


Signs

OF THE TIMES

AUGUST
1966



We often praise the evening clouds,
And tints so gay and bold,
But seldom think upon our God,
Who tinged these clouds with gold.

—SCOTT.

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.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Many people, including some leading theologians, who today have banished from their thinking any belief in God as a personal being, are in for a tremendous surprise. On page 6, Roy Allan Anderson asks the question, "Is God Still 'Up There'?" and answers it with positive proof from God's Word.

Far from her home in the South Island of New Zealand, Doreen Fox wrote her page 8 article from England, where she has been for several months. For a penetrating character study of Nicodemus, read, "A Pharisee Dies."

There is always a freshness of approach in articles written by one of our regular contributors, David Sibley. For an understanding of current happenings as well as coming events, read "A Command Performance," on page 10.

Last month we carried an article from the pen of B. B. Beach, which considered some of the important implications of the current church unity movement. This month he carries his discussion a step further as he asks on page 16, "Could 'One Church' Lead to 'No Church'?"

Writing from Detroit, Michigan, Arthur S. Maxwell reports on page 21 on the recently held world conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Although it is not listed among the now-famous "Four Freedoms," Lionel H. Turner stresses on page 22 the importance of "The Freedom to Fail." Writing with a background of a lifetime spent in the field of education, Dr. Turner here provides us with considerable food for thought.

Known chiefly for the part he played in the trial of Christ, Pontius Pilate largely remains an unknown quantity to most. For an insight into his true character, you will want to read Robert H. Parr's "The Blunders of Pontius Pilate," on page 28.

OUR COVER PICTURE

David and Kymmarie Price take in the view near the Kawarau Falls in the Queenstown area of the South Island of New Zealand. Photograph by their father, E. Bruce Price.

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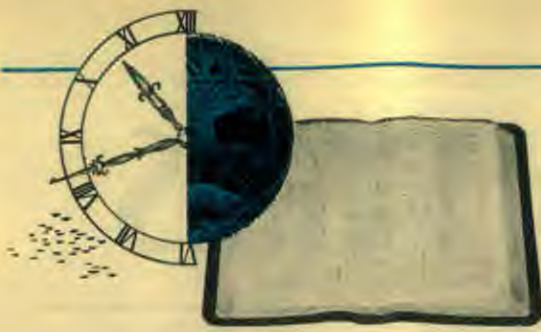
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Page One



the meaning of events

editorials

No Hiding Place

WITHOUT DOUBT one of the most sensational crimes of modern times is the one in Britain which has come to be known as the "Great Train Robbery." According to a recent report appearing in the *Melbourne Sun*, the final chapter has been written in the life of yet another character who participated in it. In part, the dramatic story read as follows: "Two things made James Edward White run—misery and fear—but he could not run fast enough. His share of the £2½ million Great Train Robbery was not enough to buy him the one thing he wanted—peace of mind. Wherever he went, no matter what his name, blackmailers were sure to follow.

"Whatever he did, no matter how he changed his appearance, there was no escape. And as the money went even faster, 46-year-old White decided a life of hiding, for ever on the run, was worse than giving himself up to the police. Worse even, perhaps, than the 18-year sentence he was given at Leicester Assizes yesterday. For last night he was able to rest for the first time since the robbery on August 8, 1963. Since that night he has been a man never able to settle anywhere, never free to use the same name twice. Seven times he tried—and failed—to start a new life. And with each change his fortune dwindled. It was the price he paid for silence that was never safe."

It perhaps is difficult for us to appreciate his mental anguish as vainly he sought to escape on one hand the long arm of the law, and on the other hand the relentless pursuit of the blackmailers who knew his secret. On one occasion, with his wife and small son, he moved into a caravan, behind the panelling of which he hid £35,000 for safe keeping. His identity was discovered within two days, however, and he fled leaving the money behind. He went to the wilds of the far north of Scotland but even there the blackmailer found him. The cost? £12,000. France, Ireland, England—the location made no difference. It once cost him £5,000 for two rooms for a week from a landlord who had been tipped off as to who his tenant was.

Finally, almost destitute, ill with worry, and at the end of his tether, he voluntarily surrendered himself to the authorities. The case of James White is a classic example of what mankind in general through the years has been endeavouring to do—to flee, to hide. When sin first entered this newly created world, the record states, "And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." Later we see the spectacle of the prophet Elijah endeavouring to flee not only before the threats of a vengeful woman, but from the pres-



Known throughout the world as an entertainer in other fields, Danny Kaye displays his versatility by conducting the London Philharmonic Orchestra for a charity performance.

ence of the God he served. Then there was the case of the reluctant evangelist, Jonah, who took a ship to Tarshish, which lay in the opposite direction to that which God had instructed him to take.

Man is slow to learn the utter futility of attempting to hide from God. The psalmist has summed this up in the graphic words: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." Psalm 139:7-10.

Why man should want to flee from God is somewhat of a mystery. The English poet, Francis Thompson, describes this headlong flight in his epic poem, "The Hound of Heaven."

"I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears."

But God does not pursue us with vengeful intent. He wants merely to capture us with His love. Said the poet:

"Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
'Naught shelters thee, who will not shelter Me.'"

Just as the Great Train robber could know no peace of mind until he had surrendered himself to the authorities, so—but for a very different reason—

the fugitive sinner cannot know the blessedness of rest in the soul until he has surrendered himself to the God who loves him. Concerning the one who has taken this step it is written: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. . . . For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:1-3.

Either our lives will be hid *with* God, or we will want to be hid *from* God. The Apostle John, in describing the impenitent on the day of Christ's second coming foretold that 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 day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6:15-17. But then, as now, there will be no place to hide.

The important thing for us to realize is that *now* is the time of decision. What we decide now will determine our destiny for eternity. How wise are those who now surrender themselves to God and enjoy "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

R.C.P.

The Indispensable Factor

IN RECENT YEARS a new secular professional group has emerged and has made a strong impact on Western society. These are psychiatrists, psychotherapists, social workers, marriage guidance counsellors, and others whose job it is to help others through personal crises by personal counsel.

In his book, *"The Faith of the Counsellors,"* Paul Halmos, professor in Sociology at the University College, Cardiff (Wales), points out that professional aloofness and reserve do not make for success in the delicate business of helping those in trouble and distress. He says:—

"The more scrupulously the psychoanalyst pursues the path of impartiality and rigorously positivistic thinking, the more striking are his ultimate confessions that this impartiality and rigour are, somehow, not enough, and indeed that something else is indispensable to both success in counselling and in acquiring more knowledge about counselling."

The "indispensable something," they confess, is a "warm personal concern and affection" for the one they are seeking to help.



British actress, Miss Sheila Scott, points out on the map the route taken on her recent solo flight around the world. She is the first British pilot to accomplish this feat.

Professor Halmos and his associates have stumbled on one of the eternal truths that we tend to forget today. It is that people who are in need of psychological help are often more benefited by the warmth and affection of their helper than by his knowledge and skill.

Many become sick in the first place because of their sense of loneliness and isolation. Feeling that nobody understands or cares, they retreat within themselves.

This fact suggests a ministry in which all can engage, the simple ministry of kindness, of caring for others. To do this one does not need years of study and a university degree, but simply,

"a thoughtful love
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And wipe the weeping eyes;
A heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize."

Human love and sympathy can do much to help those who are confused and afraid. But there is only One who can really cure them, and that is the Saviour, for only He can reach into the depths of the heart and make its springs pure. And with the forgiveness of sin come peace and healing. (Romans 5:1.)

M.M.H.

Evangelist Billy Graham arrives with his wife at Southampton, prior to the commencement of his recently conducted London Evangelistic Crusade. His previous campaign was held in 1955. (Right) Dr. Graham addressing the large crowd inside Earl's Court, London.



Abdication of the Queen

NO, it is not our beloved Queen Elizabeth of whom we speak. We could never imagine that, consulting her own ease, she would ever set aside her royal duties and step down from her throne. She has ever had the highest sense of dedication and devotion to her high duty. If ever our queen did abdicate, what consternation and grief would sweep over the British Commonwealth of Nations!

Yet an abdication more disastrous and far-reaching in its baleful effects has already taken place. In far too many homes, the mother, queen of the home, has stepped down from her high estate, and handed her royal responsibilities over to others.

We immediately think of working mothers, who without economic necessity leave their children to their own devices, or to the care of someone hired to do it, and condemnations rise to our lips. But remember that many mothers seldom absent from the home, are far from their own children in love and understanding and sympathy. They sharply rebuke their harmless noise, refuse to listen to their eager questions, and rudely rebuff their offers to help with cooking and housework.

In the realm of education the mother has almost universally abdicated in favour of the state educational system. When the rapidly developing minds of her young children fairly ferment and explode with new ideas, the mother thankfully turns them over to the school and breathes a sigh of relief.

A recent issue of *Time* magazine reported a strong move to lower the school entrance age to four years. This move was endorsed in high places though the thought of the thousands of millions of dollars this would call for annually, and the additional five million children who would need specialized care from the already inadequate education system, gives temporary pause to the scheme.

The *Time* article continues by stating that it is the belief of noted education authorities that half of a seventeen-year-old's intelligence is developed by the time he is four, and another 30 per cent between four and eight. Therefore school at the ages of four and five could help him develop his abilities and skills.

The newest in "mini" cars on display in London. Operated by electric motors from storage batteries, it is claimed the vehicles run at a cost of 1d. per mile.



Page Four

But other authorities doubt whether children from emotionally healthy homes would benefit much from earlier schooling, and contend that children sent away from home before the age of five feel rejected.

We believe that the fact of the tremendous development of the pre-school child's intelligence, coupled with the fact that in most cases he is not ready for organized public schooling, sets before parents a revolutionary idea, a challenge that few would be prepared to meet.

It is this, that home should be the child's first school, and his mother his first teacher. Who better than the mother can, by firm yet gentle discipline, help to form habits of self-reliance, self-control, and helpfulness? Why are so many mothers ready to pass to another the indescribable thrill of guiding the awakening mind to rejoice in the wonder of the world around; and in the dew-fresh innocence of early childhood, introduce him to the great Father-God.

Naturally and simply, as they work and play and study together, the mother may lead into the pathway of learning, build foundations of moral strength and integrity, and open the windows of the soul to the bright heavens above. This would be the beginning of a full-orbed education, a beginning that no other teacher could approach.

Queens of the home, you must never abdicate!

M.M.H.

Moral Landslide

A FRANK COMMENT on current moral depravity was recently made by the minister of Melbourne's Scots Church, the Rev. Gordon Powell. "The illegitimate birth rate in Victoria clearly indicates that there has been an unfortunate departure from the old standards of chastity," he said. "We are going through a morals revolution. I agree with Billy Graham that unless the Western world does something to stop the drift of moral decay, our civilization, as we know it, will be extinct by the year 2000."

What occasioned this statement was a report in the Melbourne *Herald* which revealed that one baby in every twenty born in Victoria was illegitimate. For Victoria the figure is 5.23 per cent of all births, while for the whole of Australia this is increased to 6.51 per cent. Statistics showed that 70 per cent of girls under the age of 20 were pregnant at the time of their marriage. Social workers estimated that at least 200 illegal operations were performed in Melbourne alone each week, while throughout Australia the annual total was somewhere between 100,000 and 130,000.

Various authorities indicted such causative factors as increased freedom for youth, less secrecy about sex, suggestive films, commercialized pornography, lurid magazines and books, poor home environment, insufficient sex education, and current youthful insecurity. In vain we read the press comments looking for some suggestion as to the prime cause for this pressing problem—current disdain for or ignorance of God's great moral code, the Ten Commandments. God stated them originally for humanity's protection, and Christ restated them, making them relevant to every aspect of life. We ignore them today at our individual and communal peril.

R.C.P.

The Book that would not burn

★ A. G. STEWART



WHEN VETERAN MISSIONARIES, Pastor and Mrs. L. H. Barnard, passed through Sydney recently, they were en route to Detroit, Michigan, where they attended the world Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Travelling with them from New Guinea was Paul Piari, a national minister who attended the conference as the representative of 55,000 of his fellow-believers in Papua-New Guinea.

Paul was born of heathen parents in the Central Highlands of New Guinea, and grew up in the traditional atmosphere of tribal warfare. He said that by the time the "grass" had grown on his face he was carrying bows, and arrows, and spears, and was joining with his fellow tribesmen in attacking nearby tribes. These feuds arose over disputes about land possession, women, stealing, and so forth.

His fearless nature, strong body, and good marksmanship qualified him as a leader, and more than one of the enemy fell a victim to his prowess.

With the advancement of Christian missions in that area, and sensing the futility of a life of warfare, he decided to investigate the teachings of Christianity, and to discover what benefits were to be derived from the Christian way of life. For some little while he attended services conducted by two of the older missionary societies operating in the Territory, and he learned something of the teaching of the Bible. When Paul found that their order of worship did not fully comply with his concept of the teachings of Scripture, especially in relation to the Law of God, the abstaining from image worship—which reminded him of his idol worship in his own village—and the use of swine's flesh as food, which the Scriptures forbid, he sought out the Seventh-day Adventist Mission which had recently commenced work in a nearby district.

Being convinced that the Adventists made the Bible the rule of their faith, and that their teachings complied with the written Word of God, he decided to ask the district director of that mission to provide him with a teacher. Immediately Paul went ahead and built a small native house of worship along with an adjoining teacher's house. It was not long before this request was granted and a single national teacher took up residence in the little house, with Paul as the only other worshipper. So strong was the opposition by Paul's own relatives and the villagers that he was even beaten while he was building the church.

After some little time the teacher found it necessary to be away for a few days, and left his Bible lying on a little table inside his house. Under cover of night someone put a fire-stick into the house, and in a short time it was reduced to ashes, including the table upon which the Bible was lying. When Paul came early the next morning to view the scene, he took a stick and was probing the ashes when he discovered the Bible without any mark of fire whatsoever upon it.

This miracle soon brought large numbers of villagers around, who stood with open mouths and shaking heads saying: "Something new here." However, four times the teacher's house was built and burned again before Paul finally called for the District Patrol Officer, who, holding up a box of matches in his hand before the villagers, warned them, saying, "If this occurs again I will burn every one of your houses in the village to the ground."

Paul's exhibition of patience, and his display of charity, wore down the opposition until today large numbers have united with Paul and the teacher in worship and the observance of God's Sabbath, and no longer do they use tobacco or intoxicating liquors. This group includes the man who put the fire-stick to the first house in which lay the book that did not burn—the Holy Bible.

ROY ALLAN
ANDERSON

Asks—



Is God Still "Up There"?

GREAT SIGNS DECLARE HIS SOON RETURN TO
THE WORLD HE CREATED AND REDEEMED

MANY PEOPLE TODAY are losing all sense of a personal God. The strides being made in some branches of science and education seem to have left the impression on some that God is "more remote, more unreal, more problematical," than ever.

A British scientist remarked in a New York hotel room recently: "It seems pretty certain to me that life resulted from purely random chemical events. I

feel certain that in another decade or two we will be able to create life." He concluded by saying, "I no longer find it necessary to believe in God."—Quoted in the *Saturday Evening Post*, July 3, 1965.

A new scepticism is making itself felt not only in scientific circles but also among theologians. Bishop John A. T. Robinson of the Church of England has startled many of his fellow ministers by declaring that



"the antiquated view of a God 'up there' or 'out there' is of little value to the modern world and should be discarded." "Many have come to the sudden realization that what they have been brought up to believe in religion doesn't mean much to their children."

These expressions reflect a blatant liberalism which for decades has been undermining Christianity. But they do not alter the unchanging truth that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

We are living in an era of swift and startling changes. This was emphasized by remarks made by President Johnson when opening the New York World's Fair. He reminded us that when the previous New York World's Fair was opened twenty-five years ago one of the exhibits made the daring prediction that "by the 1960's we shall be crossing the United States in less than twenty-four hours and flying at an elevation of 10,000 feet." Already this speed has been exceeded fivefold, and 10,000 feet seems insignificant today. And we are only halfway through the 1960's. By the next decade we could well exceed that speed twentyfold. During this decade we have put many men into space and sent scores of man-made satellites rotating around the earth. Plans are taking shape for landing men on the moon.

We are witnessing a runaway inflation of knowledge and skills. "The world alters as we walk on it," declares Dr. Robert Oppenheimer.

To illustrate: During the last few years the Widener Library, Harvard University, has been adding 800 new books a day to its shelves, nearly 250,000 a year. But the library has also been discarding 250 books a day, classing them as obsolete. With 2,000,000 new scientific discoveries being made every year, it does not take long for books to become out of date.

Take the field of medical science as another example. More than 70 per cent of all prescriptions issued by physicians today contain chemicals unknown prior to World War II.

While medical science has been combating disease, nutritionists have been discovering healthier ways of living. This has resulted in an extension of the average life by at least twenty years. But this blessing has created another problem—"the population explosion." In 1964 the world's total population reached 3,200,000,000. By A.D. 2000, just thirty-four years from now, economists believe it will be 6,000,000,000.

Even now 1,500,000,000 people—half the population of the world—go to sleep every night hungry. Most of them have never had a bed nor have been anything but hungry. Only about one sixth of the

world's population is well fed and properly housed. What is the solution to all this?

If we believe what God has revealed in His Word, we will know that all these startling developments—even the latest discoveries of science—are signs of His existence, His control of world affairs, and His return in power and glory. The very things that are causing statesmen and economists anxiety are to the child of God omens of a brighter day.

Not long ago, as I was speaking with a man about the return of Jesus, he said, "I have been hearing about the second coming of Christ since I was a boy. He will not come for a thousand years yet." A thousand years! Anyone who talks like that is not thinking realistically. If this world were to continue another thousand years, with the population increasing at the present rate, there would be "standing room only," less than one square yard for each person! No farms. No factories. No hospitals. No schools. There would be no room for them.

God who made the world and redeemed it has told us that He plans to remake it and cleanse it from all sin and sorrow. He will make "new heavens and a new earth" to be the habitation of His people for ever. See 2 Peter 3:13.

What does the future hold? If we believe the words of Jesus we shall know. He said: "There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places," and "fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven." "Men's hearts" will fail for fear "and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:11, 26.

The alarming conditions of our day tell us that the coming of the Lord is near. Soon we shall see Him face to face. To those who know Him as a personal Saviour He will come as a great Deliverer. But to those who have spurned His love He will be a destroyer. It is for us to choose which group we will be in.

Yes, God is still "up there," but He is coming back to this world again to gather His own, those who are waiting for Him. Then the redeemed of all the ages will be ushered into His kingdom of glory to dwell with Him for ever.

Will you accept His invitation and let Him prepare you for citizenship in that kingdom to come? Do not let the statements of "science falsely so-called" rob you of your confidence in a personal God. He who created the universe is about to return to this earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." Peace and joy will be yours as you come to know Him better.

A Pharisee Dies

FOR TWO HOURS he had sat looking out the window, trying to organize his speech for the next day, and still only a shapeless mass of thoughts tumbled through his mind.

Peace and sleep had walked out on him weeks ago, and now concentration was packing. He must think. He must have something to say tomorrow and it must be good. His friends expected it and the Man they were to discuss needed it! He was determined to speak in His defence and he must carry the other men with him. Caiaphas would oppose him, of course. Caiaphas who was fond of pointing out that it was better for one man to die than to have the whole nation ruined. Maybe Caiaphas was the man better dead, for if they, at his insistence, put Jesus of Nazareth to death, and He proved to be the Messiah, their nation would most certainly be ruined. Any rash action against this Man's life could be the gravest folly.

Nicodemus felt drawn to Jesus. Painstakingly he had gone over the prophecies relating to the Messiah, and that His life was fulfilling them no one could deny. He had pondered over the spectacular events at His birth, the quality of His preaching, the unsurpassed excellence of His service to humanity, His majestic bearing and self-possession. All these were relatively easy to accept, but Nicodemus had stumbled over Nazareth being Christ's hometown, until he suddenly realized that this saying of nothing good coming out of Nazareth was not prophetic utterance, but was the product of downright Jewish snobbery. If Messiah was to make His grave with the wicked, what was to stop Him from living among them also.

He envied this Man His ability to preach. How Nicodemus longed to be able to wrap a congregation in attention as he spoke of the things of God. Yet, when one analysed His sermons, they were often really nothing more than well-told stories which glued themselves to one's mind. What was the secret of this Man's extraordinary power over the minds of men? Where did He get His now famous replies? Oh, for a brilliant mind like that! He had seen Him take controversial "bricks" from His opponents and drop them with painful accuracy on their own toes—yet He displayed no pleasure in watching them limp away.

He made whips out of words as well as out of cords, and there was no balm for the wounds. "Hypocrites," "whited sepulchres full of dead men's bones," fiddlers with sprigs of herbs and strangers to tenderness and pity, lovers of high praise and high seats. Did these awful accusations apply to him? Surely not. Nicodemus had searched his heart. He could not explain why, but he knew that it was becoming increasingly important to him that Jesus of Nazareth should think well of him. What was the answer to it all? He did not want to reject the Messiah, nor did he want to

find himself looking into the business end of a Roman spear for having associated with a cunning and dangerous rebel and impostor.

Suddenly he made a decision. Striding to the door, he told his most trusted servant to follow Jesus all day, and to make sure that he knew where the teacher planned to spend the night. He would speak to Jesus alone. He prided himself on being an excellent Jew, a concerned shepherd in Israel, a sure candidate for "Abraham's bosom," and a debater of merit. He did not agree with all Jesus taught. This turning the other cheek, and going an extra mile for a Roman, was taking tolerance too far. Still, he liked Him for His certainty on doctrinal matters. It was enlightening, if sometimes disturbing, and very refreshing after the theological seesaw the Sanhedrin rode. The people needed a spiritual awakening and if this Man could bring that about He would not have lived in vain.

Nicodemus planned to talk with Jesus as one teacher to another. He decided how to introduce himself and which topics he wished to discuss, never dreaming that his valued opinions were, that very night, to be thrown into disarray and not only turned upside down, but rolled over and over. The proud Pharisee was going to his death, and in time Nicodemus would wake up to find him dead!

Day slowly dragged the sun across the sky and threw it over the horizon. Night pounced in as Jesus made His way to the Mount of Olives and Reuben to his master's house. Cautiously Nicodemus moved through the moonlit streets, avoiding Roman and Jew, for he wanted no questions asked about his destination. In the garden he paused behind a tree. How tired Jesus looked! He felt it was selfish to disturb Him, but a compelling power drove him forward and he could not resist.

He introduced himself in words destined for immortality. If Jesus was hurt by the slight they conveyed He did not show it. Pain was His daily companion. Joy came so seldom, but if He wept beneath the olives by night only the angels knew.

Jesus saw before Him an honest man who could not, as yet, accept Him as the Messiah, and who was prepared to admit, without any pretence, just that. A teacher sent from God? Yes; the Messiah? Well, maybe. He was not fully convinced of this.

A trained mind flashes past all irrelevant remarks to the heart of an issue, and this Pharisee had exposed himself to shock treatment.

"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," Jesus said. With these twenty-five words He turned Nicodemus' theology upside down.

Nicodemus grew pale as the import of these words dawned in his mind. "The world." "Whosoever be-



By Doreen Fox

lieveth." Then salvation was not for the Jew alone! "Whosoever believeth in Him should . . . have everlasting life." Then being a child of Abraham was of itself no guarantee of immortality! There was no truth in the "merits of the fathers" as an aid to salvation! A Jew *could* be lost in Gehenna! Salvation was bound up in the acceptance of *this Man* from Nazareth as the Messiah and as the Son of God. It was not in feasts and fasts, prayers and philosophies, law and logic, tithings and washings. It was in the hands of *this Man*! Nicodemus' theological world whirled around him—"He that believeth not is condemned already." If this was the truth, he would have to alter his whole way of thinking and believing. Was that what Jesus meant by being "born again"? If the convicting Spirit moved like the wind, then Nicodemus was in the centre of a gale! Then self and pride began a process of reassertion. He resented this Man's insinuation of his spiritual lack, his inefficiency as a teacher in Israel, and he disliked His thinly-veiled rebuke for coming by night—"men loved darkness . . . because their deeds were evil."

It was his turn to limp away. Annoyed and bewildered he left the garden, and did not understand that he had been given the key to the kingdom of Heaven. In good time the undaunted Spirit of God would show him how to use it.

* * * *

Cold moonlight fell about three empty crosses. Nicodemus looked long at the one in the middle, while tortured memory spilled tears down his cheek. Caiaphas had won. The mutilated form of the Son of God lay concealed in the tomb. The mangled corpse of Hebrew justice was exposed to the world for ever. No shroud would cover it, and no grave would accept it. Would this pain never end? Would he ever sleep again? The thought of Caiaphas made him sick. That

classic hypocrite with holiness on his hat and hate in his heart! That custodian of a legal system designed to make it almost impossible for an innocent man to be put to death. That traitorous "Absalom" leading a nation to rebellion against God needed no pile of stones to ensure that he was not forgotten.

Slowly he turned and walked away in the direction of the tomb. Again he was going to Jesus by night. Had Jesus known of the times he had defended Him, as far as he dared, before the Sanhedrin? Would He live again? He had been confident of resurrection, but why had He cried: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" This had snuffed out hope in the heart of Nicodemus, for if He was forsaken by God, then Nicodemus moved, as a symbol of the human race, through a "night" that would have no ending. He had found some comfort in being able to supply the myrrh and aloes for the embalming of Jesus. Nothing would be too much to do for Him, but apparently he had left it too late. Suddenly hope leapt into flame again. The approaching Sabbath had prevented the embalming. Did this indicate that it would never need to be done? He tingled all over. If Jesus should live again, other gifts would follow so "that the world through Him might be saved."

In the shadows a figure moved slowly. Nicodemus jumped as fear took him and shook him. The figure came closer—Joseph of Arimathea! Neither man spoke as they took each other's hand in a firm grip of understanding. They knew what it was to battle with pride, prejudice, and tradition. Each sensed the other's shame at not standing for the Man of Nazareth in a more telling way. If He lived again. . . . They stood there willing Him to live again, so that they might ask His pardon and serve Him openly for ever.

Nicodemus the Pharisee let go his last hold on life, and sank into a grave never to know resurrection, while Nicodemus, the disciple of Christ stood before his Lord's silent tomb, willing Him to live again.

The setting Sabbath sun blushed and hurried away to hide its embarrassment. Lights flickered about the tomb and Roman voices jarred upon the reverence of the resting place of the Son of God. Caiaphas had gained his own way again, but all Pilate would say was, "Make it as sure as ye can."

Blinding light exploded about the tomb, Rome dropped in confusion onto the dust, and the Son of God walked through the night in triumph.

Nicodemus turned from his night-long vigil by the window with peace and joy surging into his heart. Why? He did not know. He walked across the room, stretched his weary body upon the bed and slept.

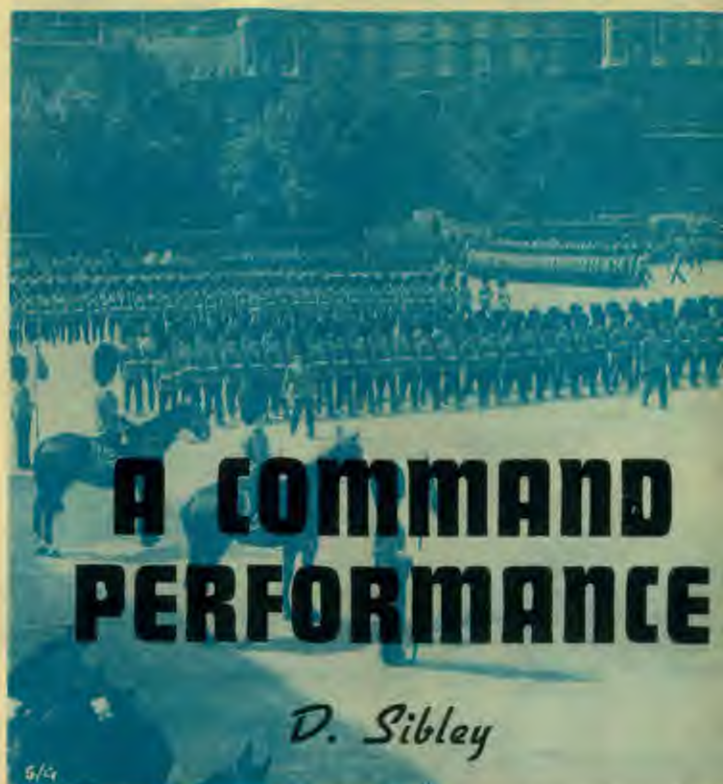
Not until later in the morning did he understand. Caiaphas had lost. He had lost! "Oh, Jesus, Jesus, My risen Lord and My God!"

LOOKING BACK a decade or two, and then taking a sweep over conditions in our world at present, who can read Christ's pointed but brief outline of world events in the 24th chapter of Matthew's Gospel without being jolted into a realization of the accuracy of Christ's forecasts? This important prophetic statement was given in answer to His disciples' question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Surely no man in full possession of his senses, in the light of the present-day situation, dare trifle with Christ's words as are here recorded. Without a doubt, He spoke not only "as One having authority," but as One who could see the end from the beginning.

According to Christ, the approaching end would be heralded by wars, famines, pestilences, plagues, and earthquakes of such frequency and magnitude that "men's hearts [would be] failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Luke 21:26. We are glad to forget the blood-bath of the recent world war, and even to turn a blind eye to the carnage to the north of us just now, but he would be a hard man who is not harrowed by the stories of the stark starvation of multitudes of men, women, and children as a result of maladministration, crop failures through drought and freak weather conditions, and the failure of our weary earth to yield the colossal quantities of food needed to feed earth's exploding population. The very planet itself, in frequent major earthquakes which lay desolate whole cities and areas, seems to be protesting against its being "defiled under the inhabitants thereof." Isaiah 24:5. Years ago scientists were boasting that with the new skills of agronomy, mechanization, and use of artificial fertilizers, it would not be hard to feed the world, but despite all this Christ's words of warning stand without serious challenge today.

The saddest indictment of modern man is to be found in Christ's forecast that men would not learn from their tribulation, and that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Matthew 24:12. In fact, He contended that in the end of the age things would be so shocking as to parallel the days of Noah and Lot when adultery, violence, and vice of every kind ran riot. It was said that back there men were fierce, that sex deviates roamed the streets, and that the thoughts of men's hearts were only "evil continually." See Genesis 6:1-12; 19:1-12. It must be confessed that even in professedly Christian lands like America, England, and our own Australia, and New Zealand, the changes in men's thinking in regard to common honesty and decency have been so rapid and marked that even heathen peoples are dubbing us as being absolutely amoral.

In His prophetic outline, Christ uttered words that arrest the attention of those who still believe in His Word and authority, for they seem to throw down Heaven's challenge to all men. Here are the words: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Matthew 24:14. In the light of present moral trends and world tribulation, it seems as though the Master is saying that in spite of all these things, and though men's love for God and His gospel



are waxing cold, the true gospel, the gospel of the kingdom, shall not be retarded or stopped, but be heard in all the world without any failure. They are dull ears which fail to hear God's challenge in such words. The One who commanded His disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20), still commands His followers.

In this passage He speaks of an "end," the consummation of an age, and assures His servants that He will be with them, and will see it through till that end. Yes, He still commands men on to the performance of His will. It is the command of the King of kings—a command performance. Apostates and revilers might as well try to stop the rolling of the tides, or the coming of the seasons, as to endeavour to stay the plans and purposes of God. Has He not decreed: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven . . . so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isaiah 55:10, 11. The most inspiring and heartening happening of modern times has been the universal spread of the gospel, and the printing of God's Word in well over 1,000 languages and dialects. The Bible is going to the world's peoples by the scores of millions of copies, and in spite of the flood of secular literature coming from the presses of the day, the Old Book is still the world's best seller.

While the world hardens in its hostility to God, and His standards for human conduct, it is still a well-attested fact that hundreds of thousands of people, even in heathen lands, are turning to God and the acceptance of His gospel year by year. This transcendent work will not be stopped by the defiant hands of unbelievers, but will end in triumph with the return of earth's rightful King, when will be heard "great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Revelation 11:15.

But notice, this gospel of the kingdom was to be preached in all the world for a "witness." Men must have their chance to hear the message, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Wickedness in high places," or in the earth beneath, shall not prevent willing men and women from receiving the gospel's witness. The coming of the Son of God to earth at His first advent was the greatest event of human history. By His teaching and His living example of that teaching, He put the requirements of God for men beyond question. Finally, His death on the cross for sinners that they might be forgiven and accepted into citizenship for His kingdom, is acknowledged even by His enemies

to be the tenderest, the most beautiful, and the most amazing story ever told. Yes, God says men must hear it, and shall hear it, and that this shall be to them for a witness. If under the urge of God's Spirit a man accepts Christ, and His provision for our race, it witnesses in his favour, and of him it is said, he "shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. What peace and what certainty of destiny there are in such God-given words! However, if men hear and refuse to follow the inner voice of conscience, Heaven says, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Romans 12:19.

It is of interest to note again that Christ's prophecy of Matthew 24 was given in answer to the disciples' questioning. They had asked information on two points, the destruction of the temple and the end of the world. They had pointed out to their Master the magnificence of the great temple of Herod, which was the very pride of the nation. It was said to be a glorious mass of marble and gold. "The front of the temple was covered all over with plates of gold of great weight, and at the first rising of the sun reflected back a fiery splendour." Made of green and white marble, the rabbis used to boast, "He who has not seen the temple of Herod, has never seen a beautiful building." But Christ predicted, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." The building being such a colossal structure, the disciples thought surely Christ's statement must presage the end of the world, hence the dual nature of their question.

Josephus, the historian eyewitness of the times, tells that Caesar commanded the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Great Temple, except for the highest towers and the west wall. However, true to the prophetic forecast, later the whole area was ploughed up and not one stone was left upon another. The Talmud says, "On the 9th day of Ab [July-August] the city of Jerusalem was ploughed up." As the years rolled by, the disciples, as they carried on the work of Christ after His ascension, must have reflected on the exactness of the fulfilment of this forecast. The grim ruins of their beloved city must have spurred them on to greater zeal in proclaiming this message of His kingdom yet to come.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." In these days with their abounding iniquity and defiance of spiritual standards, men the world around are making decisions with results that will prove eternal. Past history, and that of the present, proves beyond question the divine origin of Christ's mission, and the certainty of His predictions dealing with the end of our age. Remember that in His great prophecy He challenges sin and sinners in the following words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35. Yes, His is a command performance, and history is responding and must respond. It is on the pledged word and honour of Christ Himself, that events move according to plan, to the inexorable consummation of, "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. Let us be wise enough to move with men and women of faith, for time will prove that we have moved in the right direction.

When the Queen appears at a command performance, it is considered a privilege to be present. In the spiritual realm we witness a command performance as God speaks and history responds.

HOW JESUS SAVES YOU



By E. C. WARD

THE SLAVE TRADE is and always has been an ugly and degrading business. Sleek black ships out of Africa with a pitiful cargo of human flesh cowering below decks, the lash, the chain, and the filth and squalour of the slave compound are symbols of the bestiality and cruelty of which human beings are capable. But worst of all is the slave market, where one man bids against another for the body and personality of a fellow creature. Depravity and greed can reach no lower. Yet once—only once in human history—the slave market was bright with the full revelation of the love and saving power of God. Its horrors were transformed, and it became the arena, not of man's inhumanity to man, but of God's unconquerable love for the human beings He has made.

It happened some 750 years before Christ in an unknown village in the northern kingdom of Israel. A man walked through the streets toward the slave market, and the eyes of the villagers followed him as, with head erect and a look of determination on his face, he strode forward. He was known to them all. His name, Hosea; his occupation, prophet of the Lord. He was the last man on earth who should be dealing in the slave trade and going to the slave market on that day, but up ahead on the auction block his own wife was being sold as a slave that day. Just why was he going?

The village folk could have been in no doubt as to the answer. They had heard Hosea preach, and they knew him for a fiery prophet of the judgments of God—truly a grim man with a grim message. But there was someone lost whom he must save. Anyone, he had taught, was at liberty to sin, but he had better be ready to take the consequences; for they would inevitably follow Israel, God's people, who had repeatedly disobeyed God's Ten Commandment law. They had acted like a rebellious and unfaithful wife.

Now God's patience had run out, and destruction hung over the nation like an avalanche over a mountain valley. Hosea had even gone so far as to give his children names symbolic of his message: Jezreel, to remind the people of the national crime which had been committed in that city when the whole family of King Ahab had been murdered; Lo-ammi, "not My people," since God had cast aside His people and abandoned them to their own fate; Lo-ruhamah, "no mercy," because the healing springs of God's mercy were dried up and would no more nourish the life of Israel.

The rugged man who preached this message had suffered a tragedy in his own home. His wife had deserted him and his family and had gone out to make her own way in the world. It had been no easy road. She had become a public prostitute, and now that her charms had faded, she was being sold at public auction. Her body and her future would become the property of anyone willing to pay the price.

The fate of Gomer, the prophet's wife, was a perfect illustration of Hosea's message and of Christ's ability to save the lost. She had rejected his love—as Israel had rejected the love of God. She had turned from his home to the arms of other lovers—as Israel had turned from the Lord to idols. The judgment had now fallen upon her, and she would be sold into slavery—as the judgment was about to fall upon Israel, and the nation would become the slave of a foreign conqueror. It was an exact verification of all that

God had said and everything Hosea had preached. Who among the townspeople could doubt that Hosea was walking to the slave market to see his words come true, to indulge in a rather sadistic "I told you so"?

Because of God

The whispering voices fell silent, and looks of astonishment appeared on the faces of the crowd. An unbelievable thing was happening before their eyes. Hosea, a Hebrew, a member of a race to whom the sanctity of the family is of paramount importance, was standing in the public slave market, in the presence of his neighbours and fellow townsmen, bidding for the purchase of the harlot who had dishonoured him. He paid the price, half in money and half in grain, and walked back through the wondering crowd, leading his faithless wife—once more at a heavy cost in money and humiliation. Why had the prophet of judgment stepped in to save his betrayer from the consequences of her sin? The answer is both simple and profound. Hosea did what he did because of God.

During the long days after Gomer had deserted him, Hosea had re-examined his prophetic message. He came to a conclusion possible only for a great-hearted man. He had been wrong in representing God as a being of anger and judgment only. He passed the history of his people in review before his mind and read a new lesson there. They had been slaves in Egypt, driven, beaten, and broken, and God had heard their cry of distress and come down to deliver and save them. In the wilderness they had built golden idols and worshipped them. They had grumbled and complained against their God. They had followed every selfish whim of the moment. But God's hand had never left them. As He had been their deliverer from slavery, so He had guided them every step of the way into their own land. This was the kind of God He really was, a God of infinite patience, tenderness, and kindness, teaching His children to walk.

Once the prophet had come to this understanding of what God is like, it became startlingly clear to him what he must do about his wife, Gomer. He must act as God would act. If God is really one who loves, delivers, and saves alive, then His servants must do the same. His new vision of the love of God compelled the prophet to save Gomer from the horror which lay before her.

The new vision demanded a new language. Hosea took a word from the common speech of his people and made it the key to the understanding of God's nature. This word appears in English translations of the Bible in a variety of ways—as "loving-kindness," "mercy," and "love." In the Revised Version it is "steadfast love." But in the end the word defies translation; we can recognize it only when we see it in life.

First of all, loving-kindness, as it is connected with salvation through Christ, is more than an emotion; it is a deed. The verbs used with it in the Bible make this clear. You *show* loving-kindness or *do* loving-kindness—you never *feel* it. Emotion is cheap. You can sit in an armchair before the fire and love all men of all races in the whole wide world, and it does not mean a thing. It may give a comfortable glow of self-righteousness, but it is in the end only self-deception and does no one any good. Loving-kindness must be

expressed in action. The doing of it may take us into the filth of the slave market as it did the prophet of Israel, or it may take us to the Hill of Golgotha on a cross as it did the Saviour of the world.

The Bible deals with, and says much about, the need that all men have for a Saviour. First, by nature "all have sinned, and come short [missed the mark] of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23.) Education, culture, racial background, and financial inheritance cannot change the fact that the so-called best of us are still sinners in the sight of God, until we by faith accept the fact that Jesus came to save the lost.

Second, the Bible teaches that all of man's nature was sold to sin as a result of the fall of Adam, or as Paul states, "For I know that in me . . . dwelleth no good thing." Romans 7:18. Therefore body, soul, spirit, mind, and man's morals were lost and had need of salvation, as was provided by the supreme act of Jesus at Calvary.

Third, the Bible teaches that man's distaste, abhorrence, and even hatred, for sin will not save him from it. The drunkard may dislike both the act of and the results from his passion for drink, but he still goes back again and again. The dope addict or tobacco user may wish to break the chain of strong habit or defiling practice, but it is hopeless until strength from a higher power aids him. That ability to overcome is only from Christ, who saves the lost. The immoral man and woman, if for no other reason than to avoid the rebuke of society, may wish to break their profane habit. But they are helpless unless help comes from a stronger source outside themselves. That source is Christ. He is our only deliverer. For He came to "save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21. Therefore, from the slavemarket of inherited and cultivated sin there could be salvation in no other name or person, but in Jesus. (Acts 4:12.)

Can a person always tell exactly how this process of deliverance and salvation from sin works?

Though one may not always be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of circumstances in the process of conversion and release from sinful habit and defiling practice, this does not prove him to be unconverted and not justified before God. Christ said to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John 3:8.

Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see and which dwells in our "hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:17), begets a new life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God. While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible upon the conscience of the recipient, its effects are clearly manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will be a positive witness to that fact.

Words of Comfort

Driven from his home by a debauched and ungodly father, an unhappy boy found as his companions the citizens of the underworld. He knew nothing of God, for he had heard that holy name only in vile oaths.

Small wonder that before he reached manhood, he was sentenced to the penitentiary for a foul crime. There he became known as a desperate character, constantly forming plans to destroy the prison and escape. In an evil hour he made a murderous assault on a guard, and as a result was sentenced to solitary confinement.

There he seemed to become demon-possessed, cursing God and hating man. As a climax to his hostile life, tuberculosis fastened itself upon him, and the grim reaper drew near.

One day a Christian woman came to the prison. Though weakened by disease and debauched by sin, he seemed to see in her a resemblance of his mother, whom he loved and remembered. The words of this Christian worker comforted him. She told him of the Son of God, who came to save the lost and who even yet could reach down and save him. She knelt down and prayed for him asking God to convert him.

The Holy Spirit touched his heart. Conviction of sin was followed swiftly by repentance. He began a new life. His heart became as tender as that of a child. All were amazed at the transformation. Hardened criminals stood by his bed and wept as he told how a man could climb from the depths through faith in God. He died triumphant, a witness to the saving power of a merciful Saviour.

This man understood what David meant when he sang, "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." Psalm 40: 1-3.

There wells up in the heart of such an individual the extreme desire to express love to Jesus. The soul cries out, "Lord, how wilt Thou have me love Thee?" And the answer comes ringing back from the courts of glory, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15. (See Exodus 20:1-17.) One finds following Christ into baptism a pleasure. (Romans 6:1-4; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 19: 1-5.)

The mystery of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27) may puzzle old friends, bewilder former associates, and perplex even demons of hell, but the divine relationship lost in Eden is restored by Christ when we permit ourselves to be "led by the Spirit of God." It is, then, while yet on earth that we become "the sons of God." (Romans 8:14.) We gladly "come out" and "separate" from the "unclean" that we may be "sons and daughters" of "the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.)

Is all this true? Is it all possible, that Jesus can save the lost, you may ask? Christ answers, Yes!

Longfellow could take a worthless sheet of paper, write a poem upon it, and make it worth \$6,000—that's genius. Rockefeller could sign his name to a piece of paper and make it worth a million dollars—that's capital. Henry Ford could take a piece of metal worth only \$150 and make it worth \$1,500—that's skill. Landseer, the artist, could take a fifty-cent piece of canvas, paint a picture on it, and make it worth \$1,000—that's art. But only God can take a worthless, sinful life like yours and mine, wash it in the blood of Christ, put His Spirit and holy law within it, and make it a blessing to humanity—that's salvation.

BLUE-LAW PROBLEMS

Formation of a legislative commission to examine the entire question of Sunday and Sabbath laws in New York State is being urged by the State Council of Churches. The suggestion was made in connection with an expression of support for a proposed bill which would form a commission "to study and make recommendations to ensure that students unable to attend classes on certain days because of religious beliefs will have opportunity to receive the same educational benefits [as others] without paying additional fees." The recommendation stated that "the Council does not believe that the state should favour any religious observance, but should find by study and deliberation a comprehensive approach to a 'common day of rest' which would take into consideration a cessation of labour with adequate safeguards for those who wish to choose another day of the week for religious observances."

GREEK "POMPEII"

Plans are being made to attempt the uncovering of the Greek city of Heliki, engulfed by the mud of a great tidal wave after a destructive earthquake in 373 B.C. during the heyday of Greek civilization. As "the town disappeared while palpitating with life . . . everything must remain in place," says Professor Marinatos, and this would make it "the most spectacular archaeological discovery ever made."

MODERN WILLIAM TELL

Elizabeth Van Denburgh, five, is dead. Her father is in gaol. She and a playmate saw her father cleaning his rifle in the lounge room of their Santa Monica, California, home. She shouted to him, "Daddy, I bet you can't shoot this off my head like William Tell," recalling the famous story of the Swiss patriot's saving his life and his son's by shooting an apple off the boy's head with a bow and arrow. So saying she placed on her head the mandarine she had been holding in her hand, and stood in front of a wooden fence about fifteen feet from the lounge window. Her father lifted the rifle, sighted, and pulled the trigger. Elizabeth fell, a bullet through her forehead. He had been drinking.

OUR

Changing World



VATICAN WEALTH

The Vatican is the only sovereign state which never publishes a budget. According to a report by Charles Foley of the London Express Service, the Vatican holds large blocks of shares in real estate, plastics, electronics, airways, chemicals, transport, radio, and TV. His inquiries showed that the papal portfolio contains a fifth—\$560,000,000 worth—of Italy's total stocks. America's Catholic organizations are also rapidly growing richer. "We are already a lot bigger than Ford Motors, Shell Oil, and Bethlehem Steel put together," a United States prelate said. The lowest estimate of the Vatican's worldwide reserves given by financiers in Rome is \$5,600,000,000. This makes the pope by far the largest stockholder in the world.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE DROPS

Church attendance in the United States during 1965 dropped 1 per cent below the 1964 figure, and was 5 per cent lower than it was in 1955, according to a nation-wide survey conducted by the Gallup Poll. The survey disclosed that 44 per cent of the nation's adults attended church during a typical week in 1965. The figure is based on answers given by 8,000 persons in various parts of the country to the question, "Did you happen to attend church during the past seven days?" In 1964, the Gallup Poll placed church attendance at 45 per cent, and in 1955 at 49 per cent.

SCOURGE OF THE FRENCH

Drink remains the scourge of the French, and 20,000 people die of alcoholism or cirrhosis each year, according to a recent report by the French government. The annual toll has varied little since 1956, when it reached a peak of 20,279. In 1960 the government began a campaign to curb alcoholism by banning purchase of drinks on credit, restricting alcoholic beverage advertising, and limiting the construction of new bars.

PIPE NO ESCAPE

The suggestion that smokers who go from cigarettes to pipes are less likely to develop oral cancer is baseless, asserts Dr. Maynard K. Hine, president of the American Dental Association. "Scientists," he said, "have found that there is a cause relationship between lip cancer and pipe smoking."

EXPLOSION IN TEENAGE CRIME

In England and Wales teenage crime has multiplied by 300 per cent between 1955 and 1964. In France in ten years it has risen by 400 per cent.

PRESS CENSORSHIP ABOLISHED IN SPAIN

With only three negative votes, the 595-member Spanish Cortes (parliament) approved a new press law abolishing censorship restrictions "except in emergency or war, as laid down by law." Long awaited by Spain's newsmen and publishers, the law ends a twenty-seven-year reign of censorship which exempted only the Roman Catholic Church press from government control. The measure provides that "the administration will not apply the previous censorship [censorship before going to press], nor insist upon compulsory consultation [with authorities], except in emergency or war, as laid down by law."

UNDER WATER ROUND THE WORLD

In just over six weeks a squadron of Soviet nuclear submarines went 24,800 miles round the world without ever surfacing. The range of the vessels, which carry nuclear-tipped rockets, is claimed to be "almost unlimited."

THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH was an aggressive missionary society. The early Christians engaged in unabashed proselytism. They endeavoured to persuade all and sundry to abandon their religious affiliation and receive membership in God's church by accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. They were out to convert, to create a following, and to become an element of, even a faction in, society. While conveying to converts "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7), they at times brought about religious tensions and divisions. No doubt they had occasion to remember the words of the Master: "I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34.

Today the word proselytism has become an apple of discord. In the minds of some theologians it has lost its original significance of legitimate mission and has come to identify a corrupt, self-seeking witness—one that uses unsavoury methods bordering on bribery or "spiritual blackmail" to evangelize, with a view to increasing the size of one's own church institution by "stealing" members from another Christian body.

However, there is another side to the question. With almost studied regularity the cry of proselytism and "sheep stealing," is raised by well-established churches whose own witness has over the years grown stale and sluggish. In some instances the corrosive forces of time, compounded with human frailty, have eaten away the heart of the Christian message originally found in these religious bodies and an almost paganized substitute has appeared in its stead. Such churches have more often than not "inherited their father's riches," but not their message and spirit. They use the accusing bogie of proselytism as a kind of defence mechanism to cover their own shortcomings. They seek to create a "cordon sanitaire" to protect their "confessional reserve."

However, the history of the past few decades proves conclusively that cultural as well as religious "reserves" have become untenable anachronisms. In response to new Biblical light, sincere Christians are ready to cross confessional boundaries and change their church affiliation, no matter what the cost, including perhaps some hard feelings in their former congregation.

Furthermore, it is most unlikely that resolutions deploring "proselytism" will be able to prevent increasingly large segments of the membership of the long-established churches either from being absorbed by other Christian bodies whose witness more closely conforms to the New Testament pattern, or from succumbing to the magnetic pull of today's de-Christianized mass of society.

It is with this last danger of secularism in mind that many church leaders are treading the path of the ecumenical movement. They feel that Christians of all hues should draw together and present a united front toward the advancing forces of the non-Christian or de-Christianized majority. They claim that the main obstacle in the way of successful Christian witness in the sixties is the "scandalous division" in the bosom of Christianity.

It is, of course, self-evident that "unity makes strength"—provided this unity is based on God's Word and leads to loyalty to the true Christian message. On the other hand, history does teach the danger of

Could 'one church' lead to 'no church'?

**Must Christian Witness
Cease for the Sake of Unity?**

By B. B. BEACH

one all-encompassing religious body. Conformity can easily have a levelling, deadening effect on mission. During the Middle Ages there was one great church, but who would want to return to that monolithic system with its enforced membership and widespread persecution? True, there was outward unity, but gospel witness was smothered beneath an avalanche of counterfeit doctrine and antichristian practices.

There is very little evidence that one united super-church would be more effective in presenting the gospel of salvation than the present multiplicity of churches. Is there not very real danger that *one church* would emerge once again as the repository of pride and power? Lord Acton said, "All power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Church leaders are men, and it is hard to trust even the best of men with power without proper checks and balances. Religious pluralism does help to expose blatant shortcomings and encourage self-examination. Holy competition is certainly not all bad. John Stuart Mill came to the well-pondered conclusion that religious diversity is imperative to produce a free, heterogeneous society. He believed that plurality of religious views was essential to minimize on the one hand possible authoritarian propensities in the church, and on the other to increase the independence of religion from political or other power structures.



There is also grave danger that, if "proselyting" should be quenched and Christian witness cease, the "one church" concept might lead ultimately to no church at all. For the continuance of Christianity is dependent upon the constant zealous witness of its believers.

The greatest stumbling block to the acceptance of Christianity is not denominational divisions, but the ineffective witness of those churches which have lost the New Testament missionary spirit of dedicated evangelistic outreach. The proliferation of religious denominations is by no means only a negative phenomenon. It is a sign of confessional vitality. If some churches are drifting together, it is often for the quite unsatisfactory reason that a laxity about doctrines once tenaciously cherished has now come to the fore. Discipline and standards of Christian living that once led to distinctiveness and characteristic denominational witness, have suffered a levelling-off process.

Acts of the Apostles gives us the pattern of New Testament evangelism. The early church had a few great preachers like Apollos and Barnabas. But it "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) because thousands of simple, missionary-minded men and women testified through words and deeds how Jesus Christ had changed their lives. This made for powerful

witnessing. The church went forth to testify to the mighty acts of God.

The apostolic pattern has not changed. The elect are to go everywhere "preaching the word." Acts 8:4. Christian witness is not just "doing church work" in the layman's spare time, but is the main business of every Christian in his day's work and his home.

The New Testament preaching mission was predicated on a two-camp concept: those who accept Christ and those who do not. At the terminal point of history, the second advent of Jesus Christ, the New Testament writers pre-figured two opposite camps facing the judgment of God: the saved and the lost. It was the desire that none should perish that gave untiring vitality to Christian witness. Today as in the days of the Apostle Paul, it is still the burden for souls, sustained by the love of Christ, that constrains His disciples to reason with their fellow men "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Acts 24:25.

In contrast to the "two-camp" concept that stands out in New Testament writings, the "one-camp" theory is the order of the day in certain ecumenical circles. There appears to be a not insignificant dose of "universalism" in some modern ecumenical theology. The "inclusivist" nature of the World Council of Churches lends support to the belief that we are apparently faced with a revised edition of the post-Constantinian sacral view of society, which does not see church membership as consisting exclusively of faithful believers, but rather of all people in a given geographical area. It is quite understandable that those who see only one category in the present, find it difficult to envisage two camps in the hereafter. As a result they tend to develop little steam in their evangelistic outreach. "After all," they say, "why get overwrought about the destiny of fellow human beings? God has reconciled this world unto Himself, and all will be well." But the Scriptures clearly speak of a "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3:7.

If there is darkness in the world today, it is because men have a wrong concept of God's character. Three points are clear: (1) God's witnesses have it as their task to show forth the character of God and thus glorify their Creator and Redeemer; (2) they receive from Christ the character of God (John 17:22); and (3) Christian unity, based on perfection of character and sanctification through the truth of God's Word (John 17:17, 22, 23), is the result.

Unity and evangelism thus become the twin fruitage of a regenerated life. The Christian evangelist or missionary is not just a zealot ardently seeking out proselytes. He is not just a recruiting sergeant enrolling soldiers under the banner of Emmanuel. He is not merely an idealist with stars in his eyes, promoting Christian unity. He is more than the organizer of evangelistic campaigns or missions. He must be a winner of souls for God's kingdom, constantly bearing fruit to the glory of God.

Like the Apostle Paul, the authentic Christian witness today will testify to all men "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21. Like the first disciples, he will come a penitent to the foot of the cross, and then leave its shadow an irresistible and exultant witness going forth "conquering, and to conquer."

IN the San Bernardino Mountains of Southern California a populous resort community has developed on the shores of Big Bear Lake. Big Bear is an artificial lake, created years ago when the Big Bear Water Company constructed a dam across the narrow part of the canyon that formerly served as an outlet for Big Bear Valley. The impounded water formed a lake seven miles long and nearly a mile wide in some places.

In recent years the level of the water in the lake has been distressingly low because of the increased use of lake water for irrigation in the valley below the mountains. Those who live at Big Bear Lake have stated in court that the interests of their community require that the lake water not be taken away. The water company has contended, "We built the dam in the first place, therefore we should be free to use the water as we please." But the community representatives have retorted, "We need the water, and we want to keep it."

In the circumstance at Big Bear Lake we have an illustration of some of the relationships within the human body. Here it is not a simple matter of water rights, even though the regulation of the amount of water which the body contains is an important item.

Dr. HAROLD SHRYOCK discusses—

Nature's

AUTOMATIC SELECTION SYSTEM

It is a matter of the body's ability to preserve for its own use the materials that are needed.

Many different substances must be present in the body in order for it to function normally. These are supplied by the food and drink and air that are taken in. Many of the needed materials are in such abundance that the excesses must be thrown away. Also to be thrown away are the waste products of tissue activity.

It would be seen that in eliminating substances that are not needed, there is danger that some essential materials may be thrown out also. But when the body is in good health, it has the marvellous ability to keep just what it needs. It is the kidneys that are largely responsible for this capacity to determine what shall stay and what shall go.

Take the body's need for water as a first example. About 60 to 70 per cent of the body's weight is due to the water it contains—water in the blood plasma and other body fluids, water within the body's cells, and water in the spaces between the cells.

Water is being constantly lost from the body by several means. Water vapour is carried along with the air that is exhaled. This accounts for the loss of almost a pint of water per day. Between one and two pints are lost from the skin each day even when external temperatures are moderate. When a person



is physically active or the outside temperature is high, as much as two quarts per hour, in extreme cases, are thrown off in the form of perspiration. An average of three pints of water are eliminated per day in the urine. A small amount of water is contained in the waste material expelled from the rectum. Notice that there is a tremendous variation in the amount of water eliminated, the exact amount depending on conditions of the moment.

The sources of the body's water are three: (1) the water which a person drinks (an average of three pints per day), (2) the water contained in the food that is eaten (averaging one quart per day), and (3) the water produced within the tissues as the result of processes of oxidation (averaging about one-half pint per day).

Water is vital to the body's economy. It is the universal solvent. All the chemical processes of the body involve molecules of substances which are dissolved in water or else involve the water molecules themselves.

The exact amount of water which the body contains at any given time obviously depends upon the balance between the intake and the outgo. Loss of water from the body occurs easily and may occur very suddenly in excessive perspiration due to overheating,

in vomiting, in diarrhoea, and in haemorrhage. The body can adjust to small variations in the amount of water it contains. When the body's supply runs low, thirst develops and the person drinks an extra quantity of water, thus restoring what has been lost. When the amount of water in the body accumulates beyond what is needed, the excess is eliminated through the kidneys. If in extreme conditions, the loss of water amounts to 10 per cent of the body weight, the situation is serious. If the loss approaches 20 per cent of the body weight, the outcome may be fatal.

As the blood passes through the kidneys, a certain portion is withdrawn from the main stream and allowed to move more slowly through the kidney tissue for a sorting out of its chemical constituents. This portion of the stream is called the "filtrate." Protein and blood cells are not included in the filtrate. During a twenty-four hour period the total amount of filtrate amounts, on the average, to about 180 quarts. This is many times the volume of the body's blood plasma. It becomes apparent, then, that the fluid portion of the blood is overhauled by the kidneys many times each day as its composition is checked and altered appropriately.

As the filtrate moves slowly through the kidneys, most of its water and the dissolved substances which are still useful in the body are absorbed by the kidney's cells and returned to the main bloodstream. At first mention, this seems like a wasteful method. We must realize, however, that water is required to "flush out" the waste products and the excesses of other substances which are contained in the blood plasma.

About 85 per cent of the water contained in the filtrate is automatically returned to the bloodstream. What happens to the remaining 15 per cent depends upon the momentary water balance within the body's tissues. If there is plenty of water already contained within the tissues and circulating blood, the kidneys are liberal in allowing a surplus of water to pass on into the bladder to become part of the urine. If the water is in short supply throughout the body, most of the water in this remaining portion of the filtrate is re-absorbed so that in extreme cases only about one pint of water per day goes to the bladder for elimination.

This final control is influenced by a tiny bit of tissue which serves as a monitor to measure the concentration of the blood. When the blood becomes too concentrated, a chemical substance known as *vasopressin* is liberated from the pituitary gland and carried by the blood to the kidneys, where it brings about the return of as much water as possible to the blood.

Here we have a mechanism that reminds us of what takes place inside a chemical manufacturing plant. As we contemplate it, we can almost visualize a group of legendary dwarfs residing within the kidneys, waiting for signals from the pituitary gland. When the signal is given, they either close or open the figurative valves which regulate the amount of water that enters the urine.

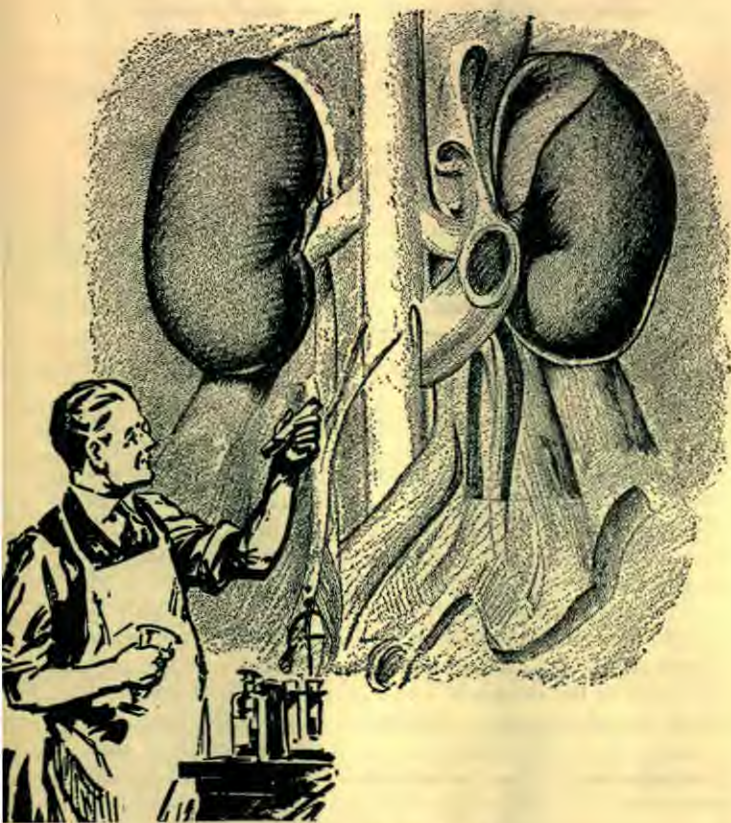
The kidneys have much else to do in addition to controlling the body's water balance. They not only permit materials which are useless to the body to be eliminated, but they prevent the loss of substances which are useful to the body. Their work can be likened to putting the molecules which are dissolved in the filtrate through a chute and saying to this molecule, "You go straight ahead," and to another, "You take the next exit to your left."

It is ridiculous to assume that the infinitely large number of molecules contained in the filtrate can be handled by running them, single file, past a check point. The kidneys handle their task very much as ticket checkers at a large public performance handle the crowd of people as they enter. In such a case there are many ticket checkers and many turnstiles so that only a fraction of the large crowd enters by any one gate.

In a similar manner each kidney contains about one million identical structures, called nephrons, each of which deals with one-millionth part of the filtrate that is processed by this kidney. So, with the two million nephrons operating in the two kidneys, the work goes forward with dispatch.

A nephron consists of two parts—a *renal corpuscle* and a *tubule*. Each renal corpuscle consists of a tuft of blood capillaries surrounded by a delicate capsule, shaped like a funnel, which collects the fluid as it seeps out of the blood capillaries and pours it into the tubule.

How Your Body Keeps What It Needs



There are tiny openings in the walls of these capillaries through which water and other substances may pass. The openings are designed purposely to be so small that the giant protein molecules contained in blood plasma cannot squeeze through. Neither can the blood cells which are carried through the capillaries as a part of the bloodstream.

Now we are ready to tie our knowledge of the kidney's structure to what was said previously. The fluid which escapes from the capillary tuft within the renal corpuscle is the "filtrate" mentioned above. It is in the tubules of the nephrons that most of the water and many of the molecules of substances dissolved in the filtrate are reclaimed for continued use within the body. It is the cells which line the tubules that have the remarkable capacity to recover from the filtrate the molecules of the substances that are needed by the body.

In addition to water, the substances which are reclaimed in the kidney tubules include glucose (blood sugar), carbonates, sodium, chlorides, potassium, most of the phosphate, most of the calcium, and a small part of the sulphate contained in the filtrate. Also part of the urea (the principal nitrogenous waste product) is re-absorbed in the tubules, only to be elim-

inated at a later time when it passes through the kidney again.

We should underscore the importance of recovering glucose from the filtrate. Glucose is the body's tissue fuel. It is glucose that unites with oxygen in the various cells of the body to provide the energy with which they carry on their activities.

When a person is in good health and when other circumstances are normal, all of the glucose is recovered and returned to the circulating blood plasma so that it can be used as necessary throughout the body. There are circumstances, however, in which the amount of glucose in the circulating plasma becomes too great. In such cases, only a part of the glucose is re-absorbed in the kidney tubules, and the excess is allowed to pass into the urine.

When a person has eaten too many sweets or when for any reason the liver is overwhelmed in storing a large allotment of sugar, the concentration of glucose in the blood becomes dangerously high. This is one of the circumstances under which the kidneys allow the excess of glucose to pass into the urine. A similar situation occurs in diabetes in which there is a fault in the ability of the tissues to use glucose in the normal manner. Then glucose is permitted to "spill over" into the urine. This explains why it is that the detection of glucose (sugar) in the urine (by a simple laboratory test) is an important aid in diagnosing diabetes or in the handling of such a case under treatment.

There is another substance for which the body has such urgent need that the kidneys do not even allow it to become a part of the filtrate. This is protein. We mentioned, in describing the minute structure of the kidney, that the openings in the walls of the capillary tufts inside the renal corpuscle are so small that they do not permit the large molecules of protein to pass through. It is for this reason that protein never appears, normally, in the filtrate and, therefore, is not present in the urine.

There are forms of illness, however, in which protein does appear in the urine. When it is present, this is indication that the capillaries in the renal corpuscles are damaged and are allowing the protein to seep through and thus become lost to the body. This sort of damage occurs in many cases of acute poisoning, as a complication of some of the infectious diseases, or in degenerative conditions of the kidney.

It is one of the remarkable features of the human body that its vital functions, even though complicated, are carried on automatically. How fortunate we are that we do not have to give conscious attention to the amount of water that should be eliminated from the body on a given day! Neither do we have to count the sodium ions or the phosphate radicals or the calcium atoms to be sure that there are a sufficient number in the body.

By our eating and drinking normally, the body is supplied with a sufficient amount of the materials which it needs, and the kidneys—credit to them—take care of the details of maintaining the right amounts of these substances in the body. Of course, they cooperate with other organs, but it is the kidneys that have the final say on which molecule stays and which one goes.

As a Man Soweth

The Saviour ignores both rank and caste, worldly honour and riches. It is character and devotedness of purpose that are of high value with Him. He does not take sides with the strong and worldly favoured. He, the Son of the living God, stoops to uplift the fallen. By pledges and words of assurance He seeks to win to Himself the lost perishing soul. Angels of God are watching to see who of His followers will exercise tender pity and sympathy. They are watching to see who of God's people will manifest the love of Jesus.

Those who realize the wretchedness of sin, and the divine compassion of Christ in His infinite sacrifice for fallen man, will have communion with Christ. Their hearts will be full of tenderness; the expression of the countenance and the tone of the voice will show forth sympathy; their efforts will be characterized by earnest solicitude, love, and energy, and they will be a power through God to win souls to Christ.

We all need to sow a crop of patience, compassion, and love. We shall reap the harvest we are sowing. Our characters are now forming for eternity. Here on earth we are training for heaven. We owe everything to grace, free grace, sovereign grace. Grace in the covenant ordained our adoption. Grace in the Saviour effected our redemption, our regeneration, and our adoption to heirship with Christ. Let this grace be revealed to others.—*Ellen G. White.*



Adventist Explosion

★ ARTHUR S. MAXWELL

FIGURES RELEASED at the recent quadrennial session of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at Detroit, Michigan, reveal remarkable growth in many parts of the world.

At the close of December, 1965, the total church membership was 1,578,504, a net increase of more than 200,000 during the quadrennium 1962-65.

In the same period the number of workers, evangelical and institutional, grew from 48,000 in 1961 to 62,224 in 1965 an increase of more than 14,000. The largest increase in personnel was in medical institutions, which showed an increase of 6,154. Evangelistic workers increased by 4,504 and workers in educational institutions by 3,899. Meanwhile the number of churches grew by 1,282.

Seventh-day Adventists carry on a global work, and 75.9 per cent of their membership is now outside North America. Of the 236 countries and political subdivisions of the world they have organized work in 200, representing 99.3 per cent of the world's population. Only a few small territories, such as Vatican City, have not as yet been officially entered, although their borders have often been crossed by literature and the radio messages of the Voice of Prophecy.

The fastest growing section of the church is the South American Division, with an increase of 38 per cent during the past four years. Second is the Inter-American Division, embracing the West Indies, Mexico, and parts of South America, with a 32 per cent increase. Third is the Trans-Africa Division with a 31 per cent gain. Here 54,000 persons joined the church, bringing the total membership for that area to 245,101.

At the close of 1965 Seventh-day Adventists were operating two universities, 632 advanced and secondary schools, 136 hospitals and sanitariums, 166 clinics and dispensaries, 16 medical launches and aeroplanes, 44 publishing houses, 14 health food companies, and 35 homes for senior citizens.

All these institutions showed considerable growth during the quadrennium. In the elementary schools the number of students increased from 245,000 in 1961 to 294,000 in 1965. In secondary and advanced schools the number of students grew from 54,000 to 73,000.

In the publishing work the number of literature salesmen increased from 5,365 to 6,107, while the value of literature sold expanded from \$24,933,000 to \$33,567,000.

In their various medical institutions the number of physicians and nurses increased from 3,385 to 4,567, while other employees increased from 9,650 to 14,084. House patients

treated increased from 270,000 to 391,000 and outpatients from 2,900,000 to 3,900,000.

Similar increases were seen in the church's radio and TV activities, the number of radio stations broadcasting the advent message growing from 1,217 in 1961 and 1,958 in 1965. Meanwhile the number of TV stations using Adventist programmes increased from 180 to 277.

To support this global programme vast sums of money are needed and the basic source of supply is the members' tithe, which increased from \$61,000,000 in 1961 to \$81,000,000 in 1965. Besides this, of course were freewill offerings from members and friends, which, with the tithe, brought in a total income of \$142,894,000 in 1965. This is a lot of money for a comparatively small group to provide, especially as the majority of the members live in low-income areas.

To sense the full impact of the figures given above one needs to remember that it is only 103 years since the first General Conference session was held. At that time there were but 3,500 Seventh-day Adventists altogether, all of them in North America. No other country had been entered. Not a single missionary had been sent overseas. The number of delegates attending that first meeting was twenty and the General Conference Committee consisted of three members!

In 1966, 103 years later, the 1,200 and more delegates who attended the fiftieth General Conference session represented nearly 1,600,000 members in 200 countries, using 928 languages. The General Conference Committee now has 280 members.

Figures, of course, are not a safe guide to quality. Bad enterprises sometimes grow faster than good ones. But when Adventism explodes, as it is doing today, it is a matter of great significance. For no one can be an Adventist unless he believes in a personal God, in Jesus Christ as a crucified Saviour and coming King, in the inspiration of the Bible, and the vital importance of the Ten Commandments. He must be willing to observe the seventh day as the Sabbath of the Lord, to return a tenth of his increase to the church, and to give up alcohol and tobacco and other harmful indulgences. When a million and a half people take such steps to express their love for God, and when 50,000 more from every race and nation take a similar stand year by year, it is obvious that something of vast importance is taking place.

Surely God is gathering His remnant people, calling them out of "Babylon," out of all nations and denominations, to witness for Him, His truth, and His delivering power, in these closing years of time.

EVEN IF EMILY had done what you said, which I don't believe for a moment, you have no right to keep her after school. Teachers take too much on themselves." The telephone was having trouble in relaying the high-pitched indignation of the voice. It zinged unmusically under the assault of the strident tirade. "Emily is never rude. It is no good your trying to tell me she was. I am her mother. I know her far too well, and it is no good saying things like that. Emily is right here beside the phone, and she can hear every word you say. . . ."

Mrs. Jones would have been the first to deny it with appropriate indignation, as she denied everything, but she was being cruel to her daughter. She was depriving her of one of her most precious possessions: her right to fail. At this stage of her life, after thirteen years of association with her mother, Emily had more need of her failures than have most of us.

Emily was not a happy child. In the classroom she was insulated by an air of tight-lipped self-righteousness. She was adept at sidestepping questions, and made plausible excuses for every error. She was able to produce written excuses for any homework that she found too irksome to do, and she showed extreme tenseness and hostility when such excuses were questioned. Her voice was perpetually balanced on a pitch and a cadence just above the territory of rudeness. She was insecure because she was training herself in the skill of getting by, in a place where nothing but achievement can bring success.

In the playground, she avoided group activities like games, and concentrated on the task of gathering two or three malcontents under her wing.

Emily's mother had long ago placed in her daughter's hand a special key to a way of life. It had been given with loving solicitude, and many subsequent occasions had assured Emily that she could enter that way with impunity. Her mother would always be there to back her up. But it was the key to a back alley of life, and Emily had already made the unconscious discovery that this back alley was a very unhappy place, because the voice that she reserved for her mother was the rudest and most querulous of all.

There are so many people more or less like Emily's mother. And they have sons and daughters more or less like Emily. They make them that way. Indeed, the best of us are not altogether immune from this ridiculous attitude to failure.

Let us take a little time to look failure squarely in the face. What is failure?

When a baby ends his wobbly progress from chair to sofa by plumping down on his fat little bottom, he is failing. When a tennis player lands a neatly executed backhand into the net, he is failing. When a pianist finds a too-quickly executed scale tumbling over itself with rhythm dislocated and fingers groping, he is failing. Every time our precise purpose is not fulfilled, it is because we have failed.

We all live with failure. It is unavoidable. It is a necessary prelude to success. An acrobatic tumbler must fall many times before he learns all the wrong things he can do.

In most circumstances we react quite sensibly to failure. The tumbler may be distressed by his falls. He may be exasperated by his slowness to profit by his mistakes. But he never pretends that they did not occur. When he falls on his face, he does not try to convince himself that he landed on his feet. He does not enshroud his failures in a morbid mist of shame. He does not feel guilty about them. He profits by them, and, if he is an expert, it is because he has developed the skill of exploiting his failures with unusual efficiency.

But here is a curious thing; the moment we enter the realms of school work, social behaviour, or religious life, our attitude to failure undergoes a marked change. Failure becomes a thing to hide from ourselves, to deny, to explain. Emotions that should be quite irrelevant to the failure rise up like a mist. In that mist the whole incident is distorted. We don't like to remember the occasion, and seek to banish it from our minds. Often we

Freedom to

FAIL

Lionel H. Turner

try to transfer the blame to someone else, or to a disturbed self that we disown. "I lost my temper"; "I was not feeling well at the time"; "I was distracted by worry"; "I lost my nerve momentarily"; are common excuses. These are primitive and highly illogical attempts to dissociate ourselves from our mistakes.

What is the effect of this childish behaviour?

In the first place, we rob ourselves of the benefit of failure. We do not make steady progress towards success. On the contrary, we remain in the sticky morass where failure is called by another name, and where we try to adjust to our environment by such devious means as Emily used in the classroom and in the playground. We, too, find it an unpleasant locality to live in.

But the most traumatic consequences of this attitude to failure lie deep in the bruised tissues of our subconscious. No one can live in a world of make-believe all the time. The sunshine vitamins of reality are missing. There is no *joie de vivre*. There is no muscle-building conflict with reality, nothing of the exhilaration that comes from improvement. In short,



the wind out of him; but the discomfort sharpens his efforts to get more spring, more turn, so that he lands comfortably.

It takes a peculiar kind of parental courage to stand aside so that the full consequences of a child's failure may fall upon him. Indeed that is the high water mark of parenthood.

But there is another aspect of failure in which we almost universally act foolishly. We do not let a child have his failures as his exclusive possession to do with as he wishes. We involve ourselves in his failures and thereby thoroughly confuse him and incur his hostility. How many children can bring home a bad school report without finding to their dismay that they have failed their parents and disgraced the family name?

When one stops to think about it, it is a curious thing that we should regard failure in sport as something so vastly different from failure in an examination. It is not that the second is seen as something much more serious than the first. A father can say, "Bad luck," with hearty cheerfulness when his son loses a tennis match by a double fault, and the son never feels that his status in the family has suddenly become questionable. On the other hand, a failure in examinations often becomes a matter of shame and embarrassment and anguished speculation about family reactions.

How have we become so confused over this matter of failure in some fields of life?

Part of the trouble comes from misguided techniques in the skill of bolstering up other people's desires to excel. Parents feel rather vaguely that they can punish their children by making them feel that they have brought suffering on the family. The child is expected to find this thought so unbearable that he will make superlative efforts in the future. But it never seems to go according to plan. The child is sullenly indignant that he can't have his failures to himself. It is his funeral, he argues to himself. He has to pay for it. He doesn't need the burden of guilt and shame they would heap on his shoulders. Quite often the child becomes irresponsible. "All right," he says with bitterness, "if they want to run my life, they can have the job of making me work."

But the more important reason is a religious one. Most people have distorted ideas of the Bible teaching on the question of failure. Many Christians assume that failure in the Christian life is unthinkable. They act as though their Father in heaven were adopting a similar attitude to their own failures—such as they adopt to their children's.

The fact of the matter is that the Bible takes a positive attitude to failure that generates cheerfulness and optimism. We are given pictures of spiritual giants like David and Elijah making the most resounding failures on occasion. We see their pain and distress when they do not face their mistakes squarely, and we see them triumph over their failures when they acknowledge their faults. They improve. They become more expert in the field of spiritual things. Indeed, the exhilaration that comes from improvement in the readjustment following failure is everywhere apparent in this Book.

(Please see page 30)

we condemn ourselves to a life without flavour, and without mental health.

But the most desperately unhappy part of the whole business is this: you can hide the truth from yourself to a great extent, but you cannot fool the subconscious. Deep down in the darkness of that primitive awareness that seldom communicates with the vividly conscious self, there is the unhappy knowledge that a complex pattern of behaviour is being built on a lie. There is no solid, comforting ground beneath our feet, and a deep and abiding sense of insecurity grows up within us. It often emerges into consciousness as nothing more than a mood, the smell of defeat, or at its worst, the conviction of doom, a neurosis.

Why do so many parents like Emily's mother open an inviting gate for their children into such a realm?

The answer is simple enough. Failure is nearly always associated with pain, and parents like to shield their children from pain. Indeed, they feel it is their duty to do so, and no one would deny that it is within the legitimate function of parenthood to protect their children from danger. The abnormal involvement of youth in car accidents is a vivid illustration of the fact that they lack judgment in the area of risk-taking, but in the common ground of living and working, children must not be deprived of the right to make their own mistakes, face the consequences of them, and profit by them. It will, of course, involve suffering, disappointment, inconvenience, but there is value in that. When a young gymnast lands on his back in a half-hearted attempt at a somersault, the jar knocks

IS PRAYER AN INSURANCE POLICY?

Asks W. Austin Townend



HE WAS NOT a man of prayer—far from it. In fact, scarcely had he ever prayed since he was a small child at his mother's knee, and here he was a man past 70 years of age—praying. A friend had convinced him of the power of prayer, underscored its necessity, and now at the end of his life's road he was praying to God at least three times a day. The experience, he found, was all that it had been painted to him, and even more.



For forty years this new convert to prayer had driven his own car, "without so much as a scratch on it or me," he proudly used to proclaim. Then prayer came into his life—and a major car smash. The vehicle was almost a write-off and the one-time proud owner-driver a very shaken man: shaken in body, shaken in soul.

"Is this what prayer does?" chided his close friends who knew of his recently started prayer life, jabbing in, "you did better without prayer."

When this experience was related to me I retorted with, "I guess the old gentleman is wondering if prayer really is an insurance policy." Is it? Some say yes,

and present their evidence. Some say no, and they, too, present their evidence. Could both be right?

Job was a man of prayer. See Job 1:20-22. *But* he was covered with boils, suffered the sudden death of his children, and the loss of his live-stock.

Moses was a man of prayer. See Exodus 33:12-23. *But* he was frustrated and ridiculed, threatened and challenged, and finally died before reaching the promised land, to the very borders of which he had led Israel for something like forty years.

Jacob was a man of prayer. See Genesis 32:9-12. *But* his faithful and deeply loved wife, Rachel, died while giving birth to Benjamin, and mark you, this was not long after Jacob's famed whole night of prayer when God actually talked with him.

Joseph was a man of prayer. See Genesis 39: 2, 3. *But* he was sold as a slave, wrongly accused, thrown into prison, fell out of favour with reigning royalty, and died in a foreign land.

Daniel was a man of prayer. See Daniel 2:16-19. *But* he was locked up in a den of lions, also in a foreign land, a long way from his home.

Stephen was a man of prayer. See Acts 7:55, 56. *But* he was cast out of the city where he had given a tremendous testimony for God, and where he had delivered one of the mightiest sermons recorded in the Bible, and then he was stoned to death.

Paul was a man of prayer. See 1 Thessalonians 3:9, 10. *But* his own statement is: "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." 2 Corinthians 11:25-28.

Jesus was a Man of prayer. See Mark 1:35. *But* He was hunted, hounded, betrayed, falsely accused, wrongly tried, beaten, spat upon, nailed on a cross, and finally died there.

Is prayer an insurance policy?

If it is then we must admit on evidence it did not "cover" Job from serious troubles; Moses from frustra-

tion; Jacob from bereavement; Joseph from disappointment; Daniel from temporary demotion; Stephen from stoning; Paul from hazardous living; Jesus from crucifixion.

Given their time on earth again would you expect these men to be men of prayer? Yes. Why? Because, amongst other benefits, they proved that prayer is an insurance policy; it insures, and assures.

Prayer does not change God, and it can hardly be said that it changes the plans and purposes of God. God is love and He is loving. (Ephesians 2:4.) He was, is, always will be, a God of love. (Malachi 3:6.) His plans and purposes for mankind are motivated by love. (Jeremiah 29:11.) These have never changed, are not changed, and will never change. (Hebrews 13:8.)

It is we who change. And it is prayer that changes us. This is a fundamental truth if we would understand the meaning of prayer.

Prayer insures our minds against breaking when the breaking-point appears as the inevitable. When other minds *do* break, the mind of the one who habitually prays *does not* break. Take the case of Job. Of his devotional life we read, "Thus did Job continually." Job 1:5. Job prayed not only in time of calamity. No, contact with God was a continual experience with Job. Then came the day of calamity or more correctly, *days* of calamity.

What a list! Just look at part of it as it is actually recorded in Job 1:13-19, according to "The Bible in Basic English." "And there was a day when his sons and daughters were feasting in the house of their oldest brother, and a man came to Job, and said, The oxen were ploughing and the asses were taking their food by their side: and the men of Sheba came against them and took them away, putting the young men to the sword, and I was the only one who got away safe to give you the news. And this one was still talking when another came, and said, The fire of God came down from heaven, burning up the sheep and the goats and the young men completely, and I was the only one who got away safe to give you the news. And this one was still talking when another came, and said, Your sons and your daughters were feasting together in their oldest brother's house, when a great wind came rushing from the waste land against the four sides of the house, and it came down on the young men, and they are dead; and I was the only one who got away safe to give you the news."

We repeat: What a list!

Job's mind did not break. Far from it. Listen to his ringing testimony: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21. Sane words from a sane mind. What a difference a life of prayer does make.

There are modern Jobs in the world today. I know several of them, as you probably do, too. I think of Mrs. Her promising young son died of a brain tumour. Her daughter, a talented, well-educated young woman, fell victim of cancer before she was in her mid-twenties. Her husband, a man of God, was killed in a motor-car accident. All her life Mrs. and her family were people of prayer.

Today? She rejoices over a sound mind in a sound body. Prayer makes heroes and heroines of ordinary people who are called to bear extraordinary trial and sorrow.

Prayer *insures*, and prayer *assures*. "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend." "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Proverbs 18:24. This friend is God. Prayer assures us of that, as every person who prays knows.

Prayer assures us that God is always listening. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." Isaiah 65:24. Some folk have a question at this point. They wonder how it is that God can hear so many prayers from so many places, all at the same time. There is no problem. God is God. What He says He will do, He does. He does not, of course, always tell us how. This we do know, however: we pray in *time*, whereas God is listening in *eternity*.

Prayer assures us that our sins can be forgiven. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: . . . for He will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:6,7. God says He will. He does what He says. He keeps His promises. If God stipulates a condition with the promise, we must meet that condition. In this case it is "seek ye the Lord." Pray. The prayer of confession and repentance changes us through the grace of our unchanging God, who forgives our sins.

"His promise is our only plea,
With this we venture nigh."

There is no doubt about what prayer does for us if we pray, and particularly as we pray habitually. Prayer is a habit.

Let those who have *never* prayed before, pray now. Let those who *have* prayed before, pray now. Let us pray, always. Praying we breathe—that is, spiritually—for "prayer is the breath of the soul." Breathing assures life. Breathing insures life. Thank God for life. Thank God for prayer.

"Lord, till I reach yon blissful shore,
No privilege so dear shall be,
And thus my inmost soul to pour
In prayer to Thee!"

OUR Co-operation Corner

From time to time "Signs" readers forward donations to us for various worthy causes. We are happy to acknowledge these gifts through our columns, and to disburse the gifts as directed by the donors. On behalf of the various funds mentioned we gratefully acknowledge the following donations.

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Advertisements like these ones penned by David H. Baash, and printed above, are not likely to appear in our newspapers. Railway engineers, teachers, and pilots would not be able to provide such expensive equipment. Employers supply all this, and ask only for the services of their employees.

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Aren't you glad that our Heavenly Father through the Lord Jesus Christ has provided everything necessary for our salvation? The Word of God abounds in assurances that through Christ there is free access to the kingdom of heaven. *The following texts of Scrip-*

ture are just a sample of the many that teach that God's plan of salvation provides everything.

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, . . . without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1.

"I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Matthew 9:13.

"In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2.

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

This salvation through Christ is described very beautifully in a commentary on the Life of Christ, "Desire of Ages," by Ellen G. White. "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'"

Contrary to a popular current teaching in Christendom today, the kingdom of heaven is definitely not a matter of our merit or means, but it is a matter of meeting the Master. Giving ourselves to Christ is the basic requirement. We need to commit our all to the One who has provided the way for our salvation. This committal to Christ calls for more than resolutions and promises, it demands the right action of the will. We must decide definitely to ally ourselves with the source of saving power. Many of us hope and desire to be Christians, but we will be lost unless like the Apostle Paul we

- "Press toward the mark"
- "Strive for the mastery"
- "are crucified with Christ"
- "Become new creatures in Christ Jesus."

Recently a clock which had been stopped for over one hundred years started running again. Around the beginning of the nineteenth century a clever watchmaker had invented a clock and kept it running perfectly for fifty years. It was an extremely complicated mechanism which not only told the time of day or night but also provided a continuous calendar, giving the days and the months. A golden disk moved across the face of the clock each day, rising and setting with the sun. Another silver disk coincided with the movements of the moon, and continually showed its current phase.

When the maker died, no one could be found to adjust it and keep it running accurately. Soon it stopped completely, and for a century it stood lifeless. Over the years many experts tried to discover how to make it tick again. None could until one day a jeweller with a knowledge of astronomy became interested in making the clock run. He did what no one else had been able to do and soon the old clock was giving the hour, the day, the month, the sunrise, the sunset, and the course of the moon, with its various phases. This master jeweller knew what to do and how to do it. The old clock, helpless in itself, useless for a century, was brought to life and was made to run perfectly again.

"Through faith in His name" you, through Christ, will have the same done for you.

Unfortunately many youth in this Space Age are more interested in *spaceships* and *spending* money, than in *salvation* and serving the Saviour. A survey taken at one of the leading universities of the world, shows that 82 per cent of students did not believe in the God of the Bible and 74 per cent indicated that they had nothing to do with any church while attending university. In their book, "*Teenage Tyranny*" Grace and Fred Hechinger speak of "our ten billion dollar teenagers." They refer to a youth research estimate conducted in 1960. The buying power of high school and college students in the U.S.A. directly led to the purchase of ten billion dollars' worth of goods annually. Multitudes of youth are captivated by the glittering neon world of coffee bars, juke boxes, and motor cars, and too many cast off parental and Biblical restraints and live mainly for pleasures.

Should there be a youth reading these lines who has been pursuing the follies and indulgences of sin, I would appeal to you to seek Christ, for as Solomon said, "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." On the other hand, the way of Christ is "the way which leadeth unto life eternal."

Those youth who *do* know the fullness of joy in Christ are duty bound to tell others of the provisions of Calvary—eternal life, perfect health, and fellowship with the redeemed of all ages.

Inscribed at the base of a lighthouse on the shore of one of the great continents, are the words—"To give light and to save life." Those words surely express the life and purposes of the Christian. We have been "*saved to serve*" and will be held responsible for the light of the gospel that we have been so privileged to learn of. Why not give your life in full-time gospel service? Christian colleges, such as Avondale College, in New South Wales, offer to you the opportunity to train for the Master's service. I would like to write above the door of every college and every church in the land the words, "*Youth Wanted*," for the great want of this space age is for Christian youth—

Youth who are not for sale;

Youth who will condemn wrong in friend or foe—in themselves as well as in others;

Youth whose consciences are as steady as the needle to the pole;

Youth who will stand for the right though the heavens totter, and the earth reels;
Youth who can tell the truth and look the world right in the eye;

Youth who neither brag nor run;

Youth who neither flag nor flinch;

Youth who can have courage without shouting it;
Youth in whom the courage of everlasting life still runs deep and strong;

Youth who know their message and tell it;

Youth who know their place and fill it;

Youth who know their business and attend to it;

Youth who are not too lazy to work, nor too proud to be poor;

Youth who are willing to eat what they have earned and to wear what they have paid for;

Youth who are not ashamed to say No with emphasis.

Youth who will go and teach the gospel of the kingdom.

(Author unknown.)

The youth who write for "Countdown" each month are youth who have decided to love and serve Christ the Saviour. This month's contributor, like most previous contributors, is training for gospel service.

'My Problem Was Solved'

By ANITA COE



In 1963, Anita Coe, whose home is at Evans Head, New South Wales, gained her Leaving Certificate. During 1964 she passed her secretarial course at Technical College, and the following year was employed in this capacity. Currently, at nineteen years of age she is attending Avondale College where she is taking the Bible Instructor's Course.

Like most young people today, I was content to go along with the crowd and drift through life with no purpose. I had no idea where I was heading nor why I was placed on this earth, but then I didn't really care—not until I became bored and discontented with my life. There was an emptiness I found in my heart, and hard as I searched in the world I knew, I could not fill it.

Then I remembered how my parents had tried to bring me up a Christian, and how I had always rebelled. I also recalled how some friends and relations had taken me to church and religious meetings in the dim past. Was this the answer? Somehow, I felt a burning desire to know what was in the Bible, to learn about God, Jesus, the church to which my parents had belonged, and to find my true self.

I not only came to know Jesus, but I also learned to love Him. My problem was solved, my empty heart was very full, and when I decided to serve my Lord, He gave me the fullest and happiest life one could ever live.

Salvation is free, young people. Jesus loves us all. We only have to give ourselves to Him. The Lord needs us in our youthful strength, and He wants us NOW. Our time in this world is short, I believe, and there is still a lot of work to be done. If we make a definite decision to serve Jesus, we will be the happiest young people in this world, and we can help others to gain this same wonderful experience.



THE BLUNDERS OF Pontius Pilate

By ROBERT H. PARR

SOME PEOPLE are inclined to make a hash of things, no matter what you ask them to do. They are the world's accident-prone, the born fumbler, the bumble-footed fraternity who will, it would seem, seize every opportunity to do the wrong thing, make the wrong decision or take the wrong turning. Most of us, it is true, have periods in our lives when this could be more or less true of even ourselves, but of these unfortunate lapses from the serene norm I do not speak; I am discussing in this brief allotment of space, the habitual, the congenital blunderer. And, as the title above would suggest, I regard Pontius Pilate of Biblical fame as the patron saint of this unhappy band.

Of the life and manners of Pilate, before he was appointed sixth Roman procurator in Judea, I know very little, and I do not have the inclination to delve into Josephus to ferret out such incidents in the man's early life as will bolster my opinions; there are sufficient examples of his miscueings and fumbings while he occupied the procuratorial palace in Caesarea. Pilate arrived and took up residence in that city about A.D. 25, succeeding Valerius Gratus; he owed his appointment directly to Tiberius Caesar himself. His duties were, in a sense, two-fold: his main function was to see that the revenue of his district was well and faithfully gathered, and due account rendered to Rome; his minor function was to act in a judicial capacity on certain occasions—as a kind of magistrate, using the term in the modern sense. An important instruction he would certainly have received from his superiors—for all such officers of Rome were so advised—was that he must not stir up the indigenous people of the

territory he administered. Such peace and harmony as existed must be maintained—for subject peoples were more likely to pay up their taxes if the Romans interfered as little as possible. Maintain the *status quo* as far as possible, collect the taxes, administer a little justice, and generally conduct himself as a Roman should; these were the requirements that must be observed if the procurator wished to avoid recall to Rome to taste the emperor's displeasure.

But, as I have intimated, Pontius Pilate was not one of those serene souls for whom life flows on in endless song, unruffled, untrammelled, and unvaried. If, indeed, things showed any tendency to be going too smoothly, Pilate seemed to think he wasn't doing his job properly, and immediately went out to see that the populace was sharply put in mind of the fact that he was running things in their particular corner of the empire, and they had better not forget it.

So it happened that, soon after he had settled in to the official residence at Caesarea, the rugged Galileans offended him in some unexplained manner. This was Pilate's opportunity and it was too good to miss. He sent the soldiers to wreak vengeance upon those simple peasant people, and the Roman legionaries fell upon the Galileans at a particularly solemn moment, when, in the midst of their worship, the sacrifice was being made. St. Luke¹ gives us to understand that the blood of the worshippers and the blood of the sacrificial victim were literally mingled in the massacre that followed. But what matter? Pilate's petulance was appeased.

The soldierly excursion was, apparently, in Pilate's distorted view, an unqualified success. That reliable historian Josephus² indicates that there were several other similar atrocities perpetrated by this miserable man. But it was a terrible blunder. Nothing tended to stir up the Jews (and who will blame them?) more than the outsider who rode rough-shod over their religion. And when that same outsider was so crass and stupid as to desecrate sacred things and people as they worshipped, he brought their hatred and their scorn down upon his head. Beside all this, Pilate, in this massacre, offended Herod, the Tetrach of Galilee, in whose jurisdiction the bloodshed occurred. This was his province, and the Roman procurator who usurped Herod's authority and who, in so doing, caused lives to be lost and blood to flow had better look to himself; he could have a very short future in that part of the world.

Thus, a short time after his arrival, Pilate had the reputation, well earned, of being a man of blood, to offend whom was likely to be fraught with all manner of unhappy results. No wonder the Galileans hated him; nor were they the only ones. For Pilate's popularity in Jerusalem was hardly in the ascendancy. His function as a collector of revenue frequently took him to the capital, and there he was known for his harshness and his rapacity, his avarice and his ruthlessness.

Pontius Pilate's next blunder was his attempt to dedicate some gilt shields to his patron the emperor, and to place them in the palace of Herod in Jerusalem. The Jewish historian Philo, a contemporary of Pilate, describes the incident and points out that the ill-starred venture brought its train of trouble. Rioting broke out and the shields had to be returned to Caesarea. The incident did nothing to improve the temper of the procurator.

What manner of man was this man Pilate who thought to treat subject peoples like dogs and to lord it over them so arrogantly? Let Philo give his opinion—though this might have been biased, for Philo, as intimated above, was Jewish. He says: "[He was] a man of a very inflexible disposition, and very merciless, as well as very obstinate."³ Philo, in another place expressed the opinion that the people might report the procurator's misdemeanours and cruelties to Tiberius Caesar, the basis of the complaint being "... in respect of his corruption and his acts of violence, and his habit of insulting people, and his cruelty, and his continual murders of people untried and uncondemned, his never-ending and gratuitous and most grievous inhumanity. Therefore, being exceedingly angry, and being at all times a man of most ferocious passions..."³

Then there was the incident of the ensigns which Josephus relates. Probably in an attempt to impress the people, Pilate planned that the Roman legions should enter Jerusalem at night, carrying their banners and ensigns through the city. There was uproar over this. Deputations scurried off to Caesarea and protested hotly against the move, for in the past, supposedly according to treaty, the ensigns had been left outside the city. Pilate bullied and blustered and finally backed down.⁴ And the Jews hated him so much the more.

Next there was the unfortunate matter of the corban and the aqueducts.⁵ Pilate, it seemed, couldn't even do his subjects a good turn without putting his foot squarely and flatly in the middle of trouble. Corban was money, given as an offering and dedicated for a specific, sacred purpose. Pilate, recognizing the inadequacy of Jerusalem's water-supply, decided that it would be to the public benefit if water could be carried to the city from the upland areas south of the city. To finance this benevolent gesture, Pilate appropriated the corban, the sacred funds. The uproar over this was immediate and violent. So much so that, when Pilate visited Jerusalem, there was an ugly riot. But the wily Roman had planted his troops—disguised in civilian clothes, but armed with sticks and knives among the crowds. Then, when the protesting rioters were making their voices heard, Pilate gave the signal and the soldiers struck and many Jews were killed and many more injured. In the ensuing panic, still more were trampled to death by their fellows in the frenzy to escape.

So much for the imperial instruction not to interfere with the religion of people under the gubernatorial rule of the Roman eagle. Pilate was immensely pleased with the outcome of his strategy; his aqueduct was built; the corban was used for the purpose; and the Jews seethed in hatred. The building of an aqueduct doubtless looked good on Pilate's report to Rome but the Jews regarded it as a desecration of sacred offerings and as such the whole benefit which might have accrued was lost in a welter of bloodshed and bitterness.

These blunders, let it be noticed, were against a subject people, and they hardly counted at all—at least not in the eyes of a Roman, and especially a Roman like Pilate. But Pilate's next blunder was against himself. When, because of the extraordinary events of the Passover eve, he had Jesus before him, he heard the prisoner say, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." The mention of the word "truth" caused the cynical procurator to smile. "What is truth?" he asked, *but he did not wait for an answer.*⁶ Immediately he had uttered the words, he left the room. This was, to date, his biggest blunder. Had he but listened, it is certain that he—and hence posterity—would have heard so sublime an answer that the ringing words would never have left him, and his life, had he heeded them, would have been radically changed.

But Pilate was a sceptic, and sceptics in whatever age they live do themselves a severe disservice when they imagine that there is no answer to the questions they pose. Don't think for a single minute that Pilate was the only blundering cynic who never waited for an answer to the most vital question that man can ask. Such people abound today; you rub shoulders with them every day. "What use is it to go to church?" "Can't I be as good a Christian as the man who goes to church every week?" "I live by the Golden Rule; what more does God expect than this?" These are some of the questions the sceptics ask today and they foolishly do not wait for a reply, for there are answers—and very good ones—to these questions, but like Pilate, they hurry on their way, be-

believing that there is no answer to these their unanswerable questions. And they are cheating themselves just as verily as did Pilate in the judgment hall.

Pilate's next—and greatest—blunder was that he stifled his convictions—again a fault which was (and is) not peculiar to Roman procurators alone. He was convinced that the Galilean before him was innocent; he said so in so many words. One word from him and the soldiers could have freed the Man who stood in the dock, reticent about saying a word in His own defence. But Pilate was a time-server; his convictions were a secondary consideration; the one guiding star in his life was "How shall my best interests be served?" and according to the answer he gave himself, so he acted. He had the Saviour scourged, insulted, and reviled. Then he tried to secure the Nazarene's release, but the mob clamoured for His blood. Finally, having regard to his wife's entreaty to "have nothing to do with that just man" he offered them the freedom of either Barabbas or Jesus—anything to save the last smatterings of his tarnished conscience. But they outwitted him. They chose Barabbas.

There was nothing left for it now; the tiresome business must be ended quickly. So he attempted to do what countless millions have tried to do since—he tried to dodge the decision and have someone else made responsible. He went through the pantomime of washing his guilty hands before them, and uttering the pious-sounding words, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it."⁸

Pilate thought that by fobbing off the moment of truth, he could forget his shameful treatment of the Man from Nazareth. But you cannot thrust the Christ aside into the limbo of forgotten things. He is not something that is cast lightly aside and forgotten like a worn-out garment. One commentator has put it clearly in these words:

"Pilate longed to deliver Jesus. But he saw that he could not do this, and yet retain his own position and honour. Rather than lose his worldly power, he chose to sacrifice an innocent life. How many, to escape loss or suffering, in like manner sacrifice principle. Conscience and duty point one way, and self-interest points another. The current sets strongly in the wrong direction, and he who compromises with evil is swept away into the thick darkness of guilt."⁹

If this was Pilate's worst blunder, it certainly wasn't his last. Soon after the crucifixion, his feelings were outraged again by something the Samaritans had done. So he repeated the treatment he had meted out to the Galileans soon after his arrival in that area. He had his soldiers set upon the Samaritan worshippers at Mount Gerizim and blood flowed again in the temple of people who innocently were about their lawful occasions.¹⁰

By this act, Pilate filled to the brim his cup of blundering stupidity. Even Rome could tolerate his blustering incompetence no longer. He was recalled to Rome. But before he arrived at the capital his friend the emperor died. Without the protection of Tiberius, he was virtually defenceless. He was given a province of Gaul (France) to administer—that district that lies along the Rhone River. But his final blunder was

yet before him, and rushing up at him to sweep him into oblivion. Having succeeded once more in riling the people of his territory to breaking point, and knowing full well that Rome would never give him another chance, he took his own life—less than three years after he tried to wash the guilt of the Galilean from his blood-stained hands.

Is it not an allegory? Is it not plain that to man there comes at least once in his lifetime a moment of awful decision? He must decide what he shall do with the Man from Nazareth. The moment of truth cannot be deferred, it cannot be ignored, it cannot be pigeon-holed for later consideration. And to those who try such tactics, there can be but one end: the way thereof is death. But to those who make the right decision there opens up an endless future, the way of life everlasting.

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FREEDOM TO FAIL

(Concluded from page 23)

When we pass from the stories of the Old Testament, to the gospel of the New Testament, it is clear that the most valuable thing that Jesus had to offer the tradition-steeped Jews was what seemed to their leaders to be a new and very dangerous attitude to sin. When He was confronted with a group of men doing their best to aggravate the sense of shame in a young woman caught in the act of adultery, He said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." That is the very essence of the gospel: the picture of Christ directing a sinner to learn from his mistake, and empowering him with the positive emotions that the Spirit can instil in him. John reminds us of this picture when he says: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father. . . ." And Paul frequently becomes lyrical in his enthusiasm for the possibilities for improvement when we turn failures into success in Christ's strength.

But let us come to the conclusion of the whole matter. Failure in any field of life is simply one of the countless wrong reactions that we can make to the circumstances that confront us. Failure, as often as not, is painful. But that in itself is helpful. The most natural reaction to failure is an urge to make a better response. But this reaction is usually badly confused by interference from without. Let your children in particular have their own failures. They are their private property. Don't try to shield them. Don't involve yourself in their failures. Don't load them with irrelevant emotions of your own. Above all, don't teach your children to pretend that they have not failed.

After all, the right to have your own failures unspoiled by interference is one of the great freedoms. It may well be that Jesus had some of these things in mind when He said: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

The Missed Sovereign

I'M READY, MUM. I'm going now," Graham said. "Have you got a clean handkerchief? and here's your lunch, and be sure to do your best to please Mr. Burt," Mother said as she kissed him good-bye. She proudly watched him as he walked to the gate. He looked attractive and she was sure he would do well. Graham was starting work today and he felt important.

Mr. Burt, his employer, had bought a shop in the main street of the town. He was a prosperous business man who owned several shops. When he asked Graham to help him in the new shop, he told him that if he worked hard and learned all he could about shop management, he would probably own a business of his own some day. As Graham walked down the street he pictured himself nicely dressed and serving customers in a gracious manner. He was good at figures and thought perhaps Mr. Burt would let him do his bookkeeping also. He felt grown up now and looked forward to his first day at work.

When he arrived Mr. Burt said: "Have you brought your overalls, Graham?" "No, I didn't think I'd need them," he said. "Never mind, there's an old pair here that you can wear today, but don't forget them tomorrow." "Aren't I going to serve in the shop?" he faltered. "No, not yet," Mr. Burt laughed. "There are lots of things to do in a shop besides serving customers. If you want to understand the business you must start at the bottom and learn everything about it. There is more to selling goods than just wrapping them up and handing them over the counter."

So, unhappily, Graham put on the dirty overalls and started work in the store room. He unpacked cases and boxes and cleaned shelves and stored the goods ready for transfer into the shop. It was heavy work and his muscles ached and soon he felt very tired. The big room at the back of the shop was dark and dismal and he had to work with the lights on. He thought of the boys at school playing in the sunshine and he wished he were back with them. He didn't know that working in a shop would be like this.

Mr. Burt's shop was one of those country stores that sells just about everything. Graham thought he would never remember where to find things, or what their prices were. And as for the book keeping, he knew he would never be able to do that with the little knowledge he possessed. He would have to take a course at night school, but he felt so tired that all he wanted to do when he got home was go to bed and rest. He thought the day would never end. He had to keep going till six o'clock and it was only three o'clock now.

About an hour before closing time Mr. Burt said: "I want you to sweep out the store room, Graham. It looks as if it hasn't been cleaned for some time, so do a good job, because we must always keep it clean and tidy. I wouldn't be surprised if there are a few odd coins lying around. I saw a couple the other day when I was shifting some boxes. If you find any you may keep them."

★

MYRTLE
O'HARA

Now Graham wasn't used to sweeping. He thought that would be easy enough, so he got the broom and made a start. But he put too much pressure on it and raised clouds of dust. Then he tried to sweep lightly, but he left half of the dirt behind. He pulled the broom towards him and swept the dirt onto his feet. The floor was rough and splintery and the hairs of the broom kept catching and dragging on the boards. He began to perspire and his hands became slippery so he took a firmer grip of the broom. Soon some of his fingers began to sting. He looked at them and found they were blistered and some of the blisters had broken, so he wrapped his handkerchief around the handle. There were empty boxes to shift and stack neatly, low shelves to sweep under, and awkward corners to clean. The room was very big and before long Graham was heartily sick of sweeping. Anyway, he thought, sweeping is a girl's work and I don't see why I should have to do it. If I have to sweep this room every day I see no reason why I should be so particular today. I'll just get the worst of the dirt off and sweep the rest off tomorrow. I don't believe there is any money lying around, but if there is I'll find it next time. So he finished his sweeping in a very half-hearted fashion and hoped his employer wouldn't examine the floor too closely.

Five minutes before closing time Mr. Burt came in and looked around the room. He saw something shining under a shelf and stooped and picked up a golden sovereign. (At the time of this story, sovereigns which were worth two dollars were plentiful, and were freely used in buying and selling). He also saw the poorly swept floor, and Graham noticed his displeasure.

"You haven't done a very good job Graham," Mr. Burt said, "and as a result you missed this sovereign. If I can't trust you to sweep a floor properly how can I trust you with more important things?" Graham wanted to tell him how tired he was, and how his hands hurt, and how he thought it wouldn't matter if he didn't get the floor clean the first time, but he remembered he was paid to work well and not to give way to his feelings, so he was without excuse. He blushed and hung his head and felt utterly miserable.

On the way home he felt so sorry for himself and so unhappy about missing the sovereign that tears came into his eyes. Then he remembered it was his own fault and there and then made a resolution that he would always do his very best, no matter how distasteful his work might be, and that he would make himself so useful to Mr. Burt that he would be glad to promote him from the store room, and trust him with greater responsibilities.



Readers' Questions
Are Answered in These Columns by
PASTOR D. FORD

BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Address: PASTOR D. FORD, Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria.

PURCHASE OF FIELD

Would you please explain Matthew 27:5, and Acts 1:16-18? Does the last text refer to Judas, and if so, how could he purchase a field after he had hanged himself? M.L.R.

The text in Acts describes the suicide of Judas after his mood of remorse. Matthew 27:7 makes it clear that the purchase of the field was done with the money given to bribe Judas, even though the actual purchase was made by the "chief priests and elders." When Judas threw down the coins in a fit of self-condemnation, those at whose feet the money was thrown decided it was more appropriate to purchase a cemetery lot than to place the money in the temple treasury.

WHO JUDGES?

Who makes the decisions in the Last Judgment, the Father or the Son? P.P.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." John 5:22.

"And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." John 5:27.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10.

"And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He [Jesus of Nazareth, verse 38] which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Acts 10:42.

"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." Romans 2:16.

It is One who has our nature, and who has known our temptations, that will make the decisions in that great day.

BASIS OF JUDGMENT

How can you reconcile the Bible teachings that every person will be judged according to his works, and yet penitent sinners have their evil works blotted out? E.W.

The Almighty does indeed record the deeds of all men, but chiefly for the purpose of witnessing to belief or otherwise in the Saviour who came down from heaven to do for men what they could not do for themselves. If a man's "works" testify to the fact that he has been "born again" through receiving Christ, then his trespasses, which were forgiven him at the time of his believing, are blotted out eternally in the judgment. Thus men are rewarded according to their works insofar as these indicate the true standing of the individual, whether they are "in Christ" or not. See Revelation 3:5; 20:12-15; Matthew 12:33-37.

CARE OF HEALTH

Am I justified in caring for my health, even when this impedes me in certain religious pursuits? S.

You are not only justified but obliged so to do. "Thou shalt not kill," no, not even thine own self. "Do thyself no harm," is still good counsel for us today. (Acts 16:28.) The saintly Archbishop Fenelon once wrote to an overzealous believer these words: "Love is never so powerful as when resting on the Bosom of the Beloved. It seems that you have done too much. . . . Natural energy and eagerness have led you to overstep your physical power. Men may praise you for it, but God likes simpler, less ambitious proceeding."—"Fenelon Letters." D. Stanford (ed.) page 65.

Keep in mind, however, that rest is for the weary, not for the psychologically indisposed or the self-caring sloth.

CLEANSING OF SANCTUARY

It is incorrect to say that Daniel 8:14 ended in 1844, because the cleansing of the sanctuary was not completed then, or Christ would now have finished His heavenly ministry. In the type of Leviticus 16 the cleansing took place on the last day of the ritual year. Is not this the case? J.S.

It is not the case that the typical cleansing of the sanctuary took place on the last day of the ritual year. Leviticus 23 shows that the Day of Atonement was followed by the Feast of Tabernacles, and it was this later occasion which climaxed the Jewish typical year. The Day of Atonement was a solemn occasion prefiguring the Judgment, but the Feast of Tabernacles pointed to the return of Christ to harvest His saints. See Matthew 13:39. The cleansing of the earthly sanctuary occurred on the tenth day of the seventh month, but the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated between the fifteenth and the twenty-second days of that month.

You are correct in saying that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary was not completed in 1844. The prophecy did not foretell any such completion, but instead gave only the starting point for Christ's final priestly work. See Jeremiah 29:10 for a similar instance, where it was promised that the Lord would cause Israel to return to Jerusalem from Babylon after seventy years were accomplished. The full return actually took a further sixty years beyond this point.

LONG HAIR

In 1 Corinthians 11:14 it says that long hair is a shame to a man. How then is it that in the days of the prophets, and in Christ's day, men wore their hair long? A.F.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:14, by "long hair" means hair as long as a woman's. Milton's words from "Paradise Lost" explain the text well.

"His fair large front and eye sublime declared

Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks Round from his parted forelock manly hung

Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:

She, as a veil, down to the slender waist

Her unadorned golden tresses wore."

WHAT MAKES A DAY?

Why does Genesis say a day consists of "the evening and the morning," rather than the reverse statement of "the morning and the evening"? R.L.

Creation means the calling forth of that which did not exist before. Thus the Genesis record begins with existing darkness and then tells of God's fiat which produced light as the forerunner of all else. No doubt this is the reason for evening being mentioned as the first part of the day. Thus Sabbath-keepers have been commanded by God to begin their observance of His holy day in the evening. (Leviticus 23:32.)



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