

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

THE WORLD'S PROPHETIC WEEKLY

FOUNDED 1874



The Flight of TIME

A Survey of World Events by the EDITOR



GORDIAN KNOT

ALEXANDER the Great was once challenged, it is said, to untie the famous Gordian knot. He answered by cutting the knot with his sword, thus averting the discredit which otherwise would have come to him.

But while this method is all very well for dictators like himself, it does not work when knotty problems have to be decided by Governments controlled by Parliaments after the democratic manner.

That is one reason why the situation in Palestine is so exceedingly complex. Here is a Gordian knot indeed, with all the conflicting aspirations of Arabs and Jews mingled with the conflicting promises made to both parties.

A dictatorial power might slice through the difficulties by sheer show of force and impose a peace after its own will, but under the circumstances that exist, with a watchful Parliament to be satisfied, such a course is impossible. Both sides must be consulted again and again, at interminable length. Both viewpoints must be carefully weighed and



INTERNATIONAL

Presenting a striking contrast between ancient and modern is this procession of British tanks passing one of the mighty pyramids during recent maneuvers.

balanced, and the rights and interests of both justly protected.

That is why, some months ago, both Arabs and Jews were invited to send delegates to London to discuss their problems; wise leadership bringing them as far as possible from the site of recent troubles in order to beget a calmer and more judicial atmosphere. But the conference proved abortive. The parties refused to meet. They discussed separately in their own groups, but not together, with consequent ineffectiveness.

So now, as the situation cannot be left in its present unsatisfactory state, the British Government has made fresh proposals, based upon all the facts gleaned

in the recent study of the difficulties. They form a characteristic effort to satisfy both parties by reasonable compromise.

Yet once again the effort to unravel the knot seems to be in danger of failure. The Jews, fearful that restricted immigration will lead to Arab supremacy, have expressed their dissatisfaction by unseemly rioting, and a happy solution seems as far off as ever.

So the troubled situation continues in seesaw fashion, with first the Arabs then the Jews seeking to emphasize their viewpoint and to impose their will by brute force. In the middle stands bewildered John Bull, doing his best to keep both sides from tearing each other to pieces.

Everybody must regret that the plan for a national home for the Jews has proved unworkable; and it is especially unfortunate when one considers the tragic exodus of destitute Jewish refugees from the totalitarian countries. Many people indeed cannot but feel as Christ did when He beheld Jerusalem "and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" Luke 19:41, 42.

One point at least has been cleared up by this new development. Those who have been advocating the wholly unsupported theory that the return of the Jews to Palestine is to be followed by Christ's return as their leader in a great world-evangelization crusade must surely realize now that this dream was but a figment of the imagination.

As we have said all along, Christ is no more interested in the unconverted

Arab delegates to the conference on Palestine in session at St. James's Palace, London. The effort to satisfy Jewish and Arab aspirations was unsuccessful.



TOPICAL

Jews who may happen to live in Palestine today than He is in the unconverted heathen of the South Seas. Under the gospel dispensation one has no prior claim above the other. The cross broke down "the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile. Ephesians 2:14. Both are in equal need of salvation. Both may receive it freely from the already available Source.

So the failure of the national home plan need bring no discouragement to Christians, sorry though they must feel for the suffering Hebrews. It is just one more evidence of the collapse of all man's best efforts to save himself, and his urgent and desperate need of divine deliverance.

And that deliverance, thank God, is near at hand. Christ will soon return as King of kings and Lord of lords to solve all world problems and to dispose of every difficulty that has baffled the wisest of men from the beginning of time.

This Gordian knot also He will cut triumphantly in that day.



MORAL DECAY

"**A** LOWERING of human values and a debasing of moral standards are taking place across the world on a vast scale and with increasing momentum," said Prof. Daniel Lamont, D. D., addressing the Faculty of Divinity at Edinburgh University the other day.

Of late, he added, "the darkness has grown deeper, causing a fear to stalk among men that modern civilization is trembling on the brink of the abyss."

"It is not simply the absence of good will that makes the situation so alarming," he said: "it is the growing abandonment of belief in what has hitherto been known as truthfulness. With an increasing number of men and nations truth is only what pays for the day."

The professor then proceeded to enumerate some of the many indications of moral decay, mentioning in particular "the licentious drivel which is served out so copiously in modern novels," which, he said, "could never get its wide public were not the general moral standard falling."

The root of the trouble, of course, lies in the fact that to many people moral standards no longer mean anything at all. They have even forgotten that there are any. They just don't care.

But, as the professor went on to say, while the present tidal wave of evil may submerge, it cannot remove, the rock of eternal truth. People may ignore the existence of moral standards, but they do not thereby obliterate them. Those

standards, enshrined in the law of God, and taught so clearly in the Book of God, are as eternal as God Himself. They have not changed. They cannot be changed.

It is therefore not the standards themselves that are being lowered, but man's interest in them, his sense of their value and importance. Having drifted away from God, he no longer likes the things that God approves, and, shunning all restrictions, he does that which is right "in his own eyes."

Paul, describing this type of individual in his day, said: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man. . . . Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies. . . . Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Romans 1:22-32.

There is but one remedy for such folly, and that is a return in full surrender of heart and life to the God who has been forsaken.

As Dr. Lamont said: "The world's spiritual climate will have to undergo a radical spiritual change; the age will need to be born again if the Christian ethic, which means the will to do the will of God, is to find hospitality in the world. . . . How can we hope to have a well-ordered world so long as man fails to put God first?"

Born again! There is the supreme need. And when men and women are born again by the Spirit of God, they find themselves face to face with the same ancient standards of morality, truthfulness, and righteousness that they once ignored, but now with a desire in their hearts to live in harmony with them.

This work of heart transformation is the greatest and noblest proceeding in the world today; and in God's own time it will be crowned with success. When finally He sets up His kingdom on the earth, it will be a "righteous nation which keepeth the truth" that shall enter into it. Isaiah 26:2. Everybody there will love truth and "bless himself in the God of truth." Isaiah 65:16. "Here," says the apostle John, "are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

Reminiscent of California or Texas is this picture of Rumanian oil fields at Campina, one of dozens in this rich oil-bearing section much coveted by oil-hungry nations.

INTERNATIONAL



The

COMING CRISIS

Facts That Should Banish Fear

by S. GEORGE HYDE



THERE is a universal fear in the hearts of men that we are moving swiftly toward the greatest crisis in history. A sense of expectancy is widespread. Everywhere the question is being asked: "What will happen next?"

It is not our purpose to conjecture the next moves of men or nations, but rather, to discover grounds for hopefulness, if happily there be any to be found. May not the rising tide of sorrow and anguish be an omen of that promised change symbolized by the prophet in these familiar words: "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat"? Isaiah 65:25. There is evidence today to deepen conviction that it is so.

This is indeed "a time of trouble, such as never was" of which Daniel the prophet wrote. Daniel 12:1. And it surely bears striking resemblance to the prediction of the Master Himself concerning an hour of "distress of nations, with perplexity; . . . men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:25, 26. This surely is that time. And let it be noted that both these prophetic descriptions are associated with an event that will produce the greatest crisis in history—the return of our Lord.

It seems passing strange that man's Helper in this and in every crisis should be so generally denied. For a long time

there has been a departure from God. That which the psalmist learned, "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust" (Psalm 91:2), is not appreciated as it used to be. True religion is seldom practiced, and religious life is decaying, as is evidenced by thinning congregations, the decline in Sunday school attendance, and the neglect of the word of God.

Yet that word—the Bible—contains the key to a right understanding of the perils we face, and their meaning. If we would but think how that Book has been so providentially preserved through the past nineteen centuries, in spite of the many attempts to destroy it, we would realize that it is in our hands today for a purpose. We need it today more than ever, and we need to remind ourselves of a neglected and almost forgotten truth—why Christ came to this earth in the long ago, and what was the purpose of God in the sacrifice of Calvary and in launching the Christian church. Was not the purpose revealed in one of those profound utterances of Christ: "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost"? Matthew 18:11.

What was lost? Why, man had lost everything through sin—his Edenic, sinless home, his life, his hope. Jesus came to defeat and to destroy the robber of all

these possessions, as is revealed so graphically in 1 John 3:8 and Hebrews 2:14. By the experiences of Calvary and the resurrection, Jesus deprived "the prince of this world" of his title deeds, and won back for redeemed man all that sin had caused him to lose.

But not until the peoples of all nations had heard of this ransom and had had opportunity to accept the Saviour, could the full benefits of that sacrifice be realized. Hence the early church was charged with a glorious responsibility. "Go ye," said the Master, "into all the world, and preach the gospel." "And then shall the end come." Mark 16:15; Matthew 24:14. What "end" would that be? Why, the end of the world's night of woe, the end of wars and fears, the end of everything that has deprived man of his original joy of living.

So the preaching of the gospel everywhere is a sign of the dawning of the great crisis day, and already it is being heralded in more than one thousand tongues of earth—a fact that overshadows Pentecost itself.

But there are many other amazing Bible revelations that provide evidence of the coming of the Lord. Indeed the Scriptures provide a minute commentary on our times. Never in all history's checkered and variable career has there been a like situation, with conditions so universally and faithfully in accord with

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Disheartening as is the prospect of devastation in the crisis to come, there is the assurance that war and the spirit of destruction shall end.

IT is a high and sacred privilege to be identified with the only winning, growing, triumphant enterprise in this world. To have a living and abiding connection with the infinite Christ and His church, to know the gospel message that prepares men for heaven, is a supreme honor that no man can afford to miss.

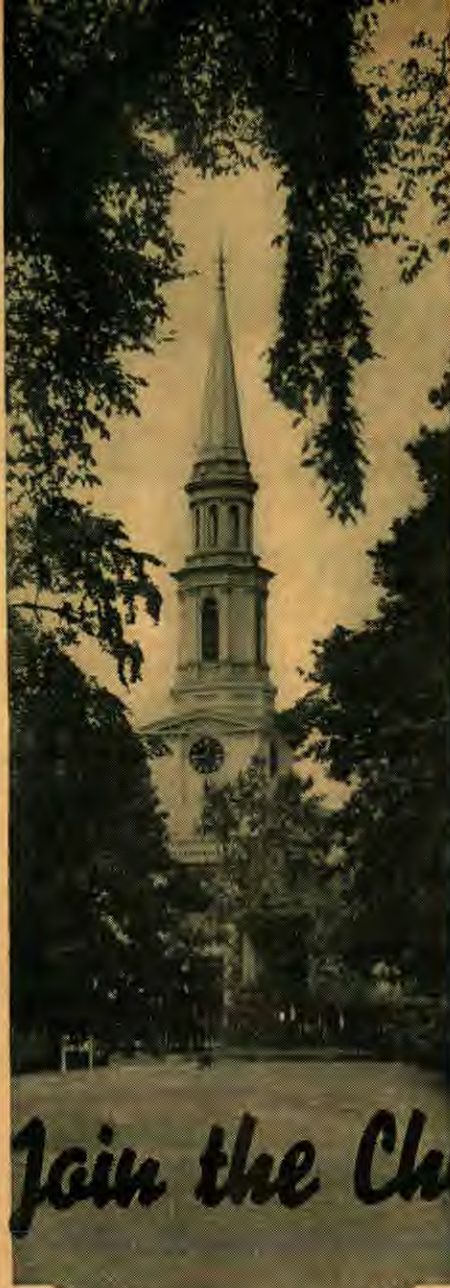
Christ "loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Ephesians 5:25, 26. There is cleansing, sanctifying power in God's word. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63. The very life of God is in His word.

Christ not only loved the church, but He identified Himself with it, with ties that will never be severed. He is "the head over all things to the church, which is His body." Ephesians 1:22, 23. He will eventually "present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; . . . holy and without blemish." Ephesians 5:25-27.

Our Lord is acquainted with all our needs, and is personally interested in every detail of our lifework and our heart preparation for heaven. His unchanging love and continued interest in our preparation for His soon return deserves our constant and individual attention, and should find a glad response in our hearts every day. To be ready to meet the blessed Lord when He comes to present the church to Himself—the "glorious church"—and to be welcomed by the angels in the sky, is worthy of our deepest thought and devotion.

Let us bear in mind that the church is an institution of God's own planting. "The Lord hath founded Zion." Isaiah 14:32. The church is spoken of as "the household of God; . . . built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone." Ephesians 2:19, 20. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of God; it is built upon a sure foundation. All the inventions and schemes of men and nations will eventually come to nought, but the church of Jesus Christ will not fail. It will triumph gloriously, and, through the merits of the precious blood of the dear Redeemer, be presented faultless before the throne of God.

The Lord of glory, the only true head of the church, promised, while here upon earth, that He would come again. The



Why Join the Church?

*Blessings of Christian Fellowship
God's Glorious Plans for His
People*

by GEORGE W. WELLS

time of that mighty event no one knows; but we read, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory." Psalm 102:16. All heaven is interested in every detail of His church on earth and our heart preparation for His return. Moreover, Christ looks "down from the height of His sanctuary;" He hears "the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." Verse 20. He graciously listens to every heart cry for deliverance; "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is per-

fect toward Him." 2 Chronicles 16:9.

We may be glad that all around the circle of the earth the eyes of the infinite God are on those whose hearts are turned toward heaven. His strength and righteousness are made available for them, and, together, we may say with confidence: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31, 34. David declared: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?" Psalm 118:6.

Yes, the blessed Christ died for us. He lives for us, He "maketh intercession for us." Men may condemn us; but if God be for us, and "He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?" Job 34:29. His eye is upon all; His ear is open to the faintest cry; He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He declares: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3:8. The most despised and oppressed may have access to the throne of grace, and there find help and deliverance.

God regards as His children those who believe in Christ, and it is His choice that they should not only be identified with His body, the church, but be members of His royal family—sons and daughters of the heavenly King. Every believing, trusting, obedient child of God is dear to His heart. He has called them out of darkness into His

marvelous light. They are to shine as lights amid the darkness of this world. On the church, in its organized and united capacity, God places the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel message to all the world.

Of the redeemed, "the flock of His people," God declares: "They shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land." Zechariah 9:16. The church saved out of the world of sin will be an eternal testimony of God's infinite love and unspeakable mercy. The church, "according to the eternal purpose," is to make known "the manifold wisdom of God" to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places." Ephesians 3:11, 10.

God has great things in store for His church; His plan contemplates man's complete recovery from the power of Satan. Through the grace of heaven, the rich endowment of the Holy Spirit, and the power of the gospel, God will refine, ennoble, and elevate the church so that it shall stand fast amid the corrupting influences of this world. Under the leadership of Christ, the true church will lift

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Twenty-fourth article in the series on the closing scenes in the life of Jesus of Nazareth



"Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost."

CHRIST Dies on the CROSS

*More Prophecies Fulfilled
Death From a Broken Heart*

by

TAYLOR G. BUNCH

PROPHECY declared that the Messiah would die as the result of a broken or ruptured heart. The fortieth psalm is a Messianic prophecy, and in verse twelve we are told of the "innumerable evils" that would encompass Him during His earthly pilgrimage, climaxing in His death, the cause of which is given in the statement, "Therefore My heart faileth Me." The sixty-ninth psalm gives the meditations of Jesus while on the cross, in which is a forecast of the cause of His death: "Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." Verses 20, 21.

From the account of the death of Jesus it is evident that His sudden decease was the result of a ruptured heart. "The peculiar atrocity of crucifixion was that one might live three or four days in this terrible state upon the instrument of torture. The hemorrhage from the hands quickly stopped, and was not mortal. The true cause of death was the unnatural position of the body, which brought on a frightful disturbance of the circulation, terrible pains of the head and heart, and, at length, rigidity of the limbs. Those who had a strong constitution only died of hunger. . . . Everything leads to the belief that instantaneous rupture of a vessel in the heart brought Him [Jesus] to a sudden death."—"Life of Jesus," Renan, pages 367, 368.

That Jesus died of a broken heart is also the opinion of Geikie: "The immediate cause of death appears, beyond question, to have been the rupture of His heart, brought about by mental agony."—Geikie's "Life and

Words of Christ," page 574, ed. 1880.

There can be no question but that Jesus lived in harmony with the laws of nature and therefore must have had a more than ordinarily strong physical constitution. Under usual circumstances He should have lived several days on the cross before death ended His agony.

Another well-known writer thus describes the death of Christ: "In yielding up His precious life, Christ was not upheld by triumphant joy. All was oppressive gloom. It was not the dread of death that weighed upon Him. It was not the pain and ignominy of the cross that caused His inexpressible agony. . . . With the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His

heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt. . . . It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God."—"The Desire of Ages," pages 752, 753.

Besides the forecasts of prophecy, there are several evidences in the nature of the death of Jesus that show that He died of a broken heart. It is proved in the first place by the fact that death occurred so soon after He was crucified. When Joseph of Arimathaea went to Pilate and asked for the privilege of burying Jesus, we are told that "Pilate marveled if He were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether He had been any while dead." Mark 15:44. It was almost an unheard-of thing for a crucified person to die within two or three days unless death was hastened by other means. It is evident, therefore, that Jesus did not die as the result of the crucifixion itself. In the second place, Jesus died very suddenly in the midst of terrible agony of mind and spirit. There

Sorrowfully and tenderly the followers of Jesus took His bruised body down from the cross and reverently laid it in a new tomb.



was apparently no evidence that death was near when His life was suddenly and unexpectedly terminated. Crucifixion always caused a long, slow, and lingering death, in which the victim grew weaker and weaker until he became unconscious.

In the third place, the death of Jesus immediately followed a loud and piercing cry. See Matthew 27:50; Luke 23:46. Usually, in case of death, the voice is the first thing to fail. It grows weaker and fainter until it becomes inaudible. The loud and piercing cry of Jesus indicated great physical strength, which

could suddenly be terminated only by the rupture of the heart. An eminent physician declared that when a person dies of heart rupture "the hand is suddenly carried to the front of the chest, and a piercing shriek uttered." Jesus, of course, could not move His hands because they were nailed to the cross. The fourth and most convincing evidence of all that Jesus died of heart rupture was the flow of blood and water from the wound made in His side by the thrust of the soldier's spear. "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." John 19:34, 35.

Testimony of Medical Science

Medical science has not only recorded many cases in which sudden death was the result of heart rupture caused by excessive grief, extreme anguish, or violent passion, but that, when the heart of a person who has so died is suddenly punctured, coagulated blood and a waterlike substance, or serum, flows out, sometimes in large quantities. Dr. William Stroud, an eminent physician of England and Scotland, gathered much of this evidence and published it in a book entitled "The Physical Cause of Christ's Death." The book was first published in 1847. During his sojourn in Edinburgh, Dr. Stroud was one of the presidents of the Royal Medical Society of Scotland. His book was endorsed by several of the most noted physicians and surgeons of the British Isles.

The English doctor cites a case where "a small rupture was found in the left ventricle of the heart; and the pericardium was so distended as to occupy a third part of the cavity of the chest. On opening it, a large quantity of serum was discharged, and two pounds of clotted blood were seen adhering at the bottom." In the London "Medical Repository" for 1814, a case is reported of a sudden death from the rupture of an aneurysm of the aorta: "The sac had burst by an aperture of nearly three fourths of an inch in length into the pericardium, which, as well as the sac itself, was filled with coagula [clots or curds] and serum to the amount of about five pounds."

The same physician quotes a Dr. Ollier's description of a case where "the pericardium contained about a quart of blood and water. The blood was separated, although indistinctly, into serum and crassamentum [a clot, as of blood]." Another physician cites a case of heart rupture where the right pleural sac "contained a great quantity of clear serum, intermixed with large coagula of blood, the whole effusion amounting to full five

pints." The *Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal* for January, 1843, cites a case in which "the cavity of the right pleura was found to be almost filled with blood, which had separated into serum and crassamentum; the former amounted to three pints, and the coagulated portion, which was exceedingly firm, weighed about three pounds."—"The Physical Cause of Christ's Death," page 152.

Dr. Stroud thus sums up the evidence he had collected from medical authorities: "In conclusion, it may therefore with certainty be affirmed, that between the agony of mind which the Saviour endured in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the profuse sweat mixed with clotted blood which so rapidly followed it, violent palpitation of the heart must necessarily have intervened; this being the only known condition which could have been at once the effect of the former occurrence, and the cause of the latter. . . .

The cause now assigned for the death of Christ, namely, rupture of the heart from agony of mind, has been proved to be the result of an actual power in nature, fully adequate to the effect, really present without counteraction, minutely agreeing with all the facts in the case, and necessarily implied by them. This cause must, according to the principles of inductive reasoning, be regarded as demonstrated."—*Id.*, pages 155, 156.

Another Roman Custom

"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw

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NEWS FLASHES

POINTED PARAGRAPHS OF WORLD INTEREST

by W. L. Emerson



✦ **THE ARCH-HERESY** "The archheresy today," declared the bishop of Chelmsford in a recent sermon, "in the Christian church—in our church and in all branches of the Christian church—is non-redemptive Christianity, though you cannot call it Christianity in these circumstances—Christianity from which the redemptive truths have dropped out."

✦ **MAGNA CHARTA IN AMERICA** The Lincoln Cathedral copy of the Magna Charta—one of the four copies that King John sealed—is being exhibited in the British Pavilion of the New York World's Fair. It was transported from England in a case that is proof against bullets, thieves, fire, and water, and has been insured for \$500,000.

✦ **CONGO CATHOLICS** The advance of Roman Catholicism in Africa is indicated by an increase of adherents of Catholic missions in the Belgian Congo alone of 176,884 last year. The Belgian Congo is served by 1,089 foreign priests and 72 native clergy, while the total mission personnel is 40,380.

✦ **KEY OF EUROPEAN ARCH** "Napoleon said that Poland was the keystone of the European arch. What was true 120 years ago is equally true today," declared Lord Barnby recently in the House of Lords.

✦ **"SMASH-AND-GRAB WORLD"** "The events of this month," declared Mr. Anthony Eden, in a broadcast talk to Australia, "by their stark and sudden tragedy, have imposed their lesson upon all statesmen and all lands. There is now universal agreement as to the peril which confronts us all. It is a peril based on the tyrannical abuse of power in this smash-and-grab new world."

✦ **"THREE-SPRINKLE CATHOLICS"** Commenting on the laxity of some Catholics, Fr. John Tobin at Boston arraigned what he described as the "three-sprinkle Catholic." "Three-sprinkle Catholics," he explained, "are those who think that all their religion entails is a little water sprinkled on them at baptism, a little rice at marriage, and a little dirt when they are dead."

✦ **SHRINKING WORLD** "We now know," asserted President Roosevelt in a birthday address to the Board of the Pan-American Union, "that the development of the next generation will so narrow the oceans separating us from the Old World that our customs and our actions are necessarily involved in theirs, whether we like it or not. Beyond any question, within a few scant years, air fleets will cross the ocean as easily as today they cross the closed European seas."



PRAYER Cha

Victories Won by Simple Faith The Key to Heaven's Storehouse

A PACIFIC liner on its way to the Far East encountered a terrific typhoon. Huge waves swept the decks. The passengers were locked inside, and the doors sealed against the elements, while captain and crew stood vigilantly at their posts, anxiously wondering if their ship could survive.

A group of Christian men and women, recalling the experience of the disciples on storm-tossed Galilee and of Paul in shipwreck, gathered in the drawing room to send up their petitions to the God of heaven and earth. While they were upon their knees in prayer, a popular authoress looked in at the doorway. When the gale was over, she wrote a vivid description of the perilous trip for publication in American newspapers, in which the prayer season during the storm was especially held up to ridicule. A few weeks later while this impious writer was still in the Far East, she contracted a painful ear trouble, and, knowing no Saviour-physician on whom she might call, employed the "pistol route" as the way out of her distress.

About the same time the city of Nanking, China, was convulsed by military terrorism, and a mob of soldiers surrounded a company of Americans, including the American consul and his wife, as they took refuge in a Standard Oil residence on Socony Hill. The furious attackers burst open doors and windows on the ground floor, and pursued the fugitives to the top of the stairs on the second floor, where the group made a desperate stand. Writing of this dramatic moment for *Harper's* magazine, one of the besieged observed that a group of missionaries were then seen on their knees in one of the rooms, while almost immediately an American gunboat lying two or three miles away in the Yangtze River, noticing a signal of distress, surrounded the house with an accurately directed barrage of shells. Needless to add, the mob beat a hasty retreat like rats from a burning strawstack.

Every sincere Christian knows that "prayer changes things;" and who shall deny the efficacy of prayer in deliverance from the angry sea and the mob?

In the long ago, during the reign of good King Jehoshaphat, a vast army invaded his little kingdom. The king "set

himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." The nation responded, and "gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord." "And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children." 2 Chronicles 20:3, 4, 13.

The king met with his people at the temple, and there offered a memorable prayer, concluding with these words: "O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee." Verse 12.

What an example of humility, submission, and dependence upon divine guidance! Here was a faith that God delighted to honor; and, filled with the Holy Spirit, a priest of Jehovah responded: "Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. . . . Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Verses 15-17.

Men Who Talked With God

As his soldiers passed out of the gates of Jerusalem to meet the mighty foe, the king gave them a final message of encouragement: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." Verse 20. God signally rewarded their trust, and some four days later the victorious army of Judah returned, "Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. . . . So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about." Verses 27-30.

In the days of Ahab and Jezebel, when Baal worship had become well-nigh universal in Israel, Elijah implored God to awaken the nation to the enormity of their sin by a never-to-be-forgotten calamity. "He prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." James 5:17. The streams dried up; fruitful fields became barren wastes; man and beast suffered hunger and thirst; and the country languished on the verge of utter ruin.

Such was the tragic situation when Elijah sounded the call for king and people to meet him on the mountainside at Carmel. There the frantic efforts of the Baal priesthood went down in shameful defeat; while fire from heaven consumed Jehovah's offering. Seeing this, the multitudes "fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, He is the God; the Lord, He is the God." 1 Kings 18:39.

In the hour of this signal victory, that mighty man of faith sought the secluded mountaintop, and there, alone with God, prayed that the Almighty would further vindicate His truth by immediately opening the windows of heaven. That very night "a great rain" terminated the long drought. Elijah knew, and every Christian knows, that prayer changes things.

In New Testament times King Herod instigated a bitter persecution against the church, and condemned Peter to death. "Instant and earnest prayer was made" by the church in his behalf (Acts 12:5, margin); and during the night before the expected execution, an angel visited the prison, chains fell off, massive doors and iron gates opened before him, and soon Peter's knocking at the home of Mary changed anxious sorrow to joy. The prayer meeting became a praise service, and the apostle testified: "The Lord hath sent His angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews." Acts 12:11. James, who was then the acknowledged head of the gospel church, and who had extended opportunities to observe the providences of God, later declared that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16; see Acts 12:17.

Among numerous other instances, we might tell of Hezekiah's prayer for deliverance from the Assyrian host, and of the remarkable answer (2 Kings 19:14-37); of Gideon's prayer for guidance by means of the wet and dry fleece, and of the victory that followed (Judges 6:36-40); of Daniel's prayer for understanding, and the angel Gabriel who stood at his side to impart the desired information (Daniel 9:3-22).

The God of heaven is just as ready and as willing to hear the cries of His children today as He was in ancient times, and to send "an answer of peace." The

es Things

by
ROY F. COTTRELL

passing centuries have not invalidated the divine promises; and the Master has the same keen, sympathetic interest in the affairs of men in 1939 as when He walked in old Judea.

Do you long for a deeper and more intimate knowledge of God's will? Your desire may be fully realized, for "if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." James 1:5. As another has written: "If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their

case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength."—"The Desire of Ages," page 668.

Complete surrender and a determination to obey God are essential to prevailing prayer. Said the beloved disciple: "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22. On the eve of His crucifixion Christ clearly indicated that the promises concerning prayer are given only to those who love God and obey His law. He said: "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:14, 15.

Right Living Must Accompany Faith

Likewise Solomon stated the rugged truth in the terse proverb: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." Proverbs 28:9.

Living faith is a necessary element in acceptable prayer. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him [God]: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews

11:6. Let the suppliant "ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." James 1:6, 7.

"But somehow," says one, "my faith seems so weak."

Friend, the supreme remedy for that malady is an earnest, systematic study of the Bible. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. Said the apostle: "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20:32. While we "search the Scriptures," let our hearts be frequently lifted heavenward with the petition, "Lord, increase my faith."

When in sore distress, many appeal to God for help; but when prosperity smiles, they readily forget the source of strength; and if prayer is offered, it is frequently done in a hasty, formal manner. In these hurrying, strenuous days of the twentieth century, let us "take time to be holy"—take time to talk with our best Friend; take time to wait and listen for His answer!

"Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary, in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."

"Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears, before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. . . . Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. 'He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.' The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son."—"Steps to Christ," pages 97, 104, 105.

Because the answer to prayer is long delayed, or because it is not answered according to our desires, let none distrust divine Providence. At times a wise and loving parent must say no to his children, even though they do not understand. Likewise the heavenly Father's ways are "past finding out," yet we know that He

(Continued on page 15)

The Scriptures are replete with instances of faith rewarded. Naaman the leper was healed because of the faith of a Hebrew maid—a slave.





When Does Temptation Become SIN?

*The Second That Decides
a Destiny*

by MURL VANCE

ALTHOUGH there is a vast difference between temptation and sin, yet they are usually only a fraction of a second apart. In order clearly to mark this dividing line between temptation and sin we must know what sin is, not by human standards but by the divine standard, for when "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:14), the difference between temptation and sin will be the difference between life and death for us.

Although "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4), and although it is by this law that we are to be judged in the last day (James 2:8-12), we learn that this transgression is not necessarily an outward act.

It seems that, as far as God is concerned, sin is a matter of thinking, the final act being merely the fruition of such thinking. Said Christ: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Matthew 5:27, 28. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." Verses 21, 22. And in 1 Samuel 16:7 we read: "The Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his counte-

nance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

If when a man is chopping down a tree the ax head flies off and kills a man, the wood chopper is not charged with sin on the books of heaven if he has taken reasonable precautions to prevent an accident; but the law of the land, unable to look into his heart, may accuse him of murder, may even punish him when he is entirely innocent before God.

On the other hand, a person may sit in church with his hands folded very sanctimoniously, looking at the preacher, and break every one of the Ten Commandments, and be charged with those sins on the books of heaven. If he has disrespect for God in his heart, then he may be breaking the first four commandments, and if he does not respect the rights of his fellow men, if he is thinking how he can infringe upon their rights, he may be breaking the last six. God judges each individual by what goes on in his mind even before his thoughts show up in actions.

Since this is true, it is of great importance for us to know just when temptation becomes sin. That temptation is not sin is evident from Hebrews 4:15: "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Temptation is a suggestion to do that which is wrong. When Christ dwelt here with us in human flesh, He was subject to temptation; and most certainly we cannot expect to escape. It is what we do with the temptation that determines whether or not we sin. We cannot keep Satan from sowing the seed in our minds, but, with the help of God, we can keep from watering that seed with our thinking until it germinates.



Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

If an individual who has a weakness for stealing sees a five-dollar bill on his neighbor's table, the evil one immediately says, "Take it." This suggestion brings the temptation, and is not a sin, for the individual has not yet violated his conscience. The conscience is a good little guardian, and if it has not been abused it instantly says: "Leave the money alone; it does not belong to you." It is at this instant that the individual's fate is decided concerning that particular temptation. If he promptly, in his mind, obeys conscience, rejecting the temptation by putting his thoughts elsewhere, he has not committed a sin. God, looking on his heart, sees that it has stood the test. His character has been strengthened; he is making progress in the right direction.

But if when the temptation comes the individual continues to covet the five dollars after his conscience has given him warning that sin is knocking at his door,

if he begins to think of ways to get the money and of ways of spending it, then he has crossed that line between temptation and sin, and he is charged with sin on the books of heaven. He has deliberately transgressed the law of God in his heart. He is going down, not up; his character is becoming weaker. It makes no difference whether or not he is successful in his attempt to get the money. He has failed in his mind to reject temptation; he has broken the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," in his thinking. He is a potential criminal, a lawless individual at heart, and is so judged by the One who reads the heart.

God's Precepts in the Heart Protect

When a sinner repents of lawlessness and, in partnership with God, starts the building of a new character, God does not try to cleanse the stream without cleansing the fountain. Every action has its origin in the mind, and God goes back to the source of action in His work of cleansing the individual. Says He, "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people." Hebrews 8:10. An individual who is thus equipped need not worry about his outward conduct. If he is a student of the word of God,—and it is his duty to be, for we are told in John 5:39 to "search the Scriptures,"—in faith accepting the instruction he finds in it, then he will be not only a good citizen of this world but an acceptable candidate for the next.

The ability to recognize temptation comes from an enlightened mind, and only those who are acquainted with the Scriptures can recognize sin in all its various branches. Those who are unavoidably ignorant will undoubtedly be excused by a merciful God, who judges them just as He judges us—by what goes on in the mind. If they do the best they can with the knowledge they have, true justice will exonerate them. Those of us who have an opportunity for enlightenment, however, but who do not take advantage of that opportunity, have, by that very negligence, crossed the border between temptation and sin. We have disobeyed the voice of conscience, which says: "Search," and have fallen under the temptation to put our interests above the interests of God by neglecting His word. We shall not be excusable in the day of judgment for willing ignorance.

The difference between temptation and sin is the difference between obedience and disobedience, between life and death, between heaven and oblivion. The steps leading down from temptation are

(Continued on page 16)



Humble Stones IN HONORED PLACES

by ERNEST LLOYD

RECENTLY I read about a large manufacturing establishment where many thousands of grindstones of every size, from small ones up to great ones several feet in diameter, are used for different purposes. As the stones wear out, they are replaced by new ones, and, since there is no further use for them in the various shops of the establishment, they are carried out of the way and built into a unique and beautiful stone wall. The interesting structure now surrounds the plant, and serves to beautify the whole place by its symmetry and grace. The remarkable fact about the wall is that every one of the many thousands of stones of which it is built is a grindstone that was worn out in the shops. It did its work as a grindstone, and, then, having given its best in that service, it was given a place of honor and usefulness in the permanent wall.

Service Brings Satisfaction

There is a lesson here for all who work in God's great workshop of the world. This is a manufacturing establishment in the sense that God is accomplishing many wonderful things here, and He is using His people as His instruments, or tools, with which to work out His mighty purposes. He does not offer the Christian life as a life of ease by any means; it is a life of sacrifice and wearing service, and it is common for those who are serving with a whole heart to wear out in that service.

But the difference—and it is a great difference—between the service of our Lord Jesus Christ and the service of selfishness and sin is that although in time we shall wear out in either service, the one offers in the end nothing but to be cast out as worthless, while the other offers a place of honor and usefulness as "living stones" in the eternal kingdom of God that is soon to be

established. Moreover, it is a happier life that we live in the service of righteousness, and one that gives enduring satisfaction, for it means the salvation of men and women; and such a service affords an outlook that is infinitely brighter than any other.

Tedious, but How Essential!

The stone in the shop goes round and round as it grinds away at the tools, shaping them, fitting them, and sharpening them for effective use. Life for the stone is a ceaseless round of duties and an endless grind; but, though the stone grows smaller and smaller and by and by becomes worn out, the tools that go out from the shop tell of the fine service the grindstone has done and the perfect work it has accomplished.

And, similarly, our human life goes round and round, morning and evening, month after month, winter and summer, year after year—a ceaseless round of activity. Over and over must the duties be done. And often it seems like a tedious grind, for there is frequent drudgery to meet and difficulties and discouragements to work against. But the last round comes, the last year, the last day—and life is done. Does it tell of good service done? Does it satisfy the Master? Do we have the assurance that His "Well done, good and faithful servant" will be our commendation? Then there awaits for us a place as "living stones" in the everlasting temple of the King.

So while we are here in the daily routine of this life, let us remember that He works side by side with His workmen in the shops, in the homes, in the offices, everywhere, and has said, "Henceforth I call you not servants: . . . but I have called you friends." And again, "Lo, I am with you always." John 15:15; Matthew 28:20.



God will make a new earth to carry out His original plan that was ruined by sin.

Does Heaven Matter?

Dreamland or Reality?

by R. H. PIERSON

RECENTLY it was my privilege to visit one of Asia's most beautiful and most publicized buildings—the Taj Mahal, in Agra, India. As I beheld the graceful lines of its white-marbled majesty reflected in the long pools of water stretching some sixty or seventy yards into the foreground, I was overawed with the beauty of the picture before me. Then, when the hot Indian sun had sought its rest in the evening, I saw the pearly domes of the Taj bathed in the purplish haze of the mellow full moon of the tropics, and I thought I should never again see a sight so beautiful. As I drank in the magnificent view, I thought of the splendor and the beauty of the mansions that the heavenly Architect is preparing for His own in the home of the redeemed. I wondered if they could possibly be more beautiful than the "symphony in marble" before me. Then came the words of Inspiration recorded by Paul in his first letter to the church of Corinth: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corin-

thians 2:9. What joy, what anticipation, to look forward with hope to such beauties as only the mind of the Omnipotent can devise! What Christian heart has not beat fast with expectancy at the very mention of that magic word—"heaven"?

In a recent number of the *North American Review*, Mr. Channing Pollock wrote a thought-provoking article enti-

led, "Heaven Doesn't Matter." The author developed his subject with a display of apathy toward a heaven lacking in tangible reality. It is easy to understand how a treatise of this nature could be the child of the popular conception as to what sort of place heaven really is.

The word "heaven" conveys to the mind of the average churchgoer today an ethereal dwelling place of disembodied spirits floating around on cloud banks with harps in their hands.

Responding to such a conception of the eternal home of the saved, Mr. Pollock very naturally comments: "I've never been able to get excited over heaven myself." Then he continues by adding: "There are many conceptions, of course, ranging from streets of gold down—or up—to the Buddhist state of forgetfulness. I shouldn't care for gold streets, and there's little I want to forget."

If Mr. Pollock would take the time to search the word of God and find those blessed scriptures depicting the beautiful home of the saved,—as real as the ground upon which he walks,—and then compare it with this present strife-enveloped and sin-sick world of ours, perhaps his interest could be aroused.

Perhaps when he becomes bored with the popular clerical conception of an ethereal hereafter, his taste for the tangible could be satisfied with the words of the gospel prophet Isaiah: "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them." Isaiah 65:21. That sounds as if there is going to be some real work to be done in God's new earth, which He Himself says He will create after this old world of sin has been consumed. Hear the words from the inspired writers themselves: "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look

COMING NEXT WEEK

in addition to the regular features:

- Is Liberty Worth Saving? Charles S. Longacre
- God Gave Us Freedom Leon A. Smith
- The Power of the Cross Taylor G. Bunch
- "He Will Abundantly Pardon" Roy F. Cottrell
- Stop! Murl Vance
- The Two Thieves Charles G. Bellah
- Challenge to Liberty in America Today Heber H. Votaw
- The Prayer of Faith G. W. Rochelle

for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:7, 12, 13.

John the revelator was also given a vision of this new earth. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." Revelation 21:1.

The gospel prophet himself, in prefacing his remarks about the work that shall be done in the home of the saved, says: "Thus saith the Lord God, . . . Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Isaiah 65:13-17.

"They Shall Not Labor in Vain"

From the foregoing texts it is plain that God will destroy this present earth, so filled with sin, and will make a new earth to carry out His original plan when the world was created and Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden. It is also evident, from the words of Isaiah, that the redeemed are to have some very definite duties to perform, just as He had given Adam and Eve work to do before sin entered. Genesis 2:15. The God of the universe is a God of industry, and heaven is going to be no place for loafers. In this life many times our labor is in vain. We put in a crop and insects take it. We build a house in the days of our prosperity and lose it when our financial ship runs aground on the shoals of adversity. These experiences will not be ours "over there." We read on in Isaiah 65:22, 23: "They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them."

What a comfort these promises ought to be to those who have lost heavily during the recent depression period or at the time of the heavy floods or droughts that have done much damage during the past few years! God says: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Isaiah 35:1, 2.

Mr. Pollock, grieving over the fact that the church's conception of heaven will be bound to rob people of their individuality, should find the words of Paul wonderfully reassuring: "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1

Corinthians 13:12. Those characteristics and features that make a separate personage and distinguish us from our fellow men here in this world will also identify us as we walk the streets of gold together in the earth made new.

One thing, however, will be missing—that is the mark of sin. If disease or accident has visited us and left us disfigured or crippled in any manner, all of this will be left in the grave when the great Life-giver calls us forth from our dusty beds at the time of the resurrection. See 1 Corinthians 15:51-55 and Isaiah 35:5, 6.

Very real people, emancipated from sin, will inhabit God's new earth, but the Bible also assures us that there will be some very real animals there. Divested of his ferocity, "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the

lion shall eat straw like the ox." Isaiah 11:6, 7.

Then, as for the streets of gold, we believe that even Mr. Pollock would enjoy them, for those avenues of transparent gold will wonderfully reflect the majesty of the stately mansions that stand on either side. What a gloriously real place God's home of the saved will be!

Perhaps the greatest joy that will come to the heart of the saved individual, as he inherits the home prepared for him, will be the companionship of the Saviour. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Revelation 14:4. Joy of joys! To be in the company of the precious Jesus,—yes "this same Jesus,"—never again to be separated! To listen to the voice of the Saviour as He unfolds to His followers the greatest mysteries of the plan of redemption will indeed be a privilege and a joy.

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Those



Bible Comparisons and Contrasts—15

The TWO PRODIGALS

by

CHARLES G. BELLAH

IN A family of four in Palestine, the two sons were prodigals. One went away from home. The other remained at home. While one was starving away from home, the other was feasting at home. After a while the younger prodigal was nearer home in a far country than the older prodigal was in a field near by. Luke 15:11-32.

When the younger prodigal returned home, the older prodigal retreated from home. When the lost son was found, the other son became lost. The younger son was nearer home while farther away. But the older son was farther away while near his home.

If the older had thought more of his brother, he would have thought less of himself. He who had always eaten his meals at his father's table objected to his brother's having one meal at his father's table. He overlooked the fact that the receiving of the younger son by the father did not mean the rejection of the older son by the father. For the father loved not only the son who had always obeyed, but also the son who had repeatedly disobeyed.

When the younger son came in to the feast, the older son went out into the field.

And his aged father wanted him in without turning his brother out.

We meet these two brothers in almost every church today—the younger brothers who come home to the older brothers, and the older brothers who are sorry that their younger brothers come home. When the outsider comes into the church, sometimes the insiders are inclined to go out. The younger members are often perplexed at the position of their older brothers. And the older members are sometimes vexed at the salvation of their younger brothers.

Like the two brothers, some good people have bad faults, and some bad people have admirable virtues. It is easier to stay at home and not go away than it is to return home after going away. Let us pray that all prodigals, both young and old, may not only reach home, but may remain at home.

The prodigal came from faraway lands,
Tattered and torn, and with empty hands;
The robe of forgiveness was o'er him thrown,
And covered all signs of roaming alone.

With sorrowing hearts as sore as our feet
Let's hasten along our Father to meet;
He'll pardon our past, and set our feet right
And lead us away to mansions of light.

who have the precious privilege of following Him throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity will be those who have, through precept and example, followed Him here in this life. Are you now following "the Lamb whithersoever He goeth"?

There are many conceptions of heaven; but there is only one heaven of the redeemed of which the Bible speaks, and that is surely a very real place.

The Coming Crisis

(Continued from page 4)

the prophetic portrayal. In every case, too, the description is related to the great consummation, the end of all things, and the entry of the children of God into the glory pledged and provided by the sacrifice on Calvary.

If the coming crisis for which all nations are preparing is spoken of by some as Armageddon, let us take comfort in the fact that Armageddon not only means all the world at war but also peace at last! When the promise concerning Christ was made in the days of Isaiah, it was stated that eventually the Son would carry upon His shoulder the government of the world when, as the revealer assures us, "the kingdoms of this world" "become the kingdoms of our Lord." Revelation 11:15. This will be realized when, as "Prince of Peace," Christ comes with all the heavenly hosts to intervene in the dramatic climax of Armageddon. Then it will be that He will cause "wars to cease unto the end of the earth" (Psalm 46:9), and establish peace for His trusting people.

So we are not to fear the coming crisis. Hear afresh the words of comfort offered by Jesus: "Let not your heart be troubled. . . . I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3. Instead of fearing the future, let us prepare for it by renouncing sin and accepting the Saviour, receiving His peace in our hearts.

Better times are ahead—not by man's way, but by God's way. "The crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Isaiah 40:4; Revelation 21:4.

But if we are to enter into these great blessings, we must be worthy of them, and we can be worthy only as we shed our own filthy garments and become robed with the righteousness of Jesus. Yes, we must heed those great words of Joshua: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods. . . . Choose you this day whom ye will serve: . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:14, 15.

If we do as Joshua did in his time of crisis and national apostasy, we shall have no occasion to fear even "though the earth be removed." Psalm 46:2. Rather we shall say with all sanctified peoples: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Revelation 22:20.

Christ Dies

(Continued from page 7)

that He was dead already, they brake not His legs." John 19:31-33. The historical records of those times tell us that the legs of crucified prisoners were sometimes broken in order to hasten death, so that the soldiers would not have to remain on guard so long. The guards were generally ordered to remain till the victims died, so as to prevent friends or relatives from taking them down from the cross. There are recorded instances of this having been done, and of the recovery of the victim.

Punishment by crucifixion was abolished by edict of Constantine after his supposed conversion to Christianity. The historian says: "He thought it indecent and irreligious that the cross should be used for the punishment of the vilest offenders, whilst he himself erected it as a trophy, and esteemed it the noblest ornament of his diadem, and military standards. . . . The same religious sentiment induced Constantine likewise to forbid breaking the legs of criminals, a punishment often annexed to that of the cross."—"History of the Roman Emperors," Crevier, vol. 10, p. 132. An ancient writer said of Constantine: "He was pious to such a degree, that he was the first to set aside that very ancient punishment, the cross, and the breaking of legs." See also Paley's "Evidence of

Advocating a return to the simple gospel of Christ, and a preparation for His imminent second appearing

EDITOR . . . ARTHUR S. MAXWELL

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Christianity," pages 266-268. It had been divinely ordered that the bones of the sacrificial victims, which were symbolic of the antitypical Lamb of God, should not be broken. This experience was therefore also a fulfillment of prophecy.

Another Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled in the burial of Jesus: "He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." Isaiah 53:9. The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in Matthew 27:57-60. The burial of Jesus in the tomb of a wealthy man is remarkable when we consider the fact that burial, especially in a sepulcher, was absolutely forbidden by Roman law to crucified persons. They were usually left on the cross to decay or to be devoured by dogs or wild beasts and birds of prey. "Distracted relatives and friends saw the birds of prey attack the very faces of those whom they loved; and pity often took pains to scare away the birds by day and the beasts by night, or to outwit the guards that watched the dead."—"Jesus of Nazareth," Keim, vol. 6, p. 250.

Pilate was glad to grant the request of Joseph because he knew that Jesus was innocent. He was also anxious to ease his guilty conscience. Since Jesus was not a criminal, He did not deserve the death and burial of a criminal. Pilate had several times declared Him guiltless, and he therefore either concluded that the Roman law did not apply or he did it as a rebuke to the Jews. He made His grave "with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." From every viewpoint, the events in the life and death of Jesus prove conclusively that He was the Messiah of the Jews and the Saviour of men.

OUR COVER PICTURE

This week our cover shows the U. S. S. "West Virginia" passing under the Brooklyn Bridge, with the imposing skyline of Manhattan in the background.

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Why Join the Church?

(Continued from page 5)

up the downtrodden law, and "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Endowed with the righteousness of Christ, and beautified by His life, the children of God will eventually be presented "to Himself" a glorious church. All who are fully identified with her will hear the words of welcome. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34.

"Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Our "God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth." "They shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord." Revelation 22:14; Isaiah 25:8; 62:12.

Temptation and Sin

(Continued from page 11)

clearly outlined by James: "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:14, 15.

Considering the vast difference between the rewards of obedience and disobedience, we shall certainly do well to check up on our individual reaction to temptation, ever remembering that no temptation can be a severe one if it is rejected and cast out of mind the instant it is recognized. If we desire life, we shall do well to watch that first second that follows our recognition of a temptation—the second that decides a destiny.

Prayer Changes Things

(Continued from page 9)

doeth all things well; and, if we are found trusting to the end, "sometime we'll clearly see, and understand."

But for today let us live by the promises of God: "He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Psalm 91:15; Luke 11:9, 10.

Invited into the audience chamber with God! Oh, what a precious privilege! And in amazement we ask: "Why should the sons and daughters of God be reluctant to pray, when prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence?"—"Steps to Christ," page 99.

for JUNE 27, 1939



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TWO-MINUTE
MESSAGE



*Jacob, in fear of his
life, confessed to God,
who forgave and
blessed him.*

Our Greatest Need--GOD

by

IDAMAE MELENDY

"DON'T think that I am a heathen because I am not a member of any church," a lady remarked when she was visited by a distributor of Christian literature. She seemed genuinely interested in a study of Bible doctrines, and stated that she and her husband read the Bible and tried to interpret it. Parenthood had brought to them the responsibility of training their son, and they desired to give him a religious background. Although she had never been christened or baptized, this lady believed in God and was determined that her child should have the advantage of Christian training, affirming that every child needed and had the right to such training to be a guide and a stay to him in the formative and adolescent years of life.

It is indeed refreshing to find such a common-sense attitude as this on the part of some who are not church members. Not all honesthearted seekers for truth have been gathered into the fold of the church, and it should never be felt that an individual is not religious or interested in religion because he has no church affiliation. Man is instinctively religious.

A newspaper correspondent, writing of an interview with Lowell Thomas, commented upon his attitude toward religion as being that "everyone is either deeply religious or else desires to be so." One's own experience testifies to the truthfulness of this. Who has not yearned for a deeper experience in the things of God upon hearing or reading

of the experiences of famous Christians? We ask ourselves, "Why cannot I have such an infilling of God's Spirit as that man experienced?" God is the author of such yearnings, and He will not place within us the desire for something greater than we have experienced in fellowship with Him, and then fail to satisfy it. The reason for failure rests with us, not with God. We "let go of the arm of the Lord too soon." How earnestly do we desire this experience? Unless we are willing to give up everything else, if need be, we cannot obtain it.

When Jacob reached the crisis in his life, believing that his brother was coming with murderous intent, he gave himself to prayer. He cast himself fully upon the Lord, acknowledging his weakness and need of help. Never before had he prayed as he prayed that night by the brook Jabbok. All selfishness and pride were abandoned. He became a humble suppliant at the throne of mercy, and threw himself unconditionally, unreservedly, on God. He did not do this without a struggle. Does one ever give himself clear away to God without a struggle?

Jacob had felt a desire for the Lord's help previous to this experience. He had been glad to accept the Lord's blessing upon him, but he had never realized his entire dependence upon God. He had always acted as though he had some part to act in taking care of Jacob, that

it was not wholly the Lord's business what became of him. How human he was! How often we all endeavor to help the Lord in His task of caring for us! We are too much concerned with ourselves, and not concerned enough with God's plans for us. Though God's providences or His word indicate one way, we often resist, feeling that some other way is better. Without our consent, the Lord cannot lift us up out of our selfish concerns and make us what He would have us to be. We do not know what is best. We cannot see ahead, as He can. Having yielded fully to God's desires, we can be used for His glory, which should be our only aim in life.

We dishonor God by limiting His power and failing to let Him do for us that which He desires. When we are content with a mediocre Christian experience (if there can be such a thing), we are denying ourselves the enjoyment of the fullness of God's blessing and presence in our lives. We are mere weaklings in spiritual strength, and God is not pleased with scrawny, undernourished, underdeveloped children any more than parents are pleased to have their children less than they should be physically.

Can God be pleased with the testimony, "I am trying to serve God in my poor, weak way," when He has made every provision for us to serve Him in a great, strong way? His is the power, ours the acceptance. Let us not dishonor Him by uniting with Him in name but not in actuality.