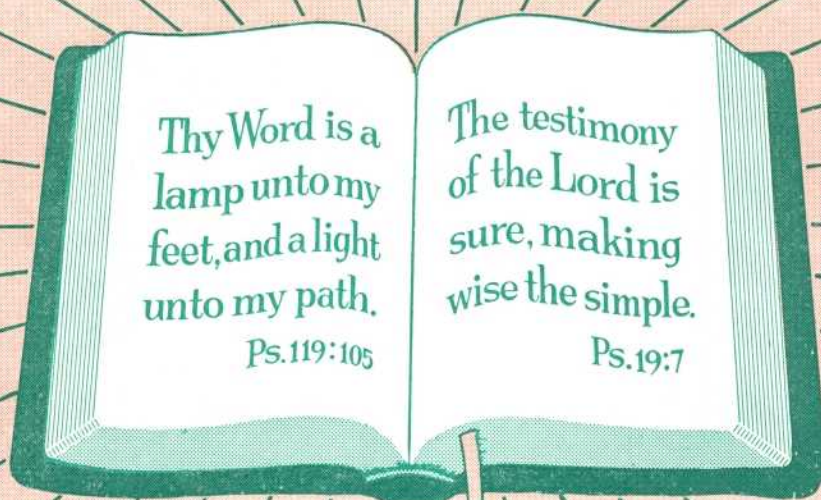


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



The Pre-Existence of Christ--Fact or Fable?
Positive Thinking in Troubled Times
Understanding the Bible
Evolution

Megiddo Message

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Editorially Speaking...

Self-Pity Is Poison

SCOLD yourself, shake yourself, blame yourself, watch yourself, but *don't pity* yourself.

Self-pity has a certain septic satisfaction, like picking at a sore, and there is an undeniable "luxury of self-dispraise," but it's as dangerous as drunkenness. It's habit forming. It grows on one. *Quit* it.

Pity is a glorious and creditable attribute—when it flows out toward one who is deserving. Then it is like the mountain brook, carrying health and joy to all who drink of it.

But pity, when it turns upon self, is like a stagnant pool, covered with hateful scum, and concealing ugly, slimy things in its foul ooze.

One who feels sorry for himself is already half beaten.

The self-pitying are abused. Nobody treats them right. People talk about them. Others are promoted over them—or so they think. They get no proper thanks. They are unappreciated. Alas! alas! let us all go into the garden and eat worms.

The self-pitiers invite every variety of spiritual microbe harmful to the spiritual life to come in and breed.

They are the clouds, mud, and slush of mankind.

They are rarely efficient. The man who has no respect for himself seldom amounts to much.

Self-pitiers are trying to live with, and impossible to please. They cannot enjoy riches, nor escape poverty. When they are well, they think they are sick. And when they are sick, they think they are worse.

They are gloom spreaders and heart depressants.

Self-pity is the most exquisite form of selfishness, the camouflage of impotence, the acme of disagreeableness.

Self-pity requires no brains, no capacity, no worth. It is sheer and utter no-accountness.

If you pity yourself, you are hypnotized by yourself. Come out of it!

No self-pitying troops ever won a battle; no self-pitying clerk ever rose to be general manager; no self-pitying merchant ever made his business thrive; no self-pitying woman ever retained her respect; no self-pitying human being was ever a help to another. And no self-pitying person was ever recognized as an ornament adorning the doctrine of Christ.

Self-pity is the collapse of all the faculties; it is cowardly surrender in the face of the enemy.

God does not want self-pitiers. His advice is: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:4).

Since "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known" (Luke 12:2), let us be done with all self-pity. Let us be "all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful"—but not toward ourselves! ●●

The Pre-Existence of Christ

FACT or FABLE?

WAS the human Christ who lived among men an incarnation of an eternal Deity which had formerly existed in heaven, or did His life commence when He was born of the Virgin Mary?

In this fourth installment of our discussion with a correspondent who is a firm believer in the pre-existence of Christ, we shall answer questions relating to Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ and also other passages of Scripture which might seem to suggest that Christ was God. (Note that the paragraphs in boldface type are quotations from our correspondent; the lightface type which follows each is the editor's answer.)

"Notice: the Bible says no man has ever heard the voice of God or seen Him. Yet, God spoke to and was seen by many in the Old Testament. It is quite obvious, therefore, that that person was Christ, who is God."

You allude to Jesus' words in John 5:37, "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, . . . ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." John's Epistle confirms this: "No man hath seen God at any time" (I John 4:12). However, this fact in no way suggests that the God who spoke to men in Old Testament times must be must be *Christ*.

In at least two instances we are plainly told who was the God who spoke to Moses. We read, "And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. . . . Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:4-6). In verse 2 we are told who was present and visible and who was speaking as God's spokesman: "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." It was the angel of the Lord who was speaking for God and delivering God's message.

When Moses went up into Mount Sinai we read that he "went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, . . ." (Ex. 19:3). We read further that "God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount" (Ex. 19:19-20). Centuries later Stephen understood who talked with Moses on the mount, for he said, "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers" (Acts 7:38). He tells further who were the communicants delivering God's message to the Israelites: "who received the law by the disposition of angels" (Acts 7:53). Men talked with and saw the messengers of God, angels. No suggestion that Christ was present!

Exodus 23 informs us why the seeming ambiguity of name is possible. Speaking of His divine messengers, the Lord says, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, . . . Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; . . . for my name is in him" (vs. 20-21).

"Many Old Testament passages which predicted the Messiah's coming also foretold His Deity. Isaiah says that 'his name shall be called . . . The mighty God, The Everlasting Father.'"

These verses in Isaiah (9:6-7) definitely describe the future roles Christ shall fill: "and his name shall be called . . ." etc. Note the tense *shall be*. Christ was not existing at the time the prophecy was made.

Various of the newer versions omit the idea that Christ was to be the "everlasting Father." In its place the *New Catholic* and *Douay Versions* read: "Father of the world to come," which is certainly a role Christ will fill. The *New English Bible* calls Him the "Father for all time," adding in a foot-

note: "Father of a wide realm." The *Emphasized Old Testament* by Rotherham renders it, "Father of Futurity, Prince of Prosperity," and in a footnote suggests, "Or: 'Father of progress.' " Christ was not and is not the "everlasting Father," but He is the "Father of the world to come." He is "Emmanuel," which being interpreted is "God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

"Jeremiah, in chapter 23:5-6, predicts: 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.' Here again is Christ, who is God."

The Prophet does not say that Christ is the Almighty God but only a King who would reign and prosper in justice and be called "The Lord Our Righteousness." Furthermore, Jeremiah says this deliverer should be *raised* unto David a righteous Branch—He should be raised up, not brought down from heaven.

A comment on this passage in the *Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary* reads, "A promise of a future scion of the old stock who will reascend the throne of David... is found in this oracle. He is no heavenly being, ... The promise here is simply of a 'good time' under an ideal king. The last king's name is Zedekiah, meaning 'Yahweh is my righteousness,' and correspondingly the new king's name will be *The Lord is our righteousness*—which should be taken here as 'vindication,' with the emphasis on vindication for the nation as a whole."

No, there is no suggestion in this text that Christ is God.

"Micah, chapter 5, verse 2, speaks quite distinctly about the Messiah's eternal pre-existence: 'But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.'"

Your reasoning and your conclusion may sound plausible, but this verse does not say what theologians have long tried to make it say. The problem is mainly one of translation. The last phrase of this text, as translated in the *King James Version*, is incorrect. The *New English Bible* renders it, "one whose roots are far back in the past, in days gone by." Or, "whose origins are from of old, from

ancient days" (*American Translation*); "one whose origin is of old, of long descent" (*Moffatt Bible*). Micah was prophesying that Christ would be descended from an old family in Israel, "of long descent," with no idea that Christ Himself had always existed.

The *Abingdon Commentary* states concerning this verse, "The Messianic king was to be descended from an ancient family—'from of old, from everlasting' imply no more." It is further stated, "The truth is that the words rendered 'from everlasting' reappear in 7:14, where they denote a time no further back than the days when Israel occupied territory on the east of the Jordan, while at 7:20 the other phrase 'from of old' signifies the days of the patriarchs. So far, therefore, from these phrases [Micah 5:2 and others] suggesting the pre-existence of the coming ruler, they mean nothing more than that he comes from an ancient family."

"Finally, Zechariah predicted that 'in that day shall [the house of David]... be as God' (Zech. 12:8)."

I cannot see that this text suggests that Christ was God. It is speaking of the whole house of David as an illustration of strength.

"Christ also has many Old Testament passages which refer to God applied to Him in the New Testament. For example: Matthew 3:3 and Isaiah 40:3."

You are concluding that in the words "a highway for our God" (Isa. 40:3) the word "God" refers to Christ because Matthew records the fulfillment of this prophecy in relation to John the Baptist as the forerunner of Christ. I see no reason for this conclusion. John was certainly doing God's work. He was making a highway through the desert for God at the same time that he was preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The thought of the highway-building being "for God" is merely omitted in Matthew's quotation.

"The story is told of the occasion when three men appeared to Abraham of old. Abraham prepared food for them, and they enjoyed his hospitality. Later two of these who are referred to as angels (Gen. 19:1) visited Lot in Sodom. The other was engaged in conversation with Abraham, who pleaded that the doomed cities should be spared."

"Now the interesting part of the story is that this person to whom Abraham was talking was none other than Jehovah. This person is referred to as the LORD, and wherever the word Lord is written in capitals, as it is here (see Genesis 18) we are to understand that

the original Hebrew, from which it is taken, is Jehovah. The Hebrews were very careful in their use of the name Jehovah, and it appears that the translators also revered the name in the extent of substituting Lord for it. This makes it very clear that one of the visitors to Abraham was Jehovah. Abraham gave Him food to eat, and was engaged with Him in face to face conversation. In view of the fact that no one has ever seen the Father, who was this Jehovah? There is only one answer. This was the Son! A study of the use of the name Jehovah reveals that it belongs just as much to the Son as to the Father, as any other family name does."

I fear that you have drawn a whole succession of conclusions without adequate proof. Your first premise, that when the word "Lord" is capitalized it always refers to Jehovah, can be easily proven false.

Let us first determine the meaning of the word Lord as used in Genesis 18. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states that this English word "represents several Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew words. It thus expresses all grades of dignity, honor and majesty. It is not always sure of the sense in which the term is to be taken."

We also note that in the Bible "Lord" and "God" are sometimes used synonymously with angels, as in Gen. 16:11, 13; the angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar and Hagar answered, "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, *Thou God seest me,*" etc. Verse 11 shows clearly that it was the "angel of the Lord" that had addressed her. A like interchange of names occurs in Judges 6:11-18.

In Exodus 3:2 we read first that the "*angel of the Lord*" appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." Then in verses 4 and 6, *God* is said to speak from the midst of the bush. In Ex. 23:20-21, God commands the people to obey the angel which He is sending before them *because His name is in Him*. As a Son is called by the name of his father, so the angels are sometimes called Lord or God. Angels are a part of God's family (Eph. 3:15). Why shouldn't they bear His name?

From the foregoing evidence, it seems reasonable to state that the three men in Genesis 18 (sometimes called men, sometimes angels, and sometimes Lord) were angels. There is no proof that one of them was God or Christ. All three were men, angels, or messengers of God, His representatives.

The *Dummelow Commentary* has this to say about "Lord" in verse 3: "This was only a title of respect, it is not Lord, i. e., Jehovah." Abraham was entertaining angels unawares. Note also that the

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two angels who visited Lot are also addressed Lord (capitalized). If because of capitalized Lord we identify one of these as Christ or God, then all three were Christ. If Christ existed in ancient times, why was He never honored by identifying Him clearly by name?

"In the book of Exodus, Jehovah is spoken of as the angel of Jehovah (Exodus 3) and yet He is referred to as Jehovah in Ex. 6:3. Here we have Jehovah communicating with a man, or carrying out the work of a messenger (the Hebrew word for "angel" means "messenger"). Later He instructs Moses to 'say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you' (v. 14)."

Because both terms "Lord" and "angel of the Lord" are applied to the same being, why must we conclude that the angel was Jehovah? Instead of concluding that Jehovah was doing the work of one of His messengers, why not conclude that Jehovah had sent a messenger, i. e. an angel, to carry His message in Jehovah's name?

Behind the messenger and behind the message was the same supreme power, designated by "I AM" in v. 14.

"Before Israel made its assault on Jericho, Joshua one day was confronted with a man with His sword drawn. He asked, 'Art thou for us or for our adversaries?' The reply was, 'Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come' (Josh. 5:13-14). Joshua was commanded to take off his shoes in reverence, and he worshiped this person. Who was He? He wasn't an angel, as angels refuse worship (Rev. 19:9-10). He wasn't the Father, for no one has ever seen Him. Yet He was One eligible to worship. He is referred to as Jehovah in the next chapter. This again is none other than Jesus in His capacity of Word becoming the channel of communication between the Father and Joshua."

Your evidence is no more than circumstantial, and bears no weight. As for the claim that the man appearing before Joshua with drawn sword was Jehovah, and that He was so-called in the following chapter, this is a mis-statement. In this chapter the term "Lord," capitalized, occurs 15 times, but the name Jehovah does not occur.

Who was this man that appeared to Joshua? The passage says clearly that he was a man. And this description permits the possibility that it was an angel, for many times in Scripture angels were identified as men (see Gen. 18:2; 32:24; Acts 1:10).

However, your conclusion that this man could not have been an angel because angels refuse worship is without adequate foundation. The text

reads that "Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship." But the original Hebrew word translated "worship" in this passage is *shachah*, and is defined as "prostrate (especially reflexive in homage to royalty or God):—bow down, crouch, fall down, humbly beseech, do obeisance, do reverence, worship" according to Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance*. Many times in Scripture the word is used when a man bows to another man, a king, or a friend. For examples, see Gen. 23:7, 12; 48:12; 50:18; Ruth 2:10; I Sam. 24:8; 25:23; II Sam. 14:22; 24:20; I Chron. 21:21, where the same word translated "worship." But the original Hebrew word was only natural that Joshua should bow or fall prostrate before the messenger of God as a gesture of humility and submission, just as a subject might bow before a king. Angels would be more worthy of such recognition than an earthly monarch.

Joshua's heavenly visitant was an angel—we can see no reason for rejecting this possibility; most certainly the visitor was not the pre-existent Christ whose birth Jacob had foretold.

Furthermore, there is no proof that John's angelic informer in Rev. 19:10 was giving a directive for all time regarding worship.

"We have a similar occurrence in the experience of Gideon. One who is called the angel of Jehovah, and Jehovah interchangeably, appeared to Gideon (Judges 6). This again is none other than Jesus appearing in His messenger capacity. He brought the message that finally brought deliverance to Israel."

Again your position is untenable. The angel of the Lord in Judges 6:12 is spoken of as "the Lord" in verse 14.

"Hebrews 12:25-26 says Christ was the angel of the Lord who spoke in Old Testament times to Israel in the wilderness."

The account as given in Exodus describes the speaker as "God" or "the Lord." Acts 7, where Stephen is retelling the ancient history of the nation, says definitely that it was the "angel of the Lord," and that angels were the chief means of communicating the law to the people (Acts 7:38, 53).

The verses you mention from the book of Hebrews refer to God. Verse 23 speaks definitely: "to God the Judge of all." Verse 24 speaks of "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." Verse 25 reads: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him who spake on earth [the angel who spoke for God on Mount Sinai], much more shall not we escape, if we turn

away from him that speaketh from heaven." There is no suggestion that a pre-existent Christ was doing the speaking. Verses 26-29 also refer to God; observe especially verses 28-29: "...whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire."

"In Revelation 1:8 we find that Jehovah is called 'the Alpha and the Omega.' Isaiah 44:6 declares quite distinctly that the terms 'Alpha and Omega,' or 'the first and the last' (which is what 'Alpha and Omega' means) are reserved for God alone. Yet, Christ claimed these titles in Rev. 1:17 and Rev. 22:13. This is another indication that the Scriptures teach the full Deity of Jesus."

Isaiah 44:6 states that there is but one eternal God, and that He is the first and the last, that He is the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; but that is all it says. The prophet is nullifying the idea that there may be other gods besides the true God. In stating that He is "the first and the last," the prophet does not say in relation to what.

In Revelation 1, all statements are regarding the "things which must shortly come to pass," and of these things, Christ is the "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" (Rev. 1:11).

But in this chapter both God and Christ are indicated in different passages. Verse 4 reads, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne." The Almighty Himself is here indicated. Verse 5 continues: "And from Jesus Christ," etc. Verses 6 and 7 also clearly refer to Christ, the writer's succession of thought ending with "Amen."

Verse 8 obviously refers again to God: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord Almighty." God is the speaker in this verse, as in Rev. 21:6, where again He calls Himself the "Alpha and Omega." The man of Patmos asserts the eternal Providence which gives his message weight and authentic power. So he declares that he represents the One who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. It is the One who is the Origin and the Conclusion of everything who sends the message to the churches. ●●

(To be continued next issue)

**If I ignore the house of prayer I impoverish my soul.
To love the Church of Christ is to become enriched
with the "fullness of Christ."**

Signs of the Times

WE LIVE in the modern era. Views are modern views. Styles are modern styles. Changes are modern changes.

More than all this, we are aware of a battle which began with the dawn of civilization, the battle between science and faith. Until the past century, science was always attacked and discredited by religion; but now, religion is attacked and discredited by science.

Branded Religion But look at the image religion in the modern era is making for itself. Weak, flaccid, powerless—too much modern religion is being branded by its futility.

This feeling of futility is reflected in the latest statistics which show a continuation of the 13-year drop in church attendance in our nation. A 1971 survey shows that 45 percent of church members in the 50-year-and-older bracket attend church, while

only 28 percent of the 21-25 age bracket attend.

The technology known to this modern civilization has developed a vast network of worldwide communication never before known to mankind. In many parts of the world, widespread education has virtually eliminated superstition; but at the same time it has weakened religion to the point of disrespect. Especially in the nations of the free world, modern communications (radio, television, newspaper) are destroying the image of religion. "Priest, Six Others Charged As Anti-war Plot Trial Opens," reads one newspaper headline. "Pope Urges Caution Over Church Union," reads another. Rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" is anti-Christian say some, pro-Christian, say others; and the Archbishop of Canterbury states, "A bit of Christianity did come through."

What is one to make of this modern Christianity? How haphazard and unruly it seems. How hypocritical and useless, with its bickering clergy, church bingo, and unpious pulpits. It is time for us to turn to the Bible and defend it as our only hope of salvation in this world of confusion. ●●

From A Reader—

An Analysis of Time

When we are busy, time seems to fly. If we are waiting for somebody or something, it seems quite the reverse. We describe time as flying, but we know it to be a fallacy, as time never changes: it is past, present and future.

The all-important question is: Are we making the very best use of it? For time is our opportunity to hearken and seek after the Lord. Now, more than ever, in these last days of faster living, "it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

We are growing older, and time is not going to wait for us, for there is "an appointed time to man upon earth"; so may we strive to gain something for salvation every day, and live each day as though it were our last. One day there really will be "time no longer" in which to serve the Lord, and when we come to give an account of ourselves to God, all will depend on how we have used our time. To procrastinate spiritually, in any way, because we did not realize the swiftness of time's passage, is

indeed a poor excuse and should be the very reason for redeeming it, for are not our days "swifter than a weaver's shuttle"?

May God teach us the "measure of our days," that we no longer live the rest of our time "in the affections and evils which dwell in the flesh, but to the will of God."

It is a shocking thought that someday time will actually end for the unfaithful covenant-maker. So, if we have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, may we never stop in this upward climb only to slip backward again, for then, the latter end will be worse with us than the beginning.

May we then be sober, and watch unto prayer, that we may live for all time in the wonderful Kingdom of God.

*R. B., Swansea, South Wales,
Great Britain*

There is nothing that brings on premature age like secret sin. It keeps the mind in perpetual unrest and a troubled mind soon makes the body old. The real nourisher of the body is a quiet and radiant mind. But let the mind be chaos and the body will soon be in ruin.

Taking Lessons From Children

A day in the life of a small child is so often routine, yet each is fresh and new in its own way. First thing in the morning he wakes not only ready, but eager to begin the new day. "It's morning now," he calls hopefully, half afraid that it isn't and he'll have to go back to sleep—of all things! But as soon as he hears that yes, indeed, morning has come, the quick pitter-patter of eager feet can be heard heading for the nearest thing which has caught his inquisitive, early-morning attention. Not a moment of the day must be wasted without something to do. And in the evening, though unwilling to say goodnight, he goes to sleep satisfied that he has extracted all he could out of the day.

The child's three daily meals are mostly a thing of necessity, and he doesn't always like having them cut into his busy and imaginative activities. On the other hand, he definitely knows what's good to eat (in his opinion) and doesn't need any coaxing to open his mouth for something sweet or very tasty. He is always ready and willing to do anything that appeals to his youthful tastes and desires, but isn't quite so agreeable when told to do something which goes against *his* idea of the way it should be done, and usually he is only too quick to let his feelings be known.

From birth the child has so very much to learn—why, it takes in everything! And from babyhood the normal child is anxious with his whole being to take in as much as possible in as little time as possible. There is no slow growth, if *he* can help it. The more opportunity he is given for learning, the more he will take in.

Of course, no child could get along without direction. We all know a young child could never make it through a day, hardly an hour, without the guidance and attention of a capable adult. In fact, the more guidance and attention, direction, discipline and love a child receives the more he will thrive and grow, and he will experience a satisfaction and a contented security with life. According to the well-known quote, "Children have more need of models than of critics," and the best guidance can be given by a self-controlled adult who follows a high moral standard of conduct in his own life. As we all know, a child with absolutely no supervision would not thrive at all.

Parents can share many a delightful experience with their little ones. The young years are the most impressionable, and the best time for diligent training. How joyful the parent who sees the little fruits of right-doing bloom out as a result of consistent disciplining. How sweet to the ear are the words, "All right, I'll do it," followed by quick and obedient action on the child's part.

On the other hand, though the child should know better, there will be many times when he delays his obedience or else doesn't comply with commands at all. He can be told to do something, at which he smiles agreeably, says "All right," and then very unconcernedly undertakes *not* to do it. Sometimes, before the warning comes, he decides to do it after all—a belated obedience. But on other occasions, even when knowledgeable of the consequences, he chooses not to obey at all. Then, of course, he must suffer those consequences. This part of the learning experience involves those things which are contrary to his nature, his little "old man." But every loving parent who desires to "train up his child in the way he should go" so that when he is old "he will not depart from it," will consistently press on, hour after hour, day after day, trying to set the child's affections on the right things.

What lessons the actions of children can impress upon us, if we only make the proper application! As a mother, I am thankful for the many eye-opening lessons which I get from daily, hourly contact with my children. We can liken our relationship to God as being much the same as the relation of child to parent. For, how does God see us? We would like to think that we are so grown-up simply because we have gone through certain experiences in our lifetime. But when it comes to the spiritual things, God finds us nothing less than unborn at the time we first become acquainted with the truth of His Word. And oh, what an experience it is! It is such as we have not felt before, to have all the darkness of religious misconception thrown aside when the true light begins to shine in our lives. It is such a novel experience that it is like a rebirth, as if we have just begun to really live. Then, like a newborn babe, we are anxious with our whole beings to take in as much as possible in

as short a time as possible. If only we would not let this novelty wear off, if we could always find the truth just as fresh and new as when we first began to understand it, our growth would be just as rapid as the growth of the natural child. We would use every opportunity to take in something new. Each morning in our lives would be met with readiness, eagerness, and willingness to meet the day's experiences.

We should not be so busy with our temporal duties that we have no time at all to be spiritual. Rather, we should always be ready to sit down at the Lord's table and eat of all the spiritual food He has laid out for us. We should not only choose those things that appeal to our spiritual appetite, but taste everything until we learn to like it all. Right from the start we should work to impress our minds with the Words of Life, so that these early impressions will be deep and lasting.

We could never carry out a day, or even an hour, in our spiritual lives without the guidance, direction, and discipline from our heavenly Father. If we would thrive in the Christian life, we must yield to the discipline of God. Then we will become secure in the knowledge that Someone greater than ourselves is at the head of everything.

God, knowing that example is easier to follow than precept, left us a perfect model to copy—Jesus Christ. If we only follow in His holy footsteps, we will be trained up so well that we will never depart from God's law.

Do we render to God a childish obedience? Are we willing to obey Him even when things arise which are completely contrary to our lower natures? We should not obey just when we feel like it, when we are in the mood. And never should we choose not to obey at all. If we do, someday we will have to suffer the consequences.

It is so easy to say, " 'Cease from anger'—now that is a wonderful commandment, and I know I'll be a better person for obeying it." But when some little thing comes up that we don't like, we aren't quite so agreeable. Let us remember what a joy it is to God to have His children respond to His training, to see His Word having an effect on our lives, and causing us to show forth the sweet fruits of righteousness. God is so willing to direct us, if we will only throw away all stubbornness and be willing to be led.

Let us set our affections on the right things—on the most wonderful of all rewards, which God is holding out to us. Let us resolve not to waste a moment of our time, but live each day so dutifully that we will go to sleep at night satisfied that we have extracted all we could out of the day for the benefit of our spiritual lives. ●●

September, 1972

The Twenty-third Channel

The TV set is my shepherd. My spiritual growth shall want.

It maketh me to sit down and do nothing for His name's sake, because it requireth all my spare time. It keepeth me from doing my duty as a Christian, because it presenteth so many good shows that I must see.

It restoreth my knowledge of the things of the world, and keepeth me from the study of God's Word. It leadeth me in the paths of having no time for meditation on God's Word, and doing nothing for the Kingdom of God.

Yea, though I live to be a hundred, I shall keep on viewing my TV as long as it will work, for it is my closest companion. Its sound and its picture, they comfort me.

It presenteth entertainment before me, and keepeth me from doing important things. It fills my head with ideas which differ from those set forth in the Word of God.

Surely no good thing will come of my life, because my TV offereth me no good time to do the will of God; thus I will dwell in the house of the dead forever. ●●

Words to WALK By

Be a stand-by for the Lord's work, not a by-stander.

Interest rates on borrowed trouble remain high—and it is hard to repay the principal.

If you would have a call to great tasks, be faithful in the performance of small ones.

A man is also known by the company he avoids.

The Sunday service prepares for Monday serving.

We can't all be apostles, but we can all be "living epistles."

Emotion is no substitute for devotion.

There's no excuse for being lost. Jesus said, "I am the way."

When we make trouble for others, we make more for ourselves.

Three kinds of Church members: Jaw-bone, Wish-bone, and Back-bone.

Positive Thinking In Troubled Times

HOW to live in a time like this—that is the question, and it's a real question, for this is not only a time that tests men's souls but their ability to live also. Ours is, and has been for some decades, a period of uncertainty for the average man. What the next day will bring no one knows. The sense of security known in other days and the old habit of planning with confidence is largely gone. A great problem of the hour seems to be security.

For youth, the past few years were years of peculiar discouragement, even frustration. A multitude of human problems both personal and social ranging all the way from racial troubles to war, inflation and pollution agitate the minds of men and disrupt relationships. Over the whole world, like Vesuvius over the Bay of Naples, looms the threat of further troubles yet to come. A dying man said to me recently, "For myself I do not regret to leave this world, for life is so ominously uncertain here. I only fear for my loved ones, how they are going to live and what they shall be called upon endure in the years ahead." It is

What have we as Christians to sustain us through these trying and difficult days? What have we to keep us going, to keep us fighting, to keep us pressing toward our goal? Patience—"steady patience is what you need"—for "in your patience possess ye your souls."

This article is adapted from a book by Norman Vincent Peale, and is used by permission of the publishers—EDITOR.

a far-reaching problem which taxes all our powers and ingenuity—how to live in a time like this.

But there is a way, a very successful way, and the prescription for it was written in a time similar to our own, though long ago. This prescription is found in the Bible.

In a period of upheaval and uncertainty the Master spoke these words: "In your patience ye shall win your souls." This is at first sight a strange statement. It is, for example, a little startling to be told that we must win our souls. We have been in the habit of thinking we possess our soul as a divine inheritance. We are accustomed to think of

our souls as the fully developed gift of God. But the soul is, rather, like a bulb which contains the possibility of the full-grown lily. The soul is given to one in incipient form, and it may grow or die. "In your patience"—you shall finally win your soul. What is the meaning of that great word?

Set the word "patience" off by itself as an airplane might write it in letters of smoke against the sky. Look at the values that flash from it like jewels—perseverance, calmness, forbearance, philosophical composure, poise, faith. We are told that in such virtues we shall come into possession of our souls. Despite the noisy, clamorous, battered, disillusioned age in which we live, in the deep patience of our hearts our souls can grow strong until we have actually overcome the world—the evil inherent in our own natures.

Now, let us take this word "patience" and, adopting it as our attitude toward life consider how by its use we may live. It teaches us, first of all, to live a day at a time. *Carpe diem*—seize today—is a bit of good

advice come down from pagan days. The Buddhists likewise exhort their adherents to make the most of every moment. Guatama taught that the passing beauty of a thing in nature, a gracious friendship, a noble thought, or a fleeting inspiration—all must be highly prized. Live this one day to the full without borrowing trouble about the future, is the emphatic teaching of Christianity. "Do not be troubled about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself." A great hymn wisely declares,

"I do not ask to see the distant scene;
One step enough for me."

When our thought is projected days, months, and years ahead, personal power is dissipated, and we stumble and go without direction through life. Put the force of your thought on the day at hand and let tomorrow and, indeed, all the tomorrows take care of themselves. The chances are if this day's work is done just as well as you can do it, that subsequent days will by a natural law of adjustment care for themselves. At any rate, it adds an unnecessary burden to take the tomorrows on your shoulders today.

Sir William Osler, who gave much wise counsel to mankind, advised us to adopt the principle of watertight sections used in constructing ocean liners—to learn to control the machinery of our lives so as to live in what he calls "day-tight" compartments.

This, he says, is the most certain way to insure safety on the voyage. "Get on the bridge," he advised, "as captain of your life and see that, at least, the great bulkheads are in working order. Touch a button and hear at every level of your life the iron door shutting out the past, the dead yesterdays. Touch another and shut off by a mental current the future, the unborn tomorrows. Then you are safe, safe for today."

Patience means another thing and that is inner quietness. The patient man is one who is unhurried in his mind and who finds it possible to relax within. It is supremely essential that in the midst of the confusion of this time there should be no confusion inside a man. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," prayed the Prophet of Israel, "whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

One thing is sure: so long as the din and jar of life do not get into the inner essence of a man, he is safe. So long as he can keep an inward stillness and poise, it does not really matter what confusion reigns without. When for any cause that inner quietness gives way and the clamor and litter of the world come pouring into his mind, he either goes to pieces and sinks or he becomes cynical and hard. Thus is seen the importance of careful at-

tention to the inner spiritual life, for that is a man's last citadel.

The Bible teaches us to rise up and walk life's dusty way without fainting. It teaches the art of living in two worlds at the same time—the world without and the world within—but cautions us that if the world without is permitted to encroach upon the world within, trouble will result. They must work in perfect co-ordination, not overlapping, nor infringing in any way, the one upon the other.

Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, describes those dark days when the Goths and Huns and Vandals swept down upon Rome. They fell upon the glorious temples and palaces of the eternal City with destructive zeal. When they had finished their depredations, however, it was observed by the thoughtful that only the filigree work, the frills and superficial ornaments, had been destroyed. The great pillars and lofty arches still remained, standing forth in an even more imperial beauty because of newly demonstrated strength inherent in their simplicity. Thus, our civilization finds itself in earthquake times. The Christian philosopher with quiet poise reminds us that eternal verities upon which our civilization is based scarcely tremble while superficial elements, many of them worthless, are destroyed and actually should go. The confusion of our era may sound like a terrific storm, but when it is over, the great trees will still stand.

The suggestion that "In your patience you shall win your own soul" indicates another help for living in a time like this, and this is the expectation—that out of the difficulties of this hour a better day will come to pass. It always works that way; the pearl is developed from the pain and death of the oyster; coal which warms and cheers man came out of the decay of ancient trees; and April with its new, fresh beauty is born in dark and boisterous March.

All of which is to say that not until it gets really dark do the beautiful stars appear. Patience of the Christian variety teaches us in these dark days to look for the bright stars of hope, stars that are growing brighter and brighter as the world grows darker and darker.

Hope—that is the word for our time. Hope is the stimulus and spur of everyone who seeks a better life, a real life, an eternal life. It is a hope grounded in God, a hope sure and steadfast, that after all the centuries of man's misrule and tumult, distress and confusion, a better day will certainly come. A King will come—Christ will come—with power to destroy from the earth every element that opposes His new regime. This may be hard for us to believe in these days of faithlessness and skepticism, but

the God of heaven has so decreed. It is as certain as tomorrow's sunrise.

What greater incentive should we need to sustain our patience through the hours of struggle and trial that are sure to come. It is this hope that gives our lives purpose and which will enable us to find in our difficulties the means to a higher—and therefore deeper—appreciation and understanding of the meaning of life, and ultimately, eternal life in the Kingdom of God on earth. * ●●

A Manufacturer

MANUFACTURING is the most common of all businesses today. There is hardly a paper or magazine that does not advertise articles manufactured—everything from toothpicks to jets.

All of us are not involved in the manufacturing world, yet there is another type of manufacturing that we do too often and do not realize it.

There is the story of a busy executive in the 1920's who decided to take his wife on a long-needed vacation. We will call them Mr. and Mrs. X. Many weeks they spent planning the trip. They chose the best means of travel at that time—the train.

But their vacation was not the happiest. When it came mealtime, they proceeded to the dining car. Mrs. X was dressed in costly silk, a mink stole, and many diamonds. They were seated at a table and chose their menu.

Mrs. X., who was a very particular person, complained that the dining car was too cold—and it wasn't very clean, either. After the waiter brought the water, she complained that the water was too warm; and the salad was too sour. Her chair was not comfortable, the meat was tough, and so it went.

In a short time a Mr. Y came and sat at the table with them. The men soon exchanged greetings. Mr. X was the president of a well-known bank; Mr. Y, an attorney from a large New York City firm. Mr. X introduced his wife to Mr. Y and added that she was a manufacturer. Mr. Y could

hardly conceive of this cultured lady being a manufacturer, when Mr. X added—"of complaints."

There is a lesson here for us. Are we manufacturers? It has been said that it is as easy to complain as to breathe. And how many times do we observe the ugly, the unpleasant and the uncomfortable part of life, things that can't be changed anyway. The weather is too hot or cold, too dry or too rainy. If not careful, we, too, may become manufacturers of complaints.

Nothing is easier than fault-finding. It requires no talent, no self-denial, no thought and no character to set up the grumbling business. The easiest thing is to find fault, and the hardest thing is to keep still.

The apostle Paul gives a helpful admonition in Phil. 2:4: "In everything you do, stay away from complaining and arguing" (*Living Letters*). The person who is always finding fault seldom finds anything else.

Complaining is not the only thing we can manufacture. Some people are great manufacturers of trouble; others, of excuses.

Sensitiveness and hurt feelings are also easy to manufacture. Someone may do something innocently—even in kindness—and we are hurt about it, and from that point everything that person does is wrong. The feeling grows and grows until our heart is filled with hatred. How much better to think good of our friend, to assume it was just a mistake, that he did not mean to hurt us. In such a circumstance, it is our duty to avoid being hurt. Then, too, it is very easy to pass these feelings on to others, and two are harmed. Manufacture kindly acts and deeds and soon the old hurt will be forgotten.

Evil thoughts are very easy to manufacture. In fact, all our evil ways stem from evil thoughts. We should never let our manufacturing plant produce these evil thoughts. If we curb them and manufacture only good thoughts, pure and elevating, others will be encouraged and helped by our influence.

Another product easily manufactured by the natural mind is criticism. Did you ever listen to a conversation between two or three individuals? One criticizes and then the other returns a criticism, and the evil grows by leaps and bounds. If all the facts were known by those criticizing, the entire situation might look different.

Time is growing short. If we have been manufacturing complaints and evil thoughts, let us change our business and produce only kind words and thoughtful deeds. It will make us happier and will be showing a pattern of good works before God. ●●

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UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

Baptism

THE sacrament of Baptism has been observed for centuries by nearly all religious denominations who call themselves Christian. The ordinance has held a position of pre-eminent honor, being considered the door of entrance to the nominal church. The rite has been almost universally accepted, but like many another orthodox belief, it has often been the center of controversy, especially since the 16th century.

Baptism as observed by Christians is not new. Ceremonial and ritual washings are to be found in the annals of practically all religions, many of them antedating Christianity by centuries. There is no Biblical command to baptize during the four millenniums prior to the ministry of John the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth.

Ceremonial washings for the purification of everything from basins and articles of clothing to individuals were well known to Israel from the days of Moses. Israel was commanded to "wash their clothes" to be prepared to receive the law from Mount Sinai; Aaron was commanded to "wash his flesh in water" before donning the priestly garments; other various forms of "uncleanness" were to be cleansed by washing with water according to Moses' law.

The prophets used the symbol of washing in calling on the people to cleanse from sin: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well"; "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?"; "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Isa. 1:16-17; Jer. 4:14; Ps. 51:2, 7). Cleanliness was equated with holiness. Holiness required the individual to be clean both without and within.

In our study of the subject of baptism we will seek to learn the Truth of the nature and purpose of the rite as it was used in the early Church. Our concern is not with its early history outside the

Scriptures, but with its place in God's plan. We will study the subject, following our outline:

- I. What Is Baptism?
- II. Baptism in Scripture
 - A. John's Baptism
 - B. Jesus and Baptism
 - C. The Apostles' Baptism

Was the sacrament of Baptism "instituted by Christ Himself" as some claim? Is baptism necessary to cleanse from "original sin"? Should the recipient be led into the water, dipped into the water, submerged in the water, have the water poured upon his head, or not be baptized in literal water? Should infants and young children be baptized to assure their salvation, or should adults only receive the sacrament?

These are some of the questions that have been debated for centuries by both Protestant and Catholic Church leaders. We are not concerned with such trivialities, but will study the subject as it is used in the Bible.

I. WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is variously defined as an initiatory rite, a symbolic washing, an immersion in water signifying the removal of sin. It is well defined in the **Standard Bible Encyclopedia**: "Baptism, as taught in the New Testament, is the picture of death and burial to sin and resurrection to new life, a picture of what has already taken place in the heart, not the means by which spiritual change is wrought. It is a privilege and duty, not a necessity."

The Greek words most commonly used in the New Testament to denote the rite of baptism are the verb **baptizo** and the nouns **baptisma** and **baptismos**. In general the noun **baptismos** was used to denote ceremonial purification and **baptisma** to denote the Christian baptism. **Baptizo** is used today in Greece for baptism. The Greeks have never substituted pouring or sprinkling for immersion as have various other faiths, but the Greek church practices trine immersion—one immersion for each person of the triune Godhead in which they believe.

The significance of baptism varies among denominations. Some claim it is absolutely essential to salvation and as a result baptize both infants and the indigent. It was this practice that brought about the use of sprinkling as not all were physically able to walk into and out of the water.

The manner of baptism has given rise to much controversy, but whether a candidate was immersed or sprinkled is immaterial to our study. We are concerned only with the Biblical aspects of baptism.

II. BAPTISM IN SCRIPTURE

Details concerning the exact time of the institution of baptism as a religious rite are lacking in ecclesiastical history. As mentioned previously, there was no baptismal rite in Judaism, but ceremonial washings were common. Being familiar with these washings, early Christians would not have found the new rite entirely unfamiliar. And by the time of Christ, history records that Gentile converts were being instructed in Judaism, then received into the Jewish community by baptism; but unlike Christian baptism, the Jewish proselyte baptized himself.

It was against this background that Christian baptism was instituted. When a person became a believer and was instructed in the Christian faith he was baptized. The Biblical record leads us to believe that baptism was always by immersion, usually in running water such as a river or stream.

There has been considerable debate between denominations concerning the baptism of infants. Infant baptism is neither forbidden nor commanded in the New Testament Scriptures, but there are reasons for believing that baptism was limited to adults at that time. Repentance and faith were both required of the individual to be baptized and infants would have been incapable of either.

Baptism in the New Testament was more than a ceremonial washing. It was a public declaration of the convert's intention to change his way of life. The Greek word **baptizo** held a broader meaning than merely to dip. The man who was brought under the control of any passion—anger, fear, love—or who was overcome with wine or with sleep, was said to be “baptized” with these things. Thus baptism symbolized a complete immersion in the water of life, the beginning of a new life completely controlled by the Word of God.

According to the late William Barclay, baptism symbolized three things: A thorough cleansing of body and soul; a clean break in the life of the convert, and a union with Christ. Writes Mr. Barclay, “We are told how one missionary when he baptized

his converts made them enter the river by one bank, baptized them, and sent them out on the other bank, as if at the moment of baptism a line had been drawn in their lives which sent them out to a new world, to a new life.”

Baptism expressed spiritual unity. By being baptized, the believer surrendered his life to Christ, acknowledging that he was in complete agreement with the teachings of Christ and the apostles. By submitting to baptism the convert was promising to be morally clean, to be a faithful disciple of Christ, to dedicate his life to the service of God and Christ.

A. John's Baptism

For many years prior to the birth of John the Baptist, we have no record of any prophet or any visible manifestations from God. Among many of the Jews, the righteousness of God had been abandoned and replaced with self-righteousness. God's law had become nearly obscured by the interpretations of the scribes who acted as instructors of the people. The greater part of the nation, led by these blind guides, were with them hastening to destruction while the few who still sought the God of their fathers were as sheep without a shepherd because the priesthood had become corrupted.

John's mission had been revealed to his father Zacharias by an angel: “He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17). “As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Luke 3:4). John's work was to prepare the way for Christ.

John's ministry was characterized by his warning to the Jews to repent and return to God, to prepare to meet their King. His baptism required:

1. Repentance. John the Baptist called for repentance. **True repentance is not in simply being sorry for sin, but in doing something about it.** “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for [unto, margin] the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins” (Mark 1:4-5).

2. Good Fruits. When John saw many of the Jews coming to his baptism, he said unto them, “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance [margin, answerable to amendment of life]:... And now also the

ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 3:7-8, 10). **To repent and be baptized was only a beginning; they must bear fruit or they would not escape condemnation. Baptism symbolized a cleansing, but a thorough cleansing is not done in a moment; it requires continuous right living to become acceptable to God.**

John's ministry and his baptism was for an express purpose and for a particular period of time. He was sent to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord," to prepare Israel to accept the soon-coming Messiah. He contrasted his baptism with that which was to come: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:11-12).

That baptism was later accompanied by Holy Spirit power is confirmed by Bible testimony. The "baptism with fire" is yet future; "fire" as used in the Scriptures is a symbol of God's judgments.

When Jesus the promised Messiah appeared and was baptized by John, John's work was finished.

B. Jesus and Baptism

When Jesus appeared on the scene and asked John to baptize Him, John "forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" or as rendered by the New English translation, "John tried to dissuade him. 'Do you come to me?' he said; 'I need rather to be baptized by you.' Jesus replied, 'Let it be so for the present; we do well to conform in this way with all that God requires.' John then allowed him to come" (Matt. 3:13-15).

William Barclay makes an interesting point as to why Jesus should have been baptized by John. "In John's baptism there was a summons to repentance, and the offer of a way to the forgiveness of sins. But Jesus did not stand in need of repentance, and did not need forgiveness from God. John's baptism was for sinners conscious of their sin, and therefore it does not seem applicable to Jesus at all. . . . But there were reasons, and good reasons, why Jesus should go to John to be baptized.

"For thirty years Jesus had waited in Nazareth, faithfully performing the simple duties of the home and of the carpenter's shop. All the time He knew that a world was waiting for Him. The success of any undertaking is determined by the wisdom with which the moment to embark upon it is chosen.

Jesus must have waited for the moment to come, and when John emerged He knew that the time had arrived.

"Why should that be so? There was one very simple and very vital reason. Never in all history before this had any Jew submitted to being baptized. The Jews knew and used baptism, but only for proselytes [Gentiles] who came into Judaism from some other faith. It was natural that the sin-stained, polluted proselyte should be baptized, but no Jew had ever conceived that he, a member of the chosen people, a son of Abraham, assured of God's salvation, could ever need baptism. Baptism was for sinners, and no Jew ever conceived of himself as a sinner shut out from God, for was he not a son of Abraham and therefore safe for eternity?" For the first time these Jews realized their own sin and their own need for God.

"This was the very moment for which Jesus had been waiting. Men were conscious of their sin and conscious of their need of God as never before. This was His opportunity, and in His baptism He identified Himself with the search of men for God."*

Jesus was showing that the natural Jew was not a child of God just because he was a Jew. **To be eligible for the Kingdom, the Jew must repent and turn from his sin the same as a Gentile. The first step to repentance was confession, and to be baptized, the candidate was required to confess his sins and ask forgiveness.**

1. Did Jesus baptize? Certain verses in the Gospel of John appear to give conflicting reports as to whether or not Jesus baptized. John 3:22 reads: "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized." This verse would lead one to believe that Jesus Himself baptized, were it not for John's explanation in the following chapter. John 4:1-2, in the New English translation reads: "A report now reached the Pharisees: 'Jesus is winning and baptizing more disciples than John'; although, in fact, it was only the disciples who were baptizing and not Jesus himself." **Accepting John's word, we must conclude that Jesus baptized only through His disciples whom he appointed and commissioned to do so.**

2. The "Great Commission." Except for His post-resurrection commission to the Eleven, we have no record where Jesus commanded the apostles to baptize. Mark's report of Jesus' instructions makes it appear that baptism was a foregone conclusion, but both Luke and John fail to mention it, leading some

* Barclay, Wm., *The Daily Study Bible*, Vol. 1, pp. 52, 53.

to believe that baptism was not in use in the Church at the beginning.

Jesus' command to the apostles, commonly recognized as "The Great Commission" reads: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19-20).

This commission is accepted by many as a mandate to evangelize the world. However, we take exception to the common belief. We believe the command was limited to the Apostolic Age. The Greek word *aion* here translated "world" refers rather to a specific length of time, as an age. It is so rendered in various newer translations. This "age" would have been the Jewish age which ended with the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70. The power to perform miracles also ceased at that time.

Bible testimony supports this view. Paul, the last of the apostles, wrote to the Colossians of "the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven," and to the Roman brethren, "Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Col. 1:23; Rom. 10:18). **The commission had been fulfilled; they had preached the gospel to the nations then in existence.**

C. The Apostles Baptize

The Gospels make little reference to baptism as a part of the new Christian faith. John's baptism is recorded in all four gospels, but only in the Gospel of John is mention made of the apostles' baptizing during Jesus' ministry.

After Jesus' ascension, which was followed in ten days by Pentecost, baptism was more prominent. Baptism was a sign that the convert was willing to cast his lot with the Christians, to uphold the doctrine of the faith, even to the point of death. A study of the Acts of the Apostles reveals that baptism was reserved for true believers and was not done indiscriminately. We learn that certain conditions were to be met before the candidate was baptized.

1. Repentance. The first condition was repentance. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you..." said Peter, and again, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted" (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Repentance demands action, a turning from sin, not just an empty promise.

William Barclay gives a comprehensive analysis of repentance: "'Repent,' said Peter, 'first and foremost.' The word originally meant an **afterthought**, a second thought. Often a second thought shows that the first thought was wrong; and so the word came to mean a change of mind; but, if a man is an honest man, **a change of mind demands a change of action.** Repentance must involve both change of mind and change of action. A man may change his mind and come to see that his actions were wrong, but he may be so much in love with his old ways that he does not change his ways. A man may change his ways but his mind may remain exactly the same. He may only change because of fear; his heart still loves the old ways and, if the chance comes, he will lapse into them. **True repentance involves a change of mind and a change of action.**"† **Baptism itself did nothing to remove the sin.**

2. Belief. Instruction must precede baptism. Philip, one of the first deacons of the Church chosen by the apostles, taught the Ethiopian eunuch the principles of the Christian faith before he was baptized. When the eunuch asked to be baptized, Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest [be baptized]" (Acts 8:37). **To believe with all one's heart is to render more than lip service. To merely speak the words "I believe" would not be really believing. The true believer will back up his words with action.** The eunuch was a true believer.

3. Receiving the word. We read that following Peter's Pentecost sermon "they that gladly received his word were baptized" (Acts 2:41). It would be impossible for one to believe until he knew what to believe, hence the necessity for receiving instruction before baptism. We note that they "gladly received" Peter's words, the words of eternal life which he had received from Jesus. Peter was following the instructions of the Master, preaching "repentance and remission of sins" (Luke 24:47). They were willing to listen and learn and change their ways, and they did it with joy.

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. What is the meaning of baptism?
2. What was its significance as it was practiced by the apostles?
3. What was the first requirement of John's baptism?

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

† Barclay, Wm., *The Daily Study Bible, The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 24.

Evolution Credible ??

FEW subjects today are so controversial as the subject of evolution. From the days of the ancients and Aristotle to the Scopes (monkey) trial in Tennessee (1925) and on into the present-day classroom the subject has aroused bitter controversy.

It is only fair to say that a substantial volume of facts *appear* to support the theory; it cannot be dismissed as a theory with no credibility. Yet as it was propounded by such men as Aristotle, Darwin, Huxley, Simpson and others, a Christian cannot accept it in its entirety. Even the evolutionists themselves admit that the theory contains many holes.

Civilized beings have inhabited this planet for such a short period of time compared to the billions of years it has been in existence that it is extremely difficult to determine exactly what took place in the ages of the remote past. Yet in seeking an answer to the mystery of life on earth we must either acknowledge the existence of God the Creator or we must leave Him entirely out of the picture and say that all things came about as a result of development, function and natural selection (we must, of course, overlook the origin of the first substance and matter thus developed).

The straight-line Fundamentalist, in accepting the story of Genesis as a description of the literal creation of the earth and man is as far from reason as is the all-out evolutionist. His position is obviously untenable. Whoever heard of grass that could grow without sunlight? Or who could believe that the wide variety of men extant upon earth are each created in the exact image of the Creator? Any intelligent scientist, unable to accept so unreasonable a position and having no desire to test its truthfulness, would abandon it immediately in favor of a theory which seemed more plausible, though such a theory might encounter many obstacles.

If we accept the Genesis story as an allegory descriptive of God's *spiritual* creation of this

earth's future and eternal inhabitants, as a process continuing through a long period of development, we are at once delivered from the Fundamentalist-scientific controversy. The Bible does not describe the creation of the literal earth, man or the animals, except to attribute all creative ability to one source: God.

But as Christians what can we believe in regard to evolution?

Before attempting to prove or disprove the theory, let us first examine its origin and rationale.

"The theory of organic evolution is the hypothesis that all living things are historically related through a common ancestry, and that all levels of subsequent differentiation have resulted from changes in species. . . . However, the theory of organic evolution is concerned solely with the development of higher forms of life from the first organism and makes no attempt to explain the origin of life.

"The Greek philosopher Thales stated, about 600 B. C., that all life arose from, and was dependent upon water. . . . Aristotle in the third century B. C. was the first to emphasize the idea of a change in living things from simple to complex forms.

"By the nineteenth century most scientists tacitly accepted some form of evolutionary theory. . . . Two schools of thought developed. One school, the catastrophists, believed that at certain epochs all living things were destroyed, and that new organisms were especially created each time this occurred. The other school, the uniformitarians, believed that living organisms evolved only from pre-existing organisms. . . . Darwin in his book, *The Origin of Species* set forth the theory of natural selection. Briefly, this theory states that individuals of the same species differ (variation), that more individuals are born than can survive (overproduction), that individuals must compete with one another in order to survive (struggle for existence), that the most successfully adapted survive this competition (survival of the fittest), and

finally that fit individuals may transmit their fitness to their offspring.”*

Evidence Favoring the Theory of Evolution:

1) Fossil records are said to provide evidence of a chain of development among the same species. Among these are the horse, certain lizards, birds and even man himself.

2) Many animals including man have embryonic remains of organs which are not in use today. Under this heading we might mention the appendix in man, also a rudimental tail structure at the base of the spine. In underground streams there is found a blind newt or Salamander, whose eyes are completely covered over, suggesting a structural change due to environment.

3) The fact that cultivation and propagation of plants results in new varieties and types is cited as additional evidence of evolution; also the breeding of animals to obtain certain characteristics. If improvements can be made under man's direction, it is reasoned that many changes could take place under natural selection over a period of thousands, or perhaps millions of years.

Evidence Favoring the Theory of Special Creation:

1) If birds evolved from reptiles, why do we still have reptiles today? Why did some lizards evolve into birds and others remain lizards? And what of the in-between stages of evolution? Why do we see none of them today, for instance, an animal that is part reptile and part bird?

2) If man evolved from lower organisms, why did not all such organisms evolve into men? Why is there still existing an orderly progression of animals from the simplest to the most complex if all the more complex developed from the simpler forms?

3) If evolution be the universal explanation for all forms of life, why should some birds find it necessary to migrate to a warmer climate for a portion of the year, while others make their homes the year round in a northern climate?

4) Why should some fish live their whole life in the river or lake of their birth, while the salmon leave the river of their birth, spending years in a complicated journey of thousands of miles in the ocean and then just before death return unerringly to the exact spot of their birth to spawn? What possible mechanism of inheritance, natural selection or gene mutation could possibly have taught a salmon aeons ago such a marvelous life pattern?

5) If evolution be true, that lower forms of life are by the process of nature producing “greater variety and leaning to higher degrees of organization, more differentiated, more complex,” how can we apply the fundamental principle of physics, that in all energy transformation there is a tendency for some of the energy to be transformed into non-reversible heat energy and lost? Energy tends to run down and wear out. Applying this law of science, all things tend to become more “probable,” that is, more disorganized, more random. This process, called “entropy,” can be decreased for a time—as in the growth of a child, the development of a crystal, the raising of a building. But that child, or crystal, or building or anything else will eventually start to grow old or wear out or decay. Contrary to the assumption of evolutionists, there is a universal tendency toward decay and disorder rather than to growth and development. Mutations, which evolutionists say are the basic cause of improvements and development, are essentially a sudden and apparently random change in the genetic structure of the germ cell brought about by penetration of the cell by radiation, a change-causing chemical or some other disorganizing agent. The effect is analogous to what would happen to a camera if a firecracker were exploded inside it. There would be a change, but it would, in all probability, not result in an improvement in the camera's structure and function.

6) Even more important than the wonders of creation and the laws of science is the Biblical evidence supporting the theory of special creation. The Bible states plainly that the earth and all its living beings were *created*.

“I have made the earth, and created man upon it” (Isa. 45:12).

“Remember now thy Creator” (Eccl. 12:1).

“All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds (I Cor. 15:39).

“Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee” (Neh. 9:6).

In face of such evidence, how can we assert that no Divine Hand had part in creating the organisms we see today? We do know that many changes have taken place over the billions of years this earth has been in existence. But the most marvelous natural selection over countless billions of years could not develop a one-celled ameba into the complex, thinking creature we call man—not without

* *The Universal Encyclopedia.*

the direction and guidance of an overseeing, all-powerful Creator. Through the centuries the living population of the earth has changed. Skeletal remains of prehistoric animals such as the mastodon, the mylodon, the three-toed sloth, etc., have been found, proving that creatures vastly different from the forms we know today once roamed this earth. Whether these creatures were killed off and later a new series were created we do not know. This is one of the secret things which belongs to God. This knowledge will someday be revealed to His faithful children.

Our position in regard to evolution is this:

Accepting the Bible as the Word of God, we believe that God or some being under His omnipotent direction created man, the beasts, the fishes, the birds, and the multitude of plant life. This fact, however, does not completely rule out the possibility of evolution of the species and the survival of the fittest. The evidence for such specialized evolution is too overwhelming to deny. But evolution without a divine Creator and director poses more questions than it answers. Man himself has evolved considerably from the cave man of Neolithic period. His brain is larger, the shape of his head is different. He has less hair on his body. Many changes have taken place through natural selection. Through environment, inheritance, and evolution, if you will, man's mental capacity has been greatly improved. This should have also improved his moral capacity, but in too many cases we find this mental capacity used in the wrong way. This has resulted in an increase of evil in the world instead of, as it should, an increase in righteousness, justice and mercy.

This brings us to another facet of the subject: Moral evolution.

When God called Adam into His spiritual Garden, mankind had reached a level of mental development where he could comprehend God's laws. He had finally arrived at the place where he was capable of character improvement. He could learn to control his animal instincts, govern his emotions, and form a character worthy of perpetuation.

"And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2: 16-17). The Lord put man in the garden to keep it; to make *himself* worthy of eternal life and to assist others in gaining it. This continual process of growth of the natural man into the new creature which God honors is evolution, the highest type of evolution known to mortal man.

There remains still another more sublime form of evolution which will be experienced by everyone worthy of eternal life. This will be the physical evolution—the change from the mortal body we now know to a new body which will never know sickness, pain or death; a body which can traverse inter-stellar space; a body which will never grow old or become tired, full of boundless energy and vitality; a body governed by a mind which will continue to grow and expand from "glory to glory" throughout the endless ages of eternity. Such will be the ultimate in evolution—perfection, the apex to which all other forms of growth have been unfolding. ●●

The Scientists Confess . . .

PROFESSOR Dawson says, "Evolution existed in the oldest days of philosophy and poetry. It is destitute of any shadow of proof. To believe it again shows that the world has fallen into a state of senility and dotage again."

President Eliot of Harvard said, "Evolution is an hypothesis, and not a science at all."

Agassiz, of Harvard, said, "Any man who accepted the doctrine of evolution ceased thereby to be a scientist."

Darwin confessed, "Not one change of species into another is on record."

Wallace confessed that "there is a gulf between matter and nothing; one between life and the non-living; and a third between man and the lower creation—and science cannot bridge any of them."

President Leavitt of Lehigh said, "Protoplasm evolving a universe is a superstition more pitiable than paganism."

Virchow, the pathologist, physiologist, anthropologist, paleontologist, and chemist, of his day, said, "It cannot be proved by science that man descends from the ape or any other animal. The midlink has never been found and never will be."

Etheridge, Fossilologist of the British Museum says, "In all this great museum there is not a particle of evidence of evolution. It is sheer nonsense, not founded on observation, and unsupported by fact. This museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of evolution."

Professor Fleishman, of Germany, writes, "Evolution is purely the product of the imagination. It spins theories and twists facts."

St. George Mivert, of England, says, "Evolution is but a puerile hypothesis."

Robin, a French infidel, in the French "Encyclopedia of Science" writes, "Evolution is a fiction, a poetical accumulation of probabilities without proof, and of attractive explanations without demonstrations."

Professor Millikan says, "The pathetic thing is that we have scientists who are trying to prove evolution, which no scientist can ever prove."

Professor George Wright says, "The history of science is little else than one of discarded theories."

Professor Hyatt says, "A scientist who has a theory to support is as stubbornly difficult to convince, even on clear evidence, as any other man."

Professor Moore says, "Evolutionists seek to crush all opposition by hurling anathema that, if you do not believe in evolution, you are not fit to live."

Evolution is the Hinduism of Asia: "The endless emptying of nothing into everything from nowhere to everywhere, and of something into somebody, until everything is extinguished and everybody expires from everywhere to nowhere."

No wonder that Hegal and Darwin only read the Bible at last; that Spencer confessed, "I have spent my life in beating the air," and that Huxley requested that the 15th chapter of First Corinthians be read at his grave.

Edison left word for all scientists of the world today, that they do not know "one millionth of one percent about anything; that they do not know what matter is, what mind is, what electricity is, what life is."

Sir Isaac Newton wrote, "I seem to myself as a little child standing on the seashore. Here and there I have picked up a pebble, but out before me lies a vast ocean of knowledge all undiscovered."

"The Times" of London has said, "It would puzzle the scientist to point to a battlefield exhibiting more uncertainty, obscurity, dissention, assumption, and fallacy than their own."

The "Universe" of Paris has said, "The Spirit of peace has fled the earth because evolution has taken possession of it."

—From *The Evangel* by Dr. William R. McCarrell

THINK!

1. Once they found me in a tree
Which I had climbed someone to see.
I came right down, gave a goodly meal
To Him who so many sick did heal.
Who am I?
2. Of my great strength you all may speak,
But in temptation I was weak.
I had a very noble beginning,
But sad was my end because of sinning.
Who am I?
3. An angel spoke concerning me
And stated what my name should be.
My calling was a special one,
I cleared the way for God's own son.
Who am I?
4. I was one of noble descent
And to a pagan land I went.
To my God I was true as steel.
His presence I could always feel.
Who am I?
5. Very strongly I was bent
To write concerning our dear Lord
So that my friend most excellent
Might know the certainty of the Word.
Who am I? Who is my friend?
6. To aid in judgments wise and right,
To priest and judge we gave the light
Whene'er there was a law to make
To save our people from mistake.
Who are we?
7. I ask my own questions and answer them too.
I tell of the stars and the morning dew.
I proclaim God's greatness in heaven and earth
And have men note their moral girth.
What book of the Bible am I?
8. These people brought much more than enough;
So willinghearted, they offered too much;
They had to be told to bring no more.
What was it they offered so freely for?

(Answers on page 21)

Bible A B C's



WHEN Jesus went about choosing men to be His closest friends and His helpers in spreading God's Word, four of the men He chose were fishermen. These four men earned their living by catching fish in the Sea of Galilee and then selling them to be used as food.

These fishermen owned boats and they fished by letting nets down into the water. After a time they would pull the nets up again and they would have some fish in them. They would throw the little ones back into the sea to grow bigger and the big fish they would sell in the marketplace. These fishermen apparently knew each other well and worked together in the fishing business before they met Jesus.

There were two men who were brothers, Peter and Andrew, and James and John who were also brothers. They were all hard-working men because the boats and nets had to be repaired and in good condition if they were to catch fish.

One day Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately obeyed and left their boats and nets behind and followed

F is for
Fishermen

Jesus. He taught them to be honest, kind, good men and they helped Him very much as He went to the different cities and villages preaching the good news of God's Kingdom and performing all kinds of miracles. They saw Him heal the sick, raise the dead, give sight to the blind and cause deaf people to hear. These were exciting experiences for them.

After Jesus ascended into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit power to guide His people and these four humble fishermen, Peter, Andrew, James and John, were among those who received this great gift. Then they, too, did some of the miracles that they had seen Jesus doing. They

were very happy that they had obeyed Jesus and lived as He wanted them to live.

Wouldn't you like to meet these four fishermen and listen to some of the exciting stories they could tell us? You can, if you will learn now to become the same kind of people they were, honest, faithful and determined to do what God says is right. ●●

THINK!

(Answers to Questions on page 20)

1. Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1—10)
2. Samson
3. John the Baptist
4. Daniel
5. Luke; Theophilus
6. The Urim and Thummin
7. The book of Job
8. The tabernacle (Ex. 36:2-7)

Christian Youth in These Times

Have No Fear

THIS story takes place during the time of the Early Church, when Christians suffered persecution under the cruel Roman government. The boy in this story lived with his parents in the city of Rome. First of all I will describe the strange meeting-place which Christians used then.

These people did not have a comfortable church, as we do. There were no church bells calling these Christians to worship in those days. Have you ever heard of the catacombs? Catacombs are underground tombs where the early Christians buried their dead. These were large gallery-rooms underground. Tombs for burying the dead were cut back into the soft rock of the walls. Sometimes these catacombs were as much as forty feet underground. A long stairway led into them. Some of them were located outside the city of Rome. When the Emperor Nero began his persecution of the Christians, they gathered in these tombs for worship. This was because every citizen was safe from attack in the burial grounds. Later, even the burial grounds were not safe. The Christians then blocked up the regular entrance and built secret entrances.

At the time of this story, John Mark had just finished writing his faith-strengthening Gospel, and the Christians were going to hear it read at their underground meeting-place. Brother Paul called for John Mark to come to Rome, because he had become such a helpful servant in the Lord. It is likely that John Mark wrote the Gospel at this time, to strengthen the faith and endurance of these much-tried Christians.

Rufus, a young lad of ten years, was going to meeting alone. Christians avoided going in groups; there was less danger of arousing the suspicion of Roman soldiers. His mother had gone earlier, and his father would go right from the pottery shop.

Rufus peered down the narrow alley which twisted and turned to join the wide street that led through the gate into the open country outside the walls of Rome.

The boys that lived in the alley were not very kind. They had marked Rufus as a Christian boy, and Christians were despised and persecuted by most of the Romans. The boys would often dash out and make fun of him. "Christian! Christian! Rufus is a Christian," they would jeer as he went by. They might even throw stones at him, or knock him down on the dirty cobblestones.

Rufus took a step down the alley, then stopped. Ahead of him was the broad back of his neighbor Lucius. Lucius was such a good person and strong in the faith, but he had already been called in question by an official, and Rufus had heard Lucius' wife say, "I never know whether he'll come home at night, or be in prison waiting to be thrown to the lions."

Rufus did not dare walk through the streets of Rome with Lucius. He thought, "It might be better to stay at home after all." It might be too dangerous to try to go to the catacombs where the Christians were meeting to read the new scroll.

These faithful Christians were willing to recognize and please the Roman emperor, so long as he did not claim what belonged to God only. Christians could not worship the emperor or his statue, or offer incense to any of his gods. They had to worship and obey the true and living God alone, and entrust their souls to Him.

Rufus did want to hear that new scroll. Everyone who heard it had a new light in his eyes and new courage in his step. Rufus was tired of being afraid all the time.

Lucius was out of sight now, and Rufus walked cautiously in the middle of the narrow road. He walked as far as possible from the dark doorways from which some boy might dart with a taunting "Christian! Christian! there goes a Christian." At last he reached the wide street. Here he could mingle in the crowds unseen.

Rufus ran through the gate onto the wide Appian Way that led on and on into far parts of the great Roman Empire. He sometimes asked his parents why the Christians didn't leave Rome and travel to Macedonia or Palestine or Asia, or any far-away place where they could be safe. But his parents always answered, "No place in the Roman

Empire is safe for us; Christians are in danger everywhere."

Rufus turned from the Appian Way to follow a path toward an opening in the ground. He had gone into the catacomb once with his mother. He had been afraid to go again until today. Even the singing and prayers of the Christians could not take away the creepy feeling of being in an underground cemetery. He wondered if Roman soldiers would be barring the entrance when he wanted to leave.

"I hope the new scroll will be worth all this," Rufus said to himself. He entered the opening and followed the tunnel. It was dimly lighted by oil lamps set in small niches hollowed out of the clay walls. He tried not to look at the rows and rows of shelves cut on either side for the burial of the dead. The sound of the singing led him on.

He found the Christians gathered in a wide underground room. His father's eyes smiled as they met Rufus'. His mother smiled, too, and spread her cloak so that he could sit close to them.

The Psalm was finished, and Jason the leader held the new scroll high so all could see it. "This is the good news that you have come to hear," he said. "Mark knows how hard it is to be a Christian in these days of suffering and danger. On this scroll he has written for us the story of Jesus Christ who never seemed afraid. He has told us of His mighty works, and how we too shall be able to do mighty works if we have faith and courage to do God's will now."

"Read!" exclaimed the people. "Read the good news from the new scroll."

Rufus listened. He watched Jason wind the scroll from one stick to another as he read. Story followed story. Four fishermen leaving their nets and boats to follow Jesus. What a great teacher He was! What power He had! He spoke with authority and healed the sick. Jesus faced the Roman soldiers and procurators without fear. He was faithful through persecution. The stories continued—a few loaves and fishes became enough for hungry thousands.

Jesus in a storm was unafraid, and He told His disciples how great their power would be if they prayed with faith. Jesus walked boldly toward Jerusalem where He knew His life was in danger. Not the cross or the tomb could keep Him. And Rufus heard Mark tell of Jesus living again and telling His friends to "have no fear."

The scroll was finished. They sang, and they prayed for new courage and strength. Then one by one, for the sake of secrecy and safety they departed. The corridors of the catacombs did not seem creepy and frightening now. Rufus forgot that Roman soldiers might be guarding the opening. He was thinking of the words of Jesus to His

disciples, "Take heart, it is I. Have no fear." Rufus' mother asked him if he would be afraid to go on alone. He stood tall and with a new spark in his eyes he answered, "No, Mother, I am not afraid. I am going to be like Jesus, the Great Teacher. I am going to do right and trust in God whatever happens."

"Only do that, my son," said his father, "and God will be with you and you will grow stronger and stronger. God will give us time to do the work if we are determined to do it."

As Rufus hurried on his way, he hesitated only a little when he came to the narrow alley that twisted toward his own little house. That was where the boys lived who sometimes jeered, threw stones, or knocked him down on the dirty cobblestones. Within himself Rufus seemed to hear a strong, kind voice saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

Rufus turned up the alley with a firm step. He marched bravely along toward the boys who were playing on the street. "Christian, Christian! Rufus is a Christian," they taunted. The boys left their game to crowd around him. They clenched their fists and shook them in his face. "Christian! Christian! Rufus is a Christian."

But Rufus surprised them. He did not run away. He did not cringe. He stood erect. He smiled calmly and said, "Yes, I am a Christian. I am glad I am a Christian." They gasped. "Glad? Why are you glad?"

"I will tell you," he said. Rufus was careful. "I am glad to be a Christian because Christians are good people; they are kind and patient. They are honest and polite. They never harm anyone, and best of all, someday the Great God will reward them abundantly for being good."

Stunned by the new radiance in Rufus' face and the courage in his steps, the boys turned on their heels and repeated once more, "He's a Christian." Rufus passed along quietly, thrilled in his heart at his own bravery. He thought of how Jesus had patiently endured scorn, shame and persecution for the great joy ahead.

Rufus had kept the words of Jesus singing in his mind. "Take heart, it is I. Have no fear." Rufus realized what persecution was in store for him as a Christian. There was an easy way out of it, if he wished to take it, but Rufus had decided to be a Christian. "To be a strong and faithful Christian," he said to himself, "I must now practice courage in doing right. I must practice courage in every temptation and trial I meet."

Although the clouds of persecution hung low over the heads of these Christians, there was a certain quietness and peacefulness in Rufus' home

that night. The fires of their faith were burning brightly. The new scroll together with the new strength of the youthful Rufus put new fire in their hearts for God.

How glad Rufus and his parents would have been to live in a free country as we do, and to worship God in peace. Surrounded with blessings as we are, with no fear for our life, do we have the courage to live for God in all purity and simplicity? Who will resolve today to be a Christian? Who will have courage to do right though it seem difficult and unpopular? To ever be a strong Christian, we, like Rufus, must practice courage, courage to do right every day through every trial and temptation. Each victory will help us another to win.

We today have not just a few scrolls of God's inspired Word, but we have a whole set of sixty-six letters to strengthen us. We should determine to set the fires of our faith burning. In our own soul, we should keep those words of Jesus ringing, "Take heart, it is I. Have no fear." ●●

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"Does the Judgment follow death immediately?"

No, according to the Bible, the time of the Judgment is coincident with the granting of the reward. These are Jesus' words: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he set upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations [His servants from whatever nation]: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:31-34). And from Luke 14:14 we learn when the rewards will be dispensed: "And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." The resurrection will occur when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (I Thess. 4:16).

In Genesis 15 we read how Abraham was given promise of a great inheritance to which his seed

should be heir; then in vision he felt the horror of great darkness fall upon him (v. 12), and he understood that he must rest a long time in the grave before seeing the fulfillment of this promise. The patriarch Job understood the same, when he said, "If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness."

The resurrected dead, faithful and unfaithful, and the living who are amenable to Judgment will be rewarded at the same time. This fact is stated in the aforementioned words of Jesus (Matt. 25:31-34), as both sheep and goats are present at the time of separation. It is stated also in Heb. 11:39-40: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Also Paul's words in I Cor. 15:23, "But every man in his own order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's *at his coming*."

Paul stated conclusively that the reward will be given when Christ appears the second time: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom." He then makes reference to his own situation: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:1, 7-8).

Rev. 22:12 restates the same truth: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"—Christ will bring the reward which He will dispense to every man "according as his work shall be."

"How do you reconcile John 20:17, where Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father' and John 20:27, where Jesus said to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side'?"

When Jesus told Thomas to handle Him, He was trying to convince Thomas of the verity of His bodily resurrection. Thomas had said: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25). Jesus was giving doubting Thomas the fullest opportunity to see and be convinced.

Apparently the words to Mary, as translated in our Common Version and in many of the newer

(Continued on page 26)



Meditations

On the Word

JAMES is the book that Luther wanted removed from the Bible. A brief glance through the fourth chapter of this book readily reveals why anyone who did not believe in the doctrine of good works for salvation could not be happy with the teachings of the author James. But before we can go further we must determine who this devil is. Certainly he cannot be the fanciful creature with horns, tail and cloven hoof, sanctioned by ecclesiastical authorities. We find no place in the Word of God where such a creature is described or even suggested. On the other hand, we do find in James 1:13 the flat statement, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." The Apostle's statement at once eliminates all need of a personal devil, with every man's temptations coming from his own lusts.

This agrees entirely with Jesus' teachings in Mark 7:21-23. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Jesus speaks in John 6:70, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" People were the devils then, and they are the only devils now. If there was sufficient evil in the heart of one called to be an apostle for Jesus to call him a devil, how can we deny that there is sufficient evil in our own hearts for us to be devils, opposing God's will, when not keeping His commandments?

In Luke 22:40, Jesus said, "... Pray that ye enter not into temptation." He did not say,

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" —James 4:7

"Pray that this horned devil be not permitted to come and tempt you with evil." The Prophet also agrees, Jer. 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

"Submit yourselves ... to God. Resist the devil." On the surface this does not seem like such a very large order, but when it comes to applying it day after day in our lives, and making our lives measure up to the godly principles that accompany this injunction, it is a very different matter. For human nature to submit itself to the dictates of any other power, high or low, is not easy. To resist any inclination which we wish to follow, whether we believe it comes from without or whether we realize it comes from within the heart, is not easy. When we double up on this program and undertake to submit ourselves to God, and begin to resist all the lower inclinations of our own heart, then we are undertaking not only a doubly difficult program, but triply difficult and even more. If we are actually trying to apply God's holy laws often to our lives, it will seem at times that the do's and the don'ts have hedged us about so tightly that we can scarcely move. And this is just the point, for as long as the do's and the don'ts are from without, our life as a Christian will never be easy. But when we have rewoven the pattern of our lives about the do's and the don'ts of God's holy law so that His commandments have become a part of our desire, then His Law is working effectually in us.

Human nature never submits willingly to any outside influence which runs counter to its own desires. As we look about us we can often see this illustrated in the lives of those by whom we are surrounded. When we turn the inquiry to self we can see it illustrated all too often. We know of too many instances in our own

lives when we have sacrificed the best for that which was only good, simply because it was easier to do. Our nature is all too prone to regard as coercion any influence which will elevate and edify, if there is any effort connected with it.

To the natural mind God is only an outside influence. The Prophet says, "God is not in all their thoughts." To be receptive and submissive to His ways and laws, God must be in all our thoughts. In I Tim. 4:15, Paul says, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." When meditating, when reading, we are placing ourselves in a favorable position to submit ourselves to the loving Heavenly Father who wants to make us amount to something if we will only co-operate.

The greatest achievements of mankind apart from religion have always been obtained by the sacrificing of self-interests. Scientific research, exploration, invention, the establishment of great businesses, have often been achieved at the price of self-sacrifice even to the point of death. The world does not call this submission, but tenacity of purpose. It is the price of achievement, this subordinating of self to a high interest. Likewise the true Christian's greatest achievement is obtained by the complete submission of self to principles of God's revealed Word, to the point where his character is entirely made over into a new creature. This means sacrifice, and sacrifice is not easily endured unless we have an end in view. We have all heard of the sacrifice, and character developed by Abraham, Daniel, Moses and Paul, but their achievement is no greater and their submission no more complete than among the many whose lives have not been recorded for our learning, but who have submitted their lives to the godly pattern and made themselves over into new creatures by resisting the evil within until it had fled from their lives.

Submitting to God and resisting the devil is more than a nice ethical idea. It is a warfare. It is one man against another. It is the old man pitted against the new man. Paul knew this warfare and described it from the riches of his own experience, in Romans 7. In I Tim. 6:12 he admonished Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Again in II Tim. 2:3, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." If we expect to resist the devil within and bring ourselves into submission, we must fight the same warfare that Timothy and Paul did.

The more we consider the question of submitting our lives to God, the more we find that it is really getting rid of all the iniquity which the human

heart can develop. Iniquity hides all the good in us from God. A little iniquity will hide a great deal of good. In fact, it will hide the good so effectively we cannot gain the full reward. Likewise when we become filled with righteousness, the iniquity cannot develop within, or enter from without. When we can maintain such a state within, we shall then be submissive to God. The devil will have fled and we shall know the peace that passes understanding. The greatest pleasure we can experience is to know that we are keeping all the commandments of God. For to continue in such a state will bring that greatest of rewards, eternal life. Without this hope, the Christian life can only be meaningless and empty. ●●

Questions and Answers

(Continued from page 24)

versions, do not give the clearest sense of what Jesus was saying. The *New English Bible* reads: "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers, and tell them that I am now ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God." This thought seems to explain the meaning of Matt. 28:9, where the disciples, worshiping Him, held Him by the feet. That seemed to have been their way of expressing their supreme joy at seeing Him and their affection for Him.

A footnote in the *New Catholic Edition of the Bible* suggests that in her joy, Mary had cast herself at Jesus' feet. "But he tells her not to delay thus, 'but go, tell my brethren,' etc." A footnote in *The Scofield Reference Bible* gives a similar thought: "that He merely meant: 'Do not detain me now; I am not yet ascended; you will see me again; run rather to my brethren,' etc."

The late William Barclay commented on this text: "It is suggested that the Greek is really a mistranslation of an Aramaic original. . . . What Jesus really said was: 'Touch me not; but before I ascend to my Father go to my brethren and say to them. . . .' It would be as if Jesus said: 'Do not spend so long in worshipping me in the joy of your new discovery. Go and tell the good news to the rest of the disciples.' . . . It may be that Jesus was saying to Mary: 'Don't go on clutching me selfishly to yourself. In a short time I am going to my Father. I want to meet my disciples as often as possible before then. Go and tell them the good news that none of the time that we and they should have together may be wasted.' " ●●

LETTERS

Searching Rewarded

I just received my free copies of the *Megiddo Message* and *The Coming of Elijah and Jesus' and the Kingdom of God* and I am very pleased with them.

I also would like to say to you that I appreciate your type of service (churchly, Godly; or plain old Religious Assistance). I sure have been looking for this very thing for several years and I'm very happy that I found you.

Pusan, Korea

D. A. S.

The Inside Too?

Recently I read a story about the roll-top desk. While the mother was away over the weekend, her twelve-year-old daughter cleaned the house thoroughly, expecting the mother to mention it when she returned. Mother came home, and seemed to take no notice. "Mom, don't you think everything looks nice?" she asked. Mother answered quickly, "Let me see the inside of the desk." She knew that when the roll-top cover was down, all was not as it should be inside. Everyone else would have thought the house was immaculate, but not Mother.

God knows what is in the secret corner of our hearts. Our prayer should be, "Lord, cleanse me from hidden stain; save me from secret sin. May all I do or think or say, Thy full approval win."

Carrollton, Ohio

L. W.

Thank God for Time

With world conditions like they are, it makes a person wonder how much longer it will be before God intervenes. But we know God will watch over His obedient children.

We can be thankful for more time to get ready. What is a few years of sacrifice, compared with the good time that is coming, when we can live for eternity. I hope I'll be worthy to live then!

Davenport, Iowa

W. P.

Wonders through Faith

As an Asian, I have enjoyed reading your *Megiddo Message*. It contains a good many articles very relevant to the times.

Faith in God can do wonders, and your Message helps to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among the people of this faith.

Some of these thoughts arose in my mind as I read in a recent issue, "A Garden Without Water."

Auburn, Alabama

A. B.

Fellow-Workers

I like the thought of progressing from "little" things to "big" things. It is our desire to serve the Lord with our whole hearts. We want to exemplify our love for Him. We are all "fellow-workers for the Kingdom of God" (Col. 4:11, Darby Translation).

September, 1972

What would interfere with our reaching our goal? It is termed nearsightedness. Jesus rightly called it blindness, for the wantonness of today's experience and the comfort of today's tangibility glares so excessively bright in our minds. If this affects us, we have not put to death our "members which are upon the earth" (Col. 3:5). We have not put on the sunglasses necessary for such a glare, which are to: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God. And everything, what ever ye may do in word or in deed, do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him" (Col. 3:16-17, Darby).

British Columbia, Canada

R. F.

A Friend of God

I think when anything comes along that can be a blessing to others and to ourselves, we should not put it off; for sometimes when we put off things, it is too late and we miss out on the blessings.

We must keep trying each day to overcome our deceitful hearts and live each day to the best of our ability; then, according to the Scriptures, we shall be saved. But I feel like it is a life-long process.

There is another Scripture which says we must put no trust in man, but rather we should trust in God, for men will fail in our time of need. It is best to keep our eyes on God and look for our help and strength from Him, for He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. I believe that to be a personal friend of God, to have His favor and honor, is better than the best of dreams.

Kansas City, Missouri

F. R.

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