

# Megiddo Message



*Lord God of low tides  
and high hopes,  
who has brought millions  
to our shores,  
grant that each  
shall find the freedom  
he sailed for  
in this great land  
which honors those  
who honor it.*

*Lord God of willing hands  
and opportunity,  
of past failures,  
present mistakes  
and future successes:  
who has brought man  
from wagon train to  
space capsule and  
filled this great country,  
imperfect though it be;  
give equal dignity to all  
(Continued on page 3 )*

LORD GOD of LIBERTY

# Megiddo Message

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

The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- 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...

### Why Hobab's Eyes?

BEING so instinctively opinionated as we mortals seem to be, we quite naturally believe in ourselves. Our ideas are generally good. We know what is best—for ourselves, if not for everyone else. And should we sometime feel the need of outside help, we find it much easier to ask another man our equal than to seek guidance from the divine Mind.

Many a man has stumbled on this very human rock of offense. Even Moses.

During the early days of the Israelites' wilderness experience, there occurred a bit of discussion that was recorded for our learning. The two parties involved were Moses and a little known in-law named Hobab.

"And Moses said unto Hobab, . . . We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Hobab clearly did not want to go, and he said so. But Moses insisted: "Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes" (Num. 10:29-31).

Imagine Moses hiring a guide to lead his people through the wilderness! The whole idea seems almost incredible, as though God had made no provision for Israel's direction. But Moses was a man like the rest of us, and as capable of making mistakes. And hiring Hobab was a serious mistake.

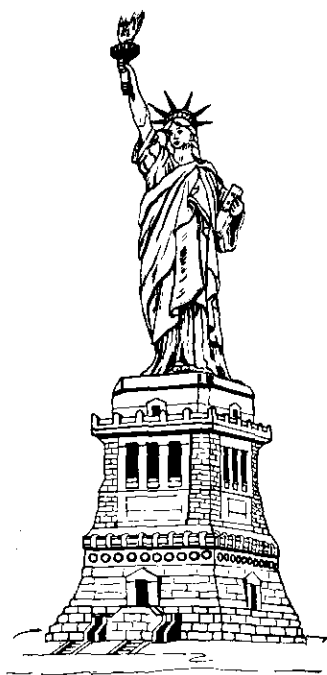
God had made abundant provision for their guidance through the wilderness. Before Moses ever spoke to Hobab, God had promised to show the way: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way" (Ex. 23:20). He was to be ever present, a cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night. What need for Hobab's eyes?

Hobab's presence added nothing to the safety of the Israelites; and there is reason to believe that he may have been a spiritual stumblingblock, both to Moses and to Israel. The more they trusted to Hobab, the less they trusted in God. And that was bad for Israel.

The Israelites eventually arrived at their destination—through the guidance of God, not Hobab. But Hobab is present with us, though in a more modern form. Our Hobab is any earthly interest or affection which distracts us from following strictly the path God has laid out for us. Each of us must continually look out for him in our own lives, lest we find ourselves consulting *his* advice instead of God's. How easily we may find ourselves following *our* Hobab, our own notions, our natural instincts, our inborn desires and ambitions. He is so near, so easy to talk with, so natural and so appealing—Beware!

The message recorded for our warning is unequivocal: "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths"—and *He* is *God*, not Hobab. Hobab is but a man that walketh, and "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." ●●

# LORD GOD of L I B E R T Y



*(Continued from page one)*

*and let men everywhere know we still  
stand by the promises of our Declaration.*

*Lord God of other lands and other peoples,  
who have not all the blessings that are ours,  
we pray that they may someday know the joy  
of struggle and success  
that You have given us in our free land.  
You do not regard the high and mighty,  
nor do you disregard the humbler kind;  
You seek the noblest and the best, where'er they be—  
in any land, in any race of humankind.*

*Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel,  
who in the ages past did save them from the oppressor's hand,  
and taught them how to live and love and serve  
You as their God,  
teach us to use the stalwart muscles of our faith  
to fashion in ourselves that holiness that pleases You,  
that purpose firm,  
that fixed desire to see a better land  
than yet the eye of mortal man has seen.  
O teach us now that evil does not flee by wishful thinking,  
that good that is begun must follow through;  
that today must rectify the wrongs of yesterday  
if goodness is to triumph in the end.*

*Lord God of earth and sky,  
and all the heavenly hosts that dwell above,  
to whom a thousand years is but a day,  
to whom eternity lies opened wide,  
remind us that the best of earth  
is but a moment worth.*

*So we await that great and glorious hour  
when You shall send Your Son to crown Your own,  
and they shall be Your own for evermore!  
We stand for liberty, but we seek  
for that which now is known among Your "sons,"  
immortal beings who inhabit other worlds.  
Give us a burning love for that which is to come,  
that time when men shall know each other,  
and all be children of Your care, all one.  
We stand by Liberty's uplifted nightlight  
welcoming tomorrow in a land where  
the glow of living truth and freedom shall not fail  
until the Day has come!*

In an age of decadence and foreboding--

## Thank God for America

“ALL the earthly possessions of the priest were sold in the town square. The priest himself had died before a firing squad for baptising a mother and young child.”

Toulouse, in 1310?

No, not at all. Albania, in 1974!

Living in the free religious atmosphere provided for us by the government of the United States, it is difficult for us to realize that religious freedom is not the blessing of people worldwide. Even today persecution for one's religious beliefs is rampant in many countries.

### In the USSR...

A totally atheistic state is the avowed aim of the government of the USSR. And this means that the religious-minded must suffer. Religious worship is not officially forbidden, but it is subject to continual harassment and oftentimes severe persecution. Many churches have been converted into dance halls, factories or club houses, or even destroyed. Small groups of believers meet in private homes to worship and sing hymns, but even these are kept under surveillance by the KGB, the secret police. The government recognizes the impossibility of preventing the older citizens from practicing their religion, but it is doing all in its power to prevent missionary work or proselyting among the young. Manifold means are used—even to secret radio listening devices installed in homes of ministers and their families, so that government officials may know all that goes on in the home. Those who are trying to satisfy the spiritual needs of friends and parishioners are frequently arrested and sentenced to prison at trials from which the public is barred. But in spite of it all, some religious groups are alive and enthusiastic—underground though they must be.

Would that we who have the privilege of free and open loyalty to God, and who are blessed with an insight into the great things of His law, might demonstrate that same zeal!

### In Albania...

The little Communist country of Albania has gone further than the USSR in its determination to eradicate all forms of religion. In 1966 an “ideological and cultural revolution” was initiated, and within a year all religions were forced to abandon public worship. More than two thousand buildings were closed, and those hardy souls who continued to practice their religion publicly were imprisoned or executed. In 1967 the Albanian government announced the nation to be “the first atheist state in the world.”

### In Africa...

Reports from several of the newer African nations contain almost unbelievable stories of persecution. Uganda's secret police are said to have slaughtered more than 90,000 in three years. In Burundi, three hundred thousand people have lost their lives because of dissident religious beliefs. In the Nigerian civil war, many thousands perished. In Chad, the situation is the same. Missionaries in several of the African nations have been subjected to torture and death.

### In Korea...

Korea has seen two wars and two great persecutions (one Japanese, one Communist); and even today, the government of South Korea, though backed by the United States, does not permit its citizens religious freedom.

### In Ireland...

The situation in Ireland today is one which should cause both Catholics and Protestants to appeal to the leaders to end the violence perpetrated upon innocent victims. Such slaughter cannot be condoned by any civilized society, to say nothing of a *religious* society. It is persecution by the religious people themselves. Men, especially religious men, should be governed by a higher law than that of the jungle. But they are not.

## What Is Persecution?

Persecution has been defined as "deliberate, persistent attack or harassment because of the victim's religious identification or beliefs." It may have many causes. Usually it arises among those who fear losing their privileges to a more vigorous, more competent, or more righteous person or group. Or it may be motivated by a thirst for revenge. Or it may result from resentment toward a source of frustration, or a long-term personal grudge.

Through the ages those who have striven to serve God with their whole heart, who would not bow to conformity or popular opinion, have often been subjected to severe persecution. There are many examples in the Bible.

### In the Old Testament . . .

The history of persecution begins in the Old Testament with the murdering of Abel (Gen. 4: 5-8). Soon followed the persecuting of Joseph at the hands of his brothers (Gen. 37:23).

The Israelites, enslaved in Egypt, suffered persecution at the hand of their Egyptian taskmasters—because the rulers feared their growing numbers.

Many of the prophets, sent of God to warn erring people of their sin and its consequences, were persecuted either by the people to whom they were sent or by their rulers, or by both.

The prophet Micaiah, who alone warned King Ahab of the serious consequences of his folly in going to battle with the Syrians, was imprisoned and afflicted for telling the unpopular truth. Jeremiah suffered a similar fate for warning King Zedekiah of the calamity which was coming upon him and the city of Jerusalem. Daniel, a Hebrew captive in a Babylonian palace, was thrown to the lions for having the courage to worship the true God in defiance of the king's decree. In this case the Lord delivered him. The majority of victims of persecution have not been so favored.

### In the New Testament . . .

The outstanding example of all time was that of our Saviour and coming King, Jesus. He healed the sick, raised the dead, taught men the only way of salvation. Yet because His teaching was unpopular and because He exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders of His time, He was cruelly scourged and crucified.

Jesus had much to say about the mistreatment His disciples could expect in years to come. It would be part of the price Christians would have to be ready to pay to show the completeness of

their devotion. He said: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:10-12).

Again, "Beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles" (Matt. 10:17-18).

"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matt. 23:34-35).

And again: "And ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake . . . But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24).

In His parting address to His disciples the night of the crucifixion, Jesus tried to fortify them for the trials which He knew lay ahead. He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. . . . If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also" (John 15:18-20). As He had promised them earlier, they would receive "a hundredfold now in this time, . . . with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30).

### After Pentecost . . .

The Spirit-filled apostles who went out to preach immediately after Pentecost were not long encountering what Jesus had foretold. The first recorded incident is that of the arrest and trial of Peter and John for their preaching after they had healed the lame man at the Gate Beautiful of the Temple (Acts 3 and 4). Only a short time later, Stephen was stoned to death; Herod executed James and imprisoned Peter (Acts 12).

The apostle Paul felt the heat of the days of persecution. He expected it: "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus," he wrote, "shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). In his letter to the Corinthians he recounted his own sufferings—enough

to discourage any less zealous man (II Cor. 11:23-27). Wherever he went, he knew that bonds and afflictions awaited him (Acts 20:23). Yet through it all he was buoyant: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (II Cor. 4:8-9). In all things he wanted to prove himself the minister of God: "in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings" (II Cor. 6:4-5). And he could even say, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (II Cor. 12:10).

Finally, after being arrested by the Jews in Jerusalem, Paul appealed to Caesar and was sent to Rome, where he spent his last days in chains and probably died in the persecution that took place during Nero's reign.

Persecution during the early years of the Christian Church was sporadic, sometimes severe. Often it resulted from local resistance and mob rule. At times the Roman authorities adopted a hostile attitude toward the spreading faith. During such a time the apostle Peter wrote his two Epistles to his brethren, in which are numerous references to persecution and how the Christian should bear it nobly (see I Peter 1:7-8; 4:3-4, 12-14, 16). Persecution continued to be severe during the rule of several of the Roman emperors.

### **During the Middle Ages . . .**

When the Christian (apostate) Church became established as the state religion, dissenters were persecuted severely as being opposers of the "kingdom of God." To disagree with a tenet of the Church was to oppose divine authority, it was believed. The principle of "One King, One Faith, One Nation" left no place for tolerance of varying viewpoints. To preach any gospel other than that of the established church (which was both the civil and sacred law enforcement agent) was to "kill souls"—a crime far worse than natural murder; hence the severity of persecution. The days of the Inquisition were even worse, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when every spark of free thought was cruelly tortured and suppressed. These days stand in history among the darkest, and the Church was the instigator of the suffering.

### **During the Reformation . . .**

The days of the Reformation saw little more free thought as those having power—especially ecclesiastical power—were intimidated, harassed and persecuted. Men, women and children were mercilessly tortured and killed because they would not assent to all the doctrines they were taught. Calvin in all good conscience assented to the burning of Michael Servetus at the stake because Servetus refused to believe the doctrine of the Trinity—a heresy which Calvin considered equal to idolatry.

## **A Prayer**

by Thomas Jefferson

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 industry, sound learning, and pure manners.



Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues.



Endow 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 of the earth.

In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in Thee to fail; all of which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



## In the New World . . .

Religious persecution even traveled across the ocean to the New World with those who, driven from their homes in Europe because of their religious persuasions, were seeking freedom for themselves and their families. For though they wanted "freedom" to worship as *they* thought best, they were not willing to grant the same right to others. They wanted everyone to accept *their* brand of Christian orthodoxy and were ready to force it upon all who happened to be within their jurisdiction.

### Religious Freedom

Real religious freedom was a long time coming. But it came step by step as men in the New World, guided by the hand of God, eventually came to see the need for total separation of church and state.

It was Roger Williams who started a movement for complete religious freedom within the state or nation, though even *he* would not endorse it within a church. Unrepentant "heretics," he felt, should be dealt with through excommunication from fellowship.

Religious liberty became an issue during the American Revolution. And after the war was over, a general spirit of mutual tolerance and religious liberty was in the air as churches in the colonies broke loose from the old-world organizations. In New York, Maryland, and the Carolinas, complete religious liberty was adopted during the war. In certain other states freedom was longer in coming. Not until 1786, ten years after the Declaration of Independence, was Jefferson successful in persuading the Virginia Assembly to approve his Statute of Religious Liberty. But its guarantee was complete. The exercise of religion, it declared, is a "natural right" not to be infringed by "the impious presumption of legislators and rulers" who set up their own "modes of thinking as the only true and infallible"; and who "compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves," a practice both "sinful and tyrannical." The statute declares, "No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place or ministry whatsoever," and any later assembly tampering with this law "will be an infringement of natural right." And none to this day have ventured to do so; the law is still in force.

How different this spirit in the colonies from the thinking which had dominated Europe through the centuries!

When the Founding Fathers framed the document which became the Constitution of the United States, they included no section which mentioned any connection between church and state. But simple omission was not enough to satisfy those who were so near the days of fiery persecution. When the Bill of Rights was added in 1791, the First Amendment specifically guaranteed religious freedom to all: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

### WHY Persecution?

Why so much persecution through the centuries? Because intolerance seems to be part of human nature unrestrained. The human mind, unfortunately, often operates like a camera, with as restricted a field of view. Actions which we cannot understand, or which are outside our limited vision, are suspect. Instinctively we feel that others should think just as we do. If they do not, there is something wrong with them, and they should be punished for it. This is the source of religious persecution.

Why does God allow it?

The answer to this lies in the basics of the arrangement God has set up. He has made men free moral agents, free to choose their own course of action, free to govern themselves. Hence, man's animal instincts, unrestrained by law, often govern. The time for divine coercion has not yet arrived.

This system of individual choice allows every man to determine his own destiny. Man possessing by nature a mixture of good and evil, he is free to restrain the evil and develop the good if he so desires, or to let the evil overrule the good. This has been true through the ages. God sent His prophets and even His Son to aid man in reaching and developing his highest potential, of forming a character worthy of living in God's future arrangement when divine righteousness shall be universal. But to man's everlasting shame he refused this offer, allowing his animal nature to dominate. Jealousy, intolerance, vain ambitions, desire for power over others, cruelty, sadism and lust have been characteristics of far too many in or out of authority through the ages. Hence we find persecution today which we would like to think was confined to the days of the Roman Empire or the Dark Ages.

Even when Christ returns and compels men to submit to Him and learn His ways of righteousness and truth, men will still be ready to persecute. The "kings of the earth" will "set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us"

*(Continued on page 27)*

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## **GOD'S MAN FOR CRISIS HOUR**

Part 4

**L**IFE is one continuous round of decisions. What is best? What is right? Which course will offer the most in long-term benefit?

Decision was Elijah's problem. It was Israel's problem. It is still our problem today. Decide we must, again and again and again. For we cannot have everything, only a choice of things. Sometimes the decision is trivial; sometimes it determines the whole course of our life for years to come.

Sometimes the right decision is obvious. More often it is a choice between two alternatives—both to our liking, or neither to our liking. And the decision becomes painful. It involves sacrifice, or suffering. Naturally we recoil and strike for a middle course between the two alternatives.

This is what Israel did in the matter of God and Baal. And this is what brought about the contest on Mount Carmel.

### ***On Carmel***

The scene on Mount Carmel is familiar history. The great gathering of people, and the seemingly unequal contest—one man of God against 850 false prophets. It was the day of decision.

Forth came Elijah's ringing challenge: "How long halt ye between two opinions?" (I Kings 18:21, KJV). Or, "How long do you mean to hobble first on one leg then on the other?" (Jerusalem Bible). Or, "How long will you sit on the fence?" (NEB). Or, "How long will you lean to both sides?" (Berkeley). Or, "How long will you go limping with two different opinions?" (RSV).

The people were inclined toward a compromising attitude of

### ***Both . . . and***

Throughout history mankind has found the worship of one god rather a dull affair. For this reason he has sought to introduce variety into religious life by making other gods, or by adopting someone else's god besides his own. "There be gods many, and lords many," wrote Paul to the Corinthians as he commented on the extraordinary number and complexity of the gods and religions in the Greek world of his time.

The people of Israel in Elijah's day had given way to this same lust for religious excitement. The Lord was a "one God only." That was not enough. And the services He commanded were extremely dull compared with the sensuous and exciting rites that attracted crowds to the pagan temples. Why not add spice and variety to the religious life of Israel? After all, Israel was famous for her religion. Why should she have less to boast about than her neighbors?

Then too, time demanded a change. There had been a royal marriage, and Ahab had brought Jezebel to her new home amid great national rejoicing. Jezebel's god was Baal. Wasn't it perfectly logical to add her religion to the religion of Israel? Here was something exciting and new, ready-made with scores of Tyrian priests willing to come and teach the people all the associated orgies and ceremonies. Why not adopt Baal *as well as* the Lord, and so have breadth and variety in Israel's religion which would put all other nations in the shade?



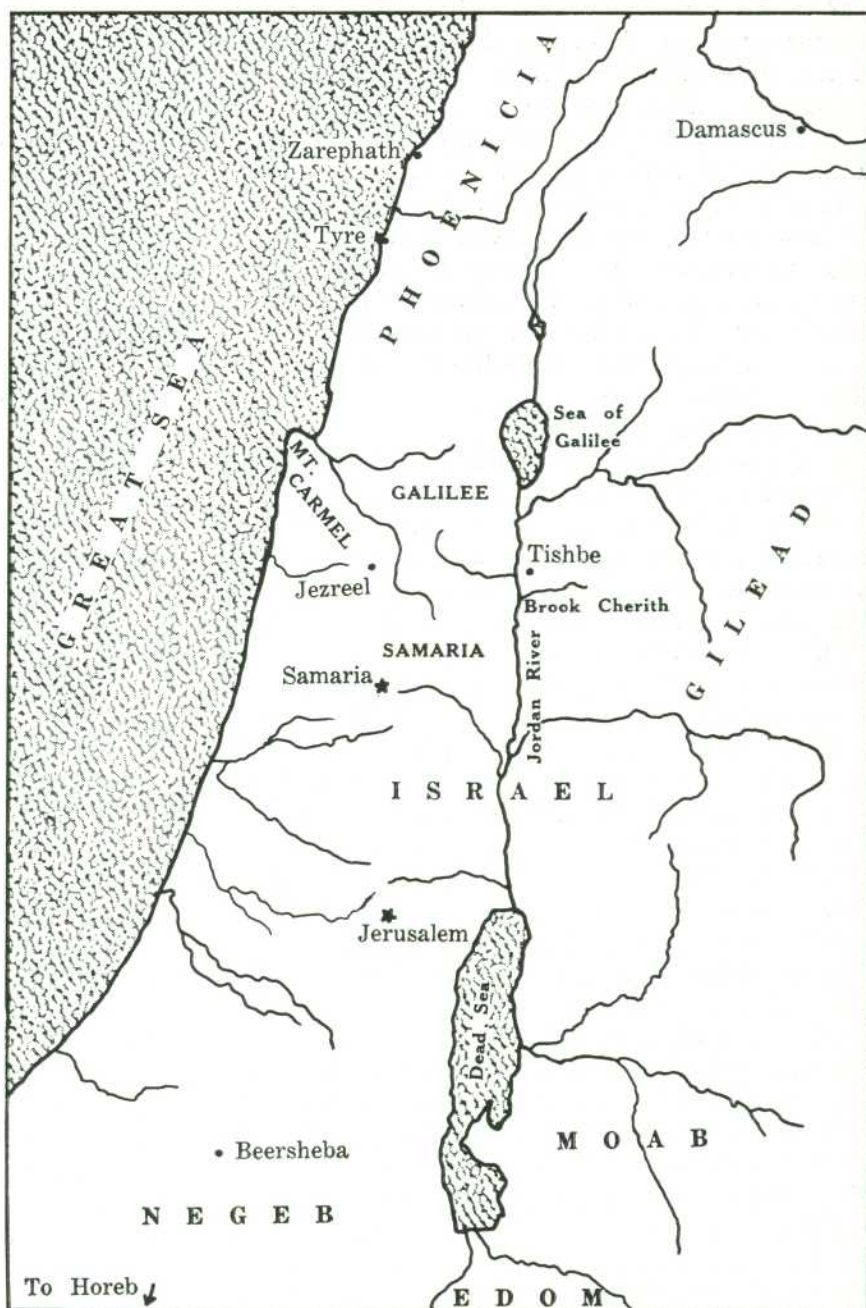
The people of Israel welcomed Baal as they had welcomed Jezebel. They built altars to him, bowed the knee to him, and kissed him. Why not? This did not change anything. They were not giving up the Lord for all this. They kept the Lord as their official national God. He came first. His temple was well kept. It was the Lord *and* Baal for Israel. Their priests told them they could worship *both*. In fact, some likely said that the ideas they culled from Baal would in time enrich their concepts of the Lord and embellish and improve their national tradition. Why not?

The same temptation confronted the early Church in the centuries immediately following Christ. All around them were multitudes of gods and religions and philosophies. Some were bad, detestable and disgusting. But some seemed basically good. Some were stupid and immoral, but others were highly intellectual and cultured. Could they not with discernment borrow what was good from the pagan world and at the same time worship God? And when persecution came and they were threatened with death, why not throw a handful of incense on a pagan altar and bow to the Emperor—why should that necessarily mean giving up the Lord? Why not have the Lord *and* some form of “Baal”?

We today press against the same decision. God is still in heaven, and Baal is still upon earth. Why not combine the two? Why not pursue the things we like, personal advancement, and this world's good, at the same time remembering God as our Creator?

God *and* mammon; God *and* wealth; God *and* worldly wisdom; God *and* Baal—why not?

The reason is simple: *It will not work*. God will *not* share His worship with another. “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God” (Ex. 20:5). He will not vie with another secondary absorption. He wants our devotion—*all or none*. It is a matter of . . .



### ***Either . . . Or!***

Elijah's plan of action on Mount Carmel was deliberately spectacular. This man of God provoked a tensely dramatic crisis in the nation and created a situation which would force the people to one final choice between the Lord and Baal. It was to be a life-and-death struggle between himself and the priests of Baal in which one and *only* one could survive. It was a setting in which God could visibly vindicate His name and speak decisively.

Let us picture ourselves present on Mount Carmel that day. It is a great scene. People from all

over the nation are gathered. Elijah stands alone, and the prophets of Baal in their hundreds stand on the other side. And there are the throngs of curious, undecided onlookers.

Straightway the prophets of Baal erect their altar and begin their supplications. Baal must hear and send fire. Loud and long they cry, now prostrating, now dancing around the altar with all kinds of body contortions, their fervor mounting as the hours pass. They whip themselves up into an ecstatic frenzy, even cutting themselves with knives to impress their gods—while the people grow impatient, restless, weary.

But there is no response.

It is now evening, and Elijah's turn. He begins by preaching. His sermon is short, clear and right to the point. No one who hears shall ever forget those final words of appeal and warning that hushed the whole assembly into a troubled silence. "How long, how long halt ye between two opinions?"

Elijah tried with all the passion and eloquence he had, to make the men of his time see that it must be *either* God or Baal, *never both*. To cultivate a religious life that involved a continual traffic between the house of the Lord and the house of some other god was to make a mockery of both. Such a view of religion refuses to take anything seriously, for instead of looking on life as a sphere for decision, it leads to a view of life as a mere game in which men are always hopping about on one leg from one thing to another, with no hope of finding any solidity anywhere.

It is our task today to confront ourselves with this same either-or decision. How strong the temptation to feel, I can do this or that *and* maintain my loyalty to God. How easy to throw just a small handful of incense on other altars of secular interest in this world of many gods. How easy to confess that God is the Lord of our life one moment, and then turn to seek elsewhere some new bit of excitement. How easy—but how fatal! Elijah could not condone it; neither must we.

### ***Fire Came Down***

Elijah's words were words of power that day on the height of Mount Carmel. But it was not his words alone that brought the people to the Lord's side. It was the fire from heaven. The proposition was: "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." Elijah's preaching in itself would have failed, despite its passionate sincerity, for "the people answered him not a word." When three years' famine had failed to change the hearts of Israel, one short sermon by itself could not. If Israel was to

## ***The Excellency of Carmel***

"A beautifully wooded mountain range, an upland park of oaks and evergreens, bright with hollyhocks, jasmine and various flowering creepers; myrtle, honeysuckle and laurel"—this is how a traveler has described the highland region where Elijah met the prophets of Baal. Rising above the other peaks, Carmel is visible from far. On its top is a terrace of natural rock; nearby is a perennial spring not known to go dry. At the base of Carmel winds the ancient brook Kishon.

Carmel's remote heights, its groves and nooks have been scenes of worship from ancient days. The caves and wooded glens have hid many a fugitive. To the west lies the great blue sea, and to the south and east the plains of Esdraelon. Away in the distance is the city of Jezreel, where in Elijah's day stood Ahab's royal palace and the idol temple distinctly visible from Carmel's height.

The name Carmel means in Hebrew, "plantation, garden-land, fruit or garden-growth." How fitting that the ancient Prophet should have compared the beauty and fertility of the glorified earth to "the excellency of Carmel" (Isaiah 35:2).

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turn to God, God must manifest Himself—visibly.

And Elijah was sure that He would.

But first, Elijah must do his part—Elijah must pray; and we should note the Prophet's sublime confidence in God. In vivid contrast to the priests of Baal who jumped about crazily and cut themselves with knives and shouted wild and anxious prayers to Baal, Elijah moved with calm and superb dignity.

"Hear me, O Lord, hear me," he cries quietly and confidently in his final words of invocation, "that this people may know that thou art the Lord God."

God honored Elijah's calm, unshakable faith, and answered. "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

The prophets of Baal had failed utterly, and Elijah demanded their slaughter. Baal had been defeated that day in Israel, and his promoters must be removed if Israel was to be purged from idol worship.

We today are living in an age when the Lord will shortly make Himself known before all nations upon earth. As vividly and as convincingly as He spoke that day on Carmel, He will speak

again. He will honor His Word. And when He does, where will we stand—with Elijah, calm and collected, eager to see the manifestations of His power, or with the excited—and doomed—prophets of Baal?

### ***Another Prayer and . . .***

The coming of fire was a sign to Elijah that the rain would soon follow. "Get thee up, eat and drink," he told Ahab, "for there is a sound of abundance of rain." Elijah had ears to hear what Israel could not hear—because his ear was attuned to God. The famine-stricken people needed rain, and as sure as the Lord sent fire, so surely He would send rain. Elijah—by faith—could "hear" it coming!

But the rain did not come instantly and automatically. Elijah still had something to do. While Ahab and the rest of the people went off to feast on the slender remains of their stores of food, Elijah prayed.

"Ahab went up to eat and drink," says the Scripture, "and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself upon the earth, and put his face between his knees" (1 Kings 18:42). God would surely finish what He had begun, but Elijah must still pray. It is always man's duty to do all he can to place himself on God's side, to confirm his part of the covenant relation. It is a lesson we should ponder. Too easily we relax in the midst of Christian work. Too easily we forget that though God is working, we still must pray; our desires must be linked with His purposes in earnest, fervent prayer.

That is why Jesus taught His disciples to pray: "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6: 10). The Kingdom of God is coming, and nothing men may do can thwart that divine purpose. But if we want that Kingdom to include us, we must now include ourselves among those so intensely interested in it that to reach it is their first desire.

Elijah prayed; then, having done all that he could do, he awaited the Lord's answer. "Go up now," he addressed his servant, "look toward the sea." The servant went and returned, reporting, "There is nothing."

Elijah was not dismayed or doubtful. "Go again," he said

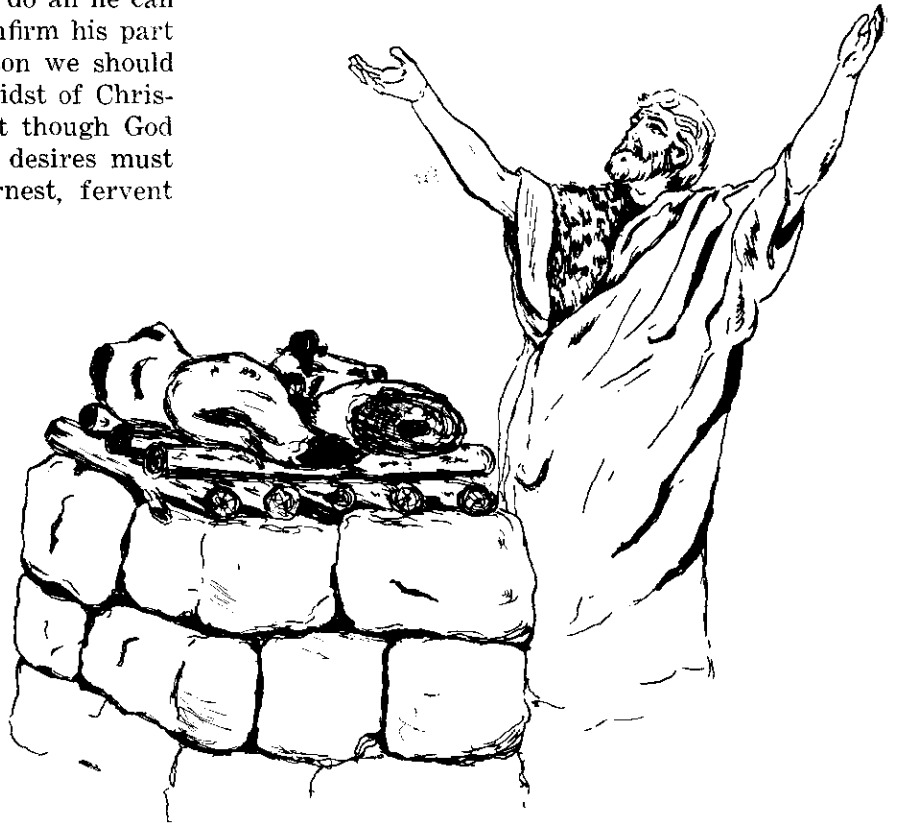
simply, and the servant went again. Still his answer: "There is nothing."

How persevering was Elijah! Six times did he send his servant, and six times the servant returned with the message, "There is nothing." But when the servant returned the seventh time, he reported: "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." Elijah's prayer was answered, and he knew it. At once he sent word to Ahab to prepare for the coming storm. He and the king began to descend the hill, for the clouds were gathering rapidly. At the foot of the hill the king boarded his chariot, hurried to cross the brook before it became a flood, and made for Jezreel as fast as he could go.

But Elijah went faster. "And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel"—about eighteen miles!

And it rained. And rained. And rained. The long drought was over.

*(Continued on next page)*



*"Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel,  
let it be known that thou art God"*

## ***Crisis Hour, Then and Now***

It was crisis hour that day on Mount Carmel. Three years of drought had brought Israel to the point of dire necessity, and it was time for the Lord to speak.

Once again, nearly three millennia later, *we* stand on the brink of an even greater crisis. One-time strongholds of morality and justice and personal integrity are trembling. Men's hearts fail them for fear of the problems that loom large before them—famine, war, overpopulation, crime, general unrest, nuclear power and the possibility

of total annihilation. It is crisis hour.

And where is God's man at this time? He is coming, the veritable prophet Elijah himself, who stood on Mount Carmel that day in Israel. Soon, very soon he shall be sent as the herald of the King of kings, to begin the great work God intends to do in these last days. He comes to issue God's proclamation worldwide to call all men to a decision, just as he did in Israel. He comes to warn them that the "great day of the Lord" is at hand.

It is crisis hour. And God has His man pre-appointed; even now he is prepared, ready, waiting. Are *we* ready to meet *him*—God's man for *this* crisis hour? THE END.

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## ***No Middle Road***

Though the majority of Israelites worshiped Baal in the time of Elijah, they had not formally renounced Jehovah or ceased to regard themselves as His people. That is why in the midst of the severe famine they could not see *themselves* as the cause. True, they were worshiping Baal; but they were performing their duties to God just as they had for years. Perhaps they did not wish to go to extremes with either side; they would be safest in the middle of the road.

In temporal matters the middle of the road is often the safest. Life is healthiest when it avoids certain extremes. The majority of the earth's population flourishes in the temperate zones, where it is neither torrid nor frigid.

But in matters pertaining to the spiritual life, the middle of the road spells danger. It is not a place where one may travel with speed and safety. To stay in the middle, one must like Ahab go "limping weakly between two sides"—or halt.

Another danger in the middle of the road is the tendency to lukewarmness. Too easily we confuse indifference and tolerance. Tolerance may sometimes be a virtue, but there is no true tolerance in being "past feeling." Insensitivity to issues that mean eternal life or eternal death is critical. To keep one's head cool enough for impartial judgment is one thing; it is another to let one's heart grow cold, hard and unfeeling.

In religion there is no real middle course. The men who have done great work either for God or for the world have never been fence-sitters. Those who try to favor two different sides give nothing to either.

Life involves a commitment. Those who wish may serve Baal, but those who serve the true God must

serve Him *alone*. Their dedication to one side of the road must keep them going straight. "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me," said Jesus, "cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).

The apostle John voiced the same eternal truth in his First Epistle: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And then he explains why. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:15-17).

There is a distinct cleavage between the world and the Father, and consequently in the choice every man must make. Our ultimate devotion must be to one or the other. "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13).

How many steps are wasted in attempting to keep a middle course between the two! What folly and sin have resulted from continual vacillation! Our moral foundations are undermined by decision deferred. Strength of character lies in a solid decision clinched by decisive action.

It is the decision to which Jesus challenged His listeners at the close of the Sermon on the Mount. The choice is between a likeness to the man who "heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them," and "every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not." One is wise, the other is foolish. There is no middle road. ●●



# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## World Religions

**I**N our last issue we studied Judaism, so named for the tribe of Judah. It is the religion of the Jews, the descendants of Abraham. Judaism was built upon the best of foundations—the law of God.

God called Israel to be His nation. He provided them with a leader and gave them laws to live by. He saw them safely settled in their homeland and sent His prophets to teach them His law. Through these same prophets, He made known that He was to have a human Son who would someday be King over not only the nation of Israel, but over the whole earth. The birth, work, ministry, second coming and kingship of Christ were all the subject of literally hundreds of prophecies. The Jews were well acquainted with these prophecies, and for generations the hope of the Messiah was alive in the heart of every true Jew. But when the Messiah came as a common man and not as royal king, He was maligned, ridiculed, rejected, and put to death on a Roman cross.

By rejecting Christ, the Jews sealed their fate. They were no longer the chosen people; they had failed to keep their covenant and had rejected God's own Son. Without believing in His first coming, there could be no hope in His second coming. They had been established as a nation by God; they had started to build upon a good foundation, established by God Himself, but a building upon the finest foundation is worthless unless it is completed. No building of God's can be complete without the chief cornerstone, which is Christ.

In this issue we will make a brief study of the faith most familiar to all our readers, Christianity. Christianity has what all other faiths we have studied lack: Christ. All other faiths project life no further than the grave. Lacking the true God, they lack His Son and the hope of a future life.

For the majority of the adherents of Eastern faiths, life is meaningless, often hopeless. Their religion offers them nothing beyond this life; and possessing little of this world's goods, life affords little pleasure. This is not true of the life of a

Christian. The Christian possesses a hope not shared by other faiths. He sees this life as a preparation for a larger, fuller life in the Kingdom of God on earth which Christ is coming to establish.

## VII. CHRISTIANITY

A Christian is defined in **Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary** as "One who believes in or professes belief in Jesus as the Christ; a member of any of the Christian churches. One who lives according to the example and teaching of Jesus. A civilized, decent, or respectable person." Put simply, to be a Christian is to be like Christ, to emulate His example.

Christianity did not emerge as a religion in the form of an established Church until after Christ, but it had its roots in the Old Testament. Some claim it is entirely a New Testament faith and discount the Old Testament in favor of the New. But the New cannot be divorced from the Old, as is aptly stated by an unknown poet: "The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed. The New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New explained." The New Testament's more than 260 direct quotations and the more than 300 indirect allusions to Old Testament texts prove the truthfulness of this statement.

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Christianity actually began with Christ, but the formal Christian Church was not organized until several years after Christ's ascension. Christianity began with Jesus and His disciples, the apostle Paul being an outstanding organizer and missionary. Jesus' preaching and teaching was done at existing synagogues, in the marketplace, by the Sea of Galilee, or anywhere people congregated.

Fortified with the power of the Holy Spirit, the Eleven went out after Pentecost and spoke boldly in the name of Christ. Many listened, but few actually followed; for when the Holy Spirit was given, only 120 disciples were assembled in the Upper Room.

But with divine Power at their command, the

membership grew by leaps and bounds. We read that 3000 were added to the church in that one day! Only a few days later it is recorded that "many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand" (Acts 4:4). A short time later, we read, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14).

But this period of phenomenal growth was destined to be short-lived, for the divine Power of its leaders was only a temporary arrangement. And when that Power was withdrawn at the close of the Apostolic Age, men quickly lost faith and membership began to dwindle. The number of true loyal adherents to the teachings of Jesus became less and less, until sometime during the seventh century the last one perished.

Meanwhile "another" church with "another gospel"—also called "Christian"—was developing and increasing, not only in numbers but in doctrines. It claimed Jesus Christ as its founder and His teachings as its basis of faith, but it was not many years before it had lost all identity with the simple faith of the Man of Galilee and had become a complicated system of theology, or science of religion. This church, known as the Christian Church, has continued to grow through the centuries until today it includes about one third of the world's population, or slightly more than a billion people. But it retains only a faint resemblance to the teachings of Christ and His apostles. In the words of a Jewish rabbi, we "doubt even that Jesus would recognize it."

### A. History of the Christian Church

The apostle Paul, who received his teachings direct from Jesus, described the Church as being "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). The foundation remains the same, but the building erected by the "Church Fathers" since the demise of Paul and the other apostles is undergirded otherwise and has become burdened with the doctrines of men.

Throughout the Apostolic Age the Church was able to remain pure due to the help of Holy Spirit power. In the centuries immediately following, persecution was rife and it was a struggle for the Church to survive and hold to its teachings. During this time the Christians became more and more exposed to Greek thought and the writings of Philo, a Jewish philosopher schooled in Greek philosophy. It was inevitable that with the cessation

of Holy Spirit power new ideas would be brought into the Christian Church.

Early in the fourth century, the Roman emperor Constantine made Christianity the religion of the State and the Church was released from the dangers of persecution. The acceptance of the new faith by the pagan Emperor did not mean that the Emperor was "Christian." He was not willing to submit to the moral restraints of the religion himself, but he saw its worth politically as a means to solidify the Empire. Paganism gradually crept into the Church as the Church lowered its standards to make itself less forbidding to the cultured and to win the pagans. Heathen practices and festivals were supposedly "Christianized" and permitted and the purity of the Church was contaminated. Outwardly, the Church may have conquered the world, but inwardly the world had conquered the Church.

With this popular Christianity the religion of the State, the Church was infiltrated by many who were not true Christians. Among them were intellectuals who were largely responsible for many doctrines now considered fundamental by the nominal Christian Church.

The Church became a powerful organization under the direction of the bishop of Rome by the sixth century. Political expediency was the ruling consideration and the Church became a great worldly power. During the period of the sixth through eleventh centuries, northern Europe swarmed with Catholic monks until at the end of the crusade there were none left who did not count themselves members of the Catholic Church.

Northern Europe was completely won over, but it was only an outward show of religion. Little instruction was given, and the people remained in ignorance of the meaning of **true** Christianity. Pagan practices flourished, and supposedly-Christian church meetings could not be distinguished from the old ceremonies. The promise of favor with God and of a future life drew the majority to the Church, but immorality was unchecked. The Church was strong and powerful and the people were held in submission by the threat of penalties. True Christianity had long since disappeared under this mass of superstition and ignorance.

The sixteenth century saw a new movement which was to have long-term effects upon the established Church. It is called the Reformation. The Church had grown more and more powerful, and abuse of power was the natural result. The immediate cause of protest was a campaign by the Church to sell indulgences (which gave to the buyer the "right" to commit a sinful act). A representative of the Pope in Rome was sent to Ger-

many to sell these indulgences to raise money. Enraged by the evil of it, Martin Luther posted his famous "Ninety-five Theses" and the battle was begun.

The results of the battle were permanent: The Church was divided into two main parts, Protestant and Catholic; corrupt practices were curbed; and the Protestant Church was free to develop its own line of thought—which differed somewhat from the established Church.

But the Protestants were not yet free from persecution. Driven from Europe because of their straight-line religious beliefs, many fled to a new country, America, early in the seventeenth century. They were known as Puritans; and while their doctrine was more pure than that of the Mother Church, it was not the faith of the apostles of Christ. True Christianity was still buried beneath error and superstition, and no one seemed to care. The general attitude toward religion had to change before the time would be right for true Christianity to again become the living, active faith that it had been in the hearts of the apostles and the Christians of the early centuries.

We will review some of the basic doctrines of today's Christian Church, comparing them with true Christianity's only textbook, the Holy Bible.

## **B. Basic Doctrines of Theology**

Christianity—so-called—is like a tree with many branches. All claim to have sprung from the same root, the Apostolic Church. Although there are many denominations among the branches, the theology of all is basically the same.

Modernists would say any faith is all right; all roads lead to the city. But do they? Is it possible to have a thousand and more faiths based on a Bible that states emphatically: "One Lord, one faith"? (Eph. 4:5). Can so many be truly "one"? We will study some of the doctrines to determine where they lead.

**1. The fall and original sin.** This doctrine forms the basis of most present-day theology. The doctrine holds that Adam and Eve were created perfect, that they sinned, or "fell" by their disobedience, and being the progenitors of the whole human race their sin was transmitted to all succeeding generations.

The doctrines of the "fall of man" and original sin are to be credited to theology, not the Bible. It is contrary to the teaching of the Bible, which holds every man to be responsible for his own sin and not the sin of another. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man

shall be put to death for his own sin" (Deut. 24:16). **This was the principle under Moses' law and it is the Bible principle throughout. Succeeding generations do not bear the guilt of the sins of their predecessors; sin is in no way inherited.**

**2. Christ's redemptive death.** Because Adam's sin passed to all after him, theology holds that it was necessary to offer a perfect sacrifice to redeem men from the guilt of Adam's sin. Because Christ was perfect from the beginning, theology holds that God chose Him to make a sacrifice for the saving of all mankind. "At the cross, all the sin of the ages was placed on the heart of the sinless Son of God, as He became the racial representative of all humanity. From the cross, salvation flows to every believing soul. This is the Gospel, the greatest good news the world has ever heard."\*

This may be good theology, but it is not good Bible. Without original sin as a foundation, the necessity of a perfect sacrifice, a redemptive death, is removed. Christ's death that will save men was His death to sin, as Paul wrote: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. . . . For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 6:10; 5:10).

Jesus did not go around preaching that He would die on a cross to save sinners. He did not mention the literal cross before His death. The cross that will save is not the literal, but the one He taught: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Again, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Luke 9:23; Matt. 10:38).

That the "Gospel" is the teaching of Christ's death on the cross is theology and not Bible. Matthew recorded that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom"; Mark reported that "after . . . John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God"; Luke wrote that "he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God," and again after His death and resurrection, Luke put into the record of the Acts of the Apostles that Jesus spent the forty days after His resurrection "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Matt. 4:23; Mark 1:14; Luke 8:1; Acts 1:3).

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\* *Basic Christian Doctrines*, Edited by C. F. H. Henry, p. 139.



If Jesus' sacrificial death were the most important part of His teaching, it would seem that such should have been recorded by the men that were with Him as He taught among them.

3. **The two natures of Christ.** A prominent theologian says, "If there is, among the distinctive articles of the Christian faith, one which is basic to all the others, it is this: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man for our salvation. This is . . . the incarnation."\*\*

Admittedly, says the writer, "incarnation" is not a biblical term, but it "conveys a biblical truth." In theology, "incarnation" assumes Christ to be both God and man; God came down to earth in human form.

This doctrine is inextricably bound up in another false doctrine, that of the Trinity, and assumes yet another point of error, that Christ pre-existed. **We are confident that the Scriptures do not teach any of these points. Christ was a human being, born of a human mother (Luke 2:7). He grew (Luke 2:40); He was subject to parents (Luke 2:51); He learned (Luke 2:52); He read from the prophet Isaiah (Luke 4:17); He was betrayed (Matt. 26:48); He was bound (Matt. 27:2); He died (Matt. 27:50); and He was raised from the dead by God, His Heavenly Father (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15). He was powerless to raise Himself; without the power of His Father, He would have remained in the grave.**

4. **The Holy Trinity.** Theology understands God as being three-in-one, "three-personed," yet one, existing "in a single uncompounded nature, in structural togetherness," commonly designated as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

It is readily admitted that the word "Trinity" does not appear in the Scriptures, but the "principle" of a triune God is supposedly found there. Abundant proof is said to be available, according to one writer. Even the words "holy, holy, holy" of Isa. 6:3 are said to refer to "His tri-personality," as also the plural **Elohim** frequently found in the Old Testament Hebrew. \*\*

The writer admits that some discount the theory, but expresses his own confidence in the doctrine, though allowing that "logic and mathematics do not suffice to explain it." The texts referred to offer no proof or explanation.

We can agree that it cannot be explained by logic and mathematics, but we cannot agree that either the principle or the Trinity are to be found in the Bible. To form a part of the religion of the Bible,

any doctrine must be supported by that Bible. Were we to depend on hymn book, there is ample proof. Lacking Scripture proof, we hold to the testimony of Moses, a testimony to which the Jews hold to this day: "The Lord our God is one Lord."

**The doctrine of the trinity is a doctrine of men, a doctrine of theology and not of the Bible. God does not expect us to believe that which transcends reason and He disdains the commandments of men.**

5. **God's unmerited favor—grace.** The grace of God, described by theology as His "unmerited favor," plays an important part in the doctrine of nominal Christian churches. In the eyes of some, it is the teaching of forgiveness with acceptance the only requirement. The essence of the doctrine is that it is free to all; it can be had for nothing. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8), is the verse most often quoted in its support.

We do not deny God's grace; He sends the sun and the rain on the good and on the bad; He gives this life to all. But we deny that salvation is free, that it is a "something-for-nothing" proposition, conditioned on grace alone. The faith that will save is the faith that works, for we learn from James that "faith without works is dead" (2:20), and "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

The necessity of both faith and works is not taught by James alone, but is the general teaching of the Scriptures. The verse following the oft-quoted Eph. 2:8-9 shows the necessity of works: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (v. 10).

Paul associated grace and works in his letter to Titus: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (2:11-12). Again he exhorted Titus to show himself "a pattern of good works," including "sound speech, that cannot be condemned" (vs. 7-8), and to "be careful to maintain good works" because "these things are good and profitable unto men" (3:8).

Paul's charge to Timothy included the command to "do good," to "be rich in good works, . . . laying up in store . . . a good foundation against the time to come, that [you] may lay hold on eternal life" (I Tim. 6:18-19).

*Reprints of these studies are available  
upon request.*

\*\* *Basic Christian Doctrines*, edited by C. F. H. Henry, pp. 124, 36, 37.

# Elevate Your Sights!

**T**HERE are few things so frustrating as to work without knowing what we are trying to accomplish; that is, to be lost in the means and ignorant of the end.

Examples of this are the "parts" factories where men spend years making small articles that in themselves have no significance, totally ignorant of the finished product of which their work forms the hundredth part.

Because the human mind is designed to think in terms of ends and wholes, "parts" work is monotonous and distressing. Each of us has an inborn urge to plan and to create according to a definite design, and we feel fenced in and defeated when we are compelled to spend days and years in toil that has no visible objective. It is this, rather than the work itself, that makes so many jobs dull and boring.

There is an ever-present danger that this segregated "parts" work may invade our spiritual lives. Our Christian life is composed of many practical details, and it must be this way. We know that we must be careful to speak and to dress in a manner becoming to our profession as Christians. We must be careful of the manner in which we spend our time. Our companionship is important; we would not consider attending the average entertainment movie, or be found within the walls of a dance hall. We concentrate on living harmoniously with our families and friends. We even set up our daily schedule to allow time for Bible study and prayer. But even in all this there is danger that we may become so absorbed in the means that we forget the goal, the great reward God has set before us. These activities are all parts of the Christian life, and they are all essential. But they must never be separated from our vision of the goal ahead. Jesus "for the joy that was set before him" endured the cross. He had a definite objective, and His whole life was ordered accordingly. Without the goal before us, our obedience, however well ordered and circumspect, can never be complete; and our lives will easily become dull and spiritless and routine.

To the dynamic apostle Paul, there was nothing

dull or tiresome in the religion of Christ. God had a plan which was going forward to completion, and Paul and all His brethren in Christ were delighted to be part of that plan. It included faith and work and feeling and direction and dedication on their part. And they had it to give, all of it. They gave it not as parts of an unknown whole but in exchange for the promise of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). They had their eye fixed on the goal.

Nothing less than the knowledge that they were part of an eternal plan imparted unquenchable enthusiasm to the early Christians. They burned with holy zeal for Christ and felt that they were part of an army which the Lord was leading to ultimate conquest over all the powers of darkness. That was enough to fill them with perpetual enthusiasm.

Many are the religious zealots today who make no apology for their beliefs. Whatever their beliefs, their conviction keeps them driving toward their goals.

Can we, who profess to rely upon the Holy Scriptures for each tenet of our faith, do less? Can we fail to respond to the power of the faith which was once delivered to the saints?

There is danger that we may be lulled into sleep. We are too comfortable, too contented with things as they are. We hold the faith of the holy men of old, but does that faith hold us? To us has been committed the most precious of all treasures, but are we committed to it? Is our religion our occupation, or our *life*?

God is trying to interest us in a glorious tomorrow that is surely coming—how can we reject Him by wrapping our hearts in an inglorious today? How can we be afflicted with a religious myopia and see only the things near at hand? How can we be bogged down in local interests when we can have eternal purposes? How can we muddle along from day to day, as though weary and bored, when eternity lies before us? How can we quietly hope for the Kingdom of Christ to come and show so little eagerness to get there ourselves?

God help us to elevate our sights! ●●

## Learning to Forgive

THE hard way of learning overtakes all of us sometime or other. I'm Karl Kandor, and I want to tell you my experience—hopefully you may do better.

It was a hot night, and so uncomfortable. Not even a breath of freshness was coming in the window. I turned and tossed and turned again, but sleep was so far away. If only I could find an excuse not to go to work tomorrow! Bob and Doug would be there, still talking about the Science Show. I wanted to forget all about it.

But I couldn't.

How different everything would have been if Bob hadn't knocked my "receiver" off the table. He didn't do it on purpose—he even *looked* sorry, and he apologized. But why couldn't he have been more careful? *He* didn't have to find out what it feels like to have a first-prize exhibit get *third!*—and all because somebody *else* damaged it.

You see, we were in high school at the time, and this Science Show meant everything. The results were to determine who was eligible for a special electronics seminar the school was scheduling for the summer. The top winner would be able to attend the class free of charge.

I was seated on a stool next to my masterpiece, a rather elaborate two-way radio set. This was the day before, and everyone was moving in and setting up on the tables provided. I had come early so that I could have plenty of time to check my exhibit thoroughly. Everyone that came by thought I had a splendid piece of work and should easily get "First" for it. And why not? After all, it represented a half-year's work!

Nearby Bob Kendall was setting up his project. A school friend, a good lad, and a real wizard with

mathematics, Bob had lots of potential. But when it came to putting electronics together and making things work, he just didn't have it. Nevertheless, he had built a rather complicated computer, and it seemed to work, too. But Bob had had his troubles; like a week before, when he had called me over to his home to help him find a short circuit in the thing. He was glad for me *that* day, though I don't think he remembered it long.

Well, Bob had built this computer. And it was excellent, though I could see some things Bob might have done differently—to advantage, it seemed. But then, that was Bob's business, not mine. And after all, why should *I* say anything? We were competing for the top prize.

I had just finished checking out my "receiver" to my satisfaction and had laid it aside when Bob came down the aisle, his arms loaded to capacity—and then some. He was talking to another boy who was behind him when, suddenly, somehow—Bump!—and the receiver went spinning to the floor.

I jumped up in an effort to catch it, but to no avail. Carefully I removed the cover, to see what might have happened. Everything *looked* all right. I proceeded to connect it into the system to give it a quick working-check. "I sure hope it works," I finally managed to say.

Bob looked worried, genuinely worried as he managed to apologize. "Sorry, Karl, awful sorry."

"I think it'll be all right," I said with a bit of optimistic confidence I didn't have. It was too late to worry much, though. Only a matter of hours and the judges would be starting their rounds.

"Don't worry, Bob. I shouldn't have left it so near the edge of the table anyway."

The next day it was all over. And my exhibit had a *White* ribbon—*Third Prize*. First Prize had gone to *Bob!*

Well, I was half-prepared for this disappointment. After all, mine *had* suffered an *accident*.

But the worst was yet to come, when Bob's friends all came in and crowded around to see his exhibit, while Bob explained it all and demonstrated how it worked. Everyone congratulated him, and told him what a fine job he had done. I should have told him, too. But I just couldn't. I couldn't make my lips form the words. They stuck in my throat. They stuck so hard I nearly choked. And when I did speak—

I said the wrong thing. The very *wrongest* wrong thing I could have said. I knew it immediately, but I was feeling so bitter and so sour over it all that I felt I just *had* to let a little of it out.

Bob was near enough, so I'm sure he heard it, too. "He's forgotten that *I* helped him lay out this

thing," I muttered in a stage whisper to a couple of the admirers. "And"—I had still more venom to let loose—"it never would have worked if he'd had to find his *own* short circuit last week!"

The boys made no comment, only continued to listen to Bob's lengthy explanation of the computer.

But I had said it. How? How could I? How could I be so unkind—so selfish—so "stuck up"—so *un-Christian*?

I left the auditorium dejected, miserable, sick at heart, and headed home.

Straight for my room I went, not wanting to breathe a word of my troubles to anyone, when—whom should I meet in the upstairs hall but Mom!

"Well, Son, what brings you home so early? Thought you'd be still up at the auditorium. Everything over so soon?"

"No, I just came home." I tried to sound blank and unemotional. But of course, Mom knew me.

"What's the matter? Something went wrong?"

"*Everything* went wrong!"

"Now I can't believe that!" She smiled faintly.

"Tell me what happened, Karl."

"Got third prize. That's all," I muttered.

"Nothing so bad about that, is there? Probably lots of boys would have been so happy to get third prize."

"Not when they should have had *first*."

"You mean the judges didn't rate the exhibits right?"

"No, Mom, that's not it. You don't understand." I sighed. "I should have had the top prize. There was no excuse. And I would have had it—if Bob hadn't finished it with his clumsy feet."

"You mean Bob *damaged* your radio set?"

I nodded.

"I can't believe he did it on purpose."

"No, probably not. But I wonder." I hesitated.

"He said he was sorry, so—

"Didn't you accept his acknowledgment?"

"Yes, but—but I didn't know then that *he* was going to get *First Prize*!"

"Now Karl!" Mom seemed shocked at the real truth.

"And now Bob's strutting around with his bright blue ribbon pinned to his shirt. He's proud as a peacock. And everybody's praising him, and telling him what a fine job he did."

"Now Karl Kander"—Mother's voice was firm—"you sound like King Saul himself." She paused. "You know what you should do."

I nodded.

"You should get yourself right back to the auditorium and *congratulate* Bob *yourself*. Tell him how glad you are at his success, and make him feel

the *value* of his accomplishment. Bob hasn't had life easy all the time, you know."

"I know it, Mom, but I can't. I just can't do it."

I went down the hall toward my room, entered and closed the door.

And there I fought it out. I had told Mom *part* of the story, but only *part*. The *real* reason I didn't want to see Bob now was because I knew I owed *him* an apology—for that miserable remark I had made. If I'd told Mom about *that*, she would have *made* me go and apologize right then, and I couldn't do it. I just couldn't!

Well, I fought the battle out that night. I was ashamed, thoroughly ashamed of myself and the childish way I had acted. There was nothing to do but make the matter right with Bob and ask God's help and forgiveness. I found real strength that night in prayer.

The next day I decided to do my duty whatever it took. My loss of character in the sight of God was *far* more serious than my losing the First Place in the Science Show. And I knew it. I just *had* to make it right. Mom was right. I had to learn to forgive—and then *forget*. I was just adding sin to sin by trying to get what was not coming to me. I was *wrong*, *WRONG*, all the way through.

I went to work the next day and met Bob, just as I had expected. And with all my Christian courage summoned, I apologized to him.

Bob didn't have a word to say. He just stood there and looked at me. But I could see the admiration glowing in his face.

At long last, Bob spoke. "Karl," he spoke thoughtfully, "I don't know how you can do it. You've got something I don't have. I could *never* do such a thing."

"Yes you could," I replied, "if you had what I have. It's—it's my religion, Bob."

"I want it, Karl, really I do. Let's be real Christian friends—"

"Brothers in Christ, sons of God," I added.

He meant it.

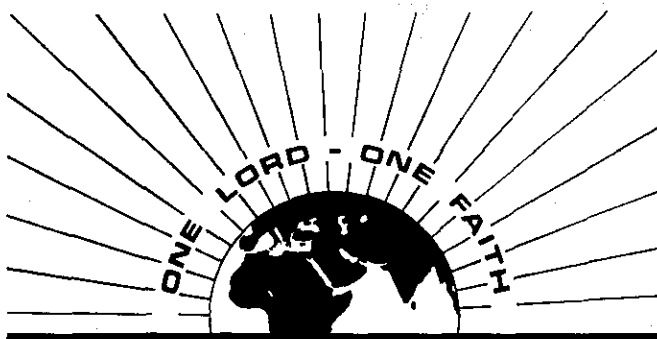
And so did I. ●●

Still learning to forgive,

*Kathy's son, Karl*

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A man once had a clock by his bed. It would keep good time only when it was placed on its back. Set in natural position, it wouldn't run at all. You see, the clock was like some folks. The only time they lean on God is when they are flat on their back, sick, afraid, helpless. When they are up, they forget God.



## Who Is the Christ?

**W**HY do we call ourselves Christian? Have you ever thought about it?

*If you are learning the basics of Christian faith, you will be especially interested in this point: To be a Christian one must be like Christ, for that is what "Christian" really means—"one who follows Christ."*

*If you have not already done so, you should read the part of your Bible called "The Gospels." They contain most of what we know of Jesus' life and ministry, His teachings, His death and His resurrection. They are books written by men who knew Jesus or had firsthand information available to them. They wrote it down, guided by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the record is preserved so that we can learn from it. We need it, and we need to get acquainted with it; for what kind of "Christians" can we be if we are not even informed about the person we are professing to follow?*

*In the next few articles in this series we will talk about Christ. Read them as they come each month. If you speak another language, translate them so you can communicate the subject to your friends. The subject is vital—it is the center of Christian faith.*

A man whose life began in Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago has influenced the history of mankind more than any other man who ever lived. His name is Jesus Christ.

What do you know about Him? Where did He come from? Who was He? Who were His parents? Was His birth, life and death as that of other men? Or was He different? Where did He live? How did He live? Why did He live? Is He living now? Can we expect to ever see Him? What is His destiny?

These are questions which every believing Christian, every follower of Christ, should be able to answer.

### Before the Beginning, Prophecy

If any of us were to write an account of our lives, we would begin with the time of our birth. We might mention something our parents did prior to the time we were born, but the story about us as a person would begin at the time we entered this world and became a living, breathing human being.

The story of Christ is different—it begins earlier than the time He was born. Are you thinking, "Yes, this is because Jesus existed before He was born"? Some people believe this. They think Jesus was living with the Father, or was a part of the Father, or was *the* Father up in heaven before He came down to be born among men. But we are confident the Bible does *not* teach this. These ideas arise from a wrong understanding of a number of different Bible verses. Christ never said He was God Almighty, or that He had enjoyed life in heaven from eternity past prior to the time of His birth. He was "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4), and was a man, not God (I Tim. 2:5).

But the story of Christ *does* begin before He was born—because God knew in advance that He *would* be born, even what His work would be and what He would become. God revealed some of this information to His prophets, who in turn told it to the people they taught. Some of God's prophets wrote their messages from God, and we have them in our Bible.

The prophecies about Christ are scattered through the Old Testament, and some of them date back as much as seventeen centuries before the time Christ actually was born. The Almighty God has a power we do not have—He can foreknow the future. There are at least three hundred different prophecies of Christ recorded. Many of them were fulfilled during His mortal life, many more wait to be fulfilled when He comes again.

God's prophets foretold:

The place where Jesus would be born (Bethlehem, Micah 5:2)

The family of which He would be descended—the family of David, of the tribe of Judah (Ps. 132:11; Gen. 49:10)

His ministry of teaching (Isa. 9:1-2)

His ministry of healing, helping, and telling men of future events (Isa. 61:1-3)

His life of obedience and submission (Isa. 7:15; Ps. 40:7-8)

His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12)

His crucifixion (Daniel 9:26) and even sev-

eral details of that crucifixion:

He should be mocked (Ps. 22:7)

His hands and feet should be pierced (Ps. 22:16)

They should give Him vinegar to drink (Ps. 69:21)

They should cast lots for His garments (Ps. 22:18)

His bones should not be broken (Ps. 34:20)

His resurrection (Ps. 16:10)

His ascension to heaven (Ps. 47:5; Ps. 68:18; see Eph. 4:8)

His second advent (Ps. 96:13; Isa. 25:9; Jer. 23:5-6, and there are hundreds more on this all-important subject)

His future offices:

As King (Zech. 14:9)

As Judge (Mic. 4:3-4)

As Redeemer (Job 19:25-27)

### **Where Did He Come From? Who Were His Parents?**

The angel Gabriel's words, recorded in the book of Luke, as addressed to Mary were: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

Jesus was not the child of Mary and Joseph; He was the Son of God, born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14).

His name was God-assigned, and meaningful, being descriptive of the purpose of His life. "Jesus" means "Jehovah is salvation," or "Jehovah saves," or "Jehovah will save." The message from God was: "Thou shalt ... call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). And He was the "Christ," meaning "the anointed one," or "Messiah," which had been prophesied among the Jewish people. The angels told the shepherds that were in the field at the time He was born: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Jesus bears yet another name which is significant: "Emmanuel." The meaning and significance of this name are also revealed in the words of the angel: "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

### **When Was Jesus Born?**

As a result of comparing historical records and references of the time, scholars generally agree that the date of Jesus' birth was sometime between 7 and 5 B. C. When scholars set up a system of

numbering the years of history, it was intended that His birth should divide B. C. and A. D. The error resulted from a Roman monk's attempt to "adjust" the Christian calendar in the sixth century.

At what season of the year was He born? The widely accepted date is December 25, but we can be certain this date is *not* correct—it was not even established until the sixth century A. D.!

There is much Bible evidence pointing to a spring date. Outstanding among this evidence is the fact that shepherds were in the fields watching their flocks on the night Jesus was born, and in Palestine, the land where it occurred, shepherds do not watch their sheep during the rainy winter season, which begins in November and lasts until March. History tells us that until the fourth century the dates most commonly accepted for the birth of Christ were spring dates in March or April.

The placing of Jesus' birth date on December 25 was an attempt by the Roman Church to make a "Christian" festival coincide with a pagan festival in order to attract more pagan people into the church. December 25 was the season of the Roman Saturnalia, observed by many of the cults and pagan religions of the early centuries. There is nothing in the Bible that would even suggest that Christ was born at that season. God would not have His Son's birth coincide with pagan rites or ceremonies or in any way identify with them. All through history His people have been commanded to be different, totally different. ●●

# **HAVE YOU READ?--**

**HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION  
THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH  
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?**

**GOD'S SPIRITUAL CREATION**

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

**THE GREAT APOSTASY**

**AFTER DEATH, WHAT?**

**THE DEVIL AND HELL**

**TRINITY OR UNITY?**

**THE ATONEMENT**

**THE HOLY SPIRIT**

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# Woman's UN-Dress

*The following article distributed by Faith Publishing House of Guthrie, Oklahoma, is a timely warning which should concern Christians everywhere. The flagrant violation of the Bible principle of "modest apparel" visible everywhere today is another striking fulfillment of Bible prophecy: "As it was in the days of Lot [Sodom], . . . even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."*

*We originally published this article in 1968. It is being reprinted by request.*

Down through the history of the true Church, from the days of the apostles Peter and Paul, men and women in touch with God, faithful to the teaching of these pillars of the Church, have ever felt the need of preaching and writing on Woman's Dress. Today there is a crying need of sounding the alarm against Woman's "Undress."

To follow the fashions of the world at any time is as positively forbidden in the Word of God as is stealing or filthy talking, but to be "conformed to this world" in dress at the present time, is more than disobedience of a Divine command, it is a crime against humanity.

Parents are committing crime against their children. Mothers are committing crime against their daughters in sending them out into the world clad in a manner to invite insult. Wives are committing crime against their own husbands and the husbands of others.

It is a crime of sisters against brothers, of maidens against their suitors, and of schoolgirls against their mates—a crime committed by women against their employers and fellow workmen.

It is a crime against ministers, who in turn are criminally unfaithful in allowing this sin.

There is no other one crime at this hour that is sweeping souls on to perdition at a swifter rate. Much is said about moving pictures and its wrong influence, but woman's "undress" is destroying her, and leading her victims to destruction. . . .

A young woman opposed to the plain teaching of the Word of God as to modest dress had been preparing herself for missionary work. Recently she arrived at her field of labor in a heathen land, but on leaving the boat was informed by officials that she must lengthen her skirts or leave their town—a sermon in itself.

A young man to whom was quoted the words of the Son of God: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," replied, "Everyone is guilty." Though not absolutely true, his answer is a shame to womanhood.

If this terrible evil were confined to avowed sinners, it would be bad enough, but stand at the church doors and see it stalk in and out, bearing the name of "Christian." Voices must be raised to cry: "It is not Christian." Christians are separate from this sin of the flesh manifested in wearing thin clothing, bold colors, low necks, short sleeves and short skirts.

As against all this how plain and simple are the words of the apostle Paul: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. Not with broided hair, or gold or pearls or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Beautiful words are these to one who has them in her heart, true to the words of an old-time writer: "Everyone loves that most without him, which is most suitable to that within him." The "undress" is a picture of the heart. ●●

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"In the June, 1975 issue of the *Megiddo Message*, on page 23, paragraph two, in an article entitled 'One Lord, One Faith,' you say that at the close of the Millennium there will be a rebellion against God, which God will cut short by sending judgment upon the rebels. Then follows a second resurrection to restore to mortal life all who have died during the thousand years, so they can be judged and rewarded. This seems strange to me. Why should people who have been living in the Kingdom suddenly rebel? And when will the resurrection and judgment be? I am confused."

We must agree with you that our explanation was confusing. We will try to clarify.

The order of events as given in Revelation 20 is not as detailed as we might like it to be, but the basic sequence is there. When Christ comes, the "first" or "primary" resurrection will take place (Rev. 20:6), which will be followed by the thousand-year reign of Christ and His saints (v. 6). Then, "when the thousand years are expired, Satan [that is, evil and evil workers] shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth." They shall even "compass the camp of the saints."

Such a violent rebellion after so many years of peace and tranquility seems strange at first thought. But this certainly reveals the obstinacy of human



nature. Rebellion against God is an inborn trait.

However it would seem, as you suggest, that toward the end of the Millennium the tendency would lessen. We might easily speculate that a larger proportion of those who had begun life in the decadent days prior to Armageddon would prove rebellious than those who were removed from those "evil" days by eight hundred or more years. As the thousand years progress and all evil is suppressed, when "thou shalt not see evil any more," when "all thy children shall be taught of the Lord and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isa. 54:13), when "officers of peace" and "extractors of righteousness" govern the earth, and "the work of righteousness shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance" (Isa. 32:17-18), the tendency to evil would naturally become less and less—perhaps nearly nil—as people would become more and more surrendered.

We must remember that Revelation 20 also tells of a resurrection and judgment to take place at the close of the Millennium. And might we not reasonably believe that the rebellion will be generated by the resurrected dead rather than by those who have known peace and submission to law all their lives? Revelation 20:5 tells us the "rest of the dead," those who die during the thousand years, will be restored to life when "the thousand years were finished." It would seem therefore that this resurrection would take place *before* the rebellion; for many of those resurrected will be persons who died in rebellion against Christ and His government. These could easily let loose their wild, untrained, unrestrained natures and attempt to unite the people of earth to overthrow Christ.

The rebellion will be terminated by a vivid demonstration of the supremacy of God and His authority. God's judgments will act swiftly and decisively, as the Revelator reveals: "Fire [a symbol of destruction] came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (v. 9). This judgment will mark the final separation of the righteous from the wicked; and those who survive will receive the crown of immortality and become the glorified populace who will inhabit God's everlasting Kingdom.

"You make it easy by teaching that the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit left the lives of men during the early centuries of the Christian Era. But if we take the writings of objective, spiritually-minded men we will find that true Christians have existed throughout the last nineteen centuries."

To seek for evidence of a true Christian group through the past nineteen centuries is vain and not  
July, 1975

in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. For Jesus did not anticipate having Spirit-filled believers through all the ages that would follow His ministry.

In His parable of the Ten Virgins, Jesus illustrated a time when there would be *no* living believers, when all would have turned away from His true teachings and the Word of God would lie dormant. He said, "And while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept" (Matt. 25:5)—"they *all* slumbered," all His active followers "slept." This leaves no place for a small group to possess the Holy Spirit from the time of the apostles to the present day.

"When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He gave it for all time. He said, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: . . . and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. 28:19-20). He promised that 'signs' would follow 'those who have believed.' Would He forsake His people at such a critical time as the end of the first century?"

When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He did *not* give it for all believers through all time. He set a definite limitation upon it: "even unto the end of the world." The original word translated "world" in this text, *aion*, also means "age," as it is rendered in many of the newer versions of the Bible. It refers to a specific period of time, limited in extent. Jesus was not promising to be with them with signs and special power for ever, but only for the duration of the age then present.

"Why do you contend that the method of receiving salvation (that is, by the Holy Spirit) has been changed in this dispensation of grace when there is no Scripture to show that God has changed it?"

We cannot agree with you that the possessing of the Holy Spirit power was ever a "method of receiving salvation." Jesus taught that "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). And Peter understood that it is "reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:4-5). He said also, "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4).

However, referring to the dispensing of the Holy Spirit power, there is Scripture evidence to show that God's plan included a definite change.

Paul stated plainly, "And now abideth faith,

hope, charity, these three"—no more tongues, no more prophecy, no more knowledge by divine revelation (I Cor. 13:8, 13). Only "these three"—faith, hope and charity—were to abide after "that which is perfect," the totally revealed will of God, the written Word, the Bible, had come. Paul understood that the partitive arrangement (the gifts of healing, speaking with tongues, interpreting, etc.) were all to be superseded by "a more excellent way" (I Cor. 12:30-31). The "more excellent way"—that is, living by faith, hope and charity alone without the gifts of the spirit and visible manifestations—is "more excellent" because of its greater reward. As Jesus said to Thomas, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). And as Paul himself wrote to the Corinthians, God has reserved "more abundant honour" for that part of the body of Christ which would "lack"—which would not have the gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:24).

"All honest scholars admit that the Church was begun by God on the Day of Pentecost when He poured out His Spirit upon His followers; and Peter stated that 'this is what was spoken of through the Prophet Joel' (Acts 2:16, NASB). This prophecy was to be fulfilled 'in the last days.' John said plainly that that time was then: 'Children these are the last days' (I John 2:18, Jerusalem Bible). We know a day to be a thousand years with the Lord. If God began pouring out His Spirit nearly 2000 years ago, that is only two days. If as you would advocate, this outpouring stopped in about 70 A. D., then that was not even one full day in the Lord's time."

You seem to suggest that the "last days" began in Jesus' time and continue through to the present day. This seems unreasonable, for following such logic a bit further, you could say that the whole six thousand years of man's rule is the "last days" as it all fits into one week of prophetic time.

No, the "last days" must be a relative term. It can refer to the "last days" of a person's life; or to the "last days" of a particular age. And of course, it refers to the "last days" of the Gentile Age just before the second advent of Christ. The term can only be understood in its context.

The 19th verse of Acts 2 precludes the possibility that Peter could be referring to the "last days" of the Apostolic Age, for the "wonders in heaven above, signs in the earth beneath, . . . the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come" has not yet occurred. ●●

*A little story with a big lesson—*

## A Helpful Neighbor

"WHAT are you looking so gloomy about, Ned?" asked Robert as he accosted his playmate who was sitting on the front steps, his chin in his hands.

"Oh, nothing," answered Ned in an unconvincing tone.

"Must be something. I never saw you act like this before," continued Robert.

"Well, if you really want to know, Mother asked me to peel the potatoes for dinner while she went to the store and *I don't want to!*" Ned was emphatic.

"Well, now, wait a minute," reasoned Robert, Ned's senior by two years. "Don't you *eat* potatoes as well as the rest of the family?"

"Of course, but what has *that* got to do with it?"

"Well, let me tell you the lesson I learned," said Robert very grown-up-like as he leaned against the porch rail.

Ned's countenance brightened as he straightened up to hear the story. He always did like stories.

"It was like this. One day Mother was making bread, good old homemade bread. I was watching her mix it—she calls it 'kneading.' All at once she asked me to grease the bread pans. Well, I didn't think I wanted to get my hands greasy so I told Mother I was tired and I couldn't. And she didn't make me do it, either. But at supper that night, wasn't I surprised when Father passed me the bread plate filled with delicious bread and Mother said quickly, 'No, Father, Robert doesn't get any homemade bread this time.' Then she explained that I wasn't even willing to grease the bread pans."

Ned's eyes opened wide with surprise as Robert continued with his story. "And believe it or not, I never had a taste of that bread!"

"Really, Robert?" Ned was amazed.

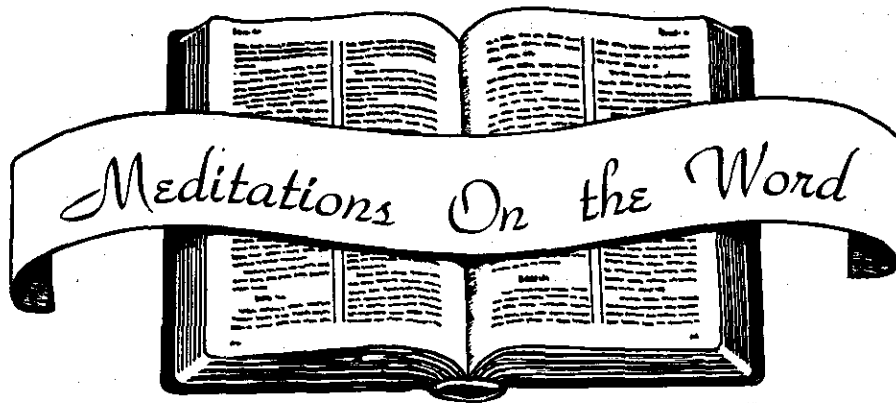
"Really. You see, it's this way. Dad works hard to earn our food and Mom works hard to prepare it, and it's only fair that we do *something!*"

Ned's face brightened as he saw the point. "Come on now, Ned. I'll help peel those potatoes."

As the two boys disappeared into the house, Ned said, "I think I'll set the table for Mother, too, and surprise her. She loves surprises." ●●

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*God deserves more than the skimmed milk from your earnings—give Him the cream.*



*"He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap"*  
(Ecclesiastes 11:4).

THE Wise Man wrote our moral text from observation. He used incidents about him that furnished material from which a moral may be drawn, even as his descendant, the great Teacher, centuries later did on so many occasions. In our day, as in Solomon's time, the timid farmer is with us. He may operate a good farm, he may work hard, but he is not successful. He is too timid and over-cautious, so much so that to him every wind is a hurricane and every cloud appears to be a storm. Consequently, he delays his sowing, which results in a poor yield, and while dallying at the harvest season he loses much of his crop.

There are people who have made grave mistakes because of rashness and overconfidence; but there are a great many more who have failed in life because of timidity and fear. There is a way of brooding over difficulties which is extremely foolish.

In our Christian experience there are bitter winds on every path, and black clouds on every horizon. These winds and clouds—the troubles that confront us, often caused by our own moods and attitudes, are sometimes al-

lowed to fill our vision and rob us of our courage and peace of mind. Courage and cheerful persistence are needed in spiritual matters as in every successful earthly enterprise. We need faith that God is and lives and that things are not as desperate as they appear. We need an assured confidence that He who has led us in the past will not desert us in any crisis of life. These are essentials for success.

One of the certain causes of failure is the timid, wind-observing and cloud-regarding spirit which fears to attempt anything that demands real effort and courage. The great weakness in the Christian warfare is listening to this one who points to a cloud of difficulties, and to that one who raises a stormy wind of objections. So often one hears when considering a new and worthy venture, "You can't do it"; "the task is too big"; "you are too young," or "too old"; "you won't be able to keep it up"; "you will run into trouble"; and so on *ad infinitum*.

He who professes the Christian life should ever remind himself that when duty is to be done he must not observe the wind nor regard the clouds. Conscience is

not a matter of meteorology, nor is duty a matter of a rising or falling barometer. Duty is something that God and our fellow Christians have a right to expect of us. It is something we must expect from ourselves if we want to maintain our self-respect. The duty may be unpleasant and it may be difficult; but if you are the type of man God wants you to be, it will be done regardless of weather indications.

In our Christian training it is the difficult tasks that cause us to grow into manhood. The very fact that we face difficulties and are doing something to overcome them is what adds to our strength. We learn and grow by working at new and challenging problems. We often hear people talk about a sheltered life, a life where one is shielded and protected from unpleasant experiences. Actually there is no such protection. If one does try to avoid danger and difficulty, disaster is sure to follow.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* John Bunyan tells of Mr. Timidity who was always trying to avoid taking any kind of risks. He spent his life waiting until he was absolutely safe and sure

about everything before he made a move. The result was that, instead of being safe, his want of courage was his chief undoing. Most of our difficulties could easily be overcome if we faced them squarely.

When the children of Israel were at the Red Sea and Pharaoh's mighty army was quickly pressing upon them, many murmurs began to rise. The winds and the clouds seemed terrifying. But God said to Moses, "Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward." God was with them, so forward they went!

Again, when Israel stood at the border of Canaan and ten of the twelve spies which were sent out to spy out the land returned with an evil report, the balmy breeze grew into a hurricane and the gentle clouds became a cyclonic storm. Though the land was good, they feared the inhabitants. They saw giants, the sons of Anak, in whose sight they were but as grasshoppers. Strangely, when forty years later the Israelites did enter Canaan, nothing is seen or heard of any giants. No doubt there were some tall men, but in the eyes of the timid spies the size was greatly exaggerated and their fears magnified the difficulties. Joshua knew that the way out of danger was to face and conquer it.

As it was in the past, so it is today. When men go forward and disregard what is on either side, regarding only the good, God will open a way through the danger.

The apostle Paul exhorted his churches to stand fast in their convictions and not to shift with every wind that blows; that they should no longer be "children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles" (Eph. 4:14, RSV). Rather, he taught that they should speak the truth in love and grow up in every way in Christ. These marks should distinguish the Christian. They will teach the "truth in love" and they will *grow*. They will not heed adverse winds of controversy but will encourage in the faith.

But criticisms will always be leveled at those who profess better things. We should not be saddened by them. We should recall how our Lord and His disciples were evil-spoken of. Such attacks are always directed against people of importance, never against the weak and obscure. And these attacks should stimulate us to rise above all carnality and keep alive and active in the good cause.

Take up your task, then hasten to the field  
At break of day—work through till dewy eve—  
With zeal and faith, go plant the precious seed.  
In time to come, a more abundant yield  
Shall crown your toil. Be sure, you shall receive  
A hundredfold for every noble deed.

## *A Friend In Poland Writes-*

How thankful I am to be able to correspond with you on the most important subject in my life.

How good that you can say "I stand on the rock of divine Truth." Alas! I could not find this truth in Poland. I am 28 years old, and a few years ago I started to take a lively interest in the teachings of our Lord. I attended the services of different Protestant churches and have read many religious literatures. I do not know how the situation appears in the United States, but here in our land there is a great mix-up in the teachings of the churches. Some claim that you should confess the dogmas of the immortal soul, hell and the trinity; and others disbelieve these things. Still others are saying you can believe as you see fit, so long as you are regular in attending services in their church.

But the Word of the Lord says that God is not the God of confusion but of peace and order. In view of all this comes my question: Does it really matter to God what teaching I will profess and preach? I decided to delve into this matter more thoroughly and am convinced that with many of the teachings preached by the churches, God has nothing in common. The study of history and a thorough study of the epoch in which our Lord lived and worked has helped my understanding. The source of many erroneous teachings and notions about man and his future is Greek philosophy. I also thoroughly throw away the dogma of the immortality of the soul.

You can know that the Bible and seeking after truth are the yearnings of my heart and mind. Long have I been praying to God for this privilege of learning His truth, and truly I wish to have it in its entirety. Even though I do not know it all as yet—I know so little—yet you are in my prayers and I am wholeheartedly with you and do believe this contact is the result of God's arranging. Please pray to God that He will allow me to thoroughly understand all you will write to me.

Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

R. K.

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*It takes a good eye to thread a needle.*

*Did you ever try to thread the small eye with someone else holding the needle? It is quite impossible. There are things in life we must do for ourselves. We cannot have someone else do everything for us, especially in our spiritual lives.*

# LETTERS

## In Tune?

Those who are musicians know just how awful a song sounds if the instrument is out of tune. There has to be some tightening of the tension, some pressure applied to bring the instrument into tune. Although we do not always like it, we ourselves have to be brought into tune (we call it discipline). It is the same in every area of life. Every good army has to have discipline or things go wrong. We get untidy, we get unclean, we fail to arrive on time. God cannot use bad soldiers, so we have to be disciplined.

*Nottinghamshire, England*

H. L.

## Use the Present Moment

We must cultivate a more thankful spirit for all our blessings; they are more than can be numbered.

Our purpose in this life is to patiently continue in well doing, to prepare for eternal life. The present moment is the only time on which we have any certain claim. We must use it to change ourselves in so many ways. Not to have our own way, or think our own thoughts, or have our own pleasures takes work. But this is the only way we can be transformed.

*Laurel, Indiana*

E. M.

## He IS Coming

It was a long time after the birth of Christ was prophesied that it really happened. No doubt many people had heard it so many times that they had decided that it wasn't going to happen. Just so the prophecy of His second coming has been talked about for hundreds of years, and we don't know when it will happen. But we know it *will* happen, and when it does happen, it will seem sudden.

*Adamsville, Tennessee*

I. P.

## Fresh, Clean Air

I would like to say that the May, 1975 issue of your publication was the first I had ever read, and it left me profoundly impressed. I am one who, having read most of the Bible in one way or another, let myself become lost for awhile in the bewildering myriad of denominational interpretations that pass for separatist platforms in what we cynics refer to as the "Christian" Church, and then abandoned all interest in the riddle. But in this abandonment, I found also nothing of any merit in myself without God, without religion, and without any set of values that I could describe as an emanation from divine authority.

But the articles in your magazine reopened the windows of my mind and let blow in what I call fresh, clean air—at once new, ancient, everlasting and pure!

Thank you for bringing the Word to one such as me!

*Kailua, Hawaii*

F. S.

July, 1975

## Nourished To Grow

The *Message* helps us to better understand God's written Word. If we are to grow spiritually, we must be nourished, we must read, study and inwardly digest and absorb its message.

*New Brunswick, Canada*

A. L.

## To Wait?

I want to be always waiting, ready, and willing were the right moment to come along. I used to wait for a good moment to do some special good. I used to wait for a good moment to write a letter. I used to wait for a good moment to pray. But as one matures in the knowledge of the precious promises and the immanent responsibilities, one realizes there is no moment so fit for the task, the good, the prayer, as that moment called NOW.

Now is the time that we must realize, deeply realize, that we must walk in the way of His commandments!

*British Columbia, Canada*

R. F.

## Thank God for America (Continued from page 7)

(Ps. 2:2-3). But their resistance will be short-lived as they find themselves battling a power stronger than they. For "then shall he speak unto them in his wrath [His judgments], and vex them in his sore displeasure" (Ps. 2:5). For the first time in history, God and right shall prevail.

## Our Blessing Today...

We who live in America should be most grateful to God for the religious and secular freedom which we enjoy. We may worship God in any way we wish, in any place we wish, at any time we wish. We may teach our children the way we think best. We need not fear the secret police will break up our prayer meeting or break down the door of our home in the middle of the night and arrest us. Do we appreciate these blessings?

We may sometimes feel like grumbling about high taxes, inefficient bureaucrats, inept politicians, inflation, government mismanagement, injustice in the courts, and liberal laws which favor the criminal and make it difficult to prosecute the guilty. True, these conditions need improvement. But millions of people in other lands who have lived and died under the yoke of oppression would have given all they had to change places with us. God has granted us circumstances unequalled by His people in any former age.

Until such time as Christ returns and takes over the government of the earth and the worship of the one true God is established worldwide, let us  
**THANK GOD FOR AMERICA! ••**



*Thy Kingdom come, O Lord,  
Wide-circling as the sun;  
Fulfill of old Thy word  
And make the nations one;*

*One in the bond of peace,  
The service glad and free  
Of truth and righteousness,  
Of love and equity.*

*Speed, speed the longed-for time  
Foretold by raptured seers--  
The prophecy sublime,  
The hope of all the years;*

*Till rise at last, to span,  
Its firm foundations broad,  
For evermore to stand  
The city of our God.*

*--Sel. and alt.*