

Signs

OF THE TIMES

MAY 1968

"The Second Sunday in May" Page 16



"There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures."

—SHAKESPEARE.

DEAR LORD,

*Please use my hands, as those of Thine,
To guide my children's feet,
Place in their hearts Thy love divine,
To make my joy complete.*

*Please use my heart, a resting place,
And make of me Thy door,
So each dear child will find Thy grace
Through me, and love Thee more.*



A MOTHER'S PRAYER

*Please use my voice, as though Thine own,
To speak Thy words of truth,
So they'll not feel bereft, alone,
Through questing days of youth.*

*Please use my home, a place of prayer,
Where we can talk to Thee.
Please let each child feel Thou art there,
To love, as Thou dost me.*

*Please help them, Lord, to live as Thine,
To walk always with Thee.
Please bless these dear loved ones of mine.
Whom Thou hast given me.
Amen.*

by
Will Edmiston

SIGNS

OF THE TIMES

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

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HOMELY HOMILIES

ON THE NATURE OF GOD

It is surprising how easily some very young humans can answer the most profound questions. It is not, of course, difficult to ask questions, but to provide answers . . .

Now if my very young daughter had put the question to me, I am sure my answer would have been far less satisfactory than the one she received. Instead, she placed the responsibility of her enlightenment on her big sister who was in first grade at school.

"Joy," she said, "what is God like?"

From her seat on the steps, Joy puckered her brow in the acceptable expression that one assumes when faced with such a profound query, looked toward the distant hills and blue sky, and said with casual conviction,

"Oh, He's just like Daddy, only bigger."

I waited. There must be some argument against the proposition, but as far as the questioner was concerned, the answer was completely satisfactory.

I think there is, implicit in the story, a moral for all fathers. Certainly in the definition there is also, I note, close parallel with the teaching of our Lord, for did He not say, "When ye pray, say, Our Father . . ." Luke 11:2.

—Connie French.

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OUR COVER PICTURE

This fine cover picture captures a somewhat stark but peaceful seascape that attracted us by its cold beauty.

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interpreting **signs of the times**

Missing Mothers

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN lately about missing children—particularly those in the United States of America who have fled to Haight-Ashbury and similar haunts of the hippies. Heart-rending stories have been told about tragic young people who, feeling unwanted at home, have run away to find companionship, understanding, and love somewhere else. But what about the missing mothers?

Not mothers who have run away from their homes, but mothers who were not there when their children needed them most. Mothers who were out at work when their children arrived home from school to find the house empty, with nobody to welcome them. Mothers who were too busy watching TV, or playing bingo, to read to their children at bedtime, or to teach them how to pray. Mothers who were too weary to answer their questions, solve their problems, help them with their homework, or take them to church.

Amid the floodtide of sentimental nonsense expressed at this season of the year it would be good to take a new look at the responsibilities of parenthood. There is a reason why so many children are running away from home; why they are getting involved with the law and landing in detention homes, youth guidance centres and the like. Much of the blame rests with the parents who did not know enough, or care enough, to train their children aright.

Few children from truly Christian homes—where God is honoured and the Bible revered—end up in gaol. True, there are some black sheep in every flock, but by and large it is as true now as when first written in the Bible, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

Training involves time, effort, and concern. It means endless attention, day and night, with no pay for time or overtime. It takes constant vigilance, a guardianship that never fails or falters.

Bringing up children to be honest, trustworthy, dependable, godly citizens is the most arduous and responsible task anybody can undertake. Guiding them through all the perils, temptations and downright wickedness that surround them nowadays is a task of the utmost importance, requiring patience, wisdom and strength that only God can supply.

"Children," says the Bible, "are an heritage of the Lord." Psalm 127:3. That is, they are a gift from Him who bestowed on man the marvellous power of procrea-

tion in the beginning. As His heritage they have enormous potential in this life and the next. Trained in the principles of His kingdom they will bless their generation in this life and live for ever with God in the hereafter.

With a training job like this on their hands mothers cannot afford to be missing for a single moment. They have a life-time responsibility they can never evade or relinquish.

In these dark and evil times, as the world plunges on into anarchy and godlessness, these great truths need to be remembered and re-emphasized. And what better time to do it than on Mother's Day, 1968?

Arthur S. Maxwell

The Root of the Trouble

THEOLOGIANs ARE A MIXED BAG. In this, they are just like any other group of people. If they are not on the positive attack with a negative approach, they are on a negative attack with a positive approach. "If," they are saying now, "God is not dead, how can man prove that He lives?"

On the face of it, this is a reasonable question. But the tragic part is that it should even arise at all as a question to be considered. *Time* (8/3/68) brings up the point for consideration, and goes on to say, "Rational

Sir Alexander Downer, Australian High Commissioner in London, places a cross of remembrance in Westminster Abbey Field of Remembrance in honour of all those who died in the two world wars.



proofs cannot convince the sceptic; the Bible alone is authority only to the convinced believer." Stay! Hold your hand! Already you have put your finger on the canker that is eating the heart out of Christendom. There is more to that latter portion of the sentence than meets the eye. "The Bible," it insists, "is authority only to the convinced believer." So.

Blandly *Time* reports, in the most matter-of-fact manner possible, that "the Bible alone is the authority only to the convinced believer." But surely, you say, the theologian is a convinced believer! Else how can he be a theologian? If you do utter such an astonishingly naive idea as that, you stand to be laughed at—and it will be derisive laughter. Theologians, we blush to tell you, are no longer subscribers to the belief that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16.

Rather they subscribe to the view that "hardly any scripture is given by inspiration of God, and not much of it is profitable for doctrine, but generally it is a collection of interesting myths and fascinating fairy-tales." After all, they will admonish you gently, "Nobody believes that all the Scriptures are God-inspired today."

Our answer to that is that they should be a mite more careful in the use of their words. "Nobody" is a rather sweeping compass. We would respectfully remind such dogmatists that there are still some people who subscribe to the belief that the Scriptures are indeed the inspired Word of God, who accept the Book in its entirety as God's message to a lost world, who are simple enough to believe the Genesis story of creation, and who are unsophisticated enough to stand up and say so.

Moreover, as they look around them, they see a number of rather well-known people who are not ashamed to be counted along with them. There is, for instance, St. Paul, who has been described by these very theologians as the "founder of the Christian ethic," the "one voice who codified Christian beliefs." Oh, yes, St. Paul is with us; he it was who penned those words we quoted above, the verse which begins, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

Then there are the rugged features of the Apostle Peter who does not disdain to be numbered among us. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy," he thundered, "whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19. That sounds good; we like that triumphant ring in "a more sure word of prophecy." More sure than what? Than the apologetics of the theologians, perhaps.

And Stephen the Martyr aligns himself with us. Read, sirs, if you happen to have such an out-moded book as the Bible about you, his statement of belief in Acts 7. And what is more, he believed the Old Testament! And believe it or not, he accepted the fact that God is the Creator of this world! Having quoted Isaiah, which quote ended with God's word, "Hath not My hand made all these things?" Stephen launched into a righteously



Members of the Australian Navy preparing to unload empty cordite containers from H.M.A.S. "Hobart" onto a waiting tanker. "Hobart" is at present serving off the coast of Vietnam. (R.A.N. photo.)

vitriolic attack on his hearers with these words: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts 7:51. Gentlemen, we would not presume to suggest that the words of the martyr would be applicable to you, but we wonder, if you were suddenly to be confronted by the first Christian martyr, whether you would tend to soft-pedal your theology? We wonder.

The whole problem, gentlemen, the root of the trouble is that you and your peers have carried on a dangerous flirtation with science (falsely so called) for the last one hundred years. You have based your theology on the premise that if science does not agree with the Scripture, then the Scripture is wrong. You do not for one moment incline to the view that, if there is any discrepancy, science may be suspect. After all, science has not unlocked every door yet; it has not advanced beyond the theorizing stage in many issues which you are blithely taking for granted. Science, may we gently remind you, will never ensure your eternal salvation; it may just possibly encompass your eternal damnation.

The theologians' traditional quest is to find the truth about the God about whom they so learnedly speculate. They overlook the greatest clue of all; the Man from Galilee gave it to them: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." John 17:17. And not a word about science does the Master utter!

Robert H. Parr

And the Viet Cong Beneath

NOT MANY OF US will ever have the opportunity of going to Ngoc Diem. But Harold Jackson did and perhaps we will have to be satisfied with his description of the place. Ngoc Diem is classified as a pacified hamlet in the thinking of those in control of the pacification programme in Vietnam—the other and more constructive arm of the war being waged by the U.S. and its allies, in South Vietnam.

It is just fifteen or so miles from Nha Trang, a coastal town which is the headquarters of pacification for central Vietnam. It was from Nha Trang that reporter Harold Jackson set out with an armed convoy on a tour of inspection of two nearby hamlets, one of which was Ngoc Diem. Unlike the other hamlet, known as Phu Huu, Ngoc Diem had no pacification team, for it had been withdrawn, the central control being satisfied that it was "pacified."

The only official remaining in the village was the consensus grievance man. The job of this man is to report what he hears and sees to those above him in the pacification programme. Theoretically he is an unbiased, independent observer. In practice he is "often leaned on by powerful district and provincial officials so that his reports, too, get that rosy tint."

Reporting in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (March 14, 1968) from which we are obtaining these details, Mr. Jackson tells how that when he and his escort arrived in the hamlet in the mid-afternoon, the consensus man and the hamlet chief were preparing to leave their village for the night. They were just not prepared to spend a night there. One can hardly blame them, though, for their lack of trust and confidence in the hamlet's defence system. One night recently, three Viet Cong had arrived in the village to conduct a propaganda meeting. The Popular Force defensive group that had been supplied

The developing face of Sydney's skyline demonstrates the rapidly rising premium on space as sky scrapers begin to appear.

Photo D. J. Silver



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to the community for protection were to be found all crowded into one house in an effort to defend themselves. This force later buried their weapons to escape involvement.

But the cruellest piece of irony is the rumour that the Viet Cong have tunnelled under the hamlet and that visitors and villagers are literally undermined by the enemy as they tramp around this supposedly safe and pacified hamlet. Harold Jackson concludes: "As we left I noticed the village schoolhouse had its roof missing. The corrugated iron sheets by its side were clearly enough to replace it and I asked what had happened. A typhoon which struck the district in November had apparently caused the damage. No attempt had been made to repair it and the school has presumably not been in use since then."

Here, nestled peacefully among the palms and banana groves, appearing to be a perfect jungle hideaway, is a paradox of our day. It presents itself as a symbol of the age in which we live; an exact microcosm of the world. On the surface it appears peaceful and perhaps safe; but underneath is turmoil and strife that might break out at any moment. And so the relationship between its appearance and the reality is always a strained one; the "pacification" is a very delicate and uncertain accomplishment.

But the world is only made up of the people in it, and they, too, are fraught with the endemic malady of this era—insecurity.

If the cap could be taken off the unrest and corruption that ravages so many of our communities today, and the basic issues extracted and examined, present in every case would be this problem of insecurity. Each one of us is a Ngoc Diem. Whatever outer appearance we may have chosen to show the world, we all at some time, if not always, struggle against this cancer of uncertainty within—an inner sense of not belonging or feeling dreadfully lost that makes us feel so often hollow and estranged.

Insecurity is perhaps the greatest cause of the current seething urge to throw off the restraints and morals of the past and do whatever stimulates the fancy. If teenagers could be honest within, they would see that the desire to be different or reckless is only the mind struggling to find satisfaction and security. When the assurances and confidences that should be there to aid and support the young person in early life—like a good home which is a delight to return to and respectable parents who are reassuring to be with—are taken away, youth feels abandoned and lost. Add to this the obvious loneliness that will result and you have the perfect breeding ground for a-moral abandon.

When teenagers are either deserted by, or allowed to desert, home and parents during the maturing years and find themselves by choice or circumstance among the dizzy world of a big city, the Viet Cong of desperate loneliness and savage unable-to-copeness goes to work to undermine and destroy. The once quiet hamlet of a

(Concluded on page 27.)

*Loneliness—
the endemic malady
of TODAY*

"Will All the Dolores Smiths Please Stand Up?"

By
Walter R. L. Scragg



DOLORES SMITH stepped out onto the balcony of her sixth floor flat. Across the courtyard the janitor was going about his morning duties. She waved a cheery good morning to him and saw his equally cheerful reply. As he turned his back, she took a deep breath, a last look at her empty apartment, and then stepped over the edge of her balcony and crashed to her death on the pavement below.

In her apartment they found a note that read, "It is no use living any more. My husband is dead and I am alone. Nobody ever knocks at my door. My phone never rings. I cannot face this loneliness any more."

"If only I had known she was lonely, my wife and I could have called on her and made friends with her," the janitor said.

"I get lonely myself at times, and I would have been glad for company," the lady in an apartment two doors down the hall remarked.

Loneliness is often a cause of suicide, psychiatrists say. Dolores is, in some way, a symbol of our times. Cities so full of people that it seems impossible to house them all, and yet people so alone that they cannot face another moment of life. And for every Dolores there are millions of others for whom loneliness is a gnawing pain that seldom disappears. Those who have homes and families, or circles of bright, pleasant friends, fail to realize that the man next door, the lady shop assistant, even the bright young receptionist at their physician's office may hide hearts aching for friendship beneath their veneer of smiles.

Recently the television programme, Faith for Today, sponsored a survey of students who had been taking their Bible correspondence course. They wanted to discover why these people felt impressed to write for these lessons. One urgent motive for writing was that they were lonely. By writing to the kindly television pastor they felt that this loneliness might be dispelled.

Such people are typical of the millions who feel deprived, shut out, alone. Somehow life has passed them by and left them in a by-water where they find no identity and no friendship. Many look back to their childhood—to the warm, happy home where mother was queen and father the kindly authority. How different they find their life from what they knew as children! Then, right was right, and wrong was wrong, and they knew the difference. They never for a moment questioned their security. Our sophisticated culture has left such people behind; they are the victims of many circumstances. The death of a loved one for which they were totally unprepared, the emphasis on material achievement, the latest status symbol which they could not afford—these and a score of other reasons left them behind in the race of life and they could find no way to catch up.

Jesus knew the aching loneliness of the human heart. He could say, "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Matthew 8:20. In His hour of trial His trusted friends and advisers fled from Him, and He faced Gethsemane and the cross without friend or earthly comforter.

But long before His own solitary battle with death and discouragement, He looked deep into the heart of man and saw the void of loneliness and the sense of loss that so many feel. So many of His messages and parables are directed to those who feel alone and lost. It is the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, that captures the Master's attention.

Knowing how easily the human heart can be discouraged, He said of Himself, "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench." Matthew 12:20. In proclaiming the purpose of His ministry, He stated, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18.

It is no wonder then that much of the Bible talks to those who have the feeling that they are cut off, alone, displaced, rejected. In fact, Holy Scripture presents the only true answer to this universal problem. Man's real difficulty is not that his fellow men leave him alone, it is that man has driven himself away from the true Friend. Sin has put a gulf between man and his Creator. Only in the bridging of this gap can man ever find satisfaction in life.

This is why God, through Jesus Christ, offers us His friendship. He knows that in finding Jesus, we will find Him, and so be brought back to the original pattern of living for man. In Christ, man can once more look at God and find himself as the one whom Heaven designed for communion with divinity. Any person who finds the true meaning of life in Christ will never feel lonely again. Restoring, reconciling, making man one with his God is what Christianity is all about.

God proclaims His care for us. "Casting all your care up on Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7. Though the Bible proclaims God's care for the world, sinner and believer alike, there is a special sense in which God cares for His children. Those who put their trust in Him may expect to receive this special concern. Often in looking toward God we wonder how He can be interested in just one human being with his or her small problems. There are so many *big* things going on. Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Matthew 10:29-31.

God is a God of individuals. He is spoken of as "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the



"Ye are of
more value
than many
sparrows."

God of Jacob." Matthew 22:32. He knows us, not as an unidentified, proliferating multitude, but as persons. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." 2 Timothy 2:19. We are redeemed as individuals, we are loved as individuals. Anyone may safely approach Him and expect that God will hear and answer.

One of the greatest mysteries for us to comprehend is the fact that God desires man's friendship and seeks

communion with him. There was great joy at the creation of man, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Job 38:7. God made man in His own image. He bent low and breathed life into the dust that He had moulded into His own image. After creation "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Genesis 3:8. Abraham was the friend of God. Enoch walked with God, and walked right on into heaven. In fact it is clear that God rejoices in those who seek after Him.

Even sin has not debarred man from tasting this real and lasting friendship. "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. . . . I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." John 15:14, 15. At first, this friendship with God may fill us with awe and reverence, but it is a real fact of salvation and something that God Himself desires.

Even the communion which Adam and Eve had face to face with God in the Garden of Eden can, to a large measure, be restored through prayer. Often we look upon prayer as asking things of God. Those who have studied prayer and made it successful in their personal lives, have found that it is a two-way channel. We speak to God and He speaks to us. Prayer sets in motion heavenly forces that strengthen and reassure. Loneliness is banished as we take our problems to the great Friend.

Many do not know how to pray or what to pray for. This is no reason not to talk to God. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself . . . maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8:26, 27. In the final analysis, it is not the things we say, but how we feel in our hearts toward our God and Saviour that really counts.

In God, man can forget himself and his problems. Christianity directs man out of himself to the plight of others. It is not an introverted religion.

Christian recluses have never really understood what Christianity is all about. As a person discovers Christ, he begins to think of the need of others and the joy his discovery can bring to them. Service, helping others, is one of the surest cures for loneliness. Try it. Find some other person who needs friendship; offer your friendship in the name of Christ. Your own loneliness will vanish as you help others.

People wonder about churches. Can you be as good a Christian outside a church communion as you can within one? Most likely not. Friendship with those who share like hopes and aims, enlightenment regarding God's purpose in our lives, new faith and courage—all these are gendered in church. This is the society of the friends of Jesus Christ and it is here that you are most likely to find the friendship that you are need-

ing. Of course, sometimes the church does fail in its purpose. People can be lonely even in a church. Sometimes it is their own fault, sometimes the fault of the church. But if you have first found Christ and if you look to Him for the solution to your problems, you will find in church fellowship a great aid to happy living. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Malachi 3:16, 17.

Lonely, discouraged soul, there is no need for you to wander in dismay and bitterness. Look today to the greatest Friend of all. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

"What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear,
What a privilege to carry,
Everything to God in prayer."

If you are another Delores Smith, will you try this remedy first? ★★



OUR CO-OPERATION CORNER

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OUR CHANGING WORLD



BUT IT DOESN'T GROW ON TREES

The median annual income of American families reached \$7,436 in 1966 and is estimated at \$7,850 for 1967, according to figures compiled from United States Government data. On the basis of past records, researchers project an increase to about \$8,300 in 1968.

BUT NOT SO WISE

"Probably for the first time in history," declared one speaker at the World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva, "we witness the development of a younger generation which, because of the rapidity of change and the impact of education, knows more than its elders . . . even if it is recognized that knowledge is not the same thing as wisdom."

"THAT THEY MAY BE ONE"?

In northern India, things are happening in the Christian church. After a long struggle, moves to achieve a united church of Northern India and Pakistan came nearer to culmination when the Calcutta Diocesan Council of the (Anglican) Church of India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon approved of a revised plan of union. Already the plan has been approved by the Methodist Bengal Synod and by the United Church of North India, itself a merger of the Congregational, Presbyterian, Reformed and Moravian denominations. Other churches involved in the negotiations are the Methodist Church of Southern Asia, the Baptist Churches of Northern India, Church of the Brethren, and Disciples of Christ. The plan, now being voted on, holds the Bible as the decisive standard of faith and accepts the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed.

BOMBSHELL IN METHODISM

A prominent British Methodist, Pastor Roland Lamb, has resigned from the ministry because of the "betrayal of Methodist doctrines—especially that of the supreme authority of Scripture—by the Methodist Conference." He also charged his church with being blind to the "dangers of increasing flirtation with apostate Rome." His announcement was described as "one of the biggest bombshells" in British Methodism for some years.

CRIME BOOM

In its annual report the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation states that since 1960, while the nation grew 9 per cent, the volume of crime rose by 62 per cent. The number of serious crimes solved last year averaged 24 per cent, a drop of 8 per cent below the number solved the previous year. Suburban areas continued to show the sharpest upswing in crime volume, with a 13 per cent rise.

STATISTICS OF GRIEF

A new survey has confirmed old concepts, that people do, indeed, die of broken hearts, according to a recent report in the *British Medical Journal*. A survey group of 371 persons who died leaving 903 close relatives — spouse, parents, children and siblings — was matched with a control group of similar size. During the first year after death, 4.76 per cent of the bereaved close relatives died, compared with only 0.68 per cent of relatives in the succeeding three years. The study also showed that there was twice as much risk of a relative dying within a year if the loved one's death came in a hospital rather than at home.

DEADLINE, 1976

A law passed recently in Malaysia states that the residence of each non-national religious worker there must be limited to ten years. It was uncertain for a while from what time this period would be reckoned, but a government statement indicates that the law will be retroactive to January 1, 1967, giving all missionaries nine more years of service. Islam is the official religion of Malaysia. Christianity, Hinduism, and Confucianism make up strong religious minorities.

WHAT A COMFORTING THOUGHT!

With the launching of the last submarine of the 41-ship American Polaris fleet, the United States will be able to keep twenty-seven vessels carrying 432 Polaris missiles on patrol. And each ship will have a potential fire-power equivalent to all the bombs dropped by both sides in the second world war, including the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

PAUL HAILS THE GREEK'S PETER

"Significant" and "stimulating" were words used by Pope Paul VI as he hailed the restoration of prayers to Peter in the Greek Orthodox Church for the first time since the fourteenth century. The prayers include such eulogies as "Peter, the unbreakable rock of the church," "the one among the apostles who occupies first place," and "leader of the glorious apostles."

The First Casualty

By DAVID L. STOKES

WE WERE ALL vaguely aware of their existence. Perhaps we did not quite realize just how well equipped and plentiful they were, but it was no real surprise to discover that they worked on a vast scale. However, when the North Koreans boarded a U.S. spy ship and commandeered it on the high seas, the whole story of international "snooping" became common knowledge.

It was noon on the wintry waters of the Sea of Japan when a Russian-built torpedo boat of the North Korean Navy turned up to harass the U.S.S. *Pueblo*, a spy ship of the American Navy. Periodic niggling by both sea and aircraft is one of the doubtful privileges enjoyed by these ships that sift the water and the sky for information. So no one was particularly perturbed when after requesting identification the torpedo boat signalled, "Heave to, or I will open fire." The *Pueblo* explained that it was in international waters and continued on its way.

By one o'clock, three more, similar vessels had cut their way through the twelve or more miles of sea that separated the American vessel from the coast of Korea. These quickly surrounded the boat and one ordered it: "Follow in my wake." At this point two MIG jets screamed in and circled off the *Pueblo's* bow. This, too, was not to be considered unusual, since U.S. jets often buzz foreign spy ships. However, the seriousness of the situation became clear when one of the newly arrived PT boats prepared a boarding party. As the Koreans scrambled on deck, the crew of the spy ship hastily began trying to wreck the electronic equipment and destroy the quantities of information gathered. Explosives, poorly laid in anxious moments, wounded a number of the crew.

At just after 2:30 p.m., two and a half hours after the first North Korean boat had appeared, the *Pueblo* announced it was going off the air and that all engines had been stopped. Two hours or so later, the hijacked vessel was in Wonsan Harbour, after being ignominiously towed there by the "pirate" boats.

So, suddenly, world attention was focused on the much ignored, but enthusiastically pursued practice of "snooping." We discovered that the Americans have

eighty such ships around the world, and the Russians sixty, disguised as trawlers and hydrographic craft. We were all forced to witness the impotency of immense power, as the U.S. seemed unable to do very much in her own defence.

But it is not spy ships or the irony of the mouse bailing up the elephant that concerns us here, but rather something far more significant that arose out of this situation and aggravated an already suppurating wound in the minds of people everywhere.

U Thant, secretary of the United Nations, once said: "In times of war and hostilities the first casualty is truth." The *Pueblo* affair, whether considered part of the cold war or the hot, was no exception.

The North Koreans felt justified in their action because, they claimed, the *Pueblo* had violated the twelve-mile limit of territorial waters and was carrying out hostile activities. Immediately came the denial from the Pentagon. The American vessel, we were told, had not strayed from international waters. Little by little the denial became untenable. We were eventually to hear a direct contradiction of that statement and a confession that indeed the *Pueblo* had entered territorial waters.

The "credibility gap" widened. This expression, coined to describe the amount of mistrust and doubt in



"IT IS EXPEDIENT FOR US,
THAT ONE MAN SHOULD DIE . . ."

people's minds (especially those of the press) concerning official statements, describes what has become an increasingly touchy issue.

Scepticism towards the honesty of government declarations has been strengthened by revealing accounts of certain events about which we had been misled in the past. Anthony Nutting, British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs from 1954 to 1956, came out recently and gave us the whole truth on the Suez debacle of 1956 in the book, *"No End of a Lesson."* Here was a situation where a politician led his country, unbeknown to the people, into a dubious conspiracy with two other countries, France and Israel, in an attempt to crush another, Egypt. But to make it worse, when the plan collapsed, the misdeeds were supposedly covered up when the same politician refused to confess the truth.

In recent years, too, a considerable amount was revealed about the activities of the American C.I.A., a government organization concerned with espionage which had been meddling all too much in apparently straightforward practices such as student exchange between America and other countries—using the students in the interests of spying, etc.

In an age when knowledge and brilliance appear to abound, we lack the most precious commodity of all—

truth. It is more precious than scientific discovery and technical achievement; far more important than libraries of data and files of secret information; yet more scarce than the wisdom needed to make use of our knowledge and equally as important for the survival of a nation and a world.

International mistrust is sad enough, but for people to doubt their leaders is disastrous. And yet we are surrounded by such a lack of confidence that is neither unreasonable nor ungrounded. One can read from high government officials statements such as this which was echoed by the American international weekly, *Newsweek*, March 18, 1968 (speaking of recent recessions in Vietnam): "The people need to be told exactly what happened out there. They need to have a frank assessment of what may have gone wrong and why. They need to know that present alternatives and future consequences. The President doesn't have to offer a new gimmick or a new programme every time he appears on television. All he has to offer is the truth."

But enough of the things that we have discovered were false. The very fact that things have been and are hidden from the public mind suggests that there could be other things of which the public knows very little. It is not unrealistic to wonder just how much goes on that the people of a nation are not made aware of. Perhaps this would not need to concern us if it was not that such deceptions can lead into areas where human lives and national destinies are meddled with. As the tip of an iceberg warns the wary seaman of dangers beneath the surface, so such deceptions in less important areas should arouse the cautious individual to beware of more serious malignings of his rights.

Mass media today can easily be organized to propound the ideas of whoever can control them. It is not difficult to perpetrate a universal illusion involving vast majorities. Truth still remains a rare gem in this frenzy of social and political intrigue that makes up the world around us.

"Happy is the man," writes John, "who stays awake." Revelation 16:15, Phillips.

ONE OF MY FAVOURITE Bible stories is the story of the blind man which John tells in the ninth chapter of his Gospel. No matter how many times I come back to it, I always find myself exhilarated, and I want to talk to someone about it. But I am not at all sure that I know what I want to say, or, for that matter, exactly what it is that fascinates me.

The story is told with artistic simplicity. That much I can defend with a wealth of detail if need be. And the blind man, who is its hero, is a delightful person, with his enthusiasm, his humility, the arrogance of his new found certainty, his devastating scorn for the Pharisees, his almost reckless courage, and his grateful, singing heart. The story has all the elements that delight the naive, unsophisticated reader, too—all the elements exploited by folk-lore all over the world. The magic of the unbelievable comes to the down-trodden prince in disguise (for surely this man is a prince among men); the tyrants who have persecuted him are brought low; justice triumphs, the sky lights up, and we see suddenly that

"God's in His heaven;

All's right with the world."

Then again the theme emerges so clearly. Without seeming to try, the story makes its point as though it had been constructed for that purpose alone. Finally, it begins and ends as a story should. It is complete. And yet, teasingly, almost perversely, strange dissonant overtones linger in the memory. There seems to be something more here than meets the eye, and one finds oneself drawn back to it time and again as to an elusive memory to peer long and searchingly and never to be quite satisfied.

But it is time I reminded you of the story.

It begins with a scene in which Jesus and His disciples were coming into Jerusalem. When they came upon the hero of our story, begging by the wayside, an impersonal and rather academic argument started up. Some of the disciples contended that the man was paying for his own sins through his affliction. Others argued, reasonably enough, that he must have been paying for his parents' sins. After all, he had been born blind and he could hardly be expected to start paying in advance, as it were. It was a popular argument because either way it reminded the more parsimonious that they might well be interfering with the purposes of God if they gave the man any relief.

The idea that there could have been a third alternative had never occurred to anyone. After all, if

you assumed the inescapable, namely, that God was directing everything that happened on this not-very-happy little world, all suffering must have a purpose, and what other purpose could you attribute to a just and loving God than punishment for evil doing?

Jesus dropped a bombshell into the middle of this argument: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents," He said bluntly, and proceeded to restore the man's sight. (John 9:3.)

One gets the impression that no one was altogether happy with the *denouement*, except the blind man who, with a singularly unambiguous frame of mind, began without ado to take hold of a normal life with unconcealed eagerness.

*Spiritual blindness is still
common TODAY*

HEREIN IS A MARVELLOUS THING

● Dr. Lionel H. Turner

The whole incident might have ended there but for one thing: It was the Sabbath day.

Perhaps this fact bothered the disciples a little. We do not know. But the Pharisees had no doubts at all.

They did not need to ask anyone questions about what was, or what was not the case in philosophical or religious arguments. They *were* the authority. As far as they were concerned, two things were axiomatic: People who were blind were definitely sinners under divine punishment, and people who healed others on the Sabbath day were agents of the devil. There could be no doubt about it. The law of Moses specifically stated that work was not to be done on the Sabbath day, and if healing was not work, what, they would like to ask, was it?

The next scene in the story is a delightful one. The man formerly blind was before the worthy fathers of

the church and they were asking him questions. They already knew the answers to these questions, and the man knew this, too. They had already taken some evidence in all the best traditions of legality and solemnity. The man's parents had been induced to admit to the dubious fame of being the father and mother of this person accused of the crime of being healed on the Sabbath day; but they had rather timidly disclaimed further knowledge of the affair, and suggested that the Pharisees might ask their son about it.

The interview with the accused did not seem to go too well for the Pharisees. In the first place, the man lacked any appreciation of his own humble position, or of the exalted and dignified position of his accusers,



and this was very disconcerting to men who liked to see a little cringing. The fact is that our hero was in an exuberant mood. In one short hour he had emerged from the black pit of blind despair where he had dwelt as an outcast cursed by God and man for some mysterious and nameless wickedness which was as inescapable as it was undiscoverable. And now he had passed through the gateway into humanity. He belonged now, and nothing was going to intimidate him or dismay him. He listened to the petty preciousities of the Pharisees with impatience. How, he wondered, could men like this, whom everybody seemed to fear and respect, become embroiled with minor details and completely overlook the main point? And suddenly his feelings got the better of him: "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes," he cried. John

9:30. The scorn and incredulity in his voice must have cut their way deep into the minds of the Pharisees, because their effect was electrifying. "Thou wast altogether born in sins and dost thou teach us?" they shouted. And he was unceremoniously thrown out.

In the third scene, Jesus came to have a chat with the man whom He had healed. Jesus had heard that the Pharisees had expelled the man from the church, and He evidently wanted to make sure that His new friend would not succumb to the pressures of his changed circumstances. After making sure that the man knew that his benefactor was no less than the Son of God, Jesus assured our hero that what had happened was only what was to be expected. His own coming into the world was bound to upset men's thinking, He told His new convert. Those who relied too heavily on their acquired knowledge were not likely to see the real significance of the salvation He brought. "For judgment I am come into this world," He said, "that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Verse 39.

From whatever direction I approach this story, I am always aware of three groups of people. There were the Pharisees who knew what they knew so thoroughly that they saw nothing else. There were the disciples who were not so sure. They speculated and questioned. And there was the blind man who neither knew nor questioned. Something had happened to him. Indeed, he was the only one to whom anything had happened, and, in spite of his ignorance, that fact placed him at the centre of the story. For what had happened to him was so overwhelming that it dwarfed any other kind of knowledge. Indeed, it made the sort of knowledge the Pharisees had superfluous, irrelevant, contemptible.

Now I have to concede that the point of view taken by the Pharisees was eminently reasonable. This problem of suffering is a difficult one from a religious point of view. There have been few theologians who have explained this phenomenon in a way that wholly satisfied themselves, let alone others. In the time of our story there was no other point of view, so it is no wonder that the guilt of the blind man seemed more real to the Jews than did his healing. After all, if you reject this view out of hand you find yourself confronted by some rather ugly alternatives. But this view turns out to be wrong. Jesus said so quite flatly. And this brings me to the real point of the story.

It is possible to be so completely dominated by a universally accepted idea that we become blind to the significance of personal experience. This is the theme of the story. I do not think it would escape us even if Jesus had not underlined it for us. But His comment is devastating: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Verse 39.

And now I want to add three postscripts and elaborate them a little.

(Please see page 20.)



Where does **TODAY** stand in the prophetic stream?

By **W. E. BATTYE**

SIDELIGHTS on the Interpretation of a Prophecy

IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE of the *SIGNS OF THE TIMES*, there appeared an article on prophecy, written on the topic, "The Two Thousand Three Hundred Days." In an unusual letter to the editor signed "Another Learner," a reader has requested further details on certain sections of the prophecy, particularly relating to the ninth chapter of Daniel. The writer desires evidence that our Lord "distinctly points out the abomination of desolation as pagan Rome." He is also seeking information in the Word of God where other statements may be verified.

The answer to the first question may be discovered directly in the cross reference in the article itself where Matthew 24:15-20 is compared with Luke 21:20-23. In each text the Lord is indicating the coming siege of Jerusalem. Let us notice the prediction from Matthew's version. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Verses 15, 16. Luke is more emphatic. "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it." Luke 21:20, 21, R.S.V.

On the face of this prophecy we would say, "How impossible! What a ridiculous proposition, to advise escape from the city when it was surrounded by an invading army." Now will you observe the amazing sequel as recorded by the Jewish historian, Josephus, who, although not a Christian, unconsciously supplies the answer to our Lord's prediction?

In the year A.D. 66, Cestius Gallus, the Roman governor of Syria, raised an army and laid siege to Jerusalem, but he withdrew his forces without subduing the city. Josephus remarks that had Cestius "but continued the siege a little longer [he] had certainly taken the city; but it was, I suppose, owing to the aversion God had already [to] the city and the sanctuary, that he was hindered from putting an end to the war that very day." He further adds, "It then happened that Cestius was not conscious either how the besieged despaired of success, nor how courageous the people were for him; and so he recalled his soldiers from the place, and despairing of any expectations of taking it, without having received any disgrace, he retired from the city without any reason in the world." He closed this account with the remarkable statement, "After this calamity that had befallen Cestius, many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city, as from a ship when it was going to sink."—"Wars of the Jews," Book 2, chapters 19 and 20.

The translator, A. M. Whiston, comments on these circumstances. "There may another very important and very providential reason be here assigned by this strange and foolish retreat of Cestius; which if Josephus had been now a Christian, he might probably have taken notice of also; and that is, the affording of the Jewish Christians in the city an opportunity of calling to mind the prediction and caution given them by Christ . . . when they should see the abomination of desolation, the idolatrous Roman armies with the images of their idols in their ensigns, ready to lay Jerusalem desolate . . . when they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies they should then 'flee in to the mountains.'"

Eusebius, the fourth century church historian, chronicles the event. "The whole body, however, of the church of Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond Jordan, called Pella. Here, those that believed in Christ, . . . removed from Jerusalem, as if holy men had entirely abandoned the royal city itself and the whole land of Judea."—"Hist. Eccl.," Book 3, chapter 5.

Thus this prediction was fulfilled in a most unexpected way. It is affirmed that such was the confidence the believers had in Christ's prophecy, that not a single Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem. Its fulfilment puts to silence the sceptic and confounds the unbeliever. This by no means exhausts the evidence, but sufficient has been said from the Word of God and history to demonstrate that the abomination of desolation is pagan Rome.

Our reader requests further information. "What is the covenant confirmed with many for that last week of the seventy in Daniel 9:27? Who is the Prince that confirms the covenant, and how does it terminate in A.D. 34?" A survey of these questions must conclude the subject for the present.

We now introduce two princes in Daniel 9:25 and 26. The first is Messiah the Prince, which obviously is the Lord Jesus Christ to whom we shall later briefly refer. Let us note the significant language associated with the second prince. We read, "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary . . . and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Verse 26. In A.D. 69, Vespasian, the Roman general, became the ruling emperor and committed the siege of Jerusalem to Titus, his son. Titus gave strict instructions that the temple should not be destroyed, yet notwithstanding this injunction, the Romans were so incensed against the Jews that a soldier thrust a burning brand among the draperies of the temple and the whole building went up in flames.

There is a careful emphasis laid upon this destruction by the prophet, for it was not Titus the prince who destroyed the sanctuary, but the people of the prince were the perpetrators of the deed. This is very

important, for any mistake here could lead us far afield from the intent of the prophecy. We now come to the crucial word in the understanding of our text. A careful reading will discover it is the pronoun "he." We read, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." Daniel 9:27. The antecedent of this pronoun must be in the singular number and therefore "he" could not refer to the "people of the prince" which perforce must take the plural form. Then where is the singular antecedent of "he?" There can be no other reference but to the Messiah mentioned in the previous verse. Who then is the confirmer of the covenant? It is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Prince of the covenant of Daniel 11:22. He is the Mediator of the covenant (Hebrews 9:15, R.S.V.). He is the victim of the covenant (Hebrews 7:22, 27, R.S.V.). He is the "Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." Malachi 3:1. In the English Revised Version of the Gospel of Luke, we have the words of Jesus at the Last Supper as He is about to yield His life a sacrifice for the sins of the world. He points to the emblems of the offering, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you." Luke 22:20, R.S.V.

We refer the reader to the November issue of this journal for an exposition of the seventy weeks and the 2300 days. (The prophecy declares that from the decree to build Jerusalem to Messiah the Prince, shall be sixty-nine weeks or 483 years. There were three decrees issued by the Persian kings for the building of Jerusalem, but the third decree by Artaxerxes answers the prophecy [Ezra 6:14, Daniel 9:25]. It was not only to build, but also to restore the governmental polity, to establish magistrates and judges with complete jurisdiction, "whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment." See Ezra 7:13, 25, 26. This well authenticated decree occurred in 457 B.C.)

The prophecy is clear, simple, and direct, just as if a timetable gave the direct route from Melbourne to Sydney 558 miles. If we deduct 456½ B.C. from 483 years, as approximately half the year had elapsed before the decree was put into effect, the remainder is 26½ or A.D. 27, the year when Jesus was baptized and commenced His official ministry. He preached the gospel of His coming covenant sacrifice for three-and-a-half years or half a prophetic week, and in the midst of the week, "He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." He was the sacrificial victim. He was the Offering for sin. He was the oblation Lamb. He died in A.D. 31.

"Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace, or take away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.
My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand, and there confess my sin."

Dr. Isaac Watts.

(Concluded on page 17.)



Mother's Day—
TODAY

By FAITH BALDWIN

The Second Sunday in May

UPON this day, all over the nation, Mother's Day is celebrated, as it has been since its founding. I have great respect for, and appreciation of, the ideal which prompted the establishment of a day during which the mothers of this country and the whole world should be honoured. And if I dare voice a personal, even critical opinion, it is in no way intended to detract from the tender inspiration of the founder, or from that of millions of women in whose honour the day was set aside.

I do not much cavil at the so-called commercializing of the day itself. To be sure, for weeks in advance we are assailed by advertisements which advise us what to give mother upon her day. To me many of the suggested gifts seem somewhat astonishing; some shops take the attitude that all mothers are over eighty and desire shawls, hot water bottles, and bedroom slippers; some believe them to be no more than twenty-five and advertise accordingly; others adhere to the notion that what mother wants more than anything in the world is a new electrical gadget. I have no quarrel with this, really, for anything that stimulates trade is good for a great many people; and I am able to endure the attack upon the nerves induced by those radio and television artists whose "mother" songs are fated to ring out over the air waves by the hour.

I am, however, irked by the notion that we are exhorted to honour our mothers for one day of the year and let it go at that; this also holds true of Father's Day, which somewhat belatedly follows. The Biblical injunction, the commandment which reads, "Honour thy father and thy mother," stipulates no limited date.

There are, of course, some children, young and old, who hold to the commandment all the year round, not because of fear that their days in the land would be shortened, but because they love their parents as freely as they breathe. The gifts brought by them to their mothers on this May Sunday, whether made by small inept fingers or bought in a shop, according to the means of the giver, are merely symbols of something enduring. But gifts bought at the last minute, after the usual reminders, and hastily bestowed, are less than nothing.

I believe that a child who does not experience toward his parents the warmth of affection which ought to be a part of his subconscious self should not be blackmailed into giving presents. They would be as empty as a barren heart and as meaningless as mere scribbles on a pad. But I have no use either for the mothers who sit and sulk, or weep and whine, because they say they are forgotten on Mother's Day. It could be possible that they have not done anything to earn their children's love and respect.

Motherhood, biologists state, is an accident. It is not something for which a mother can or should take credit. Having a child, physically, is not remarkable. It is only in the rearing of the child that the quality of true motherhood asserts itself; it is in the love and security with which the child is surrounded; it is contained within the example set for the child, and in the lack of clinging, unjust demands and possessiveness. It lies in rearing your child to the very limit of your fallible human ability, in what you teach and exemplify, in the religious and moral training of the soul entrusted to you, and in your compassionate and understanding love.

There are in this world too many neglectful, indifferent, even unkind children, but there are also neglectful, indifferent, and unkind mothers. I cannot repeat too often that the simple process of bearing a child does not qualify a woman to the title of mother, save in the academic sense; nor does seeing that a child is clean, fed, clothed, sheltered, and educated constitute all obligations. Animals can manage most of these duties, except that animals don't have to buy raincoats, shoes, and other necessities.

There are numberless women in this world—and always have been—who have never borne children and who have through love, patience, understanding, and dedication earned the right to be honoured not just on Mother's Day, but always. These are the women who, though childless, have adopted children and reared them with devotion and sacrifice; these are the women who have neither borne nor adopted children but have given selflessly to innumerable children; these



are the teachers, nurses, doctors, scientists—the list is endless. They mother the world—and are entitled to its gratitude.

No thinking woman is ever, probably, as good a mother as she wants to be; the wisest make mistakes; the most serene are often agonized; the outwardly successful many times wonder where they have faltered or failed. Few of us know when it is time to hold fast—or let go; and all of us are vulnerable and mortal. Only a minority, thank God, are deliberately uncaring or bad mothers. Yet there are such, and there are legions who are halfway between good and bad. Most of us, I dare say, belong in that group.

Just as we agree that the spirit of the Christmas season should, ideally, be kept alive and vital all the year around, and that every day should start in a sense a new year, we would also agree that Mother's Day should be each day on the calendar. I believe that every day those women who are mothers, in any sense

of the word, should re-examine their attitudes toward their children, whether small or grown. For the true Mother's Day gift was, certainly, the child itself, a gift which premises much more than certain severe words indicate — duty, responsibility, obligation, accountability.

It is a curious thing, but a too unselfish mother sometimes rears a selfish child; and the selfish parent an unselfish child. The frustrated woman tries to live her daughter's life, or to shackle it, as the case may be. The relationship between mother and child admits of a thousand such variations.

I suggest, therefore, that when the second Sunday in May dawns in your home, Mother's Day have a significance far beyond the opening of a pretty package. It would be an excellent thing for each child to consider his relationship to his mother, and it is equally imperative that each mother consider her relationship to her child. Mother's Day in the sense of a day upon which you honour your mother, is really a day of reckoning, of balancing the budget. For honour, like love, does not come spontaneously. It has to be earned, usually the hard way. ★★

SIDELIGHTS ON THE INTERPRETATION OF A PROPHECY

(Concluded from page 15.)

The prophecy states: "And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." God suffered long with His people, and was reluctant to pass them by. For yet another three-and-a-half years the covenant of our Lord's sacrifice was proclaimed almost exclusively to the Hebrew nation until the Father's patience reached the limit of forbearance after the crucifixion of the Son of God, in the stoning of Stephen in A.D. 34. From this time forth the disciples and apostles were scattered everywhere preaching the Word, and the glorious news of God's salvation was proclaimed to the Gentile world. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word." Acts 8:4. See also Acts 13:46. As the temple veil was rent from top to bottom in the earthly tabernacle, so the Lord cried from the cross, "It is finished." No longer are the morning and evening sacrifices offered. No sons of Levi will ever again effectively serve at priestly altars. No animal sacrifices will ever again have any efficacy as a representation of the Son of God. No altar of burnt offering will ever again be acceptable before the Most High as a symbol of atonement for sin. Jesus, the Lamb of God, has come as the only sacrifice, the one offering, for the sin of the world. He has caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease by the divine offering of Himself as the only Saviour. May we accept Him.

Thus we conclude this message of the seventy weeks, for its marks the terminal period of God's special favour upon a national people. ★★

*The hopes
within the breast
of the
first mother
are still significant
to mothers TODAY*



ROBERT AYRES, ARTIST

The FIRST MOTHER

By Meryl
Tolenhofer

TENDERLY the mother bent over her slumbering babe, crooning softly to herself. Never had she imagined that she could experience such ecstasy of joy. The surge of maternal devotion made her at once languid and fiercely possessive. This was her child, but how could she have known he would be like this? So little, so helpless, a wee scrap of humanity, with such tiny finger-nails, a mere shadow of eye-brows, long curling eye-lashes and a compelling cry. Her heart ached with the burden of love.

Gently she caressed the infant. It was for this she had been created. Truly her husband had named her Eve, "the living one," because here she was "the mother of all living." This brought to her mind the golden days that had passed, that blissful time when they lived in Eden, the garden of the Lord. The loss was all her fault. Her fault.

When Eve awoke to life, her first awareness was of her Creator. Not only was she His handiwork, perfect in every sense of the word, flawless and mature, but she was His child. To her He had given life. Her first perception, then, was of a Being regarding her with love, joy and admiration. Infinitely tender, infinitely gracious,

He took her to Adam expectantly waiting in the home God had prepared for them.

A whole new world was theirs, yet with loving solicitude, with personal, paternal concern, God had planted a garden east of Eden for their exclusive delight. In the bright sunshine, amidst the surpassing loveliness of trees, ferns and flowers, purely simple yet brilliantly colourful, the first marriage ceremony was conducted. Innately good, essentially innocent, the exquisite couple were married by God Himself; their attendants the ministering angels, the witnesses the gentle submissive creatures of the forest.

So many things there were to learn, to experience, to enjoy, but above all the coming of the Sabbath with the setting sun. God had finished creating material things; there remained the spiritual. By ordaining the Sabbath rest God provided for man's physical needs and ensured his spiritual sustenance. "Then came still evening on" and

"With heavenly touch of instrumental sound,

In full harmonic number joined,"*

angelic voices united with those of Adam and Eve to glorify their Creator.

Presently the moon rose, round, full, yellow, bending low to the earth as if wishing to join the chorus of praise. Later in the night it seemed to recede, and with a rush the tremulous stars appeared, crowding the black dome of the sky.

The next day, the first entire day spent by the young couple, was indeed "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable" (Isaiah 58:13), for their Creator was the first teacher. To them were opened treasures of wisdom and knowledge, for they could learn the mysteries of godliness from Him who was the Source. With angels as their companions they rambled through the garden, continually finding beauties to wonder at, to admire. The intricate marvels of nature filled them with adoration for the One who had made these things for their pleasure.

When in the cool of the evening the Creator again met His happy, excited children, He bestowed His benediction upon this seventh day of the week, His Sabbath, setting the seal on His creative activity.

Filled with nostalgia, Eve thought of the days which followed (how many we do not know). They had been given the pleasant, exhilarating task of tending their garden. Not only were the days filled with physical activity; there was also the mental stimulus of learning the secrets of the various forms of natural life. Angels were their mentors. Perhaps they had not heard the exact words of Milton:

"That thou art happy, owe to God.

That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,

That is, to thy obedience,"*

but certainly they had been warned of the consequences of disobedience and the possibility of deception. Lucifer, the light-bearer, leader of the heavenly choirs, next in status to the very Godhead, had allowed feelings of pride, jealousy and ambition to smoulder until they finally overcame him. Rebelling against divine authority, by subtle deception gaining the allegiance of a large number of the heavenly host, at length becoming Satan the adversary, eventually he had to be cast out from the heavenly courts.

In the garden God had placed two trees. The fruit of one, if continually eaten, had the power of perpetuating life. Close by was the other, the fruit of which, harmless in itself, had been denied the pair as a test of their loyalty. It was only at this tree that the tempter could approach them.

Bitterly Eve recalled the occasion when she realized that, busily engaged in her pleasing duties, she had indeed wandered from Adam. Momentarily alarmed, she looked about her. The tree of life was close by, its silvery-gold fruit glinting in the sun. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil could not be far away. Yes, there it was. Curiously she regarded it. The fruit looked beautiful, a tantalizing breeze wafted an alluring perfume. Why had God forbidden them to eat it?

Venturing closer, she was utterly amazed to see a serpent ensconced in its topmost branches. At this

moment it was resting in the laden boughs apparently in the process of eating the delicious fruit.

"Does God's edict apply only to humans, and not to animals?" Eve wondered. As if echoing her thoughts came a musical voice: "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Genesis 3:1. Subtly ambiguous, the question confused the woman. What exactly had God meant? Was there any reason or justice in His command?

Instead of fleeing to her husband, she stayed to discuss the matter. They had been warned of a fallen angel, but had not all creatures, however wise or beautiful, been made subject to them? How was it that an animal could speak, anyway? It did not occur to her that the adversary was using the serpent as a medium to propagate his lies.

Disarmed by flattery, Eve was prepared to listen to the remarks which followed—statements designed to cast doubt on God's love and integrity. Was He not withholding the fruit because eating it would make them like God Himself?

"Ye shall not surely die," the serpent stated emphatically. Genesis 3:4.

Eve plucked the fruit, and realizing that the touch had not brought immediate death, she became bolder and ate it eagerly. She could not know that it was because her Creator, the second person of the Godhead, had already offered Himself as an atonement for her sin that judgment had not been immediately executed, but at that moment the death sentence was irrevocably pronounced. Beguiled as she was, the woman imagined she was entering a higher state of existence. Filling her hands with the fruit, she hastily sought Adam, beseeching him to enter this exalted condition.

Filled as she was with an unnatural excitement, the woman was hardly conscious of his reaction. Overwhelmed with dismay, his face darkened as he realized his dreadful choice. Should he disobey his Creator who had surrounded him with so many tokens of His loving kindness, who had promised him a future of increasing joy, knowledge and achievement? Or should he join the one he loved, who was his flesh, who had shared his experiences, contributed to his happiness?

The horror of mind mirrored in his face made Eve apprehensive. What would happen to her if Adam remained loyal to his God? To her relief he finally seized the fruit and quickly ate. The consequences of that act were something upon which the wife could not bear to dwell. At first both fancied they had entered a new sphere of existence. Gradually they realized the reverse was the case. Self-conscious now, they contrived garments of leaves in an inadequate attempt to hide their apparent guilt. When evening came, that erstwhile blessed hour when the Lord visited them, they heard His voice, the fond, proud voice of a Father calling His children, and fled conscience-stricken into the recesses of the garden.

It was the next episode which brought to Eve the reality of sin. At length, fearing to face the Lord, but still more fearing to evade Him, they had slunk into His presence.

"Love was not in their looks, either to God
Or to each other, but apparent guilt,
And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile."*

Adam was challenged with his sin. With anguish Eve recalled his reply. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Genesis 3:12. Adam was blaming her. Of course, it was true, but he had chosen his course of action because he dreaded to be separated from her. Was this the "knowledge of evil" from which God had wished to shield them? Would this be the pattern of their future lives? Indeed it would.

Eve was no less grieved to remember her own words on this occasion. When taxed with her fault she cast the blame on the serpent, and by implication on God Himself as Creator. Penitent now, she remembered, with thanksgiving, the Creator's words. There was no anger, recrimination or censure either to herself or her husband—merely a calm statement of consequence. The serpent was to bear the most obvious effect. It was to become the most loathsome of God's creatures. Though Eve had come to realize that the animal had merely been the medium for the spirit of evil, it would always remain an object lesson of the results of sin upon even an unwitting beholder.

It was the following promise which gladdened Eve's heart. Her seed was to conquer the power of evil, and would bring redemption to mankind despite continuing conflict. Adam had blamed her for his fault, but through her, he would gain salvation.

* * * *

"Now," she told herself, joyfully, "the promise has been fulfilled." With passionate tenderness she drew the babe to her breast. "You, little one, are to atone for your mother's sin. I have been given a man by the Lord, so I'll call you Cain."

Though she had been saddened by having to leave the Eden home, and awed by the scintillating flashes of the Shekinah glory which barred the way to the tree of life, that glory now burned in the mother's heart. She was aware of the tumult of pain that engulfed Adam when he had slain his first sacrifice. To point them to the promised Redeemer, to provide clothing for their nakedness, such an act was necessary. Exactly how this related to her son, the mother could not comprehend, but she was convinced that he was the promised seed.

Alas, poor Eve. She did not know the heart-break in store for her. Instead of being the world's redeemer, Cain would become the world's first murderer.

The woman had not realized that the One who had made the promise, would Himself fulfil it. Many years after Eve had been laid to rest, He was born as a babe

in Bethlehem to one of her descendants, and vanquished the enemy, to mediate as High Priest for mankind. Soon He will return to recreate His shattered earth and resurrect His faithful followers.

Then when Eden blooms on earth again, Eve and Adam will once more wander along the paths they knew, eat the fruit of the tree of life, join in angelic songs of praise with greater intensity, for they will once more enjoy communion with the One who is their Maker, Redeemer and Friend. ★★

* Quotations from "Paradise Lost," by J. Milton.

HEREIN IS A MARVELLOUS THING

[Concluded from page 13.]

In the first place, it is all too easy to over-value the conclusions of human research. This is especially true when these conclusions are enunciated by savants from every corner of the globe, buttressed by a mass of evidence too huge for any man to assess in a lifetime, and vitalized by reasoning that is just beyond the reach of our comprehension. Besides, there is something infinitely compelling about the fact that everyone accepts these conclusions. In the presence of such distinguished knowledge it hardly seems worth while to give an eye to the contrary evidence that lies in the hearts and minds of men.

In the second place, it is well to recall that history gives us little encouragement to place much confidence in even the most convincing theories of man. Every age has had its own theories of matter and time, of space, the universe, God and life itself. Many of them were universally accepted, too. But most of them were systematically dispersed by subsequent ages. And, for the most part, the changes were not incremental. They were revolutionary. Often a new era brought a gigantic change in perspective, or a new and wholly unexpected vista. Yet most ages believed that they were very close to ultimate truth.

Lastly, I want to point out that there is no reason to believe that our own age is different in this respect. I say this not so much *in spite of* the fabulous growth of knowledge, the miraculous feats of technology, the seemingly endless parade of discoveries. I say it *because of* these things. It is all happening too fast. There is altogether too much of it. We are much more likely to be on the edge of the most revolutionary new concepts than on the borders of ultimate truth.

In this age more than in any other the stature of man has grown and the stature of God has decreased in the minds of men. More and more are coming to think that they can do away with the very concepts of God and salvation. Before we join them, may it not be well to spare a glance for the man who was healed of his blindness, and listen for the scorn and exultation in his voice: "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes?" ★★



lines that linger

GOD'S LESSONS

And yet these days of dreariness are sent us from above;
They do not come in anger, but in faithfulness and love;
They come to teach us lessons which bright ones could
not yield,
And to leave us blest and thankful when their purpose
is fulfilled.

— Author unknown (Mrs. Hazel Williams).

I WILL FORGIVE

I will forgive, O Lord,
For I would be forgiven,
Forget the wounds and scars,
For I, too, must be shriven.
Deep in my heart, my God,
Implant Thy holy love;
Give me the peace and hope
That come from heaven above.

I will forgive, O Lord,
For I have also erred
In giving way to self
By harsh and haughty word.
So may I know the joy
And comfort of Thy grace.
I have forgiven; from me
Thou wilt not hide Thy face.

—May Cole Kuhn (Mrs. F. Ludwig).

IF I HAD KNOWN

*If I had known the trouble you were bearing,
What griefs were in the silence of your face,
I would have been more gentle and more caring,
I would have brought more warmth into the place—
If I had known!*

*If I had known what thoughts despairing drew you—
Why do we never try to understand?—
I would have lent a little friendship to you,
And slipped my hand into your lonely hand,
And made your stay more pleasant in the land—
If I had known!*

—Author unknown (Mrs. L. H. Smith).

IF THOU COULDEST KNOW

I think if thou couldst know,
O soul that will complain,
What lies concealed below
Our burden and our pain;
How just our anguish brings
Nearer those longed-for things
We seek for now in vain—
I think thou wouldst rejoice
And not complain.

I think if thou couldst see
With thy dim mortal sight,
How meanings, dark to thee,
Are shadows hiding light;
Truth's efforts crossed and vexed,
Life's purpose all perplexed,
If thou couldst see them right,
I think that they would seem all clear
And wise and bright.

And yet thou canst not know,
And yet thou canst not see;
Wisdom and sight are slow
In poor humanity.
If thou couldst trust, poor soul,
In Him who rules the whole,
Thou wouldst find peace and rest.
Wisdom and sight are well,
But trust is best.

—Adelaide A. Procter (Mrs. Valerie F. Brown)

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

CAN A MAN believe in God, worship Him, and still be lost? Is not the fact that we worship more important than the form our worship takes? Is a prescribed way of worship important? Is the day on which we worship important? Is God so really particular as to require minute obedience to His will? Will not God be pleased with me if I am nine-tenths obedient?

Man's supreme obligation is to worship His Creator. The first thing God did after creating man was to bless a certain day, setting it aside for the purpose of Creator-worship. (Revelation 14:7.) The last thing God does before destroying sinful man is to call him back to Creator-worship. (Revelation 14:9.) The last warning the Bible gives is a most terrible warning against a false way of worshipping. The only thing God is seeking in this world is for "true worshippers." (John 4:23.) "For the Father seeketh such," were Jesus' words. Man must worship. Worship is part of our being, like hunger and thirst. There is not a tribe on the earth without some form of worship. The most primitive aboriginals worship their spirit gods and grovel before their idols and totems. Today's sophisticated man worships at his self-constructed shrines: as one university student revealed so vividly when asked if he believed in God. "I have my own private gods," he replied.

It is evident that we cannot simply worship whatever god is convenient. The words, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:13), written by the finger of the Creator, and thundered by the voice of the Creator, still reverberate through the Creator's universe.

Worship is, literally, "worth-ship." What we count of greatest worth, that we worship. True worship is communion, adoration, submission of the created one to his Creator. What we worship we imitate, for that which absorbs our thinking must compel our actions and mould our lives. "They that make them are like unto them" (Psalm 115:8), is the God-given law on idol-worship.

The whole Biblical drama through the ages is the record of God seeking to attract true worshippers, and of man's constant efforts to sidestep some of God's requirements, thus developing false systems of worship. The constant oppression of the true worshippers by false worshippers then moulds the drama into a tragedy. It is not in any sense a controversy between those who worship God and those who do not. All men worship, whether they know it or not. A thousand forms of false worship present themselves to us, but there is only one way of true worship. The great master missionary, Paul, wrote of the Roman and Greek civilization of his day with vivid insight. They "worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." Romans 1:25, margin.

We must worship. We must worship God, the Creator God. We must worship the Creator "and Him only." Matthew 4:10. And we must also worship the Creator in His own prescribed way of worship. No

half-way, or three-quarter, or nine-tenths measure is acceptable to Him who is perfect in all His ways.

Behold again the opening scene of the Bible drama, which is an account of man's first way or method of worship. Both Cain and Abel worshipped the true God, for their very parents were God's original creations. It is likely that the angel's shining sword reflected its gleam from Abel's knife-blade as he sacrificed his lamb at Eden's gate. Abel worshipped God in God's own appointed way, and was blessed and accepted by God, but not so Cain. He, too, must worship. He could only worship God, but he would not worship in God's way. Sin lay at the door of Cain's heart, and soon his brother, the true worshipper, lay at the gate of Eden, his own blood mingled with the blood of his offering.



Cain was "more cursed than the earth" (Genesis 4:11 R.S.V.), simply because he was too proud to worship God after God's order. He could not see any reason for animal sacrifices. His own fruit was convenient. He failed to discern and practise the highest form of worship—implicit obedience to God's instruction.

Remember kingly Saul, Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, the great king and leader of Israel, God's true worshippers of old. He, too, worshipped the Creator with great zeal. There is no mention of unbelief or idolatry in his life. He banned the sorcerers and wizards that worshipped devils. "As the Lord liveth" (1 Samuel 28:10), was his oath. Saul's apparent zeal for the worship of the true God is revealed as he offers a sacrifice to God at Gilgal (1 Samuel 13:9) and as he brings back the best of the Amalekites' sheep and cattle "to sacrifice unto the Lord." 1 Samuel 15:21. Apparent, because God had expressly forbidden both. "What hast thou done? . . . Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 13:11; 15:22), was God's rebuke, and Saul was rejected of God because he would not worship in God's way. He, too, failed to see that implicit obedience and true worship are blended as one.

Listen again as the Saviour of men, the Discerner of all hearts, speaks to our generation of worshippers just before His return to judgment. "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of

My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man." Matthew 7:21-24. Is not this a vivid picture of you and me and the professed Christians of our age? Does it not portray an



age filled with churches and replete with worshippers, yet beset with such immorality and violence that world authorities fear for the survival of civilization, yea, for the very existence of the human race? In our so-called Christian nation, man seems bent on destroying himself with an avalanche of crime and corruption, licentiousness and lust. Scholarly unbelief and educated infidelity use the Christian pulpit as their sounding board. Only this age could have produced a best-seller with the title, *"How To Be a Bishop Without Being Religious."*

We, too, must worship. Like Cain, like King Saul, like the Pharisees of Christ's day, we may be very zealous in our worship of the true God. We may believe fervently in Christ's power to save. We may preach in His Name, and do "wonderful works" of charity. Such may be our apparent faith and earnest work that miracles will be wrought and the very devils put to flight. *And yet still we may hear those fearful words, "Depart from Me ye that work iniquity."* Many, said Jesus, will present this defence "in that day," but to no avail. The tragedy of worshippers who will not worship in Christ's way! The strange paradox of those who bow before the all-wise Creator, yet will not obey His word. Can we be so blind as to pray repeatedly those sacred words, "Thy will be done on earth," and not realize that we are praying for ourselves that we

may be submissive to the will of God on earth? How earnestly and prayerfully we should search the Scriptures to find God's will for ourselves!

The final religious conflict on this earth will centre around this issue of true and false worship. It will not be a conflict between religion and atheism. No one need be deceived. God's final call of mercy to sinful men, a call to worship the Creator in the Creator's way, makes this clear. Read Revelation 14 and 15. Hear the glorious harmonies of the final triumphant song of the victorious throng in heaven. It is a shout of triumph over those who would force them into a false way of worship.

Listen to the voices of the angels of God as they wing their way over the earth and sound out God's last appeal to every man before judgment day. "Worship Him that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of water. . . . If any man worship the beast and his image . . . the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God." Revelation 14:7-10. This, the most awful warning ever given in the Bible, is clearly a warning against false worship, and a mighty call to the true worship of the Creator in His way. It is a call to implicit obedience. Its very words are quoted from God's commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. Hear God speak from Sinai, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God . . . for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." Exodus 20:10, 11. Hear the judgment angel echo it—"Worship Him that made heaven and earth and the sea."

Just as a bitter storm broke over the true worshippers of old, so the storm-clouds are gathering for earth's final turmoil. Just as surely as Cain slew Abel, and as Saul pursued righteous David, yea, even as the false-worshipping Pharisees slew their Messiah, so will the false worshippers turn upon the true worshippers in one last savage fury that will climax earth's history and bring in Jesus' everlasting reign of truth and true worship.

Even now the clouds are racing overhead. Perhaps sooner than we think, the age-old prophecy of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation will be written again—not on India paper nor with printers' ink, but on legal scrolls in parliament houses and senate chambers, in the constitutions of mighty nations and the sacred canons of great churches. It will be enacted in the great halls of justice, in the popular courts, on the television screens and blazoned across the press boards. The full story will never be written in the historical tomes of this world, for history will end; His story will begin. Christ will return to deliver His oppressed children.

Will you worship God—the Creator of heaven and earth and the sea? Will you worship Him in His way, on His day blessed and sanctified from His creation to His kingdom? Upon your answer to this question—your response to God's last appeal—your eternity may depend.

★★



ASK... *Desmond Hills*

YOUNG PEOPLE'S QUESTIONS ANSWERED

SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

Matthew 24:29 states: "The sun [shall] be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven." Can you tell me when these signs of the second advent will take place?

The opening phrase of the verse that you have quoted gives us a clue as to when this prophecy of the signs in the sun, moon and stars would be fulfilled. Matthew says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun . . ." The gospel writer was referring to the 1260 days (years) of papal persecution, terminating in 1798. The signs of verse 29 are thus closely related in point of time to the time of persecution or "the tribulation of those days." This 1260 time period is also mentioned several times in the books of Daniel and Revelation.

History records the fact that the signs in the heavens referred to by Matthew were given a primary fulfilment in the situations listed below:

—May 19, 1780, is known as the great dark day when in north-east America the sun was completely veiled during daylight hours.

—On the night of May 19, 1780, the light of the moon was veiled in the same area.

—The greatest meteoric shower in all history occurred on November 13, 1833, also in areas of North America.

These celestial phenomena precisely fulfil the predictions of Jesus, because they came at the time specified, and no other phenomena of the past measure up to the specifications of the prophecy.

FRIENDLESS

My problem is that I do not have any friends. My mother is worried about it, too, and suggested that I write to you. Although I try to make friends with the girls at work, it seems that I am just not the type that attracts friends.

There is no need for you to be lonely, for all of us can attract friends. There are three possible solutions to your problem. You need to try harder; you need to try less; or you need to try another way. Yes, in this matter of making friends it is possible to try too hard, and from what you have told me about yourself and your family, it seems that this might be your problem. Like all good mothers, your mother

is anxious for your welfare and it could be that she has over emphasized this question of having friends.

All you have to do to have friends is to be a friend. This basic rule for friendship was verified by the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. While on earth, Jesus went out of His way to be friendly to other people. He seemed to specialize in taking an interest in those who were downcast, underprivileged and sick. Here is a cue for you and for me, that rather than specialize in trying to make friends with those who have influence and are "up in society" we can draw close to those who can really benefit from our association with them.

It would be well for us to look closely into our lives and to see what kind of a friend we are. If we want friends who are sincere, honest, loyal, trustworthy and good company, then this is the kind of person that we need to be. If we put to work all the ingredients for friendship, we will have friends. There is no question but that the surest way to be loved is to love, and that when we give, we receive. The golden rule really works—it is the law of attraction.

DRUGS

During the past few months I have read a lot in the newspapers concerning the effects of the new drugs that young people are taking. Apparently these drugs give those who take them a real kick, and although I am not at all interested in having it on, I am wondering what is wrong with these drugs. I presume that they make those who take them a bit doxy afterwards, but after all, wouldn't it wear off after a good sleep?

The drugs that are currently being used by groups of young people such as the hippies are in a different category entirely to the drugs that are being used for medication. Perhaps I can best show you the seriousness of these psychedelic drugs by quoting the statements of some doctors as they appear in an international journal for better living, "Listen." "Under the influence of psychedelic drugs, as many as 8 per cent become suicidal or even homicidal." According to Dr. Lindsay R. Curtis, the forerunner of these drugs, LSD, "is so dangerous that it can cause permanent insanity, so unpredictable that doctors fear to experiment with it, so potent that a tiny speck can give a one-way ticket down the road—perhaps to suicide.

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.

"LSD and other related drugs create a state that enables the young person to avoid dealing with feelings and cause a reduction in responsibility and judgment. Unfortunately, those who continue to use them become increasingly withdrawn from society."

Here is a note from a former hippie, which reveals the depths of despair that result from drug-taking.

"I am a young woman of twenty years of age, but for the past year and a half I have been wandering down the nightmare alleys of the junkies. I want to quit taking dope; and I try, but I can't."

"Gaul didn't cure me. Nor did hospitalization help me for long."

"The doctor told my family it would have been better, and indeed kinder, if the person who first got me hooked on dope had taken a gun and blown my brains out. I wish to God she had."

The doctor who has compiled some of the facts in this answer on DMT, STP and LSD states: "Psychodelics are not kid stuff. They are serious business. They can be dead serious."—Dr. Lindsay R. Curtis, "Listen," February, 1968.

BORED

Although I am only a teenager, I am certainly bored with life. I just hate going to work and I don't find any satisfaction in moping around home. It's no wonder that kids like me join gangs and live it up. Unless I find something more interesting to do than I am doing at the present, that's what I will be doing.

The fact that you have been able to satisfactorily analyse your problem means that you are half-way towards solving it. Apparently there are strong reasons why you have not joined the masses who live it up. Just as in the past these factors enabled you to make the right decision, so with little adjustment of your programme you can find the full satisfaction that life offers.

From the little that you have told me concerning your everyday living, it would seem to me that you would need to find other employment. Assuming that you have endeavoured to take an interest in your work, and yet fail to find a liking for it, I suggest that you find another job. Up to forty hours per week are spent at work, so it is certainly essential to do something that you enjoy. It could be that it would pay you to visit a vocational guidance centre and have an aptitude test to find out which profession or trade you are best suited for. If there is a particular line of work which requires training or further education, I suggest that you take the time to qualify. The mere fact of working towards a goal will help you to find satisfaction in life.

As far as your spare time is concerned, it would be well for you to settle on some hobby that you can do at home. No doubt there are some things that you liked doing in your boyhood days, and perhaps these can be developed on an adult level at the present time. Then, too, I suggest that you connect with some youth group that has wholesome outdoor activities such as bush walking, athletics, camping, etc. Remember that "variety is the spice of life." If you take up more than one hobby, outdoor activity, or sport, you will find many avenues leading to renewed interest in life. If there are many interests to occupy your spare hours, you do not give boredom a chance!

There is no question that religion gives stability, security and hope for the future. If you take time to read your Bible daily and to worship each week, you will find that this can show you the way to the kind of life that you yearn for. As one Christian writer in commenting on the place of religion in life has put it, "No recipe for contentment can be complete without this main ingredient."

YOUTH Answers

Each month we address one of the questions to a young person and ask him or her to send us their answer. This month we have asked Philip Ward to answer the following question:

SIGNS OF THE TIMES May 1, 1968

Please tell me how it is possible to talk to workmates about Christianity. They all seem to be preoccupied in having a good time and don't seem interested in discussions about religion. Where do we start when we do get an opportunity to share the Bible with our friends and workmates? Somehow I seem to be afraid to talk to others about my faith. I do believe the Bible and find it wonderful to read. How can I share its good news with others.

"Stage fright" is something that most people wrestle with when wanting to witness for God. But the more we believe that God is with us, the less afraid we will be. God has given us this promise, "Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you." Jeremiah 1:8, R.S.V.

If a Christian is working for God, God is working for that Christian. Whenever God wants you to witness to a person, the Holy Spirit will have already been working on that person's heart to prepare the way for you. Just as "faith without works is dead" (James 2:20), so works without faith is dead also. It is important to believe that, although you cannot see Him, God is working with you.

Many people wrongly feel that when they become a Christian they must give up their friends outside the church. Actually you should hunt up more friends outside the church. True friendship is God inspired. See 1 John 4:7. To win your workmates, be friends with them. For forty hours each week your workmates can see what your religion means to you. Always be happy and helpful. Do your work well and hard. Since the Christian life is a far happier one—if we have confidence in Christ—your workmates should start to secretly envy your joy. You should prayerfully work out a plan to present some Bible truths to them.

I suggest you become very familiar with the second chapter of the Book of Daniel. It is a dream about a statue and a stone. The statue represents the successive world empires from Babylon through Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome to today, when no one nation rules over all the world.

The stone represents the second coming of Jesus. Practise giving this Bible study to one of your Christian friends—then pray that God will give you an opening to present it to one of your workmates.



PHILIP WARD comes from Ryde, N.S.W. He attended Ryde high school and from there began the mechanical engineering course at Sydney Technical College, but left after two years to take up studies at Avondale College. At twenty-one he is working on a Bachelor of Arts degree in theology, preparing to enter the Christian ministry. His interests have always been in outdoor and youth activities, he having been a keen scout in his day.

For the next few days—or weeks—try to pull the conversation around to the thoughts of the future, but do not be surprised if God finds another way for you to present your message. Try to give the Bible study to one person only—again God may have different plans. Have your friend read the actual texts from the Bible himself. Once he has had his first taste of what the Bible has to say, your workmate will probably be very interested—far more than you would have guessed.

For succeeding studies you could write out the questions and Bible references from the "Seven Facts" page of the "Signs of the Times," and together look up the texts in the Bible to find the answers. But the most important thing, once your workmate is interested, is to keep him reading the Bible.

There is great joy in serving God; I would recommend it to all, "Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires: God will satisfy them fully." Matthew 5:6, Today's English Version.

Page Twenty-five

A TRANSLATION WITH A DATE LABEL

★

W. Austin Townend

IF THE WORLD as we now know it lasts another thirty-two years, that is, to the opening of the twenty-first century, men will, I believe, still appreciate the translation of Scripture which was made for the twentieth century — *"The Twentieth Century New Testament."*

Undertaken as "a labour of love" by a group of translators with a sense of mission, this version could well have had written across its front cover "mission accomplished."

These translators had what might be termed "an up-to-date awareness" of contemporary needs. Note how they themselves expressed the idea. "Though in the course of the last hundred years the Bible has been translated into the vernacular of most countries, the language of our Bible remains the English of three hundred years ago."

"This translation of the New Testament is an endeavour to do for the English nation what has been done already for the people of almost all other countries—to enable Englishmen to read the most important part of their Bible in that form of their own language which they themselves use."

First appearing in three parts issued between 1898 and 1901, the one volume edition made its debut around 1904, the publishers of my copy being Horace Marshall and Son, London, and the Fleming H. Revell Company of New York.

Two particularly interesting items appear in the preface. One points out that between the time of the publication of the Authorized Version, which is often called the King James, and this Twentieth Century translation "more than 1,500 manuscripts of the whole or of parts of the New Testament have been discovered or have become accessible." The other point is that this new (in the early 1900s) work is "neither a revision nor a paraphrase" but a translation in which "every word has been carefully weighed."

In this twentieth century we are reading and hearing much about the highly probable "end of the world" in our times. Readers will no doubt therefore appreciate the way that this translation expresses some of the Scriptures' predictions relating to this climactic event.

Doubts, for instance, are dissipated by the recorded words of Jesus about "That Day" when He declares

"come it will upon all who are living on the face of the whole earth. Be on the watch at all times." Luke 21:34, 35.

Naturally, some of the things to "be on the watch at all times" about would be the signs or indications of the coming of "That Day."

Anyone looking at the world scene today and then picking up this translation must surely be impressed while reading passages such as, "Be sure of this, that in the last days difficult times will come. Men will be selfish, mercenary, boastful, haughty, and blasphemous; disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, impure, incapable of affection, merciless, slanderous, wanting in self-control, brutal, careless of the right, treacherous, reckless, and puffed up with pride; they will love pleasure more than they love God; and while they retain the outward form of religion, they will not allow it to influence them." 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Another thumb-nail prophetic sketch of our times appears in Luke 21:26: "Men's hearts will fail them through dread of what is coming upon the world." And yet another shows up in James 5:1-4: "Listen to me, you rich men, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches have wasted away, and your clothes have become moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are rusted; and the rust on them shall be evidence against you, and shall eat into your very flesh. It was fire, so to speak, that you stored up for yourselves in these last days. I tell you, the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you have been fraudulently keeping back, are crying out against you, and the outcries of your reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts! You have lived on earth a life of extravagance and luxury; you have indulged your fancies in a time of bloodshed."

Courage for the coming climax is available as promises such as 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Peter 5:7 are claimed and used: "The Lord is not slow to fulfil His promise, as some count slowness; but He is forbearing with you, as it is not His will that any of you should perish, but that all should be brought to repentance." "Laying all your anxieties upon Him, for He makes you His care."

Clearly lining up the end of the world with the second coming of Christ, the Bible also leaves no doubts



in the minds of its readers regarding just *how* the second coming of Christ will take place. The translation under review gives us clarity on the matter in verses such as Matthew 24:26, 27 and Acts 1:9-11. We now quote: "Therefore, if people say to you 'He is in the Wilderness,' do not go out there; or 'He is in an inner room,' do not believe it; for, just as lightning will start from the east and flash across to the west, so will it be with the coming of the Son of Man." "No sooner had Jesus said this than He was caught up before their eyes, and a cloud received Him from their sight. While they were still gazing up into the heavens, as He went, suddenly two men, clothed in white, stood beside them, and said: 'Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the heavens? This very Jesus, who has been taken from you into the heavens, will come in the very way in which you have seen Him go into the heavens.'"

Further declaration on the manner of the second coming of Christ stands out in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18: "This we tell you on the authority of the Lord—that those of us who are still living at the coming of the Lord will not anticipate those who have passed to their rest. For, with a loud summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the trumpet-call of God, the Lord Himself will come down from Heaven. Then those who died in union with Christ shall rise first; and afterwards we who are still living shall be caught up in the clouds, with them, to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall be for ever with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with what I have told you."

Because of a built-in human dissatisfaction with what we now have and what we are now experiencing, all of us, to some degree, keep on hoping for something better. To the genuine Christian this hope is, of course, climaxed in the second coming of Christ which will certainly usher in everything better—for eternity.

But even Christians cannot successfully by-pass certain things as they will be at the end of the world as we now know it. The scene comes to us through the translators in these words: "The Day of the Lord will come like a thief; and on that day the heavens will pass away with a crash, the elements will be burnt up and dissolved, and the earth and all that is in it will be disclosed." 2 Peter 3:10.

Wise indeed are the suggestions which follow: "Now, since all these things are in the process of dissolution, think what you yourselves ought to be—what holy and pious lives you ought to lead, while you await and hasten the coming of the Day of God."

Yes, as one reads on in "The Twentieth Century New Testament" one feels that the hope of the translators that "the New Testament may become a living reality to many" is indeed a hope that has beautifully blossomed in the pages of their work, which they record was carried out for "the goodwill of all English-speaking people, and to the blessing of Almighty God." ★★

AND THE VIET CONG BENEATH

(Concluded from page 5)

personality may at any moment erupt into violent, disastrous activity to satisfy the seething unrest within.

But youth are not the only ones affected. We said that Ngoc Diem was like us all. Adults, too, are susceptible to insecurity. Their reasons might be similar to those of youth—social and emotional—or there may be other causes such as the impending conflicts around them, nuclear war, etc. Such things are a possible reality, not a dream or a neurosis.

So behind the synthetic peace of a myriad faces are tunnels and traps that threaten to undo the personalities. "An awful desperation eats into the heart of plain men. It is compounded of despair and cynicism. Men may not use words, but the language of their fear-filled hearts is borrowed from the old paganism, 'Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.'"—W. S. Sangster, "Let Me Commend," page 9.

There is a saying that you cannot help a person who doesn't see his need. It is also true that you cannot help a person who sees his need but still does not want to be helped. There is a solution to insecurity and it rests in trusting something or someone who can offer assurance and security and who is powerful enough to guarantee that security. The idea of God is anathema to some people, mainly because, in the words of Soren Kierkegaard, "It is so hard to believe because it is so hard to obey." The idea of God, unfortunately, carries with it more than just fringe benefits. It calls for allegiance. However, you may want to doubt His existence and depreciate His relevance, but you cannot avoid the usefulness of the concept of God.

Committal to a belief in God can bring peace and assurance and security because it presupposes that He is above all and can, in the ultimate, control all, however ominous it might appear to you. For a nation, that, like America, trusts largely in ideas that work, herein lies a very pragmatic philosophy. A belief that assures that whether there be fears and insecurities without, you are impregnable within, for He cares about and for you, so who can cause you to fear?

David L. Stokes

• "An old Welshwoman said that Christ was Welsh, and an Englishman replied, 'No, He was a Jew.' She declared that she knew that He was Welsh, because He spoke so that she could understand Him."

—D. L. Moody.

• "There are too many who find, or think they find, a cheap ticket to scholarship in parading their doubts. They would discover that their doubts would die for want of fresh air if only they would keep their mouths shut."

—Alexander Fraser.



A WORD TO REMEMBER

"Mother"

By ROY C. NADEN

THE VIETNAM conflict drags on, its ravages confronting us every day through public media. *Scarred* cities dot the entire Vietnam peninsula. *Scarred* soldiers daily return from the battlefields. But worse still, *scarred minds* will bring tragedy into the lives of men, women and children for decades to come. The confusion and loss of war itself is catastrophic enough, but the after-effects are often equally iniquitous, particularly in a country divided against itself.

This was the case at the end of the American Civil War as the reunited states began to rebuild an economy and bury bitter memories. For many months whole cities and towns had been divided in their loyalties. When the men returned to live as neighbours again, bitterness continued to mar the hard-earned peace.

A courageous woman of this critical period of American history was Anna Reeves Jarvis. She determined to stamp out the rancour that spread its malevolent mantle over the town. She began by organizing the mothers into planning a Friendship Day. It was unusually successful. Both union and confederate veterans received invitations. Many accepted. One person who was present said, "It was an inspiring sight to see men in grey shake hands with men in blue, and to hear them say, 'God bless you, neighbour, let's be friends again.'" Yet this simple meeting was destined to have international repercussions. Unknowingly, Anna

Jarvis had laid the foundation for the annual celebration of Mother's Day. Some forty years later, on May 10, 1908, Anna's daughter organized the first official Mother's Day ceremony in memory of her own mother. It was held at St. Andrew's Methodist church, Grafton, West Virginia. The preacher's text was, "Behold, thy mother." And this year, 1968, is the sixtieth anniversary of that event.

Mother's Day always brings a flood of memories cascading through the mind; memories of the sweetest mother in all the world to us. For those in adult life, this possibly means a grey-haired or white-haired mother, one who through the years gave and spent and never withheld. Although a mountain of sickly-sweet sentimentalism is fostered by some business interests at this time of the year, this need not—unless, of course, we let it—disrupt an occasion of delightful reminiscing about, and giving honour to, our own mothers.

The Bible says, "Can a woman forget her . . . child?" Isaiah 49:15. It is so unlikely that if among the millions of annual births it happens but once, the world looks askance. A mother's love is pure love. Thank God for godly mothers! May they find great pleasure in the love and accomplishments of their sons and daughters today.

Yet we ought not to forget the multitude of *young* mothers who, right now, find themselves captive to boisterous, healthy, happy youngsters. Their work has yet to be accomplished; it has scarcely begun. They are involved in the greatest work committed to mortals—the training of young lives. The future of our nation, to a large degree, lies in their hands. How can mothers—and fathers for that matter—measure up to such tremendous responsibility? I believe there are two important facets to the solution.

Firstly, *by keeping the home together*. Statistics each year reveal the simple fact that our homes are breaking up at an alarming rate, and frequently at the very time when young children stand at the beginning of life, longing to be loved, trained and educated. In 1965 in Australia, there were 93,000 marriages and 8,500 divorces. That is a divorce for every eleven marriages. Each year some 11,000 Australian children find their parents are no longer living together; the parental homes irrevocably split assunder.

Then, too, we need to *keep spiritual things a part of everyday living*. This turns a home into a little acre of heaven. Fathers and mothers are involved in one of the most demanding and important works committed to humans. God's guidance and blessing is essential.

And in the month of Mother's Day, we would wish for every mother the Bible's crowning tribute: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed." Proverbs 31:28. May this be their happy and joyful experience.

JOE WENT DOWN to the creek and came home with his pockets full of round, smooth stones. Each night after school he and the boys practised stone throwing. They set targets in a row or threw them in the air and tried to hit them before they fell down. It was great fun, and some of the boys were excellent shots and could hit objects quite a long distance away.

"I'm not happy about you throwing stones," Mother said one day. "I'm afraid someone might get hurt or you might be tempted to aim at something you shouldn't."

"I'll be careful, Mum, and aim only at proper targets," Joe assured her.

One evening as he was coming home he saw a bird land on the top of a tall tree a little distance away.

"I wonder if I could hit that bird," he said to himself. He took a stone from his pocket and threw it. Joe really did not expect to hit the bird, and was surprised when it fell from the tree. Feeling a bit ashamed he ran to the tree and found the bird on the ground. He picked it up, hoping it was only stunned, but found that it was dead.

"I'll throw it away and no one will know," he thought. But he noticed a ring on its leg. "Perhaps I ought to take it home and show Mum," he said to himself.

When Mother saw the bird she looked sad. "Joe, this is a racing pigeon," she told him. "I'm sure its owner will be upset at losing his bird."

"I didn't mean to hurt it. I didn't imagine I could send a stone so far. I never stopped to think. I threw it before I knew," Joe explained.

"Well, it's too late to undo the damage, and from now on I forbid you to throw stones at all," Joe felt miserable, and was about to go outside when Mother called him back. "I'll tell you a story, Joe, that shows how much better it is to be kind to birds and animals than to be thoughtless and cruel."

"Years ago," she began, "in a little village in Norway, the long, cold, hard winter was almost at an end, and the people were watching for the return of the storks that had flown away to a warmer climate during the winter. They knew that as soon as the storks came, spring was on the way, and life would be much more pleasant for everyone."

"Conrad Jonessen lived with his mother in a little house in the village, and he was the first person to see the storks far up in the sky, winging their way back to the town. He watched them as they settled in dozens all over the village. When they returned year after year they nearly always went to the place where they had nested before. No bird had ever made a nest on his house, but as he watched, one came and settled on the roof. It seemed to him what it saw, because presently it began bringing the first sticks for its nest. Conrad fed the stork each day and it soon became very friendly. Each year it returned and became tamer."

"In time Conrad grew up and went to sea. Unfortunately, his ship was captured by pirates, and the men on board were sold as slaves in a strange land. For three long years Conrad lived the miserable life of a slave. He had to work from daylight to dark. He never had enough to eat and he was beaten and treated cruelly. It seemed that there was no escape from his wretchedness, and sometimes he felt it would be better for him if he were dead."

"One day as he was returning from the fields to his hut he saw a stork flying northward and immediately thought of his mother and home and wished he had wings so that he could fly away. He pretended he was a boy again and that the bird was his own special stork, and he lifted his head and sent forth the shrill whistle that his stork used to know so well."

To his surprise the bird stopped in its flight and came swiftly to him. He could scarcely believe it, but it was his stork. The bird and Conrad were overjoyed to see each other again. He fed it and petted it and it seemed content to rest for a few days before continuing its journey. But Conrad knew that before long it would leave him. Then he had a wonderful idea. He would write a message to his mother and bind it firmly to the stork's leg. He did so, and next morning when he got up the bird was gone."



Conrad's Stork

A Story for the Children by
MYRTLE O'HARA

"It soon arrived at his mother's house. She was waiting for it, as it reminded her of Conrad, whom she thought was dead. She had no doubt that his boat had gone to the bottom of the sea and he was drowned. She noticed that the stork was picking at something on its leg, so hurriedly got it some food and then caught it. When she unrolled the paper and saw Conrad's writing her heart beat fast. She read the note over and over. It seemed too good to be true that he and his shipmates were still alive. Then she ran from house to house in the village and told the people the good news. They wasted no time in sending some men to the place where the seamen were held captive, and in time they were able to arrange for their release. Soon they were all home again, and there was tremendous rejoicing in that little village."

"As time went on, Conrad became a rich man and did much to help his people. One day someone suggested that they make the stork the emblem of their town and everyone thought that was a fine idea. So that is how tourists and visitors to that place see figures of storks everywhere. They are carved from wood, made in silver and all kinds of materials, and people take them away as souvenirs. When they ask about them they are told the story of Conrad Jonessen and his stork."

"That was an interesting story, Mum," Joe said.

"I think," Mother continued, "that boys in Conrad's time weren't much different from boys today. Supposing a boy had seen his stork and thought: I wonder if I could hit that bird, and had done what you did today, what a dreadful thing it would have been! In the world war, Joe, pigeons used to carry messages from one part of the battlefield to another, and they probably helped to save the lives of many soldiers. It is cruel and foolish to take the life of creatures. It is much better to make friends with them and to study their habits. There is more pleasure in that than in killing them."

"I wish this poor little pigeon could come alive again," Joe said sorrowfully. "Anyway, I'll never kill a bird again, and I'll tell the story about the stork to the boys so that they won't be tempted to kill birds either."

TRILOGY

By ROBERT H. PARR

IT IS LITTLE SHORT OF REMARKABLE how, out of the blue, one will hear a clutch of stories, all unrelated but with a common denominator, and all within a matter of hours. Such was my experience only this week, and so strongly did they impress me that I am here retailing them to you.

THE FIRST comes from a Mrs. Fred W. Robinson—her real name—who is unknown to me personally but that is of little consequence. Now Mrs. Robinson has twin sons, Murray and Mike. Murray is effervescent and outward-going, apparently; Mike is quiet, reserved and inclined to be shy.

One afternoon the boys came home bubbling about a new idea that their teacher had introduced. This obviously wise lady had decreed that each boy should select a little girl in the class and invite her to be his lunch partner so that they could learn the art of social conversation.

Murray, a lad who has had an eye for feminine pulchritude ever since his kindergarten days, his mother avers, was excited about the whole prospect, being especially happy about the little girl whom he had secured for his partner. "And is she pretty?" Mrs. Robinson asked. "Just beautiful," replied Murray, and you could hear the italics in his voice.

Mike, however, said nothing. He was not so sophisticated and smooth in this aspect of life as his twin. So his mother, noting his reserve, turned to him and said, "And how about you, darling? Did you invite a little girl, too?"

"Oh, yes," he said, noncommittally.

"And is she pretty, too?"

"Well, no—not so pretty," Mike replied quietly. Then, opening up somewhat he added, "In fact, she is not pretty at all. I guess she is prob'ly the unprettiest girl in the whole school."

Mrs. Robinson was somewhat puzzled at that, as you may well imagine. So she asked, "Well, how did you come to invite that little girl, dear?"

Mike's reply heralds the fact that he will grow into a gentle and thoughtful man. "Because," he answered simply, "I was afraid that if I didn't invite her, maybe nobody would."

THE SECOND STORY comes from a nurse who was in a florist's shop ordering some flowers for Easter when a small boy entered the shop. He examined the florist's extensive stock carefully and took a long time to make up his mind. Finally he pointed to the long-stemmed red roses and asked, "How much are those?"

The florist broke the news to him as gently as possible, giving him the price per dozen.

Silence. Then, "How much is one?"

They were choice blooms and brought from afar. "Well," said the man behind the counter, "one would cost twenty-five cents."

The little fellow thought for a moment, then said, "That's all the money I have. May I have one please?"

Curiosity overwhelmed the friendly florist, and he could not but ask, "What are you going to do with the rose, son?"

"It's for my mother," the boy answered. "I'm having my tonsils out tomorrow and I know she'll worry, so I'm going to leave this rose in her bedroom for her."

THE THIRD PART of this trilogy also concerns a boy, but this time the other participant of the story is his father. It so happened that, in a certain country area, a certain farmer's corn crop was not what it should have been and in fact, for one reason or another, it was virtually a total failure. The farmer, therefore, decided that he would "borrow" a few bushels from his neighbour whose crop was standing high, wide and handsome. Selecting, therefore, a dark night, the man and his eight-year-old son, carrying several bushel baskets between them, stealthily approached the field of standing corn. When they reached the fence which separated the two farms, the man looked furtively to the right, then to the left; then he peered ahead and finally took a last long look behind him.

Nothing stirred. Not a sound other than the chirruping of the crickets broke the stillness of the night. But then the eight-year-old spoke. "Daddy," he said, "you didn't look up."



THE STORIES, I said, have a common denominator, in that they all throw light on and add new significance to those words which Jesus uttered when He walked among men: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3.

REX D. EDWARDS gives . . .

Seven Facts About the Manner of Christ's Return

The Apostles' Creed enunciates:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty . . . and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from hence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." Thus for 1,800 years Christians of all lands have expressed their hope in the second coming. But how will He come?

1. He will come **PERSONALLY**. Acts 1:9-11. "This same Jesus."

The expression "this same Jesus" contains demonstrative words stressing that He who returns will be the actual Jesus who ascended—in other words, "Jesus HIMSELF shall come."

"I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:3. His return will not be an impersonal spiritual appearance, but open and public. The Lord will appear when He comes. (Hebrews 9:28; Titus 2:13.)

2. He will come **VISIBLY**. Revelation 1:7. "Every eye shall see."

Carefully compare the manner of Christ's return in these two passages:

Matthew 24:30, 31

"They shall see the Son of man coming."

"His angels with a great sound."

"A great sound of a trumpet."

"They shall gather together His elect."

"In the clouds of heaven."

1 Thessalonians 4: 15-18.

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven."

"With the voice of the Archangel."

"With the trump of God."

"Caught up together with them."

"In the clouds, to meet the Lord."

Observe that Matthew teaches a splendid, outward, public coming and Paul in Thessalonians employs exactly the same phrases and symbols.

3. He will come **BRILLIANTLY**. Matthew 24:27. "As lightning."

What a direct contrast with His first advent! Certainly no hint here of a secretive and private appearance.

4. He will come **AUDIBLY**. Matthew 24:31. "Sound of a trumpet."

The second advent is associated with the "noisiest" text of the Bible—1 Thessalonians 4:16. Observe the three sounds.

5. He will come **GLORIOUSLY**. Luke 9:26. "Of the holy angels."

Born in obscurity, He now comes in triple glory. (Matthew 25:31.) A spectacular display of celestial pageantry without parallel. Notice the effect of the presence of an angel at the resurrection. (Matthew 28:2-4.) In view of the number of angels (Revelation 5:11; Hebrews 12:22), who can doubt the devastating effect the second advent will have upon the unsaved!

6. He will come **POWERFULLY**. Revelation 6:14-17. "Every mountain and island were moved." Earthquakes often accompanied manifestations of the divine presence. (Exodus 19:18; Matthew 27:51.)

7. He will come **UNEXPECTEDLY**. Matthew 24:42, 44. "Ye know not what hour." To the unprepared His coming will be as "a thief in the night." 1 Thessalonians 5:2. This stresses the uncertainty of Christ's return rather than suggests its being a secretive event. He will come "as a thief"—quietly, swiftly, suddenly.

Dr. R. A. Torrey testifies to the immediate practical effect of these truths: "When I got hold of the truth and the truth got hold of me of a personal, visible, glorious, imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ, it lifted me above the world and its ambitions."

HEALTH OUR DUTY

I have so many duties that my health is imperilled. What should I do?
D.J.

You should work according to the principle of priorities, remembering that health is second only to character in the Christian hierarchy of values. When two duties conflict, one ceases to be a duty. Paul's admonition to the Philippian gaoler still applies: "Do thyself no harm." Acts 16:28. Without good health it is impossible to fulfil our obligations to God, to our fellow men, or to ourselves. If this counsel seems difficult to fulfil ask yourself the question: What will happen as regards these multifarious duties should I break down? Consider the following pertinent quotation:

"Our first duty, one which we owe to God, to ourselves, and to our fellow men, is to obey the laws of God, which include the laws of health. If we are sick, we impose a weary tax upon our friends, and unfit ourselves for discharging our duties to our families and to our neighbours. And when premature death is the result of our violation of nature's law, we bring sorrow and suffering to others; we deprive our neighbours of the help we ought to render them in living; we rob our families of the comfort and help we might render them, and rob God of the service He claims of us to advance His glory. Then, are we not, in the worst sense, transgressors of God's law?" E. G. White, "Counsels on Diet and Foods," page 21.

THE SABBATH IN HEBREWS

Would you please explain the "rests" of Hebrews chapter four. Why is the seventh-day Sabbath mentioned in this passage?
B.S.

The original purpose of the Book of Hebrews was to prevent the Jewish Christians from backsliding when they compared the glories of their temple and past history with the apparent insignificance of the new church, which lacked all external splendour. A key-word of the book is "better," which occurs eight times as Paul shows that in Christ we have advantages "better" than all the privileges enjoyed by Israel. The pertinent section of Hebrews chapter 4 follows, preceded by the relevant context of chapter three.

"Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, . . . They shall not enter into My rest.

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. . . .

"To whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? . . . Let



**BIBLE
QUESTIONS
ANSWERED**

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

us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. . . . For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all His works. . . .

"There remaineth therefore a rest [margin "the keeping of a sabbath"] to the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Hebrews 3:7 to 4:11.

Here the inspired writer speaks of (1) the rest of Canaan after the warfare and wandering of the wilderness; (2) the rest of heart that faith in Christ brings as we learn that He is our righteousness; (3) the rest of the first Sabbath in Eden which was God's parable and His invitation to all men to find their rest in Him by fellowship; (4) the final rest of heaven for all who maintain faith's hold on Christ. The emphasis throughout the passage is that rest is available by a right relationship of trust and obedience to Christ the Creator. Just as Adam, the man made in God's image, received rest on the first Sabbath from His Maker before he had begun to labour, so the believer remade in the image of His Redeemer receives rest moment by moment as He relies upon the atoning work of Christ rather than upon his own tainted accomplishments. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the gospel of grace and of the righteousness which comes by faith alone.

BIBLE STUDY

What suggestions can you make for studying the Bible devotionally? M.S.

If you are already well acquainted with the King James Version, receive fresh impact of meaning by using other versions frequently. Regard every opening of the Word as an entrance into the presence of the Most High, and pray for becoming reverence and illumination. One chapter read six times over is better than reading six chapters once.

Every passage should be recognized as reflecting both the human reader and the divine Writer. Realize that the characters of Holy Writ set forth our own potentialities—their sins are mine, past, present or future. Likewise their victories. The failures of David and Peter are meant to lead me to self-distrust, whereas the transformation of Jacob, the upholding of David and Joseph, and the spiritual conquests of Paul are for my encouragement in God.

Frequently choose a special topic of interest such as prayer, faith, hope etc., and look up the key-words of the topic in a concordance in order to gain a summary of truth from the Scriptures on that subject. Become acquainted with the Bible book by book, using as a background material from a commentary such as "The Conflict of the Ages" series by E. G. White, or such books as "The Outlined Bible," by Robert Lee and "Christ in All the Scriptures," by A. M. Hodgkin. Above all, read in order to practise rather than to preach.

FREEDOM FROM SIN

May one claim freedom from sin in this present life?
R.D.

"There is no man that sinneth not." 1 Kings 8:46.

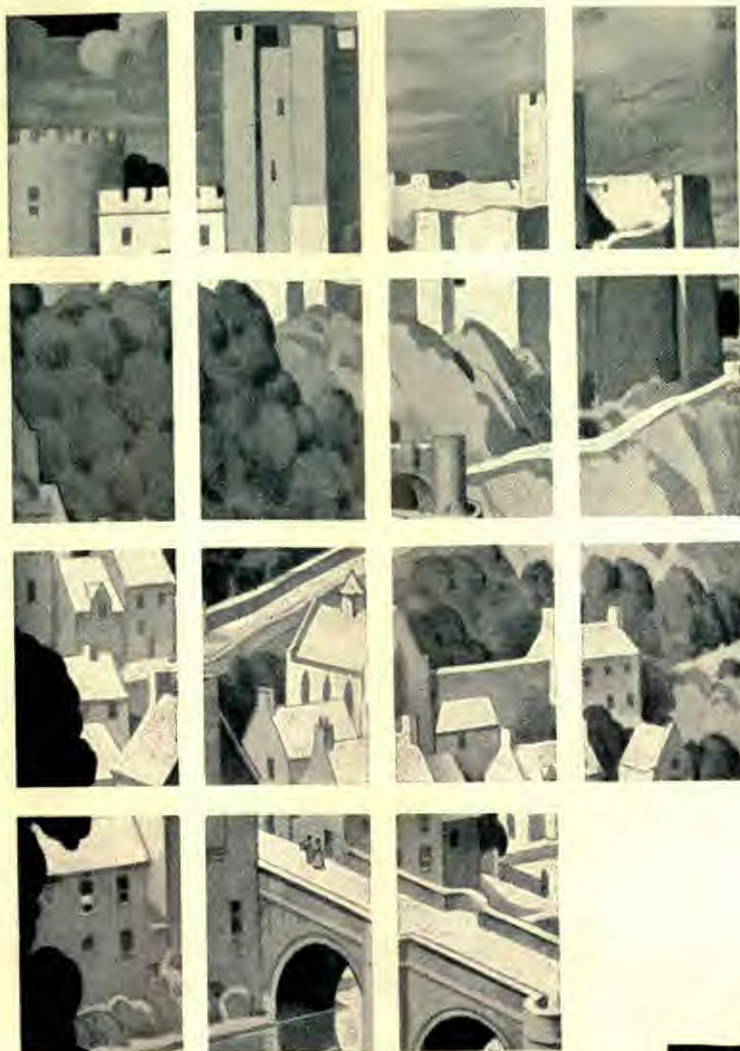
"Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Proverbs 20:9.

"There is none righteous, no, not one. . . . They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Romans 3:10-12.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8.

"For in many things we all stumble." James 3:2, R.V.

These verses do not constitute any excuse for yielding to known sins of omission or commission. They are rather a reminder that "when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." Luke 17:10. Because our very best works are always tainted by a mixture of motives, our very repentance needs repenting of, and our tears call for cleansing by the blood of Christ. Victory over every sinful habit is available in Christ, but no sooner is one vice overcome than another shortcoming is revealed. Thus sanctification is the work of a lifetime.



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