

Signs

OF THE TIMES

A lit candle in a silver holder next to a snow-covered evergreen tree. The candle is lit, with a bright flame. The tree is covered in snow and is illuminated by a warm, orange light. The background is dark.

**Enjoy Christmas!
You Must No Longer Be Afraid**

Signs OF THE TIMES

Vol. 105, No. 12 — December 1978

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LETTERS

DINOSAURS

Signs is a magazine I really appreciate. I began reading it about fifteen years ago, when copies were left in a box at the Redwood City Southern Pacific station.

"Don't You Believe It, Kids" (August) has left me with a question about the dinosaurs. If they were not extinct at the time of the Flood, they would have been included in the ark. Wouldn't a smaller species of the 30-40 ton dinosaur embark with Noah and later become extinct due to changed environment after the Flood?

It will be a joy to visit a museum (the Museum of Earth's Origin and Change, Angwin, California) that is based on the Bible instead of evolution. I am a docent for Coyote Point Musuem, San Mateo County, California.

*Charlene M. Borchers
Redwood City, California*

We don't know all the answers—but your suggestion merits further study—Ed.

YOUR BIBLE QUESTIONS

I enjoy reading Ivan Crawford's responses to questions in the *Signs of the Times* magazine. May you strive always for greater depths in the Lord. He has so much to offer.

*Karen Hayden
Kansas City, Missouri*

BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS

In the doctor's office the other day I read "All Those Born-again Christians" (May).

My feeling is the same as yours. A born-again, or saved, Christian must be a different person than he was before being touched by the Holy Spirit. I have seen many meaningful conversions. These people have shown an immediate change in their attitude toward God and their fellowmen. Proclaiming that you are a born-again Christian and being one are quite different. Only time will tell which is real. Keep up your good work.

*Fran H. Faber, President,
Faber Advertising, Inc.
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

"THE DELAYED LETTER"

In "The Delayed Letter" (July) what called most of all my attention was the explanation these two G.I.'s got when they asked the preacher who was helping them about keeping the Sabbath and taking orders from their superiors in the army.

Now I understand why Peter, the apostle, acted the way he did when he encountered trouble.

It costs to be a Christian. It isn't just a way of thinking. You live your faith.

*G. G.
Los Angeles, California*

BETTER THAN BAND-AIDS

Your magazine must have been sent at the direction of the Lord, for I did not subscribe to it.

I enjoyed "God's Plan Better Than Band-Aids" and feel so happy that man is truly turning to the Bible as a guideline.

*Ann M. Hurst
Tucson, Arizona*

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Editorial

BETHLEHEM'S HAZARD

The Babe of Bethlehem represents an astonishing paradox.

God trying to show Himself wrong.

A homey illustration will help explain what I mean.

A few weeks ago I returned from a month-long trip to find the fluid gone from my car's transmission. The engine whirred, but the car stood still.

Up went the hood—and in went three quarts of transmission fluid.

Heidi, age four, was fascinated. She watched every motion as the pink fluid ran down the long funnel.

"Daddy," she said after a while, "is that the car's vomit medicine?"

"The car's what?" I gasped.

"The car's vomit medicine." Her eyes were big, pleading to be understood. "You know—like what Mommy gives me and Heather when we eat something we shouldn't."

Light dawned!

My mind went back to a frightening day when Heidi was about 18 months old. Her mother was cleaning the little girls' bathroom when Heidi, with the quick impetuosity of her inexperience, suddenly bit off a chunk of deodorant from the diaper pail and swallowed it.

Diaper-pail deodorant is poisonous. Again and again Mother had told our little girls not to touch it and certainly not to get any in their mouths. "It could make you so sick you would die," she had said.

And now one little girl had challenged both Mother's right to control the use of the deodorant and the truthfulness of Mother's statement, "If you eat it, you will die."

Here was a made-to-order opportunity to prove to Heidi's little sister that Mother **MUST** be obeyed.

Indeed, if Heidi didn't die, wouldn't both Heidi and Heather feel free to disobey Mother whenever they might want to in the future!

Dare Mother run the risk of letting her daughters think they could freely disobey her? Ought she let them think she sometimes lied, especially when

she warned about the danger of disobedience?

Better let the naughty child die and avoid the risks. Better preserve Mother's authority and integrity at whatever cost to the child.

What?

The events of the next frantic minutes I learned about when I returned from the office in the evening.

The instant Mother turned and saw what had happened, she leaped across the room, grabbed the little girl and jabbed a finger in her mouth to remove all trace of unswallowed poison.

Then flinging open the medicine chest she poured out a bottle of ipecac syrup—previously purchased for just such an emergency—and administered a large dose.

Then to the phone to call the doctor.

And back, with a rush, to the bathroom, where the ipecac had already begun its life-saving work. Heidi was vomiting all over the bathroom floor. And over everything else in the bathroom.

It was two hours before the mess was cleaned up and a very weary little girl lay asleep in her mother's arms.

What about all those risks we mentioned? They proved valid. Both little girls did indeed get the impression that Mother overstated the facts when she talked of the dangers of disobedience. Both have eaten poisonous substances again. Not diaper-pail deodorant, of course; that was quickly and permanently removed. But other things equally deadly. It is amazing how little girls can climb to the most inaccessible places and discover the best-locked doors left momentarily open.

But we have seen a beautiful phenomenon developing. The little girls are beginning to understand that Mother wants them to live. She wants them to grow—no matter what they do—to enjoy happy, useful lives. And they are gradually showing their appreciation by obeying her more and more.

Now ipecac syrup sometimes appears pink.

And transmission fluid is pink.

And the Babe of Bethlehem, by a sweet coincidence, was pink too, and soft and cuddly and very, very dear.

Mary wrapped Him safe and warm in swaddling clothes; and while He slept, Joseph watched over the manger where He lay to protect Him from harm in this strange, forbidding place.

But Jesus had not come to be protected. He had come to protect. As the angel said to Joseph, He had come to "save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

God had plainly stated to our first parents that if they ate of the forbidden tree they would "surely die." Genesis 2:17.

Through Ezekiel he had phrased it very clearly, "The soul that sins shall die." Ezekiel 18:4, N.E.B.

Millions of men and women have thought that death was an arbitrary punishment God meted out to people if they disobeyed Him.

They failed to see that sinners die, not because God says so, but because sin kills.

Just as children die because poison kills, not because Mother warns them of the danger.

However, because Jesus came to save people from the fatal results of sin, many think it a light and frivolous matter whether they obey God or not. So they sin again and again.

But in every generation some come to understand that God loves sinners. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should repent and live. See 2 Peter 3:9.

Jesus is the great Antidote to sin. When He is taken into our minds and hearts, glorious are the results. The effects of sin are reversed; the power of sin is overcome. Saved, transformed, the erstwhile sinner lives beyond the realm of death.

Dearest Babe of Bethlehem, we will love You and serve You forever. **L. M.**



JOHN STEEL, ARTIST, © 1963 PPA

Enjoy Christmas!

LaVonne Neff

Do you bemoan the commercialization of Christ's birth? Then you will enjoy this article by LaVonne Neff!

Christmas is coming! Not only is the goose getting fat, but the department stores are already displaying red-suited mannequins behind spray-frosted windows. The city fathers have approved the annual street decorations (with reduced lighting for conservation). Suburban homeowners are spraining their backs attaching rows of tiny colored lights to their rain gutters, while young victims of compulsory education rejoice in the approach of the longest school holiday until summer. Ministers have begun to preach sermons and Christian magazines to publish articles bemoaning the commercialization of the holiday, wistfully recalling some misty past when the world spent December 25 on its knees.

Today, the argument goes, we spend too much time and attention on the commercial elements of Christmas—Santa Claus, tinsel, presents. What we need is to restore the true spirit of Christmas, to give attention to the day's purely religious aspects. Some suggest that we go to church (never a bad idea); others that we feature Jesus instead of Santa on our greeting cards. Some even recommend that we abandon our merrymaking altogether in a serious quest for the forgotten spiritual elements of Christmas.

The articles are often illustrated by religious art, the usual pictures containing some or all of the following features: piles of fresh yellow hay; freshly washed and brushed adolescent animals; a well-lighted, thor-

oughly scrubbed stable; a group of manicured shepherd boys; a few singing cherubs; a collection of halos; and, most of all, the holy family.

Joseph, who has apparently just trimmed his beard and got his cloak back from the cleaners, stands modestly to one side. Mary, tastefully made up, her face framed by her freshly shampooed golden hair, wears a soft, flannel, light-blue robe with matching veil. In her arms sleeps a pink-cheeked, smiling, six-month-old baby. Who can resist such a heartwarming scene?

I can. I agree that the meaning of Christmas should not be obscured by commercialization. But its meaning can be equally obscured by spiritualization—by etherealizing the Christmas story until it bears little resemblance to the events of a certain night two thousand years ago. Isn't there, somewhere, another alternative, a way to celebrate Christmas that is neither too material nor too spiritual? Let's look at the facts of the Christmas story for ideas.

A young couple living in a conquered country is forced by the occupation government to make a four-day trip to register for the dubious privilege of paying taxes. The fact that the wife is nine months pregnant is irrelevant to the occupation army. She must go, in person, to sign the register.

Her husband, a young cabinetmaker, can offer her only a donkey for transportation. It's better than nothing; so his young wife climbs onto its back

and off they go. They plan to arrive at their destination the afternoon of the fourth day, but they don't count on the discomforts of advanced pregnancy. The young woman has to stop and rest every hour or so. Before they are halfway there, she is almost sobbing from fatigue. Then on the morning of the fourth day, her labor begins.

Well, back to the donkey. What other choice does the young woman have? If the constant jostling and bouncing is uncomfortable, it's no worse than being kicked about by soldiers for failure to register. And maybe she'll be able to find some kind woman when they arrive—someone to help her when the baby comes. Here on the road there's nobody except her husband, and he's scared to death.

By the time the two travelers straggle into town, the girl is in hard labor. She knows her baby will be born soon. But the trip has taken too long. By now all the motels are full. Where can they go? Is there anywhere she can lie down?

A motel manager offers them his stable. It is not clean. Built to accommodate only a few animals, its stalls are crowded with the braying, bickering animals of other taxpayers. The hay is stale and smelly. But the stable has a roof and a corner to lie down in. The young woman sinks into the straw, oblivious of her surroundings.

Only a short time passes before the baby is born into the hands of a stranger—the manager's wife or perhaps a guest in the motel, irritable

At Christmas heaven joined earth and they became one forever.

at being summoned to this foul barn after her own tiring trip. Then, just as father, mother and child are about to sink into dreamless sleep, the stable door creaks open and a crowd of noisy, ragged cowboys (or were they sheepherders?) bursts in. They want to see the new baby. Their speech is jumbled and their hands are dirty. They haven't been able to bathe since leaving home, and there is no place to wash up before going to town. Their clothes are grimy and wilted. But they are too tired to be embarrassed. Later they can find a clean place to stay.

The Christmas story, spiritual though it is, is full of physical elements. That is, the people involved are not antiseptic, immaterial, disembodied angels. They are real people with real tendencies to get sweaty, greasy, tired, dirty, hungry and wrinkled. They find themselves in two situations which make fastidiousness almost impossible—traveling fourth class, and having a baby. Add the further irritations of substandard lodging and interrupted sleep, and you do not get a family ready to sit for its portrait.

Why is the nativity scene usually so tastefully laundered? Could it be because we human beings are more uncomfortable with the physical world than God is?

It's strange how hard the Christian church finds accepting the idea that the physical world is good. Converts to a church are called "souls," not "bodies," and from the time of their conversion they are subtly made to feel that their souls are important but their bodies mildly embarrassing. Sometimes we blame the Victorians for this hang-up, but we don't need to. People have been uncomfortable with their bodies for thousands of years.

A rather influential group in the early Christian church felt that bodies were definitely second-rate. In fact, they taught that Jesus didn't really have a body at all; He only appeared human. When He walked through the sand, they said, He didn't leave footprints behind Him. Another group, supposedly Christian, denied that God created the world. The physical world

is evil, they believed; so an evil god must have made it. The good God will some day release us from this world and from our bodies. We will become pure souls with no bodies attached.

These teachings were denounced as heretical by leaders in the Christian church. But some of them were, nevertheless, at least partially incorporated into church thinking. Many began to believe that truly holy people were not concerned about their bodies at all. They could live without adequate food, sleep, warmth, exercise or companionship—as long as they were permitted to pray.

Some came to feel that the more they denied natural bodily needs, the freer they would be to pray. They left usual human pursuits like farming and business and isolated themselves in small communities where they made a point of "mortifying the flesh" for the benefit of the soul. If their bodies got out of hand and began demanding food, drink, sleep, sex or whatever, they encased them in hair shirts or whipped them with leather straps. These people were called "religious." They were thought to be holier than common people whose bodies received as much attention as their souls.

In this twentieth century it's hard to imagine the ancient concepts of disembodied holiness. We scoff at the Puritans, make fun of the Victorians, and consider ourselves to be the first enlightened generation to come along for centuries. Since the sexual revolution, many feel, we are free to enjoy our bodies as never before. Sex, gourmet cooking, jogging, water beds—so many of today's fads are all body-centered.

What we don't realize is that we are simply reversing the ancient error. They divided body from soul and chose soul; we divide the two and choose body. They opted for spirituality; we for materialism. But a return to gutless spirituality is not the cure for rampant materialism, because the meaning of Christmas is found neither in the ethereal paintings of those who choose soul nor in the raucous bashes of those who choose body. *The mean-*

ing of Christmas is that body and soul alike are important to God.

God, says the Christmas story, joined Himself forever to a human body. Jesus Christ was both completely God and completely man. In deciding to become a physical human being, the Son of God was not fastidious. He did not try to avoid the side effects of being human by choosing an antiseptic, immaculate, germ-free, perfumed, powdered family. Instead He was born to a common laborer's family. He left not only footprints on the sand but also sweat stains on His work shirts. His rigorous daily schedule exhausted Him. The knowledge of His impending death terrified Him to the point of sweating blood. While hanging on the cross, He thirsted, He bled, and He—Creator of the universe—died. He did this in order to save human beings, both body and soul, from final, irrevocable death.

Certainly Christmas nowadays is too often crassly materialistic. For many people the celebration is all body and no soul. But the answer is not to spiritualize Christmas. A day that is all soul and no body is no great improvement; for Christmas, of all days, should celebrate the union of body and soul. On this day heaven and earth joined and became one for eternity. On this day God became man so that man could find God.

How should we celebrate Christmas? With our bodies and with our souls. Enjoy the family gatherings, recognizing that God created the family to teach us of His love. Delight in good food and decorated living rooms, realizing that food and beauty are heavenly gifts to make life pleasant as well as possible. Praise God for the gifts we give as well as the gifts we get, understanding that all gifts are but a token of the Gift God gave on that first Christmas day. Give thanks to God, who created the good and the lovely and the just-plain-fun and who is planning to renew the earth for our perpetual physical and spiritual enjoyment.

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it!"



JOAN WALTER

Let the Water Run!

Sanford T. Whitman

“I learned the real meaning of the manger in Bethlehem,” says Sanford Whitman, “on a warm September afternoon during prune harvest.”

Greeting cards almost always show bare trees and snow-covered fields at Christmas. But I learned the real meaning of Bethlehem one afternoon when the trees still bore their leaves and the orchards were ripe for harvest.

The foothill world was in its glory. The dogwood and vine maple were aflame. A showery spell was giving way to settled weather. Tired winds. Poetic clouds becalmed on a clean-washed sky. Sunlight that was pleasantly warm. Early September 1935.

The proper season and typical weather for prune harvest.

I was approaching the end of my first summer back in farm country. Officially the Great Depression was on its way out, but for millions its fangs still slashed. After my five-year encounter with metropolitan unemployment I couldn't believe that anything as good as rural America still existed.

Yet here it was. Good farms. Good farmers. Good neighbors. Plenty of food. Plenty of wood. As much work as I could do. Friendship. Respect. Happy people, rich in everything but dollars. Again I dared to hope and dream.

One afternoon the picking crew came to the front edge of the prune orchard. Across the road, in a corner of a neighbor's yard, was a faucet for irrigating the lawn and flowers. *Fresh* water. Without a word, all hands headed for that faucet.

It was purely chance that I was last in line. *Mountain* water. Clear. Cold. Satisfying. I filled my cup the third time and put my hand to the faucet to shut off the flow. In the city, water costs money. Poor people don't waste a drop. Saving water had become a habit.

"Let it run," I heard a man say. My hand was still on the tap. I looked up, trying to understand.

"It's spring water," the kindly voice went on. "What we don't use goes to waste anyway—either here or in the canyon. The more it runs, the better the

water tastes. And we have plenty of it."

It was such a little thing. So brief. So obvious. Yet that experience taught me one of the great spiritual lessons of my life.

"God is love." 1 John 4:8. All that is true of God must therefore be true of love. God is eternal. God never changes. God is before all things. By Him were all things created. By Him all continue.

Lift up your eyes to the starry host. Look at the natural wonders of earth. Examine the fabric of redemption. Behold the future glory revealed in the promises. Look everywhere God has been; inspect everything He has done. Everywhere and in everything two great realities abound—power and love. Each is infinite. Each is eternal. Always the two have planned and worked together.

The visual revelation of God's character, begun in Bethlehem, developed in the earthly life of Jesus, is simply the love of God in living example. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory)." John 1:14.

The law inscribed on stone at Sinai is none other than the love of God in written form. It is this love, created by the power of God in the sin-cleansed life, that constitutes the new birth.

In everything that He has done, by every means that men might understand, God makes known His love. The father of the prodigal son, tossing endlessly in the night, often at the gate

Sanford Whitman is no longer in the business of building county roads in Oregon, but he's still busy writing at his home in Hillsboro.

scanning the empty road. The shepherd out in the night and storm, searching for the one sheep that has strayed from the flock. That pitiful Form—uplifted from earth; beaten and bleeding and crowned with thorns; forsaken and mocked and, strangely, also feared; there paying the awful price of man's redemption. The glorious King, swiftly descending the corridors of heaven, coming to earth to take unto Himself His own. Finally, God at home and at ease, dwelling in the fair vale of Eden, leading His happy people along the quiet paths and beside the still waters of gloryland.

Always the love of God flows bank-full and channel-wide. For love to be idle is for love to die. Like spring water, it has to keep spending itself to retain its flavor.

Love with its attendant graces is all that God has ever had—or will ever need—in His warfare against the powers of evil. Love limited the rebellion in heaven. Love crushed the enemy at Calvary. At the judgment bar of God, in the presence of total selflessness, the kingdom of "me first" will collapse in confusion and silence. Love will triumph.

We teach and we preach. We write and print and distribute all manner of books and papers. All these have their place and importance. But what the world needs—nay, is dying for—is the living example of God's love in the daily lives of God's people.

Nothing else has such power to attract and appeal, convince and constrain, arouse and endear as the Christ-centered, Christ-glorified, Christ-glorifying life.

The life that love lives when all of self has been surrendered. ◇



Viking's soil sampler collector arm successfully pushes a rock on the surface of Mars, October 8, 1976. The rock is shown being displaced by the arm. It is moved to the left of its original position and is left cocked slightly upward. A soil sample taken from beneath it has been sheltered from the sun's intense ultraviolet radiation.

The Billion-Dollar Question

George J. Javor

Is there life on Mars? The United States government spent a billion dollars to find out.

This was the Billion Dollar Question: "Is there life on the planet Mars?" It was not a particularly new query. Probably it had been asked for hundreds of years. But previous generations could only guess at the answer. Now we can send instruments to Mars to make direct measurements and discover the real answer.

Mars is the seventh in size among

the planets of the solar system. Its diameter is 60 percent of Earth's, but its mass is only 10 percent of our planet's. Once every 26 months we come as close as 35 million miles to Mars, and at such times the planet glows, with a reddish hue, more brightly than the brightest star. Viewed through a telescope, the Martian surface appears reddish-orange with ir-

regular greenish patches and two glistening white polar caps. A number of astronomers, beginning with the Italian Schiaparelli in 1877, reported thin artificial-looking lines, "canals," traversing the planet. To many the greenish regions suggested the existence of vegetation, and the "canals" hinted the intriguing possibility of intelligent life on Mars.



A scene from Death Valley in southern California? No. This remarkable picture is a landscape on Mars photographed by Viking Lander 1. The dunes indicate the most recent wind capable of moving sand, and the small deposits downwind of the rocks indicate its direction.

Is Life Possible on Mars?

Of all Earth's neighbors in the solar system, Mars is considered to be most suitable to support life as we know it. The temperature of its surface is never excessively hot, never higher than 30° C.; and the average surface temperature is only 50° C. colder than on Earth. Martian conditions are less severe than those of the boiling hot springs of Yellowstone National Park or of the water 30,000 feet below the surface of the Pacific Ocean, yet microorganisms have been found thriving in both of these areas. If life is *there*, under those conditions, why not also on Mars?

Between 1965 and 1972 a number of spacecraft were launched by the United States to obtain photographs of the red planet's surface from the proximity of a few thousand miles and to send back other information vital for a direct landing. The pictures revealed a desolate, comparatively featureless planet with craters, sand dunes and ridges reminiscent of the lunar surface.

Telemetric data also indicated the presence of an atmosphere much thinner than ours, consisting mostly of carbon dioxide with some water vapor, carbon monoxide, oxygen and atomic hydrogen. No traces of nitrogen, ammonia or methane were found by the Mariner spaceprobes.

The close-up photographs did not verify the existence of canals on Mars, nor were explanations obtained for the supposed green areas of earlier, Earth-based, observations. The absence of nitrogen and ammonia and

the low water-vapor content of the Martian atmosphere discouraged speculation about the possibility of life there.

The Theory Behind the Search

One currently popular postulate within the theory of evolution assumes that the initial processes which eventually led to the appearance of primitive life forms on our earth begin in the atmosphere of any planet that has the necessary ingredients and adequate radiation. The necessary ingredients of such a "life-producing" atmosphere, according to this postulate are water vapors and gases containing carbon and nitrogen. Under the influence of ultraviolet radiation (or perhaps other energy sources), the components of this atmosphere combine to form biologically significant compounds. Amino acids, simple sugars and fats produced in this manner in the atmosphere collect on the surface of the planet. Given sufficiently long periods of time, these simple substances assemble themselves into proteins, complex sugars, nucleic acids and eventually into living entities.

Laboratory experiments have been performed in which various mixtures of gases have been irradiated by ultraviolet or other types of radiation, and simple biologically important substances have indeed formed in this manner. These results have encouraged evolutionary theorists to elevate their theories to the level of dogma. In essence, they have been saying that given the proper ingredients of a

planetary atmosphere, the proper surface temperature and surface composition plus a few billion years, it is inevitable that life will appear on such a planet.

A perfect test case of the correctness of these theories would have been Mars, were it not for the reported absence of nitrogen-containing substances in the Martian atmosphere. Nevertheless, early in 1971 scientists at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, exposed a gaseous mixture of carbon dioxide, water vapors and carbon monoxide to ultraviolet radiation, and observed the formation of formaldehyde, acetaldehyde and glycolic acid. These organic molecules could potentially convert into biologically important substances if they interacted with nitrogen of the Martian soil. Thus came the announcement from Pasadena that the existence of primitive life on Mars was possible.

A Billion-Dollar Effort

This development paved the way for an all-out effort to find life on Mars. Several years of planning and instrument building and the expenditure of one billion dollars followed. Then, in the fall of 1975, two unmanned spacecrafts were launched from the Kennedy Space Center toward Mars. Each of the 7700-pound Viking units contained a Mars orbiting satellite and a lander vehicle. The orbiter portion was equipped with two-way communication facilities, computers, solar energy panels, jet propulsion engines and res-

Dr. George Javor is professor of chemistry at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Scientists said the atmosphere on Mars was suitable for life to start spontaneously, and the evolution theory said that life had started spontaneously on earth. So, according to the theory, there ought to be life on Mars. Was there?

ervoirs of propellant fuel. The lander, a hexagonal-shaped, three-legged aluminum structure, housed computers, power units, cameras and scientific instruments.

Cruising through space at about 30,000 miles per hour, the spaceships covered the 50 million miles (18 "light minutes") in 304 days. Prior to landing, the spacecraft were placed in orbit around Mars. Potential landing sites were photographed by the orbiting vehicles for a closer look, and it was then that space scientists realized that the terrain of the initially selected site was too hazardous for a soft landing. Four weeks of intensive photographic search followed before a suitable spot was located on the Chryse Planitia basin. Then on July 20, 1976, at about 4:00 p.m. local Mars time, the Viking I lander successfully touched down close to the designated site and began transmitting data back to Earth. A month and a half later, Viking II lander was also placed on Mars, at a region

known as Utopia Planitia, some 4600 miles from the location of the first robot.

These lander vehicles had been designed to conduct significant chemical and biological experiments to test for the presence of life. Based on our experience with living matter here on earth, it is safe to generalize that living matter is relatively rich in the elements carbon and hydrogen, while in nonliving matter oxygen is relatively abundant. Among the instruments aboard the Viking I and II landers were combinations of gas chromatograph-mass spectrometers. These units could analyze the molecular and atomic components of gaseous substances.

The Tests Begin

A mechanical arm scooped up a small amount of Martian soil and placed it into an inner chamber. The soil was heated to 200° C. to drive off any relatively volatile substances, and the vapors were analyzed. Only water

vapors were detected, believed to come from hydrated minerals in the soil. Next the soil was heated to 350° C. and then to 500° C. At these temperatures all carbon-containing molecules break down to gaseous fragments, suitable for analysis by the gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer units. The results of these experiments by both Viking units were negative. No carbon-containing substances were found in the Martian soil, within the sensitivity of these instruments, which was ten parts per billion. By comparison, surface samples from the biologically destitute regions of Antarctica have yielded some organic matter when similarly treated, of levels of several thousand parts per billion.

A Scientific Surprise

The subsequent experiments, designed to probe the biological activities of the Martian soil, were anticlimactic, though their results were very surprising to scientists. One of

To get a sample of soil to analyze, Viking I dug this trench which is 3 inches wide, 2 inches deep and 6 inches long.



This photo shows a field of red rocks on the horizon nearly two miles away from Viking 2 on Mars' Utopian Plain. The structures in the foreground are sections of the Viking 2 spacecraft. The expensive search for life on Mars made one important discovery—no life there!



these experiments tested the ability of the Martian soil to convert radioactively labeled carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide to larger carbon-containing substances both in the dark and in the presence of light. This is routinely done by some Earth-bound microorganisms and by all plants. Another experiment examined the ability of Martian soil organisms to break down and metabolize compounds labeled with radioactive carbon. A third type of experiment consisted of monitoring the release of oxygen and other gases from soil samples, as they were incubated in a complex growth medium.

The results obtained were extremely puzzling in view of the total absence of carbon-containing substances, thought to be indispensable components of living organisms. All of the experiments yielded positive data, which in our Earth-based laboratories would have been interpreted as unequivocal proof of biological activity and of the presence of life.

First, the Martian soil converted carbon dioxide to larger organic compounds to a slight extent. This ability of the soil was destroyed when the sample was heated prior to the addition of carbon dioxide. The Martian soil could also break down complex organic molecules to carbon dioxide, and pretreatment of the soil with heat destroyed this capacity of the soil as well. Third, when soil samples were moistened with water vapors, a rapid release of significant quantities of oxygen was noted. Along with this oxygen, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen and argon also evolved. Preheating the soil before the addition of water abolished the observed phenomena.

Why?

Reviewing these results, the preliminary scientific opinion was that in view of the absence of carbon-containing substances, all of these data can be best explained by purely chemical reasoning. It was postulated that extensive ultraviolet radiation of the sun interacted with the inorganic minerals of the Martian surface to create exotic and highly reactive substances which were responsible for the observed results of the biological exper-

iments. But the first attempts to duplicate the Viking data in Earth-based laboratories were unsuccessful. The first interim report by the project scientists concluded rather optimistically: "Thus, despite all hypotheses to the contrary, the distinct possibility remains that biological activity has been observed on Mars."

In July of 1977 Dr. Cyril Ponnampenime's laboratory at the University of Maryland reported the results of experiments in which all of the positive results of Viking's biological experiments had been duplicated using metal peroxides or the iron oxide, hematite, exposed to ultraviolet radiation in the presence of carbon dioxide. (See *Science* 197:455-457, 1977.) These findings provided the basis for the most reasonable explanation of all the observations.

The Answer and Its Meaning.

Late in 1977 project scientists of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and of the Space Board of the National Academy of Sciences met to confer on the results of the Viking probes, with particular emphasis on the chemistry and biology of the Martian surface. After a thorough review of the data the consensus was that Mars lacks every form of life, including microorganisms, and the search for life on that planet may be abandoned. Gerald Soffen of N.A.S.A.'s Langley Research Center was quoted: "I may have been prepared for the lack of life on Mars, but it never occurred to me that there would be no organic chemistry as well. Before the landings, most of the scientists at this meeting would have expected to find some sort of microorganisms in the Martian soil, but

now I think just about everybody would have to say that, given the data we've received, it's highly unlikely that there is any life at all on Mars."

Through decades of continual reiteration, prominent scientists have persuaded the population in general to accept evolutionary theories as historical facts. Science and its practitioners have earned the confidence of the general public by their numerous novel discoveries and startling technological breakthroughs. This public confidence has enabled scientists to "sell" evolution successfully.

The theories of chemical evolution are said to be valid not only for Earth but for any planet in the universe that possesses the needed raw materials and a continuous supply of energy from a nearby star. Mars admirably fits this category. Simulated Martian environment in the laboratory produced organic molecules with potential biological significance. Successful laboratory simulations of primordial synthesis of biologically important substances serve as the foundation for chemical evolutionary theories. What the Viking results clearly show is that the laboratory synthesis of these substances in a simulated environment does not necessarily mean their actual accumulation on a planetary surface. In the case of Mars, highly reactive peroxides in its soil quickly degrade any organic molecule that may form in the Martian atmosphere. Prior to the Viking experiments no one had seriously worried about the effect of unceasing ultraviolet radiation on exposed inorganic mineral surfaces. Now the evidence points to the creation of a chemically highly reactive type of matter which can confound the best schemes of chemical evolution.

Was it worth a billion dollars to learn that there is neither life nor organic chemistry on Mars? It is not up to me to say. However, it was not at all a waste of money to find out that chemical evolution does not operate on our closest planetary neighbor. These results will cause more thinking people to realize that if chemical evolution is an invalid hypothesis for Mars, it is also invalid for Earth. And they just may turn to the other alternative option for understanding our origins, the biblical account of special creation. ◊

The answer to the billion-dollar question is a resounding setback to the evolution theory.

The Kitchen Corner

Marcella Lynch

Wholesome Candies for the Holidays

Christmas festivities are usually not complete without a variety of candies around the house upon which to munch and crunch—chocolate creams, fudge, divinity, Almond Roca, English toffee and the like. Just reading the list makes your mouth water, doesn't it? How many times have you reached for that "one more" piece and then for just another "one more"? Then as if to justify those extra pieces, you tell yourself that Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without a little indulging and that your dieting will begin in earnest after the holidays.

The sugar in the following candies is prepackaged by our Creator with the original vitamins, minerals, fiber and natural sugar all intact. Although natural fruits, nuts and grains do contain calories, they are not "empty calories" (as sugar is) but are loaded with minerals and vitamins as well. The natural fiber in the fruits and grains gives you that "full" feeling before you overeat, whereas sugar confections actually neutralize the mechanism in the brain which indicates that you are full.

Try these no-sugar Christmas candies.

Carob Super Fudge

- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 cup carob powder
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup coconut, shredded
- 1 cup date butter (1 cup chopped dates cooked in 1/2 cup water until very soft)
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Boil the carob in water, stirring, for 5 minutes until a smooth paste. Mix all ingredients and press into square pan. Refrigerate. May add 2-3 tablespoons honey if needed for added sweetness. Cut into squares to serve. Decorate with walnut half on top. Yield 2 dozen pieces.

Almost Almond Roca

- 1 cup walnuts, ground
- 1 cup raw almonds, ground
- 1 cup coconut, ground
- 1/2 cup dates, ground
- 3 Tbsp. carob powder
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 3 Tbsp. Minute Tapioca
- 1 tsp. butter flavoring
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Ground nuts for rolling

Grind nuts and dates through coarse blade of food grinder. Place nuts, dates, coconut and carob powder in mixing bowl. Combine in small saucepan the orange juice, honey, butter flavoring and tapioca. Cook and stir over medium heat until tapioca is clear, about 6-8 minutes. Add vanilla. Combine all ingredients and mix thoroughly. (Fingers work best.) Roll small portions between palms of hands into logs, about 1 1/2 inches in length. Roll logs in ground nuts. Chill until firm. Yield 2-3 dozen pieces. Store in refrigerator.

Carob-coated Peanut-Butter Kisses

(tastes like Reese Peanut Butter Cups)

- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or other nuts
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 1 cup wheat germ, toasted
- 1/2 cup date sugar (or omit and increase chopped dates to 1 1/2 cups)
- 1/2 cup nonfat milk powder
- 2-3 Tbsp. fruit juice to moisten if needed
- 1 1-lb. pkg. carob chips

Mix first 7 ingredients together with hands. Roll into balls or small rectangular shapes. Melt carob chips in top of double boiler over hot water. Using 2 forks or tongs, dip candy pieces into

melted carob to coat. Yield approx. 3 dozen pieces. Store in refrigerator or freezer.

Old-fashioned Fruit Candy

- 1 cup (about 1/4 lb.) dried figs
- 1 cup pitted dates
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup dried apricots
- 1 cup nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds)
- 1 tsp. grated lemon or orange rind
- 3 Tbsp. lemon juice

Grind fruits and nuts together through fine blade of food grinder. Then add juice and rind. Line a pan with wax paper. Pack fruit mixture well, and smooth the top. Place a weight on top and let stand for a few hours. Then cut into squares. Decorate tops with shredded coconut or walnut halves. Optional additions: May add 1 cup peanut butter, 1/2 cup wheat germ, or 1 cup granola-type cereal fruit after grinding. For added sweetness add 2 Tbsp. honey. Store in refrigerator or freezer.

Sesame Seed Drops

- 1 cup sesame seeds
- Honey to taste
- 1/4 tsp. almond extract
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 18 walnut halves, approx.

Place the seeds in an electric blender and blend until they are a smooth mass. Turn onto a board and gradually knead in a little honey. (The seeds are fairly sweet alone.) Knead in the extract. Work in raisins, and when mixture is a compact ball, pinch off small pieces and shape into flat rounds. Press half a walnut into each candy. Store covered in refrigerator. Yield approx. 18 candies. Freezes well.

The Seeds of Truth Unite at Last

W. L. Emmerson

It is my very firm conviction that God intended the Advent Awakening not only to proclaim the personal return of Christ, but also to bring together the scattered "seeds" of the Reformation and to finish the work begun at Wittenberg in 1517.

I see one evidence for this in the evangelical recruits who were gathered into the second advent movement. First to join Baptist William Miller in the advent proclamation were Methodist Josiah Litch, Congregationalist Charles Fitch and Joshua V. Himes of the Baptist-aligned *Christian Connection*. Each of these dedicated Christians brought into the movement his particular biblical insights.

These included (1) the Bible as the only rule of faith and life, (2) salvation through the free grace of God in Christ, (3) justification by faith, (4) sanctification by faith, (5) believer's baptism (6) by immersion, (7) the Ten Commandments as the continuing standard of Christian discipleship, and (8) the "sleep" of the dead—the belief that the dead are unconscious until the resurrection at Christ's second advent. As the movement spread, these seed truths were added to and reinforced. The nucleus of God's "ecumenical movement of truth" began to emerge.

The Sabbath and the Advent Movement

Go back three centuries to 1529—17 years before Luther died. It was then, in Moravia, that the advent message and the truth of the Bible Sabbath came together to raise up the first sabbatarian adventists. And it was in the little

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town of Washington, New Hampshire, where these two "seeds" of truth came together again in 1844.

About three miles outside Washington lived a dedicated company of believers among whom the Methodist teaching of scriptural holiness had been linked with the hope of the second coming of Christ. To this little group came sabbatarian Baptist Rachel Oakes, of Oneida County, New York, and her daughter, Delight, who was to teach school in the little community.

At a communion service in the winter of 1843 the visiting minister, Frederick Wheeler, spoke on the commandments of God. He declared that all "should be ready to obey God and keep His commandments in all things." Later he called at the home of Rachel Oakes and her daughter. Mrs. Oakes pointed out to him that while his presentation of the law of God as the standard of Christian living was admirable, he could not commend all the commandments to his hearers while he was himself breaking the fourth commandment which expressly states, "The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." After careful study, Frederick Wheeler accepted the seventh-day Sabbath and began to keep it about March 1844.

As the thoughts of the adventists were all wrapped up in the return of Christ, the matter of Sabbath keeping was not discussed publicly at that time. But after the disappointment of October 1844 some 15 to 18 members of the Washington church embraced the message, and the first company of Sabbath-keeping adventists came into being.

Through the witness of either Frederick Wheeler or Rachel Oakes, Thomas M. Preble—who had been a Freewill Baptist and was now the adventist minister of the nearby East Weare church—became a Sabbath

keeper. In February 1845 he wrote for the first time about the seventh-day Sabbath in an adventist periodical, *Hope of Israel*, published in Portland, Maine.

Preble's article aroused the interest of one of Miller's closest associates, ex-captain Joseph Bates, of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Bates accepted the Sabbath and traveled by train and coach all the way to New Hampshire to make contact with the sabbatarian adventists there. When he returned home, he set to work on his first tract, *The Seventh-Day Sabbath, A Perpetual Sign*, which was published in 1846.

Joseph Bates had additional important contributions to make to the faith of the Sabbath-keeping adventists. It will be remembered that he had formerly been a minister of the *Christian Connection*, which had preserved, among other basic Bible doctrines, the belief that the dead are asleep. Though Bates did not make an issue of it at first, he hinted at it in his tracts, *The Opening Heavens* (1846) and *Second Advent Waymarks* (1847). In due course, because it was firmly established in Scripture, this seed of truth became another of the pillars of the Bible-based faith of the Sabbath-keeping adventists.

The Sanctuary and the Sabbath

While former Methodist Hiram Edson and his fellow adventists were trying to understand the true significance of the date 1844, it came to them that Christ had never intended to return to the earth at the end of the 2300 years of Daniel 8:14. Instead, at that

The truth about the Sabbath and the second coming of Christ came together in this simple church outside Washington, New Hampshire.

time He had passed from the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary into the second apartment to begin the cleansing work of judgment. Edson's friend and associate, Owen R. L. Crosier, first published this explanation of the 2300 days in his paper, *The Day-Dawn*, in 1845. Soon Joseph Bates linked the message of the Sabbath with this new understanding of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

Joseph Bates visited Edson in 1846 to bring to his attention the importance of the Sabbath. During this visit, Bates realized that the law of God, which includes the Sabbath, was set in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary as the standard of the final judgment. When Edson saw the clear link between the law, the Sabbath and the cleansing of the sanctuary, he burst out, "That is light and truth! The seventh day is the Sabbath, and I am with you to keep it!"—W. A. Spicer, *Pioneer Days*, p. 83.

"Thus," says L. E. Froom, in *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, "the connection was made between the Sabbath

message and the sanctuary message, which from that time forward were increasingly and inseparably associated."—Volume 4, p. 961.

Joseph Bates had sent a copy of his first tract to his friend and fellow adventist, James White, of Palmyra, Maine, some little time before White was married to Ellen Harmon of Portland. The couple's first reaction, as they studied the tract, was that it laid too much stress on the law in contrast to the free grace of God. But by 1846, after their marriage, the newlyweds saw that the Sabbath was indeed biblical and began to observe it. They united with the growing body of sabbatarian adventists.

Special Guidance for the Final Crisis

Through James and Ellen White yet another seed of truth was contributed to the belief of the sabbatarian adventists, namely an understanding of the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit. As far back as 1527, at the Martyrs' Synod in Augsburg, the advocates of

the ongoing Reformation discussed the relation of the "outer Word" of Scripture to the continued operation of the Holy Spirit through the "inner word" of individual spiritual illumination. They decided that spiritual illumination was biblical and could be expected in the onward progress of the gospel message. But, these reformers stressed, it was never to add to or supersede the "Outer" or Written Word. It must always be tested by the Written Word of God.

As the sabbatarian adventists studied the last-day gospel message, they saw that the message was to be associated with the special "testimony of Jesus" sometimes called the "spirit of prophecy." See Revelation 12:17; 19:10. They realized that this was actually happening in a remarkable way in the experience of Ellen G. White. In December 1844, shortly after the great disappointment, young Ellen saw in vision the advent believers holding fast to the truth as they followed a lighted pathway to the celestial city.

(Continued on page 21)

Luther began the Reformation; he didn't finish it. He discovered some Bible truth, and others have found much more. All these discoveries—these "seeds" of truth—have come together in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which God has called to finish the Reformation.





God Waits for Us

A. Graham Maxwell

Almost two thousand years have passed since God won His case on Calvary. Satan's lies and accusations have long ago been met. The freedom of the universe has been eternally secured. Why, then, does God still tolerate this one rebellious spot in His loyal universe? He longs to re-create our world and give it to His trusting saints. Why does He still wait?

Before Jesus left this earth to return to His heavenly Father, He told His disciples that He would come back soon. "How soon?" they asked. "Tell us, when will this happen? What will be the signal for your coming and the end of this world?" Matthew 24:3, Phillips.

"Even the angels do not know the exact time," Jesus replied. See Matthew 24:36. But "set your troubled hearts at rest. Trust in God always; trust also in me. . . . I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also." John 14:1, 3, N.E.B.

One day as they sat together on the Mount of Olives, Jesus told His disciples of many signs by which they could tell when the end would be near. He spoke of alarming disturbances on the earth and in the sky, of growing distrust among the nations, the rise of false religious leaders. He especially warned of those who would teach that His second coming was to be in secret. "Don't believe it," Jesus said; "for the Son of Man will come like the lightning which flashes across the whole sky from the east to the west. . . ."

"And all the peoples of earth will weep as they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The great trumpet will sound, and he will send out his angels to the four corners of the earth, and they will gather his chosen people

from one end of the world to the other." Matthew 24:26-31, T.E.V.

This is hardly the description of some invisible event. On the contrary, as John predicts, when Jesus comes back the second time, "every eye will see him." Revelation 1:7.

Not everyone will weep to see the Son of man return. The ones He calls "his chosen people" will be glad to see Him come. As Isaiah wrote so long ago, "It will be said on that day, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'" Isaiah 25:9.

But as Revelation 13 describes, most of the world will have turned against God. And when lost sinners look into the face of their spurned Redeemer—though He comes back in His human form (see Revelation 14:14)—they flee from Him in terror, "calling to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.'" Revelation 6:16.

Peter and Judas looked at that same gentle but majestic face. One was moved to repentance and the other to take his own life. Our Lord is not two-faced. The difference is in us. Those who have welcomed the good news will be ready to see Him—even in His glory—and not be afraid. But those who have despised the truth will look at the One who died for them and, like Judas, be driven to suicide.

Of all the things that must happen before Jesus comes, He especially emphasized one. "This Good News about the Kingdom will be preached through all the world for a witness to all mankind; and then the end will come."

Bible references not otherwise credited are from the Revised Standard Version.

The
totally
trustworthy
God delays
His second
coming
while
He
waits for us
to learn
to
trust Him.

Since God has proved Himself so abundantly worthy of your trust, why not put your trust in Him today?

Matthew 24:14, T.E.V. You can trust God to wait until everyone has had a chance to make an enlightened choice. You can trust Him not to ask anyone to pass through the final time of trouble without an opportunity to prepare.

God has always waited patiently for His children to make up their minds. He waited for centuries for the people of Israel to respond to the invitations and warnings of the prophetic messengers. Not until they had resisted so long that they were beyond even the Creator's power to restore did God reluctantly give them up.

After the Israelites were taken off into Babylonian captivity, the writer of Second Chronicles explained why God could no longer protect them: "The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he has compassion on his people. . . ; but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, till the wrath of the Lord rose against the people, till there was no remedy." Chapter 36:15, 16.

Is God Too Patient?

Sometimes God's patience has been misunderstood to mean that one can go on sinning with impunity, for God is too patient and kind to bring discipline or turn the sinner over to destructive consequences. Paul warns of the error of such presumption: "Are you, perhaps, misinterpreting God's generosity and patient mercy towards you as weakness on his part? Don't you realise that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" Romans 2:4, Phillips.

In the days of the prophet Habakkuk the people were crying out in despair that God was doing nothing about their predicament. The prophet was sent to urge them not to give up their faith in God but to trust Him enough to let Him choose the best time for working out His plans. "It may seem slow in coming, but wait for it; it will certainly take place." Habakkuk 2:3, T.E.V.

Peter warned that "in the last days there will come men who scoff at reli-

gion and live self-indulgent lives, and they will say: 'Where now is the promise of his coming? Our fathers have been laid to their rest, but still everything continues exactly as it has always been since the world began.' "

The apostle went on to explain, "It is not that the Lord is slow in fulfilling his promise, as some suppose, but that he is very patient with you, because it is not his will for any to be lost, but for all to come to repentance. But the Day of the Lord will come; it will come, unexpected as a thief."

Then Peter referred to Paul's advice in Romans 2:4: "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience with us is our salvation, as Paul, our friend and brother, said when he wrote to you with his inspired wisdom." 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 9, 10, 15, N.E.B.

Sometimes God's graciousness has even been an embarrassment to some of His people! When the prophet Jonah was asked by the Lord to take a warning to the city of Nineveh, he first ran away. Later he reluctantly delivered his message: "In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!" Then he sat down on a hillside nearby to watch the city come to its end.

But the people of Nineveh repented, and the city was not destroyed. Jonah angrily complained to God, "That's why I ran away. I knew you were too kind to go through with that prediction. You have made me look like a false prophet, and I'm so humiliated I could die." See Jonah 3:4; 4:1-11.

God reasoned with frustrated Jonah: "Have you no pity for these people? Aren't you glad that they have chosen to repent?" But Jonah was more concerned about his prophetic reputation.

Paul was proud of the good news about our gracious, forgiving God. Jonah was ashamed!

Growing Excitement

About a century and a half ago there arose in various parts of the world the growing conviction that the time had come for Jesus to return. Bible students in different churches began to see in

certain remarkable events the fulfillment of the signs Christ gave in Matthew 24. They traced other lines of prophecy in the books of Daniel and Revelation that seemed to add further evidence that the long-looked-for second advent was now very near.

Some of these eager "adventists" began giving particular attention to the messages of the three angels in Revelation 14. They came to believe that the time had come to share with all who would listen the urgent meaning of these final, summary statements of the truth. Their audience was to be nothing less than the one Jesus described to His disciples as every nation in the world.

The excitement—and the disappointment—of those days are now all part of religious history. But the conviction that the end is near is still very much alive. Thousands of Christians the world around still agree that those early adventist believers had indeed seen God's signal that Christ was coming soon.

But this was not a signal for saints to withdraw from the world and pack for the trip to heaven. It was a call from God to finish the work of preparing the world for His coming.

Mature Christians

When Jesus returns, He will come to a generation of believers who have experienced Satan's last supreme attempt to deceive and destroy God's people. They will have accomplished what one third of the brilliant angels failed to do. They will have refused to be turned against God by Satan's lies. They will have been able to say with Paul, "If anyone—even an angel from heaven—should bring a different version of the everlasting good news, he is wrong and we will not believe it!" See Galatians 1:8, 9.

These are not babes in the truth. They are grown-up believers. They meet the biblical description of Christian maturity: they have "their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil." See Hebrews 5:11 to 6:3. They have not only the teachable faith of a little child, which still needs much protection, but—like Job—they can stand alone. Though their faith is severely tested, they will persevere.

(Continued on page 20.)



Jesus and You

Richard H. Utt

At least once a year almost all the world thinks about Jesus and His coming to earth. But too few realize what He can mean to them personally, not only at Christmastime, but every day of the year and on into the future. Here are a few of the many truths about Jesus Christ, as given in the Holy Scriptures.

OUR SAVIOUR

1. What does the name Jesus mean? "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21.

2. What was God's purpose in sending His Son to this earth? "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

3. What did Christ's coming make possible for all who accept Him? "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John 1:12.

4. Is there any limit to His power to save lost, sinful human beings? "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Hebrews 7:25.

OUR EXAMPLE

5. What kind of life did Jesus live on earth? "Jesus . . . went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38.

6. From what was His life entirely

free? "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Peter 2:22.

7. In view of His perfect, unselfish life and His ministry to others, what should we let Him be to us? "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." 1 Peter 2:21.

OUR COMING KING

8. Will we one day personally meet Jesus? "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

9. What will be the manner of His return? "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts. 1:11.

10. How many people will be eyewitnesses of this glorious event? "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Revelation 1:7.

11. Saved forever, where will we spend eternity? "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:17. "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3.

God Waits for Us

(Continued from page 18.)

They have welcomed the Holy Spirit, the Teacher of love and truth. He has sealed and settled them so firmly in the truth that they cannot be moved. See John 14:16, 17, 26; 16:8; Ephesians 4:30. To be filled with the Spirit of love means to be filled with the Spirit of truth. The loving Christian is a person of conviction, and He speaks with the authority of truth.

God is waiting for such firm believers. In Revelation 7:1-3 His angels are pictured as mercifully holding back the final winds of strife until the minds of God's children have been unshakably settled into the truth.

The last book in the Bible frequently speaks of the marks of God's true people who will endure the time of trouble and welcome Jesus when He comes. Above all, they trust in God and are loyal to His Son. They have accepted the testimony Jesus bore about His Father. They believe that God is just as gracious as His Son. This everlasting gospel is what has won them back to faith.

Because of their trust in God, they gladly keep His commandments. That is, they love one another and they love their heavenly Father. Moved by the same Spirit who inspired the prophets, their greatest delight is to join with every friend of God in bearing witness to Jesus Christ. See Revelation 14:12; 12:17; 19:10.

It is the mission of the Christian church to help produce such people. In his letter to the believers in Ephesus, Paul explained Christ's purpose in establishing His church: "He appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ [a symbol for the Christian church]. And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature. Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful men, who lead others into error by the tricks they invent. Instead, by

speaking the truth in a spirit of love, we must grow up in every way to Christ, who is the head." Ephesians 4:11-15, T.E.V.

There is no closer unity than this oneness that is inherent in our faith. Growing up together in love and admiration for the same Christ and the same God, we are bound together by the very truth that sets us free! God's true church is made up of individuals who in the highest sense of freedom choose to band together for mutual encouragement and for greater efficiency in spreading the gospel to all the world.

God still waits for His children to grow up like this. He needs better spokesmen than Jonah proved to be. Reluctant teachers of the truth, moved only by fear or obligation, are themselves a sad denial of the content of the good news. God waits for loyal people who are proud of the good news, who "look eagerly for the coming of the Day of God and work to hasten it on." 2 Peter 3:12, N.E.B.

It is true that time has continued much longer than early adventists expected. The signs that stirred them to announce the nearness of the second coming are now well over a hundred years old. But are we ashamed that our gracious God has been willing to wait? Are we concerned about our reputation or His?

The good news is not about us. It is about God! If by our failure to complete our task we may have contributed to

the delay, then we deserve to be ashamed. But the longer God waits the more gracious He looks. His delay only confirms the good news.

How Much Longer?

How much longer do you think God will have to wait? We can trust Him to wait as long as there is hope for anyone. But we can also trust Him not to wait forever. The One who reads our every thought will know when the work is done, when the gospel has gone to all the world and all final decisions have been made. "So then," Jesus advised His disciples, "you also must always be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you are not expecting him." Matthew 24:44, T.E.V.

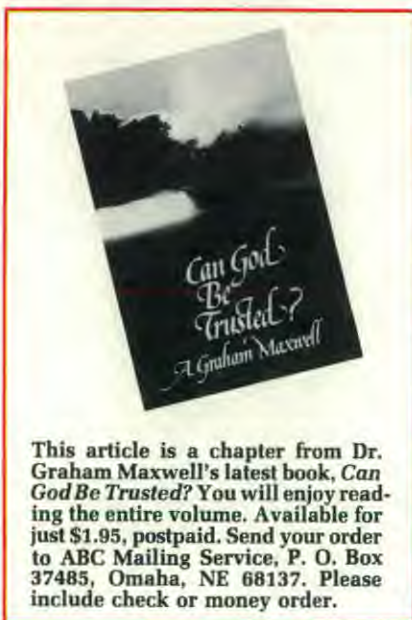
What position have you taken in the great controversy about God? Have you found sufficient evidence for faith? Do you find God worthy of your confidence and trust?

Each passing year adds further evidence that God is not the kind of person Satan has made Him out to be. Our heavenly Father is an infinitely powerful but equally gracious Person who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity and the individuality of His intelligent creatures, that our love, our faith, our willingness to listen and obey may be freely given. Such things as this are not produced by force. And so God waits.

If, like Paul, we are proud of the good news and worship God for His infinitely wise and gracious ways, this will greatly affect the way we live, the way we treat one another and the way we represent Him. Our admiration for God will show in all we say and do. Like Abraham and Moses, who were called the friends of God, we shall be jealous for God's reputation. We shall want the world to see Him as He really is. And we shall covet as the highest of all commendations the words of God about Job, "He has said of Me what is right." See Job 42:7.

The gospel does not end when Jesus returns. It is the everlasting truth. It will remain the basis of our faith for all eternity. From world to world through the whole vast universe there will never cease to echo the eternal good news: Yes, God can be trusted. ◇

This article concludes the series.



This article is a chapter from Dr. Graham Maxwell's latest book, *Can God Be Trusted?* You will enjoy reading the entire volume. Available for just \$1.95, postpaid. Send your order to ABC Mailing Service, P. O. Box 37485, Omaha, NE 68137. Please include check or money order.

The Seeds of Truth

(Continued from page 15.)

This was the first of many manifestations of the guiding gift which through succeeding years was to confirm the faith of the advent believers, restrain them from erroneous developments and encourage them in their God-given task.

Asked about her writings, Ellen White made her position very clear. "I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as your rule of faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged."—*Early Writings*, p. 78. Then referring to her own writings as the "testimonies," she said, "The Testimonies are not to belittle the Word of God, but to exalt it, and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 606. In 1903 she described her testimonies to the church as "a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light [the Bible]."—*Review and Herald*, January 20, 1903, p. 15.

A Firm Platform of Truth

So in the providence of God, at the precise time indicated in the prophetic Word, the many seeds of gospel truth rediscovered in the great Reformation movement and sown in the wilderness of the New World met together in the faith of the sabbatarian adventists.

In 1848 it was decided to arrange a series of Bible conferences in Connecticut, New York, Maine and Massachusetts to unify and clarify the adventists' understanding of the everlasting gospel, and to fortify themselves for the fulfillment of their God-given responsibility of giving God's last message to the world.

In these conferences the truths handed down from Reformation times were related to the opening understanding of the final phase of God's purpose of salvation. The participants in the conferences recognized the progressive fulfillment of the great lines of prophecy in Daniel and the Revelation. They were convinced that they had seen the fulfillment in 1844 of the longest time prophecy of the Bible, the 2300 days. This, they said, referred to the cleansing not of the earth or the church, as had been supposed, but of the heavenly sanctuary and the beginning of the investigative judg-



JOE MANISCALCO, ARTIST, © 1956 PFFA

Early Adventists were very excited about all the ancient truths they were rediscovering in the Bible. Not even the noisy clang of the hammer could stop Joseph Bates from giving a Bible study to a busy blacksmith.

ment of the world's Day of Atonement.

They saw that the commencement of the heavenly judgment was to be associated with the messages of the three angels of Revelation 14. The advent believers had been given the sacred task of initiating the last gospel call to the world.

They came to believe that the remnant church would be characterized by keeping all the commandments of God and having the full faith of Jesus. Further, as they sought to discharge their God-given responsibilities, they would be supported by the guidance of the spirit of prophecy.

Growing Light and Broadening Truth

Following the Bible conferences (there were 20 of them between 1848 and 1850), new light continued to shine on important aspects of last-day

events. Other seeds of rediscovered truth were progressively incorporated into the faith. One of these was the biblical principle of healthful living. Sobriety had characterized the early evangelicals in continental Europe, and their avoidance of the local taverns had often led to their discovery by the persecuting authorities. Joseph Bates took a stand against alcohol, tobacco and narcotics even before he associated himself with the Advent Awakening. As early as 1827 he helped to organize a local temperance society. James and Ellen White became health reformers in 1855. Health reform became a major test of the sabbatarian adventists after 1863, when the great subject of health reform was opened to Ellen White in vision.

The association of foot washing with the celebration of the Lord's Supper had been revived in the Reformation

Because the Seventh-day Adventist church is God's church for this closing hour of earth's history, we urge all readers of *Signs of the Times* to join us in proclaiming the everlasting gospel and the certainty of Christ's imminent return.

period by Balthasar Hubmaier in Switzerland. It was adopted by many of the evangelicals in Europe and carried to America by the Baptists, Mennonites and others. In the providence of God this gospel seed also found its way into

the teaching and practice of the sabbatarian adventists.

These Sabbath-keeping adventists refused to organize themselves as a church for nearly 20 years. But in 1863, 125 groups with some 3500 members were joined together in a church organization which took the appropriate name, Seventh-day Adventists. In 1872, the first official statement of *Fundamental Principles* was issued.

The wisdom of leaving the way open for the Holy Spirit fully to reveal and clarify the truths of the everlasting gospel became more and more evident with the passage of time. Even after the great principles of the Advent message had been formulated in 1872, there continued to be diversities of understanding on certain aspects of truth, resulting in part from the diverse backgrounds from which the advent believers had come. Some failed to appreciate fully the biblical teaching on the nature of Christ and the Holy

Spirit; others veered from a truly Trinitarian concept of the Godhead as held by the majority of Adventists. Some, misunderstanding the true relation of law and grace, tended toward a legalistic position on the commandments of God. Through the continuous searching of the Word, and the guiding and steadying influence of the spirit of prophecy in the church, the truth about God is being understood better and better all the time. Seventh-day Adventists are still studying to reveal truth in its purity and fullness.

We cannot but believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been raised up in the providence of God to proclaim the everlasting gospel, to keep the commandments of God, to stand by faith in the hour of His judgment, to meet Him in peace at His coming, and to live with Him forever in His universal and eternal kingdom. We invite the readers of *Signs* to join us in earth's last great enterprise. ◇



HARRY ANDERSON, ARTIST, © 1944 RBH

Earnest Christians send their prayers along with the printed message, that God's good news may find responsive hearts.



CHRISTEL SCHLEICH, ARTIST, © PPPA

Kindest Man Who Ever Lived

A Story for Children

The kindest man who ever lived was born in Bethlehem many years ago.

After he grew up, he went to a wedding. While the refreshments were being served, the supply of grape juice ran low. This kind man knew that there would be a lot of embarrassment; so he quietly told the servers to fill several large pitchers with water. When they took the water out, it was

grape juice. How thrilled everyone was when they saw it!

The man's name—as I am sure you have guessed—was Jesus. How He did enjoy making people happy!

One day, after the wedding, a rich man came to Him and said that his son was ill. Jesus told him, "Go on home. Your son will live." When the man arrived home, he found his son already

well. And when he began asking questions, he discovered that the boy had begun to get better at the very moment Jesus had talked to him.

Children loved to be near Him. They climbed into His lap or sat around on the grass and listened for hours while He told stories. He loved to talk to them!

The older people liked to listen to Him too. One day more than 5000 came to hear Him speak near the Lake of Galilee. What He said was so interesting and helpful that no one seemed to notice how fast time was passing. The crowd even forgot about lunch, too, till Jesus stopped talking, late in the afternoon. Then they suddenly realized they were very hungry.

Jesus might have said to them, "Hurry on home and have a good supper." But He knew they would be happier if they could eat right then. So when a little boy offered Him his lunch of five buns and two fish, Jesus accepted it, broke it in His hands and fed the whole multitude.

It was that way wherever Jesus went. He cheered up the discouraged, comforted the sad, fed the hungry and clothed the naked.

You would think everyone would have loved Him. But they didn't. Cruel men arrested Him. They stripped the clothes from His back and whipped Him. They accused Him of all sorts of wicked things He had never done. And then they crucified Him. They drove nails through His hands and feet and stood around laughing at Him while He died.

But soon Jesus came to life again. He's living in heaven today, still the kindest Man who ever lived. And He wants to be kind to you.

If you're in trouble, ask Him to help you, and He will. If you need assistance with your studying, He'll help make it easier. If you have bad habits you need to overcome, He'll help with those too.

And if you want to thank Him for being so kind, just bow your head and say, "Thank You, Jesus, for being so good to me." That will make Him wonderfully happy. It is the best present you could give Him.

Your friend,

Uncle Lawrence

Why Not Ask?

Wayne Judd

WHY SATAN?

Why does God permit Satan to continue to live?

One word: freedom. If the possibility of evil had not been built into creation, there could have been no freedom. If the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had not been placed in Eden, God's plan would not have been perfect, for Adam and Eve would have had no tangible alternative to goodness. The tree was not merely a test of loyalty; it was God's way of declaring a free alternative—which is more than Satan would have done!

Also, since the broad universe had never before experienced this tragic "alternative," God's kindness allows sin to run its course in order to protect freedom forever. Never again will God's justice and love be questioned.

If this seems unjust, then consider the larger injustice of a perfect God who became man and died as a sinner on Calvary. His righteous, giving act more than compensates for the injustice and pain and evil in this world.

VEGETARIANISM

Does the Bible support vegetarianism? I want to know whether or not I should be a vegetarian.

God is against killing. He did not design the slaughter of animals as a

means of feeding people. Genesis 1:29 reveals man's original diet, which included fruits and grains. Adam was not a hunter—at least not in Eden. However, in Leviticus 11 God reveals "plan B," which includes carefully selected meats.

Since God's original design was a vegetarian diet, it makes sense to return to that plan. People who have done so usually feel better and many of them live longer.

If you decide to become a vegetarian, beware of making your vegetarianism the center of your life. "The kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17, R.S.V. I have met people who believe they can make themselves more holy by what they eat. The Bible denies that that can be done, though it does emphasize that we should eat and drink in a way that will glorify God. See 1 Corinthians 10:31.

WHY SO FEW CHRISTIANS?

I want to know why Christians are still so few in number. If we have the true teaching, why hasn't the world been converted by now? Is it possible that we're wrong?

Whenever we start counting, we're in trouble. Some churches believe it is terribly important to keep an accurate

head count of how many souls to expect in heaven. But the Bible teaches that we're all going to be surprised when the final tally is taken. If you consider the "church invisible" scattered throughout the earth, there may be far more "Christians" than you think.

Even if we Christians are only a small minority of the total population of the world, it doesn't mean we're wrong. After preaching for many, many years, Noah discovered that the majority was dead wrong.

Still, if you total all the billions of worlds in the universe where created beings remain true to God, those who refuse to love and honor Him on this poor earth will one day constitute a paltry minority at best!

THE AGED: NOT MARRIED, JUST LIVING TOGETHER

Your department of the *Signs* is most interesting and often brings a smile at the frank, open questions the young people ask. And I have great admiration for the excellent and well-informed answers you give.

But it seems that all our instruction is for the young—those of childbearing age who have little or no money or property to worry about. Has it ever occurred to you that there are many elderly people who have problems

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also? The difference is that they will not ask questions. There are many men and women who suddenly find themselves alone and still in good health. There are older men who have never cooked a meal or kept house and who certainly do not want to be alone. Nor do they want to live in a rest home or with relatives.

Some have solved this problem by living discretely in the same house with another person. Such persons often have large estates, and to go through the formality of a marriage would create no end of legal problems with wills, taxes, etc. Would you be so kind as to give me your personal opinion—putting yourself in this position, recognizing the loneliness and needs of these people?

I'm afraid I'll have to be as conservative with senior citizens as I am with the teens on this matter. God's plan for husband and wife does not end with childbearing. Wills can be changed, and filing a joint return is usually considered a financial advantage. In many states it is possible for a couple contemplating marriage to enter into a legally binding agreement that their marriage will not alter previously made wills. Further, I'm not convinced that all older people lose their appetite for sex.

Those of us who are adults frequently remind Christian young people that God does not change the rules for teenagers. He doesn't change the rules for the aged either.

DIVORCED AND LONELY

I've been through separation and divorce. I have been alone with my two young children for almost two years. I am a very affectionate and loving person who seems to need to give and receive a lot of affection.

But now comes my question: What is a single Christian woman to do with these feelings and cravings? How am I to handle them? Often times I feel like falling into the arms of the next male who walks into my door. Please help me if you can.

You speak for a thousand other women—and men—who find themselves in similar circumstances. But the situation is not hopeless. There are a number of things you can do.

First of all, remember that your ability to give and receive affection is a gift from God. This implies that He approves your efforts to fulfill your need. Trust Him. Then help Him all you can by placing yourself in a setting where there are other people your age. In most large communities there are clubs for persons like yourself, where you can meet compatible new friends.

Another one of your assignments as you trust God's kind providence is to maintain your own attractiveness, not only physically, but more important, spiritually—which includes personality, character and moral commitments. Two small children can keep you in a perpetual state of disarray and exhaustion unless you determine to organize your life with extra care.

Many, many women and men have lived out their lives in productive substitution, and you may find it necessary to do the same. Rather than forever wasting your energy lamenting the deplorable cross you bear, turn your efforts and your affections to other goals. No doubt your experience has emphasized the truth that it is better to be a productive single than a miserable wife.

A final word: People who casually fall into strange arms and beds report that these are empty substitutes for the deep relationships they desire so much.

HOW MANY BAPTISMS?

I'm a born-again Christian. I've attended many churches, and I have a question about baptism. Some people tell me that every time you join a different church you have to be baptized again. I believe a person should be baptized as Jesus was, but I don't think you should always be rebaptized. What do you think?

Rebaptism is for people who have been reconverted after completely turning their backs on Christ. I do not believe a "growing experience," even a dramatic leap forward, calls for rebaptism.

Perhaps all churches should follow the New Testament model of foot washing in the Communion service. See John 13: 1-17. This symbolic act constitutes a "mini-baptism" for people who have stumbled because of a perverse heart.



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Your Bible Questions Answered

Ivan Crawford

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

My life as a Christian has been a mess. It's not clear to me whether Christianity is a discipline of will or a transforming of the character. Since there has been no transformation or inspiration, no power or "victory," and likewise an enfeebled will, I am prompted to ask you to elaborate on Romans 7:15-25. J. J. G.

While Christ has achieved a once-and-for-all victory, none of us can say we have achieved it. But Paul said in First Corinthians 15:57, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Paul said something along the same line in Romans 7:25. There is always victory in Christ, and there is always failure without Him. Even the best that we can do is nothing to boast about.

When we take our eyes off Christ, we sin. Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you." John 15:4. See John 15:7; 17:23. This is to be a constant and lifelong relationship. Paul said in Acts 17:28, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." What do you think of when you awaken in the middle of the night? That is a good time to cultivate the presence of Christ, for the sounds of the world are shut out then. By starting this way, you can think of Him first thing in the morning and then go on to abide in Him throughout the day. *This is the life.* "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1.

I don't know that it does any good to wade through Romans 7—to dwell on our struggles. We should be over in Romans 8, where the victory is. I believe that Paul throughout his life had a continual struggle against inherited and cultivated tendencies to evil. He said, "I die daily." The point is that we do not have to win tomorrow's battles. We have enough to fight today. And that fight has been won already at Calvary—we can have the victory for the asking. This does not mean that your hormones cease to function or that your yen for tobacco or liquor is

going to be removed pronto. Jesus says to us as He said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Corinthians 12:9. Read the entire passage and see how Paul withstood his "thorn in the flesh."

There is really no reason for us to go limping along day after day when we can have victory just as well. In fact, we spurn God's gift when we fail to reach out and grasp it. Do you know that this very instant you can stand perfect before God? Read Romans 4 and discover how Abraham was justified *before* he ever attempted to enter into works. Righteousness was *imputed* to him, or *counted* to him. And once this transaction is done, we live on a plane that is in keeping with it—we refuse to sin willingly, though we may slip into something inadvertently. Only Jesus never sinned. 1 Peter 2:21-24.

I trust that these thoughts may help you to be victorious.

VAIN REPETITIONS

In Luke 18:1-8 Jesus tells the parable of the judge and the nagging woman, illustrating our need for constant prayer until the answer comes. But I read again in Matthew 6:7 that we should not use "vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." L. A.

You will notice that the importunate widow is not pictured as making constant speeches. Obviously it is her very presence that bothers the judge and pricks his conscience. He says he will help her "lest by her continual coming she weary me." "Vain repeti-

tions" do not seem to be emphasized here.

Let us suppose that your very dear friend is seriously ill. Do you in your prayer for healing repeat God's name over and over, or do you in the heaviness of your heart seek to commune with God—to come into a relationship with Him where you can earnestly say, "Thy will be done"? Probably the latter. And God hears even the unspoken prayer, the "groanings which cannot be uttered." Romans 8:26.

In some of the Eastern cults which are now sweeping the world, great virtue is attributed to the pronunciation of the sound "om." So-called holy men spend their lives seeking to perfect this utterance. Here indeed are "vain repetitions." Likewise the person who thinks that by constantly naming the name of God he or she gains greater favor—such a person will fail. It is the heart yearning that counts, not the mouthing of words, or the counting of beads, or the prayer wheel that is kept in motion.

NOW OR LATER?

According to Isaiah 44:22 a person's sins are blotted out when he or she repents—"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." But in Acts 3:19, 20 we are given the impression that sins are blotted out just before the coming of Jesus. Which is right? L. O.

Both are right. As far as the individual penitent is concerned, Jesus Christ is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" right now, this very moment. See 1 John 1:9. I repent and confess, and my sins are erased, blotted out. I am washed, cleansed from every stain of sin through the merits of my Substitute. I need not grovel in vain hope and afflict myself in penance, wondering if Jesus will be true to His word. As far as my sins are concerned, they are gone.

BIBLE ANSWERS. If you have a Bible question you'd like help with, send your question to Ivan Crawford, Signs of the Times, 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94042. Please be sure to include your name and address as not all questions can be answered in the limited space of these columns. We are unable to respond to requests for pen pals, sponsorship, or other forms of financial assistance.

In Peter's sermon at Pentecost—which you refer to—Peter, under the inspiration of God's Spirit, told his hearers that before the coming of Jesus not only individual sin but universal sin must be expunged—and then Jesus would come. See Acts 3:19, 20. As for the individual sinner, the business in hand for him was to get rid of sin, experience the cleansing and leave the rest with God.

Every individual sin is a part of the sickness of the universe. If I do my part in repentance and confession, God will do His part in the cleansing of the world. "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." Acts 3:20, 21.

DID CALVARY NIX SINAI?

Even though the Sabbath is found in the heart of the Ten Commandments and begins with the word "Remember," it is still a part of the ceremonial and sacrificial law system and therefore must have been abrogated at the cross. Since then we observe the principle of "one day in seven," or "the seventh part of time," but are under no obligation to observe a Jewish ceremonial rite. M. C.

If the seventh-day Sabbath were judged to be a part of the laws concerning sacrifice, you would have to pronounce marriage a part of the same and would have to abrogate marriage along with the Sabbath. Both were instituted in sinless Eden some 2500 years before Moses enunciated ceremonial law.

Our first parents' first full day as a married couple was the day when God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath. See Genesis 2:1-3. Safeguards for both the Sabbath and marriage are given in the Ten Commandments that God personally wrote for us with His own finger on tablets of stone—indicating their importance and their perpetuity. Severe penalties were given in Moses' civil laws against breaking the Sabbath and violating marriage. Jesus gave His blessing to both the weekly Sabbath and marriage, and the apostles did the same. How can you make a distinction, calling the Sabbath a ceremonial law and marriage a part of the moral law? What right does any man have to discriminate in this fashion? To be

consistent, you would have to abrogate both the Sabbath and marriage at the cross, or you would have to make both of these institutions binding on all Christians today.

By the way, the terms "seventh part of time" and "one day in seven" are not found in Scripture. They are used by some who would disregard the definiteness of Bible language and would invent their own terms. What God said was "the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exodus 20:10. He was very definite about it.

Jesus delivered us from quickie

divorces, saying "from the beginning it was not so." Matthew 19:8. Jesus also delivered us from the many man-made rules concerning the Sabbath, quoting as His authority, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2:28.

Any attempt to get back to God's original plan for the human race must incorporate both marriage and Sabbath reform. The devil is out to destroy both institutions. He well knows that family solidarity would wreck his plan for the "new morality." And Sabbath reform would restore the worship of our Creator.



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IN THE NEWS

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS FOR SABBATH KEEPERS

An Anti-Defamation League (ADL) spokesman has urged the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to adopt guidelines for employers to spell out requirements for nondiscrimination against Orthodox Jews and other Sabbath observers.

Ira Gissen, director of ADL's unity on discrimination, said widespread misinterpretations of a U.S. Supreme Court decision last year have led to problems for Sabbath observers.

The case, *TWA v. Hardison*, pitted Trans World Airlines against Larry G. Hardison. Mr. Hardison claimed he was discriminated against by the airline when he was fired for not working on Saturday, the sabbath of the World Church of God. The justices at that time ruled that seniority rights take precedence over the religious rights of workers who want to take days off for sabbath observance.

Mr. Gissen said that misinterpretation of this precedent has led many employers to believe they are no longer required to provide time off for the religious needs of their workers.

He recommended that the EEOC issue guidelines which would give employers the options of providing paid personal leave days for employees' religious observance, offering the option of "voluntary swaps" among workers or an equal treatment schedule, where time off for religious observance of some employees is not denied to others who have different sabbaths.

"DON'T ACT ON CONVERSION LAW"

Israel's Attorney General Aharon Barak has issued stern instructions to prosecutors and police authorities not to start proceedings under the new so-called "antimissionary" law.

The controversial legislation, which

went into effect April 1, provides for a five-year prison sentence for anyone offering (and three years for anyone accepting) "material inducements" to change one's religion.

Mr. Barak's move came in the wake of police interrogation of the Rev. Baruch Maoz, a Protestant "Hebrew-Christian" minister.

Baptists and other Christians in Israel protested the questioning of Mr. Maoz, charging that the incident represented "harassment" under the new law.

WIFE BEATERS FACE ARREST

New York City's police department has agreed to arrest men who beat their wives when there is reasonable evidence that they committed the crime.

Police have commonly handled assaults in wife-beating cases by trying to reconcile the parties or mediating, rather than handling them as criminal offenses.

The agreement was signed by the city's corporation counsel for the police department and lawyers for 71 women who said they had been repeatedly beaten by their husbands and were denied police and Family Court protection. The court action is still pending and is unaffected by the agreement.

"This is the first official recognition by any law enforcement agency in New York that wife assault is serious and pervasive," said Laurie Woods, a lawyer for the women. She said battered women are now "officially entitled to the same police protection as other victims of crimes."

The agreement stipulates that the police department must send one or more officers to respond to every woman who reports a wife-beating complaint. If there is reason to believe criminal assault has been committed, the police must arrest the husband or locate him if he has left the premises.

Failure to make an arrest cannot be on the fact that the woman is married to the suspect or that the police officer believes they should reconcile.

The police department also agreed to mandatory arrests when the husband threatens or assaults a wife who has obtained a protection order from Family Court. Police are also required to remain on the scene and help the woman get medical attention or protect her if she requests it. Women are also to be informed of their rights, including the right to make citizens' arrests with the aid of police.

MIXED MARRIAGES REQUIREMENT CHANGED

The Roman Catholic Church of England and Wales has decided that children of interreligious marriages no longer must, necessarily, be raised as Catholics.

The Catholic bishops of England and Wales, in a new Directory on Mixed Marriages, explained that they felt the old insistence on children being brought up as Catholics should not be pressed to the extent of jeopardizing the marriage.

The directory calls for an "understanding" rather than a "promise" on the part of the Catholic partner to raise children as Catholics. The revised rules stop short of requiring any decision to be binding on either partner.

METHODISTS MAY UNITE SOON

The Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) General Conference may unite soon with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AMEZ).

Union of the two black denominations is hoped for within 10 years, according to a CME resolution voted in Birmingham, Alabama, in May.

The AMEZ Church has not yet acted on the proposal but expects to do so at its 1980 General Conference.



ARLO GREER, ARTIST, © 1962 R&H

You Must No Longer Be Afraid

The message of the angels to the shepherds is for us today.

Jean Sheldon

There was no nurse available to wrap Him in a warm, clean, receiving blanket when He was born.

Few even cared that God had come to their little world.

Hardly anyone went to the barn to see Him lying on a pile of scratchy straw; people just couldn't visualize

God being born a baby in a barn. Surely God would never stoop that low.

God was like themselves, they thought, selfish and ambitious. When He came, He would, with His coercive power, conquer all their outward foes—the Romans, hunger, disease and death—but not their inward foes.

Jean Sheldon has a beautiful understanding of Scripture. She lives in Phoenix, Arizona.

It was a dark night out there around the barn, a fitting symbol of the world's morbid condition. Night can symbolize different things—wickedness, death, fear. Earth had them all.

Wickedness? People then were so wicked that, to them, goodness was badness and badness, goodness. The more severe God appeared, the holier He seemed; the less forgiving, the more righteous. With their own evil lives they enshrouded His character.

Because of
the Babe of Bethlehem we no longer need to
fear sickness or financial reversal—
not even death or the final judgment. Jesus
came to remove all cause for fear.



CHARLES ZINGARO, ARTIST, © 1961 PPPA

Death? It had become a common part of life's experience. When a person became sick, he was considered a terrible sinner, under fearful punishment from an angry God. The depression that this belief produced resulted in many getting worse and giving up completely. And there seemed no hope of resurrection beyond the tomb; death was the final act.

Fear? What aren't people afraid of when they believe God to be harsh and vindictive? To them He was a fearsome Being who made laws for their bondage and required them to appease His wrath. To be afraid of God had actually become virtuous, a part of religious piety.

But the darkness of their night's superstition and error was suddenly shattered by a light that overwhelmed some shepherds out on the Judean foothills. Terrified, the shepherds clung to the ground, seeking relief from the brightness. What was happening? Had the Messiah come to destroy them? Had God come down to devour them in His wrath?

Gradually, as their eyes became accustomed to the light, the shepherds saw an angel standing in the heavens not far above them. "Stop being afraid," the angel told them, "for now I bring you good tidings of great joy which is to be for all the people." Luke 2:10, C. B. Williams.

The words "Stop being afraid" may also be translated, "You must no longer be afraid."* They hint that the shepherds had been afraid for a longer time than merely that night. Could it be that they, too, had been afraid of God? And could it be that the angel's message—"today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11, N.A.S.B.)—was meant to dispel more than simply their fear of the brightness? Perhaps their fear of God?

Good News for Us

Yet not just for the shepherds was that message given. It is for everyone who is afraid of God. That message was the good news: You must no longer be

*W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 870.

afraid of your God, because He has become One of you in order to reveal Himself. It did not begin with the angel that night in Judea. Centuries before, the prophet Isaiah had foretold the same event:

"You who bring Zion good news, . . . cry to the cities of Judah, 'Your God is here.' Here is the Lord God coming in might, coming to rule with his right arm. . . . He will tend his flock like a shepherd and gather them together with his arm; he will carry the lambs in his bosom and lead the ewes to water." Isaiah 40:9-11, N.E.B.

The Beginning of Fear

But in order truly to understand this good news, we must go back to a time before Isaiah's prophecy, when God was first misrepresented. Before this world was created, one of God's created beings and closest friends, Lucifer, began to harbor serious doubts about God's character. Was God really loving, reasonable and merciful, or was He selfish and oppressive? Although God tried to persuade him to believe differently, Lucifer refused. Finally, leading the friends who had joined him, Lucifer rebelled against God. It was open, deliberate rejection of God, and God expelled them from heaven. See Revelation 12:3, 4, 7-9.

Later, after this earth had been created, Satan (as Lucifer was now called) was given opportunity to tempt the first man and woman with his lies about God. Having given Adam and Eve the power of choice, God graciously granted Satan a testing ground where he could continue his controversy. Here, at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Eve met the liar head on. "Surely," Satan intimated to her, "you don't mean that God would withhold one good tree in the world from you! Isn't He being a bit too fussy, even arbitrary, in telling you not to eat such good-looking fruit? And as for this nonsense about dying—you won't die if you eat it! God lied to you when He said you would. You see, Eve, He is really afraid that you'll eat this fruit and become equal with Him in wisdom, power and authority. If He were truly unselfish, He wouldn't care; but He's trying to protect Himself."

The rest of the story, found in Genesis 3, is a sad description of what

distrust in our loving God can do to us. Although forewarned of the results of disobeying Him, Adam and Eve ate the fruit. And when God came to visit them later the same day, they hid from Him in terror. Why? Were they merely afraid of being seen without proper clothing? Or were they really afraid of God? Afraid of a God they now believed didn't truly love them? Afraid that He would be angry with them?

God's Solution for Fear

God wasn't angry with them, only very sorry. He could have left them to receive immediately the natural results of their distrust: death. But because He loved them, because they were afraid of Him, and because the other beings in the universe had questions, He took millenniums of His time to explain Himself to all. Although He was continually frustrated by people's doubts and fears; although His channels were repeatedly blocked and His plans thwarted by indifferent, rebellious people, He never stopped trying to reveal Himself.

Finally He came down to a little town called Bethlehem and became a man, in order that men and women might see Him as He really is. He was the One who had created Adam and Eve, who had ordered the Flood, who had talked with Abraham, who had led Israel through the wilderness, who was One with His Father. See Micah 5:2; John 1:1.

All through His life on earth, He demonstrated God's character. When He healed the sick, He was teaching people that God cares for them when they're sick (even sin-sick) and longs to heal them. When He held little children on His lap, He was showing that God loves people of any age. When He ate with sinners and identified Himself with their needs and interests, He was revealing God's love for them too.

Jesus Was the Good News!

To everyone He was the good news about God. There was no need to be afraid of a God who would take the time to talk to a man in the middle of the night. See John 3:1-21. There was no reason to be afraid of a God who would tell a prostitute, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again." John 8:11, R.S.V. There was no

need for anyone to be afraid of a God who would stop an entire joyous procession to weep over a city full of hatred toward Himself. See Luke 19:35-44.

Then, in total selflessness, He gave Himself up on a cross to prove that there is no height or depth to which God's love will not go. All Satan's lies tied together could not reach both ends of the cross. They fell, shredded and useless, at Satan's feet, because the universe out there no longer believed them.

Down on this earth, however, those lies are still enveloping people in darkness. God's laws are still considered arbitrary and destructive of personal freedom. God is still represented as either a tyrant who will mercilessly burn people forever and ever, or a God of coercion who will force everyone, good and bad, to go to heaven—whether they want to go there or not. One of the main reasons so many try to forget God is that they are afraid of the God they would have to remember if they chose to believe He exists.

That is why God has asked His followers to carry the good news about Himself to everyone. All must hear it and decide for or against it before He can come again. See Matthew 24:14. He wants no one left to grope helplessly in the darkness of superstition and falsehood.

For many long centuries the good news has been given—that is why it is called the "everlasting good news." Revelation 14:6, W. F. Beck. It is the same good news of the cross; the same good news Jesus revealed during His life on earth; the same good news the angels gave the shepherds.

But now, in these last important hours, this good news is to be given as never before. John saw it as a light that brightened the earth and dispelled the night's gloomy fear. See Revelation 18:1. Now, with greater clarity than ever before, God is to be revealed through those who have completely accepted the good news about Him and have become like Him in character.

It is this good news especially that Seventh-day Adventists delight to share with those who do not know it, saying to them, "You must no longer be afraid of God!" ◇



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