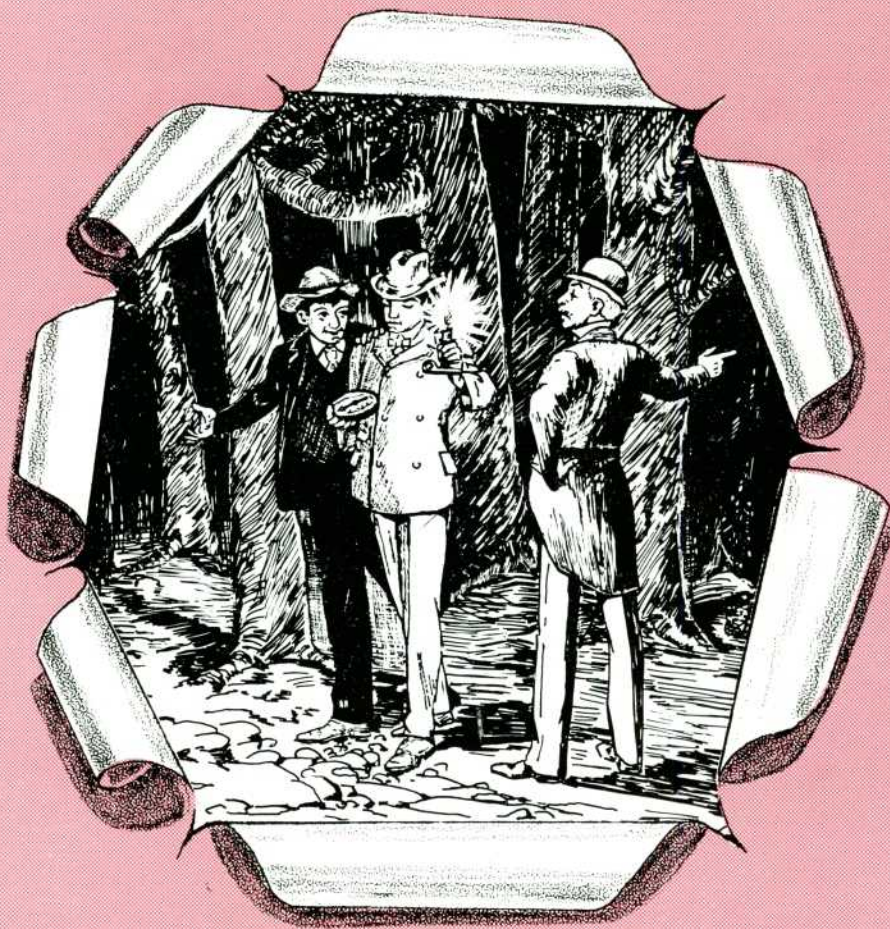


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



He Followed the Compass

Call It Success?

ASK a variety of men to define success, and you will get a variety of definitions. Ask God, and your answer will be still different, entirely different, God's thoughts being as far removed from ours as the heavens are from the earth.

As professing followers of Christ, we need to be watchful lest we fall prey to worldly views of success and find ourselves thinking too much of the temporal and not enough of the eternal. More often than not, "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). Our faith in God gives us a totally new perspective on life's goals and values.

We may not be striving for what the world calls success, but what do we admire? Do we look up to one because he has much of this world's goods? Do we judge success in terms of promotion, position, salary, and security?

We need to be on guard lest we be too interested in the material and end up the servants of it. It is the old danger of thinking too much of the things of here and now and making them an end in themselves instead of using them as a *means* to a much *greater* end.

The Bible tells us we cannot serve two masters: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." There is no wrong in prospering in this world; Abraham was wealthy; so was Lot. The wrong comes in a wrong attitude toward it, esteeming money for money's sake rather than seeing it as given of God to be used as He would have it used.

And we need not have an abundance to have the wrong attitude toward it. There are people who look with envious eyes at the world's "success," whose highest esteem is for those who *have*. God forbid that we should ever be among these. Paul's command covers all: ". . . whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31).

There is nothing in Scripture which even suggests that the successful man of this

world is worthy of praise and honor. On the contrary, we find warning upon warning against the dangers of pride and self-importance. And, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44). High position is not success. Financial security is not success. And we dare not compare ourselves among ourselves on these scores; comparing ourselves among ourselves is strictly forbidden—God judges by character (II Cor. 10:12).

Paul could have been proud of his success in the world of his day, but he counted it all "loss" in relation to the greater goal Christ had set before him, even "the high calling of God" (Phil. 3:8-14). "I count all things but loss," he wrote, "that I may win Christ."

In God's sight, the man or woman who is living most closely by His law is worthy of the highest honor. What he has—or lacks—of this world's goods matters not at all. Nor does such a one seek or prefer any position or service above any other because of personal satisfaction. He sees every task not as men chance to esteem it but as God sees it. His whole concern is to use all He has to please God.

The contrast between this world's view of success and the Christian's might be seen in a compliment given by one to another. Says a man of the world to his friend, "You should be proud of what you have done." Says the Christian to his advancing Christian friend, "You are part of a challenging program which has a great history behind it and a great future before it. What a privilege—and a responsibility—is yours."

Having a few extra dollars, or a finer home, or the recognition of a million men means nothing to God. He wants holiness. Think about it, and when you talk with your friends, let them know that you are not competing in this world's scale of values—you want what *God* calls success. ●●

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE MEGIDDO MISSION CHURCH
L. T. NICHOLS, *Founder*
KENNETH E. FLOWERDAY, *Editor*

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Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

Geographically, Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, located at a strategic point, demanding heavy fortification; for Palestine is the age-old gateway between East and West, and the avenue connecting North and South. Supremacy there has long been the envy of aggressive nations, and the prevailing power has guarded it with jealous eye. The famous pass at Megiddo through a solid mountain range is the one means by which this avenue between continents may be traversed.

In the spiritual parallel, it is a place of troops, where soldiers are equipped for spiritual warfare against the forces of evil without and within. "The weapons we wield are not merely human but divinely potent to demolish strongholds; we demolish sophistries and all that rears its proud head against the knowledge of God; we compel every human thought to surrender in obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5, NEB).

Megiddo Message

Vol. 64, No. 10

October, 1977

EDITORIAL

2 Call It Success?

God's thoughts are not man's; the goals of this world are not the goals of His people.

SPECIAL FEATURES

4 He Followed the Compass (*Cover Story*)

God has provided the Compass which is still pointing the way to life.

6 Better Is The End of A Matter

by Rev. L. T. Nichols

The end will bring us blessings supreme—if it finds us pure.

8 A Thousand Years of Happiness

Millennial Family Life

Millennial Opportunity

Millennial Lifespan

A Millennial Communique

Millennial Beauty

18 The Peaceful Hour

We need it every day.

REGULAR FEATURES

13 Understanding the Bible: *The Pre-Existence of Christ* The *real* origin of the doctrine is *not* the Bible.

17 Kathy Kandor's Korner: *Be Courteous*

22 Our Readers Write . . .

23 Pro & Con

Discussing Faith vs. Works, and the Grace of God

27 Scriptural Spotlight: *Conquered or Exterminated?* On Romans 8:37. We must be more than conquerors.

Bible Quotations in this issue:

Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version

Other versions are abbreviated as: *New International Version* (NIV); *New English Bible* (NEB); *Revised Standard Version* (RSV); *The New Testament in Modern English* (Phillips); *The Living Bible* (TLB); *New American Standard* (NAS).

He Followed the Compass

In Memory of Our Founder

IMAGINE yourself lost in a strange forest. It is a dark, cloudy day with no sun visible. You realize you should go north to reach open country and the road that leads home, but you cannot determine which direction is north.

As you stumble along slowly, confused and bewildered, suddenly you hear footsteps. Two men approach. You explain your plight, and each one offers you directions. However, one man points in one direction and assures you that that is north, while the other man points in the opposite direction and affirms *that* is north.

You are now more confused than ever. What should you do?

As you stand there pondering what to do, you suddenly remember that you have a compass in your pocket. Immediately you check the compass—and to your amazement, both of these men are wrong.

In this situation, would it not be prudent to follow the compass?

The plan which the Almighty developed for the salvation of His earthly children has always involved following His directions. It is a plan of "Obey and live, disobey and die." This life is a free gift. Everyone born into the world is entitled to what this world can offer. Each may live his life in any way he pleases, provided he abides by the laws of nature and by the laws of the country in which he resides. If he chooses to disregard the laws of the Creator, he may do so with no penalty forthcoming. He simply lives his life and dies.

Future, eternal life in God's Kingdom on this earth is also a gift from God. However, to receive this gift, certain requirements must be met. These requirements are quite stringent, and they are all found in a book of instruction called the Bible.

This book of instruction is the compass God has provided to serve as our guide until Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on this earth. How we interpret and follow these instructions should be of utmost concern to all of us.

The Bible, the Word of God, is our compass on life's road, our only qualified guide. We should beware of all others. And we should be careful to read the Bible correctly. A compass read wrong-

ly, or a compass not followed as read, is of no value.

To reach the destination God has set before us, we must interpret His compass fairly, accurately, and honestly. Our own opinions, desires, or feelings must not be allowed to influence our reading of the compass. This is vital, for it means our everlasting life or everlasting destruction.

I well remember walking through a mountain woods with which I was familiar. This particular morning there had been a heavy snowfall which completely changed the appearance of the terrain, and I was confused. I knew the road I wanted to reach was in a northerly direction. I checked my compass, but I just could not believe the road was in that direction. I followed the compass generally, but kept veering northeast, thinking that I would reach the road sooner. The result was that I had to walk through deep snow and over rough ground much longer than I would have had to if I had followed the compass precisely.

Just so does God's compass give us maximum guidance—only when we interpret it correctly and follow it precisely.

The Bible has never lacked for interpreters. The only question is: Has it been interpreted correctly? Our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols, did not think it had been. As a young man he faced a bewildering array of doctrines, most of which were believed to have been derived from the Bible. He reasoned correctly that something was wrong. If the Book was truly the Word of God, it could point out only one road to salvation, not the hundreds he saw on every hand.

Mr. Nichols observed many people influenced in their interpreting of the Compass by many factors: the opinions of other men, their own pre-conceived ideas of what it should say, and their own desire to avoid any restriction upon their freedom of action. Some interpreters even claimed special revelations from God to justify their own interpretation of its message.

In sending a vehicle to Mars, even a slight error in aim would result in the vehicle's completely missing the planet and traveling on aimlessly through space for years. There is a close parallel in understanding the Bible and following its directions:

If in youth we aim in the right direction, and stay on course, we will reach the goal of eternal life which it points out. If our aim is wrong, if we deviate ever so slightly from what the compass directs, we will travel aimlessly on and on and end in destruction.

Our founder was determined not to err in following the Compass, not even *slightly* err. God had provided the Compass, and he felt that its directions should be followed explicitly. The opinions of other men, however highly regarded or accepted, were discarded if contrary to Scripture. His own opinions or desires were equally worthless if they could not be substantiated by the dictates of the Compass. In this manner he reasoned and studied from point to point.

When he read "Obey and live, disobey and die," he accepted obedience as an essential Christian duty and responsibility. He found all denominations veering off in the direction that Christ's death on the cross covered our sins if we would only accept Him as our Saviour. If he could prove this from the Bible he would accept it joyfully and gratefully, but if not he had to reject it. His father, mother, minister, and nearly everyone he knew told him that we have nothing to do to obtain salvation, only believe; it had all been done. But when he consulted his Book of instruction, the compass, he found the Old Testament filled with commands to obey; and in the New Testament there are *four* references to commandments to be kept (or evils to be laid aside, or virtues to be acquired) for every *one* verse that might suggest that we are saved by Christ's "blood" or by "grace." To him, the logical solution was not to give in to the easy way but to try to harmonize the minority passages with the majority. The Bible, he firmly believed, could outline only one plan of salvation; if we see in it more than one plan, the fault lies in our discernment, not in the Bible.

The crux of the matter is the meaning we attach to the phrases "blood of Christ" and "grace." Mr. Nichols found that the blood was used as a symbol of life, the life of the flesh being in the blood (Lev. 17:11); thus the blood of Christ is the life Christ lived. If we follow Christ's example (I Pet. 2:21) and live as Christ lived, surrendering our all to do the will of God, we too may receive immortal life. In this context, Paul's words in Romans 5:10 took on new meaning: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." We are saved not by Christ's death but by His *life*, by living as He lived.

Our founder, studying the Compass closely, found the word "grace" in Scripture to have more

than one meaning, and never the unmerited favor that removes all guilt of sins. He found it could mean God's goodness in giving us this present life with all its blessings (I Tim. 1:2; II Tim. 1:9); that it could mean the gospel, as stated in Titus 2:11-12, the gospel that teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts and "live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world"; also it could mean the reward of eternal life, the "grace to be brought" at "the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:13). There is no text which says the "grace of God" is the unmerited favor of God conveyed to us by Christ's atoning death.

Following the Compass, Mr. Nichols found that the word "Christ" in the Bible is used in three different ways. There is the man Christ who was born of the virgin Mary; second, there is the body of Christ, the church (Col. 1:18), also called Christ; and third, there is the spiritual Christ, the Word of God, which the literal Christ personified so completely in His life (I Cor. 10:4; John 1:14).

Studying the Compass, Mr. Nichols found also that "death" is used in the Bible with different meanings. It can mean natural death which comes to end mortal life; it can also mean penal death ("the wages of sin is death"—Rom. 6:23); it can also describe that state of spiritual lifelessness, being dead in sin (Eph. 2:1), and the spiritual death *to* sin ("Likewise reckon ye also yourselves

(Continued on page 26)



L. T. NICHOLS

*Founder of the Megiddo Mission Church
(October 1, 1844—February 28, 1912)*

Better Is The End of A Matter

by L. T. Nichols

Founder of the Megiddo Mission Church

WHEN we contemplate the wonderful eternity in which we shall be permitted to view such glories, it would seem that every soul would be more anxious to be an overcomer than anything else; yet how sadly different we find the real facts. We let our affections go out after the temporal, the things that are seen, instead of centering them on the things that are not seen. Our faith must "overcome the world"; and faith cannot be produced if we fail to meditate on the wonderful revelations of God. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

We see the teaching of the divine testimony, and yet how diametrically opposed it is to the knowledge of the world. To think of the wonderful knowledge of God! If we could only realize the wonderful knowledge God has granted us in His Word, it seems as though every heart would be filled with loving gratitude, filled with a deep desire to serve such a Being, One who has brought forth and made known so admirable a plan. Our hearts should be more than filled with reverence and love.

It is only those who meditate on God's law day and night, those who have a constant meditation on what He has done, that will ever be overcomers. Consider the place from which we have come, and look to the high and lofty pinnacle of Jehovah. Our minds will be taken up with these things so we will feed on them all the time, when we rise up and when we lie down. They will be with us when we walk by the way, and will be our meditation in the night watches. We will not be so anxious whether or not we are going to make a dollar, as to know, Am I living right? Am I making the sacrifice God requires? It takes a lifetime to make the sacrifice; yet can it be called a sacrifice when we are reaping all the benefits ourselves? It is just like putting our money in a bank and drawing a thousand percent interest on it. We have never made a real sacrifice in our lives. The only sacri-

fice we can possibly make is to kill out the old man of sin in us. This is the only sacrifice that will be accepted before the great white throne. We can make but one sacrifice, and this must be the object of our life, to kill out the old nature and become a new creature. All we have ever done will redound upon our own heads, and we will ever enjoy ourselves in a gladsome eternity, increasing in happiness and comfort as each cycle passes by. What a reward!

To think God will even offer us such a reward—we should be glad for the opportunity to do a little for it. The trouble is, our eye is too much on the temporal. Our eye should be on the temporal only as a means and help to gain the eternal. It seems as if every heart would begin to long and thirst for it, in a dry land where no water is. It would seem our every interest would be in one direction.

Here is the reason why so many will never enter: They go on thinking it is not necessary to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. But the final Day will reveal their mistake; God never intended to include such in His Kingdom. He intends to fill the earth with immortal and incorruptible beings, and it does not matter to Him how long He takes to do it. But that number will be made up only of those who have become pure of heart, those who have crucified the flesh with all its affections and lusts. Consequently, there is a work to be performed if we expect to form a part of God's Kingdom; and we should not expect it to be an easy task.

But as we read in Ecclesiastes 7:8, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." The Lord has promised His abundant and overflowing blessings just simply for serving Him with our whole mind, might and strength, crucifying the flesh with its desires. We must become dead to the world, like our Master, crucified to the world and the world to us. In the sight of the Lord this is the only right thing for a man to do. The ways of

the Lord do not look right to the world, and we must not look through the eyes of the world.

We must do everything, control every energy, to the honor and glory of God. When we try to do this, we soon see how few, how very few will ever enter in. The Lord says, "I will try you and develop you. I will see if you have crucified the ways of the flesh." The Lord has a trial in view, and the very thing we so much like we must go without. We must prohibit everything that is contrary to what He commands.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"—with an eye single to His glory. But oh, how often deception comes in, men's lusts deceive them, and they follow the road that leads to destruction. If we actually believed God, that He will do for us what He has promised, would anything seem too hard to do? Would anything be a burden?

But the trouble is we will not believe; we will not stop wondering. What we should consider is, Am I doing this with an eye single to the glory of God? Would not a thousand years of happiness, without a sorrow or pain, be worth all we can possibly do now? Everyone who does not feel that way is not worthy of the reward. We can never *earn* the great prize our Master has promised to give. Even a hundred years of what He promises would more than repay us for anything we could do now. He pays us even now a hundredfold; everything is better, and it will be still better in eternity.

If we could just remember these things as we should, and know that the end will be better than the beginning, and really believe it, then our faith would begin to overcome the evils of our nature.

Those words in Revelation 2 are constantly running through my mind. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (vs. 2-4).

After summing up their grand qualities, He says, "nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (vs. 4-5). They must repent, or they will not be permitted to remain a light to the world.

A man who would find fault with having to do this work is not worthy of life. If we consider the end in view, we will not want to hold on to fleshly lusts, but we will be anxious and longing to keep every commandment willingly and joyfully. It is like when I was a boy; I was willing to go with-

(Continued on page 20)

Let Us Pray . . .

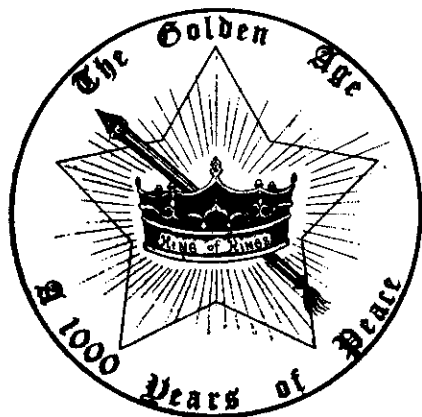
O God and Creator of the wonderful universe, Thou preserver of all mankind, Thou Saviour of all who believe, we thank Thee for life, and that we live now; that our eyes have been opened to the beauties of today, and to the greater beauties that will prevail in Thy better Tomorrow. We thank Thee for the tasks of the present; nor do we despise the past, into the labors of which we have entered. Its errors warn us, its successes inform us, its sacrifices inspire us, and to its brave souls we are forever debtors.

We thank Thee for the moral leadership of worthy souls, for the women and men who are the roadbreakers of true liberty, for those whose keen sense of values impels them to value life more than food, and the body more than clothes, and the boon of eternal life more than everything of the fleeting present combined. We find ourselves living in two worlds, the present by necessity, the future by choice. Give us the wisdom always to choose the better part, always to put first things first, never promoting the things that matter least at the expense of the things that matter most.

We implore Thee to hasten the Day when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and His faithful Bride or Church, when as the result of divine administration of earth's affairs we shall have peace on earth and goodwill among men, when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth and all peoples live in peace with nothing to alarm or make afraid.

Thou hast never promised to supply all our wants, but Thou hast promised to fill all our needs. We ask Thee for the gift of contentedness, of being satisfied with what Thou dost send, and may we always say, Thy will be done.

We are thankful for the friends whose faith in us has tended to improve our moral stature; for the tasks which we are unworthy of, but which make us more like Thee, and for the example of Thy dear Son and our Saviour, in whose name are all our prayers and supplications. Amen.



*This is the seventh in a series
of articles on the coming
MILLENNIUM.*

*"But as truly as I live,
all the earth shall be filled
with the glory of the Lord"*
—Numbers 14:21

*"Thou shalt not see
evil any more"*
—Zephaniah 3:15

*"They shall call on my name,
and I will hear them:
I will say, It is my people:
and they shall say,
The Lord is my God"*
—Zechariah 13:9

A Thousand Years of Happiness

NO war. No crime. No prisons. No hospitals. No sickness. No open misbehavior. No cruelty. No destructive influence or demonstrations of rebellion. In such a world, family life will have a new chance. There will be peace and plenty and happiness for all.

Millennial Family Life

During the Millennium there will be marriage and children among the multitude of mortals, and millions upon millions of happy active, healthy families. Billions of children will be born, and the population will grow and grow. This is how the earth will be replenished after the judgments of God have removed the rebellious, incorrigible element and all who refused to honor the laws and mandates of the New Government. Two thirds of the old populace will have been destroyed by God's cleansing judgments.

But the third who survive will find life far superior to any experience of mortals during the history of the earth, and they will delight in the normal functions of healthful living in a vastly superior environment. The sexual aspect of human relationship, so abused for centuries, the most perverted of all God's marvelous designs for humankind, will be wholesome under the control of divine law and will be respected by all.

God's purpose being to "fill" the earth with righteous people, all family life during the Millennium will be focused toward that one goal: to develop a race of people worthy of living—of living both during the Millennium and through the Age beyond. Not all will qualify for the latter, but all will have opportunity. Says the Prophet, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (Zech. 13:9). All will be instructed in the ways of the Lord.

What an advantage the children of that age will have! They will not grow up to die in war or live in meaninglessness; they will not even have to face the evil influences of a corrupt society, for in that age "thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 3:15). They will be shown and taught the ways of God, and the morally fittest of them will be selected to live on forever and ever, filling the earth with the glory of God.

They will be a blessed people. They shall "build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and

another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them" (Isa. 65:21-23).

It will be a time when "the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations" (Isa. 61:11), when "the Lord God shall . . . call his servants by another name"; when "he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten" (Isa. 65:15-16).

How many mortals will there be during the Millennium? Revelation 7:9 describes them as a "great multitude which no man could number." Of course, this is not to be taken literally; it is rather an expression of a very great number, a number "not revealed." Other passages of Scripture describe them as "the stars of heaven" or "the sand of the sea" (Gen. 15:5; Hos. 1:10). In *Cruden's Concordance* is this thought: "The number of the stars was looked upon as infinite. When the Scripture would express a very extraordinary increase and multiplication, it uses the symbol of the stars of heaven or of the sand of the sea."

God wanted it known that the number of the populace during the Millennium will be very large—a very extraordinary increase. But it is not to be understood as a limitless number. There will be a limit. The planet is not limitless for size (though there will likely be much more habitable land); and the planet not being limitless in size, its population could not be limitless. One translation of Rev. 7:9 replaces "no man can number" with "too many to count."

The number will be controlled, through the goodness and mercy of God. Another text in Isaiah 65 reveals this thought: "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them" (65:23). The people of the Millennium will not bring forth children for trouble. Therefore, at some point during the Millennium child-bearing will cease; God will control it; if He did not, there would be children brought forth for trouble—there would be a multitude of little children and infants at the close of the Millennium who would have no time in which to work out their salvation and perfect their characters for the Age beyond.

There is a limit to the time for the development of the Millenarians. The Millennium itself, though a longer span of time than anyone today experiences, does have a limit. The thousand years will close, and there will be no further opportunity for anyone on earth. And God will arrange conditions so that the time is right for all; none will lack opportunity who might have used it, and the population will be just right: not too sparse, and not overcrowded.

Millennial Opportunity

Opportunity is said to be a time and a place favorable for executing a purpose; a suitable combination of conditions or circumstances favorable to some end. *(Continued next page)*

*"He who blesseth himself
in the earth
shall bless himself
in the God of truth;
and he that sweareth in the
earth shall swear
by the God of truth;
because the former
troubles are forgotten"*
—Isaiah 65:16

*"Thou shalt arise,
and have mercy upon Zion:
for the time to favour her, yea,
the set time, is come.*

*"So the heathen shall fear
the name of the Lord,
and all the kings of the earth
thy glory.*

*"He will regard the prayer
of the destitute,
and not despise their prayer.*

*"This shall be written for the
generation to come:
and the people
which shall be created
shall praise the Lord"*
—Psalm 102:13-18

The Millennium will be the place and the time suitable and favorable for many a noble and holy aspiration.

In the present age, many people lack opportunity to accomplish what they would like to; they may lack time, place, health, money, suitable circumstance, or ability, or any combination of these. But none of these will stand in the way of the Millenarians.

The first and greatest opportunity of all the mortal citizens of the Millennial era will be to prepare themselves for eternal life. The knowledge of God having been spread worldwide, it seems likely that the majority of people living then will be seriously engaged in just that preparation. Of course all will not. Never has God found all people willing to listen to His commands. All will have to assent outwardly to the policies and laws of the new government and comply with outward demands. But the inner transformation will still be a matter of individual choice and individual responsibility; the vast majority, however, shall undertake it.

The standard for the life-seekers of the Millennium will be the same required of God's life-seekers in every age of the past: absolute purity of character, if they would live in the golden Eternity which is to follow. Each person will have to make his own choice. Each will have to learn to obey if he chooses to live beyond the Millennium. Each will have to prove his own faithfulness under trial. Each will have to learn obedience despite the greatly improved conditions under which they will live.

The Bible tells us the general populace will be purified and tested. In Revelation 7 they are pictured as having come "out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood [life, or word] of the Lamb" (v. 14). They are robed in "white," symbolic of their moral purity (vs. 9-10, 13); this is the standard of character they will have attained during the Millennium, their day of probation.

But while they are engaged in this most important work, there will be opportunities open for them in the educational and social and political structures of the New World. It has always been God's principle to reward superior effort with superior advancement, and such opportunity will doubtless be open for Millennium mortals. The Bible indicates that special assignments and positions of note will be granted some of the mortals of that age (very likely, we may safely conclude, to the more ambitious and dedicated). The prophet Isaiah (chapter 66) has this to say:

"And I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw

the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles" (v. 19). This pictures a time early in the Millennium, before all have learned of the Lord's purposes. Some of the more advanced will be sent as missionaries to those who are bewildered and need to be taught—what thrilling work to share in!

The Prophet says further: "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations . . . to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord" (vs. 20-21). This last indicates the more advanced may hold administrative positions: they will be chosen to serve as "priests and . . . Levites."

During the glorious Millennium, mortals will be able to choose a career and pursue it without fear of malicious schemers, of untimely death, or economic crisis, or accident interfering. What a glorious time in which to live!

For the immortals, the Millennium will be the beginning of possibilities without limit. The whole earth will be theirs, and all that lies beyond will eventually be opened to their exploration. There will be opportunities in education, in administration, in travel, in creation, and every other area a mortal mind can imagine—and many more. All will be open wide to immortal adventure. It will indeed be opportunity unlimited.

Millennial Lifespan

Perfect health will have an immediate effect on the lifespan. The prophet Isaiah reveals this fact by mentioning that a person one hundred years old will be considered still a child in that new realm. "Every boy shall live one hundred years before he dies" (Isa. 65:20, NEB). "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. 65:20, KJV). Those who die at one hundred years will be reckoned as children, or as prematurely cut off because of sin, for the law of righteousness will be enforced as "with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26-27). The wording of Isaiah's prophecy in the Moffatt Bible is clearer: "No babe shall die there any more in infancy, nor any old man who has not lived out his years of life; he who dies youngest lives a hundred years; anyone dying under a hundred years must be accursed by God."

Isaiah gives another illustration of the new longevity: "For as the days of a tree are the days of my people" (65:22). Palestine had many long-lived trees. They had the olive, the oak, and the cedar, all common and all trees that live for centuries, some even as much as a millennium. These were considered the most enduring of living things at that time, though of course they did not live forever. Likewise, says the Prophet, the people of the Millennium will live for centuries, and they will enjoy vibrant health and the fruit of their labors

all during that time. "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them" (Isa. 65:21-23). What an age to live in! What a time to live for! (Continued next page)

A Millennial Communique

*from Church Administrative Headquarters in Jerusalem
as it may be presented to the mortal members of the
MILLENNIUM CHURCH UNIVERSAL.*

The subject of this communique:

Opportunity

Be it known to all members of the Millennium Church Universal that our major task is the building of a New World of people in our new universal nation, the Kingdom of Christ.

Time for accomplishing this great work is limited; therefore the administration is calling for the combined, consecrated abilities of you, the membership, to assist in every way possible. Every good gift God has bestowed upon each of you is needed in the work of the Millennium Church Universal. The Church needs speakers, writers, musicians, assistants, organizers, campaigners, pastors, teachers, counselors, and anyone who can show in his daily life an example of love and devotion to the highest good.

It is the obligation of each of you to discover his own talents, and to find joy in consecrating them to the service of God and your fellow mortals. In this way you may contribute to the great work of the Church and thus to the Kingdom of Christ.

May we emphasize: The Church needs YOU, your efforts and your talents. The best that everyone of you can do or give is needed. Each will be permitted to give according to his preparedness and willingness to serve. The greater your development of soul and character, the more you can be used by the Church and by the Administration, and the higher position you will be awarded. It is not presumption to work to qualify for the highest service you can render.

The entire membership of the Church are urged to share in the multiple Millennial projects of transformation that are underway. Give all you have. You will find the benefits beyond anything you can imagine.

Signed,

The Immortal Administrators

Millennial Beauty

The promise is, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21). During the Millennium, the glory of the Lord will be everywhere—and everywhere increasing.

One definition of glory is beauty. And the beautifying of our decadent and ramshackle civilization and desecrated landscapes will be a glorious project of the Millenarians. All through the thousand years the project will go on and the earth increase in beauty. It will be beauty beyond our finest expectations.

Outstanding everywhere will be the beauty of holiness, for "thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (Isa. 60:21).

But for the glory of the Lord and for the enjoyment of all, God has promised there will be physical beauty as well.

We today can easily suggest a number of ways to add to the beauty of our world: Do away with smoke, smog, and gas fumes, and replace them with the fragrance of blossoms, pine and sweet spice. Remove all slums and dilapidated structures; remove the inglorious telephone poles and power lines and replace with better systems; lay out more parks, gardens, and perfect country settings.

All this—and much more—will be possible during the Millennium, for all unsightly or imperfect scenes will be transformed.

We have all observed what men can do today. Urban renewal projects have transformed many a dark corner even now. First comes the wrecking crew; with swarms of bulldozers and wrecking balls and dynamite they reduce the old to rubble. Then come the builders who, almost magically it seems, erect new, handsome facilities. The old is replaced by the new!

So it will be in all corners of the earth. Millennium youth (everyone under one hundred years!) will be able to find plenty of useful employment for their creative minds and expanding energies. First there will be a great clearing away of everything decadent, everything that does not harmonize with God's Millennial-life blueprint. All the old slums, the club houses, the dens of iniquity will be reduced to rubble and be carried off. Then will begin the construction of the new and beautiful. It will be a glorious work!

Imagine something you call beautiful now, the most beautiful creation you can conceive of—Mil-

lennium beauties will surpass even that!

Again we go to the prophet Isaiah for a picture of the beautiful scenes that shall be:

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon"—the Prophet used imagery the people of his time could comprehend as a point of beginning; these were the most beautiful sights Isaiah had ever seen. But all this, said Isaiah, would be only the beginning of the reality, for "they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. . . . In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (Isa. 35:1-2, 5-7).

The Prophet's prediction is a glorious contrast to what has been known on earth for centuries. Gone is the fearsome landscape of desolation. All nature breaks out in new life and beauty. The air is crystal clear, sweet with the scent of flowers. The fields are bright with blossom and every common bush is beautiful. It is the garden full of delights in the midst of which will live the people of God.

Hear the Prophet as he describes more of the natural and spiritual beauties of the new age: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8).

Greatly enriching the beauty of the Millennium will be the glorious immortal beings, shining with the glorious beauty of their new divine life. Isaiah pictures them, the "ransomed of the Lord," traveling the high road of Zion and singing their hearts out for joy as they travel. It is a new age. The sun has risen, and the shadows, the sorrow and sighing, have fled forever.

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. 35:10).

Who would not like to be one of them! ●●

Help me, Lord, to live for Thee,
My privileges prize,
That I may never be ashamed
To meet Thy searching eyes.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Pre-Existence of Christ

CHRISTIANITY began with the Man Christ. Jesus Christ, miraculously conceived of the Virgin Mary, was first an infant, then a youth, then a mature man who lived as others. The early disciples understood Him to be a man, the Son of God; a man who walked and talked with them, a man who taught them with simple illustrations about the glorious Kingdom of God. They witnessed His brutal murder; they saw Him and ate with Him after His resurrection from the dead. They saw Him depart from them as He was taken up into heaven. All these events were understood as historical happenings such as might have happened to any one of them.

But time has an uncanny way of changing things. The Christian Church, originally established in His absence by His disciples and followers, who used His life and His teachings as the basis of their faith, has departed so far from this humble beginning as to be barely recognizable. From the simple teachings of the Man from Galilee men have developed a whole new system of religion, a mixture of philosophy and Christian ethics. The Church has been divided and sub-divided until today so-called Christian religions range all the way from small Bible Study groups in private homes to the ornate pontifical High Mass of the Catholic faith in St. Peter's glittering Cathedral in Rome.

How did it happen? The change was subtle and gradual, an evolutionary process. The earliest Christians had been content to believe in God and the Son whom He had sent. They gave no thought to defining precisely the relationship of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They looked up to God in heaven as the One Supreme Being, the Creator of all things. They did not think it necessary to demonstrate by processes of reason that their ideas of Him and His Son were true. But association with Greek philosophy changed all this. Speculation replaced knowledge with the result that the commandments of God were replaced with the doc-

trines of men. Reasoning along the line of the philosophers, the Church fathers decided that the Bible could not possibly contain all that man should know and believe concerning religion. The philosophers were great thinkers, and should not their thoughts be as worthy of consideration as the Scriptures?

According to Edwin Hatch (a 19th century Bible scholar), the history of the second century is the history of the clash and conflict between these new mystical and philosophical elements of Christianity and its earlier true form. On the one hand were the original churches, still holding to the concept of Christianity which they had received from those closest to Christ, "a religion of stern moral practice and of strict moral discipline, of the simple love of God and the unelaborated faith in Jesus Christ." And on the other hand were the new communities with their tendency to speculate, with their concept of knowledge side by side with faith. The result was division. The old-fashioned Christians, refusing to compromise, detached themselves from the others. The old clung to the teachings of Christ while the new gradually lost what little resemblance they had to Christianity.

Under the influence of the philosophers, the early Church fathers such as Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Origen (who gave us our subject) were led to expand the Scriptures and to interpret and re-interpret them in the light of Greek knowledge until they had developed a whole new system of faith, a doctrine foreign to the true gospel of Christ. And it is to these men that we are indebted for such doctrines as Adamic condemnation, original sin, the vicarious atonement, the trinity, the immaculate conception, the incarnation, the pre-existence, and many others—all doctrines of men and not of the Bible.

No part of Scripture has suffered more at the hands of these philosophizing religionists than that which concerns Christ. From them have come the generally accepted ideas concerning His pre-existent nature summarized in these lines quoted from an unknown poet:

*"He stepped from the measureless aeons of eternity
Into the confinements of time and space."*

*He laid aside the shining garments of glory
 To be clothed in the flesh of a helpless infant.
 He left the immortal fragrances of heaven
 For a world sick with the scent of mortality.
 He turned His back on gem-studded mansions
 To live where He had no place to lay His head.
 He removed the crown of His sonship
 In exchange for thorns and scars on His brow.
 He closed the gates to heaven's courts
 To stand accused while Pilate washed his hands.
 He descended the ethereal battlements on high
 To climb a hill called Golgotha.
 He moved away from a throne of honor
 To be nailed to a cross which was His curse.
 He gave up heaven's deathless climate
 For the airlessness of Joseph's tomb."*

These lines contain all the common misconceptions about the nature of Christ; they contain little truth. The author places the beginning of Christ's life not at His birth but in "the measureless aeons of eternity," making Jesus as old as His Father. Jesus is said to have left "gem-studded mansions" in heaven for a mortal existence on earth, to have left "heaven's courts" and "a throne of honor to be nailed to a cross" on Golgotha. He is said to have exchanged the crown of His sonship for one of thorns. All these statements are gross misrepresentations. Christ never denied His Sonship even in the face of certain death, nor did He leave a heaven He had never inhabited.

II. JESUS CHRIST—IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

There is admittedly no passage of Scripture which states directly that Christ pre-existed, but in the eyes of those who espouse it, the doctrine is assumed in dozens of instances. Suppositions, such as those in the poem quoted above, are common in theology and philosophy. And supposition forms the core of the pre-existence doctrine—there is nothing else on which it could be based.

With the doctrine already firmly fixed in their minds, it is not difficult to see how Christ's pre-existence is read into the Scriptures. Christ is thought to have existed even before the Bible record begins—in the beginning when God created the earth. With such thinking, the "us" of Genesis 1:26 becomes God and Christ; the glory reflected in the face of Moses is understood as that of the pre-existent Christ who was there to deliver the Law to Moses; the pillar of fire which led the Israelites can be none other than the pre-existent Christ.

We will discuss these and some other instances from the Old Testament where believers in the pre-existence hold that Christ was present.

A. Jesus and Abraham

Are Jehovah of the Old Testament and Jesus of the New Testament the same person of the god-head? Answering this question from a reader, Robert Mounce, writing in the religious publication *Eternity*, points out that Jesus was not actually God, but that He did have a prior existence with the Father. The questioner had asked further, "When Jesus said 'I Am' was He claiming to be the 'I Am' of the Old Testament?"

Mr. Mounce's answer states the view of the majority concerning the pre-existence: "Your reference is undoubtedly to John 8:58 where the Jews stumble at Jesus' statement that Abraham rejoiced to see His day. They ask incredulously, 'You're not even fifty years old; how could you have seen Abraham?' Jesus answers, 'Listen carefully; before Abraham was born, I am'—that is, before the great patriarch Abraham came into being, Jesus already existed in an eternal state. The statement, 'I Am,' means nothing less than that Jesus continually IS.

"What He does claim elsewhere in John is both pre-existence ('When all things began, the Word [the eternal Son] already was'—John 1:1, NEB). This of course, verges into the mystery of the triune God who is one in essence yet three persons. However, Jesus is not making a statement about the nature of the triune God: He is simply saying that before Abraham was born He already was, since He always has been, is now, and forever will continue to be."*

We cannot believe that Jesus was claiming a prior existence by His statement to the Jews in John 8:58. To accept the idea of previous existence contradicts the plain truth of the Bible concerning the nature of Jesus. Had Jesus been making such a claim, He should have said, "Before Abraham was, I was," not "I am." He neither claimed existence before Abraham's time nor did He claim to be the great I AM. Christ is before Abraham in rank because He is to be the King over the whole earth. He may also be said to be before Abraham in that He is now immortal; He alone possesses immortality, while Abraham and all other worthy ones of old (except Enoch and Elijah) sleep in the grave, awaiting the resurrection and exaltation.

How did Abraham see Christ's day? He said to the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Note that He did not say Abraham rejoiced to see **Me** in his day. Abraham's day and Christ's day were two distinctly different times. Only by the eye

* *Eternity Magazine*, June, 1975.

of faith, by divinely revealed knowledge, could Abraham "see" or know about, the day of Christ.

This thought is borne out in newer translations of the verse: "Abraham was delighted to know of My day" (Beck); "Abraham was extremely happy in the prospect of seeing My day" (Berkeley); "Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day" (NIV); "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He knew I was coming and was glad" (TLB).

The context in which John 8:58 occurs shows plainly that Jesus was not claiming to be God, to be equal with God, or to have been eternally pre-existent with God. The doctrine of the "triune God who is one in essence yet three persons" is as unscriptural as the pre-existence. Nowhere in the Bible is there any assertion of a triune God; it is a doctrine of men, not of God. Anything that "verges into mystery" belongs to philosophy, not to Scripture and true religion.

B. Jesus and the Creator

Proponents of the pre-existence theory believe that Christ was with God helping with the creation of all things. In Genesis 1:26 where God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," they assume the "us" to be God and Christ. This is pure conjecture; there is nothing to indicate that the "us" consists of God and Christ.

The Hebrew word translated "us" is **Elohim**, which is defined in Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon as, "in a plural sense of gods or deities in general. . . . Not a few interpreters, both ancient and modern, have regarded Elohim as denoting angels (See Ps. 8:5). Hebrews, chapters 1:1-6 and 3:7-9 show plainly that this word sometimes means angels, and the authority of the New Testament decides the matter." Angels, endowed with the power of God would certainly possess the power to create.

No, Christ was not "in the beginning" with God. We are told in Hebrews 2:17 that He was made in all points like His brethren. If Christ pre-existed, then all His followers pre-existed, for they are all brethren. Theology limits pre-existence to Christ only. Had He existed before, the doctrine should be clearly stated and not left to assumption.

C. Jesus and Moses

Was Jesus in existence in the time of Moses? Were we to accept as evidence the words of the Church "Fathers," we would have to agree. Some of them firmly believed in His pre-existence, as do some theologians today; but more than firm belief is necessary to render a doctrine the truth of the Scriptures.

Mr. A. T. Hanson, writing in his book, **Jesus Christ in the Old Testament**, quotes from these early Church Fathers as proof of Christ's pre-existence: "The idea that it was Christ who uttered the Law to Moses on Sinai, and who spoke to him in the tabernacle, is certainly to be found in the Fathers. We have found it in Melito: 'He it was . . . who gave thee the law on Horeb.' Irenaeus certainly believed this: for example . . . he writes as follows: 'And the Word [the pre-existent Christ] indeed spoke to Moses, appearing in his sight as a man speaks to his friend (Ex. 33:11). . . . Tertullian insists that it was Christ whom Moses saw in the tabernacle and whose glory Moses hid from the Israelites.'"

Mr. Hanson also holds that New Testament writers believed in Christ's pre-existence. He is confident that Paul is thinking in terms of pre-existence when he relates Old Testament history concerning the giving of the Law, the reflected glory on Moses' face, the ending of the Law—and many others, including I Corinthians 10:1-11. Here Mr. Hanson says we have "the one passage in the New Testament where everyone admits that we have a clear example of Christ's pre-existent activity in the Old Testament history"—everyone, that is, except those such as ourselves, who cannot believe the apostle Paul had any such idea.

Mr. Hanson points out many instances in the Old Testament which he believes to be pre-existent activities of Christ: the call of Moses at the burning bush; the giving of the Law on Sinai; the pattern for the tabernacle; the pillar of cloud and fire.

Let us consider each of these and see if there is any reason to believe that Christ was present in a pre-existent state.

1. **The call of Moses.** In Exodus 3:1-6 we read of the incident of the burning bush. Moses was tending sheep in the desert of Mt. Horeb when "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Moses turned to investigate, and a voice spoke to him out of the bush, identifying itself as "the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Writes Mr. Hanson, in support of the generally accepted belief, "That it was Christ who appeared to Moses in the burning bush is a common theme among the [Church] Fathers. There are at least two references in Justin. . . . The same identification will be found in Irenaeus. . . . Chrysostom, who is no fanatic for finding Christ in the Old Testament, is perfectly clear on this point. . . . Compare also Eusebius. . . ."

We cannot accept the witness of the early Fathers of the Catholic Church as proof of the pre-existence of Christ. Tradition weighs nothing in the balances of the Almighty. We must abide by what the Bible says, and there is nothing in the Bible narrative of the incident to suggest that it was Christ who appeared to Moses in a pre-existent state. Angels are glorified beings, hence angels were responsible for the bright light that made the bush appear as if it were on fire. It could not have been Jesus, because the Gospel of John recorded of Jesus twelve centuries later, during His ministry, that "Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).

Christ was not in existence in Moses' day, for Moses prophesied of Him, saying that He would be "raised up" from among the people. He was to be "like unto me [Moses]"—and no one suggests that Moses pre-existed.

2. The giving of the Law on Sinai. Because Christ appeared to Paul on the Damascus road as a light "above the brightness of the sun" (Acts 26:13), proponents of the pre-existence theory jump to the conclusion that the "Lord [who] descended upon it [Mt. Sinai] in fire" was none other than Christ (Ex. 19:18). The idea is expressed that because the title "Lord" is printed in all capital letters as LORD it refers to God, but a careful study of the title "Lord" throughout the Bible does not bear this out.

A case in point is found in Genesis 16, when the angel of the Lord came to Hagar in the wilderness. In verses 9-12 the "angel" was speaking to Hagar, and in verse 13 Hagar spoke: "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" It was an angel that was speaking (vs. 9, 11), and he is also identified as "LORD" in all capital letters—the two were used interchangeably.

Also, the glory reflected in Moses' face when he returned from the mountain, according to pre-existence believers, came from a meeting with the pre-existent Christ. Such a conclusion is merely conjecture. It is impossible, for a non-glorified being as Christ would have been (John 7:39) would not have shone. Stephen, well versed in Jewish history, stated that the Law was given "by angels" (Acts 7:38, 53).

It has been suggested that in making this statement, Stephen was adding a new dimension, since the angels are not mentioned in the Old Testament record of the giving of the Law. However, we can

be confident Stephen knew whereof he spoke, for Stephen possessed the Holy Spirit power (Acts 6:5). It is common Bible usage to say that "The Lord said" or "God said," when His angel was delivering the message. Angels are members of God's heavenly family, and they bear His name (Exodus 23:20-21). The angels present on Mount Sinai at the time of the giving of the Law caused the mountain to appear as filled with "fire." Though they are not mentioned in the account in Exodus, Moses, reporting on the mountain experience at a later date, stated definitely the presence of angels: "He came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them" (Deut. 33:2). We have no right to add to the words of Stephen or any other Bible writer, or to speculate what he might have been thinking but did not say. Such speculation amounts to private interpretation of Scripture, which is strictly forbidden (II Pet. 1:20).

3. The pattern for the tabernacle. In his discourse before the council (Acts 7) Stephen related how Moses was instructed to set up the tabernacle in the wilderness "according to the pattern he had seen." The writer to the Hebrews stated that Moses "was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5).

Pre-existence advocates see in this event the pattern being given by none other than Christ in His pre-existent state. To say thus is to read into the Scriptures something that is not there. It is but conjecture. To add to the Word of God is dangerous practice: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:6)—and all liars have their part outside the Kingdom of God (Rev. 21:8, 27).

4. The pillar of cloud and fire. Believers in the pre-existence see Christ's presence in the pillar of cloud because the title LORD is written in all capitals, but as explained in our previous lesson, a careful study of Scripture does not support the claim. The Bible expressly states that it was God's angel that both led and protected the Israelites on their journey (See Exod. 23:20 and 14:19.) **There is nothing to indicate that the angel was Christ. This and all other claims of Christ's pre-existence in Moses' day are unfounded; there is no Bible evidence to support them. ••**

*Reprints of these studies available,
10 cents per copy*

* *Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*, A. T. Hanson, p. 88

**Kathy
Kandor's
Korner**

Be Courteous

"GO get that bicycle pump!" Kenneth snarled at his younger brother.

"Get it yourself!" Keith flung back defiantly.

Hurriedly placing a folded towel on the growing pile of laundry, I headed for the back porch. As the door stood open to let in the autumn breezes, I heard their voices clearly. What was the problem? I wondered to myself. These word hassles were becoming too frequent.

As I stepped to the doorway, I saw an angry Keith eyeing his older brother almost viciously.

"Whatever is the trouble?" I asked, looking from one boy to the other.

"Just because he's older"—Keith was all ready to defend himself—"he thinks he can boss me around and not even say 'please.'" Keith's lower lip protruded further than usual. "You'd think he was the president. It's—it's the big bully way he says it."

"I can tell you what the problem is." A big, deep voice spoke from behind us. "Does either son of mine know the meaning of the word 'courtesy'?"

Kenneth's face flushed as he slowly turned to face his father who was just home from work.

"I have come to the conclusion," said Neal as he placed his brief case on the step and leaned against the railing, "that so many of these little disturbances could be avoided altogether if we would only treat each other with that great little smoother, common courtesy."

"I didn't mean to be rude or bossy," Kenneth spoke lamely, "but I was in a hurry and Keith had the pump last."

"There is no excuse for being discourteous," answered Neal firmly. "We are never too busy to be courteous." Placing a hand kindly on Kenneth's arm, Neal continued, "I'm sure Keith would gladly have run an errand for his buddy if you had po-

lately asked him and not demanded it roughly."

Neal sat down on the porch glider and I sat down beside him, glad for a moment to rest my feet. The boys slumped to the nearest chairs.

"Rudeness is lack of consideration for others. We interrupt others while they are speaking because *we* want to be heard. We push others aside because we feel superior to them. They get in our way. It is *our* way they are getting in, remember. We can't wait our turn because *we* have so much more work to do than others."

"If courtesy is so valuable," interposed Kenneth lightly, "why isn't everybody courteous?"

"We are all born self-centered" was Neal's answer. "Good manners have to be learned, and remembered. And they have to be practiced."

"Kenneth, you would never think of speaking to your Uncle Gerald in the same way you spoke to Keith," I added.

"Of course not! but Uncle Gerald isn't my little brother."

Neal leaned his head back, as if to analyze. "Somehow we feel we don't need company manners at home with those we love. But there is a verse of Scripture which says we should 'learn first to show kindness at home.' It's so strange how we tend to be irritating, ugly and mean to those we love."

"I never see you or mother rude with each other" volunteered Keith.

Neal smiled. "We are glad you can say that, Son. Your mother and I have tried very hard to make courtesy a habit, and"—Neal tossed a cheerful glance my way—"I think we're doing it."

"Well, then," Kenneth spoke, a bit sourly. "What am I supposed to say to Keith when I know he's done something with something I want?"

"Be courteous, Kenneth. Think how you would like Keith to ask you, if you were in his place."

"Well, Keith, I still need the bicycle pump. Would you please see if you can find it and bring it to me?"

No answer was necessary. Keith bounded down the porch steps and out to the shed, where he knew he could find it. Courtesy made all the difference. ●●

"Love is very patient, very kind.

Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful.

Love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient.

Love never disappears."

—I Corinthians 13:4-8, Moffatt Bible



The Peaceful Hour

"In quietness and in confidence
shall be your strength"

—Isaiah 30:15.

HAVE you ever tried to evaluate thoroughly and honestly the pattern of your thoughts upon awaking in the morning? In our hectic and highly demanding existence, it becomes increasingly difficult not to let the first thought of the day be of the problems of yesterday and the myriad tasks of today.

The alarm clock sends out its jarring buzz. Instinctively we silence it. Then, as we struggle to shake ourselves awake, we begin to go over in our minds the multiplicity of duties that we know will be clamoring for our attention before this day is done. The temptation to disregard the alarm clock and return to peaceful sleep almost overwhelms us, as we cringe before what the day might bring.

Is this the way an aspiring Christian faces the new day of opportunity and challenge? No! There is no desire within that eager soul to retreat from the conflicts of life, no longing for the oblivion of

slumber, but instead a strong resolution—even an anxiety—to have and *use* the opportunities of the new day. There will be opportunities to erase some of the mistakes of the previous day, and opportunities to go forward to new and higher achievements in the Christlike life.

Whence comes the strength to do this, to get up in the morning with a feeling of gratitude for whatever the day might bring?

Listen!

*Oh! be careful, for a moment,
At the early dawn of day!
Let the heart in deep contrition,
Think what's best to do and say!
Join in prayer before thy Maker,
Ere one sin has entered in;
There in lowly, sweet communion
Ask for victory to win.*

The words of "The Peaceful Hour" were composed by our founder, Rev. L. T. Nichols.

There is urgent need for quiet time, for a season of spiritual renewal, for time when we can entreat

our heavenly Father for additional courage to face life's battles. And what better time could we find than a few peaceful moments in the morning—before we tackle (even mentally) the duties and trials of the day?

Prayer has always played an integral role in the lives of God's saints. In fact, prayer might rightly be called the lifeline, the life-support system of all who are earnestly striving for perfection of character. Remember our Creator's promise, that if we "ask anything according to his will, he hears us"? God will certainly hear—and answer—such prayer. The answer will not always be to our natural liking, but we can be sure it will work to our spiritual betterment if only we allow it to.

How imperative, then, that we begin our day not with a thought of the day's duties, or with yesterday's problems, or last year's grievances, or tomorrow's worries, but with a season of heart-felt communion with our Maker. There is tremendous grow-power in prayer. And we need it.

Are we making the most of our morning privilege, that time when we can commune with God and refresh our souls in His Word? Do we go even further, making the most of our spare moments and hours through the day? Do we take time—or *make* time—to become better acquainted with God's message for us? Can we say we are finding in Him that perfect peace that nothing can offend?

Not only do we have the lifeline of prayer as an ever-present help in our times of daily need, but within our homes, possibly lying upon a shelf is a book—perhaps all-too-little-read—which can be a thorough furnisher unto all good works, if we take the time to read and study it, and submerge ourselves in it.

*Stop! and think, at least a moment,
With thy Bible by thy side;
Turn and read some sacred portion,
From this storehouse opened wide;
Let it guide thee ev'ry moment,
When you sit, or walk, or ride;
Then will spring bright hope and beauty
To within thy heart abide.*

The Bible is our never-failing Guide Book, to which we should turn constantly for instruction and edification. In days of stress, it is a staff to lean upon. When temptation assails, it becomes our trusty armor. When the heart yearns for spiritual refreshing, it is a well of cool, sparkling water. And where else can you find a book written centuries ago that gives an accurate picture of the present conditions of the world? What other book

projects in glowing words a grand and glorious preview of the world to come?

The benefits of using our moments and hours in quiet, peaceful prayer, reading and meditation are sure to be far-reaching. Not only will we find ourselves seeing the present as through new eyes, but the end result of a life wholly devoted to God will be a completely new individual.

Then . . .

*. . . there'll be a glorious morning
You may share for evermore;
'Twill be better far than money
When probation day is o'er;
Beauty, grandeur, wealth and glory
It will yield on Zion's shore,
To be clothed in dazzling beauty,
Soar aloft to die no more.*

What a gracious Paymaster we serve! Just think what He has offered. His blessing will mean death abolished forever; glorious, vibrant life and health our never-ending portion. It will go on and on. Listen!

*Oh, what bliss 'twill be to linger
On that bright, celestial shore!
There to bask with Christ forever
Throughout ages evermore.
There to be all life and action,
Go with freedom of the wind;
Ev'ry act and thought so holy,
We'll forget we ever sinned.*

Of all deliverances, will not this be supreme, to "forget we ever sinned"? In this present time, sin is the horror of our lives. It continually assaults our efforts to become pure and holy and threatens to separate us eternally from all that God offers.

When we have shown the moral vigor to overpower sin in our lives, God will remove it entirely, and we shall find we have yet more and more to enjoy, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Cor. 2:9).

It's too much to miss, isn't it?

Why not make this the opening thought of each new day, the beginning of a peaceful hour of spiritual invigoration which will assure us a whole day of loving, faithful, devoted service to God *every day*? ●●

Is our desire for life so strong that we are willing to put forth the effort necessary to obtain it?

Better the End

(Continued from page 7)

out to get something better. I had my eye on what I had been offered. I saw there was something worth having, and I wanted that something to come to me. So we must look to the end of the matter; the end will bring us ten million times the pleasures we get now. If a man will not crucify his lusts for this short moment of time to obtain the grand eternity, he is not worthy of it.

If we could but realize how much easier it is to serve the Lord than to serve the flesh, we would find there is no burden. We should appreciate the blessings God has given us, or He will not continue to do us another good turn. If we do not appreciate our present blessings, He will never surround us with greater blessings.

We do not have long to perform this work, so why should we do anything that will lessen our opportunity? The trouble is, we do not act consistently at all. Why are we not, as James says, "easily entreated" and doing all with an eye single to the glory of God? This is what we just have to do if we gain the prize. We must *be* what we profess to be, actually go ahead and crucify the flesh, our own natural desires. When a trial comes and we are the same as we were when there was no trial, then there is victory; then there is cause for rejoicing, for we can see where we did all to the glory of God. This is the work we have to do. I thought the other day, how many are stopping to realize and ask themselves, Am I really doing this with an eye single to God's glory, or am I doing it just to satisfy myself?

Well, beloved brethren, let us determine by our conduct, begin today and be willing and glad to be found on the Lord's side. I am more than anxious to be on the Lord's side, no matter how great the opposition from the world. We cannot have the ideas of the world, and the ideas of God. The "carnal [natural] mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

We read, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." If we are doing this or that according to our own inclination or thought, the Lord cannot save us. We have to have our thoughts, our motives, our all governed by the divine Record. That is why so few will be saved.

It is absolutely necessary to realize fully the necessity of a constant onward march in order to reach the Promised Land. Standing still here, loitering there, will never gain it; it is the one who

has more energy in it than in any other work who will enter there.

Until we see our interest is becoming so intense that it is above everything else, the gate to life will forever close against us. Even humankind would select good associates; so the Almighty in selecting for His eternal associates, someone that will always be in His presence, enjoying His glory, will choose only the pure and holy. It is absolutely necessary for us to grow to that standard if we want His blessing. We must feel within ourselves that we must be about our "Father's business" all the time.

Our minds go back to the testimony in Jeremiah 2: "Hear ye the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? Neither said they, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?"

"And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit" (vs. 4-8).

There is a great lesson here. When the Israelites were wandering through the wilderness they forgot the God that brought them up out of the land of Egypt and performed such marvelous miracles before them. They were not thankful; they turned into a "degenerate plant of a strange vine." Instead of bearing more fruit, they became barren. How careful we should be, that we do not forget God, seeing we are surrounded with so many greater blessings than they had. We should remember II Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

We can all know whether our zeal and energy are constantly impelled by the spiritual or the temporal. Paul tells us to "examine ourselves." We can see what kind of fruit we are bearing, if we look at ourselves honestly. We can see how much progress we are making. But if not extremely careful,

time will pass and we will be thinking and planning all for the temporal. We will be doing something; some little thing will come in which did not suit us in the temporal, and we will be all concerned about that instead of doing all we can to build up the spiritual.

The children of Israel had gone astray; they called sweet bitter, and bitter sweet. They should have said, "We are not worthy of what God has done for us." But they did not. If we are not careful, we will be worse than they were; for we are surrounded with so many more comforts than they ever had. For us to murmur once is a thousand times worse than for them. We should feel we are in no wise worthy of what we enjoy. We should feel, "Anything, Lord, for Thee, anything, Lord that will purify me." We must look to the end, to our own self-purification. Every moment of our time should be engaged in thinking, What blessings I am surrounded with; see how little appreciation for them I have shown by my conduct! We need to consider more seriously what God has done for us, or the Lord will reject us when He comes.

In this age we are asked to believe without seeing. We have evidence, but Noah of old had evidence that outrides ours: he had the visit of an angelic being.

But even with the evidence we have, how could any of us think of disbelieving or distrusting God? We have mighty evidence before us; we have a biblical answer for everything we believe. When we consider this, is it not wonderful? It would seem that it would fill us with such zeal and enthusiasm that we would be inquiring, yes inquiring, "What can I do, Lord, for Thee?" Look around for work, be watching for it, for it will bring such a wonderful amount of pay in the end.

It is as we read in II Peter 1, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (vs. 2-4).

To get such a redoubling pay as that! I do not wonder Peter called it multiplying. God calls upon us to make a little addition, and then He says He will multiply to us happiness, peace, and joy for evermore. Such promises! Such "exceeding great and precious promises"!

We think we have trials; they look like mountains to us. But let us read Matthew 17:20, "And Jesus said unto them, . . . verily I say unto you,

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." We build the mountains ourselves. If we had this grain of faith, we could remove them all.

We are happy, yet not happy enough; we should be all wrapped up in divine things. If we do not get more interest in divine things, we shall never obtain the glorious prize. We are too tardy. When the Master comes, if we have not been working, we shall be outside and the gate will be closed forever. No power on earth will be able to open it. Though Noah, the faithful one, and Daniel the courageous one, and Job the patient one, though all three of them should stand and plead for us, they could deliver only themselves (Ezek. 14:14). They could answer only for their own works. Our own individual righteousness is all that will save us. Their righteousness will answer for them, and ours will answer for us.

We should meditate on the divine testimony and compare our everyday conduct with it; we should look to ourselves, and compare ourselves with the pattern. Every part, every crook, every turn must be molded, carved and shaped precisely like the Pattern. When it is, we will be impelled by the spiritual.

The only thing that will avail is to cease to do evil and learn to do well. Can we see we are more interested in divine things today than we were yesterday? Can we see we have more energy in the Lord's work than we had yesterday? Do we really feel a greater consolation in working for the Lord than in working for the things of the present? Do we really feel it? I can only answer for one.

Someday the books are going to be opened. Why? Because there is an account to be settled. It will be the big payday. The book will show whether we have been zealous workers or not, and we shall receive our pay just according as our works have been. If we have not been zealous workers, sorrow and anguish of heart will seize us and destruction will be our doom. "Be zealous therefore and repent." We have enough zeal in the temporal, but we must have it in divine things. I would not give anything for a man without zeal, but that zeal must be impelled in the right direction.

The Lord said to Ezekiel, "Go . . . speak, . . . whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, for they are a rebellious house."

The books will be opened. We shall see what we have written. The angels will not scribe anything but what we give them. We are the manuscript, the angel is the scribe. Just as we have been, it

will be written there. But the trouble is that we do not want the work of writing the manuscript; nevertheless, "tardy" will be written on the book and it will be against us if we have not been diligent in our writing.

I am writing the manuscript for myself. I cannot write for you. Some will be sadly surprised when the book is opened, some who have said, "We have not sinned."

Let us not deceive ourselves; the end will be just according to what we have done. ●●

Our Readers Write . . .

God's Bountiful Provisions

I am trying to realize more strongly the great mercy and longsuffering of our heavenly Father that He has seen fit to give us this wonderful light of eternal life and has given us a full supply of heavenly bread to make us strong to overcome all our evil ways. He has also given us pure living water (John 4:14). All this and much more is all freely given to everyone hungry and thirsty.

But too often we neglect to partake of this highly nourishing food and instead feed on our own natural evil thoughts which lead only to destruction. Too often I find I forget to bring every thought into subjection.

British Columbia, Canada

Z. M. S.

The Warfare

The warfare with our own wills is one of the most difficult, and it does exact its toll in blood and death to the will. I know what is correct and proper, yet in a second I can do just the opposite and stand ashamed and degraded. It takes vigilance and constant striving to overcome the evil within ourselves.

God is a God of just love, to so many people, and He will always look the other way when we're engaged in an evil or wicked act or thought. It is a disgrace to even suggest that God the Father would demand an accounting from us. No one in this age likes to receive direction and orders from another in the guise of being a free person and willing to make up their own minds. Every man does what is right in his own eyes, but that will all be swept aside when Christ returns to establish the Kingdom and give the entire world a final opportunity to cast aside all pagan beliefs and conduct themselves properly.

A Christian is not one that is made overnight and suddenly blooms the next morning. It takes a lifetime of denial or great tribulation, of learning to say "No!" to yourself every day, in fact every minute of every day. Shedding the blood of the death of the old man is a very real struggle, and a day or a week or a month isn't enough; it takes a lifetime.

Presently I can run or jog five or ten miles daily without any great effort; but it took me years of daily running and sweat and effort until I had disciplined my body to accomplish this. The same is true of a Christian; we all must reach the standard God has set, but it takes time and diligence to do it.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

D. K.

Growing Again

We here in this part of the country are receiving a good supply of water now. The grass that was brown for so long from lack of water is now getting green and starting to grow.

Down through the ages the bulk of people that entered the garden to work for eternal life have remained like the grass around here, dormant. They did not partake of the water of life and so did not grow to maturity; it is to their shame that they did not.

But what of us? Are we taking in this water so that we will become full grown in all this great wisdom that has been revealed to us?

Selma, Iowa

G. M. M.

Isaiah Was Encouraging

The prophet Isaiah had a hard job encouraging the Israelites while they were turning away from God as a nation. Somehow, probably with Isaiah's help, a remnant of the people remained true to God. One way Isaiah kept them encouraged was to remind them of God's love and power. In Isaiah 40, he points to the majesty of the seas and mountains and to the grandeur of the forests and tells the people that from His place in heaven He regards even the most powerful of nations as a drop in a bucket, or as the small dust of the balance; all nations before Him are as nothing, even less than nothing and vanity.

We are living in a very troubled world, a world full of turmoil and confusion. The floodgates of wickedness are open wide, evil overflows; where there was once a small ripple of evil now there is wave upon wave of corruption. How well we should realize that we will need God's mighty strength to pull against the forces of evil. We also must have a controlled pull against our own evil thoughts within. To make headway we must maintain our enthusiasm and pull against the evil current with all our might and strength. We are in possession of the wonderful power of truth, and if we couple this with our God-given will power we should be able to make rapid progress.

Swansea, South Wales

M. S.

Without Money or Price

How good God is to send His faithful and wise servant to open the eyes of our understanding and point out to us the difference between the religions of today and the teaching of Jesus. It is quite a lesson we have to learn, and it took a lot of time in my case to learn it.

We don't have to have a lot of money to be accepted. If we did, I would be out. But Isaiah says, "Come ye, buy and eat: yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." What a wonderful invitation! If people could pay their way into the Kingdom, there would be a lot of rich people there and not many poor.

It is a sad picture to see so many striving for mastery in the fleeting things of this life but ignoring the eternal life God offers. May the Lord help us to keep looking ahead.

Newfoundland, Canada

G. W.

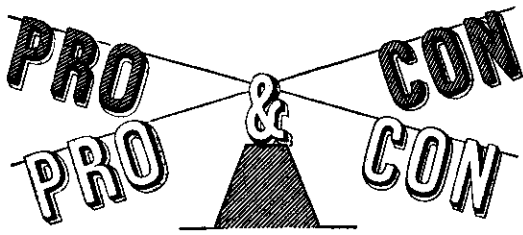
Sowing and Reaping

We reap just what we sow. If we want to reap a rich harvest we must make the most of life's seedtime and not waste precious hours. We cannot bring fruits of the flesh but must have fully ripened fruit of the spirit without blemish.

We must not allow a day to pass without making progress in getting rid of our fleshly ways. God wants only the best and we know that He will not ask us to give up anything without replacing it with something better.

Peru, Iowa

F. B.



A Column for Open Discussion

● Which matters most—FAITH or WORKS?

"In your Millennium article, you did me a valuable service: You reminded me of a stern Father, you reminded me of and sobered me with 'the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom.' Now, I too renew the discipline and diligence with which I pursue good works—out of the pure love I bear Him, without which I not only could not be motivated to do those works, but would not even be able to perceive the nature of those works I ought to do for Him.

"Sirs, I may not work now, but only contemplate upon the Father but I assure you that this is fueling me for good works—how indeed could it be otherwise? With meditation, I will do what I do for Christ in the *right* way: wholeheartedly, diligently too. Notice, too, what an apostle says of his labor of love, in the Scriptures: 'But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me' (I Cor. 15: 10).

"I know God doesn't wish to waste His grace on those who won't bear fruit of works—that's why the Apostle says it was 'not in vain' upon him. But I also know that there is a reward of sweet rest from God, too, and that He is patient in the formative work of noetic (intellectual) faith, which makes us indefatigable workers later. Sometimes, it is much later. Our own inner work, sirs, of conquering ourselves, is an indispensable prelude to the life of works for Christ."

C. L. A., Midland, Michigan

We certainly agree that God is patient with us in our often slow beginnings in the race for eternal life. But neither will He wait indefinitely for us to bear the fruit of works. He does not expect us to conquer our evil natures in a minute, but as the apostle Peter expressed it, we must "grow in grace,

and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). You express it admirably when you say, "Our own inner work of conquering ourselves is an indispensable prelude to the life of works for Christ"—our own inner work is not the "prelude" but *the work* which Christ desires. It is this "work" which we must perform so that God's grace, His abundant goodness to us in giving us this life and the knowledge by which we may attain to a better life, may not be in vain to us.

"God loves to delight our souls with the passive aspects of faith in Him. . . . We in turn try to please Him, even, I say, delight Him, with our fervor and control in matters of the great labors in the vineyard. God loves me, sirs, and I love Him; that is all that really matters. I do for Him what I'd do for anyone I love with all my heart; but that's beside the point. I love Him."

You make two statements here with which we cannot agree:

1) "God loves to delight our souls with the passive aspects of faith in Him."

How are we going to show our love for God except by our works? We might say we loved Him, but that would be a meaningless gesture, unless we back our statement by actions. To love the Lord with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength implies **work**. There is nothing passive about it. James states plainly, "Faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:26).

You state also:

2) "I do for [God] what I'd do for anyone I love with all my heart; but that's beside the point. I love Him."

What we do for God in demonstrating our love for Him by our works is **not beside the point**; it is **THE POINT**. When Christ returns, He will reward "every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

"Sirs, where are you going to go with this corporate-executive—efficiency style of working for God, when the time comes that He so orders it that the evil of the world no longer even exists? What will you do then? You will simply love Him, as I do."

This statement sounds as though you believe works are sometime going to be "out of date," so to speak, as if God will at some point in time simply order the cessation of all evil in the world and nothing will remain to do but love God. But you give no Scriptural evidence for this idea, and we know of none.

There are many texts which state that the evil-doers shall be destroyed, that evil will be purged, but there is nothing which suggests it will disappear with one divine order. Six times in Psalm 37 the fact is repeated that the wicked will be cut off. If God were simply to "will" evil from the earth, why did He allow it in the first place? Evil-doers will be "cut off" (Prov. 2:21-22); mankind will have to learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). The "devil," representing sin and all sinners, will be bound and ultimately destroyed (Rev. 20:1-3; 21:8; 21:27). We, too, will be destroyed if we have sin within our own hearts or lives when God does this; only the righteous and pure will remain forever; only they will be able to show their love to God after evil is wiped out, for only they shall abide (Ps. 15; Isa. 33:14-17).

The seven thousand years which God has allotted for the completing of His work on earth include the probation time, the proving time, of those whom God will have for rulers and populace of His eternal Kingdom on earth. Those proving themselves of select quality will live forever. Those failing to keep all of God's commandments will be destroyed. This concept may be deflating to man's ego, but it is the plan outlined in Scripture.

"Why don't you revise your statement, then, to say that all Christians will receive only part of the reward intended for them if they do not receive grace God gives fully and co-operate with that grace fully?"

We do not believe that anyone who has not made himself worthy of the full reward of life eternal by living in obedience to all of God's commands will ever live beyond the end of the seven thousand years. God's eternal Kingdom will have no sin within it whatever, but only the perfect and pure and immortal. Revelation 21:27 reads: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

"Sirs, the works we do for God must be done with wise judgment; the soul is the seat of judgment; if the soul is corrupted, it follows that works proceeding out of that corrupt soul will be likewise corrupt. Therefore it follows that first comes the inner ordering of the salvation of the soul, then, next, proceed those works seen as pure by God. As the Bible teaches us in Ephesians 2:8, 'For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.'

"Sirs, may I simply say, please, that I am acquainted with the distinction between so-called charity-workers who are mere busy-bodies, meddling in everyone else's business, and those who authentically serve Him and never fail to do so without love. That is where the taint of your magazine's obvious doctrine of favoritism toward works, as opposed to faith, comes in, in that you fail to appreciate salvation by grace alone because you ignore the spirit of I Corinthians 13, verse 3: 'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.'"

It is true that man by himself would not know how to please God. In the period of history covered by the Bible, many times God revealed Himself to His prophets and teachers, instructing them in His ways and telling them what He required of men. Today we are not favored in this way. All we have to guide us is the written law of the Lord, which Psalm 19:7 assures us is "perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

There are many aspects to the subject of grace as projected in the Bible. God's grace often means God's favor or goodness to us in supplying us with the knowledge whereby we can make ourselves worthy of salvation. The grace of God is shown especially in His Word, or revealed knowledge, which teaches us to deny ourselves of "ungodliness and worldly lusts" and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). The greatest manifestation of God's grace will be in the reward which Christ will bring—that supreme blessing is called "grace." We read, ". . . be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:13). The grace of God to us is far beyond anything we have deserved; we live by God's grace.

Where theology distorts the concept of God's grace is in applying it to cover or overlook sin. In this context there is no such thing as salvation by grace alone. We cannot become free from sin except as we confess and forsake it (Prov. 28:13; Isa. 55:6-7). God by His grace provides the knowledge, and the ability to apply that knowledge, that we may merit salvation; but we have to use the faculties God has given us and apply that knowledge before we can receive God's eternal grace, even eternal life. To say that we are saved from our sins now by God's grace and that good works follow as a matter of course is to put the "cart before the horse."

To understand the meaning of I Corinthians 13:2, we must determine what Paul meant when he used the word translated "charity" or "love." The original Greek word Paul used is *agape*, which denotes the "love between God and man, including God's love to man and man's love to God." It is a type of love which seeks the best for the object of its interest.

John the Beloved had a definition of love which is as follows: "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments." This is a visible type of love; it is love that is proven and true; it is the highest type of love. It is love demonstrated by faithfulness by works; it is not a sentimental feeling apart from works.

We agree that there is a definite relationship between faith and works. Both are necessary. Faith without works is of no avail, and conversely, works without faith amounts to action without direction.

The apostle Paul referred to faith as a "shield" (Eph. 6:16), a very vital part of the Christian's armor, but by no means the only part. The breastplate of righteousness is also an important part (v. 14). In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul lists the works of the "flesh," the lower nature of man, and then adds, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Then he continues right on with the works which we must do, the fruits of the Spirit, and concludes, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

We believe it is a dangerous attitude to apply the term *passive* to our faith. Our faith must be *active*, a "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6). As James said, "I will show thee my faith by my works" (Jas. 2:18). And Peter: "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (II Pet. 1:5-7). Faith is the foundation for all the virtues; but unless these virtues are built upon it, there can be no salvation.

God has given His children a work to do. That is what the whole plan of salvation is about. We cannot minimize, rationalize or explain it away, much as we might like to. Theology has been doing just that for more than nineteen hundred years. But when the end of this age arrives, the words of Jeremiah will be fulfilled: "The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit" (Jer. 16:19).

We do not believe it is possible to overstress the importance of **works**. To keep the commandments

of God, to meet the requirements God has set for eternal life, is to give all our heart, soul, mind and strength in showing our love for God (Mark 12:30-31). This is our responsibility, but it is all that we are able to do. The rest is up to God. We must be very, very careful that we keep our end of the compact, for "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8). ●●

We will continue this discussion in our next issue. If any of our readers have any comment, do not hesitate to write.

Fruitful Fragments



The best rosebush is not that which has the fewest thorns but the finest roses.

The foolish man seeks happiness in the distance; the wise man grows it under his feet.

It is never too soon to give up a prejudice.

We can use life's blows to wail on—or to sail on.

People may be judged by the things they stand in line for.

Freedom endures only in those who are willing to live by the rule of truth, justice, and generosity.

The work an unknown good man has done is like a vein of water flowing hidden underground, secretly making the ground green.

Real achievement seldom is possible without some difficulty along the way. We do not put forth our best effort if things come too easy.

We want to plant things in our mind which will later bear fruit in our lives.

If obstacles get in your way, do as the wind—whistle and go around them.

Scriptural Spotlight

(Continued from page 27)

we be satisfied with letting an occasion pass as of little or no consequence, but constantly keep adding more and more strength, devising new methods of attack and fortification. There is no mysterious magic about the overcomer; he consistently adds the extra measure of effort that is so important—ever increasing the addition.

The conquest of evil in our lives must be the driving force in all we do, until our hearts throb with divine energy. Every morning our waking thought should be to meet the challenges of the day in the fear of the Lord, and we should strive to perfect this desire in the petty or the profound trials of the day.

If our ambition is to only subdue evil, if we try to get by in a halfhearted way we will fail. We are here to *banish* evil. God has given us charge of the Conquering Business. The evils of our nature must of necessity be suppressed and subdued first, but we must keep fighting, fighting until the old nature, lies dead at our feet.

Julius Caesar maintained that no man will ad-

vance to the full extent of his ability if he leaves a line of retreat open behind him. So firmly did he believe this that in a foreign invasion, when his troops were sent ashore to engage the enemy, he burned all the ships that had brought them, thus cutting off all possibility of retreat.

Needless to say, Caesar's armies won the battle, for when his soldiers saw that they could not turn back, their only hope of survival lay in winning.

Thus they committed themselves so thoroughly to their goal that nothing could tempt them to quit or turn back.

"He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," says our Commander-in-Chief. And when we have done this, He will take over and make the conquest imperishable. What a delightful experience to feel the evils of our nature one by one losing their tenacious grip upon us—this gives us hope of complete victory. But even this glorious victory is not the final goal, for from it we shall be permitted to go forth to conquer the world for God, and to perform deeds of greatness in His name through all eternity—if we are more than conquerors now. ●●

He Followed the Compass

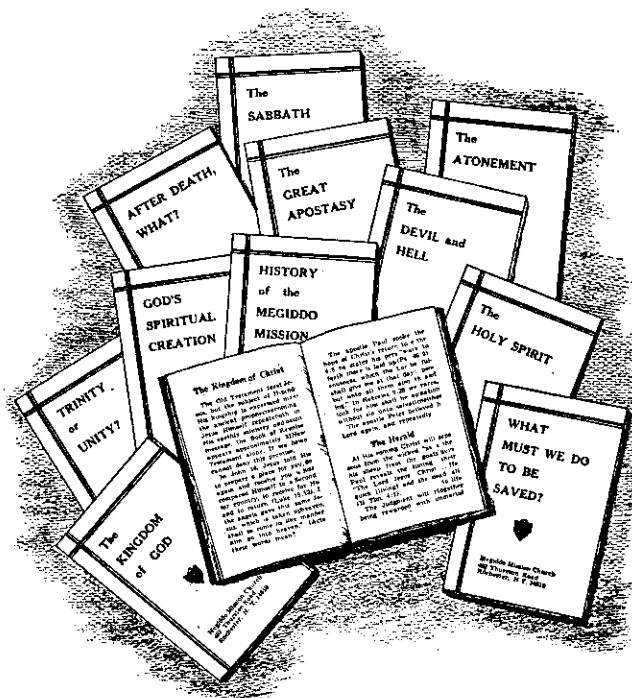
(Continued from page 5)

to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God"—Rom. 6:11).

The reward God offers is "free" in that it can never be truly earned; we have nothing to give which even comes near to equalling it in value; but the whole religious world have veered from true "north." They take the position that Christ's atoning blood makes up for any lack on our part. Often they take verses out of context to support an idea, or read into a passage something which the original writer did not intend to convey. The reward is "free," but God requires a minimum standard. That standard is the best that we can offer, a wholehearted obedience to His commandments—an accomplishment that amounts to a real price, but which is indeed minimal when compared with the reward.

If we were to use a compass by holding a magnetic device near the needle, we could not expect to get a true reading. Our founder felt that this was what too many Bible interpreters had done. They had kept their own ideas so close that they could not get a true reading from the compass, and so veered off course and proclaimed a doctrine pleasing to men.

This our founder refused to do. The Bible was his only guide; nothing else mattered. He followed the compass. ●●



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MEGIDDO MESSAGE



SCRIPTURAL SPOTLIGHT

*"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors
through him that loved us"*

—Romans 8:37.

A WIDELY accepted definition of a conqueror is one who is strong enough and ruthless enough to impose his will on his fellowmen. Of course, there are exceptions—as the scientist or humanitarian leader who conquers a social problem or a disease. But too often, the great conquerors in history have been masterful ruffians.

Conquest alone, however, is not enough; it has no lasting value. History has demonstrated this fact again and again. The most brilliant conquests are short-lived; the victory gained in the field often is cancelled at the conference table. Nations rise and fall, civilizations ebb and flow, and there is nothing abiding. Conquest is of little value if the position gained cannot be held.

One of the last great deeds of Elisha the prophet was his counsel to King Joash when as a sign of the Lord's deliverance from Syria, he was told to smite the ground with his arrows. The king did as the Prophet commanded, but to the Prophet's great distress the king put so little effort into it, smiting only three times. This foreshadowed the fact that the battle would merely be sufficient to subdue the enemy three times; the victory would not last.

Elisha was a man with a purpose. Well he knew that great victories are won only at the price of intense struggle. He had been trained by Elijah, who was exceedingly zealous for the Lord. During the greatest episode of the grand old Prophet's life he had not been satisfied with merely defeating the prophets of Baal and Ashteroth—he had exterminated them, that the true God alone might be worshiped in Israel.

This bit of history contains the lesson of our text: To be valiant for the Lord, we must not only conquer the evil in our lives but *more than* conquer it; evil must be exterminated. Our spiritual conquest can easily be lost if we do not follow our victory with vigilance and skill. We need effort to resist evil, but only unrelenting persistence will

assure a lasting victory. "In all these things we are more than conquerors"—fortifying and holding the ground taken, going from victory to victory to the very end of the war and the final triumph! Success depends on staying power no less than on drive. "Steady patience is what you need, so that after doing the will of God, you may get what you have been promised" (Heb. 10:36, Moffatt).

As we travel the narrow way to the Kingdom of God, we shall encounter one temptation after another which must be dealt with. Some of these take years to conquer; but what counts is whether we are actually fighting to win, or merely suppressing the foe. If we are but suppressing our temptations, we are merely struggling with the opposing forces, not conquering and exterminating.

The famed General MacArthur once said, "There is no substitute for victory." Let us not fool ourselves into thinking we can merely subdue evil. Ours must be the determination to fight to the finish, till every moral fiber of our nature has been transformed into the Christlike nature; until we have captured the enemy and made him work for us.

Our warfare against the evils of our nature must be persistent, steady, until the victory is complete. A little slackening of our effort may put us years behind, and time is an important factor. Frequently we have deadlines to meet in everyday life which are important in their class; but none is nearly so important as finishing our work for God before our time expires. Our whole lifetime is limited. The uncertainties of life may suddenly result in even less time than we had ever anticipated. But our time is in God's hands, and He knows whether we are working casually or fighting to win the full victory.

If an evil persists in tempting us, we must persist the more in fighting as God directs, using all our God-given abilities to the utmost. Never should

(Continued on page 26)

*When you are forgotten,
or neglected,
or purposely set at naught,
and you smile with your heart at rest . . .*

*When your good is evil spoken of,
your wishes crossed,
your task offended,
your advice ridiculed,
and you take it all in patient silence . . .*

*When you are firm in difficulties
and superior in adversity . . .*

*When you lament not a loss
that you cannot retrieve . . .*

*When you greet each new day
as the beginning of a new life
and forget yesterday's woes . . .*

*When you see yourself both as you are
and as you want to be
and keep the highest ideal in mind . . .*

THAT IS VICTORY!