Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

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

Ps.119:105

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

Ps.19:7

Creative Love

Pentecost

Greater Man, Greater Testing Who Are Accountable to God?

Megiddo Message

Vol. 60, No. 6

June, 1973

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE MEGIDDO MISSION CHURCH
L. T. NICHOLS, Founder
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A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone.

The Mediddo Message will

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

Published monthly by the MEGIDDO MISSION CHURCH 481 Thurston Road Rochester, N. Y. 14619

• SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One year, \$2.00; six months, \$1.00. Make checks or money orders for all literature payable to the Megiddo Mission Church. Please notify promptly of any change of address. Foreign subscribers, please make all payments by international money order, available at most banks and post offices.

Second Class Postage paid at Rochester, New York.

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O God of wisdom and all knowledge . Cov	er

Editorially Speaking...

Time to Think!

I T'S high time that we who call ourselves Christians were doing some thinking—clear honest thinking, especially if we take seriously our prospects of life in the world to come. Too many hours have we wasted without maintaining a constant, conscious control over this small organ of thought that distinguishes us from the animal creation. Too many hours have we permitted it to wander aimlessly over the world without guide or overseer. It's time to think!

To think or not to think. Therein lies the difference between success and failure; between carefulness and carelessness; between obedience and disobedience; between joy and sorrow; between fruition and frustration; between eternal gain and eternal loss.

"To think" is defined as: "To exercise the mind with ideas; to meditate, to muse, to purpose, plan or intend; to review or examine mentally." Thinking, clear, honest thinking, requires effort. If we would be Christians, our minds must be consciously controlled and directed through all our waking hours. When we are working, we must give our minds consciously and completely to the work at hand. And when we relax, we must meditate on the most important business of our lives—the King's business. In our relations with one another we must conduct ourselves according to the pattern left us by our Great Example, ever keeping before our minds the purpose for which we are living. One overpowering interest must direct all our thought, for Whom we serve and Whose we are has power to know every activity of our minds.

How often do we realize that we stumbled in our Christian walk for just one reason: we didn't think. Thinking could have saved many a transgression in days of old. Had Saul thought the matter through to its conclusion, he would not have disobeyed the command of the Lord and performed the service which Samuel the prophet was commissioned to do. Had Uzzah thought of the command of the law, not to touch any holy thing, he would not have disobeyed and put forth his hand to stay the ark of God. Had Moses thought before he struck the rock at Meribah, as he had been accustomed to do, he might have entered the Land of Promise.

And deep, sober thinking—fused to the hub of our habit wheel—can and will prevent fatal transgression in our lives. It will keep us reminded of the contrast between the weight of any earthly gain and the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And acting upon such thought, we shall be able to avoid the calamity of the short-ranged thinker who, engrossed with temporal success thought to tear down his barns and build greater. The infinitely larger loss of an eternal tomorrow lay beyond the scope of his thought.

Thinking up to the high standard of divinity will turn our sorrow into joy. And it will prove a wonder-working power in transforming our lives until we will be able to say spontaneously in any situation, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Creative Love

PRAYER

O God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou merciful Being who hast blessed us with all spiritual blessings, and made us sit in heavenly places with Thy dear Son, help us to set our affections on things above, that our whole life's interest may be centered on the things which are higher than the groveling things of the flesh.

May we never forget that where Christ sits He is King, He is Master, the One to give orders. If then we ever sit with Him in the seat of authority as associate kings in the age to come, we must now sit with Him in heavenly places. His interests must become our interests, His business our business, His life a pattern that we must match with precision.

Grant, Father, that we may always be mindful of His accusing words: Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? Ye call Me the Way, and walk Me not; ye call Me the life, and live Me not; ye call Me Master, and obey Me not; ye call Me bread, and eat Me not; ye call Me truth, and believe Me not; ye call Me Lord, and serve Me not. If this be our affected way of life we know that when He condemns us at the Great Assize we shall have none but ourselves to blame.

We pray for the wisdom to cease walking as other Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind, completely absorbed with the unimportant things of the fleeting present. Grant that the eyes of our understanding may be fully opened to the sublime hope of our calling, and may we have a warm, glowing affection for Thee and Thy purpose.

We pray Thee to be with us in this service, and may we open our hearts to receive a blessing. Be with those absent from us today, who would desire to be with us. Bless all everywhere who are striving to learn and live Thy truth. Be with the sick and afflicted, and with every one who is in trouble or distress; strengthen and sustain them as Thou hast promised. May Thine angel encamp about all such, preserving them from harm.

And when we have worked out our salvation with fear and trembling, grant us a place in Thy eternal Kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

DISCOURSE

God is love, His mercy brightens All the path in which we rove; Though the darkness sometimes frightens, God is wisdom, God is love.

THE sentiments of this well-known hymn are as true as the existence of God Himself. "God is wisdom." Matchless wisdom and limitless foresight are His divine prerogatives. One short verse from the book of Acts describes these two qualities: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

God is wisdom, and more, God is love—creative love. He has fatherly concern for the welfare of His earthly children. "Like as a father pitieth his children," wrote the Psalmist of Israel, "so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. 103:13). A good father loves his children. A good father provides for his children. A good father seeks to instill right principles into the minds of his children; he corrects and disciplines them. And our heavenly Father does all this for His family in even greater perfection and completeness.

In His divine wisdom and love, God gives comfort, heavenly comfort.

He with earthly cares entwineth Hope and comfort from above; Everywhere His glory shineth, God is wisdom, God is love.

God gives hope and comfort. The Psalmist was aware of this comfort God gives when he said, "This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me" (119:50). God's comfort comes to us through the medium of His written Word; that is our only connection with the Source of divine comfort today.

The apostle Paul was familiar with God's plan for comfort. He had received that comfort, and he knew how comforting it was; and he didn't try to hoard it or keep it all to himself—he wanted to share it with others. He wrote, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Cor. 1:3-4). What comfort can compare with the comfort of knowing that all things are working together for our good, that the whole shaping of the life of the true Christian is of the Lord, and that circumstances are always driving toward one destiny—our goal of eternal life.

Paul was aware that God's glory was shining everywhere, and he voiced his conviction in clear outline in his letter to his Corinthian brethren: "Wherever I go, thank God, he makes my life a constant pageant of triumph in Christ, diffusing the perfume of his knowledge everywhere by me. I live for God" (II Cor. 2:14, Moffatt Bible).

The Almighty Himself puts forth the question: "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?" (Isa. 40:25). And lest we answer according to our own conceptions, He proceeds to inform us through His inspired writers of some of His most striking attributes— His goodness, His creative ability, His mercy, His forbearance, His kindness. But perhaps the most familiar, the most beautiful, the best fitted to our mortal understanding and mortal need, and the most vital in our quest for the higher good is the concept of a God of love. Pagan cults had their gods of wrath, of revenge, of jealousy, of blood-lust, of every base and destructive quality; but it remained for the Hebrew prophets first to reveal the true and living God, a Deity who loves His creatures with a perfect love and calls upon them to imitate that love if they would be like Him and share His salvation.

The idea of God as supreme Intelligence or supreme Will is inadequate, for the reason that neither a brilliant mind nor an iron will is evidence of character; in fact, human experience proves that, ungoverned by love, they may be tools of evil. Generations of miseducation, however, have so beclouded and distorted this sublime word love that it requires definition. The term has come to mean any one of so many things that it is in need of rescue. "Love has all but suffered the fate of being slain in the house of those who have called themselves its friends."

Human Loves

The love most familiar and that which we first experience is that of the family circle. We know love as a domestic experience: the love between parent and child, between members of a family. Its purpose is clear; it seeks to protect the object of its interest. And while in many aspects this love is a beautiful and powerful thing, it has in its very nature grave limitations; it fails to satisfy our idea of God. Mother love, for instance, the strongest and most enduring family tie known to our race, can be and often is utterly unreasoning, blind to faults, oblivious to evidence, often degenerating into mere feeling of sympathy for some weak little being who happens to be of the mother's flesh and blood. It is clannish, tribal, and in some ways socially retarding. The fact that this protective impulse is present in the brute creation, sometimes to an amazing degree, would indicate that it is principally an instinct necessary to the survival of the species. At best its moral quality may be regarded as incidental. There is something lacking in the picture of God merely as a parent who is eternally busy taking care of His children. God is far more than a superior provider and protector of His offspring.

The second variety of love in human experience is sentimental or possessive love. Sentimental love seeks to possess the object of its interest. At first blush we can readily see that God is most emphatically not that kind of love. Read Paul's hymn to love (I Corinthians 13), substituting the word "romance" for love wherever it appears, and you will find romance is none of these things. It is selfish, jealous, intolerant, irrational, often cruel and lawless. There is no redemptive quality in such love. It is utterly inadequate to conceive of God's love as a romantic spasm or even a sustained ecstasy of sentiment. Neither God nor man can save the world by romancing, dear to the heart of mankind though it may be. Dispassionate analysis shows this sort of so-called love to be in the same category with protective love, a physical instinct based on race-preservation; and its infinite capacity for perversion and degradation, when ungoverned by law, places it morally even below the domestic experience.

But love has another guise. It is less easy to name but its evidence is unimpeachable. Unlike domestic love it does not seek merely to protect; and unlike romantic love it does not seek to possess. It seeks rather to perfect the object of its interest. Perhaps it should be called *creative love*, since its effort is to create greater and higher values in the person or thing loved. This might be exemplified in a small way by a profound love of music or art, which does not seek to protect or possess, but to *create*, to enrich music or art by one's life and efforts.

So, too, is the divine love. It is expressed in many ways which, to the instructed, bear no resemblance to the popular notion of love. Just as the highest form of parental love is expressed in guidance and discipline, so these things are the very essence of the creative, perfecting love of God; for only through discipline can perfection be attained. "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" (Prov. 3:12). Even Christ, the great Captain of our salvation, of whom it was said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," was made perfect through suffering (Heb. 2:10), through discipline. God so loved the world of believers that He could never be satisfied with them until they had attained His mental and moral image.

God Is a Creator

The great eternal God has many attributes; one of these, He is a creator. In Psalm 19 King David draws our attention to His creative ability in beautiful language: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." And again the great God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah, calls our attention to His ability to create, with these words: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. 40:26). Seven or more times God restates His claim as creator throughout the book of Isaiah.

Even a casual appraisal of the wonders of creation, whether seen at close range or distant observation, cannot fail to impress us with the greatness of the Being who created all these things. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that the wisest man living today—or the accumulated wisdom of all the men living or that have lived—could not create any part of the physical universe, hence we can easily attribute it to an All-wise Designer and Creator.

We readily accord to the Eternal God the credit for the creation of the physical universe, and the world, and man. But need we feel that His interest in creating is limited to these creations? No, being a God of love, He possesses creative love. From the great mass of humanity He is creating a new nation, a nation of believers, a group of superalert men and women who place the love of life above all other interests. He has arranged the circumstances by which we enjoy physical life, to the end that we may make something of ourselves. He permits grief, reverses, pain, distractions, and testing to toughen our fiber and build a character worthy of perpetuation.

The Christian life is a life of change, of improvement, of character building, of learning to put first things first. God's creative love purposes to produce one new man, "created in righteousness and true holiness." We are His "workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 4:24; 2:10). The saving gospel is a gospel of transformation, of improvement. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," cried the Psalmist (51:10); the sentiment being exactly the same as when he prayed, "Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me" (40:11). Could we but realize that the chastening rod is directed by the hand of God Himself, a token of His love and care to purge us from sin and create a clean heart within us, we would so receive it that it would yield in us the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

God is creating a people to form a part of a new and heavenly order which one day shall prevail upon earth. Through Isaiah He revealed His plan in working with mankind—it was to fill the earth with His glory, with true Israel, the "little flock," a "righteous little people." The Lord speaks: "I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory" (Isa. 46:13). Speaking again of His plan to create righteous people fit for perpetuation, the Eternal declares, "I will say to the north, Give up: and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isa. 43: 6, 7). What an exhibition of creative love!

God Transforms

Speaking again through Isaiah the Eternal declares: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things" (Isa. 45:7). He shows His creative love in that He creates the better from the poorer, transforms the worthless into the most valuable of commodities. The higher critics find fault with the statement that God creates evil. And if that is the actual meaning of the term, their criticism is justified. We could not worship a God who would deliberately create evil. We see too much of evil in the world today and its dire results to be impressed by a being responsible for its existence.

The Hebrew word translated "create" has a number of definitions. One of these definitions is, "to

cut or pare down." Hence the text might read, I cut or pare down evil, I cut or pare down darkness. It might be more comprehensive to say that God takes raw material, rough, unprocessed, and of little worth, and re-creates it into finished material for His kingdom. Dr. Moffatt's translation of Job 11:11-12 advances this very thought. Speaking of the Eternal, he said; "Well does he know who are worthless; he sees guilt and he marks it, training a worthless creature to be wise, taming a wild colt of a man." He takes a wild colt of a man and reforms him into a new creature, by love creating him into material fit for perpetuation.

When we look upon a piece of exquisitely perfect and beautiful furniture, we know at once that it did not emerge from the forest a finished product. Raw materials were processed and fabricated to effect the result. And the same is true with basically evil human beings. As a wild untamed colt of a man they are worthless, but God knows they have the potential for transformation, and He employs it. They can be tamed, and He sends the process to tame them; furthermore, we can be tamed, and He sends the process to tame us. It is worthy of note that the knottiest portions of a saw-log are susceptible to being cut into thin layers to form the most beautiful of plywood panels. God sometimes finds the same true with human beings.

God shows His creative love by leaving us free moral agents, so that we can make something of ourselves if we choose-or we can refuse improvement. A man who is financially able to write a check for five thousand dollars, can go out into the new-car market and buy a motor car which is a mechanical marvel of engineering and refinement, the result of more than seventy years of research and improvement. At the turn of the century the combined wealth of the Morgans, the Astors, the Vanderbilts and the Rockefellers, could not have procured such a device as any man today can buy for five thousand dollars. But there is no special virtue to the present purchaser; he merely is cashing in on the efforts of others. The first car that Henry Ford, or any of the early experimenters built, crude though they were, was a greater credit to its owner than possessing the finest car of today. The former showed purpose, creatorship, and devotion to an ideal; the latter was the simple accomplishment of purchasing an already perfected article from accumulated wealth. Likewise God could have created us humans flawless and perfect, so that it would have been impossible for us to sin; but under those conditions our perfection would be of no particular glory to Him, and no virtue to ourselves. God shows His creative love by putting us on our own, setting before us good and evil, but leaving the choice entirely to us.

In the allegory of creation in the first chapters of Genesis, the Lord is said to have made man out of the dust of the ground. Therefore, making the spiritual application, the one new man which God is making—and which when completed will be "very good"—is the end result of creative love. The Lord didn't find the material for His kingdom all ready to use. The human beings destined to become members of the new man were still in a rudimentary state. They were the "dust of the ground," and before they could merit exaltation they must be lifted above that condition by a creative process. God's plan for mankind-a replica of the plan He employed through endless ages in the past—was to take valueless material and re-create it into finished material for His eternal purpose. God's creative love is working upon us now if only we will allow it to work.

God's Munificence An Evidence of His Creative Love

It is quite true that the love of God has visible features which are protective and paternalistic. We see it demonstrated in the bountiful provision made for the subsistence of the human family, even the unthankful and evil. It may seem to the fainthearted that the Creator, through the adverse forces of Nature, has handicapped him and made life and survival difficult for his species; but the fact remains that his species has thrived amazingly under these alleged hardships, and the human population of our planet grows apace. Year after year,

He sendeth the sunshine and rain, He scatters the dew on the flowers; He maketh the desert to bloom, His blessings descend as the showers. Wonderful, merciful, bountiful love!

And yet, upon sober second thought, we see that even this provision is not from sentimental or purposeless generosity. The Eternal does all things according to plan and toward a definite end, and His only interest, if we may believe His own words, is in the members of the "world to come," the true Israel, those who will, through the ages, be drawn out of the great reservoir of humanity. The present evil world shares these temporal bounties only incidentally, until the fullness of the time shall come when only the fittest shall survive. Creative purpose dominates even this lavish provision for all flesh.

By far the most precious gift this divine creative love has bestowed upon the human race is the (Continued on page 22)

"Men and Brethren,

What Shall We Do?"

THE setting was Pentecost, the Fiftieth Day, the Feast of Weeks which loyal Israelites had remembered faithfully for more than a millennium. The date marked the close of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was a day of looking back and looking ahead, a day of thanksgiving and anticipation. (The anniversary of Pentecost falls this year on June 5 and 6).

But suddenly the agricultural setting of the day was overshadowed by a new significance. For Pentecost marked the beginning of the Christian Church, and one of the greatest days in history.

The Eleven had been through the harrowing and tragic events of the crucifixion. Then they had seen and heard the witness of the resurrection. But they had no immediate idea yet as to what they ought to do, except to obey the command their Lord had left with them just before He was taken into heaven. Do not leave Jerusalem, He had said, but "wait for the promise of the Father.... For... ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence."

And so they waited. And they were still waiting, when the day of Pentecost arrived, "in one place," as the Scriptures say. And suddenly the great event happened, and they found it impossible to describe it except in poetry and symbol. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:2-4).

Even then they did not receive detailed instruction outlining each step of the rest of their lives. But they did receive light upon the next step, and immediately they took that step. They were to witness, and they "began to speak with other tongues...the wonderful works of God."

This awakened the critics. Something was wrong. Were these apostles drunk?

In answer to this charge, Peter stood up and be-

gan to preach. First he pointed to the prophecy which they were witnessing in fulfillment—even the descent of power from on high (Acts 2:16). Then he told them of a greater Pentecost still far in the future (Acts 2:17-21). And then, quoting from their own Scriptures, He told them of "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God"—but not approved by them. "That same Jesus, whom ye have crucified," he said, is "both Lord and Christ."

Peter spoke with power, and "when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart." They were convicted. What could they do? What *should* they do?

Peter's answer was direct, and reaches even to us: "REPENT." "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

"REPENT"

That is a harsh, hard word. To modern ears it may sound old-fashioned, but it is as much our need as it was theirs on that day of Pentecost. Repent means a change, a drastic change. It means that we have recognized our evil and are ready to take any action necessary to expel it from our hearts and lives. It means there is something dead which must be quickened, something asleep which must be awakened, something wrong which must be righted. We must find new values to live by and new hopes to live for. We might be eager to pursue a new course, were it not for this humiliating obstacle in our pathway: "Repent."

The meaning of repentance is illustrated by the traveler who stopped to ask a man who was resident in that neighborhood how far it was to his destination. "Well," replied the man, "if you keep on going the way you are headed, it is about 25,000 miles. But if you will turn back and take a right turn, it is only about three miles." This was the word Peter spoke to those men on the day of Pentecost, and it is the word he speaks to us. To keep traveling the way we are headed may mean that

(Continued on page 12)

Timely Topics

SATURDAY morning coming round—its magic hours of freedom seduce many good-intentioned parents into temporarily abandoning their offspring. It is all too easy to forget the day's obligations and stay in bed longer, while the little ones toddle into the living room for a rendezvous with that reliable pacifier, the television set. So loyal an audience are they that they will park themselves obediently before the tube whatever the fare. Even the tiniest will stare enchanted at the continually changing patterns—until the rest of the family offers something more exciting.

TV— Activated Evil

Such is the lamentable situation in too many homes of our modern America. Most parents have never thought of taking their chil-

dren to night clubs, theaters, or other places of filthy and questionable amusement. But what about the TV set, on which all forms of immorality—drinking, smoking, lust, unclad people, dancing, drugs—and crime—robberies, holdups, fights, murders, kidnappings, arson, lynching—are flaunted before young and old alike, and right in the home! The very fact that such programs exist is an indictment upon the audience, who decide the quality of the programs to be seen. In other words, this is what the majority of the public want to see!

"A commercial television station must present programs that appeal to the public," we are told, "in order to attract viewers, and therefore, advertisers. Programs are cancelled or continued on the basis of rating systems that measure the percentage of viewing audience held by each program in its time period. Programs that appeal to a selective but relatively small audience are usually dropped. (Few advertisers are willing to spend the enormous amounts of money required to sponsor a program if their advertising will reach only a small audience.)

"There is constant criticism, from many sources, of the quality of programs on commercial television, and the blame is usually placed on the importance attached to ratings. Some critics have suggested increased government regulation as a

means to force commercial television stations to devote more time to the interests of smaller audiences. It is argued, however, that such measures are contrary to the principles of free enterprise and might constitute a threat to freedom of speech or of the press" (*The New Standard Encyclopedia*).

Television is a fairly recent absorption, having expanded rapidly during the last twenty years. Immediately following World War II, the production of televisions multiplied until at present the manufacture, sale and repair of television sets and the production of programs is a major industry in our country and abroad.

Television has proven beneficial to mankind in various ways. Closed-circuit television fills a definite place in education, hospitals, industry, banks, laboratories, traffic coordination, and outer space research.

However, it is commercial television which has become so popular and so "necessary" that today's average American household hardly feels complete without one—or two or three, depending on the social and economic status. And so it becomes the home's entertainer, informer, and baby-sitter. Daily living is planned with regard to "what's coming on" that box in the living room, or den, or even kitchen. For some, watching TV becomes habit that borders on obsession. TV can be dangerously addictive. As said a well-known actor, "I hate television. I hate it as much as peanuts, But I can't stop eating peanuts."

Does the TV contribute to family unity? Far from it. What communication can take place between members of the family with all eyes and ears glued to what is happening on the TV screen? Rather, it tends to be a causative factor in the crumbling of family life. A poor substitute for family companionship, worship and Bible reading, it is one more idol set up which removes the God of heaven from the lives of the people and delivers them from the trouble of deciding what they can do with their leisure time.

And the effects of the quality—or lack of it—in the programs so popularized on its screen is alarming. Think of the impressions made on the minds and lives of the young, even the very young, who learn more from what they see than what they are told. How can they be expected to grow up having high moral ideals when they have been fed such an unwholesome diet from babyhood? A few who are aware of what is happening—judges, educators, ministers, and ordinary thinking people—cry out against the damage TV is doing. Crime committed by the young has increased tremendously, and where did the youngsters learn their methods from? Television!

According to a current circular, a group of mothers sat in on a children's TV program and this is what they saw: "13 murders, 14 sluggings, 6 kidnappings, 8 holdups and armed robberies, 3 explosions, 2 cases of arson and blackmail, lynching and torture." Parents, and everyone, should be alert to the destructive potential of this popular form of home entertainment.

Certainly the television should find no welcome center in the home of the God-fearing family. The command in First John 2 is plain: "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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Equally plain are the words of Paul: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing" (II Cor. 6:17). And his strong admonition in Ephesians 5 allows no time to be wasted: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Could any Christian fulfill this commandment while watching popular programs on TV?

It is not possible to serve God wholeheartedly if we involve ourselves in the sinful pleasures of the world, for "no servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). Likewise the thoughts of the striving Christian must be turned to those things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8)—and certainly TV could not influence one's thoughts in this direction. To think on such things requires much self-control and effort, whereas TV-viewing requires no effort at all. The mind is open to any and all impressions made available.

Christian parents are commanded to bring up their children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:2), and such a command can never be carried out in a home where the TV is the family babysitter. It is the child's home life and training which most often influences the kind of adult he will be; home environment is extremely important.

Thank God that the days of the present pleasureseeking generation are numbered. This ungodly age is rapidly drawing to a close. A change is coming! The signs of fulfilled prophecy keep our faith growing stronger and stronger, as we know that God's promises will also be fulfilled in due time. As suddenly as the flood came in the days of Noah, and as the fire and brimstone rained down upon a wicked Sodom and Gomorrah, "even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:26-30). If we would be on the safe side in that great and dreadful day, let us now hearken to the plea of Jesus through John the Revelator: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4). For "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17).

WHAT ARE YOUR TOTALS?

When your thoughts express themselves
In the many words you use,
And you find that you are known
By the things in life you choose;
When your steps are added up
At the climax of the day,
And your deeds are counted in
All along your checkered way,
WHAT ARE YOUR TOTALS?

When you work at this or that,
As a means of livelihood,
When you stand by what you do
As your fellowmen have stood;
When you act and play your part
In the lives of those you meet,
When you face your daily tasks,
Each of which you have to treat,

WHAT ARE YOUR TOTALS?

When you meet the good or bad
That will tell of what you're made
When you face the downward road,
Or the road that leads up grade;
When you go or when you stay,
When you take or when you give;
When you count on what you are
By the way you daily live,

WHAT ARE YOUR TOTALS?

—Selected.

Greater Man, Greater Testing

THE way of the Lord is equal. To whom much is given, of him shall much be required, and the man of smaller capacity is not responsible beyond his own measure of endowment. To those who perform the greater work, shall be the greater reward. But all must be overcomers. This is the minimum requirement; but the man with the greater endowment has a greater responsibility, also greater temptations. Every faithful son of God will be tried sufficiently, for trial is necessary. The system of balances operates the same throughout the plan of salvation.

Abraham was one of God's great men. The brief history that we have of his life might lead us to think that he had things pretty much his own way. He was very rich in silver and gold, in cattle and goods. The nations about him knew him as a mighty prince. A broad, empty land lay before him in which to live the peaceful, unhurried, unworried life of a desert chief. There was little need of contact with the world of the ungodly. His tribe was a world in itself. So far as we know, he was answerable to no government and paid no tax. His communion with his God was directly to the visible and tangible angelic messengers on occasion, though we know there were long spaces of wearying and time-testing silence. His privileges seem overabundant; yet, judging from our own experiences we know that even the first hundred years of his life could not have been all strawberries and cream. Life just is not like that; and it never was.

Abraham was a human being like ourselves, and many a struggle must have arisen within his breast as life's daily problems tested and tried him. The little thorns were in his pathway no less than in ours, but he was too big a man to be conquered by them. And being a big man, he required a big trial for the supreme test of his faith.

From the record we learn of one of his greatest frustrations. With nearly everything that heart could wish in his possession and command, one thing was lacking. And the lack gave him no peace. "Lord, God," he cried in anguish of soul, "what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?" An old man, with an aging companion, with all the oriental love of offspring and the desire to be

founder of a family, with promises from the Eternal pertaining to his seed—a seed that did not exist—small wonder that even his mighty faith needed another bulwark of support. Yet, when the Lord sent an angel to carry the answer to Abraham, this great man believed, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

The promised child was born, and Sarah laughed for joy. The fulfillment of Abraham's lifelong desire, he was the apple of his father's eye. Then, out of a sky seemingly clear and sunny came a stupendous test. All the trials of a lifetime rolled up into one which would reveal whether the gift or the Giver lay nearer Abraham's heart.

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt [put to the test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here am I.

"And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

"And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

"And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.

"And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?

"And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen 22:1-8).

Abraham's courageous obedience and unshakable faith, which God rewarded with a sudden and direct intervention, are matters of familiar history. The man of great endowment proved himself equal to his responsibility. As a result, God confirmed again His promise of future blessing: "Because

10 MEGIDDO MESSAGE

thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and...in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:16-18).

A stupendous test, but a stupendous reward. And so God works. The way of the Lord is equal. We would not ask for the position of honor which Abraham occupies and will occupy when God's new order is established; but neither would we ask for his equal in testing. God knows what we need for our development, what we can achieve, what we can endure, and measures every pressure that tries our soul. He has only one requirement of us: our best. ••

THINK!

I was second only to the King;
 I served my God—the foremost thing.
 From human glory I did flee,
 Though men bowed low and honored me.

Who am I?

We four lived at Caesarea
 In the land of old Judea.
 There our father did abide.
 We served the Lord and prophesied.

Who are we?

3. Where the waves of the Jordan roll,
My skin and body were made whole;
Not muddy waters of that stream
But my obedience made me clean.

Who am I?

4. Paul once sent a letter by me;
Our friends at Rome I went to see.
I served my Church and gave my all,
Helping many, great and small.

Who am I?

5. Paul the prisoner to me was sent; I, the governor most excellent.

"At some convenient time I'll call...
For now," I said, "let this be all."

Who am I?

6. Paul met us at the riverside;
To God my heart I opened wide.
My household all were baptized, too.
For prayer we met, many or few.

Who am I?

7. Religion was at an all-time low; Israel's consolation seemed so slow. My faith was burning very bright—God's prophets all had given light. What joy it was the babe to take And to our God a prayer make.

Who am I?

8. I was surprised God's voice to hear; 'Twas not Eli's, but it was clear.

To God I gave my youthful heart; I had an extra-special start.

Who am I?

9. Upon Mar's Hill I heard Paul speak;
New things the people came to seek.
Though the only woman called by name,
There were believers just the same.

Who am I?

10. A young king asked me to expound The book of God which had been found. By Hilkiah the word I sent; The king of Judah his clothes rent.

Who am I?

Answers

(11 Kings 22:13-18)	prophetess.	Huldah the	.01
17:3 4)	toΑ)	Damaris.	6
I Sam. 3:3-10))	Samuel.	.8
лке 2:28-29)	T)	Simeon.	۲.
(9T s	doA)	Lydia.	'9
(\$Z:£	Acts 24	Felix.	.č
(2-1:91 snamo	H)	Phoebe.	Ŧ
I Kings 5:13-14)	(I)	Naaman.	3.
(8-8:12 stoA)	ters of Philip.	Four daugh	2
(8	(Gen. 41:42-43	loseph.	T

Your Signature

W HEN a child first learns to write his name, he goes about writing it everywhere, in books, on sidewalks, on walls and in sand. He soon discovers that this is not the accepted thing to do, and reserves his writing ability for less public places. As he grows to maturity he learns that his signature bears binding obligation. Thus he learns to be careful about putting his signature to papers that go out beyond his control. By experience he learns to be wary of the legal documents he signs.

But there is a deeper thought about our signatures. The man who wrote the eighth Psalm had this in mind. He was thinking about the signature of God. He had looked at the glory of the heavens—the stars, and the sun, and the moon—and he had looked at that tiny little speck called man. He had seen beauty and wisdom and divine order. How did it come about? Did it just happen? No, "it is the Lord's doing," he cries; His signature is written all over it. "How excellent is thy name in all the earth!" This mercy, this blessing, this beauty—these are the letters in the signature of God!

All of us, like God, leave our signatures upon our work whether or not we actually spell out the letters in pen and ink. In this same way, painters and sculptors know the works of the masters in their field without seeing their names signed in letters. The signature of the master artist is embedded in the very brush strokes and the marks of the chisel and in the intangible personality of the work itself. In the same way musicians can identify the works of their masters. Only Mozart could have written Mozart's music. Its style and personality certify it.

In the same way all of us, even in the homely duties of every day leave our signatures upon our work. When mother finds a trail of cookie crumbs from the pantry to the front door, she knows that is her small son's signature. A student leaves his signature upon his classwork whether he signs it or not. Every woman weaves her signature into her home; every man stamps his upon his business or profession; the carpenter upon the house he builds; the mason upon the bricks he lays.

John the Revelator records another type of signature. "His name shall be in their foreheads." His signature penned indelibly on the foreheads of those who stand approved suggests a likeness of mental and moral characteristics. These in-

dividuals fixed their minds so firmly on God and His law that it became their identifying characteristic; they belonged to God. Is this signature being inscribed on our foreheads? Does our conduct show that we are unmistakably the property of God?

There is another aspect of our signatures: we write them not only upon our work but upon the persons with whom we live and associate. No man lives to himself alone; we each are a constant influence on others. And here lies a further responsibility: we must be careful how we write. We can write our signature in letters of self-seeking, or write as our Master wrote His—in letters of kindness and courage.

How about our signature—yours and mine? . .

"What Shall We Do?"

(Continued from page 7)

we will never arrive where we want to be. We must begin by turning around.

What does this mean in our everyday lives? It means that every evil imagination must be rooted out by a constructive thought. Every word of foolishness, every sarcastic remark, every needless comment, every meaningless expression, as well as every slurring or slangy phrase, must never be allowed to pass the gateway of our lips; we must turn around and speak words of kindness, confidence, faith and love. Repentance means that every emotion of impatience, every feeling of bitterness, every attitude of superiority, every passion of jealousy must be forcefully evicted from our minds and lives. Whatever our tendency toward evil, as soon as we sense that it is evil we must turn squarely around and travel in the opposite direction if we would fulfill Peter's command. "Repent."

As we succeed in overpowering each evil desire and inclination with the nobler purposes of God, we prepare ourselves for the greater Pentecost which the apostle Peter foresaw, when God will pour out His spirit "upon all flesh," when He shall "shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath,... and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved [delivered]" (Acts 2:17-21). This shall be when that great and glorious day of the Lord has come.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God."

Original Sin

CONTRARY to the teaching of theology, death and sin are not the direct result of the sin of Adam and Eve in Eden but have formed a part of the world from the beginning. When and why the first creature on this earth died, we are not told. And it is immaterial. Death is but the normal, natural end of man's brief mortal existence. Sin is the natural result of a weak human nature.

"The idea that Adam's descendants are automatically sinners because of the sin of their ancestor, and that they are already sinners when they enter the world, is foreign to Holy Scripture," writes Herbert Haag. We concur. A man becomes a sinner through the exercise of his free will; he is free to choose the good or the evil.

"The scriptures are witness that once sin entered the world, it spread among men like a rushing torrent with such power that, in spite of personal freedom, no man in reality could escape it. When a man, furnished only with human powers, was born into the sinful world, he became at the same time, subject to the might of sin. It is in this sense that Adam transmitted sin which is the death of the soul to all mankind.... Adam is the cause of spiritual death only for those who imitate his fault."*

We will conclude our study of original sin with this issue, following our outline:

- VI. Paul and Original Sin
 - A. Sin Under Law
 - B. Did Paul Teach Original Sin?
 - C. Paul and Righteousness

The Bible itself offers conclusive proof that the doctrine of original sin is man-made and not Godordained. Writes one dissenter: "In view of the predominant place Adam and Eve have held in Christian theology it is no less than startling to be told that in the whole of the Old Testament there are only a few scattered references to them. [These are found mostly in the Apocrypha which we do not recognize as inspired.] What a contrast this

presents with the history of the patriarchs which is mentioned ceaselessly!... Nor could we say that there is a hint anywhere in the Old Testament of an inherited sin as we Christians have been accustomed to think of it.... They [the Jews] knew nothing of a sin handed on from parent to child."**

This fact alone should prove that Adam's sin affected no one but Adam. Had the consequences affected all succeeding generations, attention would have been called to it repeatedly. The only direct references to Adam in the Old Testament are found in I Chron. 1:1 where he heads the genealogy of David, and Deut. 32:8. It is also notable that Jesus made no reference to Adam having any part in the sin of the world.

We have learned that the doctrine of original sin did not originate in the Scriptures but was first found in literature outside the Scriptures. The doctrine as found in church catechisms today was formulated by Augustine, who, in the words of one Bible scholar, "read more of his teaching on original sin into [Scripture] than he could have got from it." He based his doctrine largely on Romans 5:12, which, because of a mistranslation, seemed to support the theory he held. He assumed his translation to be correct because it "fitted beautifully into the opinion he had already formed."

VI. PAUL AND ORIGINAL SIN

Sin is an evil deed, willfully committed with full knowledge of the consequences. It has been the same from the beginning. God gave His law to the children of Israel through Moses: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, . . . and a curse, if ye will not obey . . . " (Deut. 11:26-28). The curse would not come upon them because Adam sinned, or the blessing because Christ was righteous. They would be blessed if they obeyed; cursed if they did not obey. The responsibility was entirely theirs.

^{*} Herbert Haag, Is Original Sin in Scripture? p. 105.

^{**} Peter DeRosa, Christ and Original Sin, pp. 97, 98.

The history of the early Christian Church reveals that such a doctrine as original sin was unknown. The Church held each individual responsible for his own sin; no thought was given to placing the blame on some early ancestor. The early Church was founded on the teachings of Christ and not once did Christ mention Adam and Eve in any recorded utterance nor did He once suggest that human sin was the result of their disobedience.

As the Church became more closely associated with the pagan world, it began to lose sight of the teachings of Christ and to absorb many of the pagan doctrines and practices. As we have learned in previous lessons, Augustine played a major part in establishing the doctrines of the Church and it was through his influence that the doctrine of original sin became an official tenet of the apostate church.

Briefly, Augustine's doctrine stated that "on account of their sin Adam and Eve lost sanctifying grace, their right to heaven, and their special gift; they became subject to death, to suffering, and to a strong inclination to evil, and they were driven from the Garden of Paradise." And "on account of the sin of Adam, we, his descendants, come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace and inherit his punishment, as we would have inherited his gifts had he been obedient to God."*

Some twelve centuries later, during an official session of the Catholic Church Council, Augustine's doctrine was upheld in its entirety in a canon that promised excommunication for anyone who asserted otherwise. More recent church councils have likewise upheld Augustine's doctrine and it remains today.

Augustine's sole support for the doctrine was a mistranslation of Romans 5:12, that: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned" (Douay Version). The last phrase of this verse is more correctly translated "because all have sinned" (New Catholic Edition); "because all men sinned" (Goodspeed); "inasmuch as all men have sinned" (NEB); "All alike were guilty men" (Knox); and our Common Version which reads "for that all have sinned."

The mistranslation came about in translating the text from Greek to Latin, the language of the Church fathers. Augustine seized upon the error and built his theology upon it. The mistake was uncontested for about a thousand years, but today it is generally accepted that the Greek conjunction "eph ho" which occurs in the original has the meaning of "because," or "considering that." The New Catholic Edition of the Bible has corrected the error and renders the phrase: "Through one man

sin entered into the world and through sin, death, and thus death has passed to all men because all men have sinned."

But even though it is now recognized that Augustine built on an uncertain foundation, the doctrine still stands in a majority of churches and its supporters credit Paul with the authorship of the doctrine and run to his Epistle to the Romans for proof.

Because of so much of his teaching to the contrary, we are confident that Paul had no intention of teaching "Original Sin," that all men are condemned because Adam sinned. Let us study Paul's words concerning sin.

A. Sin Under Law

To understand Paul's teaching concerning sin let us first read the verses in question: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come)" (Rom. 5:12-14).

Before we consider the "one man" by whom sin entered the world let us ascertain who is under God's law. We will consult the Bible for the answer.

- 1. Are all under God's law? No. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. 2:12-13). Mankind is divided into three classes:
- a. Those who have sinned without law. We read that this class "shall also perish without law." They are the great masses of mankind including the heathens of foreign lands who never knew God's law and never made a covenant to serve God. Never having known, they live and die without being held responsible to God. They are the class that "shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake" (Jer. 51:57). They will not be resurrected and judged. This life, which God gives to all, is their only reward.
- b. Those who have sinned in the law. This class having known the law "shall be judged by the law." They will be among those resurrected and brought to Judgment to be judged "according to their works," and their works being evil, will be subject

^{*} Herbert Haag, Is Original Sin in Scripture?, p. 45.

to death, penal death. They "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (II Thess. 1:9).

c. The doers of the law. This class both heard the law and obeyed it. They are "just before God." They are the class that were seen by the Revelator in chapter 14. "These were redeemed from among men,... and in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (vs. 4-5).

God does not hold sin against anyone who has not made himself responsible to the law. Only those who agree to serve God will be called to Judgment. If found faithful, they will receive the reward of eternal life. If found unfaithful, they will be subject to penal death. One who has sinned has transgressed the law and he is responsible for his own sin only, not the sin of his forefathers.

B. Did Paul Teach Original Sin?

We are confident that Paul had no intention of teaching a doctrine of original sin such as is found in the churches of today. In Paul's words in Romans 5, theologians think they find backing for their belief that all mankind are condemned by Adam's sin and saved through Christ's righteousness. The Scriptures do not uphold such a teaching. We cannot take a few verses of Paul's writings and say that they teach a doctrine that is contrary to his other Epistles and opposed to the whole tenor of the Bible.

The apostle Peter wrote that "our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:15-16). With these words in mind, let us attempt to understand Paul's teaching. Let us put Augustine's doctrine of original sin entirely out of our mind that we be not guilty of reading his doctrine into Paul's words.

1. The "One Man" by whom sin entered. Paul said in Romans 5:12, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," but he did not say the "one man" was Adam alone. Theology, however, has assumed that it was the literal man Adam, hence "original" or the first sin in the world. Adam might be said to be the originator of sin by virtue of the fact that he was the first to sin under law, being the first man to covenant and thus the first to be accountable for his sin.

A careful reading of Paul's letter to the Romans, of which the verses in question form less than one-hundredth part, will immediately prove that the Apostle is not attempting to forge the doctrine of original sin. In the first three chapters of the letter he discusses the sinfulness of humanity without mention of Adam or his sin.

a. Adam as a representative man. The "one man" of Romans 5:12 is not necessarily the first individual at the beginning of the history of mankind. Besides being an individual, Adam is also a representative man and defines those who come into God's service and fail to keep His law. "The man, Adam, is as well a mirror to the reader. Adam is myself for I am disobedient, hateful, unloving, rebellious. Adam is here and now; he is me and you and him and her.... To David who had stolen another's wife, the prophet Nathan said: 'You are the man.' Genesis speaks to its every reader in like manner: 'You are Adam, the man of dust.' "**

This "one man" by whose disobedience sin entered the world is a composite man, a corporate personality, a group of men who have sinned. The Bible often speaks of a group as one. Jesus represented the unfaithful man by a guest who did not have on the wedding garment, the robe of right-eousness. He was to be bound, cast out, and not permitted to partake of the feast.

In Hosea 6:6-7 we read of a man by whom sin entered the world, and it was not the literal Adam: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me." The marginal reference in the King James Bible has for the words "like men" the alternate translation of "like Adam." The classes of men here represented have transgressed the covenant, they have sinned—"like Adam." They were under covenant to God, but proved unfaithful; they failed to keep their vow.

Many who have come under the law have "like Adam... transgressed the covenant." These compose the one unfaithful man, the "one man" through whose unfaithfulness penal death comes into the world, or becomes reality.

This same "one man," the one unfaithful man, representatively called "Adam" is also found in I Cor. 15: 21-22, another text used to support the theory of original sin. The verses read: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

The "man" by whom death came is the same as the man who sinned under the covenant of the law, those who prove unfaithful "like Adam" ("like

^{**} Rev. Peter DeRosa, Christ and Original Sin, p. 77.

men," margin), in Hosea 6:7 quoted above. The "all" in Adam who die are the same class, death being penal death, not natural death.

The "all in Christ" that shall be made alive form the counterpart of the "all" in Adam. They are the faithful, who having lived the Christ life, shall be given immortal life by Christ at Judgment. There is no hint of original sin in these verses.

- 2. What is "death by sin"? Transgression of the law of God results in death. But what type of death? It cannot be natural death, for natural death is the result of mortality and befalls man and beast alike. Adam's transgression did not alter his mortal state; he was from the beginning an ordinary physical human being, a mortal man with no special gifts or powers. (This subject has been covered in a previous lesson.) The death that comes by sin is penal death, condemnation at Judgment, eternal death. Natural death did not come into the world as a result of sin. This is the teaching of theology, not the Bible.
- 3. Why is "death passed upon all men"? Augustine contended that death passed upon all men because Adam sinned, but the Scripture states that "death spread to all men because all men sinned" (RSV). It is a matter of individual responsibility. Everyone judged worthy of penal death will be judged so because he himself has transgressed the law of God. The text does not say that Adam sinned, and all men are consequently condemned, but rather that all who share in Adam's sin by virtue of their own sin are condemned.

We might paraphrase Paul's thought in Rom. 5: 12: Wherefore Adam, being the first under law was the first to transgress that law, he thus became subject to penal death; and this same penalty of death rests upon all who like Adam have sinned.

- 4. Sin outside the law. Verse 13 is comparable to Romans 2:12. "For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13). Sin was in the world before God made known His law and called men into His service, but God held no one accountable because they had not committed themselves to be responsible to His law. Adam was the first to sin under law, being the first man called to work in the service of God. The sin "in the world" bore no relation to Adam's sin—it was sin belonging to the individuals who committed it.
- 5. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." This death (v. 14) is natural death, not death that is the result of sin; it is death that results from mortality. And it was a death "even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." These sinners between the times

of Adam and Moses* could not sin in the sense that Adam sinned because they had not been called by God, had not placed themselves under law. They were not covenant-makers, hence could not be covenant-breakers.

C. Paul and Righteousness

What was Paul's general teaching on sin?

1. Sin is a personal matter and must be overcome by the individual. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof... for sin shall not have dominion over you." "But God be thanked you, who once were slaves of sin, have yielded whole-hearted obedience to the pattern of teaching to which you were made subject,... as you once yielded your bodies to... lawlessness,... so now you must yield them to the service of righteousness, making for a holy life" (Rom. 6:12, 14, KJV; 6:17-19, NEB).

2. Sin comes from within; it is not inherited from Adam. "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me... but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:21-23).

3. Man is freed from sin by living the Christ-life. Men can be freed from sin not by Christ's death, but by His life (Rom. 5:10). "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death... If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. 8:2, 13). Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

These verses are but a very small sample of Paul's teaching concerning personal sin and personal righteousness. But certainly he could not be said to be guilty of teaching Adamic condemnation or salvation by the righteousness of another. His own words were: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). Every one must stand at the Judgment on the merits of his own deeds or misdeeds. We need have no fear of condemnation because Adam sinned.

Reprints of these studies are available upon request.

^{* &}quot;From Adam to Moses"—In the book of Romans Paul has been discussing at length the difference between the potency of Christ's teachings as contrasted with those of the law of Moses. He now speaks of those persons who lived before the time of the giving of the law of Moses.

Who Are Accountable to God?

AS the God of heaven looks upon the individual members of His human creation, He sees each as belonging to one of two distinct categories: those who are unenlightened by His superior law and unmindful of His plan or purpose, and those who acknowledge and accept His law and desire to become an integral part of His plan. The former live their entire lives outside the reach or influence of the law of God; they pledge themselves to no particular law or divine standard, and thus are not accountable for their conduct. The latter group, who accept and acknowledge His law, establish a working covenant-relation with God and thus make themselves responsible to the author of that law-God. We will term this latter group covenant-makers.

The covenant-makers, each by his own diligence or negligence, divide themselves into two groups—those who are faithful to their covenant and those who are unfaithful. Thus we have three basic classes of mankind: those ignorant of the law of God, unfaithful covenant-makers and faithful covenant-makers.

The Scriptures have something definite to say about each of these classes. An example of the first class, that is, those who do not recognize God, who get what good they can from this life with no hope of any future, is found in Job 21: "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave" (v. 13). And that is their end. No punishment, no reward; whatever good or ill they obtain from their lifetime, that is their portion.

The entire 49th Psalm (with the exception of verse 15) speaks of the class of persons who neither know God nor desire a knowledge of His ways. Notice the reading of the text from verse 12 to the end of the chapter, again omitting verse 15. A man may be honorable in the sight of men; yet, lacking understanding of the law of God, he is compared with "the beasts that perish." "Like sheep they are laid in the grave"; when they die, they "carry nothing away." "He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" (vs. 19-20). Verse 15 pictures worthy covenant-makers: "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me."

In Jeremiah 51:57, the Lord speaks of the fate which is to overtake Babylon, the power responsible for the first destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and used figuratively of all confused beliefs and their sponsors. We read, "And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts."

Obadiah (vs. 15-16) speaks of the same class of people, here classified as "heathen," and their destiny: "For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: ... For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been."

In John 15:22, Jesus pictures two classes of individuals. covenant-makers and non-covenantmakers, showing that knowledge, acceptance and a working agreement with God precede responsibility: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin." Those who never subscribed to the law of God are not accountable to that law; having never pledged allegiance to it, they are not sinners in the sight of that law, for "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4), and where there is no law, there is no transgression-"sin is not imputed [literally, not "charged to one's account"] when there is no law" (Rom. 5:13). Having chosen to spend their lives in ignorance of God's demands, they will never be judged for reward or punishment; death for them ends all.

Jesus in the parable of the Talents indicates that He will not reckon with all mankind indiscriminately, but only with those who have established a covenant-relation with Him. The man of wealth in the parable (representative of Christ) left his financial interests in the hands of his "own servants," and upon returning he reckoned with them only (Matt. 25:14-19).

The same truth is taught in the parable of the Laborers. When evening came, the farmer settled only with those whom he had hired. The parable of the Net Cast into the Sea teaches the same: the commercial fisherman upon lowering his net into the ocean water does not expect to land all the fish in the sea. Neither does the Almighty expect all

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mankind to answer "yes" to His offer of employment with eternal life as the prospective result.

In Romans 1, the apostle Paul speaks of God's judgments which will come upon "covenant-breakers" (they had established an agreement with God, or they would not be accountable to Him). He says also of this group: "who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them"—they knew, but they did not take heed (Rom. 1:28-32).

In Romans 2, the Apostle speaks of the same two classes: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law" (v. 12).

A correspondent has disagreed with our application of this principle to Romans 2:12. He writes, "I have this to say first of all, that to take one scripture out of many surrounding ones and claim to know all there is to know on the subject from this one isolated scripture, is like reading one paragraph of a book and claiming to know the whole subject from that one paragraph. It just cannot be done. Romans 2:12 standing alone states that the person who has no law relationship at all with God, and lived a sinful life till he died. will 'perish' without a resurrection and subsequent judgment. While the person who did have a law relationship with God, will, when he dies, be resurrected to stand judgment before God to be rewarded or punished.

"Looking at the surrounding scripture I find the following: 1) The person living 'without law' can, by natural instinct, practice patient continuance in well doing, seeking for glory and honor and immortality, and be rewarded with eternal life after he dies. Compare Romans 2:14 and 2:8. How does this reconcile with Romans 2:12, which says that he will 'perish'?"

The foregoing evidence should be sufficient to show that Romans 2:12 does not stand alone in teaching that the man who has no covenant-relation with God dies without prospect of a future resurrection and subsequent judgment.

But to understand fully what Paul was saying, we need to consider the context in which his words occur. Paul, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," was writing to members of the church at Rome who were Gentiles. In verses 1-11 of chapter 2, he points up the fact that both Jew and Gentile are on exactly the same footing with God. There is no respect of persons with Him. Those who by "patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality" shall receive "eternal life"; and those who are "contentious, and do not obey the truth,

but obey unrighteousness" shall receive "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." In verses 12, 16, Paul summarizes that thought, stating their status plainly: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; ... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (You will notice that verses 13-15 are parenthetical, hence verse 16 immediately follows the thought of verse 12, as above.)

We might ask what is the law to which Paul refers. It is altogether possible that since he was a Jew writing to a church which was predominantly Gentile, though his statement is not specific, the immediate law in his mind was the Mosaic law, to which all loyal Jews subscribed religiously. The law of Moses, being civil in nature, would serve to illustrate the apostle's thought: that law was enforced only upon those under the jurisdiction of Israel; the transient, the foreigner, or the invader, bore no responsibility to its demands. And the same is true with the superior law of faith: Those who sin outside its jurisdiction shall perish without being called to account; and those who transgress being under that law will suffer the consequences of their transgression. Paul uses the term "law" in a general sense; thus it is a principle applicable to any law.

But verses 14-15 do not say that the person living outside the law can, by natural instinct practice patient continuance in well doing and be eligible for that reward. These verses simply state that "when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Here Paul's reference is very likely to the Mosaic law once again, though he is stating a principle in general terms which may be applied generally. But if following a law by natural instinct in ignorance of God's law were the key to salvation, why should Jeremiah have said, "Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbor,...What hath the Lord answered? and, What hath the Lord spoken?" (Jer. 23:35); or, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"? (Jer. 10:23).

There is yet another point to be observed concerning this "instinctive" obedience to a law not learned. Those who do "by nature" the things contained in the law would never be able to render that complete obedience which the supreme law of God demands—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with

Take Care of Your Name

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches"

—Proverbs 22:1

N some parts of Africa the natives have a strange custom—they buy each other's names. So much money is paid for a share in another man's name, and a name is often exchanged in this way several times. I think that must be rather confusing, don't you? You go up to somebody you have known and address him as so-and-so—the name by which you have known him—and you find that he is no longer so-and-so, but somebody of an entirely different name.

I imagine there are many people in our own country who would be very glad to purchase somebody else's name, especially if they could buy their character along with it. But we can't buy and sell names like that here, and so we have to take care of the name that we have.

Why are names such precious things? Well, it is because your name stands for you and for what you are worth. When people mention your name they think of you and the kind of boy or girl you are, and so it is very important that you should have a good name and keep it. A lost fortune is sometimes found again, but a lost good name is very, very difficult to find.

What does a good name mean? It doesn't mean a musical name or a high-sounding one. We may be sorry we have such a plain name, but that doesn't matter to God. What does matter is what our name means, and that is entirely up to us. For a good name means a name for goodness; it means having a reputation for all that is pure, and brave, all that is noble and honorable in the sight of God.

King Solomon tells us that a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. Why is a good name more valuable than riches? There are two reasons.

First, because riches are worthless without it. It doesn't matter how rich you are, if you haven't a good name, you won't have much happiness. Sometimes people have risked their good name to win riches. They have done things that are not honest to gain wealth, and then one day their evil has been found out. I wonder which they thought more precious then—the good name or the riches. Remember that all the money in the world isn't worth your honor and your peace of mind.

Do you remember Judas, the chosen apostle of Jesus? He had a good position and a good name, but he sold it when he sold Jesus into the hands of His enemies. His enemies paid Judas thirty pieces of silver—or more than thirty dollars in our money. But after Judas had done it, he realized how wicked he had been, how he had completely ruined his name. He gave the money back and went and killed himself. Losing his name was more than Judas wanted to face.

The second reason why a good name is better than riches is that a good name brings things that riches cannot buy. It gives us the love and respect and confidence of others. And these things are of much more value than mere money. You may have thousands of dollars but if you do not have a good name along with your wealth, you are a very poor person indeed. Nobody can rely on you, and you are of little real value in the world.

God doesn't judge people by how much money they have; He judges by the kind of character they have. You may not own a penny and yet be rich indeed in God's sight because you value the things God values—righteousness, goodness, love, peace, and obedience.

Once a great scoundrel said to a man who was distinguished for his uprightness, "I would give ten thousand dollars for your good name." And when asked why, he replied, "Because I could make a hundred thousand by it." That was a low and mean way of looking at it, but it showed that even that scoundrel knew the value of a good name.

You are just setting out in life, and as yet you haven't made much of a name for yourselves. But other people are watching you. While you work or play, they are wondering whether you will be a person that is good and kind and honest, or whether you will go after the things that are worthless. Do they think of you as a helpful, kind and obedient boy or girl, or when they think of your name do they think of someone they would rather not know about?

One thing I want to suggest. If you want to make and keep a good name, take the name of Christ with you. Become His follower and walk in His ways. You can never be sure that you will not lose your name if you depend on yourself; but if you follow Him and do as He commands, your name in the sight of God will be safe, and anything that men can do to try to destroy your good name will not matter. ••

If you want to improve the world, start with yourself.

Creative Love

(Continued from page 6)

promise of a painless, deathless eternity, filled with every conceivable pleasure, and the means provided by which we may attain it.

Creative Love in Action

We find the operation of perfecting love described comprehensibly in chapter 4 of the Epistle to the Ephesians: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 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" (vs. 11-13).

Here we see creative love in action, we see the new man taking shape before our very eyes. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." A knowledge of the Son of God, and the great place He is destined to fill in the age to come; a knowledge of the plan and of the requirements is the first step in the creating of the one new man which God through His creative love is making. Apart from knowledge we would not know God's definition of right and wrong. Without a knowledge of the rewards promised we would not have the impetus, the driving force to impel us to make the drastic change from the old life to the new.

"And of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Here is a remarkable creation in process, and the created object must meet the most exacting specifications: "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Here the Apostle strikes the keynote of wholeness, completeness. Reverend L. T. Nichols, our founder, once spoke of perfection of character as a robe which each of God's children must grow to fill. He said, A child half grown will not fill it, a child three-fourths grown will not fill it, a child nine-tenths grown will not fill it, only a full-grown man will fill it. God demands that we grow up. His parental love is of a practical sort. He does not want us always to remain "babes" in Christ. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine... but speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (vs. 14-15). Creative love will not be

satisfied with anything less than a full-grown Christian.

Then in v. 17 the Apostle proceeds to lay down the rules for conduct of the "new creature." "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind." If we long for the full salvation awaiting the overcomers at Christ's coming we cannot surrender to conformity. We cannot walk as do those who give no heed to the plan of God. We cannot talk as they talk, or act as they act. They do that which is right in their own eyes, they take the line of least resistance, they give the Almighty the small end of their life, reserving the greater portion for self-aggrandizement and self-gratification. But this practice is definitely forbidden the life-seeker. He must give up walking as the pagans or Gentiles walk. They have the eyes of their understanding darkened, they are alienated from the life of God through ignorance, "because of the blindness of their heart." But God forbids blindness. Creative love demands that we get our eyes opened to our own failures, that we believe right, and that we live right.

"But ye have not so learned Christ." Our knowledge of the divine plan of salvation precludes the possibility of our going on in ignorance, and being saved; our insight into the Christ life-pattern denies us the right to walk as we would have walked if God's creative love had not touched our lives. Now we have different aims, different interests, different concerns. Now it is our duty to "put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of [our] mind; and...put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (vs. 20, 22-24).

Then the Apostle becomes specific about the process of creative love: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another" (v. 25). God wants His children to be truthful, He wants them to cut or pare away the sinful practice of telling untruths, only in this way may we be created in the image of His Son.

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (v. 26). Anger is a sin, it is a part of the uncouth nature which God detests, hence must be eliminated. "Neither give place to the devil." Do not give way to the promptings of the lower nature, its pull is always downward. Then creative love demands absolute honesty! "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12: 30); and "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point" is counted with the law-breakers (James 2:10). Nothing less than full obedience can be rewarded with full salvation—for God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6).

There is yet another point about those who do "by nature" the things contained in the law: they judge their "obedience" (which is only incidental) by their own uneducated consciences—"their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another"; whereas the man who has pledged himself to the superior law of God learns to compare his life and conduct with the standard set by God. He learns to "judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24); he learns to judge himself by the fruits he manifests (Matt. 7:20). Paul told the Corinthian brethren that judgment according to men's thoughts and conscience is valueless in the sight of God-and he even included his own judgment in this category: "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." For when the Lord brings "to light the hidden things of darkness" and makes manifest "the counsels of the hearts," human accusings or excusings will mean less than nothing (I Cor. 4: 1-5).

Our correspondent asks that we compare Romans 2:14 with Romans 2:8. Verse 14 pictures those who "sin without law"—they are "a law unto themselves." Verse 8 pictures those who sin under law—them "that are contentious, and do not obey the truth" (they could not disobey what they did not know; they were covenant-makers). This latter group will be judged by the law of God and will suffer its penalty, eternal death (verse 9).

Our correspondent asks further: "How can a man be 'seeking' for 'eternal life' when Romans 3:9, 19, 23 state that he, and the one in the law, are all 'under sin'?"

In Romans 3, Paul is discussing the position of the Jew and Gentile before God. There is no difference. All have sinned, all by nature are estranged from Him. "...For we have before proved both Jew and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no not one" (vs. 9-10) in their natural unregenerated condition.

But this condition of their being by nature "under sin" does not interfere with their seeking for eternal life, as in Romans 2:7. By "patient continuance in well doing" these natural sinful tendencies can be overcome; Romans 3 only shows

that the natural man has not acquired that for which he may seek. But though presently "under sin" he can escape from sin, his captor.

Romans 3:19 bears directly on the point of who is accountable to God and who is not. There is a class of people to whom God is not speaking: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law [not to the world at large]: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world [the world of believers] may become guilty before God ["subject to the judgment of God," margin]." Then in verse 23, Paul summarizes: "For all [whether Jew or Gentile] have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Indeed, the world at large who know not God, and the one "seeking" for eternal life are all by nature "under sin." That is the very reason why the life-seeker seeks.

Our correspondent asks further: "Since Romans 5:13 states that 'sin is not imputed when there is no law,' why does the person who sins outside the law have to 'perish'? Isn't this cruel? Or perhaps we need to bring all the surrounding Scripture into one close picture."

Yes, indeed, we need to consider all that the Scriptures have to say on the question before we can draw a conclusion.

And by bringing all the surrounding Scripture into "one close picture" we see the wisdom and goodness of God offering men a means of escape from their natural bondage to mortality. Jesus promised that any man who would do the will of God should know of the doctrine (John 7:17), and Paul assured the man who was striving to fulfill that will, "If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Phil. 3:15).

Should a billionaire come into our home town and give every man and woman a free gift of a thousand dollars, we would consider him a great benefactor. Should he then leave a book of rules with each person with the understanding that each person who would live according to those rules without fail for a whole year would receive a million dollars, would be thought cruel not to give the greater prize when the majority of persons spurned his offer? Of course not. In like manner, God gives this temporal life as a free gift. And He has provided His Word which presents the formula whereby man can obtain eternal life. The masses of mankind choose to remain in ignorance of His offer, but God's refusal to give them the greater reward is no evidence of cruelty. His original gift and His abundant offer is only a manifestation of His love and goodness. ••

Bible A B C's



THE name Onesiphorus is long and difficult to pronounce. It means, "profit bringer." Onesiphorus lived in the days of Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles many years ago. All we know about Onesiphorus is what Paul wrote about him to Timothy. We don't know where Onesiphorus was born, or who were his parents.

Onesiphorus was a Christian like Paul, and in those days the Christians were persecuted in almost every city. Sometimes they were beaten or stoned by wicked men. Paul was a prisoner in Rome, and when Onesiphorus was in that city he searched and searched until he found Paul. Paul was bound in chains to keep him from escaping, and most people would have been ashamed to visit a prisoner in chains. But Onesiphorus was different. He knew that Paul had done nothing wrong. Paul was a prisoner because he taught the people to live as Christ lived.

When Onesiphorus found Paul after searching for him in Rome, there was a joyful, happy meeting of these two close friends. Onesiphorus' visit brought cheer to Paul, and Paul probably en-

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couraged and helped Onesiphorus, too. We can be sure that these two friends would talk about God and that great future Day when God's Kingdom would be set up on earth, and wicked men would no longer rule.

Onesiphorus was glad that Paul was his friend and had taught him to become a Christian. While Paul was in prison, Onesiphorus visited him as often as he could and brought cheer to Paul. Onesiphorus was a very kind man, and Paul was always thankful to have a visit from him. Paul's trials were great, and they were difficult for him to go through. But Paul was always refreshed spiritually when Onesiphorus visited him.

Paul says, "He sought me out." Onesiphorus would not have had to search and find Paul when he was a prisoner in Rome, but he did it because he wanted to. He wanted very, very much to see Paul. He wanted to help and encourage his friend, and he knew that Paul was the friend of God, too, because Paul was keeping God's commandments in difficult times.

Don't you all want to be like Onesiphorus? We might say he was a good man who was always seeking for opportunities to do good. It didn't matter when or how these opportunities came, he used them.

Because of Onesiphorus' kindness and concern for this very good friend, Paul asked the Lord to have mercy upon Onesiphorus' family. We do not know how many people there were in his family, or just how many children he might have had, but apparently others of his family were very good people, or Paul would not have asked a special blessing on them.

Let us try to be like Onesiphorus and show kindness and encouragement whenever we can. God will surely bless us if we do.

MEGIDDO MESSAGE

which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (v. 28).

Then verse 29 makes God's precepts even more restraining. Creative love demands speech control: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Lying is forbidden, bad words must not pass our lips. What we say must be to edify others; if not, we are not growing to the full stature of Christ our pattern.

The last two verses of the chapter, if allowed full sway in our lives, should act as a most effective matrix in which the new life will be formed: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

To claim the love of God, to throw ourselves wholly upon it, is a serious matter, not to be undertaken lightly or unadvisedly, or simply as an emotional outlet. It demands of us first of all a surrender, a complete giving up of ourselves. Every member of our being must be dedicated to the service of God and His truth. "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof," said the Apostle. It is not that God desires to possess us, for He accepts no man's person, and we can add nothing to His glory. It is that in His wisdom He knows we cannot become perfect by a halfhearted service, nor can we aid in perfecting others by a halfhearted example. His creative love is disciplining us for our good, to raise us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Creative Love Demands Action

"The love of Christ constraineth us" (II Cor. 5:14)—to what? To repentance, to a turning from sin, to a ceaseless warfare against all that is destructive or negative. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." It is the thrust of a great moral imperative. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments," said the beloved disciple; and the keeping of "the whole law" calls for something more than a pleasant sentimental feeling. It calls for an utter cleansing of our lives without and within, a complete change of ideas, of associations, of habits, of tastes, all moving from a lower to a higher level. This upward thrust, this urgent desire for good, is of the nature of God and of those who are godly.

With this understanding of creative love, that which seeks to perfect, read again Paul's sublime words in I Corinthians 13, inserting "creative" before love, wherever it appears. Listen now:

Creative love beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Creative love never faileth.

Out of the depths of eternity moves a cosmic tide to flood all the shallow levels of our spirits.

An old man who had learned the secret, and who was still living creatively in a decadent age— John the presbyter of Ephesus—once wrote a simple letter to his friends in which he spoke of God's creative love, of the close relationship between God and His worthy children, of what He has in store for us if faithful at Christ's coming: and of the impact that all this should have upon our lives. Here are his words: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:1-3).

And a little further on in this Epistle the beloved John gave a summary of a philosophy that had brought him serenity and poise in a turbulent day. As we take slight liberties in translating it he seems to be saying: "Dear friends, let us love one another creatively, for creative love comes from God, and every one who loves creatively is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love creatively does not love God, for God is creative love. God's creative love has for us been revealed. . . . Dear friends, if God has loved us so, we ought to love one another creatively."

Words to WALK By

A man's real limitations are not the things he wants to do but cannot; they are the things he ought to do but does not.

The glory of life is to love, not to be loved; to give, not to get; to serve, not to be served.

You can tell how big a man is by observing how much it takes to discourage him.

Diplomacy is the art of influencing someone else to accept your way.

Master selfishness, or it will master you.

Today we sometimes have to learn to do without some of the things our parents never dreamed of having.



To Be A Disciple

To be a disciple of Christ we cannot be a part of or partake of the evil ways of the world. He calls us to leave all that is petty and carnal and to live on a higher plane. In Brother Paul's words to the Romans (chapter 12:2), we must not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Jesus did this as an example to us

St. Joseph, Missouri

H. W.

Expecting the Lord

As we see all the trouble in the world, we need to be exhorted in the truth more than ever before. We all seem to think it can get worse, and likely it will before the coming of the Son of man. It is getting worse, not only internationally or nationally, but in the homes, institutions, and in churches, because God has been rejected and His wisdom and knowledge ignored.

May we ever be watching and praying as though we were expecting the Lord today, tomorrow, and every day.

Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada

J. G.

Stand Upright

We must always stand upright; even if we are weighed down by burdens, we still ought to stand. Posture is important in the Christian life. On the road to Damascus, Saul and his companions fell to the ground, but the voice of Jesus came to Saul, saying, "Stand on your feet" (Acts 9:6).

How can we do it? By being firm in purpose, "standing in the heart." Do we brace ourselves against falling? We should be on guard against tripping, not merely "thinking" we stand. We should remember that every time we crumple up, or even just sag, we affect the lives of others.

up, or even just sag, we affect the lives of others.

Stand in the faith! There is help at hand. The Lord is able to cause us to stand erect. Therefore, let us go on standing in the faith, in the Lord, knowing what we are trying to do and determined to do it

Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada

M. L.

A Sense of Urgency

Your booklet on the coming of Elijah and Jesus is most thought-provoking. I really appreciate receiving it as I am much interested in material concerning the second coming of Jesus. Less than a year ago I thought it was silly for anyone to think He was coming soon, but now I feel such a sense of urgency to work for Him because time is so very short.

All over, people seem to be sensing that it won't be too many years before Jesus returns.

Palouse, Washington

G. B.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

"I have read something in your magazine which disturbs me greatly. It is on page 13 of the February issue. You say, 'It is utterly absurd to say that all men were physical descendants of Adam and Eve.' The Megiddo Message is undermining the Word of God and denying Jesus Christ with a statement like that. Jesus believed in the creation (Matt. 19:3-9) and His human body was a descendant of Adam (Luke 3: 23-38).

"Furthermore, if Adam and Eve were just representatives, then God would not have had them to raise children and future generations. Cain married one of his sisters (Gen. 5:3-5)."

Perhaps we did not state clearly enough what we meant by our statement in the February issue, or perhaps you misunderstood us. What we meant to convey was that we cannot believe that all men—black men, red men, yellow men, white men—are all physically the descendants of Adam and Eve. The known laws of heredity would not allow such strong variations as feature and skin color changes between parent and child.

But by stating that all men could not have been physical descendants of Adam and Eve, we do not mean to suggest that we disbelieve that God created man. The Bible states specifically that God did create man: "I have made the earth, and created man upon it" (Isa. 45:10-11), and there are many like verses throughout Scripture. We cannot accept the modern theories of evolution as a way out of believing in God as the Creator of the earth and mankind; though *how* or when He wrought this work of creation we are not told.

However, the first three chapters of Genesis are much more reasonable and understandable if we accept them as allegorical, rather than as an account of a literal creation. Should we try to take them as narrating specific events of creation, we confront many inconsistencies and impossibilities which infidels and atheists have ridiculed for decades—grass that could grow before the sun was created, and all mankind literally made in the exact image of God, a literal Garden of Eden (which has never been found) and a literal tree from which Adam partook in disobedience to the command of the Lord. (For a discussion of this subject,

send for our booklet, God's Spiritual Creation.)

By using Adam and Eve as representative persons, we do not mean to say that an actual man Adam and a woman Eve never existed. They certainly did exist, and their existence is definitely confirmed, as you mention, in the fact that they are listed in the forebears of Jesus Christ.

But we cannot believe that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman created upon earth, though they were the first two persons with whom God worked. Though dating methods for determining the age of prehistoric remains that are uncovered are somewhat indefinite and allow for a large margin of error, the remains that have been found—and the evidence of the mountains and rocks themselves—certainly establish a date of creation long antedating 6000 years ago.

If we were to believe that Adam and Eve were the first two persons God created, we must say, as you state, that Cain married his sister when he took a wife in the land of Nod. But the Biblical reference you mention does not state this; neither does the account in Genesis 4:16-17. We simply are not told. But we are told that Cain and his wife had one son, Enoch, and that Cain founded "a city" in the land of Nod. Isn't it somewhat difficult to conclude that such a "city" would have been composed only of the members of Cain's own family—especially considering that Abel and Cain were the two eldest children of Adam and Eve? It seems much more reasonable to allow that there were other people living on earth at the time and had been for an unknown length of time. God saw fit to allow men to progress intellectually to a point where they could comprehend His plan and purposes and obey His laws, before He revealed them to men.

"I wish you could tell me something. I don't agree with a local church here in my community on all things. I want the truth—and I think you have it. I depend heavily upon you.

"This church tells me that they don't believe in musical instruments in the church. They don't believe they should have even an organ in church, or any other instrument. I don't agree. I think that any music used to the glorification of God is good. How do you feel?"

We believe musical instruments, if used to the glory of God, can and should be used in church. There are a number of references in the Old Testament to praising God with the harp, the psaltery, timbrel, cymbals, organs, etc. Read Psalm 150, and note the variety of musical instruments listed to be used in praising God.

In Numbers 10, the Lord commanded Moses to

make two trumpets of silver to call the congregation together, and then in verse 10 he says, "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God." See also I Chron. 13:8; Ps. 98:6; Lev. 23:24.

While it is true that the playing of musical instruments is not mentioned in the New Testament, this does not per se condemn it. Music was certainly familiar to the people of the time. The night of the Last Supper, we read, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out..." (Mark 14:26). Paul, writing to the Corinthians, appealed to their knowledge of music. Denouncing the Greeks' tendency to speak with many words, in mysteries and prophecies not understood by anybody, he said, "Even things without life, giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?" (I Cor. 14:7-8, ASV).

The author of Revelation, writing of the time when the Lamb shall stand on Mount Zion, mentions "harpers harping with their harps," surrounded by a multitude of singers pouring forth "a new song before the throne" (14:2-3).

One reason that might account for the lack of reference to the use of musical instruments in New Testament times was a matter of circumstance. These Christians lived and met much of the time in fear of civil authorities, and the sound of musical instruments would have tended to disclose their places of meeting.

Yes, we feel just as you do, that any means for praising God, whether with instruments or voice, is acceptable to God if done with the right object.

"What do you feel about saluting the flag?"

We do salute the flag, in recognition of "the powers that be" as being "ordained of God" (see Romans 13:1-7). We must be subject to the laws of our land and obey them, except where they conflict with the law of God, in which case we must obey the law of God first. As regards military service, we are conscientious objectors because, "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" and we are commanded, "Do violence to no man" (Matt. 26:52; Luke 3:14). We will not bear arms; however, we do serve in work of national importance in lieu of military service.



ONE of the prevalent physical afflictions of our day is commonly known as an allergy, a condition brought on because of the individual's hypersensitivity to various foods, pollens, dusts, and other substances too numerous to mention.

By means of tests the physician attempts to discover the offending substances or object. After the case has been diagnosed it is then a matter of avoiding the menace; or by the administration of the proper medication, an endeavor is made to build up the sufferer's resistance to the point of immunity; or, and which frequently is the case, it may take a combination of both to effect the much desired results.

Whereas many persons have not been so unfortunate as to find themselves afflicted with a physical allergy, no one has yet lived who has not at some time, or more correctly, many times during his life felt the discomforts of sin, with a strong, and more marked susceptibility toward some certain failing or besetment.

Expediency may lead one to be untruthful, either by word or deed; the promise of quick gain may cause many to be dishonest; covetousness will cause one to long for things denied the Christian; personal disagreements often call forth harsh and unkind words; selfishness causes many to think only of themselves at the expense of others; everyday happenings may severely try the patience; while the desire for a thrill often lures into questionable places and amusements; trivial irritations often provoke; while indifference makes for neglect of reading, prayer and meditation.

It is readily discernible that while the physical allergies are many, the spiritual allergies are al-

"For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me"—(Psalm 40:12).

so many and much more serious. These spiritual allergies have proved they are no respecter of persons, age, station, clime, or nationality. It is a universal affliction. We are aware that while many victims of an allergy suffer very acute discomfort, others

go along not actually suffering enough to take drastic or immediate action, yet not well enough to say they are feeling their best.

It is only as we go to the great allergist, God, and get a thorough checkup and a realizing sense of our true condition that we can get our first faint hope of relief from these "sins" or "allergies" that so easily beset us.

As long as we think of our sins as being too small to require attention, or they do not appear to us as the burden and discomfort they really are, we will not take drastic or immediate action to get rid of them. The Great Physician can see our every need. His word is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). He is acquainted with all our ways (Psalm 69:5; 139:1-4). Being thus informed, He is able to make an accurate diagnosis, and if willing to submit to the treatment and take the "medicine" He prescribes (Psalm 107:20), we shall soon be on our way to gaining relief from our "allergies," whatever they may be.

The Psalmist knew from actual experience that it is only when the Word of God is hid, not on a shelf or within a book or in a dresser drawer, but in the heart, can it enter the bloodstream of our heart's purposes, desires, aspirations and affections, thereby becoming an active cleansing agent, bringing blessed relief from the miseries of sin.

(Continued on next page)

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Meditations on the Word

(Continued from page 26)

If we let it work effectually within, the Word of God will finally give full immunity from sin. Temptations, like allergies, always attack at a person's weakest point. Some come with such speed, power and force that we will at first be compelled to avoid them as much as possible if we wish to get control and overcome them. One seldom falls before the temptation of grosser sins unless he has first weakened himself by indulging in the so-called lesser sin. To avoid temptation as much as possible is the royal road to the Kingdom. Keep away from the thing that gives you acute spiritual discomfort. This was Paul's advice to his brethren. Although King Solomon failed miserably

in his attempt to get relief from his sinful nature, he left some excellent and timely advice, born out of sad experience, on the subject under consideration: "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Prov. 4:15).

If one fails to obtain full and lasting relief from the miseries of strife, hate, bitterness, envy, jeal-ousy and selfishness it will not be because there was no balm in Gilead, neither will it be for lack of a Physician, but it will be because of indifference and carelessness regarding the state of our spiritual health. A most careful watch has to be kept lest when some temptation comes upon us our "allergy" flares up and we find ourselves back where we started.

Because we are constantly subjected to the influences of evil, we mortals stand in need of a strong immunity to the allergy of sin. ••

O God of wisdom and all knowledge...

Science tells us much, but we know so little...

We are staggered by what we find
in our test tubes, our telescopes, our formulae—
all creation unfolds before our mind.

But-

The smallest atom threatens us.

The cure of disease is not shared.

Easy living softens us.

Are our souls too small to match the feats of our minds?

What is the purpose of it all?

What are we missing?

O God, forgive us when we forget that we are not the Creator, but the created; that we are not the Maker, but the users; that we are not the Father, but the children.

Giver of all gifts,

Help us to know how to use what You have given. Beloved Father,

Teach us to be children that obey.

Amen.