



Signs

OF THE TIMES

**DECEMBER
1967**

Inside East Berlin
(PAGE 16)



THE GIFT

*Gifts bring joy to the fleeting span
That the years of time afford,
"But the gift of God is eternal life
Through Jesus Christ our Lord."*

D. J. SILVER

DELLA WAS HEARTBROKEN. Tomorrow would be Christmas, and after all her skimping and saving she had managed to put by only \$1.87. And what could a young wife buy as a token of her love with that trifling sum! Certainly nothing that would be worthy of her Jim. She flopped onto the couch and sobbed out her disappointment.

Suddenly she stopped crying. Drying her eyes, she ran to her bedroom and surveyed herself in the mirror. Why had she not thought of it before! Slipping on her coat, Della hurried down the street. She stopped but for a moment in front of the sign marked "Hair Goods of All Kinds," and then, lest her courage fail, she ran quickly up the stairs and went inside. There was no point in demurring, for though her long tresses had always been a source of family pride, she was sure Jim would understand. After all, it would soon grow again.

Eagerly clutching the \$20 she had received in exchange for her hair, Della searched long to find a gift that would express the devotion and thoughtfulness she had for her husband. She found it at last. It was just what she had been looking for—a fine platinum fob for Jim's heirloom watch.

When Jim came home that night, she was bubbling over with excitement, though just the least bit fearful that he would not approve of her short hair. But she was sure he would approve of her gift! Eagerly she gave Jim her present, and then wondered why he did not seem as enthusiastic as she had anticipated. She wondered—until Jim brought from the wrapping his gift for her. There they lay—beautiful, jewelled combs which were meant to adorn Della's vanished tresses—combs for which Jim had exchanged his treasured watch!

By the time I had finished reading this brief story—beautifully told in more detail by O. Henry in "The Gift of the Magi"—I was fumbling up my sleeve for a handkerchief. At first I thought "How tragic!" And then I wondered if those two were just plain foolish. Perhaps. But I don't think so now. Obviously, the author felt this story reminded him of the gifts which the Magi brought to Jesus.

As these influential Gentiles had been studying the starry heavens, they noticed a mysterious light. Their interest was aroused, and earnestly they consulted the treasured prophetic writings of their race, and were convinced that they should go in search of the new King who had just been born.

Not long ago I looked out across that desert as a hot wind whipped up clouds of red sand that stung my eyes and smarted my nostrils. And I thought of the wise men struggling on in search of the King. How welcome must have been the sight of Hermon's snowy height, and the green valley of the Jordan!

Imagine, will you, the eagerness of these strangers as they descended the Mount of Olives to the courts of the temple in Jerusalem. "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" they asked, "for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him." But their inquiry met with no co-operation. A close search of the rolls of prophecy convinced them that they needed to travel further.

Disappointed, the Magi departed alone from Jerusalem. It was dusk, and how their hearts must have rejoiced to see again the sparkling of the star. Encouraged, they followed it to Bethlehem. There, "entering the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother and bowed to the ground in homage to Him; then they opened their treasures and offered Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Matthew 2:11,12, N.E.B.

This Christmas time what gift will I offer Him who gave everything for me? A monetary gift perhaps? But is that enough? Jim and Della were each willing to sacrifice their most precious treasures to express *their* love for one another. In their search for the new King, the Gentiles from the east sacrificed their personal comfort, and brought to Him their costly presents. But this was not all that the wise men laid at the feet of the Christ child. "Beneath the lowly guise of Jesus they recognized the presence of Divinity. They gave their hearts to Him as their Saviour."—"Desire of Ages," E. G. White, page 65.

Humbly I pray my God to accept my gift—my life. This was the real gift of the Magi—the wise ones.

By Joyce Totenhofer

The Real Gift of the Magi

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.

VOLUME 82, NUMBER 12 :: DECEMBER, 1967

EDITOR - - - Robert H. Parr
 ASSOCIATE EDITOR - - Marian M. Hay
 OFFICE EDITOR - - - David L. Stokes
 CIRCULATION MANAGER - Allan Maberly
 LAYOUT - - - - - Howard G. Davis

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Single Copies	20 cents
One-year subscriptions, paid in Australia for mailing to addresses in Australia, Mandated Territories, and Pacific Islands	\$2.00
British Commonwealth Countries	\$2.45
Foreign Countries	\$2.70
New Zealand (N.Z. Currency)	\$1.60
Single Copies15

- A publication of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the SIGNS OF THE TIMES is printed and published monthly by the SIGNS PUBLISHING COMPANY (Australasian Conference Association Limited, Proprietors), Warburton, Victoria, Australia, and is registered as a newspaper in Victoria.
- All subscriptions should be accompanied by cash, such remittances being made payable to the Signs Publishing Company. All New Zealand remittances should be made by Money Order, as N.Z. Postal Notes or Stamps are not negotiable in Australia. Please notify changes of address promptly, stating both old and new addresses.

EDITORIALS

Peace on Earth—or Poison Gas	3
War's Legacy	4
Will We Ever Learn?	5

ARTICLES

The Real Gift of the Magi	Joyce Totenhofer	1
Our Down-to-Earth Saviour	David Sibley	6
Should We Dispense with Christmas?	Charles L. Paddock	8
The Wedding	Pearl C. B. Ellison	10
Broken—but Valuable	Doreen Fox	13
Give Him a Chair	Mary J. Vine	14
Inside East Berlin	Reg Parr	16
The World's Biggest Meeting Place	W. Austin Townend	22
An Open Letter to Santa Claus	Robert H. Parr	26
Not Ready	James H. Rabe	28

REGULAR FEATURES

Our Changing World	11	
Think on These	14	
A Story for the Children	Myrtle O'Hara	20
Lines That Linger	21	
Ask Desmond Hills	Desmond B. Hills	24
Bible Questions Answered	Desmond Ford	30
Just You and Your Bible	Roy C. Naden	32

■ A GIFT OF DISTINCTION ...



simple to purchase, unique to receive—

SEND THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES THIS CHRISTMAS

■ JUST RETURN THE ORDER TAB TO US AND YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING WILL BE OVER

■ YOUR FRIEND OR RELATIVE WILL BE NOTIFIED THAT HE IS TO RECEIVE A TWELVE-MONTH SUBSCRIPTION AS A CHRISTMAS GIFT FROM YOU.

12 MONTHLY ISSUES ONLY \$2.00

Cut out and send to: Signs Publishing Company, Warburton, Victoria. 3799

PLEASE SEND TO MY FRIEND

NAME:

ADDRESS:

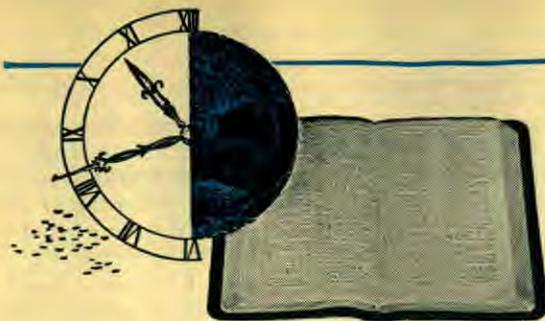
STATE:

POSTCODE:

CHEQUE M.O. POSTAL ORDER. (Please check.)

SENDER:

ADDRESS:



the meaning of events

editorials

Peace on Earth—or Poison Gas

THIS MONTH will see us all pause a moment to chant well-worn slogans and mouth time-honoured clichés which pay lip-service to the fact that it is the season of goodwill, and that we are as hopeful as ever that the dove-like form of peace will settle once more upon the wrinkled brow of a troubled world.

There will be evidence abroad that this feeling of benign brotherliness is genuine and sincere. Magistrates will behave tolerantly to the inebriates who regularly show up in their courts, admonish them, and send them home "because it's Christmas"; tight-fisted business men will unleash the shackles of their employees and give them (perhaps) an extra half-day's shopping time (with pay!) as well as allowing them to consume vast quantities of liquor and nibble countless hors d'oeuvres in the name of the annual "Christmas party"; publicans will offer all sorts of side-benefits (such as home deliveries, or even an occasional bottle free to the regular customer) as a gesture of good fellowship; the merchant princes of our cities will deck their premises out in the most garish and tinsel-glittering array to pay lush tribute to the season that takes its name from the Saviour of men; husbands (even) who pay no regard to their wives from one year's end to the other may unbend to the extent that they actually buy the little woman a present; wives, the fire of whose tender affection has long since been dissipated, will be observed to fan what tiny spark is left for their allegedly nearest and dearest, and rush out to the local mercer and, regardless of expense, purchase a neck tie for the one for whom they have not uttered a single kindly syllable for nigh on a twelvemonth. And all because it is Christmas.

Then the carollers will start, bless them. They will inject the atmosphere with their ballads of yuletide, extolling the One upon whom the festival is centred; they will collect for some worthy cause, and even those who couldn't care less about that worthy cause will drop coins into their boxes without so much as an audible grumble, but rather with every semblance of the utmost civility and bonhomie.

Finally, there will be high level discussions among the Great Ones of earth wherein there will be honest attempts to induce the Viet Cong to cease their barbaric shelling and shooting during the season of goodwill, so that some vestige of an atmosphere of peace may be at least simulated on the all-important date of December 25.

Then when the day has passed and the holiday spirit has evaporated, the fighting (both domestic and international), and the dedicated pursuit of the all-import-

ant dollar, and the sober practice of all things legal and illegal, lawful and unlawful will be on again.

This is the tragedy of Christmas: it lasts for so short a time. The aura of goodwill is as transient as a Christmas candle; a mere facade to the dog-eat-dog pattern of living that has long ago become the norm.

If all this seems just a little cynical, it is not meant to be. Rather, it is meant to be sadly realistic. The expressions of goodwill are needful and necessary; the outreach of the affluent to the poverty-stricken is commendable and noble; the cease-fire in the Vietnamese jungles is sweet and elevating. **BUT IT IS OVER BEFORE IT HAS HARDLY BEGUN!** That is the tragedy of it. And you can be as starry-eyed as you like about Christmas and all that it means to you personally, but you can't escape the painful fact that all the expressions of goodwill are lost in the surging tide of living when it gets under way again.

For countless centuries pious hopes have been on every lip in Christendom at this time of the year; for more Christmases than any of us can remember the hackneyed old phrases have had their annual airing;

A wooden effigy of the French premier, General de Gaulle, by the female Venezuelan artist Marisol Escobar. It has been on show at the Hanover Gallery in London.



we are staunchly earnest in our hope that everyone shall have a Merry Christmas, that peace will be the lot of our every friend and neighbour, that our own families will know nothing but love and good fellowship for the ensuing year, yea, for ever. But comes the dawn of another day, and some minor upset or some little disturbance, and we are back to our old selves again.

Man's quest for peace on earth, it must be admitted sadly, has not met with much success at all. And—tragedy of tragedies—it never will until he tears down the wall of selfishness that he builds around himself for fifty-one weeks of the year, and until he lets the goodwill of the Christmas week seep through the entire fabric of his society. It never will until he finds the Man who is the Prince of Peace and takes Him into his heart, making Him the centre and soul of his life and living; until he enthrones the Child of Nazareth in his breast, and acts upon the principles He taught when He came to manhood.

This is the only solution; mankind need look no further; this is the only thing that will bring lasting peace, either among nations, or within the soul of a single person.

Neglect this, and there stretches before mankind an apparent eternity of unhappiness, misery, shame, bloodshed, and horror. Turn from this, and the cynic's rhyme takes on a terrifying meaning and utters a chilling prophecy implicit in its words:

"Peace on Earth—we sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it;
And after two thousand years of mass—
We've got as far as poison gas." R.H.P.

Making his debut in international yacht racing at Cowes off the south coast of England is Prince Charles, becoming acquainted with being at the helm.



Page Four

War's Legacy

WAR CASUALTIES did not cease with the ending of hostilities at the close of the second world war in 1945. Now, twenty-two years later, a lethal aftermath is still being reaped, of those killed or injured by live bombs or shells.

In Britain, officers of the Royal Engineers bomb disposal unit say that it will take at least another ten years to clear about 130,000 acres of British beaches and farmland still considered dangerous.

Strangely, Britain has one of the lowest death-rates from postwar bomb explosion, averaging less than one a year. Equally strangely, Austria has one of the highest rates, with 1,600 dead and 3,000 injured in the first eight years after the war. Its twenty-five-man bomb-disposal squad have found and destroyed more than seventy-five tons of war explosives.

While fully appreciating the tragedy of the several thousand people who have thus been killed or maimed as a legacy of the war, we have asked ourselves if this is the only legacy of suffering which has been handed down to the countries of Europe in which the war raged.

The war has surely left the mark of its curse in innumerable homes and hamlets, in countless hearts and lives. In many homes the father or the son has been taken, leaving no one to take his place as the provider and head of the family.

Even more damaging is the bitter and poisonous aftermath of hatred and alienation that has followed the war. Men and women who under normal circumstances would have been friendly neighbours have become enemies.

The redrawing of territorial borders, dividing friends, and placing whole communities among strangers, has had its effect. One legacy of the war, the Berlin Wall of bricks and barbed wire, is a symbol of the cruel and arbitrary separation that is caused by war.

This spirit of hatred and separation is in direct contrast to the spirit of Him whose coming to earth we are celebrating this Christmas season. He came to blot out the differences and to make mankind one. He came to unite the alien peoples of Judaism and paganism in the loving fellowship of the church of God:

"He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; . . . that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Ephesians 2:14-16.

Not only are the factions of earth united, but earth is united with heaven, for "having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." Colossians 1:20.

By thus having stamped out the virus of sin, with its separation of man from man and man from God, the Creator plans to bring this little earth once more into cosmic harmony with all of His creation:

"In the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." Ephesians 1:10.

War's aftermath of suffering is for ever wiped out. God's long-range plan is fulfilled when "peace on earth, goodwill toward men" prevails.

M.M.H.



"How many times have I told you not to go down there? Now you can't get back, see? When will you ever learn?" The polar bear at Whipsnade zoo is Maya, seen here with her twin cubs Tiyak and Tineak.

Will We Ever Learn!

IF THE YEAR 1967 could be analysed by some sort of a progress-assessing spectroscope, one dominant theme throughout would be a colour representing dismal failure. With all our capacity for scientific achievement we have yet to find the formula which will remove the obstacles that prevent us from getting on with our fellows. On a world scale it is called—international relationships.

Should this analysis be taken further to discover, perhaps, people's attitude to this situation in the world, an unusual phenomenon would be observed. It would be found that while people may harbour fears concerning world conditions, at the same time they continue to cherish the belief that in the arms of science they will yet be carried into an era of peace and progress. Meanwhile the world fills with a violence and hatred that threatens to undo all that man might dream of.

For instance, what have we achieved in 1967? We have observed the escalation of the Vietnam war where more U.S. soldiers have been killed this year than in all the previous years put together. Add to that the untold thousands of North and South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians who have been either bombed or shot. We note the futility of the Middle East war where poor countries became poorer and squandered much needed money and lives in vain. We realized with deep concern the impotency of the United Nations to avert the crisis when it was put to the test.

Our inability to live with one another peaceably has revealed itself as the cancer of our civilization in a myriad different ways and situations. But perhaps none has been as poignant or sardonic as the racial riots in the United States. New York City, and Rochester in New York State, Cambridge in Maryland, Toledo in Ohio, Englewood in New Jersey, Houston in Texas, and Pontiac in Michigan all saw expression of Negro (and police) violence, but none quite so severely as Newark in New Jersey and Detroit in Michigan.

In Newark the riots began as a protest against the police for the beating up of a Negro taxi driver who was arrested for following too closely an unmarked police car. Following two nights of looting it seemed as if the looters and rebels had exhausted themselves, but the Governor was not convinced and so ordered the National Guard into action, instructing them to use their weapons to gain order. In their hunt for snipers and militants they sprayed apartment blocks with bullets, ransacked homes, and beat bystanders at the slightest provocation. The close of the five-day war found twenty-three Negroes, one policeman, and one fireman dead. Not one sniper was arrested and not one killed. Many of the dead were women and children.

In Detroit the situation was even more ironic. The press, puzzled by the strange circumstances surrounding the death of three particular Negroes, set out to discover the reasons for the other forty-three fatalities. Their conclusion was alarming: "A majority of the riot victims need not have died. Their deaths could have been—and should have been—prevented." (*Newsweek*, September 18, 1967.) All but five of the deaths were accounted for, and among the five was that of a pregnant mother shot as she rode down the street. Of the preventable deaths were such as Roy Banks who was gunned down as he walked to work. The National Guardsmen claimed that they had called a warning but he refused to notice it. What they did not report was that he was both deaf and dumb. Others were killed when guardsmen mistook persons standing at windows for snipers and on some occasions turned tank machine guns on them.

The most distracting feature of all as we analyse 1967 is not so much the political and social botch we have made but rather the fact that we have done it so many times before. We refuse to learn from history and our past mistakes. Until mankind is prepared to acknowledge that the world's problems are personal ones, things will continue as they are. 1968 will be 1967 in another garb.



WHILE it must be confessed that the actual date of the birth of Christ is not known for sure, and that the date now observed has pagan connotations, yet Christ's coming to earth was the greatest event of recorded time. Let us therefore see if we can catch the true spirit invested in this Christmastide for mankind. Yes, have a Merry Christmas.

On the night of the Saviour's birth, we are told, there were shepherds watching over their flocks when, "Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. . . . And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." Luke 2:9-14.

The angel's instruction to those fear-stricken men was, Put away your fears, and join with us in our celestial praise and joy, for man's Redeemer has come down to earth, bringing God's peace and goodwill for all people. Here's something for the human family to rejoice over—joy without the alloy of fear; a happening uniting heaven and earth, causing angels to sing.

What a down-to-earth Christ we worship! The angel said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." And prophecy said,

OUR Down-to-earth Saviour

"They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." And did not the Apostle John declare: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Matthew 1:21, 23; John 1:14.

Humankind could not look upon the unveiled glory of even an angel—how much less the glory of God? So the Father sent His Son down to earth to be clothed with humanity, "born of a woman, born under the law." Galatians 4:4, R.S.V. Another apostle wrote of Him: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest . . . to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Hebrews 2:17. Let sceptics in the church and out of it scoff at Christ's virgin birth and godhead, if their God is so puny as not to be able to work miracles any longer, but we will catch the spirit of Christmas and repeat that celestial song heard over the Bethlehem hills, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

The word *gospel* means "good news." It was good news that men needed back there, and it is good news that harassed and embattled humanity need today.

On beginning His ministry for mankind, we are told that Jesus declared: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isaiah 61:1; c.f. Luke 4:17. He found that men had confused and corrupted God's teaching, making religion a yoke of bondage rather than a thing of joy. He spoke "to the multitude, and to His disciples, saying, The scribes and Pharisees . . . bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." Matthew 23:1-4. To make an end of all that, and to bring the joy and gladness of true religion into the lives of men by showing them the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, was the grand purpose of His coming to earth. One asked Him, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." He answered, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." John 14:8, 9. And He called unto the masses: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30. His life was so fragrant, His teaching so beautiful, and His touch so gracious that men back there, as do millions today, declared that never man spake as this man. Aye, never man lived as He lived, and "the common people heard Him gladly." He showed mankind that God's attitude toward repentant sinners was one of goodwill, and taught them to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name."

If we are to have a really Merry Christmas, we must stop to consider its true significance and not just give ourselves up to feasting and revelry. We should, rather, renew our proper relationship to God as our Father and take His Son's yoke of service for humanity

upon us, that there might be goodwill toward men. Thus we shall be able to serve and worship God merrily. Francis of Assisi led a life of poverty, which was often a grim struggle without the ordinary amenities of civilization. As he worked for his lepers, he called his band the *Joculatores Domini*—"the Lord's Merry-men." Ah, yes, happiness is a thing of the spirit and not merely of the flesh. There are some religious people today, of course, who think it almost a sin to laugh, and believe they serve God by a gravity that is almost melancholy. But not so with Christ. He was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," but again and again He spoke of His "joy," wished it upon His disciples, and a favourite salutation of His was "Be of good cheer."

It was the godly Henry Ward Beecher who once said, "He that cannot laugh and be happy should look to himself. He should fast and pray until his face breaks into light."

Surely if more Christians radiated the joy of salvation, smiling and singing amidst earth's lamentations, they would be performing a work of real ministry, and the cause of Christ would be greatly extended. It was Robert Louis Stevenson who prayed: "Give us to go blithely on our business. Help us to perform the petty round of irritating concerns with laughter and kind faces." He was a man who suffered much, and when very ill he said to his friend, "Good-bye Wakefield. Remember, fill your life with laughter and sunlight. That is the best kind of success—to radiate happiness."

And now let us look at three occasions on which Christ used the saying, "Be of good cheer."

"And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Matthew 9:2. Maybe the poor fellow had a past that robbed him of his peace, and knowing his inner need, before healing him, Christ gave him the peace of Heaven's forgiveness. What good cheer there is in the knowledge of sins forgiven!

Then there is that story found in Matthew 14. The disciples feared shipwreck, for their "ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary . . . and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." Verses 24-27. He not only calmed their fears, but also that sea. If life for you these days is a troubled sea, remember He can take care of the present.

And there is also the passage in John 16. Christ was about to leave His disciples, and they were in mortal dread of the future. He gave them His peace and assured them that the future was in His hands, saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Verse 33.

Our God came down to earth, and in all His dealings with men He proved to be down-to-earth in His practical ministry. Therefore be of good cheer, and this Christmas season let no regret for the past or concern for the present or anxiety for the future destroy your peace, for, says God's angel, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. . . . For unto you is born . . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

SHOULD
WE
DISPENSE
WITH



Christmas?

Asks C. L. PADDOCK

LAST CHRISTMAS MORNING I decided to call several of my friends to wish them a happy Christmas. There was excitement all about me. The house was abuzz with merriment. I got one of my telephone numbers mixed up, and a strange voice replied, "You have the wrong number, but Merry Christmas to you just the same."

Had I made that mistake any other day in the year, that voice would probably have been different, and the one disturbed would not have been so pleasant. I could imagine her remarking disgustedly, "Oh, it was just some dumb-bell who rang the wrong number."

We are different at Christmas time. Most of us, that is. In a large department store, crowded with hurrying, bustling souls, the week before Christmas, I noticed an elderly woman with a very happy expression on her face. She was loaded with parcels and shopping bags filled with purchases. I wondered how she would ever manage to get home with all of them. Secretly I wished I might be going her way so that I might give her a lift. Wondering what might be going on in her mind I said to her, "Looks as if you have a big shopping list. You are going to make a lot of people happy. Do you enjoy this Christmas season?"

"Oh, yes, I love it!" she replied without hesitation. "I wish Christmas came more often. I wish we could all have some of the Christmas spirit all through the year. We all seem to be more kind and thoughtful. It is the one time of year when all of us seem to think of others rather than of ourselves."

A happy little live-wire fellow of eight, surrounded by gifts on Christmas morning, was bubbling over with joy and happiness. I asked him, "Jimmy, do you like Christmas?"

I got the kind of answer I expected: "I wish every day could be Christmas. It is the best day in the whole year."

As I look back over many Christmases, I agree with him. I could wish that we might exhibit more of the spirit of Christmas every day in the year. Why confine it to a short time in December?

Two days before Christmas I visited a comfortable city home just as a mother and her daughter returned from some last-minute Christmas shopping. With sighs they both dropped into chairs and pulled off their shoes to relax. The mother remarked that the shopping was all done, but now she had to begin planning for a big Christmas dinner for the family and six friends whom they had invited. I wondered if she felt the same as the little boy, so I said, "Christmas is a wonderful season. Don't you wish it came more often?"

She was in no mood for that kind of question. "I wouldn't care if we never had another Christmas," she said.

I do not think many of us would agree with her. We are sorry we do not all manifest more of the spirit of Christmas the rest of the year, but we are thankful for the difference in our homes, our neighbourhoods, our churches, our nation, for a few weeks in December.

At this same time I heard of a taxi driver who had the real Christmas spirit. As he cruised down a busy street, he noticed in the bustling crowd a small, elderly lady weighed down with parcels. She was struggling bravely with the load. Pulling up to the kerb beside her he said, "I am going your way. You are overloaded. Hop in and I will take you home. It will not cost you a cent." As he drove this little lady home he told her about his wife's illness and her need of surgery. When she got out of the cab right at her front door, the happy little lady asked for his telephone number. He did not know why. Her son was a successful surgeon. That evening at dinner she told her son and the rest of the family about the most unusual cab driver who had brought her home—for nothing.

Late that night the cab driver's phone rang. It was the woman he had driven home that day, the little lady with all the parcels. She told him about her son, and asked if he could bring his wife to see the doctor for an examination.

Right after Christmas the surgery was performed, and in a matter of weeks the patient was much improved in health. When the taxi driver asked for his bill the doctor said, "It is all paid for. You did an unusual kindness for my mother, and I want to do as much for you."

That is the spirit of Christmas, the spirit of the Master, who went about doing good, not one week of the year, but every day of the three hundred and sixty-five.

The happiest souls on Christmas morning are those who have given most. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," we are told. Acts 20:35. I don't imagine there is any adult alive who has not experienced the joy of giving.

Some folk dread the coming of Christmas because of a shortage of money. We would like to do more giving, but our budget will not permit it. Fortunately, there is much giving we can all do that does not call for money. We can give of ourselves. There are so many ways to scatter joy and sunshine.

One Christmas Eve I left Vancouver, British Columbia, on a Canadian Pacific train, headed for Calgary, Alberta. I would have given almost anything to be home that night. It was the only time I ever spent Christmas away from the family.

Christmas morning I bought a newspaper, and spent an hour or so reading what was happening in the world. When I had finished reading the paper, I folded it neatly and laid it on the seat facing me. The next time the newsagent came through he noticed I was not reading my paper and asked if I had finished with it. I told him he could have it. I felt very sure he was going to sell it to someone else, and I was more sure

The newsagent threw out the bundle of papers, and the old man smiled and waved and waved. (Arlo Breer, artist)



as I followed him through the train and saw him picking up papers and magazines from other passengers. I rather resented it. He had sold that paper and made a small profit. Now he was going to sell it again.

I followed him up to the front of the train and saw him rearrange the papers and fold them neatly. Then he rolled them up and tied them in a neat bundle. I had judged him wrongly.

I was curious to know what he planned to do with the papers. He put on his coat and hat, went out into the vestibule, and opened the upper half of one of the doors. It had snowed during the night, and the train seemed to be crawling along. Looking over his shoulder in the direction the train was travelling, about a mile down the line I saw a small cabin a short distance from the right-of-way. As we came nearer I could see someone in the front yard. It was a little old man, stooped a bit, supporting himself with a stick. As our train came opposite him, the newsagent threw out the bundle of papers. The little old man smiled and waved and waved and waved.

"Do you do this often?" I asked the newsman.

"Oh, yes, I throw him papers every trip. It brings some joy into his life, and all it costs me is a little effort." He had learned the joy of giving.

At the holiday time I was talking to a friend in an office. She had just finished reading a letter. "I just got the most encouraging letter from a friend," she said. "Her letters are priceless. So many times I have received one when I needed it. It is one of the best Christmas gifts anyone could get."

Who does not enjoy a letter? We all have friends who would be helped by a letter. Maybe they are ill, perhaps struggling with problems, maybe discouraged. A letter does not cost much, and it is always worth more than it costs.

We do not have to give costly gifts, yet we can all give liberally. At Christmas time, and all through the year, we can be lavish in our giving—with smiles, kind words, letters and visits.

Rega K. McCarthy wrote this little poem:

Christmas is too short in time;
I want it to last longer.
I think it could if our goodwill
Were just a little stronger.

If people held the spirit
Of helpfulness and cheer,
Christmas would be in our hearts
Throughout the entire year.

I could not vote for doing away with this day of days. I would not want to move to a land where there is no Christmas.

If you would like to make this the best Christmas ever, do a bit of planning. Think of those in need. Plan to give more than you have ever given—not in dollar value necessarily, but of yourself. ★★



The Wedding

PEARL C. B. ELLISON

*Amazing Love! I scarce can see
How God can fashion one like me
To live with Him in realms afar
Beyond each sun, beyond each star;*

*That He has planned my destiny
To live throughout eternity!
Yet invitations are abroad
From the Great King, our gracious Lord.*

*It is the marriage of His Son
And "whosoever will may come."
You may be black, be brown, be red.
God wants you there, for He has said—*

*"Of one blood" are we to our King;
That wedding hymn we all shall sing.
Yet everyone must here be dressed
In royal robes of righteousness.*

*How sad if we were so intent
Upon the world, that this event
Would find us in a tattered dress
Without His robe of righteousness!*

THE HORSE-AND-BUGGY DAZE

Members of the Amish sect in Iowa, U.S.A., have asked the State Highways Commission to widen U.S. Highway 1 "so that it will be fit for horses and buggies." The religion of the Amish people prohibits them from owning cars, and the one hundred and fifty families living in the area have offered to help with the cost of widening the highway for six miles. They point out that they are in danger when their horse-drawn vehicles, travelling at ten miles an hour, must share a highway with cars and trucks moving at sixty miles an hour.

THE CRIMINALS!

Thirty-nine Jehovah's Witnesses, many of them women, have been gaoled in Portugal for holding a Bible-study meeting in a private home. The accusation against them said that they were guilty of a "crime against the security of the state, of instigating collective disobedience." Although the public prosecutor produced no witnesses to support the charges during the trial, the defendants were sentenced to prison terms varying from five and a half months to one and a half years, assessed court costs of nearly \$A30 each, and fined varying sums from approximately \$A40 to \$A160.

AFRICA EMERGING

Excluding the Arab nations of North Africa, the independent nations of Africa can now count twenty-seven universities catering for some 30,000 students. The ratio of students to staff is extremely favourable in these tertiary institutions, especially in the sciences. The figures vary from four to ten students to each lecturer.

THE CHURCH MILITANT

Official statistics published recently by the Roman Catholic Church in America show that its church membership stood at 46,864,910 (including children) at the end of 1966. The clergy numbered 59,892. The number of converts (117,478) was the lowest since 1953, and candidates for the priesthood declined by six per cent. It is significant that, over the past decade, Catholic growth in the U.S.A. has been 35 per cent as compared with the Protestant growth rate of 15 per cent.

EACH A LITTLE LESS THAN YESTERDAY

Although the world's agricultural production during 1965 was a record 1.5 per cent more than that of 1964, the world's population in the same period increased by two per cent, which means that the per capita supply of food declined. Considering that most Westerners did not notice the difference, it means that many underprivileged people certainly did.

OUR Changing World



THE NOT-SO-FRAIL BARC

A nine-and-a-half-foot-tall tyre is used on the American army's amphibious Barc, a one-hundred-ton land-water vehicle that will haul sixty tons of materials, or more than one hundred army personnel. Each tyre weighs nearly one-and-a-half tons and requires enough rubber for six hundred passenger car tyres. The Barc is sixty-five feet long, twenty-seven feet wide and nineteen feet high, and will travel eighteen miles per hour on land and seven knots on water.

ECUMENISM ESCALATED

Five churches, two Anglican, two Roman Catholic and one United Church of Canada, have announced plans to share the same church building on a site along the shores of Arrow Lake in the south-eastern region of British Columbia, Canada. The new church will be built at Fauquier, and will serve some sixty families. Each denomination will have its own sacristy to store sacred vessels and vestments.

STANDING ROOM ONLY

At its present explosive rate, with the earth's population expected to double by the year 2000, each earthling by A. D. 2600 would have less than a square yard of land that he could call his own.

GETTING ALONG WITH THE MOSQUITOES

Seventy-six per cent of the 1,586 million people in the originally malarious parts of the world, live today in areas where the disease has been eradicated or where eradication programmes are going on. The population of areas freed from endemic malaria now amounts to 885 million, or 56 per cent of that in the malarious parts of the world. During 1965 Bulgaria, Taiwan, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago were certified as having eradicated the disease.

NOT CREAM CHEESE

The American spacecraft, Surveyor 5, resting on the moon where it landed rather precariously recently, has returned to earth an analysis of the moon's surface. The built-in laboratory in the spacecraft reported to the scientists that at least part of the moon's surface is strikingly similar to that of the earth. The most plentiful substance identified is virtually the same as much of the rock that can be found on the floor of oceans or many parts of the world.

BOOBY TRAPS AT THE WAILING WALL

Israel has set up a commission to examine the damage done to holy places during the recent conflict, and a preliminary assessment has described such damage as "very light." Part of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem was badly scarred when the church was hit by a shell which started a fire on the roof. Monks from the neighbouring Greek Orthodox monastery, climbing across the rooftops, quickly extinguished the blaze in the church, which is shared by Greek Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic and Roman Catholic Christians. The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem was closed temporarily to civilians to check it for possible mines and booby traps.

Broken-



WITH CONFIDENT STEP and dignified bearing, alert and observant, a young man made His way through the market. He was noticing everything and everyone. A merchant with a false balance felt the heat rise to his cheeks as those searching eyes swept the innermost recesses of his soul. Another, trying to conceal inferior goods under those of quality, suddenly tipped all the goods into a heap and began filling the container with only the best. Across the way, a merchant pressing a high price upon a poor widow for the goods she badly needed, began to feel terribly, terribly mean and wondered why. Business was business, wasn't it?

The young Master Merchant handled only merchandise of incomparable value and beauty. He bargained with no one. His price had been fixed by the Chief Director, and He had no authority to alter either price or merchandise. He saw every individual as an oppor-

tunity for an encounter. His stay was to be brief. What He had to do must be accomplished with the utmost efficiency. Many had looked at His merchandise long and longingly, then, "Your price is too high," they said, as they turned to shuffle off through the dust, lost for ever in a crowd caught up with a medley of paltry purchases.

Carefully the Master Merchant explained the value of His wares. Gently but firmly, He pressed the Pearl of Great Price into their hands while His eyes, filled with longing and compassion, looked deeply into theirs. "You may have it," He said quietly, "for ever and for ever; not even death will take it from you; I promise you that; but in return," and He emphasized each word, "you must give Me your life."

He was procuring living treasures for His mansions. Though every life He purchased was chipped, or broken, or tarnished, this could not deter the Master of restora-

- But Valuable

By DOREEN FOX

tion, who saw the eternal beauty of the reconstructed product. The critics could not follow His methods, and considered His business sense poor. What would the Chief Director say about pearls left in the publican's house? Undeterred, He travelled on, ever seeking those who would come and "buy." Without money? Yes, without money. Without price? No, not without price. "You must give Me your life," He gently insisted.

He sat down by a well. The sun's heat penetrated His clothing, increasing weariness and thirst. Far below Him was water—unobtainable water, for the Merchant carried pearls, not pots. Further away there was treasure, apparently equally unobtainable—locked behind barriers of hate and prejudice.

A figure stirred the dust on the heated road. He knew who it was. "Broken, but valuable," He murmured and waited.

"If you can recognize Me, I will give you living water, and you shall never thirst again," He offered. The woman looked at Him in wonder, for she was not used to entering into transactions at the well. He was offering her the Pearl of Great Price in language she could begin to understand. He saw her worth, though others could not. He saw her deep longings, though others misunderstood her. She was seeking security and satisfying love—love in which heart answered to heart and life to life. She had gone shopping in the wrong market, and could not get out—alone.

As the Merchant talked, she began to sense that this Man had what her heart was dying for. Holiness and purity surrounded Him, excluding any flippant relationship, and yet she felt that He did not condemn her. He did not condone her behaviour; He offered restoration, and she caught the glimmer of pearl. Her heart began to desire what He offered. She began to respond to His kindly attitude.

He could hear the critics mock, "And where in your mansion do you propose to put this—ahem—gem, Master Merchant? Somewhere on the outside wall at

the back, perhaps?" They would shrug their shoulders, "No accounting for tastes, but you do have strange ideas as to what would enhance a palace."

Closely He looked at her. "You have seen something of My wares," He said. "I am going to make you My agent." Her eyes widened in wonder. This Man had faith in *her*, and she determined it should not go unrewarded. Away she sped, leaving Him with hope—and a water pot.

If she had been less absorbed in her mission she would, no doubt, have chosen her words with more care. Bursting into the market, already beginning to close, she cried aloud, "Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did."

"My, what a revelation!" jeered a youth by the oil merchant's stand, and coarse laughter broke out among more than his companions.

"Did you enjoy your moment of truth?" shouted another, and the laughter rolled around again.

Pots, balances and bargains were forgotten as she ignored their low mirth and cried again, "Come, is this not the Christ, the Master Merchant? He is come with pearls, I tell you."

Master Merchant? Pearls? The Christ? Surprised and questioning, hopeful and sceptic, they followed as the Holy Spirit pressed desire close to their hearts, unlocking the barriers for some and setting them free. The Master Merchant had again cleared a market place!

"Now is the time to do the business of Heaven," the Merchant said as He saw the treasure coming down the dusty road. They came, they listened and they divided. Some sauntered off to lesser things. They had battled with prejudice, unbelief and worldliness—and lost. Others battled and won. They looked into His eyes, and heart answered to heart and life to life. "Your price is right," they said, and hands closed reverently over His pearls.

Broken but valuable, that is how the Master Merchant sees us in 1967. Is His price right for you? ★★

**LET US not forget Christ
this Christmas season**

Give Him a chair



By MARY J. VINE

HE IS AN OLD MAN NOW, retired, and probably many times a grandfather. But when he passed through our town many years ago, his children were all tiny; and, tragically, their mother lay far away, in the heart of Africa, never to wake again until the call of the Life-giver.

It was in the days when mission stations were far-flung outposts, difficult of access; when communications depended on faithful hearts and willing feet; when only apologies for roads criss-crossed the country; when hospitals were still only a dream; when the missionary's own pathetically little knowledge was the sum total of available help; and when the mission board's first question to its candidates was often, "Are you willing to die there?"

She had died there, the mother of those four little ones, and now he was on his way to bring them back to the homeland.

Only a few days ago I heard the story of those dark days of his loss.

He was distraught.

Humanly speaking he had nowhere to turn.

The isolation bore down upon him. His children's loneliness without their mother pierced him like a sword, and he himself felt utterly bereft. He longed inexpressibly for the knowledge that, despite his sorrow and loss the Lord was still with him, that He did have a plan, and that in His own time He would make it plain. But he felt lonely, so lonely; and one day, being hardly able to bear it any longer, he placed a chair and said, "Lord, come and sit here, and let me talk to You."

That the Lord did come is beyond question, for it was no broken man who preached to us that day. Indeed, he spoke so forcefully that, even after forty years, I can still remember his text: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

What the good Lord told him as he knelt before Him in the chair was obviously enough to give him courage to go on and, even more, to inspire others to follow in the hard trail which had already cost him so much. I am quite sure that thereafter that plain old piece of mission furniture was something sanctified, for the Lord had sat in it.

I have thought a lot about that chair. Maybe you also have had seasons of deep grief. Few of us have been saved from such. Maybe you have looked across the table and somehow visualized His lovely face and in your heart heard His wondrous words of comfort. And maybe, like me, you have often wished that you could pull the best chair up for Him and know that He was sitting there. You would feel so safe, so secure. And if He were to honour us on this day—if, as He told Zacchaeus the publican, He were to tell us to make haste and come from whatever we were doing because He wanted to "abide" at our house, how we would bestir ourselves!

As indeed we are doing. We have to. Weeks and weeks before Christmas we start getting ready. And the question confronts us, Is it in our hearts to make

room for Him, to give Him the seat of honour, to make Him, of all, the most welcome?

If so, if—figuratively if not literally—we give Him a chair, it will do something to us and our behaviour. It may even affect what we eat and drink.

If we put a chair for Him, and consciously remember that He is in it, who knows, it might be the best Christmas we have ever experienced.

No nagging.

No show of irritability.

No untoward gossip.

Moreover, having Him in the chair of honour might have some effect on our visitors list; for, believe it or not, He tells us whom we should invite. "When thou makest a feast," He says, "call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed." Luke 14:13, 14. And again, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40.

Shall we make sure, then, to "offer Him a chair" at this Christmas season?

It will involve us in no sacrifice.

It will ensure for us only blessing.

That so-versatile poet, "Anon.," has written a beautiful thing that I must ever remember. "The Guest," it is called:

Yet if his majesty, our sovereign Lord,
Should of his own accord
Friendly himself invite,
And say, "I'll be your guest tomorrow night,"
How should we stir ourselves, call and command
All hands to work! "Let no man idle stand!"

"Set me fine Spanish tables in the hall;
See they be fitted all;
Let there be room to eat,
And order taken that there want no meat.
See every sconce and candlestick made bright,
That without tapers they may give a light.

"Look to the presence: are the carpets spread,
The dazie o'er the head,
The cushions in the chairs,
And all the candles lighted on the stairs?
Perfume the chambers, and in any case
Let each man give attendance in his place!"

Thus, if the king were coming, would we do,
And 'twere good reason, too;
For 'tis a duteous thing
To show all honour to an earthly king,
And after all our travail and our cost,
So he be pleased, to think no labour lost.

*But at the coming of the King of heaven
All's set at six and seven:
We wallow in our sin,
Christ cannot find a chamber in the inn.
We entertain Him always like a stranger,
And, as at first, still lodge Him in the manger.*

Oh, let us take care, this Christmas, that this last stanza cannot be said of us. ★★



Think on these . . .

- "Faith is the daring of the soul to go farther than it can see." —William Newton Clark.
- "Someday I hope to enjoy enough of what the world calls success so that somebody will ask me, 'What is the secret of it?' I shall say simply this: 'I get up when I fall down.'" —Paul Harvey.
- "The highest evidence of nobility in a Christian is self-control." —Ellen G. White.
- "There are persons so radiant, so genial, so kind, so pleasure-bearing, that you instinctively feel in their presence that they do you good; whose coming into a room is like the bringing of a lamp there." —Henry Ward Beecher.
- "My father was king in our house. If dad was sleeping, the children had to be quiet. If there was one egg left, it was saved for dad. We were taught that the father was the head of the household—something, I'm afraid, too many women today have forgotten. I never heard my mother criticize my father in front of her children. I never heard her belittle him in front of a soul. That's the way my three sisters and I were raised—and all four of us are still married to our original husbands—and those are the values I am passing on to my own daughter." —Abigail Van Buren.
- "The follies of youth become the vices of manhood and the disgrace of old age." —L. E. London.
- "The best of all medicines are rest and fasting." —Benjamin Franklin.
- "Of nineteen out of twenty things in children, take no special notice; but if, as to the twentieth, you give a direction or command, see that you are obeyed." —Tryon Edwards.
- "It is not genius that is so rare, but sincerity." —Goethe.
- "Many things lawful are not expedient, but nothing can be truly expedient which is unlawful or sinful." —G. Simmonds.

THE road was bare and empty except for the early morning workers, shabbily dressed, walking on their way to destination "work." Some turned right, and I watched them as they turned, yards short of the hostile wire, into the last open doorway—flashing their identity cards as they entered. Two hundred yards past the coils of barbed wire, stood a cold, stark, concrete chain of bricks some eight to nine feet high, twisting and coiling its way endlessly like a giant deadly snake.

This was East Berlin and the infamous wall. Built hurriedly in 1961 to prevent the flow of people fleeing into West Berlin, the wall cuts like a great knife, separating churches from their cemeteries, breaking the backs of once giant highways, and tearing apart the hearts of thousands of German people. On the west side, crosses and flowers mark the spots where many have died trying to escape to freedom. On the east, close to the Brandenburg Gate, in wire-enclosed no man's land, stands a little hill covered with a carpet of grass—the remains of Hitler's bunker—the lair where that loveless monster of human destruction perished.

High on the rooftops, grey-clad men sit like vultures, scanning the deserted area with binoculars, their automatic weapons at their sides. This is East Berlin—unsmiling, tense, lacking happy normal laughter, the simple smiles of friendliness, and the small luxuries of the West. These people have suffered greatly; and written into the very fibres of their beings is the tragic cost of total war.

Communism has done little to lift and encourage. Basically anti-God, it has cut people off from the inner strength of the "faith in God" so necessary to all. Blasted churches stand unroofed and shattered, walled up and empty except for broken piles of rubble and silent bomb-smashed bells.

Freedom to worship and to believe in God! How foreign these seemed in this Communist-controlled state, with its constant propaganda, its sausage-machine policy of sameness, and its constantly policed atmosphere which reduces individuals to cogs in the materialistic state machine. Yet to this place, East Germany, I had come that my faith in God and the Bible might be strengthened. I had come to see with my own eyes, in the Pergamon Museum, some of the remains of Babylon. Once the hub of the world, Babylon's power had crumbled, and its capital became a vast deserted heap of rubble just as the Bible prophets had foretold.

Bible prophecies that had become fact and history ran through my mind. "Behold, I will . . . take vengeance for thee. . . . Babylon shall become heaps, . . . an astonishment . . . without an inhabitant." "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I shall bring upon her." Jeremiah 51:36, 37, 64. How true those predictions proved!

The ancient city of Babylon was situated fifty miles south of present-day Baghdad on the fertile plain between the twin rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. First mentioned in the Bible as Babel, Babylon at the height of her power was enclosed by a great girdle of fortifications. Walls and a moat some eighty feet wide and seventeen miles long formed the inner encircling defences, making this large ancient city practically impregnable.

This great man-made complex was pierced by the Euphrates River and one hundred gates. It contained homes, palaces, court-rooms, forts, feasting halls, and temples to the various gods Marduk, Ishtar, Ninurta and others. The show pieces of the city were the Tower of Babel, and the Hanging Gardens—a vaulted stone hill



INSIDE
BER

By RE



EAST

IN

Reg Parr Photo

PARR

overlaid with trees, shrubs and flowers, and watered mechanically. One of the seven wonders of the world, it has been traditionally attributed to Nebuchadnezzar, who built it for his queen to remind her of the mountains of her Persian homeland.

At the time of the prophecies of doom given by Isaiah and Jeremiah, Babylon had existed for 2,000 years and now stood in all the resplendent glory of the golden Chaldean era. Hammurabi, with his famous codified laws (now in the Louvre Museum, Paris), had been succeeded by 1,000 years which had brought strength, power and conquest to Babylon. Under Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrians were defeated, and Nineveh fell, Jerusalem was captured and the people of Israel carried into captivity. At this time, in the height of her hey-day, the Bible prophets predicted the downfall and destruction of this mighty nation, riddled and ruptured by false philosophy and materialism.

From a human viewpoint such a destiny seemed highly improbable; but with the marching ages of time these predictions—"heaps," "an astonishment," "without inhabitant," "shall not rise"—have been remarkably fulfilled. With the conquest of Babylon by the combined armies of the Medes and the Persians, led by Cyrus in 539 B.C., the decay of the city began. Century after century rolled by before the curse of God finally came upon Babylon to the full extent of the prophecies.

Alexander the Great followed the Persians, and gradually the brutal savagery of human conquest, and the ravages of nature by rain, wind and frost eroded the magnificent capital into gigantic heaps of rubble. During the time that followed, Babylon became a quarry for the neighbouring tribes in the district. It lay sleeping, silent and deserted, just as the Bible had predicted. Down through the ages it lay deep in the hills of sand, entombed and forgotten.

From the Reformation to the nineteenth century, man seemed to awake but slowly as out of a drugged sleep, searching for knowledge, and craving to understand the secrets of the world. Man's inquisitive nature and computer-like mind reached out into every avenue of investigation.

Amidst this rush and bustle, older standards and information gave way to clear understanding, and many of the foundations of the Bible and Christianity were challenged. Some journeyed to the Bible lands to disprove the Bible. Others, searching for a foundation for their faith, left their homelands and started searching the Bible lands for proof of the Bible's correctness, through the new science of archaeology. A vast mass of information has been accumulated, and in our twentieth century the Bible's historical statements and prophecies have been remarkably confirmed.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the German Orient Society of Berlin determined to carry out a systematic exploration of Babylon under the direction of Robert Koldewey. Small digs had been carried out by different folk, but had been abandoned because of the vast waste nature of the site and its rugged and unfriendly climate. Koldewey spent eighteen long health-breaking years there on the plains of Shinar, only to be interrupted by the British advance into Mesopotamia in 1917.

Broken down in health by the harshness of the climate, he lived until 1925, leaving the legacy of a carefully prepared account of the dig, and some of the remains of the glory that had been Babylon's. The Processional Way, the famed Ishtar Gate,

everyday articles, plans of temples, and bricks and inscriptions telling of the ancient city's power, beauty and might, were presented to a surprised world.

My thoughts came rushing back from history. Karin would be calling at 8.30 a.m. Thirtyish, plump, a fluent, specially trained Communist interpreter, she was to be my constant paid shepherd for three days.

Now to see Koldewey's discoveries of Babylon. Karin was tactful, helpful, prying. Was I enjoying Berlin? What brought me to museums? What was New Zealand like? What did I think of the wall? Gradually the conversation moved around to belief in God. "I do not believe," she said.

"Well," I replied, "I've got three days to help you."

We walked into the Pergamon Museum. The Processional Way was magnificent, towering up to twenty-five feet in height. The small section of about thirty feet gleamed with its highly adorned, brightly coloured enamelled bricks. Embossed lions stalked sedately down its wall which were lined with flower friezes. To think that this was once a double-sided roadway 3,000 feet long, staggers the imagination.

The Gateway of Ishtar! One may read, see photographs, and dream about a thing, but to actually see for oneself, to touch the forty-foot-high double gateway with its enamelled dragons and bulls, brings to one the reality of its greatness, and the patience, the unlimited expense that must have been involved in Babylon's construction. Truly Babylon was a golden nation at that period of her history! In my heart I humbly

thanked God for the patience of Koldewey and his assistants, and for the fact that through two world wars these remnants of Babylon have been amazingly preserved, and for the ability of modern-day travel to have brought me to this place.

"And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gormorrah. It shall never be inhabited." Isaiah 13:19, 20. As I repeated the prophecy aloud, Karin listened and then from her background of nominal Protestant upbringing, said, "Something from the Bible?"

"Yes, and it's strange to see how accurately it has been fulfilled. You see, predictions like this coming true, help me to believe in God. The challenge of the Bible is, 'Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none . . . like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.' [Isaiah 46:9, 10.] It is the only Book that can tell us where we came from, why we are here and what the future holds."

We chatted quite a deal in those next three days, about believing in God, knowing and loving Him. As we talked, something seemed to stir inside her.

On the last day, we visited the Museum of Natural History. As usual it contained a section on the evolution of man. We talked about the origin of the human race, and then came to a section on shells, minerals and fossils. Fascinated, we saw the beauty, the design and the order. It bubbled out—that last attempt! "You

The famous glazed brick reliefs of lions that decorated the walls of the Processional Way. It led from the Ishtar Gate (Top right) to the Temple of Marduk, a shrine of one of the Babylonian deities.



cannot disbelieve when you see these things. There must be a Creator, for I see behind these things the touch of a Master Craftsman: One who loved things that are fragile, beautiful; One who was careful and orderly. These prove to me that there is a God. Nature reveals a little of Him, but the Bible tells us that He cares for mankind. I am not afraid of your wall, nor of Communism, but I have learnt to respect and love the God of heaven, who controls the rise and fall of nations, and who can entomb fish in clay like these fossils. The Bible says that the ancient world perished because man walked high and mighty, disregarding his Creator.

"Babylon perished, not because it lacked material, gadgets, or glory, but because she walked against God. I believe that Communism will fail, too, because it leaves God out of its reckoning." I can still hear Karin's reply to that last appeal for her to believe. "You are the most disturbing person I have ever had to guide in East Berlin."

I often think of Karin, the lack of fresh fruit, the wrinkled, soft-hearted potatoes, the chocolate at a dollar for five ounces, the aged lady who sold me a bunch of wild flowers to help her face another day, the cruel wall, the godless attitude, the hopeless looks; and I pray that many in East Berlin will find inner peace and hope by believing in God and having faith in His Word. ★★



(Right) The Ishtar Gate as it has been rebuilt in the Pergamon Museum in East Berlin. (Below) Ruins of ancient Babylon.



It was Christmas morning, and Eileen walked along the street carrying a geranium in a flower pot. She stopped at a shabby house, walked through a gate hanging on one hinge, went along a weed-covered path and knocked on the front door. After waiting a while it slowly opened a little, and an old cracked voice said, "What do you want?"

"I've come to wish you a happy Christmas, Mrs. Jones," Eileen said, "and I've brought you this geranium. It is a very special plant, and I thought it would brighten your kitchen. And I have a piece of Mum's Christmas cake for you." The door opened wider and Eileen beamed at the untidy old woman who stood looking at her. She held out the flower pot to Mrs. Jones who, after staring at it for a moment, took it from her. "Here's the cake," Eileen said as she took it from her pocket and handed it to her.

"I can't remember the last time anyone gave me a Christmas present," Mrs. Jones said. "Who are you and where do you live?"

"My name is Eileen and I live in the corner house. I knew you didn't have any children to give you a Christmas present, so I brought along the geranium. Do you like it?"

"Yes, it is very pretty, and thank you, little girl, for your kindness."

"I'll come to see you another day," Eileen said, and she gave Mrs. Jones such a lovely smile that the old lady couldn't help smiling, too.

Eileen turned and waved happily as she went through the gate, and the woman watched her go down the street. Then she went slowly inside, put the flower pot on the table, and sat down and looked at it. So this was Christmas day! She had quite forgotten. For years Christmas had meant nothing to her.

Mrs. Jones had lived alone for a long time and she had no friends or relations. When she first came to live there the neighbours tried to be friendly, but she was such a sour, bitter person that they soon left her alone. She had lost interest in life and seldom left the house.



THE POTTED GERANIUM

*A Story for the Children by
Myrtle O'Hara*

Eileen and her mother often wished they could do something for the old lady, but it was plain to see that she wanted to be left alone. Then Eileen thought of giving her the pot plant.

"How did you get on?" her mother asked when she arrived back home.

"She didn't seem very pleased to see me," Eileen told her, "but she actually smiled before I left, and I've never seen her smile before. And do you know she looked so different. I can imagine that she might even have been pretty when she was young."

"I guess sorrow and suffering have altered her and made her like she is," Mother said.

As Mrs. Jones sat looking at the geranium her mind went back a long way to the time when she was young and had a garden full of geraniums and other flowers. She thought of her own little girl and the happy Christmases they had together. And now another little girl had come into her life with this reminder of the past.

She rose and cleared a place on the window sill for the geranium. Then she noticed how dirty the window was, so she cleaned it. Next morning as the sun shone in brightly

through the clean window Mrs. Jones said to herself: "I must wash the curtains today. I didn't know they were so dusty." Then the extra light coming in through the clean window and curtains showed up the dirty kitchen, so Mrs. Jones cleaned and tidied till it looked a different room. Gradually she cleaned through the whole house and then brought out some clothes she hadn't worn for years and improved her own appearance.

A few weeks later Eileen knocked again on Mrs. Jones's door. This time it was opened wide, and Eileen scarcely recognized the woman standing there. "Oh, Mrs. Jones, you do look nice," she said. "I called to see how you are, and here are some biscuits that Mum sent you. Is the geranium still alive?"

"Yes, my dear, I've taken good care of it and it has grown quite a lot. Will you come in and see it?"

Eileen followed Mrs. Jones into the kitchen and was surprised to see such a bright, tidy room. They had a nice time together, and as Eileen was leaving Mrs. Jones said, "Be sure to come again soon."

Eileen raced home to her mother, and said, "Mum, something has happened to Mrs. Jones. She was so clean and tidy and looked much happier, and she asked me in and her kitchen was clean and tidy, too. She even asked me to come again." Mother was as happy as Eileen when she heard the news. After that Eileen often visited Mrs. Jones, and one day her mother went with her. Then the old lady told them how Eileen reminded her of her own little girl who had died when she was about Eileen's age.

When spring came Mrs. Jones began to work in her garden, and soon the outside of her home was as nice as the inside. She began to make friends with her neighbours, who were happy to be friendly and do what they could for her. In time she became a different woman, and everyone wondered what had brought about the change. They never knew that it was caused by a little girl's Christmas visit and her gift of a potted geranium.



BRIDLE THE TONGUE

A word once spoken can return no more,
A wise man sets a watch before the door;
The bird in hand we may at will restrain,
But being flown, we call her back in vain.

—Author unknown (Mrs. E. Pack).

Lines that Linger

WOMAN'S RIGHTS

The rights of woman, what are they?
The right to labour, love, and pray;
The right to weep with those who weep,
The right to wake while others sleep.

The right to dry the falling tear,
The right to quell the rising fear;
The right to smooth the brow of care,
And whisper comfort in despair.

The right to watch the panting breath,
To soothe and cheer the bed of death;
The right, when earthly hopes all fail,
To point to that within the veil.

The right the wanderer to reclaim,
And win the lost from paths of shame;
The right to comfort and to bless
The widow and the fatherless.

The right the little ones to guide
In simple faith to Him who died;
With earnest love and gentle praise
To bless and cheer their youthful days.

The right the intellect to train,
And guide the soul to noble aim;
Teach it to rise above earth's toys,
And wing its flight to heavenly joys.

The right to live for those we love,
The right to die, that love to prove;
The right to brighten earthly homes
With pleasant smiles and gentle tones.

Are these thy rights? Then use them well,
Thy holy influence none can tell;
If these are thine, why ask for more?
Thou hast enough to answer for!

Are these thy rights? Then murmur not
That woman's mission is thy lot;
Improve the talents God has given.
Life's duty done, thou'lt rest in heaven.

—Author unknown (Mrs. Bonnie Marshall).

A LITTLE FENCE OF TRUST

*Build a little fence of trust
Around today,
Fill the space with loving thoughts,
And therein stay.
Look not from the sheltering bars
Upon tomorrow,
God will help you bear what comes
Of joy or sorrow.*

—Author Unknown (Hazel Williams).

FRIENDS

If nobody gave us a helping hand
And nobody seemed to care;
If the prizes of life all went to the strong,
And nobody gave us a share;

If nobody had the time to give
A thought to you and me,
And we had to struggle as best we could,
What a hopeless world it would be!

Lending a hand to help the weak
Can lighten another's load,
Giving our best with a willing heart
Can brighten a lonely road.

'Tis something to live for, someone to love
That purpose in life depends;
And there's nothing to equal the gladness and joy
Of making and keeping friends.

—M. Bishop (L. S. Manville).

MANY A STRANGE DISGUISE

Christ claims our help in many a strange disguise;
Now, fever-ridden, on a bed He lies;
Homeless He wanders now beneath the stars;
Now counts the number of His prison bars;
Now bends beside us, crowned with hoary hairs.
No need have we to climb the heavenly stairs,
And press our kisses on His feet and hands;
In every man that suffers, He, the Man of Sorrows,
stands!

—Author Unknown (Mrs. E. Davey).

★ Each month a selection is made from readers' favourite quotations. No original matter, please. Include source, author, and your own name.

The World's Biggest Meeting Place



DO LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO THE WORLD'S BIGGEST MEETING PLACE.

King and countryman, scholar and simpleton, poet and plasterer, scientist and sweeper, preacher and pew-sitter, rich and ragged—pair them as you will or take them one by one—they each (and all) have the same four basic needs: the need for *recognition*;

the need for *security*; the need for *affection*; the need for *variety*.

Here, AROUND MAN'S BASIC NEEDS, you have the world's biggest meeting place, for it extends from Alaska to Auckland, from Stockholm to Sydney, from London to Launceston, from Brussels to Brisbane and from Madrid to Melbourne. Writer and reader? Yes, we are both in it.

In the SIGNS OF THE TIMES last month it was shown how these needs came about.* We showed from Scripture (Genesis 1:27, 31) that man did not lack supply for these needs when he came fresh from the hand of his Creator and into the sinless scene of Eden. All his needs were met.

Then came sin. Man's sin. And then followed the awareness of his needs. Man was unsatisfied. See Genesis, chapter 3. Nothing has changed since then, that is, as far as needs are concerned. Adam's first sons felt them. My father's son has them as does your father's son, or daughter as the case may be. Our children have them. This every observing parent understands.

We (and by "we" I mean "man") need not be as hopeless as one described us: "nature's only mistake," or as in Pope's line: "pest and riddle of the world." Rather, man can become, in the words of old Francis Quarles, "Heaven's masterpiece." This can only be fully so as the four basic needs are met. Here God steps into man's muddle.

Take *recognition*, that is, our need of it. God offers and provides the practical plan of "adoption." Each person who has been born anew or, as the Bible puts it, "born again" (John 3:1-8), is then "adopted" into the family of God. This means much. It means we become "fellow citizens" of the saints and members of God's household. (Ephesians 2:19.) We are delivered from servility. (Romans 8:15.) We are freed from anxiety. (Matthew 6:25-34; 10:29-31.) We have an assured enormous eternal inheritance. (1 Peter 1:3, 4.) All this is *recognition*.

Now look at *security* in relation to our need of it. Here again, God meets the need. God's salvation makes men secure, for "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Isaiah 32:17. The ground for this is aptly stated by Dr. R. A. Torrey: "It is the blood of Christ that makes us safe; it is the Word of God that makes us sure." Of course, there are problems from time to time. But, as Faber sang:

*"These surface troubles come and go
Like ruffles of the sea;
The deeper depth is out of reach,
To all, my God, but Thee."*

Here we have *security*.

Having gone thus far we must look at *love* and its place as one of our foundational needs. God's gospel has the answer for needy man in this vital area of life. In this matter of love, God teaches by example. Love is expressed in giving. The more we love, the more we give. God loves us. (John 3:16.) God gives to us. (James 1:5.) But before all of this, let us remember that God loved His Son, and gave to Him. (John 3:35.) Then He took the Son, and all He had given to Him—and with His Son, gave all to us. Every person who accepts God's salvation accepts love. The need is met. The believer has *love*.

Some years ago a prominent newspaper asked its readers to write in and tell what they found hardest to bear in life. Eighty-five per cent of those who wrote in, said that life's hardest experience was *doing the*

same thing day after day. They were, of course, confessing to this fourth basic and unsatisfied need—the need for *variety*.

The head of a flourishing advertising agency told me that the most powerful word in advertising is "new." Run your eye along the shelves of your local supermarket, or down the columns of your newspaper's advertisements, and you will see the evidence. People crave variety. God knows this. His gospel meets the need.

Think about the Scriptures, for instance. In them God provides variety such as you cannot find within the covers of any other book anywhere. And then there is Christian service. It abounds in variety.

*"Live for self, you live in vain;
Live for Christ, you live again."*

Paul declared that Christ's men are "always abounding in the work of the Lord." 1 Corinthians 15:58. No monotony there! Of course not, for wherever his place or whatever his task, the true Christian has genuine *variety*.

Nowhere in all Scripture will you find the world's biggest meeting place more vividly presented than it is in Revelation 14:6-12. Let us first note the words, and then we shall discover God's plan in them. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Those who have met God and received from Him His last message for mankind given there in Revelation 14:6-12, rejoice today in a completely satisfying experience of life and living.

And verily it is the religious world's present largest meeting place. Believers in the "three angels' messages" of Revelation 14:6-12 are living on every continent of our earth. Precisely, they are found in 212 different countries and they speak 912 different languages and dialects.

God meets human needs, and these people who by God's grace live the truths of the three angels' messages, are proving it every day.

W. A. Townend

* See "Human Nature's a Funny Thing"



ASK...

Desmond Hills

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S
QUESTIONS
ANSWERED**

FACES AS LONG AS CUCUMBERS

Why do so many people who profess to be Christians go around with faces as long as cucumbers? I believe that these so-called pious people stop lively young people from attending church. Ministers should do something to make these folk friendly, and to see that they welcome young people to their church services. **Queensland Youth.**

Christians certainly should be the happiest people in all the world. We have a faith and a blessed hope that gives us happiness independent of the happenings of life. Our inner joy is based on the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full," John 15:11. There are also many other texts in the Scriptures that show that Christ's followers should be friendly, contented, hospitable and happy.

Christians should go out of their way to have a friendly atmosphere in their churches. They should make visitors feel welcome and also invite them to their homes. Unfortunately, as you have discovered, there are many church members who do not show friendliness.

Ministers and church officers can and should encourage these folk to let others know that they enjoy being Christians. No doubt the best thing that can be done to see that all churches have a friendly atmosphere is for each one of us to conduct a smiling campaign. If we greet everyone with a smile and handshake, it will help to counteract the faces that are "as long as cucumbers."

HOLY DAY OR HOLIDAY

Ever since I can remember, Christmas has only been a holiday to me. However, now that I am married, in-laws and friends are urging that we join them in observing Christmas Day as a holy day. They say that we should go to church and observe it just like we keep Sunday. Knowing that the "Signs of the Times" bases its articles on the Bible I am writing to ask if there is Scriptural backing for the observance of Christmas as a holy day.

There is definitely no Scriptural basis for the observance of December 25. Nowhere in the Bible will you find a divine command to observe that day or any other day as the birthday of Christ. Christ's birthday is unknown and the

Bible seems to indicate that it would not be in December. For instance in Luke 2:8 we are told that at the time of Christ's birth there were "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night." Shepherds would not have camped in the fields at night in December in Palestine, for that is the winter time and it is often cold and wet. History records that December 25 was chosen as Christ's birthday late in the fourth century to coincide with "the birthday of the sun." It is significant to note that it was in the Western Church that the birth of Christ was first associated with the pagan holiday.

Although we do not approve the pagan origin of the date December 25, we can surely do good at this time by fostering the spirit of "peace, goodwill toward men."

SPECIAL RESURRECTION

I understand that somewhere in the Bible it states that at the second coming of Christ those that persecuted Him will see Him come in the clouds. Seeing that the wicked people are not resurrected at the second advent, how can this be? Also can you tell me what events precede the second advent.

The statement that you refer to, concerning those who persecuted Christ, is found in Revelation 1:7 and it reads as follows: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him."

In the twentieth chapter of the same book John states that the wicked are not resurrected till one thousand years after the second advent. However, in the Book of Daniel we discover that there is a special resurrection prior to the advent. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel 12:2. No doubt the persecutors of Christ mentioned in Revelation 1:7 are included in the resurrection before the second coming.

As far as the time of the advent is concerned, Jesus declared that of "that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not [even] the angels of heaven." Matthew 24:36. However, there are many prophecies in the Books of Daniel and Revelation that reveal that we are living at the end of time. Then, too, while on earth, our Lord gave signs of His return for us to look for and these are recorded in Matthew 24 and



YOUR QUESTIONS INVITED. Desmond B. Hills is an experienced counsellor of youth. He is often invited to speak to young people at conventions, camps and colleges. At these gatherings in Australia and New Zealand, many seek his personal counsel. Now through these columns he can give advice to the youth readers of this journal. Perhaps he can help you. Write to him, care of the "Signs of the Times," Warburton, Victoria. Your names and addresses will not be printed and your letters will be treated as confidential. Each month a selected young person will also give his or her opinion on matters important to youth.

Luke 21. It would be helpful if you make a detailed study of these prophecies and signs. I can supply you, and readers of these columns, with information on special Bible correspondence courses that would be helpful in a study of last-day events.

TEN TEEN RULES

Do you have any rules to help teenagers like me to make the right decisions? I want to do what is right but I find it easy to go with the crowd. There seem to be a lot of amusements and books and things that we teenagers have to avoid if we are going to be good Christians.

You are quite right when you say there are "lots of amusements and books and things" that teenagers should avoid. The secret of doing this is to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. As the poet says, "The things of the world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

We must commune with Christ every day. The only safeguards against temptation is to answer the tempter with the words Christ used, "It is written." This means that we must read the Scriptures and commit passages to memory.

The following teen rules were penned by Dr. Billy Graham for teenagers and I know you will find them helpful.

1. Avoid the wrong company.
2. Watch your eyes; you cannot help the first look, but you can help the second look.
3. Watch your lips. Refrain from telling dirty or off-colour stories.
4. Watch your heart. Do not let evil thoughts stay in your mind long.
5. Watch your dress. I know a girl who always dressed provocatively until she was converted to Christ. Now she says, "I dress as though Christ were my escort each evening."
6. Watch your recreation and amusements. Be careful about the films and TV shows you watch.
7. Be careful what you read. The news-stands are filled with pornographic literature; avoid them like a plague. Such literature stimulates wrong emotions.
8. Watch your spare time. Too much leisure and idleness is harmful in many ways.
9. Have Christ in your heart and life.
10. Take a delight in the Word of God. The Bible says, "Thy Word have I hid in Mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." Psalm 119:11.

Youth Answers



TOESE AH SAM is a trained minister from Apia, Samoa. Only twenty-three years of age, he has already graduated from a training course at a college in Fiji and is now studying in New Zealand at Longburn College near Palmerston North. His plan is to better equip himself for ministerial work.

Each month we submit one question to a selected young person and ask him or her to answer it. This month's question is:

Can you please tell me what it means to give one's life to the Lord Jesus Christ? Frequently I have been in meetings when preachers have urged us to do this, but they have never actually explained what is involved. I want to be a Christian but at the present I am not clear as to what is involved

or how I can become one. I realize that you do not have very much space in the "Signs of the Times" to answer this question, so would you also recommend a book that I could purchase outlining the procedure that I should follow to become a Christian.

We become Christians by getting to know Christ. This is the only way, for Christ Himself said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." John 14:6. It is not possible to make oneself a Christian, nor can anyone else do it for us, but Jesus can when we determine to serve Him.

No doubt you are asking, How can I get to know Christ? This is very simple: First, you have to introduce yourself to Him. This is done by getting right down on your knees and talking to Him. It is called "praying," but it is simply talking to Christ, just as you talk to your best friend. Do it now, for Jesus is your best Friend. You need not be afraid. Do not worry if you are lost for words at first—a short sentence prayer is a good start.

Have you stopped to consider, that while you think that you have been seeking Christ, it is really Christ who has been seeking you? He loves you very much and that is the reason why He died on a wooden cross for you. Because He loves you, He wants you to be happy. Read John 15:11.

Christ knows that for you to be happy, you must get to know Him and learn to trust Him. That is why He gave you the Bible. He knew that on this earth there would be many people, just like yourself, who would want to know Him, so He came and lived here, just like you and me, for thirty years. In the first four books of the New Testament you can read exactly how He lived. Ask Him to give you wisdom and courage so that you can make your life like His.

As you read the story of Christ's life, you will be amazed how much it helps you. Read it every day, think about it, and pray to Him as you work. You do not always need to kneel down, it does not matter what you are doing, He will hear you wherever you are. As you follow this plan, you may notice a difference in yourself. You will not worry so much, you will not get annoyed at little things. You will smile more and, deep down in your heart, you will know that you are happy.

The Apostle Paul was a man who had this experience of finding Christ, and he said that He was "crucified" with Christ. He explained what this really meant. It was not he (Paul) who was living, but Christ who was living in him, and the actual life he was living he was living by trusting in Jesus, who loved him and gave Himself for him. (Galatians 2:20.)

While speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus called this experience being "born again."

After deciding to follow Christ you will find that although you will be happier than you have been before, life will not always be easy. You see, Satan does not want folk to become Christians, and he will try to make it hard for you. At these times you need to remember that Jesus defeated Satan when He died and rose again, and once you have given your life to Christ, He is on your side, and will give you the victory. Paul also said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13. This promise is for you, too, and you will have spiritual strength. There will be no limit to what Christ can do for you and what you in return can do for Christ.

There are other steps to Christ and these are recorded in the Bible. I have listed some of them for you: Repentance (Acts 2:38), confession (1 John 1:9), faith (Mark 16:16), love (John 15:12), obedience (John 14:15), baptism (Matthew 28:19).

I hope that as you read these steps you will accept Jesus as your personal Saviour and Friend. Many young people lose eternal salvation while they are still hoping to become Christians.

The best book about Christian life is the Bible, but there are devotional books that help us live for Him. The book "Steps to Christ" by Ellen G. White has been a wonderful source of help to me. This book outlines steps to Christ as they are given in the Bible. It has been widely circulated in many countries, and I would recommend it to all young people.



AN OPEN LETTER TO *Santa Claus*

DEAR SANTA,

It is a very long time since I wrote you a letter. Something like forty years, it would be. But you wouldn't expect correspondence from anyone as old as I am, would you? There was a time when I used to leave you a glass of lemonade and a piece of cake and I must admit that you were generous to me over the years. True, you didn't leave me everything I asked for, but now I see that that was just as well, anyhow, and it was good for my character, for, looking back on it, I guess I was just a mite greedy in some of my requests.

I have come a long way since those days when I used to think you were the most wonderful person in all the world and that your sole thought was to make small boys like me happy on Christmas morning. But now I see you in a different light, and that is what I am writing about today.

First, however, I should say that I am not trying to be offensive, but I recognize that some of the things I am about to say are not exactly palatable, but they are the honest feelings of an ordinary man, and, I feel, should be said. There is nothing profound here, and probably nothing that has not been said before—and said much better. But I would like to get this off my chest because I am greatly concerned about some of the things you are doing.

It's about the whole Christmas business in which you are involved right up to your bewhiskered chin. I'm worried about it—the situation, not your chin—and I feel that it is getting out of hand. Actually, I doubt whether you ought to be in the Christmas season at all, for, as I see it, this is the season of the year when we should be directing our attention to the worship of the One who gave His name to the festival—Jesus Christ. But you very well know that the majority of people are far more interested in you than they are in Jesus of Nazareth. You have usurped His office, sir, and I would suggest to you that this is a serious position for anyone to be in. To have pushed the Lord of Glory from the focal point of anything is serious indeed, but to have dethroned Him as King of His own special time of the year is surely something that ought to give you grave concern.

In spite of that jolly picture you project of yourself, and in spite of that plump, jocund, well-fed image that you present, I know (as everyone does) that behind the rubicund rotundity that is Santa Claus there is a monster which is called Big Business. And you (and somebody must tell you, and I may as well be the one, even if you cross me off your list for ever) are very much a part of it. You are not the jolly, laughing, benign old fellow that people are led to believe you are; on the contrary you are a monster, an avaricious parasite on the body politic, draining the hard-earned cash from those who cannot afford to buy your wares. Don't dismiss me as mean and tight-fisted, a Scrooge among the Scrooges who is afraid to loosen his purse-strings, a grab-all who is reluctant to spend something on someone else at this season of goodwill. This is, I trust, not so.

What I am accusing you of doing is extracting means from people who cannot afford the luxury of you. I recall last year a family whose circumstances, if not straitened, were at least far from affluent. Someone, well-meaning but misguided, gave them a Christmas present quite unexpectedly and for no reason that they could think of, and the gift was a costly one. Instead of generating joy, the gift threw the family into a near-panic. They felt that they must match the value of the gift and give one in return. Frankly, they couldn't afford anything like the sum they finally paid for something to give to someone who, normally, would not have been on their gift list at all, and someone, I might add, who didn't need what they gave. But honour had to be satisfied; they had to forgo some virtual necessity in order to equal the original but unnecessary gift. And I accuse you of the responsibility for their plight. And they are only one family in millions. But you are happy; so long as you hear the yuletide concerto for cash register crashing to its annual crescendo, you can laugh till your well-padded anatomy fairly shakes with satisfied mirth.



That is my quarrel with you, Santa. You are not what you pretend to be. And you are not what you originally were. Remember how you began—when they called you Saint Nicholas—and how you used to leave your gifts for people who could not afford them—*anonymously*? But do you encourage *anonymity* in your helpers

now? No you don't. Such an attitude would mean that only one gift would be bought instead of two—or more. You realize—and have long ago built your mammoth empire upon this philosophy—that spending begets spending, and never mind who can afford what, so long as the notes rustle into the till and the coffers of your treasuries are brimming with the gold of your subjects.

I know that I can't hope to achieve much by writing to you. You have become so involved now that you couldn't stop it if you wanted to. But I wonder whether you ever have a feeling of guilt when people, by force of custom, are embarrassed by the social pressures that you have generated, because they have had to buy something beyond their means as a token for someone who really didn't need their gift.

But this is not my only quarrel with you. Actually, I have two more bones to pick with you, and having gone in for a penny, I may as well go in for the whole pound. I accuse you not only of avarice but of partisanship, of being blind to real need and of heaping your gifts on those who really don't need your largesse. A case in point. Last year a certain obnoxious child of my acquaintance—albeit the apple of his doting and wealthy parents' eyes—was showered with so many things that he could hardly hope to smash the lot of them (as he inevitably did) before his birthday came around in July when his parents dumped another heap of goods on him as a token of their affection.

Now I know what you will say; you will emphatically deny guilt; you will blame his parents, saying that they are the ones who have bought the stuff and that your hands are clean. Your hands are not clean, sir. In your name they have done this, and the responsibility is yours for projecting your image as you have done over all the earth. Moreover, the child of poor parents, the offspring of the indigent and the progeny of many a poor widow scarcely ever catches a glimpse of your generosity. Indeed, unless some charity or some kindly outsider comes to their aid, you do nothing to help. You have come a long way, my friend, since the days when you left your gifts by stealth and slipped away under the cloak of night. A long, long way. And the reason for this is that you have elbowed the Christ out of Christmas and set your own self up as the central figure. You enjoy the worship that your blind subjects bring you, and, so long as last year's record is eclipsed, you are happy. You care nothing that needs and deservings are not met; you are concerned only with your own profits.

But there remains yet one more charge I want to make against you. It is somewhat allied to that above; it is connected with the matter of gifts and is tied up with to whom we shall give.

Remember that first Christmas? Remember the very origin of Christmas giving? Remember how the Wise Men from the East brought their gifts to Jesus—gold, frankincense, and myrrh? Yes, you must remember. But the point is that these men brought their gifts to Jesus. They gave to Him, the One whom you have eased out of Christmas so that your ledgers may record what tremendous business you are doing. What happened to that gracious custom? Whatever happened to that splendid ideal that men and women

once had of making their Christmas gifts, not to those from whom they could expect presents in return, but to the Saviour who came to rescue them from the degradation of sin? But I never hear you say anything about that. I never hear of you advocating that anyone cut down their spending so that anyone else—even the brethren of Christ—may benefit from the gifts that we could make.

I would say, sir, that you have gone far enough. The time is long gone when we should have awakened to the real purpose of this season, and that we should have hearkened to the words of the Nazarene whom you treat with silent contempt. He said that when we make a feast (and surely that means at Christmas time, and in gift-giving) we ought not to spend upon those who will give back to us; rather should we give to those who are impoverished, who cannot respond, who are destitute, who are worried because of the dire need in which they find themselves, perhaps through no fault of their own. That is what our Master would have wanted, sir, but you have dealt your blows to that philosophy, haven't you?

It is too late, certainly, to hope to change you, you old red-coated sinner, but maybe someone will read this letter to you and look around for someone whose need he may be able to alleviate at this season of goodwill. To such, I know, the Christ of Christmas will say, "Inasmuch . . ."

I remain,

More than somewhat disillusioned about you,
Santa,

Robert H. Parr

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.

E.J.R.	Tithe	\$71.00
Anon, Morwell, Vic.	Tithe	90.00
M.C.	Free Literature	2.00
R. & E. Johns	Missions	2.00
A. Burns	Foreign Missions	5.00
Friend	Tithe	40.00
Anonymous	Mission Work	10.00

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

In common with other leading periodicals, the "Signs of the Times" encourages its readers to send gift subscriptions to their friends. Should this magazine come to you unexpectedly you can know that a friend has taken out a subscription in your name. In accepting this you place yourself under no financial obligation whatsoever, as no "Signs" are mailed for which subscriptions have not been paid. We welcome you to our growing circle of readers.



- - - NOT READY



By JAMES H. RABE

LOCAL LEGEND HAS IT that Nellie Melba, world-famed soprano, once sang from the balcony of a hotel to rapt thousands in the street below. Today there is little left of the building save the euphony of its title, "Silver City Hotel." The wording is scarcely visible on this unprepossessing building on a dingy street. A disused tramline running the length of the street bears testimony to the rich hauls of silver that were transported from the nearby mines. In any given year rain here falls on an average of three hundred days, for this is Zeehan, once Tasmania's third city, but now only a fascinating relic of an era that will never return.

Mining interests are rebuilding the town in order to gather the wealth of minerals which were overlooked in the mad scramble for silver. Enormous heaps of mine tailings scar the hillsides, which are honeycombed with shafts. Zeehan has an atmosphere uniquely its own. The surrounding countryside, down to the stark and seared environs of Queenstown, forms part of this atmosphere. A brooding stillness reigns, almost as though the entire area is involved in a passive protest against the ravages of man; against the uncontrolled sulphur gases from the smelting works that have reduced the adjacent hills and valleys to grey, drab formations without a vestige of green; against the thoughtless destruction of every living thing.

In direct contrast to this bleak picture is one to be found in an outer suburb of Melbourne, a locality that is surrounded by apparent prosperity. Here is where a prominent Australian architect fought a campaign to arouse his countrymen against the continual desecration of nature. He tried to change the familiar pattern of the suburban sprawl with ideas designed to eliminate many of the worst features of a housing development. Instead of scraping off the topsoil and erecting forests of poles for electricity, he skillfully landscaped the area, leaving as many trees growing as possible and burying all electric wiring.

Apple Tree Hill became a place of beauty in the midst of artificiality. Though many hundreds of people have passed through these homes, the project remained financially unrewarding. Why, it is difficult to say. It could have been that the futuristic designs of the homes failed to appeal to the tastes of a community known to be conservative by nature. After so many years of hacking and grabbing, of wresting from the earth, we are not ready to make aesthetic appreciation the important feature of our lives. As a daily newspaper editorial sadly remarked, "We are just not ready for these graces."

Perhaps the most all-embracing censure of the human race can be succinctly put in those two short words "not ready." Collectively and individually we fail in the stewardships entrusted to us. Although readiness formed the keynote of the message in the closing stages of Christ's earthly stay, two thousand years later man is no nearer an acceptance of Christian privileges and responsibilities.

In six thousand years man has rendered this planet nearly uninhabitable. Pressing social and agricultural problems must be solved immediately if he is to continue in existence more than a hundred years. We have been guilty of unwillingness and unreadiness to accept a sacred responsibility for the earth and its tenants. Animal, vegetable, and mineral realms have been exploited without regard to the ultimate reckoning. This time of reckoning can surely not be far distant.

"Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." Matthew 24:44. Christians are admonished to be ready for many things. We must be ready at all times to assist those in distress. We are told to be ready to give a reason for the hope that we cherish. Continual readiness to seize chances for excelling in Christian witness is required of us. Readiness to recognize temptation and to stand firm in the Saviour's strength will enable us to be victorious in life's battles.

Yet over and above all duties to ourselves and our neighbours comes the command to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man. What does this involve? Are we to maintain a constant state of feverish excitement for the Master's return? Doctor John Baillie, in his address on Christian vigilance, said: "The object towards which we are to direct our watchfulness is not His future appearing but our present state and our present task. We are to attend to our work so that the Lord when He comes will find us doing His will. Christian readiness is not being constantly keyed up with nervous expectation, but calm fulfilment of each duty as it comes to us."

On two occasions in Scripture angels administered gentle words of reproof to the followers of Christ in the form of questions. When the resurrection morning found Mary and the other women at the tomb, disconsolate and perplexed, the angel asked, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." Luke 24:5, 6. Then an angel appeared to the bewildered disciples after Jesus' ascension, asking, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

Because the Master did not act in precisely the manner anticipated by the disciples, they were not ready for the unexpected turn of events. The idea of an earthly kingdom was uppermost in their minds, with attendant rivalries and petty jealousies. Only after the angel had spoken to them were they able to rid themselves of ideas of self-glorification and accept the tremendous power of Pentecost. There is no record of any member of the new church going to the empty tomb to worship. They had learned the lesson, and we must learn the lesson that if God's way and our ways are not always in harmony, the fault is ours and not God's. Readiness to perform the will of God is preceded by a realization that our prejudices and experiences, even at times our prayers, are standing between us and what we might achieve by His grace. When we cease to seek for living power in the emptiness of dead materialism, and turn to the wells of living water we shall find the true source of this power. We will then be ready to accept service for the Lord.

In a world that regards military preparedness as the only way to prevent further world-wide bloodshed and destruction, we are called to be ready for a totally different cause. The tastes of people generally have been demeaned by long association with mercenary matters. Our lives must be elevated and attuned to the will of the Lord. Only in this way will we be ready when the Creator and Judge of the universe comes to claim His own and to call for a reckoning with those who have been responsible for the desecration of His work.

FEELINGS AND RELIGION

How can one feel the presence of the Holy Spirit while praying? M.V.

As surely as it is possible to speak to people on earth without experiencing strong waves of feeling, so it is possible to speak to God without being thrilled through by emotion. It is a great mistake to guide or judge one's religious life by feelings. Because we are physical beings living in time and in an imperfect environment, our feelings are variable and largely unreliable. The weather, bad news, or even minor ailments such as low blood sugar or low blood pressure can depress our emotions. Too often humans follow this scheme of values: feeling, faith, fact. But the true order is the reverse: fact, faith feeling. We are to believe the facts of Scripture, its promises and commands. Then when we act in harmony with the facts, God will give the right feelings in His own good time. Learn to say:

"Be my feelings what they will,
Jesus is my Saviour still."

While our affection for God resembles the moon, only sometimes at the full and often only a crescent streak, His love for us is as the sun, ever at the full. Joy ultimately comes to the believer when he concentrates most on what God is to him—ever the same—rather than what he is to God.

TRUE NATURE OF LAW

Does not the New Testament teach that in a certain sense the Ten Commandments are done away with, although still constituting a revelation of what is just and good? Would you please explain 2 Corinthians 3 in this connection? G.P.

While the New Testament speaks of the Ten Commandments as "spiritual" and as "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:14, 12), it is true that in some places the Apostle Paul appears to write in a derogatory way concerning them. Inasmuch as this same inspired writer assures us that faith in no way makes void the law (Romans 3:31), and that "what matters is to keep God's commands" (1 Corinthians 7:19, N.E.B.), we must be careful not to misinterpret him in puzzling passages. All such passages find their explanation by the application of two great gospel truths:

(1) All the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament, and even the Ten Commandments, pointed to Christ as their great objective. The ceremonial requirements foreshadowed His work as our Sacrifice and Priest, while the Ten Commandments described His perfect righteousness. Paul, under inspiration, condemned therefore all who sought to divorce from Christ God's ancient legislation. Many in his day sought to enforce the ceremonial precepts of the Old Testament even though such precepts had as surely "run out" as a shadow of a tree does when it meets the tree itself. And some believers there were who considered and taught the Ten Commandments without relating them to Christ.

(2) No law of itself can ever bring salvation. In Paul's day, as in ours,

there were many who hoped for salvation through their own observance of ritual or moral requirements, forgetting that the chief requirement of the law is a holy heart which only Christ can give.

In substance, therefore, we may say of the New Testament's teaching on law that all legal requirements as a means of salvation on their own (i.e., divorced from Christ) are condemned. Paul protested both against the enforcement of worn-out, typical ritual and the self-righteous efforts of those who hoped to recommend themselves to God by their outward fulfilment of the moral commandments. The law, both in its ceremonial and moral phases, is a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we



**BIBLE
QUESTIONS
ANSWERED**

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

might be justified by faith." Galatians 3:24. As a standard of holy living the commandments of God are ever upheld. Indeed, the very purpose of the gospel is that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:4.

2 Corinthians 3 says, in effect, that wherever the law is proclaimed without relating it to Christ, it becomes as a dead letter and a "ministration of death." The great Reformer, John Calvin, wrote as follows on this passage of Scripture—

"It is clear that Paul is there arguing against false apostles, who, by recommending the law without Christ, deprived the people of the benefit of the New Covenant, by which the Lord engages that He will write His law on the hearts of believers, and engrave it on their inward parts. The letter therefore is dead, and the law of the Lord kills its readers when it is dis-severed from the grace of Christ, and only sounds in the ear without touching the heart."—"Institutes," Book 1, Chapter 9.

THE WISE STEWARD

Can you explain the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16? It seems to teach that it is right for debtors to give but part payment to their creditors. N.Z.

The parable reads as follows:

"There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? . . . Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty." Luke 16:1-6, K.J.V.

"Now the master praised this rascally steward because he had been so careful for his own future. For the children of this world are considerably more shrewd in dealing with their contemporaries than the children of light. Now my advice to you is to use 'money,' tainted as it is, to make yourselves friends, so that when it comes to an end, they may welcome you into eternal habitations.

"The man who is faithful in the little things will be faithful in the big things, and the man who cheats in the little things will cheat in the big things, too. So that if you are not fit to be trusted to deal with the wicked wealth of this world, who will trust you with the true riches?" Luke 16:8-11, Phillips.

The character in this story did right in exercising foresight with regard to material things in order that his future might have some security. He did wrong in cheating his master.

This is another of the "how much more" stories of Christ. Our Lord, master story-teller, instructs by both similarity and contrast. He tells us elsewhere: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Matthew 7:11. That is to say, "Your heavenly Parent is like you in that He delights to give to His children. Yet you are evil whereas He is good. Therefore how much more likely is it that He will answer His children's requests than human parents the requests that come to them." Here is both similarity and contrast. The case is the same in Luke 18 where we have the parable of the unjust judge (in contrast to God, the Judge, who is always just), and in Luke 16 where the unrighteous steward is intended as a contrast to God's righteous stewards. In this parable, therefore, Christ is saying to His followers: "You are stewards of all Providence has assigned you. If rascally and unconverted stewards use foresight and plan their usage of material things in order to prepare for their future, how much more should you!"

A QUESTION OF DIET

I believe that a vegetarian diet is more in harmony with the original plan of God than a diet including meat. My wife is not a believer. Should I insist on her preparing meatless dishes? C.

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace." Romans 14:17-19.

All of us must frequently choose the less of two evils. Your chances of ever winning your wife to Christ are reduced if you insist upon your own way in smaller issues. While you cannot compromise in anything where you yourself only are concerned, in matters such as cooking which involve her, allowance must be made for her privilege of thinking differently from you. Anyway, a well-spread table usually supplies enough range of choice to support both health and conscience.

CONSCIENCE

Is conscience in reality the Holy Spirit? M.V.

No. Conscience is but the judgment of the mind regarding right and wrong. Even the heathen "having not the Spirit" (Jude 19) often manifest conscience because their minds retain some of the image of God in which mankind was originally fashioned. Our individual task is to educate our conscience through the study of the Word of Truth. Compare the following texts.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12.

"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." 1 John 3:20.

CHRISTIANS AND DANCING

Is there anything wrong with non-competitive Scottish country dancing where partners are never held against one another as in ballroom dancing? I have attended such dancing in church halls, and it seems to have all the advantages of vigorous exercise without the disadvantages of competitive sport. Do you agree? P.J.R.

Condemning dancing lock, stock, and barrel places the Christian in a quandary inasmuch as sacred Scripture declares that "David danced before the Lord." 2 Samuel 6:14. What Christians usually have in mind when they speak against dancing is its usual modern connotations. David's dance was one of reverent joy, on his own, and to the glory of God. Most modern dancing seems the reverse of reverent, has sexual stimulation as one of its fascinations, and is to the glory of the devil.

When such questions are raised as you have presented, the Christian must keep in mind certain principles clearly stated in Scripture, and decide on the

basis of these. Consider, for example, the following:

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth [welfare]." 1 Corinthians 10:23, 24.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of." Romans 14:16.

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any praise, think on these things. . . . The God of peace shall be with you." Philippians 4:8, 9.

"Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Romans 14:23.

Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." 1 Corinthians 15:33, R.S.V.

He who loves not Christ will say, "if in doubt, try it out," but he who loves Him says instead, "if in doubt, leave it out."

CHRISTMAS DAY

Should we make much of Christmas day in view of the fact that the date of the festival is pagan in origin?

Inquirer.

The only day God has told us to "make much of" is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, the reason being that that day is a reminder of Christ's love and power manifested in creation and redemption. See Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:15, Ezekiel 20:12. The only merit in Christmas observance lies in the grateful remembrance of the Christ who took upon Himself the limitations of humanity at His incarnation. Where there are children in the household who observe that other children are preparing for the festivity with joy it would be wise to also make some preparations for the day but with this difference—the emphasis should lie on a grateful giving to God by gifts to the needy rather than merely upon a family interchange of presents. The keynote of the celebration should be "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." 2 Corinthians 9:15.

SINFUL FLESH

How do you understand the passage in Romans 8 which says that Christ was "in the likeness of sinful flesh"? R.M.

Literally the passage in the Greek reads that Christ came "in a likeness of a flesh of sin." Paul is saying that Christ condescended to such an extent that He was as near to fallen man as it was possible for a sinless One to come.

That is Christ took upon Himself human nature in its weakened state—He did not come with the vitality or capacity of sinless Adam. But despite this apparent identity with all men, He alone was free from the taint of sin. While all others enter the world as "aliens from God," "by nature the children of wrath," "shapen in iniquity," "having not the Spirit," Christ came as "that holy thing," "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." See particularly Ephesians 2:1-3; Psalm 51:5; and Hebrews 7:26. Only a sinless Saviour could redeem a world of sinners.

THE TEN KINGDOMS

Would you please explain Revelation 17:12? What are the ten kingdoms "which have received no kingdom as yet"? C.

The text and its context reads as follows:

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them." Revelation 17:12-14.

These verses foretell the future union of nations and their collaboration with a world church. When compromise has been practised to such an extent that all doctrinal differences are submerged among churches, then the resulting apostate ecumenical religion will substitute the power of the state for the power of the Holy Spirit. This in turn will lead to the persecution of a non-conformist religious minority. See Revelation 12:17 and 13:8-18. Christ will deliver by His coming those who have chosen to risk death rather than violate "the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

HOW LARGE WAS THE ARK?

What was the size of Noah's ark? How could it have possibly held such a tremendous load of cargo? Q.

The Bible gives in cubits the size of the ark, but the precise size of the cubit then in use is not certain. However, a conservative estimate of the ark's dimensions represent it as 525 feet long, 57½ feet broad, 52½ feet high, weighing about 42,000 tons. It could have housed over 20,000 men plus stores. An ordinary cattle carriage on the railway carries from eighteen to twenty head of cattle; or from sixty to eighty head of pigs, or from eighty to one hundred head of sheep. Two thousand of such carriages could have been stored away in Noah's ark. According to Byron C. Nelson, "There was room in such a craft for one hundred menageries larger than Barnum, the great American showman, ever saw in his wildest reveries, and room to spare for food."—"The Deluge Story in Stone," page 152 f.



Just

YOU and YOUR BIBLE

✧ By ROY C. NADEN

ISRAEL CONFIRMS BIBLICAL ACCURACY

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE BIBLE

Since Israel's independence on November 29, 1947, she has accomplished astonishing results both economically and agriculturally. Yet few people realize how this programme has been aided, time and again, by the words of the Bible. In fact some of the most important discoveries in modern times in Palestine are the result of following up apparently insignificant details mentioned in the Biblical narrative.

1. COPPER IN ISRAEL

What reference does the Bible make to the presence of copper or bronze in Israel?

"Now the pots, the shovels, and the basins, all these vessels in the house of the Lord, which Hiram made for King Solomon, were of burnished bronze. In the plain of the Jordan the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarethan." 1 Kings 7: 45, 46, R.S.V.

It was long assumed that there was no metal in Israel. But Rabbi Nelson Glueck, Biblical archaeologist and president of the Hebrew Union College at Cincinnati, thought differently, because of the words of 1 Kings 7. If King Solomon's copper mines ever existed, he reasoned there must be some evidences left even if they had been buried for the past 3,000 years. One day in 1934, after twenty years of general archaeological work in Israel up and down the Jordan valley and across the blistering Negev, he came to a place the Arabs called "Copper Ruin" just south of the Dead Sea. He excavated and found crumbling walls and furnaces, black with heaps of copper slag. Farther south were seven other similar centres. The pottery (the best guide for archaeological dating) confirmed that these operations had been carried on in the times of Solomon.

Then four years later, the mineral centre of the ancient Holy Land was found, just by investigating the site described in 1 Kings 9:26. "King Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom." These areas, rich in minerals, are being mined today.

2. IRON IN ISRAEL

What is another mineral mentioned in the Bible as being in Palestine?

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, . . . a land whose stones are iron." Deuteronomy 8:7-9.

Just a few years ago, Dr. Ben Tor, one of Israel's leading geologists, was carrying out a mineral research programme a few miles from Beersheba. Here he noticed that the immense cliffs were shot through with red-black ore. After hundreds of samples were examined, the resources of iron ore in this area were estimated at fifteen million tons. One outcropping alone produced 60 per cent pure ore.

3. NATURAL GAS AND OIL IN ISRAEL

How was the presence of natural gas and oil in Palestine suggested to one modern researcher?

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven." "And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Genesis 19:24, 28.

Xiel Ferderman, a literalistic but keen-minded business man, began searching for oil and gas when he read about the flames that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. He said—rightly or wrongly—flames meant gas, and gas meant oil. The geological evidence he subsequently gathered together

confirmed his suspicions that there was oil in the area. He organized a company, and drilling commenced on November 3, 1953. The record today, as reported by the Israeli Foreign Ministry, reads as follows: "Oil was struck for the first time in 1955, and gas in 1958. Oil is produced at Heletz and Kochav, near Ashkelon, and natural gas at Rosh Zohar near the Dead Sea."

4. AGRICULTURE IN PALESTINE

For a number of years, Dr. Walter Clay Lowdermilk, a leading United States authority on crops and soil conservation, has been advising Israel. He comments, "Fortunately the Bible tells us what crops will flourish in certain sections. We know the Philistines grew grain, because Samson tied the foxes tails together, fixed firebrands to them and turned them loose in the grain fields. They also ran into olive groves. When Samson visited his sweetheart, he passed through vineyards. All these crops are doing well there now."

What Biblical comment concerning the spies in Jericho suggested that flax could be grown in at least one area of Palestine?

"But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof." Joshua 2:6.

While digging in the ruins of Gezer, in Palestine, R. A. S. Macalister, an archaeologist, discovered a stone agricultural calendar which gave the months for harvesting certain crops. Flax was one of the crops mentioned. But flax had not been grown for generations in the area. Now it is one of the most favoured crops.

5. ANIMAL HUSBANDRY IN PALESTINE

The forbidding Negev, south of Beersheba, has had no settlement for more than 1,300 years. Yet the Scripture suggests Abraham, with his flocks and herds, camped in this area. (Genesis 12:9.) With less than four inches of rain a year, it seemed unlikely any herds could be supported. Yet archaeologists recently took a closer look at the hills and found down in the smallest gullies the remnants of small dykes, some as low as two feet in height. They had stumbled on an intricate drainage system from which scarcely a drop of water was lost. Then in May, 1952, a group of eighteen experimenters pitched their tents in this area. They reproduced the water conservation scheme as best they could, building forty dykes over an area of sixty-five acres. The next spring, lush green grass sprang up, sufficient to supply their entire herd of 300 sheep.

CONCLUSION

Using the geographical comments of the Bible, the economy of Israel has been greatly strengthened. In fact, in the words of the Bible, "This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden." Ezekiel 36:35. The latest Fact book from Israel adds this additional fascinating comment: "A land of wheat and barley and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates, a land of olive-oil and honey," says the Bible. Much has been added, including date-palm, bananas, the orange and other citrus fruits, for which the coastal plain, when irrigated, offers the world's most favourable combination of soil and sunshine.

"Deciduous fruit trees grow everywhere, but especially in the cool hills; bananas, avocados, guavas and mangoes in the hot Jordan Valley and the coastal plain. Besides the basic grains and vegetables, tobacco is grown; cotton, ground-nuts and sugar-beet have been successfully introduced on a comparatively large scale."—Page 37.



INDIA
AUSTRALIA
BRAZIL
JAPAN
AFRICA
SCOTLAND
PAKISTAN _____

FAITH FOR THESE TIMES is the Australian voice of a world-wide radio ministry. Are you among the millions who are thrilled and encouraged by these sessions which vibrate with the power of the everlasting gospel?

Tune each Sunday to any of the stations listed and strengthen your faith for these times.

AND THE FREE "FAITH FOR THESE TIMES" CORRESPONDENCE COURSES ALSO ARE YOURS FOR THE ASKING. FILL IN THE FORM AND POST TO EITHER OF THE ADDRESSES GIVEN.

FAITH FOR THESE TIMES, BOX 4112, G.P.O., SYDNEY, N.S.W., 2001, OR BOX 2316, P.O., AUCKLAND, N.Z.



ROY C. NADEN, "FAITH FOR THESE TIMES" SPEAKER

SENIOR YOUTH JUNIOR HEALTH

Name

Address

State Postcode

TUNE EACH SUNDAY

NEW SOUTH WALES	2KM - 1.00 p.m.	VICTORIA	4WK - 8.30 a.m.	WEST AUST.	NEW ZEALAND	TONGA
2UE - 10.05 p.m.	2RE - 10.30 a.m.	3BO - 8.05 a.m.	4NA - 8.00 a.m.	6PM - 5.30 p.m.	4XD - 11.00 a.m.	ZCO - 6.30 p.m.
2KY - 8.10 p.m.	2VM - 8.40 a.m.	SOUTH AUST.	4KQ - 9.00 p.m.	6AM - 5.30 p.m.	TASMANIA	Wednesday
Wednesday	2AD - 7.10 p.m.	5DN - 7.05 a.m.		6KG - 6.00 p.m.	7AD - 10.00 a.m.	SAMOA
2KA - 6.10 p.m.	2GZ - 5.10 p.m.	SOUTH QUEENSLAND	NORTH QUEENSLAND	6GE - 6.00 p.m.	7SD - 8.40 a.m.	2AP - 10.00 p.m.
2LM - 8.40 a.m.	2AY - 8.05 a.m.	4SB - 9.10 a.m.	4TO - 9.15 a.m.	6GE - 9.30 p.m.	7BU - 8.40 a.m.	Thursday
2NX - 9.00 p.m.	2GN - 7.40 a.m.	4RO - 7.00 a.m.	4MK - 9.00 p.m.	Mon. 9.45 p.m. Wed.	7EX - 8.30 a.m.	NORFOLK ISLAND
2NM - 9.00 p.m.	2CA - 8.00 a.m.	4ZR - 5.00 p.m.	4MK 10.00 p.m.	Fri. Sat.	7QT - 7.45 p.m.	VR2NI 9.20 a.m.
2TM - 5.30 p.m.	2WL - 9.45 p.m.	4IP - 6.10 a.m.	Mon.-Fri.	9.45 p.m. Wed.	7HT - 7.45 p.m.	Tuesday
2NZ - 5.30 p.m.	2WL - 2.30 p.m.	4MB - 8.00 a.m.	4LM - 9.40 a.m.	6VA - 6.00 p.m.	NORTHERN TERRITORY	
2GF - 8.10 a.m.	Mon.-Friday	4BU - 7.45 a.m.	4CA - 8.30 a.m.	6TZ - 7.45 a.m.	8DN - 9.30 a.m.	
				6CI - 7.45 a.m.		

STORIES AND PICTURES THAT MAKE THE BIBLE LIVE

The Bible Story

By Arthur S. Maxwell



*The Greatest Stories Ever Told from
The Greatest Book Ever Written*

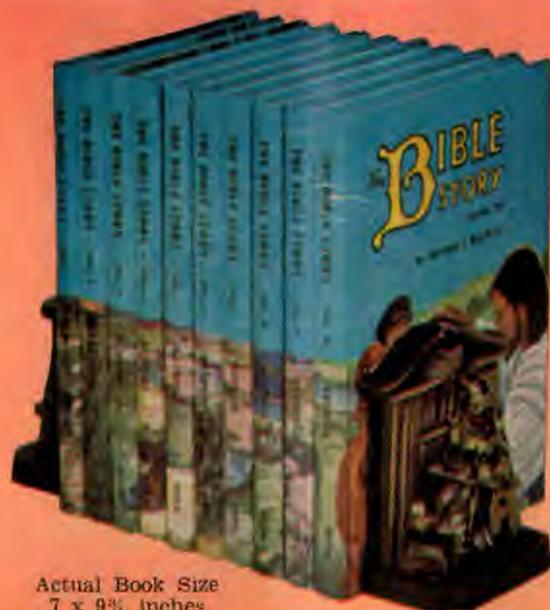
In these ten beautiful BIBLE STORY volumes will be found:

- More than 400 stories unexcelled in clarity of presentation.
- Nearly 2,000 pages.
- Full coverage of the Bible narrative.
- Exquisite full-colour illustrations by nationally known artists at every page opening.
- Reading enjoyment for every member of the modern family in clear easy-to-read type.

The writer of these ten marvellous volumes, THE BIBLE STORY, Arthur S. Maxwell, is a world-renowned editor, author, and lecturer. He is known and loved the world over by scores of millions who have read his ever-popular BEDTIME STORIES series.



Parents, teachers, church and youth leaders, judges all agree: **Good Books build Good Character and help young people to successfully meet the realities of life.**



Actual Book Size
7 x 9 1/2 inches

THE BIBLE STORY

is loved by boys and girls of all ages, for it is written in easily understood words. It is more colourfully illustrated than any other story of the Bible ever published, regardless of price.

Fill in and post to

SIGNS PUBLISHING COMPANY
Warburton, Victoria. 3799

Please supply without obligation further information on these ten wonderful volumes of THE BIBLE STORY.

Name

Address

Postcode