

The Bible and

OUR TIMES



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PETER'S TOMB FOUND?

At last the promised announcement, hinted at more than a year ago, on the alleged finding of Peter's tomb beneath the basilica of St. Peter's, Rome, has been made by the Pope himself.

In an address to his cardinals, Pius XII declared: "The tomb of the Prince of the Apostles has been found. Such is the final conclusion after all the labour and study of these years."

On the question as to whether any of the remains of Peter had been discovered in the tomb, he said: "At the side of the tomb the remains of human bones have been found. However, it is impossible to prove with certainty that they belong to the body of the apostle."

But even though the excavations have produced no proved "relics," he added: "This still leaves intact the historical reality of the tomb itself. The immense dome rises directly over the tomb of the first Bishop of Rome, the first Pope."

"A documented work," the Pope further stated, is to be published in a very short time "which will bring to the knowledge of the public the result of these explorations."

Until the detailed report is published it is, of course, impossible for archaeologists to assess the evidence upon which this confident assertion respecting Peter's burial on Vatican Hill is made, but it is necessary without delay to dissociate what may be a perfectly valid archaeological discovery from the theological fallacies with which the Pope links it in his Holy Year announcement.

The majority of Protestant scholars are prepared to agree, equally with Roman Catholics,



Current Event in
the Light of the Bible

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By the Editor

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that Peter was most probably martyred in Rome and buried there. In his recent book on *The Dawn of Christianity*, for example, Professor F. Bruce quotes the noted German Protestant scholar, Hans Leitzmann:

"All the early sources about the year 100 become clear and easily intelligible, and agree with their historical context and with each other, if we accept what they clearly suggest to us, namely, that Peter sojourned in Rome and died a martyr there."

Provided, therefore, that the evidence for the identification is satisfactory, the tomb beneath St. Peter's will be accepted by all, Catholic and Protestant, as the authentic grave of Peter.

But when the Pope goes on to say: "The immense dome rises directly over the tomb of the first Bishop of Rome, the first Pope," he is moving from the sphere of archaeological investigation to serious theological controversy.

As we have previously stated in these columns, while Clement at the end of the first century and Ignatius early in the second refer to the apostle's martyrdom, they say nothing about his holding any office in the church of Rome. It is not, in fact, until the end of the second century that Hegesippus referred to Peter as having anything to do with the establishment of the church in the capital

of the Empire. And he lists him only as co-founder with Paul of the Roman church.

So even if it is established that Peter was buried on the site of the great church of St. Peter's, it by no means follows that "the first bishop of Rome" was buried there. Indeed, the French Roman Catholic scholar, Jacques Zeiller, has to admit:

"The so-called tradition of the twenty-five years of Peter's Roman episcopate rests on no historical data. . . . Of Peter's life in Rome we know for certain only the last act, his martyrdom."

To suggest further that Peter was "the first Pope" takes us still deeper into the hypothetical, for implied in this declaration is the claim that the "keys" of the kingdom of heaven were given exclusively to Peter, and passed on by him in "apostolic succession" to future popes occupying his seat in Rome.

Actually the passage in Matthew on which Roman Catholic theologians rely to prove the authority of the papal See (Matt. 16:18, 19) does not suggest that the "keys" were given only to Peter, and the text was not so understood even by the Roman branch of the church in the earliest centuries.

So far as we know, Pope Stephen, about

through the moving of the seat of Empire from Rome to Constantinople.

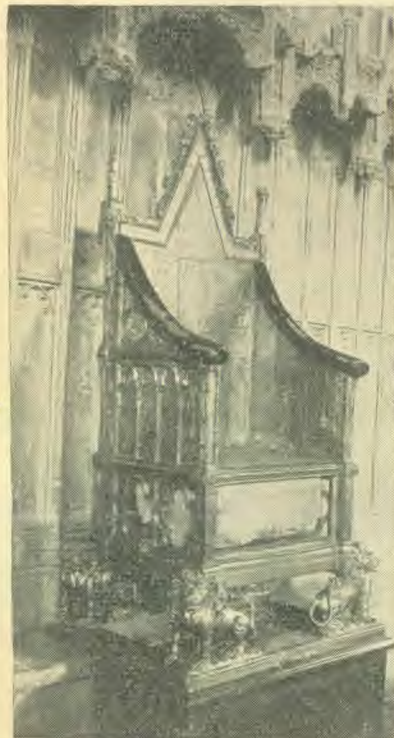
Whatever, therefore, the discovery of the tomb of Peter proves—assuming that the archaeological evidence is convincing—it certainly provides no evidence that Peter was either "the first bishop of Rome," or "the first Pope."

THE "STONE OF DESTINY"

TALKING of theological inventions associated with genuine archaeological objects reminds us of some which have been woven around the famous Coronation Stone which disappeared from Westminster Abbey a few weeks ago.

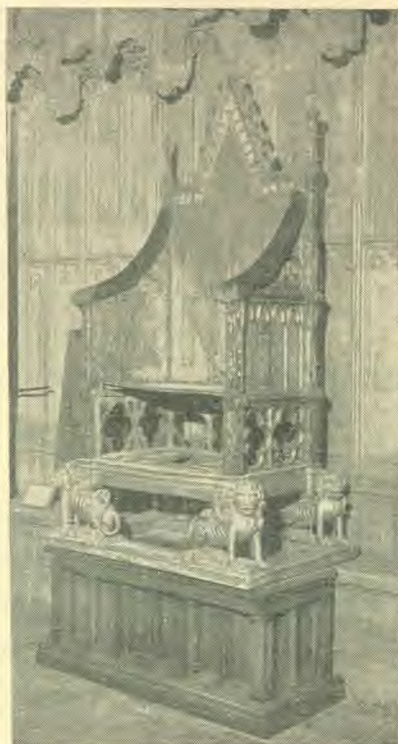
Of the antiquity and priceless value of this national heirloom there is no question. Since 1297, when it was brought to London from Scone Abbey, Perth, it has been used at the coronation of every British sovereign, and for centuries before that it was associated with the coronation of Scottish kings. Though it was disputed by the late Dr. William Skene, Historiographer Royal of Scotland, some authorities believe the Stone of Scone to be identical

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A.D. 256, was the first bishop of Rome to claim privileges as Peter's successor, while the first known reference to the "keys" was in a letter of Felix II, bishop of Rome, between A.D. 355 and 358.

It thus becomes evident that the claim of the Papacy to universal spiritual dominion, was an opportunist move on the part of certain ambitious prelates of Rome, when they saw the power of Imperial Rome disappearing, and as they faced the possibility of dominance by the Eastern churches



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Left.—The Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey with the famous Coronation Stone in its usual position.

Right.—The damaged chair after the sensational theft of the stone.



By E. Zimmermann

With rapt attention the disciples listen to the word of the Master.

The Man Whom Jesus Loved

By F. A. Spearing

SEVERAL times in the gospel of John we read of the disciple "whom Jesus loved." He was one of the twelve who took part in the last supper; he was a witness of the crucifixion of our Lord; he visited the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection; and he was one of the disciples to whom Jesus appeared by the Sea of Galilee after His resurrection. But his name is not given. It is, however, generally understood that this disciple "whom Jesus loved" was John the evangelist, the writer of the fourth gospel, and this understanding is supported by John's own words: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things." John 21:20, 24.

What kind of a person was this man who was distinguished in so remarkable a way? His must have been an ideal character? But no; far from it. The gospel narrative portrays him as ambitious, hasty, quick-tempered, im-

pulsive, and presumptuous; not at all the kind of person one would think the Master would choose for a disciple. Yet Christ saw great possibilities in him; and He was not disappointed, for John drew closer to the Master than did the other disciples, and he, doubtless, learned the lessons of love more quickly. His was a case of real, sound conversion; of transformation of character and life. And his writings are full of the love of God.

It will be recalled that after the crucifixion of our Lord, Mary, His mother, made her home with the beloved disciple. (John 19:25-27.)

But John was not the only one who was greatly loved by Jesus. He loved Peter, too, and James, and Philip, and Andrew, and Thomas. We are told that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." John 11:5. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus to learn the way to eternal life, we read

that "Jesus beholding him loved him." Mark 10:21. Did He not also love the publican when He said to him: "This day is salvation come to this house"? Luke 19:9. And the guilty woman to whom He said: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more"? John 8:11. And the man, sick of the palsy, who was healed of his disease, and at the same time given the assurance that his sins were forgiven? (Mark 2:1-12.)

How Many Brethren?

On one occasion Jesus had had a harassing day. The enemy had done his utmost to overthrow the faith of the Son of God, yet without success; our Lord vanquished him at every point. At this time Mary, the mother of Jesus, came to speak to Him, perhaps to say a word of comfort and cheer and confidence. Matthew describes the scene as follows:

"While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. Then one said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee. But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?" At once He answered His own two-fold question: "And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." Matt. 12:46-50.

There can be no doubt that Jesus dearly loved His earthly mother, even as He loved His heavenly Father; and it goes without saying that He loved His brethren also, even though some of them did not believe in Him as the Saviour of the world, or the Messiah. (John 7:5.)

But Jesus loves all men, very tenderly, and it gives Him especial joy when a soul yields his heart to the Saviour, whether that soul be a Pharisee or a publican, a Jew or a Gentile, a stranger or a member of His own family. It was "for the joy that was set before Him," the joy of seeing sinners saved by His sacrifice on Calvary, that He "endured the cross, despising the shame." Heb. 12:2.

He Loves "The World"

To Nicodemus the Pharisee, the ruler who came to Jesus by night, the Master said:

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:14-17.

Never before had Nicodemus heard such teaching. He was familiar with the Old Testament story of the serpent; but it was an entirely new thought to him that the serpent was a type of the Man of Nazareth. He had not understood before this interview what the plan of salvation meant. Now he saw that that plan involved the death of the great Teacher with whom he was speaking, to whom he was listening. New light dawned, too, as he realized for the first time that God was interested in the whole world, not only the Jewish people; that He loved all men, everywhere; that He loved them so much that He gave His Son to die in their stead. This new light reached the heart of the ruler of the Jews, so that he became a faithful follower of Jesus, a true disciple of the Saviour of the world.

"God so loved the world!" That is, God so loved the people of Africa, of America, of the South Seas, of Europe, of the vast countries of Asia, that He gave His Son to die for them all; that whosoever should believe of these great multitudes, should be saved eternally. In His wonderful, comprehensive plan, God remembers every part of the earth, every soul, everywhere. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. 5:20.

He Loves "You"

The disciple whom Jesus loved was called John. The man whom Jesus loves to-day, may well be called John, for many men bear that name, and Jesus loves them all. He also loves the Andrews, and the Peters, and the women who are called Martha, and Mary. The man whom Jesus loves, the woman whom He loves, lives in the very town in which you live. He lives in your street; she lives in your house! Yes, the One who came to die for the world, came to die for you. He loves you, dear friend, whosoever you are; He loves you, dear brother, dear sister, with an intensity that passes the

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Bishops, Monkeys, and You!

By T. G. Belton

BISHOP BARNES of Birmingham has once again returned to his attack on the Bible—or at least that part of it called "Genesis." At a recent diocesan conference he once more opened up on his pet theme that we are not descended from Adam, as the Bible teaches, but from apes. For his persistence in propagating this theory, he was once dubbed by a senior bishop, "The Monkey Bishop."

We would not quarrel with Dr. Barnes if he wishes to trace his own lineage back to an ape; but we do object to his applying his theory to us. We much prefer to believe what the Bible says of man: "He was the son of Adam, which was the son of God!" In other words, as it is expressed in another part of the Bible: "Man was made in the image of God."

The Bible speaks of "the beauty of the Lord;" it is strange indeed, therefore that some people should prefer to imagine themselves as "ascended" from apes, rather than made in the image of the beautiful Creator. Paradoxical as it may seem, I think there must be an element of pride in it: they prefer to think that they have improved, advanced, ascended, from the ape, rather than admit that they have degenerated from the "image of God" in Adam.

Evidence for Adam's Existence

But have we sufficient ground for believing that man was originally made in God's image and has "descended" from that image, rather than "ascended" from an ape? We certainly have, quite apart from our own common sense and reason, and apart from the evidence of Genesis itself.

One of the most astonishing things about the Bible is its amazingly well-kept genealogies. Look at St. Luke's gospel. Here you will find a complete genealogy from Adam to Christ—an unbroken chain covering thousands of years! There is nothing like it anywhere else in the world! It can only be accounted for by the over-ruling providence of God. There is no

"once upon a time in a far-away country" about it. Every name is clearly recorded in its proper order. Says Dr. Luke, "the beloved physician," "I can give you every name in an unbroken chain from Jesus right back to Adam."

Here is another witness: We find in a letter written by the apostle Jude a reference to "Enoch also, the seventh from Adam." Jude 14. This can be checked in Luke's genealogy. Here it is: "Methuselah, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam!" Count back "Adam first, Seth second," and so on, and you will see that Enoch was "seventh from Adam," so that these two witnesses agree.

Going back to the Old Testament, we have another reliable witness, the man whom God chose, above all others, to be the custodian of His ten-commandment law. What does he say? "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam. . . ." Deut. 32:8. So Moses had no doubts about the existence of Adam, and that he was the "father of the race."

But someone may ask: "How did Moses know all this about God's planning for the nations, and about Adam?" The answer is that Moses had long private interviews with "The Most High"—the Source of all knowledge. His school was high up in the mountains, and his Teacher was God! (Exod. 33:11.)

There was also another famous character who also had the rare privilege of conversing with God, and of whom God Himself testified that "there is none like him in the earth, a PERFECT and an UPRIGHT man." If a judge had before him a man that he knew to be a "perfect and upright" man, would he not accept his evidence without question? What did this perfect man say? He not only asserts the fact

of Adam's existence, but he also confirms the Genesis story of Adam's "fall," and refers to Adam's attempt to hide his transgression. He says: "If I covered my transgressions, as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom. . . ." Job 31:35. The manner of Job's reference to this subject would seem to indicate that the fact of Adam and his transgression, was not questioned by anyone in those days.

Paul's Testimony

Now listen to another very reliable witness. This man lived about 1,550 years later than Job, but he also, in addition to receiving the best education available in his day, afterward attended the same "High School" as Moses did—He had "revelations" from God: he was taught by God Himself. He records how he retired for a time into the desert of Arabia, and tells how God taught him by "revelation." He particularly emphasizes that he did not receive his knowledge from other men—not even from the apostles of Jesus—so he is not merely echoing the beliefs of old-time patriarchs, when he says: "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." Rom. 5:14. He also refers to "Adam's transgression." And again he writes: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:22.

As those who have believed in Christ, are said to be "in Christ" so those who have not yet been converted, are said to be still "in Adam," because they are descendants of Adam, inheriting his fallen nature. But when a man becomes "in Christ," he is given a changed "heart," so that he hates all hateful things, and desires love, co-operation, peace with all men—"Peace on earth, goodwill to men."

That Adam was the first man, Paul confirms in these striking words: "The first man Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam [Christ] was made a quickening Spirit. The

first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." 1 Cor. 15:45. In writing to the church of Ephesus, Paul mentions both Adam and Eve, and again confirms the story of the "fall," adding the information that it was Eve who was deceived, not Adam. (1 Tim. 2:13.)

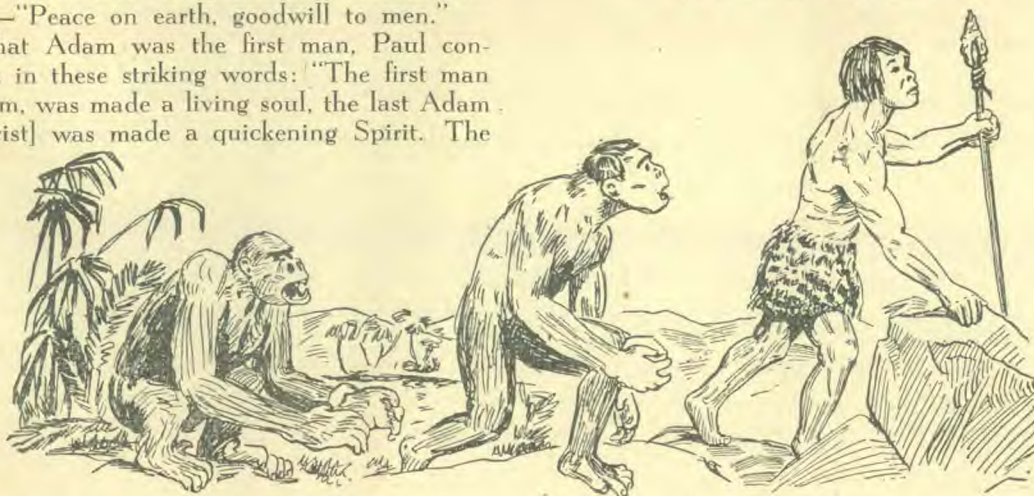
Would the Bishop Argue with Moses or Paul?

What an array of witnesses we have then to the fact that Adam was the first man, and that he "fell by transgression," and that the whole human race "in Adam," inherits sin and death. If Bishop Barnes is ever privileged to meet these famous characters who have testified to the absolute truth of the Genesis story, I wonder if he will venture to argue the matter with, say Moses, and contradict him! Those who did so in Moses' lifetime—whether Israelites, or the proud Pharaoh—always came off second best! Would he debate with the great "apostle to the Gentiles," St. Paul, and tell him he had "got it all wrong"? Or would he allow himself humbly to be instructed by this great martyr-apostle?

Can the Records be Set Aside?

Bishop Barnes says: "The early chapters of Genesis were survivals of ancient Jewish speculation as to the origin of the world and man" and that they can "be set aside without in the least injuring reverence for Christ's teaching." Can they? Can we cut out the first two chapters of Genesis and leave the rest of the Bible intact? The references given above prove that we cannot! We would also

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THE perverted inclinations to which men have bowed, have left posterity no greater or more famous a monument than that of Rome's Colosseum. No longer the scene of inhuman cruelty and bloodshed, it is now a majestic, crumbling ruin of masonry and marble. Neither is it any longer the rendezvous of the idle, bloodthirsty Roman mob whose insistent clamour was for "bread and circuses." It is now a museum piece, thronged by sight-seers and hawkers, and a fruitful source of government revenue.

It was with very mixed feelings that we emerged from the Via Sacra of the Roman Forum, and crossed the wide Via di S. Gregorio by way of Constantine's Arch, to this, the old world's greatest arena. We were traversing what was possibly the very route followed by the Vestal Virgins who regularly took their honoured place among the hundred thousand spectators who crowded into the extensive galleries of that colossal slaughterhouse.

Builders of the Colosseum

Two thousand years ago, the site now occupied by this man-made mountain was an ornamental lake in the gardens of the Emperor Nero. The work of building was completed by Titus, largely with the help of twelve thousand captive Jews whom he brought back to Rome after he had wiped out old Jerusalem. On completing their task, many were thrown to the wild beasts in the arena which they had constructed, while the air vibrated with the tumultuous shouts and cheers of the surrounding masses. The gruesome entertainment provided by the slaughter of these Jews was merely a feeble forerunner of the fantastic things to come. It is certain that no battlefield in all history has witnessed such wanton and cruel barbarity, or absorbed so much human blood, as this arena.

Having paid our small entrance fee we climbed to the upper galleries of this gigantic structure. The gaunt massiveness of it all was almost frightening—a feeling that was enhanced by at least a partial knowledge of the wild and brutal stories every block could tell. We looked down upon a vast basin of dark arches and broken walls, by no means lacking majesty, but having somewhat of the nature of

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Photo by R. D. V.

Ruins of the Colosseum

I VISIT THE

By R.

a horrifying, soulless skeleton. Far below was the infamous oval itself where, to amuse the dissolute multitudes, and to provide entertainment for the pagan Cæsars, gladiators fought to the death, and Christians and others were thrown to the wild beasts.

The Colosseum's First Christian Martyr

The first Christian to die here, according to tradition, was Ignatius, the disciple of St. John and supposedly the little child whom Jesus blessed and set in the midst of His disciples to teach a needed lesson of humility. Finally, here in the Colosseum, he was again set in the midst of his fellow creatures, but this time as a victim of anti-Christian hatred. The prospect of facing the beasts below did not deter him. One can imagine, first, the sullen silence of that pagan mob as he cried out to them in a

OUR TIMES



Colosseum in Rome.

COLOSSEUM

VINE

passionate appeal, not for his life, but for them to turn to the living God; and then the thunderous applause as the lions leapt upon their defenceless prey, leaving nothing of him but the larger bones. It is said that fellow Christians collected these bones during the night, and that they are now preserved in the papal church of St. Clemente.

Many a loyal Christian met an untimely end in this tragic place. And as they were variously gored to death by maddened bulls, surrendered to the fury of the lions and bears, or slowly roasted to death like the Christian patrician Placidus and his wife Theophista, their dying agonies evoked no tears of pity or feeling of sympathy, but rather exultant howls and hoots from a hundred thousand callous spectators. Pity, sympathy, kindness—these were virtues from which those Roman hearts were utterly

alienated. And above the excited clamour would be the cries of the Vestal Virgins, insisting that no quarter be given and no mercy be shown. No need to wonder at the vehemence of these priestesses of the fire god, Vesta, since Christianity was a rebuke to their evil practices and an exposure of their false and debasing religion.

Christian Influence

Little is it generally realized to-day that whatever of decency and real goodness there is in this world of ours, it is due entirely to the influence of Christianity. It was, of course, due to this influence that the frightful butchery of the Colosseum was suppressed. Constantine, the first Christian emperor, in A.D. 336 tried to stop the gladiatorial combats, and succeeded in abolishing the throwing of criminals to the wild beasts by condemning them to forced labour instead. A little later, in A.D. 404, the Emperor Honorius issued an edict for ever banning the gory spectacles of the Colosseum.

As we walked thoughtfully around that historic place, we felt we could fully share the feelings of the great novelist Charles Dickens who remarked that the Colosseum "is the most impressive, the most stately, the most solemn, grand, majestic, mournful sight conceivable. Never, in its bloodiest prime, can the sight of the gigantic Colosseum, full and running over with the lustiest life, have moved one heart as it must move all who look upon it now, a ruin. God be thanked: a ruin."

A Problem

Some there are who wonder how such refinement of artistic taste as characterized those ancient Romans could harmonize with the equally great refinement of barbarity shown. It is regarded as one of those pathological problems that will never be solved. Whatever the precise answer to this problem may be, the Colosseum provides ample proof that secular education, love and knowledge of the arts, do not provide the means for softening and humanizing man. Ardent love of music and of beautiful things in general, frequently goes hand in hand with vicious tempers and fiery intolerance.

Nor are modern examples of this great problem lacking. Witness the wartime concentration camps and gas chambers of the Nazis. Witness the "purges" and revolting

forced labour camps of Russia and Siberia. Just a few of the more spectacular examples of inhuman barbarity among people who emphasize culture, science, and education. Not that there is anything wrong in emphasizing these things, but that they are obviously quite insufficient to refine man's nature. And what is the morbid satisfaction with which horror and murder films are so eagerly seen, but a milder manifestation of that selfsame spirit of brutality which animated those ancient patrons of the Roman Colosseum?

The Greatest Need

What men need to-day, like those pagan Romans, is not greater knowledge but more kindness, tolerance, and moral goodness. There is but one adequate solution to this basic human problem. It is fully comprehended in one name—that of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. His power alone provides the means of ennobling man, and of quelling the evil passions which so often reside harmoniously with artistic refinement and "culture."

As I made my way to the great baths of Caracalla I could not but think of the Bible's description of the man "which drinketh iniquity like water;" "who rejoice to do evil;" who—and especially in these last days, according to this New Testament prophecy—has "pleasure in unrighteousness." Job 15:16; Prov. 2:14; 2 Thess. 2:12. Outward refinement, but inner corruption and cruelty, is a condition more and more characteristic of our day.

There is a danger when visiting the Colosseum, to be so impressed with the brutality that planned and built and patronized the place, that one forgets the supreme heroism and peerless faith of the Christians who died there. One word of recantation, or one simple little act of reverence for the pagan gods, would, in many cases, have assured their deliverance from the horrors of the arena.

They Upheld the Standard

But, like Daniel of old, they refused in any way to compromise. They resolved, like Job, that "though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Job 13:15. They realized the sincerity of the Lord's insistence that they "diminish not a word" of all that has been revealed to us in the Bible. (Jer. 26:2; Rev. 22:19.)

They were not "convenient Christians"—willing to fulfil only that part of the Word

which suited them. Unlike many to-day who, finding certain aspects of God's requirements inconvenient, not only ignore them, but bitterly oppose those who, by God's grace, endeavour to uphold them. Never was the world in greater need of fearless upholders of the truths of God who, come wind or weather, refuse to lower His standards.

(Next Time: "Firebrand of Florence.")



The Man Whom Jesus Loved

(Continued from page 5.)

comprehension of human minds. You are assured of the love of your wife, of your husband, of your parents, of your children; but their love does not begin to compare with the love that Jesus Christ has for you, for His love "passeth knowledge." Eph. 3:19.

Perhaps you knew about this before; did you? What, then, does that wondrous love mean to you? Perhaps you have never heard of this glorious truth until now; how, then does it strike you? Having now made this wonderful discovery, that Jesus loves you so much as to die for you, does it leave you cold? God forbid! We are sure indeed that you will rejoice as the good news reaches you; but you will do more than express your joy at the great things God has done for you, and is doing for you; you will surrender your life wholly to your Redeemer and your God. You will not belong to yourself any more; you will belong to God.

What will this mean to you? It will mean that from now on you will consult Him about all your plans; about your way of life; your pleasures; your recreations; your business affairs; your goings out and your comings in. To consult God does not merely mean going to Him for counsel; it means going to Him for orders, for as you now belong to Him you will recognize that He alone must direct in all things. Perhaps as the will of God becomes more and more clear to you, you will come to the conclusion that you must give up certain habits, certain indulgences, certain ideas. But you will make these little sacrifices because you have come to know that His way is always right, and is therefore best for you.

The one whom Jesus loves! Can you not say: "That means me"?

How THE WORD Became Flesh

By Ernest Cox

OFTEN even experienced Christians are disturbed and exercised in mind when called upon by sceptical friends to explain the virgin birth of Christ. This fundamental doctrine of all true Christianity is probably the one doctrine most subjected to the scorn and incredulity of unbelievers.

We are told by doubters continually that virgin births simply do not happen. Why should there be anywhere, at any time, an exception to Nature's apparently inexorable law?

The answer to this objection is that the Creator who instigated the natural law would be competent and justified in providing an exception to His law, should such a provision promote His special purpose. There would be nothing really unreasonable or unduly remarkable in that.

Moreover, the virgin birth of Christ was directly an act of God, just as the wondrous creation of this world was directly an act of God. The apostle Paul declares that "through faith we understand" and accept the stupendous miracle of this world's creation. Similarly, it is by faith that we understand and accept the wonderful miracle of our Lord's incarnation.

"How Shall This Be?"

Indeed our faith in the virgin birth of Christ is immeasurably strengthened and encouraged when we consider in detail some of the events of the incarnation.

To begin with, Mary, the mother-to-be of our Lord, besides being intensely surprised, was naturally profoundly at a loss to understand just how the incarnation could be accomplished through her. She well knew that



By D. Flockmole

The holy family.

physically and humanly speaking, it was an impossibility. With the utmost modesty she hints at her perplexity. "How shall this be?" she asks. (Luke 1:34.)

It is to be noted that unlike many people of the present day, she does not dogmatically declare, "It cannot be." She believed that "with God all things are possible." Mark 10:27. Mary was not concerned as to the possibility of the incarnation; but she was quite expectedly unable to understand its method.

Mary now realized that she was intimately and indeed principally concerned. She could not understand, as yet, the way the Lord would have to deal with her that she might be the humble instrument of His purpose. But in any event, she was abundantly willing to be used. She knew that the plan of God for her might involve suffering and misrepresentation—perhaps the sacrificing of all her most natural and cherished hopes. But she knew also that whatever was God's will for her, it would

never involve her moral degradation: it would never mean disobedience to any of His precepts. She knew herself and her honour to be safe with God, however difficult and perplexing might now be her future.

In the lesser problems that occasionally beset our pathway, might we not strive to emulate Mary in her reliance upon God, and her confidence in the considerate out-working of His all-wise purposes?

Parallel With Creation

The angel immediately comes to Mary's aid. It was not the Lord's will that His handmaid should remain long in hopeless perplexity.

Gabriel explains to Mary how that, broadly speaking, the method of the creation will be the method of the incarnation. The same holy, omnipotent Spirit who "brooded over" our chaotic world in the beginning, would likewise overshadow her until eventually the promised Messiah, the world's Redeemer, would be born. Great must have been Mary's wonder and awe as Gabriel went on specifically to declare, "Therefore . . . that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35.

Incidentally, we may note a striking similarity between the creation of the sinless Adam and the incarnation of the immaculate Christ. For the Scripture declares that Jesus thus addresses His Father: "Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, *but a body hast Thou prepared Me.*" Heb. 10:5. It is noteworthy also that Paul speaks of our Saviour as the "second Man . . . the last Adam." 1 Cor. 15:47, 45. Thus both Adam and Christ came into being as a result of the wondrous power of God directly manifested.

The story of the incarnation of our Saviour is not really complete unless we notice, in addition to the wondrous condescension of Christ, the humility and implicit obedience of His earthly mother. Submissively she said: "Be it unto me according to thy word." The will of God as expressed in His word, was to her, even in this very personal and difficult matter, the final consideration. Her virtue, her devotion, her willing co-operation, made her, at the appointed time, a supremely fit vessel for the Master's use.

May we all be just as worthy, just as willing, just as devoted to whatever service, high or low, the Lord may ask of us.

The "Stone of Destiny"

(Continued from page 3.)

with the Lia Fail of Tara on which the High Kings of Ireland were crowned, and that it was brought over from Ireland by King Fergus Mhor, who founded the kingdom of Dalriada.

Further back than Tara, however, we certainly cannot go with any vestige of historical support, but some, boldly entering the realm of legend, assert that the stone was brought to Ireland by a refugee princess, Tephí by name, from Palestine, where for centuries it had been the coronation stone of the kings of Judah, and that originally it was the stone on which Jacob rested his head at Bethel when he had the wonderful vision of angels ascending and descending the heavenly ladder.

These legends would do no serious harm if they were recognized as no more than such, but unfortunately, this and other equally foolish conjectures have been used to build up the theory that the British race are none other than the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, that the British Royal House, through the inter-marriage of Princess Tephí with the Celtic King Heremonn, is the direct Davidic line, and that they are the keepers of the true throne of David until Christ, the greater David, comes to reign.

This fantastic idea has really much in common with the Roman case for the Pope as head of the universal church, for both are based upon misinterpretations of Scripture and have been bolstered up with a great deal of false history.

As a result many good, though credulous people, have been led seriously astray, in the one case to accept the word of the Pope as the authentic Word of God, and in the other to glory in literal descent from Abraham instead of adoption into his spiritual seed through faith in Christ.

How important it is, therefore, that we should each one make certain that our faith is based not upon "cunningly devised fables" respecting the supposed stones of Peter, Jacob, or anyone else, but upon the impregnable Rock of the truth of God.

— — —

SPEAKING in Detroit, Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg, former Chancellor of Austria, pleaded for "a holy alliance against the unholy alliance of Communist imperialism."

Bishops, Monkeys, and You!

(Continued from page 7.)

logically have to discredit the writings of Moses, and Job, and we must reject the epistles of Paul. It would also mean discrediting the gospel of Luke!

So, far from "not injuring reverence for Christ's teaching," it is obvious that we would do so, because the apostles, and Paul—as he tells us—were instructed by Christ Himself.

Speaking of young people in school, Dr. Barnes says: "These truths must be combined with their religious education, if we wish to

win the confidence of our young people!" What a dangerous policy to emanate from a Christian bishop.

This is not just a casual tea-table topic. It is a matter that vitally concerns your children, and consequently — You!

Another Envoy to Vatican

It is stated in Vatican circles that negotiations are almost complete for the inauguration of diplomatic relations between Persia and the Holy See. When finalized, Persia will send an accredited minister to Rome.



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FEBRUARY 8, 1951

PAGE THIRTEEN

THE CHILDREN'S



Pages

His Mother's Picture

ONCE upon a time, when the cruiser *Boston* was in the battle of Manila during the Spanish-American War, one of the powder boys quickly pulled off his coat, and it fell over the railing into the ocean. He turned to the officer, who was standing near him, and asked if he could jump overboard, and get the coat which was floating on the water. The officer refused to let him do so. But the lad slipped around to the other side of the ship, jumped overboard, and swam around to the place where the coat was floating and got it. Then he swam back and climbed up on the deck.

The officer saw him and had him put into the small prison on the ship. When the battle

was over, the officer had him tried for disobedience under fire. The boy was found guilty, but the decision of the court had to be reviewed by Commodore Dewey, commander of the fleet. He sent for the boy and asked him in a friendly way why he had risked severe punishment in order to get the coat. The lad replied that his mother's picture was in one pocket of the coat, and he just couldn't bear the thought of losing it!

The brave Commodore Dewey took the lad into his arms and hugged him. Then he ordered the lad to be dismissed. "Boys who love their mothers enough to risk their lives for their pictures cannot be imprisoned in this fleet!" said Dewey.—Selected.

ARE YOU THANKFUL?

By Elsie Pratt

THE other day I was thinking how important are the two words, "please" and "thank-you."

I am sure that at some time or other you have been invited out to tea with your friends, and before you leave home Mother says, "Now, be a good girl [or boy] and don't forget

For Three Things

Dear Lord, for these three things

I pray:

To know Thee more clearly,

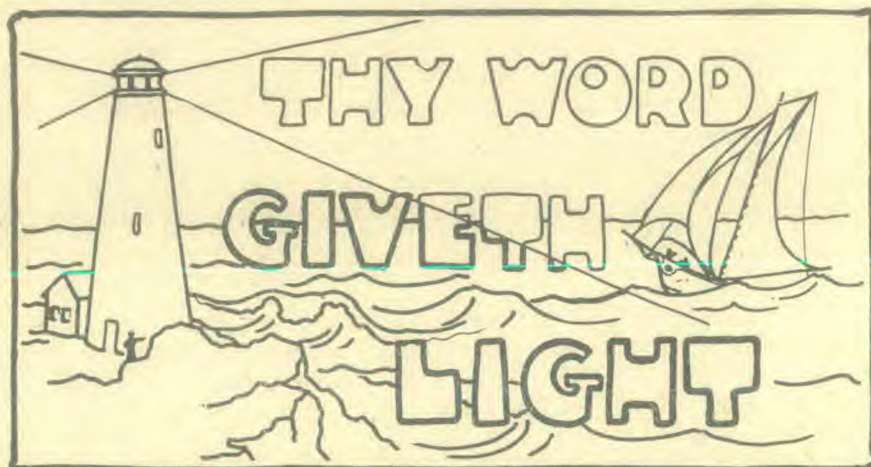
To love Thee more dearly,

To follow Thee more nearly,
Every day. —Selected.

to say "please" and "thank-you."

Then I thought about Grandma Hawthorne who went to visit her little granddaughter Suzanne. One day when dinner was ready the family took their places at the table, and all except Grandma began to eat.

After a few moments, Suzanne asked: "Why is Grandma looking at her dinner?" Now this little girl had not been taught to say her grace before meals, so she did not realize that Grandma was



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Eva, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than February 22nd.

thanking Jesus for her good dinner.

Children, I wonder if you remember always to thank Jesus for the good things He sends you. And really, everything does come from Him if you stop to think about it.

There is a little verse I like very much. Perhaps you know it. If you do, then you can be a real "Sunbeam" and teach it to your friends who don't know it. Here it is.

"Thank You for the world so sweet,
Thank You for the food we eat,
Thank You for the birds that sing,
Thank You, God, for everything. Amen."

Welcome to Our New Sunbeams

4906 Vivienne Freeman, 4907 Marion J. Coombes, 4908 Stanley George, 4909 Jean Woodward, 4910 Terrence Francome, 4911 Margaret Redman, 4912 Annie M. Wood, 4913 June Eagle, 4914 Robert Price, 4915 Maureen Heeks, 4916 Kenneth Sweeting, 4917 Olive M. King, 4918 Barbara Ferguson.

Results of Competition No. 24

Prize-winners.—Jennifer Harvey, 6 The Grange, Horsefair Street, Charlton Kings, Nr. Cheltenham Age 6; Joan White, 116 Hagden Lane, Watford. Age 8.

Honourable Mention.—John Barnes (Portadown); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Helen Cooper (Nottingham); Susan Atkinson (Ventry); Carole Mayes (Skewen); Patricia Rutherford (Gateshead, 9.); Robert Carr (Larkhill); Siegfried Baron (Church); Julia Catton (Bournemouth); David Downer (Burnley); Annie Wood (Sandwich, Orkney); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Brian Smith (Portslade-by-Sea); Jill Watson (Romford).

(When you have received six honourable mentions you will receive a prize!)

Those who tried hard.—Kathryn Pickering (Pickering); Rita Moss (Southampton); Timothy Vowles (Bishopsworth); Robin J. James (North Addington); Tony Richards (Mountain Ash); Paul Hands (Manchester); Derek Kerr (Edinburgh); Patricia White (Plymouth); Michael Wright (Batterdown); Veronica Law (Greenock); Pearl Rich (Launceston); No name (Birmingham, 7.); Susan Mudford (Epping); Howard Tilly (Bournemouth); June Grady (Norwich); Ian M. Nunn (Liverpool); Colin Glenister (Leicester); Kenneth Peacock (Darlington); Ivan Tann (Fareham); Lydia Harris (Maxey); June Eagle (Norwich); Geoffrey Trigg (Churcham); Olive King (Chelmsford); Janet Wells (Chelmsford); Maureen Walsh (Hove, 4.); Maureen Brent (Folkestone); Barbara Case (Ashton, Birmingham); Janet Dugdale (Norwich); Brenda Mace (Nor-

wich); Patricia Butler (Worthing); Malcolm Page (Hayes); Barry Alen (Ipswich); Eleonore Baron (Church); Vivienne Freeman (Swansea); Jean Woodward (London, S.W.6.); Jacqueline Dowell (Lowestoft); Peter Harvey (Norwich); Gillian Jones (Mountain Ash); John Rich (Launceston); Molly Rich (Launceston); Peter Kirby (Bugthorpe); Sheila Ellis (Bow, E.3.); Ingrid Rutishauser (Alperton); Geoffrey Rudd (Norwich); Rita Elvin (Norwich); Ronald Wick (Stromness); Margaret Redman (Bishop's Cleeve.)

Results of Competition No. 25

Prize-winners.—Ruth Johnson, 46 Weller Avenue, Rochester, Kent. Age 12; Brian Platt, 22 Shortwood Avenue, Shortwood Estate, Hucknall, Notts. Age 7.

Honourable Mention.—Richard Smith (Rickmansworth); Jose Jepson (Catford, London, S.E.); Margaret Johnson (Rochester); Gloria Snowden (Beccles); Terry Francome (Highworth); Ian Nunn (Liverpool); Margaret Tillet (Norwich); Keith Rant (Norwich); Maureen Walsh (Hove, 4.); Colin F. Bezer (Chipping Sodbury); Josephine Aldridge (Bishop's Cleeve); Ingrid Rutishauser (Giperton); Terence Mansfield (Blackfordby); June Ainsley (Coventry).

(When you have received six honourable mentions you will receive a prize!)

Those who tried hard.—David Shooter (Salterford); Monica Jenkins (London); Hazel Harris (Cambridge); Susan Harris (Brokenhurst); Rita Moss (Southampton); Irene Bird (Luton); Peter Walker (London, N.10.); Mary Smythe (Rickmansworth); Susan Mudford (Epping); Derek Kerr (Gilmerton, Edinburgh); Susan Lloyd (Woodmansterne); Boyd Greenwood (Belfast); Ann McCarthy (Newport); Margaret Bond (London, S.W.20.); Valerie Hastings (Ipswich); Billy Devereux (Harraby); Ruth Campion (Torquay); Diane Eadie (Coventry); Kenneth Peacock (Darlington); Siegfried Baron (Accrington); Marilyn McLeod (Norwich); John Haskell (Plymouth); Christine Saville (London, E.14.); Geoffrey Trigg (Churcham); Joyce Pickering (Pickering); Olive King (Chelmsford); Annie Wood (Orkney); Ann Smythe (Rickmansworth); Maureen Heeks (Birmingham, 7.); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Eleonore Baron (Accrington); Albert Wagstaff (Rickmansworth); Lily Huggins (Apsley); Patricia Hogg (Erdington); Ivy Hirst (Stalybridge); Barbara Cammish (Sheffield); Jeffery Heath (Liverpool, 8.); Maureen Woodman (Southampton); Kenneth Sweeting (Rickmansworth); Margaret Dunn (Lower Openshaw); May Goudy (Co. Antrim); Betty Campion (Torquay); Molly Rich (Launceston); Ronald Wick (Orkney).

THE Sunbeams' CORNER



My Dear Sunbeams,

WELL done to all who entered for the competitions! I do want to thank you all for your splendid entries. It was quite a big task to decide which were the best.

A kind friend from Walthamstow sent five shillings, and Veronica Law of Greenock sent more stamps for the Indian children; these will go through to Auntie Ina. You cannot imagine how grateful these dear children are. Thank you so much.

I wish you could see a beautiful cot cover I have received knitted with odd pieces of wool. The colours are so gay. I am sure the Indian baby who will be kept warm with it, will be happy to see it on the cot. Will the lady who made and sent this accept my sincere thanks?

Then I cannot forget to thank three Sunbeams for a parcel of toys. This was waiting for me on my return from the holidays. They are Molly, Pearl, and John Rich of Launceston. I am quite sure your toys will give much pleasure to the children.

You will be cheered to hear that I was able to send one pound one shilling as a donation for the Save the Children Fund, which cares and provides for children who have lost both parents during the war years and are even unable to trace their relatives.

I am sure you will be happy because you have made others happy.

Thank you to all the Sunbeams who have written such lovely letters to me. I will try to mention as many as I can next time.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE EVA.

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STRAWS in the WIND

CENTURY OF CHANGE

"How will it appear to future historians, this first half of the twentieth century—a century that began in the reign of Queen Victoria, has run half-way through its course into the atomic age, and has already witnessed two world wars?" asks an editorial in the *Listener*. "To those who have lived through it the period seems more compact with change than any period of the same length in history. The life we lead to-day is a phenomenon that those who knew what life was like at the beginning of the century would scarcely recognize."

NO ROSEATE DAWN

"To depict glowing prospects for the New Year would be treacherous to truth," says the *Church of England Newspaper*. "No roseate dawn awaits us as we look forward. Even the journalists that springs to the pen on occasions such as this drips with the clichés of apocalyptic. The twelfth hour strikes; the tocsin sounds; these are times of anxiety."

LAST TRAGIC ABSURDITY

In a recent sermon the Dean of St. Paul's referred to the "last tragic absurdity of two mighty armies, equipped with atom bombs and all the latest scientific instruments of slaughter, rushing into battle

each bearing the banner, 'We light for peace.'"

RESERVES OF DARKNESS

"LUCIFER is the Prince of Darkness," declares Richard Law in his *Return from Uto-*

MY STRENGTH

"The Lord will give strength to His people,"
So well "He knoweth our frame;"
His hand is stretched down to our weakness,
His palm is engraved with each name.

Oh, make Thy strength "perfect in weakness,"
I stretch out my hands unto Thee;
How sweet is the touch of Thy power,
The gift of Thy strength unto me!

Mrs. M. H. Cooper.

pta, "and he is massing all the reserves of night to overwhelm us. I think that we shall not withstand him unless we seek again the grace of God."

ANTI-RELIGIOUS CAMPAIGN IN SOVIET RUSSIA

It is reputed that the atheistic "Russian Society for Political and Scientific Studies" is planning an anti-religion

campaign which will include the distribution of thirty million copies of specially prepared anti-religious literature.

SABBATH IN ISRAEL

In the course of discussion on a Sabbath Observance Bill in the Israeli parliament it was mentioned that at the present time 354 industries, seventy-one of which employ more than 10,000 workers, operate on the Sabbath.

CHURCH MERGER IN U.S.

THE newly formed National Council of Churches in the United States links together in co-operative effort twenty-nine Protestant churches with a total membership of thirty-three millions.

MISSIONS IN JAPAN

SINCE the reopening of missionary work in Japan thirty-six Protestant groups have sent in workers in addition to the missionary priests of the Roman Catholic Church.

TASK FOR CHRISTIAN STATESMEN

"CHRISTIAN statesmen everywhere must try to the best of their ability to establish once more foundations based on religious and moral convictions in harmony with the natural order of things," asserted Dr. Adenauer, leader of the German Christian Democrat party, in a recent newspaper interview.

