

Megiddo Message

*"Lead Me to the Rock
That Is
Higher Than I"*

— Psalm 61:2



Are You A Balanced Person?

A balanced person is

- One who can give as well as take; and take as well as give;
- One who can be both practical and idealistic;
- One who can dream great dreams and also be a realist;
- One who is self-disciplined without being self-righteous;
- One who thinks deeply, yet remains humbly aware of wisdom beyond his intellect;
- One who feels a righteous indignation against wrong, yet is ever ready to encourage and to forgive;
- One who can hate evil wherever it be found and embrace goodness wherever it is perceived;
- One who can take criticism with good grace, and criticize without wounding unnecessarily;
- One who can stand up for the right without knocking others down;
- One who is willing to speak loud and clear, and who is equally willing to listen;
- One who can cherish the beautiful and despise the ugly;
- One who has the capacity to appreciate and love, yet never slips into possessiveness;
- One who believes in the power of God to do all things, yet knows that he must assume responsibility for his own life;
- One who is always ready to submit, yet strong to stand against the wrong.

— _____.

— _____.

— _____.

These are some of the qualities of a balanced life. I leave it to you to complete the list.

Megiddo means . . .

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

—in God, the Creator of all life, all men, and all things.

We believe

—in the Bible as containing the genuine revelation of God and His purposes for men, and as our only source of divine knowledge today.

We believe

—in Jesus Christ the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was born of a Virgin, ministered among men, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.

We believe

—in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.

We believe

—in humankind as providing the nucleus from which a superior, God-honoring people shall be chosen to receive the blessings of immortal life.

We believe

—in ourselves as capable of applying the precepts and principles of the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of character which God has promised to reward with life everlasting in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.

We believe

—in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth will be filled with His glory, His people, and His will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Bible Quotations

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows:

NEB—New English Bible

NIV—New International Version

NASB—New American Standard Bible

RSV—Revised Standard Version

TLB—The Living Bible

TEV—Today's English Version

JB—The Jerusalem Bible, Reader's Edition

Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English

Berkeley—The Modern Language New Testament

Weymouth—The New Testament in Modern Speech

Goodspeed—The New Testament translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed

Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation

About Our Cover

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MEGIDDO is a way of believing and living, grounded solidly in the Bible as the reliable Word of our Creator. A total view of life, the world and the universe, it sees all events, men and nations moving together toward one God-ordained climax: the Kingdom of God on earth. This has been the plan of God since the beginning. Christ will return visibly, bodily, as King, and the governments of this world will be joined to form a totally new worldwide government. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants. This is the purpose and goal of all creation.



*“Lead Me
to the Rock...*

*That Is
Higher
Than I”*

*“Hear my cry, O God: attend unto my prayer.
“From the end of the earth I call to Thee,
when my heart is overwhelmed.”*

“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

—Psalm 61:1-2 (RSV)

THIS lofty Psalm seems to have been written during a time of extreme national and personal distress in the life of King David.

The king was living in exile. And the cause of the trouble was not a usurper from outside but the wicked scheming of his wayward son Absalom.

To make matters still worse, David loved Absalom.

The effect was traumatic. David was, by his own testimony, “overwhelmed.” Faint, failing, and languishing, he was, so to speak, “going under.”

When David needed help, he turned to God: "Hear my cry, O God." It was as if he said, "Lord, help!"

David needed help. And so he turned to God. "Hear my cry, O God." It was as if he said, "Lord, help!"

The situation could have been—and had been—worse. At this time the rebellion had been crushed, and things were returning to normal. There was no immediate danger.

While in exile, the king was at Mahanaim, in the home of a kindly old gentleman named Barzillai. An enthusiastic supporter of the king, Barzillai was doing everything in his power to make life pleasant and bearable for the king. Yes, he was entertaining the king in regal style. The old gentleman's heart was filled to overflowing with this opportunity to show his love and loyalty for David. Nothing was too good, or too costly, or too much trouble to do for the King.

But in spite of it all, in spite of Barzillai's magnificent generosity, David could not forget the ugly weights of reality. He was still in exile, isolated, bereft, alone, at the "end of the earth." "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee . . ." (v. 2).

More than anything else, David wanted to be at home. Mahanaim, some two or three days' journey from Jerusalem, seemed like the end of the earth. He might just as well have been in Egypt. He was away from home, and away from the sacred tabernacle he loved.

But he was not out of the range of God's ear. He could still pray. And pray he did. "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Why was David feeling over-

whelmed? Perhaps this spiritually sensitive man was feeling the inner agonies of bitter defeat in the whole situation—bitter because he knew only too well that a very large portion of his troubles were his own fault. Through painful experience he was learning, like the rest of us, that he was his own worst enemy. If only he had not sinned years ago . . . ; if only he had not yielded, . . . if only . . . if . . . if . . .

It was too much. He was overwhelmed. But David could not allow himself to be mired in the bogs of vain regret. He was too sensible for that. Instead, he took his problem to the Lord, to the Rock of his salvation, the God who time and again had steadied him, supported him, reproved him, preserved him. For all of it David loved God. He felt a deep and reverential awe of God. He longed for God to hear and help, to set him on his feet, to lift him above his troubles, above his faltering, above his weakness; hence his plea: "Lead me"—I am not competent to direct myself. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

In the quiet of exile, there was much for David to ponder. Away from the duties of the state, he had time to think and meditate, and check the direction of his life.

With the news of Absalom's death a piercing sorrow had struck him—piercing, because in the matter with

Absalom, David's affections had not been where they should have been. Absalom was wicked, worthless in the sight of God, and David knew it. Still, David had loved Absalom; wicked and unfaithful and scheming as he proved to be, still David had loved him. It wasn't right, and suddenly, when God removed him, David realized it. Suddenly the shame of his sin struck him like a ball of lead. David had loved where God condemned. David had forgiven Absalom, and would have forgiven him again; but God, who knows far better than we do when to draw the line, did not forgive.

Now it was all over. Now the line was drawn. Forever. Now his dear, oft sinning, handsome Absalom was

*O safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly;
From sin and its follies to Thee would I flee,
Thou blest 'Rock of Ages,' I'm hiding in Thee.*

*In the calm of the noontide, in sorrow's lone hour,
In times when temptation casts o'er me its pow'r,
In the tempests of life, on its wide, heaving sea,
Thou blest 'Rock of Ages,' I'm hiding in Thee.*

dead, and all that remained was the sin-blackened record of his life, along with the ugly stain on David's own heart.

Probably what stabbed David through and through was his realization of the hopelessness of Absalom. He had sinned away his day of grace.

There was nothing that could be done for Absalom. But what of
(Continued on page 23)

Forgiveness Is Conditional

"If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared"
—Ps. 130:3-4.

*God will pardon,
and forgive; all He
asks is that we
stop sinning.*

THE writer of this brief Psalm entertained no illusions as to his natural worth or condition. He knew he was a sinner, and he knew that at the hands of a stern law he deserved only punishment. In this sense he speaks for all of us; for who of us can say that we are pure by nature or that we have never knowingly broken the law of God? Not all in the same way, perhaps, or to the same extent; but the record of the poet's struggles and failures might, but for the grace of God, have been written of any of us.

There are two categories of sin we must consider: those committed before we accepted the authority of the law of God, and those in which we persist after we know better. The former have no practical bearing on our future, for at the time we committed them we were not legally accountable, being without God or hope in the world (Eph. 2:12). Those who sin "without law [outside the jurisdiction of the law] shall also perish without law" (Rom. 2:12).

Like all humankind, we are by nature a mixture of good and evil, and our neighbors can probably evaluate the proportions of each more accurately than we can. The idea of "natural righteousness" is highly suspect; rather, when acting entirely by "nature," outside the

law of God, we were guided, in our better moments, by a set of rules based on human experience, much as every human society operates, in the interest of survival and personal happiness.

But even when the better side of human nature is given full credit, it falls far short of the far stricter code of Divine law. In the words of the inspired Prophet, upon sober reflection we must agree that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). This is true, because by natural instinct we will fight to the last ditch to save our own reputation, however worthless it might be. Our instincts fight to the bitter end against the idea of absolute obedience and absolute purity of character.

Legally, our past is immaterial. Until we make a personal covenant to serve God, we deserve nothing, good or bad, at His hands. But our subsequent record is, too often, equally undesirable. Even after making due allowance for our heritage of instinct and habit, we must confess that we could have done better, much better, than we have. If honest with ourselves, we will say with the lamenting Jeremiah, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not" (Lam. 3:22).

The patriarch Job's testifying to his

When we realize that sin stands between us and God, that it isolates us so completely from Him, forgiveness becomes a very serious matter.

past sinlessness were as unacceptable as were the accusations of his friends. It was only when he had brought himself to say from the heart, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," that his speech was accepted by the Eternal.

The patience of the Almighty is a thing to be wondered at. It was our founder's honest facing of himself and the facts of his own life which led him to say in an impressive Pass-over sermon, "I never before realized so deeply the absolute necessity of the mercy of God."

To avoid an honest facing of one's self and the consequences of sin, theology has devised another scheme: the arch-heresy of the atonement. One version of the postulate might run like this: An inflexible deity suddenly found himself in a predicament. He had made an inflexible law, with no provision for human weakness, and his first probationer promptly broke it—a small enough sin, to be sure, but one involving the death penalty, which was passed on to the victims of his posterity. In spite of the overhanging penalty, the human race kept right on sinning. To save the impossible situation, the Creator came into the world Himself in the form of sinful flesh, called the Son of God, pure, innocent and obedient, and suffered a cruel death, to provide the perfect, redeeming sacrifice.

This cornerstone of Christianity, falsely so-called, is as unscriptural as it is unjust. We deny it totally. From the very beginning, individual responsibility has been the keynote of the

plan of salvation. No one can fairly read the 18th and 33rd chapters of Ezekiel and not acknowledge this principle. God is interested in our present for the sake of our future; the past is dead, and not held against us.

How is this possible? How are the accumulated sins of the past blotted out? The method is simplicity itself: "Go, and sin no more." That is all, and that is enough, as anyone who has attempted it has learned. The old debt need not trouble us, for when we repent and turn, it no longer exists. What could be more just or fair than this? Our own sins are enough, more than enough. Yet at any time they can be extinguished simply by abandoning them. This is justice; this is law, the highest law of God, which has always contained the saving principle of forgiveness.

It is not justice to punish for wrongs which have been made right. And to demand a substitute as a condition of pardon makes it no pardon at all, for if a debt has been paid by another person, no forgiveness is needed. Shall we dare to say that the Eternal God, the embodiment of mercy and love, is more vindictive than man?

One Demand: Obedience

Yet He demands the ultimate in obedience. A broken law, be it ever so slight, will separate us at Judgment from receiving the full benefits of our covenant, for God demands perfection. This was the statement of the author of the book of James, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he

is guilty of all" (James 2:10). We must not conclude from this that breaking one law means we have broken all, but that a broken law stands between us and God, and a broken law is sufficient to bar us from His fullest blessings.

In view of this exacting principle we can readily see that if the accumulated transgressions of our past were to be held against us, in the words of the Psalmist, "Who should stand"? But, praise be to God, "There is forgiveness with God," and this gives us hope—hope that the future can be better than the past, hope that our sins need never be mentioned against us, hope that we can repent and turn, and receive full absolution.

Forgiveness and Fear

The Psalmist links forgiveness with the fear of the Lord: "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared" (Ps. 130:4). What is the fear of the Lord? "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate" (Prov. 8:13). If there is no forgiveness of sins at the point where we learn "to hate evil, pride, arrogancy, and the evil way," then we may as well "eat, drink, and be merry" for "tomorrow we shall die." If there is no forgiveness, we are doomed.

Or, if we were to accept the popular theory that salvation may be gained by the work of another, then there is no need to hate evil or crucify all flesh. But our knowledge of conditional forgiveness and conditional immortality rules out this conclusion

and makes it worthwhile—exceedingly worthwhile—to depart from evil. Indeed, this is the only way to salvation.

As we learn to rule our naturally evil propensities, we realize what longsuffering and mercy the Lord has bestowed upon us, that through the mercy of the Lord we have not been consumed, “because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning.” In the words of the prophet Micah, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:18-19). What fuller forgiveness could we look for! What more could we ask than a God who “delighteth in mercy.”

Jesus and Forgiveness

What did Jesus say about forgiveness?

Jesus gave us another aspect of forgiveness, and another condition that must be met. What did He say? “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” What is this? When we contemplate these words, we seem to have the feeling that we are treading, as it were, on holy ground, and are forced to realize the need of caution. “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will

your Father forgive your trespasses.”

This same condition for forgiveness appears in His prayer, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” These words are so constructed that it seems no comment is necessary. Truly, they are plain and understandable, with no allegorical meaning which might require many hours of study to fathom. Yet in their simplicity they describe an important step which must be taken before we can be granted the full salvation.

All of us have need of God’s forgiveness. Our iniquities separate us from God, and hide His face from us so that He will not hear our prayers (Isa. 59:1-2). If we would have hope, we must get ourselves into a condition where we can secure forgiveness. And before sin can be forgiven, it must be forsaken.

When we realize that sin stands between us and God, that it isolates us so completely from Him that we cannot approach with petitions either for temporal blessings or eternal rewards, forgiveness becomes a very serious matter.

To Obtain Forgiveness, Stop Sinning

The prophet Isaiah describes the way to this forgiveness. It is as simple as “cease to do evil, learn to do well.” Then, “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:16-18). God will pardon, God will forgive; all He asks is that we stop sinning, that we

forsake our evil ways and turn to Him with our whole heart (Isa. 55:6-7).

It is right and proper that we should ask forgiveness for our many sins; more, we are commanded to do so. For it is only as we ask and expect to receive forgiveness according to His terms that we shall make an effort to eliminate our sins. But His terms must never be forgotten: Sin to be forgiven must be forsaken.

Forgive As You Would Be Forgiven

With the Lord there is forgiveness; with Him there is plenteous redemption, when we meet His terms. But while we are petitioning forgiveness for our shortcomings, we cannot in any way hold grudges or ill feelings against others who have caused us wrong.

When we realize the meaning of Jesus’ words, we are faced with a problem from which there is no escape. We must positively and definitely extend forgiveness to any and every one to whom we owe it. Jesus leaves no room for any evasion. He has constructed these words with such skill that once our attention has been drawn to the matter we are obliged either to forgive those who have wronged us or cease repeating His prayer—and with that cease growing spiritually.

It is an unparalleled principle with God: as we turn from our iniquity and do what is lawful and right, God forgives, and forgives to the extent

**Forgive as you would be forgiven.
Clear yourself of all resentments and bitterness, and
you will find your general happiness and spiritual growth
to be nothing less than phenomenal.**

that our sins shall not be so much as mentioned against us (Ezek. 18:21-22).

So also must be our forgiveness toward those who trespass against us and then repent. If we say, I will forgive but I won't forget, it is just another way of saying, I will not forgive. As someone once stated, Forgiveness ought to be like a canceled note, torn up and thrown away, so that it can never be shown against the debtor again.

There are few people in the world who have not at some time or other been really hurt by someone else; or

disappointed, or injured, or misled. Such wounds sink into the memory, where they become inflamed and festered. There is but one remedy—they must be plucked up and thrown away. Where the offender has repented, forgiveness must be extended; where the wrongdoer remains offensive, we must hold no bitterness or resentment. The words of the apostle Paul are plain: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's

**There is never
a circumstance
that justifies
bitterness or
resentment.**

sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31-32).

There is never a circumstance that
(Continued on page 12)

Bible Authorities On Forgiveness

Jesus:

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." —Matt. 5:7

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." —Matt. 6:12

"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." —Matt. 6:14-15

"Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.' —Matt. 18:21-22

(Jesus, concerning His crucifiers) "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." —Luke 23:34

(Concluding the parable of the Unmerciful Servant) In anger his master turned him over to the jailers until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." —Matt. 18:35

"God is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." —Luke 6:35-36

The Apostle Paul:

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. . . . Live in harmony with one another." —Rom. 12:14, 16

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. . . . Do not take revenge. . . . but leave room for God's wrath. . . . On the contrary, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if

he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.'"

—Rom. 12:17-20

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." —Eph. 4:31-32

"As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

—Col. 3:12-13

"Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else." —I Thess. 5:15

The Apostle Peter:

"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. . . . Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?" —I Peter 3:9, 13

The Wise Man:

"A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense." —Prov. 19:11

"Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the Lord will see and disapprove. . . . Do not say, 'I'll do to him as he has done to me; I'll pay that man back for what he did.'" —Prov. 24:17, 29

(Quotations are from the *New International Version*)

Backwash from PTL?

During recent months the religious world has been shocked by the volume of bad news coming from religion in high places. TV religion—which many thousands of people have supported with millions of dollars—has suddenly shown itself to be what it really is: only another form of public entertainment, show business, operated for the enrichment of the producers.

Reflecting on the whole, our minds turn to what we have read in Scripture. The current reports bear a strange similarity to those from ancient Israel, where the Prophet of God long ago watched selfish and greedy religious teachers of whom he

wrote, they “teach for hire” and “divine for money” and say, “Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us!” (Mic. 3:11). And what did the Prophet say would be the end of such? They shall be “plowed like a field,” and “become a heap of rubble.”

The Prophet of God condemned in ringing tones, and can we do less? God’s attitude toward the abomination has not changed. Those who use the sacred name and sacred associations for personal gain are still “an abomination to the Lord.” His Word and His truth is still “without money and without price,” and those who are His true ministers will not be

“preaching for hire.”

The apostle Paul “labored with his own hands” that he might not be “chargeable” to any (I Thess. 2:9; II Thess. 3:8). Why? Because His commission was to “preach the gospel,” and “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” that gospel which was and is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (I Cor. 2:4, Rom. 1:16). The minister who is depending on his audience for his own support is in danger of preaching to please his audience, not Christ—a practice which every minister of the gospel must guard strictly against. “For if I

During more than 100 years of its history, the Megiddo Church has

- **never solicited money from the community**
- **never asked publicly for money or contributions**
- **never accepted tithes or donations from members known to be in need or under heavy financial obligations**
- **never provided financial support to any of its ministers or church officers**
- **never published and sold literature for profit**

CHURCHIANITY is a system by which the life, death and ministry of Jesus Christ are used to achieve worldly goals. These goals include money, power and a socio-political base of followers. It is a system that compromises the true gospel in order to achieve financial, material blessings.

The success of Churchianity has been

yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

What will come of the present unveilings? What will be the end result of exposing the ugly heads of scandal, fraud, greed, deceit and vice within the ranks of so-called Christianity? (falsely "so-called," for real Christianity has no part with such).

Some are saying that the cause of Christ has been wounded by the exposing; that backwash is inevitable.

Others are ready to challenge believers: "So that's what your faith amounts to, is it?"

But there is nothing to fear. True Bible faith is not even touched by this. Faith that is founded on the solid Rock of evidence is not shaken, and never can be. Storms and shocks may come, but it will never move. It cannot, because it is not founded on any empire of man. Its foundation is the unshakable word of God, and the "things that cannot be shaken" will remain (Heb. 12:27).

Only the false, the counterfeit, is threatened. The *real* cause of Christ suffers not at all. What has suffered is only that which *ought* to suffer: that which is opposed to the teachings, principles and practices of Jesus Christ.

The disclosing of money-oriented evangelism has only pointed up to every honest believer a difference as

due to its ability to convince Christians that the riches of the church are its reward from a loving, generous Father—despite no buildings, no programs, no hierarchical clergy and no elaborate displays manifested by Jesus Himself! Today the hundred million dollar ministries that bestow million dollar homes on its leaders reflect God's blessings, according to Churchianity doctrine.

Churchianity appeals to the greed and covetous qualities of man's heart. Everything

striking as that between day and night—the difference between the true and the false, between the clean and the unclean, between the holy and the profane, between "him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not" (Mal. 3:18).

The advice of Gamaliel from the days of the apostles seems appropriate at a time like this: There is no cause for concern; for if this thing is merely of human origin, it will amount to nothing; if it is of God, any effort of humankind against it cannot overthrow it (Acts 5:38-39).

True faith cannot be hurt by investigation, criticism, or opposition. The early Church even thrived on the persecution which was intended to stamp it out.

is justified and sanctified by the worldly "fruits" of size of congregation and contributions. Getting bigger is a blessing of God. Acquiring more members, larger annual contributed income, buying more land, building more buildings and accumulating more fixed assets are seen as heavenly rewards for following in Jesus' path. . . .

At this point Churchianity romanticizes the life of Christ and focuses on His love and compassion. What would Christ's response be today if He were to visit Vatican City, Heritage Village, Oral Roberts University or the Crystal Cathedral?

Churchianity is founded upon the very same political, social, religious and economic principles and values that existed in the time of Christ, principles and values that Jesus Christ rejected!

Another issue is that of fellowship . . . Today Churchianity would have Jesus on a luxury ocean liner giving a daily sermon to retirees between meals and planned activities.

MM

Jesus's ministry was not money-oriented, and those who follow His example will not teach "for hire."

What about the thousands of "innocent" believers who
(Continued on page 23)

Churchianity Revealed!

by Israel M. Knobel

Forgiveness Is Conditional

(Continued from page 9)

justifies bitterness or resentment. The command is to every one of us: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger . . . be put away from you. . . ." An act of kindness toward the offender may often soften him when nothing else will.

It is not difficult to forgive trifles, but the Lord requires that we forgive not only trifles but wrongs which at first appear impossible. We may cry, I cannot do it, it is too much to ask, the injury was too great. But when we realize that our own forgiveness from God is dependent upon our extending forgiveness to whom we owe it, we will reconsider. For if we cannot forgive another and must postpone it, then, our spiritual growth will cease and we shall have to post-

pone the recital of the Lord's prayer until such a time as we are able to do so.

More and more we need to examine and understand our own heart and character. We need to learn how deceitful and desperately wicked our hearts naturally are (Jer. 17:9), how we are so often puffed up by our own self-importance and miserable pride; how vain and wayward have been the thoughts and imaginations of our minds.

Then, too, we need to consider what our attitude has been toward our fellowman, our neighbor, our brother in the faith. We need to realize that our brother has besetments too; for, being human like ourselves, he is subject to every temptation. Life is a growth for all of us, and we need to realize that our brother must grow just as we must. Too suddenly we

may pass judgment, that such a one is hopeless, that he will never merit God's favor. And in our hasty conclusions we forget that we are acting the part of Simon the Pharisee of Jesus' day. In our self-righteousness we overlook the need of forgiveness for our own manifold transgressions and are ready only to condemn another.

Nothing could be further from the spirit of Jesus. There is a striking example in His parable of the Two Debtors, and His application of it to Simon and the sinful woman teaches us to look to ourselves. The woman was sinful and needed much forgiveness, it is true. But she realized this and was doing something about it. Simon thought that he was just about all right. He thought that as far as the law was concerned, he was blameless, when in reality, he did not

Reflecting on Forgiveness . . .

LATELY I have been reflecting much on the Lord's Prayer: "and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." We are grateful that God offers to forgive our sins, but we must remember that He will not if we do not forgive those who sin against us.

Forgiving our offender means: I must be willing to blot out of my heart every trace of the desire to harass or revenge myself against the person who transgressed against me.

It is usually easy to see why *we* were right, and our opponent was wrong; but if we carefully and fairly weigh both sides of the argument, we may discover that our neighbor is not as deserving of such severe condemnation as we first judged. And whatever condemnation he may deserve, he is accountable to God, not to us, and we must not harbor any resentment or ill will. And if he did not altogether deserve it, we must not blame. Even if 99% of the fault could be his, there remains the problem of the 1% standing against *us*, which is *our* responsibility.

Vindictiveness is not Christian. To be a Christian means we must forgive even what we consider "unforgiveable" faults, because for just such faults God has forgiven us.

To forgive a singular, even a very large or grievous fault, may be very difficult. But to keep forgiving never-ending irritations in everyday life—for example, to be always forgiving a despotic mother-in-law—how do you achieve some such thing? I believe it is possible only through a proper application of the words of Jesus' prayer, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Only as I realize my own need for forgiveness from God will I be able to forgive others properly.

To refuse to forgive others is to renounce the mercy God offers toward me.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Jesus' word is final; there is no mention of any exceptions whatever. And God keeps His word. Whatever He promises He fulfills. He will forgive us *only* as we forgive others. —R.K.

take the law to heart at all. The Pharisaic ordinances he performed with meticulous care, but the weightier matters of the law he overlooked completely. Hence he, too, needed forgiveness, but did not know it.

Are we like that? If Jesus were to sup with us, would He have need to inform us: "I have somewhat to say to thee"? (Luke 7:40).

Lest in that future Day we should be faced with that humiliating moment in our Lord's presence, let us examine our hearts and see that no grudges are camouflaged there in some self-righteous way.

What shall we do then? Forgive, as you would be forgiven. Clear yourself of all resentments and bitterness, and you will find your general happiness and spiritual growth to be nothing less than phenomenal. MM

The Waste of Worry

The worrier—the person who is forever biting his fingernails and looking for the worst to happen—is not only doing bad things to his nervous system, but he is wasting his time in the process.

According to an authority on human behavior, only about eight percent of a person's worries are legitimate: 40% concern things that will never happen; 30% involve things which cannot be changed; 12% concern other people's feelings toward us; 10% are things that exist only in the mind.

And what about the remaining eight percent? How much of it could be eliminated by asking for help or by acknowledging a mistake? How much might be removed by a little imaginative action? And could we not dispense with the rest by taking it to God in prayer?

A word of caution: Worry may be just another way of avoiding the problem-solving process. Don't trust your thoughts too far! MM

A Lesson from King Saul

*Homeward they journeyed from glorious conquest,
Israel's legions, in battle array;
Shouting their praise for the victory given;
Saul, in his chariot, leading the way.
With them they bring proud King Agag—a captive,
He, and the best of the flock had been spared,
Spared to present to their God as an offering,
Thinking that God for such sacrifice cared.*

*Saul, who had once in humility listened,
Feeling that he was unworthy to rule
So great a people, in bright armor glistened,
While by God's standard he acted the fool.
See him bow low before Samuel, saying,
"Blessed be thou in the name of the Lord."
Hear him proclaim, self-deceived, and self-righteous,
"I have performed as thou gavest me word."*

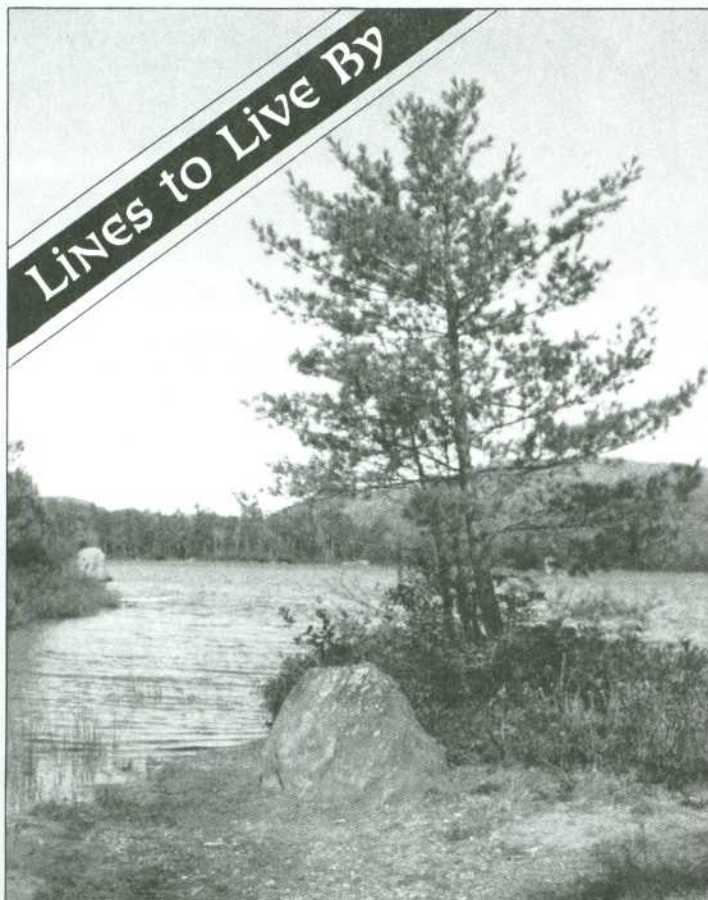
*Samuel answered, "What meaneth this bleating,
The bleating of sheep that now falls on my ear;
The lowing of oxen, if you have been keeping
Jehovah's command, which to me is so dear?
Is the Lord pleased with such sacrifice offered,
When He commands you His voice to obey?
Thou hast rejected the Word that was proffered,
And thy dominion is taken away."*

*Saul, thinking God would be dazzled by splendor,
Did not consider the weight of his sin;
Thinking that sacrifice pleased his Defender
He did not see the dire strait he was in.
But Samuel said, To obey is far better;
This is the service Jehovah requires,
That we should keep all His law to the letter.
This is the sacrifice that He desires.*

*You know the rest of the unpleasant story—
Saul lost his kingdom, and also his life,
When for the choosing lay honor and glory,
With an eternity, free from all strife.
Offered in vain were excuses and reasons;
The sinners of Amalek, God ordered be
Put to the sword, with none spared, or delivered,
And its fulfillment he wanted to see.*

*Let us take heed to the warning here given,
And when God speaks, really fly to obey
Every commandment—'tis sent us from heaven;
Not deviating one mite from the way.
Then we shall not hear the dreadful words spoken,
"I never knew you." Instead we shall hear
From our dear Lord, whose oath cannot be broken,
"Enter My Kingdom, have never a fear."*

—L. L. S.



Portals of Praise

Lord, with glowing heart I'd praise Thee
 For the bliss Thy love bestows,
 For the chast'ning love that saves me,
 And the peace that from it flows.
 Help, O God! my weak endeavor,
 This dull soul to rapture raise;
 Thou must light the flame, or never
 Can my love be warmed to praise.

Lord! this bosom's ardent feeling
 Vainly would my lips express;
 Low before Thy footstool kneeling,
 Deign Thy suppliant's prayer to bless.
 Let Thy grace, my soul's chief treasure,
 Love's pure flame within me raise;
 And, since words can never measure,
 Let my life show forth Thy praise.

Being a Christian

*Being a Christian is living
 As God would have us live.
 Being a Christian is giving
 All He would have us give.*

*Being a Christian is doing
 Things that are pure and good
 Being a Christian is pursuing
 All that we know we should.*

*Being a Christian is keeping
 The commandments of our Lord
 Being a Christian is living
 According to His Word.*

So live that when people speak
 evil of you, no one will believe it.

*When you kill time, remember it
 will have no resurrection.*

Trying to sell a religion you
 haven't lived is like trying to sell
 a product you haven't used.

*The pleasures of sin may be for a
 season, but the wages are for
 eternity.*

Good temper oils the wheels of
 life.

He Maketh No Mistake

*My Father's way may twist and turn,
My heart may throb and ache,
But in my soul I'm glad to know,
He maketh no mistake.*

*My cherished plans may go astray,
My hopes may fade away,
But still I'll trust my Lord to lead
For He doth know the way.*

*Though night be dark and it may seem
That day will never break;
I'll pin my faith, my all in Him
Who maketh no mistake.*

*There's so much now I cannot see,
My eyesight's far too dim;
But come what may, I'll simply trust
And leave it all to Him.*

*For by and by the mist will lift
And plain it all He'll make;
Though dark it be, I then shall see
He made not one mistake.*

*Humility and self-denial are often
admired, but seldom practiced.*

*Too often the family Bible can
be passed from generation to
generation because it gets so little
wear.*

*Temptations are sure to rap at
your door, but it's your fault if
you let them in.*

*Actions speak louder than words
but not nearly so often.*

*Are you doing the best that you possibly can
To lift some burden of care?
Are you holding a light for your fellowman,
For those inclined to despair?*

*There are those every day you could help to inspire,
There are those you could teach to trust,
For God will fulfill every right desire
And do only that which is just.*

POINTS for the Month

Week 1: Maintain the gratitude attitude.

Week 2: Character is not only taught—it is *caught*.

Week 3: God wants our precious time, not our spare time.

Week 4: He who has a *why* to live can bear almost any *how*.



Tamar, Arise!

*A Story
From Capernaum*

CHANNAH picked up a feather fan which had come all the way from Egypt. "Are you ready, Tamar?" she asked.

Her daughter smiled and nodded. She was happy; in a week she would be twelve years old and today they were going down to her father's shop to choose some veils.

At thirteen years and a day a boy became a man. At twelve years and a day a girl became a woman. In the case of the girl, this changed status was not celebrated by an elaborate feast, as was the boy's. It was announced by the simple process of donning the head veil. Tamar could hardly wait until she would wear her first veil like a grown-up lady!

"We are ready, Jairus," Channah called lightly to her husband.

He was seated on the other side of the room. Aminadab, his personal servant, stood behind his chair winding his richly brocaded turban in the prescribed manner.

Jairus, forty his last birthday, was a little over five feet, but carried himself with such an air of dignity that he appeared taller. He was strong, scholarly, always immaculately groomed and tastefully garbed. Strangers recognized at a glance that he was someone of importance. "Who is that man?" they would often ask the townspeople, whereupon the Capernaite would smile, saying, "That is Reb Jairus ben Esrom, our ruler."

The turban was wound now, and Jairus and his family left the big room and walked through a wide, luxurious courtyard where palm and fig trees grew, toward a stout wooden gate which a manservant hastened to open.

Accustomed as they were to the beauty of the vista before them, they nevertheless paused to admire it. The ruler's house was built high on the slope of a hill. From where they stood they could look down upon the city, the beach and the fisher shacks and fishing boats, large and small, which dotted the deep blue of the Sea of Galilee.

"Oh! It is so beautiful!" exclaimed Tamar.

They started slowly down the hill with the dignity befitting a ruler and his family.

CAPERNAUM, on the northwestern shore of the big lake, stretching upward proudly on the northwestern slopes of the big lake, was the only home Tamar had ever known. Its real name, Caper-Nahum, was derived from the prophet Nahum, who had lived there long ago.

Tamar had never been further from Capernaum than its untidy suburb, Bethsaida, or Fishertown, because she was considered too delicate for long journeys. She knew what a heavy trial she was to her parents, being an only child, a

daughter, and a semi-invalid. They adored her, pampered her, and incessantly worried about her. She knew her father would gladly have given all his wealth, if only she could be "normal."

As ruler, Jairus ben Esrom was the most important person in the city. Not only its mayor, he was also its chief judge. His was the deciding voice in all matters synagogical. The exalted position required that the one holding it be a man of unimpeachable rectitude. It required that his knowledge of the Law, the Scriptures and the Prophets be above reproach, which meant that he must have had rabbinical training.

The Beth-din, of which he was head, was the local Sanhedrin, the tribunal before which cases connected with the synagogue or involving a breach of the Mosaic Law could be heard. It was composed of twenty-three members, all of whom had to be versed in the Law, and was answerable only to the Great Sanhedrin of seventy members with headquarters in the temple at Jerusalem.

Because of her frailty Tamar had no friends her own age; consequently she was more adult in her thinking than most girls of eleven. To keep her amused, her indulgent father had spent every moment he could spare from his business and his duties at the synagogue with her, telling her of the legends of the people, teaching her the wise sayings of the prophets, and explaining the intricacies of the Law. He had welcomed her queries, answering them honestly and completely, and not as though she were a child incapable of comprehending such matters.

"My father," she had asked one day, "why do we Hebrews refuse to associate with Romans and why do we call them unclean?"

"The Romans," he explained gravely, "are pagans or heathens. They believe, as do other Gentiles, in many gods and they make statues of these gods and pray to them. We Jews are unique because we believe in only one God. That is why we isolate ourselves from the pagan

world which surrounds us and to which we refer as 'darkness'. Our Laws were given us by God through Moses. The Gentiles consider these Laws absurd and resent us because we adhere to them."

"But Marcellus Florius does not resent us!"

"Marcellus Florius is the exception. He has lived among us a long time. He understands us and we trust him. But even so, the Law is the Law, and since he is a Gentile, we cannot invite him to our homes, nor can we break bread with him."

THE Roman soldiers were forbidden to interfere with the Jews in any way unless one of them did or said something which could be interpreted as traitorous to Caesar. They had no jurisdiction whatever over a Jew. Capernaum was wholly a Hebrew city and the Beth-din held its own trials and dealt its own punishments.

Gradually—and grudgingly—Marcellus had come to admire the Jews. On the whole, they were austere and orderly. They kept the city a model of cleanliness; they cared for their own poor; they were devoted to their families and wholly absorbed in their religion.

Recently, when he learned that the Jews proposed to build a new synagogue in Capernaum, he donated so liberally to this project that he had practically built the whole structure. The Jews were astounded that he—a Roman!—should do this, and were profoundly grateful.

On reaching Jairus' shop the clerk opened various packages of veils, and Channah and Tamar began choosing from among them. When they had chosen a goodly supply, they decided to go on down the street and do some other shopping. Just as they were leaving the shop they met Centurion Marcellus and his young servant Julian, whom he loved as an own son.

Tamar was relieved when they reached the house of Simon Bar Jona. Here Channah was to order some fish. Since there were no servants, Channah and

Tamar went directly in and found Perpetua and her widowed mother Rachel in their cool courtyard.

Though living in the lower part of town near the beach, they were well-to-do, especially since Simon and his brother Andrew had formed a partnership with their neighbors James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were no ordinary fishermen, and the company prospered. They owned several large boats and employed a large crew.

For some months now, while hardy old Zebedee took charge of the business, the four partners had been down in Judea somewhere, having attached themselves to a strange preacher, nicknamed 'The Baptizer'.

"You have probably heard, John the Baptizer claims to be only the forerunner of the Messiah."

"Blessed be the ones who come in!" cried Perpetua as they entered.

"God be with you," replied Channah smiling.

"Sit here, Channah, and Tamar. All is well in your house?"

"All is well," answered Channah, "And what do you hear from Simon and Andrew? Do you expect them home soon?"

"They are home," replied Perpetua beaming. "Just arrived yesterday."

"And they have now another teacher," added old Rachel in her quiet way.

"Oh? Do you know him?"

"I scarcely think so. His name is Jesus. He is a young man from Nazareth, son of a carpenter named Joseph.

He is a cousin of James and John."

"Why did Simon and the others leave the Baptizer and go following this Jesus?" queried Channah.

"You have probably heard, John the Baptizer claims to be only the *forerunner* of the Messiah. The Messiah—" Perpetua stopped and looked meaningfully at Rachel, not knowing if she should go on.

"I think it is all right if you tell, Channah," said Rachel.

"Simon," went on Perpetua, "Simon, Andrew, James and John think He is the Messiah."

Tamar's heart jumped.

"But what has He done that makes them feel this way? Do tell us what you know." Channah was excited but she didn't want to be swayed too easily.

For years people had been hearing reports that the Messiah had come, and the imposters would acquire many followers; however, in a few months each one had faded from sight and nothing more would be heard of him.

"We do not know too much about this man yet—He has just recently started preaching. But we do know that His lineage and place of birth is just as was foretold by the prophets for the Promised One." Rachel stopped as if trying to find words to explain Him further, then she smiled and said, "He is the kind of person you cannot explain, but if you saw or heard Him once, you would understand why they would feel this way."

"Perhaps He will be invited to speak in the synagogue this coming Sabbath. He intends to make Capernaum His headquarters."

"I should like to hear Him," said Channah as she arose.

After giving the order for fish, Channah and Tamar bid their friends farewell and started home.

They were about to turn up the road that led to their home when Tamar caught sight of Simon, James, Andrew and John. The four fishermen grinned

and waved their bronzed arms at them. In the center of the group walked the Rabbi from Nazareth.

The stranger met Tamar's eyes and smiled as though He already knew her. She smiled back at Him, her crushing tiredness forgotten.

His was not the wintry, condescending smile that teachers usually gave to little girls, nor was it the smile of a stranger. It was a smile of companionship, as though already they were old, old friends.

The group passed on, and Tamar, forgetting her manners, turned about to stare after them.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "He is so . . . so wonderful!"

"Yes," agreed her mother.

And then she grew intensely serious, for there flashed through her mind the words of a long dead prophet who, predicting The Messiah, had declared: "His name shall be called Wonderful . . ."

That evening Channah told Jairus of what Perpetua and Rachel had said. Jairus himself had met Jesus and was much impressed.

Tamar spoke excitedly. "Could such a thing be? *Could* He be the Messiah?"

"Now, now," answered Jairus soothingly, "we will not permit such reports to excite us."

"But, Jairus," said Channah, "is it not foretold that He will be a Nazarene, and of the house of David, and that He will be born in Bethlehem?"

The ruler nodded.

"That," went on Channah, "is what seems so curious, because this Jesus *is* a son of David, *is* a Nazarene, and *was* born in Bethlehem."

Jairus smiled. "It will take more than that to prove that this man is what Bar Jona says he is."

"But my father has often said that the Messiah might come at any time—to-day, tomorrow, next year!"

"True. And when He comes, what have I told you of the teaching? By what signs shall we know that He has come? Israel's sages have told us to look for these signs lest we be misled by some

imposter. He will arrive with great pomp—out of the clouds, and after He comes there will be countless changes. We believe that in our Holy City He will sit upon a golden throne ruling the world, and Jerusalem will be the world's capital. Is it? *No*. Now then, are we to put credence in what our great prophets have told us or are we to believe our neighbors, James, John, Simon and Andrew? Could these fishermen be correct and Israel's sages wrong?"

"I—I suppose not. But oh! I love to think that when He comes there will be no more sickness and He will heal all ills!"

Jairus rested his jeweled hand lovingly upon his daughter's shoulder. "Pray for His coming, child!"

DURING the next months things began to happen in Capernaum and in the surrounding area. Jesus was gathering the crowds from everywhere. They came long distances to hear Him and to bring their sick to Him.

Tamar loved Jesus, and though she was frail, when she knew He was nearby she would go and listen to Him. She saw many blind, sick and lame made well. In her child-like faith she was convinced that He was the Messiah.

But there were others who had a great dislike for Jesus and they were glad when the Passover season came and Jesus left to spend the holidays in Jerusalem.

Jairus and Channah had not made the trip since Tamar had been born, thinking the girl too frail to stand the trip and loving her too much to leave her in the charge of the servants.

The heat that year was particularly oppressive, and Tamar and Channah remained as much as possible within the shade of their lovely courtyard. But they were not cut off from the news of the Teacher. Faces flushed with excitement, they listened while travelers told of the miraculous cures that the Teacher had accomplished in Jerusalem and other places.

ONE morning a servant came with the report that Jesus was going to give a lecture nearby. It had been a long while since Tamar and Channah had had a chance to hear Jesus, so they decided to go.

It was not hard to know which direction to go, for many others were heading His way. Before long they reached the spot where the crowd had gathered. The crowd was so large that they could not hope to get near the Master. But Jesus could be seen and heard by everyone, for He was seated on the top of a hill.

As if to assure the Teacher space to stand, His students sat on the ground in a circle around Him. Then there were about fifty soldiers. Evidently the state was alarmed at such a gathering and felt more comfortable when hovering about, on the alert for trouble.

Tamar noticed that Marcellus was there but that Julian wasn't with him. Poor Julian had been taken seriously ill with the palsy.

Tamar was exhausted and sank down on the grass beside her mother. Then clear and firm came the voice which held them spellbound.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!"

Throughout the long sermon the people listened attentively. Such words none had ever heard. When it was over, the teacher's students made an aisle for Him, and the people stood back respectfully as He walked down the hill. Once in a while one stepped forward and humbly asked to be healed or for Him to heal a dear friend or relative.

Channah and Tamar walked thoughtfully down the hill, each engrossed in recalling the remarkable sermon. Reaching the bottom of the hill, they found many people who had halted and were talking excitedly.

"That rabbi has just healed a leper!" cried someone.

"A leper!" gasped Tamar. Leprosy was incurable. Only God could cure it. God—or the Messiah.

As soon as Channah and Tamar

*Tamar
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entered Capernaum they headed for Jairus' shop. They could not wait until evening to tell him all they had seen and heard.

When they reached the shop they found Marcellus there.

"How is the boy?" Jairus was asking.

"Worse, worse," answered Marcellus sadly. "The doctor has given up all hope, Julian is—dying."

Tamar spoke unguardedly. "The Teacher! He will heal him. He just healed a leper. Look! Look! here He comes! Ask Him!"

Marcellus turned to Jairus. "Would you ask Him, Jairus?" pleaded Marcellus, "I am not worthy."

Several people had gathered around them now, and a masculine voice said, "Ask Him. Tell Him the centurion is worthy."

"I will gladly tell Him," answered Jairus.

Tensely they watched as he walked up to the Teacher, saluting Him respectfully.

"What do you wish of me, Reb Jairus?" asked the Teacher.

"Sir," replied Jairus humbly, "I wish nothing for myself. But for that officer there. I ask you — indeed, I beseech you to help him. He is in trouble. His servant, dear to him as a son, is dying. The

centurion has been a good friend of our people and he is worthy of Your aid. He does not despise us; he loves us. Why, he even built our synagogue for us!"

Jesus nodded and turned to go in the direction of the centurion's house. Marcellus gasped as if startled, and stared, then stepped forward. So there they stood, the Hebrew Healer and the Gentile, face to face.

"Lord," Marcellus began respectfully, trying to speak calmly, "my servant lies sick of the palsy, grievously tormented."

"I will come and heal him," answered Jesus quietly.

For a moment Marcellus was so profoundly touched that he could not speak. In the interval of silence it came to him that this Hebrew Teacher was the most important and most powerful being in the world—yet, if He stepped inside a pagan house He would be liable to punishment, not by His God, but by men of religious authority. These enemies could make things even more difficult for the Teacher. That he, Marcellus, should be the cause of such punishment was unthinkable. Despite his love for Julian, Marcellus knew that at all costs, he must protect the Teacher.

Besides, perhaps Jairus had not made it clear to the Teacher that he, Marcellus, was a Gentile. His voice, though humble, carried a deep undertone of urgency coupled with an intense conviction. "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof. Do not trouble yourself. In fact, I did not even consider myself worthy to approach you with the request. But only speak the word and my servant shall be healed! For I am a man also of some authority. I have soldiers under me. I say to this man, 'Go,' and he goes. And to another, 'Come,' and he comes. And to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it. Your authority is so far greater than mine, all you have to do is speak the word and my servant will be healed!"

Those who stood near enough to hear the centurion's words were aghast. Had the Roman grasped so much of Jesus'

teaching that he was absolutely certain of His power?

Jesus' piercing eyes looked deep into the soul of the centurion, and saw that no gulf divided them. It was not the case of an "unclean" Gentile and an "undefiled" Hebrew. They were brothers, having one Father, and were united by one Law—not the disciplinary Law of Moses but the all-beneficent Law of faith and love.

"Truly I say to you," marveled Jesus, "that I have not found so great a faith as this—no, not in Israel!" Turning to the Roman He said, "Go about your business. As you have believed, so shall it be done unto you."

TAMAR was happy; what a day this had been. But it had been too much for her and she was feeling the reaction now. Her head throbbed and she had

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scarcely enough strength to climb the hill to her home.

The next day she awakened with a terrific headache. It was an effort to bathe and dress. By mid-afternoon her mother sent her to bed, dosing her with medicines and applying cold cloths to her head.

But the next day she was worse. All day the girl lay twitching, mumbling, burning with fever. The pain seemed to be everywhere all at once. She would

doze off to sleep and her mother would think, If only she sleeps she will be better. But only a few minutes later she would open her eyes and sob with pain. When Jairus came home, one glance told him that she was seriously ill. He took her in his arms, holding her while he prayed. A servant went scurrying for a doctor.

At nightfall the next day, the doctor, feeling her pulse, putting his head to her chest to listen to the faint beating of her heart, looked grave.

"But she will get well?" cried Channah frantically.

"I can offer you little hope, Channah."

The pain had gone from Tamar now, and her eyes were glazed. She saw people moving about, but their forms were blurred and they seemed far away. Sometimes the mattress was sailing on a vast, dark sea and she was drifting further and further away into blackness. She tried to tell her mother how cold she was, but when she moved her lips no sound came. And then it seemed that the mattress was sinking down, down, down, and the cold grew more and more terrible. She was frightened.

The next day everyone knew that her death was only a matter of hours.

"If only Jesus were here!" sobbed Perpetua, who had come to help. "Oh, that sweet little girl, our little princess!"

It was autumn and the days were growing colder. Perpetua, who had taken charge, ordered larger fires in the ovens and hot bricks placed at Tamar's feet.

"Engage the mourning women and the flute players," advised the doctor, "I doubt if she will live through the night."

"If only Jesus would come back!" mumbled Perpetua as she hurried off to engage the mourning women and flutists, telling them to accept no other assignments but to be in readiness to come to the ruler's house at any moment.

"It is too bad your husband's Rabbi is away," they said to Perpetua. "Have you heard that He raised a dead man in Nain?"

"No! I have been helping at the ruler's

house. The poor parents. She is their only child! You say Jesus brought back to life a man who was dead?"

"That is the report that is circulating through the town. It may not be true. The young man was the only son of a widow and was being carried to the sepulchre when the rabbi and His students met the funeral procession. He spoke to the young man and they say that instantly the breath came back to his body!"

Tamar was still alive next day, and at dawn Jairus came to his wife and put his hands upon her stooped shoulders. "Channah," he said, his strong voice breaking. "I am going to find the Teacher. Wherever He is, I am going to find Him!"

"Don't leave me, Jairus," she sobbed. Then, "But where would you look for Him?"

"I don't know, but I shall find Him. I shall find Him if I have to go all the way to Jerusalem, if I have to search throughout the whole of Palestine!"

Perpetua spoke quickly. "Go toward Nain. I heard yesterday that He was there."

Jairus hurried from the house. Perhaps he had no hope of finding the Teacher. Perhaps he only knew that he could not stay in that house any longer and watch his little one die. He turned in the direction of Nain, and at the sight of his white and grieving face the people stood aside, giving him no greeting.

He remembered that it was twenty-five miles to Nain by the lake road. Why had he not thought to ride a donkey? Jairus was a rich man. He held the highest position in his community. But what did *things* matter *now*? Gladly he would give them up if by doing so he could save Tamar's life.

Ten minutes after Jairus left, the doctor looked sadly at Channah.

"No!" she screamed, reading the dreadful message in his gaze.

"It is over, Channah. She is dead."

Channah moaned and sank to the floor. Perpetua came, raised her up and

led her into her own room. Outside in the court a crowd had gathered. They were barefoot, many in sackcloth with ashes on their heads, and they began moaning and wailing.

Perpetua, her face wet with tears, sent a servant for the mourning women and the flute players. Then she turned to Aminadab. "Go find the ruler. Take the road toward Nain. Tell him not to trouble the Master, for the maid is dead. It is too late."

Some of the women entered the death chamber and began preparing the body, for burial for funerals were held as soon after death as possible. By sundown Tamar would be in a sepulchre, the large white sepulchre that was near the tomb of the prophet Nahum.

JAIRUS had gone three miles on the road toward Nain when he saw the man he sought. Jesus was seated on a rock facing the sea, surrounded by a small crowd.

Matthew was the first to see Jairus. "Here comes the ruler," he said. "There must be some trouble in Capernaum."

"He seems to be looking for you, Master," put in Simon Peter.

Jesus arose and walked toward Jairus, who now increased his pace and finally sank humbly to his knees in the dust, panting so painfully that for a moment or two he could not speak.

Jesus reached down sympathetically and helped the ruler to his feet. "What is

*Perhaps
Jairus had no
hope of finding
the Teacher.
Perhaps he only
knew that he
could not stay
in that house
any longer
and watch his
little one die.*

it, Jairus? What can I do for you, my friend?"

"Sir, my daughter—my little daughter—is even now at the point of death. But come, lay your hand upon her and she shall live!"

"Yes," answered Jesus soothingly. "I will come."

And they started on the road to Capernaum.

"Have no fear, sir," said Matthew, steadying Jairus as he stumbled along the road. God is greater than all the forces of this world combined."

Time Is Priceless

*Two or three minutes; two or three hours
What do they mean in this life of ours?
Not very much, if just counted as time,
But I can transform them to minutes sublime
If only I use them to bring to an end
The evils that haunt me, the words that offend;
O Lord, teach me how to make minutes of gold
To lay up in heaven—they're riches untold.*

Jairus nodded tensely. It seemed a long, long way back to the house on the hill. The nearer they came to Capernaum, the larger grew the crowd. One of the duties of the students was to prevent Jesus' way from becoming blocked. This task became more and more difficult as they approached the city. Everyone was apparently possessed with the idea of getting close to the Teacher. The pupils, all strong men, were courteous but firm.

"Stand back, Stand back. Let the Master through. Keep His way clear. Do not crowd Him so. He is on an urgent mission. Stand back and let us through," they kept saying.

Just outside the city Aminadab ran up and touched Jairus on the arm. "Sir," he panted, "your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Master."

Jairus gasped and swayed. Jesus grasped him in His strong, steadying hands, and spoke in a calm voice: "Do not fear, Jairus. Only believe, and she shall be made whole!"

Jairus looked at Him dazedly as though he did not comprehend the simple words.

"Do not be afraid," Jesus repeated. "Only believe!"

They started forward again.

At last they entered the court where the crowd was wailing and the flutes were moaning their low, prolonged, melancholy notes. Jesus followed as Jairus led the way to his daughter's room. Outside the door Jesus paused and addressed His students.

"Let no one follow me inside except Peter, James, John and the parents of the maiden."

There in the death chamber lay Tamar in her burial clothes with her hands crossed upon her breast. Here, too, people were weeping.

"She is dead, our beautiful young princess. Master, you have come too late."

"Do not weep." Jesus spoke again in that serene, soothing voice. "She is not dead, she is sleeping. Why do you make this ado?"

Even there in the death chamber, some of them laughed scornfully. "What do you mean, she is not dead? Not dead? Look at her and see for yourself!"

"How can that man say she is not dead?"

"The Master wants you all to go outside," announced Peter.

He and James and John gently ushered the women toward the threshold and quietly closed the door.

*Jairus and
Channah
watched the
silent figure on
the bed. They
saw the color
come swiftly
back into
Tamar's lips . . .
they saw their
daughter open
her eyes.*

The room was very still. Stifling and still. The odor of the spices was oppressive.

Jairus put his arm around his wife. Together they stood at the foot of the bed. Peter, James and John grouped solemnly at one side.

Jesus was in no hurry. Slowly He approached the bedside and for a brief interval stood there relaxed, yet majestic, looking tranquilly at the small figure.

Then He reached out and lifted one of Tamar's hands, holding it firmly.

"Damsel, I say to you—Arise!"

Jairus and Channah watched the silent figure on the bed. They saw the color come swiftly back into Tamar's

lips and watched as her chest swelled as her lungs filled with air. Then they saw their daughter open her eyes.

Tamar sat up, at first aware of no one except her beloved Teacher. Then she noticed her parents, who were gazing at her as though she were a ghost. There, too, were her old friends, Peter, James and John. She felt wonderfully rested and strong.

In a normal, unaffected voice, Jesus addressed Tamar's parents. "Give her something to eat."

Tears flooded the eyes of the ruler. "What—what can I say?" he stammered. "How can I—" he was too overcome to continue.

As though suddenly realizing that what had happened was not a dream, Channah rushed to her daughter with a glad cry and took her in her arms. Jairus stood silent and motionless, looking at the two of them as if unable to wrest his gaze away. After a moment, he remembered the Master, but He, and Peter, and James had gone.

Outside in the court, Perpetua rushed up to Peter as he was leaving the room. "Does the maid live?" she asked in an excited voice. "Is everything well with Tamar?"

"The maid lives," answered Peter smiling. He turned to the crowd. "Let us through. Give way for the Master."

After a while the door to Tamar's room opened and the ruler stepped out.

"My friends," he announced jubilantly, "Rejoice with me! My daughter is alive and well!"

Several called out simultaneously, "What happened? What happened? We want to know!"

"I cannot tell you anything except the glad tidings that Tamar lives. I ask you now to go home that my wife, my daughter and I may offer our prayers of gratitude in peace. We are very grateful to all. God be with you." MM

*Wisdom is knowing what to do
next; skill is knowing how to do it,
and virtue is doing it.*

"Lead Me to the Rock That is Higher Than I"

(Continued from page 5)

David's sin in the matter? How could he face it, acknowledge it, confess it, and find forgiveness?

David's heart was burdened. The thought of it was like an open sore in David's soul. And making the wound still deeper was the tormenting question of his own guilt in the matter. How much had David, by his own misbehavior, contributed to Absalom's downfall?

Overwhelmed, David turned to God with this desperate, heartfelt plea: "Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

Would God hear at such a time as this? Would He hear and help as He had before? "Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy" (v. 3). It was as if to say, "You have been my refuge and my strong tower of safety. Will You be that again to me?"

"I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah" (v. 4). The word translated "abide" literally means "to be a house guest for the night." David could picture nothing more wonderful than the privilege of spending the night as a "house guest" in God's tent. As an ordinary

Israelite, even though a king, David had no access into God's tent, the one he had pitched for the sacred ark in Jerusalem. Only the priests could go into the tabernacle, and only the high priest once a year could go into God's immediate presence, in the most holy place. And even there he could not stay. After performing the necessary rituals, he had to retire.

But David was thinking further than the tabernacle in Jerusalem. David was a spiritual man, one of the few who saw beyond the rites and rituals to the realities they symbolized. And so he lifted his aspiration out of the time dimension into the eternal, where God dwells. "I want to be a house guest," he says, "for the night in Your tent forever!"

Along with this came a thought of God's mercy—and his personal need for that mercy. David could never forget his sins. "I will trust in the hiding place of thy wings," he adds. To David, "wings" were the symbol of God's mercy, because the part of the ark called the mercy seat was overspread by the wings of the cherubim. Imagine the security, he thought, of one who could creep as a house guest into God's pavilion, and stay there forever—and know the overshadowing protection not merely of the wings of the cherub but of the Eternal God Himself!

It was a beautiful thought, to which David added his reverent exclamation,

"Selah!" David had entered into a dimension of understanding rarely grasped by human minds.

What troubled David most was the same problem that troubles us, if we think seriously about our own relationship to God: the miserable consequences of sin. David recognized what we too easily forget: the treachery of his own heart. This is why he sought the place of mercy, the one safe place in the universe. It is the same place to which we may resort, to find the same Divine mercy for *our* needs, and the same deliverance.

*"There is a place of quiet rest
Near to the heart of God,
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God."*

At such a moment David was in his meditations, spiritually speaking, inside the veil, between the cherubim, close to the heart of God. "Now then," he said in effect, "who or what can harm me?"

Let us learn to pray as David did. In the midst of the troubles that vex our lives, let us seek refuge in this same Rock, the Rock that is higher than ourselves. Then, whatever the storms that come, we will be safe.

Now and forever. For "things beyond our seeing, things beyond our hearing, things beyond our imagining, all are prepared by God for those who love him" (I Cor. 2:9, NEB). MM

Backwash from PTL?

(Continued from page 11)

follow "blind guides"? The Bible places responsibility on each and every person individually. False information is no haven of safety. Each and every one is responsible to test and try his beliefs by the unerring Word of God. The Lord has no guaranteed rescue plan whereby He automatically picks up those who fall because they chose a blind spiritual guide. What did Jesus say? "If the blind lead the blind, the leader shall fall into the ditch but I will rescue the innocent follower"? No, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14).

Guidance in the matter of our eternal salvation is a matter with consequences far too serious to trust to blind guides. This is why the Bible directs us to "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). "Search the Scriptures" (John

5:39). "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15, NIV).

"Prove," "search," "do your best" to find out what is true, what is right, what is a solid and secure foundation, before commencing to build your structure of faith.

There is nothing in the world that can substitute for truth, integrity, and uprightness. Eloquence cannot. Neither can image, or show, or personality. And certainly money cannot.

In due time, the storm of God's judgment will descend upon an unsuspecting world, and every structure that is not built on the solid rock of faith and obedience will fall (Matt. 7:24-28).

That day is near. Let every sincere, true-hearted one take heed. MM

The way to keep your religion is to keep it busy.

Thinking . . . ?

"We compel every human thought to surrender
in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:5, NEB)

I bring my scattered thoughts today. O Lord, I would that they were prayers!
It seems I can't do better, Lord, my mind runs everywhere.
I've started for Your throne five times, and then . . . and then I've wandered;
My mind has strolled this way and that, and half an hour is squandered!

I feel I'm wasting time, Lord, when my thoughts aren't heavenward,
And now I sit here puzzled—can You see me? Are You there, Lord?
I wonder if it counts, Lord, if You know that I am trying . . .
Or are my wand'ring thoughts of earth . . . are they "disqualifying" . . . ?

My mind so quickly flits from You to thoughts about a friend
I'll see today. (His problem hurts my heart—when will it end?)
That thought becomes a springboard to a time ten years ago
When someone else I knew was here (can you believe 'twas so!)

Let's see, I must be sure that I see Sue about our change of plans;
And oh yes, while downtown pick up the package—. (How I zoom
From this moon to the next, and from one season to another!)
"Now end you with this jaunt," I say, "start praying for your brother."

But Lord, what do You think of this Your child, so awf'ly flabby?
(Of course, Lord, do not think that I am always quite this shabby!)
I have some days when worship soars and intercession presses
Me to take the Kingdom e'en by force, as faith-filled prayer possesses;

Yes, I have times of prayer sincere. But God, what of this season,
This morning when my wand'ring thoughts seem void of rhyme or reason?
I sit here in this armchair, looking out across the gardens,
Where—Look! a beam of sunlight makes the dewdrops shine like diamonds!

And there I'm off again! O Lord, forgive my wand'ring soul,
"Gird up!" I shout. "Now every thought, I take you captive—NOW!"
"You be obedient unto Christ!" I stern command my brain.
"Stop wand'ring!" (Oh, what was that noise? I must go see what happened.)

As I return, the morning paper's waiting at the station.
I'll just glance quick to see what's going on about the nation.
Now . . . back to thinking thoughts divine . . . but oh, what was that headline?
It said the President is back—I wonder where he's been?

But soul, you laid that paper down! Much better things you're thinking!
Yes, Lord, I'm with You now. Let's see—what was it I was saying?
I'm here because I love You, Lord; my poor mind notwithstanding;
My heart is Yours, so please, Lord, of these tours be understanding.

And somehow in the silence—(There's the neighbor's car now leaving.)
I think . . . indeed, I do, dear Lord; and I go on believing!
I treasure, Lord, Your comfort: "I am with you all the day"—
And yet I wonder . . . wonder . . . when my mind runs off this way . . .

If I could but find rest within Your solace every hour,
If I could but enjoy Your peace and sanctifying power!
If I could claim the mind of Christ to rule this mind of mine,
What depths of faith I would possess, what conquering heights sublime!

And then, it seems, I hear You speak—yes, Lord, I'm list'ning; speak—
"I cannot honor wand'ring thoughts which do not honor Me;
No mind can open gates in Heav'n that does not love Me most."
You mean then, Lord . . . you mean my mind can never be Your host?

"O no, my child, I only mean that you must change your ways,
Your mind restrain, your thoughts direct to honor Me always;
Gird up that mind of yours, that mind so prone to things below;
Move forward, and take captive every thought that wanders so.

"Go end this day of wand'ring thoughts, and learn to think with Me;
Then I will be your strength and stay wherever you may be.
Who captive takes his every thought, his mind is truly free;
He is a conqueror supreme who always thinks with Me."

Why Did Abraham Offer Isaac?

“Why did Abraham place Isaac on the altar? Did Abraham believe in substitution rather than in personal responsibility as a means of salvation? Mainline churches think there is a parallel between Isaac and Christ who was a substitute sacrifice.”

We can see nothing in the account of Abraham placing Isaac on the altar which even suggests that Abraham believed in “substitution rather than in personal responsibility as a means of salvation.”

Why did Abraham place Isaac on the altar? Offering Isaac was certainly nothing Abraham would have done on his own. Isaac was his dearest possession on earth.

According to the Genesis narrative, God directly commanded Abraham to offer Isaac. We read in Gen. 22:1: “And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, . . . Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” It was God’s command.

It has often been asked, Why would God issue such a command? However, the word translated *tempt* is the Hebrew *nacah*, and means “to test, prove, tempt, try.” The 11th chapter of Hebrews also speaks of the event as a test from God. We

read: “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac . . .” (v. 17). The word “tried” is the Greek *peirazo*, which has the same meaning, “to test, discipline, scrutinize, prove, tempt, try.”

The very first record of God’s speaking to Abraham was a command. God promised Abraham a very special blessing, even an everlasting inheritance, under the terms of a covenant, and the entire covenant was conditioned upon Abraham’s obedience. In Genesis 12, we read that the Lord “said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:1-3). The blessing was conditioned upon obedience.

Years later the terms of covenant were repeated, and again the condition was obedience. “When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will estab-

lish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God” (Gen. 17:1-2, 6-8). Again the terms of the covenant were obedience: “Walk before me, and be thou perfect.”

God’s Covenant with Abraham Confirmed at the Offering of Isaac

When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, He was testing Abraham’s fidelity. God wanted Abraham to prove that his first love and loyalty was to God. Isaac was a child of promise, and dearest to Abraham’s heart. But above all natural desires was Abraham’s love for God, and Abraham’s obedience in willingly offering Isaac proved this.

Immediately when Abraham demonstrated his obedience, the angel of the Lord intervened and saved Isaac, and God confirmed the promises of the covenant to Abraham. This fact is stated explicitly in Gen. 22:15-18, “And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless

thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Note that the covenant was confirmed "because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son." The blessing was for obedience: "because thou hast obeyed my voice"—it was as a direct result of Abraham's obedience.

This confirming of the covenant upon the offering of Isaac is also recognized by the New Testament writer of the book of James: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works [obedience], when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (James 2:21). It is stated again in Hebrews 11:17, that when Abraham offered up Isaac, "he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, . . . accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11:17-19).

Why did Abraham obey? Because he believed God, because he "accounted that God was able to raise him up." He obeyed, and trusted

the results with God.

The writer to the Hebrews again recognized the significance of Abraham's obedience in offering Isaac by stating that it confirmed the covenant with Abraham. We read in Hebrews 6:13-17, that "when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself"—the time when God swore by Himself, when He guaranteed His promise by His own existence, was the time immediately following Abraham's obedient offering of Isaac (see Gen. 22:16-17). These were the words of the covenant: "Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb. 6:14-15). The confirming of the covenant was a direct result of Abraham's obedience; it was because of this that he "obtained the promise." After Abraham obeyed, God "confirmed it [the covenant, the promise] by an oath" (Heb. 6:17).

Many times in Scripture Abraham's obedience is commended, and the result of His obedience was God's favor. There is *nothing* in the Bible that indicates that Abraham believed in "substitution rather than personal responsibility as a means of

**God confirmed
the covenant
to Abraham as a
direct result
of Abraham's
obedience:
"Because you
have obeyed
my voice. . . ."**

salvation." If there is any thought of substitution in the account of Abraham offering his son, it would seem more likely to be the ram than Isaac. The ram was offered as a substitute, but we have never heard of anyone attaching redeeming merit to Abraham's offering of the ram!

There is one parallel in Scripture between Isaac and Christ, and that is in their common role as children of promise. The birth of each was prophesied; each came to fill a pre-defined role in the plan of God. Any parallel beyond this is read *into* the Bible, not *out* of it. MM

An elderly man, bed-ridden and partly paralyzed: "Can I handle this crisis? Absolutely! because the innermost strands of my faith are the strongest. I need no outside props to hold up my faith."

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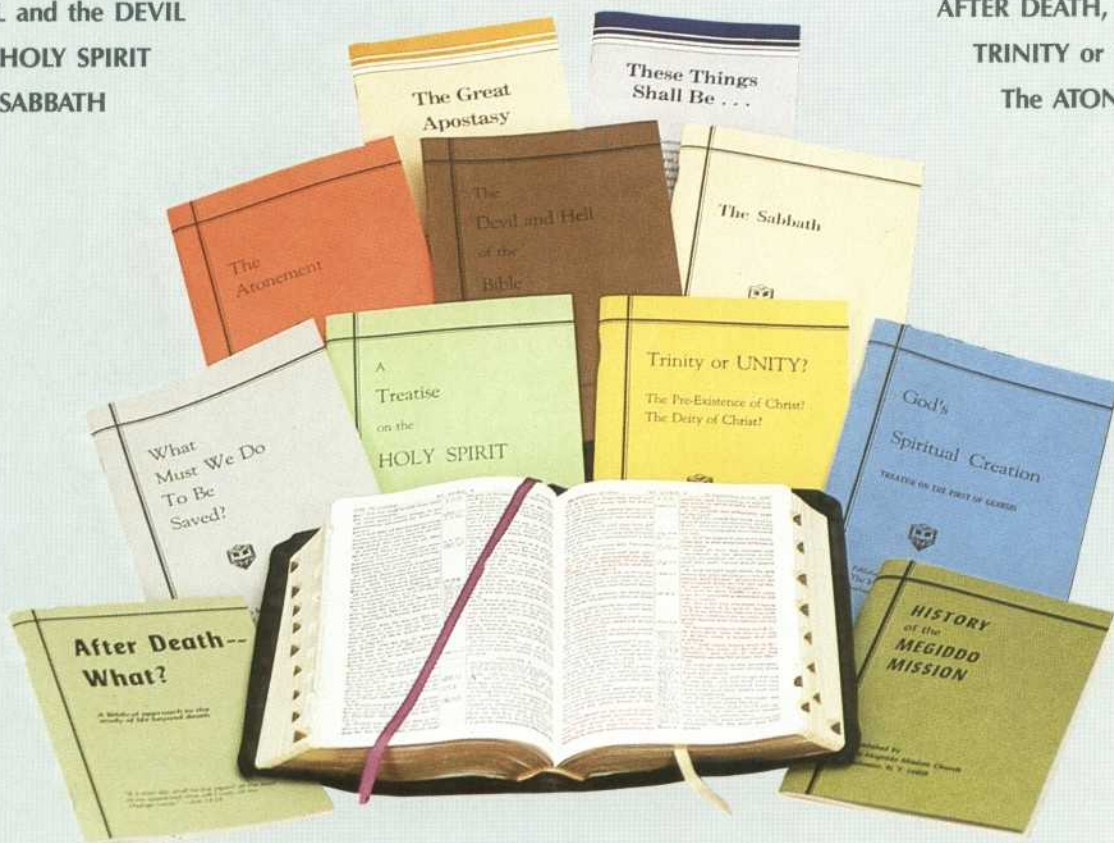
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