



# OUR TIMES

JANUARY 1966

Lanki #7



# EVENTS and TRENDS

The Edge of the Precipice—4

## HISTORY'S GREATEST DISASTER

"GREAT WORLD FAMINE 'MAY KILL BILLIONS'" shouted the newspaper headline. "A world famine striking 'hundreds of millions or even billions of human beings is near,'" the article beneath it went on to declare ominously. "It will be the most colossal catastrophe in history," it continued, quoting Dr. Raymond Ewell, a research professor at the State University of New York.

"Such a famine in Asia, Africa and South America by the 1970's and later seems almost inevitable as expanding population outstrips food production," the professor went on. He further stated that by present trends "it seems likely the famine will reach serious proportions in India, Pakistan and China in the early 1970's, followed by Indonesia, Iran, Turkey, Egypt and several other countries of Asia and Latin America by 1980."

Another newspaper, which referred to this threat of famine as "history's greatest disaster" further quoted Dr. Ewell as saying that "this is the greatest and most nearly insoluble problem in the history of the world." And, the paper goes on to say, "he finds few who disagree."

Last month, when we discussed the population explosion, we stated that we would consider some of the major implications of this situation at a later time. This looming threat of famine on a vast scale is the greatest of them.

One magazine read around the world stated that in some developing countries the population is increasing so rapidly that it offsets gain in production of food and other essentials for the support of life. This increase is fastest in these countries least able to provide necessities. Even improved productivity does not keep pace with the population upsurge.

The *Sunday Standard* of August 8, 1965, quoted Prof. Dennis Gabor of Imperial College, London, as saying that "world food production cannot hope to keep pace with our rocketing population—any more than a running man could catch up with an express train." He is further quoted as asking, "What is the good of doctors in, say India, reducing infant mortality if it only means that the children are more certain to starve as they grow up?"

Many of the world's hungry lands have been looking to the United States, with its sometimes

seemingly unlimited food supplies, for help in solving their problems. India, for example, has an agreement to receive 220 million bushels of wheat yearly from that country under the Food-for-Peace Plan. Recent reports state that at present this country is unloading wheat from the United States at the rate of 20,000 tons a day.

However, further reports raise the question in some minds: How long is the United States going to be able to continue the programme of trying to feed the ever-multiplying mouths of the world? The unsettling fact is that food surpluses in the United States are not limitless. While there seems to be no need for immediate concern, the possibility is there that that country may, at some future date, be forced to curtail its generosity.

But even should the United States continue to produce and to distribute food as at present, will it be able to meet the world's needs? The following observation by Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal provides food for thought: "Within ten years or less the world will need every shred of food and fibre the United States can grow. If I am right, and I am afraid I am, very much more food will be urgently needed within a short time to avert world calamity."

How is this calamity to be averted? According to a source previously quoted, "The only alternative put forward by those who have studied the grave situation is control of population." And efforts are being made in that direction. Many governments are trying by various means to keep down the population increase.

And the result? In the words of a few days-old newspaper clipping before us, "The world's population leaped sixty million in a year to a total of 3,220 million by mid-year 1964, according to a United Nations report." This is how successful birth control efforts have been so far.

In closing this month's column we repeat the statement with which we opened this series several months ago: "It is our judgment that we are fast approaching, if we have not already arrived at, a time in the history of our world when something extraordinary, something entirely outside the stream of humanity, must penetrate into and radically influence its course to save the race from chaos and destruction."

# OUR TIMES

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## THE WORLD



## AROUND

A Soviet scientist has suggested a means by which we may get some idea of the storage capacity of the human brain. His estimation is based on the capacity of a chromosomal set which contains about 6,000 million "bits" or units of information. A nerve cell, the scientist says, apparently contains many sets of chromosomes, and could thus store many times the 6,000 million bits of information "filed" in one chromosomal set.

Going a step further, we learn that the cerebral cortex, that part of the brain with which we think, memorize and which governs speech, has between 10,000 and 18,000 million cells. Thus mathematically we arrive at a fantastic figure for the number of "bits" of information the human brain could store. It could probably accommodate as much information as is stored in a million libraries the size of the U.S. Library of Congress, which contains some 12,000,000 books and pamphlets.

—SF

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The most expensive member of a family to feed is a teen-age boy, according to figures released by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Recently a USSR journal carried a long article written by a woman atheist in which the author suggested that Russian action in closing churches has not had the desired effect of weakening Christianity. The move, she stated, only "strengthens the attraction of religion and breeds antagonism in the people."

The article stated that while there are large areas of Russia without churches or clergy, this does not mean that there are no believers there.

—EPS

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## THINK!

*THERE IS NO LABOUR* so hard as real thinking. Consequently, in the words of the quotation which the inventor, Thomas A. Edison, had posted all around his plant, "There is no expedient to which a man will not resort to avoid the real labour of thinking."

"To doubt everything and to believe everything are two equally easy solutions—both dispense with the necessity of reflection," said the British philosopher, Herbert Spencer.

So unusual did the celebrated sculptor, Rodin, apparently consider real thinking that he carved a famous statue which he named *The Thinker*.

## Editorial

Jesus was constantly challenging his hearers to think. "Consider . . ." He would say. "How think ye?" "What thinkest thou?" He asked time and again. By striking phrase, by paradox, by vivid imagery, He sought to jar people into actually considering, weighing and evaluating an idea so as to make a right and thought-out decision regarding the thoughts He presented. Which leads us to the thought that truth is—and all religion ought to be—an intelligible thing, a rational thing.

Jesus was always able to give a reasonable answer for His beliefs. We ought to be able to do the same. This does not mean that we must have superior minds in order to understand what we believe. It does not mean that we have to be able to understand, and to be able to think and speak in the oft-times special types of language of the man learned in religion. But it does mean that each of us has an obligation to study each fact of the religious beliefs to which he subscribes to be sure that he has an understanding of them and that he can convey that understanding to others.

We should not take the word of anybody else as to what our religion teaches, but should study the word of God for ourselves. If we allow others to do our thinking for us, as multitudes do, we shall have crippled energies and contracted abilities.

God gave to man the most marvellous product of His creation: a thinking, reasoning, retentive brain. Thus we have an obligation to develop it to its greatest capacity in such a way as to glorify Him and lead others to Him.

**I HATE YOU, I hate you!**" screams four-year-old Tommy as he strikes angrily at his mother. If you have observed some children, you know they have this reaction frequently.

Hate and anger are emotions felt by everyone. "True," you admit righteously, "I hate evil, and injustice makes me angry." That is as it should be, but perhaps you never realized how universal these feelings of hate are.

Actually, everyone who has accomplished anything has had to deal with anger and hate. So long as there is ambition, pride, and selfishness, you feel the urge to hate. You may hate or feel angry when you are harmed or think you might be harmed. You will feel the same if something happens to belittle you or to keep you from getting what you want or even threatens to do so. You can feel hot anger and bitter hatred toward favourite objects, persons you love, and even yourself.

All of us establish in our minds an ideal or a set of standards that we think represents us. This idea of ourselves is developed from the attitudes of parents and teachers and our own experiences. If you set this goal for yourself too high, or are too strict in living up to it, you are going to feel too much anger and hate. If others don't seem to appreciate that you are the fine person you consider yourself to be, you will resent their attitude. If you feel that you are not living up to your standard for yourself, you will be anxious and disgusted with yourself.

The emotion of hate shows itself in many forms and degrees of intensity. The English language has many words for them. A few of these expressions are *anger, resentment, malice, depression, disgust, antagonism, bitterness, peeve, grudge, hostility, contempt, destructiveness, rebellion, aggression, and self-assertiveness*. The term with the broadest meaning is *anger*.

You recognize the effects of acute anger. Your muscles tighten, your jaw sets, your fists clench, and your head thrusts forward. Your skin gets pale, and your heart beats faster. Your blood pressure goes up, your digestion stops, more blood is supplied to brain and muscles, and sugar is made available from the supply in the liver as fuel for your muscles. All

# Do You Have to HATE?

these adjustments improve your efficiency in meeting threats to your physical welfare.

Under the control of intelligence anger is a useful thing, because it makes you a more effectual person. To hate wisely is the best mental and physical hygiene. It can protect you from harm.

Anger or hate may help you do something about a situation, and the feeling will remain until you take some action. Anger or hate can become chronic when there is no acceptable way of dealing with the cause. If you are a sensitive person, easily hurt, given to holding grudges and finding fault, you are suffering from chronic anger, of which you may not be aware.

If you harbour resentment and hate, you are the one most harmed, because your angry, hateful behaviour invites retaliation by others—there is nothing more natural than to try to get even. Even though you are able to conceal your feelings and others treat you decently, you will still punish yourself by depriving yourself of health, comfort, and peace of mind. These deprivations are the result of feelings of guilt, worry, self-blame, and bitter regret.

*Depression* is a term expressing a condition produced by these feelings. Common symptoms of depression are a feeling of fatigue and weakness, inability to sleep, lack of appetite, indigestion, constipation, numbness, dizziness, and headache.

An attitude that arouses much hate and anger usually also stirs up anxiety. All nervousness or nervous tension is the result of the feeling of anger or anxiety in one form or another. These emotions are involved in all situations where there is responsibility or competition. The two emotional states of anger and anxiety cause many illnesses and complicate other diseases that they do not cause.

There is the successful businessman of humble origin who was recently divorced by his wife. The court costs and the settlement took all he had saved, and the alimony was taking most of what he was earning. When he sought treatment for pains in his stomach, X-ray examination showed that he had an active peptic ulcer. He admitted to much resentment over what he felt was unfair desertion and exploitation by his former wife.

There is the young woman who fears that she has heart disease but whose main problems are sick headaches and flares of temper of which she is ashamed. Having been adopted by a stern but kind and provident couple, she early had feelings of inferiority and of being rejected by them. She tried to be a good girl and thus be accepted by her foster-parents, but things never seemed to work out as she hoped. She grew up to be a conscientious, neat, well-mannered person who hated herself for her failure to live up to her ideals of performance.

The number of people is legion in whom chronic anger and resentment have been leading causes of high blood pressure, chronic fatigue, ulcerative colitis, spastic colon, muscular rheumatism, arthritis, stuttering, eczema, and asthma. Scarcely any tissue or organ of the body can escape the effects of chronic anger.

Despite the fact that there are health-destroying, time-killing, unhappy aspects of anger and hate, there are also ways that you can make these emotions work for you instead of against you. You can take out your feelings in a way that will be useful. Use the heat of anger to drive you on to an extra spurt of physical work. Clean the house. Do some needed repair work. Chop some wood.

You can lessen the unavoidable tension of competitive living in two ways. First, learn to relax, for short

periods, frequently. Second, take up some non-competitive recreation requiring physical activity. Golf, hiking, swimming, tennis, are enjoyable. Since competitive exertion is both superfluous and harmful after you are getting on in years, learn to play for fun.

As a parent you can do much to help your children establish habits in which hate plays a small part. To do this you must be able to handle these feelings yourself—example is the best teacher, you know—and must be tolerant and understanding toward the child. Anger, jealousy, hate, and fear are important in the feelings of a small child. You can help him if you realize that it is the fear and anger aroused by being little, dependent, and unable to do the things others do that drive the child to progress.

The first step in handling anger and hate in yourself is to recognize, understand, and accept them. When you can say without shame, "I am angry," and then go ahead and do something constructive with the emotional energy, you have begun to win out in life.

If your problem is a hot temper, first of all train yourself to control your impulse to retaliate long enough to consider and try to understand the other person's motives. A situation that you understand is less threatening and arouses less anger than a situation that you don't understand. A good way to gain time for consideration is to repeat ten times the first ten words of the Lord's prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name."

If someone offends you, talk to him about it. The offence may well have been unintentional. If you can't talk to him, instead of brooding about the slight, "blow off steam" by pouring out your grievance to a trusted friend. Then forget it. Don't tell it around until the matter grows, and you are reproached by the community and your own conscience.

Base your philosophy of life on a willingness to live and let live, or in other words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." If you will admit that others are as worthy of success and advancement as you are, you will not waste your time and burn yourself out feeling sorry for yourself.

If you are really serious about

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**W**ITH THE TWILIGHT, gloom, and darkness, there appear the stars, one by one, shining, scintillating, increasing in brilliance as the firmament blackens. Now is the hour when eyes, which focused no further than the pebbles of the beach in August, can gaze on distant suns and far-away worlds. For up in the black vault are the great giants of outer space, billions and billions of them. The number is fantastic, incomprehensible.

The first impression that one has of the stars in the night sky is that they are tiny; distant festoons of tiny milli-amp lamps, pin-holes of light, luminous dust.

What an illusion! The stars are not the "forget-me-nots of the angels," nor are they the "candles of God." They are gigantic nuclear power stations of space; they are blazing sources of energy of gargantuan dimensions. Whoever observes through the great telescopes gazes aghast at clusters of burning stars, clouds of fiery suns, colossal island universes of burning suns.

White-hot gases leap incredible miles into space. Blasts of intense heat consume millions of tons of matter every minute, yet the inexhaustible fires are never consumed. Here the elements are truly melting with "fervent heat." Here is the fiery magnificence of outer space, pouring forth energy in the form of light, heat, and invisible radiations at a rate beyond computation.

There is one star named Betelgeuse in the constellation of Orion which has a diameter of three hundred million miles, three hundred times the width of the sun, and the whole surface is an ocean of flame. To grasp what this means, bring the star as near to earth as the sun is; then Betelgeuse would overhang the whole horizon. Or again, imagine 150 suns, edge to edge, on one side of the sun, and 150 suns on the other side of our sun; then you will perceive what the vast fiery diameter of Betelgeuse really means. The whole annual circuit of the earth around the sun could be accommodated in the ocean of Betelgeuse's flames.

#### *Our little sun*

Our own sun is a star, though a very small one. Its diameter is 865,000 miles. It is composed of matter so dense that no crane could

# WHAT THE STARS TELL

raise so much as a bucketful. By atomic fission it converts 250 million tons of hydrogen into light, heat, and radiation every minute, a heat equal to burning all the coal reserves in the world in one month. Its centre temperature is twenty million degrees. Its huge leaping flames lick 50,000 miles into space with a temperature of 5,000 degrees. Each square centimetre of the sun's surface has a brilliance of 50,000 candle-power. Its fountains of exploding gas attain a velocity of hundreds of miles a second. Our fiercest hurricanes are but zephyrs by comparison. If our earth were dropped into the flaming vortex of a single sun spot, it would be like a boulder toppled into the fiery crater of Vesuvius; for the sun could engulf a shovelful of 1,300,000 worlds at one go.

Yet our great fiery sun is far surpassed by countless others in size and glory. "One star differeth from another star in glory," says the Bible. It would need one thousand suns to make up the bulk of Arcturus, a star in the constellation of Bootes with a diameter of 420 million miles.

#### *The heavens declare*

What can we say when confronted with such incomprehensible splendour! The redeemed saints of earth are pictured as singing, "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty."



King David, who in his shepherd days watched the movement of the stars in the clear Judæan sky, wrote:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork" (Psalm 19:1).

I have described but three of the gargantuan sources of energy in space. But consider. There are 200 billion such burning suns in the earth's universe (the Milky Way) alone. And there are millions of similar universes.

Space is not an ocean of emptiness. It is an ocean in which flame 20,000,000,000,000,000,000 star furnaces; every one pulsating with, and radiating unbelievable amounts of energy. The earth is surrounded by these flaming suns, above, a-

round, and below. One Bible writer in a very humble understatement says, "Lo, these are parts of his ways" (Job 26:14).

From another anonymous writer comes this apocryphal yet significant quotation: "The angel once took a man and lifted him up into space to show him the glory of the universe. They flew past galaxy after galaxy, and infinity upon infinity until the solar system appeared but as a speck of light against the black empyrean. They passed rushing worlds, systems after systems, until the human heart sank, and the man cried out, 'End is there none to the universe of God?' And all the stars echoed the answer, 'End there is none to the universe of God.'"

Such is the extent and size of the kingdom of God.

The question must be asked, "Who hath created these things?" Who indeed? Scores of theories have been advanced during the past centuries to explain how the universe came into existence. But few theories have been tenable for long. The realization of the ever-increasing size of the universe (to us) has made the problem too immense for the human mind to explain. We can only worship a wonderful Creator.

With grand imagery, the prophet Isaiah called upon his fellows to recognize this Creator, and to give thought to His greatness.

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

In more recent years the poet, Addison, gave us this verse:

"And all the stars that round her burn,  
And all the planets in their turn,  
Confirm the tidings as they roll,  
And spread the truth from pole to pole.  
For ever singing as they shine,  
The Hand that made us is divine."

But that is not all. The prophet Isaiah further challenges our thinking; he asserts that the Creator knows every world by name. "He calleth them all by names" (Isaiah 40:26). David also writes, "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names" (Psalm 147:4). The astronomers who watch the stars night after night have built up an index containing the names of vast numbers of the heavenly bodies. But He who made the stars has indexed and named them all!

*The God who made the stars made thee*

Is this knowledge too wonderful for us? Our Lord went still further. He assured His followers that this God is also a loving Father, that He knows each living person, saying that even "the hairs" of our heads are "numbered."

Look up then into the night sky and take comfort from it. The God who made the stars made thee. "He giveth power to the faint, and

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## BEHIND OUR DESTINY

**T**HE STUDENT NURSES on night duty were alerted—a young mother-to-be was brought to the obstetrical ward in a very serious state. While one nurse examined the patient, another tried to get as clear a picture as possible of her history from the fear-stricken relatives. They had rushed her to the hospital as a last resort after a village midwife had exhausted her knowledge, experience and energy working on the patient for two days.

The nurses, though only in training, sized up the situation instantly and went to work. The agile feet of one hurried along the corridor and across the yard to get the doctor on call while two others wheeled the patient into the delivery room and began preparing her for the doctor's attention. No sooner was the patient ready than the student-midwife, the ward supervisor and the doctor were on the scene. Speedily efficient and dedicated hands went to work. The doctor dextrously and gently helped the still figure of the baby move forward. But when it emerged, lo, the stillborn baby had two well formed heads!

I leave it to your sympathetic imagination to picture the cloud of deepest sorrow that enveloped the young couple who had spent days and months planning and hoping for the great day when their baby would be a reality.

At that time I was at the hospital waiting to meet my baby, and was in regular touch with the fluctuating statistics of the baby ward where practically every day and night the miracle of birth takes place. My heart went out in deep sympathy for that young couple while my waking moments were haunted with anxiety. Would my own baby be normal, or would I, too, be the mother of a child deformed in some manner?

A few days later my baby arrived, and what a relief! She was normal, healthy and even good-looking. I was, and still am, so gratefully happy as I realized that it certainly was not because of any merits of mine that I have a perfect baby. And many will agree with me that I have a normal baby by no virtue of mine, but by the grace of God. Surely everything we are or have, we owe to God's grace. Yet many times we tend to forget this fundamental truth as we meet less fortunate fellow-beings every day.

Whenever I come across someone who is not so well placed in life as I am and begin to feel that I am *somebody* in this world, I am reminded of the above experience, and two thought-provoking lines of a poem written by Harry Kemp come to my mind:

"I pitied him in his blindness;  
But can I boast, I see?"

We have so many contacts with others in this life that could remind us of those lines. We meet so many fellow-beings that are not blessed with the many, good things that we may enjoy. We, perhaps, have been born in homes with high levels of culture, or in a strata of society where we have some prestige. Think of the millions who enjoy neither. Let us hope that we were born into homes where love reigns and where a happy atmosphere abides. There are more homes than we can imagine where only hatred and strife rules. We, let it be hoped, enjoy nature's most valuable gift, physical and mental health. There are millions who live in misery because they have not those blessings.

We have had the benefit of a reasonably good education. The mere fact that we are reading these words indicates this. But for every one that can read in our land there are three who cannot.

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OUR TIMES





**O**N THE GROUNDS that Jesus Christ is primarily known to us in the unity of the New Testament, preserved through the centuries by Christians who believe in Him, some critics have gone so far as to say that He was created by the Christian church and had no real existence. There is a complete answer to this, however, in the fact that history outside the pages of the Bible fully attests to His existence, teaching, and influence.

Socrates taught for forty years, Aristotle for forty, Plato for fifty, but Jesus taught for only three years. Yet those three years infinitely transcend in influence the combined efforts of 130 years of teaching of three of the greatest men of all antiquity. Only Jesus Christ has been able to divide time and history, so that we speak of it as being either B.C. or A.D.

That the historians, in spite of these facts, do not give prominence to the life of Jesus is, from their point of view, quite natural. Christ lived in a remote part of the great Roman Empire, far from the centres of learning, and His teaching was not easy and popular. Yet we have really more outside historical evidence in regard to His life than we might expect. Christ is just as historically vindicated as any other ancient figure of whom we have record.

In the Imperial Library at Rome were lodged the writings of Flavius Josephus, who was born in A.D. 37. He refers to Pontius Pilate and to Christ in the following words:

"Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer

of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day."—*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 18, ch. 3, par. 3.

This is a testimony from a historian of the first century. Josephus was a Jew, prejudiced against Christianity, yet he speaks of three supernatural facts about Jesus. Christ's deity is indicated by the words, "If it be lawful to call him a man"; His miracles, "he was a doer of wonderful works"; and the resurrection, "he appeared to them alive again the third day."

Another first-century historian was Tacitus, a Roman. Writing about Nero, he gives first-hand information concerning the attitude of the Romans toward Jesus and Christianity:

"But neither by human aid, nor by the costly largesses by which he attempted to propitiate the gods, was the prince [Nero] able to remove from himself the infamy which had attached to him in the opinion of all, for having ordered the conflagration. To suppress this rumour, therefore, Nero caused others to be accused, on whom he inflicted exquisite torments, who were already hated by the people for their crimes, and were commonly called Christians. This name they received from Christ their leader, who in the reign of Tiberius was put to death as a criminal, while Pontius Pilate was procurator. This destructive superstition, repressed for a while, again broke out and spread not only through Judea where it originated, but reached this city [Rome] also."

Suetonius, who also lived in the first century, refers to Christ when speaking about the Emperor Claudius: "He [Claudius] banished the Jews from Rome who were continually raising disturbances, Christ [Chrestus] being their leader." Concerning the

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## Was JESUS a Real Person



**M**AN WAS ORIGINALLY endowed with noble powers and a well-balanced mind. He was perfect in his being, and in harmony with God. His thoughts were pure, his aims holy. But through disobedience, his powers were perverted, and selfishness took the place of love. His nature became so weakened through transgression that it was impossible for him, in his own strength, to resist the power of evil. He was made captive by Satan, and would have remained so forever had not God specially interposed. It was the tempter's purpose to thwart the divine plan in man's creation, and fill the earth with woe and desolation. And he would point to all this evil as the result of God's work in creating man.

In his sinless state, man held joyful communion with Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." But after his sin, he could no longer find joy in holiness, and he sought to hide from the presence of God. Such is still the condition of the unrenewed heart. It is not in harmony with God, and finds no joy in communion with Him. The sinner could not be happy in God's presence; he would shrink from the companionship of holy beings. Could he be permitted to enter heaven, it would have no joy for him. The spirit of unselfish love that reigns there—every heart responding to the heart of Infinite Love—would touch no answering chord in his soul. His thoughts, his interests, his motives, would be alien to those that actuate the sinless dwellers there. He would be a discordant note in the melody of heaven. Heaven would be to him a place of torture; he would long to be hidden from Him who is its light, and the centre of its joy. It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them.

It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." "For the interests of the flesh are hostile to God; they do not yield to the law of God (indeed they cannot)." Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behaviour, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness. The Saviour said, "Except a man be born from above," unless he shall receive a new heart, new desires, purposes, and motives, leading to a new life, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." The idea that it is necessary only to develop the good that exists in man by nature, is a fatal deception. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'Ye must be born again.' Of Christ it is written, 'In Him was life; and the life was the light of men,' the only "name under



heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

It is not enough to perceive the loving-kindness of God, to see the benevolence, the fatherly tenderness, of His character. It is not enough to discern the wisdom and justice of His law, to see that it is founded upon the eternal principle of love, Paul the apostle saw all this when he exclaimed, "I consent unto the law that it is good." But he added, in the bitterness of his soul-anguish and despair, "I am carnal, sold under sin." He longed for the purity, the righteousness, to which in himself he was powerless to attain, and he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Such is the cry that has gone up from burdened hearts in all lands and in all ages. To all, there is but one answer, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Many are the figures by which the Spirit of God has sought to illustrate this truth, and make it plain to souls that long to be freed from the burden of guilt. When, after his sin in deceiving Esau, Jacob fled from his father's home, he was weighed down with a sense of guilt. Lonely and outcast as he was, separated from all that had made life dear, the one thought that above all others pressed upon his soul, was the fear that his sin had cut him off from God, that he was forsaken of Heaven. In sadness he lay down to rest on the bare earth, around him only the lonely hills, and above, the heavens bright with stars. As he slept, a strange light broke upon his vision; and lo, from the plain on which he lay, vast, shadowy

"There is a land of the living  
and a land of the dead,  
and the bridge is love."—Thornton Wilder



# THE BRIDGE OF LOVE

stairs seemed to lead upward to the very gates of heaven, and upon them angels of God were passing up and down; while from the glory above the divine voice was heard in a message of comfort and hope. Thus was made known to Jacob that which met the need and longing of his soul,—a Saviour. With joy and gratitude he saw revealed a way by which he, a sinner, could be restored to communion with God. The mystic ladder of his dream represented Jesus, the only medium of communication between God and man.

This is the same figure to which Christ referred in His conversation with Nathaniel, when He said, "Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." In the apostasy, man alienated himself from God; earth was cut off from heaven. Across the gulf that lay between, there could be no communion. But through Christ, earth is again linked with heaven. With His own merits, Christ has bridged the gulf which sin has made, so that the ministering angels can hold communion with man. Christ connects fallen man, in his weakness and helplessness, with the Source of infinite power.

But in vain are men's dreams of progress, in vain all efforts for the uplifting of humanity, if they neglect the one source of hope and help for the fallen race. "Every good gift and every perfect gift" is from God. There is no true excellence of character apart from Him. And the only way to God is Christ. He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

The heart of God yearns over His earthly chil-

dren with a love stronger than death. In giving up His Son, He has poured out to us all heaven in one gift. The Saviour's life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man's redemption.

O let us contemplate the amazing sacrifice that has been made for us! Let us try to appreciate the labour and energy that Heaven is expending to reclaim the lost, and bring them back to the Father's house. Motives stronger, and agencies more powerful, could never be brought into operation; the exceeding rewards for right-doing, the enjoyment of heaven, the society of the angels, the communion and love of God and His Son, the elevation and extension of all our powers throughout eternal ages,—are these not mighty incentives and encouragements to urge us to give the heart's loving service to our Creator and Redeemer?

And, on the other hand, the judgments of God pronounced against sin, the inevitable retribution, the degradation of our character, and the final destruction, are presented in God's word to warn us against the service of Satan.

Shall we not regard the mercy of God? What more could He do? Let us place ourselves in right relation to Him who has loved us with amazing love. Let us avail ourselves of the means provided for us, that we may be transformed into His likeness, and be restored to fellowship with the ministering angels, to harmony and communion with the Father and the Son.

—Ellen G. White

**T**HINGS go wrong with everybody. Last week-end I read the memoirs of a famous royal personage. Things often went wrong in his experience, he confessed.

Down on a certain street corner I know very well, every morning—dull, sunny, hot, cold, fine, rainy—there stands an old man selling newspapers. I know that things are going wrong in his life, for the poor old fellow is now walking with an obviously painful limp.

A picture I am particularly fond of shows a chubby little girl of say about three tender years—holding in her hands a broken doll—while great tears are shown on her round, rosy cheeks. Things have gone wrong with her—all wrong, in a big serious way—in her mind and according to her way of looking, that is.

In my life? Yes. In your life? Yes. In the life of the man next door? Yes. In the life of the woman sitting next to you in the bus today? Yes. In the life of that person who at present seems to be on top with "everything going his way"? Yes. Here is a part of life common to all now living, all those who have gone before us, and all who may follow on after we rest.

Things have been going wrong for about six thousand years, ever since Adam and his wife crossed the fateful line between where *all* was right all the time, and when *nothing* would be all right all the time. The vista on the right side of that line is well worth looking at. You take it in with the words of Genesis 1:26, 27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." This "dominion" given Adam was complete.

On the other side of the sin-line it was very different. Death replaced life, and everything has gone wrong. Man is now living in a new kind of world—a sinful world. It is a world made sinful by his own disobedience. Man himself is now a sinner. Poor Adam! And we are his sons and daughters!

Yes, things are still going wrong,

# WHEN THINGS GO WRONG



and we all know it. Oh, no!—life is not "one long unending vale of tears." Far from it. That we also well know, for, no doubt, like this writer, each reader has had the thrills of real life, genuine love, and clean laughter, and has tasted somewhat of life's successes. Life is often very sweet. Thank God for that. *But* we repeat: *things do go wrong*. This fact leads to a very practical question. What can one do when things do go wrong?

As life matures every person requires somewhat of a working philosophy. May I share a little of mine with you regarding this matter of things going wrong.

1. Do not take too seriously your initial emotional reactions be they fear, anger, revenge, inferiority, grief, frustration or one of a dozen others. These strong feelings are pretty natural at such times, and they do subside, rarely being as intense as at the time of the initial impact of the gone-wrong experience. Read 1 John 2:1; 1:9.

2. During my college days a fellow student in art class made a poster as a class assignment. On it were the words, "THIS, TOO,

SHALL END." It is now nearly thirty years since I saw that message attractively displayed in our "Practical Art" class. "Practical?" It surely was. And how true is that maxim. Acceptance of it has helped me over more than one confusing bit of life's road. Read Revelation 21:1 to 4.

3. Look for the "positive approach," find it, and then follow it. Some years ago when I was responsible for the publication of a little paper for church officers, I observed that church after church I visited was out of order in regard to certain basic procedures. Things surely had gone wrong. I wrote a somewhat stinging editorial—and never published it. Instead, in my paper I started up a new department headed "We Liked . . ." and I listed the things I liked about the churches I visited. It was really surprising how matters began to come into line.

The positive approach pays, and always one such angle can be found. Think for a minute of Scotland's able preacher, Doctor George Matheson, who at the same time was one of the world's lead-

ing writers of devotional literature. While a brilliant student at the University of Glasgow, he became engaged to be married to a delightful young woman. Then, unexpectedly his sight failed. His sweet-heart decided against going ahead with the marriage. What heart-breaking news this was to the young preacher-writer. But out of that bitter experience he wrote the words of the almost immortal hymn:

"O love that will not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in Thee;  
I give Thee back the life I owe,  
That in Thine ocean depths its  
flow  
May richer, fuller be."

Read Romans 12:21.

4. Do not give way to feelings that God does not care. God does have a purpose for your life. That fact, rather than being able to at all times see this purpose for you, is of supreme importance. Let me quote some lines from Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

"I will not doubt, though all my  
ships at sea  
Come drifting home with broken  
masts and sails;  
I shall believe the Hand which  
never fails,  
From seeming evil worketh good  
to me;  
And, though I weep because  
those sails are battered,  
Still will I cry, while my best  
hopes lie shattered,  
'I trust in Thee.'"

Read Hebrews 13:8 and verse 5, last part.

5. Follow the advice found in the words of the hymn, "Take it to the Lord in prayer," for "In His arms He'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a solace there." True. Very true. Try it and prove it. Read Psalm 37:5.

"Oh for a faith that will not shrink,  
Though pressed by many a foe;  
That will not tremble on the brink  
Of poverty or woe:

"That will not murmur or complain  
Beneath the chastening rod,  
But in the hour of grief or pain  
Can lean upon its God."

—by W. Austin Townend

## WAS JESUS A REAL PERSON?

From page 9

life of Nero, Suetonius writes: "Christians were punished, as sort of men of a new and magical religion."

Thus we see that to these three well-known secular historians of the first century Christ and the Christians were realities.

The books of the New Testament, which testify in detail concerning the life of Christ, are dated in the first century. That these dates are genuine is attested to by Christian literature of the late first and early second centuries.

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (martyred about A.D. 116), clearly knew our New Testament in general. He knew the Epistles of Paul well, and the Gospels of Matthew and John appear to have been his favourites.

Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (about A.D. 69-155), uses much of the New Testament in his letter to the Philippians.

Clement of Rome (about A.D. 30-100) wrote a letter in the name of the Church of Rome to the Church at Corinth about A.D. 96. This little letter, known as 1st Clement, clearly indicates that he knew Matthew, Romans, 1 Corinthians; and it is full of references to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

All the other early church fathers quote from the writings of the New Testament. What has been said about the three church fathers already mentioned could be said about, for example, Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (about 80-155); Justin Martyr (about 100-165); and Hegesippus (about 110-180). The value of this historical evidence to the truth of Christianity is often overlooked, but it is significant when it is realized that they lived in very different parts of the great Roman Empire and wrote at a very early time in the history of Christianity.

Their witness to the antiquity of the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament is in itself a testimony to the historicity of Christ.

Homer, the epic poet of Greece, probably lived not far from 1000 B.C., yet the oldest manuscripts

now extant containing his *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are hardly older than the tenth century of the Christian era. Demosthenes, the Athenian orator and statesman, died in 322 B.C., but the oldest manuscript of any complete oration which we have is about A.D. 900. Hence we see that in the first example about two thousand years intervene between the author and the oldest complete manuscript of his works, and in the other it is one thousand two hundred years.

But in spite of such great spans of time no historian would deny the historicity of these classical writers. In regard to the New Testament, however, we have two complete Greek manuscripts written before A.D. 340, perhaps as early as A.D. 325. According to church father Tertullian, the original manuscripts of the New Testament were still in existence in A.D. 200.

In 1931 the so-called Chester Beatty papyri were discovered in Egypt. They contain parts of all the four Gospels and Acts, ten almost complete Epistles of Paul, and the Revelation. They were all written very early in the third century A.D.

In the John Ryland's Library at Manchester, England, is a little scrap of papyrus containing only a few verses of John 18. This was written in Egypt early in the second century, and equally old fragments have more recently come to light which provide further evidence of the facts about Christ and early Christians.

In all we have as available source materials of the life and teachings of Christ about four thousand Greek manuscripts, about eight thousand handwritten copies of the Latin Vulgate, and about two thousand manuscripts of the New Testament in other languages. Altogether there are about fourteen thousand available sources, as against a mere handful of manuscripts of the classical writers, and these are far more remote from the time of the authors.

With this preponderance of evidence for the historical trustworthiness and accuracy of the life of Jesus, no informed person can doubt the authenticity of His life and teachings.

—V. Norskor Olsen

(Note: That this study might be of permanent value, readers are invited to underline all the texts and to follow a simple plan of annotating alongside each text in the margin of their Bibles the next text in the study. Begin by entering the following information about the study on the flyleaf of your Bible as tabled below: serial number, title, first text, code letters, and total number of texts used. Then turn to the first text and write in the margin alongside it the second text with code letters and so on in chain reference fashion to the end.)

25 W  
2 Tim 3:16  
29 Je'-sus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, / not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.  
30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.  
31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by

# MARK YOUR BIBLE

Conducted by Bernard Pinghe

No.	Title	First Text	Code	No. of Texts
16	Christ Our Hope	Jer. 6:14	COH	12

THE METHODS of well meaning men striving for peace lie strewn on the sands of time. The frustration and despair has been expressed by the late Sir Winston Churchill: "The human tragedy reaches its climax, in the fact that after all the exertions and sacrifices of millions of people. . . we have still not found peace or security, and that we lie in the grip of even worse perils than those we have surmounted." *The Gathering Storm*, p. 99.

## CHRIST OUR HOPE

### 1. How elusive has been peace among nations and in the lives of individuals?

Jeremiah 6:14. "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (2 COH 1 Thessalonians 5:3.)

Lack of security and loss of hope is an advancing tide. "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." H. G. Wells in *The Outline of History*. No one can claim that education is winning the race.

### 2. Of these times when honest attempts are made to erase war, what is the prophecy of scripture?

1 Thessalonians 5:3. "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh." (3 COH John 16:33.)

While the day by day events of present history fluctuate up and down, like a column of mercury in a thermometer, we cannot forget that the fires of war that affect the thermometer are still burning, and

are liable to flame into a holocaust at any time.

### 3. While maintaining that peace is not possible in this world what hope did Christ hold out to man?

John 16:33. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (4 COH Revelation 3:8.)

### 4. What is Christ's message of hope to all who find avenues to joy and peace barred?

Revelation 3:8. "I have set before thee an open door." (5 COH John 15:11.)

Not until we enter in at this door could we say with Francis W. Parker. "We are marching along the endless pathway of unrealized possibilities of human growth."

### 5. How complete and permanent is the joy that Christ offers?

John 15:11. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (6 COH Joel 3:16.)

"Joy of this world, for time will not abide.

From day to night, it changeth as the tide."

—Chaucer.

### 6. When at times the outlook is most unpromising what guarantee of hope does God give to His children?

Joel 3:16. "The Lord will be the hope of his people." (7 COH Psalm 16:11.)

"Behind the cloud the starlight lurks; through showers the sunbeams fall; for God who toucheth all His works has left this hope with all."—Whittier.

### 7. What further assistance is offered to those who are in the paths of sin and error?

Psalm 16:11. "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." (8 COH Isaiah 55:7.)

Sin leads to death but Christ through the act of redemption offers us life.

**8. What generous offer is made to anyone who is now burdened with sin?**

Isaiah 55:7. "Let the wicked forsake his way . . . and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (9 COH John 10:10.)

John Flavel described Christ's love and mercy in these words: "What an excellent, lovely one is Christ! Put the beauty of ten thousand paradises like the Garden of Eden into one. . . . What an excellent thing it would be, and yet it should be less to that fair and dearest well-beloved Christ than one drop of rain to the whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths. Now for God to bestow the mercy of mercies, the most precious thing in heaven or earth, upon poor sinners, what manner of love is that!"

**9. What large measure of a bountiful life is offered to the followers of Christ?**

John 10:10. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (10 COH Zephaniah 2:2, 3.)

Michelangelo once looked over the work of one of his talented students and remarked, "There is one thing lacking." The student was most depressed. When the great man heard of this he said to the student, "The one thing lacking in your statue is life!" The best efforts of man cannot equal the abundant life that can be given only by Christ.

**10. During the judgments to be poured on the earth what promise of protection is assured to all who turn to Christ now?**

Zephaniah 2:2, 3. "Before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you, seek ye the Lord . . . it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger." (11 COH Isaiah 41:10.)

"The earth may reel 'mid tempest shock;  
My secret place is in a Rock,  
The Rock is Christ; my great high Tower;  
There I am safe in the darkest hour."

**11. What is the satisfying promise to those who trust the heavenly Father?**

Isaiah 41:10. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. (12 COH Matthew 13:45, 46.)

"In times of sudden difficulty or peril, the heart may send up its cry for help to One who has pledged Himself to come to the aid of His faithful, believing ones whenever they call upon Him." E. G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 631, 632.

**12. What will be the response of those who recognize a new lease of gracious living made possible by Jesus?**

Matthew 13:45, 46. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant, seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." (COH //)

As God gives us another New Year let us resolve to serve Him fully, and to look to Christ our Hope.

Have faith in God;  
In the world no peace is sight.  
Have faith in God;  
When life's battles we fight.  
Have faith in God;  
Our victory and hope is Christ.  
Have faith, dear friend, in God.

**OUR DESTINY**

*From page 8*

You, perhaps, have had the opportunity of developing your talents. Perhaps you can persuade some musical instrument to bring forth celestial music. Perhaps you can stroke a brush over a canvas and paint a picture of exquisite beauty. Possibly you have developed your talents for writing and can put a pen to paper and stir the hearts and minds of millions to greater and more worthy things. Perhaps you can speak with a golden tongue and influence men and women to acts of courage and heights of endeavour.

It is true that all of these achievements call for untiring work, the full use of opportunities and preparation of months and years. Even then, can we who have them boast that we "see"?

I would like to share with you one of my favourite passages in the Holy Bible found in the *Book of Psalms*, chapter 127, verse 1: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain."

If it were not for the grace of God, nobody would accomplish anything, for we are what we are, and we have what we have, only because of the grace of God. Let this thought motivate our attitude toward others who are of humble birth or who tread the lowly walks of life, whose opportunities are limited and whose contributions to history will never be noticed. Then will we have cause for great thankfulness for the blessings that God gives us.

—by Janet Bhaggien Calebs

**HATE**

*From page 6*

ridding yourself of hate and a too easily aroused anger, you must learn to forgive and express goodwill. The difficulty in forgiving is expressed in the saying, "To err is human; to forgive, divine." Christ told us to forgive "seventy times seven" if necessary. Don't put it off. Start forgiving now. Repeat the Lord's prayer, inserting the name of your offender, "Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive . . . ."

Speak kindly to others about the person toward whom you feel hate. Practise praying for him, asking specific blessing for him, especially regarding things that have irritated you the most. Write him a brief letter expressing your forgiveness and your goodwill.

Love is the antidote for the poison of hate. When our instinct to be "up and doing" is motivated by too much pride and selfishness, we will hate too much. When that urge is trained to be helpful to others as well as ourselves, we have learned to love. "Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent. She is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance."

—by Harold J. Hoxie, M.D.

# FOR JUNIORS



## SWAVAN'S WONDERFUL PLAN

**A**T LONG LAST Swavan had found a good way of making money. It had taken much thought and careful planning, but here at last was an idea that really worked!

It was like this: Swavan would walk up to a kind-looking lady or gentleman in the street, and trying to seem as distressed as possible, he would say:

"Excuse me, sir. I wonder whether you could help me. I've lost the money for my bus fare home. Do you think you could possibly lend me 37 paise?"

"Why, yes, son," was the usual answer. And the kind person would bring out 37 paise or even a rupee from his pocket, and give it smilingly to Swavan. It was as simple as that.

"Thank you ever so much, sir. That is kind of you," Swavan would say. Then putting the money into his pocket, he would walk along a little farther and try again. The plan worked so easily that Swavan wondered why he hadn't thought of it years ago. What a lot of kind people there were in the world after all!

But one day something happened that stopped his wonderful plan. Nothing unpleasant—nothing connected in any way with a policeman.

It was a Saturday morning. Swavan was out again looking for kind people. Presently he found himself near a church.

A car stopped and the visiting minister got out.

"Ah!" thought Swavan, "this looks like a really kind man."

He walked up to him, looking as

distressed and yet as winsome as he could.

"Excuse me, sir," he began. "I wonder, whether you could help me? I've left my bus fare home and need just 37 paise. Do you think you could lend me enough to get me home?"

"Why, yes, son," said the minister, as he put his hand in his pocket and brought out some coins. "Here you are, and I hope you get home all right."

Swavan was really impressed by the man's kindness and the tone of his voice.

"Thank you ever so much," he said, and turned to walk away.

But a firm and kindly hand grasped his shoulder.

He stopped and turned around. The minister was speaking.

"Son, you asked me to lend you this money. When you say 'lend' you mean that you will pay it back, don't you?"

"Er—yes—I suppose so," replied Swavan.

"Yes," the minister went on, "but how can you pay me back unless you have my name and address? Would you like me to write it on this piece of paper for you?"

Swavan could only say, rather weakly, "Yes, please."

"You see," the minister continued, "when I am not talking in a church as I am going to do today, I teach a large class of boys about your age. Some are bright, some are not. But I always tell them that what the world needs most of all is not brilliant scholars so much as honest boys. I tell them that not all can be brainy, but all can be honest. You want to be known as

an honest boy—a boy anybody can trust. Here's my name and address, and I shall look forward to hearing from you soon. Good-bye, son."

The minister walked into the church, and Swavan walked down the street. He was thinking about what the minister had told him and he didn't try his little trick on anyone else that day.

Instead he went home. "Honest men, honest men." The words kept coming into his mind. "Not all can be brainy, but all can be honest."

When he reached home he went up into his room and found an envelope, paper, and a couple of stamps. He sat down and wrote a letter to the minister who had spoken so kindly to him.

Frankly, it was a great surprise to the minister when on the following Monday morning he found a letter in the mail—a letter from Swavan, enclosing 37 paise and thanking him for what he had said to him.

Not that the minister was worried about his 37 paise, but he was happy to think that Swavan had proved to be an honest boy.

So he sat down and wrote a letter to Swavan, enclosing a lovely book worth far more than the 37 paise.

And you can be sure that that was the end of Swavan's plan for making money by being dishonest. He determined right then and there that he would grow up to be a man who could be trusted, the kind of man the world needs so badly.

—by Edward A. Warren

## STARS TELL

*From page 7*

to those that have no might, he increaseth strength." Look up at the star-dotted sky and also know, that in these last days, the Creator is calling upon men everywhere to recognize and return to Him. (Revelation 14:6-8.)

The solitary brilliance of the star of Bethlehem called men to the stable to worship the new-born Jesus. The host of stars in the night sky challenge, invite, and call us to worship the Christ who is soon to come again. The New Year is a good time to come to Him. He who goes out under the stars to seek the Creator will not go unrewarded.

—by J. R. Lewis



# ANSWERS FROM THE BOOK

Conducted by the Voice of Prophecy

Questions related to Bible subjects or personal spiritual problems are invited. Address to "From the Book", Box 35, Poona 1, India.



## Origin of "Bible"

*What does the word "Bible" mean? How does it happen that we have a Bible? In what language was it written? Is the Bible as we have it today complete?*

The word "Bible" is derived from *biblia*, the plural form of the Greek noun *biblion*, which simply means "little books," referring to the fact that the Bible contains sixty-six separate books. The name comes originally from the Phoenician city Byblos, from whence papyrus, the material for ancient scrolls, was obtained. The word paper also comes from the word papyrus.

The sixty-six little books were written by holy men chosen by God. Their thoughts and perceptions were governed by God who watched over the preparation and the preservation of the ancient manuscripts.

We have a Bible today because God loved us enough to provide a means through which we can find the way to salvation. From the Bible we learn of God's love for His erring children. We learn that He has paid the price for our redemption, and that "whosoever will" may come. (Revelation 22:17, John 3:16.)

The larger portion of the Bible which forms the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the smaller portion, the New Testament, in Greek. A few short passages in the Old Testament were written in Aramaic, or, as it is sometimes called, Chaldee.

In the year 250 B.C. the Bible was first translated into another language, Greek. Translations have multiplied since then and today we have the Bible in all the major languages and it is the leading best seller. But still, many peoples of the world do not have the entire Scriptures, as we know them, in their languages. In many of these only small portions have so far been translated. Nevertheless, the power of the gospel is evident even in these portions.

Although the Bible was written nearly two millenniums ago, its concepts have remarkably stood the test of time. The book is sufficient today to fulfil every human relationship.

The Bible as we have it is "complete" enough to show us the way to God. Undoubtedly, God could

have allowed much more to be included in the Scriptures, if in His divine wisdom He had desired so, for He is infinite. Man will never be able to have a full revelation of God, but in the Bible we have enough to challenge the most brilliant of human minds, yet presented in simple form which the humblest can understand.

## Christ's Return

*What do Christians mean when they say Christ will come again, and how do they believe He will come?*

Christ told His followers, "In my Father's house [heaven] are many rooms; . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself" (John 14:2, 3 RSV).

He *did* go into heaven. From the Mount of Olives in Palestine some of His closest followers saw Him arise from the earth up into the sky, where a cloud finally hid Him from their sight. Read about it in the Book of Acts, chapter 1, verses 9 to 11.

And *how* will he come? The Bible gives a very vivid answer to this question. Just as He went away with clouds, so "he is coming with the clouds; every eye shall see him, and among them those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the world shall lament in remorse" (Revelation 1:7). "And every mountain and island was moved from its place. Then the kings of the earth, magnates and marshals, the rich and the powerful, and all men, slave or free, hid themselves in caves and mountain crags; and they called out to the mountains and the crags, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne and from the vengeance of the Lamb.' For the great day of their vengeance has come, and who will be able to stand" (Revelation 6:15-17 NEB).

This day of Christ's vengeance is not for those who honestly and sincerely serve Him, but for the rebellious. Those who serve God will look up and say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation" (Isaiah 25:9).

**I**N THIS AGE of scientific marvels it may seem strange for a doctor to talk about the healing power of prayer. Scientists are always sceptical of anything they cannot weigh, measure, or dissect. Yet every experienced physician is well aware that some patients recover from serious illness when, humanly speaking, there seems absolutely no hope.

What is the reason why such patients recover? It is not because of anything the doctors have done. Medical science can go only so far in any given case. If such a patient recovers it is because of some power beyond the scope of modern medicine.

## LET'S THINK ABOUT PRAYER

Doctors freely recognize that, regardless of all modern discoveries, there is no miracle drug that ever actually heals the human body. Medicines may help by preventing the growth of invading germs, or by stimulating some organ of the body into greater activity. But beyond this no medicine can ever go. The healing that takes place is not due to medicine but to the power of God.

The more we study the human body the more we realize that man is the masterpiece of creation. In all the visible universe there is nothing more perfectly balanced than the human body, and nothing that begins to compare with the human mind. The very fact that you are reading this magazine is an indication that you are far above the level of the most intelligent animal. It is the mind that sets man apart and gives man dominion over himself and over the world around him. This responsibility is the gift of God.

Man is different from the rest of creation in another very important respect. He can pray. This is true, regardless of how he may try to explain away his actions. Men pray when they are out in the remotest jungle, or when living in the most advanced society. At some time in his life every man will pray, whether he is normally religious or not.

Deeply implanted within all our minds is a consciousness of someone greater than ourselves. How else can we explain the marvellous universe all around us? No rational man ever really believes that all these wonders came into existence by themselves. He may attempt to explain what he sees by one theory or another, but he is well aware that—

Beyond the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadows  
Keeping watch above His own.

Man instinctively turns to God in the hour of sorrow or bereavement. Even the sceptic who claims to doubt the existence of God will suddenly cry out for deliverance

when confronted with some extreme emergency. No matter how much he may try to rationalize his actions, his cry for help is directed to the only One to whom he knows he will one day have to give a final accounting. The surprising thing is that sometimes his prayers are answered in a way he would least expect.

Centuries ago Augustine, the great philosopher and theologian, expressed it this way: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and the heart of man is restless until it finds rest in Thee." This is the real purpose of prayer. We pray, not so much for healing, but for rest. It is through prayer that we find the answers to the questions that perplex and harass us. The one thing above all else that the human heart desires is rest.

Nor do we come uninvited. The Master has said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." He does not promise to give us all the things we think we must have. He says, "I will give you rest."



What is prayer? Many wonderful definitions have been given of it, but one of the best is this: "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend." We must open our hearts to God as if we were talking to a friend and seeking to understand his mind.

There is nothing selfish or demanding in any true friendship. We do not make demands of someone whose friendship we cherish. We have only one desire—to enter into his confidence, to accept his counsel, and to please him. This is the way for us to approach God. He is our Friend.

This is very different from the attitude many people adopt. The great majority think of prayer only when some overwhelming calamity, such as a serious illness, occurs. Then they are desperate to find someone who will pray for them. Such an attitude springs from fear and is not the right approach for anyone who is seeking healing through communion with God.

It is perfectly right for us to appeal for help in some moment of crisis, such as in an earthquake, pestilence, famine, or drought. But prayers that are confined to such occasions alone may spring from pure selfishness. If we would receive the full benefits of healing through prayer, we must be in constant touch with God. He knows our needs, and is only too willing to supply them as He sees fit.

The question naturally arises, If God understands our needs, why should we pray? Does He not provide for all men everywhere, whether they serve Him or not?

Prayer was never intended as a means of obtaining material prosperity. Its chief purpose is to bring us into harmony with the Author of the universe, that we might understand His will and become one with Him. We do not pray that we might change His mind, but that we might bring our minds into harmony with His. When we do this we are often surprised to find that the desires of our hearts are answered, even though in a different way from that we may have expected.

#### *Prayer for healing*

Let us suppose you are in pain, suffering from some condition for which modern medical science can offer little or no permanent relief.

It is difficult for you to understand why you should have this illness. You have already asked for healing, but so far you have not received the answer you desire. Does this mean that your prayers have not been heard? Not at all. God is not willing that any of His children should suffer needlessly.

Yet for reasons that you cannot understand you are still suffering, and there seems no relief in sight. Why the delay? Maybe there are some things in your life that need to be changed—habits of eating, drinking, rest, and recreation. This is an excellent time to think things over.

Perhaps you have already made certain drastic changes, yet you are still in pain. But this is no reason why you should lose your faith. A serious illness may be the only way of helping a person find the right approach to life. Maybe there are lessons of patience, kindness, sympathy, and understanding that have yet to be learned. A prolonged illness gives us an opportunity to take stock of ourselves. It provides us with a time for reflection and perhaps for a complete reorientation of life.

If a person uses this time aright, avoiding all useless fretting and frustration, his whole life will be richer and more enjoyable afterward. The trouble with most of us is that we do not take time to think for ourselves. We demand constant entertainment. We are forever surrounded with the noise and bustle of life. The Master has said, "Come ye yourselves apart, . . . and rest awhile." A serious illness may provide us with the opportunity to do this.

#### *When to ask for healing*

While lying in bed sick it is well to examine carefully the reasons for being there. Are you suffering because you have wilfully transgressed the laws of health? If so, it is time to make a change for the better. You can hardly expect God to save you from the results of your own foolishness. If you really want help you will resolve henceforth to live in harmony with the laws of the universe. Having done so, you may freely ask for divine healing.

One reason why so many prayers for healing are not answered is that the individual is not living in harmony with God's laws. Even after

a person is healed it is usually necessary for him to "go, and sin no more." He must bring his whole life into complete conformity with the ideals of heaven. This means a life of obedience and humility, in which he is at peace with God and with his fellowmen.

This is not always easy. Family circumstances often make things difficult. Most of the old problems are still there, and some may never be fully solved. But in completely surrendering his will to God a patient places himself where he can receive the blessings of renewed health and vitality. The healing process may be slow, but it is no less a miracle than if it had occurred immediately. This very slowness may give the individual an opportunity to co-operate more fully with God.

#### *How should we pray?*

When a person comes to know God as a personal friend his whole attitude will be different. No longer will he make unreasonable demands. He will want to know what is best in his case, and he will leave the decision to God alone. His prayers will be offered in humility and deep sincerity. With true resignation he will say, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

It is foolish for us to try to tell God what to do. He already knows what is best for us, even if we are suffering because of our own folly. An immediate answer to our prayers might do more harm than good, for we would not have learned the secret of an abiding trust in Him. In resigning ourselves to God we find happiness and peace, and from henceforth we can rest our case with Him.

Nor must we lose faith when prayer does not bring some loved one back for whom we have diligently prayed. Regardless of our desires, there comes a time when it is best that a loved one should rest from his labours. The choice of the time is not ours but God's. We must leave the final decision to Him.

"Prayer is the breath of the soul." It teaches us to love God and to understand our fellowmen. It is the one unailing link between earth and heaven. And it is the one sure way to bring our lives into harmony with the Divine.

—Clifford R. Anderson, M.D.



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