

A photograph of three sheep with black faces and white woolly bodies grazing in a lush green field. In the background, there are several trees with green and yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The lighting is soft and natural.

Signs

OF THE TIMES

TEN SLEEPY GIRLS
IS TITHE A TAX?
PATRICK, THE IRISH APOSTLE

Signs OF THE TIMES

Vol. 106, No. 3 — March 1979

Lawrence Maxwell, Editor; Ivan Crawford, Associate Editor; Edna Jewell, Editorial Secretary; Howard C. Larkin, Art Director; Adán Saldaña, Design; A. R. Mazat, Circulation Manager; Leon Cornforth, Sales and Promotion; Henry Nelson, Office Manager

Jungle Jeopardy <i>Editorial</i>	3	Patrick, the Irish Apostle <i>Warren C. Trenchard</i>	16
Legumes <i>Marcella Lynch</i>	4	Is Tithe a Tax? <i>Jean Sheldon</i>	19
He's on Our Side! <i>T. R. Torkelson</i>	6	How Old Is Old? <i>Harold W. Clark</i>	21
Miracle by a Pool <i>James Joiner</i>	8	Why Not Ask? <i>Wayne Judd</i>	24
The Most Wonderful Life <i>Richard H. Utt</i>	10	Your Bible Questions Answered <i>Ivan Crawford</i>	26
Healed by a Touch <i>Lucile Joy Small</i>	11	Immovable Elephant <i>Uncle Lawrence</i>	28
Ten Sleepy Girls <i>Ellen G. White</i>	12	Jesus Loves . . . Me! <i>LaVonne Neff</i>	29

LETTERS

ENJOY SIGNS

Although our family is not of your faith, my husband and I sincerely enjoy your magazine. We especially take note in your question and answer pages. I don't know who gave us the subscription, but I am thankful for their generosity.

*Mrs. Larry Van Buren
Pasco, Washington*

I was thrilled to see the candy recipes in your December issue. I surely will be trying them. Maybe you can feature wholesome cookies sometime.

*Jeanie Smith
Boring, Oregon*

I don't know who the good Samaritans are who are making it possible for me to receive the *Signs of the Times*. I have enjoyed it so much.

*Mrs. Gail L. McGrath
Weiser, Idaho*

"ENJOY CHRISTMAS"

Your recent article, "Enjoy Christmas" (December 1978) is a sad, unscriptural presentation of a profound truth.

*L. J.
Silverton, Oregon*

After getting my family off to work and school, I sit down each morning and have my daily Bible study. This morning I took time to start reading the *Signs*. After reading the article, "Enjoy Christmas," I cried, mainly because you made me feel so good.

*Dorothy Layson
Bend, Oregon*

BALM FOR TROUBLES

In September I had many troubles and many unexpected problems to solve. Your September issue was like a balm for me. Thanks for "Why God Says No So Often" and "A Friend to Share Your Burdens."

*Name Withheld
Rio De Janeiro, Brazil.*

SOUL SLEEP

I am not a member of your faith, but a well meaning relative sends us the *Signs*. I find some of the reading very good, but feel that you sadly misrepresent some Bible truths. I am referring now to your belief of soul sleep. You completely disregard the teaching in the New Testament.

*Name Withheld
Mount Shasta, California*

Thank you for your good letter. Adventists do not believe the soul sleeps. We believe the person sleeps. Be sure to read next month's *Signs* carefully. It will answer many questions about what happens when someone dies.—Ed.

CLEAR

I find *Signs* most interesting. I have enjoyed the clear write-ups on different subjects, usually difficult to write about. The illustrations are lovely too.

*Hazel Bacon
Fort Lauderdale, Florida*

Subscription rates: When purchased in U.S.A., \$2.95 (U.S.) mailed to U.S.A. or Canada. To other countries, \$3.95 (U.S.). Single copy, 35 cents. When purchased in Canada, \$3.30 (Can.) mailed to Canada or U.S.A. To other countries, \$4.30 (Can.). Single copy, 40 cents. A publication of the Seventh-day Adventists, the *SIGNS OF THE TIMES* is printed and published monthly (twelve issues a year) by the Pacific Press Publishing Association at 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94042, U.S.A. Second-class postage paid at Mountain View, California. Allow thirty days in requesting change of address; give both old and new addresses and zip numbers. Member of Associated Church Press. Copyright © 1979, by the Pacific Press Publishing Association.

Jungle Jeopardy

Postscripts to the Jonestown massacre will doubtless flow from the pens of sociologists for many years to come. And we will all continue to wonder how a segment of the human family could possibly have gotten themselves so confused about life they would prefer death by suicide.

Are people programmed to go mad? Can some theorem be enunciated that would show that all minds have a common bent to insanity, given the right (or wrong) time and place?

Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist (1858-1917), set forth the theory some years ago that altruism promotes suicide. He reasoned that when a group becomes concerned for the welfare of people outside its own circle it begins to break up, leaving the members at loose ends.

The finale at Jonestown provides ample evidence that some people there certainly were at loose ends and that suicide was the result of their distress.

Was it, however, altruism—that broad, humanitarian outreach that helps others enjoy a better world—that drove the members to suicide? Or was it introversion, narrow provincialism and paranoia that precipitated this great tragedy?

We are concerned about the question, because some people are blaming Christianity for the ghastly debacle. The validity of the gospel commission is being questioned.

Frankly, we deny outright that the Jonestown massacre has anything to do with Christianity. When Jim Jones set himself up as a messiah, he separated from Christianity. Jesus warned long ago, "False Messiahs and false prophets will appear." He went on to say that when this kind of religious

leader called his followers to go with him to some out of the way place, His instructions to the true Christians were, "Don't go there"! See Matthew 24:25, 26, T.E.V.

To the Roman authorities of the first century, the small group of Christians in the empire at that time was indeed a "cult." They "loved one another" intensely. They would gladly have laid down their lives for their belief that their leader Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. Jesus Himself had called this small group of believers a "little flock." Luke 12:32. And in Jesus' notable prayer to the Father, He prayed for them, asking that "they may be made perfect in one." John 17:23. From such descriptions, the early church admittedly sounds much like a closed shop, introverted and exclusive. But this is not the whole story. Christianity soon proved it was for all the world, not alone for a favored few.

Jesus constantly directed His followers outward. For instance, He said at one time: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." John 10:16. It soon became clear that Christians were not able to enjoy their favored position within the "little flock" if they did not reach out to the world beyond. One of their greatest leaders, Paul, revealed that what kept him going was this constant outreach. He said, "I preach the gospel. . . . I am under orders to do so. And how terrible it would be for me if I did not." 1 Corinthians 9:16, T.E.V. To preach the gospel was to tell others about Jesus. Paul felt compelled to tell everyone everywhere—to reach constantly outward. Read the story of his

life in the New Testament and you will find him scarcely returned home from one evangelistic tour before he sets out on another. The Christian church was no closed shop for him. His was a world outreach.

In this he followed in the steps of Jesus Christ who said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matthew 28:19, 20.

Have you seen any exclusive Christians lately? Probably not many. For when a Christian loses his altruism, when he loses the vision of taking Christ to the nations, he soon loses the thing that is most beautiful about belonging to the "little flock." That's when he is likely to be at loose ends.

It is not altruism but narrow provincialism and self-centeredness that may lead to paranoia and suicide. Emile Durkheim's theory is twisted around wrong end to. For the happiest, the most hopeful and best adjusted people anywhere in the world are those who hold out to others the water of hope and joy that is always "springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14.

We hear a great deal these days about individualism. Who could be more individualistic than the person who chooses to reach out to make a better world? Altruism is evidence of maturity. It is the stabilizing feature of both the individual and of society. Jesus told His followers, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27 I. C.

Legumes

SAVORY SOYBEAN PATTIES

- 3 cups water
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup dry soybeans
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups water
- $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups rolled oats
- 1 small chopped onion OR
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. oil
- 1 Tbsp. brewer's type yeast (optional)

Soak soybeans overnight in 3 cups water. Then drain. Blend soybeans in blender in $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups water until quite fine. Remove to bowl and add seasonings and rolled oats. Allow to stand 10 minutes for rolled oats to absorb moisture. Stir again and drop by rounded tablespoons into lightly oiled skillet on moderate heat (350°). Cover and cook until lightly browned. Turn, cover and cook until lightly browned. Reduce heat and allow to cook 10 minutes longer. Serve with the following tomato gravy. Serves 8. Protein 11 gm. per serving.

LENTIL-RICE SOUP

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown rice
- 1 cup lentils, dry
- 2 quarts water
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 large can tomatoes
- $1-1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt to taste
- 2 Tbsp. margarine
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce

Mix and cook slowly until all ingredients are tender. Sometimes more liquid is needed. Can add tomato juice or soup for more liquid. Thyme or oregano may be added for flavoring, if desired.

QUICK TOMATO GRAVY

- 1 can undiluted tomato soup OR
- 2 cans tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. onion powder OR
- 1 small onion, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Italian seasoning
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cumin
- 1 Tbsp. oil

Heat and serve over Savory Soybean Patties.

BLACK BEANS OVER RICE

- 1 lb. black beans
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 green peppers, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 lb. brown rice, cooked
- green onions, chopped
- 1 small carton plain yogurt

Cover beans with 6 cups boiling water and let sit one hour. Then cook over low heat (gently bubbling) one hour. Sauté onions, green peppers and garlic in oil. Combine with beans, add other seasonings and cook until beans are tender and liquid is thick. Serve over brown rice and top with a dollop of yogurt and sprinkling of green onions. Serves 10.

My favorite "from-scratch" main dishes begin with legumes. Legumes can be made into delicious patties, loaves and soups. They can be merely cooked and seasoned and served over rice or toast or eaten in a bowl.

Legumes comprise a group of foods that includes lentils, peas and beans in their many varieties. They are a hearty and versatile food and an inexpensive source of protein. When used with complementary foods such as whole wheat, they are comparable to meat in protein value. They are a good source of carbohydrates, B-complex vitamins and iron. And they are a fair source of calcium.

Soybeans are known as "the king of the plant kingdom" or as "the meat that grows on vines" because of their very high protein value—very nearly comparable to meat.

If you want to be sure that your legume main dish is adequate to replace the meat dish of the meal, just remember to serve legumes in any of the following combinations:

Legumes + whole grains = complete protein

Legumes + nuts = complete protein

Legumes + seeds = complete protein

Legumes + milk or eggs = complete protein

For example, beans served at a meal with whole-grain bread or beans served over brown rice or beans in corn tortillas yield this balance of complete protein. All of the eight essential amino acids are present in any of these combinations.

Dried legumes should be stored in tightly covered containers in a cool, dry place. They should be cooked in liquid to soften their cellulose fiber and to restore flavor and moisture. Soaking legumes overnight in cold water or for 1 to 2 hours in water that has been brought to boiling will shorten the cooking time.

If beans tend to be gas-forming to you, try preparing them according to a method devised by Dr. Joseph Rackis of the Northern Regional Research Laboratory in Peoria, Illinois. You can enjoy the wonderfully creative bean dishes without the discomfort of flatulence. The basic cause of flatulence from beans is the absence of enzymes in our systems to break down the

trisaccharides normally found in beans into simple sugar. The undigested trisaccharides provide a banquet in the lower intestine for the natural bacterial flora which produce carbon dioxide and hydrogen—flatulence.

Dr. Rackis has figured out a way to enjoy beans without the offending trisaccharides, which fortunately are water soluble. The trick is to discard the soaking water and the first cooking water and thus get rid of the trisaccharides. First, presoak the beans in water for at least three hours. Throw away the soaking water. Add boiling water to cover and cook for at least 30 minutes. Discard the cooking water. Add fresh water and resume cooking until tender. There is a slight loss of minerals, protein and some water-soluble vitamins when you use this method. In order to compensate for this loss, add two tablespoons of nutritional yeast at the end of the cooking period.

Here are three delicious legume recipes that balance out to give you excellent quality protein and the added advantage of ZERO cholesterol.

IN THE NEWS

"POT" WORSE THAN ALCOHOL

Prolonged use of marijuana may cause more physical harm than cigarettes or alcohol.

Marijuana can lead to emphysema and bronchitis, and cause damage to the brain, lungs, liver, reproductive system and chromosomes, according to two California researchers

In some cases, long-term users may not be able to understand "something as simple as a proverb like 'Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.'"

Unlike alcohol, which is flushed out of the body in a day, THC, the drug in marijuana, is trapped in the system for four to six weeks. Being "6000 times more soluble in fat than in water," once THC lodges itself in fatty tissue it remains there till it becomes water soluble and reenters the bloodstream, the scientists state. This leads to an accumulating effect among frequent pot smokers, so that "people who use marijuana even socially are stoned all the time although they are not aware of it," in the opinion of the researchers. According to the psychiatrist in the research team, "Marijuana ages you about twenty times as fast as alcohol."

PRIEST GIVES AWAY NEW TESTAMENTS

Roman Catholic priest Edward Nadolny has given away 150,000 New Testaments in Hartford, Connecticut, in the first phase of a three-year evangelization project. "The first step in evangelization was to bring the good news of Christ to as many people as possible by offering free Bibles to anyone who didn't have a personal copy and wanted one," Father Nadolny said. The Scriptures were provided by the American Bible Society at considerably less than cost.

NO FREE SCHOOLBOOKS

The Scarborough (Maine) Town Council has voted not to purchase and loan textbooks to local children who attend private schools. It was estimated that the cost involved would have been \$60 a student for 58 students. The school superintendent pointed out at a public hearing that the town does not save money when local children attend private schools. On the contrary, the town loses state subsidy funds because the enrollment drops.

I.R.S. SWAMPED WITH PROTESTS

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service has been deluged with more than 115,000 letters protesting its proposal to deny private schools their tax-exempt status unless they enroll a percentage of minority students equal to 20 percent of the percentage of minority school-age population in their community.

The letters have led to packed-room public hearings and a promise by the I.R.S. to "review" the proposed regulation.

GOD? NO. UFOs? YES

Nearly 75 per-cent of Britain's teenagers own a Bible, but more young people believe in unidentified flying objects and life on other planets than "definitely believe" in God, according to a survey published in London.

NO MORE FIRE PRAYERS

The Los Angeles Fire Commission has decided it will no longer open its meetings with formal prayers led by department chaplains. Commissioners voted unanimously to substitute a minute of individual silent prayer after chaplains objected to a request to offer prayers that are "spiritual, non-denominational and nonsecular messages."

News items not otherwise credited are from Religious News Service.

JERUSALEM TO REMAIN ISRAEL'S CAPITAL

Professor Yehuda S. Blum, Israel's representative to the United Nations, said in a December speech that there is no disagreement between the government and the opposition that Jerusalem, undivided, is the capital of Israel.

"It is an issue over which there is no disagreement between government and opposition and on which there is virtual unanimity of opinion among the Israeli populace: It is that the united city of Jerusalem is and shall remain the eternal capital of Jerusalem. Whether others recognize it as such or not, Jerusalem is the heart and soul of the Jewish people and has been so for close to 3000 years."

SPAIN SEPARATES CHURCH AND STATE

Besides establishing a parliamentary democracy under King Juan Carlos, Spain's new constitution separates church from state. It guarantees basic human rights and political, religious and social freedom.

Abrogating, in effect, a declaration in the 1953 concordat between the Vatican and the Franco regime that Catholicism was the state religion, the new charter declares that no religion in Spain has "state character." It says, however, that the government will "keep in mind the religious beliefs of Spanish society and will maintain the resulting cooperative relationships with the Catholic Church and other faiths."

LIQUOR IN KANSAS

The Kansas Legislature has enacted a law permitting counties to vote whether or not to allow liquor by the drink within the county. The Methodist church has resolved to "defeat liquor in restaurants in every county where it is on the ballot."

HE'S ON OUR SIDE!

The Bible tells us that Jesus is our Friend and Helper.

T. R. Torkelson

Two Scottish schoolboys out for a hike one morning came to a cliff overlooking the sea.

As they stood admiring the scenery and listening to the breakers below, they heard in the distance the blast of a hunter's horn, the baying of hounds and the beat of horses' hooves. A hunting party on the trail of game, they thought. And they were right. Soon a deer rushed out of the underbrush panting with fear, obviously the object of the chase.

The boys watched the terrified animal pause at the edge of the cliff as if debating what to do, whether to jump for his life into the sea below, or what? How they wished they could help him!

Then in a split-second decision the deer turned sharply to one side and sped away along the edge of the cliff, quickly disappearing from sight.

The boys knew that the hunters would soon arrive in hot pursuit.

"What shall we say if they ask us which way the deer went?" the younger boy said.

"Oh, we'll just say we don't know," replied the older one.

"But that would be lying," the younger objected. "We don't want to do that."

Then just as the hunters arrived on the scene, an idea that solved the dilemma struck the older boy. When the hunters asked the boys if they had seen the deer and which way it had gone, he said, "It's not fair to ask us; we're on his side."

A simple story, but how profoundly suggestive of Christ's care for His people here on earth! And how reassuring also. He's on our side. The Bible says so, in just those words. Read Psalm 118:6, N.E.B.: "The Lord is on my side, I have no fear; what can man do to me?" The same thought is re-

peated in the next verse, and the psalm goes on to speak of our finding refuge in Him.

What a comforting concept, and so descriptive of all that Jesus wants to do for us. It speaks so eloquently of His love for us and His constant concern. And of His willingness to stand up for us against the mighty forces of evil.

Who knows better than He the conflict we're involved in, and the foes bent on our destruction? He lived here as a man for 33 years. He was tempted and tried in every way we are. And having "suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted." Hebrews 2:18, R.S.V.

What wonderful words: "He is able." For God nothing is impossible. See Luke 1:37. He "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Jude 24.

"He is able," says Paul the apostle, "to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Timothy 1:12.

"He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25.

He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Ephesians 3:20.

And joy of all joys, this mighty Helper is on our side!

Note how Jesus took the side of the helpless and distressed when He lived here on earth. He could not stand aside for a moment and see someone mistreated or exploited.

See how He rose to the occasion when scheming men would have stoned a woman caught in adultery. He took her side against them. "Neither do I condemn thee," He said to her.

"Go, and sin no more." John 8:11.

Then there was the youth excommunicated from the synagogue because he defended Christ when He had healed his blindness. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out" and went and "found him." John 9:35. He took pains to give him moral support, standing with him when he stood alone. Even his parents had deserted him, the record says.

Jesus seemed especially indignant at wrong done to children. When the disciples at one time rebuked a group of mothers for bringing their little ones to be blessed by Jesus, Jesus "was much displeased." See Mark 10:13, 14. He went at once to the defense of the mothers and the children against His own disciples. "Let the children come to me," He ordered, "and do not stop them." Mark 10:14, T.E.V.

Jesus "was moved with compassion," the record often says as He saw someone weeping or hurt or in need. See Matthew 9:36; Mark 9:22; and Luke 7:13. He had to do something, whatever the particular situation called for to bring help. As an Old Testament prophecy had said about Him, He came "to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Luke 4:18, R.S.V. (See Isaiah 61:1, 2.)

He came to take sides with us, the children of men, when the odds of life were against us. Appalled when He saw no one to help, "He said, Surely they are my people, . . . and he became their Savior. . . . In his love and in his pity he redeemed them." Isaiah 63:8, 9, R.S.V.

That's the way Jesus has always related to the human situation—always entering into the fray on our side.

And it's the same now. Jesus is al-

ways the same—"yesterday and today and for ever." Hebrews 13:8, R.S.V.

He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Hebrews 13:5, 6.

What a champion is Jesus to have on our side!

Even when the odds seem totally against us we can take courage. A mountain lion in the "Bear Country" tourist attraction south of Rapid City, South Dakota, jumped through the window of a motorhome one summer day not long ago and attacked a little boy. What could poor Grandma do, alone in the back with the child? She could pray, and she did. And she could use a knife, and she did. God gave her strength and the skill to pierce that lion's heart. She saved the boy and herself.

Almost unbelievable? Yes, but the unbelievable happens with God on our side. Miracles take place. God has His own ways of accomplishing the impossible. "The captive shall be taken even from the strong," He assures us,

"and the prey of the ruthless shall be rescued." Isaiah 49:25, N.E.B.

Sometimes all Jesus can do at the moment is to give us moral support, as He did for that excommunicated youth back there in old Jerusalem. For reasons known best to Him, He has to postpone final intervention and recompense till His coming. He asks His oppressed children to be patient till then, even when they must "endure the pain of undeserved suffering." 1 Peter 2:18-20, N.E.B. See also James 5:1-8. God, the righteous Judge, is on their side and will take care of everything in His own time and way. In the meantime He gives strength and fortitude to endure.

Even through "the valley of the shadow of death" He promises to accompany us. See Psalm 23:4. He's on our side. "When you pass through the waters I will be with you," He says; "and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you." Isaiah 43:2, R.S.V.

God's love for us is an "everlasting

love." Jeremiah 31:3. Nothing can ever separate us from it. The child of God has security here surpassing anything that the moguls of Wall Street can guarantee, or that the ordinary psychiatrist can infuse a sense of. It's the security of knowing we have a mighty Helper on our side. And "if God is for us, who can be against us?" Paul asks in Romans 8:31, T.E.V.

Can "trouble . . . or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death" deprive us of this security? See Romans 8:35, T.E.V.

Never! replies the apostle Paul in what may be the grandest tribute in Sacred Writ to the might and intercessory power of Christ. "I am persuaded," he declares, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38, 39.

What a God! What a Saviour! He's on our side! What about making sure that we're on His? ◇

D. TANK



Miracle by a Pool

The patient had been ill 38 years and had about given up all hope, when Jesus came and healed him.

James Joiner

Towering over the suburban Maryland landscape and visible for miles around is the 16-story Bethesda Naval Hospital. One of the important points of interest in the Washington, D.C., area, it is a fitting place for U.S. presidents to recuperate from illness.

With Jimmy Carter, an Annapolis graduate, now in the White House, all five of the American presidents since Eisenhower have been "Navy men." John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford and now Jimmy Carter, whatever their differences in politics and personality, all served as officers in the United States Navy. For presidents with a Navy background, Bethesda is the usual hospital of choice whenever any of them needs hospitalization.

However, my title doesn't really refer to the Sabbath afternoon when I visited friends at the Bethesda that is a suburb of our nation's capital. Rather, I hoped that the title would carry our thoughts back to the time when One greater than any president visited Bethesda in another national capital, Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus was there, and the day was the Sabbath.

The apostle John records the story and its sequel in chapter 5 of his Gospel. I hope you will read it for yourself.

John began his account very simply: "Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent [sick] folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water."

Have you thought of the pitiful picture the Saviour saw on that Sabbath at Bethesda? As He walked alone, apparently in meditation and prayer, His divine-human heart was deeply moved by the sorrow before Him. Hundreds of suffering people were anxiously

watching for what, they thought, was their only hope of healing. For it was commonly believed that supernatural power caused the waters of this pool to be agitated at times, and the wretched sufferers rushed forward when they saw the surface rippling, supposing that the first one into the water would be cured.

Surely it pained the heart of Jesus that these people were so ignorant of the character of God. As they rushed to get into the water first, the weaker men, the women and the children were often trampled underfoot. Many died on the brink.

What was our Lord's desire in this pathetic situation? He must have longed to heal every sufferer there. However, since it was the Sabbath, Jesus knew that such an outpouring of His healing mercies would so greatly excite the bitter prejudices of His opponents that His work would be greatly hindered. But, as we see in John's account, the Saviour focused His attention on one case of supreme wretchedness. "A certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years."

This poor man, like the leaders of his day, regarded illness as a judgment from God. Even the disciples were not yet removed from this cloud, for some time later they asked Jesus concerning a man who had been born blind, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" John 9:2. In reply, the Lord made it clear that illness is not to be regarded as God's punishment for sin.

However, it is true that God usually allows the natural law of cause and effect to take its course. If we disregard wise principles of health, it is likely that we will reap the result in disease and suffering. This poor man at the pool of Bethesda was reaping the

natural results of his own actions. Knowledge of this fact no doubt added to his discouragement, for he surely felt himself shut out from the mercy of God.

Unable to contend with the selfish, scrambling crowd, he would sometimes lift his head sufficiently to gaze at the pool that held his tiny, fading hope. It was here, on the pavement beside the pool, that Jesus intervened in his life. That tender, compassionate face bent over him, and Jesus asked comfortingly, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

Then Jesus said to the sick man simply, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

The result was thrilling. "Immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."

The rulers were hardened in their hatred of Jesus. When, minutes later, they saw the healed man walking toward the temple carrying his blanket, they accused Jesus of Sabbath breaking. They had become so blinded in their narrow-minded selfishness and in their excessive zeal for the Sabbath that they failed to recognize the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus was fulfilling His mission, revealing the love of God in its exhaustless fullness. He showed that God was not an avenging Judge but a tender Father.

There was always a wise purpose for Christ's actions. In choosing the most pitiful case at the pool of Bethesda on which to exercise His healing power, and choosing the Sabbath day, He was showing the higher purposes of the Sabbath.

The rulers were incensed against Jesus when, answering their accusations, He made the simple declaration that both He and the Father in heaven did the same work of love to bring blessing to all Their creation. John 5:17 records: "My Father worketh hitherto,



and I work." The very next words tell us, "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him." They accused Jesus of blasphemy because they understood the true meaning of what He had said, "making himself equal with God."

Jesus, indeed, did indicate His equality with God in doing a work equally sacred. Jesus' work was of the same character as the work of the heavenly Father—it was the everlasting work of bringing blessing to everyone. The Creator has not forgotten His creatures, no matter how hopeless the situation may seem.

As Jesus went on, He showed that He Himself shared with the Father the power to raise the dead. "Even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Some day soon He will call forth from the grave all who have accepted His offer of mercy. And the same Jesus who gave everything to save us will be the court of last resort, the Judge of all the earth. "The Father judgeth no man," Jesus said, "but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

The human authorities sought to condemn the Lord of the Sabbath for healing the poor man at the pool of Bethesda. But they found His words unanswerable.

You probably do not live in Bethesda, Maryland, or even within a few miles as I do. But every one of us, in a sense, lies at the pool of Bethesda. We are helpless in our life situations. Nothing can save us from our fate—we have no hope for deliverance—except for the Saviour who found the sick man and inquired so tenderly, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

In Jerusalem the sick man's time was about to run out. After 38 years of illness, how much longer could he expect to go on? In our day as well, our time is about to run out. After almost 6000 years of bondage to sin, the signs of the times indicate that Jesus will soon intervene again in human history. If the man at the pool had rejected the Saviour's offer, what hope would have been left? If we hear His sweet voice today and reject His offer, what hope will we have left?

"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:2. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." John 5:24. ◊

Bible Bulletins

Richard H. Utt

The Most Wonderful Life

We cannot walk the dusty roads of Judea with Jesus and His disciples, personally taking note of His every action and word. But, in all the ways that matter most, we can still closely follow the example of that most perfect life ever lived.

THE COMMON TOUCH

1. Jesus lived here on earth not as a member of a superior order of beings but as a Man among men. "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Hebrews 2:16.

2. He was born not into a family of wealth and privilege but into a small-town family familiar with poverty and hard work. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" Mark 6:3.

3. He freely associated with all sorts and conditions of people—the high and the low. "He went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat." Luke 7:36. "As Jesus sat at meat in his [Levi's] house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples." Mark 2:15.

4. To Jesus everyone was important—including the little children. "Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'" Matthew 19:14, T.E.V.

5. When He spoke, He revealed a gracious, friendly spirit. "All . . . wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Luke 4:22. As a result, "the common people heard him gladly." Mark 12:37.

A SERVANT OF ALL

6. Jesus came to this earth not to command or to dominate but to serve. "Christ Jesus . . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Philippians 2:5-7. "Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45.

7. He spent much of His time relieving pain and suffering. He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." Acts 10:38.

8. In one memorable act God's Son set an imperishable example of humility and service for others. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel." John 13:4, 5.

OUR GREAT EXAMPLE

9. Christ is our perfect Pattern. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." 1 Peter 2:21, 22.

10. He invites us to follow Him. "If any man serve me, let him follow me." John 12:26. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:23.

11. We should look to Him for help and guidance, and learn to love others as He did. "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." Hebrews 12:2. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Ephesians 5:2.



KEYSTONE

It is a hot day; the air is humid. A crowd of people move slowly along the dusty road.

Our attention is focused on a man at the front of the crowd. He appears to be the chief attraction. He is walking with His closest companions and several other individuals who appear to be persons of some importance. He is talking earnestly, and all in the group are straining to hear His words.

Our attention is diverted for a moment to the outskirts of the crowd. A slight, stooped figure is attempting to approach the Man at the front. Her garments are blood-stained and patched. We sense the ingredients of a human-interest story. We make our way to the woman's side. Mingling curiosity with sympathy, we ask, "What do you want?"

"O madam," she replies, "I want to be healed of this dreadful plague of bleeding."

Noting our interest, she continues, "I have been seeking help of physicians for 12 long years, and with all their efforts I have only grown worse. Now my money is gone."

Her gaze follows the direction in which the central Figure in the crowd

Healed by a Touch

Lucile Joy Small

is walking. "I have heard that some have been healed by touching His garments." Seeing a slight opening in the crowd, she leaves us and presses toward her Goal.

At last she is near Him! Trembling with excitement, she leans silently forward, reaches out an arm and touches the border of Jesus' robe. We see a look of sheerest joy and happiness flood her face. She stands erect and gazes at Jesus, worshiping Him. He pauses and looks around.

"Who touched Me?"

Someone close to Him answers, "Master, in this press, how can you ask such a question?" The speaker seems almost to be scoffing.

Jesus answers seriously, "Somebody has touched Me, for I perceive that virtue has gone out of Me." He looks full

into the face of the woman as He speaks.

She comes forward hesitatingly and confesses, "Master, I touched Your garment. It was my only hope; and see, Master, I am completely healed."

With a tender smile He replies, "Daughter, be of good comfort, your faith has made you whole." He moves on, leaving her healthy and happy.

Spellbound by the little drama we have watched, our minds turn to the words of Scripture, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Psalm 103:3.

As the scene fades from sight, we involuntarily exclaim, "Oh, that today we might see this power manifested again!"

God's power is as great today as when the Great Physician walked the dusty roads of Palestine. Let us draw close to Him by the study of His Written Word. Thus we may learn how to develop a faith similar to the great faith of the woman who was healed when she touched His garment.

(You can read about this experience in Matthew 9:20-22, in Mark 5:25-34 and in Luke 8:43-48. Read all three accounts to get the complete story.)◇

Ten Sleepy Girls

One of the most popular stories Jesus told was about the ten girls who went to sleep on their way to a wedding.

Christ with His disciples is seated upon the Mount of Olives. The sun has set behind the mountains, and the heavens are curtained with the shades of evening. In full view is a dwelling house lighted up brilliantly as if for some festive scene. The light streams from the openings, and an expectant company wait around, indicating that a marriage procession is soon to appear. In many parts of the East, wedding festivities are held in the evening. The bridegroom goes forth to meet his bride and bring her to his home. By torchlight the bridal party proceed from her father's house to his own, where a feast is provided for the invited guests. In the scene upon which Christ looks, a company are awaiting the appearance of the bridal party, intending to join the procession.

Lingering near the bride's house are ten young women robed in white. Each carries a lighted lamp and a small flagon for oil. All are anxiously watching for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay. Hour after hour passes; the watchers become weary and fall asleep. At midnight the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." The sleepers, suddenly awaking, spring to their feet. They see the procession moving on, bright with torches and glad with music. They hear the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. The ten maidens seize their lamps and begin to trim them, in haste to go forth. But five have neglected to fill their flasks with oil. They did not anticipate so long a delay, and they have not prepared for the emergency. In distress they appeal to their wiser companions saying, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out." (Margin.) But the waiting five, with their freshly trimmed lamps, have emptied their flagons. They have no oil to spare, and they answer, "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but

go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

While they went to buy, the procession moved on, and left them behind. The five with lighted lamps joined the throng and entered the house with the bridal train, and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins reached the banqueting hall, they received an unexpected denial. The master of the feast declared, "I know you not." They were left standing without, in the empty street, in the blackness of the night.

As Christ sat looking upon the party that waited for the bridegroom, He told His disciples the story of the ten virgins, by their experience illustrating the experience of the church that shall live just before His second coming.

Two Classes of Christians

The two classes of watchers represent the two classes who profess to be waiting for their Lord. They are called virgins because they profess a pure faith. By the lamps is represented the Word of God. The psalmist says, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105. The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

In the parable, all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ's second coming. All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ's near approach and confidently expect His appearing. But as in the parable, so it is now. A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him," many are unready. They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. They are destitute of the Holy Spirit.

Without the Spirit of God a knowledge of His Word is of no avail. The

theory of truth, unaccompanied by the Holy Spirit, cannot quicken the soul or sanctify the heart. One may be familiar with the commands and promises of the Bible; but unless the Spirit of God sets the truth home, the character will not be transformed. Without the enlightenment of the Spirit, men will not be able to distinguish truth from error, and they will fall under the masterful temptations of Satan.

Character Is Not Transferable

This is the class that in time of peril are found crying, Peace and safety. See 1 Thessalonians 5:3 They lull their hearts into security and dream not of danger. When startled from their lethargy, they discern their destitution and entreat others to supply their lack; but in spiritual things no man can make up another's deficiency. The grace of God has been freely offered to every soul. The message of the gospel has been heralded, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. But character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit's working. "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it [the land], as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness." Ezekiel 14:20.

It is in a crisis that character is revealed. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him," and the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers, it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. So now, a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something



JOAN WALTER

that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul's need to be supplied.

The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth's history. All claim to be Christians. All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God's service. All apparently wait for Christ's appearing. But five are unready. Five will be found surprised, dismayed, outside the banquet hall.

Saddest of all words that ever fell on mortal ear are those words of doom, "I know you not." The fellowship of the Spirit, which you have slighted, could alone make you one with the joyous throng at the marriage feast. In that scene you cannot participate. Its light would fall on blinded eyes, its melody upon deaf ears. Its love and joy could awake no chord of gladness in the world-benumbed heart. You are shut out from heaven by your own unfitness for its companionship.

We cannot be ready to meet the Lord

by waking when the cry is heard, "Behold, the bridegroom!" and then gathering up our empty lamps to have them replenished. We cannot keep Christ apart from our lives here and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven.

Light in Darkness

In the parable the wise virgins had oil in their vessels with their lamps. Their light burned with undimmed flame through the night of watching.

So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, God's Word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His Word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God, to lighten the path to the Bridegroom's home, to the City of God, to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The coming of the bridegroom was at midnight—the darkest hour. So the coming of Christ will take place in the

darkest period of this earth's history. The days of Noah and Lot pictured the condition of the world just before the coming of the Son of man. The Scriptures pointing forward to this time declare that Satan will work with all power and "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2: 9, 10. His working is plainly revealed by the rapidly increasing darkness, the multitudinous errors, heresies and delusions of these last days. Not only is Satan leading the world captive, but his deceptions are leavening the professed churches of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great apostasy will develop into darkness deep as midnight, impenetrable as sackcloth of hair. To God's people it will be a night of trial, a night of weeping, a night of persecution for the truth's sake. But out of that night of darkness God's light will shine.

Effective Witnessing

Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do more than this.

The lesson of Jesus' story was that we need the Holy Spirit to help us to be ready when He returns.

The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed.

There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the Word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead and a Physician there.

But no man can impart that which he himself has not received. In the work of God, humanity can originate nothing. No man can by his own effort make himself a light bearer for God. It is the love of God continually transferred to man that enables him to impart light. Into the hearts of all who are united to God by faith the golden oil of love flows freely, to shine out again in good works, in real, heartfelt service for God.

In the great and measureless gift of the Holy Spirit are contained all of heaven's resources. It is not because of any restriction on the part of God that the riches of His grace do not flow earthward to men. If all were willing to receive, all would become filled with His Spirit.

Evidences of the Spirit

It is the privilege of every soul to be a living channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that Christ desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for channels through which can be poured the holy oil to be a joy and blessing to human hearts.

The indwelling of the Spirit will be

shown by the outflowing of heavenly love. The divine fullness will flow through the consecrated human agent, to be given forth to others.

The Sun of Righteousness has "healing in his wings." Malachi 4:2. So from every true disciple is to be diffused an influence for life, courage, helpfulness and true healing.

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, *Let your light shine.* If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence.

The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. And in currents of praise and thanksgiving from the many souls thus won to God, glory will flow back to the great Giver.

The Bridegroom Comes!

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Isaiah 60:1. To those who go out to meet the Bridegroom is this message

given. Christ is coming with power and great glory. He is coming with His own glory and with the glory of the Father. He is coming with all the holy angels with Him. While all the world is plunged in darkness, there will be light in every dwelling of the saints. They will catch the first light of His second appearing. The unsullied light will shine from His splendor, and Christ the Redeemer will be admired by all who have served Him. While the wicked flee from His presence, Christ's followers will rejoice. The patriarch Job, looking down to the time of Christ's second advent, said, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger." Job 19:27, margin. To His faithful followers Christ has been a daily companion and familiar friend. They have lived in close contact, in constant communion with God. Upon them the glory of the Lord has risen. In them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ has been reflected. Now they rejoice in the undimmed rays of the brightness and glory of the King in His majesty. They are prepared for the communion of heaven, for they have heaven in their hearts.

With uplifted heads, with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them, with rejoicing that their redemption draweth nigh, they go forth to meet the Bridegroom, saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." Isaiah 25:9.

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. . . . And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." "He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Revelation 19:6-9; 17:14. ◇



MANISCALCO

Patrick

The Irish Apostle

We have always thought of Patrick as a Catholic. Recent research suggests the astonishing conclusion that he may have been, instead, an Adventist!

Warren C. Trenchard

Among the world's most widely celebrated national heroes, St. Patrick of Ireland must be rated near the top. Yet his life is hidden in obscurity. He is as universally associated with Ireland as are the shamrock and the shillelagh, but practically nothing is known about the essential details of his life. Scholars hold a wide range of opinions about him.

Some have romanticized his career and colored his teachings far beyond the evidence of the facts, while others have denied his very existence. The truth must lie somewhere between these extremes. Let us consider what we do know about Patrick from writings that are generally accepted as his own, and from other apparently authentic material.¹

Patrick was born about A.D. 388² somewhere in Britain.³ No one knows where exactly—except that it was not in Ireland! Probably England or Wales. According to Patrick, his father was a provincial landholder, suggesting a comfortable, though not wealthy, background. Furthermore, his father was a deacon and his grandfather a priest, though Patrick himself was evidently not a practicing Christian while a youth at home. He characterized himself during this time as being “ignorant of God.”⁴

When he was 16 years old, Patrick was captured by a band of raiders and, with others, carried off to Ireland. There, as a slave, he tended sheep for six years. Apparently his early Christian training, unproductive at first, became the foundation for his zealous quest for salvation during this difficult period. He later recalled the experience in these words, “More and more

the love and fear of God burned, and my faith and my spirit were strengthened.”

Patrick had many dreams that affected his life. While still a slave he dreamed that he should attempt to escape from his Irish master. He acted accordingly and found a ship captain who took him to France. After several years of unknown activities, he returned to his family in Britain. There he had his most important dream. He saw a man from Ireland named Victorius who gave him some letters. As he read one entitled “The Voice of Ireland” he heard voices crying, “We beseech thee, holy youth, to come and walk with us once more.”⁵ To this experience Patrick attributed the origin of his mission to Ireland.

The Apostle to Ireland

We have little certain information concerning the details of Patrick's Irish mission. It commenced about 415. He described his work to win village chieftans to Christ and through them to influence their people. Evidently he was consecrated as a bishop by his home clerics. In Ireland he established churches and appointed bishops to oversee them. Despite some exaggerated accounts, his work, while successful, did not achieve spectacular proportions.

Patrick was not the first Christian in Ireland. He appears to have found some Christian priests already there when he arrived. They pledged him their congregations. Before this time Pope Celestine (d. 432) had sent the bishop Palladius to Ireland. His mission had met with little success and ended after a year. Palladius reported

that he had found the Irish already believing in Christ but unwilling to support the Roman type of Christianity.

After a long ministry that influenced not only their religious but also their social and legal history, Patrick, the apostle to the Irish, died about 460.⁶ He was followed by a succession of Irish Christian leaders who, for several centuries, preserved his distinct type of Christianity.

Patrick has been called “the father of teaching and faith for Irishmen.” He himself recognized his responsibility to guide the formulation of Christian teaching. He declared, “According to the role of faith in the Trinity, I should define doctrine, and make known the gift of God and everlasting consolation, without being held back by danger, and spread everywhere the name of God without fear, confidently.”

Bible, Not the Fathers

Regarding his doctrine of authority, Patrick leaves no doubt. “The words are not mine, but of God and the apostles and prophets, who have never lied.” This was not just a theory, for his writings, though few and short, are soaked with the dew of biblical language. In abrupt contrast, he never quotes the teachings of the fathers, and he never mentions the canons of the church councils.

The Trinity

Patrick believed in a triune God. He taught that Christ “above existed with the Father” and was “begotten before the beginning of anything.” He saw Christ as man's mediator with God—a role he nowhere assigns to angel, saint,



PATRICIA JOY BEARG

or priest. In this silence he is followed by Irish Christians for three centuries after him. For Patrick, the Holy Spirit was divine, being given by Christ to the believers as a first installment of salvation. He believed that the Spirit dwelt in his heart and had changed his life. In Patrick's view, God was the origin of all things. His successors show clear evidence of their literal acceptance of the Genesis account of creation.

Patrick's view of man does not appear to include a radical dualism between an evil, temporal body and a good, eternal soul. We learn of his regard for the body of Secundus' Hymn where Patrick is said to have prepared his flesh "as a temple for the Holy Spirit; by whom, in pure activities, it is continually possessed; and he doth offer it to God as a living and acceptable sacrifice." But with typical Pauline realism, Patrick himself cautioned, "I do not trust myself as long as I am in the body of this death, because he is strong who daily endeavours to turn me away from the faith."⁷

The Resurrection

We see further evidence of Patrick's view of man when he speaks of the resurrection. "Most surely I deem that if this [death] should happen to me, I have gained my soul as well as my body, because without any doubt we shall rise on that day, in the clear shining of the sun, that is, in the glory of Christ Jesus our Redeemer, as sons of the living God, and joint heirs with Christ, and conformed to his image, that will be; since of him and through him and in him we shall reign." For Patrick this resurrection leads to eternal life where all who believe in Christ will live and reign with God forever.

God's Grace

Salvation, according to Patrick, was from beginning to end the result of God's grace. "Most surely I deem that from God I have received what I am." "I am only worth what he himself has given to me." In his emphasis on grace and faith, Patrick echoed the teachings of Paul and anticipated the doctrine of

the Reformers of the sixteenth century. He confessed, "The Lord opened the understanding of my unbelief that, even though late, I might call my faults to remembrance, and that I might turn with all my heart to the Lord my God." It is thus that God "makes those who believe and obey to become children of God the Father and joint heirs with Christ."

Prayer

Patrick believed in prayer. After he was converted as a young slave, he prayed dozens of times a day. To the end of his life, prayer was his constant strength. However, he saw no value in praying for the dead. He taught, "For he who did not in his life deserve to receive the sacrifice, how shall it be able to help him after death?"

Coming of Christ

Patrick also held definite ideas on the doctrine of last-day events. Regarding the second coming of Christ, he testified, "We look for his coming soon as the Judge of the quick and the

dead." He taught that at this judgment all must give an account of every sin, large or small. However, he did not dismiss this event to the remote future but expected it soon. The signs had been fulfilled.

He viewed his own mission to Ireland in the light of the final proclamation, "Behold, we are witnesses that the Gospel has been preached to the limit beyond which no man dwells."

Seventh-day Sabbath

In practice, as well as doctrine, Patrick represented a type of Christianity that was unique in his day. The church at Rome taught by this time that the sanctity of the Sabbath had been fully transferred from the seventh day of the week to the first day, Sunday. However, Patrick and the Irish Church continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. Even where the Irish conducted services on Sunday in honor of the resurrection of Jesus, they did not consider the day equal in sanctity to the seventh day. On Sunday a worshiper was taught that he could return to his work following the service. But on the seventh day Christians must do no work, for this was the Sabbath.

One of Patrick's early biographers reflects on Patrick's special relationship to the seventh day. "The angel was wont to come to him on every seventh day of the week, and, as one man talks with another, so Patrick enjoyed the angel's counsel and conversation." The same writer also mentions that the parents of a girl, who, against their wishes, wanted to remain unmarried, sought out Patrick "having taken advice given to them by God, heard of Patrick as a man who was visited by the everlasting God every seventh day."

Baptism by Immersion

The early Irish Church practiced baptism for immersion by adults who had received instruction in the faith. Patrick is said to have baptized many people in wells, where the water was deep enough to allow for total immersion. One anecdote relates how he conducted a baptism in a river. "Thereafter Patrick went in his chariot, so that every one might see him, and that they might hear from him his voice, and the preaching of God's word by

him. And then they believed in God and in Patrick. So Patrick repeats the order of baptism to them on the river, which was near them, and all the hosts are baptized therein." Other accounts show that he instructed adults before their baptism. There is no indication that he baptized infants.

Foot Washing and Lord's Supper

Irish sources indicate that foot washing was a regular practice of the church. Normally foot washing and Communion followed baptism. Foot washing also signified a gesture of hospitality and an act of penitence. One legend mentions a certain bishop who washed Patrick's feet, and even the feet of his horses, after wronging the saint. Irish Christians practiced foot washing on Maunday Thursday in preparation for Easter and seemed also to have regularly used it in connection with Communion.

Secundus calls Patrick one "who draws heavenly wine in heavenly cups, and gives drink to the people of God from a spiritual chalice." To the daughters of Loegaire, Patrick is said to have counseled, "Ye cannot see Christ unless ye first taste of death, and unless ye receive Christ's Body and his Blood." Together these suggest that Patrick conducted Communion services in which the worshipers received both bread and wine.

No Popes

Like Paul, Patrick had a high regard for the Christian ministry and seems to have based his order and regulations on the instructions of the great New Testament apostle. He appears to have placed a bishop or overseer at the head of each church he organized. This leader was simply the priest or pastor of the congregation with no particular authority beyond his parish. A catalog of Irish saints mentions 350 bishops at the time of Patrick, all founders of churches with one head, Christ, and one chief, Patrick. No one outside Ireland is identified as a higher authority.

Married Priests

Irish clerics did not follow the Roman practice of celibacy. Patrick openly and without embarrassment mentioned that his grandfather was a priest and his father a deacon. He him-

self may have been married. A later homily refers to Patrick's offspring by blood, by faith, by baptism and by doctrine. Several legends speak of his marriage but try to show that it was not consummated. Nevertheless, the idea that he was married persisted in the traditions and is probably genuine. Later Irish writers noted that a bishop should have no more than one wife. Bishops in Ireland continued to marry until the tenth century.

For Patrick and his fellow Irish ministers preaching was the principle vehicle for transmitting the gospel. The evidence suggests that their preaching was conducted in the language of the people and was characterized by clarity and simplicity with no dogmatic mold.

An Independent Church

We have seen that the early Celtic Church of Ireland, with Patrick as its main founder, was for several centuries independent of the universal church of Rome. In its doctrine and practices it remained quite close to the earliest Christianity described in the New Testament. Eventually it was absorbed into conformity with the Roman See, but only after a long and bloody struggle.

A veil of obscurity still conceals most of Patrick's life. Yet enough of his teachings and practices seeps through to permit a rather different picture of him from that assumed by his most devoted celebrants today. In this season when he is most remembered let us consider well who he really was and follow his example of biblical faith and practice. ◇

REFERENCES

1. My principal source of information on Patrick is Leslie Hardinge, *The Celtic Church*, Church Historical Society Series, No. 91 (London: S.P.C.K. for the Church Historical Society, 1972). Quotations from Patrick and other primary source material about him are cited from Hardinge, unless otherwise noted.
2. Dates suggested for his birth range from A.D. 370 to 390.
3. Patrick gives his birthplace as Bannaven of Tabernia—a place that can no longer be identified. Cited by Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), 4:48.
4. Cited by Schaff, *Ibid.*
5. Cited by Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1937-45), 1:218.
6. Dates suggested for his death range from 460 to 495.
7. Cf. Romans 7:24.

Is Tithe a Tax?

Or is paying tithe evidence we believe God is abundantly generous?

Jean Sheldon

Nancy, a young-adult Christian, looked at her father. "Dad," she asked, "why don't you go back to church?"

Mr. James replied, "I'll go back to church when they stop asking for money."

Nancy knows that if he insists on that condition, her father may not go back to church for a very long time.

Why does God ask His followers to return one tenth of their income to Him? See Malachi 3:7-10. Is He being too possessive and arbitrary? Is He a grasping tyrant who holds over us the threat of losing our "credit rating" in heaven if we don't pay?

A False Accusation

Away back at the beginning of the world, God's adversary, Satan, said to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "Isn't God very selfish, asking you not to eat of this tree? It certainly doesn't seem very generous of Him to withhold such lovely fruit from you, does it?" See Genesis 3:1-3.

Eve agreed, and so have most of her descendants. Worshiping the selfish person they believe God to be, people become even more selfish. Foreseeing this, God did something very sensible to help all mankind understand what giving and love are all about. He asked His people very early in the history of time to return one tenth of their income to Him. Through Moses He said to the Israelites camped at Mount Sinai, "All the tithe of the land . . . is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord." Leviticus 27:30, R.S.V. It was to be used to pay God's servants, the priests. See Numbers 18:24.

It was a sensible requirement, designed to remind God's chosen people that God is the Supreme Giver of the universe. But in the centuries since, Satan has done his best to make this requirement appear to be merely a tax.

In the truest sense, when we return that 10 percent, we show that we have rejected Satan's lies about God!

From the very beginning, long before sin entered the universe, God desired His beings to see His love and goodness and to understand that His government was one of freedom and fairness, so that their worship would be an intelligent response to His excellence. Back then the angels knew nothing about tithe. They didn't need to. Their joy was the same as God's joy, the joy of giving. They gave supremely to God and unselfishly to one another.

But when Satan began lying about God and convinced Adam and Eve that God was selfish, the angels began to question whether perhaps God really was selfish and demanding.

Because of this and because man needed another chance, God gave His all to prove His generosity. Paul exclaimed, "He did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all; and with this gift how can he fail to lavish upon us all he has to give?" Romans 8:32, N.E.B. God gave us Jesus. What more could He give?

The angels, looking on at all that God had given, agreed that God was right about Himself and Satan was wrong. See Revelation 5:11-14.

Yet here on earth many—like Nancy's father—still cling to the ancient misconceptions about God. No wonder they are confused about God's request that we return to Him one tenth of all our increase!

God's Reasons

Why does God ask for the tithe when He knows how hard money is to get?

Certainly God doesn't need our money. He owns everything. "If I were hungry, I would not tell you," He says, "for the world and everything in it is mine." Psalm 50:12, T.E.V.

Perhaps, then, we could say that God has asked us to return tithe simply to acknowledge His supremacy and ownership. But is that enough? Are we, as managers of His treasury on earth, mere robots to satisfy His demands?

God has always based His sovereignty on the fact that there is enough evidence to prove His trustworthiness. In the ultimate sense, God is God because He is love, a fact which He has proved through painful effort. Even if a being were omnipresent, all-powerful and supremely intelligent, if he were not at the same time supremely loving and gracious, he would not be worthy of the title God. God's sovereignty is to be acknowledged intelligently because we know God to be worthy of our love and worship.

By intelligently returning one tenth of all that God has given us, we acknowledge that God has always been the rightful Possessor and Giver of everything good in the universe.

More than that, by returning tithe we acknowledge that God has proved Himself to be the rightful Redeemer of all that we are, through Jesus' revelation that His Father was indeed generous, fair and loving.

Returning tithe is not making a weekly payment for our salvation. It is our natural response to God's graciousness in not only giving us everything we own, but then giving everything He owned to win us back.

If God really were a demanding, stingy tyrant, He would require 90 percent of our income instead of only 10 percent. If anything, the smallness of the 10 percent requirement shows His overflowing willingness to give in contrast to our limited ability to give.

Malachi 3:10 says that God asks us to give to Him so that He can pour out more than He gave us the first time!



Those who hoard what they have often do not wish anything from God and thus limit the One who has shown Himself to be so generous to all who call upon Him.

Giving and Robbing

It is possible to put the proper amount into the offering plate each week and still rob God.

Sometimes the people of Malachi's day did do their duty in offering to the Lord what He asked, but in their hearts they rebelled. They gave the tithe wearily, and their offerings poorly represented God's true character. See Malachi 1:13, 14. They robbed God not only by withholding the tithes and offerings He deserved (see Malachi 3:8), but by speaking against Him (see Malachi 3:13-15).

Later, in Christ's time, the people were very careful to tithe even the smallest items they received. But they so misrepresented God by their legalistic attitudes that their giving was mere mockery. See Luke 11:42.

If in our giving to God, we give as a mere duty without meaning all that our giving is intended to mean, then we reveal that we think of the God we worship as legalistic and arbitrary. If we give grudgingly and reluctantly, then somehow we must feel that He gives to us grudgingly and reluctantly.

But if we have responded to the good news that God is the supremely giving God, we will give Him our very best gladly and willingly.

Giving and Receiving

To those who give, God has promised that "good measure" will be given back, "pressed down, shaken together, running over. . . . For the measure you give will be the measure you get back." Luke 6:38, R.S.V.

Paul wrote that those who give spontaneously, without reluctance, will receive abundantly. "The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work." 2 Corinthians 9:6, R.S.V.

Those who return tithe acknowledge their trust in God as the sovereign Giver. They are not constantly worrying about finances. They gladly acknowledge Jesus' truth that if one seeks only to make God look His best in everything, all that is necessary will be added to him. See Matthew 6:33.

Sons or Slaves

Rather than being an act of slavery, as some are tempted to feel, returning tithe is really an act of sonship.

In the parable of the prodigal son, the older brother became upset with his father for celebrating the runaway boy's return. "He retorted, 'You know how I have slaved for you all these years; I never once disobeyed your orders; and you never gave me so much as a kid, for a feast with my friends.' . . . 'My boy,' said the father, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.'" Luke 15:29-31. N.E.B.

Obviously the older brother served his father—as a slave. But he had put himself in this position. His father had not put him there.

If we enter with God into a relationship of love and trust and if we acknowledge this relationship by returning tithe, God can then say to us, "Everything I have is yours." As His sons and daughters we will be partners with Him in His business. Is there any way God could treat us with greater dignity and respect than that?

When we know God as He really is, the unselfish One who gave all for us, our giving to Him will be our greatest privilege and our honest declaration that God deserves our all.

And God will continue to outgive us! ◇

How Old Is Old?

Various dating methods seem to support the evolution idea that life began on earth hundreds of millions of years ago. Dr. Clark gives these methods a closer look and shows they are not as reliable as you may have been told.

Harold W. Clark

Again and again the statement has been made in the *Signs of the Times* that conservative creationists do not accept the popular idea that life began on this planet hundreds of millions of years ago. Creationists believe that God created life here only about 6000 years ago. I am quite sure that readers will say: Why? Give us your reasons for these statements. I agree. It is only fair to explain why we do not accept the conclusions so many others approve.

Thin Layers of Sediments

When studies began on geology in the eighteenth century, various estimates were made as to the age of the earth. Sediments found in the earth were taken to be anywhere from 20 to 100 million years old. More recently, studies on the Green River shales in Wyoming place their age at around 6 million years. Beds over 1000 feet thick contain thousands of thin layers called laminae, about 1/2000 of a foot thick. The layers alternate between those having little carbon—supposedly laid down in winter—and those with high carbon content, supposedly laid down in summer. In this interpretation, two layers equal one year, 2000 layers (one foot of sediment) equal 1000 years. But there is a real problem in these beds—for evolutionists. They contain millions of fish. It takes several layers to cover a fish, even a small one. How could these fish have escaped disintegration long enough for these very thin layers of sediment to be laid over them?

Growth Rings on Trees

Another case that has been widely publicized is that of the bristlecone pine forest in the White Mountains of

California and Nevada. Here at 10,000 to 11,000 feet are several groves of apparently very ancient trees. They are gnarled and twisted into grotesque shapes. Many have little bark left on them. Tree-ring counts first taken placed their age at about 4600 years, but later borings gave estimates of 8000 years. Creationists are not much concerned about the smaller figure, but an age of 8000 years does not fit biblical chronology.

The problem of age dating by tree rings has been given considerable attention within the past few years. Dr. Harold S. Gladwin, of the Santa Barbara (California) Botanical Garden, declares that all trees are not of equal value in tree-ring dating. Deciduous trees are of little value, as the rings are hard to decipher. Among the conifers, the junipers are misleading because many of them are partly dead, and the living often grow multiple rings in the same year. Among the pines, the bristlecone pine is even more undependable. Sometimes only a few inches of the circumference of a trunk will have any live wood. A core taken may not give correct figures as to age, due to these irregularities.¹

Not only is the ring count undependable on any one tree, but trees from different areas differ. Cores from the White Mountains of California and Nevada, from southwest Utah, and from the San Francisco Peaks of Flagstaff, Arizona, show no similarity whatsoever when charted.

Commenting on this problem, H. C. Sorensen states that 30 percent of the bristlecone pines have extra rings, and 10 percent have missing rings.² The rings are extremely thin, so that dating has depended on the judgment of highly trained investigators who were

yet only human, and therefore fallible. He complains that all the work so far has been done in one laboratory, whose director has refused to allow a critical study of the raw data.

One more problem lies in the fact that when the wood was tested by the carbon-14 method, there was a discrepancy of some 200 years in the age dating.

Carbon-14 Dating

This brings us to radiocarbon dating. The carbon-14 method, or radiocarbon method, is another age-dating procedure that offers some good data regarding the past, while at the same time posing some difficult problems. It was developed by Dr. W. F. Libby while working at the Institute of Nuclear Studies at the University of Chicago between 1945 and 1959. The essential data regarding this method are as follows:

Nitrogen has an atomic weight of 14; carbon has an atomic weight of 12. Powerful energy units known as cosmic rays enter our atmosphere from outer space and collide with some nitrogen atoms, changing them to carbon. But the atomic weight is not changed, so the new atoms of carbon have the weight of 14, the same as nitrogen. They are radioactive now and disintegrate. According to this theory, a certain ratio between ordinary carbon-12 atoms and the radioactive carbon-14 atoms is maintained in the atmosphere at all times.

When a living organism takes in carbon by breathing or eating, it takes in both kinds, carbon-12 and carbon-14. As long as it lives, the proper ratio between carbon-12 and carbon-14 is maintained within the tissues as well as in the atmosphere. As soon as the

A muscle on a musk-ox dated at 24,000 years. A hair from the same ox dated 7200 years. Did the ox really live that long?

organism dies, the exchange with the atmosphere ceases, but the carbon-14 within the dead body keeps on disintegrating. A laboratory test to determine the proportion existing between carbon-12 and carbon-14 will, theoretically, tell how long since the organism died.

Some investigators challenge the theory that the balance between the two types of carbon is in equilibrium. David J. Tyler states that there are several evidences that such a theory is far from true. He gives considerable attention to this problem.³ This would have an effect on the supposed age of any specimen, introducing serious errors into the computations that many people have regarded as highly reliable.

It should be pointed out in this connection that many students of the problem have noted that it can be depended upon for only about 3000 years or so, beyond which results become so erratic that they are extremely difficult to interpret.

Dr. Robert H. Brown, director of the Geoscience Research Institute, has made special studies on radiometry. From his work we take a few examples to show that the method is not always dependable.⁴

The Beresovka mammoth that was found in the Lena delta of Siberia has been carbon-14 dated at 26,000 years, while peat only 18 inches above gave a date of 5610 years. Normal growth of peat layers would require not more than 2000 years, instead of the 21,000 years difference in these two measurements. Muscle tissue from the scalp of a musk-ox showed an age of 24,000, while hair from the hind limb of the same musk-ox gave only 7200 years.

Ivory from a mammoth skeleton at Rawlins, Wyoming, indicated an age of 11,500 years, while wood in the same gravel dated 5000. Other instances are given, but these are enough to show the inconsistencies in carbon-14 dating that make it questionable.

The Flood Theory

It is not enough to challenge a popular theory; evidence should be given that will support any other proposed view. Creationists have been faced with the problem of finding an explanation for these irregularities in terms of the Flood theory of geology. One of the criteria by which a theory can be evaluated is whether it will fit into the viewpoint proposed. We have seen that radiocarbon dating has many discrepancies when we try to fit it to long-ages geology. Now let us see if it can be fitted into the short chronology—Creation and the Flood only a few thousand years ago.

Long-ages geology places the burial of the coal beds millions of years ago, but Flood geology accounts for it only about 4000 years ago. Coal has little or no carbon-14 in it. Geologists say that this is because the carbon-14 has all disintegrated. But if coal vegetation was buried only recently, it would show carbon-14 if there was any in the pre-Flood atmosphere. The implication for the believer in the Flood geology is that the pre-Flood atmosphere was very low in carbon-14 or may have lacked it altogether.

Now if we apply this concept to some examples of dated materials, we find an interesting corollary. Tests on charcoal and bones found in caves in Morocco, along the shores of the Mediterranean or on the Atlantic coast, and in caves on the south shore of the Caspian Sea give dates of 30,000 to 40,000 years. On the Flood theory these caves must have been inhabited soon after the Flood. Materials found in caves and other prehistoric pits give dates of 20,000 to 50,000 years.

The whole matter falls into line with the concept of a low carbon-14 content of the atmosphere before the Flood. Immediately after the Flood the concentration would begin to build up until it reached equilibrium—that is, until carbon-14 was being formed as fast as it was being destroyed. Materials burned in early caves, or early

burials within caves, would all show very low concentration of carbon-14. The dates of 30,000 years would be only apparent, not real. When an approximate equilibrium was reached, the dates would become more dependable.

This situation has led many to say that the carbon-14 figures do not represent actual years, but what they call "radiocarbon years." These are relative ages and must be calibrated to correspond with the real ages.

But what about claims of finding specimens of prehistoric man dating three or four million years ago? How can such dates be obtained?

In the first place, it should be clear that these figures are not obtained from the specimens but from the ground in which they are found. Even if the carbon-14 method were correct, it could not go back more than 50,000 years at its present state of refinement. Some other method is used to date the rocks.

In 1896 the French physicist Henry Becquerel discovered that certain rocks give off radiation by which their composition and weight are modified. This principle has been refined and applied to age dating. The most common minerals used in this method are uranium and potassium. Since uranium is the easiest to understand, we shall use it as an example.

Uranium-238—that is, uranium with an atomic weight of 238—disintegrates on the way to becoming lead-206. This process is so slow that four and a half billion years are required to reduce half the uranium-238 to lead. A specimen of rock is tested and the ratio of uranium and lead determined. Assuming that all the lead-206 in it has come by the decay of the original uranium—for lead is volatile and would have been destroyed in the molten material when it first was produced—the age of the rock can, theoretically, be determined.

For this test to be valid, several assumptions must be made: (1) that there



PAUL B. RICCHIUTI

was no lead-206 in the rock to begin with, or, if there was, that amount must be known, (2) the rate of decay must always have been uniform, and (3) there must have been no gain or loss of uranium or its decay products during the time it was disintegrating. None of these assumptions can be checked experimentally.

Dating by this method is subject to many discrepancies. The same is true of potassium-argon dating as a few examples will illustrate.

A British consulting engineer, S. P. Clementson, found through research on ten samples of volcanic rock that all were "very young" and gave "ages" all the way from 100 million to 10.5 billion years. He says: "These ages have no relationship to the age of the earth, because, of course, the various ages vary so widely. Consequently ratios of parent and daughter elements are merely ratios, and their use in projecting 'ages' of rocks, or of the earth itself, is highly questionable, and fraught with many assumptions that cannot be checked."⁵

Again we cite examples from the writings of Dr. R. H. Brown:⁶ The as-

sumption that when molten material comes up from below its lead content is always reduced to zero—this assumption has not proved to be reliable. If some lead were left in the molten mass, then the radioactive "clock" would not have been set at zero, as is generally supposed, and the dates would be erroneous.

A number of discrepancies have been noted. In New Zealand trees gave a carbon-14 age of only 225 years but were overlaid by volcanic material that dated from 145,000 to 465,000 years old. In 1801 the volcano Hualalai in Hawaii erupted. Subsequently tests on the lava showed it to have an age of more than a million years, and certain components of the flow dated 4 million years old. Recent eruptions of Kilauea in Hawaii gave potassium-argon dates of 43 million years. Dating of a single flow in the Pacific Northwest gave variations of several hundred million years in the same flow, at different depths, apparently due to varying conditions to which the flow was subjected as it came out under water.

These are only a few of the ir-

regularities that show up in radiometric dating, but they are sufficient to show that one must be very skeptical of the measurements until they show a greater consistency of results. Is it not safe to say that the believer in the literal rendering of the Genesis record has no need of conceding anything to the theory of great age of the earth based on such erratic tests? Let us keep an even keel and not be disturbed by theories that cannot be substantiated by more consistent and positive, unanswerable proofs. ◇

REFERENCES

1. H. S. Gladwin, "Dendrochronology, Radiocarbon, and Bristlecones," *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 1, June 1978, pp. 24-26.
2. H. C. Sorensen, "Bristlecone Pines and Tree-ring Dating: A Critique," *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 1, June 1976, pp. 5, 6.
3. D. J. Tyler, "Radiocarbon Calibration—Revised," *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 1, June 1978, pp. 16-23.
4. R. H. Brown, "Radiocarbon Age Measurements Re-examined," *Review and Herald*, vol. 148, no. 43, October 28, 1971.
5. S. P. Clementson, "A Critical Examination of Radioactive Dating of Rocks," *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 3, December 1970, pp. 137-141.
6. R. H. Brown, "Radioactive Dating of Inorganic Material," *Review and Herald*, vol. 148, no. 44, November 4, 1971.

Why Not Ask?

Wayne Judd

AGAINST PUBLIC PRAYER

I don't like to pray! I enjoy talking to God privately, but not publicly. When asked to pray in a prayer group, I am expected to say something significant. But my prayers are so simple that I'm embarrassed. I can't think. They expect a long prayer, and mine are short. Is group prayer really necessary?

Even public prayers should be short and simple, since they speak for many people. For the same reason, the one who prays publicly should rarely use "I" but rather "we." There is an appropriate place for public prayer if it is done thoughtfully, and if it represents the assembled group. But much public prayer is wasted repetition, mere formalism, with which the group cannot identify.

It seems to me that you have every right to state that you do not pray in public.

But then ask yourself why you have nothing to say when you are asked to pray. Is it because you are not thinking about God between the prayer sessions?

If you are studying the Bible every day, if you are thinking about Jesus during the day, if you are talking to people about Jesus whenever you have opportunity, if there are several people you are praying for privately, the

chances are that soon you will have plenty to talk about and pray about at your prayer bands. You may even find yourself leading out and asking others to pray with you. You don't believe that could happen? Try it!

INTOLERANT ADVENTISTS

I'm not an Adventist, but I know some Seventh-day Adventist people who make me feel like I'm going straight to hell because I'm not a member of their church. What makes these people so intolerant? I'm not against their religion, so why do they insist on condemning mine? Doesn't Paul's statement, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," have some bearing on this question?

I know Methodists, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Christian Scientists who have the same attitude as the Adventists you know. This attitude is unattractive in any professed Christian. Or in any atheist or agnostic or evolutionist, for that matter.

Most of the Adventist people I know would not exclude members of other churches from heaven. Those who do might be wise to review their own eternal destiny, for the Bible says, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Matthew 7:1. The Bible also says, "Other sheep I

have, which are not of this fold." John 10:16.

As a Seventh-day Adventist, I deplore the practice of condemning others for their beliefs.

You are right in thinking that Romans 14:5 has some bearing on this situation. To accept any belief without being "fully persuaded" that it is right is utterly worthless.

However, I would not be dealing fairly with you if I left this discussion here. To be "fully persuaded" that something is right does not necessarily make it right. The people who refused to go into the boat that Noah built were fully persuaded that there would never be a flood. But the Flood came anyway and they were drowned. See Genesis 6-9. Apparently being "fully persuaded" is not enough. Sincerity will not save us when we are believing or doing wrong.

Notice that God provided only one boat—though no doubt many people tried to save themselves by clinging to uprooted trees and broken branches.

Notice too that when Jesus said, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold," He went on to say, "There shall be one fold." John 10:16. Many sheep, but only one fold.

Today we see many folds—Methodist and Episcopalian and Ad-

Moving?

If you're moving, please let us know at least six weeks in advance if possible. Attach your label from the back cover of this issue. Write your new address in the blank.

I am moving; my new address will be:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State or Province _____ Zip _____

There is no charge for change of address.

1 92388 T-128 MY4454 00* 1351
CCP#14 JUL79 48372 10 83

**ATTACH LABEL HERE
for both moving and renewing.**

Please cut out entire
coupon and mail with your remittance to

SIGNS
Pacific Press Publishing Association
1350 Villa Street
Mountain View, CA 94042, U.S.A.

Renewing?

To reduce costs, we do not send renewal notices. Please check your expiration date and renew at least six weeks early if possible. See bottom of page 2 for price schedule.

Yes, I want to renew my SIGNS subscription. Send my SIGNS to (check one):

My same address (see label attached).

My new address (see "new address" blank).

Please be sure to attach your label!

ventist and Catholic and Jehovah's Witness and Baptist. And add Buddhist and Taoist and animist and a host of others. Jesus said that there is only one right fold. We as Adventists must not condemn you if we don't think you are in the right fold. But if you are in the wrong fold at judgment day, you will be like the people before the Flood who trusted the broken branches.

So, good friend, let's get busy while time remains and find out which fold is the right fold and hurry into it.

I WANT A HUSBAND

I decided to write to you after reading your column in the *Signs* magazine. I have this most desperate problem—I'm a 23-year-old Christian girl, and I'm not married yet. I've had only one boyfriend in my life so far, and when I was in high school, I didn't have any boyfriends, so I had never been on a date until last year. (Isn't 22 kind of old to just start dating?) Things didn't work out between the two of us, so we broke up. Lately I've been really discouraged because I want to find a husband who loves God. My friends all say just to be patient and wait, that God has someone already chosen for me, but how do I know that? And how do I go about finding this "dream man"? When I do marry, I want our marriage to be one which has Christ at the center. I know that I would be a good wife, not because of what I am, but because of what Christ has made me. Are there still men who actually think as I do?

From simply reading your letter, I suspect some lucky man will make the best choice in his life one day—YOU! Which isn't at all as encouraging to you, I'm sure, as I would like for it to be. I receive so many letters like yours, I'm strongly inclined to challenge Christian men all over the world to wake up and take a bit of initiative!

I can assure you that there are many fine young Christian men who could

provide what you want in marriage. But I do not believe that God will parade them before you with "I'M LOOKING" placards. Over and over I tell young women to do some "sanctified hunting" themselves. This doesn't mean you grab the first man who rounds the corner, but it does mean involvement, and it does mean placing yourself, somehow, in a community where you can meet a number of available Christian men.

Twenty-three isn't exactly geriatric. No need to panic! In fact, you're about the right age to begin dating seriously. Most early dating is confusing, frustrating and wasteful.

A postscript: I can't promise you'll marry. But I can promise that you can be happier single if you're a Christian than if you're not.

TV ISN'T SO BAD—IS IT?

In our home, the TV is on all the time. My sister and I disagree. She thinks I should keep it off, but I do all my work and I don't let things get out of hand. Now I think that I should be able to watch what I want to watch when I want to watch it, don't you? I mean, as long as I don't let it come before the Lord.

Sorry, but if we're choosing teams, I'm on your sister's side. Actually, I'm on your side, too, which is why I have to disagree with your position. I have a hunch you think your sister is right. Viewing too much television may not rob your faith—at least not right away. First it will go after your brain, which is, after all, quite an important part of you, right? TV addicts don't have to think. The TV does it for them, vicariously.

If you want to be like Jesus, remember that He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil." Habakkuk 1:13.

Doing wrong is, of course, bad. But to enjoy watching others do wrong may be just as bad. Read Romans 1:18-32 and see what it says about people "who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

A very good policy to adopt is written in the Psalms: "I will set no evil thing before mine eyes." Psalm 101:3.



Send SIGNS to Your Friends

When Purchased in U.S.A.
\$2.95 (U.S.) mailed to addresses in U.S.A. or Canada.

\$3.95 (U.S.) mailed to addresses outside U.S.A. and Canada. 35 cents, single copy.

When Purchased in Canada
\$3.30 (Can.) mailed to addresses in Canada or U.S.A.

\$4.30 (Can.) mailed to addresses outside Canada and U.S.A. 40 cents, single copy.

Friend's name _____

Address _____

Zip _____

Your name _____

Address _____

Zip _____

The "Signs" is also available in other languages. Check the language you wish sent to your friends, if other than English.

- French *La Sentinelle* (\$2.00)
 Ukrainian *Oznake* (\$2.00)
 Spanish *El Centinela* (\$2.00)
 Portuguese *Sinais* (\$2.00)

Clip the coupon and mail with your check or money order to *Signs of the Times*, 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, CA 94042.

(For additional names attach separate sheet of paper.)

WHY NOT ASK? Do you have a youth question? Why not ask Wayne Judd to help you? Write to Wayne Judd, *Signs of the Times*, 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94042. Please include your name, age, and address. We are sorry we cannot help you with pen pals, school fees, or personal financial aid.

Your Bible Questions Answered

Ivan Crawford

SABBATH PUZZLING

A very dear friend of mine has given me a gift of the *Signs*, which I enjoy very much. But the keeping of Saturday, the seventh-day Sabbath, puzzles me. Would you please explain to me the reasons for this practice and what you folks do with such texts as Colossians 2:16, 17, 20-22. M. V.

It is easy to see that some folks might become confused in regard to Christians who keep the Sabbath, for this is considered by many to be Jewish. However, the Sabbath was instituted on the seventh day of Creation, some 2000 years before the birth of Abraham, the father of the Jewish race. In other words, the Sabbath was given and kept longer before there was a Jew than Sunday has been kept in the Christian dispensation. Genesis 2:2, 3 says that on the seventh day of Creation week God "rested . . . from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

It was before the entrance of sin that the Sabbath was sanctified, or set apart for a holy use. Did God need to rest? No, for He "fainteth not, neither is weary." Isaiah 40:28. But God saw that Adam and his descendants would be blessed by observing the Sabbath.

Coming down to Exodus 16, before the law was given at Sinai, the people were given heavenly proof of which day is the Sabbath. The manna fell on six days but not on the Sabbath. Then, when the commandments were given, the reason for Sabbath keeping was that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth . . . : wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Thus, you have a 2500-year history of the Sabbath, up to the time of the giving of the law.

Notice that the Sabbath is in commemoration of Creation. It is not what is called in Colossians 2:16, 17 "a

shadow of things to come." There were many yearly sabbaths in connection with the Jewish feasts (read Leviticus 16 and 23) including Unleavened Bread, the Passover, Pentecost, Blowing of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Feast of Tabernacles. These sabbaths were indeed "a shadow of things to come." But when Christ's body hung on the cross and He died for us all, "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom." Mark 15:38, R.S.V. All the sacrifices, feasts, and yearly sabbaths lost their significance. But not so the seventh-day Sabbath. Jesus kept it during His stay on earth, and He told His disciples in Matthew 24:20, "Pray . . . that your flight be not . . . on the sabbath day." Jesus was referring to the invasion by the Roman army in A.D. 70. See Luke 21:20. That invasion did occur, and the people who heeded Christ's counsel were saved from massacre. If Jesus wanted His people to keep the Sabbath in A.D. 70, why not now?

Coming over to Revelation 12:17, we are given the marks of the last church to be on earth before the coming of the Lord. They "keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." See also Revelation 14:12. If all the world had continued to observe God's Sabbath in honor of Creation, there could never have been an unbelieving evolutionist or an atheist. Why should this great fact not be called to the attention of the many very sincere Christians who at present observe Sunday in honor of Christ's resurrection? (Romans 6:3, 4 tells us that baptism—not Sunday—is to be observed for this purpose.)

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.

JUDAS

I am grateful to *Signs* for the good material that has come to me over the years. There seems to be a tendency, though, to add to the biblical accounts. For instance, speaking of Judas Iscariot in the August 1978 issue, the author states, "Then he, too, looked at Jesus. He saw the same sorrow and pity that had touched Peter's heart on the face of the One who just the night before had knelt down and washed his dirty feet." We are referred to Matthew 27:3-5, but I fail to find anywhere a reference to Judas and Jesus seeing each other after Judas left the upper room. J. L.

Matthew 26:49 tells us that after the Gethsemane experience, Judas "came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him." Because of the brevity of the Bible account, we are not told that Jesus and Judas looked at each other, but it would be difficult to imagine that they did not.

Why did Judas "repent himself"? Matthew 27:3. Was it because Jesus was in custody and on trial? Hardly, for Judas himself had arranged the capture of Jesus. I think it must have been the look on Jesus' face that drove him to suicide.

I personally feel that the eyes of Jesus and Judas did meet and that Judas saw in Jesus' face a pity and forgiveness that would have led to Judas's repentance if such had been possible.

NAME THOSE GIFTS!

I bought and read Dr. Gordon Hyde's *Rags to Righteousness* but was disappointed that the author failed to identify in every case whether he was dealing with justification or sanctification. How can we benefit from a gift if we do not know what it is? T. R.

It is interesting that Jesus Himself, the Source of both justification and sanctification, did not always specify by name what gift He bestowed. To the

man sick from palsy He said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Matthew 9:2. This you would no doubt term justification—the clearing of the record of a sinful past. The scribes promptly took Jesus to task for it.

Now come with me to the pool of Bethesda and meet a cripple to whom Jesus says, "Wilt thou be made whole?" John 5:6. After 38 years of utter helplessness, the poor man quibbles not a word about justification or sanctification. If Jesus offers him a Cadillac, he is not about to argue for a Chevy. "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk," Jesus says in verse 8.

In our finite reasoning we would have to pronounce this miracle an act of sanctification—an inner work of enabling—for there was no possible way those wasted limbs could respond without it. It was not a matter of crediting something to the man's account, but rather of inner restoration, and the man acted in immediate response.

But here again Jesus comes under severe fire. Evidently the devil wants neither justification nor sanctification—both acts of grace by faith—to be applied to sinful men and women.

Jesus in cool, unruffled composure replies to all His critics, "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?" Matthew 9:5.

My dear brother, when Jesus offers you a gift, of which you and I are both unworthy, do not say, "Lord, let me look at it first to see whether it meets my thinking." It is the risen Christ who speaks, and "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Romans 6:4. The clearing of the sinful past is never detached from an empowered and victorious future through the indwelling Christ. What an assurance is ours that Jesus can make "a man every whit whole"! John 7:23.

SECOND CHANCE

Will people be given a second chance for salvation when Christ returns?
J. K.

While many texts tell us that now is the opportune time to prepare for

entrance into God's kingdom, no scripture tells us of a second chance for salvation after this life.

"Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:2. A time will come when God will say, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11. Therefore, "exhort one another daily, while it is called To day." Hebrews 3:13. "The

end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Peter 4:7.

Remember the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were found without oil for their lamps and were therefore unable to go in to the marriage. "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." Matthew 25:10. What a solemn thought, that day by day we are deciding our destiny and that even today we could cross the line of no return!



Speaker, THE VOICE OF PROPHECY INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST

Hello, friends.

Today, more than ever before, people are seeking answers to many perplexing questions, such as, "Why am I here?" "How can I find meaning and purpose for my life?" "The Voice of Prophecy" can give you these answers through our free Bible correspondence courses. Want answers? Mail in the coupon today to find real meaning and purpose for your life.

HMS Richards Jr.

Select the one that suits you best:

- FOCUS ON LIVING— All about family, peace, God, faith, the future.
- NEW LIFE— Covers major doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.
- LIGHT OF THE WORLD — Reveals Christ's life through the Bible.
- HIGH WAY SCENES — Contemporary Bible study guide for youth.
- YOU TAKE THE WHEEL — Happier living for early youth.
- HELP FOR ALCOHOLICS— Practical steps in overcoming alcoholism.

(Offer limited to U.S.A. and Canada.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State or Province _____

Zip Code _____

Mail your application to:

SIGNS OF THE TIMES
VOP
1350 Villa Street
Mountain View, CA 94042

- Today I have followed the Scripture injunction and given my life to Jesus Christ.

Name _____

Consult your local listings and listen to "The Voice of Prophecy" radio program each week.

This remarkable story comes from the days when the British ruled India. It was first printed in the London Times.

It happened during a war in India. The army of one of the provinces in central India was fighting the army of another province.

The Peshwa (the chief officer of one of these provinces) had given the flag to his most trusted elephant driver and ordered him to keep it flying. The elephant driver—called a mahout—fastened the flag to his elephant where everyone could see it.

At first the battle went in favor of the Peshwa. Then his army ran into difficulties. The mahout ordered his elephant to halt, and a moment later the mahout was killed.

Things really went bad for the Peshwa's army. Many of his soldiers were sure there was no hope and that they had better escape while they were still alive.

Then for a moment the smoke cleared from the battlefield. The Peshwa's fearful soldiers saw their flag still flying above the elephant. It had not retreated!

The elephant's master had told him to stay where he was and to carry the flag. And until his master changed the order he would stay where he was and fly the flag.

If the flag was still flying, there was still a chance to win! The Peshwa's men took new courage and redoubled their efforts. The tide of battle changed! Soldiers now swept past the immovable elephant in the opposite direction and left him standing like a mountain among the bodies of the slain! Sure that their case was hopeless, the enemy broke and ran.

The Peshwa's victorious soldiers gathered around their elephant and showered praise upon him. Then, because it was time to go home, one of the other mahouts mounted to the elephant's shoulders and ordered him to follow the rest of the elephants which were leaving the battlefield. But the flag-bearing elephant would not move.

Other mahouts tried but to no avail. Three days went by. The elephant still stood in the same place. Then someone remembered that the mahout had a son, a little boy whom the mahout had occasionally put in charge of the elephant. They sent for him, though the boy lived a hundred miles away.

When he came, the elephant recognized the voice of his master's son. With the broken trappings of battle clanging against his great sides, he followed the little boy home.

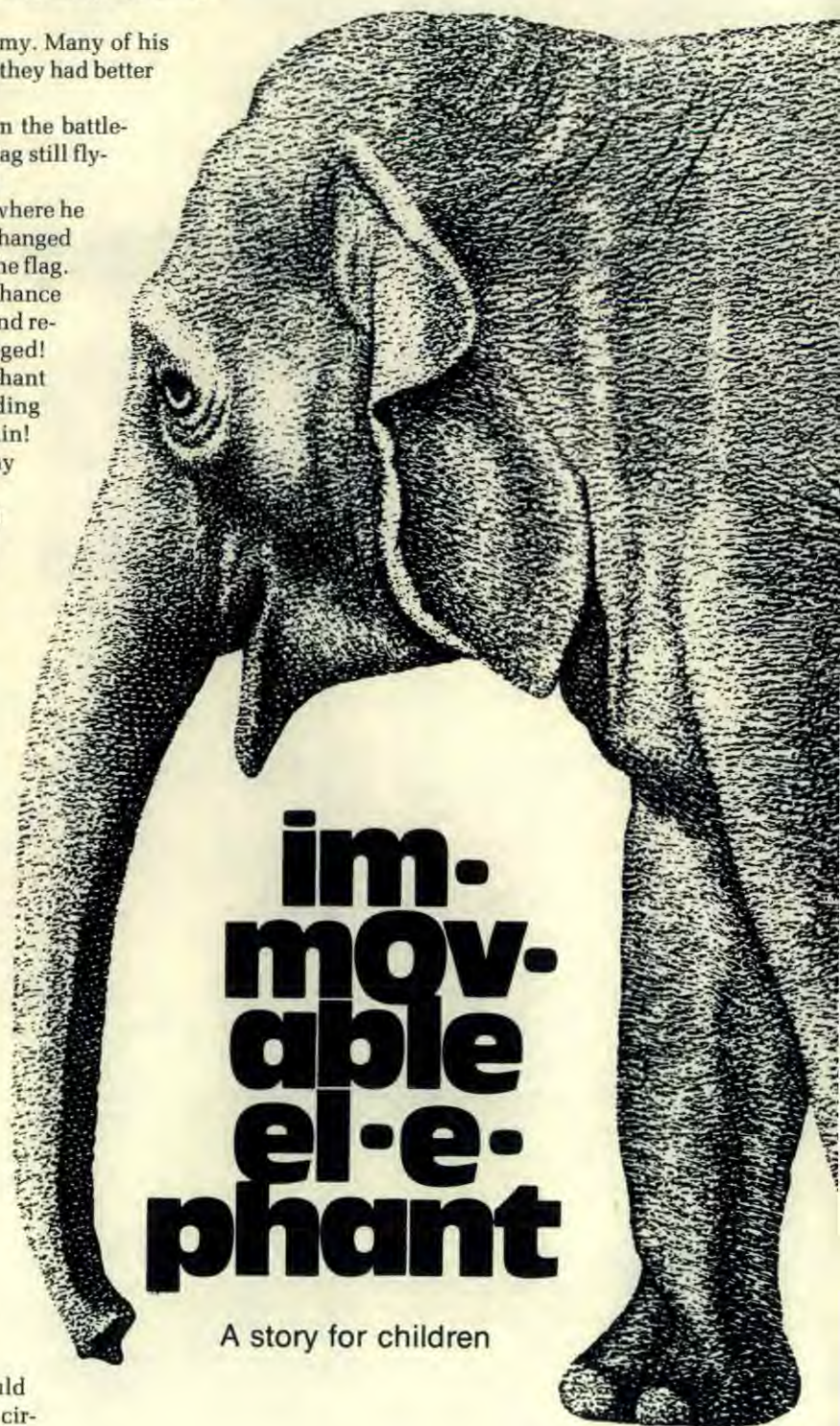
Every once in a while we find ourselves in the middle of a group of young people who are being swept along into various kinds of sin. Next time this happens to you, remember the immovable elephant. If you will stand where you are and keep the flag flying for the King of kings, some of your friends will see your example and will take courage again. They will resist the devil until they win the victory.

What kind of young men and women would we be if we would resolve never under any cir-

cumstances to take orders from anyone but from our heavenly Master or from Jesus Christ, His Son!

Your friend,

Uncle Lawrence



im- mov- able el-e- phant

A story for children

JESUS LOVES ...ME!

Jesus had a very fine reason for saying we must become like children if we are to inherit eternal life—and it wasn't because children are all that good!

LaVonne Neff

A friend of mine once told me that she had been having difficulty praying. "I feel like my prayers bounce off the ceiling," she said. "But, you know, I have a cure for it. I know that if I was cussin', God would hear every word. Why shouldn't He hear me when I pray?"

My eight-year-old daughter tells me that she's been having difficulty perceiving the reality of God. She's been sorely tempted to believe that God doesn't exist, that the sun will run down and the world will grow cold, that there is no purpose in life. "But I know Satan is real," she tells me. "All I have to do is look around me, and I can see the awful things he does."

What a mixed-up world we live in! My friend is a dedicated and loving Christian. My daughter is an earnest little seeker after God. But the one finds God's judgment more tangible than His mercy, and the other sees evidence for the devil more clearly than evidence for God. Why do wickedness and punishment often seem more real than goodness and grace? Is it just because the world is fallen, because there's so much evil around us, because sin requires judgment? Or is the devil actually blinding our eyes to the mercy of God and the signs of His love and goodness in the world, hoping that by limiting our vision he

can drive us into utter hopelessness.

Does Jesus (as well as the devil) have an intense personal interest in each one of us—the small child, the housewife, the factory worker and the unemployed, as well as in the President, the archbishop and the theology professor? His own disciples didn't seem to think so. Strange, isn't it, that they could forget their origins so quickly! Several had been common laborers, one was barely old enough to shave, one had been a hated tax collector; the only educated man among them was Judas Iscariot. Yet these first followers of the Lord soon became obsessed with questions of status. "Who will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" was their constant question, their all-consuming topic of conversation. And in their desire to gain recognition for themselves, they completely forgot the little people Jesus had come to serve. Matthew 19:13-15 shows the kingdom-seeking disciples in direct conflict with the personal Jesus. Imagine the scene:

Two women walk slowly up the gentle slope, shortening their steps to accommodate four pairs of stubby legs running along beside them. One carries a six-months-old baby; the other, a lunch basket. Their children sometimes race ahead after a butterfly,

sometimes fall back to admire a wild flower. But always they chatter.

"Will Jesus tell me a story, Mamma?" "Can I climb on His lap?" "Will He make little sister well?"

The mothers are discussing how best to persuade Jesus to bless their children, but they pause to answer the questions. "Jesus often tells stories—maybe He'll tell some today and we can all listen." "Jesus is a great man, Benny. You mustn't climb all over Him." "Jesus makes sick people well. I hope He'll heal little sister."

"I'm getting nervous," one woman says. "Do you think we'll even get close enough to see Him?"

"I can hear the crowd," says her friend, "and we're still a mile away from where they said He'd be preaching. I hope Jesus doesn't think we're pushy."

"We have to take the chance. The baby's fever is worse today."

The women fall silent as the group approaches the edge of the crowd. Even the children walk more sedately and mute their shouts. "Excuse us, please," say the women, and the crowd opens just wide enough to let the group in. For a while the women can see nothing but shoving, sweating bodies, all trying to elbow their way to the Master. Then a kindly grandmother, a smiling farmer, a perceptive

young man each notice the droopy bundle in the mother's arms, step aside, and allow the group to move closer to Jesus.

"I see Him!" Benny sings out. "Keep back," warns his mother. "No climbing on laps, remember!" The women notice other mothers with their children moving out of the crowd into the circle where Jesus and His disciples are sitting. Soon they are part of a group of a dozen or so women and three times as many children walking bashfully, uncertainly, toward Jesus.

"What do you think you're doing?" A big disciple steps toward them. "We don't want children disrupting this meeting." A mother speaks up. "We've brought our children for Jesus to bless. We want the Son of David to lay His hands on them."

"Impossible!" says the disciple. The women look hesitantly at one another. They have not been trained to argue with brawny fishermen. But as their heads droop and their feet begin to move them back into the faceless crowd, a gentle voice calls after them.

"Don't tell the children to go away," Jesus says. "Let the little ones come to Me." Startled, the women look up. Jesus smiles at them. "The kingdom of heaven is made up of children—and of others who are willing to become like children," he says.

Already the children are running to Him. A little girl shyly offers Him a flower. A baby plays with His sandal straps. Benny stands awkwardly and, he hopes, respectfully to one side and gazes into the Master's eyes. Jesus scoops him onto His lap. Benny, delighted and terrified, searches out his mother's face. She is smiling. He snuggles into the bend in Jesus' arm and sighs with contentment.

How could the disciples have so completely misunderstood Jesus? How could they think they were doing Him a favor by keeping the children away? Only a few days earlier Jesus had called a child to Him and had cuddled it in His lap. The disciples had seen Him do it. In fact, He had done it to answer their ever-present question, "Who's the greatest?" "Anyone who wants to be great," Jesus had previously said, "must become like this little child. Unless you humble yourself like this child, you'll never

even see the kingdom of heaven."

The disciples simply didn't understand that God takes a personal interest in little people. Unsure of their own standing with Jesus (in spite of the fact that He had promised them judgeships and thrones), they were baffled by His acts of mercy and love. Like my daughter, they recognized evil when they saw it. Like my friend, they understood judgment. But divine love toward unimportant people was so far removed from their way of thinking that they often didn't recognize it when they saw it.

They were with Jesus when He went out of His way to raise the twelve-year-old daughter of the president of the synagogue. They understood Jesus' delay, His willingness to let the demanding crowd slow down His progress to the president's home. After all, it was only a child who was sick. But they didn't expect the personal attention Jesus gave the girl when He got to her house. "Little one, get up," He called gently, as if He were calling her to breakfast. And when she did sit up, He ordered food for her!

Well, the disciples thought, at least she was the daughter of somebody important. But when a Canaanite woman—a heathen!—came to beg healing for her daughter, they were sure Jesus would turn her away. At first they were satisfied. "Shall I take meat from the children and give it to the dogs?" Jesus asked. But the disciples, unlike the woman, didn't see the twinkle in His eyes. They were appalled at the woman's reply: "No, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the table." And they were shocked that Jesus healed the heathen child.

The disciples didn't understand God's care for the individual, but children had no difficulty. It was quite simple to them: Jesus loved them, and they loved Him. Other rabbis preached heavy theological sermons; Jesus told stories they could understand. Other rabbis condemned them for their misbehavior, present and future, real and imagined; Jesus took them on His lap and shared their jokes as well as their fears. Jewish leaders seemed to be afraid of Jesus. They ran, for instance, when He ordered the money lenders to leave the temple court. But children

weren't afraid. Before the tables were picked up off the floor, they followed Him and sang to Him—"Hosanna to the Son of David!" And when a priest rebuked the noisy children, Jesus rebuked the priest.

Why did Jesus say that only people who become like children can enter the kingdom of heaven? I've heard it said that it was because children are loving, teachable and forgiving. I have two children, and I'm not so sure. Children and grown-ups are all sinners, and it would be silly to pretend children are more righteous than the rest of us. Here's what I think Jesus meant—children know how to respond to Jesus' personal, individualized love.

Adults think in abstractions—movements, patterns, forces. An adult may firmly believe that God is in charge of history but find it almost impossible to believe that God will direct his life. An adult may have no trouble believing that God loves the world but be unable to comprehend that God also loves him individually.

A child, on the other hand, may not know much about history and movements and destiny, but he knows very well that God loves him. While the disciples were busy trying to preserve their Master's privileged isolation, the children were climbing onto His lap. They simply did not doubt Jesus' personal interest in them, and they expected from Him tenderness rather than rebuke.

How can I say such things about children when my own daughter worries that Satan seems more real than Jesus? Here's how. My little girl is growing up, I realize. She is just beginning to experience adult doubts and fears. (Her six-year-old sister thinks her whole dilemma is quite silly.) But Molly announced to me last night that her problem is now solved. She now understands that Jesus is completely real, and furthermore, she plans to make a list of the good things she sees Him doing. How did she come to this understanding?

"Well, when I was worried about if Jesus was real, I kept praying to Jesus to help me know," she said. "And if I was praying to Jesus, of course He's real!"

How can you doubt the lap you're sitting on? ◇



Especially for Children Ages 2 to 6



Reasons why your child should have OUR LITTLE FRIEND—weekly.

- 1. Character-building stories
- 2. You-do-it-yourself features: ● color drawings ● dot to dot ● hidden-object puzzles
- 3. Nature picture-story series

4. Ages 2 to 4 illustrated Bible lesson with modern theme story

5. Ages 5 and 6 Bible lesson with modern theme story for week

If you have children or grandchildren ages 2 to 6, OUR LITTLE FRIEND is a must. Makes a beautiful, meaningful, and constant gift for every week of the year.

Subscription price:
 One year \$5.20 in U.S.A.
 \$6.20 outside U.S.A.
 All prices at U.S.A. exchange

Please send _____ subscriptions for one year to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State (Province) _____ Zip _____

Send your order with check to OUR LITTLE FRIEND, 1350 Villa Street, Mountain View, California 94042. This offer expires December 31, 1979. (S-79)