote: "God is one" (Gal. 3:20).

To the Ephesians Paul wrote: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all ..." (4:5-6).

That there is but one God in one Person is implied in many other texts in Paul's epistles. In his speech to the men of Athens (Acts 17:22-31), he chided them for their worship of an "unknown God" and declared to them the one true God, the

creator of all things, making no mention of a trinity of persons in the Godhead.

We quote freely from Paul since he was chosen for the ministry by Christ Himself; and of the gospel he preached, he said, "the gospel you heard me preach is no human invention. I did not take it over from any man; no man taught it me; I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ." And he further said: "Follow my example as I follow Christ's" (Gal. 1:11-12; I Cor. 11:1, NEB).

B. Jesus is NOT God

In the booklet entitled "**The Trinity, Must We Believe It?**" the author states that "the Bible invests each of these [God, Christ and the Holy Spirit] with the attributes and titles of deity. If the deity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit can be established from Scripture, the matter is settled: There must be a tri-unity in the one God, and belief in the trinity must be fundamental.

"Careful Bible students are agreed that the Scriptures ascribe deity to Christ and that He himself claimed it. . . . Jesus Christ was God while at the same time man. He was not half God and half man but actually God and real man." †

This is a broad statement and one with which we cannot agree. **We believe that "careful Bible students"—students of the Scriptures and not theology—will find upon careful study that Jesus Christ was NOT God.** To claim that Christ could be "actually God and real man" is ridiculous. We will go to the Bible itself for proof that Jesus was a man and not God.

1. Jesus was a human Being. No one knew Jesus better than the Twelve who accompanied Him throughout His three-year ministry. They walked and talked with Him; they prepared food and ate with Him. There is nothing to indicate that they considered Him part God or God Himself. Peter, speaking to the assembled multitude after the Holy Spirit had been received, still spoke of Him as "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs" (Acts 2:22).

a. He was born—not created in heaven. The prophets foretold that Jesus would be born, not sent down from heaven. Moses said that "God [would] raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). He was here alluding to Jesus' being a descendant of the tribe of Judah. The prophet Isaiah likewise foretold that "a

virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). The name Immanuel means "God with us," that is, Jesus was to be God's representative on earth, not God Himself.

Paul testified to the fulfillment of the prophecy: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). **He was born as any other child, born "of a woman."**

b. He had to learn as any other child. Jesus did not possess all knowledge and all wisdom, but had to learn. As a child, his mental capabilities were equal to those of any other child. It is recorded that in His youth he "increased in wisdom and stature [age, margin], and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). He went home with His parents "and was subject unto them" after being located in the Temple in Jerusalem. He "learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). **These are not characteristics of Deity, but of a human being, the youth who was later spoken of as "the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5).**

c. He was subject to temptation. "God cannot be tempted with evil," but we read that Jesus was tempted. Three of the four Gospel writers tell of His temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4; Mark 1; Luke 4), and the writer to the Hebrews describes Him as one "In all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). From the New English translation we read that "he had to be made like these brothers of his in every way, so that he might be merciful and faithful as their high priest before God. . . to help those who are meeting their test now" (Heb. 2:17-18). **He is our High Priest before God, not God Himself, as plainly shown in this text.**

d. He possessed other human characteristics. Jesus is clearly revealed in the Scriptures as a man, not God. We read of His being weary (John 4:6), of His weeping (John 11:35), of His dying (Matt. 27:50), of His being buried (Matt. 27:59-60). **These are all things that could happen to a human being, but not to God.** God "fainteth not, neither is weary" (Isa. 40:28), there are no tears in heaven (Rev. 21:4); God is omniscient, He is all-knowing (Isa. 46:9-10); He is both eternal and everlasting, hence He could not die and be buried.

2. Jesus was the Son of God, not God. Genealogies were important to the Jews and the genealogy of Jesus in both Matthew and Luke states that He was the "son of David," and Luke adds "the son of Adam, the son of God." Jesus acknowledged God as His Father, and throughout His ministry emphasized that He was the "Son of God." The title "Son of God" is applied to Him more than 50 times

† Brooks, Keith L., *The Trinity, Must We Believe It?*, p. 6.

in the New Testament, more than half of these being in the Gospels.

The phrase "God the Son" appears frequently in Creeds and Catechisms, but it is not once found in the Scriptures. "God the Son" is theology and NOT Bible.

Christ made no claim of being God. Contrariwise, He showed His dependence on God, His Father. We read that He "continued all night in prayer to God" on one occasion. On another, He prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Again He said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." He said "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.... I do always those things that please him." He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." **All these texts show two separate persons, not one person in two parts** (Luke 6:12; Matt. 26:39; John 5:30; John 8:28-29; 5:17).

3. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). Believers in the Trinity fly to this verse to prove that Jesus was God. True, He said He was one with the Father, but that in no way proves He was God.

The late William Barclay makes an interesting commentary on this verse. He says: "What did Jesus mean by this?... If we will go to the Bible itself for the interpretation of this statement, we will find that it is in fact so simple that the simplest mind can grasp it... Let us go on ahead and turn to the 17th chapter of John's gospel. There John tells us of the prayer of Jesus for His own people before He went to His death. He prayed thus:

" 'Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are' (v. 11). It is clear that Jesus conceived of the unity of Christian with Christian as the same as His own unity with God. He says so in so many words. In the same passage He goes on: 'Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one' (John 17: 20-22).

"There Jesus is saying with simplicity and with clarity which none can mistake that the end of the Christian life is that Christians should be one as He and His Father are one.

"Now what is the unity which should exist between Christian and Christian? What is it that makes the Christian one with his fellow Christians?

The secret of that unity is love. 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another' (John 13:34). Christians are one because they love one another. Even so, Jesus is one with God because of His love of God.

"What is the only test and proof and guarantee of love? Let us go again to the words of Jesus. 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love' (John 15:10). 'If a man love me, he will keep my words' (John 14: 23-24). 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15). 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me' (John 14:21).

"Here is the essence of the matter. The bond of unity is love; the proof of love is obedience. Christians are one with each other when they are bound by the bond of unity, and obey the words of Christ.

"Jesus is one with God, because as no other person ever did, He obeyed God and He loved God. His unity with God is a unity of perfect love, issuing in a perfect obedience.

"When Jesus said: 'I and the Father are one,' He was not moving in the world of philosophy and metaphysics and abstractions; He was moving in the world of personal relationships. No one can really understand what a phrase like a 'unity of essence' [a common phrase in creeds on the Trinity] means; but any one can understand what a unity of heart means. **Jesus' unity with God came from the twin facts of perfect love and perfect obedience. He was one with God because He loved God perfectly and obeyed God perfectly."**

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. Cite three texts in the book of Isaiah where the Prophet specifies that God is one God, not a trinity of deities.
2. Mention four other Old Testament personages who testified that God is one.
3. What is proved by the fact that God sent Jesus?
4. Give four texts which show Paul's attitude toward God.
5. Name four characteristics about Jesus which prove definitely that Jesus was not the eternal God.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

THE SABBATH

WHEN WAS IT GIVEN?
TO WHOM WAS IT GIVEN?
WHY WAS IT GIVEN?
WAS IT TO LAST FOREVER?
IF NOT, WHEN WAS IT TO CEASE?
WHAT LAW ARE WE NOW UNDER?

The First Day Observed Early Evidence

MANY early Christians set aside the Jewish Sabbath. Others, however, did assemble on the first day of the week. Among the writings of the early Church are references to support this:

Pliny (A. D. 107) wrote concerning the Christians: "They were wont to meet together, on a stated day before it was light, and sang among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ." And the historian Eusebius agrees: "By this is prophetically signified the service which is performed very early and every morning of the resurrection day [that is, the first day of the week] throughout the whole world."* They met together on "a stated day before it was light." Eusebius says it was the custom of all Christians "to meet very early and every morning of the resurrection day."

The *Epistle of Ignatius*, written about 107 A. D., agrees also: "Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish Law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace. . . . If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him."

The *Epistle of Barnabas*, written about 120 A. D., also shows what Christians believed and practiced immediately after the apostles. In this epistle we read: "Incense is a vain abomination unto me, and your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure [apparently this is a paraphrase of Isa. 1:13-14]. He has, therefore, abolished these things." Of the first day of the week, Barnabas says, "Wherefore,

also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead." (The "eighth day" became a common term for the resurrection day among early Christian writers.)

Also the *Teaching of the Apostles* (120 A. D.—160 A. D.): "But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving."

Also the writings of Justin Martyr (A. D. 145—150): "And on the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read. . . . But Sunday is the day on which we all hold a common assembly, because it is on the First day of the Week. . . . [that] Jesus Christ our Saviour. . . . rose from the dead." And Justin Martyr lived more than one hundred fifty years before Constantine made his decree!

Also Tertullian: "We solemnize the day after Saturday in contradistinction to those who call this day their Sabbath."

We quote also from *Apostolic Constitutions: Church Life in the 2nd Century*: "On the day of the resurrection of the Lord—that is, the Lord's Day—assemble yourselves together without fail, giving thanks to God and praising Him for those mercies God has bestowed upon you through Christ."

Also Irenaeus (A. D. 155—202): "The Mystery of the Lord's Resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than on the Lord's Day."†

Very clearly the first day of the week was observed long before the time of Constantine.

* *Sabbath Manual*, p. 125 as quoted by D. M. Canright.

† Quotations are taken from William C. Irvine, *Heresies Exposed*, pp. 165, 166; also from D. M. Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*, pp. 213ff.

Both Days Observed

There is some evidence that during the early centuries some Christians found it expedient to keep, at least to some extent, both the Sabbath of the Jew and Sunday. In the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, we read, "On the sabbath and on the first day of the week the bishop, if it be possible, shall with his own hand deliver to all the..."—the writer mentions both days.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1968 Edition, Vol. 19, Art. *Sabbath*) confirms this point: "The Jewish Christians of the early church continued to observe the Sabbath. According to Eusebius, the Ebionites kept both the Sabbath, . . . and the Lord's day (Sunday), the weekly celebration of the Resurrection; and this was the general practice of the early Christians, as recommended by the Apostolic Constitution." For how long a time this custom prevailed, we do not know.

Another historian confirms the thought that some Christians kept both the Sabbath and the first day. They "did not hesitate to observe both the Jewish and the Christian memorials, the Sabbath and the Lord's Day. This conservative, Jewish-Christian practice was retained for many centuries, not merely among the Jewish-Christians, but among various groups of Christians. We read, 'You and your slaves and your servants, do your work five days. And on the Sabbath and First day you shall not do any work in them; but they shall have opportunity for church, and for instruction in the religion of God' (G. Horner, *Statutes of the Apostles*, St. 66, Ethiopic Text—These two sacred days are found also in the less Jewish Arabic text)."[‡]

Early Christian Attitude

How did these early Christians feel about observing the Sabbath? The law commanding Sabbath observance had been withdrawn, and they were free to keep any day to the Lord, as they were able.

We must not forget that these early Christians were living in a world which was set against them. Apparently they desired to keep the first day of the week in remembrance of the resurrection of Christ. But they did not meet in mid-morning services. Very early in the day, usually before daylight, as Pliny wrote, or late at night after the day's work was done, they gathered. In this way their worship was little known and did not interfere with their social and economic obligations, if they were bound to work on either or both the Sabbath of the Jews and the first day of the week.

A Continual Sabbath

Probably because of economic and social limitations among the early Christians we find an intensification of the spiritual sabbath: Keep the true sabbath, that is to say the spiritual sabbath.

What is the spiritual sabbath? Isaiah 58: 13-14 defines it as the continual day on which we must rest from every evil: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day: and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." We must keep the Sabbath by not "doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words"—this is the deeper, far more significant Sabbath of the Lord.

Several writers of the early Church express the practice of the early Christians in keeping this continual Sabbath unto the Lord. We quote:

Justin: "The new law requires you to keep perpetual sabbath, and you (i. e., the Jews) because you are idle for one day, suppose you are pious . . . The Lord our God does not take pleasure in such observances; if there is any . . . thief among you, let him cease to be so: if any adulterer, let him repent; then he has kept the sweet and true sabbath of God."

Irenaeus: "Nor will he be commanded to leave idle one day of rest, who is constantly keeping sabbath, that is, giving homage to God in the temple of God, which is man's body, and at all times doing the works of justice."

Tertullian: "Be mindful of the sabbath, sanctify it: on the sabbath you may do no servile work except that of service to your soul. Hereby we have come to know that it is more important that we should always abstain from every servile work, not only on the sabbath day, but on every day."

Origen: "We want to enquire of what kind should be the sabbath observance of a Christian. . . . Whoever, therefore, desists from the works of this world is free for spiritual works; he it is who offers the sacrifice of the sabbath and observes the festival day of the sabbath. He carries no burden in the street. The burden is, in fact, every sin, as the prophet says, 'They lay on me a heavy burden.' . . . On the sabbath everyone remains seated in his own place and does not leave it. What is the spiritual place of the soul? Righteousness is its abode, truth, wisdom, holiness and everything which

(Continued on page 19)

[‡] Paul Cotton. *From Sabbath to Sunday*, p. 63.

Timely Topics

“WE, THEREFORE, the Representatives of the United States of America... solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be, Free and Independent States.”

So reads a portion of one of the most important documents of our country, the Declaration of Independence. With the signing and adoption of this declaration, a new nation was born, the United States of America.

Independence Day It became a nation born of war fought by an oppressed people who were led by strong men. The colonies held many grievances against the Mother Country, and there was no solution except through separation. Freedom became a precious word, so precious that its price was blood.

Independence Day is still recognized in our nation. Now commonly called the Fourth of July, the real reason for its commemoration seems to be so often forgotten amidst the frivolity of the day's proceedings. Parades, parties, outings, excesses of eating and drinking all form a part of the false merriment. The masses seem to grasp at any excuse for having “fun.” By many the day is celebrated in complete disregard of its greater and far deeper significance.

As Christians, we cannot join in the world's celebration of the day, though we have good reason for commemorating it. We remember it for its true meaning to our lives and carry out the day's activities according to the same principle by which we must judge all that we do: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” For who but God deserves the praise and thanksgiving that we have been given a country founded upon such noble principles as “all men are... endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”; and from the Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

After the long, dark night of the Apostasy, when all mankind were turned from God's truth to fables, God saw fit to allow a nation to be developed

in which the light of true religion could once again shine. So we are free today to worship without governmental interference. How we should thank God that He has chosen to bless us in this manner, that we may enjoy the freedom to serve Him in truth!

Freedom! To us it must be the most precious of words. We must take advantage of our freedom to worship as we please and the freedom to send the news of the gospel. And we must use this freedom to fit ourselves for gaining that greater freedom, even the freedom from death. That freedom will be born of war, our war against every vestige of sin within us. It will be won by the shedding of much blood, the blood of the “old man,” our lower nature. We will lay down our lives for it. Then in that grand Independence Day, we will be freed forever from the enslavement of self and the oppression of sin.

Yes, freedom! “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Free now from error and darkness, free from sin, and in the future, free from mortality, free to be as the angels, one of God's own! ●●

THE SABBATH

(Continued from page 18)

Christ is: that is the place of the soul. The soul should not remove away from this place in order to keep the true sabbath.”

Ptolemy: “And (with regard to) sabbath observance: I desire indeed that you abstain from all evil works.” “Wherefore, brethren, every day is the Lord's for the scripture has said, ‘The earth is the Lord's with the fulness thereof, the circle of the world that is under heaven, and all that dwell therein.’ ”

This spiritual sabbath, the rest from all evil, was a sabbath which every Christian had to keep continually. And no one—not even the Emperor—could interfere with this.

Christ had pointed men forward to that greater, eternal Sabbath, and had made possible such a “sabbatical” manner of life for all who would believe in Him that these early Christians had a revived and real hope in keeping the spiritual, daily sabbath unto the Lord. Jesus promised “rest” to those who would learn from Him: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me... for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matt. 11:29).

God's holy day extends all through the day of salvation (II Cor. 6:2), including every day of the Christian's life. ●●

Bible A B C's



D is for Dorcas. Dorcas was also known by the name of Tabitha. She was a disciple in the early Christian Church. This church was started by the followers of Jesus after He was resurrected from the dead and had ascended into heaven.

We do not know anything about Dorcas's childhood or her parents. We do not know if she had any brothers or sisters. When we first read of Dorcas in the Bible, she has already grown up and is living in the city of Joppa.

Dorcas was a very kind woman and did much to help other people who were less fortunate than she. Dorcas was very skillful with a needle and she sewed garments and coats for poor widows and other people who needed them.

But one day, Dorcas died. Many of the widows whom she had helped prepared her body for burial and then sent two men to Peter, asking him to come to Joppa without delay. Peter did so, and when he arrived at Dorcas's home, the widows stood around him crying and showing him the garments Dorcas had made for them.

D is for
Dorcas

Then Peter asked all the widows to leave the room where Dorcas lay. When the door had been closed behind them, Peter knelt and prayed to God that Dorcas might be brought back to life again. Then he turned toward her and said, "Tabitha, arise." A wonderful thing happened. Dorcas opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up! Dorcas was alive and well again. How happy everyone was.

When the people in Joppa heard that Dorcas had died and that Peter had raised her to life again by the power that God had given him, many people became believers in the one true and living God and started to live good lives. This probably made Dorcas very happy be-

cause the Bible tells us that Dorcas was full of good works, and it is good works that make people righteous in God's sight.

Are we doing good works every day and becoming righteous like Dorcas was? Dorcas is a good example for us to pattern after. ••

I knew him for a gentleman
By signs that never fail;
His coat was rough and rather worn—
At work he does not quail—
A lad who has his way to make,
With little time to play;
I knew him for a gentleman
By certain signs today.

He met his mother on the street;
Off came his little cap.
My door was shut; he waited
Until I heard him rap.
He took the bundle from my hand,
And when I dropped my pen
He sprang to pick it up for me.
This gentleman of ten.

He does not push or crowd along;
His voice is gently pitched;
He does not fling his books about
As if he were bewitched.
He stands aside to let you pass;
He always shuts the door;
He runs on errands willingly
To market, mill and store.

He thinks of you before himself;
He serves you if he can—
For in whatever company
The manners make the man.
At ten and forty its the same,
The manners tell the tale;
And I discern the gentleman
By signs that never fail.

A Garden Without Water

*"For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth,
and as a garden that hath no water"*

—Isaiah 1:30

HAVE you ever looked at your garden after a long spell of hot, dry weather? The ground is baked and parched and seamed with cracks, and the poor flowers droop their weary heads. Of course, you go around with a watering-can and do your best to revive them, but even that is seldom sufficient. And if you happen to live in a town where the water supply is limited, sometimes you receive an order to stop watering the garden. Then you know that if the rain doesn't come soon, the flowers will shrivel up and die.

Away in the East they are much more dependent on water for their gardens than we are. For the sun shines much more intensely and there are long hot periods when rain does not fall at all. In these lands you can imagine what a terribly dreary thing a garden would be that had no means of getting water. Everything would be shrivelled and burned. It wouldn't be a garden at all.

Now I want to speak about two kinds of parched gardens. The first is the garden of our own soul.

This garden has everything it needs to become very beautiful. God has given us the soil, and has furnished seeds for us to plant—seeds of purity, love and gentleness and kindness. But unless our garden is well watered, these flowers cannot grow; they will droop and wither away. How do we make them grow?

What do they do in those hot Eastern countries? In some parts of Persia, the rain falls for only a few hours in each year and yet there are gardens there. They bring the water in giant pipes from the mountains many miles away. These mountains are so

high that their peaks are covered with the everlasting snows, and so the supply of water never fails.

If we want our soul-garden to flourish, we must get our supply of water from an everlasting source. We must let God provide the water. And when we are refreshed with the pure water from His stream of truth, the fair flowers of character will grow and blossom.

There is another kind of parched garden you may find in the world. It is the thirsty garden of other people's lives.

Some people's hearts are dried up for want of a kind word or for lack of encouragement. And so they become hard, and bitter, and disagreeable. There are very few fair flowers blossoming in their gardens. Other people have become withered by some great trouble, or by a great many little cares, or by the love of money.

Now God has told us we can be raindrops to refresh and water these parched gardens. Perhaps you don't think it is very pleasant work; perhaps you think you would rather water flowers that are fresher. But don't you think it would be splendid to help make these flowers grow in dry, barren places? This is a work any child can do.

Away in the hills is a wonderfully fruitful farm. Half of it lies on the side of one hill, and the other half on a hill opposite; and between lies a valley. On one hill grow acres of wheat, on the other there is a fruit orchard. That farm has a history. Once the land was dry and bare and unfruitful, because there was a scarcity of water. But one hot day the farmer climbed one of the hills and lay down near the top to rest. As he lay there his attention was attracted to a low gurgling sound beneath the surface of the ground. There was no water to be seen, but he felt sure there must be a hidden spring beneath the rock. He descended the hill and rode off to the nearest town for an engineer. Very cautiously they opened the rock, and out rushed a stream of clear refreshing water.

That stream was the making of the farm.

What that stream was to the parched land you can be to the parched lives around you. You can refresh them with a kind word, with a loving deed, with a helping hand. And someday, perhaps, the flowers will bloom, and the fruits will ripen in these dry, dreary places, and what before was barren desert will become a beautiful garden. ••

Christ offers no security *against* storms, but perfect security *in* storms.

The Pre-Existence of Christ

(Continued from page 6)

foretold that a virgin would conceive and bear a son (Isa. 7:14-15). Paul's mentioning that Christ was born of a woman does not indicate that He pre-existed any more than any other human. We all are born of woman (Job 14:1).

"Let us ask ourselves the question as to how it was possible for Jesus to live a sinless life. He was the only member of the human family ever to have done this. All others came into this world with sinful tendencies, which made it certain that they would become sinners. It is impossible for any real child of Adam to live a sinless life. A child begins to do those things which are sinful before it knows what sin is. Because of this, there is no hope of parents raising a child that is sinless. Sin is ingrained in its makeup from the very moment of birth.

"Now if the birth of Jesus was the same as ours, the only difference being that He had a heavenly Father, how did He overcome sinful tendencies in the days of His babyhood, tendencies that would have been passed on to Him by Mary? Did God overrule these tendencies so that His Son could not be influenced toward sin? If He did, then He showed a favor toward His Son which He has not been prepared to extend to others."

Again your thought is counter to the teaching of the Bible. You assume that Christ lived a sinless life from the moment of His birth. According to the Scriptures, He did not. He had to eat the "butter and honey" that he might know to refuse the evil and choose the good (Isa. 7:15). He had to "learn obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8) just as every other child has to learn. Christ was sinless only in the respect that He never transgressed after He knew right from wrong; in this way He differs vastly from the rest of the human race who stumble and fall again and again in the same pitfall of sin—after they know better. Jesus became perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:10). He learned obedience (Heb. 5:8-9). Try to picture the eternal God of heaven having to learn right from wrong, or having to endure the cross in prospect of a future joy that had been set before Him (Heb. 12:2).

You make the statement that if God overruled the human tendencies to sin in His Son, then He showed a favor to Him which He has not been prepared to show to others. If you accept the theory that Christ was part of the Deity and existed be-

fore He was born, God certainly extended to Him favor He has not been prepared to extend to the rest of us.

"The truth is, as I understand it, that when Jesus was born His was an experience different from ours. The angel said to Mary, 'That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God' (Luke 1:35). If any mother ever thought that her child was a holy thing, she didn't have long to wait before she was sadly disillusioned."

Yes, in a physical way, Christ's birth-experience was different from ours; He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; but that did not make Him sinless. He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

"I believe that Jesus received no natural tendencies toward sin, not because God interposed, but because what He experienced was an incarnation."

If Jesus was God come in human flesh, who engineered the incarnation—Jesus or God?

The meaning of "incarnation" is: "The embodiment of a deity or spirit in some earthly form; the unity of divinity with humanity in Jesus Christ." But the Bible does not teach that Jesus ever experienced an incarnation. He was raised up from among his brethren (Deut. 18:15), and was like unto them. He was made like His brethren, and none of them experienced an incarnation.

"God performed the miracle which united the pre-existent Christ with human flesh, but it is clear that He retained the holiness and the character that were formerly His."

Where in the Scriptures do we read this? We have no right to accept any statement without Biblical support for that statement.

"This [incarnation] is something that cannot be understood. It cannot be explained on scientific grounds. Paul speaks of this as the 'mystery of godliness' (1 Tim. 3:16).

"If the birth of Jesus was merely the result of God supplying the male cell to unite the female ovum, there was no mystery about it, nothing difficult for Christian people to understand. But as we consider the question of a person who has previously existed uniting His person with human flesh, this we cannot understand. This is indeed a mystery. All we can say is that the miraculous power of God made this possible; beyond this our reasoning powers cannot probe to find a solution to this question."

Building on the phraseology of I Tim. 3:16 in the King James Version, you would make the point that Paul was speaking of the mystery of the pre-existent Christ shrinking to the size of a microscopically small male life cell so as to be able to enter the body of the Virgin Mary and bring about an incarnation—at which point on the journey did this shrinkage take place? This surely would be a mystery.

But is this what Paul was saying? Let us read the text: “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

The above is not the best translation. The *Concordant Version* words this text: “And avowedly great is the *secret of devoutness* [referring to Christ and His holy life, not His birth], which was manifested in flesh, justified in spirit, seen by messengers, heralded among the nations, believed in the world, taken up in glory.” The *Emphatic Diaglott* reads: “and confessedly great is the *secret of piety*; He who was manifested in flesh; was justified in Spirit, was seen by messengers, was proclaimed among Nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.” He was taken up in glory, or “received up into glory” (KJV), not returned to glory where He had been through untold ages!

The *Interpreter's Bible* explains the word “mystery” thus: “Mystery here does not mean ‘mysterious.’ It means revealed truth: Great indeed is the revealed truth of our religion.” The secret of God is with the righteous, with those who fear Him (Ps. 25:14; Prov. 3:32). God is in sweet communion with the righteous and makes His higher spiritual ways known to them. It is only assumption to say that the “mystery of godliness” refers to the incarnation of Christ.

Let us now consider what Paul meant when he said further, as translated in the King James Version: “God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

Most commentators refer to this latter part of verse 16 as a quotation from a hymn of the early church. It is also agreed that it refers to Jesus Christ, not to God. But we should not draw the hasty conclusion and say that Paul is telling us that Christ was God and existed before all creation. We could say that God was manifest in the flesh of Christ, but only in that His work, purpose and reward were fulfilled in Christ. Christ was not God. Few translations use the word “God” here, but use

the pronoun *He* or *who* as in the RSV and Berkeley translations. The original Greek text reads, according to the Diaglott, “He who was manifested in flesh, was justified in spirit, was seen by messengers, was proclaimed among nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”

A comment from the *Abingdon Commentary* on this passage is clear: “. . . the Church is the household of God, His family to whom He has committed His truth. . . . And beyond controversy it is a great revelation which the Church should embody and express in the lives of its members. It is nothing less than finding the secret of godliness, how to live godly lives, how to become like God. This marvellous secret the Church has learned through her great Lord Jesus Christ who revealed it to men by living it Himself in the days of His flesh, who was vindicated by the spirit He revealed and by His victory over sin and death, who was the marvel of angels, heralded among the nations, accounted worthy of trust in the world and exalted high in heavenly glory.” We can see no evidence in this verse that Christ was God, or that an Eternal God was changed into a human being. ● ●

When You Garden--

The next time you are out turning the soil in your garden, think about these words written by a patriotic American:

“Today I picked up a clod from my yard, broke it, and as it sifted through my fingers I realized for the first time that this was more than just dust: this was really a tiny piece of America!”

“I owned a rare treasure—a bit of the only soil left in the world today where a man can stand free and unafraid. I was standing on a piece of America, a few feet around and a thousand miles deep. Here could I build my future, and rear my children with the assurance that they, and their children, could enjoy that same security.

“I could stand on my piece of America, think freely and say what I thought, do what I pleased, shrink from no man, and call upon God as I might choose.

“Three deeds protect my land. One is locked in my strong box—a purchase deed. The others are enshrined and locked in the hearts of every American—the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

“I am a fortunate man, the indisputable owner of my own life, and of the land on which I live it.

“I am an American!” ● ●

LETTERS

Expert Gardeners

The shedding of the maple leaves is in accordance with the natural state of affairs—our mortal lives are similar. But what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us in revealing how we can eventually avoid this happening. Knowing these things we should become expert gardeners, treating our soil so that the leaves of our trees will not fade and fall, but one day be suitable for the healing of the nations. Let us not be as some gardeners, just foolish, folding our arms and allowing things to drift, eventually being carried away by the wind as chaff. Our garden could quite well bring forth thorns and thistles, but we must be digging constantly, not allowing the seeds of these pests any time to even germinate. Once a little evil starts, it could grow quickly and choke all the good. We should bear in mind the words of Gardener James, that one sin chokes out all the good we may have planted, so far as eternal life is concerned.

As in the natural, the gardener's job is arduous; so in the spiritual, it is strait and difficult. We must therefore become experts, putting up with all the difficulties and bringing forth produce worthy for the Great Exhibition, earning full marks by the Divine Judge when the Exhibition is held. The date we know not, but one thing is sure—it is very, very near.

A Subscriber in South Wales

First Things First

If we could just practice the principles of obedience, humility, loyalty, and faithfulness in our daily lives and keep them at all times first and foremost, what a difference it would make!

Recently I was reading an article, a part of which I will quote: "We are passing through the most lawless age the world has ever known. One great reason for this state of affairs is that people have gradually drifted away from the Bible, that wonderful book of laws. In it obedience is the foreword, the theme and the conclusion: 'Obey and live, disobey and die.' 'Blessed are they that do his commandments.' "

Before we can advance ourselves beyond the rank and file of the world, we must come out from among them and become zealous of good works. We must keep trying to climb up the hill of perfection, and refuse to let any fleshly desire interfere with our continuous program of character building. And nothing acts as a greater incentive to overcome our shortcomings than to realize the flesh profits nothing.

Having faith will impart patience, steadfastness, and courage. Faith waits patiently for the promises; endures trials without discouragement; and performs the will of God obediently until the promises are fulfilled—the victory won! I John 5:4 tells us, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." We should practice these principles daily.

A Subscriber in Missouri

Where Eternity?

We must grow up with temporal things. We find, however, that our temporal duties are not for the purpose of retarding our growth to maturity, but for the purpose of building a character for eternity. We can think of eternity as chunks or pieces of time, each temporal in its own duration, comprising some temporal duty for each section of time. Now, if our management of this allotted piece of eternity which we have today is not used properly, why then, we would be considered unable to govern other such like pieces or sections of eternity.

So a question might be asked, Where will you spend eternity? We are starting eternity in life now, so let us continually prove we can spend eternity for God—each division of time we can spend with God.

A Reader in Canada

Inspiring Messages

My wife and I wish to extend our thanks and appreciation. We get much spiritual help and comfort from the *Megiddo Message*, and try to overcome our wrong thinking and wrongdoing.

We are grateful to all who have a part in making such inspiring messages and truths available to us. It is comforting to know God's plan for His people is made so easy to understand through the teachings of the Megiddo Mission Church. We wish you every success in your work for the cause of Christ. With such continual help we surely shall grow in more ways to please Him.

Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

"Teach Me"

I have found much of interest in your publications. Having done some reading, I find that there is much that I would like to know, for I too wish to serve the true God in the correct way, and according to accurate knowledge.

Although I do not find myself agreeing with all I have read, this *Message* contains much that is new to me and is therefore of great interest to me.

In Psalm 143:10, David asks, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God." How often I too have uttered these words. I strive for wisdom in the Lord that I may serve with wisdom. I know He is not far from every true believer, but we must work to maintain our integrity and our good standing with God. Your publications will, I'm sure, help me to "get wisdom" and in all my "getting, get understanding" (Prov. 4:7).

Monmouth, South Wales, Great Britain

The Lie Exposed

Your article on page 9 of the February issue of the *Megiddo Message* called, "Is She Really Dead" drives home in a Godlike manner, certainly not in a debasing manner, the great truth about the great lie being continually perpetrated by so much of organized religion about the immortality of the soul. To my wife and me (we were raised Baptists, now we are just plain Christians) it is a lie, sickening, and anti-Christ, to see what so many so-called ministers teach and preach, yet not using God's Holy Word. We wonder why, but then we realize what is behind the lie and we continue to love Christ.

Thanks for a multi-megaton-loaded reply to Mr. Graham and so many like him.

Columbia, South Carolina

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Numerous holy days were given to the Israelites. Do you keep them? If not, why not?"

The command to observe these holy days terminated with the withdrawing of the law of which they were a part, the law of Moses. (See II Cor. 3:6-11; Gal. 3:24-25; Heb. 10:4-9.) Paul mentions holy days specifically in Col. 2:16-17: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come."

"I believe that being a Christian is being an Israelite. The thirteen tribes (Joseph split into two) of Israel are not Jewish, only the house of Judah. The Israelites were not called Jews until sometime during the reign of the Kings of Israel and Judah. The term occurs first in II Kings 16:6."

You are correct. To be a Christian is to be an Israelite in the sight of God. The apostle Paul states the fact plainly: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

"Your lessons sound reasonable to me, and I've got the right attitude to learn if you will help me. I have this question: Who stops sinning? How can we keep on doing wrong and be forgiven every day?"

Who stops sinning? It is the man who obeys Isaiah's injunction, "Cease to do evil, learn to do well" (Isa. 1:16-17). No, we cannot keep on doing wrong every day and yet merit eternal salvation in the end. God forgives as we "cease to do evil and learn to do well." But a day must come when we shall have broken with sin completely, and become perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48). It is he that continues to the end that shall be saved.

"What Bible do you use?"

We use all the newer versions, but principally the King James Version. We have no gospel other than that contained in the King James Version. All existing Bibles are translated from the same original manuscripts. However, we find the word-

ing better on certain texts in the newer versions, and some are not so good, also the Catholic versions clarify and emphasize certain texts.

"I need help. In Section VII of 'Understanding the Bible' under the heading of 'Demonism' you say: 'And a sinner cannot be cleansed from his sin through the blood of Christ.' How does this conflict with King James Version of I John 1:8-9?"

There is no conflict. There is no efficacy in the literal or physical blood of Christ. In John 6:53, Jesus said: "...except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." He was speaking in symbols; He didn't mean for His hearers to take His words literally, but they did. Then in verse 63 He spoke plainly: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." The words that Jesus spoke to the people were the elements that He spoke of as His flesh and blood. Hence, John said: "But if we walk in the light, ... we have fellowship one with another, and the blood [or word] of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

Ephesians 4 is definite on the cleansing process: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor. . . . Let him that stole steal no more. . . . Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth" (vs. 22-24, 25, 28-29).

Let Us Pray

O Lord, we come to You in weakness, that we might be strong. We come in humility that we might be filled with Your power. We come in the frailty of flesh that we might be robed in Your righteousness.

As Your children we ask that You will give us wisdom and understanding. Give us a compelling love within that shall more than conquer any situation that arises, Lord, this day. We claim Your promises for complete victory over our problems. Prosper us in health and strength, as seemeth good in Thy sight.

This we ask in the Name of the One we love most, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Amen.

When looking for faults, use a mirror, not a telescope.

Meditations on the Word

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in all my holy mountain" (Ps. 46:9; Mic. 4:3; Isa. 11:9).

When all evil has been suppressed we can leave our homes unlocked at night knowing no thief will enter. It then will be unnecessary to maintain a safety deposit box in a bank vault to store any valuable papers we may happen to own. No longer shall we be obliged to see people living like pagans, immodesty of dress and demeanor on the streets and in public places. No longer will millions of radios and television sets be pouring out their trashy, thought-deadening programs every hour of the day and night, minutely depicting the evil side of life; but entertainment then will be of an educational nature, glorifying the highest moral life, or broadcasting the knowledge of the eternal laws of the universe.

A babel of confusion and unethical religious beliefs no longer will be handed out to baffle mankind. The assurance is: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." "... For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, 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" (Zeph. 3:9; Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34).

And all this will be the result of the presence of Divine Authority. Sin no longer can be openly committed. "The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Mic. 4:2). In place of the ignorance of divine law that exists today, the age-lasting gospel then shall be heralded to "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, ... Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:6-7).

The penalty for breaking of the law then shall be executed speedily. There will be no dishonest lawyers to plead for the criminal, nor any unscrupulous judges to render verdicts in favor of organized crime. And sinning ignorantly then shall no longer be possible, for "thine eyes shall see thy teachers, 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).

During that Millennial Age "the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the

Lord of hosts: I will go also" (Zech. 8:21). And those who refuse to give the Lord the glory due His name shall feel the direct effect of their arrogance: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations... shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whosoever will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain" (Zech. 14:16-17). The blessings shall be withholden from all such.

And there is yet another sense in which God's faithful servants never shall see evil, once they have received their reward. Never again shall they experience sickness, pain, fatigue, disappointment, frustration. The perennial problem of making the income dollar match the high cost of living and meet the demands of the ever-broadening base for taxation, shall no longer exist. Dr. Moffatt's translation of Isaiah 33:17-19 should have its appeal: "Your eyes shall see the King in all his splendor, and gaze upon his broad domain; till musing on the terror that has vanished, you ask, 'Where are the tyrant's officers, who taxed us, charged us, took our tribute?' These insolent creatures you shall see no more." ●●

*Not all are prisoners of steel
Nor locked behind the bars,
Our self-made prisons oft conceal
The glory of the stars.
We bind ourselves with ball and chain,
We drag old hurts around—
In many a prison of the brain
A prisoner is found.*

*Come out of the jail! Life lies before;
Forget the things behind.
Your memories are wall and door.
Your prison is your mind.
This very moment turn the key
And lift the bolt, and go—
This very moment you are free,
If you will have it so.*

*Drive out the thoughts of things unkind
That make your mind a cell,
And better thoughts will come and find
A place therein to dwell.
A self-made prisoner no more,
Go forth to sun and star.
Let in the light—throw wide the door—
For what we think, we are.*



Meditations

On the Word

IT WAS foretold by the prophet Isaiah that in the last days, just prior to the second coming of Christ, iniquity would be coming "in like a flood." The events of recent months compel us to associate this prophecy with the present time: "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion" (Isa. 59:19-20).

Evil today is rampant everywhere. We see it on the streets, in public places, in the homes, in society, in high places in the government; in the conduct of human beings everywhere we look.

By nature man is a tree of good and evil. God could not have created man otherwise and at the same time preserved his free moral agency. It is God's plan to save and eternally bless only those who will make something of themselves. Had He followed any other plan there would be no virtue to man and no glory to Himself.

The state of things we see today is not the Eternal's purpose; it was not for such a purpose that He made the earth and created man upon it. Although He now endures with much patience the vessels of wrath fitted only to destruction, He will not always endure them. He permits delinquency and evil workers only as a means of maintaining material from which He may refine the valuable metal. In the end He will discard the dross.

A time is coming when He will separate the tares from the wheat, the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the wicked. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all

things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13:41). The prophet Job pictures the end of the wicked in words too plain to mistake: "He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world. . . . Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God" (Job 18:18, 21). He shall be chased out of the "world to come."

How good it is to know a Day will dawn when we shall see the fulfillment of the glorious promise that the Lord, "the King of Israel," shall be in our midst, and we shall not see evil any more; no transgression tolerated.

There will be no more murders, no more robberies, no more embezzling, no more forgeries, no more gambling. There will be no dishonesty among bank officials and personnel, no more iniquity in high places. There will be no more drunkenness, no more immorality, no more broken families, the by-product of divorce.

There will be no more war. No longer will billions upon billions of dollars be spent to maintain immense armies, navies and air forces. There will be no more wanton destruction, whole cities wrecked by bombing, hundreds of thousands of inoffensive people killed, besides the millions maimed and left homeless and destitute in the wake of the destruction. The divine promise is: "He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth." "And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords

into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

"They shall not hurt nor destroy"
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"The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more"

—Zephaniah 3:15.

The Call

*In days long gone God spake unto our sires:
"Courage! Launch out! A new world build for me!"
Then to the deep they set their ships, and sailed,
And came to land, and prayed that here might be
A realm from pride, sparring and despotism free,
A place of peace, the home of liberty.*

*Lo, in these days, to all good men and true
God speaks again: "Launch out upon the deep
And win for me a world of righteousness!"
Can we, free men, at such an hour still sleep?
O God of freedom, stir us in our night
That we set forth, for justice, truth and right!*

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