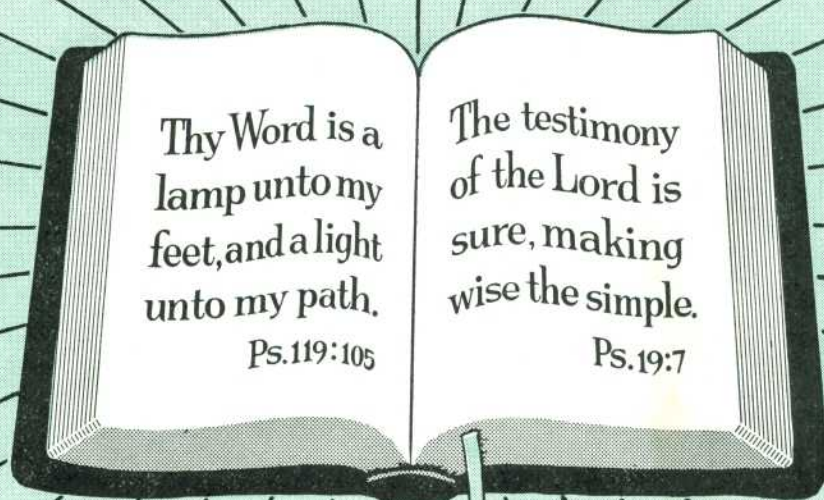


# Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



TRinity or Unity? Three or One?

Keep Me From Turning Back  
In the Hands of the Potter  
Whom Shall I Thank?



# Megiddo Message

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## INDEX

TRInity or Unity?	3
Timely Topics	8
Meekness	9
Keep Me From Turning Back	11
"And Be Ye Kind"	12
Understanding the Bible	13
In the Hands of the Potter	17
Bible A B C's	19
Whom Shall I Thank?	20
Meditations on the Word	24
Letters	25
Questions and Answers	26
A Youth's Prayer	Cover

## Editorially Speaking...

### Turn Your Minus Into A Plus

PLUS and minus—these common symbols speak to us of positive and negative; more and less, adding to and taking from; victory and defeat.

Each of us finds life filled with these signs, sometimes minus, sometimes plus. What we want but cannot have is a minus; what we seek and find is a plus. Handicaps are often considered a minus factor; yet success is achieved by no certain formula of so much minus and so much plus.

"It lies within the power of a human being to turn a minus into a plus." So writes a noted doctor, and a brief survey of the human narrative verifies this fact. Many are the inspiring stories of handicapped men and women who, though blind, or deaf, or crippled, or contending against seemingly impossible odds, fought their way through life to success. They refused to become victims of self-pity; rather, they determined to rise above their limitations to discover the unsuspected reach of their possibilities. They turned their minus into a plus.

As Christians struggling to achieve the nobility of character God requires, we find ourselves involved very often with a plus—and more often with a minus. There is virtue to be added, and evil to be subtracted. We find that we have the strength to resist a temptation to which we have many times yielded—a most welcome plus. Again, we long for something the law of God forbids, and wish the minus might become a plus. We feel incapable of accomplishing all that we set out to do. Here is where we must turn our minus into a plus—God has assured us that we *can* (I Cor. 10:13).

There are many noble examples of those who toil in this life to attain success. They become illustrious stars in the world of music or art, eloquent orators, eminent doctors, wise statesmen, etc. Their names are inscribed on the honor roll of the nation. Yet in the end, their hard-earned plus reverts to a minus for them as they must yield to the power of the King of Terrors; all is lost in the oblivion of the tomb.

Nearly two thousand years ago a great Man came to show how by carefully ordering one's life this dreadful minus can be turned into an eternal plus. No scientific discovery, however fraught with hope for suffering humanity, could compare with the miracle-working power He manifested.

Multitudes followed Him and praised Him when He fed them with bread and relieved their physical sufferings; but when He began to reveal to them their true spiritual condition, when He exposed their pride and hypocrisy, they were offended at His sayings. Still, His message pointed out the only way of turning a minus into a plus of eternal benefit—one must subtract the evil from his character and add all that is virtuous.

To do the very best we can with what we have—this is all God asks of us. And this is the formula that will turn a minus into a plus. We have it—and we can do it. Why not try it!●●

# TRInity or Unity?

## Three or One?

ONE plus one plus one equals—three. Or one. The answer all depends on where you look for it, whether you consult the unerring Word of God or the theology of man's devising. Reason would tell us that where you might choose to look for it makes little difference to the facts, for one apple plus one pear plus one peach can never equal any less than three distinct fruits. Neither can the Father, plus the Son, plus the power of the Holy Spirit equal any less than three separate and distinct entities, though all work together for the fulfillment of a common purpose.

This is in accordance with Scripture—we read the words of Paul: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6). How strange for Paul to make such a statement if he understood that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit form a mysterious unity of one divine essence!

However, it was not long after the first century until the Church Fathers, bent on formulating their own code of dogma, rather than holding strictly to the apostles' teachings, began to envelop the simple truth of God in a nebulous mystery—a type of belief popular among the mystic cults of the early centuries and more easily aligned with philosophic backgrounds. Thus one God, eternal, the Creator of all, came to have a partner from the beginning—His Son, co-eternal and co-existent with Him. And later, a third partner was recognized as making the trinity complete—the Holy Spirit, thought of not as the power which it was to the apostles but as a third person, to which was assigned the same qualities possessed by the Son of God—co-eternal, co-existent, and co-equal with the former two. But note carefully that all this did not happen until *after* the time of Jesus and His apostles and the completion of the Sacred Scriptures. Not until nearly two hundred years after Christ was the term "trinity" even coined, and the doctrine was not accepted as part of the Church dogma until more than a hundred years

after that—more than three centuries after the founding of the Christian Church.

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

We recently received a letter from a friend who requests that we discuss certain aspects of our disbelief in the trinity. Our friend enclosed a communication with a clergyman who strongly upholds the doctrine. And since the words of the clergyman raised further questions in the mind of our friend, we are discussing them for the benefit of all. For the subject of the oneness of God, though among the more lucid of Bible topics, has been grossly confused by the deductions and conclusions of theology.

(In the following discussion, boldface type denotes the words of the clergyman; our answers appear in lightface type.)

### **"The Lord Our God Is One"**

**"The Hebrew word for God in Deuteronomy 6:4 is in the plural form, and the verse might be translated, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our Gods are one unity.' But whatever may be its significance, it certainly does not indicate a plurality of gods, since the Hebrews were strict monotheists. For this reason our English translations never render it in the plural. The term poses a difficulty not only for the translators but for expositors as well. Some have**

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\* C. W. Lowry, *The Trinity and Christian Devotion*, p. 21.

seen in it a remnant of polytheism, but God would never have used this name for Himself if this were its connotation. Others have thought that perhaps the plural is expressive of the fulness of the divine attributes, but this abstraction does not account for other factors such as plural verbs, pronouns, nouns and adjectives used with the name. These also militate against the Jewish explanation of the 'plural of majesty'....

**"The correct answer to the use of Elohim in Deuteronomy 6:4 with the Hebrew word 'echad (compound oneness, a unity) is that within the one Godhead there exists a plurality of Persons. This plurality is seen from other Scriptures to be three so that we have a tri-unity, generally called a trinity.'**

We can certainly agree that the Hebrews being strict monotheists never thought of their God as a plurality of gods. The thought may have been that all the powers in the universe unite in the one, Omnipotent, All-powerful Sovereign God. We may be certain that Deuteronomy 6:4 states unambiguously to any enlightened mind that we worship but *one* God. Any other interpretation of this text would militate against Jesus' words and accuse Him of not knowing the nature and number of the One He called "Father." For Jesus quoted the words from Deuteronomy: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29). Surely Jesus' understanding of the writing of Moses was correct, and Jesus' words leave no place for a plurality of gods—the original Greek for "one" means "one, single, only one."

To conclude, for lack of better explanation, that the "use of Elohim in Deuteronomy 6:4 with 'echad (compound oneness, a unity) is that within the one Godhead there exists a plurality of Persons" is to go beyond the words of Deuteronomy and Jesus and all Scripture. It is possible that the Elohim might include God and His co-workers, the angels, as the definition of Elohim would indicate (see Gesenius' *Hebrew-English Lexicon*), but this gives no suggestion that Christ and the Holy Spirit were included. God and His angels were working together as a united force, as 'echad might suggest, just as Adam and Eve became one flesh ('echad), but this does not mean that they became one being or one person or one entity.

#### **Is Christ Called "Jehovah"?**

The above-mentioned clergyman attempts to prove that Christ is Jehovah by a comparison of Scriptures in which a thought applied to God in one instance is applied to Christ in another instance. ("Jehovah" is translated "Lord" in the KJV.)

**"The 'way of Jehovah' of Isaiah 40:3 is applied to Christ in Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; and Luke 3:4."**

Isaiah 40:3 is a prophecy concerning the mission which John the Baptist fulfilled as the forerunner of Christ's first advent. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." It seems only proper that the "way of the Lord" in this text should be applied to the way of Christ and "a highway for our God." According to the prophecy of the angel before His birth, it was revealed that "they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Thus it is not inconsistent that a text in the Old Testament which speaks of "Lord" or "God" in a prophecy relating to Christ should be rightly applied to Christ in fulfillment, Father and Son bearing the same name. But this does not in any way suggest that they are the same individual, nor does such a conclusion seem necessary from the wording of the passages in the Bible. The two individuals were of one family, and shared a common purpose. Jesus gave His entire life to the performance of His Father's will—why couldn't He be said to be doing the work of God?

**"The Jehovah of Isaiah 45:23-24 is applied to Christ in Romans 14:10-11 and Philippians 2:10-11."**

Isaiah 45 states that "unto me [God] every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." And Romans 14:10-11 records a still-future application of the prophecy, when, after Christ has served as Judge (v. 10), as "it is written, ... every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." The thought in Phil. 2:10-11 is the same: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." But what cause is there for ambiguity here? The passage in Isaiah is relative to God saving His people, and Christ is to be God's instrument, appointed to accomplish the task. What is there inconsistent about every knee bowing to God, or every knee bowing to Christ, as a result of the God-appointed work He will be doing? Could not all the people of a nation pay homage to one official of their government and then pay the same gesture of homage to another high official without anyone concluding that the two officials were one person?

There is no basis in this comparison for us to assume that God and Christ are one.

**"The 'Lord' of Hebrews 1:10 is certainly the Jehovah of Psalm 102."**

The passage in Hebrews 1:10 is quoted directly from Psalm 102. We might observe that in Hebrews 1, the author speaks first of the angels (vs. 5-7) in relation to God's work with mankind;

then of the Son, Christ (vs. 8-9); then follows the quotation describing the work of God (vs. 10-12). Are we not justified in applying the quotation to the work of God both in its original context and again in Hebrews 1? There is no reason to say that the "Lord" of Psalm 102 is God and the "Lord" in the identical passage as quoted in Hebrews is "Christ." Repeatedly in Scripture God Almighty is recognized as the one and only Creator (see Isaiah 45:10-11; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 24:2; 33:6; Isa. 40:28). What reason have we to think that His Son, a subject of His creation at a time some four thousand years after the beginnings of God's work with the people of this planet, should have been instrumental in a creation that occurred perhaps billions of years previous?

**"Isaiah 8:13-14, where Jehovah [Lord] is spoken of, is applied to Christ in I Peter 2:7-8."**

Isaiah 8:13 speaks of the "Lord of hosts," or God. "Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." Why should God be "fear" and "dread" to His people? Because of His laws and judgments. In different ages God used different instruments to enforce these laws, and His laws and those who administer them are often spoken of as one. Here Isaiah foresees trouble: "He shall be... for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel."

At the time Isaiah made the prophecy, Israel was already stumbling at the law of God. And when Christ came in the name of His Father and with the same laws and judgments, He likewise became a "stone of stumbling" and "rock of offence." Peter specifically applies the prophecy to Christ. God and Christ upheld the same standard and enforced the same laws for His people. But this does not suggest that Christ was God.

**"The 'Jehovah' of Joel 2:32 is applied to Christ in Romans 10:13 (compare verse 9 which is very important in the light of this)."**

Joel 2:32 reads, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." And Paul quoted this in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." However, nothing in either place limits the application of the term "Lord" to Christ or to God Almighty. Christ came bearing witness to His heavenly Father; and Father and Son bear the same name. God has set in motion a plan of salvation, and Christ is the means of its realization. How then can we distinguish which person is meant in either text? The point would be without consequence, anyway; for he who should call upon Christ would also call upon God—they are two persons involved in the same work of

salvation. There is nothing here to suggest that they are one and the same.

And verse 9 is very significant in proving that they are two separate persons, for it makes mention of God and of the Lord Jesus as definitely two distinct individuals: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead"—Jesus did not raise Himself from the dead!

**"The 'Jehovah' of Zechariah 12:1 and 10 is applied to Christ in John 19:37."**

Here again is an instance where, Father and Son bearing the same name, we cannot judge which is meant in the prophecy except by context. Zechariah 12:1 tells us that the "Lord" is speaking—"which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth." Such a description could apply solely to God.

In verse 10 is a prophecy that may relate to Christ—"and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced." They, the Jews, never "pierced" God Almighty, nor did they look upon Him. John 19:37 applies Zechariah's prophecy at the time of the crucifixion—they looked upon Him (Jesus) whom they had pierced. How inconsistent to claim that they looked upon God Almighty whom "no man hath seen... at any time"—much less pierced!

**"John 12:41, stating that Isaiah saw the glory of Christ and spoke of Him (verse 40 being a quotation from Isaiah 6) refers to his statement, 'mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts' (v. 5)."**

In John 12, the evangelist is summing up the outcome of Christ's ministry (vs. 37-41). And he sets it down with blunt frankness that in spite of the wonder of Jesus' words and His innumerable kindnesses and miracles, still *they did not believe in Him*. The fact is so staggering to John that he accounts for it by quoting from the words of Isaiah a passage that was true in Isaiah's time and still equally true in Jesus' time: "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." In the next verse, John remarks that Isaiah made this statement at a time when he had seen the glory of the Lord (presumably the God of heaven) and spoke of Him, but nothing about this confuses God Almighty with Christ, nor does it even infer that one is equal to the other. Because John made a statement in which he applied to Jesus' day the reaction that Isaiah felt to his own heaven-sent message (Isa. 6:10) does not in any way suggest that God is Christ. In fact, Isaiah's description of the people's reaction to his vision is no part of the

vision; their reaction was a *result* of the vision.

**"In Revelation 22:12 Christ applies the 'Lord Jehovah' text of Isaiah 40:10 to Himself."**

Isaiah 40:10 is another prophecy of the work of Christ, the "Lord God" being "Emmanuel, God with us," or Christ. For it is Christ, the Son of God, who shall come to earth with "strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him and his work before him" (Isa. 40:10). Jesus in Revelation 22 rightly applies these words to His own future coming and work; but such an application in no way suggests the existence of a trinity. Both texts relate to the same person and the same work and the same advent.

**"The 'mind of the Lord' (Romans 11:34) is no doubt a reference to the Jehovah of Isaiah 40:13. This is applied to Christ in I Corinthians 2:16."**

Both texts (Romans 11:34 and Isaiah 40:13) describe the Eternal God of heaven—there is no confusion here. Isaiah says, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" And Paul writes, after exclaiming about the "wisdom and knowledge of God," "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" And I Corinthians 2:16 speaks distinctly of two persons: "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?"—God Almighty needs no instructing—"But we have the mind of Christ."

#### **JESUS CALLED GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?**

**"The exact number of times that the Lord Jesus Christ is called God in the New Testament depends upon the accepted reading of certain texts. He is positively called God in John 1:1."**

However, the name of Christ or Jesus or Lord is not mentioned in John 1:1. How then is He *positively called God*?

The difficulty arises from the word *logos*, translated "Word": "In the beginning was the Word [*logos*], and the Word [*logos*] was with God, and the Word [*logos*] was God." What is the meaning of *logos*? Scholars agree that the meaning of the word changed with time. Originally it suggested an incorporeal, self-subsistent idea or a thought of God. Later, under the interpretation of Philo, it came to mean the intelligible world in two successive stages of existence, first as thought of God and then as real beings created by God (see Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, C. 1970, p. 258). However, a change in the meaning of the word in no way affects its original usage. *Logos*, as defined in Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*, means: "language,

talk; a sentence, . . . a saying, . . . the thing spoken of, . . . that which is laid down or stated"—there is no suggestion of a real being or of Christ.

In the beginning was the Word, or the wisdom of God, the thought, or expression of that thought; and that thought was "divine"—it was not God. The last Greek word in the text is used without the article, and in such usage denotes a descriptive quality rather than the identity of the word. Thus the *logos* was "divine" (several of the newer translations observe this fact—see Moffatt and Goodspeed).

**"The statement of Thomas in John 20:28 is a positive acclaim and its acceptance by the Lord Jesus Christ rules out the idea that it was simply a statement by an overwrought and emotionally upset man."**

When Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God," he did not mean that Jesus was the God of heaven any more than the Lord was setting Moses up as the God of heaven to the people of Israel when the Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh" (Ex. 7:1; 4:16).

"My Lord and my God" was Thomas' exclamation of conviction. His confidence was now complete, and he was ready to acclaim Jesus as Conqueror and King. Did Thomas in his moment of unbelief doubt the existence of God in the heaven? Did he think, by disbelieving in Christ's resurrection, that there was no God in the universe? No such thought is indicated. Thomas' words were simply an exclamation of worshipful adoration.

**"Romans 9:5 calls Christ God, unless a forced and unnatural punctuation is given to the Greek."**

Our Common Version of this text reads: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Paul is speaking about Christ, who was a descendant of "the fathers" (the stock of Israel) as being at that time "over all" (He was then at the Father's right hand) and "blessed for ever." And no forced or unnatural punctuation of the Greek is necessary to clarify the meaning.

The text reads more understandably in some of the newer versions. For example, the *New English Bible*: "Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them, in natural descent, sprang the Messiah. May God, supreme above all, be blessed for ever!" No suggestion here that Jesus was God. Nor is the reading strained or forced. The *Moffatt Bible* reads: "The Patriarchs are theirs, and theirs too (so far as natural descent goes) is the Christ. (Blessed for evermore be the God who is over all!)" Christ and God are two distinct and different persons. We must remember that punctuation is no part of

inspiration; the punctuation in the original Greek has been added.

**"Titus 2:12 reads literally, 'and appearing of the glory of the great God and Saviour of us, Jesus Christ.' Thus also the Revised Standard Version. In the light of this definite statement the reference in verse 10, 'God our Saviour' also applies to Christ."**

Here again it is a matter of translation, for which there are many possibilities. But is it not reasonable to choose that which harmonizes with the plain texts of the Bible?

Let us read Titus 2:10, "Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." God, as well as His Son Christ, is our Saviour; it is God who is behind the whole plan and program for the salvation of men. There is no ambiguity here.

Now let us read verses 11-13 from the *New English Bible*: "For the grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all mankind; and by it we are disciplined to renounce godless ways and worldly desires, and to live a life of temperance, honesty, and godliness in the present age, looking forward to the happy fulfillment of our hope when the splendour of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus appears." Notice that it is not the great God and Saviour Christ, as one being, which shall appear. It is the *splendour* of the great God which shall accompany the appearance of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Note also the suggested translation given in the footnote: "Or, 'of the great God and our Saviour. . . .'" Again, two distinct persons. Jesus Christ will come "in the glory of his Father with his angels" (Matt. 16:27). This will be in the splendor of God Almighty, but this does not say Jesus is God. The RSV wording supports this thought: "Awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,"—again it is the *glory* of God that shall accompany our "Saviour Jesus Christ."

**"The Greek of Second Peter 1:1 calls Christ God. Here again the Revised Standard Version renders correctly. The construction is exactly the same as verse 11, only in the one case the designation 'God' is used and in the other 'Lord.'"**

The claim is without support, as the words "God" and "our Saviour Jesus Christ" are in the same case construction in the Greek. The wording in the RSV could suggest that God and Christ were one individual, "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ." But the

September, 1973

thought is utterly without support, as the original reads literally, "in [the] knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord." Two distinct persons are clearly indicated—God, and Jesus our Lord. The usage is identical with verse 11, but this is no evidence that God is Christ. The Kingdom is sometimes said to belong to God, other times it is called the Kingdom of Christ, other times the Kingdom of heaven; but this is no evidence that the words "God" and "Christ" and "heaven" are equivalent in meaning.

**Second Thessalonians 1:12 has also the same construction in the Greek and should read, 'the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ.'"**

Second Thessalonians 1:12 could read this way, but it could also, and more logically, read, as it does literally in the original, "the grace of our God, and of [the] Lord Jesus Christ"—again there is no evidence that God is the Lord Jesus Christ. Both God and Christ have grace to give.

**"In John 1:18 many very ancient authorities read, 'God only begotten.' This includes the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts, and we believe that it is the proper reading."**

John 1:18 reads in our King James Version, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

At the time John was writing his Gospel, Jesus *was* in heaven, "in the bosom of the Father," seated at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33). But the text clearly indicates two distinct persons—God, whom "no man hath seen," and "the only begotten Son" who "hath declared him [the Father]." What objective would there be in God (whom "no man hath seen") being His own Son to declare Himself? Should we choose to call Jesus by the term "God only begotten," this would do nothing to change the meaning of the text; nor would it indicate that Jesus was God, for Father and Son could easily bear the same name, as they often do.

**"It would indicate a finer degree of scholastic texture and interpretive honesty to admit that this is the import of these Scriptures and what these writers believed while not holding to that belief oneself, rather than to force these statements into other meanings to save the embarrassment of denial."**

Is it not more embarrassing to make the writers say what they did not mean and contradict themselves?

#### To Prove the Deity of Christ

**"Many books have been written on the subject,**

*(Continued on page 22)*

# TIMELY TOPICS

**L**IKE so many things these days, the traditional concepts of morality are changing. In an age of "free love," the "new morality," and crumbling moral values, some go so far as to see no worth in marriage. Others, wishing some form of legal union but scorning the traditional, seek new life-styles, each couple adopting the one which suits them best.

For some, marriage is a temporary arrangement. They marry on contract for a specified length of time while they decide whether they can work out a permanent relationship. Others join communal families in which people, married and unmarried, live together in one dwelling, often immorally. All

this only shows the drastic decline in morals in our nation.

**"New"**

**Morality**

With marriage—both traditional and unconventional—on the increase, another problem becomes a major concern—divorce. And in this age of laxity, divorce is easy to come by. Nationally, the divorce-marriage ratio reached an all-time high last summer with 455 divorces for every 1,000 new marriages. The old adage, "Marry in haste, repent at leisure" is long out-dated. There is no longer any need to repent; after all, in states which have adopted a plan of "no-fault" divorce, an uncontested divorce takes only about four minutes to acquire, with a minimum of questions asked. Other states go still further and grant divorce by mail!

Numerous judges, counselors, educators and sociologists recognize that the American family is in trouble. Over 800,000 children a year are involved in family break-ups, with unmeasurable harm done to their mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. What is to become of this next generation which is being built upon foundations such as these—broken homes, disjointed lives, lack of genuine parental love and the proper guidance? Can they be expected to grow up into responsible, secure and happy citizens?

How different are these loose trends of the world from the principles laid down in the Bible!

Jesus plainly laid down a standard: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32). The apostle Paul adds: "... Let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband. A married woman ... is bound by law to her husband so long as he is alive" (I Cor. 7:2). If these guidelines were followed in our land today, society could greatly benefit from the results.

The marriage bond should not be taken lightly. The Christian ideal for marriage may seem high and self-sacrificing—and perhaps old-fashioned—but it is still possible. A life lived for Christ is self-sacrificing and carries a very high standard, and the family which would be Christian must comply. Christ being the head of the household, the marriage itself is Christ-centered. "The whole relationship is ... *in the Lord*. It is lived in the presence of the Lord; it is lived in the atmosphere of the Lord; ... In the Christian marriage there are not two partners, but three—and the third is Christ" (Wm. Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 207).

"You married women should adapt yourselves to your husbands, so that even if they do not obey the Word of God they may be won to God without any word being spoken, simply by seeing the pure and reverent behavior of you, their wives ... Similarly, you husbands should try to understand the wives you live with, honoring them as physically weaker yet equally heirs with you of the grace of eternal life" (I Peter 3:1, 7, Phillips). That is most important—to be equal heirs of the grace of life, striving together to gain a crowning part in that glorious future wedding when Christ, the Bridegroom, will be forever betrothed to His Bride or Church. Then the song shall be, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. ... Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:7-9).

This Bride or Church must now prepare herself by bringing herself into subjection to her husband, Christ, "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). Then she shall belong to that eternal age when "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for they are equal unto the angels" (Luke 20:35-36). Here is a worthwhile goal, the attainment of which leaves no time for the changing ways of a pleasure-seeking generation. ●●



# Meekness

**I**N the literary world, past and present, much has been written in prose and poetry on courtesy, chivalry, service, duty, sacrifice, bravery, tragedy, etc. But of the virtue of meekness we find comparatively little. Reference to it, either direct or indirect, often confuses the mind as to its true nature. Occasionally meekness is characterized as timidity, as if the two were closely related or nearly alike.

Let us look into the attribute of meekness more closely.

The meek are sure and steadfast souls, exhibiting no signs of self-assertiveness. They are uncomplaining, sincerely interested in the welfare of others. Their delight is to be of service. Though insults, injuries or scorn are heaped upon them, with troubles and adversities as their portion, they bear them quietly and submissively.

By contrast, the timid person is often shy, afraid to venture beyond his own sphere. Lacking in distinction, he is a weak and retiring personality, fearful of pushing any distance ahead, keeping close to the negative side of things.

Moses, the great Lawgiver in Israel, was an outstanding character of meekness. The Scriptures speak of him as the meekest man on earth. Yet, Moses had what it takes to rule and govern a large group of people firmly and wisely. He was meek, and not self-assuming; humble and not proud. In matters too difficult to handle, he carefully sought the wise counsel of the High and lofty God who gave him the strength of character he needed in his position as a leader.

Our Lord was meek and lowly. But He was not timid or fainthearted. When positive action was necessary, He was not afraid to take it. When He found buyers and sellers desecrating the temple of His God (Matt. 21:12-13), He lifted a strong voice of protest and used His arm in defense of the house of prayer, dispersing and expelling the moneychangers.

In Galatians 5, Paul lists meekness among the fruits of the spirit. Meekness is modest, submissive to the highest law, even to God's ways which are as much higher than man's as the heavens are above the earth.

Meekness is distinguished by silence in the face of abusive accusation, possessing a longsuffering and forgiving spirit towards wrongdoers.

Meekness is the source of inexpressible joy and contentment.

Like every other virtue, meekness does not come of its own accord; it is the end result of many trials endured heroically and quietly.

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips," cried the Psalmist. He must have uttered these words from the heart. Naturally impulsive, he was quick to speak and—to his sorrow—equally quick to act on the promptings of his all-too-impetuous self. Only after bitter experience and severe corrections did he learn true meekness and was able to write for our admonition: "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head."

What is our return action toward such a reproof? Does our heart ever get stirred with violent and caustic rage when another crosses us? Do we immediately erect a wall of self-defense when someone challenges our manner of speech or action? Or are we among God's meek servants, even-tempered, taking all with good grace and without undue emotion, saying, "Thank you, Lord. Whatever I need, let me take it and profit by it."

The meek who copy the meek and lowly Master take the right attitude. Toward the tempted and tried the Saviour of men was gently forgiving; toward the fallen He showed the greatest concern. The critic is ready to criticize and condemn the failures of others; but the heart that follows Jesus' example of forgiveness is kindly in judging the failings of others, for well he knows that only by the grace of God is he what he is.

Meekness is the most effective way of leading others in the right way. Moses, that man of God, was not given to imperious authority or dogmatic dictatorship; the people recognized that he was "very meek" (Num. 12:3). He was meek toward the rebellious, the unbelieving, the critical and the faultfinding, even if they were of his own household and deeply indebted to him; because he counted himself only the servant of the Most High.

The meek know the meaning of real joy and satisfaction because their happiness is independent of circumstances. Meekness is never a heartache; meekness is blessedness.

And the meek have the promise: "they shall inherit the earth"—eternally. All others are forever excluded. The proud and haughty of the earth, however deep may be their holdings in this day, shall be forcibly rooted out of that land where the meek hold sway.

"The meek will he guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way"—now and forever. Isn't this sufficient incentive to cause us to be more meek?"●

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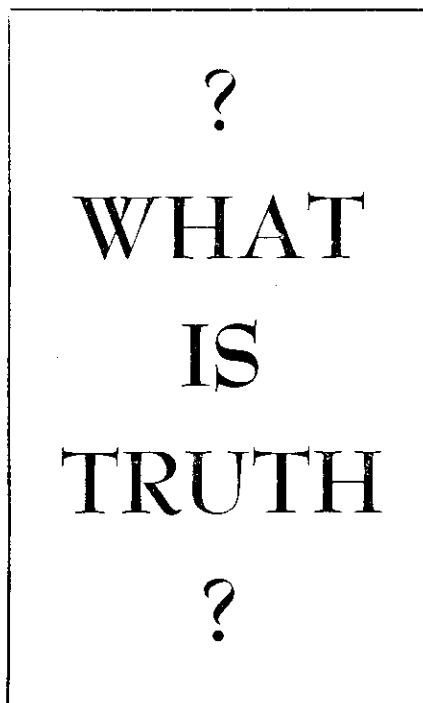
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# Keep Me From Turning Back

**H**AVE you ever stopped to consider how different history might have been had Columbus turned back after launching out on that perilous voyage? Suppose Thomas Edison had wearied of experimenting with the baffling problems of electricity. What if the many unrecognized pioneers in the field of medical research had given up their quest for the life-saving drugs so beneficial to mankind today? They had a definite goal in prospect and nothing could deter them from achieving it. For them there was no turning back.

As earnest aspirants for the ultimate in life—self-mastery—we have accepted the greatest challenge ever presented frail mortals. Yet, in many respects we are far more fortunate than those stalwart individuals who pioneered in geographical exploration and scientific research. They had little information to guide them in their efforts, whereas we have the written record of One who blazed the trail before us. Here is a giant among men, One who never transgressed after He knew the law, and ultimately He was privileged to hear those assuring words from His heavenly Father, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

And now His call comes ringing over the centuries of time to us: “Come unto me, . . . take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

But listen: we hear another word, sterner in tone: “No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven.” We must give careful attention to the written Word left for our instruction lest we turn aside from our avowed purpose.

If we ever succeed in our quest for perfection of character, we must possess a high degree of faith in ourselves, our possibilities and abilities, when activated by the power of God and upheld by His strength. It is necessary that we train ourselves in the habit of thinking positively and optimistically, for no real progress is possible when a person is constantly oscillating between conflicting opinions and desires. Through the eye of faith we

have caught a brief but glorious vision of eternal glory; it remains for us to keep closely within the path of self-denial that will lead us to where that vision will be reality.

Yet it would certainly be vain to assume that once we have answered His call and accepted His yoke, the goal will be achieved instantaneously without effort. Far from it! Every step toward perfection's glorious heights will present its own particular challenge. There will be myriad temptations to resist and trials to surmount. We will be beset within and without, but we can allow no retreat. We may be beaten to the ground, but there can be no turning back.

Perhaps there is no single aid more vital to the success of the earnest life-seeker than the possession of a living, working faith. Not only do we need faith in ourselves, but more important, we need faith in God's Word, His promises and His guidance. True, there will be times when we do not understand why we are called upon to endure such trials; but that should not weaken our endeavor to the point of looking back—much less, *turning* back. Do you remember how Jesus chided His disciples for their lack of faith, reminding them that “with faith as a grain of mustard seed” they could remove mountains? So with us: when we have a strong, abiding faith as our constant companion, seemingly insurmountable difficulties will keep their proper perspective.

There are few areas in the Christian's life more fraught with danger than the dark, gloomy abyss of discouragement. Once within the sphere of its influence, the spiritual light flickers and dies. We become cold and indifferent, numbed by a feeling of defeat and uselessness. True, our lives are frequently swept by trials and problems which for the moment may seem insurmountable when we cannot see the way before us. Sometimes we may almost feel that the Lord has deserted us. But not so! This is no time to lose heart and turn back. Remember, every Gethsemane has its strengthening angel!

Then, too, how easily we may allow ourselves to be turned aside by the sheen and shimmer of



some fleeting pleasure of modern-day Babylon. Doesn't our heavenly Father offer enough both now and future to provide the necessary incentive to keep us pressing faithfully to our goal?

Think for a moment: Can you take in even the minutest segment of the vast scope of His promises? Has He not offered an hundredfold in this life, and in the future everlasting life and glory? Is there any joy or happiness now that can equal the exhilarating effect we feel when we are faithfully speeding along the path toward our ultimate goal by overpowering the sins that beset us? Then think what it will mean to be a recipient of that future glory, which eye has not seen and ear has not heard—neither has entered into the heart of man to imagine what God has prepared for those who love Him (I Cor. 2:9)! Only then will life—meaningful life—really begin.

With such a glorious future in prospect, may our prayer ever be, "Oh God, my God, keep me, keep me from turning back!" ●●

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## "And Be Ye Kind"

KINDNESS is a warm, glowing word. To be kind is a lovely virtue. To return a kindness is commendable, but to bestow a kindness upon someone whom we naturally dislike is courageous.

In Proverbs 31 the Wise Man spoke at length of the virtuous woman. The faithful of the day of salvation, represented by this woman, are reported to open their mouth with wisdom, "and in their tongue is the law of kindness."

In the tongue—that is where we so often omit the law of kindness. Kind words can be prompted only by thoughts, feelings and motives of a kind nature. Our tongue and our actions mirror our inward feelings. If our minds are impregnated by a sordid feeling of bitterness, how can kind words result? Kindness is the outgrowth of hallowed meditation. The high, strengthening thoughts of God draw us into closer communion with Him and thus we allow the law of kindness to rule. The law will then take its rightful place—between us and the offense or injury otherwise inflicted by another. This law of kindness is the only element that will obliterate the pettiness of our nature, the bitterness, the sensitiveness, the unkindness. Bitterness and envy rule when such thoughts are allowed to run untamed within the confines of the brain.

In the tongue—how often have we loosed the bridle from our tongue and not enforced the law of

kindness. Even now we may be hearing the echo of words which we uttered—of unjust criticism, gossip, backbitings, bitterness. Someday these unkind words will throb in our hearts with agonizing severity when we are brought to account, not only for our words but for our thoughts and those inmost secret motives.

At every turn of life we are given an opportunity to brighten another's path by a deed of kindness. We should examine our attitude in the light of this law. Were we kind when the opportunity arose to be forgiving to a repentant brother who had wronged us? Is ours the humble attitude of mind: "I might have made it easier for him to do right had my own attitude been different"?

We may think of a person who is gentle, kind and devoted as one who is soft, supinely meek and mild, who would not offend anyone. But not so. Kindness in a Bible sense carries a meaning of far greater import. "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head" (Ps. 141:5). Here is the greatest kindness—and often the least appreciated—to be told of our besetments. To administer this kindness calls for true love.

When we meet, may there be in us a sense of royalty, that of the sons of God, that we may bear ourselves with that rare, gracious love and kindness befitting sons. May we at such times throw the mantle of forgiving kindness over others that it may be returned to us when needed.

Let us be gentle, kind and true that it may be said of us, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness."●●

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## Words to WALK By

The church is a workshop for wide-awake Christians; not a dormitory for sleeping ones.

*The greatest concern is not so much where we stand in the world but in what direction we are moving.*

The world is not a place in which things happen, but one in which things are done.

*Perseverance always wins in the long run—usually by steady walking.*

Most powerful is he who has himself in his own power.

*Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victory without it.*

# UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

## The Ministration of the Spirit

A survey of religion in our nation shows that the Christian Church of our day has little effect on society. Why? As stated by one writer, the church is "beset by human weaknesses and confronted by a deadening apathy and a flood of pagan ideologies." The church is unable to influence even its members. Men speculate that the church has lost its influence from a lack of faith, a lack of fervor and a lack of fight. Granted, all these are lacking in varying degrees, but the greatest lack in our day—and one over which we have no authority or power to supply—is that of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostolic Church performed a great work in less than a half-century—and without modern means of transportation and communication. Someone has said that if they did what they did with what they had, why can't we do more with what we have? What the author of this statement didn't realize, and what few will admit, is that we today lack the power of the Holy Spirit. As we have stated previously, that power was withdrawn at the close of the Apostolic Age. Since that time men have had to walk by faith alone—and faith also is lacking.

There is much confusion in the religious world concerning the Holy Spirit. Fundamentalist groups, as well as many churches of the major denominations, claim to possess the Holy Spirit. Some hold special services devoted to the laying on of hands, purporting to receive the "baptism of the Spirit." Individuals attending supposedly receive the Spirit and often speak in tongues. Other individuals, under the influence of their new-found power, pour forth volumes of unintelligible words said to glorify God and His power. Sometimes others who attend are described as so overcome by the spirit that they writhe and roll on the floor, moaning and groaning.

But is such stage-type performance the operation of the Holy Spirit? Does God send a measure of His power immediately to the newly-converted as claimed by some evangelists today? Is there anything in the Scriptures to support such a claim? Do we once read in the Bible of the Spirit coming

suddenly upon a man and instantly changing him from a sinner to a saint? Is there any evidence in the Bible that the possession of the Spirit causes individuals to throw themselves upon the ground as though seized by an epileptic fit?

In this issue, we will continue our study, following our outline:

### IV. The Ministration of the Spirit—Old Testament

- A. The Spirit from Adam to Abraham
- B. The Spirit in the Patriarchal Period

In all ages of which we have record, the result of God's power or Spirit given to men was self-evident: A man given the spirit of prophecy could foretell future events accurately; a handful of meal and a little oil kept a family and its guest for many days; a man born blind was caused to see and the lame man leaped and walked; a youth who fell from a window was restored to life, as was the seamstress Dorcas; the Great Apostle shook off a venomous snake and suffered no ill effects.

Such miracles, whenever they occurred, were convincing. In Old Testament times they served to remind the children of Israel of the God who was their salvation from slavery in Egypt, and in New Testament times they served to add scores to the ranks of the Church. And today, if such miracles were being performed, the whole world would know. Modern communication systems can broadcast news around the world in a matter of seconds. What could men do with God's power added to their knowledge?

Although God is now silent and His Spirit and open manifestations of His power have been withdrawn from the earth, we are confident that it will not always be so. Just as the promise to send the power after Jesus' ascension was fulfilled, so will His promise of restoring that power be fulfilled.

### IV. THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT—OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God is regarded as divine Energy, a power belonging to the Almighty Himself, a power which enables men on whom it is bestowed to do that which under

ordinary conditions would be impossible. This divine Energy was seen operative in nature as well as in men.

"In the Old Testament, spirit (**ruach**) is fundamentally an activity of God. The word 'activity' is used in preference to such words as 'characteristic' and 'attribute'. The God of the Old Testament is not so much 'One who IS' as 'One who DOES,' and the essential activeness of God is nowhere more clear than in this idea of the Spirit of the Lord (**ruach-adonai**). The Spirit is the manifestation in human experience of the life-giving, energy-creating power of God. The writers of the Old Testament and also of the New Testament maintain consistently and persistently that the activity of the Spirit is God's power in and through the lives of men. Because of it, men are able to do those things which of themselves and in their own strength they are incapable of doing. **Ruach** is always associated with life and power, and that life and power belong to God, so that the Spirit or **ruach-adonai** is always a gift to men direct from God. Because of this association, the **ruach** of man is also of God, and no man himself has 'spirit' except as it descends upon him from God. It comes to man from above, from outside."\*

From the above explanation, it appears that the Hebrew words **ruach** and **nephesh** are used interchangeably for the Spirit of God, which is His power, and the "spirit of man," which is His breath. No man has "spirit" or breath except as it is given him of God, just as no one ever possessed the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit except as it was received from God or His Son. The Spirit or power of God, as previously defined, has been administered by different means in different ages. We will study the ministration and workings of the Spirit of God in chronological order.

#### A. The Spirit from Adam to Abraham

As we learned in our previous lesson, God has worked by various means at different periods in the history of our planet. His work does not always involve the supernatural. God is at work in the ordinary as well as the extraordinary affairs of the world. Should God choose to "gather unto himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:14-15). Here the spirit is man's breath. It is God-given, and without it man ceases to live.

"God that made the world and all things therein, . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things," and "in him we live, and move, and have our being," said Paul to the men of Athens (Acts 17:24-28). God has a plan for this earth and He has been in

the process of completing that plan for nearly six thousand years. At different times He has worked by different means, but always toward the same end. From Adam to Abraham visions and dreams that were God-inspired were frequent as were the visits of angels. We will study some of God's earliest work in behalf of men.

**1. Before Adam.** God's first work in our behalf was the creation of the earth and all that is upon it. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God says, "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded" (45:12). When did God do this? He does not choose to tell us, but we know that it was countless ages in the past. The six-thousand-year span of time covered by the Bible is but a tick of the clock to the All-wise, Eternal Creator.

We read in Genesis 1:2 that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." It was at this time that God turned His attention toward our planet. These words are part of an allegory outlining God's plan for the earth and do not bear upon the subject of the actual creation of the physical earth and man. (A detailed explanation of the subject can be found in our booklet, **God's Spiritual Creation**.)

**2. God calls men to work in His garden.** After the Creation, God's first work upon this earth was to call men to work in His garden. "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed" (Gen. 2:8). God's garden is the same as His vineyard (Isa. 5:7), His field (Matt. 13:38); it is the field of human endeavor, a spiritual garden. God prepared the garden and offered man the opportunity to work for Him.

Adam and Eve represent the first of the race to be selected by God to work in His spiritual garden. In Gen. 3:8-9, we read that God called to Adam and Eve and "they heard the voice of the Lord God." The voice they heard was that of God's angel. Often God or the Lord is said to be speaking, but in the majority of these instances it is God's angel who is speaking for God.

Angels are of God's family; and because they are, they bear His name and are often spoken of as Lord. Speaking of the angel that was to direct the children of Israel in their journeyings, God said, "Obey his voice, provoke him not; . . . for my name is in him" (Ex. 23:20-21). **The angel speaks for God; the people were to obey the angel's voice because it was equivalent to the voice of God. Angels**

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\* T. W. Manson. *The Living Flame*, pp. 43, 44.



act as God's agents, His messengers to reveal His will to those who are to have a special part in His plan. Angels play an important part in the ministration of God's Spirit.

**3. Enoch's translation.** From Adam to this point, we have no record of God's work upon earth. One important act of God is included in the genealogy of Noah. We read in Gen. 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." These words, and similar ones in the book of Hebrews, tell all we know of Enoch. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him," or as it is phrased in Hebrews, "he was translated that he should not see death." It was God's Spirit or power that removed Enoch from the earth to a destination unknown to men. Only the power of God could preserve a man's life "that he should not see death" (Heb. 11:5).

**4. God's displeasure with the wickedness of men.** "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, . . . and the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, . . . for it repenteth me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:5, 3, 7). God had been silent for some time prior to this statement, but He was not asleep. He was keeping watch, and He did not approve of what He saw. Men had become exceedingly wicked, but Noah knew God's law and kept it. And God spoke to Noah, giving him 120 years to prepare the ark for the salvation of the righteous.

Noah was God's man in his generation; and we read that he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord," and that "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:8-9). Noah obeyed the voice of the Lord and he and his family were saved, while the wicked perished. **The Spirit of God was at work on the earth. Man can neither make it rain nor cause a flood to dry up, not to mention forecasting the event of the flood 120 years in advance.**

**5. Angels appear to Abraham.** Abraham was not only blessed by being called to become the "Father of the Faithful" and to be promised the earth as an everlasting possession, but he also was privileged to have angels visit him to inform him of his role in God's plan. Beginning with his call out of the land of Ur of the Chaldees and continuing throughout his entire life, God was working through Abraham by means of His Spirit. In some instances it is said that the Lord spoke to him, but in others it is definitely stated that an angel or angels appeared to him. We will review some of the incidents.

**a. God calls Abraham.** In Gen. 12:1, we read of God's call to Abraham: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram [God later changed his name to Abra-

ham], Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." The voice of the Lord was that of His angel. Abraham obeyed the voice and moved to Canaan.

**b. God makes a covenant with Abraham.** In the 7th verse of Genesis 12, we read that "the Lord appeared unto Abram." Since "no man hath seen God at any time," we know that it must have been an angel. Because Abram had obeyed the voice of God, i. e., the angel, God promised him the land as an eternal inheritance. In Gen. 13:14-15, the covenant was renewed, "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

**c. Abraham receives the word in a vision.** Abraham received the promise of a son as an heir in a vision. We find this recorded in Gen. 15:1-5.

**d. Angels appear to Abraham.** Abraham was privileged to have more angelic visits than any other human of whom we have record. In Gen. 17:1 we read that "the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect." For the reason that no man has seen God, we again know that it was God's angel bearing His name. It was on this visit that Abram's name was changed to Abraham. God was using Abraham toward the fulfilling of His plan for this earth.

Other angelic appearances to Abraham concerned Ishmael, his son by Hagar; Isaac, the child of promise and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The "three men" who came to his tent were angels. From the context of the Scripture, it is obvious that two of the three continued on to the house of Lot, where they are identified as angels. Using the power of God, they rescued Lot from the wicked mob by smiting the crowd with blindness. Only the power of God, His Spirit, could have caused such a miracle. **These angels were not apparitions, but appeared as men.** They took Lot, his wife and daughters by the hand as they hastened them out of the doomed city.

In Genesis 22:1 we read that "God did tempt Abraham," but a better translation would be that "God did test Abraham." (Most newer translations render it thus.) Again, it was an angel that spoke to Abraham. Verse 11 of the same chapter is definite: "And the angel of the Lord called unto him [Abraham] out of heaven." The angel, the eyes of the Lord, was watching and spoke at the appropriate time to prevent his slaying his son. In verse 15, we read that "the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham" a second time, again renewing the covenant he had made with God.

**Angels were the principal means of the minis-**

tration of the Spirit of God in this age. God was at work on the earth putting His plan into operation, and Abraham was one of the main characters in the great drama.

## B. The Spirit in the Patriarchal Period

As in the earliest period of Bible history, God was working through men to accomplish His purpose. This is the ministration of His Spirit, His power in the lives of men. While most dreams, visions and angelic appearances concern only one individual, their fulfillment is usually for the benefit of all His people. The visions, as well as their interpretations, are God-given. We will discuss the workings of the Spirit, God's directing of His people, from the time of Abraham to the time of the Exodus.

**1. Seeking a wife for Isaac.** Few people ever had their choice of a life partner guided by an angel, but such was the case with Isaac. Abraham sent his servant on the mission, and in Gen. 24:40, we learn that the angel helped to guide him. The servant said to Laban, quoting his master Abraham, "The Lord, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way." The angel, doing God's bidding, had guided the servant to the proper destination and Rebekah returned with the servant to become the wife of Isaac. Again, it was the Spirit of God working with men on the earth to fulfill His plan. Rebekah was to be the mother of Jacob, another vital link in God's plan.

**2. The Lord appears to Isaac.** Isaac, like his father Abraham, was favored by direct contact with God by means of an angel. We read in Gen. 26:2 that "the Lord appeared unto him." As in previous cases, we can know that it was the angel of God. The angel renewed the covenant with Isaac which God had made with Abraham. God had said that the promise was to Abraham and his seed, and the angel confirmed the promise.

**3. Jacob's dream.** Jacob's ladder is one of the more familiar dreams of the Old Testament. Jacob, fleeing the wrath of his twin brother Esau, spent the night in the desert. In his dream, he saw the angels of God, and in the dream the Lord renewed with him the covenant He had made with his grandfather Abraham.

**4. Jacob's prosperity.** Jacob served fourteen years that he might have the two daughters of Laban for his wives. During these years he tended the flocks and herds of Laban, and the Lord prospered him greatly. He then worked another six years for his herd, and again the Lord was with him and he acquired many animals. This, too, was the manifestation of God's Spirit on behalf of His servant, Jacob. God was working with Jacob, who was to

be the father of twelve sons who became the heads of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

**5. Jacob wrestles with an angel.** Jacob, like his grandfather Abraham, had more than one visit from an angel. It is recorded in Genesis 32 that Jacob "wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." That it was an angel is confirmed by verse 30, "for I have seen God face to face," said Jacob. No man has seen God; it was God's angel, bearing God's name, sent by God. The wrestling proved the angel was superior in strength, for the angel prevailed. At the end of the episode, Jacob's name was changed to "Israel." The angel of God appeared to Jacob yet once more and blessed him and again renewed the covenant which God had made with Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 35:9-12). Afterwards we read that "God went up from him in the place where he talked with him." It was **the angel of God, not God Almighty. The angel was God's representative.**

**6. Joseph, the dreamer.** Joseph, the eleventh son of Jacob was called "the dreamer" by his jealous brothers. Joseph's dreams were God-induced. In both dreams his brethren were bowing to him (Gen. 37:5-10). His jealous brothers sold him as a slave into Egypt, but as we read in Gen. 39:2, "the Lord was with Joseph." God prospered Joseph; he was another link in the chain of events that would eventually lead to the Kingdom of God on earth.

Joseph was unjustly imprisoned, but the Lord was still with him, giving him the power to interpret dreams. The interpretation of dreams is possible only by the power or Spirit of God. Revealing the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream raised him from the dungeon to second only to Pharaoh in the land and resulted in the fulfillment of his earlier dreams. Because of a famine in the land of Canaan, his brothers were forced to come to Egypt to buy food for their survival "and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth."

The story of Joseph's revealing himself to his brothers is familiar to all. Joseph had no ill-will for his brothers, but explained that his entire life had been God-directed. "God did send me before you . . . to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God" (Gen. 45:7-8). **The angel of God had directed Joseph's entire life. It was part of God's plan to preserve the life of Jacob's entire family, as they formed the nucleus of that people known as Israel.**

*Reprints of these studies are available  
upon request.*

# *In the Hands of the Potter*

*"Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel" —Jeremiah 18:6*

JERUSALEM was already astir with morning activities as Jeremiah the prophet seated himself by one of the gates of the city. Soon the marketplace would be thronged, and he had come to speak a word for the Lord. As he drew his cloak about him to keep out the chill morning air, he murmured a prayer that Jehovah would instruct him what to say. Oh, if it were but possible to move the people of Israel to better living and to a fuller realization of their duty to their Creator!

The Prophet was living in troublous and distressing times. Mankind had lost sight of their real purpose in life; men were self-rich and God-poor. Sitting there with bowed head and a prayer on his lips, word came to him from the Lord, saying: "Arise, and go down to the potter's house; and there will I give you my message."

Jeremiah found the potter already at work, shaping a lump of clay into a useful vessel. As he watched, he was greatly impressed to see how disciplinary measures were used in the whole process of pottery making.

The soil or "dust" out of which the clay was made, had been carefully selected and was spread out in a large trough where water was sprinkled upon it. Treaders then trampled and mixed the muddy substance till the whole mass became soft and pliable. When it was of the right consistency, the potter cut off a piece of the doughy substance. It was rough and ugly in appearance and took more than a gentle patting to make it without crease or wrinkle. In fact, the potter had to subject it to a violent slapping and striking with his palms till it took on a smooth texture and became a sphere in shape. It was then ready for the potter's wheel.

The potter's balance wheel was a horizontal disc that revolved on a vertical spindle. As the potter manipulated the wheel with his foot, he shaped the turning clay with steadying and skillful hands as it continued to revolve upon the spinning disc. Pressure was applied all the while, firmly and steadily till perfect curves and contours were

formed in smooth and graceful lines, and a vessel of perfect symmetry was the result.

The Prophet took special notice that not every piece of clay responded to the potter's touch, and consequently not every lump was transformed into a perfect vessel; and how often grit and other foreign matter marred and ruined the potter's work. Thus much time and labor were lost; but, having no alternative, the potter would patiently take the ruined vessel off the wheel, and crumbling up the spoiled lump would throw it back into the trough where it would be sprinkled with water and worked again. This happened time and again.

Finally when a number of vessels were shaped successfully, they were put through the finishing process, that is, through a furnace-like oven where they were burned by fire. This burning-in by fire not only hardened them for useful service but also set the colors permanently. Many times two and three burnings were necessary to bring out the brilliance in coloring.

Because the smallest defects showed up in the burnings, it was important that flaws be detected on the shaping wheel where they could be corrected. A vessel that came through finished as a perfect specimen was given a special trade name which meant that it was without a flaw. The potter was careful not to stamp the name upon any vessel that had the smallest defect. Generally, the defects that showed up after the fiery burnings were so pronounced that it made a vessel utterly worthless and fit only to be thrown out into the potter's field behind the workshop where it was broken to shivers and atoms.

As the Prophet pondered on the lessons learned in the potter's house and their applications, the message came from the Lord: "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."

God will be the Potter—if we choose to be the clay! A solemn thought! Do we take in the magni-



tude and fullness of such an assertion? Do we realize what a favor the Almighty is bestowing upon us—interested in us, working with us, perfecting us?

God is still waiting to fill His House with chosen vessels of honor, individuals of perfect character and zealous of good works. Let us avail ourselves of the opportunity and enter the Heavenly Potter's House. Let us willingly and joyfully volunteer to be clay in the Potter's Hands.

As dust absorbs water, even so the mind that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness will absorb the Water of Life freely. God will not refuse help to a single soul who longs to be worked upon and be made over new. He does not condemn anyone for entering His workshop as an unsightly lump of clay, but He will condemn all who remain unsightly.

Theory alone will not make of us a new lump. Human nature being so stubborn through the deceitfulness of sin, it will take more than a pat on the back and a gentle handling to bring about a Godlike appearance and a rounding out in holy virtues.

Oftentimes it takes a hard blow of discipline in the form of some great crisis to get one to turn right-about-face and get started in the right direction. Such was the case of the apostle Paul when stricken with blindness on the way to Damascus; Peter, when he suffered bitter remorse after his denial of the Master; Elisha, after the dramatic meeting with Elijah; Onesimus, the runaway slave, when he came under Paul's converting influence; and Ruth, the Moabitess, when she made a complete separation from all home-ties. In each instance, there was a complete turning point.

A mind that is pliable and impressionable will yield to discipline on the balance wheel of life. Through tests and trials, life takes on a new aspect. "Self" is no longer the main orbit. Our self-centered lives begin to revolve around the Creator and our whole life becomes God-centered.

It is one thing to have our spiritual life abundant, full and flourishing; and another thing merely to eke out an existence in holiness, stingily and sparingly. Oh, we may have taken our place in the potter's workshop; we may even have a good start going through the daily routine of things; but are we making real progress? Are we receiving impressions, deeper and deeper into our hearts? Are we putting on the Christlikeness?

The thought that God is making us over for Himself and is waiting patiently to see what we will make out of our lifetime, is refreshing and stimulating. But, human nature dislikes the idea that God uses human help to carry out His will.

He used the prophet Jeremiah as His mouthpiece. Shall we despise the chastening of the Lord because it comes through human instrumentality?

The message Jeremiah received that day from the Lord—how it should ring in our ears: "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand." Certainly we should remember it when the going is hard and trying; for, is the Potter to blame? Let us search; when the Potter is pressing forward, are we drawing back? Are we pulling away the shoulder or are we yielding in humble submission? Do we make the same mistake day after day without putting forth the effort to take on a holier impression? Consider, are we doing His will from the heart?

There is much in the natural make-up of humanity that can easily mar and spoil a seemingly perfect vessel. The outward appearance may be perfect, but what of the heart and mind? It does not take much, a streak of anger, a bubble of foolishness, a grain of jealousy, or a root of bitterness; any of these can exact a toll in time and labor and mar the genuineness of our endeavors.

It is something to keep our vessel turning in the right direction. It means something to learn wherein our duty lies; what is right and wrong; what is fair and just and what is mean and low; what is elevating and what is degrading; what is honest and what is untrue; when to say "yes" and when to say "no."

We do not get to be a perfect vessel at the first attempt, or even the second. How very often we fail! But let us not become discouraged. If we put forth the effort, the Heavenly Potter will not give us up in our failures. Time and time again He will sprinkle us with the water of life and continue to work with us.

Though our life may seem at times to be crushed and crumbled and broken, let us have more stamina than a King Saul, a Samson or a Judas. Arise, and let us get back into the struggle! Try again and again! Each good impression will make it so much easier for the next. Fortify the noble powers mightily for still another test of our material. Invariably it will take a determination of steel and will power of flint to carry us through every failure to an ultimate success. But to submit wholeheartedly, we shall have to get that courageous confidence and earnest conviction that Someone is guiding still.

When self-aggrandizement is effaced and the contours of the flesh-man are removed, we will then take on the perfect symmetry of righteousness; we will turn whithersoever He wills; we will be able to smile through adversity; we will not

*(Continued on page 27)*

# Bible A B C's



R is for Rhoda,  
A good name to know.  
Her example should help us  
More kindly to grow.

**D**O you know what very good lesson this young girl left for all of us? We read of Rhoda only once in the Bible, and that was when the apostle Peter surprised the little group of Christians at Jerusalem.

It was a time of great persecution of the early Church, not long after Jesus had risen victoriously from the dead.

Persecution is when people are made to suffer for what they believe about God and Christ. Peter was teaching about Christ wherever he went. For this, the wicked ruler ordered him to be put in prison, where they intended to kill him.

All the nearby Christians were praying for Peter in the home of Mary, John Mark's mother. There Rhoda was a maid. While the Christians were all down on their knees, begging God to spare their friend's life, Rhoda heard a knock at the gate.

She ran to answer it. How surprised she was to hear Peter's

**R** is for  
**R**hoda

voice on the other side of the door, asking her to let him in.

Rhoda was so happy, but very quickly she thought of sharing the great joy of *seeing* the very answer to their prayers. She wanted all the praying brethren to see God's wonderful kindness at the same time. Rhoda announced to the people that the very man they were praying for stood at the gate. They just couldn't believe Rhoda's words, but she insisted that it was the voice that she had heard so many times before. Only Peter sounded like Peter. Of that she was sure.

Peter continued knocking, and several others went to the door. When they saw Peter, they knew that God had very certainly answered their prayers. How thankful they were!

An angel had delivered Peter from prison. The chains had just fallen off from his hands—miraculously. Do you not think that Rhoda was very unselfish? Is she not a very good example to every boy and girl and every man and woman to think of others first and not just of ourselves?

Rhoda's name also means "rose." Wouldn't such an unselfish person be a beautiful flower in the garden of God?••

I Can is a little lad,  
He is both brave and true.  
He makes success of everything  
That he does try to do.

I Will is I Can's brother,  
And they always do agree,  
Everybody likes them,  
For they are nice lads, you see.

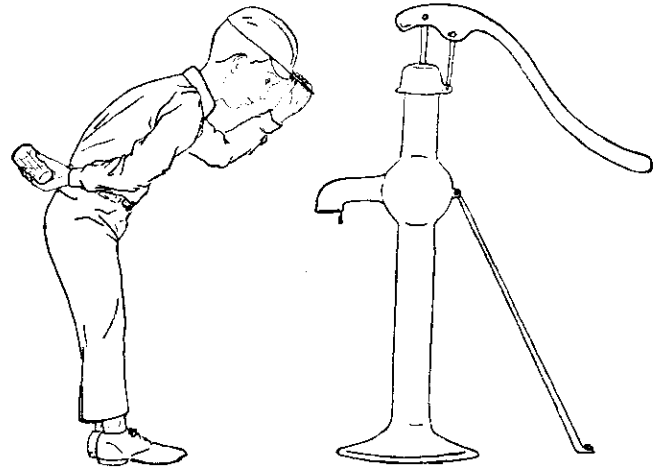
I Can't lives in another house,  
He's as shiftless a can be.  
He never does a single thing  
That anyone can see.

I Won't is I Cant's brother,  
But people pass them by,  
For nobody even likes them,  
And they never seem to try.

## Whom Shall I Thank?

A little boy had sought the pump,  
 From which the sparkling water bursts,  
 And drank with eager joy that draught  
 That kindly quenched his raging thirst.  
 Then gracefully he touched his cap—  
 "I thank you, Mr. Pump," he said,  
 "For this nice drink you've given me!"  
 (This little boy had been well-bred.)

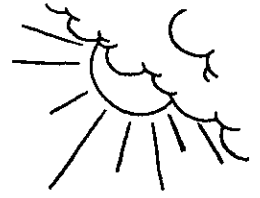
Then said the Pump: "My little man,  
 You're welcome to what I have done;  
 But I am not the one to thank—  
 I only help the water run."  
 "Oh, then," the little fellow said,  
 (Polite he always meant to be)  
 "Cold Water, please accept my thanks;  
 You have been very kind to me."



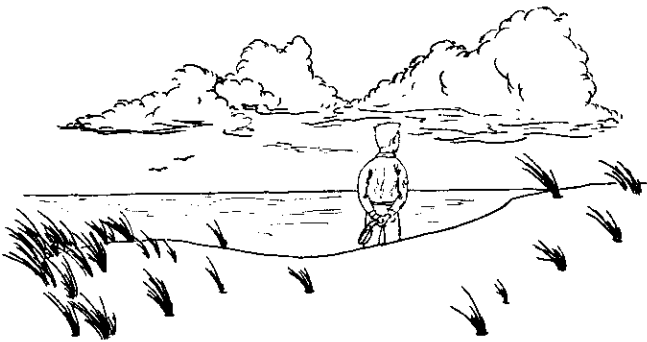
"Ah!" said Cold Water, "Don't thank me;  
 Far up the hillside lives the Spring  
 That sends me forth with generous hand  
 To gladden every living thing."  
 "I'll thank thee, Spring," then said the boy—  
 And gracefully he bowed his head.  
 "Oh, don't thank me, my little man,"  
 The Spring in silvery accents said.

"Oh, don't thank me; for what am I  
 Without the dew or summer rain?  
 Without their aid I ne'er could quench  
 Your thirst, my little boy, again."  
 "Oh, well, then," said the little boy,  
 "I'll gladly thank the rain and dew."  
 "Pray don't thank us—without the sun,  
 We could not fill one cup for you."





"Then, Mr. Sun, ten thousand thanks  
For all that thou hast done for me."  
"Stop!" said the Sun, with blushing face,  
"My little man, pray don't thank me.  
'Twas from the ocean's mighty stores  
I drew the draught I gave to thee.'  
"Oh, Ocean, thanks!" then said the boy—  
It echoed back: "Not unto me."



"Not unto me, but unto Him  
Who formed the depths in which I lie—  
Go, give thy thanks, my little boy,  
To Him who doth thy wants supply."  
The boy then took his cap and said,  
In tones so gentle and subdued:  
"O God, I thank Thee for the gift—  
Thou art the Giver of all good."

*Heavenly Father,  
Hear our thanks  
For Thy loving care.  
Help us now to show our love,  
And each blessing share.  
Amen.*



## Trinity Or Unity?

(Continued from page 7)

and we can give here only the briefest outline. Divine names and titles are given to Him. These include the 'Alpha and Omega' (Revelation 1:8), the 'first and the last' (Rev. 1:17 and Isaiah 44:6), 'Lord of lords' (Rev. 19:16 with Deut. 10:17), the 'Holy One' (Acts 3:14 with Psalm 71:22 and Isa. 41:14), the 'Lord of Glory' (I Cor. 2:8 with Psalm 24:10) and many others."

Divine names and titles are given to Christ, for He is the Son of God. But this is no evidence that Jesus is God or a part of God, nor does it lend any evidence to the trinity. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of the new creation (Rev. 1:11; Heb. 2:5-8; Col. 1:18). He is Lord of lords and King of kings (Rev. 19:16); He is the Holy One and the Lord of glory; but these titles give no proof that He is God; He rightly deserves each of them by virtue of His own life and future work.

**"Divine worship is granted Him, which is due to God alone."**

In answer to the tempter's invitation to fall down and worship Him, Jesus said, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve." But Jesus would have the right to apply a principle to a specific situation without making that application a rule for every situation that might arise. In answering the tempter as He did, He was not necessarily saying that no being other than God Almighty could accept worship. In Revelation 3:9, it was said to the Church at Philadelphia: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Either the members of the Church at Philadelphia were all a part of God, or else Christ would not have to be a part of the Godhead to accept worship.

No, the fact of Jesus' accepting worship does not prove that He was part of a trinity.

**"Divine offices are held by Him. These include Creator (Col. 1:16-17); Resurrector (John 6:39-40, 54); Forgiver (Mark 2:5-10); Rewarder (Rev. 2:23); and Judge (John 5:22 and II Tim. 4:1)."**

Divine offices are held by Christ because God specifically assigned to Him these offices. One of His chief offices is that of Judge: "Because he [God] hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). He is a judge "whom he [God] hath ordained."

Concerning His office of Rewarder, God gave Him the power to give life. We read His own words: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son... For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:22, 26-28). Again He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18); and, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35).

But though Jesus holds divine offices, He is not the Creator. Colossians 1:18 shows clearly where He has pre-eminence: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Only in relation to the new creation is He a creator.

**"Divine attributes are possessed by Him—in 'him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.' Life, eternity, immutability, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence are His. He is full of truth, love, holiness. Even divine self-consciousness is seen in Him, in His teaching and in His claims (Matt. 5-7; John 6:63; John 8:18, 56; 14:9-10, 21, 23)."**

Were we to accept Colossians 2:9 as teaching that Christ was the bodily form of God, we would be contradicting the words of the author of Hebrews, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. 2:16-17). Christ was not part of the Godhead bodily any more than were His disciples.

The *Interpreter's Bible* offers an enlightening comment: "Bodily may be taken to mean 'incarnate'; but it is not so understood by the ancient fathers, and it is probably better to interpret it as meaning 'genuinely.'" And this thought is in harmony with general Bible teaching. As well as being made in "the express image of his [God's] person" (Heb. 1:3), Christ did possess the characterlikeness of His Father genuinely. This passage as rendered in the *New Testament in Modern English* incorporates this thought: "Be careful that nobody spoils your faith through intellectualism or high-sounding nonsense. Such stuff is at best founded on men's ideas of the nature of the world, and disregards Christ! Yet it is in him that God gives a full and complete expression of himself (within the physical limits that he set himself in Christ)." No suggestion of a triune Godhead here! Paul was simply trying to warn his brethren against the vain delusions of the world and turn them to Christ.



Christ is "the life," and He is now "eternal," having received immortality (I Cor. 15:23; I Tim. 6:16); He possesses the qualities of God—truth, love, purity, holiness, righteousness. But this fact is no evidence that Christ is a deity. These Godlike qualities must be developed in the life of every man or woman who aspires to eternal life (see Matt. 5:8; I John 3:3; Gal. 5:23-24; Col. 3:12; 1:9-10).

And in the roles which Christ shall fill in the future, He shall have still more divine qualities—omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence shall be His to further the work of establishing His kingdom. Even during His earthly ministry it is recorded that "he knew what was in man"—He could read the thoughts (John 2:25).

It does not seem reasonable to say that Jesus' remaining behind in the temple at the age of twelve was an act of "divine self-consciousness." Jesus thought it was time for Him to be about His Father's business, but when His mother and Joseph reprimanded Him, He went home with them, and it is eighteen years before we again hear of Him.

During His ministry, though, Jesus did assume divine authority for the words He spoke—and rightly, for had not the Father sent Him to teach? It is recorded that those who heard the Sermon on the Mount "were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28-29).

Jesus also proved Himself to be a witness for His Father (John 8:18). All His words bore the stamp of divine approval, for He could say, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10). But this does not prove that He was God—on the contrary, it proves that Christ was a separate and distinct being—why would God send Jesus to be His witness if Jesus were God?

"Divine association is accredited to Him in the baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19), in the apostolic benediction (II Corinthians 13:14), in the epistolary salutations (I Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2; etc.), and in numerous other passages (II Thessalonians 2:16-17; I John 5:7; John 5:23)."

Matthew 28:19 is Jesus' commission to His disciples to "go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." But even this text does not say that the three are one being, nor does it classify them as co-eternal and co-existent entities. Association with other names does not imply equality among those names. The apostolic benediction, recorded in II Corinthians 13:14, is even less suggestive of a trinity of personalities.

September, 1973

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." Clearly Paul enumerates Jesus Christ, and God, and the Holy Spirit as separate and distinct from one another. No attempt is made to say that the three are one.

In Second Corinthians 1:2, Paul says, "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Why should this imply that God the Father and Jesus Christ are one being, any more than the preceding verse would suggest that Paul and Timothy are one being because both are sending the letter? The same is true in II Thessalonians 2:16-17.

As far as I John 5:7 is concerned, authorities agree that this verse was not part of the original text of the Epistle, that *it was added sometime during the fourth century*, as it does not appear in any of the earliest manuscripts.

We find no Scriptural basis for believing that Jesus and God are one being or a part of a God-head trinity. ●●

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### The Lord's Coming

It may be at morn,  
When the day is awaking,  
When sunlight through darkness  
And shadow is breaking,  
That Jesus will come  
In the fullness of glory,  
Will come and be joined to His own.

It may be at midday,  
It may be at twilight,  
It may be, perchance,  
That the blackness of midnight  
Will burst into light  
In the blaze of His glory  
When Jesus will come to His own.

O joy! O delight!  
Should we go without dying;  
No sickness, no sadness,  
No dread, and no crying;  
If faithful we'll welcome  
Our Lord in His glory  
When He shall return to His own.

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*Greatness is goodness, purity of heart, nobility of spirit, willingness to serve.*

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*Gratitude is the most exquisite form of courtesy.*



# Meditations

## On the Word

**T**HE first and greatest of God's commandments is clear and concise: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30).

Being All-wise and eternal and possessing the power to bless and prosper in this life and to bestow life eternal, God is just in requiring full allegiance. As He is capable of granting to us the ultimate—endless life—and will delight to do so for a short life of obedient service, He has a perfect right to require of us all that we can give—a surrendered life, wholly devoted to seeking and doing His will.

Who, then, are the strange gods? or what is idolatry? We may easily scorn the gods of ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and, in fact, of all the heathen; we may despise the idols of wood, gold, or stone in far-off lands; but it is equally as easy to decline into ungodliness of thought, imagination, and unchristian practice. Idolatry may be described as undue devotion to unworthy objects. It is intense admiration, veneration, or love, of any person or thing. And, further, it may be any pursuit in life on which our heart is set. Pleasure seeking may be idolatry; a hobby, a profession, a business enterprise, may monopolize our attention and dominate our lives. Strange gods are these, gods of our own creation. In short, anything that takes our attention from serving God wholeheartedly, anything we place in our affection more than God, or His service, is an idol or strange god.

We should remember that it is of religious people that the words of our text were spoken, and particularly those who know the true God, who understand His Word and have covenanted to serve Him. When we speak of forgetting something, it denotes that we once had it in mind. The words of

*"If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart"*

—Psalm 44:20-21.

the familiar hymn are fitting here:

"Jesus calls us from the worship Of the vain world's golden store,

From each idol that would keep us,

Saying 'Christian, love Me more.' "

God demands more love of us than we have for the distracting things about us.

If we really believed that in Him we "live and move and have our being," that to Him all hearts are open, all desires known, and that from Him no secrets are hid, we would be more concerned about rendering to Him the reverence due. By faith, let us deliberately welcome into our minds the inspiring thoughts about God and His attributes; thereby we shall expel any inclination to waywardness, to seeking our own pleasures or ambitions.

The tendency of double-minded humanity through the centuries has been to serve God only halfheartedly. They professed that they knew Him, but by works they denied Him. They praised Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. It was "in the dark" that the ancients of the house of Israel performed their unholy rites (Ezek. 8:12). They said, "The Lord seeth us not." In this they were unmindful of Israel's warning long before: "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" (Isa. 29:15). Had they served the Lord in singleness of heart they would not have fallen into such apostasy.

God had a covenant with Israel. They were to be His people, holy and free from the defilements of the heathen nations about them. They were to be, as He pictured (Jeremiah 3), His bride, or wife, chaste and pure, having no other allegiance but

Him. His promises of blessing went with the covenant, and all He had promised had been fulfilled. They enjoyed the prosperity of the land; they were guarded from the enmity of surrounding nations; they had men of intelligence capable of ruling justly. But in spite of all the goodness on the part of God, they forgot. But their sins were not hid. God searched them out and His judgments followed for disobedience.

Is the world of today very different from Israel before her downfall? Is it not concerned merely with the things of the present? Material progress is decidedly in advance of spiritual progress. Business, work, pleasures crowd out true religion and genuine piety. A form is maintained, but the real lessons of godly conduct are not practiced.

But here we are principally concerned with the loyalty of those who understand the precepts of God and are striving to live by them. The prophet Ezekiel (14:2) spoke of a class who had set up idols in their hearts. As we stated before, the "strange gods" may be anything that keeps us from serving God wholeheartedly, so we wish to stress the need of care and watchfulness. We need to watch the stream of thoughts that flows through our mind. Evil imaginations, unlawful desires seep in so subtly and in such attractive disguises that ere we know it we erect an idol in our heart—and worship it. Particularly we should be watchful when our mental powers are less active and imagination may run free.

There is no substitute for loyalty to God. Loyalty is that quality which prompts a person to be true in his undertaking to serve God above all else. It means one has a definite destination, a fixed purpose in life and steadfastness in his pursuit. With loyalty to God comes power, poise, purpose, a thorough strengthening of character. Whatever duties have to be discharged are not burdensome to the loyal. Indeed, work is for the worker. The reward is for the doer. The Master's service is raised to the highest plane when love for the task is fused with the effort.

We know the reward for loyal service to God will be grand; and, on the other hand, the reward for evil doing, or "forgetting," will be dismal. But there are at least some—or perhaps many—who feel and know they have done wrong in the past; have stretched out their hands to "strange gods," yet are desirous of returning to God and right. They have the desire to return, yet stagger at the magnitude of the task that confronts them. Here is counsel worthy to be tried and proven:

As the habit was formed so it must be broken. As we accumulated mental trash that cluttered the mind and crowded out the heavenly things, so now

we must discard it. As we yielded to temptation, now we must refuse. As thread by thread strands of doubt bound us into bondage, so now thread by thread we must unwind them until we stand free. As we builded, stone by stone, a wall that separated us from God, so now we ourselves must toil, and stone by stone tear down the wall until it is overthrown.

Worshiping strange gods may be pleasing for a season, but only for a season. To God are known all our ways, and He will recompense according to our works. Let us all examine ourselves as in His presence; let us see our idolatries for what they are; let us deliberately seek His help that we may cast them all away and no longer allow them to separate us from Him. ●●



### Get Ready

As we see events happening in our world today, we should try that much harder to clean ourselves up and get ready for the eventual happenings that are coming on the Earth. We are told that there will be a very few who will be ready at that time. Sometimes, it seems a very hard job to keep on the right path, but it is necessary if we would receive the prize. It will be worth all our effort.

*Carrollton, Ohio*

*H. W.*

### The Vine and the Branches

I am very thankful to be blessed with communication from the main vine. We branches out in the world need contact with truth to stir us up and certainly we need encouragement, more at some times than others. At times I seem to need a little prodding along.

It is so easy to become absorbed in the things of this life and forget what we are really working for. Our mistakes and neglected opportunities must be put behind us and we must overcome our trials so that we may walk in righteousness and godliness.

For every evil thing we give up, God will provide something better. We must fight our sins with persistent endurance and then we can lay hold on eternal life, a bountiful gift for so small a price as we have to pay.

*Winterset, Iowa*

*F. B.*

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I have had discussion with Seventh Day Adventists, and they say the Sabbath is still in force and always will be. They quote Isaiah 66:23 to prove it. How would you answer, in the light of this text?"

The 66th chapter of Isaiah is discussing the Millennial reign of Christ and conditions that will prevail in the new age. Verse 22 reads: "For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Then follows the text in question: "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." This verse shows that the new faithful generation will be primarily concerned with worshiping the Lord and promoting His interests, in contrast to conditions that prevail today. Zechariah 14:16 states the same fact in slightly different words: "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain." Blessings in the new age will be conditioned upon obedience to the law of that age. This fact alone will make right living popular.

Why does Isaiah 66:23 speak of "from sabbath to sabbath" if sabbath observance is not a perpetual command? Certainly the setting aside of one day in seven for worship and devotional service to God is proper—appropriate to all ages. At one time, God even decreed that one particular day be set aside—the seventh day, termed the "sabbath" (see Ex. 16:23; 20:8). And though this command to set aside the seventh day according to the Hebrew calendar, as time-reckoning was given to Moses, belonged to a temporary system of law which is no longer in force (see Gal. 3:24; I Cor. 3:7-8, 11, 13-14), the devoting of one day each week to worship and study and God's service is spiritually profitable. And it is not strange that such a practice might be continued into the new age, when people everywhere will be serving God and trying to live acceptably before Him.

But I fail to see any connection between this

text and the observance of the seventh day of the week according to our present-day calendar, as the Adventists would indicate. Isaiah 66:23 does not issue any command to observe the seventh day of the week. Neither does it suggest that Saturday is the seventh day which is to be kept sacred perpetually. Paul's words in Colossians 2:16-17 show definitely that no sabbath command is binding today. We read, "Let no man therefore judge you . . . in respect of any holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come"—these were shadows of better things to come—of the great, seventh day of rest or seventh thousand-year day when Christ and the saints will take over the management of this planet and God shall rest (Gen. 2:3; Heb. 2:7-8).

We might also observe that to a Jew, whose concept of weeks was divided by sabbaths, the meaning of "from sabbath to sabbath" would be the same as "from week to week" for us. This would suggest the continuation of their worship.

We should note also that Isaiah 66:23 refers both to the sabbath and to the observance of *each new moon*—if one is to be observed today, why not the other?

"There is a new Bible that says, 'I will send you a prophet like Elijah'—not Elijah the prophet but a 'prophet like Elijah.' What is the true translation? How do you explain?"

To the best of our knowledge, about the only version of the Bible with such a rendering of Malachi 4:5 is the *Living Bible*, by Kenneth N. Taylor, published by Tyndale House; and this Bible is a *paraphrase*, not a *translation*. (A paraphrase is a restatement of the text by which the one who is doing the paraphrasing injects his own meaning and interpretations into the reading of the text. A translation is a word-for-word rendering of the original text in another language.)

A note in the *Living Bible* itself shows that the rendering "like Elijah" is not according to the original Hebrew. A footnote on Malachi 4:5 reads: "literally, 'the prophet Elijah.' Compare Matthew 17:10-12 and Luke 1:17."

No, Malachi 4:5 is a divine promise that God will send Elijah the prophet—the man Himself, not someone *like* Elijah. ••

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We need the diligence to discover what is true, and the fortitude to practice it.



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### The Potter

(Continued from page 18)

chafe or gall though shackled to an unpleasant duty; we will bear the unkind words of false brethren without bitterness and will take criticism without retaliation. We can do all this and more if we remember God's promise of strength will be equal to our every need.

It takes more time and labor to make an exquisite vase than it does to make an earthen jug. Let us be more than a "wash pot," as was Moab. Above all, let us in the final Day be a finished product.

Having taken the molding and reshaping courageously, can we also take the burnings? Can we go through the furnace of affliction to make us firm and steadfast in every holy purpose? As the beauty

of our character is burned in by fiery trials and tribulations, shall we come through without a flaw? Let us take the burnings once, twice, thrice, if need be, till our vessel bears the stamp of God, that "new name," etched in colors of heavenly splendor and luminous with celestial sublimity—a chosen vessel unto the Lord. ●●

### MY CREED

*SILENCE—when my words would hurt.  
PATIENCE—when my neighbor's curt.  
DEAFNESS—when the gossip flows.  
THOUGHTFULNESS—for other's woes.  
PROMPTNESS—when stern duty calls.  
COURAGE—when misfortune falls.*





## *A Youth's Prayer*

*God, who touchest earth with beauty,  
Make me lovely too;  
With Thy Spirit re-create me,  
Make my heart anew.*

*Like Thy springs and running waters,  
Make me crystal pure;  
Like Thy rocks of towering grandeur,  
Make me strong and sure.*

*Like Thy dancing waves in sunlight,  
Make me glad and free;  
Like the straightness of the pine trees  
Let me upright be.*

*Like the arching of the heavens,  
Lift my thoughts above;  
Turn my dreams to noble action--  
Ministries of love.*

*God, who touchest earth with beauty,  
Make me lovely too;  
Keep me ever, by Thy Spirit,  
Pure and strong and true.*

—Selected

