

A large, layered rock formation, possibly a sandstone cliff, stands prominently in a lush green forest. The rock face is characterized by horizontal strata and is partially covered with moss and small plants. To the left of the rock, several tall, slender trees with dense green foliage reach towards the sky. The ground in the foreground is covered with grass and fallen leaves. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Megiddo Message

Jehovah is my rock,
my fortress and
my Savior.

— II Sam. 22:2

That Worldly Mind!

From the moment we are born we begin adapting to the world about us. Perhaps it is an instinct for survival. Slowly, instinctively, every part of us—our taste, our likes, our interests, our disposition, our attitudes, what we approve or disapprove—all are shaped by our surroundings. Very early we learn to please those who give us what we like, so that we can get more of what we like. Through childhood, youth and adolescence, the instinct grows stronger, changing only in its forms of expression. And all the while we are steadily reinforcing these instincts, this love of the world, this worldly mind.

What is this worldly mind in us? It is an inner striving to belong, to fit in, to find security in the midst of turmoil. Underneath it is a way of thinking and behaving that centers in gratifying our natural desires, our fleshly human nature. Self comes first, along with anything that promotes, or glorifies, or feels good to our selfish nature. What I do, what I think, what I feel, what I experience is just the most important issue in the whole world.

Oh, that worldly mind!

Yet when we see it for what it is, how small it is, how worthless, how utterly unable to save, or console. For it is of the world, and the world passes away (I John 2:16-17).

When Jesus said that He spoke only the words which His Father had given Him to speak (John 12:49-50), He meant that His thinking was untainted by this world. He was no part of it. His wisdom was from above; His thoughts came from God. And since His

thinking was not of this world, it would not appeal to those of a worldly mind. Nor could it even be comprehended by such.

That is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:14-16).

Here is something not of this world: "We have the mind of Christ." Do we? Have we given up our own thoughts? Have we severed our connections with the mind of this world and attached ourselves to the mind of Christ? Are our values His, our interests His interests, our standards His standards? Is our first and last thought not to please ourselves, or our associates, but God?

Just as oil refuses to mix with water, so the worldly mind will not blend with the mind of God. It is a wholly different realm of thinking and feeling and appreciating. The two have nothing in common. The worldly mind is self-seeking, self-gratifying, constantly at war with the mind of the Spirit, with its values and repentance, faith, virtue and humility. Do we wonder that James wrote, "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). The mind of the world seeks the goals of this world, its satisfactions, its pleasures, its rewards. And none of these are of God. Can

(Continued on page 26)

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

THAT WORLDLY MIND! 2

Articles

THE TRIUMPHANT FINISH 4

A Resurrection message

ABOUT NOAH'S ARK 9

WAS THE FLOOD UNIVERSAL 11

Evidence to consider

FROM DISCIPLE TO MASTER 14

Poem

THE HUNDREDFOLD—PLUS 15

From Parent to Parent—

"JUST LIKE YOU!" 16

Are we pleased when our children reflect our attitudes?

Articles

THE LAST CHAPTER 17

"Consider the latter end"

POWER TO ENDURE 18

God judges us by our ability to endure.

Story

OF CAESAR'S HOUSEHOLD 20

Part 5: *Freedom, or...?*

Defending the Bible

"SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED"? 24

Tithes To Whom?

Lines to Live By 27

Back Cover

UNTO THE END! 28

Cover photo taken at Rock City, New York, by David and Marie Sutton.

Megiddo Message

May 1992
Volume 79, No. 5

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.

The Triumphant Finish

When Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30), it was not an expression of defeat but a powerful word of victory.

If any one thought should stir the heart of every earnest believer, it is the thought of victory. Imagine what it would be like to know—not imagine or surmise but *know*—that God is accepting us, that He is pleased with our life-sacrifice, that we are absolutely sure of the final goal and triumph! Can we feel the radiant joy, the power, the courage that would fill us?

Such was the joy Jesus felt as He approached His last and severest test. There was no question in His mind. He knew absolutely that He had performed the will of His Father and that His Father would see Him through to a triumphant finish. And so He prayed, "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." There was no wonder, no misgiving, no fear, only hope and eager expectation. His had been the fully triumphant life, and it was only a matter of hours before He would be standing in His Father's presence and receiving the glorious change to immortality.

With this on His mind, the hours of agony upon the cross could be borne courageously, patiently. In the midst of the worst, He could believe the best—because He *knew* what *really* lay ahead—not Golgotha and suffering but glory and honor and a crowning with immortality in His Father's presence, surrounded by a host of holy angels. What a moment that would be! And it was coming! Thus in the agonizing death throes of Golgotha, when He said, "It is finished," it was not an expression of defeat but a powerful word of victory.

Think not for a moment that it is a word of despair. On the lips of Jesus it was a word of triumph. The final test had been passed, it was a moment of victory complete!

To those who watched it did not seem so. To them, Golgotha had the appearance of tragedy. The world who watched Him die, who heard Him say "It is finished," thought—wrongly—that *He* was finished.

The Pharisees thought that at last they were rid of His disturbing presence. Now things could return to normal in Jerusalem and Judea. It wouldn't be long until another hero came along, another preacher whom they could follow. There could be no more of His upsetting confidence, His impious blasphemy, His heart-searching questions, His continual threat to their pride and their comfortable positions. They watched Him die, fully satisfied that here was a difficult chapter *closed*. He was finished.

The Romans, too, thought that He was finished. No more would they be bothered by this man, this disturber among the people. It had been rumored that He was a king of the Jews. There had been only a week or so earlier an incident when the multitude tried by force to crown Him king. But it did not last long. This man, whom they had watched lest He cause an uprising of the people against Rome, now was finished. So they thought.

The people, too, concluded that He was finished. These people who had looked up to Him as their teacher, their comforter, their healer, and in whose presence they had found such delight, such relief—it was all over. Some had admired, often misunderstanding but always fascinated. Now it was over. The miscellaneous crowd thought that He was finished.

The disciples, too, thought it. Finished were the bright dreams they had delighted to entertain, dreams of freedom and victory and independence. Gone, too, was the One so loving, so compassionate, so understanding, in whom they had placed all their hope. Gone too was the glory of an intimate fellowship that had kindled their hearts and started something new in their lives. Despondent, discouraged, and disenchanted, the disciples

stood helpless and hopeless in the midst of their ruined dreams. Theirs was a leader lost. Theirs was a cause ruined. They looked, and thought that He was finished. It was all over.

But though the world thought that *He* was finished, they—and even His own—had missed the message He had so carefully taught, “that the Son of man should be crucified...and the third day rise again.” When Jesus said, “It is finished,” the Greek word He used was *tetelestai*, and it is a word full of courage and purpose, a victory word used by a runner who wins a race, or a boxer who overcomes his opponent. Jesus was saying “Mission Accomplished,” i.e., a divinely appointed task perfectly completed.

And Mission Accomplished it was, all the way. Not part or most but *all* that the Father had given Him to do He had done. He had come into the world to give men a guiding light to the Father. He had done it. He had come to be the perfect example of the life God loves. He had done it. First in His teaching and first in His life had been to *do* the will of His heavenly Father. And He had done it. He had been commissioned to bring the pearl of great price and show it to the world in all its loveliness and beauty. Though few would make the effort to observe, He had done it, and done it well. With His life He had guarded it to the end. He had come to commission those who would carry His gospel to others, to start them on the way. They were His own and He loved them to the end. He even had asked forgiveness for those who crucified Him. He had done all that He could do. His work was finished. He was the pattern, perfect and undefiled. Every vestige of His own will had been surrendered to His heavenly Father.

He had said, “My meat is to do

the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” True to the end, He had finished it.

Let us go now to the beginning of the next chapter, to the morning of the Resurrection (John 20), which Jesus had clearly and publicly foretold but which neither His enemies nor even His closest disciples were expecting.

It is very early in the morning. Mary has anticipated the dawn by

**When Jesus said,
“It is finished,” He
was saying “Mission
Accomplished..”**

hastening to the garden to do some act of compassion. At least she could bring some spices and weep anew at the tomb. The spreading light brought no reflection to her darkened spirit. Not only was He dead, but the tomb was empty. His body was gone. What could she do?

In her anguish she stooped to peer into the sepulcher and saw two strangers there who inquired sympathetically, “Woman, why weepest thou?” She could only answer, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” Then she was conscious that someone came near. Who could he be but the keeper of the garden, and who else would know better than he where the body of her Lord had been transferred. “Tell me where you have laid Him,” she cried, “and I will take Him away.”

To tears and tragedy there came back a single word, “Mary!” She

***First in His teaching
and first in His life
had been to do the
will of His heavenly
Father. And He had
done it.***

was startled from her sorrow, comforted from her tears, stabbed awake in spirit by the intonation of her name. It could not be—but it was. It was He—the Lord Jesus Himself! He was not dead, but was alive!

From that point forward the story moves quickly. Mary runs to bear the news to the disciples; Peter and John race to the tomb, to find it empty, still wondering what has happened. They quickly return to the other disciples to tell the news. And soon the fact is fully discovered and confirmed: Jesus is alive! Incredible, but *true*: they have seen the risen Christ!

The true gospel is no fanciful legend that asks men to believe apart from reason. It is solidly anchored in history. In the first century Christ's apostles and disciples turned their world upside down with a message that stressed Jesus'

***The true gospel is
no fanciful legend. It
is solidly anchored in
history.***

resurrection as an event in history that they had witnessed. On this basis they called men to repent and turn to God. The apostle Peter, speaking to men in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, proclaimed: "God has raised this very Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses to this fact...Turn away from your sins, each one of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:32, 38). The apostle Paul, addressing men of Athens, asserted that God "has fixed a day in which he will judge the whole world with justice, by means of a man he has chosen. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising that man from death!" (Acts 17:31). The apostle John, writing to the seven churches in Asia, referred to "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn Son who was raised from death, who is also the ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5).

The literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was the central proclamation of the early Church; it must also be the true Church's central proclamation in our day. The Gospel today rests on the same evidence that the historian Luke asserted in the first century: "For forty days after his death Jesus showed himself to them many times, in ways that proved beyond doubt that he was alive; he was seen by them, and talked with them about the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Christians must become well grounded in the historical basis of the Gospel and vigorously advance its truth so that men seeking an answer to death can recognize the necessity of examining the hope Christ offers.

How can we *know* absolutely that Jesus Christ rose victorious over death? Our testimony includes

the following Biblical proofs:

1. The transformed lives of the apostles can be adequately explained only by the resurrection of Christ. Christ's followers were utterly distraught by the execution of this One who they hoped would become the ruler of Israel, and they feared for their own safety because of the violence of Christ's enemies. Yet in a matter of days these discouraged and frightened men were amazingly transformed. They openly and fearlessly proclaimed Christ alive from the dead; their belief in His resurrection motivated them to give themselves completely to the mission of making the risen Christ known far and wide. So strong was their belief that they submitted to persecution and death rather than deny their Lord.

Had these unlearned men cunningly devised a fictional message (a scheme for which they had no discoverable motive), it would be reasonable to assume that sooner or later one or more of the eleven (not to mention other followers) would have confessed the subterfuge under the pressure of numerous threats of death. But none did. Their witness never wavered. Rather, the lives and message of these changed men changed the course of human history. No reasonable explanation has ever been given to account for their transformed lives except their own: they had seen Jesus alive from the dead.

2. The diversity of appearances by the risen Christ provides substantial historical proof for His bodily resurrection. The four Gospels relate at least ten post-resurrection appearances of Christ. He appeared to individuals (both men and women), to small groups (two, three, seven), to larger groups (ten, eleven), and to a crowd (over five hundred). He exhibited His wounded body, spoke intimately to those

who knew Him, ate in their presence, taught them, directed their activities, and gave instructions about their future work. His first appearance was to women—hardly likely had the story been invented by Jewish men. He appeared to His followers to assure them of His triumph over death and to prepare them for their worldwide preaching ministries. These various appearances to different people in different settings cannot reasonably be explained as hallucinatory experiences. The best explanation is that given by the reliable writers of the New Testament: the risen Lord actually met with His followers.

3. The empty tomb can be explained only by the supernatural power of God in raising Christ. After the crucifixion, the obviously dead body of Jesus was anointed, wrapped in linen, and placed in a new tomb sealed with a great stone and guarded by Roman soldiers. His adversaries, knowing He had

predicted He would rise from the dead, took pains to prevent any possible plot for a simulated resurrection. Yet the first day of the week after His death, the morning of the 15th of Abib, the stone was rolled away from the tomb, revealing no corpse, but only the body wrappings undisturbed and the head cloth rolled up in a separate place.

How was the body removed? Jesus' enemies would not have taken it—the last thing they wanted was the suggestion of a resurrection. Furthermore, they did not—they could not—produce the corpse later to refute the apostles' claims that He had risen. (Had it been in any way possible they certainly would have!) The friends of Jesus were in no position to steal the body: they were grief-stricken after His rejection by Israel and crucifixion by Rome and feared they too might be killed. And His disunited disciples certainly did not have the power necessary to carry

No reasonable explanation has ever been given to account for the transformed lives of the apostles except their own: they had seen Jesus alive from the dead.

out such a plot in view of the Roman military guards who stood watch over the great stone that sealed the tomb. If Christ's enemies wouldn't have removed the body and His friends couldn't have done it, what possible answer is left? Only that the power of God was the means by which the tomb opened to

Let Us Pray

Dear Father, all praise and honor to Thee as we meet this beautiful morning to commemorate once again the Resurrection of Thy dear Son!

Now we may catch the gleam of the rising sun of hope. Our hearts have said, "There must be a way out." Resurrection Morning says, "There is a way out!" We see the footprints of the living Lord leading away from the tomb. The whole course of the history of the world has been changed.

Father, remind us that if this resurrection of Jesus is to be real to us, we must share in His moral adventure, must do always the things that please Thee. Said the apostle Paul, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Our affections must be centered on things which are above, our lives must be a constant pageant of hope and praise; the bright

prospect generated by the resurrection of Thy Son from the dead must become a vital fragrance that we always carry with us, and diffuse it wherever we go.

If we would certify in our own lives the truth of Christ's resurrection we must live for the values for which He died, and be willing to die for the values for which He lived.

Here the risen Christ is pointing us to new life and hope. He is directing us to trace His own steps, not toward the tomb, but away from it. Help us to follow, that we may one day share in His triumphant finish.

Grant Father that this morning's service may prove a steppingstone to holiness, that our desire to go the whole way may be whetted, and that our determination to finish the work given us to do strengthened.

We pray Thy help that we may never grow weary in well doing, but keep pressing on as long as our day of opportunity lasts, that we may one day experience in ourselves that glorious raising to life and immortality and a life that will never, no never, no never end. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Jesus is for all time
the living evidence
of a living hope.**

reveal its emptiness. Attempts to explain the empty tomb by claims that Jesus never really died but swooned and then revived, or was merely drugged, fly in the face of the evidence from the Bible and from history, and create far more problems than they solve.

4. The growth and spread of the Christian Church during the centuries that followed is evidence beyond dispute that Christ rose from the dead. Though it soon turned away from His teachings to falsehoods, yet it had a noble beginning, and that beginning can be explained in no other way than that it had a *living hero*, Jesus Christ. No other religion in the world has a founder who is or even claims to be "alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18).

These arguments for Christ's resurrection are not all the important ones that can be advanced, nor are they developed as completely as they might be. They do, however, point to some of the rational support for Christ's resurrection

that any honest truth-seeker must consider.

The knowledge that death can be conquered permanently is of the very highest importance to the true believer. Its importance cannot be overemphasized. Without it the entire meaning of true religion is immediately drained away, and even the "little flock" would become as walking dead men, Sadducees of the latter day.

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection provide a complete and perfect example for all people in any possible circumstance of life, whether weak or powerful, slave or free, poor or rich, ordinary or genius, depressed or happy. The age was drawing on when the Scriptures as we have them today would be complete, and men would have to walk by faith, their only contact with God the reading of those Scriptures. To walk by faith without angelic visitation, vision, miracle or power of the Holy Spirit needs a special faith; and that faith needs a special, complete and perfect Pattern.

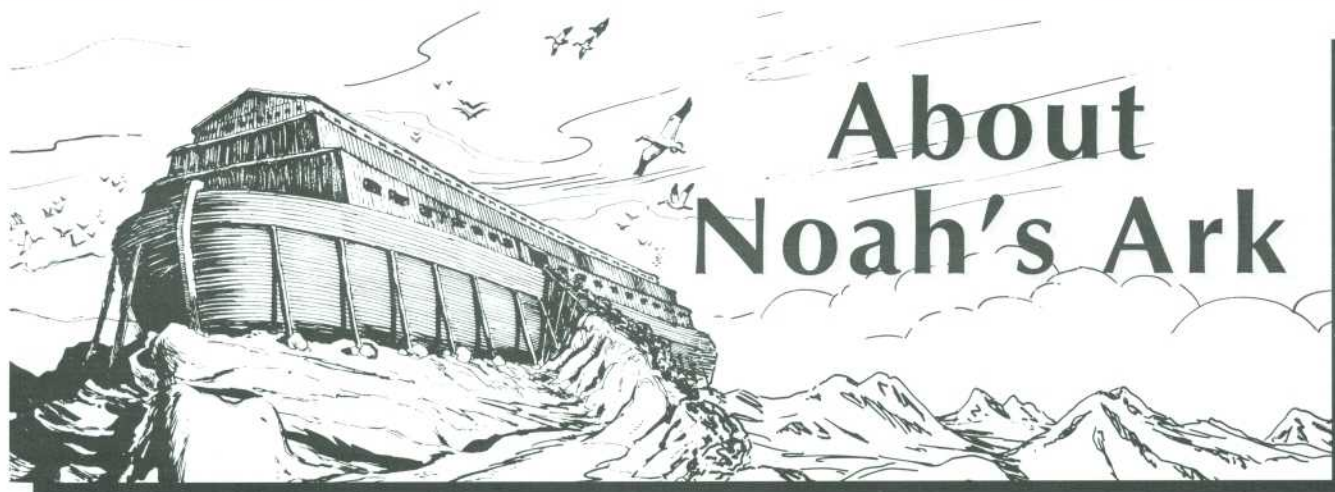
True Christianity differs from all other religions in numerous ways, but one great difference is often forgotten. There is no circumstance of life which can ever prevent the true Christian from living the way God requires. He needs no priesthood, no cathedral, no measure of position, no special situation, no power, wealth, or worldly approbation. Once the principles of the law of God are

scribed on his mind, the Christian needs only time and the determination and stamina always to choose and to do the right before God.

Jesus is for all time the living evidence of a living hope. His appearances to Paul immediately lighted in the former persecutor's being an inextinguishable, burning hope for this same immortality; and the theme of his message, as recorded in The Acts and the Letters, was "Jesus, whom God raised from the dead." Only such evidence and such a hope can fully account for such singleness of purpose as he displayed every day of his life, from Damascus to the day when he too could feel the warm, pulsing glow of a triumphant finish and could exult, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:7-8).

And now Jesus' cry of victory echoes across the ages to us. It is the shout of triumph from one who believed and achieved the highest. "It is finished." How it gives us new heart, new courage, new strength to rejoice in His victory and know that because He triumphed, *so can we*. As He conquered, *so can we*. And as He was crowned with immortality, so can we one day receive the sparkling diadem! For if we follow, carefully, every step of the narrow way of self-denial and discipline and service He walked, we shall arrive at last at that same triumphant hour, that moment of victory, when we shall see and know that for us, too, "It is finished"—Mission Accomplished, and all that lies ahead of glory and life and immortality will be our very own....forever! MM

Lord give me the power to translate
My resolutions into deeds,
My best thoughts into words,
My highest hopes into thoughts
that will enrich my life
and the lives of those around me.



About Noah's Ark

A subscriber writes:

"In the account of Noah and the construction of the ark, I have been puzzled by the necessity of the animals he loaded. There have been catastrophes throughout history which resulted in widespread destruction of animal and plant life. Within time the destruction has been repaired by nature and the loss of animal and plant life has been restored. In the natural scheme of things animals have been classified as predator or prey. Thus, it would require a miracle of sorts to have trapped a male and female of each species, confined them to the ark, and provided them with sustenance over the period of confinement. No small feat indeed.

"The thought occurred to me that the animals brought onboard the ark might have been various classes of humans devoid of understanding of God's purposes and categorized as animals. It would have been far easier to have had people living in the ark than animals. One of the reasons I have considered the above alternative is the fact that a significant number of people would be needed to re-establish a minimal civilization after the flood waters had subsided leaving extensive devastation and destruction."

We have all seen pictures of Noah's ark, with animals of all sorts and descriptions marching two by two up a ramp into the ark, their animal natures completely ignored in the illustration. If we are to take the Biblical account literally, of course this is the picture we must get. But God also invites us to reason, and there is considerable evidence that the floodwaters did not cover the whole earth. Hence the inhabitants of the ark (human and animal) were not the sole survivors of the flood.

You are correct in your observation that in the natural scheme of things the loss of plant and animal life in a certain area will be restored. You are also certainly correct in observing that "it would require a miracle of sorts" to trap a male and female of each species and confine them in the ark, and provide them with proper sustenance during the period of confinement.

Persons who believe that God instructed Noah to take with him into the ark two of every kind of

animal that exists anywhere on the earth have not thought the matter through or considered the extreme variety of animal life on the earth. To bring into one vessel two of every kind of creature on the earth—from boa constrictors to lions to rhinoceroses to elephants to toads to kangaroos would indeed require a miracle—and a much larger vessel than Noah built.

Much evidence has been given to show that the flood was not universal, also that the word "all" does not always refer to each and every worldwide creature when used in the Bible.

It does not, however, seem inconsistent to picture Noah taking into the ark his domestic animals, those which he was using for his support. The flood would be only for a short time, and Noah would need his animals after the flood. The Israelites leaving Egypt were instructed to take with them their livestock.

Your thought that the animals may have referred to "various classes of humans devoid of understanding of God's purpose and categorized as animals" is a thought that might be considered. However, God has always been very selective of the persons He used. He never accepted every kind. He was always looking for the select, the

very best and highest quality, those who were seeking His interests. To preserve humans on the level of "animals" is not in keeping with His overall purpose of providing deliverance and salvation to the "upright," the "faithful," the "pure." Any of these would be above the animal existence level.

As for God needing a "significant number of people" to re-estab-

***To cease to do evil
is not sufficient; we
must replace our evil
deeds with good
deeds.***

lish a "minimal civilization," as you suggest, is beyond our ability to know. However, we may observe that God is not short of either time or resources, nor is He obliged to work according to our way of thinking.

Throughout history we see God preserving the obedient, the faithful, those who are most like Him in thought and behavior. Here is a lesson for us: that we must get ourselves on God's side if we would be preserved in the coming devastation. For God will not preserve everyone, He is selecting only those whom He can use in His eternal purpose. When the Lord "roars out of Zion" (Joel 3:16), and His judgments descend upon the earth, there will be deliverance for "his people"—and no others.

"I often wonder about the Lord's method of destroying those who were disobedient. It certainly left

its mark. Why so extensive an inundation?"

It is not our prerogative to know God's reasons for what He does, or to question His methods of dealing with the problems on this planet. He who knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10) is certainly capable of acting wisely and in the best interests of all concerned. We must remember, too, when evaluating His actions, that His ways and thoughts being as far above ours as the heavens are above the earth, we cannot expect that our judgment will be just like His. To Him, human life is worth nothing except as it serves His purpose. Whole nations before him are "less than nothing and vanity" (Isa. 40:17).

Hannah, inspired by God, observed this fact long ago, that God kills and makes alive: "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up" (I Sam. 2:6).

However, He always protects His people, His saints, those who are part of His eternal covenant and purpose, who are obedient to His laws. Even so did Hannah pray: "He will keep the feet of his saints...The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed" (I Sam. 2: 9-10).

Why so extensive an inundation as that in the time of Noah? Perhaps it was to be a lesson for Noah and his family, and for generations to come. Far be it from us to know the purposes of Omniscience!

If we cannot trust God to act properly in behalf of His human creation, we are the losers, for we are part of that creation; we breathe and live entirely by His mercy.

"If Noah spent time as a preacher of righteousness and supervised the construction of the ark, how was the ark funded and who did the

work? A vessel of its dimensions would require more man-hours than were available from Noah and his three sons. Building the ark was no mean task."

Both facts are stated in Scripture: 1) that Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and 2) that he was responsible for the building of the ark (II Pet. 2:5; Gen. 6:13-22).

It does not seem inconsistent that Noah could supervise the building of the ark and at the same time preach. As for the number of persons who helped with the building of the ark, we are not told, but there may well have been many who volunteered, or were employed on the project, besides Noah's immediate family. The important fact is that Noah obeyed God's command, that he informed the people of the coming deluge, offering them deliverance upon God's terms, and that they did not believe. But their unbelief did not change the facts or alter God's plans. The flood came just as God had predicted.

And the lesson comes to us: "Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26-30).

Another fact is emphasized here: that unbelief is deadly. Many heard, but few were worthy of the deliverance that God was providing—because of their own stubborn will and hardheartedness. It is a lesson for all of us, that only Noah and his family were saved because only they believed wholeheartedly and acted upon that belief. All others perished. They perished because they would not believe, because they would not heed the message Noah was preaching. And so "the flood came, and destroyed them all."

The lesson was of such significance that Jesus brought it to our attention. Let us take heed to ourselves.

MM

Was The Flood Universal?

Reading the account in Genesis, one might easily conclude that the flood was world-wide. But there are a number of factors to be considered.



Bible clearly records that this commission was fulfilled: "And they went forth, and preached every where" (v. 20); "the gospel...was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23); "their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends

of the world" (Rom. 10:18). But no one assumes that they traveled to all parts of Siberia, or India, or the isles of Japan, or that they preached to the Eskimos and Indians of the "New World."

Paul wrote to the Church at Rome, that their "faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8)—which is obviously not to be literally interpreted.

3 If the flood were to have been universal, the dimensions of the ark would have been grossly inadequate to contain "all" or anything like "all" the animals that were in the whole wide world. This would mean that Noah would have had to gather two boa constrictors, and two tigers, and two hippopotamuses, and two lions and two of every weird creature that inhabits the jungles and the wilds of the earth—a physical impossibility.

Another evidence is the manner in which these animals are distributed over the earth. Each continent has its own peculiar creatures. If all the animals had migrated from one center (such as Noah's ark) after the flood, all areas should have basically the same animals. But the types of animals differ greatly from continent to continent—which would seem to indi-

1 The apostle Peter knew about the

flood, and when he was writing he was under the influence of the Holy Spirit; hence we should be able to depend on his words. In his Second Epistle he writes: "...there were heavens and earth long ago, created by God's word out of water and with water; and by water that first world was destroyed, the water of the deluge" (II Pet. 3:5-6, NEB). Our Common Version phrases it that "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." It was the "then world," the present kosmos, or arrangement of things in the inhabited portion, which God was concerned with, and which He destroyed. Other translations also bear out this fact: "the world of that time was destroyed by being flooded by water" (Jerusalem Bible); "the world which then existed was destroyed in a deluge of water" (Twentieth Century New Testament). It would make no sense to speak of the "world which then existed" if the whole face of the earth were involved. Peter did not believe the flood was universal.

In another place Peter described the "world" that perished as the "world of the ungodly." We read that God "spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (II Pet. 2:6). In the same

context he mentions Lot, who was also delivered from a destructive judgment; but no one assumes that Lot and his daughters were the only survivors upon earth.

2 When the Bible speaks of "all" and "every" and "all flesh," etc., the meaning intended is not always literal. When it is recorded in Genesis 41 that "the famine was in all the lands" and "over all the earth," and that "all countries came into Egypt to buy grain," no one supposes that the irrigated plains in Babylonia from which the patriarch Abraham had emigrated, were suffering; nor do we assume that the natives of the American continents, lands not even known in that day, came to Egypt. People inhabited China at that time, but no one believes the Yellow River dried up or that its inhabitants were suffering simply because of a drought in Palestine.

This same type of hyperbolic expression is used in Deuteronomy 2:25, where Moses told the people that all "the nations that are under the whole heaven" would fear because of Israel. The same figure of speech is used in the New Testament. Jesus sent His disciples out to "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15) and the

cate that the animals originated in their own particular areas. Furthermore, there is fossil evidence that the various continents were occupied by these primitive creatures long before the Noachian Deluge.

4 The ark came to rest within 500 miles of its starting point. This would be unlikely if the entire earth had been flooded.

5 Someone has calculated that to flood the entire globe would require eight times the amount of water now available in our present system, for it would mean raising the level of the oceans enough to cover the highest mountains, since two thirds of the world's surface is covered by water already. To raise the level of the oceans to this extent would seem without point or purpose.

6 To cover the earth with water would mean the mixing of fresh and salt water. Today most aquatic animals are adapted to live either in salt or fresh water, not in both. Salt water fish cannot live in fresh water and vice versa. How would this problem be solved after the flood?

7 The Biblical record concerns itself only with the inhabitants of a local area near Israel and those interacting with that area. Other lands are not mentioned. Why should we assume that they would be included in the flood?

8 Nowhere are we told that Noah traveled to Africa, China, or North America to preach

repentance. The tone of the passage is entirely local. Yet he was the one appointed to forewarn the people of the coming destruction, and he had no way to travel around the world. Yet we are told that he preached "repentance." Such preaching would mean little to those who had previously been unexposed to the knowledge of God.

9 Evidence of a worldwide flood is lacking. There is, however, local evidence in the Mesopotamian area that is very confirming.

10 Excavations in the Mesopotamian area offer convincing evidence concerning the Flood—its reality, and also its limits. Werner Keller, in a book entitled *The Bible As History* tells of diggings near the ancient city of Ur, and how the results confirmed the Biblical account of the Flood. About sixteen feet below the present surface they found a clay deposit almost ten feet thick, below which they found certain evidence of human habitation.

We quote a portion from the above-mentioned book:

"How far did the layer of clay extend? What area was affected by the disaster? A proper hunt now started for traces of the Flood in other parts of Mesopotamia. Other archeologists discovered a further important check point near Kish, northeast of Babylon, where the Euphrates and the Tigris flow in a great bend toward each other. There they found a similar band of clay, but only eighteen inches thick. Gradually, by a variety of tests, the limits of the Flood waters could be established. According to Woolley the disaster engulfed an area northwest of the Persian Gulf

400 miles long and 100 miles wide. Looking at the map today we should call it 'a local occurrence,' for the inhabitants of the river plains it was, in those days, their whole world."

The same God who divided the waters of the Jordan and let them wall up while the Israelites passed through could contain the waters of the flooded area so that the "whole world" literally need not have been flooded. It was a singular and great event, and God promised that never again would He send such a Flood (Gen. 9:11-15); but this does not mean that the whole planet had to be covered.

11 The purpose of the Flood is stated as follows: "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen. 6:13).

From other Bible passages we can know that God never did destroy the "earth," and never will: "the earth abideth for ever" (Eccl. 1:4). The "earth" which was destroyed was "the world that then was," as Peter phrased it, "the world of the ungodly." It was the same type of "earth" with which the prophet Isaiah years later was pleading to "hear the word of the Lord" (Isa. 1:2, 10). Every term in the Bible is not to be taken literally. And if the "earth" need not be literal, why must the "all flesh" be literally understood? or "all the high hills"? God was concerned with the people of a certain area of the earth; through all ages He has dealt only with certain peoples, not the whole earth universally; and to the people He was addressing, who had become so sinful by transgressing His laws, it was their "whole world" that was destroyed. MM



dol Talk

There are several varieties of "idol" talk on the market today, none of them worth buying. But all are worth our learning to recognize, lest we be tempted on an off-guard day.

First, there is the idol talk manufactured by those who seek to make something material a substitute for the God they worship. It may be money, sports, pleasure, achievement, friends, anything that comes ahead of their thoughts of God or takes the place of His true worship in their lives. Men have always wanted some kind of idol—something tangible, something they could see and feel and handle—in preference to the God of heaven. There is far greater pleasure in worshiping that which is part of the present cosmos. Danger lies, however, in the fact that the things of this world will perish with it. Idol talk may *seem* to transform the apparently worthless into the best value available, but what of its *eternal* value? They know—and we know—there is none.

Also, how can the worship of a God who is "from everlasting to everlasting" be replaced by some tangible piece of His creation? How can the worship of Him who stretches out the heavens and who laid the "foundations of the earth"—how can His worship possibly give place to that which is transient and trivial? Yet, small gods of this world consume many idle hours of idol talk.

Then there is another type of idol talk that even those who scorn shrines, medallions and the like may be guilty of. It is a peculiar version of a benign grandfather god, who loves everybody and is thought to bend to everybody's individual wishes. The true God hates sin and He also hates sinners; His delight is reserved for His chosen ones. Those who do not delight in Him are not a delight to Him. If we talk about God as being our friend when we do not meet the qualifications for being His friend; when we wish we could lavish goods upon Him to win His favor;

when we seek His approval on *our* terms; when we want Him to bless us but hope that He closes His eyes to our shortcomings, are we not in a sense worshiping an idol of our own making, setting up our own little god and saying, "You are mine, lord; what will you do for me?"

Another kind of idol talk today is that which reduces God to the T-shirt slogan or a car bumper sticker. As dedicated servants of the Most High, we can have nothing to do with such; however, let us beware lest the cheap imagery around us, and the common vernacular that so freely takes His name in vain, contaminate us. Whatever men do, however they may desecrate His cause, He is still the Most Holy, the Most High exalted over all, the blessed and only Potentate, and what He purposes *will* come to pass, human wishes and human wills notwithstanding. Men may flout His name and break His laws, but when their day is done, they shall be no more, while the "word of the Lord endureth forever." Let us be doubly sure that we have no part or lot with any such.

There is yet another type of idol talk, quite unrelated, but no less idolatry. It is the self-worshipping talk that puts self at the center of all. "I-I-I"—we exalt ourselves above our measure. This is a direct violation of our sacred covenant to order our ways by His law and make all our will subservient to His. A great man of God said long ago, "Reverence for the eternal is the first thing in knowledge" (Prov. 1:7, Moffatt). It is still true. And genuine reverence for the eternal allows *no* idol talk, no talk that makes an idol of self or allows any measure of self-worship.

Idol talk belongs among that which the apostle Paul classifies as should "not be once named among you, as becometh saints" (Eph. 5:3-5). Let us watch out for it. Let us make our worship pure and our hearts open before Him, before He opens His mouth and speaks—and we are no more.

MM

"The disciple is not above his master; but every one that is perfect shall be as his master" —Luke 6:40.

From Disciple to Master

A study of the life of Jesus clearly reveals that His object was to lead a life worthy of emulation. Having obtained perfect knowledge of the will of God, and always having obeyed His Father's commandments as soon as He learned them, He desired His followers to do likewise. From the time Abraham was commanded to walk before God and be perfect (Gen. 17:1) to the time the Lord instructed Moses to command the children of Israel, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44), and down to the time Jesus walked on earth, this demand for a perfect moral character had not changed. On every occasion throughout His entire ministry, Jesus taught His hearers that they must repent and do works of righteousness. No amount of outward pretense or deeds before men would do. What He taught and required was true, genuine repentance and perfection of character through growth.

We have no record of Jesus' life after He was twelve years of age until He began His public ministry. But during that time He underwent the great training which fitted Him for the work He later performed, learning to observe His Father's will so that it was a delight to Him. Thus, when the time came, He was able to resist the tempter with the words, "It is written." And when, after a series of miracles, He perceived that the multitude wanted to take Him by force and make Him king, He departed from them (John 6:15), for He knew that His time had not yet come. Jesus had to bear the taunts of even His own brethren, who at the first did not believe in Him (John 7:5). Not in a single instance did He fail to do His Father's will; even when faced with the most severe trials and persecution He would not deny the truth and the purpose of His mission. He became perfect by obedience (Heb. 5:8-9).

After His ascension He sent back a message to His followers which comes down to us: "To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). Not many of His followers have to

endure such trials as Jesus bore, but all must attain that same perfect obedience to the commandments. We must be as diligent in doing everything to please God as was Jesus in His mission; we must follow His example (I Pet. 2:21), and overcome in all things as did He.

It is not unreasonable that God demands perfection of us before He will grant us His salvation. Take for example the command, "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath" (Ps. 37:8). If we learn to control the impulse to lose our temper, and always remember this testimony when tempted so that nothing will cause us to be impatient, are we not perfect on this point? Certainly we are! If envy is our besetment, and we learn to be content with what we are able to have or be, so that nothing in which others can surpass us will disturb our peace of mind, we are pure on that point and no longer will be "envying one another" (Gal. 5:26). If a man is a thief and he learns to "steal no more" (Eph. 4:28), he is perfect on that point likewise. If we have been accustomed to jesting and joking and have learned to speak things that are edifying and upbuilding (Eph. 5:3-4), we have overcome on that point also. And so on with every besetment.

God has set the highest standard that man can possibly attain. We cannot deviate from it in the least or offend in one point (James 2:10). It is this standard toward which we must persistently—not haltingly—progress. We may not reach it immediately, but there is a pleasure in pressing toward it, knowing that it can be reached by all who make it their first object in life.

In order to have an ideal world where all nations are at peace and all individuals enjoy the fruits of their labor, it is necessary that all persons live according to the laws specified. It is not enough that the ruling powers be righteous, for, after all, perfect unity and harmony can be attained only when all co-operate. In the future Kingdom of Christ we are told that the "people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever" (Isa. 60:21). Perfect world conditions will be the result of perfect men and women inhabiting the world. Should there be allowed men with but one sin unconquered, each would bring his own sin and soon the Kingdom would have the same evils as we have among us: wars, hatred, greed, crime, and all others.

The apostle Paul is very explicit in relating how he fought against the sins of his nature until he was able to say he had finished his course and that a crown of right-

teousness awaited him at the appearing of the great Judge (II Tim. 4:7-8). He compares our spiritual warfare to men running in a race, and says: "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (I Cor. 9:26-27). This corresponds with his advice to the Corinthians later, which he himself certainly must have practiced: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5). Inasmuch as evil thoughts precede evil acts, by bringing every thought into subjection we are able to control our actions and curb every wrong motive or desire.

To cease to do evil is not sufficient; we must replace our evil deeds with good deeds. Our minds cannot remain blank, nor can we remain idle mentally or physically. Either the good or the bad will prevail. But it is possible for all who make the effort to fill their minds with good thoughts to the extent that evil can not linger therein. Likewise, good deeds can crowd out bad, and men can—if they will—be occupied continually doing right, leaving neither time nor desire for the things God forbids.

The way of Christ brings its trials and temptations, to be sure, nor is there any indication from the voice of the great Teacher or His disciples that the way is easy whereby we may attain the likeness of the Master and ultimately receive eternal life. We are exhorted with such terse words as strive, endure, press, run, fight, awake, watch, study, meditate, pray. These words suggest action. there is no easy way to life.

However, the disciples that followed Christ were promised a hundredfold in this life. In spite of the trials, and effort involved, there is joy in following Jesus' example. For as we obey and keep His commandments we have the assurance that we are working toward perfection, which results in enduring joy and peace in this present time—regardless of how perplexing world conditions may be—and gives us hope of life eternal with our Master in His Kingdom.

MM

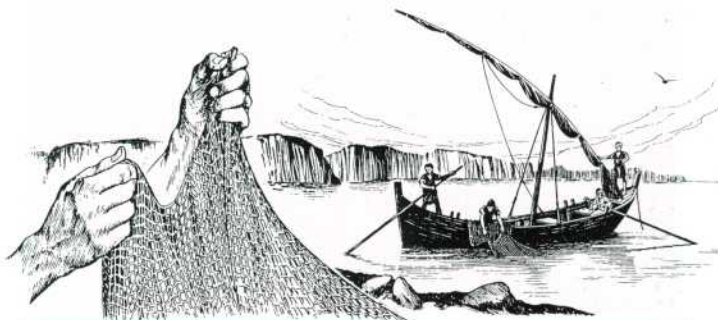
The Hundredfold—

*Lord, we left all — the nets, and boat and fish,
Left many a cherished plan and eager wish;
When morning breeze was filling all the sails
We turned to bear a cross and climb these trails;
For when we heard Thee calling from the shore
We rose to follow Thee for evermore;
What compensation shall we have for this
Forsaking all of earthly joy and bliss?*

*"Dear Child, I always pay a hundredfold!
Not just in shining silver coin and gold,
In treasures that will fill the heart today
And then tomorrow, rust and pass away;
Ah, ye that have gone forth and left that ship
And loving, follow Me — no purse, no scrip —
The value of my coinage is so great
Men know not how to find its aggregate!"*

*A hundredfold? Ten times ten thousand ways,
I know it, Lord! Thy service pays and pays
And pays — until this heart cannot contain
The joy and all the wealth of heav'nly gain;
And if I reach the grand, eternal shore
And rise to share Thy glory evermore,
So far beyond my highest dream or wish,
What then will matter — nets, and boat, and fish!*

—Selected



“Just Like You!”

Your table is a mess!”

I looked at our children's little red table. Coloring books, crayons, papers, pencils were all in a heap. I soon had the children very busy cleaning up.

Later the same day, I passed by my own desk and was I chagrined by what I saw! The thought flashed through my mind—had the children noticed it? There it was, piled high with books and papers from a Bible study committee meeting I had attended the evening before. Feeling rather guilty, I hastily put it in order.

But that made me think. What kind of example am I setting?

I was reminded again the other day when my four-year-old daughter told me with greatest satisfaction, “Mom, I’m just like you!” Now *I’m* far from being what I want to be. Do I want her to be *just like me*?

There is no escaping the fact. We parents live with our children day in and day out, and they are watching us, imitating us, learning from us. Think what power we have to influence young lives for good and for God! No one else is in the position we are in to influence *our* children.

What we as Christian parents must do is to make a conscious effort to *be* what we want our children to be. The more I think about it, the more I realize what a tremendous

job it is. But it is our responsibility before God. Wasn’t that the law in Israel long ago? “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons” (Deut. 4:9).

Lately in our home, we’ve been checking up. What are the children learning from us about ordinary everyday living? We want our children to learn a pattern of clean, orderly living that will be an asset to them throughout life. But how can they ever learn if *our* home is a hubbub. Some people say it doesn’t matter whether things are picked up and tidy, but we’ve decided Paul had a reason for using that little word

“all” when he wrote, “Let all things be done decently, and in order” (I Cor. 14:40). He meant “all things”—including at home.

More than anything else, we want our children to catch a vision of God’s future. We want them to make eternal life in God’s Kingdom on earth the goal of their lives. For this reason we want them to sense the value of solid Christian character. We want them to see that serving God brings the only real happiness. We want them to learn to live—and *love* the practical Christian walk that will prepare them for life in the world to come.

Will they want it? A lot depends on what they see in us, their parents.

How bright is *our* vision of the future? Do they get from our conversation that the Kingdom is really the most wonderful place to live and the one thing we really want?—or do they hear more about what kind of car we should drive and the high price of food?

What we say—even in casual comment—is important. Whoever thought that little ears don’t listen? If someone were to come along and ask our children, they could readily find out what we think of the Palmer’s elaborate “mansion,” and old Dr. Jenkin’s long nose, and Mrs. Simmons’ outlandish hairdos, and

***It is quite likely
that our children’s
attitudes will be a
reflection of our
attitudes. And what
do they see?***

Mrs. Kent's caustic tongue, and how Bessie can spend more in a week than poor old John can bring home in a month, and, and—*if that is what they have heard at home.*

What we say is important, and also *how we say it*. Have you ever heard your children speaking harshly to one another, and realized—with shame—that that is what they heard from you the night before? Have you restrained their outbursts of temper, only to find yourself displaying the same when their peevishness was more than you thought you could take? We see them fuss and fret and complain—but did they ever see anyone else do the same?

When we talk to them of God and the future and the kind of people God wants them to be, we can't expect them to understand it all; but they will understand *something*. And when they grow older and comprehend more, the already familiar will become much more meaningful.

We want our children to have

reverence for God and His Word. But have they ever searched the house for Mother or Dad and found them bowed in silent prayer? Do they see us reading the Bible and sense the joy we find in it? Do they observe those high qualities of kindness, patience, love and unselfishness—yes, any and all of the Christian virtues—in *us*? Have they seen us apologize when *we* were wrong?

It is quite likely that our children's attitudes will be a reflection of *our* attitudes. And what do they see? When we are out shopping, or at the doctor's office, or among the crowd on the street, with those who do not share our faith, do they see our courtesy and confidence in doing what God approves, and sense that we are glad to be different? Or do they feel a certain shame and embarrassment for our modest dress and careful deportment? *They* will feel it—if *we* feel it.

And what about the atmosphere around home? Are we cheerful no

matter what the weather, no matter what the change in plans, no matter *what*? Do we have a feeling of goodwill toward all? Or do the days sometimes turn blue when the children are moody—like we are—?

Jesus said to the Jews, "If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me" (John 10:37). Could we say that to our children?

We are trying to give these questions a lot of earnest thought. Example is so important. And after sizing up the model I'd like to be and comparing it with the model I am, well—there is a difference! I have no time to waste.

We can't accomplish the change overnight. But if we are making the effort to live by God's commands, our children will know. And as they grow older, they may try, too.

Our struggle is your struggle also. This is the time to check up: What kind of adults will your children grow up to be—if they are *just like you*? MM

The Last Chapter

The end of the matter—the last chapter of a book; the last mile of a journey; the ripened harvest of a field; the perfect performance of a musical composition; the last examination for a diploma; the finishing touch on a work of art—this is the concern of every writer, husbandman, scholar and artist. It is this final touch that marks the final achievement, that distinguishes the finished product and determines the success or failure of the project.

As Christians composing the story of our lives, our highest concern is the end of the matter, the last chapter. This was Moses' concern in his parting address: "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Yes, their latter end—and ours. It is the goal toward which we labor, "even life for evermore." And our final achievement, the last chapter of our record, will determine our worthiness.

Day by day we are writing; page by page we are enlarging our book. And the record stands. How does our book read? Will it merit for us the promised reward?

Every moment of every day we should be conscious that the book we are writing must meet the exacting specifications of the Judge. Every thought, word and act must combine to form the triumphant story of a life invested in the cause of our Creator.

Of all the chapters of our book, the important one is the last, for by it we shall be judged. The word of the Lord to Ezekiel confirms: "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity,...all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned:...in his sin that he hath sinned...shall he die."

And conversely: "If the wicked will turn from all his sins...and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions...shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live" (Ezek. 18:21–24).

The author of popular short stories told members of a writers' workshop that his method was to construct his

stories backwards, beginning with the climax or the way he wanted the tale to turn out, and then shaping the plot to fit this conclusion. Some fictional writers may choose this method, but the aspiring Christian *must* use it. He must write every chapter of his book with the last chapter in mind. For unless he keeps steadfastly before his mind the conclusion—the end—he will never put forth sufficient effort to make that desired end a reality.

Are you writing (planning) the story of your life? Write the last chapter as you want it to be, and then shape the plot to arrive at this conclusion.

Unless we outline for ourselves a very definite plan of life, the happenings of every day are incidents unrelated, events disjointed, experiences fragmented, without plot or sequence. However, with a specific goal in mind, our story will coordinate around one central topic. It will show that we are focusing all our energies in one direction.

Are you writing (planning) the story of your life? Write the last chapter as you want it to be, and then shape the plot to arrive at this conclusion.

In writing the story of our life, every moment counts. We cannot go into deep freeze and emerge as though nothing had happened in the interval. The rules of life do not allow us to lay aside our writing for a time while we relax. Whatever we do or say or think in each moment has its consequences, its influences on our story, whether we intend it or not. There is no day about which we can say, "Don't count this one." Every day *does* count toward one end or the other.

If we would make our lives pure and holy, we must keep in mind the last chapter of our book. We must picture ourselves in that blissful state of immortality, and then throw all our energies into the work to be sure our last chapter is one of triumph and victory.

Let us examine critically the pages of our book. Are they showing a very definite improvement? or is page after page marred by the same old sins, never repented of and never forsaken? If this be the picture of our book, the reading of that last chapter will be to us a day of grief and desperate sorrow.

To help us write our book successfully, let us with Paul fix our gaze on the reward awaiting the overcomer and exclaim with his determination, "In my opinion, whatever we may have to pass through now is less than nothing compared to the magnificent future God has planned for us."

Looking forward, Paul could see the whole creation on "tiptoe to see the sons of God coming into their own." Those glorious angels who have been enjoying the unspeakable joys of eternity now wait in rapturous delight to see those same joys bestowed upon the worthy mortals of this earth.

The uncertainty as to which day will prove to be the closing day of our writing behooves us to carefully frame each day's writing lest our book close suddenly with some dark chapter marking its conclusion.

Fellow writers, our books will soon be closed. How is our writing progressing?

MM

There is a bond between us that draws us together, a common interest that we share; namely, a desire for eternal life, and the blessings that will attend it. Apart from this we should have no concern for each other's welfare.

"United we stand, divided we fall" is a true maxim and should help keep us united and strengthen us to endure to the end.

Endurance is one of the most excellent characteristics we can possess. Take, for example, the material things of life, whether they be shoes, automobiles, or any one of the many useful inventions. If we are wise, we consider the strength and endurance of the article before making the purchase. We expect the product to stand up, to endure. That is just what God expects of us. If we are to become a product useful to the Almighty God, we must stand up and endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" The chastenings of life are His test of our endurance, and God tells us that if we will endure them He will deal with us as with sons.

Through careful study of the Bible we have found that the Almighty God is longsuffering, and would like all to gain eternal life, but it is always our iniquities that

Power to Endure

by K. E. Flowerday

cause the separation. That is why we must endure chastening, so we may mould a character worthy of His blessings.

The greatest ideal in life is the ideal of the true Christian. To work to lay up something for a time of need is a worthy ambition. To work for a temporal home is a quality to be commended, but it is not the highest ideal, for it cannot endure; for alas, the span of life is circumscribed by the limitations of mortality.

To allow the teachings of the Word of God to control our lives and lift us to the highest standard of morality is the loftiest ideal for this life and the only path that will lead to life unending.

Paul sensed the need for endurance when he wrote to his brethren at Rome: "To them who by a patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life."

It was Jesus' knowledge of the weakness and instability of human nature that led Him to speak as He did in the explanation of the parable of the sower. When referring to the seed that fell among thorns, He said, "these are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

It is hard for us to realize the rich blessings God has brought into our lives in enlightening us of His way of salvation. We go about our daily

tasks the same as others. We suffer pain, fatigue, disappointment. We have to struggle to make financial ends meet. The troubles in the world about us, war, turmoil, crime, and the inhumanity of man to man, cause our hearts to ache as we see the present distress of nations; yet we are infinitely richer, knowing what will be the outcome of it all. A better time is coming, and we can rejoice.

Holy men of old, patriarchs, prophets, sages, as well as good and righteous men in the humble walks of life, peered into the future, and longed to see the very days we are now experiencing, the events leading up to the return of the Messiah to earth. Their hope centered around the events that were to culminate at this very time. Some of them knew of the coming night of darkness; all knew they would have a long wait in the grave before the reward could be theirs; all looked forward to the

coming of the Redeemer. All were familiar with God's plan eventually to fill the earth with His glory.

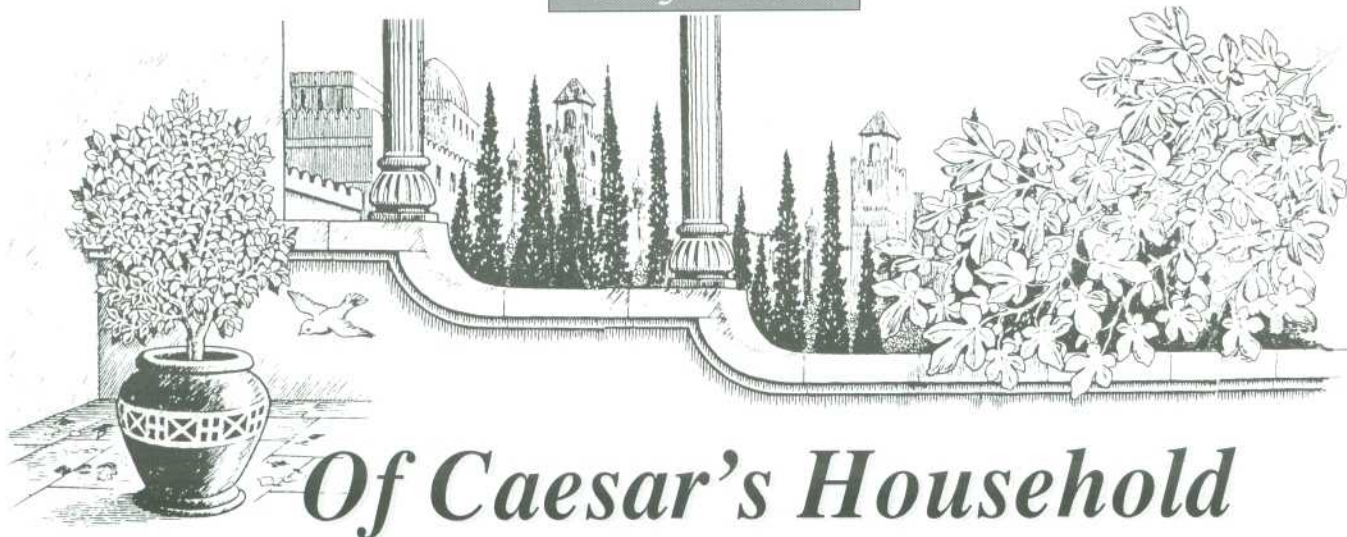
They saw these things through the eye of inspiration; we see their actual fulfillment. While they looked forward to the coming of these days with anticipation, knowing it would end for them their long sleep in death and usher in the day when they could stand in their lot in the kingdom of God upon earth, we are living in a time when some will never have to taste of death but shall live to see the Apocalypse of the Son of man. Some today will have the rare privilege of witnessing firsthand the beginnings of the consummation of God's plan on earth, of accompanying the prophet Elijah on his grand mission of raising the dead and preparing the way for the arrival of the great King Himself. Surely this will be a part of the "more abundant honor" to be bestowed upon the "part which lacked"—the feet of the body of Christ.

The writer of Hebrews knew what the world would be like in our day, and he thought it proper to warn against losing our confidence while on the home stretch and failing to gain the reward: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (10:37-38).

Yet "a little while." We can endure.

MM

The path of least resistance may seem smooth and alluring, but it is the broad way, and does not lead to God.



Of Caesar's Household

Freedom, or...?

With a heavy heart, the good Miriam related to Irene the events of the evening, saying little about the lack of direct response to their prayers—due to the changed conditions—and making much of the assured success of Luke's appeal to Caesar. It was but a straw, but one at which the disheartened girl clutched desperately, since it must keep her afloat in the trying week which lay ahead. Perhaps her last week of freedom—even of life, she reflected. Freedom! Yes, for by comparison with the life of a dancing-girl, her present condition was one of great liberty. No more could she come and go as now; her evenings must be spent at the abominable banquet and revel instead of the Christian house of worship. Instead of Miriam and Elsa, her daily companions would be women drawn from Asiatic and African hotbeds of vice. And the fat, brutal Oarses never appeared in so favorable a light as when she thought of the rat-faced, evil-eyed, serpentine Hippo. It was monstrous! she could not—she *would* not!

She received the tidings with dry eyes. The situation was too desper-

ate for idle tears. A great unnatural calm descended upon her; she committed the thing to the God whom she had learned to love and trust, and waited, like one in a dream, her brain busy the while, weighing, calculating, thinking—thinking—counting the precious seconds until Friday, when Doctor Luke would plead her case before Vespasian. Should that fail—well, God helps those who help themselves!

Two days passed, in the course of which she had been notified by Oarses of her transfer. Elsa, the German girl, rushed up to Irene in the hall, quite evidently burdened with information.

"Have you heard the news?" she cried out. "Sabinus and his congregation are not going to follow Luke and Aquila! He says Luke doesn't know what he's talking about; the Holy Spirit is still working, and he can do as many miracles as ever. He has sent word around for us all to come to his meeting tonight and he'll *show* us!"

Sabinus was the leader of the second largest Christian body in Rome, a man of great magnetism and influence, apparently very devout and godly. Irene was surprised.

"You are not going, are you?"

"Indeed I am! And so are Elisabeth and Philip, and several others. You should go, too; perhaps he can help you out of this trouble. Come; go with us!"

Irene hesitated. Another straw was floating past on the troubled waters; should she abandon the one which seemed to be sustaining her and grasp the new, even if it did appear larger and stronger? "Beware of false prophets," the Master had said. Was it possible that Luke and Aquila were false teachers, leading the Church back into the darkness? Was it indeed a step backward, or, as Luke had said, a part of the original Plan? Was Sabinus the true shepherd? It hardly seemed possible, and yet—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Had Luke interpreted it aright? Sabinus, too, was an educated man; he, too, had been converted and instructed by Paul. No; she had better go cautiously and wait for evidence. She squared her shoulders with sudden resolution.

"No, I shall not go. If you see that he has the power—the genuine power—then I may go, but not tonight."

Elsa had understated the number who would attend Sabinus' demon-

stration. Practically every Christian slave and freedman in the palace who could get leave was part of the throng which packed the house of the insurgent leader. Even old Telamon yielded to curiosity. Miriam and Irene did not go. The old man, they thought, could be trusted to give a truthful account, for his perception was keen and his experience wide.

"Well, Elsa," said Irene the next morning. "What of Sabinus?"

"Oh, he's *wonderful*!" was the gushing reply. "You should have been there! Talk about the Holy Spirit being gone—the sick were healed, a lame man walked, and two or three spoke in tongues, just as in the old days. And so many wonders he performed—why, Irene, that man can do *anything*! It's just as he says—if Luke can't show the power, it is because he hasn't sufficient faith."

"Yes? I suppose you'll be his convert now."

"You said it! and not I only, but Philip the Syrian, and Esdras, and Damaris and quite a number of others are going again."

A moment's pause, in which Irene was tense with anxiety at the mention of the names of her friends and companions in connection with such a serious matter, then the German maid continued:

"Luke is a physician, you know, and Sabinus says that must be the reason he is trying to take away the Holy Spirit; he wants to get back into business. I told him about you, Irene, and he prayed for you. It was a grand prayer, too."

Irene sighed. "Well, I don't feel any better as a result. I'll have to see Telamon."

Deeply pained by her friend's unbelief, Elsa watched her retreat out of sight, then went absent-mindedly to her tasks. In a corner of the kitchen, a little apart from the swarm of cooks and scullions, old

Telamon was busy at his daily drudgery when Irene confronted him. The unaccustomed sight so startled him that he dropped the great eel he was dressing.

"Telamon," she demanded abruptly, "tell me what you saw at Sabinus' house last night."

The old Italian was silent a moment, then, looking her full in the face, replied simply,

"Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing genuine. I saw a fine piece of deception, and it made me weep to see many of my brethren deceived by it. I saw some cures which were not cures, for I know some of the subjects and I question the sickness of some and the honesty of others. I heard some 'unknown tongues' which sounded very much like the common talk of a Moor who once worked beside me. And this I know; both the man who spoke and the man who interpreted have traveled in Mauretania, and had every opportunity to learn the language."

"Then you think it is all a fraud?"

"I do. I also saw some excellent sleight-of-hand tricks, entirely unbecoming to the house of God. And this also I know; Sabinus' right-hand man is Eumenes, a Greek, who was formerly a juggler and magician. Not many here know his past, but before my conversion I saw him in the theater many times. It is rebellion; it is anti-Christ; and, my girl, don't let them deceive you. If only you and I and Miriam stand by the old faith as delivered to us by Paul, let us remember that we have the promise, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'"

"Were there many there from the trans-Tiber?" This was the location of Aquila's church, where the palace slaves worshipped.

"Quite a number—too many. Arthur the Briton was there, and

Rufus; although they both told me the whole performance looked 'fishy,' I fear, though, he will capture some of the more shallow-minded of our congregation. It is sad; it undoubtedly means that our ranks will be thinned as many follow the deceivers and more fall away for lack of faith; but these tri-

***These trials must
come to purify those
who will be saved....***

als must come to purify those who will be saved."

Irene was about to ask more, but the head cook had espied her.

"Hey, you!" he roared, "Get out of this kitchen, and quit hindering my help! Quick, now—on your way!"

"Don't worry, Telamon," she whispered, "I believe as you do. Pray for me, Telamon—" She was gone, as the wrathful chef bore down upon them, to vent his ill-nature upon the old man, who bore the tirade with a faint look of amusement, but worked the faster at his fish.

Intercession, Martyrdom, or ...?

Thursday! Tomorrow morning her advocate would intercede for her. Irene almost felt hopeful. Surely God would not forsake her. She was certain that she needed the time to work out her salvation, but she had calmly resolved to suffer the scourge of martyrdom rather than deny her faith by word or action. One life was not much, but—she had not yet attained the full stature of Christ; this was her greatest concern.

Tomorrow would decide her fate; there yet remained a few hours of suspense. Her work finished, she retired to the little cubicle which was her meager lodging. Miriam had joined her for a few minutes of conversation. Suddenly the door was thrown open unceremoniously, and she gazed in terror at the coarse,

Irene rose to her feet, her face deathly pale; her test was to be here and now; she would face it like a noblewoman and a Christian.

bloated features of Oarses and the evil leering countenance of the Greek entertainer.

"Come!" said the eunuch, abruptly and imperiously. "Hippo has decided to begin your training tomorrow, and you must move to his school at once. Get your things ready and go with him."

Irene rose to her feet, her face deathly pale, but the unnatural, unspeakable calm once more upon her. Luke had delayed too long. Her test was to be here and now; she would face it like a noblewoman and a Christian. She opened her mouth to speak, but Oarses cut her short.

"No back talk, young lady! I'll give you just time enough to pack up, and no more. You'll have a new wardrobe over there, so you may leave your clothing for some one else. Hurry, now!"

Slowly the girl turned and entered a tiny curtained alcove at the

back of the room, where her personal effects and toilet accessories were kept. Miriam followed her. Almost savagely, Irene turned and whispered:

"Go back and keep those men occupied and out of here until I come out."

"Why—what—?"

"Never mind. Go. I have a plan."

Wondering, anxious, Miriam obeyed. Calmly Irene opened a drawer, and from beneath a heap of clothing she drew forth a small dagger. She had kept it for years for her personal protection, and now—Yesterday she had sharpened it to a razor edge. She felt its point and noticed, with a curious feeling of detachment, that her hand trembled as she did so. Her nerves could not stand the strain indefinitely; what she did must be done quickly. She seated herself before a mirror, and by the dim light of her candle regarded her reflection as she might have looked at a chance acquaintance. Two courses lay before her; she had considered them both many times in the last few days, and she must choose quickly. Suicide—one swift thrust, a moment's nausea, perhaps; then oblivion—rest—to wake in the Resurrection. Release from all her present perils—and so near at hand—but not from future troubles. Her faith, she knew, forbade her to take the law into her own hands in this manner. The faithful martyrs of former days had not chosen this easy way out, no matter how painful the punishments which their tormentors inflicted upon them. Then, too, she was not ready to die. But perhaps it were better to trust a merciful Father to overlook this one breach and hope for a partial reward for the work she had done, than to deny her faith completely under the scourge or on the rack, which might well happen should she choose life. She was not sure of her endurance, her steadfastness under pain. Perhaps—

The temptation to euthanasia was strong, but the law of God and love of life were stronger. She would take the alternative. Her accursed beauty—; she took a last look in the burnished mirror. She knew she was fair; but what was the most beautiful of mankind but a skeleton draped in a moment's grace? Her beauty had been a snare, the cause of her present troubles. Very well, she would remove the cause. In her hand lay the solution; God helps those who help themselves! Holding her breath, her white lip between her teeth, she waited until her hand was steady and raised the dagger.

In the outer room, the Egyptian and the Greek waited impatiently, while Miriam watched them keenly, sitting bolt upright—tense. Oarses's choler mounted rapidly. Presently he called out angrily:

"Girl, you have been long enough. Come!"

"Coming, sir!" a musical, almost cheerful voice replied. The curtains parted and Irene stood before them. Her white robe was splashed with crimson; blood streamed from long, deep gashes on both cheeks and forehead. One lip was split where the keen-edged weapon had been misdirected. As the three stared, horror-stricken, petrified with astonishment, she laughed in their faces; laughed loudly, hysterically.

"Come!" she cried, "let's go! Surely the great Hippo will want me in his ballet now! Surely Caesar will be pleased with such a sight! Come: what are you waiting for?" She laughed again, but as she laughed she swayed on her feet. Miriam sprang to her side and supported her, facing the two men like a tigress at bay. The Greek tore his hair and stamped furiously.

"Kill her!" he raved. "Burn her! Throw her to the lions! Oh, what a loss! My only hope, my prize performer, the star of a generation—lost! Ye gods of Rome, may she be

stricken dead where she stands!"

The slower-witted Oarses continued to stare, dumbfounded; then, as it dawned upon his wine-fuddled brain how completely his authority had been flouted, he broke into horrible curses.

"Fool!" he shouted. "I'll have you scourged for this! I'll have you beaten to death! Defying *me*—Oarses! I'll teach you!"

Springing forward, he struck the girl brutally in the face, felling her to the floor. He stood over her, his bloody fist raised to strike again, when Miriam interposed her ample frame, her black eyes flashing.

"Coward!" she cried. "Strike her again at your peril! Remember, you yourself are a slave!" She caught his wrist in her muscular hand.

"And you, too!" he hissed

"Tomorrow—" With his free hand he struck the Jewish woman squarely in the eye, wrenched from her grasp and fled, dragging the frenzied Hippo with him. Miriam bolted the door and propped the unconscious girl in the one chair. Swiftly, desperately, she set to work to stanch the blood which flowed from her wounds. Alarmed and unnerved by her lack of success, she unlocked the door and looked up and down the hall. A small black boy was in sight.

"Boy," she called to him, "run quickly to Kallibius the barber, and tell him to come here at once!"

Kallibius was a Corinthian, a valuable slave in that he had some knowledge of medicine and surgery; and in addition to his function as barber in the imperial baths, he was also physician to the palace slaves. While not a

Christian, he was favorable to the faith, having talked much with those who professed it. Miriam returned to her vigil. The ghastly wounds bled profusely; Irene did not revive. The moments seemed like hours. Must she die now, after making this sacrifice? Perhaps it were better that she should, for the all-powerful Oarses' threat boded ill for the morrow. If Luke had acted immediately on his own suggestion! He must be notified at once and the appeal to the emperor made tomorrow if the maiden—should she survive—were to be saved from the brutal wrath of the overseer. That she—Miriam—might also suffer for her defiance did not enter her mind. There were more important matters just now.

The door opened gently; it was Kallibius. *(Continued Next Issue)*

***B**lessed Lord, source of all life, goodness, and truth, I praise Thee that I may live Thy faith so adventurous and hopeful, and that I may pause to recount the blessings Thou hast given me to know:*

*The guidance of Scripture,
The promises of hope,
The wellsprings of true joy and strength in temptation,
The uplift of worship,
The desire for Thy fellowship, a mind at peace, insight into godliness,
The purpose in creation.*

***H**ow can I, so undeserving, be noticed by Thee? How can I, so rebellious, be called to seek peace with Thee?*

***I**ncrease in me all that cries out for Thee:
Lest I harden myself to truth, pursue false gods and reap in shame;
Lest I yield to sin, ignore Thy pleadings and stifle allegiance;
Lest I falter in my obedience, deny my commitments,
and dishonor Christ.
I give my life into Thy keeping. Let my heart be in Thy control
and my mindset to do Thy will.*

***S**ustain me in Thy care, and in whatever tomorrow may bring, prepare me for the challenge of the hour. In all I ask Thy help and guidance. Amen.*



“So All Israel Shall Be Saved”?

“I have been reading Paul’s book, Letters to the Young Churches. Each time I read it new information jumps out and is easier to understand. I do, however, wonder if you would inform me as to one thing. When he says God still has a plan for Israel, is this referring to the people of God?”

“It reads: ‘Now I don’t want you, my brothers, to start imagining things, and I must therefore share with you my knowledge of God’s secret plan. It is this, that the partial insensibility which has come to Israel is only to last until the full number of the Gentiles has been called in. Once this has happened, *all Israel will be saved*, as the Scripture says:

There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: And this is my covenant unto them, When I shall take away their sins.

“‘As far as the Gospel goes, they are at present God’s enemies which is to your advantage, they are still beloved for their fathers’ sakes. For once they are made, God does not withdraw His gifts or His callings.’

“Thank you for your time and information.”

In the book of Romans, Paul is writing to Gentile believers about an arrangement then current in the plan of God. God had for centuries been working largely with the Israelite nation, the family of Abraham and their descendants. But with the ministry of Paul, the plan had temporarily changed its focus. Many of the Jewish people refused to recognize this change. So Paul argues persuasively throughout his Epistle to the Romans to explain the change and to defend the justice and wisdom of God.

The passage in question (Rom. 11:25–29) is part of his defense.

Very early in His work on this planet, God selected a

certain family (the family of Abraham) with which to work, and from which to draw material for His future kingdom. But at no time was His choice limited exclusively to that family. The final basis for all His judgments was character and character alone. His selection of the Israelite nation was only to prepare soil in which the high qualities of character He desired could be nurtured.

For many years God worked with Israel as a nation, and then came a change. The nation became apostate, rebellious, unwilling to work with God, and so God cast them off *as a nation*, and turned to the Gentiles as the primary source from which to select material for His future purposes.

In Romans 11 Paul is explaining this act of God, this change in the method of God’s working, in turning from the Jews to the Gentiles. But he also makes the point that all of God’s selections are on an individual—not a national—basis. The Jews who wished to be saved had to prove themselves worthy. The Gentiles who wished to be saved had likewise to demonstrate their faith by obedience.

The Jewish people were the first “branches” on the tree, and Paul explains that those branches had been cut off and new branches (Gentiles) grafted in. At the same time, there was still opportunity for believing Jews, a group to which Paul himself belonged (Rom. 11:1).

Then at verse 26 Paul looks even further into the plan of God and sees the time when both Jewish and Gentile believers will be united as the people of God, His chosen ones, spiritual “Israel,” and “so all Israel shall be saved.”

The Bible uses the term “Israel” to describe two different groups of people: 1) the descendants of Abraham and Jacob; and 2) God’s specially chosen ones, the true and faithful, who are selected “out of all nations” (Rev. 5:9–10). These latter ones are the Israel that shall be saved “with an everlasting salvation” (Isa. 45:17). They

are the Jews who are Jews inwardly, "and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28-29).

In Rom. 11:28, Paul returns again to speaking of the Israelite nation, who at that time were "enemies for your sake"; i.e., God is working especially with the Gentiles. At the same time, Paul recognizes that they are not outside the plan of God as individuals, if they choose to be included. They are still "beloved for the fathers' sakes"—on the same basis that their fathers were beloved, for their obedience. God never loved any people of any nation who were not true and obedient. Of God's attitude toward unfaithful Israel He wrote, "I hate...I despise...I abhor" when they were doing wrong (see Isa. 1:10-19).

In a sense, the opportunity of the Gentiles to be called and chosen was made possible through the Jews' rejecting God's goodness. This is what Paul means when he says that the Gentiles "have now obtained mercy through their [the Jews] unbelief." He says also that if they (the Gentiles) fail to use properly their privileges, God will again turn to the Jews. In other words, salvation depends on one's faith and character, not upon one's nationality. Each must meet the standard, whether Jew or Gentile. And all, whether Jew or Gentile, need the mercy and forgiveness of God (v. 32).

◆ Tithes To Whom?

"We get the Megiddo Message at the office where I work, and in my spare time I read as much as I can.

"I am having a problem with understanding my responsibility in paying tithes. It is not that I believe one shouldn't pay tithes, but my problem is that almost everyone I talk to says that you just pay your tithes and let the church, or someone at the church, worry about how the tithes are spent; that after we pay our tithes, God does not hold us responsible for how they are used.

"I feel it is our duty to pay our tithes to a church that uses the money for whatever is needed in the church, and to help the less fortunate, the needy and the sick. I believe it is my responsibility to find out if this is how the money is being spent. But I need some Scriptures or help with this problem."

The Bible does uphold the principle of paying tithes. The Bible also commands us not to spend our money for that which is of no purpose or value (Isa. 55:2), and this principle could be applied to organizations as well as to individuals.

Although we may have no direct control over how our money is used once it is put in another's hands, it is sure-

ly prudent to do what we can to know that we have chosen hands that are responsible, "good stewards" of what God has provided.

Although it may be beyond our ability to know all that an organization is doing, we can surely judge them by principles of Scripture, i.e., that money is not to be spent for pride, show, the lust of the flesh or the lust of the eye (see Prov. 8:13; 16:18; also I John 2:15-17.) Elaborate TV shows, with music more suited to the barroom than to the worship service, would definitely not meet the criteria of Scripture. Jesus set the example in being meek and humble, and His promise is, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

In view of our individual responsibility before God, it would seem appropriate to ask an organization how all tithe money is being spent, if one is in doubt. If the organization is unwilling to give such an accounting, we surely would not want to trust them as God's servants.

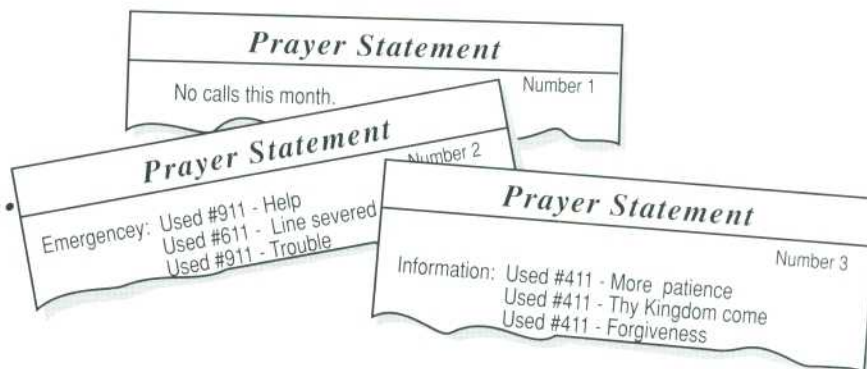
There is another point also which affects tithing. An organization that will accept money from those who are not financially able to give should not be trusted as a God-ordained organization. If one is in a position where he or she can hardly "make ends meet," or is burdened by health problems or dependents which take most of one's income, a church would be wrong in asking such an individual to pay tithes.

Actually, tithes and offerings are only a small part of one's duty to God. The real sacrifices God requires are the "sacrifices of a broken spirit...a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:17).

There is yet another factor to consider in choosing a church to receive our tithe money, and that is Paul's principle of "sound doctrine." Paul says clearly that we should not support those who "teach otherwise, and consent not to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine that is according to godliness" (I Tim. 6:1-3). He says also that we are to withdraw ourselves from those who keep up a form of godliness but have nothing to do with it as a force (II Tim. 3:5). MM

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

If You Received a "Prayer Statement"...



You walk to the mailbox and open it. Junk mail, bills, a letter and, what's this? A prayer statement?

Suppose *you* got a statement each month for the use you make of *your* prayer line (Of course, all 'calls' made to God are free of charge! Your statement would be just for your information). What would your prayer statement look like?

The first statement merely says "No calls made this month." It seems the 'telephone' wasn't even picked up!

A second statement does record some use. There were several calls to 911—the emergency line. Oh, yes, the time a car swerved into your lane. And the time your little girl fell off the swing and was knocked unconscious."

There are also some 611 calls—that means the line is giving bad connections and needs to be repaired. For instance, last month you stayed up too late one night and the next morning the connection was fuzzy when you tried to pray.

Statement No. 3 lists a call to 411—information. There are requests to understand certain Scriptures and also requests for more patience, more faith, more courage, more endurance. Daily there is a prayer for forgiveness. There are also calls seeking God's will for members of the church, family and friends. There are frequent prayers for the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. There are also calls to encourage one another, to share feelings and express thanks.

The length of this statement tells you that the prayer line was solidly connected. It was busy day and night.

Keep lethargy and lack of faith from jeopardizing your prayer line and you can receive a statement like No. 3. The more you use your 'prayer line,' the closer your connection with God will be.

What would your prayer statement look like?

— Submitted by C. P.; author unknown

That Worldly Mind!

(Continued from page 2)

and do count them but refuse, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

Paul changed his mind. This meant changing his allegiance, his affections, his interests, even his citizenship. Henceforth the world meant nothing to him, and Christ and His values meant everything. And so he wrote: "We are citizens of heaven, and from heaven we expect our deliverer to come, the Lord Jesus Christ." Why was this so important? Because of the reward He would bring: "He will transfigure the body belonging

to our humble state, and give it a form like that of his own resplendent body" (Phil. 3:20–21, NEB). He would bring the physical change, and this was what Paul wanted. More than anything else he wanted life. And the world could not give it to him. Only God could give life.

With such a life in prospect, who wants to be part of that which is doomed and perishing? For "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." Its life is limited at best. But "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:17).

Oh, let go that worldly mind, let Christ be all in all! Then you can abide forever.

MM

Lines to Live By

*Pride will lead you to destruction—
Proverbs makes this very clear;
And since the Lord resists the proud one,
Let every haughty one now fear.*

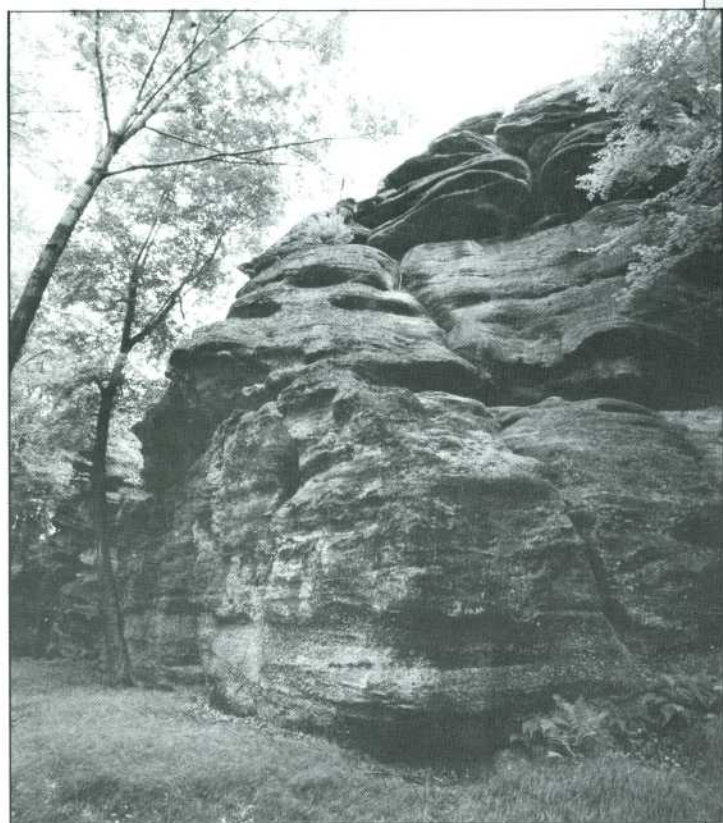
*Take time from your busy life to learn the joy
of reading and meditating on God's Book.*

*Duty makes us do things well, but love makes
us do them beautifully.*

*The Christian finds victory as he starves the old
nature and feeds the new.*

*We should all plan for the future because that
is where we will spend the rest of our lives.*

*Since you have to live with yourself, be sure
that you are always good company for yourself.*



*Pray...
No voice of prayer to Thee can rise,
But swift as light Thy love replies;
Not always what we ask, indeed,
But, oh most Kind! what most we need.*

*If you have any trial which seems difficult, pray that it may be relieved or
changed, if it be God's will. But do not pray selfishly. One disabled from
duty may pray to be restored to health, that he may help others; one
hemmed in by impediments may pray for release, that he may better serve
the truth and right.*

Or we may pray for help in conquering a besetting sin.

*But remember, the answer to our prayer may be, as it was to Paul, not the
removal of our thorn but instead, a growing insight into its meaning and
value, and strength to bear it.*

*Nothing will show more accurately what we
are than the way in which we meet trials and
difficulties.*

*One snowball of suspicion can start an
avalanche of sorrow.*

"UNTO THE END!"

"Having loved His own which were in the world,
He loved them unto the end."

*"Unto the end!" What strange,
What wondrous love! How deep, how fond and true!
For love that knows no change
We seek, but seek in vain, the wide world through.*

*"Unto the end!" He loved
The true, tried, humble ones He called "His own,"
Nor ever heard unmoved
Their cry for help, in sorrow's plaintive tone.*

*"Unto the end!" All, all
Who are His own are known to Him by name;
No tear of theirs can fall
But Jesus knows the source from whence it came.*

*"Unto the end!" if
Faithful and obedient we,
With calm and ceaseless flow
The tide of Love Divine rolls strong and free!*

*"Unto the end!" Though wide
And high along our way dark barriers frown,
His truth will still abide
To comfort and sustain, we are His own*

*"Unto the end." His own!
Not death itself from Him our souls can part;
His hand has overthrown
All that divides us from His home and heart.*

*"Unto the end!" With arms
Outstretched, He waits to clasp us to His breast;
Where, safe from all alarms,
He offers us our shelter and our rest.*

*"Unto the end" to live
And know that we are His, and only His!
The joys that earth can give,
Its sweetest and its best, yield no such bliss.*

*"Unto the end!" Thine own?
O dear and blessed Master! Can it be
That, never more alone,
Our weary hearts shall dwell in peace with Thee,
Knowing that to the end
Thou wilt be with us, walking by our side,
Our Guardian, Guide and Friend,
Until in Zion with Thee we abide!*