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THESE TIMES

SCHOOL BUS

EMERGENCY DOOR



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Nebuchadnezzar's 2500-year-old dream

God gave this Babylonian monarch a dream which is still being fulfilled twenty-five hundred years later! And it concerns your future. by **Desmond Ford**

"I, a stranger and afraid
In a world I never made."

MANY A MAN gazing into the silent heavens has felt like the poet and longed for assurance from One greater than himself. What would we not give for a single page from Heaven which (1) proved the existence of the divine Father who ruled and overruled, (2) demonstrated that the Bible is the reliable Word of this Ruler of the universe, (3) explained the past and foretold the future, and (4) unfolded the Creator's secrets regarding how His creatures should live in order to have unalloyed joy forever! The longed-for oracle can be found. It lies amid the prophetic writings of the Christian Guidebook, the Bible.

Too many people look upon Bible prophecy as the gospel minister's crystal ball, from which he discerns the image of coming events. But Bible prophecy is meant to be a mirror for every Christian, a mirror revealing his own destiny. It does not merely predict but comforts and guides. It unfolds not only the secrets of time but the mysteries of eternity. Divine prophecy demonstrates that our world is a ship under control, rather than a wandering iceberg, and that our individual lives may be likewise. We are not alone—a scurrying, harassed leaf in a senseless universe.

Prophecy tells of a providence which provides for all things and for every person. No wonder then that some of the greatest of human minds in recent centuries, heeding Christ's admonition, have found joy and profit in the prophetic pages of the Bible. Conspicuous

among them was Sir Isaac Newton, certainly one of the outstanding scientists of all time.

This wonderful book recommended by Christ for Christians of the last days contains prophecies extending to the "time of the end" (see Daniel 12:3, 4). It presents detailed chain descriptions of the rise and fall of earth's most influential empires from the days of Nebuchadnezzar (sixth century BC) till the ultimate establishment of the kingdom of God. Four times the prophet previewed the centuries of the future, on each successive occasion beholding additional details filling out the original sketch.

"Abridge It!"

Reminiscent of the *Arabian Nights* is the similar story of Prince Zemire, who, upon succeeding his father on Persia's throne, sought for a guiding history of the past. Twenty years after the initial assembly of his learned men, a caravan of twelve camels, each bearing five hundred volumes, came to the prince. Following a speech, the secretary presented the six thousand volumes. Now fully occupied with the duties of government, the king expressed his gratitude. But he added, "I am now middle-aged, and even if I live to be old, I shall not have time to read such a long history. Abridge it!"

Another score of years passed, and three camels came with fifteen hundred volumes for the king. But he declared, "I am now an old man. Abridge it further, and with all possible speed!"

When after five more years the secretary returned alone, and on crutches, leading a small ass burdened with one large book, the king was breathing his last, unable to read it.

Yet in 215 words, the prophet Daniel described the course of history and its meaning more accurately than all the historians of the ages! Read the words again from Daniel 2:38-44.

Verse 28 of this chapter answers our fundamental human need as it gives the assurance: "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." We live in an age which has endeavored to outlaw God and revelation by stress on the absolute reign of physical law. The materialistic science of the past three centuries and the philosophy of men such as Kant have asserted that the laws of nature operate uniformly, inexorably, and independently of the Divine Lawgiver. Thus the universe is represented as a closed system, unable to reveal to its prisoner any sure knowledge of the realms beyond.

Both scientists and philosophers have forgotten that, although a bird may not fly out of its atmosphere, the Creator of both bird and atmosphere is free to insert His finger into time and space and place it lovingly upon the bird. There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and He has intervened in history to offer man revelation and redemption.

Four Universal Kingdoms

To read the record foretelling the future course of the centuries brings inevitable conviction to the honest heart. We cannot deny that from Daniel's time to our own, four great empires have succeeded each other, increasing both in size and in significance for the church and the world. These four are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Consult any ancient history that covers the days from the seventh century BC to the present; or consider the most famous of historical records, the Canon of

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Babylon—head of gold

"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom. . . . Thou art this head of gold" (Daniel 2:37, 38).

Babylon ruled as the world's dominant empire from 612 BC, when it defeated Assyria, until Cyrus captured Babylon in 539 BC.

Media-Persia—chest of silver

"And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (Daniel 2:39).

The related kingdoms of Media and Persia ruled from 539 BC until 331 BC when Greece defeated the Persians at the Battle of Arbela.

Greece—thighs of brass

"And after thee shall arise another . . . third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth" (Daniel 2:39).

Greece reigned supreme from 331 BC until the Romans gained world dominion at the Battle of Pydna in 168 BC.

Ptolemy, which sets out the ages under the headings of the kings of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Finally, review the pages of Scripture and note that from the time of Israel's submission to the Neo-Babylonian Empire until the final pages of the New Testament, only four mighty empires are named, those symbolized by the metallic sections of the image (Daniel 7:1; 8:20, 21; Luke 2:1; Matthew 22:17-21; John 11:48; 19:12; Acts 25:10).

Four civilization-molding powers, extending like concentric circles in strength and conquest until the whole of what we know as Europe would be absorbed, were foretold by this page from the Old Testament prophet. He saw the fourth empire, Rome, divide into fragments of varying strength, which throughout all later years would endeavor in vain to weld themselves into yet another empire. Ultimately a fifth empire would indeed arise, but it would be divine in origin and rulership. The prophetic statement regarding the nations which sprang from old Rome—"they shall not cleave one to another"—has been confirmed by over fifteen centuries of bloody but fruitless war and by the barren intrigues of statescraft over that same period.

Unification Defied

Consider the following comment from

The New York Times Literary Supplement: "How has the continent of Europe escaped political unification? Everything in Europe seems to call for it; everything, that is, except the temperament and traditions of its people. More uniform in climate than China, less diverse in religion than India, less diverse in races than the United States of America, Europe has had for centuries a single culture and a common social structure. Landowner and peasant, merchant and banker, factory owner and factory worker, artist and scholar, would nowhere find themselves in an alien world moving from one part of the continent to another. . . . For a thousand years this most uniform of continents has defied political unification."

Had Daniel written out of his own imagination, why should he have stopped at four in predicting coming empires in Asia and Europe? Why not fourteen? or forty? Surely, if Babylon was to give way to Medo-Persia, and Medo-Persia to Greece, and Greece to Rome, would not Rome likewise give way to another, and that conqueror to yet another, and so on? The fulfillment of this prophecy of Daniel 2 alone is sufficient to demonstrate the inspiration of the Bible.

Almost two thousand years ago the Jewish historian Josephus drew this lesson for the pagan Epicureans of his day

who believed in the reign of chance. He reviewed the prophecies of Daniel regarding the four dominant empires of the past and then added, "All these things did this man [Daniel] leave in writing, as God had showed them to him, insomuch that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honor wherewith God honored Daniel; and may thence discover how the Epicureans are in error, who cast Providence out of human life, and do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world, nor that the universe is governed and continued in being by that blessed and immortal nature, but say that the world is carried along of its own accord, without a ruler, . . . like ships without pilots, which we see drowned by the winds, or like chariots without drivers, which are overturned; so would the world be dashed to pieces by its being carried without a Providence, and so perish and come to naught" (*Antiquities*, Book 10, chapter 11).

Thus we have abundant evidence for the four points suggested in the introduction: (1) evidence for the existence of the omnipotent God who rules and overrules; (2) evidence demonstrating that the Bible is the reliable Word of this omnipotent God; (3) evidence that the past is explained (in Daniel 2) and the future foretold. What about the fourth



Rome—legs of iron

"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron" (Daniel 2:40).

Rome became the world empire from 168 BC to AD 476 when with the de-thronement of Romulus Augustulus the breakup of the Roman Empire into fragmented kingdoms became complete.

Present nations—feet of clay and iron

"And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided" (Daniel 2:41).

After AD 476 when the dissolution of the Roman Empire became established, the nations of the world have continued to remain fragmented, partly weak and partly strong.

God's kingdom—stone

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44).

The next world empire will be God's rulership over the earth.

point? Does this remarkable prophecy also explain how men should live in order to live forever?

The All-wise One does not reveal secrets that we may be merely intellectually informed. His predictions mirror eternal truths and indicate the principles which should govern all our words and deeds. We need to ask, How did Christ interpret the chief import of this prophecy? In Matthew 21:44 we have His comment: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

To Christ prophecy was not merely a road map of events. It was loving counsel from the Creator to the creature, revealing what most needed to be known regarding duty. Christ saw that only right understanding concerning eternity could enable man to live rightly in time, and similarly, that a true concept of time sheds light on man's preparation for eternity.

The Lesson of Deterioration

The prophecy of Daniel 2 makes it plain that all things earthly, however grand, must deteriorate unless linked with God. Consider the gradual deterioration shown by the symbolism of the metal man. With the passing of the years there is transition from gold to silver, from silver to brass, from brass to iron and clay, and finally to nothingness after the very dust has been blown away.

There is deterioration also suggested by the increasing multiplicity in the symbolism of the image. From the single symbol of the head of gold we pass to a dual symbol of breast and arms, and then to the presentation of abdomen and thighs. This is succeeded by the decimal picture of the toes, and at last by the myriad scattered specks of dust. In value and in specific gravity the parts of the image reflect the same lesson of deterioration. While proud man since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment has rejoiced in the law of progress, twentieth-century events have endorsed the principle expressed in this prophecy, that apart from God all things human deteriorate rather than improve. And what is true of the conglomerate is also true of the individual. You and I are on our way to decay and eternal nothingness unless we take hold of divine power. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3).

Why did Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome each fail to endure? What was their fatal weakness or mistake? The answer is that to each came the gospel through God's messengers, but each rejected it. Proud Babylon ignored the warnings of Daniel, and the cruel Medo-Persians condemned to death the whole race of Esther the Jewess. Worldly-wise Greeks refused to be instructed by the books of the feeble Jews, and the Romans killed not only the Son

of God but multitudes of His disciples. In thunderous tones history is proclaiming the solemn warning of Scriptures: "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:17).

The Stone That Became a Mountain

Such is the divine admonition in the prophecy recommended by our Lord for study. But on the same page is to be found heavenly comfort. The growth of the tiny pebble into a mountain filling the earth for eternity symbolizes the fact that believers in Christ, though despised like Him, will continually increase and prosper regardless of all transitory events. Those who now permit their sinful habits to be broken by Christ's gospel, those who receive "forgiveness of sins," need not henceforth be anxious "about anything" (Philippians 4:6, RSV). To be wholly dependent upon God is to become independent of all else. This prophecy assures the believer that God's love overrules all chance and change.

It is not true for the believer that "history teaches us that history teaches us nothing." History is indeed *His* story. Christ is no absentee landlord, permitting His house to disintegrate through careless tenants. The right reading of history brings the assurance that what God made He governs and that He who controls the universe also guides the atom.





What schools are doing to little children

WHEN IS a school not a school? Answer: When its inspiration has vanished and its power, neutralized by careless hands, falls victim to social pressures.

America's greatest industry—education—is in trouble, and with little excuse. It has the greatest resources in money, research, and personnel of all nations. Its unique, comprehensive free system stands as a wonder of the world. Yet a closer look finds its inspiration fading and its effectiveness fractured by careless hands. For all the talent and information available to America, its school system is guided more by intuition, expediency, and social pressure than by available research and common sense.

Consider some of the products of our conventional wisdom: In the past half century, bigness has become the goal. We consolidate the schools. We declare that largeness brings enrichment. Never mind the time-proved excellence of the rural school or the little red brick building down the block. Rather, we demand oversized "educational parks." Inevitably we reap the harvest—impersonal, often uncontrollable, learning factories, mass-produced education, and "parks" which in due course become educational ghettos. Yet strangely we wonder, furrow-browed, why each year the quality of American education comes under increasing suspicion.

The big school has brought a hundred curses in its train. The school bus substitutes for sturdy legs, depriving the child of the experience and responsibility of finding his own way safely to school.

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Homework—rote, boring and tempting to dishonesty—has become a substitute for work in the home. Teachers, preoccupied with large numbers, feel more compelled to teach facts and the memorizing of other men's thoughts than principles and how to think. Children frequently become problems rather than helpers in the classroom. More often than not in a bygone day, the older taught the younger and the stronger helped the weaker.

Sports have largely taken the place of work, and amusements rank higher than responsibility. Practical work has given way to the excitement of athletic competition. And with it has gone perhaps our most likely avenue to the crucial values of service and self-worth.

Modern math, generalized before it was proved, seems to have confused more than clarified. The vacuous Dick and Jane syndrome has overridden the character classics which in earlier days were somehow read thoroughly and well. The open classroom has captured our fancy without our realizing that the truly open school is in the teacher's heart—reflected in the flexibility and creative opportunity he provides his students.

We do not condemn all big schools. But we do quarrel with the idea that bigness brings breadth and enrichment because of the evidence that it more often breeds tunnel vision and small minds. Why turn from smallness until bigness has been proved better?

Nor do we necessarily downgrade the bus. It is a valid educational tool. But why make it an expensive and unnecessary substitute for a child's legs—and sense of responsibility?

Sports, too, obviously have their place. And there should be no law

*A respected educator attacks many of the common myths concerning our schools. The complete results of the Hewitt Research Center's studies in education have appeared recently under the title *Better Late Than Early*, published by the Reader's Digest Press.*

by Raymond S. Moore

We commonly ignore sound educational findings and daily risk the futures of our youngsters without batting an eye."

against experimenting with the three R's provided such research is carefully done and its findings honestly implemented. But such care has been uncommon among us. Even when we do care, many administrators feel bound by legal fetters that paralyze their efforts to build on scientifically established facts. State school entrance-age laws are an example. No research basis exists to justify the six-year-old entrance laws for normal children. If there were, it would likely be unfair to boys—who mature six to twelve months later than girls at this age. Little wonder that we find several times as many frustrated, underachieving, and delinquent boys as girls.

Following the recent report that a major corporation had deliberately disregarded engineering research in the development of an airplane brake, a furor ensued. Lives were at stake. Yet we commonly ignore sound educational findings and daily risk the futures of our youngsters without batting an eye.

The scientific findings in Early Childhood Education (ECE) are a poignant example. ECE has become a "brilliant new educational star." It has all the trappings of the educational bandwagon. It allegedly offers something for everyone: "freedom" for parents, "stimulation" and "socialization" for children. It promises more jobs for teachers and pledges solutions to the problems of the deprived. It also provides a bonanza for manufacturers of educational media and has become a tempting platform for politicians.

Yet recent research indicates that the freedom ECE is bringing to parents is often short-lived. The earlier children go to school the worse their attitudes tend to be toward school. The sooner they leave the home and its relative security the greater the probability of anxiety and alienation from their parents and the values they represent. They sense that the parents would like to be free of them—a fact in entirely too many cases.

The social pressure to move children from home to school at ever earlier ages indeed implies inadequate parenthood. Yet as parents we do not necessarily

have to feel inferior. Although exceptions may occur, even undesirable homes usually provide more continuity and security for the preschool-age child than a reasonably good care center or school.

Often the highly touted "stimulation" advantage of ECE actually results in a loss of motivation. The early excitement of school in an unready child frequently turns to the doldrums as he is forced to read and compute beyond his ability. Neurophysiologists have decided more and more that the function or capacity of the brain to reason is closely related to its structural maturity. This means that the young child may not be able to sustain a high quality of reasoning without fatigue. The two lobes of the young brain may not be in balance until the child is seven or eight or nine. Psychologists also have repeatedly demonstrated that he will not be able to reason consistently from cause to effect (an ability required for mastery of the 3 R's) until he reaches this age range or even as old as eleven years.

Reading and arithmetic are complex tasks. If the child is not ready, he may turn them off permanently, never gaining effective skills. Very often his early motivation becomes stalled on a learning plateau, and it remains there for life.


Even if he apparently thrives on school, the six-year-old's vision and his inadequate hearing trip up his pronunciation of even simple words. Myopia is a common result of a six-year-old's being cooped up in a classroom. Not until he is eight or nine can we be reasonably sure of his ability to hear discriminately. Thus in Sunday School a New Yorker, age six, recently was heard praying: "Our Father which are in heaven, . . . lead us not into Penn Station."

Neither is the socialization so fondly hoped for by many preschooler parents so likely as it logically appears. Studies comparing early and later school entrants regularly find that *children enrolling later show more stability, more socialization, better leadership, and higher achievement*. For example, a normal

child who waits until age eight to start school can usually skip the first grade or two, catch up, and often pass his peers who started years earlier.

It is amazing that a nation's schools can get so far off the track and never know it until almost too late. The California State Department of Education remains a classic example of ignoring systematic educational and psychological research. It proposes to take children out of the home by age four or three or even earlier! This popular gospel is being preached by a classically appealing superintendent. His goals for little children seem sound and beautiful, but his proposed methods are far more political and expedient than scientific.

Some of us have repeatedly asked for the California evidence. But we have not received it. Nor will we, according to some respected researchers, for they say it does not exist. Rather, the evidence points to a need for more careful attention to parent education and to encouraging the child to share the duties of the home from his earliest years. This regimen teaches industry, order, dependability, and it builds self-respect and a sense of being needed—basic ingredients for security and social responsibility. A recent UCLA study of 35,286 California schoolchildren in 150 schools found that in no case did preschool children later score significantly better in performance, motivation, or productivity in the kindergarten and primary grades. In a number of cases they did worse.

Is it possible that in early childhood education and in other schooling problems we have not taken care to unveil the facts? Like Little Red Riding Hood we often see a sweet little grandma when actually we are facing a big bad wolf. It is strange and wonderful where emotions and intuition will lead. How remarkable that we often adopt causes without any serious reference to truth! Otherwise many sects would starve and more than a few politicians would fade away. But it is a risky approach when applied to business, especially the big business of American education. 



My mother is a witch!

Dear Dick:

I don't know if you would have any suggestions for me or not about my problem, but I need to tell someone, so here goes.

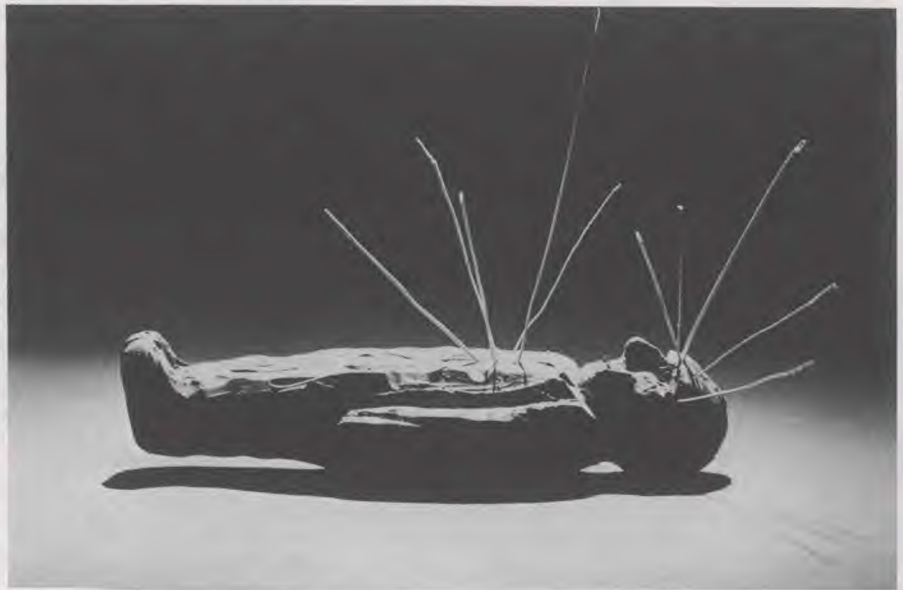
For the past three or four years my mother has been fooling around with witchcraft and the occult. I wasn't scared at the beginning because I was too young to know much about the occult. But since then it has been getting pretty serious. Our whole basement is filled with voodoo dolls, sorcery charms, hex symbols, and worst of all, last month she built an altar to Satan. I am so scared. She spends every afternoon and night down there. She has even started to speak in a crazy language. I've seen her get so angry at neighbors or relatives that she claims to have put a curse on them. I'm seventeen years old and I am counting the days till I can get out. I don't know what to do now.

I didn't make up Peggy's letter. It is real. Her problem is real. Her mother, the witch, is real. As you read this, don't conjure up in your mind some situation comedy where the mother twitches her nose and everybody on the laugh track comes in obediently on cue. This is no laughing matter!

The word to describe the situation is *diabolic*. It means "of the devil." Who is the devil? "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Most of us have been, or are, followers of the devil. Before we expose our hypocrisy with self-righteous words condemning Peggy's mother, let's stop for a little introspection. Is it really any worse to be an *open* follower of Satan than a *secret* admirer?

It would seem, however, that becoming an open worshiper of Satan ought to entitle the worshiper to inside informa-



tion. He ought to be privileged to confidences. It must be an awful pain in the neck to have to lie about everything! Perhaps they let their hair down in those Satan worship meetings and really tell it like it is. Just imagine:

"Listen, folks, I know some of you are getting sick and tired of hearing someone say you are committing fornication and adultery all the time. I have heard some of you complain that it is becoming a bit disgusting and boring to you. You must be falling down in your Satan bible reading. It says in black and white, 'Thou shalt commit adultery.'

"Another thing, some of you are becoming careless about seeking repentance for lapses into righteousness. Be sure and ask forgiveness for your good deeds! Ask Satan to help you break the Ten Commandments every day. Listen to your conscience when it bothers you about telling the truth.

"Pray for those who are nice to you. Plead for some terrible calamity to fall upon them. Feel guilty for not hating everybody all the time.

"Remember, your body is the temple of Satan; abuse it! Try to become a drug addict or an alcoholic. Lose your health as quickly as possible. Pray for disease and short life.

"Pollute, degrade. If you're lucky, you can become a criminal. Never do an honest day's work. Cheat if you have to

go to school. Do anything you can to hurt somebody. It is your satanic duty to be disloyal and unhappy. Enjoy your misery. Threaten with heaven people who aren't bad enough. Eternal life would drive a Satan worshiper insane.

"Be afraid. Be discouraged. Be worried. Become suicidal. Look forward to hell. The sooner the better . . ."

That is the way it really is with Satan worshipers either open or secret. But Peggy's mother won't find out the truth in her new church. The devil is the father of lies. Can you imagine the derision with which the devil and his angels regard the mumbo jumbo and worship antics of Peggy's mother? Voodoo dolls, sorcery charms, hex symbols, and now an altar to Satan. It is clever, diabolically clever.

Enough about the mother. How about the daughter? Must she suffer for the sins of her mother? Is she to be drawn into the web of evil against her will? Not against her will. Oh, no! The devil is supernatural, yes. But no match for God the Almighty One!

Peggy's life is not in jeopardy because of her mother. In fact, Peggy may have a bit of an "advantage." She knows the results of the choice her mother has made. Some of the rest of us puzzle our children. We are not open worshipers of Satan. But are we followers of his while we claim otherwise?

Dick Jewett pastors a church in Rochester, New York, and conducts a radio talk show for troubled young people.

There's a soybean in your future

A NATIONAL Seventh-day Adventist conference on inner-city affairs was told that Americans must become educated to accept the soybean as a nutritious and economical protein substitute for meat.

"It's going to take a lot of education to make Americans change their life-style to accept the soybean, but economics



and land usage are on the side of the bean," said Ivy S. Neblett, of the Arlington Community Action Program.

"One pound of protein from soybean can cost as little as 33 cents while a pound of animal protein in the form of beef may cost \$13.32," she said. "One acre produces enough soybeans annually to feed a man for 2,200 days."

Armstrong Weathers Defections

Disillusionments and defections shook Herbert W. Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God in early 1974 when ministers and 3,000 members left over WCG's unbending rules and rumors of philandering by Herbert's son, Garner Ted. But figures recently released show increases in 1974 membership and income following "far-reaching budgetary surgeries" and per-

sonal appearance tours to win new members. Worldwide membership rose 3,812 to 61,430 (U.S. total: 46,926). Income rose to \$62 million.

Yet financial troubles may be seen behind the closing of the British branch of Ambassador College and the sale of two-million-dollar presses that once produced church magazine *The Plain Truth*. The Armstrongs have relented on some controversial rules: new members previously divorced and remarried need not dissolve second home; payment of third tithe may be excused; members newly free to get medical care, wear makeup, observe birthdays, and date interracially.

Kanawha Parents Prevail: "Twin" Schools, Clean Books Ahead

Kanawha County (West Virginia) parents fighting "un-American, anti-religion" textbooks seem to have won the power struggle for their district's public schools. Several existing schools are scheduled to be split next year into "traditional" (stressing dress, discipline codes, three R's) and "nontraditional" schools. All textbooks must be approved by four committees with parent representation. Books must stress grammar and patriotism, and they must avoid profanity or defaming the nation's founders. A list of 325 "objectionable" titles has been removed from required reading; students need parent's OK to read them in the library.

"Indecency" In, "Gospel" Out? Crucial FCC Ruling Ahead

FCC rulings may result in "indecent" language being approved for radio when many gospel programs are not. A recent board decision indicated that "obscene" language (appealing to prurient interests) was prohibited from radio, but "indecent" (nonprurient) language was not, if scheduled when children would not be listening and if they warned "nonconsenting" adults. (The problem of distinguishing "obscene" language from "indecent" is now evident in cable TV, where "blue" programs are proliferating.)

The National Religious Broadcasters, meanwhile, is now filing statements

against a petition requesting that the FCC freeze all applications for radio and TV time by "religious, 'Bible,' 'Christian'" schools and institutions. The petition also called on FCC to divest religious groups of multiple radio, TV holdings, charging that religious programs promulgated a "comfortable, blond Aryan view of the Godhead."

No Abortion Slump Seen After Manslaughter Conviction

The conviction of Boston doctor Kenneth Edelin on manslaughter charges is unlikely to have much effect on the number of abortions performed in the U.S. (900,000 last year). The obstetrician was convicted of killing a 20-week-old "baby boy" fetus by depriving it of air after a hysterotomy abortion (procedure like a Caesarean section). The upshot is likely to be that abortions will be performed earlier, when the fetus is less "viable." Hysterotomies—now used about 1 percent of the time—will be phased out in favor of saline injection or suction methods which destroy fetus within the womb—a critical legal point.

"No Quick Recovery From Recession"

The treasurer of the Lutheran Church in America, who is also a vice-president of Mobil Oil, does not think the U.S. will recover quickly from the current recession. "If returning to normal means returning to the low recession rate of the early 1960's, I doubt that will happen until the end of the century," said L. Milton Woods.

The U.S., he said, is gripped in a recession that is the "longest and deepest since World War II, and no upturn [is] yet at hand." Mr. Woods was one of fifteen chief financial officers of U.S. and Canadian denominations who took part in a consultation in New York on the effects of inflation and recession on various levels of the church.

Marriage Seen as Popular Again

The tradition of marriage is "in" again with young people of America, according to *Redbook Magazine*. "After a decade of decline, attributed to growing feminism and increased sexual freedom, . . . marriage is enjoying renewed popu-



larity," the magazine noted.

Living together without wedding vows, increasingly common in our society, is definitely out, declares the popular journal.

"Thousands of couples . . . of all ages, races, religion, and social and economic strata . . . who a few years ago scorned the idea of marriage are marrying today legally and with ritual," *Redbook* stated in its February issue. "Even experienced marriage counselors are amazed to discover the renewed impulse to marry, because they had expected the living-together trend of the past years [from 1960 to 1970] to continue."

Elvin Hayes Testifies of Conversion

Basketball pro Elvin Hayes, an alleged troublemaker and problem child by reputation, was traded to a Washington, D.C., basketball team and became the player largely responsible for making it the winningest in the NBA.

Everyone wondered about his change of attitude, so he was asked in a half-time interview about it.

"A complete change came into my life when I accepted Christ as my Saviour a year and a half ago," Hayes testified. "I know the difference. . . . I know the change it has made in my life. After I finish my basketball career, I'll probably become a minister."

High School Leaders Believe in God

Nearly nine out of ten high school student leaders say they believe "there is a God or a supreme being." And 82 percent "feel religion is relevant in today's society." The survey, conducted by *Who's Who Among American High School Students*, shows that three fourths of the top students consider themselves members of an organized religion. Religion was one of twenty-three general topics covered in the fifth annual survey by *Who's Who*.

Jesus Movement "Fad" Over

Evangelist Leighton Ford has run the curtain down on the Jesus Movement.

"The fad of the Jesus Movement is over," he said in an interview with Virginia Culver of the *Denver Post*. "A lot of young persons in the Jesus Movement

thought Jesus was a 'trip.' It was an emotional thing, and their faith often had no content. We had some emotional casualties and dropouts, but many others [from the movement] have gone into the established churches and others have started their own churches."

Thurmond Bill Would Bar Nudity, Explicit Sex from TV Programs

Television broadcasting of programs portraying nudity, obscenity, or explicit sexual activity "which is offensive to the public taste and morals" would be prohibited under a bill introduced in the



Senate to amend the Communications Act of 1934.

Noting that Congress has authorized the Federal Communications Commission to license the originators of television broadcasts in the public interest, Senator Strom Thurmond (Republican, South Carolina) said, on submitting the legislation, that he thinks "it is entirely appropriate to help the FCC determine and define the standards by which the 'public interest' is judged."

"It seems to me," he added, "that an elementary standard of the public interest would take into account the con-

cern that millions of Americans share about the level of sexual material entering their homes."

Belief in God and Life After Death Drops in Britain

According to a recent Harris poll, Britain's belief in God has dropped significantly during the past ten years. In the current poll 29 percent said they believed in God as a person and 35 percent as some sort of spirit or life-force. Ten years ago 71 percent expressed belief in some kind of God. Belief in life after death was expressed by 39 percent in the latest poll compared with 53 percent in 1963.

Where Have All the Activists Gone? The Greening of the Campus

In 1969 many collegians forsook academics to major in the violence, idealism, and excitement of student activism. Today that era seems as remote as the Whiskey Rebellion on most campuses. Six years later, what kind of student has taken the activist's place? *Christian Century* interviewed campus ministers from colleges like Harvard, Berkeley, and Texas A & M for this overview of the campus scene in a recent issue:

1. "Students are naïve in areas in which the '69 student was experienced: organizational enterprise, the political arena, sexual relationships."
2. "Students today are less susceptible to fads . . . because they don't expect utopia with the attainment of each new experience."
3. "Students today are caught in the vocational crunch"—they "must choose a major that will pay off, and this brings an overwhelming rush for the few openings in medical and law schools and leads to competition: individualism and grade-grubbing. . . ."
4. "Students no longer believe . . . that they can change the world; 'in fact, they can no longer even think in such terms. All problems seem so global to them—ecology, hunger, limited resources, war. Students feel that they don't even have themselves together and are looking for ways to achieve that.' "



Why God can't always answer prayer

Many Christians prayed for God to heal the growth in Tim's hip socket. Many more prayed for Pastor Hansen, who had multiple brain tumors. Yet apparently God answered in one case but not in the other. by Gerald Wheeler

TIM'S X RAYS looked bad. They showed a growth on the bone in the hip socket which his physician worried might be malignant. And even if it were benign, to remove it would destroy bone, requiring extensive grafting from elsewhere on his leg to replace it. Also he would have to remain immobilized in a body cast for at least three months.

The teen-ager came from a deeply religious family. They and other members of their little country church gathered for a solemn prayer meeting. The congregation prayed that the growth would not prove malignant but that whatever happened, Tim would be able to cope with it.

When the doctors operated, they found that the growth was benign and—most amazing of all—it was now several inches down the femur instead of in the hip socket where the X rays had shown it before. The physicians would not have to graft bone, nor would Tim have to lie for months in a cast.

Just a short distance from Tim's home, intense headaches suddenly seized Pastor Hansen. X rays and other tests revealed two malignant brain tumors. Thousands prayed for his life.

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For a short time he seemed to improve. Then he slipped into a coma. Death came quickly.

Why did a miracle happen for Tim and not for Pastor Hansen? Why does God intervene sometimes, yet permit the same or greater tragedies to take place at other times?

Since we do not have God's total knowledge, we do not know why He spared Tim suffering and crippling yet allowed Pastor Hansen to die. Our understanding is limited. But the Christian must always keep several factors in mind when God does not see fit to answer his prayers.

First, God might realize that it is not in our best interest to grant our petition. All of us have occasionally approached God with requests for His aid from childish or selfish motives. To protect us, many times He has to say No.

But even when something is in our best interest, the Lord may not choose to intervene in our difficulty—a second point we must consider.

We recognize that our world is a battleground between two forces—the forces of good and of evil. Evil exists because someone has challenged God's right to rule His universe. Scripture tells us that "war arose in heaven" (Revelation 12:7*), a struggle between God and Satan (verse 9). Satan

contends that God's government is unfair and selfish (Job 1:6-12, 21, 22; 2:1-9). (The name *Satan* comes from a Hebrew word meaning "adversary," "to cherish animosity.")

After his mind began operating along the principles of sin, Satan rebelled against God's law, His character, and His rule (Ezekiel 28:15, 17, 18). His insidious charges against the Lord deceived at least a third of heaven's inhabitants, beings who had lived in intimate association with God Himself (Revelation 12:4; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). To deal with the devil's accusations, God must not only clearly demonstrate His nature both to mankind and to the rest of the beings in the universe, but He must also expose Satan's true character. The Lord must let sin work out its terrible course so that all will have no question about its only consequence. And the only way to forever remove all doubt about the validity of Satan and his plans is for a time to permit him to put them into effect. The disease of sin must run its course so as to eternally inoculate the universe against it.

Satan wanted to operate the universe in a different manner than heretofore. God knew that his methods would lead only to absolute disaster and

*All Bible texts are quoted from the Revised Standard Version.

unhappiness, but other beings did not. They had only Satan's and God's opposing claims as to what would happen. The Lord never forces a decision on His created beings, but He allows them to make their choices by their own free will (see, for example, Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15). But to decide, they must have evidence of what the devil's plan would lead to.

Only Satan could convincingly provide it. In addition, had God attempted to completely prevent the devil from putting his concepts into effect, Satan would have argued that the Lord didn't want him to succeed. And other beings might wonder if Satan didn't have a point.

So for the ultimate good of the universe, God chose to step back and let Lucifer work. He has, to a certain extent, tied His own hands. To show that Satan had become by nature a murderer, for example, the Father permitted the devil to kill His Son on the cross. And to demonstrate that He alone could operate and rule His universe, God let Satan make a mess of his kingdom on the earth. Only thus could He eternally erase all doubt about His justice and mercy.

Every being must be fully satisfied about the nature of sin. Each has to see it in action. If God should intervene too much into his captive world, Satan could charge that He was unfairly meddling, that Satan was failing only because of God's interference. God wants to avoid any such suspicions, for that would lead only to perpetuating sin.

It's painful, it's messy, it's heartbreaking to both God and man, but it's the only way He can ever ensure that sin won't arise another time. Satan plays his game out, and we suffer now until a time can come when we will never have to suffer again.

Yet despite this we know that God *does* intervene for us. He does answer

Many times God doesn't answer our prayers because we really don't want His kind of help. We wish to do the job by ourselves."

prayers and perform miracles. The Lord not only wants to vindicate His rulership and character, He is a loving Father wanting to ease the misery of His children. Here enters the third factor which influences whether God can answer our prayers as we ask Him to or not.

Although, as a whole, God has to limit what He does in a rebellious world, to His followers He has promised much help. Christ declared in His Sermon on the Mount, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?" (Matthew 7:11).

And ask Him we must. Just as God does not violate our free will in choosing between good and evil, so He doesn't force Himself on us in other ways. Man must ask for His help. To request aid means that the person helping us should be the one in charge. By His very nature God must be in control. Could He act any other way and be God? He created everything and sustains it (Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17). The issue behind the conflict between good and evil is that only God knows how to run the universe He created and that no possible way exists for Him to share His Godship with a created being such as Lucifer.

The first commandment stipulates, "You shall have no other gods before

me'" (Exodus 20:3). But sinful beings tend to act like their own gods. People who depend upon themselves to solve their own problems don't see any need for outside help. They are able—or at least they try—to take care of everything through their own efforts. Such self-sufficient individuals become their own gods—for only God is totally self-sufficient. The Lord can't aid someone who feels so independent that he feels no need for assistance. Christ clearly illustrated this in His parable of the Pharisee and the publican. God could help the publican only because he recognized that he had a lack.

Do we get so busy trying to solve the problems of our lives that we don't give our Creator and Sustainer a chance to rectify them? If He did intervene, wouldn't we think that it was our own efforts that prevailed—that we had gotten out of the difficulty by ourselves or that we had earned honor for ourselves through our personal success?

Let me suggest that many times God doesn't answer our prayers because we really don't want His kind of help. We wish to do the job by ourselves.

The principle applies to every aspect of life. Because God is who and what He is, He must be in charge of everything. He must—for our own sakes as finite, created beings—receive the recognition and glory that is His due. If His creatures don't want Him in control, He will not impose Himself on them. Never will He ignore their free will. Instead He sadly stands aside and lets them reap the disastrous results of their choices.

But if we allow God to be the guiding force in our lives, He will be able to do much more for us. The Christian with God in charge of his life will begin to see answered prayer that will pale into insignificance even the mighty wonders revealed in the Bible. ☪



My sewing box existence

IT ALL STARTED with the sewing box Don gave me for Christmas, a huge three-decker from the Singer Shop with compartments for everything. My fingers itched to transfer the tangle of materials from the tiny, dog-eared box I'd been using for years. Later that day when the Christmas debris had been either organized or ousted, I treated myself to a complete reorganization of my entire sewing area, and very specifically to stocking that fascinating box.

As I sat joyously fitting bobbins into indentations and spools onto spindles, my husband happened by.

"This is absolutely my favorite gift, honey," I said.

I buried my head for a moment on that comfortable shoulder and was suddenly overcome with a foolish urge to cry. "It's so organized," I said in a wobbly voice. "Look at it. There's even a place shaped for scissors. Nothing else in my life has any order anymore, but in that box everything fits."

He laughed at my small storm and assured me I handled our rather chaotic household beautifully. He meant it sincerely, and it was extremely comforting, but my problem still stayed with me.

True, there was nothing orderly about our existence. We had five children, four of them teen-agers. During this particular holiday one could find in the front hall a card table topped with the fragile skeleton of a balsa-wood model plane, its builder taking time out from his intricate task only long enough to go snowmobiling now and then. In the family room someone had started a puzzle which must not be disturbed. The living room seemed wall-to-wall bodies as various family members sprawled on the rug with some new game. Don's corner of the family room ran rampant with his medley of hobbies and their related reading material, and lest I leave you thinking that I'm a creature of order trying to survive in this jungle, let me add that my sewing machine was atumble with aqua knit and my desk piled with the clutter of my trade.

It was not all this, however, which

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had brought on my sense of inner confusion. The house had been full of children and their related activities for a good many years. I am used to it.

I know where it all began. About five years ago I wrote a book. Eventually it was published, and in its wake came a flare of whatever it is that happens to new writers—I hesitate to call it fame. At any rate, it sent me scurrying about the countryside speaking to hundreds of people. New writing opportunities began to arrive in my mailbox. Fan mail, awaiting acknowledgment, lay sorted into piles beside my typewriter. Life was suddenly filled with challenges, and I determined to meet them all. I went about my housekeeping duties with ideas whirling like Frisbees across my mind.

At first it was fun. There was more satisfaction than I like to admit in having written a moderately successful book and gaining a growing recognition as a public speaker. But very gradually I had come to the place where I now found myself. That organized sewing basket really got to me, and I went to my bedroom to face some facts.

I no longer walked in the woods, feeling one with the earth and its Maker.

I no longer baked the bread which our

third son loved to smell as he came in from school.

I no longer played games with the children.

Flower gardens, once the joy of summertime, lay frowzy and unkempt.

Worst of all, the daily rendezvous I had always shared with God had become shorter and ever more sporadic. I was too weary to really pray. I could not organize my thinking, even upon my knees.

Of course, in both writing and speaking I had had opportunity to witness for Christ. I did not question that He who gave the talent expected me to use it, but somehow the whole thing had gotten out of hand. Like the old sewing box, my life had become topsy-turvy, tangled, and almost useless.

I realized I faced a crossroad, and that God was trying to tell me something. I had gotten weary enough to listen at last. I'm still praying and searching for His guidance and finding it directly in proportion to how much time I'm willing to spend with Him. Next month I'll tell you some of the ways in which He's leading, just in case you, too, are caught on some merry-go-round which never seems to stop no matter how vigorously you signal, "Off."



Natural Diet

by Mervyn G. Hardinge

Did you ever wonder how cows and horses manage to build such strong bodies on a vegetable diet? You can too.

HENRY THOREAU, a nineteenth-century writer and philosopher, visited a farmer plowing his field with a team of oxen. As the two walked behind the plow, they talked about the kind of diet best suited to build strong bodies. The farmer said, "You cannot live on vegetable foods solely, for they furnish nothing to build bones with."

Thoreau mused, "All the while he talks he is walking behind his oxen which with vegetable-made bones jerk him and his plow along."

Plant foods are rich in minerals and vitamins and build not only the bones and flesh of oxen but strong *human* bodies as well. Cereal grains, beans, peas, seeds, and nuts contain considerable protein. The President's Science Advisory Committee reports that 70 percent of the world's supply of protein is derived from vegetable sources, mainly from grains. Plant foods also contribute unsaturated fats and a variety of carbohydrates.

If you doubt that a vegetarian diet can build human bone and flesh, just take a look at the population explosion in areas where the diet is largely rice and legumes as in India; corn, millet, peanuts, and other legumes as in areas of Africa; or corn tortillas and beans as in Latin America. If such predominantly vegetarian diets of rather limited choice can produce the world's greatest fertility and growth, then certainly a more varied type of vegetarian diet need lack no essentials. A study of comparable groups of vegetarians and nonvegetarians found a diet of plant foods with milk and eggs to be as adequate for the needs of all age groups—adults, teenagers, and pregnant women—as the conventional meat diet.

Obviously man is not dependent on animals to pre-fabricate his foods, particularly his protein, for him. He can go directly to the primary source—the plants—and get what he needs himself. Thus Harvard University nutritionists assured Americans during the food crisis of World War II that "as long as this country has access

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to a plentiful supply of calories and a variety of whole-grain cereals and legumes, it is most unlikely that *impairment of health* from protein deficiency will ever occur."

But why this concern over diet? Can diet kill?

Western countries with their large consumption of meat, milk, and eggs have a high blood cholesterol level and a heavy loss of life from coronary heart disease, especially in middle-aged men. In the United States 666,000 people die each year from this disease—171,000 of them below sixty-five years of age. Such is not the case with peoples whose diet contains little animal food. Commenting on this finding, Dr. Jeremiah Stamler, executive director of the Chicago Health Research Foundation and a pioneer in studying the relationship between diet and our growing epidemic of heart attacks, points to a rich diet high in animal products as one of the most important factors responsible for this plague of coronary disease in affluent countries. He warns, "In terms of diet the whole American population runs a risk." This is characterized by excessive calories, too much total fat, and too much saturated fat and dietary cholesterol of the kind found in animal products.

Vegetarians Have a Distinct Advantage

Evidently God who created our bodies knew what kind of food would keep them operating best. When He created human beings, He said, "I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. . . . And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:29-31, RSV).

Isn't it interesting that scientists have now discovered that the original diet given to man by God is the best diet to prevent heart attacks and other disorders?

However, both nonvegetarian and vegetarian diets can increase the risk of coronary heart disease by an excessive use of cane sugar. Dr. John Yudkin, of the University of London, found that men who suffered heart attacks had habitually used twice as much sugar as men of similar age without heart problems. Workers

at the University of Toronto observed that sugar and animal fat together in the diet combine to raise the level of fatty substances in the blood higher than either one alone. Thus the low cholesterol benefit of plant foods can be sabotaged by an excessive intake of sugar.

Vegetarian and near-vegetarian diets have distinct advantages. The cholesterol intake is reduced in proportion to the reduction of animal foods, and fat is less saturated. Plant foods provide an abundance of complex carbohydrates which animal foods do not contain. The starch in plant foods is converted to glucose for energy, and the indigestible fiber furnishes bulk for the bowels. Bulky foods have fewer calories and reduce the risk of overweight. Both the protein and the fat of a vegetarian diet are moderate in amount and in better balance with the carbohydrate intake than is the case with meat diets.

You Can Develop Total Excellence

Can diet kill? Usually it does not cause death immediately, but over the years a diet high in animal foods can clog up the blood vessels and disable the living machinery to a point where the life processes can no longer function.

It is the duty of every person, for his own sake and for the sake of humanity, to inform himself in regard to the laws of life and conscientiously to obey them. We need to become better acquainted with that most wonderful of all organisms, the human body.

This article has concentrated on only one aspect of healthful living—a proper diet. May it stimulate you to seek further counsel, for vigorous health does not depend on chance—it is the result of obedience to law. The body is the only medium through which the mind and the soul are developed for the upbuilding of character.

Actually we should develop all our powers—mental, moral, physical, and spiritual—because we belong to God by right of creation and redemption. We ought to present our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice. We need to realize that all our powers of mind and body are the gift of God to be preserved in the best possible condition for His service.





Dan Pfeiffer

Christians don't have to be so weak!

A young Irishman passes on to Hudson Taylor, pioneer missionary to the Orient, a simple secret to victorious Christianity. by Norman R. Gulley

ON SATURDAY, September 4, 1869, Hudson Taylor arrived home at his tiny crowded house in Chinkiang, China, after a mission itinerary. "It's been a long hot summer," he sighed as he gave his wife an extra-big hug. He kissed his children, greeted the Chinese teachers and other missionaries, and, as if driven by some inner searching, went to his study. He wanted some peace—he'd tried so hard, prayed, agonized, fasted, made resolutions, read the Bible more, but still his inner soul seemed in turmoil. He felt himself a great sinner and a failure. Picking up a stack of correspondence that had accumulated during his absence, he idly turned the envelopes. Why couldn't he get relief?

"John McCarthy," he read on the envelope. His pulse quickened, and he hastily tore open the envelope. Why, this was the young Irishman he had just left in Hangchow in August! He recalled well John's quick temper and how he longed to know how to overcome it. He had written at length.

"I see," wrote McCarthy, "as if the first glimmer of the dawn of a glorious day has arisen upon me. . . . I seem to have sipped only of that which can fully satisfy."

"What's he found?" Taylor could hardly read fast enough. His eyes were riveted as he reread the words.

"To let my loving Saviour work in me His will. . . . Abiding, not striving or struggling. . . . Not a striving to have faith, or to increase our faith, but a looking at the faithful one seems all we need."

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"Looking at the faithful one." Taylor stared long and far out of the window as he thought of his Saviour, and a wave of peace, joy, and contentment flowed through his whole being. Glorious discovery! Resting in Him!

With new joy in his heart and new light in his eyes he called the household together and read McCarthy's letter to them, exclaiming, "I am one with Christ; I am part of Him. Each of us is a limb of His body, a branch of the vine."

Centuries before this, Jesus Christ stated, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). McCarthy and Taylor now saw that victory comes through abiding rather than through fighting, that obedience comes not through trying harder but through trusting more. For obedience is the fruit of an abiding relationship with Jesus Christ.

"Ah, but wait a minute!" calls a work addict. "Isn't there something I have to do before Christ can accept me in order for me to abide in Him? After all, Taylor and McCarthy were working as missionaries before this experience."

Back comes the answer loud and clear: Don't you remember Luther's desperate struggle in the monastery? He flung himself into works, fasting, confessing, and punishing his body and mind in an unplanned suicide by installment. Frightened of Christ, he was the most miserable man on earth. Luther says, "I was so imprisoned in this practice that the Lord had to tear me from this self-torture by violence" (E. C. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Time*, p. 150). Trapped within himself, he saw no way out until Dr. Staupitz led him to see that Jesus

The battle for victory is not over sins; the battle is to become and remain connected with Jesus Christ, the Saviour from sin."

Christ had already accepted him.

Don't listen to self. Force it to see its helplessness. Fling in its face the words: "Without me [Christ] ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Really it is just as impossible for you to earn Christ's love as for a waterfall to flow upward or for you to have given yourself birth into this world or for a disconnected branch to bear fruit. For apart from Christ we cannot obey—we are weak. As Augustine declared, "When Thou art our strength, we have strength indeed, but when we rely upon ourselves, our strength is nothing but weakness" (*Confessions*, p. 112).

Away then with all humanism, all do-it-yourself jabs in the dark. Oh, rejoice in the freedom of the full fact of acceptance! Christ died for you before you were born, and that death is the greatest proof that you are accepted just as you are.

"Ah," speaks up another, "now you are talking down my alley. Jesus Christ did everything for us, and to that we cannot add one iota. Then all we have to do is believe, isn't it? We do not have to do anything else, do we?"

No! a thousand times no! responds the answer of love straining at the leash. Remember Hopeful in Bunyan's dream? He had almost given up because of his vileness till he met Jesus Christ and looked away from self to Him, then he discovered the wonderful fact that he was accepted by Christ! So, did he take it easy, just believing but doing nothing? Not a bit! In utter gratitude to Christ he exclaimed, "Had I now a thousand gallons of blood in my body, I could spill it all for the sake of the Lord Jesus" (John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, p. 146).

That's what acceptance does—it puts fire in the bones; it bursts forth in grateful obedience. It cannot help it, for love has to express itself. "If ye love me," Jesus said—and He might have added, "only if you really do, for without love obedience is a farce" (see 1 Corinthians 13:3)—"If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Obedience is more than belief, for Jesus also declared,

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also" (John 14:12).

Remember too that an accepted Christian is an engrafted branch in the Vine—it naturally becomes Vine-like. As Andrew Murray expressed it, "No one who learns to rest upon the living Christ can become slothful, for the closer your contact with Christ the more of the Spirit of His zeal and love will be borne in upon you" (*Absolute Surrender*, p. 133).

"Ah, but wait longer," calls a third. "You are now getting closer to my concerns. Shouldn't our whole life concentrate upon *what* we should do, *what* laws of God we should obey? Shouldn't studying the law in order to do better become our supreme task?"

Back comes my own experience in childhood to answer. I tried to get victory as a teen-age lad near London, England. On the bedroom wall I stuck a list against which I made daily checks. But the harder I tried to gain victory over these items, the worse it became. Gulley was in a rut! I was a miserable failure. But why?

Ah! mark it well. There is an unchanging law that by beholding we become changed (see 2 Corinthians 3:18). Looking to that chart, I was still beholding myself. To become like Jesus Christ I must look away from self to Him, read about Him, meditate on His life, and commune with Him. It is a case of my setting "the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16:8).

You see, it's not *what* you know but *whom* you know that counts. The Pharisees knew the law backward and forward, but they crucified Christ, the Lawgiver, and then ran home to keep the Sabbath. In our day many will exclaim to the returned Christ, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I [Christ] profess unto them, I never *knew* you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:22, 23). Think of it—they were so busy doing the work of the Lord that they didn't take time to

know the Lord of the work! To know Him is essential, for "this is eternal life, that they *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3, RSV).

Seeking to know the Lawgiver first and the law next is the proper order. The battle for victory is not over sins (or even to discover those things we do wrong without realizing it); the battle is to become and remain connected with Jesus Christ, the Saviour from sin. Then God will supply the victory: "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Union With Christ

Consider the last talk Jesus Christ had with His disciples before His crucifixion. If there is something crucial to know, it will be said here—and it was. In seven verses Jesus Christ spoke of obedience, keeping the commandments, and in three He referred to His own obedience in doing His Father's will. Belief, or believing, was mentioned seven times but never once as sufficient in itself, separate from resulting obedience.

But more important still, twenty-six times Jesus Christ spoke of Christians as *in* Him, He *in* them, including also His being *in* His Father, and His Father *in* Him. This *union* holds the key to all else. Victory springs out of this union, for there we find keeping power (John 17:11, 15). It's not just us *keeping* the law—the Lawgiver keeps us—and it's this keeping us that enables us to keep the law.

Note the heart of this final discourse when Jesus summed it all up in calling Christians branches abiding in Him, the Vine (John 15). Does the branch keep the vine or the vine keep the branch? The Vine keeps the branches: He is able to keep us from falling (Jude 24). "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not" (1 John 3:6). Sounds impossible, doesn't it, but what a promise!

Jesus, our human brother, set us the example in this life of obedience. A vine cannot stand upright by itself. It depends on external support. So Jesus the

Vine utterly depended on His Father. He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (John 5:30). "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10).

The early church followed Christ's example. Pentecost united them to God. Weak disciples became changed to powerful witnesses. Obedience became important to them. They knew their salvation was obtained for them through the obedience of Christ (Philippians 2:8), but also that "he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

Over and over again we find these Christians filled with the Holy Spirit: Stephen (Acts 7:55), Barnabas (Acts 11:24), Paul (Acts 13:9), the disciples at Iconium (Acts 13:52) and at Ephesus (Acts 19:6). No wonder they stormed the world, shook it to its very foundations, turned it upside down. Aflame for God, moved mightily by His instructing power, they passionately declared, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

The throbbing heart of the New Testament is union with Jesus Christ. It is the source from which flows all obedience. It is the very center of the gospel. Paul proclaimed, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). It wasn't a case of *his* living, *his* obeying—in the union, Christ lived in his place. This experience can be ours, for "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

Shout it from the housetops. Let all men know that Christianity is a relationship rather than mere rules, is a fellowship and not just form, for at its heart is a person instead of a practice!

Harry Stage

Seven-year-old Harry Stage made sensational news in the *Washington Star* on February 20, 1961. Why? Twenty-five miles away from his Phoenix, Arizona, home, while his father talked to Mr. Faubion, Harry climbed onto a platform, saw an old piece of plywood at one

Seven-year-old Harry Stage made news in 1961 by falling into an irrigation well 250 feet deep and only 16 inches wide! He got out the same way we escape from the pit of sin.

side, and jumped for it. The plywood covered an irrigation well sixteen inches wide and two hundred fifty feet deep, with water at the bottom of it.

The plywood broke. Harry plunged down, down, down, with part of the plywood slowing him a little. Hitting the water, he pushed the sides with his hands to keep from submerging and yelled, "Daddy, daddy, get me out! Daddy, daddy . . ."

"Don't worry, son, and don't be scared." His father thought quickly. "We'll get you out; just push against the sides so you don't sink."

"Okay. Hurry!"

Mr. Faubion drove furiously the seven long miles to a neighbor's ranch to get cowboy lariats to tie together to rescue Harry. Meanwhile little, frightened, seven-year-old Harry waited. With many bad bruises, two broken legs, tiring arms, he was absolutely helpless! Would Father ever come? How much longer could he hold on? Would he drown? When finally the rope was lowered, he gladly followed every instruction and obeyed implicitly. Placing the rope around his body, he held on for dear life as his father and Mr. Faubion pulled him to safety.

That rope saved Harry. It brought him back to his father because he remained connected to it. We all have fallen headlong into the pit of sin. Bruised, broken, helpless, we cannot save ourselves. Although only those who obey the Father will get to the Father (Matthew 7:21), only Christ let down to us is the way out to the Father, for He said, "I am the way: . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). We must be connected to Him. He alone resurrects us to triumphant living. He alone causes us to obey and enjoy it.

Thank God, "there is a way out through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25, Phillips).



I am Joe's conscience

One of the most amazing "organs" of the body speaks up and tells us what Joe is like from a conscience'-eye view.

by Dick Jewett

JOE IS the mythical average man created for the *Reader's Digest* by J. D. Ratcliff. Joe, forty-seven, represents a typical American male. Many of his organs and tissues have told their stories through the pages of the most widely read magazine in the world.

I am worried about Joe. You see, I am his conscience. It is my job to worry about him. Joe lives in one of our large American cities, and I appreciate what Mr. Ratcliff has done for Joe. Ratcliff has taken the literary device of personification and helped explain Joe to the world. I know, for example, how pollution affects Joe's lungs; how cholesterol clogs up his arteries; how alcohol damages his brain and liver. He doesn't get enough exercise to keep his muscles healthy, nor does he drink enough water to keep his kidneys in good shape. Joe has high blood pressure, and all too frequently he exceeds his stress level. Joe is overweight and at the prime age for a heart attack.

There is more to Joe, however, than meets the stethoscope. I am more concerned about what Ratcliff *doesn't* say about Joe. He doesn't tell us that Joe goes to church only two or three times a year. He doesn't mention that Joe and his wife haven't been getting along and are keeping the marriage together simply for the sake of appearances and the children who are still at home. Their youngest child is a troubled teen-ager into the drug, booze, and sex scene pretty heavy.

Joe is a worried man. He is worried about rising taxes and inflation. He is afraid of losing the house if the recession doesn't reverse or if the stock market doesn't recover. Joe is getting bald and going gray. Let's face it, Joe is getting older. But Joe can't face it. So he is cultivating his awareness of potential girl friends, younger than

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himself, to feed his wounded ego. Poor Joe!

Joe knows he has me. I kick him in the shins every now and then. Or, to put it in his language, sometimes I bother him. I don't bother him as much as I used to—about some things, anyway. I mean, what can I do? When he turns his deaf ear, I get discouraged. Sometimes it just doesn't pay to be too sensitive. The trouble is, Joe doesn't mind talking about his rights, but he doesn't want to hear about his wrongs!

I can remember the time when a conscience could speak with some degree of authority. Now when I try to remonstrate with Joe about something that used to be thought of as unacceptable behavior, Joe says, "How do you know?" Then he hits me with behavioral relativity. Let me give you an example: It used to be wrong for Joe to kick his dog. I don't want you to misunderstand. Joe doesn't impress people as the kind of person who would kick a dog. And he isn't. I can't remember him ever kicking his dog. So it is a safe illustration. Joe would get mad if I used an illustration closer home.

Joe says that dog-kicking is usually wrong. "But"—there is always a *but*—"isn't it better for me to kick my dog than to kick my wife? Suppose I get so fed up that I can't take it any more? Psychologists say that you shouldn't keep things bottled up inside you. If I have to kick somebody, isn't it better to kick the dog?"

So, how am I going to answer a question like that? What should I do, turn him over to the SPCA? Joe's theory of relativism makes it very hard for me, his conscience, to talk to him. I wish I could point to a clear statement in stone somewhere that did not change with the social whims: "Thou shalt not kick thy dog!" In other words, there ought to be a law.

I try to tell Joe that adultery is wrong. Lying is wrong. So are stealing and killing. He agrees they are wrong,

under most circumstances, but—here comes that *but* again—there may very well be some situations where these things could be justified. Then I get a lecture on situation ethics.

It used to be that I, the conscience, gave the lectures. Joe did the listening. I have learned, over the years, to look the other way concerning certain matters. A conscience can take only so much. I am "human" too! I guess I am like the husband who used to complain about the burnt toast he got each morning. After a while he stopped complaining. Finally he learned to like burnt toast!

What am I going to do with Joe? I can remember the value system of our childhood. Dad used to get out the big Bible and read to the family circle. Dad had his hang-ups too. He had some race prejudice, and he loved shiny new cars. I don't mean that Joe should go back to racism and materialism. But at least Old Dad had *something* going for him. He had a fixed reference point. He didn't always do the right thing, but at least he had some idea of what the right thing to do was!

What I would like to know is, Whatever happened to old-fashioned sin? Joe hasn't called it by its right name for so long, I hesitate to bring it up. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). I think that accounts for why Joe conscientiously avoids church. If somebody starts talking about sin, Joe feels strangely uncomfortable. His palms moisten, and a vague uneasiness settles in the pit of his stomach.

I guess Joe could forget all about sin if there wasn't so much sin around, by whatever name you want to use. So much human misery. Society in a shambles. Maybe God wasn't wasting His time when He wrote down the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. Perhaps the relevancy quotient of the Ten Commandments is higher than the intelligence quotients of the critics of the Ten Commandments! A sin is a sin. And if there is sin, there has to be

law (Romans 4:15). If there were no sin, we would need no Saviour from sin and its penalty. Another thing I would like to tell Joe, if I could get him to listen a minute: The law is also the springboard for forgiveness. If there were no law, there could be no forgiveness.

The most beautiful thought I could put in Joe's mind is the divine predisposition to forgive. But God can't forgive Joe for his sins until Joe recognizes his sins. That is supposed to be the job of me, his conscience.

I agree with Joe that the Ten Commandments can't save him. He needs a Saviour for that. But there is a direct relationship: If there is no sin, he needs no Saviour. And there can be no sin if there is no law.

The law is the reference point for me to know how to try to guide Joe. It doesn't mean Joe has to listen to me. I am not his computer programmer. Joe is still the boss in the body. I know my place.

I am not asking Joe to become a legalist. Grace—the grace of Jesus Christ—is the only way to go. Grace is receiving Christ's righteousness. And he gets it by faith, not by good works. Nevertheless faith does not circumvent the need for law (Romans 3:31).

To put it simply, God is a God of law and order. Heaven is a place of law and order. I know Joe. He has some Walt Disney fantasy-land idea of heaven. For him it is not a real place where real people live real lives. It is some fairy tale with no relationship to reality as men know it.

He doesn't realize that God is trying to teach him how to live in the image of God as he was created. And our three-dimensional reality is very directly related to heavenly reality as God knows it. In fact, according to the Garden of Eden story, if it were not for sin, we wouldn't have to go to heaven at all. This world, in warm reality, would be paradise.

Joe is waiting for God to wave some magic wand in heaven. Then, all of a


sudden, he will enjoy going to church. He will gladly give up his cigarettes. He will never have an immoral thought. He will not want to sin again.

I try to tell Joe that if God could have waved a magic wand, it would have been for His own Son, not for Joe. Surely God could have found some way to get around having to pay the penalty of sin with the life of His only Son. It doesn't make any sense to presume that Jesus was sent here to die to pay the penalty of law so that Joe could be saved by ignoring the law. If Jesus came to do away with the law, He didn't have to come at all. Why was Adam any different from Joe? Adam was told he had to die because he broke the law. Is God going to tell Joe something different? "I died for you, Joe, so that you can keep on sinning."

I think I know what it is. I just don't know how to tell Joe. He hardly ever listens to me anymore. The law is the schoolbook to bring a man to Christ. Christ doesn't throw it away. He uses it to help teach the man the best way to live. Children of God still have to go to school. They have to learn the rules and listen to the Teacher.

Yes, there is more to Joe than meets the stethoscope. I am his conscience. His early warning system connected to his everlasting life system. I am supposed to keep Joe spiritually healthy.

But I can't. I'll tell you why. One day Joe was driving his new car with pleasure and gusto. That car means a lot to him. It cost him more money than he cares to admit. This particular day something unusual happened. The dashboard warning light flashed on indicating an engine oil shortage. Joe wouldn't dream of doing to that red warning light on the dashboard of his car what he does to me.

He didn't take a hammer out of the glove compartment and smash the warning light, like he does to me. So I don't warn Joe much anymore. But he is about to have an eternal engine failure. It's a shame. It really is. 

Just a housewife? ... Not me!

Today, society has stereotyped the homemaker as a drab, nonintellectual TV watcher whose high point of the day comes when she bakes a big batch of chocolate-chip cookies. by Rhonda Casey

HOW DIFFERENT things might have been had the virgin Mary decided on a career instead of motherhood. What if, when visited by the Holy Spirit, she had said, "I would love to help, but you see, homemaking and motherhood just aren't fulfilling to me—I need something more, a career outside the home"?

Fortunately Mary's contemporaries regarded motherhood and homemaking as both honorable and creative. And Mary joyfully accepted God's important role for her life.

Today, society has stereotyped the homemaker as a drab, nonintellectual TV watcher whose high point of the day comes when she bakes a big batch of chocolate-chip cookies. Because of this attitude, the modern homemaker is being subtly pressured into believing her choice of careers makes her a second-class citizen.

The Christian homemaker is no exception. Too often she sees no divine plan or sense of self-fulfillment in her daily chores of washing dirty diapers, disciplining children, and running a home that seems to accumulate dirt faster than it can be removed.

But our Lord has an exciting alternative to this dilemma. Proverbs 31, from *The Living Bible**, describes a challenging and creative career which brings dignity and honor to women who choose it.

We discover first of all in reading this passage that God does not expect the homemaker to be a stay-at-home. Staying home all the time is neither psychologically nor emotionally healthy. Of course the homemaker has a primary duty to see that her home runs smoothly and her family is loved, fed, and clothed. "She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household, and plans the day's work

for her servant girls." "She has no fear of winter for her household, for she has made warm clothes for all of them." "She watches carefully all that goes on throughout her household, and is never lazy" (verses 15, 21, 27).

If this were all God intended homemaking to be, the passage would have stopped here. But God's homemaker is also a bargain-hunting, thrifty businesswoman. "She goes out to inspect a field, and buys it; with her own hands she plants a vineyard." "[She] watches for bargains." "She makes belted linen garments to sell to the merchants" (verses 16, 18, 24).

A modern-day example of the enterprising woman is a group calling themselves The Calico Crafters. These Christian women are wives, mothers, homemakers, and creative businesswomen. One paints beautiful miniature oil paintings and pursues other creative crafts. One excels at honest-to-goodness, old-fashioned quilting and various needlework projects that our grandmothers used to do. The third makes lovely gingham and calico pillows and takes charge of the group's public relations. When these girls enter an art show, they know the joy of seeing their creations appreciated by others. What's more, they make a nice profit.

The ideal woman of Proverbs 31 is also a fine seamstress. She keeps her husband and children clothed but uses her needle expertise for other things too. "She also upholsters with finest tapestry" (verse 22). How long has it been since you tried recovering that old chair in the attic? (*Every* family has one of those!) You may have talents you never knew existed.

Or why not *make* that eighty-dollar dress instead of going into debt for it? "Her own clothing is beautifully made—a purple gown of pure linen" (verse 22). A friend of mine recently said, "John and Pat always look so

well dressed. Where do they buy their clothes anyway?" Well, this couple has so many financial problems, they certainly don't have money to spend on an expensive wardrobe. But Pat has a nose for a bargain—and what's more, she sews. The result? A stunning wardrobe for very little money.

If sewing isn't your strong point, maybe cooking is. Here's where the homemaker can be creative and save money at the same time. In this day of skyrocketing food costs, cooking is one of the most important parts of the homemaker's job.

The next time cooking becomes monotonous, try making something unusual that you've seen in one of those fancy French cookbooks. Or take a hint from the woman in Proverbs who "buys imported foods, brought by ship from distant ports" (verse 14). Why not have some friends over for a potluck dinner and feature a foreign menu?

By the way, you'll have money for occasional food splurges if you will take time each week to plan your menu around weekly food specials. Remember, "[she] watches for bargains" (verse 18). The time spent is well worth it when you see a happy, well-nourished family really enjoying their food and eating better for less money.

The creative homemaker in Proverbs 31 wisely bought a piece of land and planted a garden. Today, although we depend on the farmer for most of our food needs, it's still fun to raise some of your own vegetables. It takes time and some good healthy work, but it's great for getting rid of tensions!

Flower gardening will reward you too. Last summer we had a small plot by the fence planted in bright orange marigolds. It took only about an hour to buy, plant, and fertilize these flowers. In return our family received many hours of pleasure from this spot

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of beauty in our backyard.

The godly homemaker also has a concern for people outside her family. "She sews for the poor, and generously gives to the needy" (verses 19, 20). A friend of mine helps a charitable organization deliver food to those who are either too old or too sick to prepare their own meals. Though she volunteers her time, she is well paid for her efforts by seeing the gratitude and joy of these people. Countless organizations need volunteers. If you want to help, there's a place for you.

As important as creativity is in homemaking, let me suggest a priority that is even higher on the list—your relationship with your husband and children. Here is, by far, the finest and most enduring part of homemaking. Good family relationships can make home a warm, happy, and peaceful retreat from a world that is often noisy, chaotic, and unfriendly.

But good family relationships don't just happen. They start with a woman who is interested in her family and takes the time to prove it. A wife who listens to her husband grumble about his job at the end of a hard day; a mother who is concerned about the "insignificant" problems of a six-year-old; a woman who loves . . . and cares.

God speaks about the homemaker's relationship with her family in Proverbs 31. "Her husband can trust her, and she will richly satisfy his needs. She will not hinder him, but help him all her life." "Her children stand and bless her; so does her husband. He praises her with these words: 'There are many fine women in the world, but you are the best of them all!'" (verses 11, 12, 28, 29).

Just a housewife? . . . Not me!!



*Taylor. The Living Bible, Paraphrased (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1971). Used by permission.



Fasting?

a focus of the heart

Christian churches don't emphasize fasting very much anymore, but the Bible points out that fasting includes more than merely an empty plate.

by James Lee Beall

GOD HAS NOT left us to speculate about fasting—His directions are specific. He has clearly told us what to avoid and what our aim should be. The prophet Isaiah in particular uncovered God's heart-attitude toward fasting. We learn from him why some fasting was unacceptable to God and what He desires instead.

Isaiah dealt with deep ethical questions in his prophecies to the nation of Israel. He represented the voice of God to a people with problems, to a nation whose spiritual comprehension left much to be desired.

God's concern is always with the heart. It is this that He examines when we approach Him with worship and service. When we fast, He asks us first of all, "What is your motive? What are you trying to accomplish with your fasting?"

As the Lord God examined the motives common in the Israel of Isaiah's day, He found self-righteousness clothed in externalism. People were substituting the machinery of fasting for true heart-engagement with the Lord. They were deceived regarding their own position of righteousness and were therefore unable to mourn for the condition of their hearts. Instead of humbling themselves, they made fasting an occasion for demanding results from God. In fact, they were complaining that God was not giving them the attention they deserved.

Their fasting was part of a religion of pretense. It exhibited the appearances of repentance while the heart was not being touched. These people did not see their need for change; they thought God

was the one to change. They took fasting, the very means for repentance, and made it the occasion for further sin!

They sought to fool God with their outward manner, but in so doing they increased their self-deception. God could see through the hypocrisy, but they lost the knowledge of their own hearts. As their blindness grew, so did their belligerence. "What is the matter with God?" They had forgotten that prayer and fasting must begin with the question, "What is wrong with me? What do I need God to change within me?"

The nation seemed bewildered when Isaiah lifted his voice to show them their transgressions and sins. "Transgressions and sins? Indeed!"

"We seek the face of God daily and act as righteously as we are able. We have not forsaken the ordinance of God. In fact, it is quite the opposite. We delight in our service to God" (see Isaiah 58:2, 3).

They felt that the problem was not in them but in the Lord. They fasted, but God didn't notice it. They afflicted themselves, but He paid no attention. Why should condemnation be heaped upon them by the prophet? They were not to blame!

But God saw their entire attitude as sin. Is there any greater blindness than religious self-deception?

God Requires Honesty

God's answer to the people's complaints abruptly called them back to reality. Fasting was to be born of obedience, not of self-will. It was to be initiated by God and done in His way. It was to manifest recognition of need for change. God could not consider what they were doing as fasting, even though the people did abstain from eating.

The reply of the Lord was, "Yes, you fast, but it is not a fast designed by Me. Your fasting is for strife, for debate, for

personal pleasure, and to strike out at others. Your kind of fasting will not be accepted by Me" (see Isaiah 58:4).

Isaiah then proceeded to lay down the most comprehensive discourse on fasting recorded in the Bible.

He began with the issue of hypocrisy, the lack of conformity between outward actions and the condition of the heart. We are told that the Lord derives no pleasure in the outward mechanics of fasting if these are detached from inner reality.

"Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" (Isaiah 58:5).

The general consensus seemed to have been, "Yes, this is precisely what we felt the Lord required of us. We understood that He wanted us to look sad, morose, and uncomfortable. Is this not the language for fasting? Is something more involved?"

The Right Focus

Then the Lord began to deal with the matter of proper focus—focus away from themselves and what they were doing. Fasting was to set their focus not only upon God, but also upon the needs of others (see Isaiah 58:6-10). The shift of focus from ourselves to God enables us to receive a further shift in focus. God can specify how we are to look upon the needs of others, once He has our full attention. We cannot become involved with other people until we have been freed from self-preoccupation.

This is the area that makes fasting psychologically healthy and sound. It is the shifting of your attention and care from yourself to others. Religious focus can easily turn inward. Regrettably, this inward turn happens to many. This is especially true for those who inordinately desire to be used by the Lord.

From "The Adventure of Fasting." Copyright © 1974 by Fleming H. Revell Company. Used by permission.

James Lee Beall is author of a practical guidebook to fasting for modern Christians. It claims to answer all the questions you've ever had on fasting.

Fasting must deal with reality. We cannot skirt true issues. Fasting is not a means of escaping but of fulfilling social responsibility."

They reason, "Perhaps if I fasted, I could obtain more power, do more things, see more results, and be known by more people." This sounds good and extremely religious, but it is the wrong focus. The weight of attention is on what you will become.

Those who are psychologically healthy learn to become involved in the world outside themselves. Instinctively they reach out to care for others. They grow in involvement as they mature.

Fasting must deal with reality. We cannot skirt true issues. Fasting is not a means of escaping, but for fulfilling social responsibility. The fast God has chosen so prepares us within that we can be used to bring about change in outward circumstances. As we receive inner liberation, we in turn can bring deliverance and help to others.

But this release on the inside requires the penetration of truth. We must see ourselves as God sees us and then accept His mercy for what it is—unmerited favor freely extended to us. We are not receptive to God's mercy until we deeply and honestly acknowledge our need for change and our inability to accomplish this by ourselves. As we humble ourselves by allowing God to make us aware of our need and of His provision, His grace can flow to us and through us to others.

This was exactly what the fasters of Isaiah's day refused to do. They would not face life; they were not honest with themselves. Such a fast could not help anyone.

God put His finger on the ineffectiveness of their fasting by asking them to do precisely what they could not do—help others. Had they been fasting properly, involvement with others would have spontaneously resulted. But since their focus was introverted, they could not see the needs of others, let alone do anything about them. They had to see their shortcomings in a tangible way—by discovering their inability to obey. God in His mercy refused to allow them to continue in their self-deception. They could not go on hiding from themselves and from each other.

God has provided a gauge for genuine

fasting. We can tell whether our fasting is acceptable to God by its results in our own lives and our effectiveness in relation to others around us. We need not be in the dark when we can check ourselves against His word. If fasting is doing its work of liberating our focus from self-preoccupation, this will show in mercy toward everyone else. We will give what we are receiving from God.

The root of Israel's failure in fasting was self-centeredness. Their hearts were not focused upon God, for they had no knowledge of what God desired. Instead they were fasting with a focus on their own merits. Religion had become their own game, and they were writing their own rules. They were even seeking to ignore life's built-in rules by withdrawing themselves from involvement with other people.

God has chosen a fast that is effective in self-denial and inner release. This fast cuts across self-will and causes us not only to focus upon God but to invest in others. God's chosen fast forces us to deal with the real world.

God's fast is motivated by a faith which works by love. It results not only in attitude change, but in action. Isaiah grouped these actions in two general categories: the first, of undoing; the second, of doing.

The Undoing of Bondage

Isaiah 58 contains four verbs (*italics* added) which relate to deliverance or the undoing of harm and oppression:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to *loose* the bands of wickedness, to *undo* the heavy burdens, and to *let* the oppressed go free, and that ye *break* every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:6).

We are to untie the ties of habitual sin and then lift the crushing load of guilt, fear, and oppression. The oppressed can only be restored to normal liberty if he knows that his bondage to habit has been broken, that he will not be overpowered again. Guilt must be removed by the cleansing blood, fear banished by the knowledge of God's full acceptance, and heaviness replaced by freedom to praise God from the heart. Following the release of the oppressed, we must break every yoke that would again enslave him. The source of the temptation must be removed by imparting God's strength to the area which was weakened by repeated failure.

The Sharing of Provision

Isaiah's second category of actions is that of positive contribution. We are not only to undo evil, but to do good. The four action-verbs (*italics* added) in verse seven all convey the idea of sharing.

"Is it not to *deal* thy bread to the hungry, and that thou *bring* the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou *cover* him; and that thou *hide not* thyself from thine own flesh?" (Isaiah 58:7).

We are to break our own bread and share it with the needy. This is not some impersonal contribution to a welfare fund—good as this is—but taking some of our portion and personally distributing it among the needy. We are to bring the hungry to our home and set him at our table. When we see the need of clothing, food, or shelter, we are to share ours. This cannot be done without deep personal investment in the concerns of others. We must care to the extent that their need becomes our need, and our resources are unlocked because of compassion. The key to sharing is found in the last phrase, "*and . . . hide not thyself from thine own flesh.*"

The Hebrew word for *flesh* in this passage includes a broad scope of meaning: self, body, skin, and kin. The scriptural concept involves all these shades of meaning. We begin with self-awareness through honesty, but we go on to identify ourselves with all mankind and especially with our own flesh-and-

Fasting prepares us for . . . the discipline of self-denial. We get our minds off ourselves and reorder our priorities."

blood relatives. Caring always begins with those immediately surrounding us, not with the millions across the sea.

Caring inevitably leads to sharing at the cost of inconvenience. Fasting attests our willingness for such sacrifice. The sacrifice God asks of us is to do good and share with those around us. The Hebrews writer said:

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Hebrews 13:16).

Paul said: "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13).

Caring cannot stop with words, not even with religious words. Caring must be demonstrated. James asked:

"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" (James 2:15, 16).

The Apostle John gave us this test of genuineness:

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:16-18).

Fasting prepares us for sacrificial giving because we first gain the discipline of self-denial. We get our minds off ourselves and reorder our priorities. We then become able to see our brother's need. Sharing is a spontaneous outflow of mercy when we have identified ourselves as on the same level as our brother. Humbling ourselves through fasting is a sure way to recognize how human we are.

Fasting From Self-Service

A few years ago we saw this truth at a local church and consequently urged the people to fast from self-service. Instead of buying something for themselves, they were to buy for others. They were

to purchase bread and meat for the hungry and give it away as they fasted. They were to do without extra clothes to clothe the naked. They were to fast from being oppressive and demanding. This meant that they were to stop being religious oracles who knew it all. They were not to pressure people, but to lift them. They must fast from doing "their own thing" and become involved with those around them who needed them—"their own flesh."

This is the way life is in the real world. If you seek your own, you eventually will have yourself on your own hands and in time you will become weary of yourself. Jesus warned us that if we try to save our lives, we will surely lose them. No man realizes his potential through self-service. Every successful person practices this part of God's chosen fast; he does so intuitively. The successful man gives himself away. The person who loses his life for others will find it.

No one in Isaiah's day seemed to have had the slightest notion that fasting involved this kind of ethical self-denial. They were sure that fasting was little more than an empty stomach and drab apparel. Too often we are guilty of thinking the same way.

Showing Mercy

Isaiah added another area of abstinence to all of the above—fasting from judgment against others in any form. Only those who chose to show mercy would receive mercy. God would answer the cry of the person whose fast included the putting away of all self-righteousness and replacing it with genuine compassion.

"Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day" (Isaiah 58:9, 10).

Notice that God's promise is conditional. We cannot receive God's mercy until we have created capacity by showing mercy to others. We must eliminate the yokes, the critical finger, and speaking vanity. These three areas of abstinence are vital for each of us.

The *yokes* are unnecessary religious demands. The Pharisees at the time of Christ were accused of placing unbearable yokes upon men and then refusing to help in lifting them. This forced perpetual religious activity which prevented a man from ever arriving at a meeting with God. In contrast, the early Christians at the council of Jerusalem made a merciful decision concerning the Gentiles.

"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they" (Acts 15:10, 11).

The pointing of the finger was a meaningful gesture among the Orientals. It was nonverbal language for contempt and scorn. Unfortunately, we say the same things in different ways today. We still criticize, accuse, and compare ourselves with others. Any expression of superiority is the same thing as *putting forth the finger*. Fasting is needed at this point.

A better translation of *speaking vanity* is "speaking wickedness." This includes every kind of insincerity, but especially refers to slander and gossip. The *Living Bible* renders it, "spreading vicious rumors."

Fasting, then, includes far more than abstinence from food; it involves ceasing from our own ways and serving others. It is indeed a focus of heart. 🕊



Lessons from a stop sign

by Otto H. Christensen

A stop sign means what it says in spite of an understanding police officer.

"DID YOU know you went through a stop sign?" said the patrol officer after signaling me to a stop.

"Yes, I did, but I could not avoid it," I told him, explaining how the sun's reflection prevented me from seeing the big stop sign on the pavement until it was too late to stop with my load. We were on our way back to China, and I was hauling a box trailer loaded with our trunks, which were quite heavy. And now I was under the law, for I had broken it.

After further questioning he gave me a ticket. Then to my relief he said, "You don't need to pay attention to it this time, but don't go through a stop sign again."

That was grace, a favor I had not actually merited. Now I was under grace. But the officer did not say, "Now I'll remove the stop sign." He forgave the first offense because of circumstances and my admission of guilt. But he also said, "Don't do it again."

That is what God does. If we confess, He forgives. But He doesn't remove or change His law. The apostle Paul says, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31). "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

Let us think about it a bit, for so many are confused about this matter of God's grace and His law. The officer extended grace (mercy), and I believed him and accepted his kindness. Had I not believed him, I would have gone to court to meet the judge and pay my fine. Now, how did the officer know he should stop me? Because there was a law

that said, "Stop," and I didn't stop.

How do I know I am a sinner, that I have transgressed? If there is sin or transgression, then there must be a law to transgress. The apostle John in 1 John 3:4 writes under inspiration, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." James makes it clear what law God means. He calls it "the royal law" (James 2:8), and he quotes from the Ten Commandments, saying that we will be judged by that law (verses 8-12). "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Then how shall I escape the judgment of God? Does He have a plan for my salvation, or will He do away with the law? If He does away with or changes the law for my benefit, then He has no plan of salvation. You cannot have both. Teaching that God has done away with the law so that I shall not be guilty of sin is doing away with the gospel. Our Redeemer need not have gone to Calvary if the law could have been abrogated or altered in the least aspect. This is a fearful idea.

No, friends, it is simple. He couldn't do away with His law because that is an expression of His character, nor could He change it for the same reason. Jesus declared, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle [a crossing of a T] of the law to fail" (Luke 16:17). That being the case there is only one thing God could do. He could not remove the stop sign, but He could pay the fine Himself and extend grace to me. With God the fine must be paid, "for the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Jesus died in my stead. How wonderful! Then when I confess, He extends His mercy or grace to me and says, as He said to the woman taken in adultery, "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Theologian Otto Christensen lives in retirement in Spring City, Tennessee.



Would you please explain the meaning of the verse which reads: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12)?

We must first discover the identity of the "principalities," "powers," and "rulers of the darkness of this world." The Bible gives ample data on this point. John, the revelator, informs us that Satan, once a holy angel, was expelled from heaven with a host of other angels who were sympathetic to his rebellion against God. These rebelling angels were cast "into the earth" (Revelation 12:7-9).

God gave Adam and Eve authority as the rulers of this earth (Genesis 1:26-28), but when they sinned, they came under Satan's control and lost their dominion to Satan. Thus as a usurper Satan offered Jesus Christ the kingdoms of this world if only He would bow down and worship him (Luke 4:5-8). Christ referred to Satan as "the prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30). The apostle Paul describes him as "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), and as "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). Thus the principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world in this passage are simply further designations of Satan and his evil angels.

The apostle's point is that Satan rules in the world of sinful human beings, trying to control them whether they know it or not. The Christian must realize that when he is opposed and thwarted by human beings in his endeavors to live for Christ, his real opponents are not the people before him but the supernatural agencies of evil.

Who are the 144,000 mentioned in the Book of Revelation?

Only two direct references are made in this prophetic book to a company of persons designated as the 144,000 (Revelation 7:1-17; 14:1-6). Since Revelation is largely portrayed in symbolic or figurative language, many Bible students be-

lieve that the number is symbolic rather than literal. That is, they understand the number 144,000 to symbolize a special group which in actual fact may be much larger than 144,000.

This special group appear to be God's true people who will live through the last traumatic scenes of earth's history (Revelation 7:14). They will vindicate God by their steadfast loyalty to Him and by their righteous characters (compare Revelation 14:12; 14:5). Apparently they are the living saints who will be translated without dying when Jesus returns the second time; hence, they are a kind of firstfruits of the great harvest of the redeemed of all ages who will be raised from their graves with the bloom of immortality and who will at the same time be caught up with them to meet Christ in the clouds of heaven (compare Revelation 14:3, 4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Matthew 24:30, 31).


My family of teen-agers has recently been discussing the pros and cons of attending the movies. They would like to know why a Christian should not attend the movies. Any comment?

The subject matter for our thoughts comes to us largely through the senses—especially the senses of sight and hearing. If a Christian sees and listens to that which is unwholesome, his thinking will become unwholesome, and eventually his thoughts will issue into actions unless some restricting influence intervenes. Consequently the Christian must raise a question on whatever presents itself for his consideration, whether it be in the form of books, periodicals, movies, or TV. He must seriously ask: Will these presentations lift me, help prepare me for a more useful life here and for company with Christ in heaven? Will they enable me to become a better reflector of the graces of Christ to my fellow beings, or will they detract from my spiritual growth?

The sad fact is that worldly policy largely governs the mass media. There is not much that is truly good or wholesome in the commercial movies or the TV programming that will build moral integrity in the character. And the

Christian must be aware of the fact that even films that do not depict gross sin still often sell the world's viewpoints and philosophy of life which differ with the Christian perspective. The Christian must be careful lest he be brainwashed of the very ideals for which Christ died. My personal conviction is that the commercial theater is out-of-bounds for the Christian.

Recently the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists made the following public appeal: "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Annual World Council [1974] appeals to publishers and the entertainment industry to recognize their responsibility to produce and publicize literature, films, and programs which will contribute to high moral and cultural values, and to refrain from that which degrades.

"The church further appeals to the public to refrain from reading or viewing portrayals of promiscuity, abuse, decadence, and cynicism. It invites personal commitment to integrity, purity, and virtue; commitment to resist exposure to debasing influences; and participation in community education aimed at achieving respect for the high standards of Christian morality." 



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.

How true is the Bible?

A FEW WEEKS AGO *Time* magazine carried a cover story headlined: "How True Is the Bible?" After discussing the close study and sometimes hostile attack to which the Bible has been subjected in our lifetime, *Time* summed up its conclusion in the subtitle: "The Believers Gain"! In other words, the more the Bible has been scrutinized, the more evident its accuracy appears.

Of course, the Bible does not really need our defense. As Spurgeon once said, "You don't defend a lion . . . you just let him loose!"

Many contemporary people, however, are incredulous that there are those who still accept the full authority of Scripture. I have had students ask me, "Mr. Ford, you seem like an intelligent, educated man. Do you really believe in the authority of a book written so many centuries ago?"

My answer is: "I do! With Paul, I am convinced that 'all scripture is given by inspiration of God.'"

If you ask me why I believe this—in the first place I believe it because of what *Jesus Christ* said. He clearly taught the full authority of the Bible. In the Sermon on the Mount He declared, "Till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law" (Matthew 5:18, RSV). He also warned, "Scripture cannot be broken [that is, discarded]" (John 10:34, RSV), and because I accept Jesus as Lord, I accept what He says about the Bible.

But, you may object, you accept the Bible because of what Christ says, but all you know about Christ you learn from the Bible. Isn't that arguing in a circle?

Not really. I begin with the conviction that the New Testament is reliable history, an accurate record. British scholar F. F. Bruce wrote, "There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good . . . attestation as the New Testament."

We have far more evidence for the historical truth of Jesus than we have for Julius Caesar!

Now these New Testament records show me a Jesus who was fully human, but more than human. He performed miracles, healed the sick, raised the

dead, forgave sins, accepted worship, and claimed equality with God. Accepting Jesus as my divine Lord, I am bound to believe the Bible is true because of what Jesus Christ said.

I also believe it because of *what I have experienced*. Its truth has been proved in my own life! I can say with Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."

Princeton scholar Emile Caillet tells how, as a young agnostic in France, he once wandered into a church, picked up a Bible, and began to read it for the first time. As he read he exclaimed, "This book understands me!" The result of that encounter with Scripture was that he became a devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

Like Caillet, I have found in the Bible that book that understands me. "Why do I search for a meaning for my life?" I ask. The Bible answers, "Because you are created in God's image. You are no animal—but a man—made for God!"

"Why do I have a conscience?" I ask. "And why do I feel guilty when I violate it?" The Bible answers, "Because God is holy, and His law is written on your heart!"

"Why does the thought of dying bother me, and why do I long to live on?" I ask. And the Bible answers, "Because God has put eternity in your heart."

But, you may say, that's just your feeling. What about all the mistakes and errors in the Bible? Here, too, I find evidence to buttress my confidence in Scripture. Last year, for example, we visited the famous pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. John 5 tells us that here Jesus healed a paralyzed man. For many years critics said that there was no such place. Then archaeologists excavated and found it—complete with five porches as the Bible describes it!

Again, I am impressed by fulfilled prophecy. There are hundreds of predictions in the Old Testament about the Messiah. It tells us for example where the Messiah would be born, when, and how (of a virgin). It tells us that He would be betrayed, mocked, pierced, crucified, and buried with the rich,

though He died with thieves! All of these came precisely true in Jesus, and the chances of just eight prophecies I've mentioned coming true by sheer chance are 1 in 100 followed by 15 zeros!

Perhaps the most impressive evidence I find for the *truth* of Scripture is its *power* to change lives. The Bible describes itself as God's powerful word—a hammer that crushes, a sword that pierces, a flame that devours, a seed that brings forth life. And for over twenty centuries the message of hope in the Bible has crossed all cultural and racial barriers to transform man's life and society. Truly it is a book for the world!

The message of the Bible is for all people. The message is that there is one God who has a plan for all things, that this God has made all men for Himself; that all men have rebelled and been cut off from the life of God; and that this holy God of love sent Jesus His Son to pay the death penalty for our rebellion. He gives new life in God's kingdom to all who turn to Him, trusting in Christ alone as Saviour, repenting of sin, and following Him as Lord.

One of the saddest things Jesus ever said was this: "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" (John 5:39, 40, RSV). The Bible calls us not just to believe that its message is true, but to act on that truth and turn to the Christ who is the center of its message. Today, begin to search the Scriptures, and you will find them to be a jewel box in which the greatest treasure of life, Jesus Christ, is to be discovered.—LEIGHTON FORD.

Will the pope resign?

Rome is one of the rumor capitals of the world. So when Pope Paul VI had to cancel public activities twice because of illness in recent weeks, the rumors began—the pope had a heart attack, the pope was suffering from leukemia. Such cancellations periodically bring "first hand" information from "reliable sources" that Pope Paul is gravely ill and considering the possibility of resigning.



Since the pope's prostate operation in 1967, reports about his health have ranged from cancer of the bone to hypertrophy of the left heart ventricle. No one ignores the fact that the pope is not a young man and that any illness can be serious. But the general opinion is that he suffers from arthritis in the neck and legs, a painful but not fatal illness, scarcely unusual in a man age seventy-seven. At the recent fourth Synod of Bishops, Pope Paul was gently supported up and down steps. Congratulated on his seventy-seventh birthday he replied off microphone, "Senectus ipsa est morbus" ("Old age is my illness").

The pope has a schedule that would be tiring for a younger man. He rises at six to celebrate mass and is in his office at eight. He meets with various officials and bishops from all over the world and holds regular audiences for different groups, at which he usually gives talks. He works until two in the afternoon, then has lunch and a siesta, and is back at work from five until eight. At eight he has dinner and is back in his office until midnight, often later. He has been requested by his doctors to slow down his activities, and there are signs, I understand, that he might heed the physicians' advice. But even a slowed-down schedule is still going to be demanding. Actually, no one outside the immediate papal household can be certain whether the pope is seriously ill or not, especially since Vatican officials affirm that despite a look of frailness Pope Paul VI has a strong constitution.

Rumors of the pope's resignation are not new. Yet each of them takes on added importance in the context of the eventual selection of a successor. A few years ago, for instance, Paul VI seemed to hint that he considered he had entered the autumn of his pontificate. When he introduced mandatory retirement for bishops at seventy-five, many thought he, too, seriously considered resigning at that age. Shortly before September 26, 1972, when he reached the age of seventy-five, he let it be known that he considered it his duty to remain in office as "servant of servants."

Even this, however, hasn't inhibited

speculation about the next pope. Nor is there any shortage of suggestions in the matter of naming individuals. No one cardinal stands out as a favorite as Giovanni Battista Montini did before his election as Paul VI. Some appear as more likely choices than others.

If an Italian is not elected, the choice will become wide open. Many regard Franz Cardinal Koenig of Austria as definitely of papal timber, along with Cardinal Doepfner of Munich, Germany, François Cardinal Marty, archbishop of Paris, and Maurice Cardinal Roy, archbishop of Ottawa, Canada.

Resignation would be in line with Paul VI's flair for dramatic gestures. However, its impact might be too strong. It would create a precedent for his successors, as well as limit the freedom of the consistory which as recently as 1958 chose a seventy-seven-year-old cardinal who became John XXIII.

There seems to be little doubt that resignation would be a major blow to the prestige of the Papacy as traditionally conceived. And it is no news that Paul VI is increasingly holding to this traditionalism. In social and political issues he has often chosen a liberal line, but in doctrinal and disciplinary matters he is conservative. For all his willingness to reform the various departments of the Catholic Church or to extend the Catholic Church's contacts with non-Christian religions as well as with Communist countries, he has not budged on dogma. He carries out a program of progressive reforms but does so in a conservative style, consistently doing a modern thing in an old-fashioned manner.

The possibility, therefore, that Paul VI will resign remains, but it is hardly a probability. At seventy-seven his worldwide travels and path-breaking encyclicals (*Ecclesiam Suam*, *Populorum Progressio*) date from several years ago. His leadership seems more defensive than dynamic, and he seems to want, above all, to leave Roman Catholicism on a solid and stable footing. Pope Paul VI is likely to think God will take him in His good time, that as long as he is capable he should remain at the helm, sticking to the traditional way of doing the

papal thing. Anything less would be an abdication of responsibility.—**RAOUL DEDEREN.**

Letters

THESE TIMES welcomes letters from readers on subjects dealt with in the magazine. The editors reserve the right to publish those letters they choose and to edit them for clarity and length before printing. Send to: Letters, **THESE TIMES**, Box 59, Nashville, TN 37202.

Likes Articles on Gardening

I commend you for featuring the article "Gardening for Survival." I think it's tremendous to put an article of this type in your magazine. I would like to see more articles from readers on topics of this nature. I wish more Americans would turn to backyard gardening for health's sake, for economics' sake, and for whatever else can be benefited. For me, gardening is a great physical and spiritual uplift, besides the enjoyment of eating from the fruits of your own labor.—**Garland Cross, Killeen, Texas.**

Does Not Like Photo

I always await the arrival of **THESE TIMES** with anticipation each month. I've always considered it to be a magazine of quality and good taste. However, I must complain about the photo on page 20 of the May issue. I feel the immodest wearing apparel displayed by the woman standing in the picture nullifies the work of God-fearing mothers who are trying to instill principles of modest dress in their daughters. Short skirts may be the fashion of the world today, but God's principles do not change.—**Mrs. Patricia Behrmann, Silver Creek, New York.**

*We received several letters voicing the same concerns about the photo, and we agree that the writers have a good point. Dressing modestly is certainly a religious principle which **THESE TIMES** endorses.*
—*The Editors.*





THIS TIME

WHO DOESN'T want to become knowledgeable in regard to Bible prophecy? Almost all of us sense that the Bible must contain the key to the future. It's God's Book, isn't it? Where else can one go to obtain the truth of reality about the future?

We have reached all the way "down under" to Australia to get the best writer for our article on the second chapter of the Biblical Book of Daniel. Desmond Ford, chairman of the Theology Department, Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, has the highest credentials—he has a doctor's degree in theology from Manchester University, Manchester, England, and he is a lifelong student of the God-breathed Book in his own right, a highly sought-after Biblical lecturer and a dedicated teacher and minister.

We invite you to study along with Dr. Ford and discover the amazing message from the only Biblical book Jesus encouraged us to "understand." You will find out why He said that. You will discover what is going on behind the scenes as world events rush our planet toward a cataclysmic end. You will obtain a grasp of the world situation no human commentator can possibly give. You will find comfort and hope for yourself despite worsening conditions on earth. You will understand Biblical terms that have puzzled many people.

Perhaps a word of counsel is in order. As you read this article on Daniel, you will need to concentrate on the message. Prophecy is understood only by those willing to pay the price of effort. Understanding will come. But it will not be easy. This article in THESE TIMES is necessarily concentrated; a fuller exposition of the entire Book of Daniel by the same scholar will be available in book form at a later date. But you will find more than enough here to start you on the road to becoming well informed regarding Bible prophecy.

May we wish you God's choicest blessing as you learn new and wonderful things from the Word of God. Have your Bible with you as you read Dr. Ford's article. Use a notebook. Study along with friends if possible. In any event, make the most of this rare opportunity of unfolding for yourself the mysteries of the fantastic prophecy of Daniel 2.

Kenneth J. Holland

Presenting Jesus Christ
in all His fullness to all the world.

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to be the authoritative Word of God,
Satan to be our great adversary,
Jesus to be our all-sufficient Saviour,
and the coming Christ to be our only hope
as the world nears its cataclysmic end.

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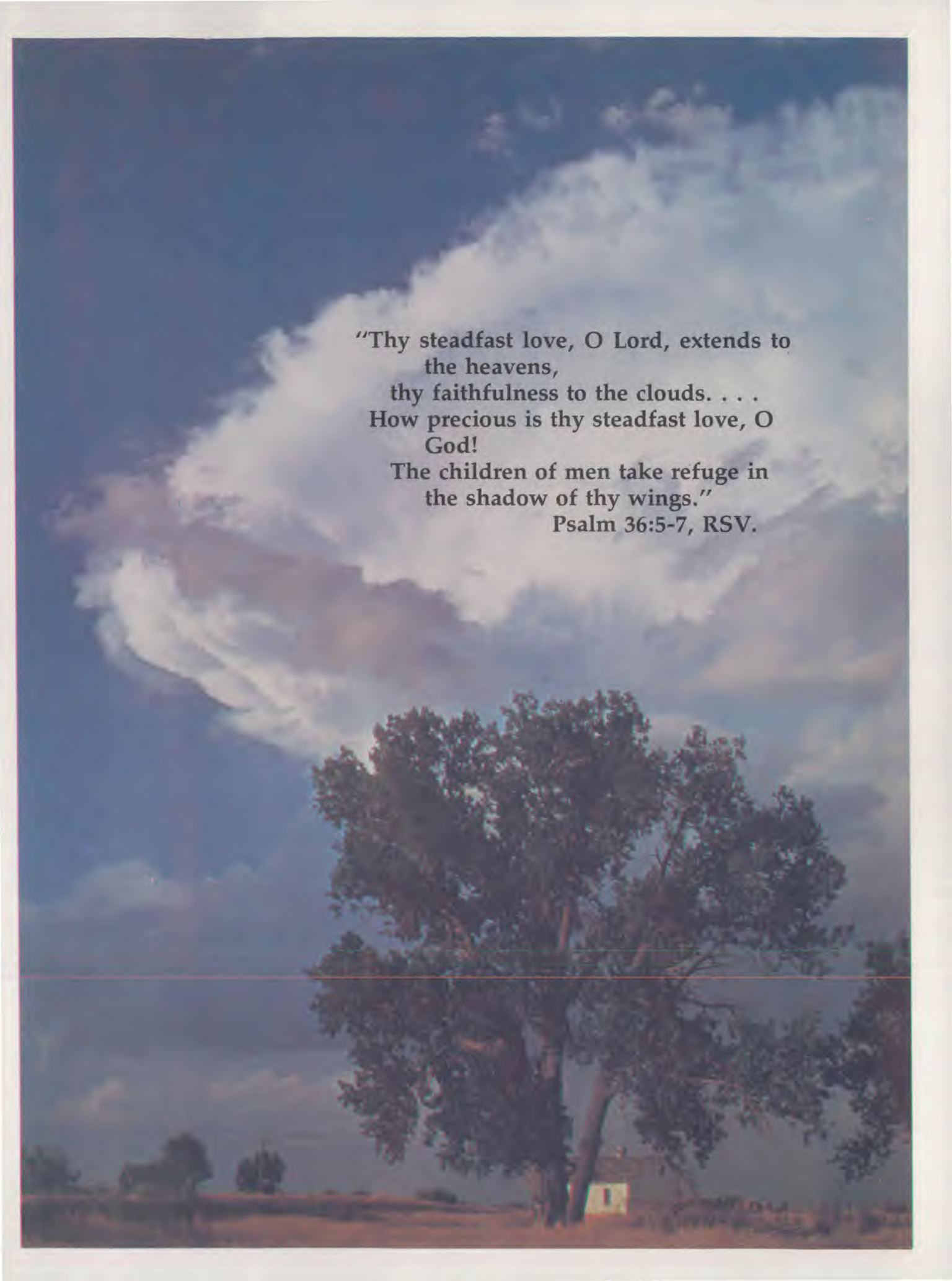
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A large, leafy tree stands in a field under a dramatic, cloudy sky. The sky is filled with large, white and grey clouds, and the overall tone is somewhat somber. In the background, a small yellow building is visible. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

**"Thy steadfast love, O Lord, extends to
the heavens,
thy faithfulness to the clouds. . . .
How precious is thy steadfast love, O
God!**

**The children of men take refuge in
the shadow of thy wings."**

Psalm 36:5-7, RSV.

You can have a more satisfying life

You're a member of the human race—working, eating, sleeping, living in the fast-paced world of today. Most of the time life goes along pretty good—not terrifically great, but not too bad either.

Like most thinking people, however, you wonder now and then if there shouldn't be more to life. Down underneath somewhere you feel dissatisfied with things the way they are.

- * Are there times when life today seems to make little sense?
- * Do you sometimes wonder where it all will end?
- * Is there any real hope for peace, either among nations or in your own heart?

Everyone has questions such as these from time to time. Peace seems so elusive, the end uncertain, that often life *doesn't* seem to make much sense. No wonder we have questions! But can we find answers? Yes. You *can* have a more satisfying life.

No doubt this copy of *THESE TIMES* has started providing some answers. And if you have appreciated its contents, we would like to introduce you to a completely new and different magazine called *Today's Life*. It's FREE!



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