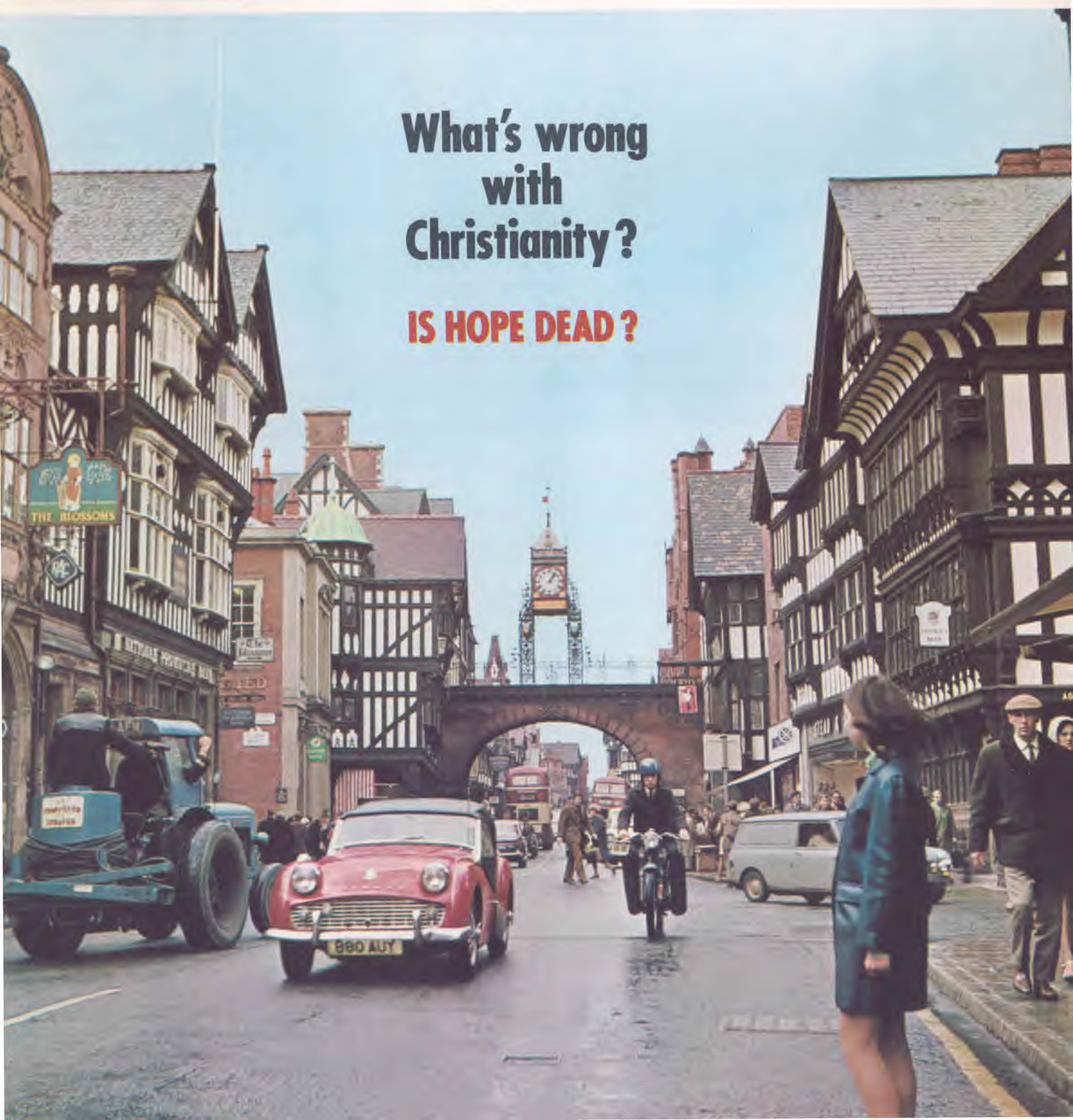


1971 VOL. 87 NO. 2

OUR TIMES

**What's wrong
with
Christianity?**

IS HOPE DEAD?



News and Views

THE ONLY WAY

"THE only way the world is going to stop short of the brink of nuclear holocaust is by a return to God and the principles of the Bible."

So affirmed Dr. George Wald, Nobel Prize-winner and Harvard University Professor of Biology.

"Nuclear holocaust," he declared, "can only be averted by faith, love, and hope, and the precious principles of the Bible. I know this is the sheerest non-academic sentimentality, but I'm convinced that this is the only way we are going to prevent the total chaos that we are headed for—and probably within the next ten years."

Archbishop Rebuked

Reflecting "Australia's bitter heritage of sectarian conflict and prejudice," was Anglican Archbishop M. L. Loane's decision not to worship with Pope Paul at an ecumenical service in Canberra last December 2, 1969.

Methodist minister, James Udy, condemned the Archbishop as "theologically incorrect and ecumenically myopic." "His decision," he said, "was an expression of bygone days, and not representative of the world-wide Anglican Communion."

In defence, the Archbishop wrote: "There are questions of truth which must be resolved before we can share in common worship and unfettered faith." He affirmed that dogmas held by the Roman Catholic Church were "radically inconsistent with and alien

to, the New Testament" and that one could not pretend that the barriers had all disappeared.

Comment:—We commend the Archbishop for his emphasis on Bible truth as distinct from Catholic dogma which so completely obscures that truth. Yet in the interests of good relations, prayer with the Pope or with any other sincere professing Christian, is good and proper. Doctrinal differences there may well be, but Christian compassion will allay hostility and foster friendliness. Yet the Archbishop's decision is doubtless intended as a symbolic protest against the Romanizing, and the Rome-ward leaning, of so great a segment of non-Roman Christendom. As *Our Times* has often stressed, this latter phenomenon is one of the surest evidences of "the last days." (Revelation 13 and 17.)

Soulless Machine

Eugene Rabinowitch, Editor of *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, commented on the world situation at the end of the first quarter century of the Atomic Age.

He wrote: "There is increasing consciousness of the predicament into which the scientific revolution is bringing mankind. The public is beginning to see science, and its child, technology, as enemies of mankind—creators of apocalyptic nuclear and space weapons and destroyers of nature. Science, they

believe, is suppressing human individuality by making men servants of AN IMMENSE SOULLESS TECHNOLOGICAL MACHINE."

Comment:—Truly does the Bible remind us: "The way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" Jeremiah 10:23. We could add the warning: "Except the Lord build . . . they labour in vain." (Psalm 127:1). Forward with God, directed by God, is the only way of salvation for man.

JUST SOCIETY

Commenting on the World Council of Churches' decision to allocate two hundred thousand dollars for "freedom fighters" in South Africa, Bishop B. B. Burnett of the Anglican Church in South Africa said: "I cannot agree with the W.C.C.'s decision as a long term policy, but I cannot condemn the decision as against the Christian Conscience. Unless we are actively engaged in trying to change society, we are in no position to criticize the Council's decision."—E.P.S.

Comment:—While we have every sympathy with victims of racial oppression,

we affirm that the Church's main task in a world of injustice, is to proclaim its divinely inspired message in a way that is clear and meaningful. This is the one proven and guaranteed means of achieving—on the individual level—the change of heart and nature which alone can assure an ideal and just society. The essential goodness of character required for such a society, cannot be achieved by force or legislation—no more than a tree can be made fruitful merely by hanging fruit on it.



Pope Paul pictured at St. Peters, Rome, where he pronounced English and Welsh martyrs to be saints.

Cover: The City of Chester, by Peter Howard.

Picture credits: Keystone, pages 2, 3; Three Lions, page 9.

OUR TIMES

A family journal of Christian living dedicated to the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel. Presenting the Bible as the Word of God and Jesus Christ as our all-sufficient Saviour and coming King

EDITOR . . . R. D. VINE

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS . . . W. L. EMMERSON, J. A. McMILLAN

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Discerning the times...

CURRENT EVENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE
BY THE EDITOR

What's wrong with Christianity?

MY most memorable dinner was in Uppsala, in Sweden, in 1968. The World Council of Churches' historic Fourth Assembly was in full swing. At the meal, I was bravely combatting nausea at the sight of the blue/red raw slices of reindeer meat set before me—when my bravery was further tested by one of the most loquacious tirades against Christianity I've ever heard. A young Asian, officially badged as a "Youth Observer" (a privilege reserved for only a very few of the world's "Christian" youth), was gunning against God, against Christ, against the Bible, against the Christian Church. It was the same old argument: "Christianity has wrought more bloodshed on earth than any other organization."

"Look at the Catholics of the Middle Ages," he said, "Look at their Inquisition with its armoury of torture instruments. Look at the ninety million Protestant martyrs who were destroyed. Hitler's pogroms were nowhere in the running!"

His eyes gleamed.

"And look at the Catholics martyred by Protestants; and the strife between different churches all claiming to be Christian. Look at the suppression of Protestants today, in areas where the Roman Church is supreme. . . ."

The tirade transmuted the small proportion of food which I swallowed into lead lumps. It's never pleasing to have one's most deeply held beliefs "discredited" and denigrated.

The facts couldn't be gainsaid. But the young man's conclusions were totally wrong, and this I sought to prove. Of course, one's first reaction was to wonder how on earth such a queer brand of "Christian Youth" could have qualified as an official "observer" to the assembly. In argument he revealed his true identity as a militant materialist.

Like that articulate Asian, we make a fatal error if we mark off Christianity because in the past it has, apparently, wrought havoc and bloodshed. Nothing could be further from the truth. Referring to the stoning, the burning, the hanging, the torturing, and the fanatic hate which have, in the name of Christ and Christianity, plagued the ages, Jesus said: "These things will they do, because they know neither God the Father, nor Jesus Christ the Son of God." (See John 16:2, 3.)

A full and genuine relationship with God, a knowledge and acceptance of salvation through Christ, and a truly converted heart will make brutal behaviour unthinkable and impossible.

The martyred millions of the Dark Ages suffered at the hands of a travesty of Christianity. The so-called Church was a grotesque "misprint" of the Bible pattern. And wherever today, there may be religious intolerance, it is, in fact, the antithesis of true Christianity that is at work.

What IS the basic test of Christianity?

Christ said: "By this shall all men know that you are truly My followers, if you LOVE one another." (See John 13:35.) The true Christian, like His Master, is *always* constrained by motives of kindness and love in all his relationships. Where hate, intolerance, and strife exist—or have ever existed—despite any acclaimed pretensions to Christianity, we see, in fact, an abandonment of Christian principles.

As time goes on, the true Church acclaim its message of hope with unfaded conviction. As Christ's sole agency on earth to point people to the one way to live happily here and, even more important, hereafter, the true Christian Church will never fail. "The gates of hell," affirmed Christ, "shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18.

"It is guarded by God and will triumph over all opposition." It is the one human group that will survive the judgements of the impending Day of the Lord. So affirms the infallible Word of God.

The answer to our question therefore is: There's nothing wrong with either Christianity or its message. Let's not be put off by the travesties and counterfeits of the real thing, with which the world is so lavishly cluttered.

Christianity, and the Christian message was never more timely, more adequate, more urgently needed, than it is today. But it **MUST BE THE REAL THING.**—R.D.V.

Rev. David Shepherd, Bishop of Woolwich, addressing a Trafalgar Square meeting on apartheid and South Africa—with South Africa House in the background. Christianity can be most effective in dealing with racialism wherever it is, by proclaiming the vital Christian message.



Christianity is the only alternative to the bleak yet widely accepted doctrine which advocated . . .

ESCAPE TO NOWHERE

by R. Edward Turner

TURN on, tune in, drop out," says Timothy Leary, the high priest of the drug cult.

In the gibberish of the day, the gurus of youth culture are peddling drugs to enhance the quest for the ultimate, and celebrating rock music for the same "acid and grass" reason. They speak of acid, grass, and "the grateful dead" as though they were essential features in a message of transcendental union among all mankind. In fact what we are hearing is a message of "escape to nowhere."

"Gonna love . . . I"

John Lennon of the Beatles declares: "We're more popular than Jesus now," and "straight" America is outraged. Why the outrage? Maybe because John Lennon is right? Today the hippies—a culture of flower power, bright beads, and universal love—proliferate and make more encampments for dropouts. Why? For the sake of "love," we are told.

Now the "good vibrations" of the Haight and the Village districts of San Francisco have turned bad. Next comes the "commune," a simple way of life where the quest continues with a sense of group solidarity. As one current song asserts: "Come on people now, smile on your brother, everybody get together, gonna love one another right now." It sounds good. Is it true?



Search for a system

At no time in history has the "now generation" taken up the search for such a wide range of mystical and religious systems. The variety is evident in the quest for drugs, Eastern mysticism, witchcraft, and the retreat to primitive living. Book-stores dealing with the occult flourish. The search is almost impulsive.

Perhaps the impulsiveness grows from a sudden realization that, as Harvard theologian Harvey Cox points out in *Feast of Fools*, Western man, while gaining the whole world, has been losing his own soul. But will the favourite paths of the "now" generation lead to the end of all anxiety and fear?

"God Is Love"

The Bible presents another alternative. "We ourselves are eye-witnesses able and willing to testify to the fact that God [the Father] did send Jesus Christ [the Son] to save the world. . . . God is love, and the man whose life is lived in love does in fact, live in God, and God does, in fact, live in him. . . . Love contains no fear . . . , for fear always contains some of the torture of feeling guilty. This means that the man who lives in fear has not yet had his love perfected." 1 John 4:14-18, Phillips.

Here John says God's love is not just a protest button exhorting the

world to "Make Love, Not War." God's love is not found in a message of "Free Sex." God gives of Himself to man. And that's good news! *Jesus Christ ends the sickness of society. Jesus Christ ends anxiety and fear. Jesus Christ ends the "escape to nowhere."* The love He gives contains no fear. This means an end to all hang-ups. And He is now able to show mankind the path of ultimate love.

In spite of this offer, the sceptics abound. Many people feel that becoming a Christian automatically means living in a state somewhat less than human. The mistaken idea is that there are only two options in life—serfdom or rebellion.

"New Life"

The truth is that Christianity demands neither stifling serfdom nor empty rebellion. It offers, on the contrary, THE ONLY REAL FREEDOM. God wants to give men freedom in the context of privilege and responsibility. This is what Christ referred to with Nicodemus. He offered him a new quality of life. It's called the new birth. This is not just another case of theological lingo. It is real. And anybody who wants to have it, can have it right now!

Christ is more than piety and lovely stories. If you think of Him in this way, your Christ is too small! Jesus Christ is a life style. He relates to everything you do. If you have a problem, Christ will end it. If you hate war, what could be more pertinent than Christ's saying: "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you"? Matthew 5:44, Phillips. If you protest the hypocrisy of this age, what could be more to the point than this: "Beware of doing your good deeds conspicuously to catch men's eyes"? Matthew 6:1, Phillips. No matter what you want to kick about, become a Christian. *Christianity is the greatest protest in the world.* A protest against anxiety and fear.

CHRISTIAN LOVE SETS YOU FREE. It frees you, but it does not come at cheap prices. This love is what Christ offers you. How can you get it? Simply by asking Him to show you the path that is more than mere escapism.

The choice is yours. What have you got to lose? Possibly, the "escape to nowhere."



Rex D. Edwards gives . . .

7 FACTS ABOUT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

"The Law of God is a divine law—holy, heavenly, perfect. . . . There is not a command too many; there is not one too few; but it is so incomparable that its perfection is proof of its divinity."—Charles H. Spurgeon.

1. They are of divine origin. "And God spake all these words." Exodus 20:1-17.

(a) The Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God. (Exodus 32:15, 16; 31:18.)

(b) Jesus is the Author. (Nehemiah 9:13—compare the context of Nehemiah 9 with 1 Corinthians 10:1-4.)

(c) They were written on two tables of stone. (Exodus 34:28, 29.)

2. The foundation of God's government. (Psalm 97:1, 2; 119:138, margin.)

(a) The "testimonies" are the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 31:18.)

(b) They are also called "the covenant." (Deuteronomy 4:13.)

(c) The Ten Commandments were in the consciousness of man before Sinai. (Romans 4:15; 5:13; 6:23; 5:14.) Had this not been so there could have been no sin before Sinai! For sin is the breaking of God's Law. Abraham obeyed. (Genesis 26:5.)

3. The principles of the Ten Commandments are immutable.

(a) They are as unchangeable as God. (Deuteronomy 4:13; Psalm 89: 34; Ecclesiastes 3:14; James 1:17.)

(b) They will endure for ever. (Psalm 111:7, 8; Luke 16:17; Matthew 5:17-19.)

4. They are the standard that defines the correct conduct of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:3.)

(a) The Law defines sin. (1 John 3:4; Romans 7:7.)

(b) Criterion of conduct is not in man.

(Proverbs 28:6; 16:25; Deuteronomy 12:8, 28.)

(c) The Law of God is a perfect standard. (Psalm 19:7; Romans 7:12.)

(d) Only the carnally minded object to them. (Romans 8:7.)

5. The Law was observed by and personified in Jesus. (John 15:10.)

(a) A fulfilled prophecy. (Isaiah 42:21.)

(b) The principles of the Law were amplified in Christ's Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28.)

(c) Our example. (1 John 2:6.)

"We must not imagine that the coming of Christ has freed us from the authority of the law; for it is the eternal rule of a devout and holy life, and must, therefore, be as unchangeable as the justice of God which it embraced."—**Calvin.**

6. Conformity to ALL of the Ten Commandments is required. (James 2:10, 11.)

(a) Grace does not annul the Law of God. (Romans 3:31.)

(b) The Commandments are a test of Christian profession. (1 John 2:3, 4; 3:24; 5:2, 3.)

(c) God's people keep the Law. (Revelation 14:12; Matthew 19:16, 17.)

7. The Commandments are to be enshrined in the heart. (Jeremiah 31:33.)

A double exposure. (Psalm 37:31.) He WALKS RIGHT (exterior life), because God's Law is in his heart (interior life.)

"In the head it puzzles, on the back it burdens, in the heart it upholds."—**C. H. Spurgeon.**

ANY QUESTIONS

The saved and the lost

Question.—"If my wife goes to heaven and I do not, how could she be happy knowing I was in hell?"

Answer.—We do not see how the saved could be happy in heaven if they knew that God had doomed a loved one to torment in an ever-burning hell. Since God cannot save those who have neglected their salvation and

have clung to their sins, the most merciful punishment He can inflict on them will be to destroy them. (See Revelation 20:9.) The Bible, both in the Old and in the New Testament, teaches that the unsaved perish, not that they have eternal life in hell.

Doubtless there will be deep grief in the hearts of many of the saved when they realize that a loved one is not with them in heaven; but they will realize God's justice in the way He has dealt with unrepentant sinners. In His mercy, God will cause the redeemed to forget the things that might cause sorrow. (See Isaiah 65:17.) "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4.

Your questions on Bible or religious themes are welcome. Just send to: "Any Questions?" "Our Times" The Stanborough Press Ltd., Alma Park, Grantham, Lincs. Include a stamped/addressed envelope if a personal reply is desired.

"Catholic"?

Question.—One of the articles of the creed of the Protestant Church of which I am a member is: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." What does the word "catholic" mean? Is this word found in the Bible?

Answer.—The word "catholic" is derived from the Greek adjective *katholikos*, which means "general" or "universal." As applied to the Church, "catholic" is said to have been first used by Ignatius (second century). He meant the world-wide Church. It is in this sense that the word is used in the creed.

The only places where the word is found in the Greek New Testament is in the titles of the epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude. In the King James Version it is there translated "general." These epistles are called "catholic," or "general," because they are not addressed to a particular person or Church, as are Paul's epistles.



MAN
THE
WORLD
WANTS
MOST

A series by Dr. A. S. Maxwell

THE EVERLASTING SEARCH

THE astronauts rendered mankind a conspicuous service when they let us see our world as it looks afar. No one who saw that spectacular sight on TV could ever forget it. Glowing in the sunshine, resplendent in colour, the earth was the one beautiful object in all the vast blackness of space.

After seeing the moon close up—and landing on it—the astronauts could not get back fast enough to the earth and home.

What a pity that a planet so naturally attractive, so obviously made for human habitation, should be so torn with strife, so riddled with crime and violence, so utterly devoid of unity in social, religious, and international affairs! *If God made it perfect, as the Bible assures us He did, it must be an awful disappointment to Him today.*

Everlasting yearning

For this world *is* in a mess, a terrible mess, and has been for thousands of years. Available history tells the sad story of almost continuous warfare from the earliest times to the present day. Crippling wounds, painful diseases, death in many hideous forms—who can begin to measure the sufferings of the human race since life began on earth?



People of every generation have groaned and wept under their miseries, ever longing for deliverance, ever yearning for a way out, EVER LOOKING FOR A MAN WHO COULD LEAD THEM INTO A HAPPIER DAY. As far back as history goes, groups, communities, nations, were always on the alert for such an individual, willing to follow him with total devotion if they could find him. And so the search, the everlasting search, began.

Alas, in most cases a chosen leader's vision was limited to the interests of his own group or nation. He thought only how that group, or nation, could be advantaged, virtually ignoring the interest of others. From this limited outlook rose conflict, and out of conflict came conquest and subjugation. The strong crushed the weak, leaders became tyrants, and the tears of the conquered flowed on down the years.

Ruthless conquerors

Among the greatest leaders of ancient times were the Pharaohs of Egypt, such as Khufu [Cheops], whose great pyramid remains to this day, and Ramses II, builder of huge statues and temples. They were great men in their time, spreading their dominion far into Africa and northward to Syria

and beyond. But all they did was for Egypt, not for mankind.

Out of turmoil in Mesopotamia came the first of the Assyrian leaders, who chose Nineveh as his capital. Sargon, Sennacherib, Ashurbanipal are some of the men who swayed the world from that once great city. But world leaders they were not. Strong, cruel, ruthless, they spent their days crushing weaker communities within their reach, blindly thinking this would enhance the prestige of their own government.

Self-centred efforts

It didn't. Instead it contributed to the rise of a brilliant youth named Nebuchadnezzar, who established himself in Babylon, which he made into what he thought would be an impregnable fortress from which he could rule the world. He had great capabilities; and, as the Bible reveals, he was given a vision of the need for world leadership. But he didn't understand it. All he could think of was his own aggrandizement. (See Daniel 2 and 3.)

He was no world leader, and a few years after his death God said to his last successor Belshazzar, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. . . . Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Daniel 5:27, 28.

So the Persian empire replaced Babylon, producing leaders like Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes. All were great men in their day, but with little care for any country save their own.

As the centuries passed, the great search continued, . . .

Out of Imperial Rome came many famous men, such as Julius Caesar and his successor Augustus Caesar, both famous for their skill in battle. Indeed, *a Roman's fitness for the office of emperor was measured largely by his conquests and the number of slaves and other booty he brought back from foreign ventures.*

Chief duty of an emperor was to keep the empire intact, which was accomplished by harsh, repressive measures designed to keep the restless subject people from open rebellion. There was no effective plan to help these poor people or alleviate their hardships. All good things, such as free food and free entertainment, "bread and circuses," were for Roman citizens.

The rest could toil to pay taxes to the Roman treasury.

Power went to the leaders' heads. They considered themselves gods and insisted on worship by their subjects. But there was nothing godlike about them. Great and famous though many of the Caesars were, not one of them remotely came to being the true leader of men that, with such great authority, he might have been.

Absolute power at last brought total corruption in both court and country, until moral and political weakness left the empire a prey, to the people it had tried to exclude from its territory. These now swarmed across Rome's borders, led by men whom *they* thought were deliverers. However, these spoilers of Rome were soldiers rather than statesmen, and their names are known today only to historians. . . .

Subsequent leaders throughout history have conformed to the well-established, but deficient pattern. And of course, even in the case of the few who, like Charlemagne, showed real concern for the welfare of all within their domains, mortality has made its inescapable claim. . . .

In the nineteenth century the dominant figure was undoubtedly Queen Victoria. In a sense she was the first *world* ruler, for she reigned over an empire on which the sun never set. For sixty years she presided over the *Pax Britannica*, one of the most peaceful periods of world history. To help keep the peace she encouraged the marriage of her relatives to other royal houses and, for a while, it worked. As long as Grandma Victoria was around there was no danger of strife in the household. Scarcely was her funeral over, however, than old rivalries were resurrected, leading at last, in 1914, to the start of World War I, a war so costly in manpower and material that her empire never recovered from it.

After that war people everywhere began to think more definitely in world terms. . . .

Then came Hitler. Many of his own people thought he was the man of destiny. Millions followed him, shouting, "Heil Hitler!" believing he could make his dream of a master race and world rule from Berlin come true.

For a time it all looked good—to Germans—until word leaked out about concentration camps and human in-

cinerators. Then they discovered that Hitler wasn't a great man at all, but instead a very little man—proud, selfish, cruel, and demented. . . .

Also in the twentieth century came the beginnings of a new and powerful movement supposedly to promote the interests of the poor at the expense of the rich. It was an effort to establish the kingdom of God on earth without God—indeed, without religion, which was termed the "opiate of the people." Among its early leaders were Carl Marx and Nicholai Lenin. Millions of the downtrodden looked hopefully towards them for deliverance. They are still looking, though the leaders themselves are long since dead. . . .

Today the question still faces us, Where is the man who can save us?

BOMBS OR BABIES?

by Dr. R. H. Pierson, D.D.

IN one nation where government officials estimate that between four hundred thousand and one million people may starve in a single year, a toothless old woman lay on a nest of rags in her dirty hovel.

"My daughter has gone to beg," she told an inquiring newsman, "and my son has gone to look for work. It has been months since we had a full meal. How do I know that either my son or daughter will bring me food tonight?"

In the same village an eighteen-year-old boy, slowly starving to death, lamented weakly, "I don't remember when I last ate."

Statisticians are now saying that during the next decade over one thousand million people—yes, a thousand million people—may die of hunger. Lester Brown, Economic Research Service, United States Department of Agriculture, declares that "hunger will be the world's number one problem in the days ahead—*famine looms as a prospect that can become more serious than the threat of nuclear war.*"

The world's population is increasing at the rate of one hundred million babies a year. Even though half that number may die, it still means an annual increase of some fifty million stomachs to be filled.

It took from the beginning of the human race until the year 1830 for one thousand million people to be alive on

To whom shall we turn for deliverance?

Meanwhile the problems of the world become more and more complex and the odds against staving off a third world war are greater than ever. Most people have a pre-sentiment of approaching disaster on a prodigious scale. If anyone is going to help, and has the ability and know-how to accomplish this Herculean task, he must appear on the scene soon. There's not much time left.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—You must not miss a single one of the nine future chapters in this series. On the authority of God's prophetic Word, they will precisely spell out how the "everlasting search" will be answered by THE MOST SPECTACULAR EVENT OF ALL HISTORY—AN EVENT THAT IS ALMOST HERE.



the earth at one time. But the population jumped to double this in just one century—1830-1930. By 1961, less than a third of a century later it had climbed to three thousand million. At this rate, in less than a decade the world's population will be four thousand million and before the end of this century it will have reached six thousand million.

Where will sufficient food come from to feed these millions of hungry mouths?

America will be unable to play the leading role she now plays. "By 1985 the world will have to find another bread-basket besides ours," a recent advertisement declares. "That's the year when the food needs of the world's underdeveloped nations will be so great it will be impossible for this country to meet them." According to the United States Department of Agriculture, even if we put every single one of America's now idle fifty-five million acres of land into full production, we will fall short of required food production by about twelve million tons.

There are lean, hungry days ahead for millions of earth's underfed, days of famine and death. What does all this mean? JESUS HIMSELF DECLARED THAT "FAMINES, AND PESTILENCES . . . IN DIVERS PLACES" WILL BE YET ANOTHER SIGN OF HIS "COMING, AND OF THE END OF THE WORLD." (Matthew 24:7, 3.)

THE CHURCH IN THE WESTERN WORLD

Twelfth in a series by
Dennis Porter, M.A. (Lond.)

ENGLAND'S RELIGIOUS PATTERN TAKES SHAPE

The Seventeenth Century

WE mentioned in concluding our preceding article that after the Counter-Reformation had reached its climax, Europe was to settle down, theologically, to something like the static trench warfare of 1914-18.

This was particularly true on the continent where, by the middle of the seventeenth century at the latest, the lines were very clearly drawn and have not been substantially altered since—except as there has been a continuous movement away from Christianity in any form. This movement can be marked off in stages by the scientific revolution of the later seventeenth century, the "enlightenment" of the eighteenth, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the Russian Revolution, assisted by a steady improvement in living conditions which has increasingly turned the attention of the western world away from interest in the supernatural.

Religious depression

To vary our metaphor with a more homely one, the religious situation on the continent of Europe became something like those Atlantic weather charts which we scan so eagerly as our summer holiday draws near. The "highs" seem inevitably to be followed by the "lows" and so it was that after the high pressure of the Reformation and Counter Reformation, European religion largely settled into a depression in which it has remained substantially ever since.

Just, however, as anti-cyclones do not usually break down suddenly but are followed by ridges which domi-

nate the weather pattern for a day or two, so the European religious scene did not simmer down immediately to quiet acceptance of the *status quo* at the end of the sixteenth century. Quite the contrary; before the lines of demarcation between the two sides were finally drawn there was the violent upheaval of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) in Germany and considerable unrest in Holland.

The Thirty Years' War achieved nothing save to weaken Germany so considerably that France was able to dominate the continent for over half a century. Religiously it merely confirmed that northern Germany would remain mainly Protestant and southern Germany largely Catholic. Its only novelty was that German Calvinism was accorded equal recognition with Lutheranism.

Holland's Arminius

In Holland the dispute was purely theological, although this did not preclude a certain amount of violence. It began when the teachings of Jacobus Arminius commenced to challenge the dominant Calvinism. Over against the Calvinist doctrine that God predestined some to salvation and the rest to damnation and that those "elected" to salvation could not resist God's grace, Arminius posited human free-will and divine foreknowledge.

God, he said, knew who would accept His grace and who reject it; He did not, however, fore-ordain the acceptance or rejection. Moreover His grace (which, like the Lutherans and Calvinists, Arminius taught is the sole means to salvation) is offered to all, but may be—and is—rejected by some.

Only those who accept it are saved, although even some of them may fall from grace later and be lost.

This view did not make much impact upon Dutch Protestantism but it did have considerable influence elsewhere, especially in England. In passing, it may be noted that one of the leading Arminians, the international lawyer Hugo Grotius, advanced during this controversy a new theory of the atonement, which was to become important later. Grotius argued against the Calvinists that Christ died because God's Law is unalterable and its majesty and permanence had to be vindicated against the offence of sin. *Thus while God pardons the sinner who in faith repents of his sin, the majesty and obligation of God's Law remain.* In the moral anarchy of the last third of the twentieth century it is not, perhaps, amiss to recall Grotius' teaching—and that of Paul himself—and to remind ourselves that, ALTHOUGH POPULAR CHRISTIANITY HAS LARGELY OVERLOOKED THE BINDING NATURE OF THE DIVINE LAW, IT IS NONE THE LESS A FACT AND A FACT THAT NEEDS STRESSING TODAY.

In England Arminianism was to have considerable influence in Anglicanism and later in Methodism. Its later influence was also to be considerable in America. It is with religion in these two countries that we shall now chiefly concern ourselves in the series.

England's "Puritan party"

The Elizabethan settlement of the late 1550s, with mention of which we ended the tenth article, although destined ultimately to set the prevailing pattern of English established

religion, was not fully to prevail for another hundred years. It was, after all, a compromise, and the Reformation had stirred some too deeply to permit of tame acceptance of anything less than what they had come to regard as the full truth. This was especially true of those who had been exiles in Geneva during Queen Mary's reign, and who returned to England determined to Calvinize its Church.

Initially they worked within it and formed what came to be known as the "Puritan" party because they wished to purify the Church of the remnants of Popish superstition. In addition they looked askance at episcopal government for which they would gladly have substituted rule by presbyters and elders. *Soon Puritan meetings were being held alongside, or in substitution for, those of episcopally-favoured clergy and a whole underground system of substitute Church government was gradually coming into being.*

Congregational "Separatists"

Some wished to go even further and separate entirely from the established Church and set up what today is known as a Congregational form of Church government, in which each group of believers is self-governing and has power to elect its own minister and other officers.

These "Separatists" were hated by both regular and Puritan clergy and, when caught, usually paid for their faith with their lives as did those at the opposite extreme—the Jesuit missionaries who were working clandestinely to regain England for the Roman Church.

It should be stated, however, that it was easy to associate the latter with treasonable designs because Rome promoted or encouraged a series of plots against Elizabeth's life with which some of the missionaries were connected. The guilt of some was easily transferred in official thinking on to the heads of all.

England's religious pattern becomes clear

Catholicism was, however, kept alive in England and so it may be said that by about 1570 the future pattern of English religion (apart from Methodism) had become clear. Reading from right to left there were Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism (from which the Puritans were eventually to separ-



ate and form the next constituent), Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism.

From the last-named was to spring a multitude of sects during the seventeenth century. Some, imbued with the spirit of continental Anabaptism—already of course known in England, were to form the nucleus of the Baptist movement; and others like the Quakers were to maintain their separate existence.

Congregationalism and Presbyterianism in turn were to cross the Atlantic, there to proliferate and segment, and many of their off-spring would in spirit re-cross the Atlantic and become once again established—sometimes in altered forms—in this country.

Cross-fertilization

A good example of this cross-fertilization in religion in the English-speaking world was to be the Seventh-Day Baptists, a group with a Puritan and Congregationalist background. They not only took over the teaching of adult baptism from the Anabaptists but also, like Grotius, emphasized the binding nature of the Law of God and hence of the Fourth Commandment as applied not to Sunday, the first day of the week—as the Puritans rigorously applied it, but to the true, seventh day Sabbath.

Some of these, relentlessly harried by all parties in this country, found refuge in that haven of persecuted sectaries, Roger Williams' Rhode Island. They achieved some small success in America and eventually in the nineteenth century imparted their main doctrines to one of the Millenarian groups, which at that time was emphasizing yet another doctrine which

had been widely taught in the seventeenth century, that of the Second Advent of Christ.

The group subsequently became the Seventh-day Adventist Church which was later to spread from America to much of the modern world. *It cannot be too strongly emphasized that bodies such as this are not, as is often ignorantly supposed, nineteenth century "American sects" (as, say, the Mormons undoubtedly are) but have their roots very firmly grounded in seventeenth century English soil.*

England's "Authorized Version" is born

While Queen Elizabeth lived there was no serious disruption of the English Church. Under her successors, James I and Charles I, persecution and dissatisfaction led ultimately to the Civil War, which, although not primarily religious in causation, had decidedly religious overtones.

James I, despite his Scottish and therefore Presbyterian background, sided immediately with the anti-Puritan party and at the famous Hampton Court Conference, staged by him in 1604 to hear both sides of the question, *the Puritans achieved only one of their major objectives—a new version of the Bible in English, published as the Authorized or King James Version in 1611.*

Puritanism, however, did not quietly dissolve away but on the contrary strengthened its underground organization and at the same time became increasingly identified with the growing political opposition to James's policies in Parliament.

Meanwhile on a parallel course but much deeper underground Separatism continued to develop. Lincolnshire in

particular had a number of Congregational groups, and between 1607 and 1609 some of these migrated to Holland to escape severe persecution at home.

English Protestantism in New World

Some later returned to England, having adopted "believers' baptism" from the Dutch Anabaptists, to plant the seeds of the English Baptist movement. Others stayed in the Netherlands and—most symbolically significant of all—some in 1620 sailed in the *Mayflower* to America to found the colony of Plymouth, later to become part of Massachusetts. The Anglicans already had a foothold much further south in Virginia, and shortly afterwards Presbyterians were to enter in increasing numbers and settle a little to the north around Boston. *Thus the three main branches of English Protestantism became established in the New World.*

What today would be called the "High Church" policies of James I were accentuated under his son Charles I from 1625. Charles's Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, was determined to enforce conformity and the result was not only enormously increased emigration to America but also seething discontent on the part of the Puritans who remained, a discontent aggravated by political questions. In 1640 the volcano erupted.

Charles had tried to do the same in Scotland as in England. There his ecclesiastical policy was even more resented and as a result the Scots drew up the National Covenant to safeguard Presbyterianism and oppose prelacy. Charles determined to force the Scots to comply but they proved too strong for him in the brief war that ensued.

With part of northern England occupied by a Scottish army and his treasury empty the king was forced to recall parliament. When the latter met it did so determined among other things to "Presbyterianize" the English Church in conformity with the opinions of most of its members. *Civil war between its supporters and those of the king was not long in coming.* In the areas it controlled, parliament abolished episcopacy and the Prayer Book; this was done because it wanted to help, and also because it needed the help of, the Scots, and it began to erect a Presbyterian system of Church government.

The all-conquering Cromwell

This work was not, however, completed because a third force now entered the picture—the army. The parliamentary army had been notably unsuccessful until taken in hand by Oliver Cromwell. It so happened that this "New Model" army was largely Separatist in outlook and by 1645 it was the strongest power in the land. In turn it defeated the king, the Scots, and parliament itself, from which in 1648 it expelled all who disagreed with it. In 1649 Charles was executed, as Laud had been four years earlier, and in quick succession Ireland, Scotland, and the last remnants of the royalist forces were subdued by the all-conquering Cromwell who became Lord Protector of England.

Until Cromwell's death in 1658 England enjoyed a larger measure of toleration than she had ever had before or would have again until within the last century. Sects sprang up and flourished and many of them—the Quakers and the various Adventist groups in particular—have left enduring legacies. After a brief anarchic period under Cromwell's son, the monarchy was restored in 1660 in the person of Charles II.

Charles breaks faith

Charles did not keep his promises of toleration. In 1661 a new Prayer Book was issued and in 1662 its use was enforced by law.

Something like two thousand Puritan ministers could not stand this and gave up their benefices rather than use the new book. Thus the final break between Anglicanism and Presbyterianism was made, and the latter faced a period of persecution which was backed up by a series of laws of Parliament which made it increasingly difficult not only for Presbyterian services to be held but also for non-Anglicans to hold public office.

Bloodless revolution

These acts, of course, also hit the Roman Catholic minority with which Charles secretly sympathized and with which his successor James II (1685-88) positively identified himself. James issued a Declaration of Indulgence aimed at the advancement of his fellow-religionists, but the Dissenters (as the Presbyterians and other non-Anglican Protestants should now be called),

although themselves benefited by this, united with the bishops in opposing the king. The result of these and James's other unwise measures was the bloodless revolution of 1688 when he was forced to flee abroad and William and Mary became joint monarchs.

In 1689 in recognition of the part they had played in the revolution, the Dissenters were granted legal toleration although many of their civil disabilities were not removed until the nineteenth century.

In Scotland the religious history of the later seventeenth century followed a similar pattern with the difference that the Covenanters were subjected to active and bitter persecution until they too received not merely toleration but predominant status after the revolution.

It is a sad truth that while persecuted churches are usually active and devoted churches, tolerated ones are too often quiescent and lukewarm. So it was to prove in England until the Wesleyan revival shook the country out of its spiritual torpor.

(To be continued.)

THE BEATITUDES OF ONE WHO IS OLD

Blessed are they who understand my faltering step and palsied hand.
Blessed who know my ears today must strain to catch the things they say.
Blessed are they who seem to know that my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.
Blessed are they who looked away when coffee spilled at the table today.
Blessed are they with cheery smile who stop to chat for a little while.
Blessed are they who never say, "You told that story twice today."
Blessed are they who know the ways to bring back memories of yesterdays.
Blessed are they who make it known that I'm loved, respected, and not alone.
Blessed who know I'm at a loss to find more strength to bear my cross.
Blessed are they who ease the days on my journey home in loving ways.

Author Unknown.

BIBLE CROSSWORD SOLUTION

(See page 14)

ACROSS: 1. Deliverance; 7. Spies; 8. March; 9. Ira; 10. Ought; 12. Nahor; 14. Rinse; 17. Manna; 19. Reu; 20. Gomer; 21. Shobi; 22. Destruction.

DOWN: 1. Discouraged; 2. Lying; 3. Visit; 4. Roman; 5. North; 6. Exhortation; 11. His; 13. Ava; 15. Names; 16. Error; 17. Music; 18. Naomi.

What a hope!

A series by Edward Pettit, M.A.

IS HOPE DEAD?

HOPE springs eternal in the human breast . . . " or so runs the poetic sentiment. But many now question whether we have anything to hope for at all. Bertrand Russell's autobiography closed with such words: "There is darkness without and when I die there will be darkness within. There is no splendour, no vastness anywhere, only triviality for a moment, and then nothing."¹

The philosophers' perennial question: "What have I to hope for?" has received an arid answer from such modern sages—Nothing. Man, however, cannot live without hope and refusing to acknowledge the one true source of hope *he has manufactured his own "hopes" for his final destiny.* Let us consider some of them.

"No—Hopers"

First come the "no-hopers." They say: "The past has gone, the future is empty, all we have is the fleeting present." In its most crass form such will see no further than Friday's pay packet, or the next holiday in Spain. Surprisingly many are such intellectual skinheads who see no end whatever to the human story. With bland naïvety they assert "there never is to be an end, things will just go on," until they die and then they are "dead as mutton." All "hope" for them is in the passing moment. All day they are busy making money, all night they gawp into a TV tube. Should any thought of the Eternal penetrate this

barrier of materialism it will bounce off a nervous system deadened with nicotine, alcohol, caffeine and pot. Their pitiable condition was described thus:

"One moment in annihilation's waste,
One moment of the well of life to taste
The stars are setting and the caravan
Draws to the dawn of nothing—
Oh, make haste!"²

Not all lack such intellectual integrity. Witness the words of H. A. L. Fisher the noted historian:

"Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history, a plot, a rhythm, a predetermind pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me."³

"Progress is not a Law"

Fisher accepts the dynamic quality of history but cannot see where we are heading. The past is still meaningless, the future mysterious. To those who dream of unlimited progress he warned: "Progress is not a law of nature. The ground gained by one generation may be lost by the next, the thoughts of men may flow into channels which lead to barbarism and disaster."⁴ Courageous words, but we are still in a wasteland of resignation and despair. *For the few such as Fisher or Russell this may be enough, but not for the masses.*

Mussolini's myth

Twentieth century man has not been able to remain content with meaninglessness. If he cannot find meaning he must create it. "We have created our myth," declared Mussolini at Naples in 1922. "The myth is a faith, it is a passion. It is not necessary that it shall be a reality. It is a reality by the fact that it is a goad, a hope, a faith, that it is courage. Our myth is the nation."⁵ *Here then is the final impious dream of modern man, that he can ascend to the seat of God and shape history to his puny ends.*

"Likeliest candidate"?

Many have been eager to snatch this prophet's mantle from Mussolini's bullet-riddled body.

China's Mao Tse Tung has called "the masses" to rise so that the "will of the people" will dominate our time. Communism looks for such a man-



Italy's "strong man" Dictator Benito Mussolini, who came to power in October, 1922.

made end to history, and this grim totalitarianism bends the minds of millions that this goal be reached. Listen to these chilling words:

"The West is living . . . upon Christian capital. But the present compromise cannot long continue. Either the West will return to the Christian tradition . . . or the Western culture will perish . . . Some new religion or ideological pseudo-religion will take the place left empty by Christianity. *Communism seems the most likely candidate.*"⁶

One Source of hope

Is this then all men have to hope for: nothing or tyranny? Where can we turn for any gleam of light in the darkness of our time? There is only one place, the source of true hope, the Bible—the Word of God. It speaks hope to each of our three classes.

To those who disbelieve in any end for man the Bible says that such choose to overlook the fact that the Lord is not "slow in fulfilling His promise, as some suppose. . . . But the Day of the Lord will come."⁷

It is, therefore impossible for things to just "go on." History is not static but dynamic, events are moving inexorably on to an undisclosed future. Insensible to the signs of the times such people will be left behind, like Australian aborigines—still chipping flints in a world of technological wonder.

THROUGH CHRIST GOD HAS IRREVO-
page 13 →

HOW MEN ARE SAVED

A series by W. H. Branson

By nature and by behaviour, all are guilty before a perfect God. All must one day render an account to Him. How to get right with Him, He has graciously revealed in the Bible. It is called "The Plan of Salvation." The first stage is known as . . .

JUSTIFICATION

IT is through Him [Jesus Christ] that everyone who has faith is acquitted of everything. . . . " Acts 13:39, N.E.B.

The righteousness wrought out by Christ, the Son of God, while here in the flesh was a full and complete righteousness. He fully met every requirement of God's Law. Not in any respect was it toned down or its demands modified. He gave all that it demanded in obedience. Not once by thought, act, or word did He transgress it. He positively declared: "I have kept My Father's Commandments." His obedience was perfect.

Thus Christ, who had originally given the law, came to earth and lived out its every precept. Why? He did it for us. We were all sinners—transgressors. We lawbreakers were under the condemnation of eternal death. Yes, more, our natures had become so weakened through the practice of sin that it was impossible for us in our own strength to live in harmony with God's requirements.

But Jesus, God's Son, came in our flesh and obeyed for us. He lived a life of perfect obedience; AND NOW, WHEN WE BY FAITH ACCEPT HIM AS OUR SUBSTITUTE AND SAVIOUR, HE IMPUTES HIS LAW-KEEPING TO US AND RECKONS THAT WE WERE THE ONES WHO ACTUALLY OBEYED.

He did it, for us.

When we accept Him, He sets over to our credit all His righteousness, and God then looks upon us as though we had never sinned.

The Bible says: "All are justified by God's free grace alone, through His act of liberation in the person of Christ Jesus. For God designed Him to be the means of expiating sin by His sacrificial death, effective through faith. God meant by this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had overlooked the sins of the past—to demonstrate His justice now in the present, showing that He is Himself just and also justifies any man who puts his faith in Jesus." Romans 3:24-26, N.E.B.

This is justification. Not only are our past sins forgiven and cleansed through His blood, but His righteousness now stands to our credit. Glorious transformation! "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21, A.R.V. Our sins were imputed to Him that His righteousness might be imputed to us. He takes the sin and guilt in which He had no part and in turn gives us His purity and righteousness in which we had no part. We are saved by His life.

"Our natures are fallen, and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey a holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our



sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."—*Steps to Christ*, page 48 [English Edition].

Such a marvellous plan could have been conceived only in the heart of God. It was born of His eternal love. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for it." Ephesians 5:25.

Clothed in His Righteousness

Therefore, he who today accepts Christ as his Saviour, and His death on Calvary as a substitutionary sacrifice for his sins, stands before God clothed in a royal righteousness. His is the righteousness of a king. Well may he sing with the prophet Isaiah, "I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10, A.R.V.

The individual who is thus justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness is free from guilt. His sins of the past are gone. He is free. "Blessed is the man of whose sin the Lord will not take account." Romans 4:8, Weymouth's translation.

God is no respecter of persons. The most hardened sinner may find grace and pardon equally with the man whose sins may seem less flagrant.

Only God could do it

No merely human saviour could have paid such a price, and purchased our redemption. The demands of the broken law were too exacting. It had been broken by finite beings, and it required an Infinite Being to repair the breach. The right of divine government must be upheld, and the honour of the divine law must be vindicated. A perfect obedience must be rendered. But man, as man, could never accomplish this. It required a God-man, Jehovah, incarnate in human flesh, to do it. And when He did it, He did a perfect work. He did not purchase a half pardon; He did not provide a partial blotting out only, but a pardon as full and as broad as had been the transgression. Yes, and even more, for we read that "where sin increased, grace has overflowed." Romans 5:20, Weymouth's translation.

"It follows then that just as the result of a single transgression is a condemnation which extends to the whole race, so also the result of a single decree of righteousness is a lifegiving acquittal which extends to the whole race." Romans 5:15, 9, 18, Weymouth's translation.

Jesus, who bore our sin, also bore its penalty. Had we been left to continue to bear our own sins, we must inevitably have borne also the punish-

ment for our sins. But Jesus took both the guilt and the consequent punishment that we might go free. For this He suffered in Gethsemane; for this the law of God exacted its utmost claim, and the justice of God inflicted its utmost penalty. He had to pay the full price in order that He might thereby purchase our full redemption.

The pardon granted the repentant sinner is therefore a full pardon. It is pardon for *all* his sins. The penalty paid by our Redeemer was equal to the enormity of *all* our sins and guilt; and therefore, the demands of the law being entirely satisfied, the sinner is

set absolutely free. Said Jesus, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John 8:36.

God's invitation to men to come to Jesus for pardon and complete justification is universal; it is to you. His appeal is to you personally. To you His nail-scarred hands are outstretched today in longing entreaty to come and be saved. The death of Jesus was as surely for you as would have been the case had you been the only sinner who needed salvation. He still would have died just for you alone. You are the object of His love and tenderest care.

(To be continued.)

← page 11

IS HOPE DEAD?

CABLY ENTERED HUMAN HISTORY. Though He now bears long with the wickedness of man, God must and will bring His plan of world redemption to its final close. Quite apart from the certainty of God's plan, this world is on a collision course with God. We "choose to overlook this fact" at our own peril.

God's plan is certain

To those who fail to see such a Plan in the kaleidoscope of history the Word of God declared: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has set within his own control."⁸ For even so learned an historian as Fisher still speaks from the limited standpoint of a mortal man. *Only God who is the Lord of history can reveal the broad, over-arching purposes of this redemptive plan, since He alone sees the End from the Beginning.* In studying that revelation we will be assured that "in the fullness of time" the end of God's appointment WILL COME. With Christ's second return the goal of history will be complete. With such an insight comprehension comes to the chaos history superficially appears to be.

God's prerogative

Finally, to those who tyrannically arrogate to themselves the lordship of history, seeking to guide events to the goal of a man-made end, the Word of God declares that *such things are beneath the control of God alone.*

Anciently, King Nebuchadnezzar of

Babylon (died 562 B.C.) defied God in just such a way by declaring his golden city would stand for ever. *The now desolate metropolis of Babylon bears mute witness to the fact that none may stay the purposes of God.* The Prophet Daniel's words issue the death knell to all such dictator's dreams:

"Blessed be God's name from age to age, for all wisdom and power are His. He changes seasons and times; He deposes kings and sets them up."⁹

(Why not learn of such wonderful prophecies by enrolling now in the V.O.P. courses advertised on the back cover of this magazine?)

In conclusion listen to these thrilling words which reveal the true and certain end of history as appointed by God.

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."¹⁰

And with such a glorious End in view we may safely turn from the synthetic "hopes" of blind philosophers and heartless tyrannies, to the hope which God has given us in Christ. Putting our faith there we may affirm, "That hope we hold, It is like an anchor for our lives, an anchor safe and sure." Hebrews 6:19, N.E.B.

1. *Autobiography*, Bertrand Russell. 2. *The Rubiyat of Omar Khayyam*. 3. *A history of Europe*, Vol II, H.A.L. Fisher, Fontana, page 773. 4. *ibid.*, page 773. 5. *In the end God*, J.A.T. Robinson, Fontana page 34. 6. *God's Grace in History*, Fontana, page 32. 7. 2 Peter 3:9, N.E.B. 8. Acts 1:7, N.E.B. 9. Daniel 2:20, 21, N.E.B. 10. Revelation 11:15, A.V.

ASTROLOGY OR GOD?



by Miriam Wood

WHEN God is rejected as the controlling force in man's destiny, weird concepts and mechanisms are often substituted. Man, it seems, can hardly survive without the assurance that something or someone bigger and wiser than he is in charge, at least to some degree. The "something bigger" might be a political ideology, where man is the servant of the state, owned by the state, and important to the state; or a social-civil ethical code of love and flowers and drugs and sex.

One of the newest substitutions for God in the contemporary world is astrology. Not that astrology itself is new, for it is usually thought to have originated with the Chaldeans of Babylon. Great students of the stars, which they studied from the tops of their ziggurats, the Chaldeans finally adopted the position that the heavenly bodies they saw were gods. After all,

the bodies [planets] moved about the heavens, with no visible power other than their own to propel them. If they could do that, why couldn't they influence the affairs and lives of men?

Further study of the heavens brought out the existence of the constellations, whose outlines were declared to resemble animals, people, and inanimate objects. (History doesn't give any information as to just which Chaldean was the first to turn to his fellow stargazers and exclaim: "Hey, that constellation looks like a crab!" Undoubtedly the concept grew slowly and spontaneously, as so much of folklore has done.) Eventually they blocked out a portion of the sky that contained twelve of these constellations and called it the zodiac—a somewhat baffling name, really, since a literal translation of this word means "carved figures" or perhaps a "circle of

figures." Probably the name was meant to convey a certain cyclical theory as well as representations of figures of various sorts. Each sign of the zodiac has been assigned (by whom, it is difficult to say) its own overriding characteristics, such as sorrow, joy, love, peace; and these in turn are projected to humans, both individually and *en masse*.

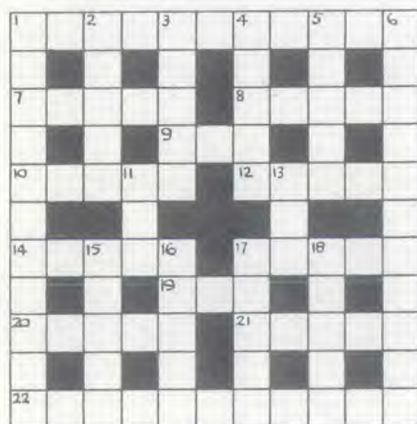
As the Chaldeans continued their stargazing they felt convinced that the sun and moon moved through the zodiac from east to west. Of course, it was assumed that the earth was the centre of the universe, around which all the other heavenly bodies revolved. (Inhabitants of earth have never been famous for their humility.) Although astrology suffered an eclipse as the result of Copernicus's and Galileo's firm statements that the earth was *not* the centre of the cosmos, after all, it has rather suddenly enjoyed a rebirth and expansion of its theories. Currently, devotees of this pseudo-science believe that the sun moves backward along the zodiac, needing a little more than 2,000 years to complete its passage through each sign of the zodiac. The term *solar age* is used to indicate these 2,000-year periods.

If we're to believe the astrologers, our earth has already passed through the Arian Age, the Taurine Age, and is just about finished with the Piscian Age—which brings us to the much-publicized Age of Aquarius, where peace and love will rule.

(To be concluded.)

BIBLE CROSSWORD

by Bruce Johnson



ACROSS:

1. Brought to captives by Jesus, in fulfilment of prophecy. (Luke 4:16-21.)
2. Rahab's faith was demonstrated by her protection of these. (Hebrews 11:31.)
3. "O God . . . Thou wentest forth before Thy people . . . Thou didst ——— through the wilderness." Psalm 68:7.
4. A chief ruler to David, and named among his great officers. (2 Samuel 20:25, 26.)
5. "He that saith he abideth in Him ——— himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 2:6.
6. Son of Terah, brother of Abraham, husband of Milcah who bore him eight children. (Genesis 11:27-30.)
7. What Israel was to do to the brass vessels after their use in washing garments contaminated by blood of sacrifices. (Leviticus 6:28.)
8. Kept in a golden pot in the Ark of the Covenant as a symbol of Jesus who is the real Bread from heaven. (Exodus 16:33-36.)
9. A son of Peleg, the fourth from Shem and father of Serug. (Genesis 11:18-21.)
10. The wayward, though loved, wife of the prophet Hosea. (Hosea 1:3.)
11. A son of Nahash of Rabbah who received David when he fled from Absalom. (2 Samuel 17:27-29.)
12. This will come suddenly upon the peoples of earth when they think the future peaceful and secure. (1 Thessalonians 5:3.)

DOWN:

1. In bringing a false report after they had surveyed the land of Canaan, the spies did this to the Israelites in the wilderness. (Numbers 32:8, 9.)
2. Righteous men hate this sin, performed with the mouth. (Proverbs 13:5.)
3. Doing this to the fatherless and widows is defined as true Christianity. (James 1:27.)
4. Paul's citizenship, which saved him from a cruel scourging. (Acts 22:24-29.)
5. One of the directions in which the symbolic ram in Daniel's vision pushed. (Daniel 8:4.)
6. Paul urged the Hebrews to listen to, and take notice of this. (Hebrews 13:22.)
7. The people Jesus will save from their sins. (Matthew 1:21.)
8. A district near Babylon whose inhabitants were transported to Samaria by the Assyrians. (2 Kings 17:24.)
9. New ones will be given to those who are overcomers for Christ. (Revelation 2:17.)
10. You cannot claim this for your works after you have made a vow to God. (Ecclesiastes 5:5, 6.)
11. What the elder brother first heard as he approached the house where his family was celebrating his wayward brother's return. (Luke 15:25.)
12. Wife of Elimelech and mother-in-law of Ruth the Moabitess. (Ruth 1:4.)

(Solution on page 10.)

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE

ALPHABET ADVENTURE

by Mary J. Vine

T IS FOR TWELVE

Twelve is another special number in the Bible.

There were twelve tribes in Israel.

There will be twelve beautiful foundations to the New Jerusalem, and twelve gates of pearl; twelve kinds of fruit also on the tree of life, which the Bible tells us, will grow in the centre of the city.

And Jesus had twelve disciples, one of whom was Thomas, and Thomas also begins with T.

Now after Jesus came striding out of His tomb that beautiful Sunday morning, there were some disciples who saw Him before the others. But Thomas was not one of them, and when the others told him: "We have seen Jesus," he couldn't believe them. Only when he saw Jesus himself did he believe. "Why did you doubt?" Jesus asked him. Poor Thomas! He has been called "doubting Thomas" ever since.

We must never doubt Jesus. What He has said He will do. We must do exactly the opposite of doubting. Do you know what that is? You can find the word for it hundreds of times in the Bible, but you can look for it just now in Psalm 37 and verse 3.

It, also, begins with T.

Jesus with His Disciples.



Your letter

My dear Sunbeams,

I have just read an interesting legend of two angels who came to earth. One carried a large basket. "I have to take men's thanks back to heaven," he said. "I know I shall have a large load." The other angel carried a small basket. "I have to take back the complaints of earth's people," he said, "I shall have plenty of room, for God has greatly blessed the people here. There will be few complaints to take back."

They went their different ways and met again when it became dark. Both were tired and sad. The bottom of the large basket was barely covered. The angel with the small basket had made three trips to heaven carrying three loads of complaints to the Father.

"How can it be?" they wondered, "mankind has so much to thank God for. Why, then, so few thanks and so many complaints?"

The words "thank you" are so easy to say, and mean so much. Let us say "thank you" as often as we can, Sunbeams, especially to God for all His blessings. Let us fill the angel's "basket" with our grateful thanks.

Yours affectionately,

Auntie Alice

U IS FOR URIM

U is for URIM

Some day, when you are bigger, you may be chosen for one of those quiz games you sometimes hear on the radio or see on the television, and you may be asked: "What were the Urim and the Thummim?"

Urim and Thummim were the names of two precious stones which were set in what was called the breastplate, a beautiful piece of work that hung from the shoulders and covered the chest of the high priest in the days when the Children of Israel left Egypt and came to the land of Canaan.

When the leaders of Israel couldn't decide what they should do, they came to the priest, and the priest, in turn, prayed to God for an answer. And God often answered by means of the Urim and Thummim. If He agreed with them, then a halo of light shone on the jewel on the right. If He disagreed, then a shadow rested on the one on the left. By this means Israel knew what they should or should not do.

More important than knowing what were the Urim and the Thummim, however, is that we should know that God wants to lead us also—you and me. And He will, if only we will try to be the kind of people He wants us to be, honest and truthful, hard-working and helpful, unselfish and kind.

RESULTS OF OCTOBER COMPETITION

First Prize.—Sarah Prentice, Gladstone Cottage, Bourne, Brimscombe, Nr. Stroud, Glos. Age 14. Gillian Burr, 16 Livingstone Street, Norwich Age 7.

Honourable Mention.—Janet Palmer (Colchester); Carol Ann Joseph (Ashton-u-Lyne); Carolyn Walker (Londonderry); Julia Hawken (Ulceby); Annette Edwards (Grenada, W.I.); Andrew Chesters (Sale); Beverley Bunn (Westcliff-on-Sea); Janet Alderman (Norwich); Karen Wood (Bristol); Julie Rich (Enfield); Julie Jones (Nottingham); Desmond Morrison (Londonderry); Davina Hawken (Ulceby); Sean Simpson (Newcastle); Sarah Martin (York); Elaine Linder (Norwich); Anne Turner (Barnsley); Kathleen Holden (Wharrah-le-Street); John Secker (Birmingham 36); Gaye Gillmore (Leigh-on-Sea); Carol Barron (Manchester 8); David Gregory (Barry); Andrew Blamey (Birmingham 14); Steven Marklew (Barrow-in-Furness); Lynne Turner (Barnsley); Kelvin Lowe (Derby); Peter Secker (Birmingham 36); Christine Grosvenor (Middlesbrough); Andrew Hills (Chelmsford); Elaine Lowe (Derby).

Those Who Tried Hard.—Caroline Poyser (Stockport); Pat Muirhead (Birmingham 11); Margaret King (Ipswich); Neil Thompson (Carlton Colville); Paul King (Ipswich); Rosemary Jordan (Norwich); D. Purkiss (London S.E.15); Siobhan Mary Russell and Stuart (Norwich); John Mann (Colchester); Herma Hazle (Wolverhampton); Sonia Hazle (Wolverhampton); Joy Oliver (Goxhill); Anne Dillon (Rainham); Sandra Cockerill (Sheffield 11); Shane Ahmed (Canterbury); Karen Wall (Birmingham 11); Julie Hamson (Heald Green); Irene Pritchard (Barrow-in-Furness); C. Bosworth (Chilwell); Cameron Franklin (Oldham); Gillian Prout (Bodmin); Joanna Hunt (Cardiff); Deborah Smith (Grays); Anita Brice (Watford); Barbara Randall High Wycombe; Jennifer Page (Oulton Broad); Joanne Lee (Norwich); Stephen Hatley (Rochford); Neil Cheyne (Aberdeen); Julie Harris (Plymouth); Irene Cox (Lowestoft); Julie Roberts (Bath); Elizabeth Pitkeathly (London W.5); Susan Lowe (Derby); Suzanne York (Kettering); Mavis Oliver (Goxhill); Mark Fieldhouse (Bradford 6); Anna Hobday (Billericay); Mark Thomas (Tredegar); Andrew Donaldson (Watford); Gillian Mann (Colchester); Tracey Flowers (Watford).

for you to paint



Name Age

Address

WE QUOTE

"FREE CHINA WEEKLY."—"The Maoists have launched a new family revolution aimed at thoroughly destroying the traditional Chinese family system on the mainland, according to Central News Agency dispatch from Hong Kong. Quoting the *People's Daily*, the dispatch said the new movement calls each family member to 'doubt, criticize, and struggle against each other so as to eradicate sentimentalism within families.'"

"CHURCHMAN'S MAGAZINE."—"Britain's true spiritual need (and here Evangelical Protestants will find themselves in heartfelt and unreserved agreement) is not so much for improved translations of the Scriptures as for faithful preaching, teaching, and personal application of the translations already in existence. For many weary years, far too many sermons have consisted largely of subtle attempts to explain away the plain meaning of Holy Scripture."

DALE CARNEGIE.—"It is not so important what happens to you: it is how you take it that counts."

D. L. MOODY.—"Lighthouses shine: they don't shout."

DR. H. ROBERT COWIES: "God is interested in expanding us. He wants to stretch our faith, broaden our horizons. How pitiful the Christian who lives in a self-centred routine, stomach full, bills paid, house well furnished, wardrobe ample, car polished, but oblivious to the big things all around him which can challenge every ounce of faith he can muster for the rest of his life." (From *The Prophecy News*.)

"Self-sufficiency is incompatible with virile Christianity. The independent person makes a poor believer."—*Ibid.*

JOHN ROSKILL, at the annual meeting of the Magistrates' Association, commenting on our permissive society, said: "Magistrates are affecting to be merciful when in truth, in the context, so-called mercy is but disguised moral cowardice and fear of criticism."

K. S. GINIGER, U.S.A. publisher, on the subject of the pornographic literature flooding today's market: "I think this tide of filth—and it cannot be described as anything else—will submerge much that is good. I think that as publishers and writers we must make efforts to clean our own stables." (London *Times*.)

"CHURCH OBLIGATION"

GENERAL SYNOD OF THE UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.—"The Church has no right to use violence to defend or secure the rights of people, nor to give to those who encourage violence. . . . The Church's obligation is to work for peace with justice through reconciliation whenever tensions exist."—E.P.S.

THOMAS CARLYLE: "What this country needs is a man who knows God other than by hearsay."

MERVYN ROSELL: "When God pardons, He consigns the offence to everlasting forgetfulness."

"GRIT": "It's peculiar how a dollar can look so big when it goes for Church or charity, and so small when it goes for groceries or pleasure."

ENTERTAINER JOHNNY CASH: "There's a beautiful thrill and ecstasy that comes from some drugs the first time. But then, as time goes by, and it only takes a short time, you cross that line between ecstasy and terror and that's where you stay—on the terror, the horror, side of that line. I escaped. I was lucky beyond measure. Don't try it. It ain't worth it."

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Mr/Mrs/Miss Age (if under 21)

Address

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