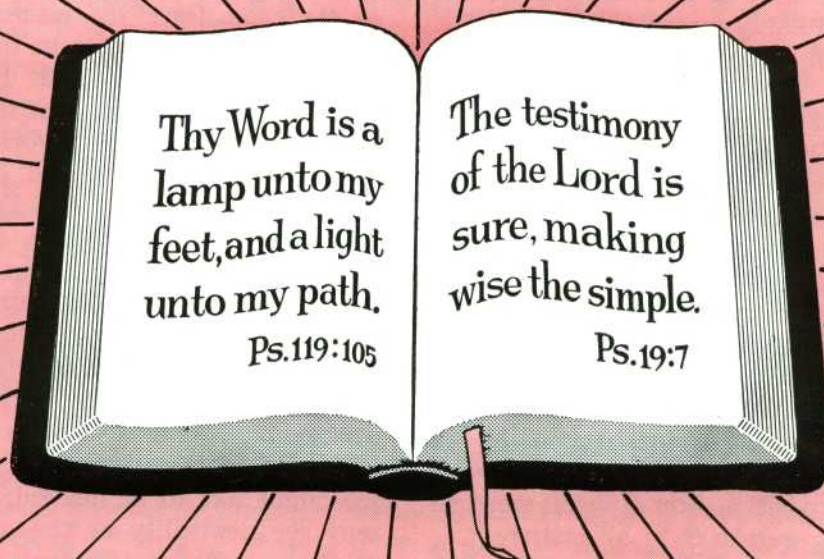


Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST



The Platinum Principle

Jesus, Master of Discipline
Was the Flood Universal?
Resurrected Life: For Whom?

No Neutral Position

PILATE had a decision to make. Upon him lay the responsibility of delivering the final verdict. Should Jesus be condemned, or should He be released?

It was a hard decision which Pilate did not choose to make. But there was no way out. The decision had to be his, and his only. So Pilate pondered: What would be the "right" thing to do? But Pilate's concept of "right" was not moral—it was political. More than anything else Pilate wanted to be right—in popular esteem. That was all that mattered to him.

So instead of making the decision according to what he honestly felt would be justice, he went to the crowd. "What do you want me to do?" Thus he lowered the question from the realm of the spiritual to the lowest common denominator of mass opinion. What Pilate really wanted was to be neutral, to offend no one. He even tried to dramatize his neutral position by publicly washing his hands of the whole affair.

But what a tragic decision he made by his attempted neutrality. For there was in reality no neutral position. His decision was one of the greatest negatives in all history.

This is what Jesus meant when He said, "He that is not with me is against me." There is no neutral position. You are either on My side, or you are fighting against Me. You either support Me, or by your non-support you contend against Me.

Between right and wrong, between truth and error, between Christ and the world, there is a cleavage. It was so in the days of the apostles; it is so today. Men cannot live without choosing, consciously or unconsciously, a definite object of devotion. They must and will love something and despise something else. To refuse one is to make choice of the other. Or to choose one is to refuse the other. They may try to offer their devotion to God, the world, the state, truth,

beauty and their lower desires all at the same time. But it is impossible. Life requires decision, and the Christian life demands decision.

The problem often is that with the passage of time the picture changes. Continued exposure to the wrong can make the cleavage between right and wrong seem less definite. Continual contact with the world may lead to an attitude of "not so bad after all." At the same time, the vision of the future fades; original impressions of things divine become less and less vivid. It is to those of us facing such dangers that the apostle John writes, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). This is just another way of saying, You cannot be neutral. Either you love the world and despise the Father, or you love the Father and despise the world. The truth in Jesus' words remains: "He that is not with me is against me." No one can ever be neutral in things pertaining to God.

There are many times in our lives when we might like to be neutral; like Pilate, we may see neutrality as the only way of retaining an image of popularity. But if we are truly dedicated to God, we will value God's approval above everything else. We will have no one in heaven but Him and none upon earth that we desire more than Him; hence, popular opinion will have no influence upon our decisions. We will want above everything else to be right in God's sight. One word from God will mean more to us than all the words of all the men in the world combined.

We can only consider ourselves "with Christ" when we are ready to support every principle He taught and lived. Unless we are striving for that supreme point of harmony and kinship of purpose, we are in reality against Him. There is no neutral position. ●●

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Megiddo Means

"a place of troops"

—Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon

"a place of God"

—Young's Analytical Concordance

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

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

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March, 1976

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The Platinum Principle

PRAYER

Once again our kind heavenly Father we lift our hearts and voices to Thee in thankfulness for Thy great mercy. We thank Thee for this temporal life accompanied by so many blessings, and above all that Thy mercy which is from everlasting to everlasting has overflowed even to us, giving us the chance to form righteous and holy characters, in the end to become Thy sons and daughters and live through a gladsome eternity.

We know that whatever we sow we shall reap, that if we sow to the flesh we shall of the flesh reap corruption, and if to the Spirit we shall reap of the Spirit life everlasting. Help us then to be exceedingly careful how we sow, always keeping in mind the influence our lives have on other lives, that our example may be above reproach.

Help us to think courage, think righteousness, think moral fortitude, think purity, think advancement in the divine life; and then translate our thoughts into action. May we never allow the subversive thoughts of defeat and despair to discourage and disarm us, or be among those who say, The work cannot be accomplished, the evils of the flesh cannot be conquered; but may our motto ever be, *It can, it must, it will be done!*

Help us to take the whole armor Thou dost provide, and use all the weapons furnished in the titanic struggle against self. May we have our loins girt about with truth, and wear the breastplate of righteousness; having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, using the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, and never forget to pray.

Be with all who are striving to learn and live Thy holy precepts, with those in sickness or trouble, those who have not our privilege of constant assembly. Strengthen, sustain and uphold them as Thou hast promised.

And may Thy Kingdom come and Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven above until the earth is filled with Thy glory.

In Jesus' worthy name we pray. Amen.

DISCOURSE

THE ONE moral maxim that is supposed to sum up all ethical behavior, that appears in one form or another in practically all religions, and that is claimed to be universally and invariably applicable, is the text commonly called the Golden Rule. It has been said that if everywhere men obeyed literally this rule, we would have heaven on earth. Few people, however, believe this to be the case. Although virtually all men are willing to assent to the validity of the rule in theory, they are convinced that it will not work in practice in every situation. In some respects it is utterly impracticable. They say that if we were to try to take it literally, in place of transforming earth into heaven, matters would be made immeasurably worse.

Obviously, this contention is quite true. Suppose, for example, you were to try literally to obey it when your child comes to you and pleads for money to purchase something that he desperately wants but is too young to handle safely. Now before you refuse him, put yourself in your child's place. If you were a small child, and you were to ask your father for a gun, a motorcycle, or a truck load of candy, would you want to be refused? Certainly not. Therefore give the child what he wants.

Suppose you were a judge in a criminal court, and a prisoner should be brought before you. Would you, if you were in that man's place, want to be sentenced to twenty years in the penitentiary? You are confident that what you would have that man do to you (were conditions reversed) and what that prisoner wants you to tell him is to go in peace and sin no more. If you literally obey the rule, you must do just that. But all men of mature judgment know that we dare not do to evil men as we know they would be done by.

What then is the answer to all this? When the astronomer finds that the course of the planet does not follow his mathematical calculations, he does not conclude that there is something wrong with the planet and the Hand that moves it, but that

his calculations contain error. Therefore when we discover that a saying like this, from lips like His seems to be impracticable, we may be assured that the difficulty is with ourselves. We do not understand it.

To begin with, it is not necessarily a rule at all. Jesus never called it a rule. The term "Golden Rule" was applied by man.

Jesus made many statements which were in themselves excellent advice, but not necessarily rules.

He never attempted to regulate men by force.

He never compelled anyone to conform to any set of rules.

He was an Inspirer of men.

He led in the way of righteousness, inspiring men to follow out of free choice.

When the woman taken in the act of adultery was brought before Jesus, and the Pharisees wanted Him to condemn her, He stooped down and wrote with His finger in the sand, and made as though He did not hear them. When a man of the company said to Him, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me," Jesus said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:13-14).

fore his time. Voltaire was the natural product of the dominance of state by the Church. The Puritans naturally produced a Thomas Paine. Whenever a great movement carries the mind of the race too far to a slavish literalism, you may depend upon it that there will be, in the course of time, a reaction too far in the opposite direction. The case is very much like that of the reaction to superstition—some people, running away from it, fall headlong into atheism, and leap over that which lies between, namely true religion. So here, as always, between the extremes, stand the sound precepts of true religion.

If then, this is not a golden rule, what is it? *It is principle.*

Rule vs. Principle

It has been said that the difference between a rule and a principle is: "A rule is a regulation of life; a principle is a fountain of life. One forms the banks which direct the channel of the stream; the other is the spring from which the stream flows." Principle affects the matter at its root.

The tendency of any set of rules is to keep the human soul in perpetual childishness and bondage. For example, observe the tenacity with which all

The Platinum Principle

All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you--if governed solely by a desire for spiritual growth and improvement--do you even so to them.

The whole trouble, therefore, with our misapprehension of our text lies in our bondage to literalism. By literalism, we mean slavish acceptance to the letter, and the inability to grasp the spirit of a saying. Not every part of Scriptural phraseology is to be taken literally, else Paul would not have written the Corinthians to "compare spiritual things with spiritual." It has been said, "Literalism is not only intellectual paralysis, it is spiritual suicide."

It is literalism that causes infidelity. Much that is in the Bible will be found to be contradictory if taken literally. The action of infidelity will be found, in religious history, always equal to the reaction from literalism. Robert G. Ingersol was the natural product of the sickly sentimentalism that pervaded the religious mind of the world just be-

Christendom clings to the Mosaic or Ten Commandment law—a schoolmaster of behavior. The tendency of a principle is to create and develop character, spiritual fiber and vigor. But usually people love a list of rules, a book of regulations. Again and again our missionaries have been asked: Just what shall I do to be saved? tell me what to do. Must I give up this? Is it all right for me to do that?

It is always easier for a man to regulate his life by a list of rules outside of himself than by a principle inside of himself.

The Bible does not attempt to spell out the exact Christian behavior in every situation that may arise. It is for this reason that we are admonished to have our "senses exercised" so as to be able always to "discern between good and evil," that whether

we eat or drink, or whatever we do, all may be done to God's glory (Heb. 5:14; I Cor. 10:31).

Rather than call Jesus' words a "golden rule," or even a golden principle, let us designate it the Platinum Principle. Platinum is more precious than gold. Whatever deep within the heart and mind and conscience of a man has the power to guide and control human conduct is priceless in comparison with something external. Thus the alert Christian is controlled, not by any established set of rules, but by his enlightened conscience and tested convictions.

Now apply this Platinum Principle, in place of the Golden Rule, to the cases already mentioned. The judge upon the bench has a prisoner before him. As a Christian judge, his course of action must be dictated by Jesus' words: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." As a priceless principle to guide his actions, this demands that he shall put himself in the prisoner's place, taking into consideration all the circumstances, surrounding and ameliorating conditions. At the same time he must put himself in the place of those other clients who come before the honest judge—the great mass of honest society which is to be protected—and act with mercy and justice toward all concerned.

Your child comes to you and asks for something he is not able to use properly. To obey the Golden Rule, literally speaking, you must give him what he asks. Following the Platinum Principle, you realize your child must be instructed and your duty as instructor, therefore you put yourself in your child's place; and, instead of saying gruffly, "No, I will not do it," you kindly try to teach him to see the folly of his extravagant and unwise request. The Platinum Principle will make you kinder, more thoughtful, more patient, forbearing and resourceful.

Taken literally, the Golden Rule would demand that a rich man give away all that he has, because if he puts himself in the place of every man he meets, he will have to give each some money. But God does not demand that, and if a rich man should give away all that he possesses, then he himself would be a subject of charity. But the Platinum Principle requires rich men to study society, put themselves in the place of the poor, the wretched, and the needy and try to administer their wealth in such a wise and fruitful manner as will do the greatest possible good—and more important still, to feed the spiritually hungry.

Another Case Against Literalism

There is a statement by the apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans which, like the Golden Rule,

could be misleading if taken without the qualifying term: "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." If we leave off the qualifying term, then it is our duty to please our neighbor by fair means or foul. Usually a man is pleased when given his own way, and not restrained from doing the things he naturally likes to do. But, knowing the human tendency to evil, that could not be the kind of pleasing Paul recommended. A pat on the back and the assurance that he is a good fellow would please one's neighbor, but such pleasing could hardly be construed as for his good to edification. Nothing pleases a man more than for

JOSEPH, A Man of Principle

AS A youth in Egypt and on through mature years, Joseph was actuated by principle. A noble example of a child of God, how his character shines out!

Follow him through his years of testing. There he was, a boy of seventeen, beloved of his father and obedient to his commands. And there were those jealous brothers. They were jealous because their father loved Joseph, because Jacob thought more of him than of them. Joseph was sent to see how his brethren were faring. They saw him coming and one of them said, "Let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will tell our father that some wild beast killed him." Murder came into their hearts, prompted by jealousy. At last, the innocent boy came, and nine of his ten brothers agreed to a plot to do away with him.

One of them (Reuben) said, "No, let us not kill him, but cast him into this pit." He did not seem to be as jealous as the others, and he hoped to be able to rescue Joseph from the pit. So they put him in the pit, but there came a band of traders traveling to Egypt. The most evilhearted one of the brothers said, "Let us sell him, and we will get rid of him." So they took him up out of the pit. Oh, how Joseph must have pleaded with them as he thought of his home, his father, and his younger brother, Benjamin. But no, his entreaties were of no avail. They sold him off, expecting to never see his face again. He was wearing a coat of many colors which his father had made for him. These

you to agree with him. But if he is in the wrong and you agree with him, you do him incalculable injury. It pleases a man to be given more credit than he is due. Men always are pleased when they receive honor from one another, but such honor does not edify.

Working From Principle Banishes Eyeservice

The employee who desires to please God works just the same whether his employer's eye is on him or not. His service is to the Lord, his greater Master; he works from principle. In Ephesians 6, and another of Paul's epistles, he draws a sharp line between obeying rules—eyeservice—and living

by principle. "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. 6:5-7; Col. 3:22-24 is nearly identical).

There is a vast difference between a rule, and a principle. Rules make eyeservants; principle makes Christians.

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good," says the Book of Proverbs (15:3). If it is our aim to please Him,

wicked and deceitful brothers took this coat and dipped it in blood and took it to their father, who said, "Joseph is dead," not suspecting foul play on the part of his sons.

The trip to Egypt was a sickening experience for Joseph. His hands were tied, and the rope attached to a long train of other slaves. He shuddered and tried not to think of what lay ahead. Why would his brothers be so wicked, and bring such sorrow to their father's heart? And they would make theirs a worse sin by trying to cover up their evil deed.

The days that followed were to Joseph a nightmare. Mile after mile he trudged, over hill and down dale. We can only imagine how his legs ached, how his throat seemed always parched, and the flies that would land on him in such swarms that he could have screamed from torment. After three weeks of journeying, they were passing through the land of Egypt. At last they entered the city of the Pharaohs. The slaves were herded through the busy streets to the public market. It was crowded with men and women from many lands. The auctioneer took his platform. One by one the slaves were sold to the highest bidder. Joseph felt sick, and his heart pained as he stood with clenched hands. Would he be next? At last he was sold to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard. But the Lord was with Joseph, and he found favor in the house of Potiphar.

Joseph met with temptations in Potiphar's house. An evil woman tried to get him to surrender his manhood, but governed by the Platinum Principle that right is right, and that wrong is never right, he would not yield, but said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" There he stood, young in years, all alone in a strange land with no one to encourage him to stand for

the right, yet he remained faithful to his God. Then Potiphar's abominable wife, being unable to seduce him, proceeded to smear him, charging him with attempted unchastity, when she herself was the guilty one. She lied to her husband about Joseph, with the result that he was thrust into prison. There he stayed for more than two years until deliverance came. But in every circumstance, he led a more noble life than those around him, adhering strictly to right principles.

At last the time came when he was released from prison and elevated to the position of second ruler in all Egypt. Still he was able to keep his poise. He bore his honor as calmly and with the same dignity as he had borne his degradation in prison.

It was now the first of the seven years of abundant crops, and Joseph as minister of food was busy making plans for the collection and storing of surplus grain. Quickly the seven years of abundance slipped into the past, and at last the seven lean years were upon them. By the second year the shortage of food began to be felt, and among those seeking food came Joseph's own brothers. It was then that Joseph's dream of his brethren making obeisance to him came true. All eleven of them bowed humbly before him.

Joseph's handling of himself with them before and after making himself known was exemplary and showed plainly the working of principle in his life. He did by them as he would have wanted to be done by, abundantly returning good for evil even when they were so undeserving. He held no grudge against them for their injustice to him but treated them in a kindly and godly manner.

Whatever he encountered, the basis of Joseph's moral and spiritual integrity was unmoved. His whole life was grounded upon a strict adherence to divine principle. ●●

and to live so that He can see no evil in our lives, then we are living by the Platinum Principle.

The Old Was Rule—the New Is Principle

Jesus, in His first sermon, revealed this difference in His comparison of the potential of the old Mosaic law and the law of faith, which He was stressing. He said: "It hath been said of old time," Thou shalt not do thus and so, meaning of course, the very act, then added, "But I say unto you, . . ." making a much deeper application. Here was a rule on the one hand, and a principle on the other. Then as an example of how the plan works, He said to them: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca ["vain fellow"], shall be in danger of the council: but, whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire [complete destruction]. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:21-24).

Here are the two forms of human behavior contrasted: the action by rule, the Mosaic law, which forbade the actual taking of the life of another; and action by principle—the principle which forbade even an angry impulse. Principle impels one to voluntarily go and make matters right with one's brother. It is the difference between a head and a heart religion. Principle involves voluntary self-scrutiny. If thou "rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Living By Principle

God, through Jeremiah, spoke of this supreme accomplishment of acting by principle as having His law written in our hearts: "Behold, the days

*A rule is a regulation of life;
a principle is a fountain of life.
The first forms the banks which
direct the channel of the stream;
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the stream flows.*

come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jer. 31:31, 33).

God also was speaking of the workings of the Platinum Principle when, through Moses, He said: "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always" (Deut. 5:29). And Jesus completes the picture by saying: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Jesus Himself, when upon earth, exemplified this principle as He lived up to the sentiment expressed in Psalm 40:7-8, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Not, I do Thy will because I feel I am obliged to do it, but, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." Jesus led the way in embodying this principle. If we step in His footprints, we too must delight to do God's will.

The superior workings of the Platinum Principle are again described in Psalm 34:12-14, in the following words: "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."

What man is he that desireth life? This man does his duty with a song. He does not have to be pushed and dragged into doing his part in the Christian life. He desires life. To do right is almost an obsession with him; and he does it from principle, out of love for the Giver of life, and not because some fixed rule forces him to do it.

"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth," said the great Apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 14:22). Here again each man is on his own. If governed by principle, we will not allow ourselves any more freedom to sin in the privacy of our own home where we feel no eye is observing us than we would allow ourselves in public. And our secret thoughts will be kept as circum-spect as though they were an open epistle to be flashed upon the television screen and observed by every family in the community.

Our earlier definition of a rule and a principle bears repeating: A rule is the banks that keep the stream in its channel; a principle, the spring from which the stream is born.

Principle Comes First

We may often ask how much a man has done, but the principle from which he acts, the motive
(Continued on page 21)

Kathy
Kandor's
Korner

Thanks, Lord, for the Failure

THE door closed with a bang. Neal was home. "Good evening, honey!" I greeted him as he strode through the kitchen. But from the sag of his shoulders I knew all things with him this evening were not "good." I watched as he tossed his briefcase onto the davenport, then sank into his favorite chair and buried his face in his hands.

I placed a hand on his bowed head. "Things rough today?" I asked, wondering what might have gone wrong during the day.

"I'm a failure. A plain, out-and-out failure."

"You mean you *had* a failure, not that you *are* a failure. What happened?"

"Oh, Kathy," his voice was half broken, half disgusted. "Everything!"

"You mean your company has gone under?"

"No, no, I don't mean that. But Sim's Department Store manager called today, and in the conversation he told me they wouldn't be needing our company's services any more. Politely, of course. But they said they weren't quite satisfied. And that means something in a small company like ours. Kathy, I've really failed, big, and—it hurts!"

I tried to reason with him. It didn't seem to me he should take the blame so personally. "Isn't anyone else in the company at least *partly* to blame?" I asked.

"Maybe, but I'm the salesman, and it's the salesman's job to keep customers satisfied. So this naturally comes back on me. I'm no good, just no good."

"Be reasonable, Neal," I pleaded as I settled down in the chair opposite his. "Losing one customer doesn't mean the end of the world—or even the end of your company. Don't you get new accounts from time to time?"

"Yes."

"Then isn't there prospect of replacing the loss, at least in time?"

"Accounts like Sim's are hard to come by."

"Still, Neal," I tried to think a bit further into the problem. "Seems as though you could look at it differently. *You* aren't a total failure just because of one mistake, even if the fault *was* all yours. *You* aren't a failure at all, unless you don't take your mistake right. Remember what Paul said, 'In *everything* give thanks'? There just might be something in this failure you should thank God for."

I felt a bit venturesome to be saying so much, but Neal and I had always discussed our spiritual problems this way and usually both of us benefited.

Neal said nothing, so I said a little more. "Suppose God might be trying to teach you something by this failure?"

"You really think so?"

"If we are children of God, nothing comes to us by chance. All things work together for good."

Neal looked up with a brighter countenance.

"Maybe you thought too much of your success in having that large account, and God is using this failure to draw you closer to Him. Maybe it is a special opportunity."

Neal reached down to adjust the footstool by his chair. "Well—"

"Maybe you are better off spiritually when you aren't winning so well in this world."

At this, Neal gave me a square, honest look. "Maybe so, but there's no need fooling anyone—winning is beautiful. At least, *I* like it. Don't think God wants us to aim at losing."

"No, I'm sure of that. But maybe it isn't healthy to win all the time, either. You might get independent and arrogant and not feel your need for Him at all."

"You have a point, Kathy. Failure that way *is* an opportunity. Maybe this was just what I needed today. I was thinking about that verse the other day, 'Do all to the glory of God.' Maybe—maybe my job has been more to *my* glory than *God's*."

"It is certainly something to think about," I agreed, "whether I am working to have people see *me* or to have them see God in all I do and say. And Neal, if we are really trying to gather all the glory we can for God, we aren't going to be upset when we fail—because if we have done our best for Him, God is the only loser—if anyone loses. Isn't that right?"

Neal stood up and stretched. "Guess I've got some real stretching to do yet."

"So have I. You know that song we were humming yesterday—maybe we ought to revise it to

(Continued on page 12)

WHEN Jesus came teaching and preaching among men, He confronted them with the formidable challenge of discipline. If He were to come among us today as He did then, our modern minds might find His message not only uninviting but even repelling. We might easily find ourselves criticizing Him for His seemingly forbidding tactics.

Jesus was no soft, easy-going, do-as-you-like preacher. By modern ideas of salesmanship He would no doubt be judged a total failure. The problem was not that His product was inferior. Jesus was offering the highest—even everlasting life—what more could one ask! But the way to it that He marked out was the harsh, rigorous, *uneasy* way of denial and discipline. It was a way that cut across every established pattern of life. It was a way that placed need before want, discipline before desire, denial before destiny.

Hear this stern Disciplinarian describing the road to life: “Enter by the narrow gate, . . . the road that leads to perdition is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matt. 7:13-14, JB). The ending of the road was sure, absolutely sure; and indescribably glorious. But there was and is no escaping the road that leads there—it is hard. It is the road of discipline.

All through Jesus’ life and teaching, discipline was primary, basic, first in importance. He was continually challenging men to the best that was in them. Tell Him fervently that you would like to follow Him and be His disciple, and He would be likely to reply: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). There you have it, plain as anything. You could take or leave it as you liked; but no need to wait for any modifications that might be forthcoming—because there wouldn’t be any. What Jesus said, He meant.

One day this Master of men approached a would-be follower, bidding him “Follow me.” The man consented, saying that he had first to go and bury his father, then he would gladly follow. Did Jesus say, “That is fine, come when you can. You are welcome any time”? *No!* His answer was totally unsympathetic, almost harsh in its starkness: “Let the dead bury their dead,” He said, “but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.” Or in other words, if you are going to start out fettered with secondary loyalties, you had better not start at all. If the Kingdom cannot be *first*, forget it.

Another man heard Jesus’ invitation and answered saying, “Lord, I will follow thee.” But this man also felt a prior obligation: “Let me first go

JESUS:

bid them farewell which are at home.” Jesus’ response must have been a hard blow, but priorities had to be set straight right at the first. “No man,” Jesus replied, “who sets his hand to the plough and then keeps looking back is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:57-62, NEB). These were the hard facts, and Jesus spared no one. Following Him was a matter of discipline, and discipline is hard.

One time Jesus fed a multitude, and they thanked Him graciously—they even offered Him a crown. That night Jesus fled across the Sea of Galilee to Capernaum. When the people gathered along the shore the next day to see Him, and realized Jesus was not there, they boarded boats and went across to Capernaum to look for Him. One might think Jesus would have commended them for their zeal in seeking Him. But no, He told them starkly, “The truth of the matter is that you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you believe in me” (John 6:24-26, TLB).

Then Jesus proceeded to deliver them a sermon so meaty and so difficult—about spiritual meat, and bread, and blood, and sacrifice—that they were offended. “This is more than we can stomach!” they cried out. “Why listen to such talk?” And Jesus watched while they walked away, scores of them. The crowd thinned to a handful. At last Jesus was left alone with His disciples. And what did Jesus say? Did He turn to them and pour out His grief for the terrible loss and beg of them to hold on? No, He put them to an even sharper challenge: “Do you also want to leave me?” It was a fierce question. What would they say? The apostle Peter responded heroically: “Lord, to whom shall we go? Your words are words of eternal life. We have faith, and we know that you are the Holy One of God” (John 6:67-69, NEB).

Another time a wealthy young man mustered enough courage to approach Jesus with a serious

Master of Discipline

question: "Master," he asked, "what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus' answer was once again without concession. "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, . . . and come, take up the cross, and follow me" (Mark 10:17-21).

What about the man who might wish to represent Christ to the world and be numbered among His disciples, but who feels a sort of withdrawing shame for the lowly Nazarene and His unpopular teachings? Should he not be sympathized with? Should he not be given credit for his good intentions? *Never!* says Jesus. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Two of Jesus' own chosen disciples, James and John, came to Jesus one day with a very singular request. "What would ye that I should do for you?" He asked them. "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand in thy glory." There was nothing like asking for a favor! But what did Jesus say? Did He tell them, "I would be only too happy to give such places of honor to such devoted young men"? No, His answer was unrelenting, even severe. "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able . . . ?" and He proceeded to inform them of the disciplines which lay between them and the securing of *any* position of honor in His kingdom. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (Mark 10:37-38). No easy answer was this!

Jesus told His disciples even more about the disciplined life and its demands in His last message to them before His crucifixion. He compared Himself to the vine, they were the branches, His heavenly Father was the husbandman. What might they expect as branches? "My Father . . . lops off

every branch that doesn't produce. And he prunes those branches that bear fruit for even larger crops." There was no escaping it. Non-productive branches were sure to be cut off, and productive ones should be prepared for pruning. But the pruning was not without purpose: "He prunes . . . for even larger crops" (John 15:1-2, TLB). Such is the wisdom of divine discipline.

In the same discourse Jesus told His disciples what they might look for in the days to come. It would not be always easy. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me" (John 15:18-21).

Why was Jesus asking men to suffer, to die, to take the narrow and difficult road? Why did He demand that we squeeze through the tight door and keep in the narrow way? Why did He recommend that we pluck out the eye that offends and cut off the transgressing hand? Why such painful illustrations? Why such drastic measures? Why such severe discipline? Jesus was looking to the end. The crippling effects of the discipline, however painful, would be only temporary; the results would be eternal. Far better to reach the goal in a crippled condition than to take any chance of not reaching it at all!

Jesus was the master of discipline; but His discipline was not without purpose—it had destiny in it. It was—and it *is*—the way to glory and blessing, even to everlasting life! ●●

Fruitful Fragments



You cannot starve a man who is feeding on the promises of God.

The greatest fault is to think you have none.

If I keep my eyes on the Lord, He will take care of my feet.

When fear knocks at your door, send faith to answer and you will find no one there.

Your true religion is not the creed you profess but the life you live.

Walk softly, speak tenderly, pray fervently.

The life that knows no joy is not patterned after Christ, for Christ brought joy.

Prayer is a relationship with God that grows from inner, spiritual discipline, and complete resignation to His will.

The spiritual life, like muscle, develops with exercise.

The cause of Christ is not harmed so much by religious persecution as by religious indifference.

Jesus did not flee from life; He mastered it.

Playing with sin is sure to prove deadly.

From A Reader—

A Talent to Bury

I want to pass on a few words I read this evening.

A pastor gave a sermon on the parable of the Talents. He spoke particularly about the "one talent" Christian and every man's duty to use the talent God has entrusted to him.

On the way out of the church, a parishioner said to him, "I must be one of these one-talent folks you were speaking of. I have only one talent—I can speak my mind. When I have something to say, I say it."

The pastor smiled and replied graciously, "It may be, my friend, that if you gave some thought to it, you would realize that this is *one talent the Lord would have you bury.*"

Speaking our mind is all too often a source of satisfaction to the speaker rather than a way of serving the Lord with our talent. If the talent for saying what we think were channeled into service for God, we would undoubtedly be able to speak words of comfort or words of reproof, as the need might be, in such a way as would bless the hearer. Think what real satisfaction this would bring to the speaker!

Speaking one's mind is emptiness. Speaking a word for the Lord brings with it a glow in our hearts and imparts a message of cheer and goodwill to the listener. Mrs. K., New Jersey

Kathy Kantor's Korner

(Continued from page 9)

'Count your failures, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.'

Neal flashed his usual bouyant smile as he gathered his briefcase and overcoat to put them away. It was a new approach, for sure, making opportunities out of failures. But maybe it would help.

As I returned to the kitchen to finish preparing the meal, I thanked God from the depth of my heart for the day's failure, even though it was Neal's. "Tomorrow," I told myself, "may be *your* test, Kathy. And how prepared are *you* to thank God for the failure?"

Yours determined to try,

Kathy

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

The Three Christs of the Bible

CHRISt is the central figure of the entire Bible, being the subject of prophecy in the Old Testament and the outstanding personage of the New. Without Him, there would be no Christianity. Although only about one third of the world's population acknowledge Him, all divide time at His birth.

But must we assume that every time we read the name "Christ" in the Bible that the personal Jesus is meant? To do so would involve us in no end of difficulty—and unfortunately many commit this error.

In Isaiah we read the divine forecast of His birth: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (7:14). Luke records a like promise from the angel Gabriel to Mary: "Behold, thou shalt . . . bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus" (1:31). Luke also confirms the fulfillment of that prophecy, adding a fragmentary record of His childhood and youth.

It is the story of the man Christ.

After His resurrection, the apostles took up His teaching and used it as the basis for founding the Christian Church. Regarding this Church, we learn that Christ is its head and His followers or believers form the body. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:27), wrote Paul.

This is the multitudinous Christ, the Church.

Again writing to the Corinthians, Paul speaks of Christ, this time with a different meaning: "I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:1-4).

This is the spiritual Christ, the truth, the knowledge of God which the man Christ personified.

These three distinctly different usages of the name "Christ" form the basis of our study. To be

able to identify these different usages of the name Christ in Scripture is essential to a proper understanding of God's Word.

I. THE MAN CHRIST

Few people that ever walked this earth have had their birth foretold by an angel—and only one, Jesus Christ, was accorded an angelic chorus at His birth. Jesus Christ was undeniably an important personage.

But what of His nature? Whose Son was He? Was He a mere man? Or was He God? Can we be sure that He ever lived? Was He really the Messiah?

Almost without exception, the major denominations teach that Jesus Christ is also God, that through the mysterious union which they call the Trinity, God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are all God—three in one and one in three—an admittedly incomprehensible doctrine. The majority are likewise in agreement that by some unexplainable means He existed from the time of the creation, some going so far as to say that He did the creating.

Few would deny that He ever lived, but some say that it really doesn't matter, that He is only a divine idea. Skeptics look upon the Gospels as a collection of myths and legends, discounting the life of Christ and the recorded miracles.

Did Christ pre-exist with the Father? Was it He who delivered the Law to Moses in the Mount as claimed by some? Does He form part of the triune God? Can we be sure that He ever lived or that He performed the miracles attributed to Him? These are some of the frequently asked questions, and we will go to the Bible to learn the answers.

A. Biblical Proof of the Man Christ

Jesus Christ was a man, not God. If there is anything made clear in the Gospels it is this. Major denominations notwithstanding, there is no Bible evidence to prove that Jesus is God. The so-called "Trinity" is entirely foreign to the Scriptures and must be discarded as a doctrine of men. The Trinity originated in Greek philosophy, not in the Bible; and it originated several centuries before

Christ. It was not a doctrine of the Church until the Council of Nicea, 325 A. D. This same council declared that Jesus was God and added this doctrine also to the teachings of the Church.

1. Jesus in prophecy. Our first introduction to Christ is through prophecy. All the major points of His life were the subject of prophecy centuries before the events took place. **Moses** prophesied of His birth; **Jacob**, one of the patriarchs, foretold that He would be a descendant of Jacob's son Judah; **Micah** pinpointed the place of His birth as Bethlehem; **Daniel** revealed the date of His birth; **Isaiah** said He would be born of a virgin; **Jeremiah** foresaw the time when He would reign as King over the whole earth, as did the prophet **Zechariah**.

All these prophecies, and many more came to pass exactly as spoken so we can know they came from God. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken" (Deut. 18:22).

2. Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus was not God, but the Son of God. Always in speaking of His Father, He subordinated Himself. Those who were the closest to Him, His disciples, taught that He was the Son of God. Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"; Paul wrote to Timothy that "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"; Martha, sister of Lazarus, said to Him, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God"; the apostle John explained the purpose of his Gospel: "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 16:16; I Tim. 2:5; John 11:27; 20:31); and of Himself He said: "I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things... I do always those things that please him... for my Father is greater than I" (John 8:28-29; 14:28).

3. Jesus, a human being. Jesus Christ was the Son of God, but He was a man and had all the characteristics of any other man:

a. He was born. He did not pre-exist, but angels announced His birth on a specific day: "For unto you is born **this day** in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord... What will prove it to you is this: you will find a baby... lying in a manger" (Luke 2:11-12; KJV, TEV). **He was born a baby as every other mortal that ever lived on this earth.**

b. He had to learn. He did not possess all knowledge at birth, for we are told that as a child He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52) He had to grow both physically and spiritually. His spiritual growth is

attested to by the writer to the Hebrews: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (5:8).

c. He was tempted. Jesus was tempted; "God cannot be tempted with evil." Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

d. He died as any mortal. Matthew's account of the crucifixion says that Jesus "gave a loud cry, and breathed his last" (27:50, NEB). God is eternal; He cannot die. "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God," wrote the Psalmist. God is also described as an "everlasting king," and as the "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." **Such could not be said of Jesus, for He died and was laid in a tomb as any other man.**

e. He was raised from the dead. Contrary to the belief of many, Jesus had no power to raise Himself from the dead. He was dependent upon His Father for His resurrection. Peter testified to this on several occasions after Pentecost: "This same Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." And again, "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 2:32; 4:10). **His mortal life was taken from Him by murderers and restored by God.**

Contemporary historians had little to say concerning Christ's life and work, but there is no lack of evidence that it **did** happen. The Romans hated both Christ and the Christians, as is evidenced from the harsh treatment accorded them. But in spite of this, Tacitus a Roman historian made mention of His execution as well as the persecution of the Christians. There can be no doubt that Jesus lived and that the Gospels are an accurate record of His life and work.

II. THE SPIRITUAL CHRIST

Many times when the name of Christ is used in the Scriptures, the man Christ is not intended, hence we have what we identify as the "Spiritual Christ." Finding certain passages of Scripture difficult to explain, theology has developed a complicated doctrine of a dual-natured Christ, attributing to Him both the characteristics of Deity and the human nature of a man, thus making Him part man and part God.

Following the Bible rule of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Cor. 2:13), the difficulties disappear and we find that it is not necessary to assume that the man Christ Jesus is meant every time the name appears in the Bible.

Personification is one means of teaching used in the Bible, but many fail to recognize it as such. However, a candid approach to the Scriptures will reveal it. When Jesus said to the Pharisees, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12), no one expected to see Him giving off literal light to lighten their way. Again, when He said, "I am that bread of life" (John 6:48), He did not mean that He resembled a literal loaf of bread.

A. The Spiritual Christ Defined

Jesus said to His disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). This is the spiritual Christ. He was the personification of the Truth, the knowledge of God. This is the Christ that has always existed. When Jesus explained to the Jews that He came down from heaven (John 3:13; 6:50-51), He was referring to the knowledge which He possessed, and of which He was the personification, and which came from God in heaven.

The spiritual Christ is the wisdom of God. This wisdom is personified in Proverbs 8 as a woman, variously called by personal pronouns of the feminine gender. Of this wisdom, the Wise Man writes: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him" (vs. 22-23, 29). This wisdom formed the "spiritual Rock" that followed the children of Israel out of Egypt. The man Christ had no existence until His birth of the Virgin Mary.

The Spiritual Christ, the Truth is known by a variety of names in the Scriptures. It is—

1. **Christ in you.** Paul wrote that he was made a minister "to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery . . . now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:25-27, NIV). **The literal Christ could not be in anyone, but the spiritual Christ, the Truth can dwell in the hearts or minds of those who will accept it.**

2. **The vine.** Jesus said, I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). No one thinks Christ was a literal vine and His disciples literal branches growing out of Him. He represented the Truth, the knowledge of God, and without it they

could not grow and bear fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-24).

3. **The bread of life.** When Jesus said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:41), the Jews could think of nothing but the natural bread and they murmured against Him. Jesus went on to explain that this bread must be eaten: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:56-57). Just as Jesus lived by eating of the Father—an obviously symbolic statement—so Jesus said His disciples could live by eating of Him. Even so, the Jews thought only of the natural, but Jesus explained: "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63, NIV).

The spiritual Christ, the Truth, His words, are what must be eaten and lived to gain eternal life. "The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11).

Only through eating His "flesh," His Word, and living it out can eternal life be gained.

4. **The foundation and the chief cornerstone.** Writing to the Church at Corinth, Paul compared the Church to a building; and in his letter to the Ephesians he identified the foundation as "the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20), and in I Cor. 3:11, he said, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

No one could erect a literal building upon any man. Likewise, the foundation and the cornerstone of the Church are the spiritual Christ, the Truth.

5. **Other titles.** It has been said that there are more than 250 titles given to Christ in the Scriptures. Many of these apply to Christ the Man in the various roles He fills, but others apply to the Spiritual Christ. He is the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Sun of Righteousness, the Rod, the Root, the Morning Star and a host of others, none of which could be intended literally. Given a spiritual application, they aptly describe Christ.

III. THE MULTITUDINOUS CHRIST

We now come to the third use of the name "Christ" in the Bible—the multitudinous Christ, the one body with many members of which the personal Christ is the Head, and the Church is His body. This Christ, or this body is the "man" God purposed to make when He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion" (Gen. 1:26). The creation of this man started when God first called workers into His

vineyard and will not be completed until Christ returns to earth.

Genesis being an allegory, the man of verse 26 is figurative, and the term is used generically. Notice that God said, "Let them [plural] have dominion." This man, or those who will one day have dominion over all the earth, is what we identify as the multitudinous Christ, with Christ as the Head and the Church as His body.

To think that man as we know him was made in the image of God borders on the ridiculous. True, God did create man in the beginning, but never in His own image. Our reason tells us that mortal humans, ranging from the dwarf to the giant in intellect as well as stature, could not possibly be said to all be made in God's image. But theology does not often yield to reason, hence it is generally assumed by the majority that man was made in God's image and somehow lost that perfect state along the way.

How and when will man be made in God's image? The time is yet future. Let us go to our textbook, the Bible, our only source of information on the subject, to learn more.

A. Who Will Compose This Body or Man?

As indicated above, this man is identified as multitudinous because it consists of many members. In describing this man, also called a body, Paul drew a comparison with the human body. First Corinthians gives a graphic description, explaining that just as all parts of a human body function together as a unit, so must the body or Church of Christ. "I beseech you, brethren," said Paul, "that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). Parts of the body cannot be many men of many minds, but all must be perfectly joined together.

1. Christ, the Head. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18). Christ, at His first coming, was meek and humble, despised and rejected. But in the Kingdom, He will be the King, the Ruler. He is "the firstborn from the dead" in that He was the first to be raised from the dead and exalted to immortality. He "only hath immortality," as we learn from I Tim. 6:16. He is "the beginning" of the new creation (Rev. 3:14); not that He existed at the time of the literal creation, but He is the beginning of the spiritual creation, the "one new man" of which He is the Head.

(For a more detailed explanation, see our booklet, **God's Spiritual Creation.**)

2. The Church, His Body. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all... are one body: so also is Christ... Now are they many members, yet but one body. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Cor. 12:12, 20, 27). The body of Christ, the true Church, must be perfectly coordinated. A man's right foot cannot go east while the left goes west, but both must work together in the same direction. God has provided apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11) to this end: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that... speaking the truth in love, [we] may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (vs. 12-15).

Only those who gain the full stature of Christ will compose this body, the Church.

B. How to be Part of This Body

Would we not like to be part of this multitudinous man, the true Church of Christ? The opportunity is for "whosoever will." But everyone that will become part of the body must be in union with the Head, and only through the Word of God can we learn what is required. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5), wrote Paul. And again, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). "Put to death... whatever belongs to your earthly nature" (Col. 3:5, NIV).

If we follow these texts and become an entirely new creature, we can be sure of being chosen as part of the body. The members that make up this "one new man" will not be identified until the Judgment, but they will be those who have first made themselves one with Him mentally by believing His Word; then morally, by obeying that Word. After the Judgment, Christ the Head will reward all members of the body with immortality, a step they are unable to take by themselves. "He will change our weak mortal bodies and make them like his own glorious body, using that power by which he is able to bring all things under his rule" (Phil. 3:21, TEV).

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

Was the Flood Universal?

WE have had several inquiries about the Flood in Noah's day. Did it cover the whole earth, or was it local? If it was local, why does the Bible say so plainly that "every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven" and "Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark" (Gen. 7:23)?

Reading the account in Genesis and giving it no further consideration, one could easily believe that the Flood was universal. But we cannot believe that it was. We will list a few of our reasons.

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 further the "world" that perished: it was 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 he 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. It is used also in the New Testament. Jesus sent His disciples out to "preach the gospel to every creature," and the Bible clearly records that this commission was fulfilled: "And they went forth, and preached every where" (Mark 16:15); "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 con-

continent has its own peculiar creatures. If all the animals had migrated from one center (such as Noah's ark) originally, all areas should have basically the same animals. But the types of animals differ greatly from continent to continent—which would seem to indicate that the animals originated in their own particular areas. Furthermore, there is evidence that the various continents were occupied by these primitive creatures long before the Noachian Deluge.

4) 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 will 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,' but 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.

5) 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" (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" 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. ●●

Abib Is Coming!

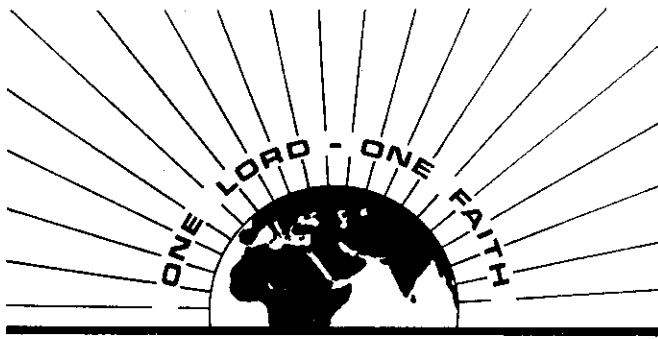
The beginning of the New Year is upon us! On our calendar, it belongs to the month of this issue (March). The new moon occurring on March 30 this year, the evening of the 30th will begin the sacred New Year celebration at the Megiddo Church. But the distributing of the April issue of the *Message* being so much nearer the actual date of Abib, we are saving our special Abib and New Year features for the month of April.

So watch for your special issue next month!

Other significant dates of the coming season include: 1) the anniversary of the Lord's Supper on Abib 13, this year on the evening of April 11; 2) the Resurrection morning, Abib 15, this year the morning of April 14; 3) Pentecost, seven weeks later, on June 2.

Plan to join us in Rochester for the coming New Year season. "O come, let us worship the Lord; . . . let us exalt his name together." —THE EDITOR.

*O mortals, give ear to His pleading,
Today to His warnings attend;
For swiftly the moments are speeding,
And quickly the summer will end.*



Resurrected Life: For Whom?

All men die. But who will be resurrected? Who will be restored to life? Who will once again live and move and breathe, after he has been through the death state?

Some people believe there is no restoration of life and never will be. Others believe that everyone that ever lived on earth will be raised to life when Jesus comes and will be given another chance to learn about God and serve Him. They say it will be a "universal resurrection."

We have no basis upon which to judge, without consulting the Bible. For here again, no man has the knowledge to reveal. No man through his own experience can know. We must depend on God. And God tells us through His written Word that some will be resurrected, but not everyone who ever lived.

THE Bible offers definite hope to men through the resurrection. The God who gave life to man can restore it, rebuild his bodily frame and make him able to move among men as an ordinary living being, just as he did during his lifetime.

We know this is true, because certain people whose stories are recorded in the Bible had this very experience. Lazarus, who had been dead four days, came forth at Jesus' word (John 11). Jesus also restored to life the daughter of Jairus, who was twelve years old.

The greatest example of resurrected life the Bible gives us is that of Jesus Himself, who walked and talked and moved among men after being resurrected from the dead. And His was no ordinary death. Jesus was crucified; yet God was able to redeem His life from the power of death. Jesus could say triumphantly, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18).

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The resurrection has been the hope of God's people through the ages. Job, living more than a millennium and a half before the birth of the Messiah, could look forward and say: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth"; and, "though after my skin [life] worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold" (Job 19:25-27).

The prophet Isaiah looked forward to a physical resurrection of all of God's servants when he said, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19).

David wrote plainly of the resurrection: "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave" (Ps. 49:15).

An angel told Daniel of the resurrection: "Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13). "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

When Christ returns, all the "dead in Christ," that is, those who have had a knowledge of God and have agreed to serve Him, will be resurrected. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise" (I Thess. 4:16). Not all people who ever lived will be raised, but only the "dead in Christ."

What happens to all others? They simply sleep, unconscious, unknowing and unknown. They lived their God-given life as they pleased, and that is all God has for them.

There are just two possibilities beyond death, and which one *we* experience depends on the use we have made of our lives. If we live as we please and give God no serious thought, when our life is spent we have had all we will have; we will simply sleep perpetually and not wake (Jer. 51:57). But if we accepted God's offer and agreed to serve Him, we will be resurrected and judged and rewarded for what we have done.

There is no other possibility beyond death, for there is no consciousness in death and no hope of further consciousness except through a physical resurrection.

How can we know whether *we* will be worthy of a resurrection? Just how does this plan of God's work out?

To illustrate, let us imagine two people. The first is born into a modest family, from whom he

learns the basics of life and self-support. In time he goes out into the world to seek his fortunes—or misfortunes—as chance may be. He lives and does just whatever he chooses, with no thought of God and no interest in His plans—in fact, no interests beyond the limits of this world. If all goes well with him, by the end of his life he may have a good family, a home, many friends, and many memories of pleasurable experiences. But there is a limit to all his pleasures, for when his life is over, that is all. He may have enjoyed life to its full, with good health, prosperity and success. But there comes an end, and he can take nothing with him.

The Bible describes this category of people as those who will “sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts” (Jer. 51:57); as those who will “be as though they had not been” (Obadiah 16); as those who “like sheep” are laid to rest (Ps. 49:14). God has been good to them; they have had all the benefits of life—which they neither requested nor earned; but since they showed no interest in further life, God allows them simply to fall asleep—no punishment, no suffering in death, no remorse; just sleep.

Now let us imagine another man, perhaps someone you know. He also is born into a modest family, from whom he learns the basics of life and living. In time he grows up and goes out into the world to seek what he may find. But somewhere, somehow he finds more than the world. He finds something he has been earnestly seeking—an answer to the meaning of life, and the prospect of giving his life to serve God in return for the eternal life which God has offered. He has found the knowledge of God. He investigates it, believes it and sets about at once to act upon it.

His whole life pattern is changed; everything he does, every decision he makes, every word, every thought is slowly but surely oriented toward his one goal: Will God be pleased? Is this for my eternal betterment? Will this help me toward the life God wants me to live? Each day he confronts himself with the question: How can I live today so that God will be pleased with my life?

This man realizes that if he lives just as God has commanded him to, God will give him far more when this short term of life is over. He sees life not as an end in itself but as a means to a much greater end. And so he goes all through life, thinking, planning, looking ahead to the greater and more abundant life God has promised. Life separated from that meaning and that purpose would be worthless to him.

In time he reaches the end of his allotted days,

and like the other man, he dies. But death does not mark the end for this man. It is only a brief interruption, one not to be too concerned about if his work for God has been completed. For God will remember his good work. This man laid up “treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.” This man laid up a “good foundation against the time to come, that he may lay hold on eternal life” (Matt. 6:20; I Tim. 6:19). Now, though he sleeps in death and knows nothing, God remembers him; for his good life of spiritual achievement is recorded.

Time goes by while he sleeps, perhaps years or even centuries. But that makes no difference to God. Ultimately the time arrives for God’s plan to be consummated, and this man is restored to life. He is actually made alive again. He walks upon earth once again, just as he did before, the same person, recreated by God. This happens at the time of Christ’s second advent. He is called before the Judgment seat of Christ and rewarded according to the use he has made of his life. If he passes the test at Judgment, he is rewarded with that life, immortal life, in which he will be able to enjoy every pleasure conceivable to the human mind—and infinitely more. For “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Cor. 2:9).

Life! Immortal life will be his portion. Not three score years and ten, four score, or even five score, but years without number—an eternal succession of time in which to live and learn and expand his powers and activities! All the “fullness of joy” and “pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11); “riches, and honour, and life” (Prov. 22:4); “glory, and honour, and immortality” (Rom. 2:7) will be his—and all because he invested his life in doing the things that please God.

Is it not worthwhile? What more could God hold out as an inducement to faithful service? With such a prospect before us, how can anyone be really satisfied with the transitory interests of this world!●●

*Bless me, Lord, I humbly pray.
Bless me all throughout this day.
Help me as I try to be
Always helpful, praising Thee.
In everything I think and do,
Keep me faithful, keep me true
To Thee and to Thy holy Word.
Hear my prayer, I ask, dear Lord. Amen.*

The Platinum Principle

(Continued from page 8)

that impels him to act is rarely considered. We inquire whether he be courageous, rich, skillful, handsome, a good writer, a good singer or a good laborer; but how poor in spirit he is, how patient, how meek, how spiritual, is seldom spoken of as things of greater worth. Naturally men respect the outward appearance of men; but God looks on the heart, the inner life.

It is important that we accustom ourselves to doing good. Good habits are a great stimulus toward righteous living, a bulwark against the encroachment of the powers of evil. A person so fortified acts from principle, the Platinum Principle. The person accustomed to doing good can be much more certain he will be able to maintain his integrity during the years when the mental processes have slowed down, and the powers of judgment are less acute. So he can bear, honorably, the glory of the hoary head by continuing steadfast to the end in the way of righteousness.

In I Timothy 4:12, Paul reveals the Platinum Principle to his son in the faith, Timothy. He says, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." When Paul tendered this fatherly advice to Timothy, it is clear that he was not trying to mislead him or make him believe the standard of conduct expected of a youthful, Christian leader was a matter to be taken lightly. Interpreted literally, the word "Christian" means a follower of Christ. He is our pattern and example. The standard of morality that He set was without flaw and must be paralleled by all who, in the fullest sense of the word, are Christians. To purify ourselves even as He is pure is a process so far reaching that it leaves not a single waking moment of our lives untouched.

Principle Through Discipline

Some years ago when Prince Charles was born as heir to the British throne, the morning paper, along with the announcement of his birth, gave a short sketch of the life of a baby prince from birth to adolescence: "Although labelled 'Future sovereign,' he will find out that his whims and fancies will have to bend to discipline. The discipline under which he will be raised will be tough, rigid, and ever present. A Prince has to learn to mind his manners. He will learn and soon, that there are things a pauper can do that are denied to a Prince. In school, he will learn that he has to be an example, that the eyes of his mates are on him."

If to attain what may be considered the highest station in the social world a child can be denied the chance to live what we call a normal life, and the British nation can respect and honor him for so doing, is it not within reason that one working to fit himself to associate with the holy angels, Jesus and the Father throughout eternity, should also submit to discipline? One of the first lessons we should learn is that before honor is humility. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up," says James 4:10.

Christians are not born. They are made, and discipline is the indispensable element in their making. Like the baby prince, the Christian must learn—and the earlier he learns it the better—that his whims and fancies will have to bend to discipline. If the unsearchable riches of Christ and the honor and glory of the world to come are to be his, he must learn that there are things a worldling can do that are denied him, for the "flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

Against the Natural

The list of the things that we naturally would do is too long to enumerate here. We could, however, mention a few of the outstanding weaknesses of human nature. In Luke 16:15 Jesus said, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." It is highly esteemed among men to seek praise and approbation, to amplify our virtues and minimize our shortcomings, but that is denied us. It is abomination in the sight of God.

We like to feel that our tongue is our own and we can speak as we please, but we cannot do this if we would uphold the Platinum Principle, for in "word," in "conduct," are two of the virtues in which we are to be examples of the believers. If anyone doubts this weakness of human nature in the use of the tongue, he need only notice how readily children, as well as grown-ups, employ the slang expressions in use today. Profanity is common, even among women, and vile and filthy talk is almost the rule where a group of men are thrown together.

Watch out! brothers and sisters, lest the freedom of speech we allow ourselves belie our profession. All who have covenanted to serve God are amenable to Judgment; and Jesus, who Himself is to be Judge, said, "Every idle [or injurious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in

the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37).

How careful then, we should be that our words are always to edification. Each morning, as we embark upon the duties of the new day, we should re-impress our minds with the need to watch that we are examples of the believers. It would be next to impossible to emphasize this point too strongly. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we must be conscious that someone is watching us, and that his or her effort toward right living will either be accelerated or retarded by what is observed in us.

None of us liveth unto himself. All must be a brother's keeper. And Paul mentioned charity which is another virtue in which we are to be an example. Charity or love is the term that has an over-all significance. Giving our goods to feed the poor is one ingredient of charity. Often, this one ingredient is taken for the whole compound. True, to have charity, we must be willing to share our blessings with the less fortunate, but there are other ways of being charitable, and ways that might be harder for some to achieve than sharing our temporal blessings: a charitable attitude toward another's viewpoint, a willingness to acknowledge and correct our faults. In fact, the word is so all-inclusive that it covers the keeping of every commandment of God. A very striking definition of charity or love is given in I Cor. 13:4-6, (Moffatt):

"Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong; love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient."

How descriptive of the workings of the Platinum Principle!

Purity is a virtue in which a Christian must excel. The present day Sodom by which we find ourselves surrounded knows little of the meaning of chastity. Too often parents allow their teen-aged children to choose their own companions and spend their evenings away from home, with no one to watch their conduct. They are thrown on their own at community centers and places of amusement. The alert Christian must studiously avoid all such places, and if he will keep his mind pure, he must close his eyes to many sights to be seen, even on the streets, and be very careful of the company he keeps.

(Continued on page 25)

From Parent to Parent--

Don't Be Difficult!

"That's the last straw!" I thought, as I heard two of our children antagonizing each other for what seemed like the thousandth time, and for no apparent reason! They just seemed to delight in irking one another. How could I make them understand how *selfish* they were being? Why... why, they were being just plain *difficult*!

There it was—that word *difficult*. I'd heard it before somewhere. As the children's play resumed in a congenial manner, my mind went back to a certain Sunday, and I could hear our pastor saying gently what danger there was of *husband* and *wife* being "difficult" with one another in the home.

I sat down, chagrined. How right he was! How many times had I said or done something, knowing full well it would irk my husband, even sometimes doing it deliberately? Or, being irked myself, responded with anger? How many times had I declared "cold war" over some petty thing my husband was completely unaware of? and then, being asked about it, refused to tell why without making a cat-and-mouse game of it. Now *that*, I decided, was being just plain difficult, if anything was! And, I forced myself to admit, it was just plain *childish*! And, yes, *very* unchristian.

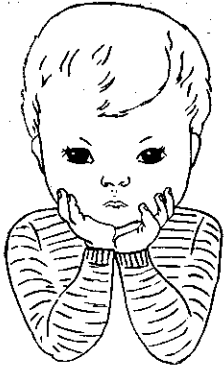
Then it hit home, and with full force. How could I expect to teach my children to get along without providing the right example myself? "O God," I prayed, "help me never to be difficult again!"

And so it is our desire to eliminate "being difficult" from our home. There are so many ways of squelching it. We can all try to be easier to live with by putting other family members first. We don't have to have our own way all the time. We don't have to display a superior attitude, thinking so much of our own opinion that we barely listen to the rest of the family. And we absolutely *have* to cut down on fault-finding!

It's going to be a big task for all of us, I know. But success means a happier (and more peaceful) home life, and some real additions to our Christian character growth!

Won't you join us, and weed out the "difficulty" in *your* home?

Please—don't be difficult! ●●



I'm Thinking

I. Can you match these items with the person associated with them in the Bible?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. a well of water | a. Jeremiah |
| 2. a shipwreck | b. Peter |
| 3. a knock at the door | c. Samuel |
| 4. a plumb line | d. Moses |
| 5. a little coat | e. Paul |
| 6. a dream | f. Rhoda |
| 7. a crowing cock | g. Amos |
| 8. a manger | h. Joseph |
| 9. a pit (dungeon) | i. Jesus |
| 10. burning bush | j. Hagar |

Answers:

1. j. Hagar (Gen. 21:17-19) 2. e. Paul (Acts 27) 3. f. Rhoda (Acts 12:13) 4. g. Amos 7:7-8) 5. c. Samuel (I Sam. 16:23) 6. h. Joseph (Genesis 40) 7. b. Peter (Matt. 26:74) 8. i. Jesus (Luke 2:7) 9. a. Jeremiah (Jer. 37:15-16) 10. d. Moses (Ex. 3:2)

II. Choose the right word out of this list that will finish each of these sentences.

- | | | |
|---------|-----------------|-----------------|
| water | missionary work | the ark |
| a wall | timbrels | the golden calf |
| a viper | Pharaoh | |
| a harp | five thousand | |

- David played
- Timothy traveled with Paul doing

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- Jesus walked on the
- Nehemiah built
- Paul shook off
- Aaron made
- Miriam sang with, praising God for deliverance.
- Joseph was next to in the rulership of Egypt.
- Jesus fed
- Noah built at God's command.

Answers:

1. a harp (I Sam. 16:23) 2. missionary work (I Thess. 3:2) 3. water (Matt. 14:26) 4. a wall (Nehemiah 4) 5. a viper (Acts 28:3) 6. a golden calf (Exodus 32) 7. timbrels (Ex. 15:20) 8. Pharaoh (Gen. 41:41-43) 9. five thousand (Matt. 14:21) 10. the ark (Gen. 6)

BY A RIVER

Fill in the blanks with the right name.

- I was hidden in a river.
- I caused an axe-head to float in a river.
- I first heard Paul preach while I was with other women near a river.
- I was healed of leprosy in a river.
- I struck the water of a river with my mantle, and it parted.
- I baptized Jesus in a river.
- I led my people across a river on dry ground.

Answers:

1. Elisha 2. Elisha 3. Lydia 4. Naaman 5. Elisha or Elisha 6. John the Baptist 7. Joshua

Questions

"You say that salvation is given only after one has endured to the end. Why did Jesus say to Zaccheus, 'This day is salvation come to this house' (Luke 19:9)?"

The thought of "salvation" or "to be saved" occurs more than 160 times in the New Testament; and it is used in more than one sense.

Generally speaking, the thought is that of a rescuing or preserving from harm or ill. The context in which the word is used must determine how inclusive is the meaning intended. For example, to be "saved" may refer to an immediate deliverance, as Stephen spoke of Moses' "delivering" or saving (the original Greek word is the same in this text) the Israelites from Egypt (Acts 7:25). Zacharias, prophesying of Christ, spoke of being "saved from our enemies" (Luke 1:71).

The same word is also used to describe a release from disease. It occurs in the narratives of Jesus' miracles, where the term is rendered "make whole" or "heal" or "to be whole" (see Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:22, 28, 34; 6:56; Luke 17:19). It may refer to an immediate deliverance, as Jesus prayed, "Father, save me from this hour" (John 12:27); He knew God was able to "save him from death"—again an immediate rescuing (Heb. 5:7).

Often "salvation" describes an eternal deliverance and is applied to the reward to be bestowed upon the faithful. It is an eternal preserving from all sin, suffering and death. This is salvation in its fullest sense. And when the term is used in this manner, the context often clearly indicates that the salvation is not a present possession but a future prospect. Phrases such as "might be saved" or "shall be saved" or "be saved" occur frequently (see Acts 2:47; Rom. 10:9; I Thess. 2:16; II Cor. 7:10). It is a condition to be sought for or attained (see Rom. 2:7; II Tim. 2:10; I Cor. 5:5).

The Bible clearly teaches that only he who endures "to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22; 24:13); it is not a gift bestowed at the time of

one's conversion, though one who is converted is "saved" or "rescued" from the thralldom of darkness. Jesus clearly associated salvation with a life of obedience and sacrifice, for when someone said "unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?" He replied, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:23). Many would *seek* salvation who would not obtain it—because they did not "strive" with sufficient effort to "enter in at the strait gate."

The thought of being saved is sometimes used in its present tense, where it describes an action in progress. For example, in First Corinthians 1:18, Paul spoke of "us which are saved," more correctly rendered "us which are being saved." It is not the act of a moment but a continuing process; many of the newer translations incorporate this thought.

The same use of the term occurs in II Corinthians 2:15, where Paul speaks of "them that are saved," literally "them that are being saved" or "them that are on the way to salvation." It is used again in I Corinthians 15:2, where the context shows definitely that the salvation is not full and final—"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel . . . by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Ye are saved IF—there is still possibility of their failing of the full salvation.

"Salvation" is also used to describe one's present deliverance from the hopelessness of darkness and ignorance. The person enlightened by God's saving knowledge is "saved" or "rescued"; he is "brought within the pale of saving privilege." Paul wrote that God "according to his mercy . . . saved us" (Tit. 3:5); and again, "By grace ye are saved" (Eph. 2:5, 8). His thought is not that we now possess the final salvation, but that we have been rescued from the darkness of the world by the mercy and grace of God; we have been delivered.

Jesus had the same thought of deliverance or rescuing from hopelessness, converting to a new life with a new hope and a new future, when He said to Zaccheus, "This day is salvation come to this house"—this day deliverance had indeed come. They were started on the way to a better life and a higher goal than they had formerly known. For them it was the beginning of the "day of salvation"—a day which would continue through all the remainder of their lives, their day of probation (II Cor. 6:2), a continuing "now." There is nothing in Jesus' words to indicate that the household of Zaccheus—or anyone else—was ever guaranteed a full and final salvation from the moment of his conversion. ●●

The Platinum Principle

(Continued from page 22)

Two of the last virtues in I Timothy 4:12 are "in spirit" and "in faith." To apply the Platinum Principle and to succeed in Christian living, we must have faith in God's Word and in the truthfulness of His great and precious promises. We must keep in the right frame of mind, retain the right attitude toward all that the Almighty has commanded, and once we know a thing is a divine command, we must fly to obey it; never consult our own ideas but believe God implicitly.

In applying the Platinum Principle, we must be exceedingly careful to see that our own attitude is always courageous, constructive, and spiritually helpful. Hence the Golden Rule could be re-phrased to read: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you," if governed solely by a desire for spiritual growth and improvement, "do ye even so to them." If in the wrong, we will want to be appraised of it so we can correct that wrong and we will return the same courtesy to our brother.

Oh, what a glorious principle to govern our lives! ●●

From A Reader—

Submit to God

The apostle James wrote, "Submit yourselves therefore to God." A Muslim is literally, "one who submits to God," thus we should be good Muslims. However, our God is the true and living God, not Allah. We should be so submitted to God that our very smallest care should be handed over to His attention. We should inwardly thank God for every success throughout the day, it matters not how small. The burdens we carry are not ours, but God's, once we put Him in the forefront of our mind. Remember, without God, we are nothing.

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." God's goal for us is self-improvement. "Cleanse your hands, . . . purify your hearts." Improve yourself, is God's invitation. We can only praise and thank God for His munificent kindness and His equitable judgments.

Mr. F., British Columbia, Canada

There is no such thing as absolute privacy. You cannot hide from God.

March, 1976

Store Up Good Treasure

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things"

—Matthew 12:35

Every man's heart is a treasury, a collection of good or evil or a certain percentage of each. As we pass through life we are continually encountering new experiences and new situations. From these we receive impressions, and one by one these incidents drop into our mental storehouse. Some impress us profoundly and we keep them fresh in our memory; others we forget.

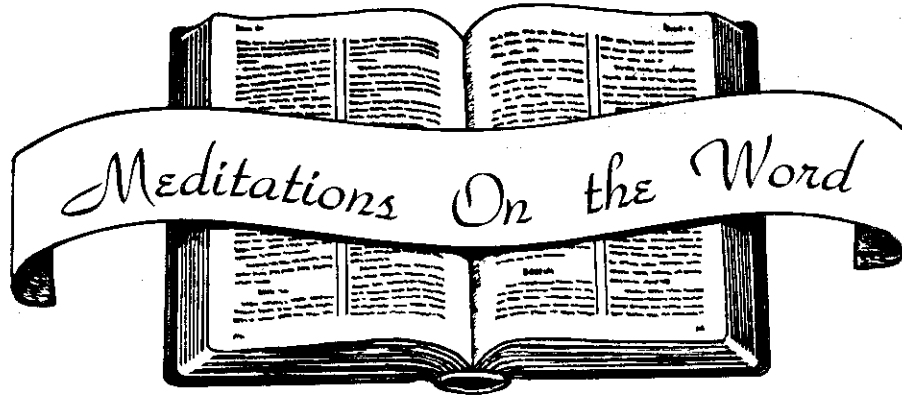
Every good deed, every good thought, every good attitude we manifest continually is being formed into habit. Each becomes a part of our good treasure or "good store." In times of crises or sudden testing, the words we utter, the deeds we perform or the attitudes we display are the result of the good store within. If we have been in the habit of doing, speaking, and thinking good, we continue to do so in critical times. The results are sure to be good because of habit, and habit thus works for us. Goodness becomes a part of our make-up. It becomes second nature to do the good, to say the right words, to take the proper attitude or keep the right motive.

When we realize how habit can thus work for— or against—us, we should be exceedingly careful about the quality of what goes into our mental storehouse.

In one of her timely admonitions, Rev. Maud Hembree once exhorted her listeners that they should lay up lofty thoughts, patience, honesty of purpose, new aspirations, new desires, a godly character. The Almighty requires that His people be pure inwardly as well as outwardly. Good fruit proceeds from a pure heart. When a man's inner life is corrupt, when his affections are set on earthly things, the actions proceeding from thence certainly will also be corrupt. What words can better express this thought than the ones Jesus uttered near the close of that first Sermon on the Mount:

"Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . . . A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:17-20).

How vital, then, to store up "good treasure"! ●●



"And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven"
—(Luke 10:18).

THIS text is sometimes quoted in support of the notion that Jesus Christ, in His pre-earthly existence, was an eye-witness of the Miltonian civil war in heaven and the violent expulsion of Lucifer, the leader of the rebellion. The suggestion raises some difficult questions. What was he doing there? How did a devil get into heaven in the first place? Quite simple, is the reply. He was not always a devil, but a bright angel, the heavenly choirmaster, to be exact. He had all the honors an angel could ask for, but he wanted more—to the everlasting sorrow of our planet, where the outcast made a forced landing.

If this be true, then we may conclude that heaven's "screening" process is something less than perfect. And if there is nothing new in the plan of God, then the same sort of thing has been going on in the universe from eternity past and will continue to eternity future, Eternal Wisdom gaining nothing by experience.

So literal an approach involves us in no end of difficulties and absurdities, and is in line with Luther's famous dictum, "I reject reason; I reject mathematical proofs. . . ."

To clearly understand Jesus' saying, we must first understand whom He is talking about. Who is Satan? It is very certain that he is no angel, and never was, for the angels of God can never die (Luke 20:36), while Satan, we are assured, is marked for eventual destruction in the "lake of fire, . . . which is the second death" (Rev. 20:9-10, 14; 21:8). If God's glorified heaven is not safe from treason and war and death, then nothing is.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, Satan, or the devil, is used as a symbolic or inclusive term, to denote sin and all sinners, any adversary to God.

It is employed in surprising ways. As godly an individual as the apostle Peter was rebuked with the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me" (Matthew 16:23).

This "Satan" has never been in heaven—God's heaven—nor will he ever be. But in the social and political heavens of our troubled *kosmos*, he rides high and rules with a high hand. He is fittingly termed "that old serpent" (Rev. 20:2); he is as old as the human race. The apostle Paul, employing the characteristic Hebrew symbolism, terms the collective powers of evil "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2), which spirit, we are informed by James and by the Master Himself, is nothing but the lusts and evil desires which come out of the human heart or mind (James 1:13-15; Mark 7:21-23). Given expression, these lusts are the cause of all the trouble, both political and personal, in the world.

It is definitely certain that Jesus did not refer to some event of His pre-existence, for, in the first place, He did not pre-exist. He was not a God incarnate, but a man, "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4), and He had no existence before the woman of whom He was made. His divine paternity did not affect His human nature in any way (Hebrews 2:17). Secondly, as we have said, Satan, as commonly understood or even as a spiritual prototype, was never in the heaven of the immortals.

Neither could it have been an event of Jesus' own day and age, for His career made no perceptible difference in His own generation. If Satan has fallen from heaven at any subsequent time, he has certainly made a remarkable come-back, if we

may judge by the present condition of society.

So much, then, for the negative side—what our Lord did *not* mean. But what *did* He mean?

The circumstances surrounding the utterance may shed some light on the question. The public ministry of Jesus was at its full tide. The work had outgrown the original band of twelve, so “after these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them . . . into every city and place whither he himself would come” (Luke 10:1). Miraculous power was provided, sufficient to confirm the Word. To humble men, who had known only the humdrum round of daily existence, this was a new and inspiring experience. The sick were healed, the lepers cleansed, sight restored to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf. Small wonder that they “returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name” (verse 17).

A knowledge of the plan of God and a study of these circumstances convince us that Jesus’ reply was not a statement of history but a prophecy. He was a mighty Prophet (Deut. 18:18), and could see far into the future. To what extent He understood the details of the establishment of His future Kingdom we do not know, but it is quite certain that He knew far more than His closest followers were able to receive. Understanding the broad outlines, they could wait for details until His ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. We may therefore conclude that when He said, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” His disciples understood His meaning.

Jesus’ reply was, in effect, “So far, so good. But this is not the real thing. The power you have experienced is but a foretaste, a faint shadow of that

which is to come. When the Son of man returns in His glory and His Kingdom fills the earth, Satan will be challenged not only on the fringes of his domain, but will be cast out of power completely. Rejoice not so much in your present ability, thrilling though it may be, as in the fact that your names are written in heaven (v. 20); that you may be a part of that glorified number of kings and priests who shall bring this same power of God to bear to banish all evil from the earth. This is the greater victory, the supreme goal, of which you must never lose sight.”

Satan’s fall from heaven will not be to immediate destruction, but into the close confinement of the “bottomless pit” for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2). Under a stern and unbreakable law, all evil will be repressed and shut up in the hearts of those who submit to the new order, but with imperfect motives. No open manifestation of rebellion will be tolerated; the chain is strong. Under such circumstances the human race will learn to mend its ways and to love the better things of life.

At the end of the Millennium comes a final test period, with “Satan” released briefly (Rev. 20: 7-8), but he never gets back into the heaven he once ruled so arrogantly. The Second Judgment consigns him forever to the second death, utter oblivion.

Satan’s fall will be “as lightning,” as the accumulated evils of all the millennia of human existence are dislodged. The change will be sudden enough, but like the Second Coming, which is also compared to lightning (Matt. 24:27), it will come with destructive violence and be completely visible. When Satan falls, it will not be done in a corner, but the whole world shall know. ●●

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Make Me



Did you ever compare your Christian service to silverware?

All silverware is made to serve, but the different pieces serve in different ways.

Forks stab. "This is mine," they say. Bits of meat, carrots, pickles, salad and cheese. "This, this and this are mine," says the fork. "Everything for me, me, me." And soon every last morsel on the plate has been pinioned by the spear of the selfish fork.

Knives cut. "Too big," says the knife. Slice. Cut. Chop. Dice. Everything must change its shape to satisfy the whim of the knife. Nothing is right as it is. Everything needs paring down, carving, or separating.

Spoons serve: cereal, soup, peas--all the impossible foods can be handled comfortably from the smooth bowl of the spoon. Spoons say, "Here, let me help you. We can manage together."

All the utensils may be necessary at times, but who wants to be always cutting and stabbing?

Make me a spoon, Lord.

A

Spoon,

Lord