

Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Thy Word is a
lamp unto my
feet, and a light
unto my path.

Ps. 119:105

The testimony
of the Lord is
sure, making
wise the simple.

Ps. 19:7

The Full Surrender
Melchisedec - Who is He?
The Pre-Existence of Christ--Fact or Fable?
Understanding the Bible

Megiddo Message

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

The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

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

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Editorially Speaking...

Build Your Life

THE greatest of all wastes is the waste of time. Maybe we feel life is so hurried that there is scarcely time to plan and think of the future, the voice of the present is so insistent. But it is better to take time to think than to go on wandering about in a sort of fog, missing life's greatest destination because we are too engrossed with petty temporal affairs. We have been governed too long by the physical; it is time to build the spiritual.

Modern civilization has multiplied material satisfactions until the effort to possess them consumes too much of the average man's thoughts and time. *Things* are in the saddle, and they ride mankind. Pleasure, ease, luxury, and convenience have compelling voices and raise answering echoes in human selfishness. But no man can live deeply and fruitfully in and by the present, except he be steadily building for the future. Devotion to the cause of Christ must become the nerve of service, the joy of prayer, and the essential and all-absorbing attraction if our temple is to be found without flaw.

The best-planned lives have many upsets, large and small, but the life lived only for the gratification of the present day and hour, without good, solid plans for the future, is like a record played backwards—you hear notes, but they sound unreal. It is a series of weird shrieks, squawks and screeches which in the end amount to a nerve-racking experience from which has been derived no real and lasting pleasure or meaning.

To build constructively we must carefully examine our thought material. If we indulge in worry, resentment, hate and bitterness or ill feelings of any kind, we are doing ourselves a serious disservice. The tendency of a persistent thought is to translate itself into action. The best building material is not remote and inaccessible. The thought materials we need are within our grasp and are available to the poorest and weakest as well as to the richest and strongest.

We can never build a temple acceptable to God without first laying a firm foundation of holy, pure and noble thoughts. Then we must erect a framework of godly repentance and sincerity, putting in the floors of faith, installing windows of a good understanding, fitting the boards of character and driving in the nails of a purpose true and strong; finally, roofing the whole with charity.

It is easy to feel secure and to be certain of ourselves, to think we are safe; yet as architects of our own destiny, will we build the external structure without paying enough attention to the interior?

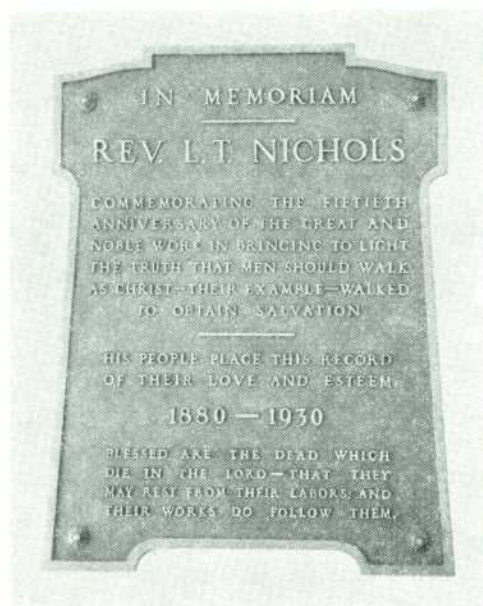
The final outcome of all life's efforts, of every mortal's spiritual building project, will depend on "As a man has so purposed in his heart," not on what his lip profession has been. ●●

THE FULL SURRENDER

WITH joy we embrace this opportunity to strengthen and encourage those who are determined to make a full surrender of their entire being to the service of Him who has been so good as to call us out of darkness into this most wonderful light of Truth. Jehovah has placed us upon a firm foundation and is giving us time and opportunity to render perfect obedience to His Divine Law, that we may gain an endless home of bliss in that wonderful City of God, and pluck with ecstatic delight the fruit of life's fair tree forevermore.

Think of living forever, free from every sorrow, toil and pain, and in their place have ever-increasing joy and pleasure, with such wonderful knowledge that even ten years in that wondrous clime will more than repay us for the trials we are called upon to pass through in this brief lifetime of threescore and ten years!

What a rich boon the All-wise, Omnipotent God holds forth as an inducement for us to faithfully serve and obey Him. And then to think that all we do, every good deed, will be set down to our account—we the ones to reap the benefit of our service; also to think the benefit will be unending in its duration, far above all we can ask or think in its wonder-



THIS BRONZE TABLET—placed in the Megiddo Church—is a symbol of our recognition of, and gratitude for, the greatest principle of truth resurrected since the Dark Ages. In the year 1880 the Rev. L. T. Nichols taught that no man could be saved apart from knowing and keeping every commandment of God. For the first time in nearly thirteen centuries the lofty principle of *Perfection of Character* was being proclaimed. This is the mighty cornerstone of the nascent truth, even as Jesus taught the multitude, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

This was the theme of Rev. Mr. Nichols’ most powerful sermons. And today, “he, being dead, yet speaketh,” as in the following excerpts from “The Full Surrender,” urging us in ardent, appealing language to *prepare* for that grand future life, that home in glory, vivid as he alone could portray it.

ful volume of glory, joy and light! This thought should cause every nerve to spring into action, with a determination to completely render our bodies and minds a living sacrifice. This work can be done, but not by halfway workers; it will be absolutely necessary for us to throw our entire being into the work, without any reserve, in order for us to be successful in accomplishing this grand and noble work which alone can yield to us life, glory and happiness in the good time to come.

Pause, and look at the evidence: “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he [Christ] is pure” (I John 3:3). Now, any amount of sophistry or reasonings of men will not alter this God-stated fact in the least. No one can scripturally claim the one only saving hope unless he believes it absolutely necessary to go to work in real earnestness and purify himself as herein stated.

There can be no dispute whatever by anyone who is truly a child of God, as to what we must do in order to have hope of being made like Jesus by seeing Him as He is; for the Scriptures plainly declare, that we *must* purify ourselves “even as he is pure.” Let others go on in their unbelief, but, O beloved ones, let us go to work with renewed

energy and accomplish this noble work. It is folly for people to cry out, as if horror-stricken, "It cannot be done!" It can and must be done, or there is no salvation for us. We, many of us, can testify from our own actual experience that it can be done for we have overcome very hard things and become pure and holy in them, and, if we bring our whole mind into the service, we can become pure and holy in all things "even as he is pure."

It is written, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14). It does not say or even hint that this blessing will come upon any one but he that *doeth*; not he that tries and does not succeed, no, no! but they that do; to them alone belongs this right. He who is found there without a right, will be bound hand and foot and cast out. Although unbelievers will ridicule the idea, all true believers will steadily march onward to perfection, notwithstanding their cry to the contrary. What a joyful consolation to have this sure word of the Lord to support this noble, saving principle of truth! It is worth more than oceans of the sayings of men.

It is one thing to acknowledge this God-given truth, but quite another to really *do*. Remember the promise is only to them that do; not to the ones saying Lord, Lord, but to those *doing* the will of the Father. This work calls for all pride and anger, in fact for all self, to be put away. How foolish to

let a little self-importance stand between us and such a glorious future as portrayed in the blessed word of the Lord! How apt human nature is to think too highly of self! Will we sell our birth-right for such an insignificant mess of pottage?

The time is so short that it should all be used in searching self, and comparing self with the plain demands of the Word. Are we like our Master yet? When temptation comes do we always have the plain, saving truth at our command? and can we say, as did He, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"? If we do not thus have the Word at our command, we had better hasten to become so conversant with the practical teachings that they will flash upon our mind at every temptation. We should be constantly meditating upon the law of the Lord until it will be ever-present with us: thus we shall be enabled to become like unto our Master—pure and holy. Nothing short of this will secure for us an eternal home on earth when it is beautifully clad in glorious Edenic beauty and eternal light.

Oh, the glory, unspeakable glory! Wonderful beyond all compare! A continual wonder of amazement, filling us with increasing happiness as the "seven thunders" unveil to our mental vision the now veiled wonders of the great eternal future of the grand and glorious plan of an All-wise, Omnipotent God! Brethren, can we afford to miss this magnificent future? Only consider, it will be con-



REV. L. T. NICHOLS

IN MEMORY OF

Our Founder

(Born October 1, 1844

Died February 28, 1912)

Only once within a lifetime does a leader strong appear
One who speaks straight from his conscience quelling all our doubts
and fears
Someone who makes truth his message, flinching not, though great
the cost,
Who with unabating courage comes right back when he has lost.
Men may thirst for such a leader, such a soul they can revere,
When the most fall by the wayside and so quickly disappear.

For the way is lined with pitfalls, and temptations at each turn;
Only will the noblest make it, for the goal is hard to earn.
But with fearless faith one traveled, and he stands before us all;
We will follow his direction, answering the heavenward call.

tinually increasing; immeasurable in quantity; purest and best in quality; far beyond all that we can with our present capabilities, even ask or think. In view of this endless future, is anything too hard to do to obtain it? It was this that caused Abraham to offer his only son; Joseph to endure his trials; Daniel to enter the lion's den; the three Hebrew children, the fiery furnace; and Paul to suffer his many trials and the loss of *all* things that he might win Christ. Win Christ! Yes, when we win Him we have won all. All then will be ours.

If any are fainthearted with all this before them, they had better either get strong or else turn back at once, for no halfway work will ever secure for us such wonderful glory. He who says, "I cannot lay aside every weight; I cannot make a full surrender; I cannot cease from sin and become perfect," is saying he cannot keep the commandments of Jehovah, and thus saying he cannot enter the golden City; for Jesus says, "Blessed are they that do [My] commandments." They alone have a right to the tree of life and the aforementioned and faintly-pictured glory.

If we would always think of the grand results that are soon to follow, we then could do this work with the greatest of pleasure. To think of always doing things that will make us better and happier now, and then give us everlasting joy in the future, should not be counted as a burden but a delight. As we progress with this work, the yoke will grow easier and the burden lighter, until it will be one continual sunshine in the soul, and we can exclaim, "I delight to do thy will, O my God."

Hearts must be aglow. We must have such an interest in doing these things as nothing on earth can give. No human suggestions, or earthly wealth will be of such importance to us. The doing of the commandments will be first—uppermost—in every career and occupation of life.

The pleasures of sin are so fleeting and in the end bring trouble, disease and death. In contrast, pleasures of righteousness yield a hundredfold of joy and pleasure now, and in the "world to come" life everlasting, with a vigor of constitution with which to enjoy that which will surpass our fondest dreams. How little and meager is the one; and how amiable, desirable and altogether lovely the other. We can speak from experience, for we have tasted both. We can testify that the pleasures of righteousness far exceed the pleasures of sin; and here, in our mortal state, we have only begun to taste of their sweetness. To realize that they will always grow better and sweeter should increase our desire to be altogether righteous.

As we with loved ones enter Eternity's shore and grasp each other's hands in greeting with a

fondness never before experienced, we shall begin to realize upon a much larger and greater scale what blessings the righteous life yields.

The road is too narrow to allow any disobedience, but so wide that it will hold any amount of righteousness. As we are commanded to walk the narrow way to life, we must cease sinning or we shall find ourselves in the wrong way, and death instead of life will mark its ending. God is opening the gates of righteousness today, and each one should ask himself the question, Am I in reality entering through these gates of right doing? am I attending to this matter now? Can we say as in Psalm 119: 60, "I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments"? If ever there was a time when we needed to quicken our steps in the narrow way, it is now.

The ever-blessed good time coming is almost here; it is but a little distance in the future. It will soon burst upon us, and some will be taken by surprise. The signs which portend its coming are beginning to appear in sight, plain, strong and substantial. The nearer we approach, the more visible they become; the greater their grandeur, and more truly wonderful they appear. But, alas! alas! how few are really instructed sufficiently to detect their existence! How few are intelligently looking for the true signs of its coming!

With the blessings of eternal life on one hand, and the dark, dismal tomb on the other, O beloved brethren, can we not arise with determination to make a full and unconditional surrender of our entire being to the Lord? Let each one say by every act: Lord, from this time on I will be wholly Thine; my head to meditate upon Thy law day and night; my tongue to tell of Thy wondrous works and speak of Thy great goodness all the day long; my hands to carry this blessed help to others; my feet to guide and walk in the narrow way; my affections to be set on things above; my heart to be filled with gratitude to God for His wonderful goodness to His children; all I have and am to spend and be spent to obtain for self and others this richest of all blessings—life and glory everlasting in the world to come.

What a joy for us to give up all for! What a home for us to labor for! What a treasure to have our hearts upon! What a pleasure for us to be enraptured by! What a life for us to thrill over!

Soon the Master will be here, and will He find us watching, waiting, ready for His appearing? A few will be ready. To such my heart goes out in a thousandfold of love. Be of good cheer; we shall soon be home in glory together where one grand shake of the hands will give us more joy and pleasure than a thousand worlds like this. Amen.●

Redeeming the Time

JUST recently as I was glancing through a magazine, my eyes fell on an article which read, "You can't hold back the hands of time. Time always moves forward. And so do men who make the most of it." I wonder if we are making the best use of the time we have. Are we studying to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth? Are we working harder every day so as to be prepared for His coming? Are we continually going over the things which we have to do so as to keep them renewed in our minds?

It is too bad that rusty brains don't squeak; if they did, we would be able to tell more quickly when we were slipping.

God is speaking only to those who want more than this short fleeting life. If we are satisfied to eat and drink and tomorrow die, God has no interest in us. But if we want the things He offers, we must stop and amend our foolish ways and doings. We must come out from a world plunging to destruction and be separate, for we cannot serve two masters. We cannot travel with the masses and at the same time keep in the narrow way that leads to life.

Many people do not have enough time; others

have too much, and do not know what to do with it. But actually, there is just so much time in the world, and it is divided equally. No one has more time than someone else. The difference is that one person uses his time wisely, and when so used, there is not enough of it. Another uses it unwisely, and wastes it, and finds too much on his hands.

Time goes this way but once. Perhaps we do not realize this fact as we should. If we would avoid the calamity of being found sleeping on guard, we must make wise use of every moment as it comes to us. "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," said Jesus (Mark 13:35-37).

Paul gives wise advice concerning the use of our time: "Be most careful then how you conduct yourselves: like sensible men, not like simpletons. Use the present opportunity to the full, for these are evil days" (Eph. 5:15-16, NEB). Each of us can use his time to lay up a store of good deeds, lofty thoughts, noble convictions and kindly attitudes. Such accomplishments will endure; and seeing them, God will perpetuate our existence. Time will not take them away.

We can do nothing in the past; we can do nothing in the future. We have only the present moment. NOW is the time; let's make it count! ●●

From A Reader—

He Left Everything

One of Jesus' first instructions was, "Follow Me." "After this he went out, and saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; and He said to him, 'Follow Me.' And he left everything, and rose and followed him" (Luke 5:27-28, RSV)

When it came to making money, Levi was in the right job. He was a tax collector for the Roman government. He also realized his fellow Jews were highly displeased with his profession. The Roman tax system demanded a heavy share of the tax receipts for itself, but there was plenty left over for the collector, for we read that Levi arranged for a great feast for Jesus and invited many other guests to his home. Levi had done very well at his job, for it was a rewarding occupation.

The question often arises, Why did Levi respond so quickly and decisively to Jesus' invitation? Realizing that the Jewish leaders hated him, Levi might have wondered if tax collecting was wrong.

He might have heard Jesus say, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." That would make tax collecting right. But Jesus also said, "Render unto God the things which are God's."

The same problem confronts many of us today. Our jobs, with the ambitions that go with them, seem to demand so much of us in time, money and effort. The question then seems to be, Where does Caesar end and where does God's share come in?

So many of us are fearful we might render to God that which is Caesar's when we should be more concerned whether we render to Caesar that which is God's.

But what about Levi—what did he do? "He left everything, and rose and followed him." This is exactly what the Lord requires of us. "Come, take up thy cross, and follow me" (Luke 10:2). May we accept Jesus' invitation and leave self with its desires for riches, wisdom and fame and resolve to follow Him.

Then, as Levi's name was changed to Matthew, we shall also receive "a new name," if we are among those who overcome.

Mrs. E. S. Wausau, Wisconsin

Watch the Inner Forces

“KEEP thy heart”—thy inner forces—“with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life,” wrote the wise author of the book of Proverbs. The mind of man is rightly described as a station that relays the innermost forces of thought and motive.

The following passage written about 400 B. C. also depicts the brain as the center of man's real world. What one has within he never fails to show without. “And men should know that from nothing else but from the brain come joys, delights, laughter, lamentations. And by this, in especial manner, we acquire wisdom, and knowledge and see and hear and know what are foul and what are fair, what are sweet and what unsavory.... And by the same organ we become mad and delirious and fears and terrors assail us, some by night and some by day,.... and dreams and untimely wanderings, and cares that are not suitable and ignorance of present circumstances, destitution and unskillfulness. All these things we endure from the brain.”

The human organism apart from the brain would be void of understanding. In the same sense, a Christian apart from the controlling mind of Christ, bears only the name of Christ, nothing more. Paul could testify: “I can do everything God asks me to do with the help of Christ, who gives me strength and power.” Christ is the head of the church, His body. If we sever the head, we sever the body. As the mind controls the entire body, so Christ's teachings and moral conduct must govern all its members. For this reason, “let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5).

The mind will be barren soil unless continually enriched by the reading of the Word, by prayerful meditation, sincere exhortation, and daily discipline. Each of these is a strong germinating force, and will aid tremendously in producing much fruit. If we were to formulate the process psychologically, we should say that stimuli lead to concepts, beliefs, motives, and habits. And this mental activity influences our behavior under certain conditions.

Christ was no psychologist, limited to the outward manifestations of the human heart. “He knew

what was in man, and required no evidence from anyone about human nature” (John 2:25, Moffatt Bible). His highly cultivated mind was nurtured and nourished by the highest source, even Heaven itself, and with the power of the Holy Spirit He was able to read men's minds. Yet even He had to subdue the inner forces of temptation before He could qualify as a Teacher approved of God. And thoroughly stimulated by the words of wisdom from above, He formed right concepts, unflinching beliefs in God, pure motives and good habits, all of which reflected in His daily life.

The inner forces of man are classed as sensuous desires, urges, impulses, drives and appetites. These sponsored by closely connected motives reflect in voluntary acts of behavior.

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the hearts” (Prov. 21:2). Outwardly we may seem to be observing all the laws and precepts of God precisely. But God knows the motives which prompt our actions, and He pronounces them good or evil.

According to the inner forces we allow in our minds, we act. We help the needy, visit the sick, and perform our Christian duties. If we have the ability to sing, perform, or write we must do so. But always we must watch the inner forces. It is wrong to act for the glory which comes from being seen or heard. Let us each ask ourselves this searching question: not, What did I do? but, Why did I do it? A good act may stem from a wrong motive and that is sin. We must be sure our motives are pure.

In the Final Day of Account, actions and actions alone will weigh with the Lord. The Judge will lay bare the inner secrets of men, for “there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed,” even to the hidden motives behind our deeds.

The human mind is complex, and our behavior can easily be falsely interpreted. We may even deceive ourselves. It would be to our spiritual advantage to use all our effort to gain an understanding of all our motives. The better we understand our inner life, the better able we will be to govern our outer life.

We might compare the process with farming. Much work is involved. The land must be cleared, plowed and cultivated before it can yield the desired crop. The land left to itself will not bear fruit. Likewise the human mind left to its own devices will not reproduce the Christ-life. The mind forces must have proper culture and discipline before our words will be words of life and our actions right in the sight of God.

If the inner forces are influenced by wrong stim-

(Continued on page 10)

Melchisedec--Who Is He?

GOD? Christ? an angel? a spirit? a man? Who is Melchisedec?

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes him thus: "...king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" (Heb. 7:1-3). Of one fact we may be sure: Melchisedec still lives; he is here; and without Him we mortals should be in a helpless condition.

But exactly who is Melchisedec?

In Genesis 14 is the history of the battle of the kings, four against five, in which the twin towns of Sodom and Gomorrah were overrun and conquered. Lot, Abram's nephew, and his family were among the prisoners of war. Hearing of his nephew's capture, Abram hastened to his rescue with his army, composed of his three hundred and eighteen servants. Abram not only rescued Lot, but also took a large booty. The narrative states that upon his return, he was met by Melchisedec, "priest of the most high God. . . . And he gave him tithes of all."

Students of Biblical history find it difficult to identify this Melchisedec with any individual that lived at that time. By far the more reasonable approach seems to be that he was a representative person, a point that we shall try to understand in the light of Scripture teaching. The introduction of Melchisedec in the Genesis narrative serves one vital purpose: it proves the existence of another order of priesthood, older, superior, and so superseding the Levitical priesthood, and the law which rests on it. This position agrees perfectly with the Biblical statement that the Mosaic or Ten-Com-

mandment law was "added" to the "law of faith" (Gal. 3:19; Rom. 3:27). The fact that the law of Moses was "added" presupposes that some other medium of authority existed already, to which the new was added. That medium was the law of faith. Melchisedec was its high priest; God Himself, its chief authority.

Philo, a Jewish religious philosopher of the First Century, identified Melchisedec as "a manifestation of the Logos." The Greek word *Logos* means "a word," "language," a "saying," "statement"—in plain words, the knowledge of God, His truth, His law, personified. Philo pictured the Logos as a real being, as Christ Himself, whom he believed had pre-existed. And so from this point of view Melchisedec would have been a real person. But the actual meaning of the word *Logos* does not permit this viewpoint.

The term "order of Melchisedec" occurs once in the Psalms (110:4), and six times in the book of Hebrews. Some religious persons believe that Christ Himself might be Melchisedec. But the very wording of Psalm 110:4 forbids this conclusion: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Christ was *after the order of* Melchisedec; He was not Melchisedec himself.

Divine Knowledge Personified

One rule basic to the study of the Bible is found in I Cor. 2:13, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Personification is one means which the Biblical writers use frequently to expound deep, spiritual truths.

This we learn by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." The entire chapter of Proverbs 8 is an outstanding example of personification. "Wisdom" is said to be speaking. "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She

standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. . . . Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men."

Wisdom is calling to everyone who will give a listening ear.

"Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. . . .

"Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. . . . I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. . . . I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures."

Then follows an identifying feature of this wisdom of God personified: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." What was set up from everlasting? What has existed and will continue to exist through all eternity? What is the "I" which the Lord possessed? It is Wisdom, knowledge personified and represented as an individual calling to the sons of men, pleading with them to hearken and turn to God.

Since this same feature is an identifying property of Melchisedec where he is described in Hebrews 7, it seems reasonable to believe that the two are parallel terms, Melchisedec being also a personification of the Wisdom of God.

We read further in Proverbs concerning the eternal duration of Wisdom: "When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. . . . I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."

This same identifying feature of eternalness is also part of the *logos* of John 1. "The Logos existed in the very beginning, the Logos was with God, the Logos was divine" (John 1:1, Moffatt). The description continues: "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (vs. 2-4, KJV). We learn from the Greek Lexicon that *logos* means: "the word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed. . . . A word,

. . . saying, statement, . . . a sentence, proposition, . . . speech, discourse." As used in the Bible, it does not refer to a person, as is commonly believed.

The *logos* is the wisdom of God which "was in the beginning with God" (John 1:2). Could it not also be the Melchisedec which is "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (Heb. 7:3)? Is it not the "I" of Proverbs which the Lord possessed "in the beginning of his way, before his works of old?" "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Prov. 8:22-23).

This same wisdom of God is sometimes in clear symbolism referred to as the Word, as we read in Psalm 119:9, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." The same application occurs in John 15: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. . . . If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." What are the conditions? "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." This Word is something to be obeyed.

We read again of this everlasting Word in Psalms: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. . . . The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. . . . Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." This Word of the everlasting God is the same eternal wisdom. And here lies another property which is common to both wisdom and Melchisedec: both are teachers. Of Melchisedec it is written, he "abideth a priest continually." A priest is a teacher. And of the word we read, "it giveth understanding unto the simple."

The Wisdom of God Termed "Christ"

The apostle Paul gives a comprehensive explanation of this same wisdom of God, using yet another symbolic term: Christ. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, . . . and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:1-4). That Rock, that *petra*, a large, massive rock, the wisdom or truth of God and the foundation of all that He is doing, is here personified and termed "Christ." This Christ existed from old time, as did Melchisedec. The passage says clearly that the meat and drink were spiritual, and con-

sistency would not permit us to claim that it was the literal, personal Christ. It is, rather, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). The personal Christ could not be in us; but the wisdom of God called "Christ," the words of eternal life, must be in us and a part of us.

Jesus stressed this same principle of spiritual meat in John 4. The disciples said to Him, "Master, eat." They had reference to literal food. But Jesus said to them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat?" Their minds were on physical food. But Jesus replied, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

In a spiritual sense, Melchisedec is Christ, but it is the spiritual Christ, not the man Christ. The man Christ was not born in Abraham's day; nor in Moses' day; but this same wisdom of God, this system of divine truth, also called Christ—"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27), the spiritual Christ, was known to both Abraham and Moses.

The King of Righteousness and Peace

We read in Hebrews 7: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham. . . ." We shall now read the following verse from Dr. Moffatt's translation, as it is somewhat clearer. "This Melchisedec is primarily a King of righteousness (such is the meaning of his name); then, besides that, King of Salem (which means King of peace)."

What is the meaning of the word Melchisedec? It comes from the Hebrew word *malki-tsedhek*, which means "king of righteousness." No man can justly claim this title; no human king has ever yet reigned in righteousness and peace. But the wisdom of God, the Word of God, is that supreme power. When Christ is established as King over all the earth, His will be a kingdom under the jurisprudence of Melchisedec, for, remember it was said of Him, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." If we allow God's righteousness and peace to dominate our hearts and lives, then Melchisedec, King of righteousness and peace, is reigning.

As we have pointed out, the truth of God is frequently personified, and among its many symbolic terms is the term Melchisedec, a most fitting name signifying "king of righteousness" and "king of peace." To this representative person, this holy priesthood, this system of divine Truth, Abraham paid a tenth of his goods. (Following this principle, the members of the Megiddo Church tithe one tenth of their income.) The incident reads that Mel-

chisedec went out to meet Abram, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him in the Vale of Siddim. Melchisedec—some person representing Melchisedec—presented Abram with bread and wine, blessed him in the name of "God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth," and "he gave him tithes of all."

Here Abraham confronted a priesthood of higher order than the Levitical. The Levitical priesthood was based on physical obedience to physical regulations, and disqualification was purely physical. Character had little to do with it. But the priesthood of Melchisedec is different. It is dependent on things that are physically indestructible. Character, thought, principle, personality—these are the basis of membership in the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:11-20). And Melchisedec is the personification of the ideal priest.

The Author of Hebrews makes a further point concerning Melchisedec, as contrasted with the Levitical priesthood. It is the point of duration. He who was a priest of the Mosaic arrangement served a term which ended at his death. He who qualifies to serve under the order of Melchisedec has joined himself to a priesthood that shall never pass away (Heb. 7:21-25).

Christ achieved this exalted position. He became a "priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." And as such Christ will be the ideal ruler for the age to come, after the order of the King of Righteousness and peace. It is now our opportunity to strive to meet these same qualifications that we may be part of this same eternal priesthood when righteousness and peace shall be worldwide. ●●

Watch the Inner Forces

(Continued from page 7)

uli, they will tend toward that which is low and groveling, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" which is "not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:16). Each of us by nature has such stimuli. We may be ambitious, and the inner force of desire will make that station of life uppermost. Or we may desire the praise of other men, or be greedy for wealth, be jealous or even vengeful. But any desire which in the smallest degree directs away from the central desire of being approved unto God must be suppressed and finally killed. Only in this way can we ever learn to say with Christ, "I do always those things that please my Father." ●●

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

Hanameel's Field

THE time was 532 B. C. The last pitiful remnants of the once good little kingdom of Judah were going to pieces as Zedekiah, the puppet king, was about to pay the penalty for rebellion against his lord, the king of Babylon. A ten years' siege had reduced the unhappy city to the last extremity; the hoped-for assistance from Egypt had failed to come, and famine made its slow kill day after day. Vain and unreasoning national pride was giving way to black despair and hopelessness. It looked like the end of all things; the nation was doomed and would never rise again. How could it? "After us the deluge." Still the futile resistance went on.

In this very bad spot was the Eternal's watchman, the heroic prophet Jeremiah, sticking to his unenviable post to the very end, for the sake of the very small remnant of honest men who dwelt in Jerusalem. He had consistently advised submission to the inevitable as the only sane course and the one approved by the Eternal, but his counsel was not popular. The machinations of a hostile nobility and military clique and the influence of a very few friends in high places kept him in an uncertain position, the invertebrate king imprisoning or releasing him according to the pressure of the hour. Just now he was "in," with little prospect of getting out until the city should change hands; but his counsel was unchanged. Jeremiah was too big a man for that.

Into the prison one day comes a visitor, one Hanameel, Jeremiah's cousin, with a little proposition. He has a field in the suburb of Anathoth which he wishes to sell, and according to the ancient Jewish land-laws, Jeremiah has the first right to its purchase. Would he buy it? Without hesitation, and probably to Hanameel's surprise, Jeremiah buys. The transaction is conducted with the utmost formality, with signatures before witnesses and the deeds carefully recorded and filed, just as in the happier days of peace and prosperity. Jeremiah goes back to his cell, and Hanameel goes his way with a broad smile, no doubt, at his cousin's gullibility. Money you can spend, but land—why, with Chaldeans overrunning the country for the last ten years and the city about to fall, the best of fields were not worth a farthing a dozen. It was almost a shame to take the money, but it was just

like finding seventeen shekels of silver. It certainly looked like history's craziest deal in real estate; Jeremiah must be losing his wits in his old age.

But Jeremiah was not mad; he was the sanest man in Jerusalem in those mad times. He knew what he was doing. He knew perfectly well that he was buying a regiment of heavily-armed Chaldeans along with the field, men whom it would be rather hard to evict. More, he knew he would never claim or cultivate or reap any profit from the purchase. Never would he build a house thereon; his last days were to be spent far, far away, in the land of the Nile. Why, then, in the name of reason, did he make such an impossible investment?

The fact is, he was preaching, by example, a sermon of hope and cheer, one of the most cheerful messages ever delivered by this much-maligned Prophet. Jeremiah is popularly considered a prophet of gloom and desolation, "doleful Jeremiah." To be perfectly frank, there wasn't much in his day—externally—to be cheerful about. He told them the bald and unpalatable facts when he prophesied of the inevitable desolation to come as the result of their disobedience, and the people wouldn't believe him. He also offered them consolation and hope, and still they wouldn't believe him; they wouldn't be heartened. Yet he stuck to his post and refused to be silenced, even at the risk of his life.

The thing that made Jeremiah cheerful amid such cheerless surroundings was *foresight*. Through divine inspiration he could see at least seventy years farther ahead than any other man of his day. He knew that the Captivity was a fact, and had been for twenty-one years, although his stubborn countrymen were reluctant to admit it. He knew that the complete destruction of the city was inevitable. But he also knew that the dark night would have an end, that when Babylon was a memory Israel would inhabit the old familiar places.

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land."

Things would come out right after all. The Captivity with its miseries was but an interlude. To show publicly his faith in the future, he bought a field, a share in the country.

"Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe

evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, . . . for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord."

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Multiply Jerusalem in the tenth year of Zedekiah by the breadth of the earth, and you have The World of Today. Desperation and hopelessness fill the hearts of men everywhere. "Now the half gods rule, loosed in a tempest of our own making. It is the day of the Black Faith, a religion of neglect and despair. The creed of brutality and force drives its millions with the fury of a holy war. Humanity is pretty sick, and while planes, tanks and battle-ships may save the patient—just this once again—they cannot ever cure the disease." This from a writer of the world is a sample of the Great Fear which is abroad today. Men know that if this sort of thing goes on, not only our way of life but our whole civilization is doomed. And this sort of thing bids fair to go on and on and on.

Yet even in this darkness and chaos we hear the cheery voice of the watchman and see a gleam of light, the same light kindled by Jeremiah when in the face of all common sense he purchased Hanameel's field. For there is a field to be bought today, and right now is the time to make the investment. The price will never be lower. "The kingdom of heaven," said Jesus, "is like unto a treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13:44).

"The kingdom of heaven"—that's our earth, our earth made over new. "He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45:18). That is His purpose, and it will be carried out. The treasure—that's eternal life. "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land." The blessings of immortal life shall be enjoyed right here in America, in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and the isles afar off. Peace, plenty, stability and justice shall cover the earth, eternally.

This is no mere pleasant dream; the Eternal has given His word—nay, He has taken His oath, and it will come. And soon! Through the dark and bloody history of our planet the Divine Plan has been silently working itself out; all else is incidental or accidental, man's own doing, misdoing and undoing—not reckoned. The present state of confusion is but an interlude, the darkness before the dawn. The sort of thing we have been having since creation is not going on and on and on. There is coming a change, and things are going to get better and better and better. All will be well. Will

our faith in these racking times match that of Jeremiah?

Buy this field, brother! Buy a share in the Kingdom of God, in a glorified earth. It will be the greatest investment you ever made; you'll never regret it. It will take all you have and are, from this time on; but it is worth it. The price is a consecrated life, "a new creature," every thought, act, word and feeling subjected to the will of God. Put off the "old man" and put on the new. The new order of the ages is only for those who prepare themselves for it. The field may at this moment be occupied by the enemy, but his power is brief and the Eternal will reckon with him. We need have no fears. When He takes a hand, a short work will He make upon the earth. Buy it; the title is sound and sure. When every other investment, every other value has crumbled, its development will have just begun. Every truth will some day be accepted, every right will some day be established, every wrong some day will be righted, and every evil some day will be abolished. In praying, in working, and in hoping, we must not faint. The delays may be many, the obstacles often seem insurmountable, but nothing is impossible for God who holds the destiny of the nations in His hand.

Buy this field, brother; buy it for joy! There's a treasure in it. ●●

Words to WALK By

Make a practice of confessing your own sins, not your neighbors'.

Still religion, like still water, is first to freeze.

One reason why so many are against the Bible is that they know the Bible is against them.

It is not what we take up, but what we give up, that makes us rich.

It matters not what you lose if you save your soul; it matters not what you save if you lose it.

Sow an act and reap a habit. Sow a habit and reap character. Sow character and reap destiny.

Men will wrangle for religion, write for it, fight for it, die for it; anything but live for it.

Think more about what is thy duty than what is thy difficulty.

Little things are the hinges on which great results turn.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

Baptism

"THERE is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism," wrote Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (4:5). It is this baptism, the "one baptism" that we wish to emphasize in this section of our Bible study.

To the majority of Christian denominations baptism is an initiatory rite upon joining the church. When this rite is conducted by a Baptist clergyman, the candidate is immersed in water, but if the chosen denomination is Methodist, the individual is merely sprinkled with water. All would agree that the rite is only symbolic, the outward sign of an inward change, the beginning of a new life to be lived within the bounds of whatever church has been chosen.

Evangelistic ministers often make it appear that the baptized convert is immediately a "new creature," a "new man." But our observation and our reason tell us that such a change is not wrought in a moment. Baptism is not a miraculous cleansing of the soul, it does not literally remove sin. Unless a change of heart accompanies the conversion and baptism, the baptized individual is as much a sinner as before.

John the Baptist claimed no saving virtue for his baptism. It was merely an outward sign of a heartfelt repentance. The worshiper must bear good fruit or there would be no salvation: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," or as phrased in **The Living Bible**, "Before being baptized, prove that you have turned from sin by doing worthy deeds. Don't try to get by as you are, thinking, 'We are safe for we are Jews—descendants of Abraham'" (Matt. 3:7-8).

In our study last month we learned about John's baptism and baptism as it was practiced during Jesus' lifetime. We will continue in this issue with further evidence on the use of baptism during the Apostles' ministry, following our outline.

II. Baptism in Scripture

C. The Apostles' Baptism (cont'd)

- D. Baptism and the Holy Spirit
- III. Baptism In Post-Scripture Times
 - A. In the Early Christian Church
- IV. Baptism For Today?

Baptism was not essential to fellowship with Christ during His ministry. John's Gospel states flatly that Jesus Himself did not baptize (4:2) but His disciples did. For nearly four thousand years included in the Bible record before Christ there is no command to baptize. And since the so-called Apostolic Commission was for a limited period of time, there must be a deeper significance to baptism as used in the Scriptures.

With these facts in mind, we will continue our study.

II. BAPTISM IN SCRIPTURE

C. The Apostles' Baptism (Cont'd)

In our previous lesson on this subject, we studied the conditions that were to be met before baptism. We learned that the convert must first **repent**. True repentance means changing; the baptism was a symbol of the change already wrought.

The candidate must also **believe**. A certain amount of instruction was necessary before baptism since one could not believe without knowing. Philip explained the Scriptures to the Ethiopian eunuch before he permitted him to be baptized; Paul was instructed by Christ Himself before being baptized; Paul and Silas "spoke unto him [the Philippian jailer] the word of the Lord" before he was baptized. **These instances show that instruction definitely preceded baptism.** Others also could be cited.

Baptism after Pentecost had two distinguishing features: It was usually accompanied by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and it was not limited to the Jews. We will review a few case histories.

a. **Baptism "en masse".** The first baptism following Pentecost must have been quite a spectacle. We are not told the details as to how so large a baptism was accomplished, but it was surely a rewarding experience for the apostles who had so recently lost their Master. The mass baptism fol-

lowed Peter's call to repentance: "Each one of you must turn from sin, return to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; . . . Then Peter preached a long sermon, telling about Jesus and strongly urging all his listeners to save themselves from the evils of their nation. And those who believed Peter were baptized—about 3,000 in all!" (Acts 2:38, 40-41, *Living Letters*).

This incident also proves two other points we have made concerning baptism: They must first repent, or turn from their sin and also be instructed. Notice that "Peter preached a long sermon" before they were received into the church by baptism.

b. The baptism of Lydia. The baptism of Lydia during the missionary visit of Paul and Silas to Macedonia is notable since she was the first recorded convert in Europe. Here again we note that before she was baptized she heard the apostles preaching the Gospel and "that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14). She not only heard, but she accepted what she heard and acted upon it, and was baptized to symbolize the change in her life.

D. Baptism and the Holy Spirit

It is to be noted that following Pentecost baptism and the Holy Spirit usually went together. In the majority of instances where it is recorded that the apostles baptized, the Holy Spirit power was received just before or immediately after the baptism. In the case of Lydia whose baptism is reviewed above, the Holy Spirit is not mentioned. However, this is the exception and not the rule. We will consider some of the instances where it is mentioned as accompanying the baptism.

1. The baptism of Paul. The conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus is one of the more familiar incidents of the New Testament, so we will omit the details. We are here concerned only with his baptism and the Holy Spirit. His baptism is recorded in Acts 9, verses 17 and 18. Ananias, a faithful disciple, was instructed by Jesus Himself to go to Paul, and he said, "Brother Saul [Paul], the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight, and arose, and was baptized."

That he did receive the Holy Spirit at this time is evidenced by the fact that in the following verses he immediately started preaching the Gospel.

Reporting his own baptism Paul quotes Ananias as saying, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and

be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). The "washing" was symbolic of putting away all sin, washing away his old sinful past and beginning a new life. It is "the washing of water by the word" that cleanses the Christian, as Paul himself wrote in Ephesians 5:26-27.

2. The baptism of Cornelius. An Italian named Cornelius was the first Gentile admitted to the Apostolic Church and baptized by Peter. The Lord had showed Peter in a vision that Gentiles as well as Jews were to be accepted into the Church because "God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35).

In this case, the Holy Spirit was received before the baptism, for we read that "while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word" (v. 44). **Again, note they were instructed before baptism; they must first know in order to believe.** "Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (vs. 46-48). **Also note they were baptized "in the name of the Lord."** The trine baptism, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," does not once appear in the Acts, leading many Bible students to believe that it was spuriously added to the words of Jesus at a later date in support of the doctrine of the Trinity.

3. Re-baptism in Ephesus. In Acts 18 and 19 we find an instance where some had received the baptism of John and had not received the Holy Spirit. They had been taught by Apollos, a converted Jew. Paul said to them, "Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. . . . Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them. . . ." (vs. 1-6).

Note again they were baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus," only. No mention is made of a trine formula. After being baptized, they received the Holy Spirit.

4. Paul and baptism. From the recorded instances in the Acts of the Apostles, it would appear that baptism was in general use in the early days of the

Church. But a statement of Paul's to the Corinthian brethren leads us to believe that he did not consider literal baptism in water too important. (His words apparently refer to the group mentioned above.)

These are his words: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel. . . ." (I Cor. 1:14-17). Christ sent Paul "not to baptize," but to "preach the gospel." To preach the Gospel, the knowledge that will save, was of greater importance to Paul than to be baptized in water.

III. BAPTISM IN POST-SCRIPTURE TIMES

From what records are available it appears that in the period immediately following the ministry of the apostles, baptism was practiced. The Church hierarchy generally agreed that the rite should be continued, but the manner in which the ceremony was conducted varied.

A. Baptism in the Early Church

Baptism was a serious matter to the early Church fathers and it was not to be taken lightly by the laity. The earliest known description of baptism outside the New Testament is found in a document known as the **Teaching of the Twelve Apostles**, commonly spoken of as the **Didache**. The original manuscript is believed to have been written about the beginning of the second century.

According to a contemporary writer, "the book begins with moral instruction, speaking of the two ways of life and of death, and describing the way in which a Christian ought to behave. The early Christians, like the Jews, had a probationary period for would-be converts, during which candidates for baptism were instructed and their lives examined to see if they were worthy to be received into the Church . . . before the baptism, moreover, the one who baptizes and the one who is being baptized must fast, and any others who can." **

The same writer gives us a further description of baptism in an early church (probably Essene) from **The Apostolic Tradition** of Hippolytus, a Roman liturgical document, dated at the beginning of the third century. The description gives us an idea of how seriously the early Christians regarded their religion.

"Admission to the catechumenate [ecclesia] was strictly supervised. Candidates were brought normally by Christian friends, who had to vouch for

them. The candidates were examined by 'teachers' as to their motives in coming forward for admission to the Church, and their manner of life. This period of preparation normally lasted three years, but it could be shortened if the candidate showed good will and perseverance. Each period of instruction ended with a prayer, after which the teacher, whether he was an ecclesiastic or a layman, laid his hands on the candidates and dismissed them.

"Of these candidates, those who were chosen to receive baptism (the **electi**), were again examined as to their manner of life. They then received daily exorcism and laying on of hands, and when the day for baptism drew near, each one was exorcised by the bishop himself. Those who were to be baptized on Sunday were instructed to wash and cleanse themselves on the previous Thursday and to fast on Friday and Saturday. A final reunion of the **electi** was held on Saturday evening, presided over by the bishop. . . . The whole night was spent in vigil, with prayer, reading of the scriptures and instruction. At the cockcrowing, there was a prayer over the water and the candidates were baptized."***

Just how long this early church clung to such a program for accepting new members is not known.

Clement of Alexandria, writing about the middle of the third century after Christ spoke of baptism as "enlightenment, involving rebirth, cleansing and the remission of sins." He said, "When we are baptized, we are enlightened; being enlightened, we are made sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; and being made perfect, we are made divine. . . . This ceremony is often called a 'free gift,' since by it the punishments due to our sins are remitted; 'enlightenment,' since by it we behold the holy light of salvation, that is, through it we are enabled to see the divine; we call it 'perfection,' needing nothing more; for what more does he need who has the knowledge of God."

From this quotation it is evident that Clement thought baptism wrought some miraculous change in the individual. Such writings no doubt influenced the people into thinking of the rite of baptism as a cleansing ceremony resulting in sinlessness rather than as an initiation into a life dedicated to obedience to Christ and God. Paganism was already having influence on the young Christian Church.

Origen, another prelate who followed Clement in time, was considered to be a "great theologian, philosopher, and mystic, and a prolific writer." These he may well have been, but he was sadly lacking in a knowledge of the Scriptures. He de-

** Brockett, Lorna, *The Theology of Baptism*, pp. 28, 48.

scribed baptism as a "new Exodus, and the means by which the convert is set free from the devil."

Cyril of Jerusalem, a monk who became bishop of Jerusalem about the middle of the fourth century, held that baptism was essential for salvation. His description of the merits of baptism strays far from baptism as known and practiced by the Apostles. He said baptism was "a ransom for captives; the remission of offences; the death of sin; the regeneration of the soul; the garment of light; holy indissoluble seal; the chariot to heaven; the luxury of Paradise; the gift of adoption." He further stated that the water of baptism "was at once your grave and your mother. In this rite in which we imitate in a figure the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, salvation is brought about not in a figure but in reality."

With each succeeding century, the Church strayed further and further from the teachings of Christ and the Apostles until the meaning of the rite of baptism was lost and the hierarchy of an apostate church became more concerned with such trivialities as to whether a convert should be immersed or sprinkled and whether or not anyone could be saved without having been baptized.

IV. BAPTISM FOR TODAY?

Many denominations of our day lay much stress on the importance of water baptism, but we take the position that water baptism is not necessary or commanded today. During the Apostolic age immersion in water was used as a symbol of the death to sin, being buried in the "water of life," the truth as taught by Christ. May not the command to baptize have ended when other phases of the same command of Christ ended—with the end of the Apostolic or Jewish Age?

A. Why No Literal Baptism?

Water baptism was never sufficient for salvation. It was only an outward form, a symbol of the intent to change. If baptism was not followed by right living, the baptized person would no more gain salvation than the unbaptized one.

The only command found in the Bible concerning baptism is contained in Jesus' words commonly known as the "Great Commission." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they

shall recover" (Mark 16:15-18).

It is evident from these words of Jesus that baptism and Holy Spirit power went together. To "cast out devils," "speak with new tongues," to "take up serpents" safely, to "drink any deadly thing" without being harmed and "to lay hands on the sick" and have them recover required a supernatural power, the power of the Holy Spirit. Without that power the believer would be as powerless to perform miracles as is the Christian believer today. Water baptism was a command for that day, but in view of the Bible teaching concerning the one baptism, is it not reasonable that when the Holy Spirit power ceased, the command to baptize ceased also?

1. The "Great Commission" fulfilled. It is commonly accepted that the four Gospels were not written until some time after the events took place. Some 30 years after the time of Christ, Mark is believed to have been the first to have recorded what he had witnessed. The last verse of the book of Mark records the fulfillment of the command quoted above: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

Mark had firsthand knowledge of the events since he accompanied the apostles on some missionary trips, perhaps more than are recorded. He had been witness to miracles and had no doubt experienced the Holy Spirit power himself, hence he knew of what he wrote. The "signs" that followed the preaching were the gifts of the Holy Spirit as enumerated above: they could speak in other tongues; they could take up serpents; they could drink poison without harm; they could heal the sick.

Historical evidence supports the view that no one has been able to perform such miracles since Bible times. Many claims have been made for casting out devils, speaking in tongues and healing the sick (especially the latter), but few of these exorcists and divine healers ever dared claim the power to take up serpents or drink poison, thus proving that they were only deceivers, for had they the power to perform miracles they could have performed the whole category of miracles.

To be a messenger you must know the message.

TEST YOURSELF

1. Cite three incidents where baptism and the Holy Spirit power were associated.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

The Pre-Existence of Christ

FACT or FABLE?

WITH this article we conclude our discussion of the pre-existence of Christ. (The paragraphs in boldface type are quotations from our correspondent; the lightface type which follows is the editor's answer.)

"Hebrews 1:10 (refer to Heb. 1:8) also affirms that Christ 'didst found the earth in the beginning,' and that 'the heavens are the work' of His hands."

We cannot believe that Christ existed when the physical earth and heavens were created. And we do not believe that Heb. 1:10 contradicts this position.

Let us study the chapter. The author of the book of Hebrews begins with *God*, who at sundry times had spoken to the fathers by the prophets, and in recent times had spoken to that generation by His Son. In verses 3-6 he pictures Christ's greatness, His exaltation by the Father, His sonship by birth, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit (note that nothing is said about His pre-existence).

Verse 8 reveals the endurance of His throne when once established upon earth, and the impeccability of His righteous administration. Verse 9 pictures His own flawless character, His superior accomplishment in holy living, and reveals His reward: "Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And there the succession of thoughts about Christ ends.

Then, referring again to God, there follows a quotation from Psalm 102, vs. 25-27: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Some of the newer versions place Heb. 1:10-12 in quotation marks, as a passage referring to God.

And elsewhere: "Lord, thou hast laid the foundations of the earth" (Knox translation). And in a footnote we read, "It is not clear why these words should be understood as addressed to the Messiah, unless this was suggested by the use of the word 'Lord.'" Note that verse 7 concerns the role of the angels, verses 8 and 9 concern the role of the Son, and verses 10-12 concern God. The work which Christ will accomplish in the future age, as Father of the world to come, the new creation, will be the only part He will have in the creation of this earth. The physical creation of the earth took place ages before He was born.

"John 1:14 gives further evidence that Christ pre-existed: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' The Word, that is, Christ, which was in heaven with God, became human flesh in Christ and dwelt among men."

No, this text makes no such claim. The Greek word *logos*, here translated Word, we have already shown to be "a word, speech, matter, reason," in no way defined or identified with an individual.

How then did the Word or *Logos* dwell among men with Christ's advent into the world? By His complete devotion to His Father, the Word of God became hands "that grip you, eyes that pierce you, a tongue that thrills you, and feet that carry you." Through Jesus' life and teaching the insights of the Old Testament became real and vital in a human life.

The Psalmist cried, "The Lord is my shepherd." Jesus alone could say, "I am the good shepherd." Jesus alone could say, "I am the resurrection and the life." He is more than the written Word, more than the divine promises; He is the fulfillment. "These are they," said He, speaking of the Scriptures, "that testify of me."

No longer was the truth imprisoned in the printed word. Now it was to walk in flesh and blood, and in the loveliness of a sinless life. And

through His incomparable teachings the living Word became flesh, it became eatable, could be partaken of and assimilated more completely than had been possible up to the time of Christ's advent into the world. Hence it could be said, He was "full of grace and truth."

"Jesus Christ was God incarnate in human flesh because He claimed the prerogatives and the authority of God. For example, He said He had the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:10) and that He would come in the clouds of heaven, that He would sit at the right hand of power (Mark 14:62), implying authority to judge men (John 5:22). Several times Jesus asserted that He Himself had the authority and power to raise the dead (John 6:38, 40, 54; 10:17-18)."

All that you have stated is true, but this is no proof that He was God, or that He had any existence before His birth. Jesus had power and authority because He received it from God. "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, 27-28). Again He stated, "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).

Christ will come in the clouds of heaven (Matt. 16:27), and He will have authority to judge men. In fact, judgment will be one of His chief missions: "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). Even during His earthly ministry Jesus had the power to raise the dead, but this power certainly came from His Father, for Jesus prayed at the time He raised Lazarus, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me" (John 11:41). He certainly was not praying to Himself, or to a deity of which He was a part.

"Jesus possessed attributes which belong to God alone. During His life He demonstrated power over nature by turning water into wine (John 2:7-11), by stilling the stormy waves (Mark 4:39); power over physical diseases (Mark 3:10); and over death by raising Lazarus from the grave (John 11:43-44). All this demonstrated His omnipotence."

In ancient Israel, the prophets Elisha and Eli-

jah performed miracles equally powerful. For example, the occasion when Elisha fed one hundred men in a famine (II Kings 4:43); when Elijah shut up heaven that it rained not for three and one half years (I Kings 18); when Elijah raised from death the widow's son (I Kings 17). Elisha cured Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy, but no one suggests that Elisha was therefore omnipotent, or that either he or Elijah was eternal and a God incarnate because they could perform these miracles. Could not God give the same power to His Son which He gave to His prophets?

"Finally, Christ accepted the worship of men, which is due to God alone. He commended rather than rebuked doubting Thomas, who fell at his feet and declared in awe, 'My Lord and my God!' (John 20:28). This was the same Jesus who had scorned Satan's invitation to worship him by replying, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve' (Matt. 4:10)."

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's invitation to fall down and worship him, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve," He would not need to be saying that no other personage could be worshiped except the great Eternal God. Revelation 3:9 reveals this fact. 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 Christ accepting worship does not prove Him to be a part of a trinity.

"Christ was with the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings. Paul makes this very clear in his statement that they 'did all drink of the same spiritual drink; for they [that is, the Israelites] drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ' (I Cor. 10:4). Could language be more plain than this? Jesus is spoken of as following Israel. He could certainly not follow them if He did not exist then. If He was merely something planned for, in the mind of the Father at that time, how could Jesus be spoken of as being with Israel back there? The very idea makes nonsense out of simple Scripture statements."

Here again is the term "Christ" applied to the gospel which He exemplified during His life. It is the spiritual Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). The man Christ had not yet been "raised up from among His brethren," as God promised Moses at that same time. And if we must take the passage literally, as the trinitarians would have us do, and apply the literal Christ, how could the children of Israel have eaten and drunk the Deity? (John 6:51). Note that Paul specifies a "spiritual" rock (I Cor. 10:4).

"Jesus as He was in contact with Nicodemus said, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John 3:16). This statement presupposes a pre-existence. Take the pre-existence out of it, and it loses its meaning. But admit that Jesus pre-existed, and you are struck with a wondrous thought."

No. Just the opposite! How can you acknowledge that God had an only begotten Son if the Son pre-existed? What father can beget a child that is as old as he is? No, Christ was not a Deity. He did not exist until born of the Virgin Mary.

Forget the non-Scriptural doctrine of the pre-existence and accept Christ as God gave Him to us—a human being born of the Virgin Mary, a man who learned obedience by the things which He suffered, who left us a perfect example of the type of life that is pleasing to the heavenly Father, and all is harmony and reason.

"When Jesus came, He came as the 'last Adam' (I Cor. 15:45). He came to win the battle where Adam lost."

Your statement reflects the thinking of theology, alluding to a belief in Original Sin, but this doctrine is not Scriptural. The divine plan is definitely stated, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezek. 18:20). Adam was not created perfect any more than any other man is born perfect. The name "Adam" in the creation narrative merely represents all humanity (it is translated "man" in Job 14:1), and we know only too well the weaknesses of human nature.

For further discussion of the topic of Original Sin, send for our pamphlet, *"Original Sin—Is It Scriptural?"*

"Just as Adam could be tempted, though perfect, so Jesus, though perfect, was 'tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin' (Heb. 4:15). Jesus had to face

these temptations without using His divine power to help Himself. He used His divine power only to help others. The tempter knew that He had power to change stones into bread. This would involve an act of creation, and only God can create."

Because Jesus had power to create is no evidence that He was God. As stated before, the prophets Elijah and Elisha performed miracles which involved creating. For example, when Elisha increased the oil to fill the pots, or when Elijah fed the men during a famine. These were acts of creation, but these prophets were no part of God. There is no Biblical evidence that "only God can create."

"We can thank God that while Jesus was on earth He was the God-man, 'God the Son.'"

No, indeed! No! Nowhere in the Bible is Christ referred to as "God the Son." He is always the "Son of God."

"As a final buttress to the pre-existence of Christ, I want to quote what John the Baptist said of Him. 'After me cometh a man who is preferred before me: for he was before me' (John 1:30). Note: 'he was before me.'"

You would have us believe that though John was Jesus' senior in respect to time, Christ actually had lived through endless ages before Him.

This is another instance of poor translation. Although most of the translators follow the *King James Version*, the *Emphatic Diaglott* translates this verse, "After me comes a Man, who is in advance of me; for he is my Superior." Not that Christ lived through countless ages before John, but that He was superior in rank.

"We can thank God that He sent the One who had been with Him through eternity to become our Saviour. It took the death of one member of the Godhead, in other words, the death of the God-man, to make it possible for us to be assured of eternal life."

No! No! NO! Salvation is a personal matter. It is for us to live as Christ lived and to die as Christ died—to sin. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:10-11). And, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he [Christ] is pure" (I John 3:3).

No, Jesus did not come down from heaven to be born of the Virgin Mary. He had no existence until His birth, any more than any other man or woman pre-exists! ●● *The End.*

Christian Youth in These Times

The Missing Money

IT was Friday evening, and Brady had just finished mowing Mr. Hasser's lawn. He wiped his forehead with the back of his hand and stared at a job well done.

"Can we go to the park now?" asked his friend Chester. He stood up under the shade tree by the driveway where he had been reading a book.

"No, I have one more yard to mow," Brady replied. "Then I'll have enough money to pay for my piano lesson tomorrow."

"What!" exclaimed Chester, sitting back down on the grass. "Do you mean you have to mow yards for it?"

Brady nodded. "It's just next door at Mrs. Gould's." Brady winced at the thought of her. "I wish I didn't have to do *her* lawn, though," he grumbled.

"Then why do you do it?" Chester asked. "What's your dad do? Doesn't he give you money if you just ask for it?"

"My dad thinks I'll learn more about how to use money if I earn my own. So he lets me go out and mow lawns. I like to do it. And—I like the piano lessons."

"You're queer, mowing lawn for Mrs. Gould. Everybody says she's mean and crabby."

"I know she is hard to get along with, but she doesn't have many friends. And none of the other boys will do it for her. Then another thing," Brady went on, "if we want to have friends, we must learn to be friendly. And I need the money for my lesson tomorrow."

"Yes," replied Chester. "But I could do without her kind," and he returned to his reading.

"Come on over with me, Mother will have a glass of lemonade for us," invited Brady as he started down the driveway and across the street.

Brady rested a few minutes while they both enjoyed the lemonade.

"Well, I guess I'd better get at it," he said. He began wheeling his small power mower next door.

It was hot, and Brady was still tired. But this was the last lawn for today.

He knocked at Mrs. Gould's door, but there was no answer. He knocked again, and waited, and at last she came.

"Oh, there you are," she frowned. "Why didn't you come earlier in the day? I wanted to go to town this afternoon. Now you're going to make me late."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Gould, I didn't know about your plans. But you can go now," said Brady quietly.

"Now you know, young man, you don't mow one strip of this lawn unless I'm out here. Well, let's get started," she shouted. "Now be careful around my flowers," she cautioned. "These marigolds, and those mums, and those carnations—if you knew all the hours I spent nursing them along, you'd—" Mrs. Gould walked close behind Brady.

"Clip the grass along this wall. . . . Yes, and trim this sprig." She stood over him until it was finished. "Now look out for that tree—it's a mimosa. And—don't you bark that dogwood!" Her high, raspy voice was very audible above the sound of the lawn mower.

Then she spied Chester, leaning up against a tree out by the road. "Young man, what are you doing there?" she yelled. She seemed to notice him for the first time.

"I'm just waiting for Brady," Chester muttered.

"Then get out of the way!" she snapped. "I don't like more than one boy around at a time."

Chester dragged himself across the yard to Brady's house and sat down on the front steps to wait while Mrs. Gould made every round with Brady.

It was somewhat irritating to have her steadily behind him. Brady stopped and tied his sneaker. "I should quit," he said to himself. "I don't have to put up with this." He looked toward the tree out by the road and saw that Chester was not there. "He's gone to tell Mom how Mrs. Gould talks to me." Giving Mrs. Gould a sideways glance, he was tempted to tell her what he thought of her, but then he thought of the Bible verse he had learned several years ago—"Let patience have her perfect work"

—and he thought of his piano lesson, and resolved to be patient. The job could last only about so long, and Mrs. Gould paid him well.

In two hours he had finished the lawn and had the grass neatly packed in boxes.

Mrs. Gould gave a sigh of relief. "Now I can go to town," she said, opening the garage door. "Look in on the kitchen table and get the envelope. Your money is in it. And let my cat out. Oh, never mind, I've got to come in and get my purse anyway." Mrs. Gould opened the kitchen door and entered, Brady following close behind her. He walked over to the table to get the envelope—but there was none there.

"Mrs. Gould—I—I—there doesn't seem to be any envelope here." His eyes darted quickly over the table, and around the room, and back to Mrs. Gould.

"Now, young man, that envelope was right here on this table. What do you think I am? Do you think I'm going to pay you twice?"

"But I—I—I didn't get it, Mrs. Gould," Brady replied in a half-whisper.

"Then your buddy must have it," Mrs. Gould scowled. "Come on out, you have delayed me already. It's time I was going."

"But what—what—ah—what about—my pay?" Brady stammered.

"That's *your* problem," she snorted as she climbed into the car and started the engine.

Brady felt a tight knot in his stomach as he walked home. Chester wasn't around—he must have given up and gone home. Brady put the mower away, and tried to think what to do. Chester wouldn't steal, he thought—or would he? "I don't even have any way of proving that the money was there to begin with," he told himself.

Brady clenched his fist. Why couldn't she believe him when he said he hadn't taken the money? His word was as good as Mrs. Gould's. He cringed at the memory of her accusing voice. That's what hurt the most—to be accused of stealing.

"Maybe Chester *did* take it, thinking he would have some fun with me; I'll call him." Brady ran for the house.

But his heart sank again when he learned that Chester had gone to spend the weekend with a friend.

"Oh, well," he sighed. "If Chester had taken it thinking it would be fun, he would have told me before now. And if he stole it, he wouldn't tell me anyway. But . . ." Brady explained his problem to his mother. "And," he moaned, "what will I do about my piano lesson tomorrow? I used up all the money I had to buy those new lesson books."

He felt miserable and could hardly sleep. He

fought the natural feeling inside him to get even. That would do him no good. He didn't want to be like Mrs. Gould. Yes, it might be easy to break a window, or pull up some flowers, or—but then he would be doing wrong. So far, all the fault for the missing money lay with someone else.

"What if Chester did take the money—how will I ever forgive him?" It was the hardest thing he had ever thought of forgiving. But he was determined to do his best.

Saturday came, and he said goodbye to any chance of a piano lesson that day—unless something could turn up before four o'clock. He didn't want to call his teacher and cancel it any sooner than he had to.

All morning he tried to busy himself around the yard at home. He dreaded the thought of the lesson he had earned—but would have to miss. His feet felt heavy as he walked past Mrs. Gould's house.

The door opened. It was Mrs. Gould. And Brady saw immediately that she had an envelope in her hand. "Come here, young man," she called.

Brady ran up the walk to the house and waited for her to speak, which seemed a long time.

"I found the missing envelope," she said in a firm voice. "Somehow it got into my purse. Must have put it in by mistake with my other bills."

"Thank you, Mrs. Gould," he said kindly.

Brady didn't distrust Mrs. Gould, but just to make sure the money was in the envelope he opened it—and what did he find but two crisp new bills! Was it extra money for extra courtesies?

"Now next time you come and mow my lawn, come early so you won't irritate me. You hear me, young man?"

"Yes, Mrs. Gould, and thank you!" he exclaimed as he dashed down the sidewalk toward the street. He glanced at his watch. It was just three-thirty. He still had time to make it to his piano lesson—if he hurried! ●●

As a shadow life is fleeting;
As a vapor, so it flies;
For the bygone years retreating
Pardon grant, and make us wise—

Wise that we our days may number,
Strive and wrestle with our sin,
Stay not in our work, nor slumber
Till Thy holy rest we win.

Soon before the Judge all glorious
We in our true light shall stand;
Saviour, over sin victorious,
Place us then on Thy right hand.

Bible A B C's



G is for Gehazi.

The story of Gehazi is the story of a young man who knew right from wrong but followed his own evil desires and became very dishonest and then told lies to cover up his wrongdoing. Gehazi had a wonderful opportunity to learn to do what was right, and to become a person that pleased God, for he was the servant of God's prophet, Elisha.

Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, had traveled to the land of Israel in an effort to get healed from the disease he had—leprosy. Leprosy is a very bad disease. The skin becomes covered with white blotches that spread. It is very contagious to other people, and lepers must be isolated.

Naaman had been directed to the home of Elisha, but Elisha had simply told his servant, Gehazi, to go out and tell Naaman to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Naaman felt that he had been insulted, but finally he did as he was told, and he was really healed from his dreadful disease. He went back to Elisha's house and wanted to reward him with gold, silver, and beautiful garments he had brought with him, but

G is for

Gehazi

Elisha would not accept them.

Gehazi heard this, and he immediately wished that he had some of the money and the garments Elisha had refused. Gehazi thought about this and finally decided upon a plan to obtain some of these things for himself. He started running to catch up with Naaman, who was on his way home. When Naaman saw him coming, he recognized the man as Elisha's servant and ran to meet him.

"Is everything all right?" he asked.

"Yes," Gehazi answered, "but my master has sent me to tell you that two young prophets from the hills of Ephraim have just arrived and he would like a talent of silver and two garments to give them."

Of course, this was not true,

but Naaman did not know that, so he gave Gehazi more than he asked for and sent two servants to help Gehazi carry the gifts.

When they arrived back home, Gehazi sent the men back and hid the robes and the money. Then he went to Elisha, who asked him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?"

"I haven't been anywhere," he replied.

But Elisha asked him, "Don't you realize that I was there in thought when Naaman stepped down from his chariot to meet you? Because you have done this thing, Naaman's leprosy shall be upon you."

Gehazi walked from the room a leper, his skin white as snow.

Yes, Gehazi had a great opportunity, but he did not use that great opportunity. He could have become a good man like his master, but instead he allowed evil thoughts to remain in his mind until they grew into evil deeds.

May we use Gehazi as an example of what *not* to do. If we keep evil thoughts in our minds, we will do evil things. That is why it is so important that we learn to think good thoughts, that we may do good deeds. ●●

THINK!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Who requested the posting of a sentinel to guard a naturally evil place?
2. When is the soul satisfied with marrow and fatness upon his bed?
3. On a certain occasion, one of three watchmen was rebuked. Who was he?
4. Not just one, but all of us have a special command. What is it? (Jesus gave the command).
5. What sorrowful soul gave a command to "tarry"?
6. A great man said by repetition that he waited for the Lord more than what?
7. Who will lift their voices in song because of perfect agreement when the Lord returns?
8. Give a verse by an inhabitant of Elkosh containing four admonitions, one of which concerns being on watch.
9. What was the extent of time during which one of Jesus' apostles warned one of the seven churches "night and day with tears"? What was the church?
10. Name two qualifications that will enable us to "stand before the Son of man" in the day of Judgment.

Answers

10. Watch and pray always. Luke 21:36
9. Three years; Ephesus. Acts 20:31
8. Nahum 2:1; 1:1
7. "Thy watchmen." Isa. 52:8
6. David. Ps. 130:6
5. Jesus. Matt. 26:38
4. To watch. Mark 13:37
3. Peter. Matt. 26:40; Mark 14:37
2. Ps. 63:5-6
1. David. Ps. 141:3

"It seems inconsistent to me that the Lord would allow a certain thing and then turn right around and forbid it. I am thinking of the laws concerning divorce. Moses' law said that a man could give his wife 'a bill of divorcement,' after which she 'may go and be another man's wife' (Deut. 24:1). Jesus said, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery' (Matt. 5:32). Please explain."

Your observation is correct. Moses' law did permit divorce. Deut. 24:1 reads in full, "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife." The only restriction was that the former husband could not take her again to be his wife. However, we learn that this law was given to control an existing situation; it was a concession, not a permission. These verses in the *Berkeley Version* read, "When a man has married a wife and comes to dislike her, having found something improper in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and, putting it in her hand, sends her from his house, and she goes off, . . . the man who first divorced her may not take her again to be his wife." And in a footnote we read, "This is not a law of divorce; it simply defines a specific situation. . . . Deuteronomy law seeks to limit divorce and prevent its abuse."

Jesus Himself clarified the situation. The Pharisees asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting [Jesus]." To which He asked them, "What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. . . . And they twain shall be one flesh. . . . What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mark 10:2-5).

God's law forbids divorce. As Jesus said, "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).

"I fail to see any connection between Jesus' words recorded in John 11:9 and the situation at hand. Could you please explain?"

Jesus was in the land "beyond Jordan" in "the place where John baptized" (John 10:40) when he received word that His friend Lazarus was sick. About two days later Jesus suggested to His disciples that they go into Judea again—presumably to visit Lazarus. When His disciples pointed out the danger of venturing into that enemy land, Jesus replied, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him" (John 11:19-20).

Jesus was referring to the light of day as His divinely appointed duty and was alluding to His Father's ability to keep them safe so long as they were fulfilling that duty. He said in effect, I can be in no danger while my appointed day of labor lasts; I walk in the light of duty, and of my Father's appointment; and am therefore safe. And so it will be with every one who walks by that light, or rather, has it within him.

God protects those who pursue His purposes and do their divinely appointed duty. As long as Christ was fulfilling His Father's appointment, He had no fear. His Father's will would be done. And that is the proper attitude for every Christian.

"Does John 21:18 refer to Peter's death?"

The text records the words of Jesus to Peter: "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." The following verse suggests a deeper application than literal death: "This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God." Natural death does not glorify God; He terms that death the "King of terrors" (Job 18:14) and the "last enemy" that shall be destroyed (I Cor. 15:26).

The verse suggests the complete change of mind from self-sufficiency to trust in God. The impetuous Peter by nature when he was "young" in the Master's service struck off the ear of the high priest's servant, denied our Lord, cast lots for an apostle, felt himself superior to the Gentiles; but as he grew in the Christian life we do not read of such things. He became the "converted" Peter, guided by the principles of Christ, crucifying his own ways and inclinations, doing the things he naturally would not have chosen to do. By this death of his own ways he glorified God, just as did

Christ by His death to sin (Rom. 6:6-11).

"Jesus is coming a second time; on this point I agree with you, but I believe He is coming to take His people to heaven. This is supported by Scripture, where Paul said we would be caught up into the clouds, and where Jesus said that He would come the second time to take His people to heaven that where He is they may be also."

You say that when Jesus comes He will take His people to heaven. But such a statement cannot be found between the covers of the Book. Such thinking comes from song books and catechisms and Church creeds, and not from the Bible. In His first sermon Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Six times in Psalm 37 we are told in slightly different words that the righteous shall inherit the earth and dwell there forever. In Prov. 10:30 we read that the righteous shall never be removed—how then shall they get to heaven?

You allude to the words of Jesus in John 14, where He said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." However, note that these words do not say that Jesus will take His people to heaven, but only that He is going to prepare for them a place, or a reward, and then "I will come again, and receive you unto myself"—but not in heaven. They shall dwell with Him in His Kingdom, which shall extend "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Ps. 72:8).

You also suggest Paul's words in I Thess. 4:17, that "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." However, this does not say that Christ will take the saints to heaven with Him. It says merely that they will rise to meet Him in the air when He returns.

There is no question but that Jesus is coming back to earth, and that His people shall abide with Him; but the Scriptures say frequently that the righteous shall inhabit the earth, and not in a single place does Scripture say they shall be with Him in heaven. The reward comes from heaven; it is the "grace that is to be brought unto [the saints] at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:13). It is reward "reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:4-5). And Christ's authority to dispense that reward comes from heaven (John 5:22, 26-27). Nowhere do we read that they must go to heaven to receive it. ●●



Meditations

On the Word

THERE, in a few words, Peter received his answer. The son of Jonas was, to begin with, a man of the strongest, the most willful, and the most wayward impulses; impulses, that but for the watchfulness and prayerfulness of his Master, might easily have become destructive. Peter had made many blunders during those years of association with Christ. Now, again, in the days after the Lord's resurrection, we detect in his speech a possible trace of jealousy. Another blunder; another rebuke; another lesson for him, for those present, and for all who should hear of that incident.

Every professing Christian encounters difficulty in the practice of his faith. The Master deserves the highest service we can give; and more, He demands it. Hence, devotion to duty must be one's paramount concern. But in times of stress, in times of self-preoccupation, or in times of incessant activity it becomes easy to lose one's real objective and utter those words, "What shall this man do?" It may be said because of irritation or jealousy, or idle curiosity, or another reason, but the Master's answer is prompt, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

We all have been Peters, perhaps we still are to a great degree. We all have spoken impulsively. We all have been over-concerned with what others were doing, or should have been doing, when our real concern should have been our own problems and our own responsibility. To all who are thus plagued, Jesus' answer applies. In fact, it is the answer for all time for all Christians, who would be unduly concerned about others. There is no evading it. The way and the answer are ultraclear: "Follow thou me."

Take, for instance, the apostle Paul. Christ had

"Lord, and what shall this man do?... What is that to thee? follow thou me" —John 21:21-22.

appeared from heaven and had chosen him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. It was no easy assignment. The absurd super-

stitions and idolatry among pagans were matters that required extreme courage to challenge. Then there was the hostility of the Jews who thought that the Gentiles were inferior to them, and even to think that God would give them an equal opportunity for salvation was blasphemy.

But suppose Paul had wavered? Suppose he had replied, What about the other eleven apostles? Why not send them? What will Peter do? They were with you through the years of your ministry and should be better prepared. If I go to the Gentiles what will they do? Settle down and live at ease? And suppose he had protested and asked more and more questions? One thing is certain, he would not have become the Paul we know.

But Paul accepted the assignment. He was immediately obedient. The preaching of the gospel and the training of his life to conform to the will of God became his chief concern. Thus he was able to utter words which to all Christians are stimulating. Some of which are:

"Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

"I press toward the mark."

"I keep under my body and bring it into subjection."

He renounced salaries, but worked with his hands so that he would be chargeable to none. He denied himself the comforts of home and of family that he might be more free to serve Christ.

He was called—and he followed.

The world is full of distractions today and the Christian must keep himself on an even keel if he is not to be influenced to his own peril by what the world has to offer. The world offers much—pleas-

ure, education, business and professional careers, popularity. It is not that the Christian cannot have any of these. He can. But they are not to be the prime concern of his life. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," is Jesus' admonition. We need more and more to develop the perspective and the ability to distinguish between momentary thrills and long-range happiness. At best, the present is fleeting, but the rewards of eternity have no equal.

In a nation that has become strongly materialistic, our testing as Christians is all the greater. When all those about us are choosing for themselves the easier way; when they lay up treasures, build attractive homes, secure the latest in comforts and conveniences, spend their spare time in pursuing the pleasures they desire and put off the work of God till a later season or indefinitely, then the Christian who must be self-denying needs more faith and courage than ever before.

When, as Jesus taught in His parable (Luke 14: 16-24), others who hear the call with us begin to make excuses, and refuse to come at the King's bidding, for us there is but one course—Go!

When circumstances and our own love of God have brought us responsibilities and duties almost to the limit of our endurance, and when we see others in an attitude which appears unsatisfactory to us and we are tempted to question their actions, then all the more we need to remember Jesus' words, "Follow thou me." At such times, keep right on in the task that God has clearly assigned to you. All men are not equal; all are not Pauls. To each God gives a different degree of grace, of talents, of gifts to use for His cause. To all He gives abundantly, but to some He gives much more. If we are the ones who are blessed with more gifts and energy, if we are aggressive and wish to see things get done while others seem to plod along apparently with little concern, we may need to slow down or forge ahead alone.

Besides the indifference, we are often faced with scorn and ridicule. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." This is part of the cross, but what of it! The servant is not above his Lord. They did more than this to Him. Follow Him! Look at His example; compare your life with His and imitate it. We are promised a hundredfold of friends, brothers, and sisters with whom to work. It is fortunate this is so, but the best of these are not good enough for our ultimate pattern. Christ is *the* One. There is none other.

Throughout all these varying trials and ordeals we must remember our calling. When we accepted the call, "Follow me," we had but one goal, and

that goal must still be the incentive that inspires our every act and motive. Whatever allurements may confront us, whatever courses others may take, for us who wish the highest and best there is but one way—*the* way—"Follow thou me!" ●●

An evangelist was holding a meeting in a coal mining town. In one of his sermons he was attempting to explain the meaning of one of the parables to the simple miners. At the conclusion of his sermon one of the miners challenged him: "If God wanted us to know His will, why did He hide His truths in parables?"

"Are you a miner?" asked the evangelist.

"For nigh onto forty years I've earned my living in the mines," came his reply.

"Do you believe that God intends man to burn coal as a fuel?" continued the evangelist.

"Sure, He did, Preacher, or He wouldn't have made it!"

"All right, if God intended man to use coal as a fuel, why did He hide it so deep underground?"

Moving On

"Ye have compassed this mountain long enough; turn you northward" (Deut. 2:3).

In most of the modern translations, this verse reads, "You have been wandering about this mountain country long enough, turn northward."

There is more than ordinary meaning attached to these words. It is the verdict of God's approval upon the readiness of the children of Israel to move on. After many days, even years in the wilderness, this generation had finally learned many lessons of faith and trust, of obedience and the fear of God. They had proved themselves worthy to move forward, on to victory and the Promised Land. Now God could use them to carry on His plan.

When men and women are ready for God's work, His doors of opportunity open. Opportunity sooner or later comes to all who work and wait. When the door of opportunity opened for the children of Israel, it was no proof that they would be faithful. They still had to prove what they would do with their opportunity.

Many do with opportunities as children do at the seashore: they fill their little hands with sand and then let the grains fall through one by one till all are gone. When a door of opportunity opens to us, let us be quick to lay hold on it.

The best men and women are not those who wait for opportunities to come to them, but who take them, besiege them, and glorify them.

LETTERS

Knowledge Applied

We are nearer to the Kingdom than many are aware of. The most important thing is to watch ourselves and correct ourselves day by day.

We should reach out to our far-away brethren with love and forgiveness in our hearts. What good is our knowledge if we have no love toward our brother and sister?

Saugerties, N. Y.

L. M.

Our First Purpose

Our first purpose in this life is to patiently continue in well doing, to prepare for that far better, eternal life. The present moment is the only time on which we have any certain claim.

We must not become too absorbed in the trifles of today or before we know it the minutes turn to hours and hours to days, months, and years, and we have not lived according to the conditions that God has given us.

Do we have a place in God's wonderful future plan? The answer lies with each individual; the answer is ours alone. Where we will be tomorrow depends on what we make of ourselves today. Life after death is not a dream but a certainty if we will but run the race now.

Winterset, Iowa

F. B.

Changing

There are many good things in the Bible to help us all do better in our daily living. To do the things of the Lord takes a lot of work, not only with changing our lives so they will shine for Him, but we have to change ourselves in many ways. For example, we have to change our talk, or the way we look at things. Maybe we have to change the places that we used to go to, or our companions and friends. How much we do depends on how much we really want of God and what He can do for us.

Ottumwa, Iowa

K. H.

We Are Gardeners

In our spiritual garden, we must see that only the good fruits are allowed to grow, for if we forget, if we neglect our work, we shall lose the good harvest we could have had.

We must search diligently to be sure all the weeds are pulled out. Then we will have a harvest of good fruit and fine sheaves to our credit, and we will thank God for having guided us in our work.

New Brunswick, Maine

M. L.

Helped to Understand

I enjoy the *Megiddo Message* very much. There are so many things that it explains from the Bible, things of which I could never understand the proper meaning until I started reading it. I hope that my subscription to you is in time; I do not want to miss a single copy.

Glendive, Montana

W. W.

It's A Fight!

We should strive to be one hundred percent people. As I study, and in daily devotion to our Great Benefactor, I am made to see the dire need for the perfection of self toward Him and the possible possession of the good thing He has promised to the faithful.

Several years ago I chanced to hear the recording of a certain preacher. By the clicks and scratchings, I would assume that it was a very old recording. About the middle of his sermon—he was talking about the Christian warfare being a fight—the needle kept jumping the track, and for several turns it kept repeating "it's a fight," "it's a fight," "it's a fight," "it's a fight," before the control man awoke to change the record. Now after several years of striving to do the right things in life, I agree with the old cracked record. Truly it is a fight. But I find written in God's Handbook that His commandments are not grievous; therefore the fight must be with our lower nature.

Only our hardest, sincerest effort will ever bring us even close to that wonderful Kingdom. What a wonderful plan of salvation! What a privilege we mortals have—if we but grasp it.

Thermopolis, Wyoming

J. A.

Uplifted

Thank you for the *Megiddo* magazine. It has been such a great joy and inspiration to me. It has kept me spiritually uplifted even though I am unable to attend any church services at all. Believe me, your *Message* means my life, my hope, my everything.

Maysville, N. C.

L. M.

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Builders

*We would be building; temples still undone
O'er crumbling walls their crosses scarcely lift,
Waiting till Right shall raise the broken stone,
And hearts creative bridge the human rift.
We would be building, Master, let Thy plan
Reveal the life that God would give to man.*

*Teach us to build; upon the solid rock
We set the dream that hardens into deed,
Ribbed with the steel that time and change doth mock,
Th' unfailing purpose of our noblest creed;
Teach us to build; O Master, lend us sight
To see the towers gleaming in the light.*

*O keep us building, Master; may our hands
Ne'er falter when the dream is in our hearts,
When to our ears there come divine commands
And all the pride of sinful will departs;
We build with Thee, O grant enduring worth
Until the heav'nly Kingdom comes on earth.*