

# Megiddo Message

*Keep the Big Picture!*

Vol. 79, No.9  
October 1992



## We Do Not Lose Heart

If any should have found cause to falter at the stark realities of life, it was the apostle Paul. Beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, scourged, dragged out of the city and left for dead, would we blame him if he had lost heart? But no, not this stalwart, dauntless Apostle. Instead, he writes of a ministry of glory, victory, and steadily increasing joy. As if comparing glory to glory, he draws a comparison of his ministry with that of Moses. Moses' ministry was one of special, radiant glory. Moses had the glory of meeting the angel of God in the mountain, after which his face shone with "the glory of his countenance" (II Cor. 3:7).

Here was visible glory, but it was only temporary. The ministry which Paul enjoyed was a *continuing* glory, one which promised to grow more and more glorious with the passing of time because it was a ministry of the Spirit. "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17).

What is Paul's conclusion? That these simple facts are solid ground for hope, and a sure prevention for discouragement. "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not" (II Cor. 4:1). In other words, *we do not lose heart*. How could we, with such a God, such a ministry, such a glory, such a hope? How could *we* lack confidence? Should we not say with Paul, "We do not lose heart"?

Yet who of us has not been tempted to lose heart? Who has not been at the point of dropping his bundle? For none of us are exempt from the subtle debilitating attacks of discouragement. Very few of the human race escape periodic feelings of despondency, whether from circumstances or the tyranny of temperament. Paul himself was no stranger to such maladies, else why would he have repeated four times: "We do not lose heart"? It was an accomplishment worth noting, one against which he battled valiantly. For him it was a victory of Spirit over flesh, and Spir-

it over spirit. "We never give up." "We don't get discouraged." "Nothing can daunt us." "We never collapse." Can't we feel the spiritual power that moved this great man of God to make such assertions?

Or we may say, "That was the apostle Paul himself. If *he* was tempted to lose heart—with his spectacular gifts, his superb training, his heavenly calling, his high record of success—what about me? For I am no Paul!"

Truly, we are not Paul. But do we not share the same high calling, the same great ministry, the same holy purpose?

Even for this great man, everything did not happen easily or automatically. Was he spared the acute testings that beset zealous followers of Jesus Christ? Was he spared the sufferings, the pain, the stresses and strains of responsibility? Read through his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and discover the kinds of circumstances over which he triumphed. Have we ever lifted anything we might call a burden, compared to the weight of his?

Yet, where is even a whisper of discouragement or depression in this great man? Hear him in the earnestness of his own personal account: "We were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more" (II Cor. 7:5-7). Paul was not spared the difficulties or the disciplines of life, but he could say through all of them, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11).

In other words, "We do not lose heart." Let that "we" include *us*, because *every* experience of life is designed for our perfecting, a means toward our great goal and glory in Christ Jesus.



## Megiddo means ...

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

## We believe ...

- in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

## Soon-coming events ...

### THE HERALD AND THE KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: ...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

## In this issue ...

### Editorial

- WE DO NOT LOSE HEART ..... 2  
Personal advice from the great Apostle

### Articles

- KEEP THE BIG PICTURE! ..... 4  
The earth is only one small part of God's great plan.
- "THEY THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE" ..... 6  
Immortal beings shine with the glory of God.
- WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR? ..... 10  
God has set the time for the second advent of Christ and sealed it; we are looking for it.

### Poem

- A LESSON FROM THE HEN ..... 13

### Articles

- CHEW, CHEW, CHEW! ..... 13  
The more we think upon the Word of God, the more benefit we shall be able to derive.

### Article

- POWER TO CHOOSE ..... 13  
A thought for children

### Debate

- WHENCE SALVATION? Part 2 ..... 18  
Rebuttals of opposing positions on the Bible teaching of Salvation

### Article

- MORE WORK, MORE PAY ..... 25

- Lines to Live By ..... 27

### Back Cover

- LIFE IMMORTAL ..... 28

Our cover photo is provided by the courtesy of Fran Biddy, Director, Strasenburgh Planetarium of Rochester Museum and Science Center, Rochester, New York.

# Megiddo Message

October 1992  
Volume 79, No. 9

a religious magazine devoted to the cause of Christ and published

for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. Official organ of the Megiddo Church, L. T. Nichols, *Founder*; Newton H. Payne, *President and Editor*; Ruth E. Sisson, *Executive Editor*.

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE is available in microfilm from University Microfilms, Inc., Serials Acquisitions, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE (USPS 338-120) is published monthly (except July) by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Second Class postage paid at Rochester, New York. SUBSCRIPTION RATE: One year (eleven issues) \$5.00. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697.

Unsolicited manuscripts for publication are not accepted.

**Bible Quotations:** Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version. Other versions are identified as follows: NEB—New English Bible; NIV—New International Version; NASB—New American Standard Bible; RSV—Revised Standard Version; TLB—The Living Bible; JB—The Jerusalem Bible; Phillips—The New Testament in Modern English; Moffatt—The Bible, A New Translation; Sprl—A Translation of the Old Testament Scriptures From the Original Hebrew, by Helen Spurrell; TCNT—Twentieth Century New Testament.





# Keep the Big

Visit the war-torn cities of Yugoslavia, where thousands every day are fleeing their homes. Or drop down in Somalia, where many thousands are starving for lack of the bare necessities of life. Or step into the drug zone of any of our larger cities, where violence is the rule of life, and ask: Where is God in the midst of all this?

Or consider the everyday problems that people face everywhere—the financial and emotional stresses on family life, the

rapid spread of the AIDS virus worldwide, the immorality and indecency being promulgated daily by the news media, the use of drugs and alcohol among our youth, and what do we have? Where are we headed? What is the future of our world?

The God of the Bible has the answer: “Look up!” Look at the big picture, at the myriad stars that stud the nighttime sky. “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth” (Isa. 40:26).

Yes, look up! Keep the big picture. While civilizations rise and fall, trailing disaster in their wake,

we dare not confine our field of vision to the present. The scenes around us are not the whole of life. We need to keep the *big* picture—of the plan which God is working out in His vast creation; of life as God will have it on our own planet in the near future. We need to remember why we are here, and where we are headed—in God’s eternal purpose.

Despite the scenes of human misery and suffering that surround us, God is this very moment working out His purpose, and His plan will succeed.

The God who created us is still in control. This earth is His world, His long-term project, and His plan will succeed. “He created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited” (Isa. 45:17–18)—not by irreverent, immoral, indecent, lawless human creatures but by a whole new creation, a family of men and women who will live according to His higher laws and enjoy the blessings of peace and righteousness eternally.



*"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth."* — Isaiah 40:26

# Picture!

How-  
ever distressing the scenes around us, God is still in control, and when the time is right He will intervene. When the time is right, "He shall send Jesus Christ," as He promised. He will keep His Word.

God has planned that the earth shall be filled with His glory, a righteous, upright people glorifying His name and enjoying the matchless benefits of righteousness. For "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. 32:17).

Our little world, with its manifold problems, is not the whole picture. This earth is only one among myriads of stars and planets in God's vast creation. Through countless ages in the past God has been creating and glorifying worlds and filling them with His glory, happy immortal beings to whom sickness and suffering are unknown. For "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Ps. 103:17-18).

When the mercy of our God is "from everlasting to everlasting," how can we limit our vision to the miseries of our small sphere? Let us keep the big picture! Our God is not the God of one small planet but the God of worlds, the God of universes, *the Lord God of hosts*—all the hosts of heaven. His territorial claims extend far beyond the boundaries of our earth, or even our solar system. Our galaxy, one hundred thousand light years from rim to rim, six hundred million billion miles of stars—all belongs to Him! All the vast stellar empires of space are His, the countless stars and their satellites traveling at inconceivable velocities, all are His! Our Milky Way Galaxy, with its hundred billion stars spinning around a center in the form of a giant disk, is only one among a hundred million galaxies in His realm.

So numerous are the stars in the Milky Way that a dime held at arm's length would block out 15 million stars from our view, if our eyes could see with that power.

And some 30,000 light years from the center of that disk of stars is a moderate star, which we call the sun. That sun, hurrying around the hub of its universe, carries with it a family of baby

planets. Among those planets is one which we call Earth. This is our place in the big picture. For "the heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Ps. 115:16).

Our sun, powerful enough to impart life-giving energy to every plant on earth, ranks fairly small by the standards of the universe. If the giant star Antares were positioned where our sun is, 93 million miles away, our earth would be inside it! Does not such vastness touch us with a feeling of awe?

Only one other of the hundred million galaxies lies close enough for us to see with the naked eye, and it is two million light years away. This galaxy, Andromeda, showed up on star charts long before the invention of the telescope, and until recent years no one knew that its little blob of light marked the presence of another whole galaxy, one twice the size of the Milky Way, the home of a trillion stars.

Whatever comes or goes in our little lives, let us keep the big picture! When the future seems bleak, look up! He who can order and direct the universes, can we not trust Him to direct our little lives?

It was God's message to Job. "Can you bind the beautiful



Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? Can you bring forth the constellations and the seasons or lead out the bear with its cubs? Can you know the laws of heaven? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth? Do know the laws of the heavens?" (Job 38:31-33 NIV) These were questions that God directed long ago to a man who had become obsessed with his own great pain, and had confined his vision to the borders of himself.

What was God saying to Job? Keep the big picture. And His message can help us also. With this heavenly perspective, Job could see beyond his problems, to other matters which God must attend to in a universe of a hundred million galaxies.

God's words to Job may seem unsympathetic, but they are the message he needed—and *we need*—to take to heart: that God is the God of universes, and our little world is part of that vast creation, and never outside the reach of His Omnipotence. Soon, very soon, we shall have help from above.

This is the big picture. Let us keep it vivid in our minds, and grasp heartily the opportunity He has extended to us, to be part of the big picture.

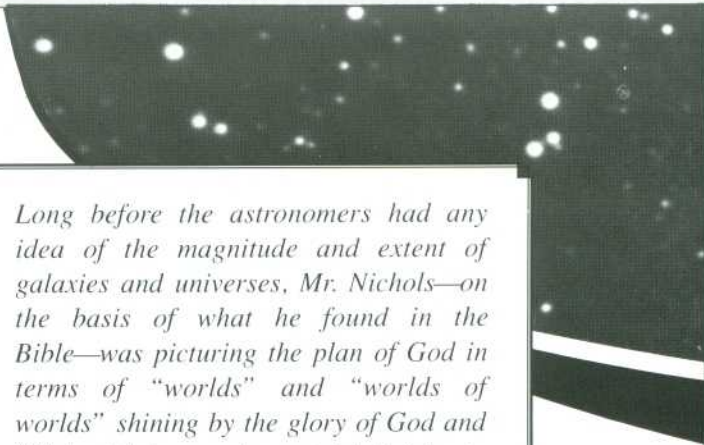
Oh, the big picture! Let the glow of it stimulate us to keep on with our serving, sacrificing, giving, until God makes us a part of it—forever!

Let's learn to think big, above our little problems, our little needs and little aggravations. Let us take a long view of our life and see the present moment as God sees it—a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to prepare for eternity.

Perspective makes all the difference, whether our earth looks large or small. If you are an ant crawling over a blade of grass, a single field seems infinite. But if you are an angel looking at the earth from another world, you see it like it is.

We do not want the ant-perspective. We want the angel view. Let us keep the big picture.

MM



*Long before the astronomers had any idea of the magnitude and extent of galaxies and universes, Mr. Nichols—on the basis of what he found in the Bible—was picturing the plan of God in terms of “worlds” and “worlds of worlds” shining by the glory of God and filled with happy, immortal inhabitants. Modern telescopic views of the heavens only prove his reasoning correct, confirming what the Bible teaches about the plan of God, and magnify the glory of our great Creator. The following article is excerpted from an informal talk given by Mr. Nichols in 1902.*

- ◆ “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” —Daniel 12:3
- ◆ “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.” —Matthew 13:43
- ◆ “And [Jesus] was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” —Matthew 17:2
- ◆ And the city [the New Jerusalem] had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” —Revelation 21:23-24
- ◆ “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee...the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee” —Isaiah 60:1-2



# *They that Be Wise Shall Shine*

To think of seeing the angels of God, those lovely forms! The Bible tells us God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, from eternity past to eternity future. This suggests at once that the angels are living, intelligent beings who lived and received the mercy of God in the eternity past. Someday we shall be acquainted with them.

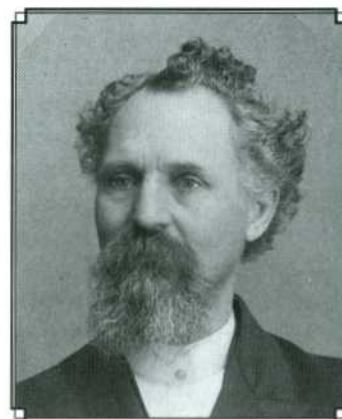
To think of the unnumbered shining worlds revolving in the immensity of space, worlds inhabited by glorified beings—and the Lord has revealed that the plan for this earth is according to His plan for those glorified worlds. It is all according to His eternal purpose (Eph. 3:11). No wonder the apostle Paul exclaimed: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14-15).

I thought tonight, as I was looking out the window, viewing the wonderful worlds on high, "Why do the stars shine?" and I thought to myself, those who believe God's Word know what makes them shine.

What causes their shining? There is only one thing in the mighty universe that makes anything shine, and that is the mighty Spirit of God. His Spirit must be exercised in some way, somehow, somewhere, in order for us to have any light whatever. Job 26:13 tells us, "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens."

I thought of this, and then my mind went back to Moses, when he stayed with the angel in the mountain forty days, and the glory of the angel made Moses' face shine. Moses was happy, because he was learning from an immortal being, a wonderful angel.

Well, I would like to know more about these secrets someday, and I shall. I have often thought that Moses being with the angel had something to do with his living to such a great age, when at 120 years his natural force was not abated and his eyes were as good as in the flower of youth. And when he came down from the mountain, he had to put a



*L. T. Nichols*  
*Founder of the Megiddo Church*  
*1844-1912*



veil over his face, so bright was the shining of it that the Israelites could not look upon him. And that was just a tiny reflection of the glory of God.

The sun did not make that light. Immortal beings shine. We read of the day when Christ will

shall shine like Moses, only a thousand times brighter. Our countenance will glow with such glory that men in their natural condition will not be able to look upon us. We shall be part of that great Power. Yes, we shall form a part of it. For the glory of the

nations will come to view that immortal city.

Some people say it is impossible to have light without the sun. But do they consider Him who created the sun? Is He not greater than the things He created? He that gave the sun its light has more light in Himself, light that can eclipse the light of the sun and moon. We read of that future day, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isa. 60:19).

The shining of the stars was a problem to me until the Bible solved it, until I found that the God of heaven had solved it. And someday, by and by, when the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the great sea, what a wonderful light will shine out, what a stream of light will shine forth from the earth!

We shall be a body of light glowing so that our rays will shine forth; yes, we shall be a body of light, not a dark body but a body of light shining in its own beauty and glory. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). In Daniel also we are told that the wise shall shine as the stars of the firmament, "and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

In Revelation we read of the holy city, that the city "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved

---

**W**hen I view these wonders, it teaches me a lesson. It took an Almighty God to create these worlds. —L. T. N.

---

stand on mount Zion and all the saints with Him, that "at evening time it shall be light" (Zech. 14:7, 9). What a change that will be! There will be no night, because Jesus and all those associated with Him will shine. Yes, every individual there will shine with a brightness greater than that of Moses, for they will all be lights within themselves. Oh, this wondrous light, the shining glory of God!

Here we are tonight, and what a contrast between that time and the present! Who would not gladly change? Who would not want to live in that age when it will be always light, one eternal day, because the inhabitants of that world are all lights within themselves?

Yes, if faithful, we shall shine someday. Just think of all those millions of angels, what light they will make! That is physical light shining. We now have spiritual light from God. But when the earth is glorified, it will then shine as the stars of heaven, shine by the light of its inhabitants. We

Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14).

We are working to be part of that city to come, that city whose builder and maker is God. When you see that city, you will behold a glitter and a glow and a beauty that you have never seen in any other city; such grandeur and glory will surround it that you have never imagined. We are looking for a city of which we read, "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60:3). When the sun begins to rise in its grandeur and beauty, all

---

**I** feel I know so little when I look out into the great expanse of the heavens. —L. T. N.

---



shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it" (Rev. 21:23-24).

Every obedient, faithful one has the assurance of entering there, but nothing defiling will enter. "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" (Rev 21:27).

And the glory of the Lord shall be the light of it.

There is nothing new under the sun, and what hath been shall be (Eccl. 1:9). Our earth will be like the other worlds of God's creating. "As truly as I live," saith the Almighty, "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21). He took His oath, and it shall come to pass. The question before our minds should be, Are we really bringing ourselves into such a condition that we can be sure we are really going to be ready to be the ones to enjoy these wonderful blessings when they come, to be among the ones to shine in eternity? You remember the angel Gabriel who came to Daniel, right from the courts of heaven, and informed him about these things. It was he who spoke those words of promise: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Jesus said it, Isaiah said it, the angel Gabriel said it. Why should we not believe it?

Our earth is probably one of the smallest planets, and the work carried out upon it such a little thing compared to the great plan of salvation on other worlds. Such gigantic wonders! It seems as though it would cause us to cry out as did Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33). To think of having our capabilities so expanded, our finite wisdom so increased that we will be able to comprehend the wonders of those stars! And the thought that we will be able to view them at close range should cause us to work.

To think that we shall be made like unto God! Our minds are so limited, too limited to drink it in. These wonders are too deep for us to grasp now.

MM

## How Do I KNOW?

**Y**ou ask me how I know it's true  
That there is a living God—  
A God who rules the universe,  
The sky, the sea, the sod;  
A God who holds all creatures  
In the hollow of His hand;  
A God who put infinity  
In one tiny grain of sand;  
A God who made the seasons—  
Winter, Summer, Fall and Spring,  
And put His flawless rhythm  
Into each created thing;  
A God who hangs the sun out  
Slowly with the break of day,  
And gently takes the stars in  
And puts the night away;  
A God whose mighty handiwork  
Defies the skill of man,  
For no architect can alter  
God's perfect master plan—  
What better answers are there  
To prove His Holy Being  
Than the wonders all around us  
That are ours just for the seeing.





# WHAT Are You Looking For?

---

**Everything  
here—whether  
the best or the  
worst—is only  
temporary.**

---

**T**he question is common enough. Someone has lost something and has instituted a search for it. He is rummaging here, there and everywhere in an all-out attempt to find it. When another breaks in upon the scene, the inevitable question is: *What are you looking for?*

The question may be more than a casual inquiry when applied to the serious issues of life. It may be a challenge that gives destiny and purpose, that keeps us thinking continually beyond ourselves and our limited environment, for something better, something certain, something satisfying, something sure.

The fact that we are looking suggests, first of all, that we are not satisfied with what we have. We want something more. Is it recognition, the thrill of accomplishment, fame, or fulfillment? Is it a happy home, or education, or wealth, or leisure, or any of a thousand goals that lure mankind?

Our Creator, through His written Word, puts the same question to us: What are you looking for? What do you want most? What are your goals? Are you satisfied to live a few years, to glean whatever you can from life, then pass out of existence forever? Or do you want something more, something truly satisfying, something eternal?

If we are satisfied with the things at hand, the pleasures and experiences of this world, the satisfactions of sight and sound and taste and touch, we can disregard God's question. But if we are not satisfied here, if we want something more than we see around us, something that will outlast the ravages of time; if we want real living and expansion, then we ought to consider seriously our Creator's answers to the question: What are you looking for?

The Bible uses the term "looking for" a number of times. Sometimes it is translated "look for" and other times "wait for," but the meaning is the same. Always it is associated with expectancy, concern, even anxiety. The people "waited for" Zacharias the priest to return after he had gone into the holy place (Luke 1:21). The phrase is used in the question the people asked Jesus. They wondered whether or not He was the Messiah: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3).



The same verb is used several times in the book of Acts. The beggar at the Gate Beautiful gave heed to Peter and John because he was "expecting" to receive something from them (Acts 3:5). Cornelius, having seen a vision from God, "waited for" Peter and the brethren to come from Joppa (Act 10:24). When Paul was attacked by a viper on the island of Malta, the people "looked on" aghast, expecting him to die (Acts 28:6). In each instance there was tension, expectancy, eagerness, anxiety, "looking for."

The verb *look for* is extremely important in the vocabulary of the second coming of Christ, where it carries the same tension and expectancy. It is used very early in the record of Jesus' life. Simeon was one who was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25) when Christ was born. The Child of promise came as a fulfillment to those who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38).

Jesus Himself used this word of expectancy, in a parable of the wise and evil servants. He told of the master coming at a time when the evil servant was not *looking for* him, and in an hour when he was not aware (Luke 12:46; Matt. 24:50)—a serious warning against relaxing one's vigil. Jesus used it again when He said, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that *wait for* their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately" (Luke 12:35–36). No placid settling down in complacency and idleness. No ease and leisure in this waiting. "Let your loins be girded"—for action; and "your lights burning"—with expectancy. For as surely as you relax your vigil, you will fall asleep—and your Lord will come.

After Jesus was taken to heaven, His apostles continued to "look for" Him. He had lived and died, been resurrected and taken to heaven. The next great event would be His return. Everything should be said and done in expectation of that great event. Paul, writing to his son-in-the-faith Titus, told of the power of the grace of God to teach us that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11–13), all the while "*looking for* that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God [Christ, Emmanuel, "God with us"—Matt. 1:23] and our Saviour Jesus Christ". Though Paul knew this "blessed hope" would not become a reality in his day, still he stressed the importance of living in expectancy—"looking" for it. This attitude of eagerness should impel the Christian believer to prepare, whatever the age in which he might be living.

The "servant of Jesus Christ" who penned one short Epistle to "them that are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ" admonished them to keep building themselves up in their "most holy faith." Then he told them why: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, *looking for* the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20–21). They were to keep alive the goal, the bright expectancy, the glowing picture of the future that could be theirs. They were to keep *looking for* the mercy of Jesus Christ "unto eternal life," the reward that would be brought unto them when He should come again.

### More Looking

There are at least three other significant *look-fors* in the New Testament epistles. They are found in the writings of the apostle Peter, that

impetuous, outspoken, very human big fisherman, who matured into an "elder" among the saints and who will be a "partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (I Pet. 5:1). After describing the calamitous changes that will accompany Christ's return, he wrote: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting

---

**H**owever men may scoff at the Word of God, His Word is sure, and will come to pass. The day of the Lord will come.

---

unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Pet. 3:11–14).

We find ourselves in a generation that gives little or no thought to the expectation of Christ's return. Present goals of pleasure and material profit totally absorb the multitudes, and any suggestion of Divine intervention is thought of as an unwelcome—and most unlikely—intrusion, if it is taken seriously at all. The consequence is that we as Christian believers who are "looking for the blessed hope" of the ages must live and work



daily in an atmosphere of near-total disbelief. This poses a continual threat to our faith, against which we must continually re-fortify ourselves. The attitude of indifference is insidious, and can be deadly.

telling us is that we as believers are hastening toward that day with eager desire and fervent longing. We are intense, expectant, pressing with speed. We are running a race against time, as it were, against an

---

### **If we claim allegiance to the blessed hope, we must live the blessed life right here and now.**

---

How diligently, then, we should concentrate our minds each day, each hour on the vision God has placed before us, to keep alive in our hearts the lively expectation and the eager longing of our confidence, "looking for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of...Jesus Christ."

#### **The Great Look For**

Examine closely the three "*look-fors*" in the text of Peter's Epistle. The first *look-for* is the event which occasions the Christian's expectation: "Looking for and hasting unto the day of God." Something is going to happen. The "day of the Lord" is coming. The day of human misrule will end. The coming of the "day of God" is the great event which draws our gaze away from this world and centers our interest in the Divine.

We are looking for the coming of the Day of God. But this is not all. Peter gives added intensity to this expectation by the verb that follows: "looking for" and "hasting unto the coming" of God's great Day. This does not mean we have any power to determine the date of its arrival. God has set the time, and sealed it from our knowledge. Nothing we do can either advance or retard its arrival. What Peter is

unknown deadline—the coming of the "day of God."

This "day of God" is a great Day toward which all creation moves. It is the event which will open the way for a whole series of events which will culminate in God's will being done on earth as it is now done in heaven. It is the Day when Christ, the "desire of all nations," will come and God will begin the great work of filling the earth with His glory (Hag. 2:7).

This Day will also mark the beginning of the end of man's system of mismanagement. Peter supplies a vivid, symbolic description of this great end, borrowing terms from the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 1:2, 10), calling the ruling powers of earth the "heavens" and the people over whom they rule the "earth." The present arrangement will be destroyed by "fire," a term used often in Scripture to symbolize destruction, especially destruction caused by the judgments of God. When the "day of God" arrives, he says, "the heavens [the ruling powers of earth] being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (II Pet. 3:12). All who survive will have to pass through the purifying fire. It is a proclamation of doom upon every form and kind and place of evil.

Once this cleansing is accomplished, none but the good will remain.

#### **A Whole New Creation**

For the righteous there is something better, something beyond the scene of destruction. Notice Peter's contrasting description of the believers' expectation. "Nevertheless we [in contrast to the unbelievers] look for new heavens and a new earth"—what a vibrant promise of hope!

The New Testament uses two words that are translated "new." One describes that which has just come into being for the first time, as a new-born child. The other describes that which is "new" in contrast with what is worn out. This latter term is the one Peter uses.

The Christian's expectation is not *renewed* heavens and earth, but a *new* arrangement, one which will replace—and totally displace—that which is old and worn out. It is not the old renovated; it is a whole new creation. The old is gone completely. A new government, under new management, ruling over a new populace, shall replace the old. This is the promise of the ancient prophet of Israel: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17).

How we need to remember this promise during these days of world crisis, world fear, and worldwide dissipation. Everything here is only temporary, whether the best or the worst. A new order is coming, which will totally displace the old. However men may decry the Scriptures, however they may scoff at the Word of God, His Word is sure, and will come to pass. However much they may disregard His warnings, they will have to face His decrees, His verdicts, His judgment. For "nevertheless, the day of the Lord will come." That "nevertheless" is



a seal upon God's promise. In spite of all human opposition and human disbelief, it will come. And because of this, "We, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Here is the vision that spurs us on.

### The Incentive

The third of Peter's look-fors is an incentive to develop the righteousness which will be the identifying mark of the new heavens and earth. If we claim allegiance to the blessed hope, we must live the blessed life right here and now. And we must be diligent in this effort,

and continue it to the end. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (II Pet.3:14).

Nothing less than an intelligent, intense, unrelenting "looking for" can move us to such holiness of life that we will be found of Him "in peace, without spot, and blameless." Here is the highest of high standards, and Peter borrows his terms from those which are used to describe Christ's supreme attainment. His achievement must be ours also. For we will be found in Him then only as we have lived in Him now.

Someone has said that "In Christ" should be the Christian's permanent address. This alone will enable us to weather the moral storms of the critical time in which we live.

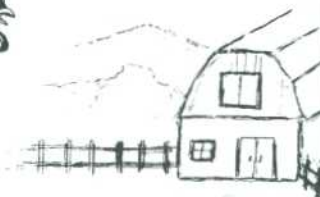
Imagine the exultant joy, the honor, the thrill in having Christ approve us at His coming unspotted, unblemished, perfect and pure! This was Peter's eager aim and intense longing. Let it be ours also.

What are we looking for? Let our life provide the answer, that we may be found in Him and worthy of the power and great glory which He will bring.

MM

## A Lesson from the Hen

*Said the big white rooster, "Ah, old hemlock, things are tough;  
Seems that worms are getting scarcer, and I cannot get enough.  
What's become of all those fat ones is a mystery to me;  
There were thousands through the rainy spell but now where can they be?"*



*The little red hen who heard him, didn't grumble or complain,  
She had gone through lots of dry spells, she had lived through floods of rain;  
So she flew upon the grindstone, and she gave her claws a whet,  
As she said: "I've never seen the time there were no worms to get."*

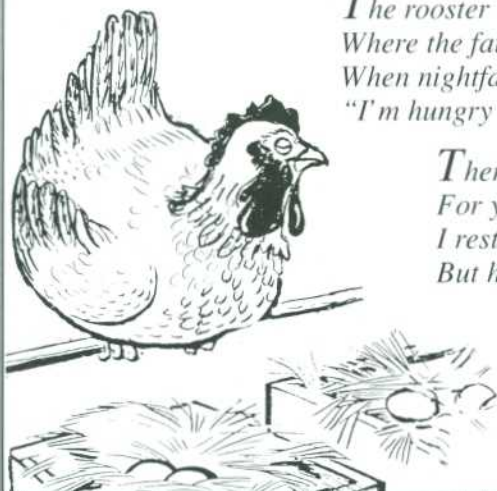
*She picked a new and undug spot; the earth was hard and firm,  
The big white rooster jeered, "New ground! That's no place for a worm."  
The little red hen just spread her feet, she dug both fast and free,  
"I must go to get the worms" she said, "the worms won't come to me."*



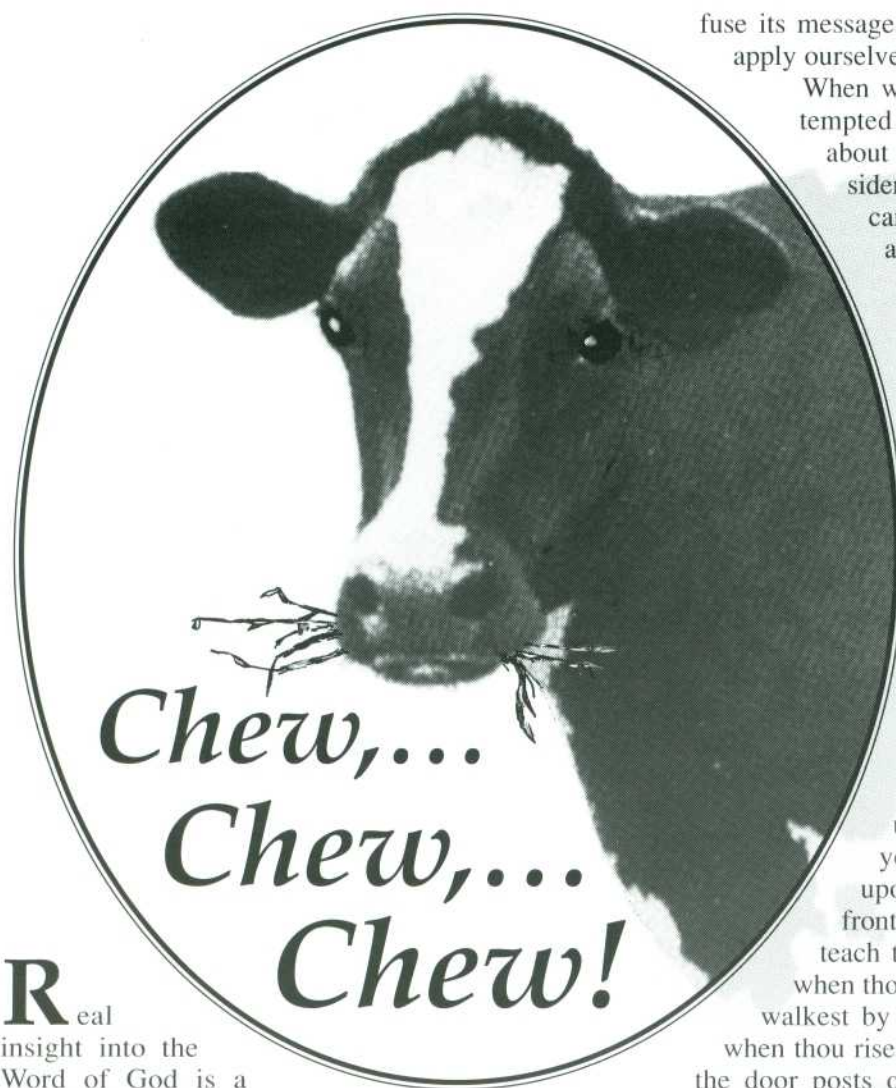
*The rooster vainly spent his day, through habit, by the ways  
Where the fat worms passed in squads, back in the "good old rainy days."  
When nightfall found him supperless, he growled in accents rough,  
"I'm hungry as hungry a fowl can be. Conditions sure are tough."*

*Then turning himself to the hen he said, "My friend, it's worse with you,  
For you're not only hungry, but you must be tired too.  
I rested while I watched for worms, so I feel fairly perk.  
But how are you? Without worms too? And after all that work?"*

*The little red hen hopped to her perch and dropped her eyes to sleep,  
And murmured, in a drowsy tone, "Young one, hear this and weep,  
I'm full of worms, and happy, too, for I've dined with luxury.  
The worms were there, as always—but I had to dig like fury!"*







**R** *Real* insight into the Word of God is a precious and heart gripping emotion. And it does not come easily. One cannot expect to sit down and read a chapter from the New Testament and come away inspired. Real insight is the product of repeated exposure, plus time, plus application. The only way to understand a passage is to read it, then internalize it, make it a part of our very being by applying it, by asking ourselves, Where does this fit me? How can this bit of knowledge change my life?

Again and again we must approach the Scriptures with an open mind, saying, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak" (Ps. 85:8).

Why, then, isn't the Bible plain and unmistakable to everyone? Why does not everyone who reads it agree as to what it says? The problem is not with the text but with the interpreter. The Bible does not change or con-

fuse its message. What it tells us to do is clear if we apply ourselves to learn it, reflect on it, and do it.

When we read a passage of Scripture, we are tempted immediately to draw a conclusion about its meaning. But first we should consider the context, consider the subject, and carefully compare one passage with another. In the words of Scripture, our study should be "line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isa. 28:10). Only as we study by subject can we see the full, broader, deeper meaning of a passage.

Then, as we look for ways to apply this passage to our lives, we see even more meaning in it. Cold words come alive. Time passes, our experiences come and go, and we encounter this passage again, with new insights. Suddenly we see in it a whole new realm of meaning and power.

To obey the Scriptures we must, like the Israelites of old, write them in our minds. "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates" (Deut. 11:18-20). "Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck" (Prov. 6:21).

The real value of Scripture to us, however, is not in having it in our minds but in applying it to our lives, using it as a tool to mold and shape our character. "When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Prov. 6:22-23).

Scripture must mold our thinking before it can mold our lives. And before it can mold our thinking we must keep it in our minds. Wherever we go, whatever we do, our minds must be fixed on the law of God as the supreme force in our life. We must go over, and over, and over again the things which pertain to our eternal salvation.



In other words, chew, and chew, and chew.

### **The Real Effect of Scripture**

Our knowledge of the Word of God, when it becomes part of our inner being, affects everything we do. If we read the newspaper, we will see it through the eyes of Scripture. We will find ourselves comparing events with prophecies and looking for fulfillments, not filling our minds with tidbits of interesting information or events.

When we select a book to read, we will choose by our loyalty to the law of God. Is this the best book for me to read? we will ask ourselves. Is this something I want to add to my storehouse of knowledge, so that I can *live* better, *be* a better person in the sight of God?

When we make a purchase, again the law of Scripture will be in our mind, and the ever present question, Is this the right use of God's property? for my money is not my own, and I must give account of how I spend it. We will select only what is needful, what is useful, what will make us better able to serve God.

When we choose a vocation, a career, or a job, again we will be governed by our knowledge of Scripture and our first duty to God. Will this career or this vocation hinder in any way my loyalty to God? As far as possible, we will look at the environment in which it places us, and ask, Is this a proper place for me to witness for Christ and His Kingdom? Can I serve God here while I serve my employer? Can I work here heartily to the Lord? (Col. 3:23-24).

When we choose to go anywhere, again the law of God will be dictating. We will not go for whim or notion or for the simple pursuit of pleasure, but will have a purpose in what we do, and will be anxious

whenever possible to keep away from the sights and sounds of Sodom.

When we speak, the law of God will bridle our tongue. We will say only what suitably represents our King. We will have no time or occasion for idle chit-chat, joking

wishes, our likes and dislikes, our tastes, our opinions. All will be influenced by the Word of God which is treasured deep in our heart. We will find, too, that many of the situations that formerly bothered us will no longer concern us.

At every opportunity we will

---

## **The real benefit of Scripture is in the change it is able to make in our own hearts and character.**

---

or foolishness, much less for anything coarse or vulgar. How can we, when we belong to God? This is another insight we have gained from Scripture, "Let your speech be always with grace...Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth" (Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:29).

When we are compelled to wait, we will not be irritated and anxious. We will immediately grasp the delay as a prime opportunity to ruminate on the Divine Word that fills our heart, to chew, and chew, and chew. From our rich storehouse

return to the Scriptures, seeking to unlock more and more of their secrets, to make them more and more a part of our lives. Having touched the depths, we can never again be satisfied with mere surface information. We will want to internalize the depths of God's plan, the real purpose of our lives, our existence, our world, and the creation. We want it to be so much a part of us that it never leaves us, even in the press of the busiest hour.

We want to lay up in our storehouse of knowledge the richest

---

## **We must go over, and over, and over again the things which pertain to our eternal salvation.**

---

of knowledge we will quickly draw a rich morsel—a passage of Scripture, from which we can extract many a thought, prayer, or lesson—and settle down happily to chew. Thus occupied, the moments of waiting will speed by like lightning.

The more we ponder the Word of God, the more it will affect our

impressions we can obtain. And to do this we have to chew, chew, chew. It's all right to be bottle fed if you're a baby. But to derive the highest nutrition from meat, one must have the maturity and patience to chew.

In this age of instant everything, we want instant truth, instant



knowledge, instant benefit. But when it comes to the law of God, the word "instant" is not appropriate. There is no instant way to salvation. There is no instant way to acquire the knowledge of God, any-

it all as it is impossible for a child who has learned his "ABC's" to comprehend Einstein's theory of relativity. The child must learn his ABC's, and upon this knowledge base must build an entire structure

---

## **Meditation, even Scripture meditation, is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end.**

---

more than we can instantly master algebra, or calculus or physics. Again and again we must return to the Scriptures. Again and again we must set our minds to absorb what we read. Let's face it, our brains are instinctively lazy. Before we can obtain the full benefits of our faith we must overcome this tendency.

Repeated exposure is the only approach to information from the mind of an Infinite God. What orig-

of thought and reasoning before he can expect to understand all that words can convey.

We may read a passage of Scripture, and reread it, and reread it again. Then suddenly a new insight comes into our mind, as if a light had been turned on. Our minds operate much the same as a computer. Our mind needs time to process the information, to arrange the data, and integrate the information into existing data banks.

---

## **The more we ponder the Word of God, the more it will affect our wishes, our likes and dislikes, our tastes, our opinions.**

---

inates in a human mind can be dissected, examined, and interpreted in a relatively short time. Not so with Scripture. Its profundity will continually challenge our best human intelligence. We will find we have to return, and return, and return, to examine more closely again, and again, and again. It is as impossible to read a passage here and there and think we understand

Let us give our mental computers the processing time they need. The benefits are incalculable. For as we come away from Scripture, and look at ourselves, we will see new areas where we can improve, where we can refine our actions, or revamp our attitudes. There is just no limit to the benefits and power of exposing ourselves to the Word of God.

The more we meditate, the more we shall be able to obey the command to bring captive the rebel thoughts that roam in our minds, and make them obey Christ (II Cor. 10:4-5).

But keep in mind that meditation is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end. The real benefit of Scripture is in the change it is able to make in our own hearts and character, in how we relate to those around us, in how we work, how we live, every day, every hour.

And the benefits multiply themselves. The more we apply the Scriptures to our lives, the more we shall be able to draw from them. Repeated exposure to that which ennobles, enriches, and deepens our appreciation for God and goodness will enhance and enlarge our love of Scripture and compel us to seek more and more.

And by far the greatest benefit is future, when the faithful child of God shall be crowned with glory and honor and immortality, eternal life (Rom. 2:7). 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).

What shall we bring to the Word of God? Bring, first of all, an appetite—a searching heart, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, a deep humility, and an openness to whatever God may reveal to us through His Word, and we are sure to benefit.

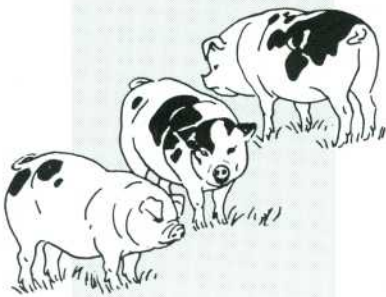
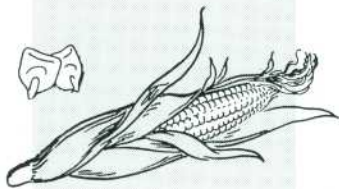
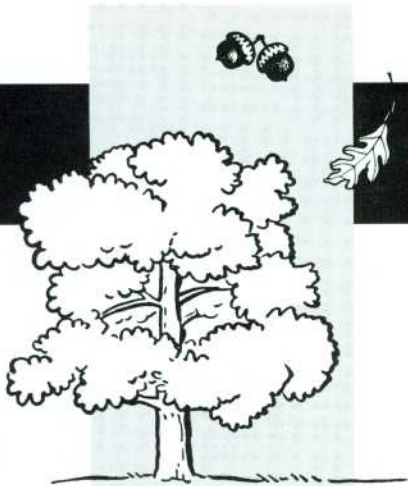
Said Jesus, My words "are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). And we want *life*, unending life in the coming glorious Kingdom of Christ.

So come to the Scriptures again and again, for new discoveries, new insights, new impetus and invigoration.

Come! It is the way to life! MM



# Power To Choose



**T**ake a little acorn and plant it in the earth. Let it be warmed by the sun and watered by the rain, and it will grow into a great tree.

Plant a seed of corn, then plant all the seeds that are produced by it, and you will soon have a very large cornfield. As Jesus said, the seed will multiply. A single seed planted in the ground may produce thirty, or sixty, or even one hundredfold.

Yet we as children of God are more powerful than the acorn, more powerful than the seed. How is this possible? Only because we have the power to *choose* what we will grow to be. An acorn can only grow into a certain kind of oak tree. A corn seed can only grow into its kind of corn. The same is true in the animal kingdom. A baby monkey can only grow into that certain kind of monkey. A baby pig can only grow into a big pig.

But boys and girls don't have to grow into just men and women. They can decide what *kind* of men and women they will be. They can grow to be selfish, or they can grow to be kind and charitable. They can grow to be disagreeable and faultfinding, or they can grow to be helpful and patient and loving.

We may be limited in our physical growth. We can't grow much higher than six feet, if we can grow to that. But there is no limit to the height our minds may reach. It all depends on what we choose to put into them.

What does the Bible say about the way Jesus grew? It says, "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Jesus grew, not only in physical stature but in mental insight, that great spiritual knowledge which brought Him in "favour with God and man."

In fact, Jesus never stopped growing. Now that He is in heaven, at the Father's right hand, He is still growing, still learning more and more of what He will need to do when He returns as King of the whole earth.

Jesus has shown us that when our body stops growing, our minds must keep on, and on, as long as we live.

Our bodies grow because we give them proper food and exercise. Let us also give proper food and exercise to the nourishing of our inner life, that it may be strong and abundant. Then Jesus will choose us for His own sons and daughters, to live with Him forever in His glorious Kingdom on earth.

MM



# Whence Salvation?

## A Written Debate

### THESIS:

Resolved, That the Bible conditions our salvation and eternal rewards upon our individual obedience and virtue, and not upon any merits deriving from the literal death or blood of Jesus Christ.

*Megiddo Church, Affirmed.  
Christadelphian Tidings, Denied.*

### Affirmed

#### Summary of the Megiddo Position

In a limited discussion it is physically impossible to answer completely every aspect of a topic of this magnitude. We will try, however, to reply to the basic areas addressed by Mr. Heaster in his opening statement and at the same time to focus upon the general teaching of Scripture on the subject of salvation.

Our primary concern is to avoid building our confidence on a false premise; i.e., a premise drawn from any school of human philosophy and not from the Bible, the Bible being our only source of inspired knowledge today. What possible value can there be in relying upon the shed blood and righteousness of Christ for our salvation, unless we are absolutely sure this is the God-designed arrangement for us? The matter is of supreme importance because it concerns our eternal salvation; upon it we are staking our entire hope of future life. If we err, we will have lost all, for we have but one life, and it is soon over.

Picture a narrow bridge-walk across a wide, deep canyon. When you walk out upon that bridge, you want to know that it is structurally sound. If its supports are half rotten, you want to know it. You really do not care if everyone in the community thinks the bridge is safe; you want to know the facts. For when you walk out upon that bridge, you are trusting your life to it. In the same way, when we accept a teaching about salvation, we want to be sure that it has a solid foundation, because we are staking our life upon it. If the foundation proves to be rotten—even if everyone

### Denied

#### Summary of the Christadelphian Position

Many of the points raised in the Megiddo opening statement are covered by the reasoning presented in the initial Christadelphian statement.

Man is of sin-prone nature both before and after conversion (Rom. 3:10,23; 7:12-25; Jer. 10:23). Except for Jesus Christ, who is the only begotten son of God, it is impossible for us to attain God's perfection through our own righteous acts. For this reason, salvation is conditioned on faith in the sacrifice (the blood, the death) of Christ (Rom. 3:25 cp. Heb. 11:28) and is through grace, i.e. unmerited favor. "(God) hath saved us...not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 1:9 cp. Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:5,8).

Faith is developed by an intellectual response and appreciation of God's word (Rom. 10:17), and its existence is shown by works which are motivated by our response to the great salvation which was accomplished through Jesus Christ. Christadelphians do not suggest that works are irrelevant in God's scheme of justification; but while we will not be saved without works, we are not saved because of them. We are saved by God's grace as He provides the gift of redemption in Christ.

Our faith is in the gospel concerning Christ—that he was our representative, sharing our nature, yet he never sinned personally. Therefore his body was raised from the dead, and glorified with immortal life.



## Affirmed

around us believes it is solid—we will not trust it.

We are convinced that the teaching of the Christadelphians upon the subject of salvation is largely the same as that held almost universally throughout Christendom. And that doctrine has its foundation not in the Scriptures but in the time-honored creeds formulated by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, Ambrose and the other Church fathers during the early centuries of our era, who were, in turn, influenced by the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and other pagan philosophers. The thinking of many of the Church fathers was a syncretism of Christian and pagan ideas, which they packaged under the name of "Christian," but which was wholly foreign to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The inspired writings of the prophets, apostles and Jesus were not their sole source of knowledge.

Widespread among the pagans was the belief that the suffering of a god was of greater efficacy than the suffering of a human or animal victim. Thus the early believers were able to see in the death of Christ a supreme instance of a Deity sacrificing Himself for the sins of the human family to secure their forgiveness and salvation; hence the doctrine of the Atonement, which in time became the central dogma of the Christian Church.

The strangest fact is that Jesus Himself never said that forgiveness of sin and reconciliation to God were to be consequences of His death. Nor did He ever say that the purpose of His life (or death) was to be a sacrificial atonement for sin. On the contrary, Jesus taught the absolute necessity of an upright, pure and holy character, and repentance as the sole basis for forgiveness (see Luke 24:47).

We readily agree that certain passages in the New Testament seem to say that the literal death of Christ is instrumental in our salvation. This has several causes:

- 1) translators who believed the doctrine of the Atonement taught by the Christian Church;
- 2) the firmly established preconception of the doctrine of the Atonement in the minds of most Christian believers today;
- 3) a general misunderstanding of Biblical terms as literal which the writers intended to be symbolic and figurative, which are, by Peter's description, "hard to be understood" (II Pet. 3:16).

Numerically, the passages in the above category are relatively few, compared with the many hundreds of texts which describe clearly the standard of character which God requires, loves, or commends. Either

## Denied

By being baptized into Christ's death and resurrection and by continuing in his way, our faith is counted for righteousness. In other words, we are treated by God as if we are as righteous as Christ. Because of this, those "in Christ" have the sure hope of "the redemption of the body" at Christ's return, to be given a glorified body like he now has (Phil. 3:19–21). It is for this reason that we presented so many passages which link salvation with the body and blood of Christ, which were offered for the forgiveness of our sins.

### The Authorship of Salvation

Christadelphians and the Megiddo Church agree that God is the author of our salvation. But Megiddo fail to analyze on what basis he achieves this. Hebrews 5:4–10 explains how God called Christ to the priesthood, and perfected him on account of his death on the cross: "And being made perfect, he (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." God became the author of salvation through the death of Christ. It is for us to show that we really believe this by living in obedience to Christ.

### The gift of righteousness

The fact that salvation is a gift from God (Rom. 6:23) on account of His grace, contradicts the Megiddo statement that "The law of God is as straightforward as 'Obey and live.'" If our obedience merits salvation, there is no place for God's unmerited favor, or "grace."

Furthermore, righteousness itself is a gift: "They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by...Jesus" (Rom. 5:17). Megiddo makes clear their view that developing a righteous character is our responsibility. They do not view righteousness as a gift. In contrast to Megiddo, Scripture speaks of righteousness as a gift because we do not have to reach a point of full obedience to be considered righteous by God. Rather, our faith in Him is counted for righteousness: Abraham "did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why 'it was credited to him as righteousness.' The words 'it was credited to him' were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:20–24 NIV).

Our obedience, however, is not irrelevant to God's system of salvation. The balance between faith and works is to be found in appreciating that



we must say that the Bible teaches two (contradictory) plans of salvation, or we must find a way to reconcile one group of passages with the other.

Because of the widespread acceptance of the Atonement doctrine throughout Christendom, it is all but impossible today to set prejudice aside and read the Bible with an open mind.

Hence our next question: How often is the idea of the atoning death of Christ read into rather than out of the Bible? How many texts would unprejudiced readers find to "prove" that Christ died to atone for our sins — if they could read the Bible without this thought already in mind?

Take, for example, a few of the passages quoted by the Christadelphians in this debate, and the conclusions they have drawn: Heb. 10:4, "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins," and their comment: "Therefore the sacrifice of the body of Jesus was needed." Could any reading Hebrews 10:4 draw such a conclusion if the theory were not already firm in their minds? The passage says nothing whatever about "the sacrifice of the body of Jesus." Or John 6:53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" and their comment: "We must intensely associate ourselves with the sacrifice of Jesus." John 6:53 says nothing about Jesus' literal death or sacrifice.

Or take John 1:29: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and their conclusion that reference is being made to Jesus' death for all mankind—when the passage contains no mention whatever of Christ's death. Or take their citing of I Cor. 10:1-2, that "[Israel] were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," and their conclusion that this means that "the blood of Jesus brings salvation for the new Israel." Such conclusions, if drawn from these texts, must be read into the passages, for they cannot be read out of them—they are not there.

We must also be careful not to make statements which cannot be supported. For example, the Christadelphian statement that "The Bible stresses that salvation is through the sacrifice, not the example, of Christ." We ask, Where does the Bible even make such a statement, with or without any "stress"? Or the Christadelphian statement that "Our salvation is obtainable because of the fact that Jesus offered Himself—His life, His blood, His very soul." Here is another statement wholly without Bible support.

God's gift of salvation is offered in response to faith, not works; but real faith will produce works as an intrinsic by-product (James 2:18-26).

#### Megiddo's mistake

Megiddo does not reconcile two great Bible themes:

1) That salvation is by grace through faith in Christ's sacrifice, "not according to works of righteousness which we have done" (Titus 3:4-7).

2) That works are also necessary in God's scheme of redemption, "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works (Titus 3:8).

Their position is that these two themes are contradictory. They contend that one or the other must be explained away.

The fact is that the two themes beautifully complement one another. Belief in the sacrifice of Christ teaches the need for self-sacrificial love and dedicated obedience in our own lives. Attempting to live an obedient life teaches us the need for the grace of God to forgive us for Christ's sake.

The concept of justification by a vibrant faith makes perfect sense of both these themes. Note that in Titus 3:8 belief comes first; first we must believe in the work of Christ and then we show this belief by our works.

#### Both Themes in the Same Scripture

While Megiddo may feel these themes are contradictory, the Bible obviously does not. They are found together throughout Scripture even in the places Megiddo uses to prove their points.

#### In the Old Testament

Isaiah 1:16,17 is quoted by Megiddo as proof that repentance, not the blood of Christ, is the basis of salvation. But it is only one of the preconditions for it. That passage goes on to say that God will make our scarlet-red sins "as white as snow...as wool." It is Christ who is "white like wool, as white as snow" (Rev. 1:14; Mk 9:3). By being in Christ, we are counted by God to be as righteous (as white) as He (Christ) is. This same figure of speech is used in Revelation 7:14, which speaks of believers washing the redness of their sins in the blood of Christ, so that their clothing is white. It is therefore in Christ that our sins are forgiven and we are presented holy and without blame before God.

Later in his prophecy, Isaiah makes clear that God offers forgiveness on the basis of the literal death of the Messiah: "The chastisement of our peace was upon him (Jesus); and with his stripes we are healed...the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...by



## Affirmed

If our salvation depends upon the merits of Jesus Christ...

Then why was Paul so concerned about qualifying himself for the crown? He had been serving Christ many years when he wrote, "I therefore so run,...so fight I,...lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:26-27). If Christ's blood had effect on anyone's salvation, it surely should have had on Paul.

Or why did Paul write, "I have not yet reached perfection, but I press on, hoping to take hold of that for which Christ once took hold of me....I press towards the goal to win the prize"—was not such effort needless, if Christ's righteousness was imputed to him by God's system of justification? (Phil. 3:12-14, NEB). If perfection was Paul's through Christ automatically, or if his own virtue and obedience did not matter to his salvation, why was he so concerned to achieve it?

Or why did Paul write, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead"? (Phil. 3:11). Would this not be a meaningless statement if his salvation was sure because of the merits of Christ?

Or why did Jesus in His letters to the seven churches warn each that they must "repent," "hold fast," or "be faithful unto death,"—or lose their crown? (Rev. 2:5, 16, 25, 10). What need for the warning, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4), if they were saved by the righteousness of Christ?

Or why was every blessing in those letters prefaced with the condition: "To him that overcometh"? (See Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21.) And why this admonition: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God" (Rev. 3:2)—if being "perfect before God" was not required for salvation?

Or why did Jesus say, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24)—if entering were as simple a matter as accepting Christ's imputed righteousness?

Or why are we commanded to "walk worthy" of our high calling in Christ (Eph. 4:1-2) if our salvation is already won for us? Or why is the eternal reward, of being made "equal unto the angels," reserved for those who shall "be accounted worthy" (Luke 20:35-36), if our individual effort is not a direct condition in our salvation?

Or why should we "fear" lest we come short of obtaining the promises of God (Heb. 4:1), if we can claim those promises through the righteousness of Christ?

## Denied

his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa. 53:5,6,10,11).

Ezekiel speaks of repentance resulting in forgiveness. But the repentant Israelite at that time was under the Mosaic law. If he repented, he would have to offer a sacrifice: "it is the blood that maketh atonement" (Lev. 17:11), and "without the shedding of blood is no remission" of sins (Heb. 9:22). Repentance was not, therefore, the only necessity for forgiveness under the Old Covenant.

### In the gospels

Megiddo claims that Jesus did not teach that he was going to die and shed his blood for the salvation of mankind. That is not true.

At the last supper, he referred to the symbolic significance of the wine: "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). Earlier in his ministry, he told his disciples, "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45). Jesus taught Nicodemus about the efficacy of his literal crucifixion: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). After his baptism, he was introduced as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). While the Lord stressed the need for obedience, his teaching about the need for us to share in the benefits of his sacrificial death was perfectly clear.

In the gospels, the language of the rituals of the Law is consistently applied to the sacrificial death of Christ: blood of the testament...life a ransom...serpent on a pole...lamb of God. His sacrifice was superior to and replaced these rituals with the true sacrificial death to which they had pointed forward. Sharing in the merits of his death is thus essential; it is the only way to eternal life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:53,54). The eating and drinking speaks of sharing in the benefits of his literal death. We do this when we believe and are baptized into Christ: "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life...he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (vs.47,35).

Yes, Jesus may refer to the need for obedience more than he refers to his sacrificial death. Both, however, are an integral part of his message and neither should be denied.



Or why did Paul write to his brethren who were believers that he was enduring "for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory"? (II Tim. 2:10). They were elect, they were believers, they were in Christ, but their salvation was not yet sure.

Or why should there be any "if" in the context of salvation if it is as simple as being baptized into Christ and receiving His merits? Why did Paul write to the Colossians that Christ had reconciled them "in the body of his flesh through death" and then go on to say "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled"? Why was there any if—if by what he had just said he meant that their salvation was secured by Christ's literal death? (Col. 1:22-23).

Or why is it written of the faithful bride of Christ, "his wife hath made herself ready," or that she is arrayed in "fine linen, clean and white" which is "the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:7-8)—if the credit rightfully belongs to Christ, and the righteousness is His, not hers?

Or why does the Bible repeatedly state God's method of rewarding "every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12) if our salvation does not depend wholly upon what we do, i.e., our own virtue and obedience? This principle is repeated in Scripture not once or twice but more than fifty times. What right have we to disallow it?

Much as we would like to think otherwise, we have to conclude that there is more—much more—to obtaining salvation than the simple formula of being baptized into the righteousness of Christ, or receiving merits He won for us.

#### The use of figurative language in Scripture

Figurative or symbolic language is common in everyday speech. Suppose we hear that "the door closed suddenly on a promising career." A picture is created in our minds which we relate to the situation described. Or if we hear that a man "lost his shirt" in a business venture, we readily understand the meaning.

The Bible writers also used symbolic or figurative language, which can be readily understood if studied in the context of the overall teaching of the Bible.

The Apostles, having witnessed firsthand the dramatic life, death and resurrection of their Lord, were so deeply impressed by it all that in writing and teaching they drew heavily from His experience. His "life," His "death," His "crucifixion," His "blood," His "resurrection"—all were terms which they used freely and with deep significance to describe every believer's commitment. Were we to take these terms

#### In the Acts

Megiddo claim that the gospel which the apostles preached focuses on the need for repentance rather than faith in the blood and death of Christ. But Jesus told them to preach "remission of sins...in his name: (Lk. 24:47). Remission is through Christ, not just through our personal repentance and obedience. This is why we preach the gospel of salvation through Christ, not of human effort.

Acts shows how the early preaching stressed the death and resurrection of Christ, repentance and then water baptism: "Repent and be baptize every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...by him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 2:38; 13:39).

Furthermore, Jesus Christ is presented as unique: "Neither is there salvation in any other...through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).

His teaching was not unique. All that he taught is found in the Old Testament including the need to love God with all the heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves (cp. Deut.6:5, Lev. 19:18).

Jesus was not unique in providing an example of right conduct. Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel and many others provided examples of the conduct of which God approves. But right teaching and right example were not enough to provide deliverance from sin. What was needed was the Savior: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

#### In the epistles and the Revelation

The passages which speak of salvation through obedience also include our need for the sacrifice of Christ. Some of these passages consciously allude to this need. Revelation 22:14 is an example: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Yet Christ is the way to the tree of life, he is the door through which a man may enter salvation (John 14:6; 10:9). It was through his sacrificed body and poured-out blood that we have this way to God (Eph. 2:16-18). Likewise, "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:17); but an integral aspect of the will of God is that we should believe on Christ as the sacrifice provided by God (John 6:33-40).

Megiddo say, "Walk in the light and that's all you need." This contradicts I John 1:7: "If ye walk in the light...the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin."



## Affirmed

literally we would destroy their meaning. For example, they wrote of "our old nature" being "crucified with him (Jesus Christ), that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6). No one understood from this that every believer must be literally "crucified."

Or when describing how new is the believer's life in Christ, they called it a "resurrection" or "life from the dead," so complete was the change from the old life to the new (Rom. 6:2-5). Again, they spoke of the new way of life as being newly begotten by the Word of truth (see I Pet. 1:3; I Cor. 4:15; James 1:18). So drastic was the change from the old way of life that being "in Christ" was like becoming a whole "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17).

In the same way, the term "death" was a fitting description of the old life completely given up, sacrificed, what Paul called a "living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1). Paul, describing his daily battle with his own nature, said of himself, "I die daily" (I Cor. 15:31). No one thought he was literally dying every day. Rather, he was describing how completely he was giving up himself and his natural desires, instincts and affections. Again he wrote of himself, "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20), and again no one pictured him on Golgotha with Christ. Using the same terminology he commanded his brethren to "put to death" their earthly tendencies (Col. 3:3-5, RSV).

Jesus Himself used figurative language when He said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). If we take these words literally, as alluding to His physical flesh and blood, we accuse Jesus of advocating cannibalism—and also must conclude that He was talking to people who were literally dead because He said "Ye have no life in you."

But no, Jesus was not speaking of things physical. Rather, His hearers were not spiritually alive because they were not partaking of the spiritual flesh and blood which He was offering them.

What was the spiritual flesh and blood that could produce and support spiritual life? Jesus Himself answered when He said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). His "flesh and blood" were His words, His teachings—these support spiritual life, just as physical flesh and blood support physical life.

In the same message, Jesus explained His point even more clearly: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:57). We live by eating of

## Denied

The Biblical position is that we must forsake our sins believing that the blood of Christ cleanses us from both our old sins and any new ones we may occasionally commit.

Obedience and the sprinkling of Christ's blood are needed for salvation: "elect...unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:2). "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ [his sacrifice]...unto unfeigned love of the brethren [obedience]" (I Pet. 1:18-22). The blood of Christ purges our conscience, resulting in our doing the "works" of continued obedience (Heb. 9:14). This was prefigured in the cleansing of the leper (representing our need for cleansing from sin). The blood of the lamb (representing Jesus) was placed on the ear, thumb and toe of the leper, to show how the blood of his redemption should affect his every action; the blood enabled him to enter the congregation of God's people, and then he could do acceptable works of virtue (Lev. 14:25). Obedience must work together with the redemption which has been made possible through Christ's blood.

### Obedience and the blood of Christ

Obedience is likened to a man building on a rock (Mt. 7:24-27). But "that rock was Christ," the rock smitten on the cross (I Cor. 10:4); the rock refers to faith in Christ as God's Son (Mt. 16:16-18). It is upon the rock of our faith that we build our house of obedience. Faith in Christ's sacrifice comes first, for it is Christ's blood which purifies us (Rev. 15:6; Heb. 1:3; 9; 14:22) and makes it possible for us to offer acceptable obedience to God. As Jesus says, if we are not in the Christ-vine, we cannot produce good fruit before God (John 15:5).

It is our faith in Christ rather than our works which will save us (Rom. 3:27; 9:11; Gal. 2:16). Because salvation is by grace, it is not by works, but on account of Christ's sacrifice (Rom. 11:6; II Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5; Heb. 4:10). Righteousness is imputed by faith to us "without works" (Rom. 4:2). There is the need for works, but works cannot save us; yet we will be judged for our works. There is no conflict in this. The resolution of this is that salvation is conditioned upon our faith in Christ's sacrifice; but if that faith is real, it will inevitably show itself in works.

Acceptable faith will not exist without works. Works alone cannot bring salvation and works cannot exist without our being cleansed by the redeeming blood of Christ. These two scriptural themes do not contradict one another; they complement each other.

### The Forgiveness of Sins

The Bible does not teach that repentance alone can



## Affirmed

Jesus in the same way that Jesus lived by eating of His Father. (This is obviously not literal.)

"The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11)—so the life of the spiritual flesh is in spiritual blood. How appropriate, then, that the Apostle should use the term "blood" with a symbolic meaning of life (spiritual life), also of that which supports or imparts spiritual life, i.e. the words of Jesus, His wisdom, His teachings. The heavenly wisdom, as spiritual blood, performs the functions that support and maintain spiritual life just as physical blood does for physical life. For example:

The spiritual blood, or word of God, is the sanctifying medium. We read in Revelation that the saints "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). Either we must have literal robes made literally white in literal blood (impossible!) or we must have spiritual robes made spiritually white (clean) in spiritual blood. What performs the functions of blood in a spiritual sense? Jesus explained it when He said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:17, 19). "The truth," His word, was the sanctifying medium. Paul said the same when speaking of Christ's relation to the Church, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26). He sanctifies and cleanses His church (His people) by the word.

The spiritual blood, or word, cleanses from sin. The apostle John wrote in I John 1:7, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Jesus said the same in these words: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Peter said the same when he wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth" (I Pet. 1:22). Obeying the truth was the means of cleansing.

The spiritual blood, or word, gives life. Jesus said, using blood as a symbol for His words: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6:53). The Psalmist said the same when he wrote, in plain language, "Thy word hath quickened me" (Ps. 119:50).

The spiritual blood, or word, saves. The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). "By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you" (I Cor. 15:1-2). Likewise spiritual blood, or the Word of God, saves (redeems): "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7).

Ruth Sisson, September, 1992  
(To Be Continued)

## Denied

bring forgiveness. In the case of the bank robber, each time he robbed a bank, he committed a sin. If he stops robbing, each of these sins has still been committed. The punishment for sin is death. It's not enough just being sorry and saying "I won't do it again." Adam sinned, therefore he had to die. Every sinner needs some other intervention to bring about his salvation in addition to forsaking his sins. Galatians 3:10 shows that everyone who didn't always obey every one of God's commands was condemned. That situation has been changed by Christ's sacrifice (Gal. 3:13). If Megiddo do not accept the benefits of that sacrifice, then they are in the same position as Israel under the Law—condemned because they have not all their lives always obeyed God's laws.

### Christ over the law

If forgiveness is conditioned only upon obedience, then there is no difference between the Old and New covenants. Megiddo's legalistic attitude to the Sermon on the Mount seems identical to Israel's relationship to the statutes of the Mosaic law. Hebrews 9:9 and 10:1 reasons that the priesthood of Christ can make us "perfect," in contrast to the previous system which could not do so. "Perfection" is not attainable, therefore, by our own obedience alone. If it was, then Christ's work would not have made "perfection" any more possible than it was before.

The Law denied blessings to those who broke it in any way (Gal. 3:10; Ex. 24:7). Yet we know that men who did break that law will be saved and were called "perfect" (e.g. David). It follows that they found justification with God in a way other than perfect obedience, i.e., through faith in Christ's perfect sacrifice. David knew that "with the Lord there is mercy and...plenteous redemption (because) he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (Psa. 130:7, 8). These words are quoted about Jesus, "He [Jesus] shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

### Secret faults

David was forgiven for his "secret faults," those which he did not even recognize. Megiddo addresses only major flaws in our conduct which will be exposed upon reading the Bible. Due to our natures, however, we often sin without realizing it. For example, we may be discourteous, irritable or slothful and never realize our sinful acts. Like David (Psa. 19:12), we ask for God's mercy regarding this. In this sense, we receive forgiveness without specific repentance, through recognizing the frequent sinfulness springing from our sin-prone nature.

Duncan Heaster, September, 1992  
(To Be Continued)





# ***More Work, More PAY***

**I**f we hire a contractor to work for us, we ask him for a price and we hope that we will be paying him according to what he does. We call this fair business.

Shall we think that God is less wise? Doesn't He know us and the natural instinct for value that He has planted within us? And shall we expect Him to violate these basic laws of life when dealing with us?

We reap what we sow. We receive according to what we have done. Such is the inexorable law of God. This principle is expressed again and again in Scripture.

The prophets of God repeatedly stated this fair and just Divine manner of working. Isaiah was especially clear: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings" (Isa. 3:10). Notice, "they shall eat the fruit of their doings"—and they are righteous. Such eating will be all pleasure, because their fruit has been righteous.

The same is said of the wicked: "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Isa. 3:11).

God is all-wise. He is not experimenting, and He has arranged that we should receive just according to what we do.

More work, more pay.

Absolute fairness is His standard. In fact, He gives more than fair measure. The promise is of abundance: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Ps. 36:8). Again, "So shall an entrance be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 1:11). Paul described the reward as "A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). Again, God is able "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). Such pay is more than we could ever earn.

Repeatedly the prophets of Israel and Judah told the people that they would reap the fruit of their doings, that their sins would bring Divine retribution; that righteousness would bring deliverance and life. "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you," said the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 5:25). Again, "Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart" (Jer. 4:18).

The principle is stated again in the book of Job: "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same" (Job 4:7-8).

It is in Hosea: "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men" (Hos. 10:13).

It is in Jeremiah: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17:9-10). And again: "Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 32:19).

It is by Paul in the book of Romans: that God will render to every man according to his deeds: "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead" (Rom. 7:8).

God has never varied from this plan, and He never shall. Each of us will have to face our record as it stands. Each of us will be rewarded just according to what we have done. Jesus sealed it with His own testi-



mony in His final letter from heaven: "Behold I come...and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

What will be our reward? We ourselves are determining it. We are the only ones who can answer that question to ourselves. If we are preoccupied with the things of this world, if our first concern is to satisfy ourselves and seek honor for ourselves this is all we will get; God has nothing for those who do not invest in His cause. But if we are willing to forego the rewards of the present, if we seek Him with our whole heart and put Him first in our thoughts, first in our affections, first in our lives, He will also put us first.

How just, how fair, how righteous. There is no possibility, then, of our doing too much. Our reward will be just that much greater, for it will still be "according to what we have done."

More work, more pay. MM

**Let nothing make thee  
sad or fretful,  
Or too regretful;  
Be still;  
What God has ordered  
must be right,  
Then find in it thine  
own delight,  
His will.**

\*♦\*♦\*♦\*♦\*

**U**ntil we desire God's way more than we desire our own, we are not likely to make much change.

\*♦\*♦\*♦\*♦\*

**W**hat looks like the end may really be a new beginning.

### Serious Business

Working for eternity is such a serious business. How very foolish we are if we do not work with all our might, continually and earnestly. We have often been told about the great and glorious reward in store for us if we can get a firm hold on self, break free from our sinful nature and fully prepare ourselves for that day. To think that sometime soon that time will come to all who have walked in the way of life—life everlasting!

Isn't it a great God who watches over us and allows us the trials we need? If we allow Him, He will push us forward and polish us until we are spotless in His sight. Each new day gives us a new opportunity to get the work done. The job is to work as if there is no tomorrow.

I want to be ready so I can look forward to that day with great joy knowing I have done my very best.

New York L.S.

### No Small Work

We are of all people on the face of this earth most blessed. We say this often, but do we really realize the magnitude of it? Billions of earthlings and only a thimbleful of covenant makers. Yes, one day there will be many, many more, but now we don't even comprise one forty millionth of the population! Just think of it...talk about minorities, we are the epitome of the word! Does it matter that we're such a small group? Not at all! With God, we are a majority.

The work we have to do is no *small* work, however. The scope of it is enormous, in fact, so much so that we tend to let this overwhelm us at times. "Perfection" is a word feared by most of the human race, and for no other reason, I suppose, but that we are human. To be perfect before God is a work accomplished a day at a time, not to be completed in one leap. We are not physically perfect, but this is not the perfection God requires. He is not unjust either in His command to be perfect, for this perfection is strictly *moral*. No matter how imperfect we are physi-

cally, we *can* become morally perfect. God would not have commanded it had it not been a possibility.

If perfection, then, is possible and God demands it, what recourse do we have but to obey! Since we have no visible manifestation of Holy Spirit power, we must simply "walk by faith." But we do have the written Word to guide us in all our paths. We also have the grand and glorious privilege of communing with the Father in prayer. Our prayer life plays a vital role in how well we perform our duties and how fast we progress toward that goal of perfection.

Georgia

G.P.

### The Marvels of Creation

I never cease to be awed at how wonderfully we are made. Only an all-wise, all-knowing Creator could design something so marvelous as the human body.

Scientists cannot figure out many things and are continually challenged to seek more answers. Even though we know much more than was known 50 years ago, we still have many things to learn. I think the reason man has been able to find out as much as he has is that the work of God is so orderly. Starting with a single atom, things react in a certain way, according to a specific pattern which is always the same.

But what we see is not the end of God's creation. He is in the process of setting up other worlds, ruled by perfect people, throughout the whole universe, and He has offered us a chance to be part of His perfect creation. It is so easy for us to forget what our real goal in life is. We get so wrapped up in our own immediate concerns that we do not think of the future. We like to think that a little sin now and then will not make any difference. But the problem is that if we continue to sin, soon we will no longer be bothered by it and that sin will prove our ruin: it will disqualify us for life in the Kingdom.

We can be sure that the wages of sin will be paid sooner or later.

Texas

P. F.



*Nothing can produce so great a serenity of life as a mind free from guilt, and kept untainted not only from actions but from purposes that are evil. By this means the soul will be unpolluted and undisturbed. The fountain will run clear and unsullied, and the streams that flow from it will be just and honest deeds, ecstasies of satisfaction, a brisk energy of spirit which makes one an enthusiast in his joy, and a tenacious memory sweeter than hope. For as the evergreen boughs, though severed from the tree, retain their fragrance, so the good actions of a wise man perfume his mind and leave a rich scent behind him.*



*A child of God's love never suffers defeat  
In the conflicts of life's pilgrim way.  
You may victory gain if you guard well your thoughts,  
Have you thought upon "these things" today?  
The things that are honest, the things that are pure,  
And the truth that no earth cloud can dim;  
As He looks on your heart with His soul-searching gaze,  
Does He find it well pleasing to Him?*

*Your thoughts are the molds which will shape all your life:  
As one thinks in his heart, so is he;  
And sin's entering wedge is a thought harbored close  
From which Jesus would want you to flee.  
The things that are lovely, the things that are just,  
Dwell on these, we are told in the Word;  
You have talked of surrender and yielding to Him,  
Have you given your thoughts to your Lord?*

*Search me, O my God, and thus know all my thoughts!  
And by truth, which hath always sufficed  
For my soul's deepest needs, bring each wandering thought  
In captivity unto the Christ.  
And when at the Judgment, life's book is unclosed,  
May no pages be marred by sin's blots,  
Because though the tempter hath fiercely assailed.  
I have honored Thee, Lord, in my thoughts!*

*It is all right to have a train of thought if you have the right terminal.*

*A long dispute means that both parties are wrong.*

*Most of our suspicions of others are derived from knowledge of ourselves.*

*When angry, count ten before speaking. When very angry, count one hundred—and then don't speak.*

*When you are right you can afford to keep your temper. When you are wrong, you can't afford to lose it.*

*I have never seen a man who profited by being jealous of others, but I have seen hundreds cursed by it.*



# *Life Immortal*

*Like the glorious light of day,  
Like the bright sun on its way,  
Like a life without a sorrow,  
Like a day without a morrow,  
Like a never-fading tree,  
So shall life immortal be.*

*Like a smoothly-flowing river,  
Flowing on and stopping never,  
Like a sure foundation stone,  
Like a home to call our own,  
Like the ever-rolling sea,  
So shall life immortal be.*

*Like the diamond sparkling bright,  
Sending forth its gleams of light,  
Like a clear and cloudless morning  
In the east, the sky adorning,  
Like the stars in heaven we see,  
So shall life immortal be.*

*Like the treasured golden grain,  
Like the sunshine after rain,  
Like a royal diadem,  
Like the New Jerusalem,  
Like a lovely Bride to be  
Clad in immortality.*

*Like the palace of a king,  
Like a never-failing spring,  
Like the gold tried in the fire,  
Like the ones that never tire,  
Like the air when pure and free,  
So shall life immortal be.*