

These Times



JULY 1967

50¢

How Our Religious Liberties Are Being Threatened:

United States Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr., probes the new "experiments" on our liberties.

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13.

HOW TO CONFESS YOUR SINS

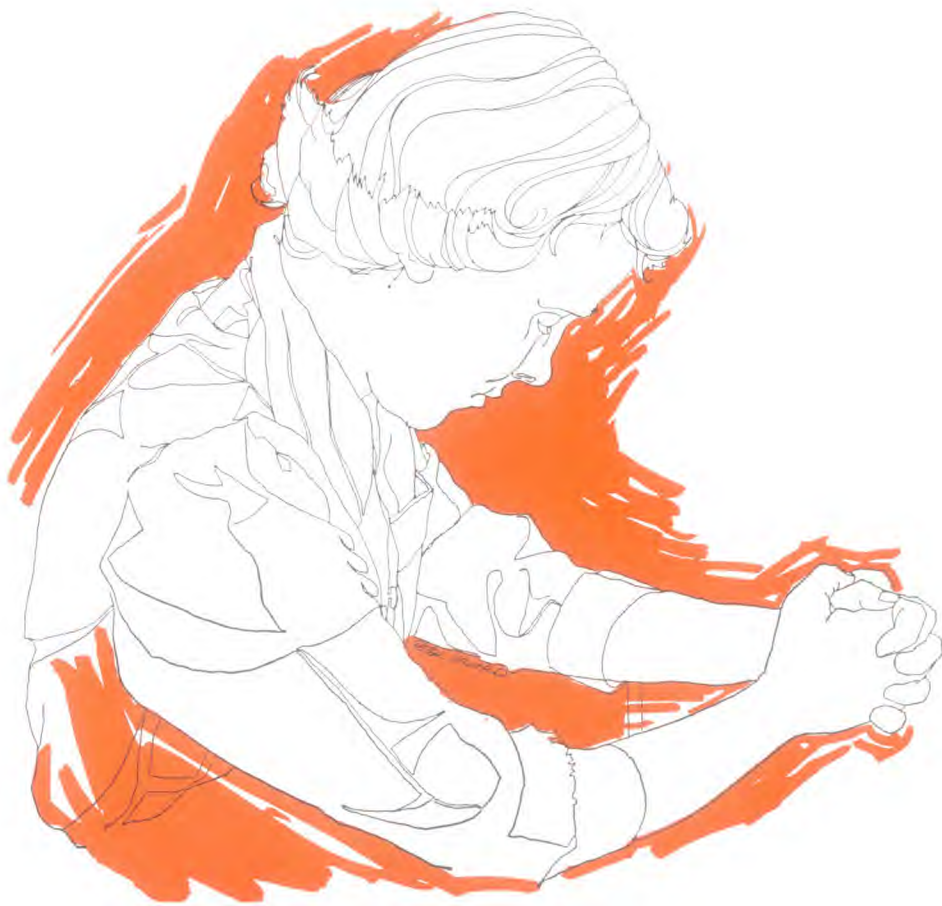
BY ELLEN G. WHITE

The conditions of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy.

The apostle says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed," James 5:16. Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is brought before the only true Mediator, our great High Priest, who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15), and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity.

Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first condition of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of, and have not with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit confessed our sins, abhorring our iniquity, we have never truly sought for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought,

(Continued on page 31)



These Times

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This time

WE CALL your attention to the vital and relevant article "What More Can the Churches Do?" page 27, by Lawrence Fitzgerald. This is an eloquent plea for closer contact between the serviceman and his home church, his pastor, his youth group. He needs to feel that someone cares.

Dr. Fitzgerald is director, Department of Ministry to Armed Forces Personnel, the General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel. This year, 1967, marks the 50th anniversary of the organization, which has its headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The Commission is a civilian-religious agency maintained by and representing thirty-six Protestant denominations. Since 1917 it has worked in support of all chaplains in the armed forces and the Veterans Administration.

Today it serves as the general Protestant liaison agency with the federal government in policy matters affecting (1) the chaplaincy of the armed forces and the Veterans Administration, and (2) the moral and religious welfare of armed forces personnel.

Established in the spring of 1917, the Commission is organized as a conference of approximately 100 official representatives named by its constituent denominations, which have a total membership of 40,000,000. Nonmember Protestant groups are related to the Commission and participate in and support its work through accredited consultants.

THE Honorable Sam J. Ervin, Jr. ("How Our Religious Liberties Are Being Threatened," page 14), is the senior United States Senator from North Carolina and a noted authority on the Constitution of the United States. He is a stalwart champion of the preservation of separation of church and state as based on the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the statutes and constitutions of the several states.

ARTICLES

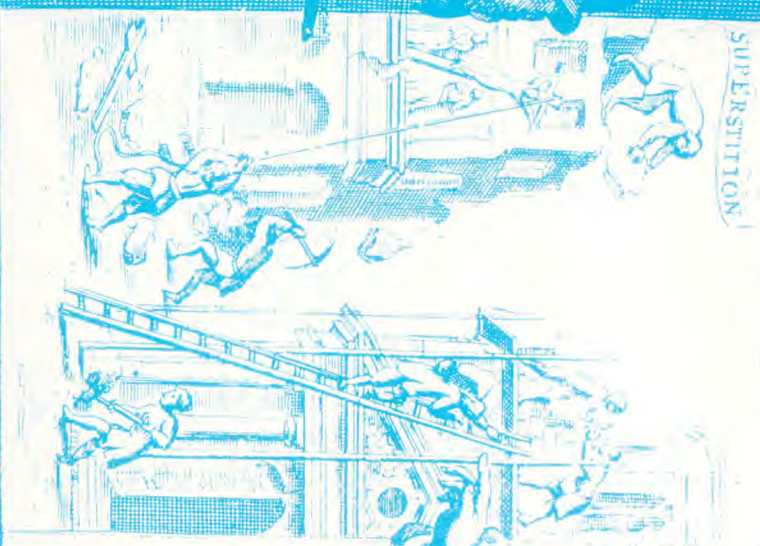
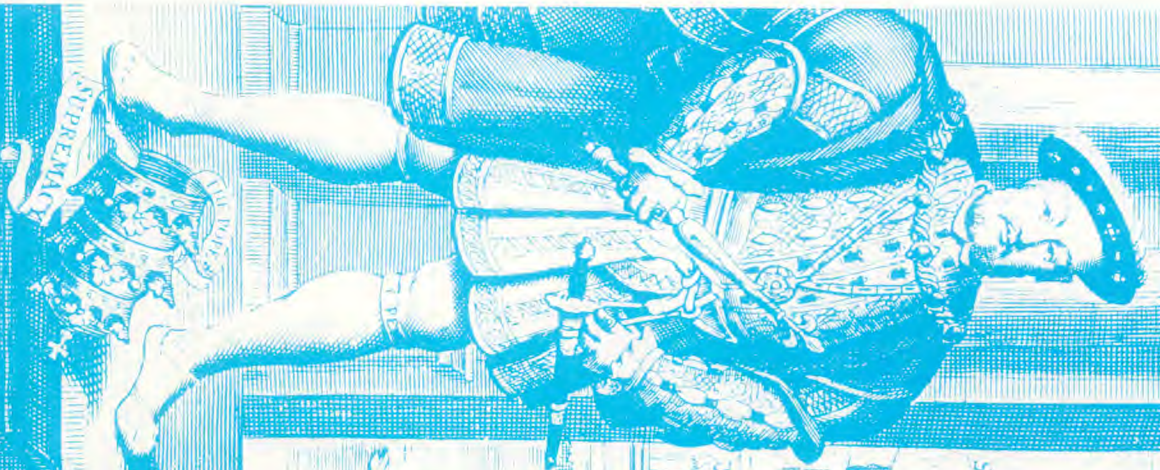
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Cover: From H. Armstrong Roberts

HAS MODERN
PROTESTANTISM
ABANDONED THE
REFORMATION?



Contrary to the expectations of certain Protestant theologians, so-called "modern man" is not happy to learn that God is dead, nor is he satisfied with a secular "religionless Christianity." He wants something to hang on to.

TO THIS QUESTION several answers are possible. The natural reaction would be, Yes, unfortunately. Modern Protestantism has clearly deviated from the Reformation message of 450 years ago. Another opinion is that Protestantism has remained, by and large, true to its basic principles, though in modern dress.

First let us consider what is meant by *Reformation*. When this term is used, it usually refers to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, when gifted theologians gave a new interpretation of Christianity and brought Jesus Christ back into a formalistic church. They stressed the classic concepts of justification by faith, the priesthood of the believer, and, especially, the Scriptures as the source of belief and life. But that movement was not really a reformation *in* the Church. Reformers were not able to reform Catholicism from within. In order to accomplish their task they either left of their own accord, or never entered the priesthood (like Calvin), or they were excommunicated (like Luther).

To reform means to alter, improve, and possibly revert to pristine conditions. The church which deviates from the original pattern and allows alien ideas and worldly practices to penetrate has to be reformed. And that should be a work from within. To what degree is such an inner reformation possible today?

The Christian church has always been in need of reformation. From its inception in the first centuries, when the Christian churches did not yet have a canon of the New Testament or a creed, the Christian communities were already vulnerable to heterodox ideas. A creeping worldliness blurred the purity of the gospel and brought forth various movements of reform, such as Montanism, which tried to discipline its members and called for a complete

BY DANIEL WALTHER

commitment to the gospel of Christ. Thus the church has been and always will be in need of reformation: *ecclesia semper reformanda* (the church is always to be reformed).

ONE FALLACY IS TO THINK THAT THE PAST WAS BETTER.

Indeed, the church needs to be constantly reformed. A church that is satisfied with existing conditions is in greater danger than a community which is aware of its shortcomings and strives for a purer understanding of the Christian faith, yearning to fulfill its responsibility, which is, essentially, to witness.

The need for a Reformation is often predicated by a longing to return to earlier times. One fallacy is to think that the past was better. An examination of the past, however, reveals that the church back there already thought that it was in the worst possible condition. Even in the early apostolic church, conditions were far from perfect. To attempt to direct a growing movement to the past is to go into reverse; a growing church naturally moves forward.

If we use the term "Reformation" as referring to the sixteenth-century revolution when the monk Martin Luther "shook the world," we might again ask the question, Have Protestants today changed to such an extent that though they have a common denominator, they are almost unrecognizable? Have the lessons which the Reformers taught in such luminous fashion been forgotten? Did Calvin's labors in Geneva, especially his gifted theological teaching, die out? Did Luther's cry for justification as the sole means of salvation vanish? Is Protestantism of today so blurred by the ecumenical trends that we no longer know what the genius of Protestantism really was and is?

◀ INTERPRETING THESE TIMES ▶

MODERN MAN STILL CRAVES PEACE, SECURITY.

Every movement, when successfully launched, rapidly evolves into new patterns; it must adapt itself to changing surroundings. As time marches on, a movement takes on another hue and places different emphasis on traditional ideas as it adapts to different conditions. Our present world with its impressive technological accomplishments and its nuclear obsession is vastly different from the Reformation era, which was still deeply rooted in medieval concepts. Yet these adaptations are often external. The basic message remains the same. The accent may be different, but the thought remains. Man does not change intrinsically. He has similar needs. He craves inner peace. He longs for security. He gratefully accepts the message proclaimed with authority.

Christ is the answer today as He was in Luther's time. Luther was personally concerned in finding a merciful God who would not deal with him as a tyrannical judge to punish and pursue him day and night. While yet in the monastery, Luther was still afraid of God. He used to say that he "hated" God, until he found that he was saved not by his own efforts but by faith alone, without the deeds of the law. To Luther that was the gate to Paradise. When he understood the message of faith, his fears were appeased. Today the aim is not quite the same. Although we do need the mercy of God, the problem seems to be how the Christian can relate to the scientific and technological world of today. Also he wants to find that "merciful neighbor."

One of the Reformation's greatest concerns was to have a true understanding of God's power and perfection. Calvin developed this thought more fully than any other evangelical theologian. Calvin was equally convinced that man, opposed to God, was

Continued



This drawing shows the issuing of Letters of Indulgence at a German county fair. The paper commissioner collecting the money may be seen at the left side. Martin Luther participated in the paying of indulgences until he found that men were saved not by such efforts but by faith alone.

Continued

utterly depraved, conceived in sin, and hopelessly lost. It was only the grace of God that "elected" certain men to salvation. Calvin's *Institutes*, easily the most important work of Reformation theology, is not dead, nor is God, who was luminously proclaimed then. Influential modern Protestant theologians, such as Karl Barth, are deeply rooted in Calvinistic theology, to which they give a modern, sometimes modernistic, interpretation. Barth proceeded to unshackle modern Protestant theology from its crassest liberalism and to enhance the Word of God. What mattered, he stated, was what God thinks about man, not what men have said about God. By suggesting a new (neo) orthodoxy Barth emphasized the transcendence of God. Whether we admit it or not, the Reformers, particularly Calvin and Luther, contributed to make our world. Their influence extended not only to the church, it also affected political developments and even economy.

PROTESTANTS TODAY ENVY THE BOOMING ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

It is sometimes alleged, as it was recently by Professor Outler, an old hand at ecumenism, that contemporary Protestantism is down and out and that while Catholicism has produced a "theological boom," Protestantism has entered a theological slump. In the aftermath of a "time of titans," Protestants today have a kind of "death of God hullabaloo," which gives Protestants, thinks Outler, a "theological colic." It appears that Protestants have largely abandoned the hallowed principle of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone).

Protestants today are often alarmed when they consider, not without envy, the patient and careful reappraisal of the Catholic Church in Vatican II—a type of reform. Protestants like to gather in council, but it is usually for business: organization, budgets, raising of funds, building of institutions, ex-

pansion, promotion, public relations, etc. Not often do Protestants meet for an inventory of their teaching. In a rapidly developing world the Protestant message of yore fails to keep pace. The message, like a creed, becomes a dead message unless it is reevaluated, strengthened, rejuvenated. If Protestantism is to be energized, it should be keenly aware of what the Protestant message is really about. What does the church actually believe today? What comfort, what certainty, does it offer to modern man? An answer to this question could be gotten from an intelligent understanding of the creative and invigorating message of the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

The Protestant message of 450 years ago can become theologically stale unless it is recharged and reilluminated in order to comfort frightened man in our age by the heralding of glad tidings, which modern man is looking for desperately.

UNLIKE TODAY, EARLY PROTESTANTS LET THE BIBLE SET THE PACE.

The real interest, in comparing the Reformation of 1517 and the church in 1967, does not relate to externals. Admittedly, different conditions call for a differently defined message.

The Protestant message, then and now, relates to eternal essentials:

Primarily, what is modern Protestantism's relation to the revealed Word of God? The Reformers, 450 years ago, rediscovered the Bible and proceeded to translate it into the vernacular, to bring it in contact with the common man. The Bible was not to be interpreted by the priest; it was to be laid in its entirety in the hands of the man in the street. He was urged to be his own priest and to find his own way to God. Paradoxically—there are many paradoxes in the Reformation movement—the Reformers requested at the same time that the individual be part of the Church as the Reformers understood it. The One Holy Church (*Una Sancta*) was indeed, to Luther, a place where the Word of God was preached and the sacraments rightly administered. Calvin's idea of a church, besides being a community or fellowship, was mainly that invisible fellowship of the elect, predestined by God's grace. But in every case the Reformers considered the Bible as setting the pace. Luther was convinced that the important thing was not what man did but what and how he believed. Whether it was in Wittenberg or in Geneva, the Reformation movement was eminently Bible centered. In this respect, modern Protestantism is not what it was.

In contrast to the medieval Catholic Church, which asserted with arrogance that it alone was the way to salvation, the evangelical Reformer asserted on the contrary that the Church could err. The attention of the Christian man, who ought to be free, is to be guided not by the priest, the "director of conscience," but by the living, ever-available God.

THE REFORMERS BELIEVED JESUS WOULD RETURN.

Moreover, into a Christless church the Reformation brought a living Saviour—Christ the Priest. It was taught that when a man sinned, he had an advocate, namely, Christ the Lord, the Righteous One. (1 John 2:1.) Christ, to the Reformer, is not a mere theoretic-

cal concept. He is the Son of man, the living Saviour, and the living Christ, who will return.

The belief in Christ's second coming was of immense importance to the Reformers. Frequently Luther preached on the second coming. He was often impressed that the world could not last much longer. The Christian church through the ages has often fallen into deep lethargy because it lost the vision of Christ's second coming. The less the church believes in the second advent of Christ, the easier it is to sink into formalism and a lethal conformism.

Man today is relatively better educated and lives in comparatively excellent economic conditions. He has solved many of nature's problems and has discovered some of its laws. He has been able to harness the most awesome power that nature can yield. And the more self-sufficient man becomes, the less he thinks he needs God. Even in religious circles God seems irrelevant, passé. Man has an amazing amount of knowledge, yet man himself remains an unknown stranger, an enigma.

MODERN MAN IS MORE THAN EVER A FUGITIVE FROM GOD.

In spite of all technological achievements and man's cynical boast that he is self-sufficient, he still is "incurably religious." His most brilliant accomplishments cannot satisfy the deep-seated longing of his soul. The trend today is an anthropocentric formula, not unlike that of the humanists in Reformation times, who sought the solution to human problems by their own strength and wisdom.

Today one of the greatest failures is that of authority. On every hand authority is challenged: in the school, the church, and the state. The ultimate authority for the Reformers rested in God. The principle of authority ever resides not in philosophical concepts but in God, the supreme and final authority. And God is unchangeable. Ever since man was, he has endeavored to run away from God. Today, regardless of many scientific triumphs, man is more than ever a fugitive from God. More than ever he needs to recapture the Reformation message: Back to God. It is the simple, eternal, authoritative Word of God that helps man to come to his senses and makes him realize that he is far away from the Father's house. Modern man, too, can "come to himself" and decide to return home.

Have we abandoned the Reformation?

Unquestionably, yes. Protestants have outgrown the initial aims. They have deviated into manifold interests. Liberalism has blurred the basic fundamental message. Protestant theologians were fascinated by the critical so-called historical methods of the nineteenth century and are today obsessed by the existential concepts of Bultmannism.

In another sense Protestants today are aware of their historical heritage and basically know that they are committed to the same propositions as the Protestants 450 years ago. They realize that there is no salvation apart from our divine Lord, who speaks to us in Holy Scripture.

THE CHURCH MAY BE "DEAD," BUT GOD IS NOT.

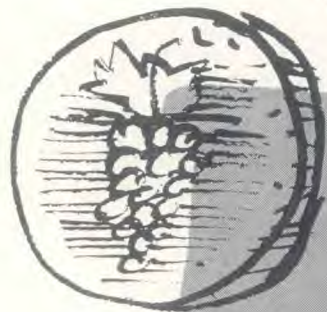
One basic truth must not be overlooked: it is God who appoints the time for a reformation and drafts men to do His task. As Calvin once said, when the church is asleep, it is actually dead. Man cannot accomplish an awakening any more than he is able to bring about a resurrection. Man may wish for renewal of the church, but the Bible has its own ideas as to "the fulness of the time." God said, "Behold, I make all things new." That applies also to the church. It is God who reforms. It is God who has the last word as to when, where, and by whom a new reformation is to occur. Yet, though the Lord appoints the time, man need not be idle.

Man can help to prepare the climate for a reformation today. He can study the Scriptures with renewed intelligence. He must learn to pray, to replace formalism by that inner communion with God. Then again, the Christian man today desires to follow the Reformation tradition in seeking the assurance of a personal salvation. In the last resort, religion is a personal matter.

Finally, the Christian man today holds himself in readiness by sharing his faith; the Christian today remains a witness who cannot resist the urge of sharing his religious experience.

There is a live connection between 1517 and 1967. The earnest Bible Christian today must rediscover this connection and witness to the availability of a living God in these times and pray that the Lord in heaven may send that revival for which all creation yearns.

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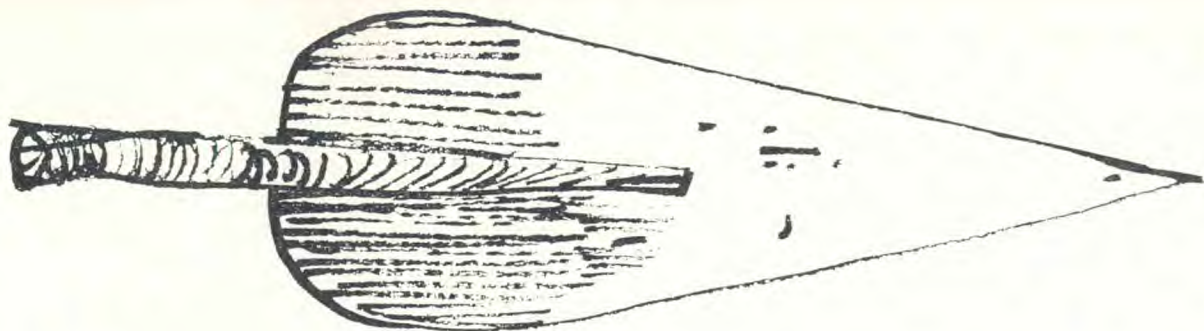
I SAW BIBLE HISTORY COME TO LIFE

*As Illustrated by the Excavations
of Shechem in Jordan*

BY SIEGFRIED H. HORN

PART I

THESE TIMES



AS A STAFF MEMBER of the Drew-McCormick Archaeological Expedition, which has excavated Biblical Shechem in Jordan since 1956, I have seen Biblical history come to life. This experience has given me plenty of opportunities to witness the emergence of evidence which has shed an abundance of light on the history of an important Biblical city.

I have lived for several summers in a tent camp situated in the pass between the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim in the same area in which Abraham pitched his tent when he arrived in Canaan and camped at Shechem.

I have eaten the native Arab bread baked in village ovens, which are nearly identical with the simple ovens excavated by us in the Old Testament levels of Shechem.

I was reminded of Bible stories when I had to fight with the local women at the village spring for water, which we as well as our two hundred workmen badly needed. There has never been enough of it for the village, let alone for outsiders as well.

Often I had to suffer from the heat of the day and then lie under a moist blanket wetted by the dew of the night. Occasionally I endured hot sandstorms, but I also enjoyed frequently the pleasant breezes of the cooling wind from the west. Many a summer night I sat under the cloudless Palestine sky and looked up at the same stars to which God directed Abraham's attention.

Working for months in the ruins of a city which in times past saw the unfolding of much Biblical history could not fail to make a deep impression on one interested in the stories of the Bible. In fact, we almost felt as if we were living in the presence of famous Bible characters. Our tents stood near Joseph's traditional tomb and only a stone's throw away from Jacob's well, where Jesus had an interesting talk with a Samaritan woman. We camped where

Abraham's and Jacob's tents had stood and in our work handled the remains of buildings destroyed by King Abimelech. Over us towered Mount Gerizim, on which the Samaritan temple had once stood, and Mount Ebal, on which Joshua had erected a monument inscribed with the laws of God. Having thus lived for several seasons in such an environment, I want to tell the fascinating story of the resurrection of a Biblical city and its history.

Where Is Shechem?

The historical importance of this city will become evident as its literary and archaeological history is being traced. However, the city of Shechem was also important because of its convenient geographical location. It was situated forty miles north of Jerusalem at the crossing of two main roads of central Palestine: (1) the important inland road from Jerusalem to Galilee and (2) the only good east-west road of that area, which leads from the Jordan Valley to the Mediterranean coast. The strong fortress city of Shechem lay at this cross point and also guarded the pass between the two highest mountains of central Canaan, Ebal and Gerizim.

A relatively wide and fertile plain east of the city always provided it with sufficient agricultural land suitable to raise grains and vegetables, while the surrounding hill country was covered in ancient times, as it is today, with vineyards, olive groves, and fig orchards. The products thus obtained, which have always been the most important articles of food in Palestine, made the city practically self-sufficient and independent. Its geographical location was thus bound to give to it unusual importance.

Background of the Recent Explorations

Before 1903 the true site of Shechem was unknown. It was thought that the remains of the ancient city were covered by the modern town of Nablus.

The name "Nablus" is a corruption of the earlier name "Neapolis," a city founded in the time of the Emperor Vespasian in the first century A.D. In 1903 two German archaeologists, Hölscher and Thiersch, rested at the village of Balatah, two miles east of Nablus. There they observed traces of ancient walls protruding from the soil and realized that the artificial hill, part of which was covered by the modern village of Balatah, must be the site of Old Testament Shechem. The explorations subsequently carried out there proved this assumption to be correct.

Ancient Grave Found

In 1908 an interesting chance discovery was made. A sheikh by the name of Salim, while digging trenches for the foundations of a house he wanted to build in Balatah, came across a grave.

From the objects discovered it seems certain that the grave's occupant must have been a nobleman, if not a prince. Since the discovery was made by villagers who had no interest in funerary equipment commonly found in ancient graves, such as pottery, much important archaeological evidence was lost, including the bones of the dead man. However, a valuable collection of bronzes came from that grave, among them a beautiful sword in the shape of a sickle, artistically inlaid with a design in gold on both sides. There were also daggers, a stamp to brand animals, armor scales, and part of a horse's blinders. These objects found their way into private hands and for several years were exhibited in a museum in The Hague.

After this museum was dissolved, for many years it was unknown what had become of this valuable bronze hoard. Recently, however, these objects have again come to light and are now part of the Egyptian State Collection in Munich, Germany. Their publication is expected shortly. *Continued*

Continued

"Cyclopean Wall" Unearthed

The discovery of this rich grave aroused the interest of Professor Ernst Sellin, a German Old Testament scholar, who was also an amateur archaeologist, having excavated first the Biblical city of Taanach in Palestine and later also Jericho. In 1913 he and Professor Praschniker, an architect, began their first excavations at Shechem. During that summer and the next they uncovered a large stretch of a monumental city wall. They recognized that it had been built by the Canaanites in the second millennium B.C.

Large boulders, up to seven feet in length, had been skillfully heaped up, and the spaces between them had been filled with smaller rocks. Channels laid into the wall had drained off rainwater.

The wall was fifteen feet thick and its preserved part still thirty feet high at the time of excavation. About one hundred yards of this wall were uncovered. Because unusually huge stones had been used in building it, Sellin called it a "Cyclopean Wall." He also discovered the Northwest Gate of the city and found it in an unusually good state of preservation. It possessed three pairs of towers, one pair behind the other, and this had made an entrance by hostile intruders extremely difficult.

During the excavations of 1913 and 1914 many interesting objects of utility and warfare came to light. Among them were more than 850 arrowheads stored in one large jar. Besides a great amount of broken pottery, commonly found in every excavation, some fifty well-preserved or restorable vessels also

came to light. A good share of the objects and pottery came to the museum in Vienna, Austria, but this material was never published and in the course of time was forgotten. After an intensive search made in recent years, I have been successful in rediscovering this interesting material in the storerooms of the Vienna museum and am presently engaged in publishing it.

The outbreak of World War I made an end to Sellin's exciting excavations at Shechem, and it was not until 1926 that he was able to resume his work there. With money raised in the Netherlands, America, and Germany, Sellin was finally able to reopen his excavations after an interruption of twelve years. He found to his dismay that the well-preserved ancient Northwest Gate had been used as a stone quarry by the



Plan shows the main features of Tell Balatah (Shechem). Items containing the Roman numerals I-IX designate the "fields" excavated by the Drew-McCormick Expedition from 1956 to 1964.

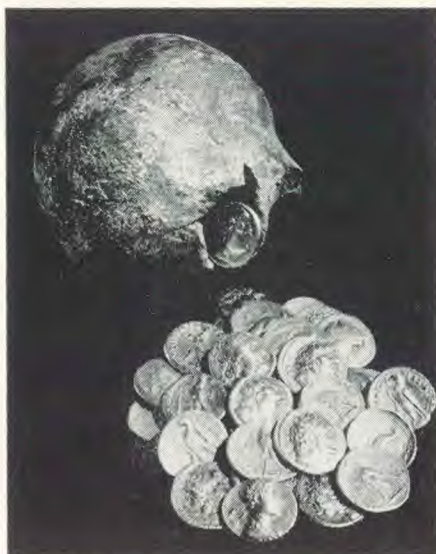
Drawn by G. R. H. Wright.

Right: Archaeologists unearth a hoard of thirty-five Ptolemaic tetradrachms together with the small vessel in which they were found.

Photo by Lee C. Ellenberger.

Far right: Scholars examine excavated foundations of a Hellenistic house. The round object in the foreground is a household baking oven of an earlier level underlying the foundations of the excavated house.

Photo by Siegfried H. Horn.



local villagers, with the result that no more than formless wall stumps remained of this once magnificent ruin. Fortunately, the Cyclopean Wall had remained intact and still stood in all its glory.

Canaanite Temple Discovered

From 1926 to 1928 Sellin excavated considerable portions of the old city. He traced the fortifications on the east side and in the north of the ancient city, and brought to light near the Northwest Gate a tremendous public building, which he identified with the main temple of the Canaanite city mentioned in the Book of Judges. In front of that building he found an altar and a huge standing stone, together with its socket. Structures surrounding this temple were identified by Sellin as having been the houses of the ecclesiastical personnel who had served the temple.

He found that the sacred area in which the temple and the priests' houses had stood had been separated from the residential parts of the city by a strong partition wall. Sellin also excavated parts of the residential areas of the ancient city and in the course of his work discovered many interesting objects, among which were gold jewelry, two cuneiform tablets, much pottery, and objects of daily use and of war.

In 1928 Dr. G. Welter, a German archaeologist from Greece, took over Sellin's responsibilities, but his work was very unproductive. Finally Sellin came back for one more campaign in 1934. But then his work came again to a stop, caused by the economic and political conditions in Nazi Germany. The outbreak of World War II deprived Sellin of any hope of return to

Shechem. He therefore made serious preparations to publish the results of his excavations in final form.

Unfortunately his house in Berlin was completely destroyed by bombs in 1943, and with it all records, diaries, and manuscripts pertaining to the excavations of Shechem, as well as some of the objects found there, such as the gold jewelry and the cuneiform tablets.

New Attempts Made

It was for this reason that new excavations were urgently needed, carried out by competent and well-trained professionals. In 1956 an American expedition sponsored by Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, and McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, resumed the excavations of this important site. The expedition stood from the beginning under the direction of G. Ernest Wright, now professor at Harvard University.

Professor Wright, who had received his archaeological training from Professor W. F. Albright, was for many years the editor of *The Biblical Archaeologist* and is the author of numerous archaeological articles and books, among which the *Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible* deserves special mention. Having directed expeditions in Jordan as well as in Israel, Wright is now unquestionably one of the leading Palestinian archaeologists.

The series of excavations of Shechem, begun in 1956 at the East Gate, have even now not been fully completed. Between 1956 and 1966 six summer campaigns have taken place. Some of the areas originally excavated by Sellin have been reinvestigated, such as the temple and its surrounding area, parts of the eastern fortification sys-

tems, and the Northwest Gate. But also some new areas were attacked for the first time, as for example the southern half of the East Gate and two residential quarters of the ancient city.

Is This the Temple of Samaria?

One of the unexpected but most welcome by-products of the post-war explorations was the discovery of the site of a Roman temple on one of the summits of Mount Gerizim. Underneath this destroyed temple were found the remains of a building built during the Hellenistic (Greek) period. This was probably the substructure of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim. That temple had been built in the time of Alexander the Great and had been destroyed by the Jewish king John Hyrcanus some two hundred years later. The exploration of this structure is not yet completed.

It was necessary to present to the reader this brief summary of the long history of archaeological explorations at Shechem so that he can understand the contribution the discovered evidence has made in elucidating the history of this Biblical city as it will unfold in the following articles.

The conclusions reached with regard to Shechem's ancient history and its connection with Bible stories in which that city played a role are not the results of a superficial exploration of the site, but are the results of many years of careful investigations in which more than forty scholars have been engaged and for which large amounts of money have been spent. As the reader will see from the presentation of the evidence as it will be given in the next articles, these efforts have been crowned with success.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

If you're looking
for a "no-holds-barred"
contact with God,

Dial Heaven

BY NEIL WYRICK, JR.

Fools don't pray. They affirm neither the reality of God nor the possibility of communication. They write books entitled *God Is Dead* and take God's name in vain without regret and are more embarrassed by prayer than helped by it.

A good prayer is a gift. It says, "Here am I, Lord; take me." It says, "I sinned; forgive me." Or, "I am weak; make me strong"; or, "I am weary; give me peace." It says, "Thank You," and admits divine help, or says, "Help me," and admits human need. Prayer is the one place *independent* man seeks *dependence*.

The Bible tells you how to pray: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6:6.

The man who does not truly pray in private has no right to pray in public. It would be refreshing if sometime a church member refused a request to pray by saying, "I haven't prayed enough in private recently."

When Jesus suggests a closet, He is not referring to walk-ins or fit-ins. He is referring to solitude. It can be your car or the back porch—or walking down the street alone beneath the stars. But it must be a place where it is just you and God, where it is quiet and there will be no interruption. And it must be regular. Architects may design places for prayer, but only men make them so.

And did you notice the word "*seeth* in secret" rather than "*heareth*"? God is no heavenly English professor grading your grammar. He is God—seeing into your heart. When prayer is what it should be, it is a time of examination of self by self and a cross-examination by God. We do not have time to be vague in our personal prayers. We live life in detail; we should pray in detail.

Do not ask God for peace until you specifically ask His help with any private hate or war. Do not make vague mouthings about love until you have specifically prayed that He might improve your false pride and prejudice. Name people. Name places. Name events. Dig up yesterday if you were unrepentant. Wipe the slate clean, but



put everything on the slate. If it is thanksgiving you feel, spell it out.

The wife of a missionary once repaid a \$500 debt to a church that she had owed for forty years. It had been long written off the books; she had concluded that since it was forgotten, her years of service were payment enough. But then she prayed one day with a new depth, and afterward she could not rest until the debt was paid.

A prayer must reach in and bring out all of you. A prayer that is afraid of yesterday is useless. A prayer must be a "no-holds-barred" contact with the Almighty.

During World War II a young soldier who had learned fast was burning up the air with blasphemy. Indeed, he was ad-libbing several originals on his own. Suddenly behind him he heard a stream of obscenities that made his pale by comparison. Turning, he was surprised to find it was his chaplain. The chaplain continued with a few more oaths and then said, "You don't like to hear your chaplain talk like that, do you?" "No, I don't!" the young soldier exclaimed. "Well, neither do I like to hear it from you, son," was the reply.

"O wad some power the gifte gie us To see oursel's as ithers see us!" Prayer does this, you know; it makes us stand back and look at our lives in a new way. Men who pray are different from men who don't. You are like the company you keep, and if that company is God, it has to make a difference.

God cares. You have to believe this if you pray. You have to believe that as you reach up, He reaches down, that He meets you halfway and more. You have to believe the cross requires, "Thy will be done." Of one woman it was said, "She made magnificent bouquets of God's refusals. . . . She turned her disappointments into flowers of love and obedience, and then offered them back to God." Attitude makes or breaks a prayer.

When John Ruskin would take a new student for art, before he ever had him draw a line or paint a scene, he would give him an opal and have him study its coloring from every possible angle till he knew it by heart. At one school for modern art the student is shut up in a room containing nothing but paintings of this style. In this isolation with and concentration on these paintings, the student learns more about the method than through a dozen lectures. "As . . . [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7.

"But I can't concentrate on anything," you may claim, "let alone God." I would reply, "Don't try to climb a mountain till you have learned how to conquer a hill." Think of God for a moment; let it grow until it becomes a minute. Enlarge your capacity for things of the spirit by decreasing your capacity for things less worthy of your time. You doubtless have some unfortunate thought habits that could be replaced with something better.

Sören Kierkegaard, mystic and philosopher, in his classic devotional entitled *Purity in Heart* makes a startling suggestion. He says that every worship service is a drama witnessed by an audience of one, and that One is God. The

minister, though it is commonly believed otherwise, is the prompter; the congregation is on stage, both during the service and afterward. The sermon and Scripture are instruction on how to act, and God watches to see how well His people take their cue.

Perhaps a prayer worth praying might read:

"Dear Lord, in the drama of life may I learn my script well; may it be from Thy hand to my heart; may its title be destiny and its climax years well spent and nobly dedicated to Thee, my God. Amen."

In Cleveland, Ohio, on the corner of Euclid and Huntington, stands the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church. At one time it was called the Second Baptist Church. Early in its history it was almost called nothing, for it almost died. Starting small, it stayed small. The minister became discouraged and resigned. He left the church deeply in debt.

Completely demoralized, the membership scattered; attendance dropped off to almost nothing. Finally a business meeting was called. Letters of transfer were given to all who wished to move to another church, and the doors were closed and locked. All that could be done had been done, and a church had died.

Except—one man wouldn't believe it. Patiently, persistently, each Wednesday night he held a prayer meeting on the church steps. His friends thought him foolish and worse than that, but he persevered. One night another man showed up. A few weeks later the number had grown to four. Soon the group grew large enough to request the trustees for a key to meet inside. Inside, the number continued to grow; a pastor was called; and today the church still lives and ministers to the community of which it is such a vital part.

What is the promise? "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Does God sometimes say No as well as Yes? One little boy prayed over and over again for God to make Jacksonville the capital of Florida. When someone heard him and asked why he was so earnest about such a prayer, he explained, "It's the answer I put on my test paper this morning."

There are times when God's intervention would be impractical and unwise. Sometimes we can see that, and sometimes we cannot. The attitude and persistence of the lone man on the church steps was commendable. It brought results. His consecration meshed gears with God. It does not mean that it is now a law that every church-step prayer meeting will produce the same results. We make the request, but it is God's prerogative to make the bequest.

The prayer of Jesus in the Garden is a fit example. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." If we had all knowledge, all presence, and all power, we could answer our own prayers. There would be no need to lift them up to the arbitration of God. But we are God's children, no more, no less; and when we are wise children, we lay our lives before the Creator and say, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt, Father."

END



How Our Religious Liberties Are Being Threatened

By Hon. Sam J. Ervin, Jr., United States Senator from North Carolina

Despite 180 years of continual remonstrances against an official relationship between the state and the church, our centralized government is endeavoring to relieve the church membership of the right and responsibility for its own support.

CONGRESSIONAL actions that appeared as an occasional intrusion on our liberties a generation ago have attained today the proportion of a massive assault. An indication of this development and its portent is evinced by a statement made in December, 1965, by

the director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Mr. Sargent Shriver. He said, "Three or four years ago it was practically impossible for a federal agency to give a direct grant to a religious group. Today we have given hundreds without violating the principle of separation of church and state."

It is appropriate that we examine the principles upon which the Founding Fathers designed the master plan for our government. For the most heart-rending story of history is that of man's struggle against civil and ecclesiastical tyranny for the simple right to bow his own knees before his own God in his own way.

As one of America's wisest jurists of all time, the late Chief Justice Walter P. Stacy, of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, declared, "Men contend more furiously over the road to heaven, which they cannot see, than over their visible walks on earth." And history records the tragic fact, "that men have gone to war and cut each other's throats because they could not agree as to what was to become of them after their throats were cut."

America's Greatest Contribution

To the self-examined American, religious liberty is the greatest contribution this nation has made both in the realm of politics and of religion. We can be proud that the United States became the first place in the world where complete religious liberty was actually tried in a political state; and, up to now at least, religious liberty has flourished.

By the time the new state and federal constitutions were being drafted, religious liberty was to a large degree already in practical operation. A failure to recognize this liberty in these new constitutions and to breathe life into this ambition would have meant a retreat from attitudes prevalent among the colonists.

Today, religious liberty is enjoyed in America to an extent unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Unfortunately, the complacency that besets many Americans about problems less understood is also prevalent in the realm of religion. We too often take for granted a right which may be in jeopardy this very day.

Lessons of History

It is fitting, therefore, that we recall the conditions under which this national treasure was conceived; and we would do well to remember that a na-

tion which ignores the lessons history teaches is doomed to repeat the tragic mistakes of the past.

What is the meaning of separation of church and state?

What did our Founding Fathers intend to do when they embodied in the First Amendment these words: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"?

The answer to either of these questions cannot be determined by a narrow analysis of any one event but must be viewed as an evolutionary process. The trend was unmistakable, the stages identifiable.

One might think that religious liberty in the United States was a natural consequence of the emergence of a new nation. This was, however, not the case. Those coming to colonize found that in a majority of the colonies the predominant religious groups had established official churches. Accordingly, all members of the colony were compelled to pay taxes for the support of churches. Moreover, they were required to frequent the services of such religious institutions even though they might disagree with their doctrines.

Colonial Establishment

During the pre-Revolutionary period, at least eight colonies provided for the selective use of taxes for the support of an established church. The Anglican and Congregational Churches were favored in these colonies; and in some, they were established by law.

Dissenters to this principle of single establishments began their efforts to achieve complete separation of seeking special concessions and granting privileges of free worship. They said, and I think rightfully so, that it was tyrannical for a government to attempt to regulate the relationship of worship between the individual and his God and that such regulation was also sinful.

Their demand for the disestablishment of churches was comprised of two objectives: first, an end to the financial connection between state and church; and second, a recognition of the right of each person to exercise freely his own mode of worship.

Opposed to this, the established churches, in order to ward off attacks for total disestablishment, persuaded the state legislatures to open up the tax privileges to the dissenting groups and to gradually admit more churches to the establishment.

It is the resulting compromise between the liberal groups believing in religious freedom and the established churches, that once again threatens what we know and enjoy as the principle of separation of church and state.

Threat of Compromise

This compromise existed in a number of states for a relatively long time. Any cooperation between the state and any or all churches was considered establishment. It was against this background and this expanded meaning of multiple establishment that the First Amendment was planned.

It disturbs me to observe the actions of those in a position to affect the affairs of mankind who feel themselves not only capable, but duty-bound to ignore the thinking of the drafters of our First Amendment. But as Mr. Justice Black has said, "Government should not be allowed, under cover of the soft euphemism of 'cooperation,' to steal into the sacred area of religious choice."

Those seeking to pervert the principle of separation by affording financial assistance to denominational institutions have apparently forgotten this meaning of multiple establishment.

They have conveniently misunderstood significant events in our history in urging that cooperation between church and state is advisable so long as the state treats all religious groups equally and fairly.

Multiple Establishment

The present policy of making Federal aid available to all nonsecular institutions is in reality a reappearance of an earlier threat to our religious freedom—the principle of multiple establishment so wisely discarded years ago.

They have filed away in the halls of bureaucracy the great truths discovered by those early men that the right of free expression of conscience is natural and inalienable and cannot be fully enjoyed as long as it is dependent upon a grant of privilege by the state.

They have overlooked an event in history which presented a clear opportunity for decision on the issue of establishment. This decision laid the foundation of religious liberty in America.

This event, or series of events, occurred in the Virginia legislature immediately preceding the writing of the First Amendment. There Patrick Henry, in 1784, introduced "A Bill Establishing a Provision for Teachers of the

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Christian Religion." It undertook to give official recognition to virtually all Christian churches and to provide taxes for their support.

In the same legislature, James Madison introduced Thomas Jefferson's "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom" which has come to be known as "The Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom." Written in 1779, it is one of the great documents which preceded the writing of the Constitution and laid down two propositions: First, that there should be no religious qualifications as a test for holding office; and second, that it is sinful and tyrannical to tax a man for the propagation of religious doctrine which he disbelieves.

Meaning of Establishment

The Virginia legislature was presented with a clear-cut choice. To assist these legislators in their decision, James Madison issued one of the greatest appeals for religious freedom ever made. It was called "The Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments." In his remonstrance James Madison used the word "establishment" at least five times in contexts which showed that in his mind "an establishment of religion" meant an official relationship between the state and one church or many or all churches.

In reference to Patrick Henry's bill Madison said, "It is proper to take alarm at the first experiment on our liberties. . . . The freemen of America did not wait until usurped power had strengthened itself by exercise, and entangled the question in precedents." He had feared the entanglements that could occur in the then brief history of our nation. Can we not apply his observation even more justifiably to the present "experiments on our liberties"?

The legislature enacted into law, by a large majority, Jefferson's bill for religious freedom rather than Patrick Henry's establishment bill.

I cannot overmagnify the importance of this bill which sets the example and mood for the First Amendment to our Constitution. The demands of Madison and Jefferson and thousands of other Americans produced that amendment so as to ensure a total disestablishment of religion.

Influence on Supreme Court

The influence of the Virginia Statute in the Supreme Court's interpretation of the religious clauses of the First

Amendment was recognized by Mr. Justice Black in *Everson v. Board of Education* (330 U.S. 1, 13 [1947]). He said:

"This Court has previously recognized that the provisions of the First Amendment, in the drafting and adoption of which Madison and Jefferson played such leading roles, had the same objective and were intended to provide the same protection against governmental intrusion on religious liberty as the Virginia Statute."

Time and time again the Supreme Court has said that neither a state nor the federal government can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another.

Jefferson's use of the phrase "wall of separation" in his 1802 letter to the

the right and responsibility for its own support.

"Best for State, Best for Religion"

I agree with Mr. Justice Frankfurter that Elihu Root's phrase bears repetition. He said, "[W]e have staked the very existence of our country on the faith that complete separation between the State and religion is best for the State and best for religion." It is my firm conviction that this course is not tantamount to a decision against God, as some suggest, but rather a decision supporting the faith and intelligence of all free men.

With due deference to all other men of all generations I confess my belief that the world has never known any other group as well qualified as the Founding Fathers to write organic law for a people dedicated to the freedom of the individual.

We, as they, know that a nation which ignores the lessons taught by such history is doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past.

One hundred and eighty years ago Americans paid dearly to secure our basic constitutional freedoms. Today we are allowing these freedoms to be dissipated for temporary purposes. James Madison said he would not tolerate threepence for religious establishment. Yet today, the federal government administers over sixty programs costing almost five billion dollars in which nonsecular schools and colleges may participate.

The Founding Fathers foresaw that troublous times would arise when government would seek by sharp and decisive measures to accomplish ends deemed just and proper. And in so doing the government would put the freedom of the individual in peril unless such freedom were established by irrepealable law. To forestall this calamity in such times they devised the Constitution to define and limit the powers of the federal government and to protect the freedom of the individual from destruction at its hands. With this Constitution they gave us a land with the knowledge and understanding that God grants religious freedom as well as all other freedoms only to those who love it and, in the words of Daniel Webster, to those who are always ready to guard and defend it.

END

This article is available in tract form from Americans United, 1633 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20036. Prices 5¢ each; 12 for 50¢; 30 for \$1.00.

PRAYER CIRCLE

"Pray for one another," wrote the Apostle James, "that you may be healed." (James 5:16, R.S.V.) The privilege of prayer is one of God's best gifts, not that He isn't already willing to give us much more than we deserve, but He is waiting and longing for us to just ask Him.

We need your prayers and you need ours. Pray for us, and we will pray for you. Send your prayer requests to THESE TIMES Prayer Circle, Box 59, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.

Danbury (Connecticut) Baptist Association has been the byword in all judicial opinions on this subject.

Inclusively, it has been construed to mean that the state may not employ its facilities or funds in such a way as to give any or all churches greater strength in our society than it would have by relying on its members alone.

In further defining establishment, Mr. Justice Douglas has said, "An institution is strengthened in proselytizing when it is strengthened in any department by contributions from other than its own members."

Despite 180 years of continual remonstrances against establishment our centralized government is endeavoring to relieve the church membership of



THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

BY ROLAND R. HEGSTAD

YOU TAKE the elevator to the sixth floor, go to the end of the corridor, and ask for Fred. If you pass muster, a buzzer sounds, the door lock disengages, and you step into the showroom of a nationally known dressmaker specializing in top-quality women's clothing. You are in the heart of New York City's garment industry.

Fred is a gruff, monosyllabic man in his middle fifties. Come to think of it, I don't know what his title is; but he is

the man to see. I met him through a friend in the industry and call on him even when my budget can't absorb a new dress for the wife.

This time I wasn't buying, and Fred wasn't either. We had been talking religion, and Fred was emphatic.

"I don't believe in anything. Look at all the misery in the world. Planes going down. Cars crashing. Good people dying. If there is a God, what kind of being is He, to run a world this way?"

I had heard the same philosophy expressed in one way or another many times in my ministry: beside the bed of a little golden-haired lass dying of leukemia, at the funeral of a young physician killed in the crash of his private plane, by the charred timbers of a home destroyed by fire.

I had once spoken similar words as I stood among Christmas packages scattered on the ground, looking at the

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shattered bodies of almost one hundred young soldiers killed when their plane crashed within moments of takeoff: "Oh, God! Why have You done this?"

I had found the answer to my question, and now I wanted to give it to Fred; but he had a style show coming up in an hour and was too busy to listen.

I would like to give you the answer now, Fred—you and all the others who ask it.

I confess, first of all, that I do not know why God permits some sorrows

With the presumption of the teen-age astronomer who set out to count the stars, you insisted on answers now. I have some for you, but it is a wise man who learns that eternal equations can be neither constructed nor construed so tidily as those mathematical symbols that shape our age. Science, too, has its unknowns; there are yet stars beyond our count.

Having made my confession of faith—or ignorance, you might call it—let me tell you four facts I have learned about our world's woes.

1. *God is not the author of human misery.*

The Bible teaches us that there is not only a beneficent power in the universe, but an antagonistic power as well. It is from this latter source, our Judeo-Christian Scriptures tell us, that our troubles proceed. The "Act of God" clause in insurance policies should be instead the "Act of Satan."

Job, a wise man who lived in the land of Uz, learned this lesson nearly three thousand years ago. The Old Testament book that bears his name records a dialogue between God and Satan, also called Lucifer, an evil angel who had been cast out of heaven because of rebellion. Said the Lord, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." Job 1:8-10.

Note the confession Satan makes: It is God who has blessed Job with abundance and success. But now Satan makes a sly insinuation: "But put forth *thine* hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." Verse 11. That is, plague him, bring troubles upon him, and he will curse Thee.

Too many of us have stopped reading here. We have failed to note how God sets the record straight: "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord." Verse 12.

A challenge has been issued to God: Job isn't really righteous. He doesn't love You. He loves himself and serves

You only because it is to his advantage.

God accepts the challenge, which can be settled only by Job himself. He will remove His protection, let Satan plague him, and see if Job does indeed love God and warrant His approval.

What we fail to note is that it was Satan who went forth and plagued Job, Satan who took Job's oxen and asses, slew his servants, burned up his sheep, and, finally, killed his sons and daughters.

When Job remained faithful to God, Satan hurled another challenge:

This doesn't prove anything about his character, really, for a man will give up everything he has to save his life. "But put forth thine hand"—the insinuation again that God is the author of Job's trials—"and he will curse thee to thy face." Verse 11.

But once more it is Satan who goes forth to smite Job with "sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."

And how does Job stand the trial? "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Verse 22.

After Job endured his test of character, the ancient scribe recorded what God did for Job: "The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. . . . So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." Job 42: 10-12.

The story of Job reveals that Satan is the destroyer, God is the restorer.

2. *Our trials are not punishments from God.*

In Christ's day the lesson of Job had been forgotten. Men who suffered were thought to have displeased God. Even the disciples shared the prevailing view that pain and suffering were judgments from God. On one occasion, when Christ stood face to face with a blind man who had never seen the light of day, His disciples asked Him, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" John 9:2. Jesus answered, "Neither." The pagan idea that misfortune and sorrow come to us as arbitrary judgments from God was repugnant to Jesus.

Another time our Lord was told that the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with sacrifices must have been very wicked men to receive such treatment. "Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you Nay." Luke 13:2, 3. The New Testament teaches that God makes His



to come to us. The saints of the ages have acknowledged that "we see through a glass, darkly." The psalmist himself, to whom we turn for comfort, admitted that his "steps had well nigh slipped"—he was almost ready to give up his confidence in God—because of the seeming injustices he saw about him. But in the sanctuary of God he gained an insight into God's justice, mercy, and love that led him to sing, "God is the strength of my heart. . . . I have put my trust in the Lord God." Psalm 73:26-28.

Out of my todays I, too, have had to seek comfort in God's "someday." I recall a visit to a hospital where my wife sought to comfort a friend who had just lost her child at birth. From the hallway came the voices of two children singing words familiar to many churchgoers:

"Some day He'll make it plain to me,
Some day when I His face shall see;
Some day from tears I shall be free,
For some day I shall understand."

Fred, I think you once called this philosophy "pie in the sky by and by."

sun to shine upon the just and unjust alike.

If the misery of our world was a judgment from God, what right would doctors have to attempt to heal the sick? How could we conscientiously join the Peace Corps, which seeks to alleviate poverty and disease? or support the President's anti-poverty program? We would not be cooperating with God, but working against Him, if trials were judgments upon mankind.

3. *We bring many of our trials upon ourselves.*

Actually, Fred, what you blame God for—planes going down, cars crashing, people dying—you should blame man for. We ourselves must accept responsibility for many of our woes. We spend our money when we are young to ruin our health and then spend it when we are old to get it back again. Hate, guilt, fear, tension, wreak havoc in our bodies and in our society.

Yes, God *could* have made us robots, unable to choose our own way; but we would not want that, you and I. We were given instead a will and a conscience and a great moral code as our guide. To a considerable extent we determine our happiness by whether we conform to that code. We cannot disobey any of the laws God gave us to keep us living healthfully and happily and go unscathed.

But is not God to blame, after all, because He made those laws that govern our bodies and our world?

I do not believe so. Look at it this way: Suppose you jump out of your office window. We will agree that the fall does not hurt you a bit; the sudden stop does all the damage. Now, is the Lord to blame because He made the law of gravity? Personally, I would not want to build my case on *that* argument! The Apostle Paul summed up our responsibility well: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7.

4. *God uses trials to teach us lessons.*

Though God is not the author of human woe, He uses trials to reveal and develop our characters. So the psalmist writes, "Despise not the chastening of the Lord." Proverbs 3:11.

To *chasten*, in this context, means "to instruct, to educate, to discipline." And God is interested in our development. But there is a vast difference between believing that God *permits* trials for certain reasons for a limited time, and believing that God *inflicts* them on

us. Let me illustrate this very simply:

One night when my daughter Sheryl was little, I was soldering a connection on our kitchen clock. Sheryl put out her finger to touch the hot iron.

"No! No! Sheryl," I said. "Hot! Hot!"

"Hot? Hot?" she repeated. Out went her finger again. I shoved it away, and shoved it away, and shoved—you know how persistent little girls can be! I finally got her away with her finger unburned. But let us assume that she persisted, and that I finally permitted her to touch the hot soldering iron, and that afterward I sympathized with her,



blew on her finger, and pointed out that she had burned herself because she had disregarded the warnings of her father. She would have learned a valuable lesson.

But what if I had taken her little finger, shoved it against the hot iron, and said, "Sheryl, I hope this will teach you to stay away from hot soldering irons!" Again she would have learned a lesson. But ever afterward she would have associated her father with her suffering—I would have been the one who inflicted it; I would have been the cause of her suffering.

In other words, Fred, there is a great deal of difference between believing that God sorrowfully permits the existence of sin and all its consequences for a time and believing that

He originated it and inflicts its consequences upon us.

The Lord chastens us by permitting trials to come upon us. This is suggested by the story of Job. These trials reveal to us the kind of characters we are building. And God wants us to know this, to take stock of ourselves, to learn what kind of person we really are.

It is said that a dainty flower once grew beside a gravel walk. One day the gravel walk said, "Friend flower, there is such a delightful fragrance in the air: from whence does it come?"

"Someone has walked upon me," replied the little flower. "My body is bruised, and my fragrance has gone forth."

"That's strange," mused the gravel walk. "People walk on me all day long, and I just get harder and harder and harder."

"Ah," said the little flower, "what one is made of counts."

And so it does. Some of us get harder and harder under the blows of life. And Satan is there to whisper, "Blame God; blame God." But as others are bruised and purified, they cling ever closer to their Father, knowing that He will not permit them to be tried beyond their power to endure. They seek the lessons God would have them learn and believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God." They believe that could they see the end from the beginning, as can our heavenly Father, they would make the decisions He does.

Actually, Fred, I have the conviction that we are part of something big—something bigger than this world.

John the revelator writes, "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." Revelation 12:7, 8. He adds, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Revelation 12:12.

I believe that we are part of a laboratory demonstration to the universe of the consequences of rebellion against the law of God. (Paul calls us a "spectacle to the whole universe.") When all the evidence is in, those who in faith have borne witness to the integrity of God will be restored to citi-

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zenship in His kingdom. In the person of Christ—who became man that the character of God might be demonstrated in contrast to the evil-bent one—the representative of our planet will sit with the “sons of God.” Earth will again be represented on the security council of the United Nations of the Universe.

“And they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.” Revelation 21:3-5.

A postscript, Fred. I can hear you asking whether I’m not quarterbacking this question of trials from the sidelines. Have I ever had to take my lumps in the game?

You remember my wife—your size ten in black (she wanted it for church wear) was a bit long-waisted on her size-nine figure. We were on our way to Newfoundland on a business and vacation trip when we stopped by.

Just as we left North Sydney, Nova

Scotia, for the seven-hour boat trip to the island, Stella became violently ill, and I was soon aware that she was desperately in need of medical attention. For seven hours we were cut off from any help—any help but from God. And worse was to come, for after the boat landed, I found that I would have to drive her another 160 miles to the hospital in Corner Brook. As I looked in alarm at her white face, at the beads of sweat covering it, at her lips drawn tight with pain, I knew I might lose her.

During the drive I thought of scores of my parishioners whom I had comforted at such times. I remembered the prayers I had said, and always the “thy will be done.” But this was my wife, mother of my two children. In our fifteen years together I had not seen another who could take her place. Did I now dare trust her to God—give her to Him to do with as He saw best?

At last we were at the hospital in Corner Brook. I watched the doctor run to call a surgeon; I saw the nurses work swiftly, efficiently, to prepare her for the operation. Blood dripped with agonizing slowness into her arm; pain flooded her body, each breath agony. It was then that I told her I loved her, thanked her for the two children she had borne me, prayed with her for the

last time that day, just before the nurses wheeled her into the operating room.

I asked God to spare my wife. I reminded Him of the contribution she had made to my ministry. I told Him I would seek to learn the lessons He had for me in this experience. I asked Him to rebuke the one who authors all human woe. But I did not insist. In that hour I was able to pray for her, as I had for others, “Nevertheless, Thy will be done.” I trusted God. And she trusted Him. Together, through her pain and my agony of heart, we reached up and found peace and trust in Him whose heart is “touched with the feeling of our infirmities.”

I’ll bring her in next time we’re in New York, Fred. I think a size nine will still do—black, for church wear.

And while she is trying it on, I have something I want to try on you—a philosophy of life that leaves room to believe in One who does not really deserve the blame for the way this world is being run. My hope is that, this time, you’ll be buying. **END**

Reprints of this article (Number MF-13) and others in this series of Messages of Faith are available. Prices, postpaid to one address: Single copies, 5 cents; 10 copies, 45 cents; 100 copies, \$4.00; entire set (24), \$1.00. Special prices for larger quantities. Address: Reprint Editor, Box 59, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.

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Your Questions, Please!

BY FRANK B. HOLBROOK

Would you please explain 1 Corinthians 12:20-26, especially verse 24? These verses have puzzled me for years. What is the "inferior part" of the body and why would God honor it?

The statement, "But God has so adjusted the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body" (verse 24, R.S.V.), is made plain by the larger context of the chapter. The Apostle Paul is developing the concept of unity in diversity. The human body is composed of many members, yet it is one. In like manner, individual Christians should regard themselves part of the one body of Christ.

Continuing the simile, Paul observes that while it is true that some parts of our physical bodies are considered more important than others, yet instinctively we tend to equalize the dignity of our members. This we do by clothing certain portions of the body which we feel are uncomely to expose (in this sense investing them with "greater honor" [verse 23]), but we leave other parts such as the face and hands exposed (which, in this sense, are honorable enough as they are [verse 24, first part]).

Likewise, God Himself, the Creator, has "adjusted" (R.S.V.) or "tempered" the physical body in reality so that all parts (inferior or superior as they may be rated from whatever viewpoint) work and move together in perfect coordination, sensitive to the well-being or ill health of every other part. So God designs to adjust, to harmonize and blend all believers into a unified Christian family. Every Christian is essential to the spiritual well-being of the church regardless of his amount of ability. Each child of God is an integral part of the body of Christ.

The term "inferior part" is used only for the sake of illustration. There are no "inferior" persons with God! "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with

In this column Pastor Frank B. Holbrook answers questions regarding spiritual truth, ethical behavior, and Biblical understanding. Write to him c/o THESE TIMES, Box 59, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. Names are confidential. If a personal answer is desired, please send an addressed envelope. Only questions of general interest are published.

corruptible things, as silver and gold; . . . but with the precious blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

I do not believe that man has an immortal soul, but what does it mean when the Bible says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7)?

The Scriptures are perfectly harmonious if we let them define and explain their own terms. A few questions will help to clarify this passage. First, to what does the term "spirit" refer? Note carefully that it is "the spirit" that "God . . . gave." What did God give to man at his creation? "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7. It is clear that the Creator gave only one thing to the first man in his creation, and that gift was the "breath of life," or the life principle. In some wonderful way God combined the "breath of life," that is, the life principle, with the body of dust. This dynamic union produced a living, loving, intelligent person!

That the "breath of life" and "the spirit" are but two different designations for the one and the same life principle is made plain by Job's statements: "The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." "All the while my

breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." Job 33:4; 27:3.

When a person dies, the life principle (spirit) returns to God, "the fountain of life" (Psalm 36:9), and the body returns to its elements. The Scriptures describe the unconscious condition of death as a "sleep" from which all will be awakened by the resurrecting power of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the age. (John 5:28, 29.)

Do you believe that God has a definite plan for our lives, including when we die—in other words, "predestination"?

No sculptor, artist, composer, or scientist who works in areas of creativity labors without design or purpose. Nor does the Creator. The psalmist sang, "My frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth. Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them." Psalm 139:15, 16, R.S.V.

The basic aim of the divine blueprint is made explicit by the Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans: "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate [to mark off beforehand] to be conformed to the image of his Son." Romans 8:29. (See also 1 Timothy 2:4.) Whether God's plan for each life is fulfilled or not depends upon our decisions. God has endowed every rational creature with freedom of choice.

In Christ we can find the complete fulfillment of all the powers of our being. God assures those who will submit their wills to His gracious control, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." Psalm 32:8. The Christian can say without fear, "My times are in thy hand." Psalm 31:15.

END

My Light Candle

BY VICTORIA BOOTH DEMAREST

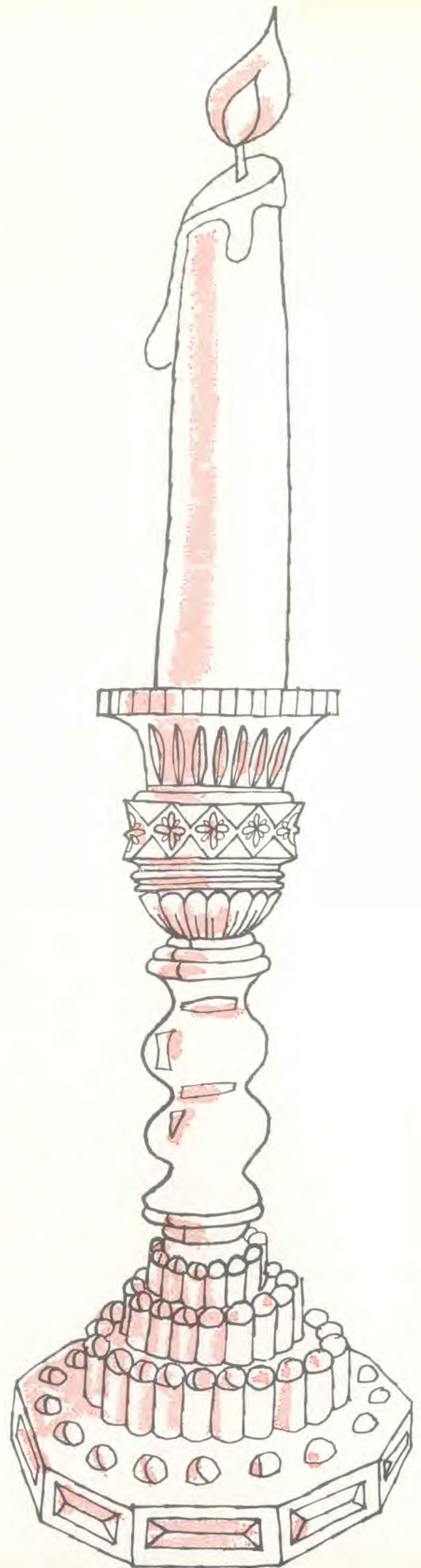
For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." Psalm 18:28.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a candle? The wax would represent your self-centered life, called by Paul in the eighth chapter of Romans "the carnal nature." The wick would represent the Soul, the realm of thought and emotion. But the flame—ah, the flame—that is the Spirit of God! How beautiful may a candle be, so graceful in shape, so colorful and attractive, and yet without light it is dead. The candle was made to give light, and without flame it is merely ornamental and fails of its mission. Even so, a person, though attractive, charming, intellectual and moral, without the light of God falls short of his potential spiritual beauty and of his destiny.

Throughout history saints have been described by such terms as radiant, glowing, shining. Jesus said that His disciples are the "lights of the world" and that the purpose of a light is to "lighten all those that are in the house." He added that we should let our light shine before men that they may observe the goodness of our lives manifest in acts of love and unselfish service, then they will honor our Father in Heaven.

It is God who lights our candle. David knew this, as shown in our text. This glow, this radiance, this light which lightens those in darkness, has a Divine origin. It cannot be produced by human effort, even by strict adherence to religious forms and practices.

Remember the five foolish virgins in the parable of Jesus. Their lamps went out because they did not have sufficient oil. But their sister virgins could not give them the oil that was needed; they had to go where the oil was first procured. Oil in the Scriptures is always a symbol of the Holy Spirit of God, and we cannot impart the Holy Spirit one to another. *We must ask the Father who is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him than a father is to give bread to his child.*



Christ is the master candle. He is the Light of the World, and we bring our candles and light them at His flame. What glow, color and vibrant life His light imparts to our whole being, even as the flame gives meaning, glory and new beauty to the candle. Our bodies receive an inflow of new physical life, our minds glow with new perception and understanding, our affections are purified and deepened, love flows out of us with new vigor and becomes creative.

Who does not love light? Only those whose deeds are evil seek the cover of darkness. Darkness is a symbol of evil. The children of God, on the contrary, love the light. But the light of the candle comes from its fire, and there is no fire without fuel. Little by little the wax, which is the fuel, burns away that the flame may keep steady and bright. Remember the words of John the Baptist concerning Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease." In the Phillips translation it reads, "He must grow greater and greater and I less and less." This expresses a great truth. The light of the candle shines at the expense of the wax. *Christ in us shines only at the expense of our self-life. The wax of pride, self-will, envy, ambition, are consumed by the flame of His love, and thus others are enlightened.*

The process of growth in grace is not easy. Paul exclaimed, "I die daily." The account of his growth in grace shows it was a growth down. In one of his early epistles he calls himself the last and the least of the apostles, one "born out of due season"—the last because he had not, like the other apostles, known Jesus in the flesh, the least because he had persecuted the church. Later, he writes of himself as "less than the least of all saints." (Ephesians 3:8.) He has come down.

No longer does he call himself an apostle but just a saint; and in his last epistle, addressed to the young Timothy, he writes of himself as "the chief of sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15.) *He has touched bottom. All illusions about himself apart from the grace of God have vanished.* Meanwhile Christ has grown within him until he could say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh

I live by the faith of the Son of God." Galatians 2:20.

Each Christian must ask himself whether he is willing to pay the price of being a lighted candle, whether he is willing to have his self-life absorbed daily into the life of God. To be explicit, this means checking ourselves daily in the light of God's Spirit and Word, being willing to make confession to God and others when we have failed bringing our lives under the discipline of the will of God, rather than being ruled by the opinions and dictates of men.

The initial surrender is a crisis, it brings marvelous release to the soul and a joy which is inexpressible. We feel that our lives have passed out of our control into the hands of the loving Christ; we realize that our sins are forgiven and that we have received new power for a new life. The candle has been lighted. But the exhilaration, the exultation, the sense of freedom and of joy—these do not remain with us continuously. We soon realize that the Christian life means bearing the cross daily. The burning begins, the consuming of the self-life.

Only as we again and again "keep our bodies under" the will of God, as Paul expresses it, by the repeated act of surrender, do we again and again experience release and joy. But how much rather would we suffer pain and loss than be dead candles—candles that give no light! We get such a thrill, such a glorious sense of victory and power, when we "let go and let God," when we cease fighting against Him and begin to fight with Him.

Sometimes a door opens suddenly, a door into the darkness, and the wind of an unholy passion causes the flame of our candle to flicker or even to go out. Then the candle must be lighted again. There are many doors that open and many winds that blow around us, and a cover must be kept around the flame of our candle. Then it can be carried out into the storm and it will not be extinguished.

On the little island of Monhegan, twelve miles off the coast of Maine, I have often gone out into a wild storm, into pitch-black darkness, violent wind and rain, and the candle I carried,

burning in its old-fashioned glassed-in lamp, has never wavered.

I love the words of the apostle Paul, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Hid in God—He is to be the wall around us, the covering, the protection, so that sin, unbelief, abuse, persecution, evil speaking—these things—will strike *Him* before they strike *us*, and they will roll off our "cover." "None of these things move me," said the apostle. This may be your experience and mine when we keep hidden in the secret place of the Most High. People will marvel at our peace, calm and courage in the midst of the storms of adversity and trial. And most important we will be able to withstand the sudden gusts of temptation so dangerous to our spiritual lives. The flame of the candle cannot resist the gusts of the wind any better than you can resist temptation—unless protected.

Is your candle smoking? If so, it is because the wick needs cleaning or trimming. No one likes a smoking candle; its light is not clear. The wick, symbol of your soul, has to be trimmed and cleaned every once in a while, "bringing every thought into captivity to Christ," says Paul. We have no right to let our thoughts run wild in forbidden paths, nor should our emotions be unchecked and uncontrolled if "the flame" of our candle is to burn brightly. The greatest danger to the spiritual life lies in the realm of the emotions. That is where we most need God's help, for we are helpless indeed when it comes to the passions of our heart.

In our churches are too many candles giving off too much smoke—unsundered Christians. "Let *your* light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." END

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READER'S CHOICE: This inspiring article was suggested to us by Alma L. Cobb, of Kittery, Maine. Send in your favorite article, tract, or book chapter. If you are first to suggest it and we print it, you will receive \$15.—Ed.

HOW COURTESY CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

NOT LONG AGO a cement contractor came to my house to give me an estimate for the repaving of our driveway. He was a clean-cut Italian fellow, the proprietor of a sizable contracting company. His command of English was poor, and his manipulation of the simplest problems in arithmetic was laborious and uncertain.

One of the problems in calculating the driveway estimate required the multiplication of 17 by 21. After standing by while he struggled with simpler problems like 10 by 10, and 5 by 5—each time he would squeeze the answer out first in his native tongue—I did him a little courtesy.

"Joe," I said to him, "I have a little gadget in my pocket—a slide rule—that makes it easy to do multiplication problems such as the ones you have to do. Let me teach you how to use it,

and you can make your work much easier to do."

I showed Joe how 21 x 17 came to 357, then let him repeat the simple slipstick operation.

He looked up at me with an admiring smile. "That's-a wonderful," he said.

"Joe," I told him, "each person has his own best points. It's easy for you to rebuild my driveway so that it will withstand the elements after I and even my children are gone. But it would be very, very hard for me to do it."

Joe saw the point in a way that made him very happy. It put us on a more "equal" business footing.

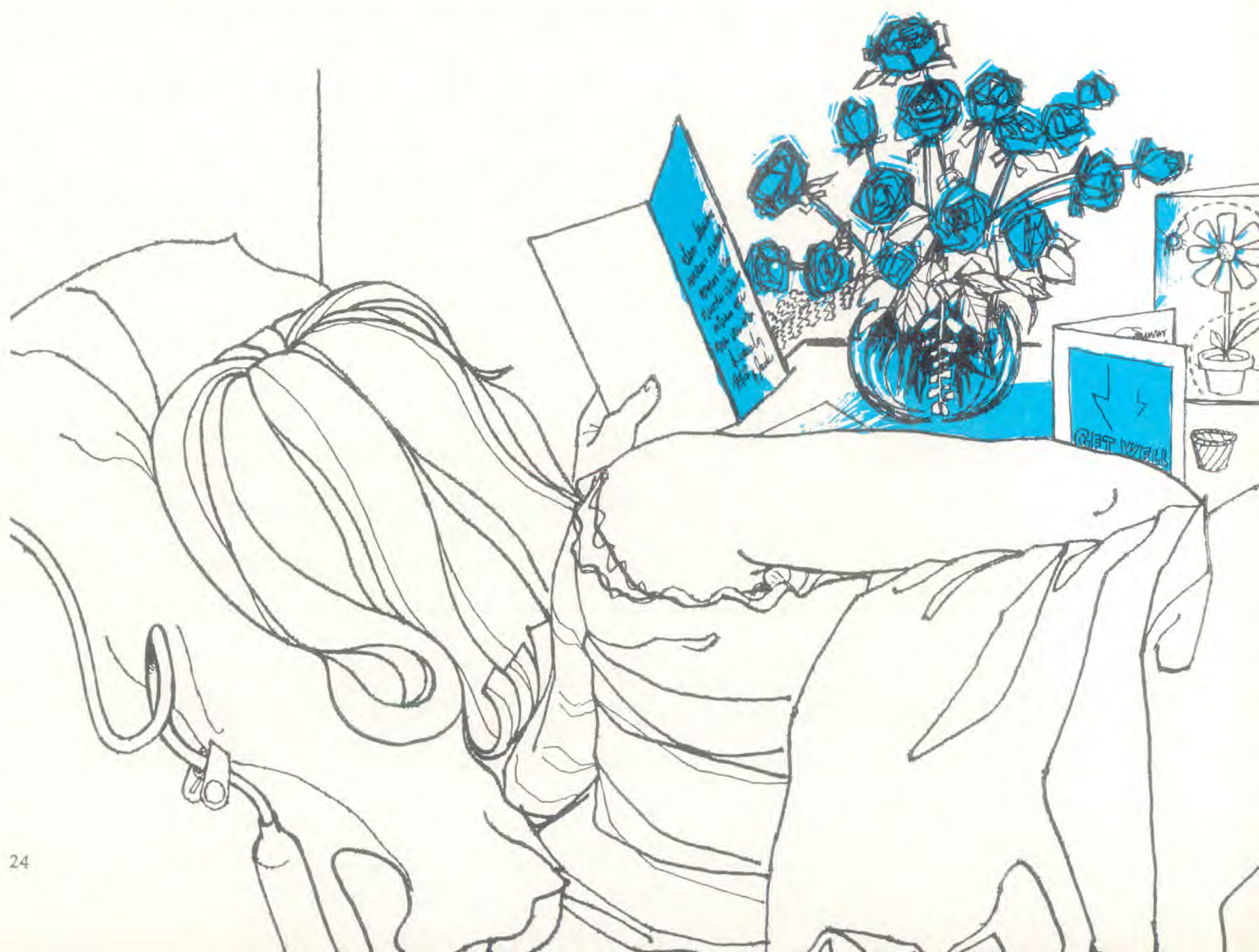
The courtesy I showed Joe that day had many wonderful repercussions. Joe bought a pocket slide rule, and I taught him how to use it for his needs in less than a total of one hour of my time. Now I have in this fine gentleman a

lifelong friend—and you should see my driveway!

By deliberately practicing the art of extending courtesies, you may find happiness in many unexpected ways. Perhaps this is because we are usually able to handle grief and reverses on our own, if and when we have to. But to get the full benefit out of accomplishments and success, we must share joys with others. And the key to opening up the hearts of others is courtesy, which is caring.

Courtesy goes hand in hand with tolerance, and tolerance may be described as the virtue of being able to look at the facts of life with one's heart instead of one's eyes. It can do much to help you get more out of life.

I once saw a young newsboy trip and fall into a puddle of muddy water with his stack of newspapers. The look



BY O. A. BATTISTA

Courtesy is a plant that has to be cultivated; it must be watered and tended if it is to produce sweet and wholesome fruit. To be genuinely courteous, you must care about people, care about how they feel or what trials they endure.

on that youngster's face as he pondered his predicament was lower than the mercury in a Siberian thermometer. A half dozen or so persons had gathered when I stepped forward. "Say, fellow, I imagine you're going to have to come good for these papers," I said. "Here's a quarter to help."

As I walked on, I noticed the other adult onlookers slipping coins to the youngster. A block later, a lad of twelve was at my side panting some of the swellest-sounding words in my ears I've ever heard in my life. What a quarter's worth of courtesy that little act was for me!

On one of my trips to Chicago I sat beside a stranger in the diner. He was a retired businessman who had turned inventor at the age of seventy-one.

"I'm interested," he told me, "in inventing and promoting things which will ease the discomforts of shut-ins. Before I retired, I was so tied up with my business responsibilities that seldom, if ever, did I think of the thousands of persons who, through no fault of their own, must remain invalids the rest of their lives. But I'm trying to make up for my thoughtlessness now. We're going into production of a cheap but effective ceiling reader to bring the best books and magazines before anyone who must spend endless hours ly-

ing flat on his back. And I'm trying to interest one of the large television companies into designing a ceiling-type television screen, too."

As this man spoke, I thought of my Aunt Irene, flat on her back for two years. What had I done to make one minute of her time less monotonous, easier to bear? When the train pulled into Chicago, I wired her a bouquet of flowers.

Now, I just can't take a trip anymore without penning a note to her and other invalids I know. Little courtesies, especially when they are expressions of thoughtfulness, are valued at all times, and in a very special way by persons who are least expectant of them.

Sometimes an act of courtesy by another person toward you can have a lifelong powerful effect on you. Certainly a courtesy extended to me by an eighty-year-old friend of mine has continued to help me no end.

Charlie Lowe is the name of this friend who has helped put a number of cups of genuine pleasure into my life, not to mention a few drops of wisdom into my head.

Actually Charlie is not an old man. His mind is young and sharp, his heart is tender and tolerant, his eyes are as much ablaze as those of a forty-year-old bank manager, and his posture

would look straight alongside a yardstick.

Charlie was visiting his daughter down the street from us when he took the opportunity to introduce himself to me one day as he walked by with his grandson tugging at his right hand.

I was cutting my grass, trying to act as though I were gasoline-powered, with the throttle wide open.

"Say there, young fella," Charlie hollered at me.

I stopped in my tracks and turned to him.

"Mind if I show you a little courtesy?"

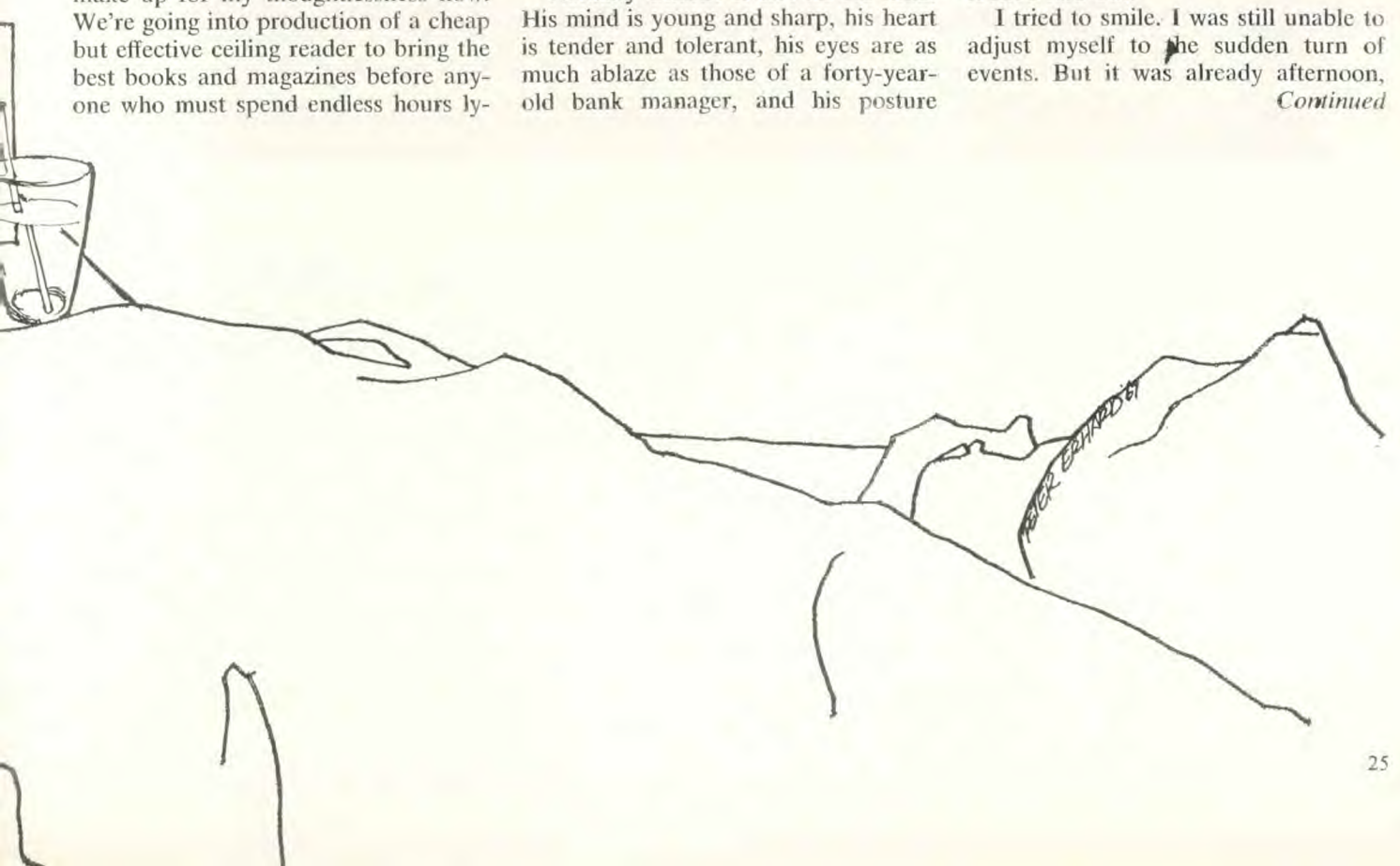
The question got me completely off guard. Naturally I complied.

"My name is Charlie Lowe," he said as he walked over to me. "This is my grandson, Bill Wood." Then he lit into me with his favor.

"Take that hurried look off your face, and lend me your ears for a couple of minutes," he said, facing me with stern, fatherly eyes. "It would be a pity if you dropped dead looking that way—so many people at the wake would have to lie about how peaceful you looked laid out."

I tried to smile. I was still unable to adjust myself to the sudden turn of events. But it was already afternoon,

Continued



Continued

and I had to finish mowing the lawn, dispose of the trash, spade the flower garden, run to the cleaner, stain a bookcase, get a haircut, fix a hinge on the garage door, and get dressed for dinner out with the family.

"I'm your senior by a few years," he continued; "not many, but enough to be able to give you some practical advice.

"For one thing, you young fellas read the newspapers so fast you skip right past the obituary notices. It would pay you big cash dividends if you read the obituaries first and see how many

forty-yearers are checking out these days.

"Take it from me, my friend; don't rush to become a fatal statistic. Don't get the idea that you can't be a big success in life unless you leave a widow and several children behind when they need you most. And don't think you're smart enough to outwit a heart attack. No matter how much time you save today, you're still not going to escape from life alive. Why try getting down to earth so seriously, if it means playing right into the undertaker's hands? For the sake of your family, if not for your own sake, slow down!"

Without another word, Charlie Lowe and his grandson Bill turned and walked slowly down the street.

"Thanks, Charlie," I called out.

Charlie's act of "courtesy," as he called it, took but a few minutes of my time. He was courteous enough to point out a commonly overlooked hazard, but it drove the modern hurry-coccus bug out of me. No longer do I cut grass as though I am walking over cut glass with my bare feet. And my wife talks about Charlie Lowe as a friend of friends.

"Charlie Lowe," she reminds me frequently, "succeeded in doing for you in a matter of minutes what I tried unsuccessfully to do for years. He started you trotting through life instead of galloping, and if he hasn't added years to your life, I'm sure he has helped indirectly to add some to mine."

One day a stranger spoke to me on a train. He was a well-dressed man with a kindly face, but he seemed depressed.

"Is your mother still alive?" he asked me, with the kind of moisture in his eyes that only a heartbroken man develops.

"Yes, thank God," I replied.

"Well," he continued, "take my advice. If you think you are doing a lot for her now, triple it. Don't just remember her on Mother's Day or Christmas. Send her some little bouquet of courtesy every week, every day. Show her you love her, you appreciate her—tell her, too. Do not put your big plans for her off—act now, today, tomorrow, the next day.

"Why am I telling you this? Because I wasn't nearly as courteous to my mother as I should have been. Now it is too late, much too late. She is dead, and I am on this train heading for her funeral."

Need I add that I've tried to be a better son, a more thoughtful and appreciative one than I had been before sharing his pathetic remorse?

Courtesy is one power for good within the reach of all of us that is crassly squandered. It is, of course, something more than just a helping hand, a shoulder to cry on, or a source for a loan in times of need. Courtesy goes hand in hand with tolerance. It is the root of the kind of goodwill which helps one to weigh the facts of life with one's heart instead of one's eyes. It forms the common denominator of the best things in our civilization. Invest in it, and the returns to you will be soul-satisfying in the extreme. END

Focusing



BY WALTER
RAYMOND
BEACH

WHEN WILL JESUS RETURN?

PEOPLE long have asked, "How long is it before Jesus will come again?" Today this question stands uppermost in the anxious hearts of millions of Christians. Some lie listlessly in hospital beds, able to think through the fever clouding their brain—and they wonder. Young men flying planes that break the sound barrier wonder, too. Old men and women totter about and ask with a shaky voice, "How long?" Countless thousands continue the humdrum activities day by day, preoccupied with the question, "How long before Jesus will come again?"

The young, the old, the strong, the weak—they all wonder. They wonder in China, Russia, Korea, Japan, Europe, America—everywhere.

Sometimes this "wonder" opens the door to discouragement. But this need not be. You see, the question "When will it be?" is not the most important thing. What really counts in our daily lives is something else. What are the decisions we make from moment to moment? Have we made a total commitment to Christ's way of life, or do we just vacillate to and fro—perhaps just wondering, "When will it be?"

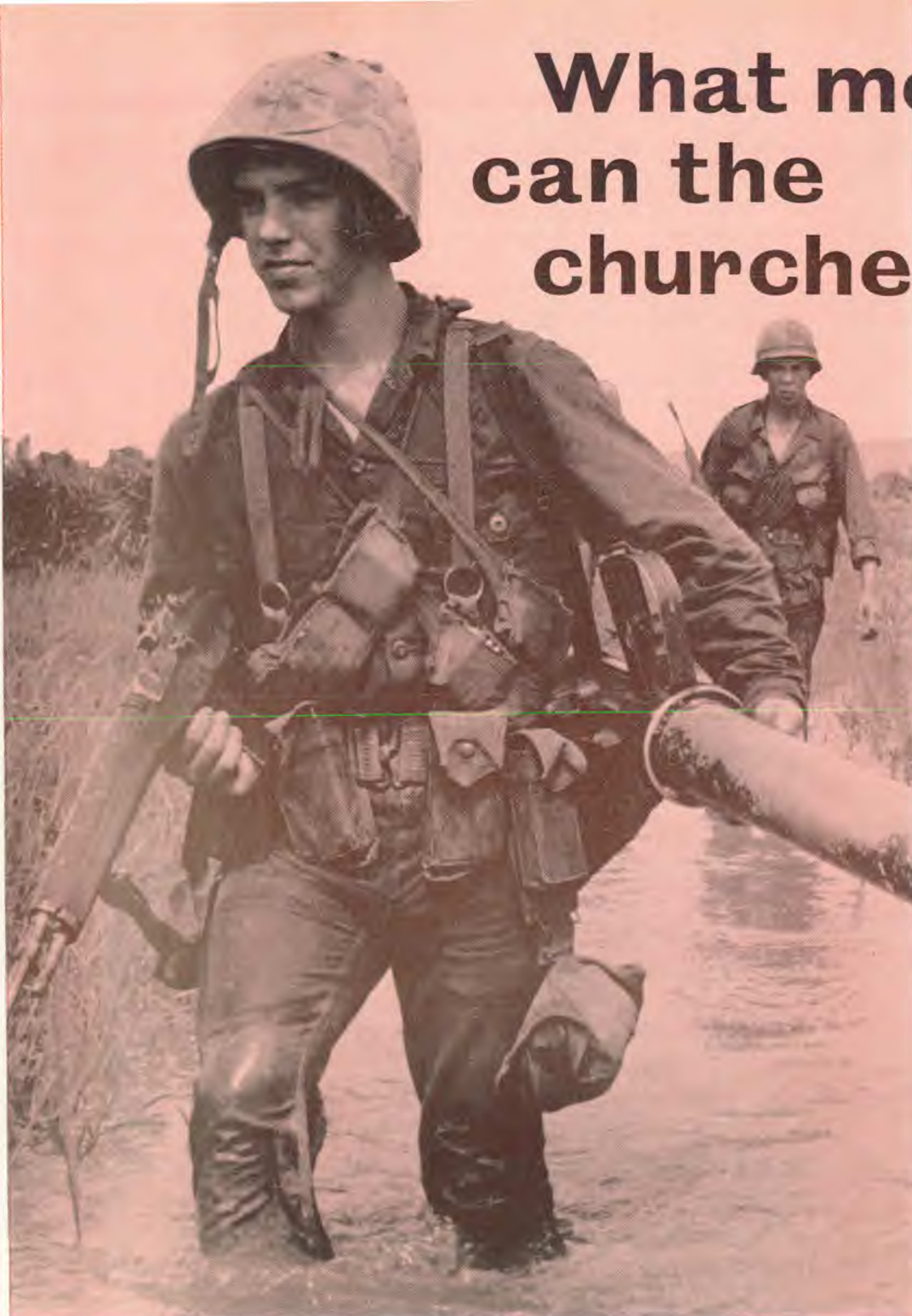
"Every day you wait, you lose," said one disillusioned man nearing the end of his life. "All my life I have been planning and hoping and thinking and dreaming and loitering and waiting. All my life I have been waiting for the summer, and waiting for the autumn; I have been waiting for the winter, and waiting for the spring—waiting and dawdling and dreaming—until the day is almost spent!"

Is this your diary?

God's call today is for us to be found "in peace, without spot, and blameless," to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:14, 18.)

Regardless of the pettiness, weakness, pride, doubting, and hate in the world, Jesus will come again. The exact hour we do not know, of course. But if we live each day as if He were coming that day, our lives will be filled with achievement and happiness, and we shall be prepared for the world made new. In fact, we already shall have entered into its life by faith. END

What more can the churches do?



There is a great need for closer contact between the serviceman and his home church, his pastor, his youth group. He needs to feel that someone cares.

BY LAWRENCE P. FITZGERALD

Three churchmen stood talking about the war in Vietnam. Let us call them X, Y, and Z. Mr. X said, "It is an unjust war." Mr. Y said, "It is a just war." Mr. Z said, "Just or unjust, the existential fact is that many of our men are there.

"Harry Jones, who sang in our choir, is with the First Cavalry at Da Nang. Rodney Smith, our pastor's son, is fighting with the marines near DMZ. Thousands

Continued

Right: A U.S. marine and two members of the Vietnamese Popular Forces use local transportation to cross a stream toward a Viet Cong village near Phu Bai, Vietnam. They are members of a Combined Action Company made up of a squad of marines and Vietnamese. Far right: A chaplain of the 1st Brigade, 101 Airborne Division, is helped in moving his jeep across the muddy Song Cau River in Vietnam. Official U.S. Army photographs released by Department of Defense.

Continued

of Americans are there in Vietnam fighting, and some of them are dying. What concerns me is: Are we doing all we can for these men? Are the churches as concerned as they ought to be?"

A small committee of concerned people (The Committee on Ministry to Armed Forces Personnel of the General Commission on Chaplains) invited recently two chaplains to sit down with them and discuss this question: Through our chaplains and our churches we are trying to meet the religious needs of our men in Vietnam. But what more can we do?

Suggestions were made in answer to this question by the two chaplains and by members of the committee, during the session and since. In general, three answers have come forth:

1. There needs to be more and better communication.

Every church has a moral obligation to keep its members informed. This involves service personnel who are far away in Vietnam. Morale is highest among informed and dedicated Christians. The lines of communication between the men in service and their home churches help to give a lift to this morale.

How communicate? By sending church bulletins, newsletters, pastoral letters, religious reading material. But personal letters are the *most* welcome. Pastors ought to write occasional personal letters to their men in service. If they are too busy to do this, they are too busy.

Once Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt was talking with a group of interested persons about how to keep up the morale of the men in service. Said Mrs. Roosevelt, "You can talk all you want about USO shows and the like as morale

boosters. They are fine. But there are two things that keep up the serviceman's morale more than any others: warm socks, and letters from home."

It is a good idea, said one chaplain, to write to the chaplain of a man's unit. The chaplain is the best man to meet any soldier's spiritual needs. Letters from the church or from parents to the chaplain will introduce him to the specific needs of specific persons. Thus he is able to personalize his ministry where military personnel sometimes appear as a mass—or as a number.

One chaplain said, "In a whole year I had only one letter from back home about any service person." A young man in the military lamented, "The only time I heard from my church back home was when it needed money."

Chaplains make efforts to provide wholesome reading material for military personnel, such as *The Link* magazine and religious pamphlets. The American Bible Society makes Bibles available to chaplains for distribution. Unfortunately, many of the Bibles are in the King James Version, and I believe the men prefer the modern versions. They are not interested in Elizabethan speech; forget the "thee" and "thou" and "thy." When you send religious literature, keep this fact in mind.

A pastor of a Lutheran church in Michigan has organized in his church a group named FROMMS (Friends and Relatives of Men in Military Service). They have a sevenfold program:

1. Send the weekly bulletin and other material to our servicemen.

2. Meet periodically to hear from our servicemen who may be on leave, and work on projects to remember them.

3. Request pictures (preferably in uniform) of all our servicemen.

4. Request the most recent addresses of our servicemen from their friends and parents.

5. Send a monthly letter from the pastor and vicar.

6. Request ideas from other members of the church.

7. Have canisters periodically at the entrances to the sanctuary so that you may contribute to this work.

2. People at home need to pray more for the men in service. Never lose faith in prayer. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." Prayer is "the earnest plea of a spirit in need," and there are thousands in need in Vietnam.

Many of our men in Vietnam are learning to pray for the first time. They face danger and death, and they ask protection. We don't want our men to use religion as "a celestial good-luck charm," but it is only natural—and right—to pray when in danger.

We are trying to lead our men to see that prayer is communication with God—the meeting of two spirits: "I am" and "I." Many are beginning to think like Clark Poling, one of the chaplains who gave his life on the *Dorchester*. Dr. Poling tells how Clark wrote home long before the *Dorchester* went down and made this request:

"I know I shall have your prayers, but please don't pray simply that God will keep me safe. War is a dangerous business. Pray that God will make me adequate."

It is a good idea to create prayer groups to pray definitely for your men in service. Learn the meaning of what Samuel said: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." 1 Samuel 12:23. Pray for your men; and let them know you are praying for them.



One pastor mentions his servicemen every Sunday in his pastoral prayer; and sometimes he prays for them by name. Nothing is a greater challenge to faithfulness to Christ than to know that you are being prayed for—and specifically.

3. Finally, we need to develop the laity so that they will become exponents of the good news in Christ. This we must do if we take the doctrine of the church seriously. The working out of God's way of life among men was never left only to the clergy.

This may mean preinduction counseling with young people before they go into military service. Do they not need help as they enter this strange new experience of the military?

This means a well-rounded program of Christian education. Young people need to be taught what it means to be a Christian and the necessity for letting the whole man be converted. In his battle with sin, the young person must learn to take a stand for Christ. Of course, he needs to see that God is a forgiving God; but he also must see that the church is not just a nursery for weaklings but a brotherhood of strong men.

Ordained clergymen need to take the laity into full partnership in the work of Christ. One chaplain said, "I often feel that the chaplain is charged with an impossible task. He works by himself; he is not a part of a team of laity who can pray, evaluate, plan, and execute a viable program. He must go it alone. . . . But laymen can and ought to be trained to share in the evangelistic and teaching ministry of the church. Once a man becomes a Christian, he is a part of the body of Christ and ought to be out doing the work of Christ here and now."

This creative chaplain goes on to say

that he knows of Marine Corps sergeants who are doing a most effective job as counselors. Chaplains, he said, ought to have the desire and the tools to train lay people to become effective witnesses for our Lord.

To be sure, chaplains are provided by the churches, and they are doing a good job; they cover as much territory as possible. But "none of our churches is ever going to do an adequate job in assisting chaplains on active duty until they take their mission to the man in uniform with radical seriousness. . . .

"We are going to be called on someday to give an accounting of ourselves and be asked what our mission was, and we may have to answer feebly that we had little sense of mission. Of course, we've done fairly well in our mission as counselors, but we need to look again at our mission as evangelists, Christian teachers, and preachers."

One supervisory chaplain said, "I was leader for two hundred chaplains, and I can truly say that I have never seen a finer group and a more capable group of clergymen in the world." But chaplains face many problems: lack of transportation, rapid turnover, the mud and the heat, and a general lack of adequate materials. The men often do not turn out for the services. Perhaps they can't. For example, in one situation where there were 1,600 Protestants, only seventeen men showed up for the religious service. A battalion chaplain reported, "I can remember that week after week after five to eight services we would have met with 15 percent of the Protestant personnel."

But the laymen are there; they are all around. And a dedicated layman can often spell the difference; he can bring the good news of Christ to needy men. I believe we ought to renew our

faith in the grand ministry of the laity.

Once again, the home churches can help these laymen by providing appropriate literature for them to use—perhaps not Jesus in the long-flowing robes on the front cover of the Sunday bulletin.

Maybe we should forget trying to create a dear old homey atmosphere of the sweet church that older people were reared in when they were children. What do we have to fear from pop art or contemporary photographs that are realistic and show men ministering in their daily situations?

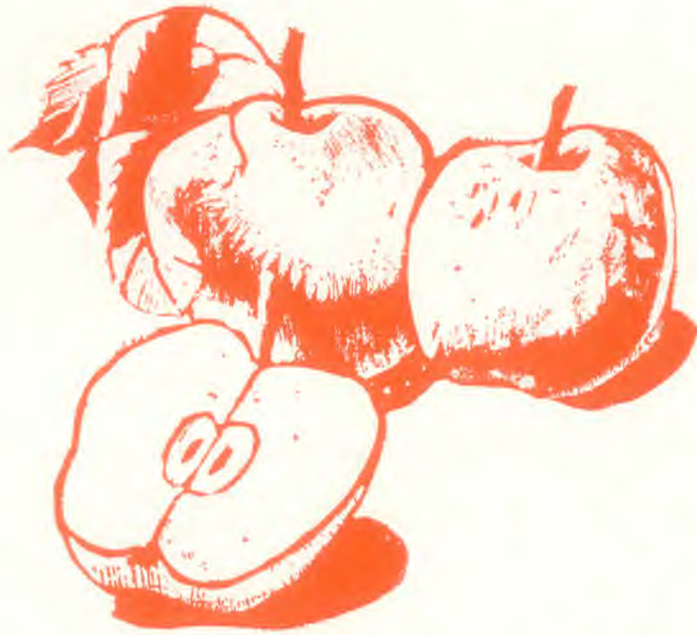
One thing especially I hope someone will come up with—guitar music for the *Armed Forces Hymnal*. Maybe not all of it—for some hymns may not be appropriately set to guitar music—but some of them. Most likely you'll find a fellow around who has a guitar and can lead the singing with it.

Do not forget that our ministry in the Navy, at least, is to teen-age Americans whose cultural and social values are deeply rooted in America's teen-age culture. More than 70 percent of the men in the Marine Corps are under twenty years of age. Our ministry ought to speak the language of that group and meet their needs.

Any way you look at it, Vietnam is a dirty mess, not a clean mess. But it is there—and our men are there—and they need an in-depth ministry by chaplains and laymen alike.

Your men will not come back the same "boys" they were when they went into service. They are going through fire; they are facing crises. It is well you want to help. And you can in the ways suggested—and other ways you will think of yourself.

All of this calls for concern and prayer and understanding. END



Apples of Gold

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Proverbs 25:11.

DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest, if you must—but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As everyone of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow—
You might succeed with another blow.

.....
Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt—
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worse that you mustn't quit.

—*Author Unknown.*
From Mrs. E. H. Berner.

When you have nothing left but God, then for
the first time you become aware that God is enough.

—*Maude Royden.*
From Carol Chilson.

A friend is tolerant; he has an understanding
heart and a forgiving nature.

—*Wilfred A. Peterson.*
From Kae Jaworski.

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of
intelligent people and the affection of children; to
earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the
betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find
the best in others; to leave the world a bit better,
whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a re-
deemed social condition; to know even one life has
breathed easier because you lived. This is to have
succeeded.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*
From Mildred Kyde.

Remember that unjust criticism is often a dis-
guised compliment.

Remember that no one ever kicks a dead dog.

—*Dale Carnegie.*
From Marcella Toland.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Almighty and most merciful God,
We acknowledge and confess that we have
Sinned against thee in thought, word, and deed;
We have not loved thee with all our heart and soul,
with all our mind and strength;
And we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We beseech thee, O God, to forgive us what we
have been, to help us amend what we are, and of
thy mercy to direct what we shall be;
So that the love of truth and goodness may ever be in
our hearts;
And we may be restored to fullness of life in thee
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—*News and Views, October, 1959.*
From Mrs. W. H. Patsel.

HOW TO CONFESS YOUR SINS

(Continued from page 2)

we have never found the peace of God. The only reason why we do not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. Explicit instruction is given concerning this matter. Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt, and freely expressed. It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a flip-pant and careless way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. The psalmist says, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Psalm 34:18.

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of such a nature as to be brought before God only; they may be wrongs that should be confessed to individuals who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as publicly confessed. But all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty.

In the days of Samuel, the Israelites wandered from God. They were suffering the consequences of sin; for they had lost their faith in God, lost their discernment of His power and wisdom to rule the nation, lost their confidence in His ability to defend and vindicate His cause. They turned from the great Ruler of the universe, and desired to be governed as were the nations around them. Before they found peace, they made this definite confession: "We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king." 1 Samuel 12:19. The very sin of which they were convicted had to be confessed. Their ingratitude oppressed their souls, and severed them from God.

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes;

cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:16, 17. "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die." Ezekiel 33:15. Paul says, speaking of the work of repentance: "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought

PEN PAL PLAN

Hundreds of men and women all over the U.S. are enjoying the PEN PAL PLAN. Those whose homes have been broken or whose children are married and gone are comforted by writing to someone who is also lonely.

So many requests have been received we must change our original plans somewhat to give you better and faster service.

1. PRINT or type your name and address (using Mr., Mrs., or Miss), and send to THESE TIMES, Dept. PP, Box 59, Nashville, Tennessee 37202.
2. Indicate your age bracket: "A" over 25; "B" over 40; "C" over 60.
3. State your church affiliation.
4. Enclose one dollar.

We shall send you our 1967 Pen Pal list and shall feel free to enter your name on the next list.

in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." 2 Corinthians 7:11.

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character, nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances, he would not have done this or that, for which he is reproved.

After Adam and Eve had eaten of

the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin, and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin, Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God and partly upon his companion: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Genesis 3:12, 13. Why did You make the serpent? Why did You suffer him to come into Eden? These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies, and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit, and will not be acceptable to God. True repentance will lead a man to bear his guilt himself, and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. Like the poor publican, not lifting up so much as his eyes unto heaven, he will cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; and those who do acknowledge their guilt will be justified; for Jesus will plead His blood in behalf of the repentant soul.

The examples in God's Word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin, or attempt at self-justification. Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in its darkest hue, not attempting to lessen his guilt. He says: "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Acts 26:10, 11. He does not hesitate to declare that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Timothy 1:15.

The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written, "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. END



Events OF THESE TIMES

ALL RELIGIONS, EAST AND WEST, FACE EXTINCTION IN RED CHINA

The Red Guards are making life harder than ever for ten million Chinese Muslims and the remaining vestiges of Christianity.

This is a diplomatic consensus, pieced together from on-the-spot "wall poster reading," diplomatic travelers in Communist China, and boastful admissions broadcast by various local radio stations on the China mainland.

They all point to the fact that with the growing rampage of the "proletarian cultural revolution" unleashed by Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the facade of religious tolerance in Communist China has crumbled. It is clear now, these diplomatic informants say, that Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims alike suffer intensified persecution.

The insecurity of the once seemingly promoted Chinese Muslims, who were to attract cooperation for the regime in the Muslim-dominated countries of

Asia and Africa, has particularly increased since the Red Guards declared war on "all old ideals, culture, customs, and habits." Branding all religions as feudal, the Red Guards have denounced Islam in their wall posters and have committed vandalism in a number of mosques. In some cases these militants have bragged about having assaulted Muslim religious leaders.

Reports from Peking tell of posters demanding, "Close all mosques." Others would "disperse religious associations," and still others would abolish the study of the Koran and "abolish marriage within the faith."

According to Indian government sources in New Delhi, the antireligious aspect of the Red Guard campaign reached such intensity a few months ago that the Peking regime has tried to tone down the overt antireligious activities in order to placate its few remaining friends abroad.

Reports from inside the strife-torn

mainland, however, indicate that these guarded appeals have gone mostly unheeded. Judging by Communist radio-broadcasts and western travelers' accounts of the recent course of the "cultural revolution," the antireligious campaign continues unabated.

In the past there had invariably been a contingent of Buddhist monks present at China's National Day celebrations in Peking. This year, however, the monks were noticeably absent. This is viewed by some Far Eastern specialists as a sign that the Buddhists in China are high on the purge list.

In Peking, where Christians number fewer than twenty thousand, the Red Guards took over some churches as far back as August, 1966. At the South Cathedral, which represents the main Catholic center in the capital, red flags fly from the dome and the west tower. Windows are shattered, pictures mutilated, slogans painted on the dome, and a stone cross chipped away, one Indian diplomatic source said.

At a local Protestant church, the same source continued, the interior was rearranged and a larger-than-life bust of Mao Tse-tung placed in the center. Pictures of Mao and other "cultural revolution" leaders, as well as red flags and banners, were hung on the walls.

Another victim of the Red Guards is a Roman Catholic convent maintained by elderly European nuns as a school for foreign diplomats' children. Here, foreign observers report, statues of Christ and the virgin Mary were broken and a cartoon of the pope was placed over the entrance to the convent.

In an effort to remove every possible Christian influence on the mainland, Red Guards are reported to have demanded that the Christian era be replaced by the Marxian era and that dates should be from the birth of Marx, not from the birth of Christ. As a result of this concentrated campaign, diplomatic sources in Peking say that the past Christmas in China was the first of this century without any public religious services.

IN BRIEF

A key Baptist official has invited Roman Catholics to participate in a mammoth "Crusade of the Americas" evangelism activity to be sponsored by Baptist bodies in 1969. "I think it

AMERICAN BAPTISTS AND CATHOLICS IN DIALOGUE



American Baptist and Roman Catholic clergy and laymen recently took part in two days of ecumenical talks in Dewitt, Michigan, and found a much wider degree of agreement in certain theological areas than anticipated.

We Quote...

would be marvelous for the Roman Catholics to take part in this great evangelism activity," said Dr. Wayne Dehoney, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Even in its present Baptists-only aspects, the Crusades of the Americas will involve 100,000 churches and fifteen million Baptists in twenty-six countries. . . .

A new idea in Billy Graham Crusades is already growing: Schools of Evangelism. Originally set up for seminary students at certain key Graham Crusades, the schools are now enlarging to include pastors. More than one thousand ministers and theological students are expected to enroll for the school to be held during the Graham Crusade in Kansas City next September. . . . Contributions for religious purposes accounted for 48 percent of the \$13.57 billion total philanthropic giving in this country for 1966. Along with their financial contributions, Americans continued to give of their time as volunteers in a wide variety of public service. Last year fifty-four million volunteers served charitable and other nonprofit organizations, including two million in hospitals or clinics and 250,000 in antipoverty programs. . . .

The American Bible Society has been giving Scriptures to the armed forces since sixty-five Bibles were distributed to the *John Adams*, a U.S. naval corvette of twenty-four guns, 150 years ago. Today the ABS gives approximately one million Bibles, New Testaments, and Scripture portions to the armed forces of the U.S. each year.

Churches and religious periodicals published in the United States and Canada total more than 85,116,606 known circulation. Actual figures given by major faiths are: Protestant, 45,612,929 circulation of 1,211 publications; Catholic, 28,205,917 circulation of 570 publications; Jewish, 1,883,918 circulation of 77 publications. . . . After careful examination, the staff of the Surgeon General's Office of Strategic Air Command, U.S.A., has given its approval for a test program of the new film series "How to Stop Smoking," produced by the Temperance Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. END

Message to the Churches From the Seventh General Assembly of the National Council of Churches: "Christians are too seldom helpfully involved in the spiritual needs of other people. We know Jesus Christ is the answer to our own deepest spiritual longings. We know sharing Him is like offering food to hungry people. We do feed some people. But many of us hesitate to share our Christian faith. We believe Jesus Christ is in the midst of life and will have the last word in history. Therefore we must not hesitate to proclaim the gracious God and live as the gracious neighbor."

Chrysostom: "The potency of prayer has subdued the strength of fire; it has bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of heaven, assuaged diseases, dispelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt.

"There is an all-sufficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine which is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a heaven unruffled by the storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings."

Bruce Larson, "Discovering a Christian Marriage," "Moody Monthly": "We waste too many of our prayers praying for the other person to change, when some really honest prayer for ourselves may do wonders."

"A man's love for God can be measured by the love he has for the man he loves the least."—Author Unknown.

The late **Dr. Edwin E. Slosson**, chemist: "The greatest miracle of the Bible is its chemical accuracy. The first book of the Bible says that man was made out of the dust of the earth, and this is literally and scientifically true. In the dust of the earth there are sixteen different chemical elements, and in the body of man there are those same sixteen chemical elements! Now, how could Moses have known this? Long ages before the science of chemistry was born, he made this statement about the combination of elements that exist in man and dust alike, and the scientists of the twentieth century have proved this statement true. Only God could have so inspired the writer of that day."

"I am living and strong. I look after you and care for you, yielding My fruit to you throughout the year. My mercies never fail. Whoever is wise, let him understand these things. Whoever is intelligent, let him listen." Hosea 14:8, 9, in "Living People as the Minor Prophets Paraphrased."

Editorials

SUPREME COURT NOTWITHSTANDING, THESE SOUND LIKE RELIGIOUS LAWS TO US!

SHOULD free people be obliged to observe Sunday as a day of rest by force of law? Are "Sunday blue laws" or "Sunday-closing laws" religious or secular?

As these questions become more and more vigorously debated, nobody remembers, it seems, that the highest court in the land has already spoken out on both of them.

Six years ago the Supreme Court of the United States decided in *McGowan v. Maryland* that, after two centuries, Sunday laws are no longer religious laws and as such are not banned by the First Amendment to the Constitution. After a brief review of Sunday legislation in the United States and a citation of various recent "secular justifications," the high Court concluded: "Thus have Sunday laws evolved from the wholly religious sanctions that originally were enacted."—*United States Reports*, Vol. 366, p. 435.

But if these laws, some old and some new, have lost their "religious character," as the court maintains, the American public should be informed of that fact, for the religious issue—far from being dead—has become rather lively of late in current Sunday-law debate. Those who favor such legislation as well as those who oppose it are both arguing their cases on religious grounds.

The Sunday-closing measure now before the New Mexico State Legislature, for example, has recently received strong backing from no less a personage than Roman Catholic Archbishop James Peter Davis, of Santa Fe. His support is not based on secular, but quite obviously on religious, grounds.

In a letter read at Mass services throughout his archdiocese the archbishop stated:

"For some time there have been in our midst members of all faiths interested in bringing back to our way of life the special reverence and observance of the Lord's Day. . . .

"Recently, a devout God-fearing man who is a member of the Church of Christ has been looking for support of this belief in the form of a law of our state which would reflect the law of God and call our attention more earnestly to the vocation—the calling to moral and social perfection under God—which all of us share as the sons of God."

"In the minds of some," said Archbishop Davis, "such an interest is rejected as a step toward puritanical, so-called 'blue law' observance of the Sabbath. This,

however, is not the true idea of the Lord's Day. I believe . . . that we should support this idea."

Not only does the support for this law recognize it as basically religious legislation, so does the opposition. Seventh-day Adventist Pastor M. N. Skadsheim, New Mexico secretary of the International Religious Liberty Association, called the proposal "a sugarcoated religious bill," maintaining that such laws constitute "restrictions of personal liberty. This is the basic objection."

Even the exemptions written into this bill are religious in nature, allowing a member of a religious group (observing a different day of the week from Sunday) to keep his business open on Sunday—provided he "actually refrains from secular [!] business and labor" on his own day of rest.

Seventh-day Adventists and others view such exemptions as legislative substitutes, temporary concessions, easily passed around and just as easily taken away, in place of what is now considered a fundamental liberty of the American citizen—the right to worship in one's own way on one's own day without governmental "permission."

Pastor Skadsheim said the exemptions are "toleration, not liberty."

The religious nature of the current Sunday-law debate is further pointed up by the ecumenical twist given to these proposed exemptions. Last February in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, for the first time in the long history of Sunday-closing-law controversy in this state, has urged the General Assembly to pass legislation which would exempt Jews and others who observe the Bible Sabbath, from Sunday laws.

In a message to Governor Raymond P. Shafer and the members of the General Assembly, the Catholic Conference, which is the official central agency for the eight Roman Catholic dioceses in the state, endorsed a Sunday-closing bill which would exempt a person who "by reason of his religious conviction" observes a day of rest other than Sunday.

A spokesman for the Conference said the exemption was based "upon principles of religious liberty and a particular concern for the religious life and freedom of our Jewish brothers."

But when what is now a freedom becomes a mere "exemption," how long will it take before it becomes nothing at all?
M. G. P.



LET THE BIBLE SPEAK

THE BIBLE OFFERS LIFE IN CHRIST

Why should you read the Bible? Because it is good literature? Because it has so tremendously influenced modern civilization? Because great religions (Christianity, Islamism, Judaism) base teachings on it?

But don't you really think the Bible would be of little value to you personally if it didn't offer you something personal, something vastly more important to you than just literary, cultural, or religious information? The Bible claims to offer you *life* by revealing to you the God of life in a Man, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

Read the New Testament. It continually speaks of Jesus Christ in the Old. Peter said:

Acts 10:43*: "To him [Jesus Christ] all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

And Jesus of Nazareth Himself told the religious leaders in Jerusalem that it was useless to read the Old Testament scriptures unless they found in them the revelation of Himself, the promised Christ. He said:

John 5:39, 40, 45-47: "You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

Consider the following texts:

Luke 24:27: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

John 1:45: "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Galatians 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

If the Old Testament scriptures "bear witness" to the Jesus Christ who was yet to come, the New Testament scriptures make up the written historical record

of the Jesus Christ who had already come, who offers this precious *life* in Himself. Of Him John wrote:

John 20:30, 31: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."

And in one of his letters he again wrote:

1 John 1:1-4: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete."

In Christ we have life:

1 John 5:11: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Galatians 3:26: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

And so the whole Bible has been written about Jesus Christ. The Old Testament points forward to the coming of a Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ who offers *life*. And the New Testament is the written historical record of that coming and what it means to you personally—eternal *life*.

Next month we shall discover what the Bible says about the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth. Is He really God?

*All Bible quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

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