



THE BIBLE AND



OUR TIMES



By C. W. E. Dietrich

The Adoration of the shepherds.

© Three Lions

The Child of Bethlehem

By A. B. Cheesbrough

★ ALL heaven is astir! Just as at the creation, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy," so the birth of Jesus was the occasion for such a pæan of praise and thanksgiving among the angelic host as had never before been known. Like a river that bursts its banks, flooding all the surrounding area, so the heavenly music broke the bounds of heaven and fell upon the silent night of earth as it reached the climax of ages. In that silence shepherds were watching over their flocks in the Judean fields, "and, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them."

He has a message from heaven. Other folk are asleep, but their occupation demands wakefulness. They know something about lambs

and sheep that go astray. And this message concerns a Child which is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. It also has to do with the peoples of the world, of whom it was written, "All we like sheep have gone astray."

The shepherds are afraid. They are sore afraid. But the angel reassures them saying: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Good Tidings! Great joy! For all people! What is this glorious Gospel? It is this: "For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The greatest event of all time was that very day taking place. Few realized it, but that divine promise to Abraham, that in his Seed

all the nations of the earth would be blessed, was being fulfilled. The Seed of the woman which was to bruise the serpent's head was now born. This Child was

The Child of Prophecy

This was He of whom Jacob spoke in his last hours when he said: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Gen. 49:10. Had not an angelic being whose name was Gabriel visited Zacharias as he ministered before the Lord, informing him of the birth and mission of the forerunner, John the Baptist? Was he not also specially sent to Mary (Luke 1:19, 26), and had he not been sent to Daniel ages before to give him skill and understanding as to the time of the advent of the Messiah? (Dan. 9:22, 25.) Had not Isaiah said: "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel"? Isa. 7:14.

It was high tide in the destiny of nations, and especially of Israel. This Child was the focal point of past, present, and future. The time for the full revelation of God's infinite love for a lost world of sinners was ripe. Light was breaking upon an age of wickedness and corruption. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder." This Child was

God's Greatest Gift

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What lovely presents will be made to children and friends this Christmas! What exclamations of joy and delight as the boxes are opened and there is seen therein the expression of a father's or a mother's love, the token of a great friendship, or the simple remembrances of days gone by! Not until the postman has delivered the parcel, not until it has come into your own hands, and not until you have untied and opened it, will you know the gift. What about this great gift of God? Have you received Him? Is He more than all the world to you? Is He your Saviour? "If thou knewest the gift of God," Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, (John 4:10.) The supreme revelation of divine love is for you. Have you accepted it? Have you thanked God for it? This child was

The Son of God

He was born of the Holy Ghost. He was God manifest in the flesh. He was God come down from heaven to earth to live as a man in a sinful world. Sings John Hampden Gurney:

We saw Thee not when Thou didst come
To this poor world of sin and death,
Nor e'er beheld Thy cottage home
In that despised Nazareth:
But we believe Thy footsteps trod
Its streets and plains, Thou Son of God.

Only those who had eyes to see and ears to hear discerned Him to be the Son of God and not merely the Son of man. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" He asked. The answer was that some said He was John the Baptist, others Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. "But whom say ye that I am?" and Peter answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Matt. 16:13-16. Thousands pay homage to Him as a good Man, a Man who has left His mark upon the pages of history, a remarkable Man, but whom do you say that He was? It makes all the difference in the world whether you believe He was mere man or the divine Son of God.

There are many things in life which we know are facts, but which we cannot explain. We can't explain the incarnation, but we know that Jesus came. We cannot explain the new birth, but thousands have been born again. The best argument for Christianity is the true Christian.

Angels Are Still Interested

in the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel. Unseen, they still visit this earth. They are now concerned with the finishing of the work begun nearly two thousand years ago.

From the angel to the shepherds, from the shepherds to the people was the saying made known. "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child." Luke 2:17. What was this saying? That there was born into the world a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. The message still comes from angels to men. The Gospel in all its fullness as revealed by Christ Himself is to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. This message heralds His second advent in power and glory. (Rev. 14:6-12.) Will you be ready and waiting to meet Him when He comes again?

WAS JESUS GOD?

By C. R. Bonney

★ THE birth of Jesus in Bethlehem almost 2,000 years ago was not the birth of an ordinary child. It was the miraculous birth of the Son of God, fulfilling one of the greatest signs of the Old Testament pointing out the Messiahship of Christ; for in Isaiah 7:14 we read: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." When Mary was told by the heavenly messenger of our Saviour's coming birth she immediately questioned the possibility, seeing she was a virgin. The angel's reply was, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." Luke 1:37. There are many still to-day who question the miraculous birth forgetting, or not believing, that all things are possible with God.

By
E. A. F. Prynne
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This was not the only miracle or mystery connected with the birth in the stable of that ancient inn, for many Scriptures testify that Christ had a glorious existence with the Father before He came to Bethlehem.

Down from Heaven

John, in his sixth chapter, records Jesus as saying, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. . . . What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" And again in the same chapter, verse fifty-one: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven."

In telling of His existence in the days of eternity before coming down from heaven to redeem lost mankind, Jesus forcefully and solemnly said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." John 8:58. What a comfort it must have been to Him to remember the original glory and joy of His heavenly home, and to realize that at His ascension to heaven in the near future He would enter again into the midst of its refreshing grandeur. This thought is brought out in His last prayer before entering Gethsemane when He said: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." John 17:4, 5. Do you notice this clear statement telling of the glory Christ shared with the Father before the creation of this earth?

When speaking by inspiration, Micah, the Old Testament prophet, foretold the place of the birth of Christ in these words: "But thou, Beth-lehem, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in

The wise men from the East present their gifts to the infant Jesus.

OUR TIMES



Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Micah 5:2, margin. How marvellously did Micah name the place of the Messiah's birth more than 800 years before! You will notice also his reference to Christ as "whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity." There is no question in the minds of the inspired writers concerning the pre-existence of Christ.

With the Father at Creation

Jesus is also set forth as being with the Father in the creation of this world. Most of you know the first verses in John's gospel referring to Christ as the Word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." There is no difficulty in knowing that the Word refers to Christ, for in verses ten and fourteen we read: "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.)"

There are many such passages of Scripture which speak of the oneness of the Father and the Son in the work of creation, but there is space only to quote just one more from the first chapter of Hebrews: "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." Verses 1, 2.

Friend, what a source of confidence we have in such a knowledge of our Saviour. He, by whom all things were created, left the ninety and nine who were not in need of salvation and came to this earth to redeem a fallen race—including you and me. "The plan by which alone man's salvation could be secured, involved all heaven in its infinite sacrifice. Christ was to stand between the sinner and the penalty of sin; yet few would receive Him as the Son of God. He would leave His high position as the Majesty of heaven, appear upon earth and humble Himself as a man and by His own experience become acquainted with the sorrows and temptations which man would have to endure."

What a manifestation of divine love for our salvation! May we receive Him anew this Christmas season.

DECEMBER 25, 1952

Your **BIBLE QUESTIONS** *Answered*

Has not science proved the Bible to be out of date?

VERY unfortunately there are many who believe this without any facts or real reason for doing so. True there are many theories which are held by men to-day which do not agree with Bible statements, but theories are not facts. A theory is a supposition of what might have been or what might be, whereas a fact is based upon certainty.

Modern scientific discoveries have not produced one fact which has overthrown one statement in the Bible. This may seem a strong, or perhaps astounding statement, but nevertheless it is true. The more I study this great question, the more I am convinced that the results of modern scientific study only prove more conclusively the reliability of the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

Should we still read the Old Testament?

SURELY we should! Jesus said, "Search the Scriptures . . . and they are they which testify of Me." When the Master made this statement the Old Testament writings were the only Scriptures in existence. By the reading of the Old Testament we gain a better understanding of the New Testament, for the New Testament, to a great extent, is the fulfilling of the Old Testament. It has been estimated that over two hundred prophecies of the Old Testament are recorded in the New Testament as being fulfilled. We find also that the books of Daniel and Revelation are complementary, one helping us to understand the other. Then there are so many prophetic portions from the great writers such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, which touch our times. Much of the ignorance we find to-day concerning the creation of all things and the history of God's dealings with men, is due to the neglect of reading all the Bible. "All Scripture," we are told, "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine,

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Must I Believe in ANGELS?

By R. Wilson

The Bible declares that the angels are "ministering spirits" sent forth to minister to the children of God.

★ RECENT controversy aired in the popular press has led me to ask myself this question. It began over the proposed erection of an angel figure at the head of a grave, permission for which was refused by the Chancellor of the Chichester diocese. The issue is not too clear in the public mind, however, for it has not been definitely stated whether the refusal was on the grounds that the dead child was represented as an angel or on the question of their existence as real beings.

Preaching recently at St. Leonards, Sussex, the bishop of Chichester, Dr. Bell referred to the matter when he said: "I certainly believe in the existence of angelic beings, but I cannot pretend to know the precise sphere which angels occupy in the spiritual realm."

Of course no-one conversant with the Word of God will doubt that angels are real beings. Their appearance in the Scripture narrative is so natural and so frequent that the matter is beyond doubt. One has only to open his Bible and read as far as chapter three of the book of Genesis to learn of angelic beings called cherubims, occupied in this instance with the sad duty of preventing human beings access to the Tree of Life after the fall.

Who Are the Angels?

That angels are a separate creation of God distinct from men is also patent when one turns to the inspired Word.

The very presence of angels in the Garden of Eden proves that they cannot be the departed souls of men, for no human had ever died up to that time. Abel, murdered by Cain, his evil brother, died many years after the fall.

Speaking of the nature of man, David says in the eighth psalm: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? . . . For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." Psa. 8:5-5.

It is interesting to note that man was made only a "little lower than the angels." For this reason there is common ground for social intercourse as is clear from Revelation 19:10. John, overawed by the majesty of one of these unfallen beings, was about to worship the angel. He, however, restrained him saying: "See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant."

True, there is at present a wide gap between the physical powers of the angels and man, for in the night that all the first-born were slain in Egypt, one angel only was employed. Later in the history of God's people, "an angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand," of the army of Sennacherib. (2 Kings 19:35.)

Hebrews 1:14 makes their real relation to man clearer for they are all described as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." The term "sent forth" is a reminder that angel means "messenger," coming from the Greek word *angelos*. This is well illustrated at the birth of Jesus when the angels brought the

"Good News" or Gospel to the shepherds. Luke 2:9 says the angel of the Lord was present, verse thirteen describes a "multitude of the heavenly host," and to ease our doubts as to their identity, verse fifteen, speaking of this "host," says: "The angels were gone away from them into heaven."

Thus angels are not men glorified. They are God's messengers and part of the great family of heaven, of whom God is the universally loved Father.

The Work of the Angels

At the creation, angels were present, for we read in Job 38:4, 7: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth . . . when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" And with the conclusion of the work of creation in the institution of the Sabbath, God's memorial which bids men to open the great book of nature and rejoice, the host of heaven rejoiced together in song and praise. Later when the law of God—wherein was this same Sabbath command—was set in permanent form at Sinai, Stephen remarks that on this solemn occasion it was given "at the disposition of angels," Acts 7:55.

The extent to which these created beings enter into the work of God is very wonderful. It was an angel that stood by Abraham when he was tested by the proposal to sacrifice Isaac. Bearing a message from heaven he bade Abraham: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad." Gen. 22:11, 12. It was an angel that stood by Moses when he led God's people out of Egypt. (Num. 20:16.) When Elijah fled from the anger of the idolatrous Ahab and Ahab's more evil wife Jezebel, it was an angel that watched over him on his long and trying journey, even bringing him necessary food and water. (1 Kings 19:5, 6.) To the brave Daniel, thrown into the lions' den for his allegiance to God, was an angel messenger sent, for Daniel himself testified in language that every child will remember: "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths." Dan. 6:22.

The greatest event in human history was heralded to man under the disposition of these

heavenly messengers, for we are told that to Mary there was sent from God "the angel Gabriel." In the great crisis of human sadness which led to the death of this same Child when He had become a Man, it is recorded that in the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, it was an angel that came "unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him." Luke 22:43.

Later in the early development of the Christian church it was an angel that was sent to answer the prayers of Cornelius, through whom the Gospel was introduced to the Gentiles. (Acts 10:1-8.) Prison doors also were opened by unseen hands that Peter might be released from his bondage. (Acts 12:8.) And in the great future day of visitation, when the harvest of the earth is reaped, angels will have a major part. (Rev. 14:14-20.)

If the angels have done all this in the development of the church of God on earth,

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By E. S. Hardy

In heaven, angels of God record every detail of the lives of the righteous and the wicked.

CONVENIENCE of

The Real Issue in Calendar Reform

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The principal supporters of calendar reform are the great business interests who are prepared to overrule religious convictions for the sake of simplifying their statistics!



★ In the lecture hall of the Royal Society of Arts, London, I recently listened to a very interesting lecture on the vexed question of the desirability or otherwise of changing our present calendar with all its variable features to one which would be mathematically more simple. The speaker was Sir Harold Spencer Jones, Astronomer Royal of Britain. Since some vital issues are involved in this plan which is being advocated as a benefaction to the world, it will assist us to come to clearer decisions about the merits and the demerits of the scheme if some of the basic problems are examined.

How We Got Our Calendar

Now what is a calendar? "It is the mode of adjusting the natural divisions of time with respect to each other for the purposes of civil life." It comprises a table of days, weeks, months, and seasons sometimes related to or governed by special festivals, quite often religious. The history of calendar making is certainly an interesting study. Men observed the return of the seasons caused by the passage of the earth on its elliptical course around the sun and thus there was born the solar year. Men also observed the phases of the moon, from full moon to full moon, and the idea of

the lunar month became established. The day similarly came from the rotation of the earth on its axis.

Now in the spiritual life of the ancients the religious festivals were as important as (if not more so than) their business commitments and it was vital that these recurring feasts should come at the appropriate seasons yearly. Thus it happened that the learned priestly caste had much to do with the general formulation of early calendar structure.

As a result of astronomical observation the length of the calendar year fluctuated between 355 and 365 days, and calendar adjustments were made by the introduction from time to time of an inter-calary month in order to correct our imperfect tabulating systems and bring them nearer to God's perfect timepiece of the heavens. The chief problem of calendar reform, therefore, in centuries past has centred around the accurate measurement of the lengths of day, month, and year and their closer relating each to the other. The length of the day was the easiest of the problems. "The true solar day is the interval of time during which the earth makes one rotation on its axis in relation to the sun," and we need not enter into lengthy definitions as to the terminological differences between the "true solar day" and

OBEDIENCE?

By T. J. Bradley

the "apparent solar day." For all practical purposes astronomers have devised what they call the "mean solar day" which is of uniform duration and known to us as our ordinary twenty-four-hour day.

The problem surrounding the month was not quite so simple. A month is the period from new moon to new moon, or the time the moon takes to make one revolution around the earth. This Lunar or Synodic month has a length of 29 days 12 hours 44 minutes and 2.8 seconds, or 29.5306 days. The alternating 29-day and 30-day months of the lunar civil calendars of the past were based on this synodic month. The Julian Calendar (45 B.C.) discontinued the usage of natural lunar months and introduced our present twelve-month system.

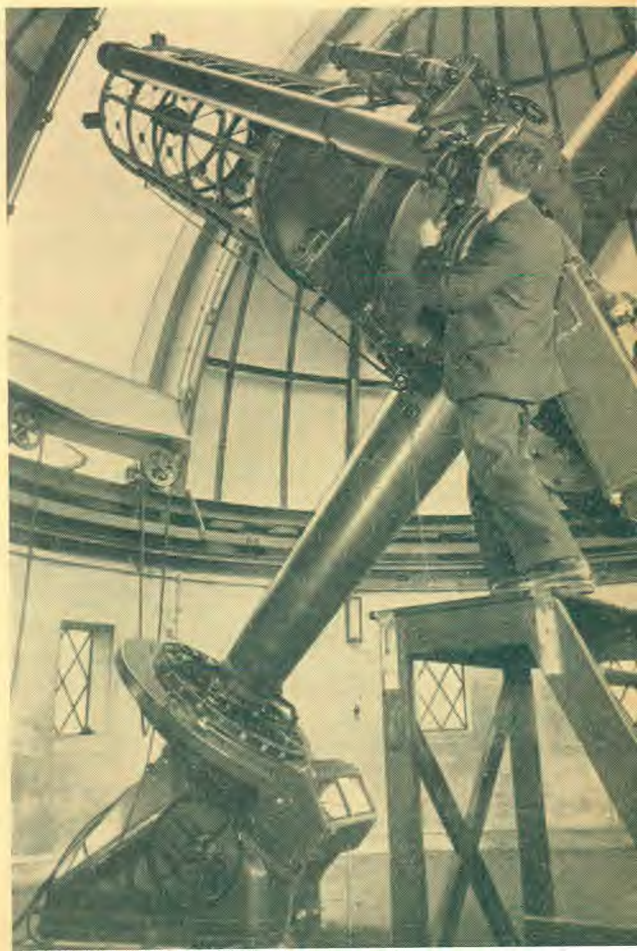
Then the problem of the length of the year is most important. It is simply stated to be the period of time needed for the earth to make one revolution around the sun. Its length is 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes and 46 seconds, or 365.242 days. But when the early imperfect calendars of the ancients measured the year as 360 days or later as 365 days it was soon noticed that the seasons were getting out of alignment with the calendars, and hence the calendars *needed* reforming, for they were not accurately recording all the time measured on God's divine and heavenly timepiece!

Ancient and Modern Calendar Reforms

Now these reasons for calendar modifications are quite justifiable, but in recent years a new type of calendar reform is being advocated by Calendar Reform Associations in many lands; and as I write, an urgent petition is before the United Nations Assembly for the inclusion of World Calendar Reform on their agenda for discussion. It is therefore important that the vital differences between the legitimate calen-

dar reforms of the years past and the highly questionable proposals being advocated to-day should be clearly understood.

With the calendars we now use there is no vital error in the measurements and relationships of day, month, and year. The measuring of time by our present calendar is now so perfected that an error of only one second in 10,000 years would be detectable! What then does the modern calendar reform movement want? It can be summed up in a simple sentence. It wants, for the sake of business statistics, to divide the calendar year into four exactly equal quarters. The plan would be put into operation in a year when Sunday fell on January 1st and for ever after January 1st would fall on a Sunday. Each of the four quarters would have ninety-one days or thirteen weeks in them, and one day of the year would have to be given a special name, and added to one of the fifty-two weeks—thus giving us one eight-day week each year—in order to bring Sunday back to us again as January 1st. The average person would not gain the slightest advantage from the proposed change. The average child would have to learn as much about the



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A member of the Greenwich Observatory staff at work with the thirty-six-inch reflecting telescope.

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new calendar (if not more) than he did about the old, for calendar reform would possibly add another lengthy chapter to his study curriculum. The housewife would have problems added to her already heavy burdens, such as Christmas day falling on a Monday regularly and Boxing Day on a Tuesday thus necessitating heavy provisioning not once in a series of years but every year. And all to help Big Business to reduce accounting costs!

Breaking the Divinely-ordained Cycle

But the most serious aspect of the whole scheme is the fact that 365 days cannot be divided into four equal parts and so the 365th day must be treated as an unwanted appendage and dropped from the weekly sequence and called a blank day, or world holiday. Leap year would have two blank days or world holidays. Now the Bible makes very clear that the seven-day weekly cycle was ordained by God and its weekly rest day or Sabbath has a vital religious significance to Christians as well as Jews and Mohammedans. But this precious, vital, unbroken sequence would be smashed for ever if the Calendar Reform suggestions were accepted by the world. Thus the difference between the reforms of the past and present becomes clear. Previously men struggled to obtain a calendar which would more accurately register the time of the universe about them. To-day a reform is wanted purely for business reasons which involves the violation of a divine sequence of days, and which would inflict a deep hurt upon millions of religious people. It would result in a moral coercion of thousands, in a way, and on a level totally indefensible in this age of respect for minority conscience.

A Faith-shattering Proposal

Just think how it would operate. Take the common practice of respecting Sunday in honour of our Lord's resurrection. If the calendar were "reformed" in the way suggested, then after the first blank day had been dropped from the weekly sequence Sunday would be the name given ordinarily to Monday. The next year Tuesday would be Sunday. The following year Wednesday would be Sunday, and so on. What then would happen to the people who still wished to keep the true Sunday in honour of our Lord's resurrection?

Then take the rapidly growing community

of Christians who have recognized the claims of God's fourth commandment and who keep the seventh-day Sabbath as a creation memorial. As Saturday wandered through the week, stumblingly followed by Sunday, what would happen to God's people who are bent on obedience rather than convenience? Calendar reform as at present advocated involves one of the worst types of moral coercion, for it steps into the realm of the religious conscience and is prepared to sacrifice the best in many a man's heart on the altar of business convenience. The devastating disruption in the souls of men would far outweigh any credits gained by the world of finance. And who would be so dismally unaware of the eternal implications as voluntarily to attempt to shatter the faith of men in the Bible and in God Himself? Or who would presume on eternal mercy after having ensnared the world and rejoiced in its capture? A great heathen king was once advised in these words: "Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor: if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

In this matter of Calendar Reform we do not protest against real scientific advancement, nor do we protest against secular improvement. We protest against a plan which is simply a tampering with a divinely-appointed weekly sequence (Gen. 2:1-3) which should be recognized and honoured as such rather than jettisoned as inconvenient. Challenging the counsels, plans, and laws of God has never brought honour and peace of mind to anyone. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

I Will Trust!

I will trust my heavenly Father,
Trust His love and mighty power:
I will take the hand He offers,
Let Him hold me hour by hour.

I will trust His precious promise,
In each time of grief and pain:
He'll not fail me, nor forsake me,
Never is His Word in vain.

Step by step His eye shall lead me,
Loving whispers chase my fear:
His eternal arms around me,
Faith and trust will keep Him near.

Mrs. M. H. Cooper.



By C. S. Dixon

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

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When God Says "Well Done"

By R. D. Vine

★ IN his letter to the Christians who lived at Corinth, Paul reminded them of an important fact. He wrote: "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." 2 Cor. 10:18. Now we all love commendation. We naturally like to be thought well of. We like to know that our characters, our efforts, and our work, are appreciated and approved by those around us. How pleasant is the inward surge of satisfaction in the schoolboy's breast when his teacher openly commends him for work well done. How warm and gratifying is the inward glow which Tom Brown feels when the boss comes along, critically surveys his work, and says: "That's a fine job you've done, Brown." How good Smith feels when he reads his testi-

monial: "We gladly recommend Smith as a dependable, honest, intelligent worker—one who will undoubtedly give satisfaction."

Words of commendation are good. They help to lighten life's burdens, and bring health-promoting feelings to those who receive them. The world would be a brighter, happier place if there were a greater readiness to appreciate and commend, and far more reluctance to vilify and condemn.

The desire for commendation is also good, when rightly evaluated. This deep concern that others may think well of our character and of our work, is really a God-given blessing. It provides us with an added urge to live nobly, and work conscientiously.

Self-commendation also has its place—in

fact, a most important place, which should not be ignored. A heart and a conscience which condemn us because of some cherished sin, some weakness indulged, some mean act or some untruthful remark, or perhaps some failure to adhere to duty, destroy our inner peace and rob life of its zest and glow. The apostle John wrote: "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." 1 John 3:21. Jesus freely offers us His grace that we may have strength to live aright, rejoicing in that inner witness of the conscience that all is well between us and God.

Not What Man Thinks

There are, however, dangers to be avoided. We must remember that our true worth is not determined by what others think of us, nor by what we think of ourselves, but by what God thinks of us. "Not he that commendeth himself is approved," wrote Paul—and we might add, "nor he that is commended by others." "But," says Paul, "whom the Lord commendeth" is the one who is approved.

Some of the Christians at Corinth resorted to the misleading practice of "comparing themselves among themselves." Verse 12. On seeing the failings in others—and there was certainly no shortage of these in Corinth—they themselves felt relatively good, and experienced a surge of self-commendation, which they really had no right to feel. Because of this Paul said they were "not wise." Self-commendation which arises from comparing ourselves with others is deceptive. Only as we measure our lives by the perfect life of Jesus, and by His perfect law, the Ten Commandments, can we be safe.

Commendation from others, especially in matters which concern our characters and spiritual standing, is also unreliable. The Pharisees gloried in the esteem and approval of their fellows. To assure an undiminishing flow of commendation from others, they made a most impressive display of their personal piety. They were thought to be good, and, like the Pharisee at prayer in the famous parable, they thought themselves to be good, too. But Jesus saw their true condition. "Inwardly," He frankly told them, "ye are like sepulchres full of dead men's bones." Matt. 23:27. Their mistake was in depending on the commendation of others and of themselves, rather than on that of the heavenly Father.

Friend, all that really matters is that we have God's approval. He sees our hearts. He knows our sins, our weaknesses, our virtues, and our inner yearnings. The deepest secrets of our lives are as an open book to Him. Loving Father that He is, He is anxious to cleanse and help each one of His struggling children, so that each may daily merit Heaven's approval and commendation.

Will You Hear Christ's "Well Done"?

Soon, very soon, Christ will return in glory to reward us all according to our works. To some whose hopes are high and who, like the Pharisees, have gloried in self-commendation, He will say: "Depart from Me." Matt. 7:23. They will have failed to live in harmony with God's will.

But to others will be spoken the thrilling words of commendation: "Well done!" In that great day, how gratifying it will be to look into the face of Christ our King, to see, not a look of painful sorrow, but a smile of recognition, and hear, not words of rejection, but those words of approval and welcome: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."



Must I Believe in Angels?

(Continued from page 7.)

then I must believe in them, for they are, for all their majesty and power, my "fellow-servants." I must recognize, too, that they cannot be the departed souls of men. They are a separate creation of God, engaged first in helping to save those who will be saved, and later, when the cup of God's indignation is full, in the work of destroying those who reject His mercy.

The Bible further makes clear that there are fallen angels as well as fallen men. Jesus Himself spoke of the "Devil and his angels." Matt. 25:41. Jude describes these evil angels as "the angels who kept not their first estate." Peter also mentions that God "spared not the angels that sinned" (2 Peter 2:4), but has reserved them for judgment.

Where then do I stand in this matter? I must believe in angels. I do not believe that dead men, women, or children become angels. I believe that there are good angels who

minister to the godly and there are evil angels of whom I must beware. And I heartily endorse what E. G. White says in her book, *Education*:

"Not until the providences of God are seen in the light of eternity shall we understand what we owe to the care and interposition of His angels. . . . The angel who was his guardian from his earliest moment; the angel who watched his steps, and covered his head in the day of peril; the angel who was with him in the valley of the shadow of death, who marked his resting-place, who was the first to greet him in the resurrection morning—what will it be to hold converse with him, and to learn the history of divine interposition in the individual life, of heavenly co-operation in every work of humanity!"

Your Bible Questions Answered

(Continued from page 5.)

for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. 3:16.

Don't you think that if something seems right to me I should do it whether it says so in the Bible or not?

In Proverbs 16:25 we read: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Jeremiah said: "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10:23. How often this has been proved to be true! Man is limited in his ability to know what is right. This is the reason why there are so many conflicting views in the world and in Christendom to-day. So many are anxious to follow what they think to be right and enforce their opinions upon others. God in His love and wisdom has given the Bible to us for this very reason, so that we might have the truth for the moulding of our opinions. The Holy Spirit was given to guide us into all truth by making clear God's Word. If we would all study God's Word and be willing to follow its wonderful teachings many of the problems facing divided Christianity would be solved.



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THE CHILDREN'S PAGES

The Cripple's Christmas Tree

MARY was a cripple. She lived with her mother in three rooms overlooking a rather dirty square. Father had died in an accident some time before, and now poor Mother had to work hard to pay for their food and rent.

The only thing to cheer them as they looked out upon the square was a lovely fir tree planted in one corner.

Mary, who was thirteen, had been a bright-eyed baby. As she grew up, the neighbours said she was like her mother. When the sun shone—as it

did sometimes in that smoky town—and the sunbeams played around Mary's head, it seemed as if a golden garland wreathed her pale features, making her eyes sparkle the more brightly.

She was loved by all her poor neighbours in the square. For she was kind, and always smiling and helpful. She was the faithful companion of old people. No white-haired grandmother ever carried a basket up her rickety stairs if Mary was about, and feeble old men with bad eyes felt the touch of her slender fingers as she helped them across the square. No wonder she was known as "the angel of the square."

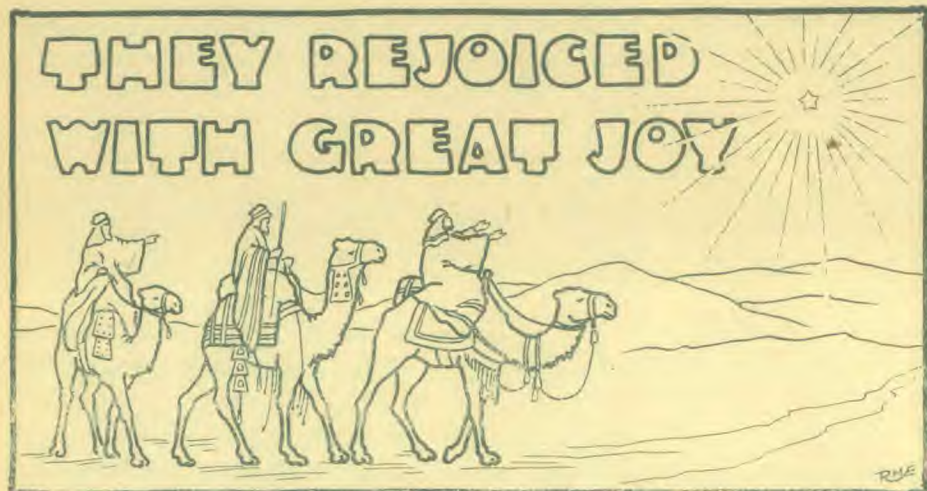
But barely a week after her father's death, a terrible thing happened to Mary. She had

an accident on the street, and her leg was badly broken. Since then she had been a cripple, hobbling about on two crutches. Those who lived in the square noticed with sorrow that this accident brought

By P. Burnell

another change. Her smile, the sparkle in her eyes, and her kindness seemed to go. Mary grew bitter. She was no longer known as "the angel of the square."

As Christmas came, Mary, who had once thought only of what she could do to make others happy, now thought only of what she wanted herself. She wanted a Christmas tree. A real one! A big one



See how nicely you can paint this picture and send it with your name, age, and address to Auntie Margaret, The Stanborough Press Ltd., Watford, Herts., not later than January 8th.

covered with fairy lights and tinsel—just like the lovely trees she had seen at the party a year ago. She would tell her mother about it, even though she knew that Mother could not afford it.

The tired mother listened as she lay back in the easy chair that evening. Unseen by Mary, her eyes filled with tears; one was on its way down her cheek, but she dashed it away.

When she was able to speak, she said, "Mary, my dear, do you realize how different you are? You are not kind and helpful as you used to be, and I need you now more than ever. I will do my best for you at Christmas."

Christmas Eve came and Mary looked at the clock. It was seven o'clock. At last she heard Mother's weary step on the stairs. She had brought home a few parcels, but Mary looked in vain for any sign of a tree. Perhaps the errand boy would bring it from the shop! Bedtime came and still no Christmas tree. But Mary said nothing.

The night was very cold, and by bedtime there was a hard frost. During the night she dreamed of a fine Christmas tree, of tinsel and fairy lights, of candles and shining decorations, and she could see herself throwing away her crutches, joining hands with the other boys and girls, and dancing round the tree in boundless happiness.

Mary awoke on Christmas morning to see the sun peeping through the frosted window panes. She glanced about her room, but there was no Christmas tree! At last, feeling for her crutches, and flinging a faded dressing-gown around her thin shoulders, she went to the little window and looked out. Her eye fell, instantly, on the fir-tree opposite.

What had happened? It was not the same tree! It was completely changed. The frost hanging on its branches was like the shiniest silver in the sunshine.

Mary gazed at it in amazement, then suddenly, the silver-frost seemed to form itself into a lovely picture—the child Jesus in the manger, and at the top of the tree a star shone, the brightest and the biggest star Mary had ever seen. Then there broke on her ears the sound of the sweetest music. It came across the silent square, away up the usually busy street, from the nearby church: "Christians awake, salute the happy morn." The choir was singing a lovely carol.

For a moment she just stood. The tree! The music! They were doing something to her. Mary held her breath and stared and listened. Without knowing why, or how it came, her heart filled with happiness. Like the fir-tree, Mary was changed, and joy entered her heart.

When the singing stopped, the church bells pealed forth. As Mary stood, she seemed to hear a voice, a sweet voice, speaking to her heart. It said: "Be of good cheer. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." It was the voice of Jesus.

Slowly the sun melted the shining frost on the fir-tree, but Jesus had come to stay in Mary's heart. She looked up and prayed: "Lord, I thank You for giving me the best of all Christmas presents, the gift of Jesus. In return I give You my life. Accept me, dear Lord."

When Mother awoke that Christmas morning she found Mary by her bedside; she had a lovely smile, and her eyes were bright with good cheer. She leaned on the bed and arranged the pillow at her

mother's back, and placed the breakfast tray in front of her. "Happy Christmas!" she exclaimed, as she bent and kissed the pale cheek.

Your Letter

My Dear Sunbeams,

CHRISTMAS is always a lovely time, for everything and everyone seem to put on a gay appearance. How cheerful even the darkest rooms look with their colourful trimmings. I think that good boys and girls are just like Christmas trimmings in this dark old world.

Yours affectionately,

AUNTIE MARGARET.

Results of Competition No. 21

Prize-winners.—Vanessa Jezard, 43 Elms Vale Road, Dover, Age 10; Margaret Peart, "Livorno," Two Hedges Road, Bishops Cleeve, Glos. Age 6.

Honourable Mention.—Pat Armstrong (Liverpool, 11); James Sparkes (Clapham); Jean Simmons (Torquay); Patrick Hall (Steyning); Nigel Payne (Bishops Cleeve); David Simmons (Torquay); Antony Peart (Bishops Cleeve); Marjorie Stacey (Hemel Hempstead); Allan Handysides (London); Adrienne Edwards (Torquay); David Equeall (Cardiff); Lydia Harris (Cambridge); Muriel Forder (Norwich); John Baker (Newport); Eileen Kelly (Liverpool, 10); Ruth Price (Wokingham); Amy Randlesome (Stockton).

Those who tried hard.—Stuart Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Heather Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Gillian Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); David Godden (Folkestone); Leslie Hardy (Derby); David Shooter (Salterforth); Celia Coleman (London, 6); Martin Cooper (York); Christine Holland (Bishops Cleeve); Marion Paget (Wokingham); Michael Henn (London, N.W.1); Vernette Handysides (London); John Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); David Davies (Llanefydd); Valerie Davies (St. Leonards); Robert Ritchie (Crossford); Patsy Pollock (Southampton); Robert Wildman (East Croydon); Bernice Axe (Hayes); Richard Payne (Bishops Cleeve); Geoffrey Trigg (Churcham); David Hollister (Bristol); Barry Green (London, S.E. 6); Valerie Lewis (Folkestone); Miriam Harris (Cambridge); Brenda Plant (Stoke-on-Trent); Sheila Keating (Dudley); Brenda Ridler (Newport); Russel? (Norwich).

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Straws in the Wind

Epochal Events

"SINCE 1914," says the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, "the world political map and the balance of power have been changed more radically than in any previous forty years in recorded time. The great Asian nations have become self-governing; the United States has risen to world leadership; a Communist regime in Russia has spread its influence over one-third of mankind. Each of these events is comparable to the rise or fall of the Roman Empire. It is difficult now to see them in perspective, and harder still to calculate what the future may hold."

Millions in Want

ACCORDING to a recent publication entitled *War on Want*, 1,500,000,000 of the 2,200,000,000 people on the face of the earth to-day are suffering from the privations of hunger.

Trends in Protestant Church

THE *Catholic Times* notes with satisfaction the increasing use in the Protestant church news of such terms as mass, confession, nullity, realizing that they indicate a steady

catholicizing of Protestant faith and practice. Protestants who hold true to the Word of God must surely bend every endeavour to resist these fatal trends.

He Comes to Bless

When Jesus comes He comes to bless.

To set the prisoner free,
To strengthen and give power divine;

He makes the blind to see.

When Jesus comes He comes to bless.

To change our gloom to joy,
To take our cares unto Himself
With all that doth annoy.

Oh, may we ever live to bless,
To help, uphold, and cheer;
To copy Him, and know that He
Is so divinely near.

Mrs. Geoffrey Brown.

Changing the Ten Commandments

It is reported that the General Synod of the Church of Canada has suggested a modification of the Ten Commandments in which the first,

second, fourth, and tenth commandments would be shortened and an eleventh, based on Christ's command to love one another, would be added. The addition, however, is quite unnecessary, for Jesus showed it to be implicit in the decalogue, and the proposed shortening is so presumptuous that it should receive the prompt rebuke which it deserves.

Hundred Million New Readers

"It is said," declares the *English Churchman*, "that a hundred million people have learned to read in the past ten years."

Television Addiction

In a discussion of television during a meeting of the British Council of Churches, it was pointed out by Mr. George Barnes, Director of Television Broadcasting, that whereas radio tended to become "a tap dripping in the background of every domestic chore, every meal, and every argument," the danger of television was the reverse: it demanded concentrated attention and could become an "addiction," a "narcotic."

