



# Signs

OF THE TIMES

**Good Will is Not Just for Christmas**

—page 16

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# THE GIFT SUPREME

FOR GOD

the greatest lover

SO LOVED

the greatest degree

THE WORLD

the greatest number

THAT HE GAVE

the greatest act

HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON

the greatest gift

THAT WHOSOEVER

the greatest invitation

BELIEVETH

the greatest simplicity

IN HIM

the greatest person

SHOULD NOT PERISH

the greatest deliverance

BUT

the greatest difference

HAVE

the greatest assurance

EVERLASTING LIFE

the greatest possession.

## CHAPTER 3

THERE WAS a man of the Pharisees,  
named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night,  
and said unto him, Rabbi, we know  
that thou art a teacher come from  
God: for no man can do these  
miracles that thou doest, except God  
be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him,  
Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except  
a man be born again, he cannot enter  
the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How  
can a man be born when he is old?  
can he enter the second time into his  
mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say  
unto thee, Except a man be born of  
water and of the Spirit, he cannot  
enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is  
flesh; and that which is born of the  
Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee,

Art thou a teacher, and knowest not these things?  
Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We  
know, and testify  
that we have seen, and ye receive not  
our witness.

I have told you earthly things,  
and ye believe not, how shall ye  
believe, if I tell you of heavenly  
things?

And no man hath ascended up to  
heaven, but he that came down from  
heaven, even the Son of man which  
hath been in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the ser-  
pent in the wilderness, even so must  
the Son of man be lifted up:

that whosoever believeth in him  
should not perish, but have eternal  
life.

For God so loved the world,  
that he gave his only begotten Son,  
that whosoever believeth in him  
should not perish, but have ever-

lasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the  
world to condemn the world; but  
that the world through him might be  
saved.

He that believeth on him is not  
condemned: but he that believeth  
not is condemned already, because  
he hath not believed in the name of  
the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation,  
that light is come into the world, and  
men loved darkness rather than  
light, because their deeds were evil.

For every one that doeth evil  
hateth the light, neither cometh  
to the light, lest his deeds should  
be reproved.

But he that doeth truth cometh  
to the light, that his deeds may be  
manifest, that they are wrought  
in truth.

After these things came Je-  
sus and his disciples into the land





# The Transcendent Love of God

By DORIS MILLER

"MOTHER MAIDEN, did you know  
When you heard the oxen low,  
And the music sweet and dim  
From the unseen cherubim,  
That to you a King was born,  
That He'd wear a crown of thorn?  
Your little Son."

The actual birth date of the world's Redeemer is not December 25. However, on that date the thoughts of millions of Christians will turn tenderly to the scene enacted in a stable in Bethlehem almost 2,000 years ago. For it was there that the transcendent love of God was revealed to mankind by the incarnation of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Immanuel, God with us, born within the crudities of a stable! But, on that Babe, born in such lowly circumstances, all history hinges.

Joseph, the husband of the maiden mother, must have had his faith justified, his self-abnegation rewarded when he lovingly looked upon Mary as she happily, though wonderingly, fondled her tiny Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed were the eyes of the lowing cattle, the bleating sheep and the braying ass—for they had been given the honour of beholding a scene from which human eyes were barred, and upon which angels rejoiced to gaze.

An angel announced to the shepherds abiding in the fields and keeping watch over their flocks by

night: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. . . . Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Luke 2:10-12.

It had been an angelic host which sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

During her travail, Mary had no other human companionship beside that of Joseph her husband.

In retrospect, dare we censure the priests, people and rabbis for not realizing that prophecy was being fulfilled? That the greatest event of all time was taking place in their midst? Had we been there, would we have known? Would we have visited the stable to worship the infant King?

Later, wise men from the East, led by a star, brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These were the first Christmas gifts, and in presenting them, the wise men bowed down and worshipped the Child.

The world would be poorer, indeed, if, in the exchanging of gifts, the sacred significance of the occasion was superseded.

"We know 'tis not the gifts of gold,  
Neither myrrh nor incense sweet,  
That God would ask this Christmas time.  
But our hearts, laid at His feet."

★★

**OUR COVER PICTURE** comes from the camera of Russell Gibbs, a young Sydney photographer who has had wide experience in both moving and still photography.

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*The birth of Christ.*

ness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

CHAP. II.

*1 Augustus taxeth all the Roman empire. 6 The nativity of Christ. 8 The angel relateth it to the shepherds: 13 many sing praises to God for it. 24 Christ is circumcised. 22 Mary purified. 28 Simeon and Anna prophesy of Christ: 40 who increaseth in wisdom, 46 questioneth in the temple with the doctors, 51 and is obedient to his parents.*

**A**ND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, when the days were accomplished, she brought forth her first-born son.

7 And she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

16  
Mary,

manger.

17 And  
known  
concerning

18 And  
those two  
herds

19 And



WHEATON, Illinois, is the home town of Kenneth Taylor. When I first drove through this quiet residential suburb of Chicago in 1968, the name of Kenneth Taylor meant little to me. True, The New Testament from 26 Translations was a valued 1967 addition to my library, and his translation was one of the twenty-six. But if pastoral duties permitted time for such thoughts, successive journeys through Wheaton merely reinforced its image as a city in healthy contrast to the smog-shrouded skyscrapers of Chicago's Loop.

that The Living Bible has met a pressing human need.

Since 1611 the words of the angel in Luke 2:10 have proclaimed to the readers of the King James Version: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." But Taylor has the heavenly messenger declaring, "I bring you the most joyful news ever announced, and it is for everyone!"

Now The Living Bible is meant to be for reading. Even Kenneth Taylor keeps another translation handy for study. But his edition

from the time-honoured King James Version to such contemporary translations as The New American Bible (1970). Kenneth Taylor has not literally rendered the precise Greek words that the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write.

Yet, if you look on the spine of The Living Bible, you'll notice the word "Paraphrased." In the face of this open admission, we need to ask, Is it legitimate to paraphrase Luke 2:10, "I bring you the most joyful news ever announced"?

#### What the Angel Said

The coming of the Saviour was a cherished hope of people of faith ever since the tragic intrusion of sin. Eve hugged her first-born son with the words, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." Remembering the promise of Genesis 3:15, she hoped this son might be the promised Deliverer. The dying Jacob, possessed by the spirit of prophecy, looked for "Shiloh" to come (Genesis 49:10). Moses grasped by faith the expectation of One who would rescue men through being God's unique mouthpiece (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). In the sublime utterance of the prophets, the Redeemer was clearly foretold as "an offering for sin" and as a healing "Sun of righteousness" (Isaiah 53:10; Malachi 4:2). That the promised and anticipated Saviour was now present on earth was singular good news such as to bring great joy. It climaxed one of the dominant currents of Scripture, the dynamic movement from promise to fulfilment.

But the angel told of more than a Saviour. "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ." We frequently unite the words "Jesus" and "Christ." The first presents our Lord as Saviour, since it literally means "Jehovah is Salvation." "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins," Gabriel commanded Joseph in Matthew 1:21. Israel had been saved from danger and grave misfortune by previous "saviours who saved them from the hand of their enemies." (Nehemiah 9:27; cf. 2 Kings 13:5.) But the "Saviour who is Christ" was unique. His work was intimated by the anointed priests, prophets and kings of the Old Testament. Yet He was the

# the most joyful news EVER announced

Late in 1970, I became aware of countless friendly young people clutching dog-eared copies of Taylor's paperback, Reach Out, an illustrated edition of The Living New Testament. More was to come. In 1971, Kenneth Taylor completed his work on the Old Testament and published The Living Bible. Now, after seventeen years, his efforts to make the Word of God vivid to his ten children have grown from a family paraphrase to perhaps the world's fastest-selling Bible. A couple of million copies sold in a year testify

has brought uncounted millions the joyful news of God's redemptive action in Jesus Christ. Has Taylor in Luke 2:10 dealt faithfully with the Word of God? Is he saying what Luke meant?

Under inspiration, Luke heard the hills of Bethlehem echo with the words of the angel proclaiming to humble shepherds "good news" of "great joy." It was not enough for this special ambassador to declare that he brought **good news**. His message was **good news of great joy**. This is the correct rendition of numerous translations,

By DR. ARTHUR PATRICK

Dr. Patrick was in America when he wrote this article. Since then he has returned to his native Australia and is now lecturing in theology in a theological college in New South Wales.



Rescuer Supreme, able to snatch men not only from danger and disaster, but from the rule of sin. Thus He could declare:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke 4: 18, 19.

### Christ is Lord

The Apostle Peter later affirmed that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." Acts 10: 38. This anointing was manifested to the astonished eyes of John the Baptist and his audience immediately after Jesus was immersed in the Jordan River. (See Matthew 3: 13-17.) As the Spirit of God rested upon Him, the voice of the Father declared, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Here was the public revelation of the Saviour as also the Christ, the Anointed One, uniquely designated as such by God. That this Saving Christ was born in David's city was extraordinarily good news with a potential for great joy.

But the heavenly messenger used a third name. "I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." Not just "a Saviour." Not only "a Saviour, who is Christ." But "a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

To name Christ as also Lord is to identify Him with the LORD or Jehovah of the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup> A careful study of the 6,800 times this name is used in the Old Testament reveals that it is the name of the covenant-keeping God, evidently derived from a causative form of the Hebrew verb "to be." Perhaps it would be much more meaningful for those of us who speak English to drop the term Jehovah and even the more linguistically correct form Yahweh, and to translate this name according to its meaning, as "The God Who Causes to Be." This exalted name of God presents Him as the One who brings into existence, brings to pass, creates.<sup>4</sup> The New Testament is explicit in ascribing this office of creator to Jesus Christ.

No such affirmation involving Christ's deity could be made without the implication of His pre-existence. The Babe of Bethlehem destined for rulership was from everlasting, according to Micah 5: 2. Though born a child of Mary, His name was still rightly, "Mighty God, Everlasting Father." (Isaiah 9: 6.) The good news of the angel formed a part of the later firm conviction of the apostles and the early church: Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, a sinless being, and a proper object of worship. As God He created (see John 1: 3; Colossians 1: 16). As Saviour He enables sinful man to be remade, "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." Ephesians 4: 24. This redemption will culminate in a restored environment, an earth returned to a condition suitable as a home of righteousness (cf. Isaiah 65: 17; 66: 22; 2 Peter 3: 13).

The radiant angel of Bethlehem announced the unprecedented good news that the human family now had a Babe in whom God's saving acts would culminate, One who would be uniquely anointed with God's approving and empowering Spirit, and who was—despite the veil of humanity—the creating-causing Lord destined to triumph and reign. No wonder he said, "I evangelize to you a great joy," using the word which means to bring good tidings or to preach the gospel. Kenneth Taylor moved beyond the plain sense of Luke's literal words by stating this is "the most joyful news ever announced." But seemingly no news could transcend it. It was not only unprecedented. So far-reaching are its implications that the glory of eternity radiates from it. The trappings and the restrictions of language seem rightly to be swept aside, and with reverence we bow and affirm that the entry of Jesus Christ our Lord into humanity and the human situation remains the most joyful news ever announced.

The angel declared that this joyous message was for all people, everyone. This good news is for all to hear and heed. But only a humble few listened in the days of Herod the King. Is modern man more attentive? He is not, according to the indictment of Edna St. Vincent Millay in her poem, "To Jesus on His Birthday":

"For this Your mother sweated in the cold,  
For this You bled upon the bitter tree;  
A yard of tinsel ribbon bought and sold;  
A paper wreath; a day at home for me.  
The merry bells ring out, the people kneel;  
Up goes the man of God before the crowd;  
With voice of honey and with eyes of steel  
He drones Your humble gospel to the proud.  
Nobody listens. Less than wind that blows  
Are all Your words to us You died to save."<sup>5</sup>

Since the birth in David's city of the Saviour, Christ, our Lord, is the most joyful news ever announced, we need now to respond humbly in this age of doubt as did the once-doubting disciple, "My Lord and my God!" John 20: 28. ★★

<sup>3</sup>While the date of the birth of Christ is outside the purpose of our present discussion, it is of interest to observe that December 25 is an unlikely option. In commenting on the shepherds in "a night bivouac tending their sheep," Hobbs states: "This fact raises the question as to the time of year when Jesus was born. Of course, the traditional time is December 25. However, the fact that sheep were in the field suggests a time between March and November, the time when they were kept out in the open. It is hardly likely that Mary and Joseph would have been required to make this long journey in the winter time, which is the rainy season in Palestine. Furthermore, would the rulers disrupt the life of the people during the spring farming season, or during the early or late harvest in early summer or in the fall? It is more likely that this would have been done between the harvests. If so, then sometime in late August or early September might be the time. But, of course, no date can be set for certain. And the celebration of the birth of Jesus is not so much a date on the calendar as it is a spirit within the heart. The glorious truth is that He was born and that for a purpose."—Herschel H. Hobbs, "An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke" (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1956), pages 51, 52.

<sup>4</sup>The subsequent Scripture citations are from the Revised Standard Version, as is this one.

<sup>5</sup>Numerous commentators agree with this forthright statement by a Lutheran scholar: "In adding 'the Lord' to the title 'Christ,' 'the Anointed,' the angel announces the astounding fact that the Rescuer is God."—William F. Arndt, Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to St. Luke (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), page 82.

<sup>6</sup>This concept is suggested in an article by David Noel Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXIX (1960), 151-156. On page 152, Freedman states his belief "(1) that the Tetragrammaton was pronounced *Yahweh*; (2) that it is a verb derived from the root *hwy*; *hwh*, which in accordance with recognized linguistic laws appears in biblical Hebrew as *hyh*; (3) that it is a Hifil impf. 3rd masc. sing. form of the verb; and (4) that it is to be translated, 'He causes to be, He brings into existence; He brings to pass, He creates.'"

<sup>7</sup>Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Masterpieces of Religious Verse," ed. by James Dalton Morrison (New York: Harper and Bros., 1948), page 168.



# POEMS WITH POWER

## Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled

Whenever I am troubled and lost in deep despair  
I bundle all my troubles up  
And go to God in prayer . . .

I tell Him I am heartsick and lost and lonely, too,  
That my mind is deeply burdened and I don't know what to do . . .  
But I know He stilled the tempest and calmed the angry sea  
And I humbly ask if in His love He'll do the same for me . . .  
And then I just keep quiet and think only thoughts of peace  
And if I abide in stillness my "restless murmurings" cease.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." 1 John 3: 1.

Helen Steiner Rice (A. Clarke).

## Those Youngsters

There are men our glorious country will be needing later on,  
At the moment, they are youngsters and their names are known to none.  
They possess the seeds of greatness; they're equipped for life complete;  
But they'll miss the way to manhood if we leave them to the street.

They are full of fun and mischief; there are twinkles in their eyes.  
From their numbers in the future some to fame will surely rise.  
But they need our friendly coaching for the task they're going to meet.  
And it isn't safe to leave them to the hazards of the street.

They'll be doctors, lawyers, preachers, with a little friendly aid.  
With encouragement and training they'll bring skill to every trade.  
We can fit them for the future; on the right path set their feet,  
But we'll throw away their talents if we leave them to the street.

Author Unknown (Mrs. W. Hodder).



# How to find happiness and get more

By RUSSELL KRANZ





THERE WAS a time when men treated the Bible seriously and believed that its writings put all history into focus. Most of our troubles started when we thought we were too wise for Scripture, didn't need advice and could get along on our own. Since then, things haven't worked out exactly as we thought they would.

Now what do you do when you are travelling out in the country and suddenly discover you are lost? If you are sensible you turn right around, drive back to the spot where you took the wrong turning, study the signpost and get back on the track again.

It seems as though we made a mistake when we discarded the Guide Book. In our eagerness to be modern and up-to-date we forgot that a mighty lot of living has been done and that the simple instruction of good men of the past plus the supreme example and unsurpassed teaching of Jesus cannot be improved upon.

The Bible may be old but its instruction is perennial. It meets the needs of every age because it deals with the predicament of every individual person and gets to the kernel of the matter. It tells us where we came from and where

we are going to; what has gone wrong and how the situation can be remedied. It explains why man is a mortal prone to death and yet longing for eternity. It describes our estrangement with our fellows, with our environment and with our God. What is more, it shows us how we can find peace, forgiveness and lasting happiness.

Its character is universal because it speaks to the condition of men all over the world, in every country, in every age of history. Its teachings are just as pertinent today as when they were first proclaimed.

The growth of modern science has done nothing to date its meaning. In fact, the tendency of science to dehumanize man and emphasize his loneliness has given the Bible greater potency. The Bible has perspective, puts things in balance and provides us with a centre to existence. From its pages we learn why we are here, all of us, condemned to die, deserving to die, at variance with God and His holy will. But it yields more than a searching analysis of our human predicament; it offers a gospel that shows us how we can overcome sin, rediscover God and enter into a loving relationship with Him.

#### Answers to Our Deepest Need

Interestingly, the Bible claims to be able to provide man with the

very things he has lost. Whether those claims can be substantiated or not is a question that has to be settled by personal experiment. The claims themselves are worthy of investigation.

I wouldn't waste my time taking medicine that didn't at least claim to be able to cure my complaint. The very fact that the manufacturers claim they have produced a mixture to cure catarrh is sufficient reason to make me give it a try. I could multiply examples.

It is the promises made by politicians that influence election results. Of course, the party must show it can produce the goods. But surely we are tempted to vote for it because it promises just that.

Paul speaks for the various writers who contributed to the Bible when he claims that Scripture teaches truth, refutes error, reforms manners, provides a discipline in right living, has the power to make a person wise and leads men to salvation (2 Timothy 3: 15, 16). Let us look at some of the claims that deal directly with matters that concern us most.

#### You Can Be Sure

The Bible is full of certainty. Wherever you open the Book and read it you are immediately impressed by its note of authority. There is no beating about the bush in its message. The confidence it breathes is refreshing. A few random passages will serve to illustrate the point.

In Psalm 19 the psalmist contemplates the revelation of God in nature and in the written law. He speaks of the glory of God as seen in His created works and then directs our attention to the Torah. "The Lord's instruction never fails, the precepts of the Lord are right, the commandments of the Lord shine clear. The Lord's decrees are true and righteous, more to be desired than purest gold."

You may wish to compare this psalm with another famous chapter in the Old Testament, Isaiah 40. Notice the ring of certainty in this prophetic poem. It is the voice of God that is speaking (verse 1). Contrasted with human life and nature the Word of God endures for evermore (verse 8). Grass withers, flowers fade, but the message of the Lord never passes away. Jesus used similar expressions in His graphic portrayal of

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the downfall of Jerusalem: "Heaven and earth will pass away; My words will never pass away." Matthew 24:35.

Maybe men have given up the quest for truth on the grounds that absolutes are unattainable and that they don't matter anyway. How mistaken!

Like Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who contemptuously dismissed Jesus with the remark "What is truth?" people who are indifferent to truth overlook the fact that Jesus came into the world "to bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37) and that God's Word is truth (John 17:17). Whoever continues in the revelation Christ brought, will "know the truth" (John 8:32) because in Him truth becomes concrete—takes on substance. He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

How different this is from the confusion and indefiniteness that characterize current thought! Whatever human limitations may be, sufficient understanding has been imparted for man's need. There is no cause for pessimism. The message of the prophets is like a lamp shining in a murky place. "It was not through any human whim that men prophesied of old; men they were, but, impelled by the Holy Spirit, they spoke the words of God." 2 Peter 1:21.

In an atmosphere of doubt, the claims of Scripture are reassuring. There is reason for confidence.

#### **You Can Be Right**

Yes, you can, even though you live in a maze of shifting standards and changing values. Flux there may be all around you, but "I am the Lord, unchanging" (Malachi 3:6), and with God there is "no variation, no play of passing shadows." James 1:17.

The Bible provides us with eternal principles and a guide to go by. If we follow its instruction we will discover the true meaning of happiness. The morality of the Ten Commandments and the New Testament wasn't dreamt up by starry-eyed mystics. It was forged on the anvil of life and practised by the only perfect Man who has ever lived. When Jesus was asked what was the most important rule in life, He answered the question by summarizing goodness in two positive commands: Man's responsibility is to love God and to love

his neighbour. All the other details that are spelled out in specific contexts are based on these two fundamental truths. (Matthew 22:37-40.)

Jesus put morality into words in His wonderful Sermon on the Mount. Reading through the three chapters, Matthew 5, 6 and 7, one is impressed by their moral depth. Men ought always to be humble and merciful, pure and peaceful; never should they return evil for evil. To do unto others as you wish to be done by is the way to behave; don't be selfish and proud and self-righteous; be kind-hearted and charitable, forgiving and courteous. Avoid judgment; put spiritual things first; learn to be generous.

Everything Jesus said, He did. He is the only moral model worth following, and whoever hears Him and puts His words to the test is "wise." In Him morality becomes personalized. Beyond the central character of the Bible, goodness can never go. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever." Hebrews 13:8.

#### **You Can Have Purpose**

The ancient Greeks adopted a circular view of history. They thought time went around in circles. It was the Jews and Christians who envisaged time as a line.

Man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and is capable of entering into fellowship with his Maker. Unfortunately, sin broke this relationship and caused disharmony and unhappiness. Man was powerless to put things right, so God sent His Son into the world to save sinners. (John 3:16.)

This rescue operation culminates in the creation of "new heavens and a new earth, the home of justice." 2 Peter 3:13. The gospel is good news. Its message shows how God is working to free men from sin and death and how those who trust Him will eventually find complete fulfilment in His presence. "Then the righteous will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matthew 13:43.

The linear picture of history provides us with a rudder that prevents us from going around in circles. It reveals our true destiny and illumines our whole life's experience.

In Jewish thinking, religion and history are inseparably connected.

The Bible ties the two together in such a way that time not only has a beginning and ending; it also has a centre.

Professor Butterfield in his excellent book, "Christianity and History" (Collins Fontana, 1967), suggests that a screen has prevented man from seeing beyond this world. This screen is created by man himself, and it is continually being broken, though man fails to recognize what is happening. Now according to the Bible, the film was so torn in the person of Jesus, that the divine stepped straight on to the stage and burst into the story. The whole interpretation of the universe depends upon His disclosure. Our response to Him determines our attitude to life.

#### **You Can Be Wanted**

Loneliness is a frightening experience. The world is full of people who are left out in the cold with no one to love them, no one to care. The establishment passes them by and the system goes on as though they weren't there. Without God there is a cosmic loneliness about human existence. Science is impersonal, quality is reduced to quantity, everything is rigidly determined, the feeling of providence has no foundation. The stars glide silently by, unaware of human hopes and aspirations. We are born but to die; there is neither rhyme nor reason to our being here. We are simply the offspring of blind chance.

That is the picture without God. But the Bible shows us that all men are important in God's eyes. God has equal care for all His creatures, irrespective of colour, race, gender or creed. He has no favourites (Romans 2:11). In Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian or Scythian, freeman or slave (Colossians 3:11). His rain falls on the just and unjust alike.

Several of the best-known parables in the New Testament show God's loving concern for His creatures. In Luke chapter 15 there are three famous stories, each of which illustrates God's relationship with man. Most touching of all is the tale of the prodigal son. The father who waits and watches for his boy to return is the heavenly Father. It doesn't matter that the son is wayward. There is joy among the angels over one sinner who repents.



Actually, these parables were meant for religious snobs who were criticizing Jesus because He mixed with unwanted folk. Christ was interested in everybody—the lowest and most obscure person as well as the highest. No one was ever passed by, and in Him, persons discovered their real worth and reached their fullest potential.

Even sparrows are noticed by God. "So have no fear; you are worth more than any number of sparrows." Matthew 10: 31. Man then is not insignificant in God's eyes. God "is very patient with you, because it is not His will for any to be lost, but for all to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3: 9. Life in all its fullness is man's for the asking.

### You Can Find Meaning

Who said life was without certainty, without guidance, without direction, without significance, without hope and without meaning?

Maybe it is for those who have not taken the trouble to study the Bible and investigate its message. Thousands and thousands of people can testify to having discovered new dimensions and deeper meaning in the pages of Scripture.

Belief makes all the difference. Whether you agree with this point of view is of course your personal prerogative. But if the Bible is able to live up to its claims and provide all the wants of the human heart, wouldn't it be a good idea to read it carefully and follow its instruction in your daily life? It is an experiment worth trying. Bible writers were men who spoke from first-hand experience. They didn't hesitate to challenge their readers to try out their advice.

The author of Psalm 34 recounts his own experience. When he was in trouble God helped him. Taste, then, for yourself and see that the Lord is good. Jesus invited His hearers to come to Him and they would find relief from their burdens, rest from their cares. (Matthew 11: 28-30.)

I guess all that the Bible promises could be summed up in two words: spiritual satisfaction. On the surface, people don't appear to be bothered about this quality. But deep down they want it more than anything else. ★★

All texts quoted in this article are from the New English Bible.

## HERE'S A PROMISE FOR YOU

By W. A. Townend



BECAUSE Christmas comes to us this month, we shall look at the first promise in the Bible that Jesus would come and do this amazing work of redemption on our earth. It is Genesis 3: 15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

One day, while visiting Tokyo, I stood with my wife on the top of that city's famous high tower, from which you can see buildings! buildings! buildings! people! people! people! There in the world's largest city I thought about our promise of Genesis 3: 15. You look down on the masses of Tokyo, seen and unseen, and you begin to realize what a job it would be to find one particular man among them all.

Our promise today sets a task much greater than that of looking for one individual in the world's largest city. The search is for one being in the whole world and during millenniums of time.

Our first clues in the Bible are really not very extensive. All we learn is that we must look for a man, not an angel.

Several centuries of history pass before the Bible gives us the next lead in our search. Abraham is named. He dies, and there is still no redeemer. Isaac, Abraham's son, next comes into focus. He dies, and there is no redeemer. Then we watch the younger of Isaac's sons, Jacob, for the Bible gives us that clue. Jacob dies, and still there is no redeemer. Of his many sons, our Bible search leads us to Judah.

Then complications set in when Israel's first king is not of the line of Judah but of Benjamin. Careful study of the Scriptures reveals the reason for this apparent breakdown in the line. But there is still no redeemer, even though the second king, David, is of the right line, that of Judah.

Down, down, down, through the corridors of the centuries after David we keep on searching for our redeemer—the one Being in the whole world we wish to find.

And then Matthew 1: 21 pinpoints Him. There we read, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." At last! We watch the unfolding of His life with close care. On every count He meets the Bible-given specifications. We have found our Man! One in millions of millions! He is the One we will especially think about this 1973 Christmas. And most important of all, no other person can do what it was told that He would come to do: "Save His people from their sins."

"His people," mark you! Despite our sins!

We have found Him. We claim Him as "ours." And from that point on He takes over, just as long as we choose to have our lives go that way. For today? Yes!

"Joy to the world! The Lord will come;

Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and nature  
sing." ★★



ONLY TWO WEEKS until Christmas, but in the year 1944 the people of Edinburgh were in no mood for gaiety. The Girls' Club leader in the church at the corner of our street was determined that this Christmas they must try to do something different. They usually had a Christmas project, but it had always been centred in the church or the Club. Now, in the midst of World War II, this was not good enough. They must learn to think of others in the wider community.

So it was decided that they would rehearse Christmas carols and go out on Christmas Eve to sing them to patients in the nearest hospital, where there were a number of servicemen recovering from war wounds.

Christmas Eve was appropriately frosty, with stars shining brightly in a navy-blue sky, and after a last-minute practice, the party set out for the hospital.

All the girls felt rather nervous as they approached the austere building, and when they stood on the polished floor of the entrance hall, and rang the bell, the leader was assailed by doubts and fears. Advancing into the long corridor, they were met by a strong smell of disinfectant and a somewhat starchy-looking nursing sister, who came forward to greet them.

First of all they were taken to sing in a women's medical ward, and as they ranged themselves around a table in the centre of the gaily-decorated room, once again the leader wondered if they had been wise to come. One or two of the girls looked a bit scared, she thought, but of course to anyone with even a modicum of imagination, a hospital was a frightening sort of place.

It was one of the patients who gave her the courage she needed to start off the singing.

"Give us 'O, Little Town of Bethlehem,'" she said eagerly, and hauled herself further up the bed to listen. Here at least was someone who was looking forward to the carol singing! And, fortunately, this was one of the carols the girls had rehearsed, so they were able to oblige.

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Miss Sinclair comes from Britain and currently lives in suburban Melbourne, where she is able to fit some free-lance writing into her programme.

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**"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2: 14.**

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# Love Came Down at Christmas

By D. V. SINCLAIR

## "Jolly Good Show"

After this, the obvious appreciation of patients and nursing staff alike was a great encouragement, and when the sister led them to a second ward, which was a male ward, the little amateur choir was really getting into its stride. Some of the men who were convalescent actually joined in with the tenor and baritone parts, and all of them voted the girls' programme "a jolly good show."

But it was when they all emerged into the outer corridor again that the real challenge came. The sister, who had seemed rather forbidding until then, took the Club leader aside and said rather tentatively, "Would your girls sing to our German prisoners? They are sick men, too, and very isolated."

The leader agreed at once, but said that she would like to consult the girls about it. She had suddenly remembered that among them was Mary who had very re-

cently lost a brother who had been in the Merchant Navy.

She put the suggestion to the girls—and Mary's reaction was immediate. These men were our enemies. Why should the Club members be expected to sing for them?

The leader explained very gently that these Germans were sick men, prisoners of war, and far away from home. Like our own men, they had to do their duty in time of war.

Then she said to Mary, "I can understand how you must feel about this, and nobody could blame you for it. You must do what your heart tells you to do; but the rest of us must go and sing to the prisoners, as we have done to our own men. This is what Christianity is all about."

The leader did not look to see what the effect of her words would be, but followed the sister across to a wooden hut where the prison-





ers were housed in isolation from the rest of the hospital.

The sister, who had unbent considerably by this time, began to tell them a little about the German prisoners. "Some of them who are not so ill as the others, have made a model of the manger with their own hands, and they have rigged up some special lighting for it, too. It is very effective, as you will see. The pity is that so few people ever come to see it."

She led the small group of girls into the hut. It was dimly lit so that the manger scene at the top end of the makeshift ward would seem more brilliant. The girls were at once interested, and this made a talking-point for them all in a situation which might have been embarrassing. The sister explained to the men that the girls had come to sing some Christmas carols for them, and one or two of them smiled and nodded, while others appeared to be stolidly indifferent.

This was not going to be easy, thought the Club leader.

Then she noticed something that filled her with relief and joy. It was Mary, quietly taking her place with the others and getting ready to sing. An understanding look passed between them, then, turning deliberately towards the manger, the Club leader announced that they would sing, "See, in Yonder Manger Low."

Never had the girls sung with such feeling, and when it came to the verse which was Mary's solo, everyone was deeply moved to hear the words ringing out with such a new depth of meaning:

"Sacred Infant, all Divine,  
What a tender love was Thine,  
Thus to come from highest bliss  
Down to such a world as this!"

#### **Enmity Forgotten**

There was a glow about Mary's face as she sang, and it made the leader think of that other Mary long ago who had said to the angel

Gabriel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." This Mary, too, had been obedient to a heavenly vision, and it was an experience she would never forget.

In spite of the language difficulty, it soon became evident that the men, too, were deeply moved. Most of them were homesick and missing their wives, children or sweethearts, particularly at this time of the year, when in their own country Christmas was always celebrated with singing and pageantry.

One of the men beckoned to the Club leader and said, "Now we sing for you in the German way, 'Heilige Nacht.'"

The hospital sister, who had been standing by one of the beds all this time, nodded her consent, and soon the hut was filled with the music of the men's voices. The girls had never heard anything so beautiful, and to all of them it was a true spiritual experience. It was a "Holy Night" indeed, when all the barriers were broken down, and all enmities forgotten.

It was Mary who made the first move after the last note had died away. She went quietly over to the man who had led the singing, and thanked him.

This was the signal for the rest of the party to do likewise, and soon every one of the girls was making a contact with one of the men. If he could not speak much English, and the girl had no German, this did not seem to matter. They could always smile and shake hands.

Some of the men produced photographs of their wives and families from under their pillows, and this was a simple means of communication. Soon the time came for the girls to take their leave of the prisoners, and the sister who had conducted them round the wards led them out again into the grounds of the hospital.

"Thank you, girls," she said simply. "You have helped us all more than you can ever know."

It was a very thoughtful group that made its way out of the hospital gates and walked home under the stars, and the leader was very conscious that another Presence was with them. Never again would they have any difficulty in believing that "Love came down at Christmas." ★★



# Marriage Gone Sour?

By LEIGHTON FORD

THE UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU reports that since 1960 the annual number of divorces has risen by 80 per cent. During 1971, 768,000 American marriages broke up. That's as if last year every home in a city about the size of Brisbane or Adelaide was broken by divorce!

What makes a marriage go sour? Counsellor Lindsay Curtis often hands his clients a calling card that lists seven warning signals of a sick marriage: (1) when common courtesies are abandoned; (2) when couples begin to think in terms of "I" instead of "we"; (3) when they stop complimenting each other; (4) when stubborn silence replaces common-sense communication; (5) when they fail to sense and meet the needs of each other; (6) when they fail to express love; (7) when they stop praying together.

Dr. Curtis says, "Prayer seems naive to a lot of people these days, but it's always been one of my favourite prescriptions for an ailing marriage."

Statistics back Dr. Curtis up. Nationally there is now one divorce for every four marriages. But when the husband and wife are Christians and have a family altar where they read the Bible and pray together, only one out of one thousand marriages in this country ends

in divorce. Apparently, God makes a difference in marriage.

The only statement about marriage in the Bible, which is repeated four times, tells us, I believe, more about this union than a whole shelf of many modern marriage manuals. To sum up the story of creation, the Scripture says that God has made woman as a partner equal to man, and "therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." Genesis 2: 24, R.S.V. When asked about divorce in Matthew 19: 5 and Mark 10: 7, Jesus recalls this same statement. Finally, when Paul is talking about marriage in Ephesians 5: 31, 32, R.S.V., he also quotes this sentence and says, "I take it to mean Christ and the church."

The four times this statement occurs are significant—when talking about the way God meant things to be (in creation); about the way men have messed things up (as, for instance, in divorce); and the way God can put things right (through Jesus Christ).

I've been tremendously helped by the book, "I Married You," written by Walter Trobisch,\* who has spent much of his life as a missionary in Africa. He shows how these words of God apply to every culture, and points out that marriage as God planned it has three parts. First, marriage is a **leaving**—"a man leaves his father and his mother." This is the legal, public side of

marriage that can never be just a private affair. God intends the home to be the basic unit of the community, so there's no marriage without a wedding that says, "Now this couple is leaving one home to begin another." The outward ceremony is the sign of the inward reality.

Marriage is also a **cleaving**. A man "cleaves to his wife" and she to him. This is the personal or "romantic" part. But "cleaving," which means to stick to or be glued to, implies more than just "romantic love." This is a love which has stopped groping and has become a decision made by **two persons**. It also means that a husband and wife are to be closer to each other than children, friends, or job.

Marriage involves one more thing: the two become "**one flesh**." The physical part, the sexual union between a man and wife, is as important to God as the legal and love aspects. Never forget that God invented sex and that sexual intercourse at the right time, in the right place, with the right person, is beautiful to God!

A happy marriage must have all three: the leaving, the cleaving, and the one flesh. Marriage gives and receives from love; love gives and receives from sex, sex gives and receives from marriage. Sex without love can be desperately insecure; love without sex can be terribly unfulfilled; and marriage

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**IN THE U.S. THERE IS  
ONE DIVORCE FOR EVERY  
FOUR MARRIAGES**

without love and sex is like an empty tent. Walter Trobisch points out that God's will is the interplay of marriage, love, and sex. Whatever brings them together is in line with God's will; whatever drives them apart is out of line with God's will.

If your marriage is like an empty tent, the problem may be in one of these areas. Perhaps it's in the leaving. Just as a baby's umbilical cord has to be cut or the infant won't grow, so a marriage can't grow until a clear separation from the family takes place and any inner emotional dependence on in-laws has gone. Or perhaps your problem is in the cleaving area. Other things—job, children, friends, material things—have come first, and communication with your partner has broken down. Love is something that has to be worked at to stay alive! Cleaving also means accepting each other as he is. A successful marriage takes two good forgivers, who can accept and forgive as God accepts and forgives us. Remember, it's up to you to love your husband or wife, not to change him. Let God do the changing!

Or the problem area may be that of one flesh. Many marriages break down because they are unfulfilled in the physical fellowship, sometimes even when there is a real love and affection. Often guilt is the cause. Sometimes parents have passed on to their children the mistaken feeling that sex is something to be ashamed of. Or perhaps premarital sex by one or both partners causes feelings of guilt, jealousy, and suspicion. The only answer here is deep and genuine forgiveness—forgive your parents for their wrong ideas of sex, just as God will forgive you for any past sex sins you confessed to Him. Then, forget the past and move on!

The most important thing of all is to have the living God, the designer of marriage, at the centre of your heart and home. He will come there through Jesus Christ if you'll invite Him in. It may not be easy, but He will transform your life and your marriage. No matter how many people live in your home, there should always be one more, that unseen Visitor, Christ. Does He live in your home? ★★

\*Leighton Ford expresses thanks to Mr. Trobisch for many of the ideas expressed in this article.



# Can We Trust Genesis?

By LINDSAY J. LAWS

THERE HAS BEEN a great deal of speculation in recent years as to whether the Bible story of the beginning of life is accurate, whether Noah's Flood really was worldwide, and if life has been in existence on this world for only several thousand years, as evidenced from Bible chronology, and not millions of years as some have claimed.

Many mainline fundamentalist churches have begun to examine Genesis 1 to 3 in the light of present-day theories, and their intrinsic belief in Scripture has been weighed and found wanting.

Frequently, the news media reports feature headlines such as this:

## 350-MILLION-YEAR-OLD FOOTPRINTS

**"Some of the world's oldest footprints have been found in Eastern Victoria. About 350 million years ago a creature crawled out of a swamp and left footprints in the mud . . ."**

As such reports are said to have been made and assessed by scientists (who deal in cold, hard facts), Mr. Average Citizen is led down the proverbial garden path of unbelief in the Bible record.

Surely scientists must have some reliable method to make these calculations of the age, not only of the earth, but of elements found in or on the earth. How completely reliable they are we shall see.

In dating the inorganic earth today a process known as radioiso-

tope dating is used. This makes use of a process by which certain elements give off rays or particles, and are thereby changed into other elements, which are called decay products. This process serves as a time clock, and with the present rate of decay known, an assessment is made of the origin of such matter, based on the same constancy of the rate of decay since its beginning.

However, as it has been assumed that the rate of decay has always been the same (and this has not yet been incontestably proved), one has remarked that time figures thus worked out were "like railway time-tables, subject to change without notice."

"Radioisotope dating of volcanic materials and marine deposits appears to contradict inspired testimony concerning the duration of earth history. This contradiction, it should be noted, is at the level of interpretation, rather than of direct laboratory or field observation. Radioisotope dating of volcanic flows and eruptions is based on assumptions concerning degassing at the time of volcanic activity, which have recently been shown not to be valid in all cases."

A short-range method of dating organic materials is supplied by the Carbon 14 method (limited to ages of 60,000 years or less). The accuracy of this method also contains some assumptions, and W. F. Libby, who developed this method,

admits there is no way to prove that cosmic ray flux has been constant for the past 60,000 years. Even the burning of immense amounts of coal, oil and gas today will upset the constancy of these calculations.

Paul Zimmerman says, "Radio carbon dating has supplied excellent evidence that certain geological processes do not take nearly as long as previously assumed by scientists." Take this as an instance of the weakness of the method: muscle tissue from beneath the scalp of a mummified ox found in frozen muck at Fairbanks Creek, Alaska, has a radiocarbon age of 24,000 years, while the radiocarbon age of the hair of the hind limb of the same animal was 17,200 years. A life span of 7,000 years for a specimen of this species is doubtful—and such findings do little to establish the incontestability of the carbon dating method.

The man in the street does not always have access to these facts when trying to assess the reliability of reported finds said to be millions of years old, and he should know that there are no absolutely sure methods for age-dating the earth itself, or the beginnings of life on earth.

## How Reliable?

With the recent discovery reported in the news media at the beginning of this article, I wrote to the person who had made the discovery, asking how he had deter-



mined the 350-million-year dating. He replied, stating he was a biologist and could not make expert comment on the dating, but was trusting the geologists' fossil-strata dating method and time scale.

The casual newspaper reader would probably say that a learned man ought to know, but a simple investigation of the facts of geology shows that while geology has attempted to age-assess the earth by the fossils (which record is very broken) and the fossils by the earth (whose strata is in no place like the geologists' time-scale chart) such a method is not reliable.

In fact, it is interesting to note some recent discoveries of living things thought to be extinct millions of years ago. In 1938, a coelacanth (fish) was caught alive off the coast of South Africa. According to the paleontological (fossil) records, the last such fish lived approximately 70 million years ago! A later discovery of a living deep-sea mollusc said to be extinct 280 million years ago was dredged off the Mexican coast on May 6, 1952.

The geological record has failed to provide us with a substantial number of fossil forms, popularly called missing links. It was the absence of these that so disturbed Darwin. Not only that, but the fact that complex forms of life have been found in lower strata, where according to theory they were not supposed to be; and as well as that, evidence also indicates the existence of man and the dinosaurs living contemporaneously. Such finds as these have upset the fossil record and made the dating of the earth or past living things by fossil discoveries, unreliable.

Incidentally, it is the evolutionist who claimed to have a complete line of fossils down through the ages and strata, from complex to simple fossil forms, to thus provide a key to the age of the earth and the existence of living things. However, as Professor More said, "The evidence from paleontology [fossils] is for discontinuity; only by faith and imagination is there continuity of variation."

It is true that all scientific dating methods give a much longer time period than the few thousand years indicated by the Scripture record.

Even without using the argument against the fallacies and weaknesses in the dating methods, I believe that there are other reasons for this discrepancy, because all dating processes are based on a uniformly changing phenomenon. It is quite evident, however, that such has not been the case. Take for example the flood of Noah's day. Here we have destruction manifested in such magnitude that destruction and decay were accelerated rapidly, as compared to normal conditions. Now if one does not accept the Biblical flood, and tries to account in terms of years for the amount of decay and destruction as it occurs under normal circumstances, one could be radically mistaken in assessing time periods.

Possibly, also, if one looks at creation in the same light, when God because of His power is able to accomplish in an instant what under normal processes of construction may take aeons of time, we can see an answer to the seeming difficulties of age dating.

There is nothing, however, to preclude the possibility that the earth's matter could have been in existence in chaotic form prior to the events of Genesis 1. This view, and the other, that the earth's crust came into existence at the same time as life on earth are tenable. However, as Harold G. Coffin says, "On points for which Inspiration has provided no positive guidance it is best to suspend judgment, and to build solidly on those truths that are clearly revealed. We should also be tolerant of other points of view on such matters."

In thinking of the age of the earth we need to remember that man did not begin as a babe, or plants and trees as seeds, but as fully developed and mature. Thus it is entirely logical to see the earth created with all the evidences of having been there for millions of years. Such thinking is not strained when one considers, say, the island of Surtsey, which was born in 1963, of which the National Geographic magazine says, "In one week's time we witness changes that elsewhere might take decades, or even centuries. . . . Despite the extreme youth of the growing island we now encounter there a landscape so varied that it is almost beyond belief." Dr.

Thorarinsson, one of the first scientists to set foot on this new island, commented, "An Iclander who has studied geology . . . at foreign universities is later taught by experience in his own homeland that THE TIME SCALE HE HAS BEEN TRAINED TO ATTACH TO GEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IS MISLEADING. . . . What elsewhere may take thousands of years . . . may take only a few weeks or even A FEW DAYS HERE."

While the existence of inorganic matter before creation week may be an open question, there can be no doubt that the existence of living things on earth prior to creation week, and prior to several thousand years ago, is altogether incompatible with a literal interpretation of the Bible. While this may be difficult for some to believe, we must also remember that in the past, many historical events, places, and personages of the Bible record were held in question until the discoveries of modern archaeology. So it may well be that as we discover more of God's secrets of the universe, we shall be led to greater faith in His Word.

We can affirm with certainty those truths about creation that are clearly revealed: that God "spoke and it was," that He fashioned this earth in six literal days, and that He rested on the seventh day, and set it apart as a memorial of creation.

In simple, straightforward language the Bible tells us what we really need to know, that the God of the Bible is the God of creation. He who made the universe made all living things, and He is the God who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Why not let Him control your life, and as at creation bring order and perfection out of chaos? ★★

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# Good Will Is Not Just for Christmas

**MAISIE FOOK**, the founder of Asian Aid Organization, is interviewed by Robert Parr.



Mrs. Fook's mother, now nearing her eighty-sixth birthday, knitted these rugs for the Korean orphans.



These Vietnam children are being taught to play. Such are the pressures of war that, when children are deprived of parents and parental love, they lose many of the things we are inclined to take for granted. These children have been virtually imprisoned in their cots in their orphanage because of lack of trained personnel. Now, thanks to Mrs. Barclay, they are learning to play—and to laugh.

**Mrs. Fook, you are Chinese, but you speak with an Australian accent. What happened to your Chinese accent?**

I was born in Tenterfield, New South Wales, and hence am Australian by birth and a Chinese by parentage.

**Have you ever been to China and the Eastern countries?**

Yes, it was on a visit to China that I first saw the need of children there, and this prompted me to do something about it.

**When did you first visit China?**

When I was eleven.

**Do you remember much of that visit?**

I can still remember as vividly as if it were only yesterday walking along the streets of a Chinese city at night. It was dark, but not dark enough to hide the old men, the mothers and little children, the cripples and the destitute huddled in doorways, trying to keep warm with a few dirty rags for covering. By day I saw the beggars, and I was distressed even then at the misery of my people.

**As you were a tourist, I suppose you have never known poverty yourself.**

No, I came from a home where there was always plenty to eat; but my father had known poverty when he was a boy in China. He had to support his widowed mother when he was ten. When he came to Australia and set up in business, he sent back all he could to help his mother live at a reasonable standard.

**Are you over-sensitive to poverty and need?**

I don't think so. What has motivated me is the Christian principles of my mother. Mother always was—and still is—a devout Christian, and lives by the principle of loving her neighbour as herself. She never let up on us when we were children. As we grew up, serving others was the guiding star of life, as far as we could see.

**You are saying that your mother helped the Chinese destitute, too—as your father helped his mother?**



Oh, no, it was far broader than that. The tramp who came knocking at our door always went away with a good dinner under his belt—and one tramp tells another, you know; the aboriginal families across the other side of town knew my mother and were often calling for her help; the family of the alcoholic nearby knew they had a friend in my mother. So we grew up with this family tradition, I suppose—that of reaching out to those less fortunate. But in those days Mother helped more black faces and white faces than yellow faces.

### **A Family Tradition**

#### **So now your mother's mantle has fallen on you?**

Not on me alone; one of my brothers is a doctor, the other brother has a lifetime of social welfare work to his credit; my sisters are all interested in this kind of thing. In fact, all my sisters are with me in Asian Aid. And my mother, now pushing eighty-six, still crochets rugs for Korean orphans. I guess you could say community service is a family thing.



Children from the Invalid Orphanage. The double amputee in the picture has Asian Aid to thank for his wheel-chair. Notice that he has also lost an eye. But he can still smile.

#### **Now this interest in Korea. Where did you get that?**

I was first awakened to the tremendous need by a magazine article. I saw the pathetic situation. I began corresponding with the superintendent of an orphanage there, and began helping to support some of the children in the care of the orphanage. Soon I was trying to adopt my "adopted" children legally. Eventually this was arranged, and they are now living with us as part of our family.

#### **Have you ever been to Korea?**

Yes, my interest was such that I scraped and saved and went to visit that country. And the orphanage, too; that was the main attraction!

#### **Was the expense and the hard saving worth while?**

I should say so. I was appalled by such things as seeing women washing clothes among the cracked ice of the frozen rivers, carrying heavy loads on their heads to earn a few pence; I was horrified at the way men had to pull carts as if they were draught animals; I saw the squalor and soul-destroying conditions in which these people were forced to live, and I felt that something ought to be done.

#### **God-ordained?**

#### **What was the actual event which galvanized you into action?**

I don't know if there was one specific event. Perhaps it was the children, mainly. I learned that some were freezing to death in the streets; I saw the bales of clothes sent from America and found out that this contribution was just a drop in the bucket. I resolved that, if I could, Australia should have a part in warming and feeding the destitute of this unfortunate country.

#### **So what did you do?**

I came back to Australia and founded Asian Aid Organization. That was in 1966.



Two Adventist ministers hand over a cheque to the manager of the Invalid's Hospital in Vietnam. The money came from sponsors and donors in Australia.





Clothes from Australia! The orphans at Cross Orphanage, with which Asian Aid is associated, hold some of the latest shipment of much-needed clothing. There are 159 children at Cross.

**Do you believe that your work is God-ordained?**

I wouldn't like to make a claim as big as that. Who am I to say such a thing! However, I can say that I believe it is God who gives us the desire to help our fellow men. And I can tell you that God has led many people to help us in a remarkable way, and the providences of His leading are so marvellous that I cannot begin to count them all. I do not think I am over-stating the facts, however, when I say that I believe God led me to help these people. I recognize that our help is another drop in the bucket, but we cannot turn deaf ears to the cries of children when they are hungry.

**You mentioned that some people had been providentially led to help you. Can you give any instances?**

Yes, first there is Mr. Shim. He fled from the Communists in North Korea, pushing his family treasures in a hand-cart. He had been a man of some wealth, and the family treasures were quite considerable. But he was—and is—a man of great compassion. By the time he arrived in Seoul there were very few, if any, family treasures left in his cart; it was overflowing with needy, hungry children.

**And he arrived at the orphanage in which you have an interest?**

Oh, no! That was before the days of the orphanage; it was Mr. Shim who talked the American Army into giving him tents to house the orphans and food to satisfy their hunger. That was the forerunner of the orphanage.

**Interdenominational**

**And who else?**

Well, Dr. and Mrs. Rue, veteran missionaries, housed hundreds of orphans in the Seoul Adventist Hospital. Then they built an orphanage as a sort of annex, and it runs to this day.

**That's wonderful! Now let me ask you . . .**

But I must also tell you about Mr. Holt, a Baptist farmer in America. He was touched with the problems of the orphans in Korea and, after the war was over, came to Korea, and, with God's help, cut through

the maze of red tape and adopted eight mixed-blood babies and took them back to America with him. Since then the Holt Adoption Programme has placed nearly eleven thousand homeless children with families in America, Asia and Australia. And Mr. Holt also provides individualized care for 1,500 children in Korea.

**I'm glad you mentioned that. At one stage, I thought this might have been a purely Adventist organization. You mentioned that Mr. Holt is a Baptist.**

Yes, but the Holt Adoption Programme itself is an interdenominational Christian Organization.

**And what about the Asian Aid Organization which you set up? Is that tied in with the Holt Programme? And is it interdenominational?**

Yes to both questions. Yes, we are tied in with the Holt Programme, and yes, Asian Aid is quite interdenominational. On the governing committee here in Australia there are Roman Catholics, a Presbyterian, a Pentecostal, an Anglican and Adventists; and there is a mixture of European and Chinese faces. These people work with a common purpose: helping humanity. There are no denominational barriers when you set about filling empty tummies and clothing shivering bodies.

**Now that Vietnam is more or less quiet, I suppose you are picking up the pieces there?**

That is exactly what Asian Aid Organization is doing; but the size of the operation frightens me. There are 700,000 orphans in Vietnam. Only 23,000 of these are in the 112 registered orphanages (1,000 are of mixed blood; 500 are black). There are 750,000 refugees in Vietnam in 128 crowded refugee camps. 375,000 of these are children. There are 25,000 children of mixed race in Vietnam.

**You and your Asian Aid Organization are concentrating on the orphans at this stage?**

Orphans and refugees, both. We are closely connected with the Gordon Barclay Vietnam Fund, and distribute through that.



## Who is or was Gordon Barclay, and what is this Fund?

Dr. Gordon Barclay is an English Quaker doctor who served for a number of years in Vietnam. Mrs. Barclay visited many orphanages and was distressed by the emotional deprivation of thousands of children in these institutions where 90 per cent of babies die before they reach the age of twelve months. Children are imprisoned in cots until they are five because there is no one to care for them. Mrs. Barclay found that the children couldn't talk and didn't know how to play. She has set up mobile kindergartens to visit different orphanages and teach these children how to play. She aims to acquire mobile medical vans to attend to their physical needs as well. The number of orphans she reaches depends upon the financial assistance she receives. That is why we direct whatever we can to the Gordon Barclay Vietnam Fund.

### Orphans in Vietnam

#### How else do you distribute in Vietnam?

The Vietnam Mission of Seventh-day Adventists helps children orphaned and injured by war. Donations and gifts are channelled to an invalid orphanage where children have lost one or both legs, both hands, are maimed or blinded by fire-bombs or suffer other horrifying deformities.

**Of course, you would need someone to handle your affairs in a place like Vietnam. Have you such an agent?**

The Adventist Mission has set up a special committee to assist in orphan work. They feel that the most urgent need is to help the 700,000 orphans and half-orphans who are now being cared for by relatives and friends.

Many of these children are on the point of starvation when the committee visits them, but the children are determined that, if it is at all possible, they will stay

out of orphanages. In one case eleven orphan children in one family lived on one meal a day of rice and vegetable water supplied by the school. The oldest child is fourteen. The older children care for the younger.

#### How do you help these children?

We arrange sponsorships for five dollars a month. This helps buy food and clothing and so enables aunts, grandmothers and widowed mothers to keep the children and give them the loving care they need for healthy development.

#### Is your work growing?

Yes, thanks to the generosity of people we have been able to list in our 1973 report an almost doubling of our financial aid as compared with 1972.

#### But you still need more sponsors and gifts?

Yes; the need is endless; the work is growing.

**Suppose any of our readers would like to help, what should they do?**

Write to me at Asian Aid Organization, 421 King George's Road, Beverly Hills, N.S.W. 2209. I'll tell them all they want to know.

**Mrs. Fook, one last question: How much of every dollar goes in administrative costs?**

Not one cent. God has blessed us, and those who have formed the committee of this organization and have run it have done so without pay; it is absolutely voluntary, and no one even receives an honorarium. In fact, it costs us something personally to run the A.A.O., but this we do joyfully, thanking God that He has so bountifully blessed us.

**Thank you, Mrs. Fook. Yours is a kind of 365-days-a-year Santa Claus to those folk in Vietnam and Korea.**

No, not Santa Claus. We try to show them that Christians care about people. Good will is not just for Christmas, you know.

## CO-OPERATION CORNER

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

J. Cook	Tithe	\$36.00
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## Old Tales Retold—1.

From December, 1973, until November, 1974, we plan this interesting series: "Old Tales Retold." The first in the series is . . .

# the BIRDS of SORROW

By G. W. TARGET

THERE WAS ONCE a certain Wise Man who, unlike some so-called wise men, was truly wise, extraordinarily happy, and very famous for all the right reasons. Indeed, he was so famous that people visited him from almost every part of the then-known world to hear a little of his wisdom, and, if they could, to catch a little of his happiness.

There were, of course, those who weren't quite so enthusiastic . . .

"He doesn't seem very wise to us," they said. What does he know of the Miracles of Modern Technology? True," they said, smiling, "he's a pleasant enough old man in his own way, and we've nothing against him personally—but his Famous Wisdom is nothing more than the odds and ends of some rather old-fashioned thinking about Morality. After all, hasn't he even heard of Situational Ethics? And," they said, still smiling, though a bit more grimly, "as for his happiness—well, he's got just about everything in the world to be happy about. A nice little house in the country, a good wife, no money worries. So," they said, "why on earth shouldn't he be happy?"

And they smiled at each other, and nodded their heads very sagely as such people always seem to do.

Anyway, the Wise Man went on living quite happily without most of the Miracles of Modern Technology, and other people kept on visiting him from almost every part of the then-known world to hear a little of that rather old-fashioned thinking about Morality, and, if they could, to carry back with them warm memories of the hospitality of that little house in the country and the marvellous cooking of his wife.

But then, one day, things started to go wrong . . .

First, his wife became seriously ill; the doctors held out very little hope for her recovery, and she was moved to an expensive Clinic . . .

Then there was a prolonged drought in his part of the country—which meant that his flowers withered,

his vegetable patch failed to produce a crop worth the trouble of picking, and that the fruit on his trees fell to the dusty earth and rotted . . .

With no rain for weeks and months the grass dried to tinder . . .

The river became a furrow of baked mud, the wells parched . . .

Fire was almost inevitable . . .

And the flames, once started by a careless spark, swept the entire countryside for miles around . . . farms, houses, woods, fields, everything and anything that would burn . . .

Well, the Wise Man escaped with a few minor scorchs, but his few possessions were in ashes.

"Now!" said those doubters, "with his wife at the very door of death, his house and property destroyed, his land worthless—now we'll see the true value of his precious so-called wisdom!"

And, just like the sort of people they are, they came to see, and to comment, and to nod their heads very sagely . . .

They found him digging a new vegetable patch, and singing . . .

"Look!" he said, "the grass is already beginning to grow again among the ashes! And that ash will do the soil a lot of good—there'll be some wonderful crops next year, you mark my words!"

"But," they said, "how can you sing with your wife at the very door of death itself?"

He smiled: "Like this grass," he said, "she's beginning to be herself again—it takes more than fire or fever to finish their sort!"

"But," they said . . . and stopped, baffled at his happiness.

"There's a rather old-fashioned proverb," he said. "You cannot prevent the Birds of Sorrow from flying over your land, but you don't have to encourage them to build their nests in your hair, do you?" ★★





MYRTLE O'HARA'S  
**STORY FOR  
BOYS AND GIRLS**

# UNHAPPY CHRISTMAS

IT ALL STARTED with Thelma's new dress. Mother made Thelma and Roslyn a new dress each for Christmas. "Make them different this time, Mum," the girls said. Before this, Mother had always dressed the girls alike. "I'm grown up now," twelve-year-old Roslyn said, "and I don't want to be dressed like a little girl." Thelma was nine years old and Roslyn considered that she was only little.

So Mother made the dresses and the girls tried them on and looked at each other. "Why didn't you make mine like Roslyn's?" Thelma said. "Hers is much nicer than mine."

"No, I think yours is prettier than mine," her sister said.

"They are both nice," Mother said. "You cannot say that one is better than the other. You wanted them different, so say no more about it, Thelma."

Thelma was a nice girl, but she had one fault. She was never satisfied with what she had, and she thought about herself all the time.

Christmas morning arrived and the girls put on their new dresses. Their family and all their relations were going to Grandma's place for dinner. During the morning, every time Thelma looked at Roslyn she felt miserable because she imagined everyone would think she didn't look as nice as her sister, and she became more and more unhappy. Everyone else was so happy, and she seemed out of it all. So she went off by herself and no one even seemed to notice that she had gone. That made her feel worse. "No one cares about me," she thought, and tears spilled from her eyes.

"What is wrong with Thelma?" Grandma asked.

"She is tired," Mother said. "There have been too many parties and too much shopping this week and I think she hasn't had enough sleep." Everyone left it at that and took no more heed of Thelma, but Grandma had her doubts.

After dinner, the family went into the lounge room, where a splendid Christmas tree reached nearly to the ceiling. It was covered in decorations and gaily wrapped parcels, and there was much excitement as the presents were given and received. Thelma received some very nice things, but she watched enviously to see what others were getting. "I wish someone had given me that," she thought as one of her cousins opened his parcel. "That is just what I would have liked," she thought again as Roslyn opened a parcel. "Everyone has nicer things than mine," she said to herself as she looked at the other children playing happily with their toys. She looked down at her own things, and Grandma was the only one who noticed the unhappy expression on her face.

Thelma made her way around to her little cousin and picked up some of his toys. "They're mine," he shouted.

"I just want to have a look," she said.

"You play with your own toys; I want to play with mine myself."

"Leave him alone," Mother said sternly.

"Let me show you how they work," said Thelma.

"I know how they work," he said and made a grab for his things.

"Thelma, go out of the room," Mother said. She stamped out and cried. She listened to all the happy sounds in the other room and blamed everyone but herself for her misery. She was sure they were being unfair to her, and it made her more miserable to think they were all so happy while she was unhappy.

Later, they had tea in the park. The children raced off to the playground and were having great fun when Thelma came along. She stood watching for a while then said: "I want a swing, too. Let me have a turn." But no one heard her and she went away by herself and watched the ducks and swans on the water.

At last, when bedtime came, she was glad the day was over. For her it had been miserable and unhappy. But Roslyn was bubbling over with happiness. "I think this is the best Christmas I have ever had," she said, and everyone except Thelma agreed with her.

The next day Thelma woke up happier. A trip to the country had been planned and Grandma was anxious to try out the new camera Grandpa had given her. It was one of those that develop the pictures as soon as they are taken. Thelma was very interested and said: "I wish I had a camera like yours, Grandma. Please will you let me take a picture?"

Grandma handed the camera to Thelma and told her what to do. But when the picture was developed there was a big black spot over half of it.

"Whatever happened?" Thelma asked in dismay.

"You must have got your thumb in the way," Grandma said, "and it spoiled your picture." Then she said: "This makes me think of all the pictures you spoiled yesterday, Thelma."

"But I didn't take any pictures yesterday."

"I mean the pictures you have in your mind, Thelma. You let not only your thumb but the whole of yourself get in the way all the time. You thought about yourself all day and you got so much in the way that you blotted out all the happiness you could have had. Instead of having a memory of lovely pictures you have only ugly ones." Grandma looked kindly at Thelma, who felt ashamed.

"Take this spoiled picture home and put it where you can see it every morning as soon as you wake up," Grandma said, "so that it will remind you to put others first and yourself last. If you do that, you will be a much happier little girl, and your memory will be full of beautiful pictures. Now try again with my camera and see if you can do better this time." ★★



# GOD HELPS DIVORCEES TOO

BY ANN ECKA

If divorce has shattered your home, and dashed your dreams, you will find wonderful encouragement in this article by a woman who discovered God beyond the disaster.

IT HAD BEEN a long week-end at the lake. Our boys and I had attended a special spiritual retreat for doctors and their families. We had been invited by friends. At one time my husband had been a leader in this group; this time I had

come as a guest, without my husband. A divorce had broken our family.

On Sunday morning I talked at length with the pastor who was the main speaker at the retreat, seeking counsel in the rearing of my teenage sons. Of necessity, we discussed the impact of divorce on a person's personality and outlook. I came home to try to put on paper a philosophy which has helped me. This is what I wrote in my diary.

Since divorce is against the plan of God—and certainly against the best interests of society—it is a subject we discuss reluctantly. However, not all divorcees deliberately choose that course. Too often people think that even an unwillingly divorced person is either immoral or inept. Regardless of causes, a divorced woman's particular problems centre around several factors.

- A tremendous loss of self-esteem.
- An overwhelming loneliness.
- An acute sense of rejection.
- An awareness of an unfair and overburdening responsibility in the rearing of partially estranged children.
- The ever-present problems of making ends meet.
- The certainty that she is the subject of ungenerous discussion among her friends.
- The loss, often, of beautiful and comfortable physical surroundings.

- The possibility of danger to her person.

- The fear that she may, through loneliness or discouragement, yield to sexual temptation.

These are problems that constantly haunt her, except when she is very busy or very sound asleep. How shall she cope with them without denying reality or becoming hopelessly depressed?

Isaiah 54 is, to my mind, the divorced woman's chapter. It was written to the "afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted." Let us take it apart and see how the promises of God meet this woman's needs. We shall first state the problem, then the phrases which hold God's promise.

## Loss of self-esteem.

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee." Verse 7.

"Thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more." Verse 4.

## Loneliness.


"Thy Maker is thine husband; . . . thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called." Verse 5.

## Rejection.

"The Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused." Verse 6.

"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kind-





ness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Verse 10.

**The responsibility of rearing children.**

"All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." Verse 13.

To this add Isaiah 49:25: "I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."

**Financial problems.**

"With great mercies will I gather thee." Isaiah 54:7.

"My kindness shall not depart from thee." Verse 10.

**Unfriendly Gossip.**

"Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." Verse 17.

"Whosoever shall gather against thee shall fall for thy sake." Verse 15.

**Loss of attractive home or possessions.**

"I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, . . . and all thy borders of pleasant stones." Verses 11, 12.

**Physical danger.**

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Verse 17.

"Thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee." Verse 14.

**Temptation.**

"In righteousness shalt thou be established." Verse 14.

"This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord." Verse 17.

At many different times and under all kinds of circumstances I

have brought these promises to God, and He has fulfilled them.

**A Story to Illustrate**

I asked a marriage counsellor to read my paper. At this point he said, "Are you suggesting that the woman who, while she was married has been without necessities can, after she has been divorced, hope for elegance?"

To explain my application of verses 11 and 12, I must tell a story.

We had designed and built our home, and since my husband had a strong artistic sense, and money had been no object, it certainly was a dream home. When I found it necessary to sell and move to smaller quarters, God provided a buyer the day after I made the decision to sell, and the buyer provided me and the children with the smaller quarters and also did the moving.

On my last night in our home, I was suddenly struck with a sense of what I was leaving **behind**, and what I was going **to**. In an almost overwhelming sense of loss, I turned to Isaiah 54 and read, really for the first time: "I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires." Our house had been decorated in a particularly lovely shade of blue; now God was saying to me through this verse that I could again hope for beauty in another, simpler home. I have never again since then felt grief over the loss of my house and what it represented.

But **how** does God fulfil all these promises? Mostly through other people, or through counselling, or through insight gained by prayer and the study of the Word of God.

The day will never come for any of us when we shall "be carried to



the skies on flowery beds of ease." But God's promises assure us that it is eminently worth while to put forth an effort to try to solve our personal problems, because He has pledged Himself to work with us.

#### Some of the Blame

A woman must face the unpalatable reality that she bears at least some responsibility for the breakup of her home. She must try to discover where **she** failed, admit her failure, go to God for forgiveness and healing, accept God's mercy, believe that she is accepted of Him, and thank Him for it.

I suspect that the desire to control and impress other people are the rocks on which many marriages founder. These are deeply imbedded attitudes, and they have to be recognized and dealt with.

Regardless of what has happened, or is happening, a woman does not dare nourish resentment or bitterness, for this will destroy her, both soul and body. Realizing where she herself has failed within the marriage, she can release a source of forgiveness for the man who was her husband.

When she is able to pray: "I have failed. He has failed. You, God, love us both. You desire to forgive us both, and to restore us. I accept your grace made possible to me through the sacrifice of Jesus, I accept that forgiveness and restoration, and I trust your leading from now on." When she prays like this, she opens herself to the mercies of a most merciful God.

When the temptation comes to blame, or to get even, Romans 12 is a good chapter to re-read:

"Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come endure them patiently; steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer. . . . And as for those who try to make your life a misery, bless them. Don't curse, bless. Share the happiness of those who are happy,

and the sorrow of those who are sad. Live in harmony with each other. . . . Don't become set in your own opinions. Don't pay back a bad turn by a bad turn, to **anyone**. See that your public behaviour is above criticism. As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone. Never take vengeance into your own hands, my dear friends: stand back and let God punish if He will. For it is written: Vengeance belongeth unto Me: I will recompense. And these are God's words: If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Don't allow yourself to be overpowered by evil. Take the offensive—overpower evil with good!" Romans 12: 12-21, Phillips.

#### Helpful Books

Books have been written dealing with the problems of single and divorced women. You may receive real help from some of them, providing you keep in mind that a person must compare secular reading with the Scriptures, and promptly discard anything that does not line up with God's Word.

Books that I have found helpful include "Life at Its Best,"\* and "Happiness Homemade,"\* by Ellen G. White; "A Man Called Peter," by Catherine Marshall; "A Woman Doctor Looks at Life and Love," by Marion Hilliard, M.D.; "This Thing Called Fear,"\* by Marjorie Lewis Lloyd; and The New Testament in Modern English,\* a translation by J. B. Phillips.

I have learned to pray about my immediate problem, however trivial it may seem. I often write out my prayers, so that I can pinpoint my precise need, and so that I can later see in what way God has chosen to answer me. I not only ask: I bring to God His promise, and I thank Him for hearing me.

\*Available from Signs Publishing Company.

A divorced woman must absolutely accept the fact that she must build for herself a new life in which she is not unduly dependent on anyone. The past—its joys and its mistakes—is past. It is right, if one's former partner has not remarried, to hope and pray that the family will be reunited, but that possibility lies in the hands of God, and the separation may be as final as death. While she leaves that door open, she must prepare herself to "go it alone." For both financial and spiritual reasons, she will need to be self-supporting. To circumvent self-pity, she does well to watch every opportunity to be of help or encouragement to others.

#### One Day at a Time

A last, perhaps most important, thought. If a bereft woman is to have any happiness, she must appreciate and respond to the small joys of each day as they come to her. She must watch for the beauties of nature, the kindness of her friends, the goodness of God. The future is uncertain, but God cares.

I have tried to share with you the comfort and counsel God has brought to me. Your circumstances are different; you have undoubtedly experienced hardships I know nothing of. Perhaps you cannot look back, as I can, on many happy years of married life. I sense that God has been very good to me, to the point that I am almost afraid to write, for fear that you will say, "But she doesn't know what it is like to be in my shoes." It is only because, as the psalmist wrote, "He fashioned their hearts alike" (Psalm 33: 15), that I presume to write at all.

There is one promise, however, which is big enough for every one of us: "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Philip-  
pians 4: 19.

**All your need!**

★ ★

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE . . .

W. L. Emerson has contributed to this and other periodicals for many years. Perhaps his greatest articles are yet future, for each succeeding essay seems better than the last. In "The Religion of Evolution," which is a recent addition to his great host of journalistic endeavours, he shows that evolution is a theory that has no foundation.

Some time ago, we discussed with Dr. Lionel Turner a series of articles on the Psychology of Salvation. Under this general heading the series commences next month. The first article of the six is "The Subject of Therapy."

A frequent contributor to this magazine is George Burnside of Sydney. He is a man who watches world events closely and lines them up against the Word of God. He writes simply and directly of one present-day trend in "Industrial Crises—Another Sign."



TEACHING ONE'S WIFE to drive has always seemed to me to be the most perilous test to which an immature marriage can be subjected. (Mature marriages are never subjected to such stress: mature people know better.) But little had I considered the perils of having a son who is taking driving lessons.

Until Sam filled me in, that is. Sam (whose name is not as real as the conversation) lives just far enough down the street to be conveniently removed from identity. His son is completing the driving course at the local high school. I stopped to visit Sam and got the following tale of woe.

"You know," he says, a short, pudgy finger pointing emphasis at me, "since he started driving lessons it's getting kind of embarrassing just having him along. Like the other day I don't quite stop at a stop sign, and he lets me know such a practice doesn't bring an approving smile to his instructor's face. And he says if a stop sign is set back twenty feet from a corner, you're supposed to stop at the sign, creep forward to the intersection, and then stop again before proceeding. Imagine him telling me that"—Sam's finger beat out the "Charge of the Light Brigade" on his chest—"me who was driving before he had juice in his battery!

"So I'm on the way to the hardware store to get some solder, see, and I change lanes a few times, and he says, 'Dad, you're not supposed to weave in and out of traffic'—says it to me, who has never scraped a fender—at least not while changing lanes, you understand." Sam's perceptive. He had seen my eyes tracing the repaint line on his '68 hardtop.)

"I've always wheeled right along—you know that the cops always concede you five or so miles over the limit, right? Well that's not the story he gets from the instructor. To hear him tell it, exceed par a few times, and you'll find yourself pulling a ricksha." (Sam's scram-

bled metaphors go well with his theology, which, so far as I've been able to discover, is twentieth-century pagan.)

"Thing is," Sam continues, nostalgia for the good old days etching pathos into his prose, "the kid thought I was the greatest driver around until he started taking lessons.

## Driving home a lesson

By Roland H. Heistad



"Last time we were out he looks at the speedometer and asks me if I really believe that speed laws make sense. If I say Yes, I've got to explain why I don't pay much attention to them; if I say No, the kid kills himself some Saturday night.

"How I drove didn't seem to matter much when he was growing up." (Sam's fingers rubbed reassurance into each other.) "Now that he's learning for himself, I'm more nervous every time we go driving.

"Now, pastor, what I want to know is, What do I say when he starts to give me that 'Render unto Caesar' bit?"

Well, this is one time I'm not volunteering any advice, not with a son who is "sixteen, going on seventeen," as the song says. I josh Sam about his inconsistency—though my heart isn't in it—and with more solicitude than usual for the tread on my rear tyres, take off for home. It takes me longer to get back than going, which is just as well, when your mind isn't on your driving.

What I'm thinking is, professing one thing and practising another is the sure cure for a kid's religious experience. Exhibits: Putting a "stop" sign on the television set—you know, that "Whatsoever" verse, and then "coasting" through another programme or two after the approved one goes off. Talking sacrifice, and practising extravagance. Upholding the Ten Commandment "speed limit" while living as if the Lord conceded you an extra 5 m.p.h. Prattling that the Lord is coming soon, and then living as if today is going on for ever.

Just what do you tell a kid when he gives you that "Render unto" bit and then asks for an explanation?

Or has he already been told—told so empirically, so repeatedly, that no amount of repentance, no amount of explanation, can ever totally undo the answer the years have given? ★★





ARCH HEFREN TALKS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

# STRAIGHT FROM THE SHOULDER

## How Much Is Enough?



THAT IS ONE of those questions to which no objective answer can ever be given. Men spend their lives trying to establish bank balances and investments that will be sufficient. Someone has very wittily given the answer thus: Enough is five dollars more than you have. That neatly expresses the dilemma of the one whose life is given over to the pursuit of wealth.

The basis of the problem, of course, is that most respectable and most common of all vices, covetousness. No man is free from it; most are utterly controlled by it. That is why hire purchase companies flourish and bookmakers grow fat. They are in business to cater for the covetous, whether of money or of things. They never lack customers, for they are in the front rank themselves.

But of course the question applies to something more than money. It has equal relevance for the pleasure seeker. How much fun is enough? With its usual penetrating insight, the Bible puts the finger on this plague spot. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6. Death in life and life in death. What a vivid picture of the one who is always chasing the newest fashion and the latest thrill! Any who have trodden the weary treadmill of pleasure in search of satisfaction know all too well the sense of satiety that can only be appeased by a return to the pleasure craze that clogs while it craves.

A whole generation has had the joys of love spoiled for it because it seemed that more and more titillation of the sex instinct was the answer to happiness. Millions of young people have been sold the delusion that sex and love are synonymous terms. Remove the restrictions upon decent reticence and have enough erotic stimulation to be enough. Well, we have gone the whole way! Stage and screen have combined to present so explicit a statement of

the flesh that there is nothing left to say. The "blue" shops and theatres of Paris are closing up because they cannot attract patrons bored with that which no longer excites. Enough is not enough, it seems. It is too much!

Perhaps we might find a satisfying answer to the question if we add two words to it. How much is enough **to give?**

That, of course, radically changes the focus. Now the spotlight is not thrown upon me and my wants, but upon my fellow man. To look upon the poor with a pity that expresses itself, not in charity but in personal involvement and sharing, is a new experience. I become aware of gratitude. My own little becomes so adequate in the light of the comparison.

To share with the sick, the blind, or paralysed, one's own gift of health, of sight, of mobility, not patronizingly but as a gesture of love, is to discover that there are no limits to giving and no cloying satiety of experience. Instead of exploiting the desire and the weaknesses of a partner, let us learn to give love without thought of return, to shelter and cherish rather than to demand, in the name of proving love, that which should not be given save in the haven of marriage. Then we shall know that "love seeketh not her own"—in other words, it is not concerned with getting but in giving.

If you want a real answer to the question we began with, look at Calvary. Satanic malice exhausted itself in an effort to find enough shame and torture to inflict upon Christ. When our Lord died, Lucifer knew he had not been able to satisfy his own desires. Enough was insufficient. Because Christ concerned Himself with the question, "How much is enough to give?" He died contented, knowing that "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Isaiah 53: 11. Which question are you asking yourself? ★★





# QUESTION BOX

Young People's  
Questions Answered  
by GORDON BOX

## Right Wing? Left Wing?

It is well known that the socialist form of government is more concerned for the "common man" than political parties that are right wing. Bearing this in mind, is it a Christian responsibility to support the socialist or communist parties? I realize communism is atheistic in its basic concept, but it still does more for the people than capitalism, which has exploited the working man for centuries. Do you think Jesus would support a capitalistic form of government?

Well, when Jesus was here He didn't openly support any political party. He did say, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," but this was probably acknowledging the role of government as a necessary function for any society. Christians are not then to shirk their social responsibilities.

When we look at today's political scene (and I certainly do not profess to be an expert in this field) there seems to be one basic flaw in them all. This is the nature of man. As a youngster said to me recently: "It wasn't the apple on the tree in the garden of Eden that caused our problems—it was the pair on the ground." Man is his own worst enemy, and never forget it.

The aims of socialism or communism may be Utopia for all. Fine! The problem is that in practice a hierarchy develops. George Orwell reminds us of this in his book, "Animal Farm." The animals kick the farmer off the property because he exploits the animals. They appoint the pigs as leaders. But after a while the pigs take over the farm house and have parties and exploit the other animals. ("All animals ARE equal—but some are more equal than others.")

So that is the story of history—even the church when it loses sight of Christ. **It is the story of man without God.**

Another important consideration: Christians cannot support a system that will, if necessary, achieve its ends through violence. That is contrary to the spirit of Christ. Communists have more than once condemned Christianity for its refusal to take a hard line of this kind against what they (maybe correctly) consider injustice. But a follower of Christ can only follow His example, and that is a non-violent example.

Again. In the socialist system the rights of the individual are subservient to that of society. The party line must be followed. This is unacceptable to the follower of Christ who holds the dignity of the individual **supreme**, and the right of man to follow his conscience **first** in any issue.

None of the foregoing is a defence of the evils of a capitalistic system. From a Christian viewpoint they are indefensible, but so are the evils or injustices of other systems. Not everything within any political system is wholly bad or wholly good when measured against true Christian morality. This again is where individual conscience must be given its right, and every man is obligated to do what his conscience tells him is the best thing in any given circumstance.

## "Who, Then, Can Be Saved?"

**Do you have to be perfect to get to heaven? If so, I don't think I'll make it.**

If you mean what I think you do, the answer is No. If it's Yes, I

know I won't make it, and I don't know who will.

All this is assuming that by "perfect" you mean a person who never makes a mistake—or thinks a bad thought—or has a poor motive, and always does everything he or she undertakes without a flaw. Perfection in this sense is beyond us. It is doubtful if we can even conceive it, let alone achieve it.

What we can have is a perfect willingness to acknowledge our need and perfect acceptance of the grace of Christ to make up for our failures. If we do this, then God looks at us, but sees Christ instead, because we have accepted His offer to take our place.

The Apostle John says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. Now if all unrighteousness, or sin if you prefer, is gone, a man stands before God "perfect."

This relationship is described very well in the little book "Real Happiness Is," in these words: "If you give yourself to Him and accept Him as your Saviour, then sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God as if you had never sinned." (If you would like a copy of this book, drop me a line and I'll send one free.) This is why the message of the New Testament is called the gospel, which means Good News.

## Jesus' Hair

**Did Jesus have long hair when He lived upon this earth? Is there anywhere in the Bible to answer one way or another?**

I know of no such passage to help you. What does seem clear is that Jesus wore His hair according to the custom of His time and did not stand out in this respect. He did stand out from His contemporaries in many other respects, however, but these were so much more important and relate to the real stuff life is made of.



## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT

SOON, the voice of the carol-singer will be heard in our land. That will be the prelude to a knock at the door and a rattle of a tin under the nose of the door-opener. The generous-hearted will dip into their private funds and contribute to some worthy or not-so-worthy cause; the more parsimonious will wave the mendicant musicians away with an impatient hand.

Christmas time is, according to the song, commemorative of that "silent night, holy night" which, about 1977 years ago (if we take 4 B.C. as the birth date of Christ, or 1972 years ago if we take it at A.D. 1) ushered in a new era. We can only presume that



Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips at the time of their engagement.

it was, indeed, a silent night and a holy night, but we can be absolutely certain that December 24 in the evening and December 25 in the day in A.D. 1973 will be neither silent nor holy—according to the celebrations of some.

The finely tuned ear will hear more than silence. It will hear the crunch of metal as motor-car jousts with motor-car; it will hear the ribald song of the inebriate as he lurches homeward from his Christmas spree at the "local." It will hear the tinkling of glass as it smashes when beer bottles are dropped; it will hear the wailings of police sirens as those earnest keepers

of law and order proceed from one unfortunate car smash to the next; from one domestic upheaval to the next bar-room brawl.

All of this noise and caterwauling is excused on the grounds that "It's Christmas." All the mad spending on presents for people who don't need them by people who can't afford them; all the idiotic behaviour because of a date on a calendar, because of the birthday of the One who was the Prince of Peace, the One meek and lowly; all this for the Christ whose birthday is, of all months of the year, certainly NOT December. (No self-respecting shepherd in Judea would be caught lolling on the ground while his sheep drowsed on the nearby sward in the dead of winter. In these antipodes, perhaps it would be the done thing to spend a December night in the open with one's flocks; but not in Palestine! Not in December!)

So of one thing we are certain: Christ was NOT born on Christmas Day—at least, not on December 25. But neither, for that matter, was Queen Elizabeth born on the Queen's birthday. She was born, and celebrates her actual birthday, in April; the British Commonwealth (at least in this portion of it) runs up its flags and puts out its bunting on the first or second Monday in June (or thereabouts).

We know, therefore, that what is celebrated here is not the actual birthday of Christ. We know with equal certainty that Christ, the Son of God, was born in Bethlehem, of a Virgin, in a stable and was laid in a manger. The exact time we do not know. But we pause among the clamour and the nonsense of life, amid the relentless strivings and the never-ending pursuit of the dollar, to honour the One who came that all men might have a better way of life, and hope of eternity.

We regret that many do not these days acknowledge the Virgin-birth as a fact of their faith; we regret that many will admit only that Jesus was a good man—nothing more; we regret that multitudes have thrown overboard the faith of their fathers. We, however, are here to state that it is still a matter of factual Scriptural reporting that Christ was indeed born in Bethlehem, that He came from a pre-existence in heaven, that He was miraculously conceived and was recognized, even in His infancy, as "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matthew 1: 23.)

The night upon which He was born was not holy in the eyes of a blind world; it was no different from a thousand other nights they had lived through. Neither was it any less noisy than any other in the estimation of an irritated populace who had to traipse half-way across the country to be taxed. There would have been some hard words uttered about that, and some defamatory remarks made about Cæsar for requiring this pilgrimage just for the privilege of paying the tax shekel.



But the night was holy because "that holy thing" (Luke's phrase) made holy everything it touched. And Christ touched that night with a new radiance. And it was a silent night, in a sense, for no doubt all heaven watched in silent awe as He, the first-born of the Father, was born in that forgotten but immortal stable and laid in a make-shift manger-crib. Then the angel choirs burst forth into magnificent song. Christ was born! The night of earth's darkness paled a little as the "Sun of Righteousness" came "with healing in His wings"—to give men hope.

*Robert Parr*

### THE NEED TO BE LED

AN OBSESSION with public opinion polls characterizes almost every political, artistic and commercial enterprise in our society. The man in the street is constantly asked for his views on a great variety of topics, and presumably this market research information is of great value at the policy-making level. Economically sound though it may be, the practice seems to ensure that the quality of many public services seldom rises above the mediocre.

Dennis O'Brien, commenting on a public-response-to-television survey presented in Federal Parliament in September, noted: "The survey revealed more public ennui than anger or annoyance with television. There was no emotion in the statistics, just a reflection of drifting boredom. People complained that television contained too many repeats, not enough diversity or Australian programming, and too much violence. But there was no heat—nor specific solutions.

"What the result spells out most of all is television's predominant lack of adventurousness. It has bored its audience by trying resolutely to toady to it. The audience now needs to be led."—"The Bulletin," October 6, 1973.

This policy of toadying to the audience, of submitting all ideas to the pre-sampling system where the lowest common denominator is taken to be the rule of acceptance, is becoming general. As a result, drifting boredom and dissatisfaction could well be described as national attitudes in many areas of life. We seem to be saddled with the second-rate because bold creative thinking becomes stifled in such an atmosphere. Truly, we need to be educated and led away from such a situation.

Even churches cannot expect to escape from this trend. Such drifting boredom and dissatisfaction turn religious life from "a thrilling affirmation into a dull denial," to use the words of Joy Davidman in "Smoke on the Mountain." She adds: "Yet there was the sound of trumpets in it once." Can that sound of trumpets be restored by asking people in a materialistic age what they want? Should the man in the street decide the direction the church must take?

In tribal Israel, restless dissatisfaction prevailed. The prophet Samuel had delegated his responsibilities to his sons, who saw the opportunity to enrich themselves by corrupting the administration of justice.

Bribery became the order of the day, to the dismay of those elders who had known the discipline of Samuel's authority in his younger days. A delegation approached Samuel, requesting that a king be appointed to rule the nation. In spite of the prophet's warnings as to the exact nature of the despotism of eastern kings, the delegation stood firm. "'No,' they said, 'we will have a king over us; then we shall be like other nations, with a king to govern us, to lead us out to war and fight our battles.'" 1 Samuel 8:20, N.E.B.

Although civilization claims to have advanced many thousands of years since that time, the description of conditions sounds strangely like our own day, when entire nations appear to wallow in corruption, when few men in public life seem immune to depravity and self-aggrandizement. With total conviction the people of Samuel's day declared that they knew the answer to the problem. They needed a king. Even though they had known the presence of the Lord in a pillar of fire, and though it was their destiny and glory to have the Lord for their King and Lawgiver, they wanted to be like other nations. And with total conviction today there are those who would choose an equally suicidal course. The tragedy is that then as now the "other nations" can offer nothing in the way of example.

In one of the most sublime of the psalmist's songs, he declares: "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me." Psalm 139:10-12. After this acknowledgement of God's power and presence, David offers the prayer of the penitent sinner: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any way of pain or grief [margin] in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Verses 23, 24.

Just as there is a need for the television audience to be led, to have their tastes refined and their perception educated, so there is a need for Christians to be led. The pathway has never deviated, even though there is a clamour on every hand for relevance and modernization. Techniques of market research in a consumer-oriented society can never make decisions for a Christian who must choose the way everlasting, and be led by the Spirit of God.

God's law, as revealed in the Ten Commandments and amplified by Christ in His New Testament statement of love, constitutes the way everlasting. Here is the course that will transform the dull denial experienced by many people back to the thrilling affirmation that thundered from Mount Sinai and led the patriarchs and the heroes of the apostolic church in their zealous deeds for the Christian faith. There is abundant evidence in our world that unwise choices and discontent mar our pathway. We need to leave the way of pain and grief, and with the psalmist surrender to the leading of the One who can cause the night to be bright about us, and who will ultimately lead us to eternal day.

*James Rabe*





# BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Readers' Questions Answered by **DESMOND FORD, M.A., Ph.D.**

## CHARISMATIC OBJECTIONS

**What objection have you to the modern charismatic movement which seems to be taking so many by storm in various churches, particularly in the United States?**

We bid all honour to those who in every church are seeking God. But because church history testifies to the fact that counterfeit revivals bring ultimate shame to the name of Christ, we feel bound to apply certain tests to every movement professing special blessing from Heaven.

One obvious test is suggested in Isaiah 8: 20. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." And the overwhelming testimony of that Word is that true holiness is WHOLENESS for God. The Epistles of Paul, for example, are characterized by a certain literary structure which impresses this point. Usually Paul has his opening chapters devoted to doctrine. But then comes a "therefore" as in Romans 12: 1, Ephesians 4: 1, Colossians 3: 5, etc. This "therefore" introduces a description of practical Christian duties whereby every thought, word, and deed is brought into harmony with the law of God. Paul emphasizes that all outside rituals, however apparently religious, are as nothing compared to the real test of the Christian—absolute obedience to the will of God. Compare the following:

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God [is everything]." Galatians 5: 6; 6: 15; 1 Corinthians 7: 19.

Paul has also defined true holiness in another place as follows:

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10: 31.

Thus holiness is neither rapture nor ecstasy. It is living by every word that has proceeded out of the mouth of God. It is obeying God when it is easy and when it is rough; it is trusting Him in the darkness as well as in the light; it is choosing His will above our own in every situation.

The characteristic evil of many so-called religious revivals is a lusting after signs of power. Men and women are ambitious for the power of God but not His character. Thus it was with the first great apostate. Lucifer said in his heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit

also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Isaiah 14: 13, 14. He was ambitious to be like the Creator in power but not in character. This was the sin of Simon Magus. Note the record concerning him: "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." Acts 8: 18, 19.

This man who wanted the power of the Holy Ghost was told that his heart was not right in the sight of God. He was urged to repent of his wickedness in the hope that he might be forgiven. Of Herod also we read that he longed to see a display of power from Christ, but instead he received the silence of contempt. (See Luke 23: 8, 9.)

The testimony of Scripture is that divine power in plenitude has been given only to men living at crisis eras such as the Exodus, the reformation under Elijah and Elisha, the Babylonian captivity, and the launching of the Christian church. On most other occasions the chief power bestowed was the power for witnessing, the eloquence of love. The fruit of the Spirit is more truly the evidence of being a Christian than professed gifts of the Spirit. And the fruit is more often attended with bodily weakness rather than outward demonstrations such as tongues or healing. Here is Paul's witness to this effect: "... there was given to me a thorn in the flesh ... to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10.

## PRAYERS IGNORED

**What should one do if one's prayer for help seems to be ignored by God?**

**S.C.**

At that point one must choose between despair and hope. The former choice can bring only a further deterioration of affairs. Therefore the Biblical counsel is to "wait on the Lord," and is often repeated. Scripture is full of examples where God seemed to tarry, but brought relief at the eleventh hour. It was in the fourth watch of the night, when the ship of the disciples seemed about to be swallowed up, that Jesus brought deliverance. (See Matthew 14: 24-27.) It was on the fourth day AFTER the death of Lazarus that



Jesus came and restored an apparently impossible situation. It was when it seemed certain to the apostles that Jesus was refusing the request of the Canaanite woman that He said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." (See Matthew 15: 22-28.)

Imagine how disastrous it would be to Christian character if God behaved as a cosmic bell-boy and immediately responded to our every request. Character would be deformed rather than formed. Whatever comes easily is unappreciated. It takes strain and tension to build not only muscles but faith. Let us learn to say with the psalmist, "My times are in Thy hand" (Psalm 31: 15), remembering that He does all things well. And while God seems to tarry, review past situations of uncertainty from which you were ultimately delivered. For your devotional reading at such times, choose the accounts of the Crucifixion, Job and Psalms.

## "TO HIM THAT KNOWETH"

**Is a man lost because he learns the truth upon a certain subject such as the Sabbath and does not follow it?** U.S.

No, he is not lost, but he is in danger of being lost. Note the warning of Christ: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." John 12: 25, 26.

It is significant that the very next words of the record are: "These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them."

Truth is easiest to obey when first the mind is convinced of the necessity for obedience. All convictions untranslating into action gradually lose their potency. Thus Scripture indicates the right reaction of all who claim to be the children of God: "As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me." Psalm 18: 44.

## THE CHEERFUL, BUOYANT CHRISTIAN

**If I am a Christian, ought I not feel cheerful and buoyant?** Anon.

If you are looking primarily for feelings rather than anything else, the type of feelings you want will lastingly elude you. Feelings, like coke, are a by-product. The New Testament urges us to concentrate on what we do, not on how we feel. Feelings are something that happen to us, rather than a matter of choice.

Those of us who spent years in the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, have developed emotional patterns which may take almost as many years to completely undo as they took years to form. Let us remember that we are accepted by God on the basis of what Christ felt for us, not on the grounds of any feelings of our own. It was the ark that saved Noah, not his feelings. A man can feel absolutely right when he is dead wrong, according to Scripture. See Proverbs 16: 25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Furthermore, we are solemnly assured that

"he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Proverbs 28: 26. On the other hand, the one who trusts in Christ and is seeking to please Him in all things is comforted as follows: "... if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." 1 John 3: 20.

Let us concentrate on doing the will of God, regardless of how we feel, and in His good time, the tide of buoyant joy will come in.

# Signs OF THE TIMES

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# What Makes Christmas?

"What is Christmas?"  
I asked my soul,  
And this answer  
Came back to me:  
"It is the  
Glory of heaven come down  
In the hearts of humanity—  
Come in the spirit and heart of a child,  
And it matters not what we share  
At Christmas: it is not Christmas at all  
Unless the Christ Child be there."

—Author unknown.







# HOW? YOUR AMBITION?

WANT TO BE the managing director of your firm?

Or head of the typing pool?

Working to salt away that magic million dollars? Anyway, you're on the way up! But what is success? And when you get to the top, will you be happy? What true satisfaction will you know?

At university there was a student with the uncanny ability always to come up with the right answer. His less clever fellows soon capitalized on his flair. They just jotted down their problems—chemistry, literature, mathematics, biology—it mattered not what. He always came up with the right answer.

On returning from a lecture, one day, he found a familiar slip of paper under his door, but it posed a strange question: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Of course, it was a question from the Bible, but religion wasn't his bag. It was OK for his parents and old ladies, but him? No, sir!

The question shouldn't have bugged him, but it did. He had a reputation for answering ANY question, and he must protect his reputation. He just HAD to answer it, but to do so he had to study. This study led him into a close personal relationship with Christ, and only then did he realize that he had discovered the answer to the most important question in life.

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