

DECEMBER  
1965

Signs

OF THE TIMES





## A SONG IN THE AIR

*There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky!  
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry!  
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,  
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!*

*There's a tumult of joy o'er the wonderful birth,  
For the virgin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth.  
Aye! the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,  
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.*

*In the light of that star lie the ages inpearled;  
And that song from afar has swept over the world.  
Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing  
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King!*

*We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song  
That comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.  
Aye! We shout to the lovely evangel they bring,  
And we greet in His cradle our Saviour and King!*

J. G. HOLLAND.



# Signs OF THE TIMES

*A family magazine dedicated to promoting evangelical Christianity, upholding Jesus Christ as man's only Saviour and soon-returning King, and presenting the Bible as the inspired Word of God and our only rule of faith.*

EDITOR - - - - Ross C. Piper  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Marian M. Hay

CIRCULATION MANAGER - J. C. H. Shirley  
LAYOUT - Howard G. Davis, Darryl M. Lock

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DECEMBER, 1965

## IN THIS ISSUE

Regardless of how you might think of this time of the year—as a holy day or a holiday—we would take this opportunity of wishing all our readers the compliments of the season and much of the Lord's blessing. In this issue you will find much that is timely and topical. Especially would we commend to you a most thought-provoking article by the international evangelist, Billy Graham. See, "Three Symbols of Christmas," on page 6.

Never has the message of "Peace on Earth" been sounded in a more contradictory age than ours. With current scientific achievements offering man a standard of living higher than anything previously envisaged, it would seem he has everything. He has—that is, except the one thing which really matters—peace! Read, "Peace on Earth—When?" on page 10.

Writing from New Zealand, where currently he is Principal of the New Zealand Missionary College, Walter R. L. Scragg, on page 14, takes a look at the significance of Pope Paul's recent visit to United Nations' headquarters in New York.

South Vietnam is a place much in the news today, and admittedly, much of this news isn't good. On page 16, Barbara Hand tells something of the difficulties facing the Christian missionary as he endeavours to witness for his Lord in the midst of the ravages of war.

Perhaps one of the tenderest stories in the Old Testament is that of Rebekah and Isaac. In her usual intimate style, Meryl Totenhofer writes of this on page 22. The second part of this article will appear in the January issue.

For a spiritual message with application to all, we would recommend the careful reading of "Forgiving and Forgetting," which you will find on page 26.

## OUR COVER PICTURE

This month we take you into the interior of the historical old church in Buckland, Tasmania. Photograph by R. Fairfoul.

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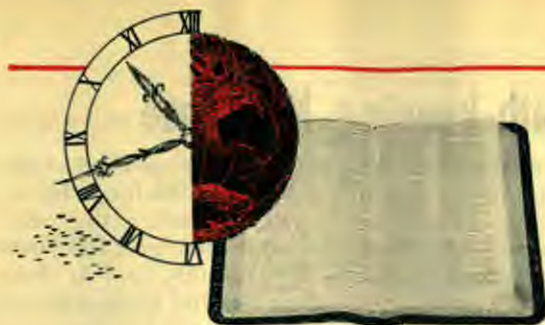


W. I. Taylor, photo

(Above) At Oran Park, near Sydney, a Mini-Cooper lost a front wheel during a recent race. The photographer, intrigued by the shower of sparks thrown up as the car skidded on its brake drum, got his picture, but at the moment of releasing the shutter, the missing wheel appeared from nowhere and sailed overhead, far too close for comfort! (Left) The official design of the new patrol craft being built for the Royal Australian Navy. 100 feet in length, they will have steel hulls and aluminium superstructures. (Lower left) Sartorial elegance at Lords! An enthusiastic West Indian cricket supporter in London. (Lower right) A tiger cub, deserted by its mother at the London Zoo is cared for by an obliging foster mother.







# the meaning of events

editorials

## Control of Life

NEVER RELUCTANT to publicize a controversial subject, *Life* magazine recently was at its sensational best—or worst, according to one's point of view—when it introduced a pictorial feature with the startling headlines, "Astonishing Biological Revolution. Audacious experiments promise super-babies, longer life, and even a kind of immortality."

The headlines having accomplished their purpose, with a growing sense of uneasiness we proceeded to read the introductory paragraph, "Of all the fantastic breakthroughs that modern science is making, none will touch man more closely, more wondrously—or more fearfully—than those now being made on the far-out frontiers of medicine and biology. As a result of research already well advanced, man may one day be able to prolong his life for decades by replacing his failing organs as he now replaces the failing parts of his car. He may hope to foreordain the intellect and the physical characteristics of his children and of all the generations that follow. He may, through ways strange to contemplate, yet being seriously pursued, be able to achieve a kind of immortality."

Then followed sixteen pages which pictured the audacious experiments which, as *Life* stated, "can give man an awesome power: nothing less than the control of life itself." After tracing the manner in which chromosomes transmit the hereditary defects of the parents to their offspring, the scientists enthuse about the way in which these can be detected, chemically controlled, and thus the characteristics of the child be foreordained. A Dr. Kermit E. Krantz stated, "It is not hard to see how any malfunction of the placenta could turn a potential Einstein into a mediocrity. If we learn enough—who knows?—maybe we can turn mediocrities into Einsteins." With due respect to the doctor, we feel the end result could be more in the nature of a Frankenstein!

Science has been able to improve almost everything in this world—except man. Now apparently it is endeavouring to rectify this oversight. Since the beginning of time man has remained essentially unchanged in nature, the only change being a steady deterioration. After a lifetime of psychological study, Carl Jung declared: "All the old primitive sins are not dead but are crouching in dark corners of our modern hearts . . . still there, and still as ghastly as ever." Is this the type of problem our modern scientists are trying to grapple with? If not, what advantage would there be attached to the "kind of immortality" they have to offer?

Many years ago, when Aldous Huxley wrote his "Brave New World," he foresaw the discovery of a drug

he called "soma," which he declared would take all the rough edges from life. Scientists today are endeavouring to translate this dream into fact. Professor B. H. Skinner of Harvard University recently declared: "We are entering the age of the chemical control of human behaviour. The motivational and emotional conditions of normal daily life probably will be maintained in any desired state through the use of drugs." Come now, Professor, "any desired state"?

The Christian concept of the only desirable state involves the following of Christ's imperative command, "Ye must be born again." This implies an absolutely new beginning, not a reformation of life, not a turning over of a new leaf, not the addition of some new attribute, or aspect, or capacity, but something so radical that it changes us into something altogether different from what we have been. Such a change can never be effected by chemical means. It can be effected only by the power of God working upon us. Its power is spiritual, not material.

R.C.P.

## Philosophic Meanderings or Christ-Centred Preaching?

ONE CONTRIBUTING FACTOR to the widespread loss of interest in religion, the lack of living faith, and the almost universal preoccupation with material things, is that many ministers of religion are themselves bankrupt in personal faith. They no longer believe in the supernatural, nor even in the existence of any "exterior God."

One is left wondering why such men chose the ministry as a profession; or having chosen it, why they keep on with it while destitute of everything that makes religion real to the human heart.

Lance Zavitz of Canada, who was for four years head of the Crusade news bureau for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, writes in *Christianity Today* of meeting in his home community a personable young minister who declared from the pulpit and in private conversation his disbelief in God, in prayer, and in the sacraments. He believed that Jesus was no different from other men. To him, the crucifixion of Christ was a "great tragedy," and exclaimed, "How much more good He could have accomplished if He had been allowed to live out His normal life span!"

The inevitable result to those who listen week by week to "this carefully diluted denial of the Christian faith," is that their own faith is destroyed or weakened. Members of his congregation say: "He knocks the props out from under everything we have been taught to believe, but he doesn't give us anything in its place."



No quickening of spiritual life, no revival of faith or reformation of life could come from such preaching. But what a difference when the words of the living God are proclaimed by the consecrated lips of a man who has experienced for himself the transforming power of God's salvation!

The cross of Christ is the supreme revelation of the love of God, for it was on the cross that Christ tasted death for every man, paying the penalty for sin, and bringing life and immortality within reach of all.

Let us go direct to the Word of God and find the water of life, rather than search vainly through the barren wastes of human philosophy. Said Paul:

"Be careful that nobody spoils your faith through intellectualism or high-sounding nonsense. Such stuff is at best founded on men's ideas of the nature of the world, and disregards Christ! Yet it is in Him that God gives a full and complete expression of Himself." Colossians 2:8, 9, Phillips. M.M.H.

## Bells of Rejection

NO CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME on radio or television is complete without the chiming of the bells of Bethlehem. That these bells come from a Greek Orthodox carillon does not worry anyone. All seem happy to be connected, even if ever so remotely, with that tremendous event which transpired nineteen centuries ago within Bethlehem's walls.

Ostensibly these bells are rung as being symbolic of the welcome accorded the Christ child on the occasion of His incarnation. And yet as one realistically assesses the reception accorded Him, the welcome was extended only by the few. The great majority, for whom Christ came to live and die, were quite unconcerned by the presence of divinity in their midst. And the very ones who should have welcomed Him—the religious leaders of the day—rejected Him. The record of the Scripture is, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

In this year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and sixty-five, the Christmas festival is with us once more. Ostensibly this is the big occasion of the year when the thoughts of the majority are supposed to centre around the nativity of our Lord. But has human nature changed with the passing of nineteen centuries? No! Christ still is welcomed into the lives of the few. The great majority still are quite oblivious of the significance of Christ's birth into this world, and are heedless of the fact that He soon is to return in power and glory.

But what about that other class, the leaders of religious thinking of our day? Thank God that there still are many who staunchly hold to the great fundamentals of Christianity, but there can be no doubt that winds of change are blowing in theological circles. The current fashion in "liberal" circles is to regard Jesus as being no different from any other man. His crucifixion is seen as "the great tragedy" with nothing of a redemptive nature about it. But not only is Christ the Son rejected, but categorically it is being stated, "God has died in our time, in our history, in our existence." Christmas bells today are largely bells of rejection.

R.C.P.

## Sabbath-keeping Nonsense

CLERICS OF THE FUTURE may not go to the large churches to minister to the faithful few who attend Sunday services in the cities. Rather, they may go to the beaches, the hotels, the clubs, and the boats where their flock spend their week-ends, and in short and simple services enable them to fulfil their spiritual obligations, and then be free to enjoy themselves.

In a realistic study of the place Sunday holds in the Christian world of today, the Dean of Rockhampton, the Very Rev. John Hazlewood wrote in the Cathedral magazine that Sunday is a "holiday" rather than a "holy day."

Away back in A.D. 321, the Emperor Constantine enacted the first Sunday law, making Sunday a public holiday in order that the people might rest and be able to attend church.

The Dean continues that the modern week-end has grown out of the Sunday that Constantine made a holiday, and a large number of people have both Saturday and Sunday off.

"They go to the beach and arrange golf tournaments, other sporting fixtures, conventions, and all sorts of things over the week-end. This natural and usually harmless relaxation has tended to upset the observance of the Eucharist, for which Sunday was originally set apart as the Lord's Day. The church must refuse to talk nonsense about the keeping of the Sabbath, and she must adapt herself to the new social phenomenon. The opportunities for the Christian to do his Eucharist and then enjoy himself must be extended."

As much as it jolts those Christians who still observe Sunday as the Christian Sabbath, the Dean is right in saying that Sunday has no special sacredness that sets it apart as a holy day. At the time he declared Sunday a public holiday, the Emperor Constantine was only a half-converted pagan; and always his aim was to unify and consolidate the Christian and the pagan elements in his empire by making the pagan and the Christian festivals and holidays coincide.

Dean Hazelwood is right in saying that we cannot keep Sabbath on Sunday; but it is difficult to see what spiritual benefit can be found in the celebration of Holy Communion as he suggests—for the sport-loving crowds to "do" their Eucharist, and then enjoy themselves.

The seventh-day Sabbath was never called the Jewish Sabbath; it is "the Sabbath of the Lord," and was "made for man." It is part of God's eternal law, and was never a part of the Jewish ritual law which was cancelled by the death of Christ.

The obligations and the blessings of Sabbath-keeping are rooted in man's need to worship. He can never be satisfied by anything that centres his attention on self. His whole life must be God-centred. Holy Communion means more than snatching a little time from our own pleasure and offering it to God. It must symbolize the dedication of the whole life to God. And to make this a living reality, God calls man on the seventh day to meet with Him, and devote the entire day to His service and worship.

Thus the Sabbath becomes a day of delight, a time of spiritual refreshment. M.M.H.



**B**UT when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." Galatians 4:4. Not too early, and not too late, but on scheduled time, our Saviour came into the world the first time. Four thousand years of this world's history had already rolled by. The great time clock of the universe had marked off four millenniums of sin and degradation, of sickness and death. Then Jesus came "when the fullness of the time" had come.

"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:21), the Saviour was to declare in Nazareth. "This day," not yesterday, not a year hence, but "this day." Quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, given hundreds of years before, the Saviour announced His work as the fulfilment of that prophecy. For 4,000 years the world had waited, but the Messiah arrived on scheduled time.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come," Peter was to declare, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Acts 2:1, 16. Hundreds of years were to pass by before Joel's prophecy would meet its fulfilment. But the words of holy men were not to be sidetracked or buried in the centuries of time. "This is that which was spoken." The DAY came. Pentecost was felt in all its mighty power, though perhaps in the years of man the prophecy had waited long for its fulfilment.

God pity him who thinks in any way to disrupt the plan of God. There is nothing in this world, from the tiny ant that crawls along the ground to the mightiest hydrogen bomb, that will cancel out God's plan.

Man's satellites are circling the earth, but this will not throw God's plan out of orbit. We may be more interested in sending men to the moon than missionaries to the Congo. But TODAY, AS NEVER BEFORE, God has His faithful witnesses dispersed through the world.

The people of Korea, today, are turning to the true God by the thousands. Everywhere there is a thirst for the saving knowledge of the gospel.

When our Saviour left this world nearly 2,000 years ago, He said, "I will come again." John 14:3. Since that day two millenniums have slipped by, but the great time clock of the universe is still turning. God's plan will not be sabotaged by man, but "in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matthew 24:44.

How well it has been stated that "like the stars in the vast circuit of their appointed path, God's purposes know no haste and no delay." (Ellen G. White, "The Desire of Ages," page 32.) Though some may say, "My Lord delayeth His coming" (Matthew 24:48), they will be sadly mistaken "when the fullness of the time" comes for His return.

I have had the privilege of climbing and going right into the crater of old Mount Pelee on the island of Martinique, French West Indies. Thirty thousand people died in five minutes' time on the morning of May 8, 1902, at eight o'clock, when that great mountain belched forth its death-laden fumes. One sole survivor lived to tell the story in old Saint Pierre. His body was burned, but he lived, down there in the little cachot in the old prison. I have gone inside this little "inner cell" where that one man lived to tell the story of that terrible eruption.

In the museum in old Saint Pierre I have seen the old bottles melted and twisted out of shape. There is one light bulb from the ruins which still lights. The piles of scissors, spikes, and dishes twisted and melted together by tremendous heat are mute evidence. I held watches and clocks on a few of which the hands still pointed to the hour, that dreadful hour, when fate decreed that "time should be no more" for the city of Saint Pierre. Without exception they pointed to eight o'clock. That was eight o'clock in the morning. Now it is EARTH'S midnight hour, her last hour that is approaching.

A destruction is coming that will dwarf this 1902 eruption. This will be a devastation that will make atomic and hydrogen bombs look like child's play, for the very "elements shall melt with fervent heat." This is not some rocket placed in orbit by man, for the "earth . . . and the works that are therein shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?" Verse 11.

Time marches on. Though this little earth is just a speck in the great universe of God, His great love was bestowed upon us in the gift of His Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

"LIKE THE STARS IN THE VAST CIRCUIT OF THEIR APPOINTED PATH, GOD'S PURPOSES KNOW NO HASTE AND NO DELAY."

# When the fullness of time had come

RALPH COMBES





MILLIONS HAVE FORGOTTEN  
THE MEANING OF THIS SIGNIFICANT EVENT  
BUT THERE ARE

## Three Symbols of

# CHRISTMAS

THAT INVOLVE ALL MANKIND



By Billy Graham



**L**AST CHRISTMAS a harried salesgirl in a department store leaned over the counter and said to me, "I wish you could tell some of these people the real meaning of Christmas."

There are millions who have forgotten the true meaning of this day. Because it is an event that captivates and enthalls all Christendom, it carries tremendous significance in the history of mankind. I would like to use three symbols to bring to you what the salesgirl longed to hear, and what millions need to hear—the real meaning of Christmas.

### *First, the Cradle*

The first symbol is a cradle. The Bible says that God was manifest in the flesh. (1 Timothy 3:16.) God in a cradle! God in human flesh! In the person of a tiny infant! The words so familiar to us all, "And . . . [Mary] brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger," marked the greatest event the world has ever known. His name Emmanuel means "God with us."

There have been some rumours that men from outer space have visited our earth, but a recent government report says that there is no evidence that anyone from outer space has ever set foot upon the earth. That government report overlooked the one exception: "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Galatians 4:4, 5.

Yes, the world has had a visitor from outer space. He is God.

Cradled in the manger in Bethlehem were the hopes and dreams of a dying world. Those chubby little hands that clasped the straw in His manger crib were soon to open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, and still the troubled seas. That cooing voice was soon to be lifted to command demons to depart, to teach men of the way, and to raise the dead. Those tiny feet were to take Him to the sick and needy and were finally to be pierced on Calvary's cross.

That manger crib in remote Bethlehem became the link that bound a lost world to a loving God. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14. And because of that, man no longer exists on a dark sphere called "earth," whirling its way in space, while God is far distant at some remote corner of the universe. Christmas means that God is interested in the affairs of men, Christmas indicates that God loves us, so much so that He was willing to give His Son.

Seen in its true perspective, Christmas is not a myth, not a tradition, not a dream—it is a glorious reality. The song we sing, "The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight," is more than sentiment—it is solid fact. From that manger came a Man who not only taught us a new way of life but brought us into a new relationship with our Creator.

Christmas-time is a time of joy, but we must make sure that it is not pagan joy generated by the expectation of receiving gifts or engaging in revelry. The real hap-



piness of Christmas is in the fact of the Incarnation, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. There are many of you that will have fun this coming season, but you will never know the joy that Christmas can bring. Even some Christians, by compromising with what the Bible calls the "world," have lost the joy that Christ can bring.

The first Franciscans had to be reproved for laughing in church—they were such happy men. The pioneer Methodists stormed the unbelieving world with songs and even set some of them to folk tunes. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit, which is produced in every true child of God who is walking in obedience to the King of kings. From this cradle came the possibility of joy to the world, and certainly joy to the church, and joy to the true Christian. In the midst of your pleasure and fun this Christmas, will there also be the joy of the Lord in your heart?

#### *Second, the Cross*

The second Christian symbol that throws clear light on the meaning of Christmas is the cross. It is impossible to celebrate Christmas and ignore Calvary. There were both light and shadow on that first Christmas. There was joy with overtones of sadness, for Jesus was born to die. Jesus, approaching the cross, said,



"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." John 18:37. Christmas was the prelude to the crucifixion Friday, and all that Christ did on earth was incidental to His crowning act of redemption on Golgotha's brow. Just as the shadow of the cross fell across the manger in Bethlehem, so the cross interposes itself in our celebration of Christmas.

To Christians the joy of Christmas is not limited to His birth, gloriously supernatural as that was, because

He was virgin born. It is built even more on the triumph of His death and resurrection. It was His death and resurrection that gave meaning to His birth.

One of the ideals of Christmas is sacrificial love. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." The real reason for exchanging gifts at Christmas whether we realize it or not, is because the spirit of sacrificial love permeates this day. Christ gave Himself; we thus give of ourselves. He died for all; we thus give sacrificially for those we love.

The mysterious spirit of generosity which possesses us all at Christmas is the afterglow of Calvary. The fact of the cross illuminates this day. As we exchange our gifts on Christmas morning, let us remember that they are symbolic of the unspeakable gift of God's love. I do not believe that Christians should be giving expensive gifts to one another. We should quietly give simple little gifts that are expressions of our love and devotion to the recipients. These little gifts become symbolic of the gift of God's love. How much money could be saved and invested in the kingdom of God by thousands of Christian families every year if the true meaning of Christmas were observed.

Another ideal of Christmas is goodwill. The goodwill the angels spoke of did not come immediately after His birth. Herod hated Him and sought His life. The Pharisees gnashed upon Him and tried to kill Him. Men went on hating, marauding, and murdering; but after His atoning death, strange things began to happen in the lives of His followers. No more did Peter take up a sword in anger. No more did Saul of Tarsus persecute the followers of Christ, but was himself persecuted, beaten, and imprisoned for his Lord. A strange, mysterious spirit of goodwill never before known in the world came to the hearts of all those who trusted Him. They had heard Him say on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And His love had changed their lives. How we need that spirit of goodwill today!

A tidal wave of ill will rolls over the world today, even in some Christian circles. There can be no real celebration of Christmas where ill will prevails. Families, churches, races, and nations are divided. When we stand at the cross, we can hold nothing but goodwill toward all men. It is in the cross that the world finds a solution to its pressing problems. This cross creates goodwill in the hearts of men.

#### *Third, the Crown*

The third symbol that helps us to understand the meaning of Christmas is a crown. Isaiah the prophet had envisioned the first Christmas in the coming of Israel's King, centuries before Christ was born. He said, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder." Isaiah 9:6. Moses had said even earlier, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49:10. Now God's Prince of peace, heir to the throne of heaven, is cradled in a manger.

Some time ago the newspapers carried a story of a \$5,000 crib which was made for a baby prince



born into one of Europe's royal families. A jewelled crib for a human child, but a manger of straw for the Prince of heaven! He was born in a manger, He lived in the fields, He slept in an olive grove, He was crowned with a crown of thorns and enthroned on a cruel cross, yet His assassins did one thing, perhaps unwittingly. As He hung on the cross, they placed a superscription over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: "This is the King."

How little they realized that in a few short hours He would indeed be King over death, hell, and the grave. His triumphant resurrection is a testimony for ever that He is God indeed. As He was ascending into heaven, the disciples were gazing in the direction where He had just disappeared into a cloud of angels who had come to escort Him back. Just then two men stood by them in white apparel and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

Dean Farrar related that Queen Victoria, after hearing one of her chaplains preach at Windsor on the second coming of Christ, spoke to the dean about it and said, "Oh, how I wish the Lord would come during my lifetime!"

"Why does Your Majesty feel this earnest desire?" asked the great pracher.

Her queenly countenance lighted with deep emotion, she replied, "Because I should so love to lay my crown at His feet."



### *The Glory to Come*

Yes, Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, and He is coming back someday. As the shadows lengthen throughout the world and the human race rushes toward destruction, there is one hope. The Apostle Paul called it the "blessed hope." It is the hope that Christ is coming back to this earth to set up His kingdom. He will not come as a babe in Bethlehem's manger, as He did on that first Christmas night. The next time He comes it will be in a blaze of glory. His holy angels will be with Him. He will sit on His rightful throne. He will be crowned Lord of all. The Bible teaches that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is indeed the King of the universe. To Christians it will be a glorious hour, because it has been promised that we shall reign with Him. To those outside of Christ it will mean judgment, and destruction. There is no possible meaning to Christmas apart from the second coming of Christ.

Cradle—cross—and crown. They speak eloquently to us of Christmas, for Christmas is three-dimensional. Let the power of Him who came to us at Christmas grip you, and He will surely change your life.

## The Voice of the Book



By Ernest Lloyd

CHRISTIANITY has its roots in the teachings of a Book—the Bible. Other religions also have books. But their authors are dead and their voices are silent. The Bible is alive because its Author is alive. He has filled the teachings of the Bible with a living voice. It is the voice of "ONE HAVING AUTHORITY." Matthew 7:29. We hear Him speak again today the very words which He spoke among men when He lived in old Galilee. His teachings are unchangeable, for He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Hebrews 13:8. His wonderful words of life are now being heard in more than eleven hundred languages and dialects around the world. What a miracle! His power is in His life-giving words, and these words alone can regenerate man. We see this being accomplished wherever the Bible is read and heeded.

Experience tells us that an increase in knowledge and material possessions does not indicate an increase in true godliness. The Bible tells us that man has "sought out many inventions" (Ecclesiastes 7:29), but none of them has contained the power to place man in sovereignty over debasing passions or invest him with moral purity and freedom from enslaving habits. Men have forgotten that the power to regenerate and lift human nature is divine power, and that it comes through His life-giving Word—through the "still small voice" that speaks to seeking and listening hearts, that it may link them with God. Are you seeking and listening?

All human philosophies and speculations fail, but "the Word of God . . . abideth for ever." 1 Peter 1:23. Men have cast it into the furnace, but it has come out without a smell of fire upon it. Men have cast it overboard in a tempest of sarcasm and hate, but it has ridden triumphantly upon the crest of the waves. It is living still—the deathless Word—heard in the loudest swelling of the storm. It has been speaking all the while. It is speaking now.

This is the hour to listen to the Word. It is the hour to heed that Word. Man's greatest need today is to know what the Word of God has for him—what light, what strength, what peace, what revelation of the future it contains for him. Blessed are they who search the Scriptures. Blessed are they who, having searched, walk in the light that prayerful reading and study reveal.

"The still small voice" of God's Holy Spirit—the voice of the Book—speaks through His Word to every longing heart. Let us thank God that we have access to that Word today.



# OUR Changing World



## FREEDOM FOR CHRISTIANS

President Gamal Abdel Nasser of the United Arab Republic, laying the cornerstone for a new Coptic Orthodox cathedral in Cairo, called for religious harmony in this predominantly Moslem nation and pledged all Christians equal treatment under the law. "Religion or race should be the source of no discrimination," he said, claiming that religious favoritism has no place in his government, where "efficiency is the only test."

## CHRISTIAN HOSPITALS NATIONALIZED

Four major Protestant missionary hospitals in Burma, a predominantly Buddhist country, have been ordered to be nationalized by the government. Among them are the Seventh-day Adventist Hospital and the Ramakrishna Mission Hospital in Rangoon, the Christian Hospital in Moulmein, and the Baptist Hospital in the mountain village of Namkham near the Chinese border, founded by Dr. Gordon Seagrave, the famous "Burma Surgeon" who died there last March.

## AMERICAN SPENDING

To maintain their health the American people pay their doctors and dentists nearly \$8½ thousand million a year, reports *Christian Economics*. To tear down their health and shorten their lives, they spend for liquor and tobacco more than double that sum, or nearly \$19 thousand million a year. To finance organized religion and private charity, they spend just over \$5 million, while for private education they spend a similar amount.

## TO SMOKE OR NOT?

There was a time when the question, "To smoke or not to smoke?" may have been considered as an academic one, the matter being one for individual conscience and preference. Today's cancer statistics have placed smoking in an entirely different category.

In Australia the incidence of lung cancer has risen 800 per cent in the last twenty-five years, from a death rate of 3.15 per 100,000 to 27.15 per 100,000. One constant finding associated with this mounting death toll from lung cancer has been that of heavy and prolonged cigarette smoking. While there might be other factors affecting this increase in the incidence of cancer, such as hereditary factors, one indisputable fact is the relationship between lung cancer and heavy cigarette smoking. The relationship is so obvious that there is little argument against the conclusion that it is causal.

## MAN BITES DOG

Reputedly when a man bites a dog, it's news. A mongrel dog recently was reported as being in a critical condition after having been bitten by a man! Haruichi Nishimura of Yokohama, Japan, after taking a few drinks, was passing a yard when the dog barked at him. Mr. Nishimura opened the gate, caught the dog, and bit it. The dog bit back. Mr. Nishimura bit the dog again—and continued biting it. The dog's owner, hearing the animal's howls, called the police. It took two policemen to pull man and dog apart. Officials said the dog got the worst of the encounter.

## WOMEN MINISTERS?

Admission of women to the ordained ministry of the Methodist Church in Australia was advocated by Victorian and Tasmanian ministers at their recently held conference in Melbourne. This will be recommended at the triennial general conference of the church to be held in Perth next May. To accomplish this certain laws of the church will need to be changed. Advocating this change, the Victorian conference was told that the church could be greatly enriched through the development of special ministries. Women were endowed with special gifts and graces for the calling.

## ABOLITION OF DEATH PENALTY

Condemned prisoners would rather face execution than life imprisonment, according to the warden and the Protestant chaplain at the notorious Sing Sing Prison. This is of interest in view of the repeal of the death penalty in Britain, certain parts of the United States, and current agitation to this end in Australia. Warden Wilfred Denno said that life in prison is a "greater punishment than death." "In one sense," he said, "your troubles are over when you go to the electric chair." A similar view was expressed by the Rev. Luther K. Hannum, a Methodist minister who has been Sing Sing chaplain for twenty-five years, and who has escorted sixty-eight condemned men to the electric chair. He said that from "75 to 80 per cent of these have preferred death to spending the rest of their lives in prison."



**T**HOUGHTFUL MEN EVERYWHERE are concerned and afraid. This was evident as a distinguished audience of 2,000 gathered in the UN General Assembly Hall earlier this year for the opening session of the International Convocation on *Pacem in Terris*—Peace on Earth.

For a few days, in midtown Manhattan, men and women from varying races, religions, and ideologies met together and considered the pressing problems of world peace. It was a significant commentary on the influence of the Vatican in world affairs that the text around which the discussion centred was the late Pope John's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*.

Addressing the imposing audience on the opening evening, Alex Quaison-Sackey, president of the General Assembly, reminded all present that though "the voice of Pope John was never heard in this hall, tonight we hear the echo of his papal message, and the voices of those leaders who have answered his call."

With all respect to the warm personality and apparent sincerity of the late Pope John, it would have been better for that glittering assembly to hear the message of Jesus Christ. Certainly He had much to say about peace—how it may be realized individually, and whether it can come to the world apart from His personal return to this earth.

Long ago, in reply to His disciples' question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" He said:

"Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. . . . Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (Matthew 24:6, 7), with "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:26.

War is as old as the human race. Bloody combat has attended every step of man's progress. Civilization's history has been tuned to the ghastly symphony of clashing swords and exploding bombs.

It has been left for our day, supposedly man's brightest era, to develop the most efficient instrument of death in the form of the devastating H-bomb with its fearful fallout.

Whereas a single conventional bomb can spread ruin over several hundred square yards, the dreaded H-bomb fallout can shower death upon thousands of square miles. Wherever the wind blows, death will follow.

Of course, we are informed, an individual may survive—if he manages to flee underground before the blast, but upon emerging, he would behold scenes of destruction beggaring description. He would discover that the work of centuries, along with all modern comforts and conveniences, had been demolished in one blinding flash.

Which, incidentally, is an illuminating commentary on the theory of inevitable progress. How curiously unreal and hollow the claims of evolutionary philosophy sound when scientists sombrely urge humans to go underground in order to survive!

In his nervous hands man now holds a weapon of enormous power. He may use it to destroy his enemies, but it could destroy him as well. A war involving thermonuclear weapons could ring down the curtain on human civilization. It could be global suicide. Knowing this makes man afraid.



The Red Arrows aerobatic troupe puts on a spectacular display to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

# Peace

## ON EARTH --- WHEN?



Comments on the UN Convocation  
on "*Pacem in Terris*"

By THEODORE CARCICH



Much more so as he compares his technological attainments with moral qualities and finds them poles apart. Priding himself on his cleverness, he deplors his lack of goodness. Not because scientific developments in themselves are evil, but because they cannot resolve the problems they create. In a highly technical age a lack of corresponding moral discipline could well trigger the past and present into oblivion.

For a long time it has been dinned in our ears that knowledge and culture constitute the world's supreme need. If we but *knew* enough, we were told, a better world would result. But we should have known that the Greek and Roman civilizations perished in spite of their knowledge. History reveals that cleverness, apart from goodness, leads only to moral sterility, emotional instability, and mental frustration. These, in turn, lead to individual and collective disintegration.

This is precisely where modern man finds himself today. Look at him! Though capable of constructing good buildings, good roads, good cars, good planes, and good trains, he is wholly incapable of building a community of good people. His civilization, like a Frankenstein monster, instead of serving him well, now threatens to destroy him.

It would seem that a generation of men possessing every possible convenience would also possess peace, but it does not. Instead, a gnawing fear fills the hearts of all. To allay the fear, men build jet bombers and guided missiles. They enter into alliances, sign treaties, hold high-level discussions, and even encourage a revival of religion—but the fear persists.

Why?

Simply because man's best attempts to abolish war have never dealt with its cause. Guns and bombs do not grow on trees. They do not just happen, nor are they here by accident. Along with other weapons of destruction they exist because of sin in the human heart.

Long ago the Apostle James pinpointed the real cause of war when he said: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" James 4:1. Since the unregenerate human heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," it can be expected

that man's relationship to his fellow men will likewise be deceitful and desperately wicked.

This need not be. Man *could* live at peace with his fellow man. He could, if he first surrendered his heart to the Prince of Peace and experienced a rebirth "in Christ Jesus unto good works." Ephesians 2:10. Here alone is the source of all peace. Peace cannot be legislated or enforced. Peace is a gift granted to repentant men and women individually when they accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

The heart renewed by the saving grace of Christ is cleansed from the lusts, hatreds, and pride of the old heart of sin. Being cleansed from such it is fit to receive the gift of peace. Said Christ: "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. Here is the only formula for peace of mind and heart.

Since men will not accept God's gift of peace, but insist on their own course of action, sin will continue to thwart their best efforts to bring about world peace. Sin, working through the medium of unrenewed hearts, will neutralize every treaty, alliance, and pact that man proposes. Sin is the great spoiler that drives men contrary to their best intentions and deceives them into thinking that war is the way to peace.

Peace on earth will come when Christ returns the second time, and not until then. Then, and only then, will come to pass the hope of mankind as expressed by the Apostle John:

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:3, 4.

Some ask, Is His coming near? Yes, nearer than many realize. The arms race, the cold war, the hatred and bitterness between races and nations, all indicate that His glorious return is imminent. For "when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." Matthew 24:33.

"Ban the Bomb" demonstrators passing Windsor Castle on their march to London from the Atomic Research Establishment in Berkshire.





**D**EL WEBB, the famous California builder, has been praised for his so-called "ideal communities" for senior citizens. His genius has designed whole cities planned for retired people so that every detail suits their needs.

Ideal? I wonder! Is it possible to engineer a community ideal in all respects?

I can hear some say, "Of course it is possible if people will only stop being so selfish. If everyone would abide by the golden rule, we could have many really utopian communities."

The golden rule is certainly a virtuous precept. The philosopher Kant thought so much of it that he called it the "categorical imperative." But a glutton, or a drunkard, or a libertine, though perfectly willing to

intentions notwithstanding, bloody racial riots, theft on a giant scale, and mass plundering roll back and forth across the nations. Despite the "Christian era," pointless savagery and violence mark smears of blood across cities and lands.

Why this display of wickedness? Let us go back to the ethical teachings of Jesus. He swept away the cobwebs of legalism and showed what godly ethics are in depth and breadth. He taught His disciples to be honourable, respectable, and decent. Yet actually this goodness did not distinguish them in the society of that day. Many people, the Jews generally and the Pharisees particularly, tried to live with maximum propriety. They gave outward obedience to the Ten Commandments and conformed—outwardly at least—

## LIVING FOR GOD



## IN A GODLESS WORLD

treat others the way he would like to be treated, would be far from an ideal citizen—and he certainly would not represent properly the Christian life.

Even the golden rule is not enough. The Christian life requires an inward moral quality. In order for the golden rule to function in a moral way, it would need to say, "Do unto others as you *ought* to wish them to do unto you." In other words, the moral ideal must condition the application of the rule.

This inward morality is largely absent today. People generally do not realize what is wrong. They are embarrassed to find themselves in a completely unsatisfactory world after they have tried to do their duty toward elevating the tone of life. They have been proper. They have taught their children to be proper. They have donated substantial amounts to the Red Cross, to various worthy charities, and to the church. They have studied psychology in order to be better parents; but the world remains a seemingly hopeless mess. Despite all that concerned leaders have attempted, and the boundless store of goodwill and good

to the teaching of the prophets. Even the Romans possessed an admirable code of honour.

But with Christ the moral act was more than outward conduct. A person could speak like an angel; but if his heart was not in what he said, he was not moral. A wrong motive could also make an act immoral. How clear Christ made this in His Sermon on the Mount! His indictment of hypocrisy is more damning than that of any other sin. Jesus minced no words in letting men know that the heart is the seat of virtue.

Jesus' life embodied genuine free-flowing love. His social contacts were warm. People who had never known appreciation and who had been scorned and rebuffed all their lives found that they could depend on Him. He was not exploiting them or playing a game. He was simply there to help, to heal, to share. His goodwill was an isle of verdure in a parched desert, and the early church was inspired by His example.

The early Christians were vibrant in their faith; they were unflagging in their ardour. In word and



deed they showed that love was their ruling principle. The heathen took notice, amazed at Christian joy in doing for others. No pagan people had ever produced a way of life equal to it. The Christian's love for humanity was not only more voluminous but also more intense. They seemed to forget themselves while helping their fellow men who needed them. Their love did not end in solitary contemplation. With Minucius Felix they could say, "We do not speak great things; we live them."

Yes, Jesus made love the chief badge of a Christian when He said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35, R.S.V. And the early Christians wore this badge so conscientiously that it became one of the



## Is the Golden Rule Enough?

By

WALTER RAYMOND BEACH

principal reasons for their being ridiculed by their contemporaries. Lucian said he held his sides laughing at silly people called Christians who were impractical enough to spend time, money, and energy for the sake of others when there was nothing in it for themselves.

This inward quality of life is basic. To be sure, inward quality involves demonstrated piety; for when the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will show it. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. Ellen G. White expressed this admirably:

"True character is not shaped from without, and put on; it radiates from within. If we wish to direct others in the path of righteousness, the principles of righteousness must be enshrined in our own hearts. Our profession of faith may proclaim the theory of religion, but it is our practical piety that holds forth the word of truth. The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example—these are the mediums

through which light is conveyed to the world."—*"The Desire of Ages,"* page 307.

The life of the early Christians was a life of prayer. To be sure, prayer in that day was a common practice; but such prayer was not the kind which Jesus taught His disciples. Some men prayed to the sun, the moon, and inanimate objects, to dumb beasts or remote deities. The Palestinians prayed at stated times, to be seen of men, in trembling and fear of what might happen to them if they did not pray.

The Christians were not to pray thus, nor were they to use prayer as a gimmick, a fire escape, and emergency arrangement, or a magician's wand. They were to pray conversationally, in a spirit of fellowship with One who cared for them so much that even the hairs of their heads were numbered. This kind of praying lifts a man into fellowship with God and identifies his life and purpose with God's life and purpose.

The lives of the early Christians were marked by study, dedication, and service. Such a life was one of happiness. Archaeologists excavating in the ruins of ancient Rome once found a piece of papyrus upon which was written this message, "It is a wicked world, Donatus; but in it I have found a serene and happy people. They are the Christians, and I am one of them."

In that pagan world where profligates like Caligula were known to spend the equivalent of a million dollars on a single evening's entertainment, the happy people were the Christians who had nothing to spend but their lives. Barnabas called them "children of joy." So deep and real was their joy that they endured the ugliest experiences of life with rejoicing.

Today life may have tragic, painful, desperate factors; yet, the life we live will lead us to sing hymns of cheer, trace smiles of confidence and hope—to live the good life of victory.

Let us live this life—not on the basis that if we keep up the pace long enough and intensively enough, God will then climax our efforts by flinging back the curtains and ushering in an eternal paradise. The Christian hope includes this grand finale; but we will not be preoccupied with the conditional well-doing. Rather we will allow the final resolution to rest in God's control while we respond with obedience and faith to His rule. We will be so profoundly God-centred that we will never fall prey to pessimism regarding this world's fate nor to conceit regarding the fabulous reward to come. Our ethic will be that of a transformed heart overflowing for God, reaching out to all fellow creatures, showing that it is a privilege to serve and to minister.

In this sort of life, the hope for reward or the fear of punishment are forgotten. One is motivated entirely by love, to furnish the universe with a holy life such as God intended life should be from creation. The Apostle Paul explains it thus:

"The very spring of our actions is the love of Christ. We look at it like this: if One died for all men then, in a sense, they all died, and His purpose in dying for them is that their lives now should be no longer lived for themselves but for Him who died and rose again for them. . . . For God caused Christ, who Himself knew nothing of sin, actually to be sin for our sakes, so that in Christ we might be made good with the goodness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:14-21. Phillips.



# HANDS ACROSS THE GULF

**Pope  
Paul VI  
in  
New  
York**

By

WALTER R. L. SCRAGG

**F**OR STUDENTS of Bible prophecy, October 4, 1965, marked the occurrence of a most significant event. Crowding from the front page other news about Indonesia, Kashmir, and Vietnam, headlines around the world gave prominence to the visit of Pope Paul VI to United Nations' headquarters in New York. Greeted with what is reported to be the largest crowd ever to assemble on the streets of the world's largest city, the frail figure clad in red cloak and white surplice received a tumultuous welcome.

Paul, first to visit Jerusalem, first to visit India, now became the first Roman Pontiff to cross the Atlantic and visit the New World. While millions crowded the streets to catch a personal glimpse of the Pope, an estimated audience of 125 million Americans watched on television his progress through the streets. It is fair to state that no world figure, political, scientific, or religious could draw such a crowd or command such attention as did the former Cardinal Montini.

Past history records many instances where pontiffs have presided at international conclaves. Once this was the peculiar prerogative of the Pope of Rome. To him the nations looked for answers to their problems, and for support against their enemies. In the days of the Holy Roman Empire, Gregory VIII and Pope Innocent III made and unmade numerous kings and emperors.

No one today looks to the Papacy to appoint the heads of state. But political power can be wielded in far more subtle and effective ways than the crowning of royal brows. When a man, to whom more than 500,000,000 vow allegiance, speaks, then the world must stop and listen. It is no wonder then that heads of state and prominent statesmen crowded the chambers of the United Nations to hear Paul plead for peace. Represented were dignitaries from 117 nations with observers from six more. The only absentee was tiny Albania, presumably absent because of her sympathy with Red China.

Considering the importance of this event in the light of Bible prophecy, it is difficult to know just where to begin, for surely it seems that prophecy is fulfilling too fast these days for the student to keep pace. To see current events in their true perspective, we need to go back to 1798 when the Papacy suffered its deadliest defeat. Long the arbiter of the nations, in that year Napoleon, annoyed at Papal attempts to interfere in French policies, instructed his general, Berthier, to take the Pope prisoner. When this was accomplished, the world in general was ready to write the Papacy off as a spent political force.

Students of prophecy have long considered this event to be the fulfillment of the prediction of Revelation 13:3, "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death." This political eclipse followed on after the devastating impact of the Reformation which left Rome withdrawn, defensive, and divided. In losing the Anglo-Saxon nations, and the other nations

of Northern Europe to the Reformation, as a long-range consequence Rome lost a controlling influence over what was to become the mightiest nation of the New World, the United States of America. It is a fact that for many years the Papacy has steadily wooed the American nation seeking to gain her as an ally in implementing its policies. It is interesting to trace the development of the Papacy from its sensitive and defensive outlook of a few years back, to today's aggressive outreach that has captured the imagination of the world. Surely in today's significant happenings the prophecy has been fulfilled, "And his deadly wound was healed." Revelation 13:3. Beside commanding the allegiance of more than one-sixth of the world's population, the Papacy has the sympathy of countless millions more. More than that, through Catholic political parties it exercises a measure of control in more than a score of nations.

Dozens of newspaper editorials have responded to Paul's recent visit to the United Nations' headquarters in words similar to those used in the *Evening Standard* of October 5: "No world religious leader can match the political power of the Pope. Not only is the church he leads probably the largest in the world, and greater, numerically, than those that proclaim no faith at all: it speaks with one voice on such matters. . . . His presence at the headquarters of the United Nations is unprecedented."

Unprecedented is right! Consider those who made up his audience when he spoke to the United Nations. Beside the representatives of the United States there were those from such predominantly Protestant countries as Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the nations of Scandinavia, and many others. In addition there were the representatives of the Communist, or Russian, bloc. And the astounding thing is that they not only listened but joined in the tumultuous applause that greeted the Pontiff's appeal for world peace. The Bible describes the resurgence of the Papal power in these words: "And all the world wondered after the beast." Revelation 13:3. No greater evidence of the fulfillment of this prophecy has been seen to date than the response of the world powers to the United Nations visit of Catholicism's head of state.

In its assessment of the impact of the Pope's visit, the October 15 issue of *Time* magazine stated: "Certainly it would bolster the morale of the professional diplomats who hope to see the U.N. roused from its present state of impotence." It then went on to declare: "Though it was possible to question the lasting impact of Paul's peacemaking address, it was impossible to deny that his mission was an unmistakable landmark in history, another great personal triumph for the Pope. Perhaps the most lasting effect of the pilgrimage



would be what theologians might call a 'demythologizing' of the Papacy. In escaping again the museum-like confines of the Vatican for the secular world, the Pope dramatized his wish to be not only the Vicar of Christ but also the servant of the servants of God. In a world grown tired and suspicious of ritual and mystery, it was well for the humble man Paul to be recognized beneath the exalted churchly office. For the more the world was able to see his stature as a man, *the more, perhaps, it might be willing to heed his words as Pope.*"

Students of prophecy also find much food for thought in the Pope's words regarding the future of the United Nations. Stated the Pope: "The edifice you have constructed must never fail. It must be perfected, and made equal to the needs which world history will present." In directing the hopes of the world and of his followers to the United Nations, the Pope linked himself and his church with the political aspirations of the U.N. From now on it would be reasonable to expect that more and more the Roman Church will seek to support and use the United Nations.

As America is a prime supporter of the United Nations, the Pope's appeal to support the organization must have brought heart to the American people and to their President. His very visit to American shores, his personal and private discussions with President Johnson, seem events that could not have been dreamed of less than five years ago. However, many who know the history of the church in the past can only view with concern the current moves toward closer friendship.

For many decades there has been a wide gulf in existence between the Papacy and Protestant America, and to see it being bridged so dramatically and suddenly shows that these are indeed significant days in which we live. Many years ago, one far-seeing writer stated: "The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf . . . to clasp hands with the Roman Power." "In the movements now in progress in the United States to secure for the institutions and usages of the church the support of the state, Protestants are following in the steps of papists. Nay, more, they are opening the door for the Papacy to regain in Protestant America the supremacy which she has lost in the Old World."—E.G.White, *"The Great Controversy,"* pages 588, 573.

At the time this was written, at the turn of the century, such a prospect was seemingly impossible of accomplishment. Today we see it being fulfilled, and Bible prophecy indicates that we should expect an even closer link in the relationships between America and the Papacy. How the final events will actually be fulfilled we do not know. History must be our guide in determining the fulfilment of prophecy. Current events must be interpreted in the light of fulfilled and fulfilling prophecy. For Christians who view with mingled concern and hope the events transpiring at the moment, the counsel of Scripture is more sound than ever: "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." 1 Thessalonians 5:5, 6.

A popular figure wherever he goes, hands are eagerly stretched out toward Pope Paul. Here they belong to young priests in Spanish Square in Rome.







Tilstra immerses one of ten Vietnamese baptised by him in a Vam Nhon drainage canal while a battle raged only two miles away.



Made from a bamboo pole, twigs, and bird feathers, this "tree" is believed by Vietnam hill tribesmen to ward off the evil spirits they have been taught to fear.

**T**HE AUSTRALIAN DOCTOR and the young American minister, tired and dusty after hiking twenty-five miles through densely forested mountains, were glad when evening came to find a cold stream in which to bathe. They had heard rumours earlier of enemy guerrillas lurking close by. But in 1962 South Vietnam was filled with rumours, so they paid little attention.

Their bath was interrupted by an excited hill tribesman. Five Viet Cong guerrillas were camped nearby, he said, and wanted to see them. Reaching the camp, the two men were questioned by the Viet Cong about the purpose of the nineteen-man safari with which they were travelling. Reinhold Tilstra, the American leader of the party, answered the questions. He grew apprehensive when the Viet Cong leader said that he and the Australian doctor and a Norwegian nurse, the only Westerners in the party, were to go into the jungle for a "lecture" by the guerrillas.

At that time Tilstra was president of the Vietnam Seventh-day Adventist Mission with headquarters in Saigon. He and his wife, Connie, had been missionaries to Malaya in 1960 when he was called to South Vietnam. He struggled most of the next four years to keep the mission afloat while wave after wave of crises swept the strife-torn country.

A short, sandy-haired man with a boyish face, Tilstra now seems reticent to discuss the difficulties of his Vietnam days. "When you live in a situation

like that, things don't seem too exciting; you just take them for granted," he says.

But the guerrillas' lecture in the jungle disturbed even the usually imperturbable Tilstra. "You never know how long those lectures will last—an hour or two, a week or two, or sometimes for ever."

Tilstra told the Viet Cong that his group was planning to visit five villages of the Kohors, a nomadic people who live in the mountainous jungle more than 200 miles north of Saigon. One of these villages had recently burned to the ground, and the mission group was taking food and clothing to its stricken people. The doctor, Alan Jones, of New South Wales, Australia, and the nurse, Mary Niegaard of Norway, had come with Tilstra to give medical aid to the natives. A Vietnamese translator was also with them, while the rest of the safari were mountaineer pack carriers.

The three missionaries and the translator had driven the day before from Saigon 175 miles north to Dalat. From there they drove about ten miles to the mountains, where they began the twenty-five-mile hike. Tilstra told the Viet Cong leader he planned to be in the mountains about ten days.

The guerrillas apparently believed Tilstra's story because, as he says, "we were treated quite correctly, even given the opportunity to put on warm clothes and get some food."

The five guerrillas were dressed in the black pajama-type garb of Oriental peasants, and all except the leader were armed with rifles. They took their turn haranguing against the United States policy in Cuba and berating the United States Government for intervention in South Vietnam. Tilstra and his companions were given little opportunity to talk or ask questions. The missionaries did argue, however, that they should be allowed to complete their tour of the five villages. They were finally given permission to continue next day to the burned-out village, about four miles away. But they were warned not to go any farther.

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Adventist Miss  
Swept Land



# ...ssing for Christ

## SOUTH VIETNAM

...y Tells of Thrilling Adventures in This War-

★ BARBARA HAND

The weary group finally emerged from the jungle at 10 p.m., three hours after they had entered. It seemed much longer. And what had begun as a ten-day trip ended after only two days.

How does a mission operate in an area plagued by such disturbances?

To overcome some of the obstacles, the mission broadcasts a radio programme in the native language over each of South Vietnam's ten radio stations. When Tilstra was there 1,200 Vietnamese were enrolled in a Bible correspondence course offered by the radio programme. A new set of lessons is now being written especially for the Buddhists of Vietnam to replace the old lessons which had been produced for Hindus.

A new \$10,000 press prints religious and health books which have been translated into Vietnamese from English and French. The books are distributed by a corps of 100 colporteurs, or book salesmen, who comprise 8 per cent of the mission's 1,200 members. Tilstra, who believes colporteurs are one of the strongest instruments of the mission organization, watched their

number grow from seventeen when he joined the mission in 1960 to 100 when he left in 1963.

One of the first big problems faced by Tilstra was development of educational facilities to train the Vietnamese to work among their own people. His goal was to set up one elementary school in each of five church districts. But he first had to develop the mission's main training centre in Saigon so it could train teachers for the elementary schools. He emphasized the academic programme, opened the school's doors to students other than mission children, and added one grade to the school each year.

The mission president found inflation a big obstacle to missionary progress. He received provisional recognition of the school by the Vietnamese government, on condition that the school expand and more facilities be added. A fund-raising drive to add six new classrooms was begun in 1961, but by the time the money was raised and government red tape cleared, building costs had risen by 50 per cent. The mission was still short of its goal.

Despite such obstacles, the Saigon school did grow from twenty-five to 300 students between 1960 and 1963, with ten teachers.

The most spectacular gain for the mission since the Vietnamese civil war began has been membership. When Tilstra entered the country in 1960, he found a membership of 900, accumulated in thirty years. By 1963 the membership had grown to 1,200—a gain of 33 per cent in three years.

The largest Protestant mission in Vietnam is the Christian Mission Alliance, which has also made rapid membership gains. That mission operates radio broadcasts, schools, and a printing press and has a few Bible salesmen. In addition, Baptist and Mennonite missions have recently established successful footholds in the country.

These membership gains have been made despite a great Buddhist majority in the country and a strong Catholic minority of about 20 per cent of the people.

Tilstra attributes the membership gains to the war, which has set the people in turmoil.

"The war and political changes have upset the social system which the Vietnamese have been used to," he

A Vietnamese church member beats on a native drum to call his people to worship in their simple meetinghouse.



Mission churches like this one built by Seventh-day Adventists dot the hills of troubled South Vietnam.





says. "So they look for something to give them security and steady belief. Brought face to face with the corruption, suffering, and misery of the world, people are willing to say, 'Well, Lord, You take over.'"

The turmoil caused by the war poses great difficulties for the missions. Workers travelling in rural areas are exposed to constant harassment. During Tilstra's years in Vietnam, nine of his growing corps of colporteurs were captured while working in enemy territory—only two returned. Those two told a story of questioning, threats, lectures, and tests. But they held true to their beliefs despite the attempted brainwashing and were finally released.

Pastors cannot travel at night, and even by day they are subject to lectures or roadblocks. Roadblocks are usually a series of fifteen to twenty ditches dug across a road in a two- or three-mile area.

Gunfire in South Vietnam has become a sound common to soldier and civilian alike. Tilstra recalls a Saturday morning in April, 1962, when he performed a baptism to the booming background of artillery fire. This baptism was held in a drainage canal at Vam

Nhon, a town south of Saigon in the Mekong Delta. Ten people were immersed that morning while a battle raged about two miles away.

Despite the war-charged atmosphere, Tilstra emphasizes, the mission he operated maintained strict political neutrality. "We are a world-wide organization and don't meddle in politics," he said.

The nature of this war poses inevitable theological questions. To what extent, for instance, can a Vietnamese be a true Christian and still survive in a region subject to dual rule?

"It is easy to say you should be a good Christian and obey the law of the land, but what is the law of the land in such a case?" Tilstra asks. "Most of our church members live in an area where one moment the South Vietnam Army is in charge and the next moment their enemies. The government collects taxes by day and the others by night.

"We just tried to keep the church members so close to the Lord as to be in daily contact with Him. Then God can give the answer to the particular problem at the particular time."

Inconveniences are also caused by the many government changes. For example, Tilstra says: "We are dealing with a provincial governor, trying to get land to build a school; he is favourable and says he will co-operate. Then he is deposed, and we have to start out with a new official."

One such incident occurred when former Vietnamese president Ngo Dinh Diem was toppled in November, 1963, by an army-led *coup d'etat*. Tilstra, who at the time was in the United States on a brief furlough, was sent scurrying back to Vietnam. Two major problems faced him. One concerned the status of the Adventist mission hospital in Saigon; the other, the right of the Adventist mission to buy and sell property with the same freedom enjoyed by the Catholic Church.

The Diem regime had threatened to close the hospital, but new officials in the health department were more sympathetic. Its doors stayed open.

The second problem was not so easily solved. Tilstra was finally granted an interview with General Nguyen Khan, then premier of the country. The missionary leader petitioned Khan for freedom to buy and sell property. But while Tilstra found the premier "polite and engaging," the petition still remained unanswered at the end of 1964.

In spite of the problems, frustrations, and fears, Tilstra and his wife say they enjoyed their work in Vietnam and would have liked to return. Their youngest daughter, Carol, two, was born in the Saigon hospital. The other two girls, Kathleen, nine, and Tina Marie, seven, were with their parents in Saigon from 1960-1963. Tilstra was born in Indonesia. He did not enter the United States until 1946, and still carries a slight Dutch accent in his speech.

He failed to receive health clearance for returning to Vietnam, but became pastor (January 1, 1965) of two Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Northern California towns of Arcata and Trinidad.

When looking back now on his Vietnam experiences, Tilstra says simply, "God was good."



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**just YOU  
and  
YOUR BIBLE**



**Roy C. Naden**

## WHO ARE THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM TODAY?

1. God made many promises to Abraham and his descendants, but were the promises conditional upon their obedience to God's commandments and their acceptance of God's plans?

"If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God." "If thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord." "The Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only . . . if that thou hearken." Deuteronomy 28: 1, 9, 10, 13.

"And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Jeremiah 18: 9, 10.

2. What did God say would happen to the children of Israel if they rejected or ignored His will?

"But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee." "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them; and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." Deuteronomy 28: 15, 25.

3. Because the Hebrew nation had fallen to a very low ebb spiritually, what was one of the great works that Jesus came to perform at His first advent?

"But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 15: 24.

4. Many years before Christ's first advent, what period of probation did God give to the Hebrews, in which they were to make an end of sin and to take up the work committed to their care?

"Seventy weeks of years are fixed for your people and for your sacred city." Daniel 9: 24, Moffatt.

(See "You and Your Bible," April and May, 1963, for a full discussion of this prophecy.)

5. After this period of Hebrew probation expired in A.D. 34, what significant statement did the Apostle Paul make?

"But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy. . . . Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13: 45, 46.

6. Up until this time the Jews had occupied a favoured position, for they had received great light, and they looked with scorn upon the Gentiles, with whom they had failed to share this light; but after receiving a special vision from God what bold words did Peter speak?

"I now see how true it is that God has no favourites, but that in every nation the man who is God-fearing and does what is right is acceptable to Him." "God has shown me clearly that I must not call any man profane or unclean." Acts 10: 34-36, 28, N.E.B.

7. From this time what was to be completely broken down?

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Ephesians 2: 12-14.

8. What was to be the relationship from that time between the Jews and the Gentiles?

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3: 28.

9. Although the Hebrews, as a nation, were rejected as God's special representatives, what invitation has always been offered to them individually?

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16.

10. Whom does God count as His spiritual Israel?

"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Romans 2: 28, 29.

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3: 29.

11. As all the promises once made to literal Israel cannot be fulfilled, because they did not fulfil the conditions, through whom will they be fulfilled?

"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: . . . They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Romans 9: 6-8.



**T**HE PROPHECIES OF REVELATION give considerable emphasis to the events of the last days. When we say, "last days," we refer to the time that immediately precedes the second coming of Christ, for it is apparent in Scripture that that event will bring to an end the present order of the way of life on this planet. The tide of evil is now rising to heights once considered by many to be impossible. But sin and sinners are not eternal by nature, for God has promised the day will dawn when "there shall be no more curse." Revelation 22:3.

Few have considered what is involved in this statement. Nor have any of us contemplated with sufficient depth of meditation what life will be like when "there shall be no more curse."

Concerning the eternal home of the redeemed, one writer has declared: "The loves and sympathies which God Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together 'the whole family in heaven and earth'—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed."

"There, immortal minds will contemplate with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There will be no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body. . . ."

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Revelation 5:13.

"The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love."—"The Great Controversy," pages 677, 678.

As fully as such things promise lasting happiness and security for the redeemed, they also portend destruction to all who refuse to be separated from sin. And it is just at this point that we see the reason Jesus described His coming as "the end of the world."

Consider what will transpire in connection with that declaration. "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do

# The Advent IN THE Apocalypse

PART THREE



By Austen G. Fletcher

iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 13:39-42.

It is this aspect of the coming of the Lord that is disbelieved most today, especially in some religious circles. Recently in a widely viewed television panel that discussed the second coming of Christ, it was the representatives of the largest and most influential religious bodies who declared that they found difficulty in accepting such concepts about Christ's coming. Yet, in the Book of Revelation, the destruction of the wicked and the desolation of the earth at Christ's coming are most emphatically taught. In this book that has special significance for the last days, it seems as if the



divine Author foresaw the popular unbelief of this age, and for that reason articulated most positively this aspect of the truth about His return.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great." Revelation 19:11-18.

There are several statements in this graphic portrayal that are exactly paralleled in other portions of this book. Kings and captains, great men and mighty men, bond and free are again mentioned in Revelation 6:14-17. So, too, is the "wrath of the Lamb," and "the great day of His wrath." Here then is a description of the coming of Christ and its relationship to the unsaved. At that day they "hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Thus does the Scripture teach us the fact that when Jesus comes, the wicked will see Him—they shall behold His face. To them it is the day of God's wrath. We repeat the question that will fall from the lips of the unsaved, "Who shall be able to stand?" Certainly not the wicked!

The desolation of the earth is also associated with the destruction of the wicked, and with the great day of His wrath.

"And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." Revelation 16:18-20.

Recall for the moment that description of the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich and the chief, and the mighty, the bondmen and free who seek to hide from the face of the Lamb, whom they see sitting on His throne. The verse preceding that description says,

"And every mountain and island were moved out of their places." Revelation 6:14.

What a dreadful day will the coming of Christ be for these who have laid up their treasure upon earth. Beautiful palaces in which men of power and wealth have lived the gay and high life will be swept to their ruin. Proud cities that have served to harbour everything that is corrupt and violent will go down into the dust! This sin-cursed earth will be convulsed under the mighty hand of God. He shall "lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Isaiah 13:9.

It is not surprising that men should seek to disbelieve what God says about these things, for they do not find it difficult to doubt what He says about other things. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14. What the Lord tells us of the lot of the wicked when Christ comes, is as plainly stated as what He says about the joys and deliverance of the righteous on that day. How much better it is to heed what God says, than to choose to become cumbered with doubt and unbelief. None need to be lost, for the way to Christ is plain and simple.

Most men believe that God ought, one day, to bring this reign of evil to its end. But few have stopped to think what would be involved if and when He did this. Yet, that day surely will come. We are not to prepare for it simply because we dread its coming, but we are to know the solemnity of men who are wise to the tremendous significance of the things that will transpire when Christ our Lord shall come again.

When Jesus comes, He will speak to us. He will address us either with the words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," or with these words, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matthew 25:34, 41.

Which group we will be in then depends on the choices we make now. May you experience the consolation of the promise that "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

O brother, be faithful! soon Jesus will come,  
For whom we have waited so long;  
Oh, soon we shall enter our glorious home,  
And join in the conqueror's song.  
O brother, be faithful! for why should we prove  
Unfaithful to Him who hath shown  
Such deep, such unbounded and infinite love—  
Who died to redeem us His own.

O brother, be faithful! eternity's years  
Shall tell for thy faithfulness now,  
When bright smiles of gladness shall scatter thy tears,  
A coronet gleam on thy brow.  
O brother, be faithful! the promise is sure,  
That waits for the faithful and tried;  
To reign with the ransomed, immortal and pure,  
And ever with Jesus abide.

—Uriah Smith.



THE GROUP OF GIRLS clustered around the spring were bantering, giggling, and gossiping as girls usually do, even when there is little to talk about. Today, however, there was much to interest them. The spring itself was commonplace, as it bubbled up in the bed of a creek which was dry, except on the occasion of seasonal floods. Being the only source of water for the town built on a mound a short distance away, it became the meeting place for the girls of the village, who came in the evenings to draw water. The interesting event, this evening, was the presence of camels, ten of them, arrogant, disdainful, resting on their knees around the spring. Curious, excited, the girls hardly noticed the stranger and his servants, except to wonder vaguely why he regarded them so closely; camels were not unknown in Mesopotamia, but they were rare, as most people used donkeys for transport.

Then Rebekah joined them; beautiful Rebekah of the happy heart and winsome ways. Everyone felt more relaxed when she was present. As she came up from the spring, pitcher balanced on her shoulder, the stranger hurried forward requesting a drink of water. Immediately, she lowered her pitcher to accede to his request, and obligingly offered to draw water for his camels.

To fulfil his commission Eliezer had travelled many days with a caravan of laden camels to reach this far-off village, "the city of Nahor." Now, having arrived at his destination, he made his way to the well where the women would congregate. But how could he know which of the village girls would make a suitable wife for the young master? Silently he prayed, stipulating a sign which would evidence a "kind heart and an active, energetic nature." Almost immediately he was given a demonstration of God's minute care and attention. Approaching a girl who had attracted his attention by her courteous, modest demeanor, he received the sign which he had requested. Rebekah had not only given him a drink, but also had drawn water for his camels.

Hardly daring to believe that his prayer had been answered with such promptness and precision, he asked her name, and requested lodgings. To his delighted amazement he learned that she was the grand-daughter of Nahor, Abraham's brother, and that the family gladly would care for the whole caravan. God indeed had guided him, and he had no doubt as to the outcome of his journey.

Hurrying home to the women's apartments, Rebekah told her mother the story, excitedly displaying the gifts. When her brother Laban heard, he hastened

# The REWARD

By MERYL TOTENHOFFER

Well, if that weren't like Rebekah! It was one thing to give a man a drink, but to draw water for his camels! Ten of them! And camels were supposed to be such thirsty creatures. Emptying her pitcher into the trough, the girl ran back again and again to the well, filling and refilling the trough until the last surly beast had drunk its fill. And the fellow hadn't even offered to help her!

When she had finished, however, the stranger showed his gratitude by presenting her with gifts—a gold ring as an ornament for her nose and gold bracelets for her arms.

"If I'd known I'd have received gifts like that, I would have drawn water for twenty camels," thought each girl enviously.

The onlookers did not know the story behind this drama. Five hundred miles away from Haran, across the Euphrates River, past the Lebanon Mountains, beyond Damascus, down in the south of Palestine at the well of Beer-Sheba, Abraham had made his trusted steward, Eliezer, swear to secure a bride for his son Isaac from amongst his relations in Mesopotamia. Abraham was convinced that no local girl would make a suitable wife for his son, the child of God's promise.

to welcome the stranger, the sight of gold accelerating his speed and enlarging his hospitality.

"What could it all be about?" the girl wondered. Her imagination pictured interesting possibilities, but after all, only one was important. She was older than most of the other unmarried village girls, no doubt there had been other suitors, but none wealthy enough to provide a dowry sufficiently large to satisfy her shrewd, scheming brother. Owing to the infirmity of her father, Bethuel, Laban had become head of the house, but surely this time no such financial problem would arise.

The strangers would be taken to the men's apartments; it would be a long time before she heard any news, the girl thought. But quicker than she expected, Laban entered with a startling announcement. Eliezer, steward of wealthy great-uncle Abraham, had come to seek a bride for cousin Isaac. He had been divinely guided to approach Rebekah, and in due course a marriage had been arranged between the two cousins.

"We cannot contravene the plans of God," the brother piously concluded.

Rebekah thought the statement rather amusing. Laban was not averse to worshipping the local deities if he thought there were something to gain. Apparently





the large dowry and the rich gifts Eliezer had brought for the family were sufficient to satisfy even Laban's avaricious nature. Happiness filled her being. Eliezer seemed an honest, trustworthy person, and God certainly had guided in the matter; she would be happy to leave Haran.

That event came sooner than she thought. The next morning the steward announced his intention to return immediately to his master.

"It's too soon," the mother objected. "Rebekah must have time to say good-bye to all her friends. We'll have parties and a round of festivities." Laban concurred. After all it would reflect on their hospitality if the girl left home without the customary farewells.

On Eliezer's persisting, however, they called Rebekah and inquired if she were willing to leave without delay. "I will go," she responded.

"But you must take someone with you," insisted the mother. So it was that Deborah went with Rebekah. Deborah having been her nurse and confidant since babyhood, left together with other personal servants.

Laden the caravan had arrived, and laden it departed, but with a more precious freight.

Interesting as the journey was, before too long it became wearisome, even though Rebekah had her girlish dreams to sustain her. What kind of person

was Isaac? And Abraham? The thought of that patriarch inspired the greater awe. Would he be disappointed in his servant's choice? Surely not, for had not God guided all the way?

After days of travelling, the caravan was filled with excitement, for had not Eliezer said they were nearing their destination? Gazing ahead through the still, evening air, Rebekah noticed a solitary man coming to meet them. On learning that he was Isaac, she alighted from her camel, and following the custom of her country, covered her face with a veil to meet the bridegroom. The journey had ended.

Rebekah's marriage fulfilled her fondest hopes. Isaac proved to be all she had wished—ardent, affable, peaceable; theirs was a happy home. To illustrate this one can refer to the incident that happened years after their marriage. Drought had driven the encampment to locate in the fertile valley of Gerar. It was the custom of ancient kings to take all beautiful women into their harems, so Isaac, fearing that he would be slain to enable the king to seize Rebekah, let it be thought that the woman was his sister, not his wife. This is one of the only two recorded instances in which Isaac deviated from implicit trust and obedience to God; it remains incomprehensible, nevertheless.

The king of the Philistines observed Isaac and Rebekah together, and such was the loving playfulness, the delicate intimacy between the two, that he realized immediately that they were not brother and sister, but husband and wife. To his embarrassment the servant of Jehovah was rebuked by the heathen king for allowing the deception.

Even before this incident, there had been evidence of God's continued interest in their welfare. Though the couple had been married for nineteen years, there was no child to inherit the promised blessings. "Abraham must surely be disappointed," thought the wife, but Isaac had to realize that his child was as much a result of God's direct interposition as he himself had been. When he made the matter the subject of earnest prayer, it was not long before his prayers were answered. Rebekah was to have a child.

Happy as she was, Rebekah realized, as the months passed, that all was not well. Deborah was quite concerned but it seemed to the expectant mother that God would be even more concerned. She felt they should enquire of the Lord, but who would do so? Abraham? Isaac? Throughout the years Rebekah's knowledge of God had increased, and her faith had developed. God was not the God of Abraham and Isaac only, but of Rebekah, too. Though merely a woman, she herself was prepared to approach God directly.

In answer to her troubled prayer, an angel was sent to inform her that she would have twin sons, boys of widely different character, and that though both would become the head of mighty nations, contrary to the prevailing custom, the first-born would be subordinate to his younger brother.

Twin sons! Would not any Eastern woman be delighted! It would, however, be a greater cause for rejoicing if each of us were to realize, as Rebekah did, that the Being whom we worship is not only a God of infinite power, but also of infinite tenderness.

(To Be Concluded Next Month)



# COUNTDOWN



**TIMELY TOPICS FOR TEEN-AGERS**

who are Looking for Certainty in Today's Uncertain World.

By **DESMOND B. HILLS**

## The Man Who Wrote His Autobiography Before He Was Born

THE BELLS that jingle the most at Christmas are the ones on the cash registers in the department stores. At this time of year the shopkeepers reap a harvest, the children have the time of their lives, and parents go the second mile all because on December 25 there is a day called Christmas, and custom decrees that certain things should be done. Actually, many of these customs date back to pre-Christian times, and are pagan in origin. Then, too, it is safe to say that the words "customs" and "commerce" are more predominant in the minds of the masses than is the person Christ whose birthday it is supposed to be. When I was a teenager, I read on a church notice board in Christchurch, New Zealand, the statement, "Let's put Christ back into Christmas!" and this thought always comes to my mind when I hear the cash register bells jingling at Christmas time. Will you join me in thinking of Christ often this Christmas time? Will you join other thousands of Christians in every land in thinking of Christ often during this coming year?

By His birthday, whenever this might be, Christ has divided time. The dating of our calendars B.C. and A.D. is only a reflection of this. His coming to this world, and all that signifies His presence, brought a new dimension to life. His keynote is salvation "without price." After thinking about Christ, one Christian writer penned the following statement under the heading, "The Incomparable Christ."

"More than nineteen hundred years ago there was a man born contrary to the laws of life. This Man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He did not travel extensively. Only once did He cross the boundary of the country in which He lived; that was during His exile in childhood.

"He possessed neither wealth nor influence. His relatives were inconspicuous, uninfluential, and had neither training nor education.

"In infancy He startled a King, in childhood He puzzled the doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature, walked on the billows as if they were pavements, and hushed the sea to sleep.

"He healed the multitudes without medicine and without money.

"He never wrote a book, yet all the libraries of the country could not hold all the books that have been written about Him.

"He never wrote a song, yet He furnished the theme for more songs than all the song writers combined.

"He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students.

"He never practised medicine, yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near.

"He never marshalled an army or drafted a soldier, or fired a gun, yet no leader ever had more volunteers who have, under His orders, made more rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot being fired.

"Every seventh day (once a week) the wheels of commerce cease their turning and multitudes wend their way to worshipping assemblies to pay homage and respect to Him.

"The names of the past proud statesmen of Greece, and Rome have come and gone, but the name of this Man abounds more and more. Though time has spread nineteen hundred years between the people of this generation and the scene of His crucifixion, yet He still lives."

Say, teenager, have you considered the Christ "who was born contrary to the laws of life"? Then again, did you know that He wrote His autobiography before He was born? Yes, the Old Testament is full of predictions about the life and ministry of Jesus, predictions which have been fulfilled to the last detail. Although this remarkable chain of Messianic prophecies was penned hundreds of years before the events occurred, sacred and secular history have proved them to be true. Let us consider a few of the amazing predictions concerning Christ that He Himself made through the Old Testament prophets.

### THE TIME OF CHRIST'S ADVENT FORETOLD

**Prophecy:** Daniel 9:25. "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks."

**Fulfillment:** Mark 1:14, 15. "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching. . . The time is fulfilled."

### HIS BIRTHPLACE IN BETHLEHEM

**Prophecy:** Micah 5:2. "Bethlehem . . . out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel."

**Fulfillment:** Matthew 2:1. "Jesus was born in Bethlehem."

### CHRIST FROM THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

**Prophecy:** Genesis 49:10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver . . . until Shiloh come."

**Fulfillment:** Hebrews 7:14. "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah."

### FROM FAMILY OF JESSE AND DAVID

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 11:1. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."

**Fulfillment:** Revelation 22:16. "I am the root and the offspring of David."

### HIS VIRGIN MOTHER, MARY

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 7:14. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

**Fulfillment:** Matthew 1:18-23. "A virgin . . . shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel."

### NATURE OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY FORETOLD

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 61:1. "The Spirit of the Lord . . . hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek."

**Fulfillment:** Luke 4:16-21. "And He came to Nazareth. . . And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. . . And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."



### **BETRAYED BY A FRIEND**

**Prophecy:** Psalm 41:9. "Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me."

**Fulfilment:** John 13:18. "That the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me."

### **SOLD FOR A PRICE**

**Prophecy:** "Zechariah 11:12. "They weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver."

**Fulfilment:** Matthew 26:15. "And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."

### **THIS MONEY PURCHASED A CEMETERY**

**Prophecy:** Zechariah 11:13. "And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter."

**Fulfilment:** Matthew 27:3-8. "And they . . . bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in."

### **ENEMIES SPIT UPON HIM**

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 50:6. "I hid not My face from shame and spitting."

**Fulfilment:** Matthew 27:30. "They spit upon Him."

### **SMITTEN WITH A ROD**

**Prophecy:** Micah 5:1. "They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek."

**Fulfilment:** Matthew 27:30. "[They] took the reed, and smote Him on the head."

### **SCOURGED AS A CRIMINAL**

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 50:6. "I gave My back to the smiters."

**Fulfilment:** Matthew 27:26. "He had scourged Jesus."

### **CROWNED WITH THORNS**

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 52:13, 14. "Behold, My servant . . . His visage was so marred more than any man."

**Fulfilment:** Matthew 27:29. "When they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head."

### **DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION**

**Prophecy:** Psalm 22:16, 17. "They pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones."

**Fulfilment:** John 19:18. "They crucified Him."

### **GARMENTS DIVIDED BY LOTS**

**Prophecy:** Psalm 22:18. "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture."

**Fulfilment:** John 19:23, 24. "The soldiers . . . took His garments. . . . Let us not rend it [His coat], but cast lots for it."

### **HIS END IS WITH CRIMINALS**

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 53:9, 12. "And He made His grave with the wicked."

**Fulfilment:** Mark 15:27, 28. "And with Him they crucify two thieves."

### **SOLDIERS PIERCE HIS SIDE WITH A SPEAR**

**Prophecy:** Zechariah 12:10. "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced."

**Fulfilment:** John 19:34. "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side."

### **NONE OF HIS BONES BROKEN**

**Prophecy:** Psalm 34:20. "He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken."

**Fulfilment:** John 19:36. "A bone of Him shall not be broken."

### **BURIED IN A RICH MAN'S TOMB**

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 53:9. "And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death."

**Fulfilment:** Matthew 27:57-60. "There came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph. . . . and begged the body of Jesus. . . . And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock."

### **AROSE ON THE THIRD DAY**

**Prophecy:** Hosea 6:2. "In the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."

**Fulfilment:** Mark 8:31. "And He began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things . . . and be killed, and after three days rise again."

### **ASCENDED UP TO HEAVEN**

**Prophecy:** Psalm 24:7-10. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."

**Fulfilment:** 1 Peter 3:21, 22. "Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God."

### **THERE HE MAKES INTERCESSION FOR US**

**Prophecy:** Isaiah 53:12. "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

**Fulfilment:** Hebrews 7:25. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

As a thread of scarlet is woven into every strand of rope manufactured for the British Royal Navy, so we see that the story of Jesus Christ runs through the entire Bible.

He is the Lord over time and can reveal the future.

He is the Lord over space and can uphold the worlds.

He is the Lord over eternity. The future is in His hands.

Is He the Lord over your life? Have you allowed Him to save you?

"Woe to a world that vainly tries to escape His deity—dispute His power—disbelieve His resurrection—explain away His existence—deride Him as a phantom—insult Him as a spirit medium—philosophize over Him as a myth—accept Him as a mere human teacher—misquote His words to sustain their opinions—pervert His teachings—and despise His precious blood; but when all this is done, their difficulty is not removed, for Christ the King still lives at God's right hand. 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.'—H. L. Hastings.

The young lady who has written for Countdown readers this month has considered the Christ who saves, and has committed her life to His care. She is a happy Christian who finds real satisfaction in living the Christian life.

## *He's My Friend*



By NARELLE HARDES

Narelle's seventeen years have been ones filled with activity. After obtaining her Intermediate Certificate in her home town of Newcastle, New South Wales, she took a business course for a further year, and currently is working in a secretarial capacity. To qualify for further responsibilities she plans to attend Avondale College where she will take the secretarial course.

Jesus is all the world to me;  
My life, my joy, my all;  
He is my strength from day to day,  
Without Him I would fall.  
When I am sad, to Him I go,  
No other one can cheer me so;  
When I am sad He makes me glad,  
He's my Friend.

I have been a Christian all my life, so I know from personal experience that this verse is true. Jesus truly is "all the world to me." I love Him more and more each passing year. He's my Friend.

Living the Christian life is really satisfying, and I am thankful that I have been brought up as a Christian. It is my desire to tell others of the joy and happiness Christ has brought to me. I am looking forward to the day when Jesus comes again in the clouds of heaven to take His people to the place He has prepared for all those who love and serve Him.

Young people, will you join me in my decision to live for, to love and serve Christ more day by day?





# Forgiving AND Forgetting

By  
**W. ALEXANDER**

*Chairman,  
Department of Religion,  
Andrews University.*

**A**FTER A SERMON on the parable of the prodigal son, a pastor received a letter which said in part: "Your sermon has been rattling around in the subterranean caverns of my soul. If there had been more time, I would have cried out for help—but there is nothing that helps. You see, when there is none to rejoice over the prodigal's return, what then? There may be feasting and forgiving in the story—but what about the prodigal's forgetting?"

"He never forgets. . . . There will never again be youth, or innocence, or love, or belonging, because there is always the feeling that the time in the pig-pen shows through—that it will rub off on someone dear and beloved. So he surrounds his heart with an armour that nothing can touch.

"When I was fifteen, I knew where I was going—when I was twenty-one, I was well on my way—at thirty-four I knew where I had been. And there isn't enough phenobarbital—or whisky—in the world to make one forget."

There is in this letter something of wistful despair that is universal. Feelings are expressed here which we have all known in some degree; for whether saint or rebel, young or old, we all have reflective moments when the memory of an hour of husks comes back to haunt us, and even to destroy us, if possible.

The presence of guilt cannot be denied. Intelligent individuals, many of them Christians, are seen limping along through a guilt-ridden life crippled by despair, anxiety, and defeat, when they could be creatively free by finding and accepting God's forgiveness.

The experience called "forgiveness" is basic, because in the context of Christianity sin is man's re-





bellion against God and his rejection of God's love. The nature of God is such, and the relationship between God and man is such, that the unvarying effect of the sin of man's rejection is that of estrangement and separation.

But God does not leave man estranged from Him, for forgiveness is an act and an attitude of a God of love intended to release the sinner from the guilt, condemnation, and punishment of his sin and to restore the love relationship God wants, and the relationship man must have if he is to find meaning in life.

Unless and until we understand forgiveness in this context to the extent we are able to accept it, and know it as an actual experience, Christianity will have little appeal or power in our lives. Without forgiveness our worship and our witness will be futile and hopeless. Without forgiveness further sin is inevitable as we reason, "What's the use?"

Even though God holds out forgiveness to His sinful creatures, we find it difficult to accept God's offer. We may take the attitude that since most of the time it is easy for us to rationalize and minimize the sin in our lives, perhaps God does the same. Because of His very nature, shouldn't His forgiving be easy? But this concept is too easy and we have to reject it, for we know through Scripture that sin is considered in the heart of God as being beyond description in its divisiveness and its baseness.

Then we may think of forgiveness as it is known in human-to-human relationships and attempt to draw an analogy to the forgiveness God has revealed in Scripture, but this arouses mingled emotions. Because we know how reluctant we are to forgive another who has hurt us, and how difficult it is to forget, we project our reluctance upon God, and tend to doubt that He really can forgive us and bring us into a relationship of trust and love.

Our problem of accepting God's forgiveness is even further compounded by vivid memories of past sins which, even though confessed, come to mind in odd moments to haunt and raise the question, "Were they really forgiven?" And though we affirm they are forgiven, we still feel they are not forgotten.

We may look for answers to the problems of forgiveness in the more legal books of the Bible, or read in the prophets and epistles for help, but perhaps the most meaningful expression of God's position on the subject is found in a song of the Old Testament. It is the song of a saint, not a glorified haloed saint, but one still living on the earth, one still contending with suffering and sin, but able to sing of his experience in a way that we can understand. This song is found in Psalm 103:1-18, R.S.V.:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul;  
and all that is within me, bless His holy name!  
Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and forget not all His benefits,  
who forgives all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases,  
who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,  
who satisfies you with good as long as you live  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

"The Lord works vindication  
and justice for all who are oppressed.  
He made known His ways to Moses,  
His acts to the people of Israel.  
The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
He will not always chide,  
nor will He keep His anger for ever.  
He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
nor requite us according to our iniquities.  
For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is His steadfast love toward those  
who fear Him;  
as far as the east is from the west,  
so far does He remove our transgressions from us.  
As a father pities his children,  
so the Lord pities those who fear Him.  
For He knows our frame;  
He remembers that we are dust.

"As for man, his days are like grass;  
he flourishes like a flower of the field;  
for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.  
But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting  
to everlasting  
upon those who fear Him,  
and His righteousness to children's children,  
to those who keep His covenant  
and remember to do His commandments."



It is this outburst of thankful joy which summarizes the relationship between God and man in the forgiving and forgetting of sin.

"Bless the Lord, O My soul, and forget not all His benefits," sings the psalmist in a torrent of joy. The first of these benefits which compels David's praise is that God "forgives all . . . iniquity." The emphasis here is upon "all." God forgives all kinds and all degrees of sin—not just the little sins, or the ones we



would forgive in others, but *all* iniquity, however heinous.

Not only does God forgive the iniquity, but He "heals all . . . diseases." Forgiveness and healing go together in God's plan of restoring us; otherwise God would always be dealing with symptoms. God's healing adds to forgiveness the process of reclaiming the individual from the condition of sin, so that man becomes more accessible to the Holy Spirit for more complete cleansing.

God does more than forgive and heal. He *redeems* the life; He *crowns* us with love and mercy; He *satisfies* us with good. These words—"redeem," "crown," "satisfy"—imply a qualitative life at the highest level, a life of freedom, innocence, opportunity for growth and development—a life that knows no unsatisfied needs.

All the Lord's benefits are poured out upon man, but strange how short the memory is when it comes to keeping in mind the continuous mercy and grace that God makes available. So it is that the singer reminds us to "bless the Lord" with all that is in us—our mind, heart, conscience, imagination—and forget not the forgiveness that follows.

We need all the revelation we can get on how God relates to sin. So it is that in the second stanza of this song David sings of God's acts and attitudes as they touch forgiveness.

In the next verses David declares that the Lord made known His ways to Moses and the children of Israel. The way in which He did reveal Himself to Moses and the people of Israel as they came from Egypt reveals Him as a God of patience and compassion—two attributes He must possess in forgiving. In verse eight David echoes the cleft experience of Moses as he saw the Lord pass before him and heard the divine voice proclaim: "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." Exodus 34:6. R.S.V.

A forgiving God passed before Moses.

Another note is sounded in verses nine and ten, which spell out yet more of God's attitude toward us in our sin. Says David, "He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger for ever. He does not deal with us according to our sins." From this we see that God is not implacable, but will always accept our repentance and confession. He keeps us more aware of His mercy than of His anger, and this we know by the way He treats us when we are sinning. We deserve separation and death, but He offers us communion and life.

By three great metaphors David sings next of the extent of God's forgiving and forgetting. From nadir to zenith, from earth to heaven, the psalmist stretches God's love and mercy out so that we may know it is vast enough, far-reaching enough, to include those it is able to touch in space and time. But David goes with God out into infinity when He says that from east to west God does His book-keeping with our confessed sin. There are other scriptures which say that God purges our sin, puts it away, casts it into the bottom of the sea, puts it behind Him, blots it out, and remembers it no more.

This being true, there should be no problem when the memory of sin comes to haunt us. True, we can-

not undo what has been done, nor can we forget; but when the memory of sin comes to mind, we know that if it was repented of and confessed, it has been forgiven, and in this sense forgotten. When it returns to haunt, either we have not forgiven ourselves, or the accuser of our soul brings it back attempting to disturb our relationship with God.

If we cannot understand forgiveness in terms of the first metaphor of the vastness of the universe—nadir to zenith, east from west—we can understand the next metaphor of the attitudes of an understanding father. Our mortality, our earthiness, makes its eloquent plea to the Father's heart. And from that heart, which has intimate knowledge of our weaknesses, our natural infirmities, our mingled motives, the extenuating circumstances of our lives, comes knowing pity. We can understand a God who says, "I created you and gave you life, but sin has hurt that life. And where you hurt, I am hurt; where you suffer, I suffer. I want you to know that you are not rejected, for I have forgiven you, redeemed you, and made you My son."

As the song ends we can almost hear the moan of a desert wind as it touches a frail flower and carries it away. Here in gentle tone is a last analogy of the helplessness, the uncertainty of feeling in the human equation, as contrasted with the eternal, forgiving love of our God. We cannot trust our own feelings and attitudes toward forgiveness, but we can trust in what He says. Those who fear Him, reverence His name, acknowledge themselves as creatures and Him as God, those who keep His covenant and seek to obey Him, will know forgiveness, freedom from guilt and condemnation, acceptance, security, joy and peace.

God's gracious dealing with our sins depends on our right dealing with it. Says John: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. R.S.V. First, we must be willing to be confronted with our sin, whether black or grey, with no attempt to lessen our guilt. We must be willing to open the heart and honestly reveal the tangled feelings of rebellion, no matter how distressing the humiliation, no matter how great the anguish or remorse. We must then be willing to accept forgiveness from God, not because of any feeling, but because He says so. If we confess, He is willing to forgive and forget. We must be willing to come to God as often as we need to, and we will often have to fall at the Lord's feet and with sincere sorrow say, "I'm sorry. Please forgive." We must possess a willingness to forgive self; a willingness to forgive others. We must be willing to surrender all areas of our lives for His cleansing. And finally, we must be willing to sing of that forgiveness, so that we do not forget.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies;

"Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."



# Lines that LINGER

## WISE IS THAT MAN

Wise is that man who can stop his work and there  
Lay hold of the blessed privilege of prayer;  
Wise is he who, baffled, turns to look  
For word of guidance in God's holy Book.

And he is wise who lets no hindering bars  
Keep him from scanning the night sky for stars;  
And very wise indeed is he who sees  
The values of earth's old simplicities.

Who counts his store of blessings, finds that health  
And deep content are better far than wealth;  
Who comes to know that worrying is waste,  
And hurrying is needless, useless haste;

Wise is that man who moves across earth's sod  
Straight and stalwart, hand in hand with God.  
—GRACE NOLL CROWELL (Mrs. L. M. Ford)

## THE GIFT

It is not the weight of jewel or plate,  
Nor the fondle of silk or fur;  
'Tis the spirit in which the gift is rich  
As the gifts of the wise ones were;  
And we are not told whose gift was gold,  
Or whose was the gift of myrrh.  
—AUTHOR UNKNOWN (J. Allen)

## TODAY'S DESIRE

Most Holy Spirit, come, oh, come in fullness  
And repossess today each waiting heart.  
Refresh, subdue, restore, give life and beauty.  
Yea, all we need do Thou to us impart.

Oh, link us on afresh in closer union  
To that one Life in whom we each would grow;  
And more of all Thou hast already given  
We humbly ask that Thou wilt now bestow.

More love we crave; a burning, pure devotion;  
More love in Christ, more Christlike love to men;  
More joy divine; the joy of self-forgetting,  
The joy of saying to God's will, "Amen."

More peace when winds are rough and seas are raging,  
When faith can scarcely bear the "It is I";  
When hopes are dashed in wild, relentless fury  
Alas! some rock, and we behold them die.

We also do beseech of Thee longsuffering,  
More kindness, too, may we to others show;  
More goodness, that will stand the test of heaven,  
More faithfulness in Christ whilst here below.

More meekness under hard and heartless pressure;  
More temperance in thought, in word, in deed,  
For all these things we wait, Almighty Spirit,  
For Jesus' sake, oh, satisfy our need!

—CHARLOTTE MURRAY (Mrs. C. Drew)

## THE CHRIST OF CALVARY

Men preach today a crossless Christ,  
A strengthless Saviour, vague and dim.  
They will not see their sinful state;  
They will not own their need of Him.

They will not know the Lamb of God,  
Despised, rejected, crucified;  
That were to humble into dust  
Their boasted intellect, their pride.

Yet no man cometh unto God  
Save by the Son alone, He saith;  
The deathless life for which we long  
Can only, ever, come through death.

Not Bethlehem, not Nazareth,  
Stern Justice's lifted hand could stay;  
To Calvary the soul must go,  
And follow Jesus all the way.  
—ANNIE J. FLINT (Alice M. Blyden)

## THE FRESH INFILLING

Dear Father, at the dawn of day  
I kneel to meditate and pray.  
I see again the rising sun,  
With daily duties to be done,  
And so I come to seek Thy face  
And ask for fresh supplies of grace.  
I bring my heart this early hour,  
For fresh infilling of Thy power.

Cleanse Thou my mind from all that's vile,  
From earthly contacts that defile.  
This life shall then be wholly Thine,  
To do Thy blessed work divine.  
I place my all at Thy dear feet,  
Wherein my powers are incomplete,  
Make up my lack again, I pray,  
As I shall do Thy work today.

—ADLAI A. ESTER (Mrs. E. Cully)

## NIGHT

Oh, wonderful night when the moon hung low,  
An ivory ball in a sea of jet—  
And lent to the earth its soft, silver glow:  
O night I could never forget!

I knelt by the window and watched it all,  
The moon shining pale on my hair and eyes,  
And listened a while to a night-bird call  
A message of hope through the starlit skies.

Now black—and now silver, the tree tops sway,  
Seeming to me like a spangled gown;  
And down in the valley the shadows lay  
And called to the moon to come down.

A peace settled down on my sorrowing heart,  
And lifted it high to the stars above;  
And a voice seemed to say, "Come with Me apart,  
And learn to trust in thy God of love."

"Look at the sky, and the stars so fair!  
Can He who created them spurn thy grief?"  
And dropping my head in the moonlight there,  
I cried, "I believe! Help my unbelief."

"Thou art the God of the silent night,  
Thou art the Healer of every prayer,  
And Thou who gave to the moon her light,  
Will give me peace for the day's despair."

—SELECTED (Mrs. E. Bedford)

\* Each month's selection is made from readers' favourite quotations. So original material, please, include source, author, and your own name.





London dresses up for Christmas. A view looking down Regent Street, London's famous shopping centre.

# THE PROMISE OF Christmas

By ROBERT H. PARR

**T**HE OLD TESTAMENT is a happy conglomeration of promises of Christmas. The main purpose of the first segment of the Scriptures—from Genesis to Malachi—is to emphasize the great theme that Christmas is coming. From Moses to Malachi, priest, prophet, and patriarch combine to bring the glad tidings.

Hardly were Adam and Eve aware of their sin of disobedience, yes, it was even before their expulsion from Eden, when the first promise of the coming Christ came from the lips of the Almighty Himself! And He uttered His sublime statement, not so much to the mortal sinners as to the archfiend who had caused them to fall. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel." Genesis 3:15.

What did the Father mean by these enigmatic words? Paraphrased, the text may be rendered thus: "I, God, will set you, Satan, and those who follow Me, at bitter enmity, and this shall persist between all generations of those who follow you and those who serve Me. But there shall be One who, though you may do Him some injury, will inflict a mortal wound upon you." And thus as our first parents stood dazed and dismayed, they heard from the lips of a merciful God precious words of hope, words which were to be the guiding star to generations yet unborn. Satan had won a signal victory; sin had blighted God's beautiful creation. But there would come a time when

the Seed of the woman, the Son of the Most High, Christ the Redeemer, would strike a blow against the forces of wickedness which would enable man to lift his head once again.

So it was that when Eve brought forth her first-born son she exclaimed with fervent joy, "I have gotten the man from the Lord!" Genesis 4:1, R.V. Remembering the words of hope, she fondly imagined that this was the promised deliverer. History records how wrong she was; the man-child in whom her hopes were centred turned out to be the world's first murderer! Gloom all but extinguished the flame of expectancy.

But God did not allow their languishing trust to die. Time and again He repeated His promise, now in a prophecy, now in a symbol, now in a ceremony. He instituted the sacrificial system, the sole purpose of which was to point those forlorn wanderers to the glorious certainty of the coming Redeemer. When they saw the sacrificial lamb slain, they were to know that this was a mere figure of the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world. When they beheld the spilt blood, they were to know that this was only a shadow of the divine blood that was to flow for the sins of all men. Thus every act of worship was so ordained that it was a promise of the coming Christ, a foretaste, if you like, of that first Christmas.

Then, as time went on, the promises relating to that climactic event of sacred history became more than a mere thread of golden promise running through



the fabric of their lives. Those who gave study to the words of seer and prophet, and those who listened with their hearts to men who were in contact with Heaven itself, found that the whole history of mankind was little more than the story of the coming Redeemer. From the prophecy enunciated at the gates of Eden, the types and shadows of the sacrificial system, and the birthright and the blessing that passed down the line of the patriarchs there were added other and equally significant promises. Balaam, the renegade seer, unable to keep his silence, cried out with prophetic utterance, "there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Numbers 24:17. Balaam probably did not fully understand what he was saying, and it is doubtful whether those who heard the words comprehended them either. But Balaam was promising Israel a Christmas to come. Yet something should have stirred within them, for five centuries before, Jacob, on his deathbed, had uttered a similar word when he blessed his son Judah.

So the great hope was kept vitally alive. David saw the coming Redeemer as a High Priest; Jeremiah called Him "The Lord Our Righteousness;" Ezekiel boldly declared Him to be the coming King; to Zechariah, He was "The Branch;" and Daniel saw the Promised One as "Messiah the Prince." Isaiah, in a burst of poetic passion sang,

"For unto us a Child is born,  
unto us a Son is given:  
and the government shall be upon His shoulder:  
and His name shall be called  
Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,  
The everlasting Father, The Prince of  
Peace."

Micah went so far as to name the very town in which He was to be born, and Daniel, by an ingenious line of prophecy, even pin-pointed the very year in which He would come!

The whole of the Old Testament has as its theme, that first Christmas! There is not a book but has as its message the first advent of Christ; there was not a prophet who looked with God-given vision into the future, but proclaimed that the Shiloh would come, the Prince of Life, the Son of God, the Seed of David.

Yet in spite of all this constant reminder that the Christ would come, those to whom He came failed to recognize Him. They were caught totally unprepared and altogether unready. Even when He told them who He was, and gave them infallible proof after infallible proof, the best they could do was to greet His words with mocking incredulity. He came to His own, and His own received Him not.

And as the Old Testament is a fund of prophecies beamed at the first coming of Christ, so the New Testament's salient theme is His second coming. Nineteen hundred years ago, in spite of all the evidences of His approaching advent, the people were taken by complete surprise when He was born in the Bethlehem stable. Small wonder then, that, in spite of all the fast-fulfilling signs that He is soon to come again, the great majority are again quite indifferent to the fact that they are living within the approaching shadow of the climax of history.



A Story for the Juniors  
by  
MYRTLE O'HARA

## SHARING CHRISTMAS

THE LITTLE, old lady sat slowly rocking and thinking. Christmas would be lonely for her this year. Last year she had Grandpa, but this year there was no one to share Christmas with her. She looked at the Christmas cards on the mantle shelf and at the presents from her children on the table, and she thanked God for such a kind, thoughtful family. How she wished they could all be with her at this time!

She reached into a little box and took out the last "letter" from her youngest grandchild. It was just a lot of scribble with some kisses at the bottom of the paper, but it was the best the little one could do and she sent it with lots of love to Grandma. She thought of other Christmases when her own children were small. What a happy time they had. There was never much money to buy things, but that didn't worry the family.

For quite a while she sat there, living in the past. Perhaps she dozed a little because suddenly the room seemed very quiet and cold and lonely, and all the joy seemed to have left her. She mustn't feel like this, she told herself. She had much to be thankful for, and she was thankful. She would go to bed now and perhaps something might happen tomorrow to make the day a happy one after all. She awoke to a loud knocking and happy, excited voices calling: "May we come in, Grandma Walton, and show you our presents?" She sat up in bed as three little children from next door came running into the room.

"Look at my new doll," Alison said as she handed it to Grandma to admire, "and here's a hanky for you."

"Here are some flowers I picked for you from our garden," Lorraine said, and she gave the old lady a lovely bouquet that her mother had arranged so nicely.

"And Mummy sent you this card," Kim added, "and I'll let you blow my new whistle if you want to."

The children climbed onto her bed and she admired all their lovely presents and blew the whistle and nursed the doll and played with all the toys and forgot that she was old and became young again, and they had a lovely time together. By and by they heard Mother calling the children home for breakfast and as they were going Alison said: "Oh, I nearly forgot; Mum said will you come to our place for Christmas dinner?"

"I'd love to come," the old lady answered. Then the children were gone, but she wasn't lonely any more. This is almost as nice as having my own grandchildren with me, she thought.

After a delicious dinner, Mother said: "Now we are going for an outing in the car. You are not too tired to come, are you, Grandma?"

"I don't feel tired at all," Grandma Walton answered. "I haven't felt so well for a long time." When she arrived home again she said: "I thought I was going to have such a lonely Christmas day, but because you have shared it with me, I've had one of the nicest days that I have had for a long time. Thank you for what you've done."

"We enjoyed having you," Mother said, "and you have made our day happier, too."

"Isn't Grandma Walton a nice old lady," Alison said. "She played with us and didn't seem old at all. I'm glad she lives next to us. We'll have her again next Christmas, won't we, Mum?"

"I don't think we'll wait till next Christmas," Mother said. "I guess she gets lonely on other days as well."

"I'm glad we shared our Christmas," Daddy said, "because we've made a real good friend. I like Grandma Walton because she reminds me of my mother."

"That's the nice thing about Christmas," Mother said; "it makes us think of other people. And when we try to make them happy we become happy, too."





YOUR

# Bible Questions ANSWERED

Readers' Questions Should be Addressed to  
PASTOR D. FORD, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria.

## SELF OR OTHERS

How much should one do for other people? My own household is often in a tangle because I spend much time helping others. Are there some principles to guide Christians in this matter?

In Galatians 6 we read as follows: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Verse 2. But we also read: "For every man shall bear his own burden." Verse 5.

Christians who love their neighbours as themselves will frequently be placed by providence in circumstances where they can benefit others by lightening their burdens, without violating personal duties already appointed by God. We do not as a rule help others by doing for them that which they can do for themselves. Such a procedure weakens rather than strengthens the persons so "helped." Indiscriminate charity is an example of the wrong kind of "help." Whatever aid fosters the efforts at self-improvement being made by another can be approved, but aid that leads to increased indolence and neglect is not only wasteful but harmful.

The Christian should remember that his first duty is self-development of body, mind, and spirit, in order that his talents may be burnished for use in God's service. Our next duties are indicated by the circumstances wherein God has placed us. For example, we are instructed that "if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." 1 Timothy 5:8. Thus parents are sacredly bound to attend first to that portion of God's flock which exists right at hand in their own family. Charity certainly does begin at home, even though it should not end there.

Another indication of our duty lies in the very nature of the abilities God has given us. As a rule, our contribution in service to others should be particularly along the lines wherein God has specially equipped us. For example, a Christian physician could spend his time doing shoe-repairs for his needy patients, or perhaps tilling their gardens, and chopping their firewood—but such would hardly be the most effective way in which he could contribute. If there is some aspect of service for which we are personally adapted by Providence, that is the avenue to chiefly pursue. The early

apostles, for instance, early learned that it was wrong for them "to leave the Word of God and serve tables." Women who are specially talented in cultural and social areas should not consume their hours with mere chores. Such can and should make larger contributions. But those who find themselves in the position of the one-talent steward should rejoice in whatever avenue of service God puts in their way, remembering that the lowliest work done as for Him is sacred and uplifting.

## WHY SO OLD?

How is it that people mentioned in Genesis lived to such great ages? For example, Methuselah and Noah each lived several times longer than any modern man.

The Tree of Life planted by God in Eden prolonged life in the first created beings. See Genesis chapters 2 and 3. Those who lived closest in time to this source of strength inherited the most of its benefits, although after the Fall all were excluded from its fruit. Furthermore, increasing sin brought heavier manifestations of the divine curse upon all creation, with consequent increased deterioration in man and beast. The change to a carnivorous diet after the Flood probably also hastened this process. See Genesis 9:1-4.

## DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

A recent issue of the Question Corner declared that all major authorities agree that Jerusalem fell in 586 B.C. However, my reading in archaeology has proved to me that Babylon fell in 539 B.C. As this last date was the end of the seventy years' captivity, Jerusalem must have fallen seventy years before, i.e. 606-607 B.C. or thereabouts. Are not readers entitled to reliable answers to their Bible questions?

You are entirely correct in saying that Babylon fell in 539 B.C. Furthermore, the first captivity of the Jews did take place about the time you refer to, in the seventh century B.C. The point is, however, that Jerusalem was not destroyed at the time of the first captivity. Every Bible encyclopædia of note declares that the destruction of the city took place 586 B.C., approximately twenty years after the earlier siege of the city.

## DESTRUCTION WHEN?

If Zerubbabel began the restoration of Jerusalem in 537 B.C., at the end of the seventy years spoken of in 2 Chronicles 36:17-23, must not the city have been destroyed 607 B.C., rather than 586-589 B.C. as suggested by Bible dictionaries?

The "desolations" of Jerusalem did begin approximately seventy years before the restoration under Zerubbabel. The first captivity in 605-606 B.C. marks the beginning of the period, although the city itself was not burned until the third captivity of the inhabitants in 586 B.C. See Daniel 1:1; 2 Kings 24:10-16; 25:1-21.

## UNCLEAN FOODS

With reference to Adventist teaching regarding unclean foods, what is the meaning of 1 Timothy 4:1-5, particularly verse 4?

The passage reads: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

Here is a warning regarding apostasy which would creep into the Christian church. The ear-marks of this apostasy included false doctrines, enforced celibacy, and meritorious fasting. By the fifth century of our era these features had entered the professing church of Christ, and have remained to the present. The word "meats" in verse three comes from a Greek word meaning food in general, and does not apply merely to flesh-foods. The fourth verse certainly is not teaching that everything is good for food whether this be mice, garbage, or dirt. Rather, it declares that all things which God created to be eaten with thanksgiving remain acceptable despite the fasting decrees of religious hierarchies. Many things He created which were never intended to be received as food. The original diet planned by our Maker is described in Genesis 1:29. It consisted of fruit, nuts, and grains.





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